

## Rhythm FREE

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### Summary

The topic of rhythm in literary theory draws both on discussions of poetry and prose and on much broader currents of thought in the natural sciences and philosophy. In Western thought, rhythm was a central focus of attention in ancient Greece, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when theorists and practitioners of literature and the other arts often referred back to classical models. This is also the case in more recent theorizing of rhythm in the context of everyday life in advanced modern or, as some would say, postmodern societies. Nietzsche, who constantly circled around the term and with frequent direct and metaphorical references to dance, is in many ways the central figure in these discussions. He was massively influential after his death in 1900, both in Germany and more widely, for example, in Britain and North America, and he was taken up again, along with Heidegger, in much French thought after World War 2. Contemporary debates around rhythm and its relation to meter continue to refer to classical Greece, and in Chinese and Indian thought there is a similar continuity of attention to issues of rhythm.

**Keywords:** rhythm, meter, prosody, eurhythmy, Nietzsche, dance

**Subjects:** Middle Ages and Renaissance (500-1600), Enlightenment and Early Modern (1600-1800), 19th Century (1800-1900), 20th and 21st Century (1900-present), Literary Theory, Ancient Literatures (before 500)

## What Is Rhythm?

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Rhythm is conventionally defined as pertaining to a sequence of events that can be perceived as a pattern, with an interplay between repetition and variation or grouping. It appears in philosophy, aesthetics, and literary theory in two overlapping forms. The more precise sense covers issues of musical and poetic and prose rhythm and, by extension, natural rhythms such as those of water, the planets, human and other animal bodies, and the rhythms of architecture, work, and so on. These are brought together in a broader sense in which rhythm is seen as a pervasive and dominant feature of the universe and its contents, expressed in, for example, Friedrich Hölderlin's assertion that "all is rhythm" or the musician Hans von Bülow's much-quoted "In the beginning was rhythm." More tentatively, Jacques Derrida suggested that "rhythm has always haunted our tradition, without ever reaching the centre of its concerns."<sup>1</sup>

Pascal Michon, who has comprehensively discussed the topic, suggests that rhythm tends to become a prominent category of reflection at times of rapid social change. The intense focus on and fascination with questions of "rhythm" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which continues to inform much contemporary analysis, has a much longer prehistory. A classic article of 1951 by the French linguist Émile Benveniste traces the term through classical Greek thought, from an initial sense of form and order captured in motion, in the thought of the pre-Socratics, to

that given it by Plato.<sup>2</sup> Here, the term is attached to successive movements, particularly those of bodies, that, in Socrates' reported formulation, "are numerically regulated and must be called rhythms and measures."<sup>3</sup>

### Classical Beginnings

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Along with the division between what might be called the special theories and the general theories of rhythm, the opposition between pre-Socratic form and Platonic metrics structures all subsequent discussion of the topic in Western thought.<sup>4</sup> In the specific case of poetics, it appears in the ongoing controversies between theorists who distinguish sharply between rhythm and meter and those who stress their affinity. In psychology, where rhythmic apprehension was extensively explored from the 19th century onward, the concept of "subjective rhythmitisation"—the transformation of mechanical beat into differentiated rhythmic form—became central. As Susanne Langer writes, "the ticking of a clock is repetitious and regular, but not in itself rhythmic; the listening ear hears rhythms in the succession of equal ticks, the human mind organizes them into a temporal form."<sup>5</sup>

It is worth exploring the classical discussion in more detail. According to Benveniste, the familiar derivation of "rhythm" from the Greek word *rhein* (to flow), leading to associations with the rhythm of waves, is inaccurate. Rivers flow, in ancient Greek usage, but the sea does not, and a current of water does not have "rhythm." In fact, the pre-Socratic philosophers Leucippus and Democritus made *rhythmos* "into a technical term" meaning "form," and distinguished it from synonyms such as *skhema*, *morphe*, or *eidos* by the fact that it "designates the form in the instant that it is assumed by what is moving, mobile or fluid . . ."<sup>6</sup> Plato's "innovation was in applying it to the *form of movement* which the human body makes in dancing, and the arrangement of figures into which this movement is resolved. The decisive circumstance is there, in the notion of a corporal *ruthmos* associated with *metron* and bound by the law of numbers: that 'form' is from then on determined by a 'measure' and numerically regulated."<sup>7</sup>

Much of Benveniste's account has been questioned; the formalization of the notion of rhythm and the distinction between rhythm and meter may owe more to the Pythagoreans' earlier contribution than to Plato himself, but his didactic approach, clearly expressed in *The Republic*, remains an important reference point.<sup>8</sup> In education in poetry and music, he writes,

"the principle governing rhythm . . . will be, not to aim at a great variety of metres, but to discover the rhythms appropriate to a life of courage and self-control . . . rhythm and harmony sink deep into the recesses of the soul and take the strongest hold there, in one who is brought up in the right way."<sup>9</sup>

In the same work Plato formalizes the concept of eurhythmy. A good man, here a ruler but possibly also one of the ruled, should be "a true guardian of himself, preserving always that perfect rhythm (*eurhythmon*) and harmony of being which he has acquired from his training in music and poetry . . ."<sup>10</sup> In *The Laws* eurhythmy is extended into a principle of social and political

organization, and rhythmic motion is combined with “harmony,” “the order in the voice in which high and low combine,” to form “choral art.” Plato’s definition of rhythm as “order in movement” is often taken as canonical.<sup>11</sup>

This conception of rhythm is taken further by Aristotle in his *Physics*, *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*, and applied to music by Aristoxenus in his *Elements of Rhythmics* and in life science and medicine, also in the 3rd and 4th centuries BCE.<sup>12</sup> Later, in the Hellenistic period, Lucretius continued the current of natural philosophy with an ontology of flows, taken up enthusiastically by the French philosopher Michel Serres (1930–2019).<sup>13</sup> In the field of rhetoric, Cicero and others traced oratorical rhythm from poetic rhythm: although oratory is not tied to meter, “All the thoughts and expressions which are most brilliant in their several kinds, must needs flow up in succession. . . .”<sup>14</sup> In the first half-millennium of the Christian era, Augustine and later Boethius wrote substantially on music.

## Rhythm Theory and Modernity

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These concerns were combined with new discoveries in science and medicine by Spinoza in the 17th century and, a little later, by Leibniz. Later in the 18th century, Diderot asserted that in poetry “rhythm is everything”: without it a poet “is almost not worth reading.”<sup>15</sup> He also wrote on rhythm as a central element of aesthetic value in painting and theater—themes taken up in Germany, where the term *Rhythmus* came into use around this time, by Goethe, for whom the metamorphosis of plants expressed “the rhythm of life,” and others. Around the turn of the century August Wilhelm Schlegel extended the use of the term from poetics to broader aspects of narrative: “the spiritual rhythm of the epic poem is its essence.”<sup>16</sup> Hölderlin took up this theme, while also stressing the role of the caesura or “counter-rhythmic interruption” in poetics and more broadly. Schelling defined rhythm, a principle governing the universe, as “the domination and subjugation of time.” He thus returned to ideas of Pythagoras while also articulating in modern terms what the French theorist Henri Meschonnic called the “cosmic paradigm of rhythm.”<sup>17</sup>

This universalistic conception, invoked in a metaphorical way in Hegel’s account of the advance of spirit, was at the base of the cult of rhythm in the early 20th century, anticipated in artistic and literary movements in the late 19th century, and in the philosophy of Nietzsche. Baudelaire, in 1862, rejected the narrowness of metric rhythm and aspired to write a “poetic prose . . . without rhythm and without rhyme.” At the same time his conceptions of harmony aimed to recapture a broader notion of rhythm seen in opposition to the alienating effects of modernity. For Mallarmé in 1894, poetry is the quintessence of language and expresses the rhythm of life itself: “every soul is a spiritual knot.”

The cult of classical antiquity in the late 19th century, notably in the work of Nietzsche which sprang into prominence shortly after his death in 1900, involved the recapitulation of many of these themes and their expression in poetry, music, dance, and even the emergent art form of the cinema. By then there was also a large body of scientific thought focused on the concept of rhythm, ranging from physics and biology to industrial psychology. There was also a strong sense

that the “rhythm of life” was speeding up, with railway travel, telegraphy, and the automobile. The separation of modern urban human beings from “natural” rhythms was a very frequent theme of discussion around the turn of the century, as, for example, in Georg Simmel’s reflections on money and the city. The pervasive nature of rhythms such as those of day and night is overlaid in the course of cultural development: “the child lives in an insurmountable rhythm of sleeping and waking, of activity and relaxation, and something similar may be observed in rural areas. Conversely, the regularity of these needs (and not only their satisfaction!) has long been disrupted for city-dwellers.”<sup>18</sup>

As usual in his work, Simmel identifies both positive and negative implications: “the general conditions of life are freed from rhythm; they are more even and provide individual freedom and possible irregularity.”<sup>19</sup> Overall, however, he is concerned with the downside, especially in the case of factory work: “Recent investigations have shown that, whereas the arrangement of work previously had a predominantly rhythmic character . . . the present rhythm is related either directly to the remorselessly objective movements of the machine or to the necessity for the individual worker . . . to keep pace with the other members of the work-group.”<sup>20</sup> Even in music, Simmel notes “that the recent trend seems to be to move away completely from the rhythmical . . .”<sup>21</sup>

In Germany in particular, there was indeed a widespread sense that rhythm had been lost, and this led to the emergence of various utopian movements for new ways of living and working, which often also involved the cultivation of the body in gymnastics and dance.<sup>22</sup> The settlement at Hellerau on the outskirts of Dresden, based partly on ideas from the English garden cities movement, combined craft production with a school of rhythmic gymnastics founded by the Genevan composer and music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950) in the years immediately preceding World War I.<sup>23</sup> The school also produced major dramatic performances that harked back to ancient Greece but were also highly innovative in their staging and lighting.

The French poet and essayist Paul Valéry wrote in his notebooks in 1901–1902: “Everyone tends to become a machine. Habit, method, mastery – in other words machine.” He wrote further short reflections on rhythm over the following three decades, despite his claim that the term was unclear to him and that he “never used it.”<sup>24</sup> The most substantial was in 1914, where he distinguished between rhythm and measure—the former pointing to the indivisibility of actions or other phenomena. “A single note may be enough to recall a melody.”<sup>25</sup> In “the intuition of rhythm” successive events have some of the features of simultaneity.<sup>26</sup> For Valéry, “it is not repetition which creates rhythm; on the contrary it is rhythm which makes repetition possible.”<sup>27</sup> In his posthumously published *Vues*, he wrote that “it is almost only via rhythm and the sensory properties of language that literature can reach the organic being of a reader with some confidence in the conformity between intention and results.”<sup>28</sup> In the same text he recalled being obsessed one day by a rhythm that eventually became a poem: “it seemed as if it wanted to become embodied, to attain the perfection of being.”<sup>29</sup>

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## Nietzsche and His Influence

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Nietzsche had written very substantially about rhythm, notably in *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and in essays and fragments from the decade spanning its publication.<sup>30</sup> Like so many thinkers of the period, especially in Germany, he saw the heyday of classical tragedy in the 5th century BCE as the high point of Greek culture, bringing together the Apollinian and Dionysian elements of structure (including rhythmic structure) and ecstatic excess, respectively. Ancient Greek “orchestics” combined what is now called dance, music, and poetry, but with music, based more on rhythm than on harmony as it was in the late 19th century, the junior partner in the triad.

Pascal Michon, who traced these themes in Nietzsche as part of his very detailed exploration of the history of reflection on rhythm, had earlier written on the work of the anthropologist Marcel Mauss.<sup>31</sup> The parallels are striking: Mauss stressed the periodic and rhythmic character of premodern social life and the kinship and other exchanges that structure it. “Is it not obvious,” wrote Mauss in 1924, “that dance corresponds to respiratory, cardiac and muscular movements which are identical in all individuals and often shared even by their audience, and that at the same time it presupposes and follows a succession of images – this series being itself the one aroused in both by the dance.”<sup>32</sup> The person is linked to the rhythms organizing social life in which s/he is situated in “the fleeting instant when the society or the people become emotionally aware of themselves and of their situation in relation to others.”<sup>33</sup> Walter Benjamin may have been thinking of Mauss when he wrote of the storyteller and the art of repeating stories: “The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory. When the rhythm of the work has seized him, he listens to the tale in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself.”<sup>34</sup>

“Rhythm,” Nietzsche wrote in a note of 1871–1872, “primordial in language: speaking moving acting.”<sup>35</sup> A year earlier he had expressed the same idea a little more fully: “The word symbolises the essence of the thing through the pitch and its fall, the strength and the rhythm of its sounding; the gesture expressed by the mouth represents the accompanying idea, the image, the appearance of its essence. The symbols can and must be diverse, but they grow instinctively and with great and wise regularity.”<sup>36</sup>

In the modern period, the music of Wagner and others represented a return of the Dionysian and the utopian possibility of a cultural life that again brought together the two principles. As Nietzsche writes in the last section of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), “where the Dionysian powers rise up as we experience them now . . . the next generation will probably behold his [Apollo’s] most ample beautiful effects.” Harmony and rhythm might again be brought together in “human beings, speaking with harmonious voices and in a rhythmic language of gestures . . .”<sup>37</sup> His views changed over the course of his active life, particularly in relation to Wagner, who came to be seen as part of the problem rather than the solution, but Nietzsche’s emphasis on dance in particular remained as late as *Zarathustra* in the 1880s and *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), in which rhythm, so far as anything does in a modern world dominated by measure, “still appeals to our muscles.”<sup>38</sup>

Dance, like other concepts invoked by Nietzsche, veers constantly between a literal and a metaphorical usage. In the latter, it represents the activity of the “free spirits” to whom *Human, All Too Human* is addressed, or the slogan that he could only believe in a god who knew how to dance.<sup>39</sup> More concretely, however, dance serves as a Dionysian expression that Nietzsche celebrates even in Christianity, which he otherwise despises: “In the German Middle Ages . . . singing and dancing crowds, ever increasing in number, whirled themselves from place to place . . . In these dancers of St John and St Vitus, we rediscover the Bacchic choruses of the Greeks, with their prehistory in Asia Minor, as far back as Babylon and the orgiastic Sacaea.”<sup>40</sup>

Christianity in its modern impoverished form has lost these traditions. Wagner’s music, Nietzsche comes to believe, has also failed to liberate music from its isolation from other forms. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* is, as it were, not total enough: it overstimulates the senses without engaging the spectators in a properly active and liberating way: “My objections to the music of Wagner are physiological objections . . . I no longer breathe easily once this music begins to affect me; my foot soon resents it and rebels; my foot feels the need for rhythm, dance march . . .”<sup>41</sup>

As early as in *The Birth of Tragedy*, he wrote that “we need a new world of symbols and the entire symbolism of the body (*die ganzleibliche Symbolik*) is called into play, not the mere symbolism of the lips, face, and speech but the whole pantomime of dancing, forcing every member into rhythmic movement. Then the other symbolic powers suddenly press forward, particularly those of music, in rhythmic, dynamics, and harmony.”<sup>42</sup> In a posthumously published text on “Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,” Nietzsche ventriloquizes Heraclitus saying, “I contemplate becoming, and no-one has so closely observed this eternal beating of waves and rhythm of things.”<sup>43</sup> Eurhythm, which had been brought back into scholarly discussion by J. H. Schmidt’s book of 1868 on eurhythm in the Greek chorus, he saw as producing a harmonious whole out of sharply opposed elements, including “strong dissonances of time-measure.”<sup>44</sup> More than three decades later, Jaques-Dalcroze was to put this into practice in his “rythmique” or rhythmic gymnastics.

Rhythm, and specifically dance, play an important part in later works such as *The Gay Science* (1882). Again the underlying theme, explicit in the preface to the 1887 expanded edition, is that the ancient Greeks “knew how to live.”<sup>45</sup> In primitive superstitions, “rhythm was meant to impress the gods more deeply with a human petition, for it was noticed that men remember a verse much better than ordinary speech.”<sup>46</sup> Later, among the Pythagoreans “music was credited with the power of discharging the emotions, of purifying the soul . . . precisely by means of rhythm . . .”<sup>47</sup>

Nietzsche himself claims to embrace this emphasis on dance and rhythm.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Jesus, with his instruction to his disciples to eat bread and drink wine in his memory, Nietzsche’s Zarathustra tells his followers “to dance – to dance beyond yourselves.”<sup>49</sup>

## Rhythm in Modernity

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Nietzsche, as discussed above, called for a return to the Dionysian conception of rhythm as against the more rigid Apollonian one that he believed had become dominant since the ancient Greek era, and this contrast drives the attempt to distinguish rhythm from mathematically measurable meter or beat, that of the metronome (patented in 1815) and Heidegger's critique of technology as a constraining force. The "rhythm science" of the 19th and early 20th centuries, partly inspired by Herbert Spencer but developed further by the experimental psychologist Thaddeus Bolton in the United States and others, made much of this distinction. Bolton, in 1894, distinguished between what he called the "primary rhythm," or "the regular recurrence of sounds and silences," and the "secondary rhythm" in which these are systematically grouped, for example, in the musical bar or the foot in poetry.<sup>50</sup> Bolton's experiments concerned in particular the ways in which people grouped sounds such as those of railway wheels into rhythmical sequences.<sup>51</sup>

The economist Karl Bücher, to whom Simmel was undoubtedly referring in the passage quoted above, contrasted the spontaneous rhythms of premodern work with those of the machine to which the worker had to conform. Jacques-Dalcroze, whose conception of drama was very close to Nietzsche's, especially in the theatrical performances he directed in the years just before World War I, was criticized by other practitioners of dance for specifying movements too precisely. In interwar Germany, the theme of rhythm became increasingly shaped by *völkisch* movements in dance and eventually in the political spectacles inaugurated by the Nazi regime. In so doing, they were in a sense putting into practice theories of the crowd and "mass society" articulated by Le Bon, Tarde, and others.<sup>52</sup> The Marxist critic Siegfried Kracauer analyzed the emergence of these tendencies in essays collected in *The Mass Ornament*, notably one on "Travel and Dance."<sup>53</sup> The Russian Sergei Chakhotin, exiled in Germany and then in France, wrote of the "rape of the masses" in totalitarian political propaganda.<sup>54</sup>

The *völkisch* and Nazi conception of rhythm drew on a much longer history of racialized thinking around the topic.<sup>55</sup> This was sometimes unconscious but more often explicit, though it is important to note, as Michael Golston does in his important study, that the term "race" itself was used very broadly in the 19th and early 20th centuries.<sup>56</sup> The literature is however replete with the phrase "savages and children," repeated as automatically as "women and children first" in relation to shipwrecks and lifeboats. It was assumed that both "savages" and children were particularly sensitive to, and attracted to, rhythm and that their responses could be juxtaposed, as they were in at least one systematic comparative study from 1910.<sup>57</sup> As Golston writes, "the idea that lower classes of people, uncivilized nations, and children are particularly susceptible to the influence of rhythm plays a role in theories of rhythm as an instrument of pedagogy, as a force in the management of labor, and as an indicator of national and ethnic identity."<sup>58</sup> Bolton, for example, asserted that "a highly civilized people is not easily affected by mere rhythms" and went straight on to note that "the negro preacher often resorts to recitative speaking to produce the desired emotional effect in his hearers . . ."<sup>59</sup>

The breathtaking juxtaposition of tribal societies in Africa with contemporary African Americans and “Indians” was commonplace.<sup>60</sup> One of the most influential studies of work rhythms, Bücher’s *Arbeit und Rhythmus* of 1899, draws, however, on a vast range of work songs from traditional communities across the world, and concludes with the hope that “a higher rhythmic unity” of technology and culture might offer “to the spirit the happy serenity and to the body the harmonious development which mark the best of the traditional societies [Naturvölker].”<sup>61</sup>

As well as this sometimes more welcoming attitude to traditional societies and communities, the early 20th century saw a vogue for what has been called “primitivism” in avant-garde art, music, dance, literature, and theater. One example was Igor Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring,” which caused a sensation when it was first performed in Paris in 1913. As Fred Moten notes, the early-20th-century avant-garde has tended to be seen as Euro-American, but there was an important black American avant-garde, in the Harlem Renaissance and with a substantial presence in Paris and elsewhere in Europe.<sup>62</sup> American jazz became a worldwide phenomenon, with rhythm as its orienting principle and slogan.<sup>63</sup>

The African American scholar Alain Locke wrote of the “remarkable carry-over of the rhythmic spirit” as the only substantial artistic legacy from Africa in “the rude transplanting of slavery”: “What we have thought primitive in the American Negro . . . are then neither characteristically African nor to be explained as an ancestral heritage. They are the result of his peculiar experience in America and the emotional upheaval of its trials and ordeals.”<sup>64</sup> The ethnomusicologist Ronald Radano, too, follows Locke’s argument to an extent, while indicating the ways in which the concept of an “African-derived rhythm” has been framed through an American lens.<sup>65</sup> Martin Munro has written that “in the post-Fanon era, rhythm has almost become a taboo subject for critics wary of racial and cultural essentialism. But to ignore rhythm completely is to neglect a fundamentally important feature of circum-Caribbean aesthetics.”<sup>66</sup>

Radano has captured the duality of white America’s response to African American “hot rhythm” in the concepts of “descent” and “displacement.” The former “refers to the evolutionary myth of origins, which had cast black music as a primordial cure for the ills of a civilized and increasingly mechanized modern society . . . The classical association of musical origins and rhythm takes on special significance around this time, building on a hybrid of mid-century romantic and slave interpretations of African-American music as a pre-discursive ‘spiritual’ resonance.”<sup>67</sup> This parallels the reception of Native American music and culture, but Radano’s second concept, that of “displacement,” “explains how primal black difference emerges as a racial threat. It refers above all to the fear of a migratory black population entering into social, economic, and discursive spaces previously controlled by whites.”<sup>68</sup>

In France, the interwar period, in which the celebration of American jazz was so prominent, was also marked by major theoretical contributions from Mauss on the rhythms of social life. Marcel Granet’s work on Chinese thought also addressed the issue of rhythm as a pervasive aspect of a society whose language was monosyllabic but where rhythm “ties discourse together and renders it comprehensible.”<sup>69</sup> “In Chinese prose, rhythm performs the same functions as does syntax in other contexts.”<sup>70</sup> More broadly, language “forms part of a whole body of techniques to locate

individuals in the system of civilisation formed by Society and the Universe.” “Dao, Yin and Yang synthetically evoke and sustain the rhythmic order which presides over the life of the world and the activity of the mind.”<sup>71</sup>

### Postwar Critical Theory and Rhythm

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In the aftermath of World War II, philosophy and literary theory in France were substantially influenced by Nietzsche and Heidegger. The topic of rhythm was not particularly prominent in the early decades, but it was taken up by Henri Meschonnic in the 1970s, in the book cited above, focused on the 18th century but including his critique of structuralism, and in his later *Critique du rythme*.<sup>72</sup> In Meschonnic’s “poetics and politics of individuation,” “the task of a historical anthropology of language, and of rhythm, is to show that every theory of language implies a theory of the relations between the subject and the State.”<sup>73</sup> He therefore rejects a “technical” approach to rhythm in language and theories that assimilate rhythm to meter.<sup>74</sup> “Metrics removes rhythm from discourse, which is the historicity of language use [*langage*], in order to place it . . . in language [*langue*], thus making it a category like space and time in Kant. . . .”<sup>75</sup> Focusing instead on the relation between rhythm and meaning shifts the emphasis from *langue* to discourse. Having taught himself biblical Hebrew, “in which there is neither verse nor prose, and everything is rhythm,” he also rejected any sharp division between verse and prose.<sup>76</sup> Following Wilhelm von Humboldt’s conception of language as connected speech (*verbundene Rede*), Meschonnic stresses the element of continuity.<sup>77</sup> Linking subject, meaning, and rhythm, Meschonnic writes, in a kind of syllogism: “If meaning (*sens*) is an activity of the subject, if rhythm is an organisation of meaning in discourse, rhythm is necessarily the organisation or configuration of the subject in its discourse. A theory of rhythm in discourse is therefore a theory of the subject in language (*langage*).”<sup>78</sup>

Rhythm was also addressed in the 1980s, by the Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who repeated many Nietzschean themes in what he called, following Pinheiro dos Santos (1889–1950) and Bachelard, “rhythmanalysis.”<sup>79</sup> His posthumously published book with that title was intended as the fourth volume of his “critique of everyday life,” and daily or quotidian rhythms are one of his main reference points in a broader analysis of “space, time and everyday life” (the book’s subtitle).<sup>80</sup> In 1968, however, in *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, he was already writing that

Writing and the recurrence of writing create an illusion of pure spontaneity, freedom and profundity; but beneath and through apparent spontaneity the organization of everyday life is conducted.<sup>81</sup>

In the context of modern times the social text profanes itself; it discards natural cycles and cyclic time, affective and emotional terrors inspired by natural phenomena, the fear of the unknown. Writing is now a signifier charged with projects immersing individuals and communities in this context, which projects social order on the field.<sup>82</sup>

The project of rhythmanalysis is among other things to locate reading and writing in a broader social context: the rhythmanalyst “is capable of listening to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera.”<sup>83</sup>

Also in the 1970s, Roland Barthes took up the concept of idiorhythmy, previously known only in a monastic context, to emphasize the individual aspect of rhythm: that of individuals living together, as addressed in his *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* of 1977. In his lectures of that year, he stressed the links between idiorhythmy and social divisions of wealth and power.<sup>84</sup> This theme is also present in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who relate rhythm to territorial control in animal and human societies, in what they call the “refrain” (ritournelle). For Deleuze and Guattari, “measure is dogmatic, but rhythm is critical. It does not operate in a homogeneous space-time, but by heterogeneous blocks.”<sup>85</sup> David Nowell Smith argues that “critical” is intended “not merely in the Kantian sense of establishing limits for thought/experience; rather, it is also in the attempt to exceed these limits. . . .”<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, for Lefebvre, “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.”<sup>87</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe has traced the relations between music and autobiography and what he calls, following the psychoanalyst Theodor Reik, a “personal rhythm.” For Reik, “to each individual or subject . . . there corresponds a rhythm, and one can consider social life as a whole . . . as governed fundamentally . . . by a general rhythmic.”<sup>88</sup> Derrida, in his introduction to the book, argues that the difficulties of translating certain terms point to “those places where the experience of thought is also a poetic experience, Privileged examples: *Gestell*, mimesis, *rhythmos*, and so many other words – in truth, other phrases – that take these words into their web.”<sup>89</sup> Derrida seizes, not surprisingly, on Lacoue-Labarthe’s claim that rhythm “is definable only on the basis of repetition (the spacing and division of the Same, the repeated difference-from-itself of the Same).”<sup>90</sup> For Derrida, von Bülow’s claim that “in the beginning was rhythm” amounts to saying “that there is no simple beginning; no rhythm without repetition, spacing, caesura. . . .”<sup>91</sup> This continuity in rhythm is also stressed, from a very different direction, by the US philosopher Susanne Langer (1895–1985). For Langer, “the commanding form of a piece of music contains its basic rhythm, which is at once the source of its organic unity and its total feeling. The concept of rhythm as a relation between tensions rather than as a matter of equal divisions of time (i.e., meter) makes it quite comprehensible that harmonic progressions, resolutions of dissonances, directions of ‘running’ passages, and ‘tendency tones’ in melody all serve as rhythmic agents.”<sup>92</sup>

The Bulgarian French philosopher, psychoanalyst, and literary critic Julia Kristeva combines a very broad conception of rhythm with a psychoanalytic focus on the drives that underlie literary production. Her *Revolution of Poetic Language* of 1974 uses the work of Mallarmé, Lautréamont, and a host of other Russian, French, German, and English writers to illustrate her thesis that rhythm is “not just a classical metric of versification but an immanent property of the functioning of language. . . .”<sup>93</sup> The “new poetics” of the avant-garde is “able to do without meter but not this semantico-phonetic rhythmic organisation (*dispositif*).”<sup>94</sup> This “trans-linguistic rhythm” mobilizes the reciting speaker’s body and its drives. Although her main focus is poetry, the connection with music is particularly strong, notably with the *Klangfarbenmelodie* of Webern

and Schönberg, in which the same musical line is divided between several instruments so as to provide variation in tone.<sup>95</sup> Lautréamont, she notes, used to say “Allez, la musique” as he accompanied his writing on the piano.<sup>96</sup>

## Rhythm and Prosody

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W. H. Auden addressed the implications of rhythm for poetry in his introduction to an anthology: “All speech has rhythm, which is the result of the combination of the alternating periods of effort and rest necessary to all living things, and the laying of emphasis on what we consider important; and in all poetry there is a tension between the rhythm due to the poet’s personal values, and those due to the experiences of generations crystallised into habits of language such as the English tendency to alternate weak and accented syllables.”<sup>97</sup>

Auden’s reference to “speech” as the foundation of poetic rhythm has been central to accounts of rhythm experienced as heard and sounded, rather than written. Gerard Manley Hopkins, to take one important example, developed a model of “sprung rhythm” as a way of recreating the strong-stress meters of medieval and popular verse. In a letter to his friend Robert Bridges, who also developed important theories of rhythm, and in particular models of “rising and falling rhythm,” Hopkins described how a poem should be read: “You must not slovenly read it with your eyes but with your ears as if the paper were declaiming it at you . . . Stress is the life of it.”<sup>98</sup> The US literary scholar Francis Barton Gummere (1855–1919) had also written extensively on the centrality of rhythm to poetry, drawing on Bücher’s analysis of the relation between the rhythms of work, play, and dance. “The poem now laboriously wrought at the desk goes back to the rhythm of work or play or dance in the life of primitive man, and the element of rhythm is the one tie that binds beginning and end; if poetry denies rhythm, it denies itself.”<sup>99</sup> His abiding interest was in what he called “the communal human sympathy” of rhythm.<sup>100</sup>

As discussed above, it is in music and poetry that the question of the opposition between rhythm and meter has been most fully addressed. As the musicologist Christopher Hasty concedes at the beginning of his study, “if we restrict musical rhythm to meter, pattern, and proportion, we feel that something essential has been left out of account.”<sup>101</sup> However, when rhythm is defined with reference to “qualitative and affective categories such as gesture, movement, impulse, tension, relaxation . . . these categories remain ill-defined with the result that, compared to analyses of meter, ‘rhythmic’ analyses are generally vague, unsystematic, and open to dispute.”<sup>102</sup> Similar disputes pervade the study of poetry and prose.

A distinction between “meter” and “rhythm” structures the majority of modern definitions and discussions of poetic and musical form, though there are many different ways of interpreting the relationship between the two. A common division is between “meter” as a quantitative and “rhythm” as a qualitative measure, extending the Classical distinction between the “metrikoi” (who measured by metrical foot) and the “rhythmikoi” (who measured by musical rhythm). This is often extended, as in many of the cultural and philosophical debates discussed

earlier, into a distinction between meter as bound into rule and repetition, and linked to “periodicity,” with rhythm understood as a more varied and spontaneous mode of pattern and energy, frequently linked to bodily experience.

Other writers on the topic, including the literary theorist Derek Attridge, resist this divide, instead understanding “meter” to be a particular form of “rhythm,” and noting that meter, like rhythm, may contain a significant degree of variation. Attridge has written that he uses the word “meter” only rarely in his work on poetic form, preferring the term “rhythm” “not because the latter has more positive connotations in current literary discourse, suggesting vibrant life as opposed to dead mechanism; it is because I think of metre as a system, enshrined in a particular culture, that has arisen because of its power to elicit and finesse something basic to human movement and perception. That basic human propensity is rhythm, the principle of alternation—of tension and relaxation—that governs such muscular activity as breathing and walking.”<sup>103</sup>

As Attridge further notes, confusion arises because scholars use the same term—“rhythm”—both to name “the subtle variations played by the particular words of a given line”—and in relation to their source in “this fundamental rhythm.” It is, he suggests, an important distinction, though not an absolute one.<sup>104</sup>

## The Rhythms of Prose and Poetry

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Most recent studies of meter and rhythm have focused on poetic form. The rhythm-studies and rhythm-science of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, by contrast, developed in tandem with extensive new studies of rhythm and meter not only in poetry but in prose. A substantial part of this work was directly in dialogue with scientific researches in the field. The subtitle of William Morrison Patterson’s *The Rhythms of Prose* was “An Experimental Investigation of Individual Difference in the Sense of Rhythm.”<sup>105</sup> Following work by Thaddeus Bolton, Christian Rukmich, and others, Patterson explored the various levels of a “sense of rhythm” in a group of experimental subjects, introducing into the experiments not only musical arrangements but also sentences from Henry James and Walter Pater.

One of the most influential studies of the early 20th century was George Saintsbury’s *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (1912) that was stimulated, Saintsbury wrote, “by the remarks of Aristotle, Quintilian, and others on prose rhythm in their languages’, and he applied the counting of metrical “feet” (the classical approach to meter) to prose works from Old English texts through to the writings of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, and other late-19th-century writers.<sup>106</sup> “Rhythm requires,” he wrote, “as a condition of its existence, the difference which I designate by the terms ‘long’ and ‘short,’ . . . grouped into the batches which I call ‘feet.’” Nonetheless, Saintsbury retained a sense of the difference between “verse-metre” and “prose-rhythm,” arguing that the principle of the former is “identity” (or “equivalence”) and “recurrence,” while “the essence of prose-rhythm lies in its variety and divergence.”<sup>107</sup> More generally, the interest in the rhythms of prose in the period were inflected by the concern with rhythm as a universal phenomenon (prose rhythm understood as closer to ordinary language than is poetry was part of this context) and by a weakening of the distinction between poetry and prose, with developments in “free verse” and

an apprehension, heightened in the work of modernist writers including Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and E. M. Forster, of the poetic and rhythmic dimensions of prose. “I am writing,” Woolf wrote of her composition of her novel *The Waves*, “to a rhythm and not to a plot.”<sup>108</sup>

Modes of rhythmic representation also emerge in the importance of intermittence and the interval: these formations, central to late-19th-century concepts of rhythm, re-emerge strongly in modernist theories of fiction. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster, discussing Proust’s *A La recherche*, wrote of Vinteuil’s “musical phrase,” the “little phrase”: “There are times when the little phrase . . . means everything to the reader . . . There are times when it means nothing and is forgotten, and this seems to me the function of rhythm in fiction: not to be there all the time like a pattern, but by its lovely waxing and waning to fill us with surprise and freshness and hope.”<sup>109</sup>

The desire for poetry in prose, or for prose to be more like poetry, finds one expression in the requirement for “rhythm” in fiction, and in nonfictional prose of the early 20th century as well as in Forster’s allusions to rhythm in music. There are verbal echoes in Forster’s formulation—“this seems to me the function of rhythm in fiction”—of Yeats’s claim, in his 1900 essay “The Symbolism of Poetry,” that “the purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols.”<sup>110</sup>

Yeats’s reference to the woven patterns of the artist indicate his belief that, as Elizabeth Loizeaux has written, “pattern of line and form in the visual arts (repetition in space) was comparable to rhythm and repeated sounds in poetry (repetition in time).”<sup>111</sup> An interrelationship between music and poetry was also, for Yeats, as for so many writers and artists of the period, at the heart of artistic tradition, vision, and creation. For Ezra Pound, poetry in Greece and in Provence “reached its highest rhythmic and metrical brilliance at times when the arts of verse and of music were most closely knit together, when each thing done by the poet had some definite musical urge of necessity bound up within it.”<sup>112</sup> The prevalent view was that music (defined as rhythmic form) was both the underpinning and the aspirational end of all literature, with rhythmic patterns preexisting, in the creative process, the words that would come to clothe them. Rhythm was thus understood to be prior to, and more fundamental than, meaning or signification. This perception continues to shape discussions across disciplines and discourses at a time of markedly renewed interest in the topic of rhythm.

## Discussion of the Literature

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The most comprehensive guide to the history of the concept is provided by Pascal Michon, in his numerous volumes and his regularly updated website Rhuthmos <<https://rhuthmos.eu/>>. In addition to the works discussed in some detail in this article, Lexi Eikelboom’s *Rhythm: A Theological Category* is useful even for readers uninterested in theology.<sup>113</sup> Laura Marcus has discussed particular aspects in various articles, and is completing a monograph on the topic.

### Further Reading

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- Smith, David Nowell, and Marko Pajević, eds. Special issue, *Comparative Critical Studies* 15, no. 3 (October 2018).

## Notes

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1. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, introduction to *Typography*, by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 33.
2. Émile Benveniste, “The Notion of ‘Rhythm’ in Its Linguistic Expression,” in *Problems in General Linguistics*, by Émile Benveniste, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 281–288.
3. Benveniste, “Notion of ‘Rhythm’ in Its Linguistic Expression,” 286.
4. The rather different configuration of the topic in Chinese thought is discussed later in this article.
5. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner, 1953), 126.
6. Benveniste, “Notion of ‘Rhythm’ in Its Linguistic Expression,” 285–286.
7. Benveniste, “Notion of ‘Rhythm’ in Its Linguistic Expression,” 287.
8. See, for example, Catherine Dalimier, “Émile Benveniste, Platon, et le rythme des flots (Le père, le père, toujours recommencé . . .) <[https://www.persee.fr/doc/linx\\_0246-8743\\_1992\\_num:26\\_1\\_1240](https://www.persee.fr/doc/linx_0246-8743_1992_num:26_1_1240)>,” *Linx* 26 (1992): 137–157. Michon, for example, suggests that “the Platonic conception of rhythm obfuscated the previous one and made it very difficult to recover” (Pierre Michon, *Elements of Rhythmology*, vol. 1, *Antiquity* [Paris: Rhuthmos, 2018], 33). Michon, rather like Karl Popper in a different context, detects authoritarian tendencies in Plato, and also in Hegel.
9. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Francis Macdonald Cornford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), 85, 88.
10. Plato, *Republic*, 102.
11. Plato, *The Laws*, 2.665a.
12. For this and the following references, see Pierre Michon, *Elements of Rhythmology*, vol. 1, *Antiquity* (Paris: Rhuthmos, 2018).
13. Michel Serres, *La Naissance de la physique dans le texte de Lucrèce: Fleuves et turbulence* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1977). Translated by David Webb and William Ross as *The Birth of Physics* (Lanham, MD: Rowland and Littlefield, 2018).
14. Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.33.151, trans. Edward W. Sutton (London: Heinemann, 1942), 105.
15. *Salon of 1767*, quoted by Pierre Michon, *Elements of Rhythmology*, vol. 2, *From the Renaissance to the 19th Century* (Paris: Rhuthmos, 2018), 82–83.
16. *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik*, quoted by Michon, *Elements of Rhythmology*, vol. 2, 107. See also Schlegel’s “Briefe über Poesie, Silbenmass und Sprache” and “Betrachtungen über Metrik,” in August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Sprache und Poetik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1962), 141–180, 181–218.
17. *Le Signe et le poème* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), quoted by Michon, *Elements of Rhythmology*, vol. 1, 137.
18. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 1978), 486.
19. Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 488.
20. Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 491 (translation slightly modified).
21. Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 487.
22. On Germany, see Olivier Hanse, *À l’école du rythme . . . utopies communautaires allemandes autour de 1900* (Saint-Étienne, France: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2010).

23. Jaques-Dalcroze was dismissed in 1914 after joining in a Swiss protest against the destruction of Reims Cathedral. He established a new institute in Geneva, from where he had already diffused his method across much of Europe and North America.
24. Paul Valéry, *Cahiers I*, ed. Judith Robinson (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 1280. Valéry's stress on the continuity addressed by the concept of rhythm is developed later by Henri Meschonnic (see below).
25. Valéry, *Cahiers I*, 1276.
26. Valéry, *Cahiers I*, 1278.
27. Valéry, *Cahiers I*, 1295.
28. Paul Valéry, *Vues* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1948), 291.
29. Valéry, *Vues*, 300.
30. See Elaine P. Miller, "Harnessing Dionysos: Nietzsche on Rhythm, Time, and Restraint," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 17 (Spring 1999): 1–32.
31. Pascal Michon, *Marcel Mauss retrouvé: Origines de l'anthropologie du rythme* (Paris: Rhuthmos, 2015).
32. Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le don," in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, by Marcel Mauss (Paris: PUF, 1950), 300.
33. Mauss, "Essai sur le don," 275.
34. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, 1935–1938, by Walter Benjamin, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 149.
35. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. III. 3. Nachgelassene Fragmente Herbst 1869–Herbst 1872*, ed. Gerogio Colli and Mazino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977), 434. Author's translation.
36. Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Dionysiac World View," in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chapter 4. 117–138.
37. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 143–144.
38. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, trans. and ed. Reginald J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1968), 73.
39. Cf. Angèle Kremer-Marietti, *Nietzsche et la rhétorique* (Paris: PUF, 1992), 169–170: "Human beings display a wish to add something to the world of natural life, and even to add to it another world and another life. An added artistic rhythm is thus detached from a natural rhythm, and creates that essential difference, often perceived as a liberation and always at least as an accomplishment of being and a derivation from an original *modus vivendi* towards a new mode of being. This difference between the human being and existence embedded in the rhythm of life is purely and simply a 'dance,' which is to say also an act of 'writing': whether it is the writing produced by the deliberate tapping of the feet and the regular scansion of walking, or the writing by the sound of the voice in the sonoric space and that of the vocal cords causing the air to vibrate. . . . Whether it remains incantatory and recitative or becomes a 'text,' writing may be considered sacred: it may even be what the priest has to chant in order to share it with the assembly of the faithful."
40. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), 36.
41. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1911), 59.

42. Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, 40. Cf. Kremer-Marietti, *Nietzsche et la rhétorique*, 173: “Lyric art is primordial for Nietzsche; it links music and dance. Based on the measures of music and dance, poetic rhythm is born of the combination of sequences of words & syllables.”
43. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. and introduced by Marianne Cowan (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1962), 50.
44. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Rhythische Untersuchungen* <<https://www.degruyter.com/view/NO/W013915V007>>, in *Nietzsche Online*, de Gruyter, 329.
45. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 38.
46. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, section 84, p. 138.
47. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, section 84, p. 139.
48. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, sections 366 and 381, pp. 322 and 346.
49. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. and ed. Reginald J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1962), “Of the Higher Man,” section 20, p. 306.
50. Thaddeus Bolton, “Rhythm,” *American Journal of Psychology* 6, no. 2 (January 1894): 145–238.
51. See, for example, Laura Marcus, “The Rhythm of the Rails,” in *Sounding Modernism: Rhythm and Sonic Mediation in Modern Literature and Film*, ed. Julian Murphet, Helen Groth, and Penelope Hone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 193–210. See also Michael Golston, *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
52. Tarde was in fact a keen exponent of a general theory of rhythm, applying to cells, organs, and human individuals and groups. See Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation* (Paris: Alcan, 1890).
53. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
54. Sergei Chakhotin, *The Rape of the Masses: The Psychology of Totalitarian Political Propaganda* (London: Labour Book Service, 1940).
55. See, for example, Michael Cowan, *Cult of the Will: Nervousness and German Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).
56. Golston, *Rhythm and Race*, 6.
57. Lilla Estelle Appleton, *A Comparative Study of the Play Activities of Adult Savages and Civilized Children: An Investigation of the Scientific Basis of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910).
58. Golston, *Rhythm and Race*, 18.
59. Bolton, “Rhythm,” 164.
60. White Americans who celebrated and romanticized the culture of Native Americans tended to be much more negative about black American culture.
61. Karl Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1899), 421.

62. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2003), 32–33. See also Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925; new ed., New York: Atheneum, 1992); and David Levering Lewis, ed., *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader* (New York: Penguin, 1994). Locke (261–262) noted the influence of African art on French and German modernism.
63. See, for example, Joel Dinerstein, *Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology, and African American Culture between the World Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).
64. Locke, *New Negro*, 254–255.
65. Ronald Radano, “Hot Fantasies: American Modernism and the Idea of Black Rhythm,” in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 460.
66. Martin Munro, *Different Drummers: Rhythm and Race in the Americas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). Munro stresses the origins of jazz in “the traveling aesthetics of the Saint-Dominguan refugees. . .” (42).
67. Munro, *Different Drummers*, 42.
68. Munro, *Different Drummers*, 42. See also Ronald Radano, *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
69. Granet, *La pensée chinoise* (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1934), 74.
70. Granet, *La pensée chinoise*, 79.
71. Granet, *La pensée chinoise*, 25. See also Pascal Michon, “Les rythmes de l’individuation en Chine ancienne – Marcel Granet <http://rhuthmos.eu/spip.php?article1218>,” Rhuthmos, June 15, 2014.
72. Henri Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme: Anthropologie historique du langage* (Lagrasse, France: Verdier, 1982).
73. Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme*, frontispiece, 13, 24.
74. Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme*, 16.
75. Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme*, 21.
76. Mélanie Bourlet and Chantal Gishoma, “Des voix dans la poésie: Entretien avec Henri Meschonnic <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/ela/2007-n24-ela02388/1035338ar.pdf>,” *Études littéraires africaines* 24 (2007): 5.
77. See David Nowell Smith, “Rhythm-Sense-Subject, or: The Dynamic Un/Enfolding of Sense,” *Comparative Critical Studies* 15, no. 3 (2018): 349–467, esp. 356, and his introduction, coauthored with Marko Pajević, to this special issue of the journal.
78. *ibid.*, 71.
79. See, in particular, Gaston Bachelard’s *Dialectic of Duration* (Paris: PUF, 1950; tr. Mary McAllester Jones [London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016]), esp. ch. 8.
80. Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis* (London: Continuum, 2004).
81. Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New York: Transaction Books, 1984), 174.
82. Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, 176.
83. Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 87.
84. Roland Barthes, *How to Live Together: Novelistic Simulations of Some Everyday Spaces*, trans. Kate Briggs, ed. Claud Coste (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 34–35.

85. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004), 346, first published 1980. See also Michael Sheringham, “Everyday Rhythms, Everyday Writing: Réda with Deleuze and Guattari,” in *Rhythms: Essays in French Literature, Thought, and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Lindley and Laura McMahon (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 147–158.
86. Nowell Smith, “What Is Called Rhythm?” in *Critical Rhythm: The Poetics of a Literary Life Form*, ed. Ben Glaser and Jonathan Culler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 42.
87. Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, 14.
88. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, 198.
89. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, 6.
90. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, 196.
91. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, 31. Although neither Derrida nor Lacoue-Labarthe refers to Meschonnic in this text, the parallels seem clear.
92. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 129.
93. Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique: L’avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), 215.
94. Kristeva, *révolution du langage poétique*, 257.
95. Kristeva, *révolution du langage poétique*, 229.
96. Kristeva, *révolution du langage poétique*, 258. Mallarmé, she notes, shared this concern, as did Joyce (262).
97. W. H. Auden and John Garrett, eds., *The Poet’s Tongue* (London: G. Bell, 1935), v.
98. Claude Collear Abbott, ed., *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 51–52.
99. Francis B. Gummere, “Rhythm as the Essential Fact of Poetry,” in *The Beginnings of Poetry*, by Francis B. Gummere (London: Macmillan, 1901), 63.
100. Gummere, “Rhythm as the Essential Fact,” 63.
101. Christopher Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.
102. Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, 19.
103. Derek Attridge, *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 122.
104. Attridge, *Moving Words*, 122.
105. William Morrison Patterson, *The Rhythms of Prose* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1917).
106. George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (London: Macmillan, 1912), vi.
107. Saintsbury, *History of English Prose Rhythm*, 450, 449.
108. Virginia Woolf, *A Reflection of the Other Person: The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, 1929–1931 (London: Hogarth Press, 1978), 204.
109. E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, 1958), 147.
110. W. B. Yeats, “The Symbolism of Poetry,” in Yeats, *Early Essays*, by W. B. Yeats, edited by George Bornstein and Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 2007), 117.

111. Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, *Yeats and the Visual Arts* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 63.
112. Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1954), 91.
113. Lexi Eikelboom, *Rhythm: A Theological Category* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

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