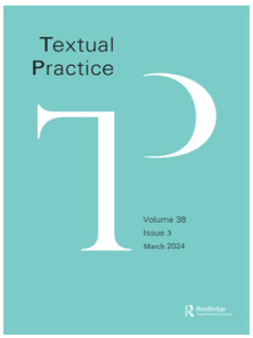

Textual Practice

ISSN: 0950-236X (Print) 1470-1308 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rtpr20

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To cite this article: Isobel Armstrong & Josephine McDonagh (2024) Introduction to Laura Marcus, *Rhythm: The Measure of the Modern*, Textual Practice, 38:3, 366-381, DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2024.2335093

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2024.2335093

Published online: 17 Apr 2024.

TEXTUAL PRACTICE
2024, VOL. 38, NO. 3, 366–381
https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2024.2335093

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Laura Marcus, *Rhythm: The Measure of the Modern*

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ABSTRACT

This Introduction to Laura Marcus's final monumental but unfinished work describes her wholly new understanding of the central importance of rhythm across the arts and sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The turn to rhythm was formative in many fields and comprehended poetry, music, dance, sculpture, painting, photography, film, gymnastics, physics, education, psychology, physiology, thinking about race, class and gender, the past and the future, tradition and change. From wave theory to orthography rhythm shaped creative thought. We summarise the existing six chapters out of what were to be eight. 1. The discourses of wave theory. 2. Rhythm in modernity – aesthetics and science. 3. Dance theories of Steiner and Dalcroze – social and physiological. 4. Rhythm theory in modernist avant-garde periodicals. 5. The Bloomsbury Group, Frye and Woolf. 6. The cultural and political turn to native American rhythm.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 15 November 2023; Accepted 15 January 2024

KEYWORDS Wave; the body; science; aesthetics; dance; organic rhythm; factory rhythm race

> Rhythm has always *haunted* our tradition, without ever reaching the centre of its concerns.[1]

> The Ubiquity of Everything which Beats.[2]

Rhythm: 'a sequence of events that can be perceived as a pattern, with an interplay between repetition and variation or grouping' (Marcus, 'Rhythm' [2021]). This precise and somewhat dry definition stands at the opening of a 2021 encyclopaedia entry authored by Laura Marcus on the concept of rhythm in philosophy, aesthetics, and literary theory, which is reprinted in the appendix to this book. It is a fundamental concept that persisted across centuries serving thinkers and artists as an entry into understanding their interactions with the natural world, responses to innovations in science

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This Introduction originally appeared in Laura Marcus' *Rhythmical Subjects: The Measures of the Modern*, published in 2023 by Oxford University Press. See www.oup.com.

and technology, and the organisation of human societies. It held a particular fascination for writers in the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period which witnessed an outpouring of ruminations on the rhythmic, extending across music, poetry, dance, sculpture, painting, photography, film, gymnastics, education, psychology, physiology, and thinking about race, class, and gender, the past and the future, tradition, and change. This concentration of interest in the affordances of rhythm is the subject of this monumental book. The subject is extraordinarily capacious. In 2016 Marcus gave a paper at an international conference entitled 'The Ubiquity of Everything which Beats'. The title alone points to the range and ambition of this learned and imaginative study. Laura's untimely death in September of 2021 cut short her labours on this book at a moment when it was close to completion. It is tantalising to imagine what final alterations and additions she would have made. She envisaged a book of eight chapters, but at the time of her death had completed only the six that we present here.

The brilliance and originality of the book's aims are, nonetheless, abundantly clear: to establish rhythm as *the* formative category of the late Victorian and modern imaginary that traversed Europe and America as a truly transatlantic phenomenon. In describing rhythm as the 'measure' of the modern she intended to demonstrate that rhythm was not only the central concept of modernity, the concept it owned, but also to explore how rhythm could itself 'measure' or index the modern, establishing its nature anew. Rhythm was, she suggests, in an article in 2018, 'a connective tissue between … areas of knowledge' – life sciences, philosophy, psychology, music and literature – 'and between the arts and sciences more broadly' at 'a time of increasing specialisation'. Her research led her to refuse customary periodisations, crossing from the 1850s and occasionally to the 1970s, and thus to change what both Victorianism and modernism looked like. She also transgressed the borders of disciplines, pursuing rhythm as an idea, an issue, or an organising principle, that mesmerised scientists, aestheticians, educationalists, and practitioners of music, dance, art, poetry, and prose at this culturally rich and unstable moment. The draft she left us is testament enough to more than fifteen years of exhaustive reading and thinking.

Marcus did not leave an introduction to this draft of the book. Our intention in supplying these opening comments is not to construct the introduction that we imagine she would have written. Rather we want to provide the reader with sufficient grounding from which they can best engage with Marcus's formidable scholarship. It is clear, for instance, that she would have emphasised the necessity to 'open up the longer history of rhythm', as she put it in 2018, and also to open up its wide disciplinary perspective. 'Rhythm', she wrote, in a description of her research for her Fellowship application to the Institut d'études avancées de Paris, taken up briefly in 2020 before it was suspended by Covid-19, 'served as a way of mediating

between different areas, at a time when many of the modern disciplines were in the process of formation or consolidation'. Rhythm science crossed the disciplines, from Herbert Spencer's study of motion in the physical universe through the rhythms of wave and wind, to psychological study of periodicity in the laboratory, to physiological aesthetics, to dance, to painting, even to town planning, and of course prosody. What links these fields is rhythm's pre-linguistic nature, prior to signification, and a concern with the body. Writers and thinkers of these periods, she wrote, are concerned 'to connect "rhythm" (etymologically and conceptually) with natural and organic processes … The metaphors of the "pulse", and the "heart-beat" as well as of waves, come to define concepts of "rhythm" in a very wide range of concepts'. They are also linked by a common impulse – 'the desire to reclaim or retain human and natural measures in the face of the coming of the machine and the speed of technological development'. The preoccupation with pulsation, conflict of force, rise and fall, periodisation, recurrence, all those synonyms for rhythm, belongs to this desire. Perhaps recurrence was a cultural need, almost an ontological need, in the face of uncertainties created not only by technological change but evolutionary ideas. Certainly, the reach and depth of rhythm theory testifies to a concern charged with common energy.

While the association between rhythm and prosody and metrics is important to this study, and something we think that Laura would have discussed in her Introduction, in the chapters that we have here, greater attention is paid to the importance of rhythm in prose: the blurring of the prose and poetry divide in modernist poetics and practice, and the extension of rhythm to include diverse psychological and cultural experience. William Morrison Patterson's *The Rhythm of Prose* (1916), which included in the concept of rhythm phenomena as varied as the child on the swing and the investor who is 'subject to the movements of capital', was to her significant for the way it took rhythm into the 'psychological laboratory'. Music, defined as rhythmic form, offered 'rhythmic patterns pre-existing, in the creative process', and it is this she wanted to explore, through the work of Paul Valéry, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield.

The ways in which rhythm has been theorised in the West have a very long history stretching back to ancient Greece. Indeed, as this book shows, the fascination with rhythm in this period of nineteenth and twentieth-century modernity was connected to what Marcus refers to as a 'cult' of classical antiquity evident in, for instance, literary and artistic preferences, styles of dance and movement, and forms of social and sexual interaction, and it was strongly mediated by Nietzsche and his influential philosophy of the dualistic relationship between Dionysus and Apollo, or rhythm and harmony. In the encyclopaedia entry cited above Marcus tracks in detail the recurrence of certain ideas about rhythm since their classical beginnings.

> Pre-Socratic philosophers Leucippus and Democritus made *rhythmos* "into a technical term" meaning "form" and distinguished it from synonyms such as *schema, 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".

The etymological derivation of rhythm from the Greek word *rhein* (to flow) is disputed, but what is clear is that in this early iteration, rhythm was a concept directly connected to the natural environment – the waves of the sea, or the flows of a river. The latter is developed by Lucretius – 'All bodies of matter are in motion', he wrote of the dance of atoms. (*De Rerum Natura [The Nature of Things]*).[3] Later Plato associates the concept with the human movements of dance. Marcus cites the important essay on rhythm by the linguist Émile Benveniste who indicates that Plato's innovation was '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'. Herein resides the origins of the idea of metre in poetry as a conventionalised adaptation of a rhythmic force.

From these early beginnings a number of persistent ideas emerge: that rhythm is connected with the natural world, either as a force that emanates from the non-human environment, or one that resides in the human body; that it emerges out of the movement of bodies and elements in nature, such as waves in the ocean, or the swaying of plants in the wind; and that it provides a structure through which subsequent thinkers will distinguish between organic forms (human and other) and the generally judged culturally impoverished beats of machines. The latter distinction is frequently evident in the critiques of modernity that emerge in the period under examination. In Georg Simmel's account of the alienation of urban life for instance, the unremitting and metronomic beat of the city, ruled by the rhythms of work, machinery and transportation, contrasts with the natural periodicity of the body. These fascinations saturate modern culture in the varied institutional and improvised contexts of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century culture that Marcus explores.

The Platonic concept of eurhythmy also emerged in ancient Greece, and this had an equally significant shaping impact on the thinkers of this later period. Eurhythmy, or perfect rhythm, is at the centre of utopian social order. As Marcus explains,

> 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 and harmony of being which he has acquired from his training in music and poetry … " [*Republic*].

Elsewhere in Plato's work, eurhythmy is 'extended into a principle of social and political organisation, and rhythmic motion is combined with "harmony", "the order in the voice in which high and low combine", to

form "choral art"'. These classical ideas of eurhythmy led to utopian artistic movements of the early twentieth century established by Rudolf Steiner and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and are the subject of chapter three of this book.

Although the classical origins of rhythm thinking are crucial to the later discourses that are explored in this book, Marcus does not choose to begin her study in the classical period but weaves an account of their impact throughout her thick analysis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, her meticulous research led her to argue that the most appropriate starting point for a study of this outpouring of interest in rhythm lies instead with Herbert Spencer in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and his influential writings on 'The Direction and Rhythm of Motion'. Spencer is an important intellectual figure in this study because he emphasised not only the omnipresence of rhythm in natural and human worlds, but also its deep connection to motion, as though it were a kinetic force, driving life itself. Spencer's deeply materialist conception of rhythm proved attractive to a whole range of artists and thinkers over the next several decades. In this book, Marcus tracks these ideas as they develop and are manifest in multiple works of art and the artistic, political, and social movements of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernity. The findings are revelatory and map new affiliations between diverse artists of the period.

This work creates juxtapositions and relationships unthought of until now. We recapitulate the characteristics that make this work unique. First, the historical arc, from the middle of the nineteenth century to high modernism and beyond, even to the second World War, from Herbert Spencer, whom Marcus, as we have seen, locates as the founding theorist of rhythm, through to D. H. Lawrence, who read Spencer's work. The sweep from Spencer to Marie Stopes, from the physics of wind and wave in the mid-nineteenth century to the periodicity of sexual life in the twentieth in the first chapter is a brilliant and unexpected move. It clears away conventional associations and prepares us for new ones. (It's notable that many of the figures Marcus references throughout the book lived well beyond World War Two.) The book welds together, secondly, empirical physiological and psychological studies throughout this period with aesthetic debate. Scientific experiment and aesthetic theory together open out a comprehensive culture of enquiry into rhythm. The third arresting feature of this book is its attention to the presence of the body in rhythm theory, whether in the aesthetics of Dalcroze's eurhythmics or in attention to graphology. This enables Marcus to foreground dance (which is the art most central to her theme) from Havelock Ellis's physiological aesthetics and the 'dance of life' (Chapter 1) to the celebration of Native American dance rhythms by American critics (Chapter 6). Finally, a recurrent motif is the rhythm of the wave, whether seen through the experiments of scientists

and psychologists or as the founding principle of the arts, the wave both as a substantive principle and a poetics, from Spencer through to Virginia Woolf. The wave takes on an entirely new resonance in this study and unifies its diverse enquiries.

Laura's chapters are rich and densely argued. The scholarly detail and analysis are exhaustive. Ideas, examples, and explication come thick and fast. We felt that the best introduction we could give to this study is to chart the successive chapters and their trajectories.

Chapter 1: Rhythm studies: science and aesthetics

This chapter begins and ends with waves. The wave shapes the new 'rhythmical subject' that is at the centre of this study. Discussions evolve from the late nineteenth to the twentieth century, but the underlying concept remains. For Herbert Spencer in the nineteenth century the wave, governed by the complexities of rise and fall, billows bearing further wavelets, is a cosmic principle and fundamental to physical life. For Marie Stopes in the twentieth century the periodicity of menstruation and of sexual life itself, the rhythms of desire, charted through a vocabulary of curves, crests and hollows, are the quintessential experiences of the rhythmic subject. Alice Meynell's *The Rhythm of Life* speaks of this subject through the rhythmic pangs of labour.

Chapter 1 traces a genealogy from Spencer through the figures of the psychological laboratory in Germany and America – Wilhelm Wundt, Edward Meumann, William James, Gertrude Stein and Thaddeus Bolton – to Grant Allen and Havelock Ellis, and through literary figures from Poe to Harriet Monroe and Pound. This history constitutes what Marcus sees as the unique founding principles of rhythm discourse – they are at once mechanical and holistic, physiological and aesthetic, fusing biology and poetics, technology and soma, science and beauty. Memory and consciousness enter the laboratory. Both Bolton and Ellis think rhythm through 'the dance of life', the one empirically through pulse and respiration, the other through the psyche, but each has recourse both to the aesthetic and to experimental research. Rhythm's concern with duration and recurrence comprehends both consciousness and the body, and thus it enters the contentious spheres of race and class. The social life of rhythm is immanent in this work.

This is an exhaustive and virtuosic chapter. Marcus sees a continuum between the late nineteenth century and modernism and even beyond to the 1970s, though her focus is on the twentieth century. Spencer, predicating rhythm on motion, is the founding author of rhythm principally through the works *Philosophy of Style* (1852), *Principles of Psychology* (1855), *The First Principles of a New System of Philosophy* (1862). It was Spencer who posited a rhythmical universe, from the undulations of wheat in the wind to the multiple rhythms of the tides, from the compound rhythms of

machinery to the pulses of music. For him rhythm was physical and social but, from the rise and fall of speech to the beating of the heart and the discharge of emotion, from the movement of the stars to migration and the markets, its repetitions were never mechanical or uniform. Because he believed that the constantly adjusting equilibrium of rhythm became socially differentiated, he was ready to posit a racial hierarchy and an evolutionary movement in which savages in barbarous tribes and children could not comprehend rhythmic complexity. Black people and the lower classes of white people maintained a merely physiological response to rhythm manifested in the epic, whereas higher feeling and emotional subtlety belonged to the lyric voice. Marcus shows how this dichotomy plays out in a dispute between Darwin and Edmund Gurney who argued about the issue of the priority of music over speech, Darwin arguing for music, Gurney for speech.

Spencer's followers, from Emerson through to Grant Allen, Havelock Ellis and Charles Brodie Patterson's *The Rhythm of Life* (1915) even to Elsie Fogarty, founder of the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1937, are important to Marcus, but her larger preoccupation is psycho-physical experiment in the laboratory, the key thinking in rhythm experiment, which she follows with the entry of literary figures into the laboratory space. She gives full attention to scholars of metrics and versification (Sidney Lanier, E. S. Dallas, John Quakenbos) but demonstrates that they are indebted to scientific studies of time and duration. Laboratory experiment with kinaesthesis, with motor-sensation, with respiration, measurable by such devices as the rhythm box, the kymograph and the phonoscope, objective ways of capturing subjective life and exploring temporality itself, pointed to the essentially rhythmic nature not only of the body but of consciousness. The hostility to irregularity and to 'arrhythmia', understood as a pathology, had its counterbalancing movement in the celebration of 'the dance of life' as a biological law. Thaddeus Bolton argued that dance preceded language. From Wundt to Havelock Ellis, from Nietzsche to Isadora Duncan, the periodic law of the universe understood by thinkers as different as Wilhelm Fliess, Patrick Geddes, Arthur Shipley and Marie Stopes, guaranteed a freedom in recurrence that was both liberating and law-bound. At just the historical moment when flux and change threatened a stable universe, the psycho-biological phenomenology of rhythm and recurrence, grounded in science, revealed, or discovered, a rhythmical subject.

Chapter 2: Rhythm, art, and experience: the rhythm of beauty

The influence of Herbert Spencer, his conception of the rhythmic universe, runs through aesthetic theories of the early twentieth century that develop ideas of kinaesthesia, or the 'conscious awareness of movement of one's own body' (Roger Smith). These theories are the subject of chapter

2. Rhythm is a concept that links mind to body, individuals to the exterior world, and provides the basis of social union in the form of empathetic feeling (*Einfühlung*). In the work of the American psychologist, philosopher, and educationalist, John Dewey, rhythm is the binding agent of a democratic society.

The French philosopher, Paul Souriau, departed from Spencer when he claimed in 1899 that universal rhythm resides not in natural phenomena but is derived from the body, its muscular movements, such as the beat of the heart, where the repetition of an alternating pulse resembles that of music and poetry. His physiological version of the rhythmic subject, however, provides a hinge between Marcus's discussion of the laboratory-based psychologists explored in Chapter 1, and her scrupulous examination of the aesthetic theorists whose milieu was more likely to be the studio and the gallery, or, for Dewey, the factory, and the classroom. Across their works we see a shared preoccupation with formalism: with lines, curves, shapes; with sympathy, or empathy, as a social glue between people, and in relation to the environment; and with notions of harmony, balance, and equilibrium. In all these areas, rhythm is the primary agent.

Ethel Puffer, the American psychologist, in the *Psychology of Beauty* (1905), takes up the terms, 'attention' and 'expectation', which, as fluctuating responses to art, locate rhythm in the perceiving subject. The rhythms of psychological response correspond with formal constituents of the work of art, achieving balance and equilibrium. Puffer's account of the intimate nature of rhythmic experience was, according to Marcus, an 'interesting attempt' to conjoin mind and body, and make psychological repose and motion, or tension, compatible. It was contemporary with British aestheticist Vernon Lee's more extensive and influential physiologically-based works on 'Aesthetic Empathy'. Working in collaboration with her partner, Clementine (Kit) Anstruther-Thomson, Lee conducted experiments in aesthetic response by observing Anstruther-Thomson's intense bodily changes in her responses to works of art. They concluded that physiological reactions were not merely responses to form but actively 'constituted the perception of form' (Lanzoni). This estimate of the dynamic role of the perceiving subject assumed a vital connection between interiority and exterior objects which rhythm coordinated and to some degree regulated. Lee describes hearing 'tunes' (or rhythms) in her head which harmonised with the tunes of exterior works of art; aesthetic experience was conceived in the manner of a musical production. In one anecdote, she describes an experience of *Einfühlung* when, on visiting St Mark's Cathedral in Venice, the sound of organ music initiates and produces her own 'very concentrated feeling, perfect' (Lee).

A Spencerian notion of rhythm also grounds Dewey's aesthetic theory. 'The first characteristic of the environing world that makes possible the existence of artistic form is rhythm'. Rhythm in nature precedes rhythm in art; it

is the 'operation through which material effects its own culmination in experience' (Dewey). Through the education of both children and workers, Dewey sought to rekindle the rhythms that he held were at the core of humanity, marking the 'interaction of the live creature with its surroundings', and effecting the repair of social relations destroyed by factory production. He collaborated with the industrialist Albert Barnes, whose vast art collection encompassed old masters as well as works of European and American modernism, and African American, Native American, and African art; the principles of display emphasised formal elements of rhythm and balance over historical context and encouraged primitivist celebration of racial difference. For Barnes, in 1925, the 'spiritual endowment' of 'the Negro', including the rhythmic qualities of Black expression, were potentially revitalising of American civilisation.

In Vernon Lee, too, there is a fascination for the creative potential of a racialised primitive culture. In her work, *Music and its Lovers* (1932) Lee cites an excerpt from D. H. Lawrence's *Plumed Serpent*, a text that Marcus returns to in Chapter 6. For Lee, the 'peculiar uneven savage rhythm' (Lawrence) of Aztec drums in *The Plumed Serpent* presents an extreme moment in which rhythm is both experienced and enacted, heard and performed, in a Dionysian frenzy that has the unusually bathetic result of 'giving a new lease of strength to go on with the usual' (Lee).

Chapter 3: Communities of rhythm: eurythmy and eurhythmics

Rudolf Steiner and Émile Jacques Dalcroze are fundamental to this book's understanding of the rhythmic subject. The chapter ends with the famous episode in Lawrence's *Women in* Love (1920), as the two sisters perform Dalcrozian eurythmics in the open air. In extending her work to movement and dance Marcus shows how 'the dance of life' theorised through science and psychobiology was actualised in culture. Steiner's work in Basel was built round speech and gesture and Dalcroze's projects in Geneva and Dresden concentrated on bodily movement in dance as the body became a musical instrument. Yet despite this bifurcation they had much in common. Behind both their understandings of *Lebensreform*, the need for reform of life, is Simmel's understanding of the loss of rhythm in factory life, the research of Bücher and Hugo Münsterberg, and behind these Nietzsche. Organic rhythm as a form of life also rejected 'Takt' or the mechanical man-made rhythms critiqued by Ludvig Klages. From 1919 until his death in 1925 Steiner's work was disrupted by the National Socialist Party, and he was attacked by Hitler as a traitor; and Dalcroze was forced to leave his rhythmic gymnastics community, Hellerau, during World War One.

Whereas Steiner was fascinated by early silent film, Russian theatre and the Diaghilev ballet, Dalcroze worked with large scale architectonic dance

performances and spectacle in the context of a utopian garden city environment that attracted visitors from all over the world.

The difference between Steiner and Dalcroze was essentially that between a writer and theoretician and a trained musician and practitioner of a fully developed dance philosophy. Steiner theorised theosophy through Goethe's 'entelechy' – the rhythm of life – and the German philosophical tradition, particularly Schopenhauer and Schiller. Central to his thinking is gesture as process and flow. Experience becomes gesture in a movement from inner to outer as the 'inner necessity' of rhythm precedes words, and completed gesture is like the completion of a musical chord. Steiner's influence extended to the dancer Isadora Duncan, the painter Kandinsky, and through the philosophy of flow, to Rilke to Proust and to Brecht, and to thinkers of modernism – Warburg, Benjamin, Adorno and Rancière.

Dalcroze's system spiritualised the corporeal and incarnated the spiritual and seemed to enact the rhythms first theorised by Spencer. It was created in response to the derhythmitisation of modern life. For Dalcroze the rhythmical body was a microcosm of architectural space – hence, in collaboration with Adolphe Appia, his Hellerau fostered anti-Wagnerian festivals of the body in the specially built 'Eurythmic' theatre. The body constituted the scenery in relation to spare settings of stairs and columns. Dalcrozian dance training saw the body as a totality of brain, nerve paths and muscle organised by the will, but rhythm becomes so internalised that improvisation and order co-exist. The patterns of movement are complex, involving multiple rhythms of the body enacted by different areas of the body. Unlike the flow of Steiner, static pauses and rests, influenced by the poet Hölderlin's reading of the structural importance of the caesura, were integral to the dance.

Visitors to Hellerau were divided. Those who saw Dalcrozian movement as 'Living plastic', a new form of community and a proof that rhythm was the basis of all the arts were George Bernard Shaw, Leeds Professor John W. Harvey, art collectors Michael Sadler and son, and Upton Sinclair. Huntly Carter was hostile to the control exerted by Eurythmics, and Diaghilev and Nijinsky were sceptical, though the Dalcrozian trained Marie Rambert was hired to assist Nijinsky in his choreographic experiments.

Chapter 4: Rhythm and the Rhythmists: a 'new age' of rhythm

One arena in which the 'cult of rhythm' found expression in the pre-World War I years is that of periodicals, the so-called 'little magazines'. This small-scale, multi-authored print format, which, alongside essays, reviews, translations of philosophical works, poems, and short stories, included reproductions of works of visual art, was the perfect medium for cosmopolitan coteries of writers, artists, and philosophers, which were the mainstay of

the Modernist avant garde. The mobility of print enabled the international dissemination of new and radical ideas about art and the aesthetic, in which rhythm played a significant role as the 'connecting tissue' between all forms of artistic expression, thought, and 'modern life' itself.

In Chapter 4, 'Rhythm and the Rhythmists', Marcus examines two periodicals, *The New Age* and *Rhythm*, in which the concept of rhythm played a prominent role, tracing their emergence from the loose associations of friends and collaborators that characterise the cosmopolitan artistic culture of this era. She sees this set of writers and intellectuals as one of two distinct groups of British modernists who were engaged in thinking about rhythm during this period; the other was the Bloomsbury group, the subject of Chapter 5. A. R. Orage edited *The New Age* from 1907. The purchase of the magazine by the charismatic Orage, a natural initiator of artistic groups, led from his establishment of the Leeds Arts Club, a forum for discussing new works of literature and art in the context of radical thought, politics, and philosophy. Its varied membership included socialists (Edward Carpenter) and feminists (Mary Gawthorpe), art critics (Herbert Read) and connoisseurs (Michael Sadler, art patron, collector of Kandinsky, and follower of Dalcroze). *New Age*'s contents were shaped as much by Orage's wide contacts as his intellectual passions: articles on Nietzsche (e.g. by poet Edwin Muir under the title 'We Moderns'); on feminist politics (by Orage and his companion, Beatrice Hastings); and on literature from across Europe, Russia, and America (by Ezra Pound, Arnold Bennett, Paul Selver). The philosophy of Bergson, who, at the time, was in the midst of a successful British lecture tour, was ubiquitous. T. E. Hulme's articles struck a discordant note, criticising Bergson's popularity, especially with women; according to Hulme, through Bergson, 'dynamism', 'vibration' and 'rhythm' had become a 'salve and a substitute' for the complexity of modern philosophy. Yet the journalist Huntly Carter – a prolific contributor to the magazine – responding to the popularisation of Bergson, celebrated the rhythm and flow of modern life that he saw in art, architecture, and city life. It was a democratising force that, he observed, materialised in casual city settings, for example, in the interaction of people at Speakers' Corner at Hyde Park. Rhythm's revitalising impact extended to modern drama, the visual arts, and dance, and was epitomised in Hellerau in Dalcroze's hot-house of mixed media experimentation.

Closely related to *New Age* in its Bergsonian interests, its European cosmopolitanism, and even its list of contributors, was *Rhythm*, a new journal established in 1911 by its editors Middleton Murry and Michael Sadleir (son of Sadler). Soon Katherine Mansfield replaced Sadleir as co-editor. A Spencerian idea of rhythm was the central, generating concept of the magazine: a manifesto declared the 'unity' of 'art', 'artist', and 'individual', and that the 'essential movement of Life' is 'the eternal quest for rhythm'. The journal

was distinctive for its emphasis on visual culture, engaging the 'Rhythmist' artist, the Scot, J. D. Fergusson, as its Arts Editor. Fergusson played an important role in shaping the magazine's exploration of rhythm in the visual and plastic arts. From his Paris base, Fergusson shared stylistic and philosophical interests with other avant-garde artists, including Matisse and, inspired by the Ballets Russes, developed representational practices that connected the moving body and the plastic arts based on the power of rhythm. Fergusson also drew other artists to the journal, notably Anne Estelle Rice, whose distinctive woodcuts are remarkable for their rhythmic forms.

After his stint at the magazine, *Rhythm*, had come to an end in 1912, Fergusson became involved with the dancer Margaret Morris, with whom he explored non-European dance forms, and developed educational projects based on shared ideas about 'life in movement'. They worked together until his death in 1961. Morris's post-war scheme in 1920 to launch a Rhythm College in Chelsea, in which 'the arts would be taught … in relation to each other', did not come to fruition, but the plan involved the participation of Fergusson, Middleton Murry, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who would design the buildings. Teachers from Morris's school, Loïs Hutton and Hélène Vanel, set up their own 'Studio Rythme et Couleur' in St-Paul-de-Vence in the south of France where they continued in the spirit of Morris and Fergusson to encourage rhythmic dance and painting. They even produced their own magazine, *Cahier rythme et couleur*.

Chapter 5: Vital rhythms: art and literature in Bloomsbury and beyond

This chapter charts the second of the two complementary British modernist groups for whom rhythm provided a vocabulary, even a grammar, for the contemporary arts and painting. Despite their shared preoccupations – witnessed in Fry's post-impressionist exhibition of 1912 (featuring Fry himself, Clive Bell, Wyndham Lewis and Spencer Gore), and a parallel exhibition featuring artists often sponsored by the little magazine, *Rhythm* (Fergusson, Rice, Peploe, Stafford) – there was no overlap among the painters exhibiting. The two groups diverged.

This chapter is dominated by Roger Fry and Virginia Woolf who in very different ways associated rhythm with the unconscious. Marcus explores their pre-1913 precursors: Lawrence Binyon, Keeper of the British Museum's Oriental department, and his circle, all of whom were in some form influenced by the unconscious, dreams, the hypnogogic and hyper-aesthesia, William Morris, Herbert Horne, Charles Ricketts, Sturge More, W. B. Yeats, Arthur Symons, Robert Bridges, Arnold Dolmetsch. Chanting and the rhythmical speech explored by Yeats and Pound, both influenced

by the Noh theatre, and for whom rhythm comes before words, created an indigenous English culture of visionary rhythm, though it was also fed by Bergson (*Le Rêve*), Valéry and Mallarmé. Exploring in detail the place of rhythm in the post-impressionist aesthetic of 'significant form', Marcus shows that transcendental and Platonic ideas were formative. Fry's Platonism allowed a recognition of the primitive and for a democratic understanding of children and the uneducated; the Bells saw cosmic rhythm, the plasticity of motion, the movement of a rhythmical line, as the foundation of a creative vision that revealed an essentially spiritual experience of inner and outer, vision and the phenomenal world.

In this immensely rich chapter, Fry stands out as a somewhat Apollonian figure in contrast to Virginia Woolf with her interest in Dionysian rhythm. In three sections on Fry's aesthetic Marcus explores his commitment to line, to draughtsmanship and to calligraphy, and, in the last lectures, to 'vital' rhythm. The line is part of a rhythmic contract and has in common with calligraphy that it is the visible record of a rhythmic gesture, matter in motion. Fry was attracted to Japanese and Chinese art, and to figures – Matisse, Cézanne, Gauguin – who could invite analyses of linearity. Graphology for Fry was not only a key to character, as it was for Robert Bridges, his interlocutor, but to the unconsciousness of gesture and its alternation of vital movement and repose. His commitment to this alternation, which carried him away from the mimetic to the symbolic, into explorations of feeling and form, and, in the last lectures, to the role of the unconscious in drawing by hand, also led him to a questionable valorisation of primitivism. He essentialised African art by suggesting that a rhythmic sense is more fully developed in primitive peoples, a view critiqued by his contemporary, Franz Boas.

The last part of this chapter is a bravura account of Virginia Woolf's incorporation of polyrhythmic experience, social and natural, into the very narrative texture of her work. Woolf's commitment to the Dionysian is the substance of a disagreement between her and Vita Sackville West, who misunderstood the importance of rhythm to Woolf's art. This manifests itself in *Mrs Dalloway* in Septimus's sense that rhythm is ecstasy and madness and in *To The Lighthouse* in Lily Brisco's sense of 'force' working through her body. Not only the rhythms of her prose, but the daily experiences of the characters, from the mechanical movement of the swing doors of a modern restaurant to the rhythm of walking, are ordered by polyrhythmia. In 'Street Music', *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts*, Marcus shows in a virtuosic way how rhythms order lives and how fundamental rhythm is to Woolf's art. The rhythm theory we have looked at abstractly is embodied in the character, Bernard's self-conscious experiments with calligraphy, for instance, or with the enunciation of poetry, where Byron's poem, 'The Destruction of Sennacherib', releases the rhythms of colonial fantasy. The work on Woolf is one of the high points of the book.

Chapter 6: The American rhythm: New Mexico, new rhythms

In the final chapter of this book, Marcus crosses continents to consider an upsurge of writings about rhythm in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century. In this American context, rhythm is explicitly racialised. Writers and artists who were white, and mainly settlers from Europe, were fascinated by what they identified as the 'indigenous, primordial rhythm of the land,' especially in the Southwest regions, a primordial power to which they considered Native American people to have a special and defining connection. They felt that in the earthy, slow rhythm there was potential for a kind of national renewal, ridding American culture of the degeneracy of an overly sophisticated, artificial, or 'nervous' metropolitan culture. George M. Beard's influential critique of American urban modernity as a state of nervousness (published as *American Nervousness* [1881]) was one of several contemporary accounts to enable racialist fantasies about 'racial perfection' to flourish, while also sowing the seeds for a 'primitivist countercurrent' that identified and sought to harness a primal energy in specific racial groups, notably Native Americans. The attraction among some avant-garde artists and writers to the indigenous peoples and cultures of the Southwest was facilitated by a belief in the revitalising agency of 'primitive' cultures, whose imagined potency lay precisely in a certain rhythm, the patterns of sound and movement that they intuited as emanating from the landscape. The possibility of incorporating, adapting, or otherwise appropriating this indigenous rhythm in, for instance, the metre of poetry, or the choreography of dance, was the key to a new mode of national culture; a way of training European immigrants to be American.

As in previous chapters, Marcus details an extraordinarily intricate network of writing and thinking about rhythm in this American context, illuminating the multiple connections between a panoply of poets, artists, philosophers, and cultural commentators. She identifies three figures as being especially consequential, and whose lives and works provide the core of this complex story. First is Mabel Dodge Luhan, an East Coast socialite and radical, whose burgeoning fascination with Native American culture led her to move to Taos New Mexico, where she met Tony Luhan, a Tiwa Indian, her fourth husband, and established a prominent artists' colony there which served as an incubator for some of the most important modernist artists of twentieth-century America, including Georgia O'Keeffe, Ansel Adams, and Marsden Harley. Second, the colourful figure of Mary Austin, a writer and lecturer, 'a lady with a great, green ostrich plume in her dark hair' who organised dramatic performances of native music for white audiences, and whose fascination for what she called 'Amerindian' culture had also brought her to New Mexico where she mingled with the artists gathered there. Third, and threaded through the chapter, is D. H. Lawrence, whom

Dodge Luhan invited to Taos, and whose writings about Mexico and the American Southwest present a powerful line of continuity between the European locations of earlier chapters and this specifically regional American episode. Austin's *The American Rhythm* (1923) argued for a specific American rhythm in poetry to replace the European verse forms which hitherto had served as the traditional models for American poets. Instead poets should find verse forms better fitted to American settlement, to 'new motor impulses' of 'footpace … ax stroke and paddle stroke' (Austin). The 'rhythmic forms to which the environment gives rise, seem to pass … into and out of the subconscious without our having once become intellectually aware of them'. Inspired by Native American dance and song, Native rituals and the decorative art associated with them, Austin theorised the deep connection that all three writers perceived between environment, indigenous life, and the cultural forms that they might inspire.

Marcus's account gives us not only a vivid sense of all three figures and their works, but also charts the contexts from which they emerged and to which they contributed. Her account of new movements in American poetry, including Imagism, which capitalised on native rhythm, is especially rich. Marcus captures the controversies that these movements provoked and probes the issue of cultural appropriation to which writers of the time were often blind. Striking throughout this chapter are the frequent references to figures who are familiar from earlier chapters of the book. The ideas of Herbert Spencer, Dalcroze, and Karl Bücher persist in the background, and we see throughout these discussions of American culture a vocabulary evocative of these very same discourses that had preoccupied artists in Europe: for example, the image of something 'static yet in perpetual motion', the notion of organic timelessness versus mechanical, industrial time, and the radical possibilities of training bodily movement. Paradoxically, the efforts to forge a specifically American aesthetic severed from a European past seemed to have relied on European intellectual models. It is striking that the predominantly white writers and artists who figure in this cultural renaissance are so embedded in transatlantic networks of cultural exchange with Europe.

Some of the questions that this chapter raises regarding the racial politics of rhythm in this its American incarnation seem unresolved. While Marcus notes Austin's activism (with Dodge Luhan and John Collier) in pursuit of Indigenous Rights, she also notes her abrasive antisemitism. The saturation in racial thinking, at a moment in American history dominated by the scandalous and ongoing violence of Jim Crow, produced profound complexities that overshadow the discourses of rhythm. Marcus refers in passing to African American art forms, especially jazz, but her discussions of these were to be developed in a chapter that remains unfinished.

In the final paragraphs of this chapter, Marcus returns to Lawrence's *Plumed Serpent*. The politics of its 'obsession with leadership', Marcus

cautions, 'are uncomfortable, even repellent. [His] representations of Native American culture may also produce significant disquiet'. Yet, as throughout, her reading shows the complexity and significance of the 'rhythmic focus'. As the book tells us, the intellectual, social, and political possibilities of rhythm are multiple. It is '[a] way of essentialising racial identity and securing the terms of racial difference', 'an attempt to produce a dynamic that runs counter to history, time, and its depredations', as well as an expression of 'the utopian aspirations of the period, in its search for community, and for a new-old language of dance and of poetry'.

Of the eight originally conceived chapters, there are only six in the present book. Though this is hard to believe, a quarter of the book is missing. The two chapters she decided not to complete were at one time Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Six was entitled 'Urban Rhythms and City Symphonies'. She notes that it was to focus in particular on 'film rhythm in the work of Hans Richter, Abel Gance, Eisenstein and others', topics that she had written about elsewhere. Chapter Seven would have engaged with 'Syncopations and polyrhythmia in writing, including prose rhythm, and in early 20th century music, including jazz and also Stravinsky, Scriabin, Honegger'. There was also to be a Coda, 'Rhythmanalysis (to include the later twentieth-century theories of Henri Lefebvre, Henri Meschonnic, Pascal Michon and Roland Barthes (on idiorhythmy))'. Bergson and Bachelard may have reappeared at this point.

Rather than dwelling on the tragedy of what is not here, we present these six chapters in the firm belief that it is best to celebrate the extraordinary richness of what is. Following Laura's chapters, this volume also includes an afterword by Laura's friend and former colleague, Steven Connor, and, in an appendix, an encyclopaedia essay authored by Laura which provides a helpful theoretical and historical underpinning to the present work.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, introduction to Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, trans. Christopher Fynsk (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 33.
2. Roger Icart, *Abel Gance, ou, Le Prométhée foudroyé* (Lausanne: l'Age d'homme, 1983), p. 131, qtd. in and trans. Laura Marcus, 'The Rhythm of the Rails: Sound and Locomotion', in Julian Murphet et al. (eds.), *Sounding Modernism: Rhythm and Sonic Mediation in Modern Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 208.
3. Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, trans. A. E. Stallings (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 38. The work probably dates to the 50s BCE.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).