

Wikipedia - RHYTHMANALYSIS

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Sommaire

- [Origins of rhythmanalysis](#)
- [General concept of rhythm](#)
- [The act of rhythmanalysis](#)
- [Presence](#)
- [Present](#)
- [Characteristics of rhythms](#)
- [Editions](#)

Rhythmanalysis is a collection of essays by Marxist sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre. The book outlines a method for analyzing the rhythms of urban spaces and the effects of those rhythms on the inhabitants of those spaces. It builds on his past work, with which he argued space is a production of social practices.

The book is considered to be the fourth volume in his series *Critique of Everyday Life*. Published in 1992 after his death, *Rhythmanalysis* is the last book Lefebvre wrote.

Origins of rhythmanalysis

The term 'rhythmanalysis' was coined by Portuguese philosopher Lúcio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos who published a first theory of rhythmanalysis in 1931, focused on its physiological dimensions. His ideas on rhythmanalysis have been later further developed by Gaston Bachelard in his 1936 book *La dialectique de la durée* (The Dialectic of Duration). [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

General concept of rhythm

Lefebvre's concept of rhythm concerns the repetition of a measure at a frequency. He identifies two kinds of rhythms : cyclical rhythms, which involve simple intervals of repetition, and alternating (or linear) rhythms. An example of a cyclical rhythm would be day fading into night, and night brightening into day ; a linear rhythm might be the flow of information from a television set. Additionally, rhythms may be nested within each other ; for example, the broadcast of the local news at set intervals throughout the day, throughout the week, is an example of a nested rhythm. In a less abstract fashion (or perhaps only abstract in a different fashion), Lefebvre asserts that rhythms exist at the intersection of place, time and the expenditure of energy.

Lefebvre posits that the human body is composed of several rhythms ; in order to observe rhythms outside of the body, the rhythmanalyst must use her or his own rhythms as a reference to unify the rhythms under analysis. Properly put, the rhythm is the conjunction of the rhythmanalyst and the object of the analysis.

The act of rhythmanalysis

Rhythms are only perceptible through the traditional five senses ; accordingly, it is possible to conceptualize rhythms as being composed of sense triggers (smells, sights, sounds, etc.) Lefebvre cautions against this conceptualization however ; he specifically notes that rhythm is not meant to refer always to its more traditional referents, musical and dance rhythm (although it could, so long as the rhythmanalysis concerned either music or dancing). He also cautions against taking the mere repetition of a movement to indicate a rhythm.

The object of rhythmanalysis is to access the obscure property of the rhythm called 'presence.' The sensory events through which the rhythmanalyst perceives the rhythm are called 'simulacra,' or simply 'the present.' The need for rhythmanalysis arises out of the propensity of the present to simulate presence.

Presence

Lefebvre describes presence as the "facts of both nature and culture, at the same time sensible, affective and moral rather than *imaginary*" (author's emphasis). (Elden and Moore translation) Rhythmanalysis stresses that presence is of an innately temporal character and can never be represented by any simulacrum of the present (people walking down a street, the sun going down), but can only be grasped through the analysis of rhythms (people walking down a street through time, the sun's movement through time).

Present

The present consists of one's sensory perceptions. Lefebvre frequently warns of "the trap of the present" wherein the present is always trying to pass itself off as presence, the rhythmanalytical truth of a situation. "The trap of the present" relies on false representation. Lefebvre argues that the present engages in a commodification of reality when it successfully passes itself off as presence.

Characteristics of rhythms

Lefebvre describes four alignments of rhythms. They are :

- **Arrhythmia**, conflict or dissonance between or among two or more rhythms, such as might occur (biologically) in an ill person ;
- **Polyrhythmia**, co-existence of two or more rhythms without the conflict or dissonance that suggests arrhythmia ;
- **Eurhythmia**, constructive interaction between or among two or more rhythms, such as occurs in healthy creatures ;
- **Isorhythmia**, the rarest association between rhythms, implies equivalence of repetition, measure and frequency.

Editions

- originally published in French as : *Éléments de rythmanalyse*. Paris : Éditions Syllepse, 1992.
- English translation published as : *Rhythmanalysis : Space, Time and Everyday Life*. London : Continuum, 2004. ISBN 9780826472991.

Source : [Wikipedia](#).

Notes

[1] Meyer, Kurt : 'Rhythms, Streets, Cities' in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life : Reading Henri Lefebvre*, Routledge, 2008.

[2] Cunha, Rodrigo Sobral : 'Ritmanálise' (*in Portuguese*), 2012.