

# **Un article de M. PAJEVIC sur H. MESCHONNIC**

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M. Pajevic, « Beyond the Sign. Henri Meschonnic's Poetics of the Continuum and of Rhythm : Towards an Anthropological Theory of Language », *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Basing the conception of language on the sign represents an obstacle to the awareness of certain elements of human life, especially to a full understanding of what language or art do. Henri Meschonnic's poetics of the continuum and of rhythm criticizes the sign based on Benveniste's terms of rhythm and discourse, developing an anthropology of language. Rhythm, for Meschonnic, is no formal metrical but a semantic principle, each time unique and unforeseeable. As for Humboldt, his starting point is not the word but the ensemble of speech ; language is not *ergon* but *energeia*. The poem, then, is not a literary form but a process of transformation that Meschonnic defines as the invention of a form of life by a form of language and vice versa. Thus a poem is a way of thinking and rhythm is form in movement. The particular subject of art and literature is consequently not the author but a process of subjectivation—this is the contrary of the conception of the sign. By demonstrating the limits of the sign, Meschonnic's poetics attempts to thematize the intelligibility of presence. Art and literature raise our awareness of this element of human life that we cannot grasp conceptually. This poetic thinking is a necessary counterforce against all institutionalization.