Elements of Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction to the Understanding of Rhythms

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Introduction to Rhythm Analysis

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

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

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

The critique of the thing and of the process of thingification (of materialization) in modern thought would fill volumes. It has been led in the name of becoming, of movement, of mobility in general. But has it been seen through to the end? Does it not remain to be taken up again, starting from what is most concrete: rhythm?
Chapter 1
The Critique of the Thing

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

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

Is there a general concept of rhythm? Answers: yes, and everyone possesses it; but nearly all those who use this word believe themselves to master and possess its content, its meaning. Yet the meanings of the term remain obscure. We easily confuse rhythm with movement (mouvement), speed, a sequence of movements [gestes] or objects (machines, for example). Following this we tend to attribute to rhythms a mechanical overtone, brushing aside the organic aspect
of rhythmed movements. Musicians, who deal directly with rhythms, because they produce them, often reduce them to the counting of beats [mesures]: ‘One-two-three-one-two-three’. Historians and economists speak of rhythms: of the rapidity or slowness of periods, of eras, of cycles; they tend only to see the effects of impersonal laws, without coherent relations with actors, ideas, realities. Those who teach gymnastics see in rhythms only successions of movements [gestes] setting in motion certain muscles, certain physiological energies, etc.

Is the origin of the procedure that starts with generalities found in abstractions? Not! In the field of rhythm, certain very broad concepts nonetheless have specificity: let us immediately cite repetition. No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without reprises, without returns, in short without measure [mesures]. But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) As it currently stands, would not this production of the different by the identical (repeated) produce a theoretical shortcoming? Does it not permit the following, highly significant formulation (affirmation): 'Differences induced or produced by repetitions constitute the thread of time'? 
Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures. Great cyclical rhythms last for a period and restart: dawn, always now, often superb, inaugurations the return of the everyday. The antagonistic unity of relations between the cyclical and the linear sometimes gives rise to compromises, sometimes to disturbances. The circular course of the hands on (traditional) clock-faces and watches is accompanied by a linear tick-tock. And it is their relation that enables or rather constitutes the measure of time (which is to say, of rhythms).

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

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

Far from resisting quantity, time (duration) is quantified by measure, by melody in music, but also in deed and language. Harmony, which results from a spontaneous ensemble, or from a work of art, is simultaneously quantitative and qualitative (in music and elsewhere: language, movements, architecture, works of art and diverse arts, etc.). Rhythm reunites quantitative aspects and elements, which mark time and distinguish moments in it — and qualitative aspects and elements, which link them together, found the unities and result from them. Rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body.

Rational, numerical, quantitative and qualitative rhythms superimpose themselves on the multiple natural rhythms of the body (respiration, the heart, hunger and thirst, etc.), though not without changing them. The bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms of social or mental function. Thence the efficiency of the analytic operation that consists in opening and unwrapping the bundle. Disorder and illness, at the worst, death, take over the operation. However, the natural and the rational play only a limited role in the analysis of rhythms, which are simultaneously natural and rational, and neither one nor the other. Is the rhythm of a Chopin waltz natural or artificial? Are the rhythms of the aphorisms of Nietzsche — of Zarathustra — natural or artificial? They sometimes have the rhythm of a march: that of the body, that of the tempo [allure] of the thinker-poet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our sensations and perceptions, in full and continuous appearances, contain repetitive figures, concealing them. Thus, sounds, lights, colours and objects. We contain ourselves by concealing the diversity of our rhythms: to ourselves, body and flesh, we are almost objects. Not completely, however. But what does a midget perceive, whose body has almost nothing in common with ours, and whose wings beat to the rhythm of a thousand times per second? This insect makes us hear a high-pitched sound, we perceive a threatening, little winged cloud that seeks our blood. In short, rhythms escape logic, and nevertheless contain a logic, a possible calculus of numbers and numerical relations.

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

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

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

Analysis that has become dialectical in this way concerns itself with three terms. That does not mean that it strays in the uses (and abuses) of this sacred number: towards metaphysics and theology, towards the trinity of the image, the three reference points of the universe (hell, the earth and the sky) — towards the trinity of the three periods of time and thought (the carnel, the lion and the child, according to Nietzsche, or Law, Faith and Joy according to Joachim de Flores). The immense mythomania surrounding this number shows its importance; the triadic conception has been released from myths since Hegel. Followed by Marx, Hegel falsified this sacred number; that is, dialectical analysis observes or constitutes the relations between three terms, which change according to circumstances: going from conflict to alliance and back again. This in the presence of the world, to the extent that it features relations of past-present-future, of possible-probable-impossible, or even knowledge-information-manipulation, etc. The analysis does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism).

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

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

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

(2) What is the relation of the logical and the dialectical (dialectic)? The law of logic says: 'No thought or reality without coherence'. The dialectic proclaims: 'There is neither thought nor reality without contradictions'. It seems that the second affirmation might eliminate the first: discourses that seek to be true declare themselves coherent: they never want to be illogical. Can contradictions be articulated in propositions or in formulas without contradiction? An open question.

(3) What is it to demonstrate? What is it to think (thought)?

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

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

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

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

In the grip of its own creations, technologies, arms, the species puts itself to the test; it can destroy itself through nuclear power, empty its skies of the indispensable (their blueness), exhaust its soils. In short, the dangers are accumulating. If it survives them, the human race will enter into the silence of anti-affirmations, calling out to demons, to gods, to Laws. It will have proved to itself its capacity to live: to organise itself. But during this period, some total risk cannot be avoided. There is destiny – and the end of destiny, the proof of the supreme test. It used to be thought that science and technology would suffice. Yet, necessary and non-sufficient, science and technology pose the problem of all problems. An absolute problem: what can philosophy do? Perceive the situation? Appreciate the risk? Point to a way out?

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

If the American author of this remarkable book assimilates and transforms one part of European culture (from Bach to mathematical logic), he seems to let another part escape him. In the dance of the Davidsbundler (Schumann), rhythm predominates over melody and harmony.12 To the extent that the study of rhythm is inspired by music
Music and musical rhythms will not, following this, take on immeasurable importance. Social times disclose diverse, contradictory possibilities: delays and early arrivals, reappearances (repetitions) of an (apparently) rich past, and revolutions that briskly introduce a new content and sometimes change the form of society. Historical times slow down or speed up, advance or regress, look forward or backward. According to what criteria? According to representations and political decisions, but also according to the historian who puts them into perspective. Objectively, for there to be change, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a rhythm on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner. In the course of a crisis, in a critical situation, a group must designate itself as an innovator or producer of meaning. And its acts must inscribe themselves on reality. The intervention imposes itself neither militarily, nor politically nor even ideologically. Occasionally, a long time after the action, one sees the emergence of novelty. Perspicacity, attention and above all an opening are required. In practice and in culture, exhaustion is visible sooner and more clearly than growth and innovation, more obscure realities and idealities.

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

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

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

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

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

This supplies the framework for analyses of the particular, therefore real and concrete cases that feature in music, history and the lives of individuals or groups. In each case the analysis should ride with the movements in whichever work or whichever sequence of actions until their end.

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

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

The Cartesian tradition has long reigned in philosophy. It is exhausted, but remains present. The 'Cogito . . .' signifies: to think is to think thought; it is to reflect on oneself by accentuating (putting the accent on) the consciousness inherent to the act of thinking. Yet what we have thought over the course of the preceding pages implies another conception of thinking. It is to think that which is not thought: the game and the risk, love, art, violence, in a word, the world, or more precisely the diverse relations between human being and the universe. Thinking is a part, but does not claim to be the totality, as many philosophers thought it. Thought explores, expresses. The exploration can hold in store surprises. Likewise, perhaps, rhythms and their analysis (rhythmanalysis).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A philosopher could ask here: 'Are you not simply embarking on a description of horizons, phenomenology from your window, from the standpoint of an all-too-conscious ego, a phenomenology stretching up to the ends of the road, as far as the Intelligibles: the Bank, the Forum, the Hôtel de Ville, the embankments, Paris, etc.?'
Yes, and yet no! This vaguely existential (a slightly heavy technical term) phenomenology (ditto) of which you speak, and of which you accuse these pages, passes over that which quite rightly connects space, time and the energies that unfold here and there, namely *rhythms*. It would be no more than a more or less well-used tool. In other words, it is a discourse that ordains these horizons as existence, as *being*.

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

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

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

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

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

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