Rhythm and Stasis: A Major and Almost Entirely Neglected Philosophical Problem

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Source: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 2011, New Series, Vol. 111 (2011), pp. 25-42

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Aristotelian Society

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41331540

Meeting of the Aristotelian Society held at Senate House, University of London, on 25 October 2010 at 4:15 p.m.

II—Rhythm and Stasis: A Major and Almost Entirely Neglected Philosophical Problem

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This article develops a *dynamic account of rhythm as 'order-in-movement'* that opposes static accounts of rhythm as abstract time, as essentially a pattern of possibly unstressed sounds and silences. This dynamic account is *humanistic*: it focuses on music as a humanly-produced, sonorous phenomenon, privileging the human as opposed to the abstract, or the organic or mechanical. It defends the claim that movement is the most fundamental conceptualization of music—the basic category in terms of which it is experienced—and suggests, against Scruton, that music literally and not merely metaphorically moves.

Rhythm is essential to music, and to poetry, which is created as much for the ear as for the eye; it is present, in less highly organized form, in prose, which is made more for the eye than the ear. Speech has metrical and rhythmical properties. We also refer—though perhaps metaphorically—to the rhythm of a line in a drawing, reflecting the movement of the artist's hand. Rhythm and metre have been theorized about, primarily in connection with poetry, at least since the time of the Ancient Greek thinker Aristoxenus. The theories that resulted were applied to music through the pervasive rhetorical or language-based musical aesthetic that was dominant until the later eighteenth century.

However, rhythm raises deep theoretical, conceptual and philosophical, as well as purely aesthetic, questions. It is essential to human activities such as physical labour, and we are born as the result of a rhythmic physical act. It is a fundamental concept concerning which one would expect philosophers to have something to say. However, discussion has been rare in the philosophical literature, with Dewey, Meyer and Scruton among the very small number of contributors (Scruton 1997, 2008; Dewey 1980; Cooper and Meyer 1960). There remains a need for a fundamental conceptual enquiry

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. cxi, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

which explores the difference between a regular sequence of sounds and movements and a rhythm. The account that I offer arises from a defence of *a humanistic and dynamic*, as opposed to an *abstract and static, conception of music*.[1] The former account argues that *rhythm is essentially the product of human action and appreciation by human listeners*.

The distinction between humanistic and abstract accounts of music and rhythm is not easy to draw, and some are sceptical that it exists. What exactly does it consist in? A humanistic account sees music as a sounding, vibrating phenomenon. Abstract or static accounts, in contrast, are non-participant, non-feeling, and intellectualist: they regard rhythm statically, as a pattern of possibly unstressed sounds and silences—as simply order-in-time. Humanists stress rhythm's essential origins in human production of sound and movement, involving a distinctive attack characteristic of producing sounds by striking, bowing or blowing. (Chimps may dance or march rhythmically, but for humanism in my sense they are close enough to human.) Since this attack is hard to replicate in other media, the possibility of rhythm-in-light as opposed to sound is questionable. A humanist account is a dynamic one, that treats rhythm as order-in-movement, as opposed simply to order-in-time: viz. the imposition of accent on sequences of sounds or movements, creating non-periodic phenomena usually within a periodic, repetitive (metrical) framework.

It will help the reader to bear in mind from the outset some examples discussed in the paper, examples that, according to a humanistic account, mark a development from non-rhythm, via proto-rhythm, to rhythm in the true or full sense:

(1) Chaos or continuum: the sound of rubbish tumbling into a bin lorry, white noise, a continuous unvarying tone.

(2) Mere regularity: an electronic pulse with no stress variation.

(3) Non-intentional 'stress': a dripping tap, a horse's hooves, or a metronome, in which stress variation is unavoidable, and from which a pattern of stressed and unstressed seems to emerge or may easily be projected.

(4) Intentional stress or true rhythm: music, dance, poetry.

[1] A humanistic treatment of music is defended more fully in Hamilton (2007). Philosophical humanism is developed in Hamilton (forthcoming).

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

My claim will be that in contrast to (1) it is possible and natural to project a rhythm on to (2) and (3), but that—on a humanistic account—these are nonetheless at best probably proto-rhythmic.

I

A Dynamic Account Derived from Plato. Plato in *The Laws* describes rhythm as 'order in movement' or 'order within movement' (Plato 1970, Book II, 665). Although he does not explain what kind of order or movement, Plato's formulation is more promising than Dewey's rather static 'ordered variation of changes' (Dewey 1980, *passim*). It suggests a dynamic, humanistic account that may be developed through further conditions:

> (D) Rhythm is order-within-movement that is perceivable through one or more of the senses, and which tends to express or generate involvement by the person producing or experiencing it; it is achieved when accents are imposed on a sequence of regular sounds or movements.

The order is said to be perceivable rather than actually perceived, because its presence might initially be overlooked. A complex structure of sounds so fast that the listener hears them only as a click, or a series of tones so slow that each crotchet lasts for a year, could not exhibit rhythm and would not, I think, count as music. John Cage's 'As Slow As Possible' (1958), currently being performed on an organ in Germany at the rate of one note every two years, is an example of the latter. If this is music, then it is music in which duration has supplanted rhythm. However, sounds can be manipulated to become rhythmic: sap rising in a tree sounds like a continuum, but when a recording of it is slowed, it appears, and therefore is, rhythmic.

The dynamic account should be further extended by making sound as basic as movement, and by specifying that the movement in question is human, bodily movement. Thus rhythm is order within human bodily movement or movement-in-sound. I say 'movement-in-sound' rather than 'sound', since harmony and melody also contribute to musical order—though in practice these factors cannot clearly be separated from each other or from rhythm.

Could other senses be involved—might movement-in-light also be rhythmic? A light could flash on and off in a way that involved 'or-

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

dered variation of changes', but to count as rhythmic, on a humanistic account, the phenomenon could not be essentially mechanical or electronic; stress—beat and not merely pulse—is required. Perhaps moving one's hand to occlude a flame could generate rhythm; or rhythm might be induced or mimicked by flashing lights, mechanically or electronically, through a more intense *1* 2 3, or slightly longer 1, or differently located 1. Perhaps this would still be too mechanical, since in contrast to the human production of sounds or tones, there is no gradient of attack and decay. Certainly 'movement-in-smell' is not possible; trying to express rhythm by production of smells would be like to trying to dance a polka underwater, or play a piano where someone has put treacle under the keys.

The limits of rhythmic order are, on the one hand, *kinetic chaos*, such as an avalanche, explosion, the random Brownian motion of particles suspended in a fluid, or randomly-generated noise; and, on the other, *kinetic continuum*, such as a smoothly gliding yacht, or a continuous or steadily rising or falling tone (*glissando*). Chaos is too varying to be regarded as ordered, continuum too unvaried; *stasis* lies between kinetic continuum and rhythm. The yacht and glissando examples are too continuous to count as rhythmic order, which involves an element of discontinuity or discreteness of elements; stasis is discontinuous and closer to rhythm. The gradations between the extremes of chaos and kinetic continuum themselves form a continuum, and in some cases it will be undecidable whether rhythm is present or not.

It is the task of this article to defend and elucidate the claim that rhythm involves order-in-movement. I have described my account as humanistic and dynamic, and the alternatives to it are:

(1) An *abstract, static account* based on an impersonal, non-participant conception of rhythm as duration plus stress. This is the view of Malcolm Budd, I believe, and is widely assumed in the musicological literature.

(2) A *dynamic but non-humanistic account* that treats rhythm as fundamentally an *organic order.* This conception underlies Dewey's account of rhythm in *Art as Experience*, although he concedes that rhythm in the arts involves novel impositions on rhythm as manifested by the living body. The organic conception traces the origins of rhythmic order, in both phylogenetic and ontogenetic terms, to human

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

awareness of pulse or breathing, and the alternation of tension and relaxation characteristic of such bodily processes.

Organicism, I believe, is inadequate. Rhythm is a humanistic concept, embedded in human behaviour and practices. 'The rhythm of the seasons' is a metaphor. Experiencing waves on the shore as rhythmic implies familiarity with rhythm as manifested in music, dancing and bodily movement. A humanistic account treats rhythm as an *order distinctive of human movement or movement-in-sound*, an order imaginatively projected onto processes that do not literally possess it. Space explorers set up a rhythmic beacon to inform other life forms about intelligent life on Earth, rightly assuming that production of rhythm implies intelligent life.

A humanistic account does not say that the movement in question must be—or must be caused by—intentional movement. Speech and musical rhythms are culturally conditioned, and cultural repertoires mostly do not arise intentionally. In understanding a foreign language, for instance, familiarity with its highly irregular, non-pulsed speech rhythms is essential. A human can intend to walk or dance rhythmically; or can do so unthinkingly. There is a continuum of intentional and non-intentional. I might be aware of the rhythmic noise of the pump which is not produced intentionally; similarly perhaps, the absent-minded drumming of fingers on a table. Awareness of making a noise and awareness of producing a noise which is a rhythm are both relevant, as is intention.

Regular but non- or involuntary movement—the ticcing of Tourette's, or Parkinsonian tremor, or indeed a heartbeat—would seem, on a humanistic account, to be at best proto-rhythmic, that is, *interpretable* as rhythmic. But if someone can produce a rhythm non-intentionally, why can't a galloping horse do so? Since horses, like humans, have an uneven gait—one footfall is louder than the others—their galloping exhibits stress and is therefore rhythmic, it may be argued; likewise, indeed, heartbeat, which is uneven between systole and diastole.

Perhaps, since a heartbeat or a horse's gallop naturally and spontaneously elicits a rhythmic response in humans, a humanistic account can describe it as strictly rhythmic. The claim here is that certain natural rhythms are such that we naturally aurally parse them in a certain way. That may be an acceptable thing for a humanistic account to say. Even so, these phenomena are not the para-

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

digm case of rhythm. If they exhibit stress, one should be able to ask 'stressed by whom?' The answer cannot be 'by the horse or the heart'. Rhythm is the order through which we naturally interpret human bodily movement, and these and other natural phenomena invite interpretation as rhythmic. But in music and dance, rhythmic order is already fundamentally an *intentional order*, an order that is perceived rather than interpreted.

A humanistic account of rhythm holds that in order to experience a horse's hooves or the movement of a train over railway tracks as rhythmic, one must *project rhythm onto regular succession*. Similarly with birdsong, which is musical, if not literally music—the phenomenon has a very significant role in human culture, but 'song' is a metaphor. By 'project', I mean that the perceiver experiences the succession of sounds or movements as rhythmic partly because they imagine that it is so. This is projection in the most minimal sense, far removed from florid cases such as the merely fanciful imagining of faces in clouds or in flames in the hearth. In order to project rhythm, one must have had experience of music and poetry as rhythmic; concepts of natural, mechanical and humanly-produced rhythm arise together. We experience wave and train motion as rhythmic because we are familiar with rhythm that is the product of human action.

The process works both ways. Music evolved in traditional societies as people experienced natural phenomena as rhythmic; a similar process occurs in our day, as contemporary drummers are influenced by mechanical and electronic soundworlds. These are neither falsifiable anthropological claims, nor fictional thought experiment with no commitment to what might have happened; rather they are elucidations of a conceptual structure, based on a very general understanding of human nature and history. The concept of rhythm, like that of the aesthetic itself, arises from human beings' imaginative appreciation of natural phenomena, which they express in music and art.

We spontaneously project rhythm onto regular sounds; we perceive regularity and imaginatively impose rhythm. Trains and waves are material for imaginative imposition or projection; but music, in performance, is not just material for projection, because we perceive the rhythm already imparted to it by the musical performer. This much seems common sense. Confusion arises when two senses of imagination are conflated: the everyday sense, and a more technical, philosophical one arising from Kant. If the rhythm is complex enough, imagination rather than perception is engaged; it involves

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

an imaginative effort to engage fully with the rhythms of Elliott Carter, New Complexity composition or Balinese gamelan. In these cases perception of rhythm might essentially be multi-aspect. But imagination in its everyday sense is not normally involved in recognition of rhythmic content. There is, in contrast, a specialized, Kantian sense of imagination according to which it is required for perception as such, and I think it is in this sense that that Scruton holds that to hear relations between sounds—to recognize the meaning that music imparts to them through rhythm and phrasing—is already to use one's imagination (Scruton 1997).

But to debate imagination and perception takes us too far afield. The dynamic account must now be developed further. Rhythmic order comprises recurring phenomena that fall under the heading of pulse or beat, but also freer, non-recurring phenomena such as an irregular musical phrase or motif, a hand gesture, or an expressive line in a drawing or painting. That is, it involves regularity in movement, and also freedom in movement. Beat is a pulse that is regularly accented or stressed, giving rise to what musicians and poets call *metre*.

The dynamic account of rhythm as order in movement or movement-in-sound must be expanded to acknowledge this polarity, making explicit reference both to stress or accent, and to pulse and repetition:

> (D′) Rhythm is order within human-bodily-movement or movement-in-sound that is perceivable through one or more of the senses, and achieved when accents are imposed on a sequence of at least regular sounds or movement; it normally involves non-recurring sequences within a recurring framework based on implicit or explicit pulse or beat, giving rise to a 'feel' or pattern in which those producing or experiencing it participate.[2]

Like melody, rhythm involves a Gestalt or unity—a 'feel' or pattern—which generates involvement in the movement by performers and listeners. Hence we talk of a rhythmic 'feel'—as in 'Latin feel', 'tango feel'. The description of non-recurrent phenomena—the irregular patterns that metrical rhythm contains—as rhythmic is fundamental, and not a metaphorical extension of the metrical con-

[2] Here and elsewhere I develop or qualify claims made in chapter 5 of Hamilton (2007), an early precursor of the present article.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

cept. We must now examine the interdependence of these two senses, rhythm as regularity and rhythm as freedom. This will require exploring the connections between pulse, beat, accent and metre.

II

The Dynamic Account Extended: Pulse and Metre. Pulse, beat, accent and metre are as hard to characterize as rhythm. They are, I believe, internally related notions, and form a *conceptual holism*—as do rhythm and music. That is to say, they are gradually and simultaneously acquired. A claim of conceptual holism between *a* and *b* says that a definition or understanding of *a* assumes an understanding of *b*, and vice versa—it holds that there is an explanatory interdependence or relation of mutual presupposition between the concepts. One cannot acquire one concept without acquiring the other, nor manifest understanding of one without manifesting understanding of the other. This is a benign circularity, essential to language.[3] The claim about acquisition is not empirical or psychological, but arises from the nature of the concepts themselves.

There are, in contrast, pairs of concepts that, although related, are not interdependent—'picture' is more basic than 'photograph', and can be understood without understanding the latter concept; but not vice versa. One might, perhaps confusingly, contrast conceptual holism with empirical holisms, that is, merely contingent associations of ideas. For example, most people would recognize an empirical holism between morality and religion, but only those committed to a certain interpretation of divine command ethics would regard 'good' and 'commanded by God' as a *conceptual* holism. My claim is that, given the nature of the concepts in question, to acquire one concept is necessarily to acquire the other. So dynamic definition (2) involves circularity, though benignly so.

Pulse and beat should be distinguished, however. Beat is explicitly metric but pulse is not; pulse involves regularity but not humanly-produced order, and so in itself is at most proto-rhythmic. It is the organic basis of rhythm. Pulse is an abstraction from metre, not vice versa. Metre is usually defined as a context of regularly occurring accents and weak beats with which, or against which, freer rhyth-

[3] The issue is discussed in Hamilton (forthcoming).

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

mic design may play. What all metric systems, however complex, exhibit is pulsation—they are repetitive and thus offer a framework for rhythmic design, even if the listener sometimes has to infer the frame on the basis of the design which it frames.

In the Western staff notation which developed from around the seventeenth century, the time signature—most commonly 3/4, 4/4, 6/8—normally denotes the metre, which is usually stable throughout the piece or section of a piece, and expresses the order and subdivision of beats or pulses. This order is expressed through bars of a fixed number of beats. Thus 4/4 stipulates four beats to the bar: *one*, two, three, four, *one*, two, three, four, ... where '*one*' is the downbeat. The beat 'four' is in the same 'place' in every bar, and we constantly return to it throughout the piece, stating it or simply passing through it if no note is played. Bars have a fixed number of pulses, but usually vary in the durations they contain—that is, in the number and lengths of notes. The fixed pulse/bar order constitutes rhythm as order, while the varying note-durations express rhythm as freedom. These are cumbersome descriptions of phenomena that every musician knows well, and it is interesting how difficult they are to formulate—the mark of a philosophical problem.

III

The Dynamic Account Defended: Free Rhythm, Stasis, Projection and Accent. The dynamic definition has to confront the existence of large bodies of music and poetry which do not appear to be metric at all. While modern Western music tends to be explicitly metric, with clearly articulated beats, in non-Western music this model is far from pervasive, and free rhythm or tempo is common. The term 'free rhythm' may be deceptive, however. Music and poetry almost always exhibit a basic pulse, even if only implicitly. One might therefore regard 'free rhythm' as involving a flexible beat or—to extend the use of a term from more recent Western art music—rubato, a slowing down or speeding up relative to a basic pulse or pulses. (Rubato, briefly, is the expressive alteration of rhythm or tempo.) There is thus in all music at least a short-term sense of pulse.

Stasis, as we saw, occupies a place between kinetic continuum and rhythm—it is the most minimal kind of rhythm. In medieval plainchant there are points of repose and movement, and though the

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

music is not strongly accented, performers inevitably impart at least a minimal propulsion. Rhythmically, plainchant has a series of plateaux, creating a kind of rubato against a basic pulse or pulses. Like folksong it is strongly influenced by speech rhythm. Prosody—the patterns of stress and intonation in spoken language—is more variable than musical metre; in speech and oratory, pulse varies. But analogous arguments to those concerning free rhythm in music apply to modernist free verse. This claim of minimal propulsion accommodates 'free rhythm' within the dynamic account.

It is certainly true, however, that in cases of free rhythm, the sense of propulsion arises from the listener as much as the performer. This is the process I have referred to as *projection*. That projection of rhythm onto pulse is unavoidable is illustrated by '"X" for Henry Flynt' (1960) by LaMonte Young, which shows both how the performer cannot help creating rhythm, and also that the listener cannot avoid projecting it. The piece consists of a sound selected by the performer and repeated exactly uniformly, a chosen number ('X') times; it thus purports to have a pure uninflected pulse, which would eliminate metre—and thus, I would argue, rhythm—in favour of perfect periodicity. Young, like Cage, is interested in encouraging listeners to appreciate the diversity in such apparent aural uniformity. But when I say that the piece 'purports' to have a pure pulse, I am suggesting that Young also sets up a friction between impossibly virtuosic score and realized performance. He aims to exploit artistically the inability of human performers to attain the score's ideal.

The piece therefore embodies a paradox. In ideal form, beyond the capacity of any human performer to realize, '"X" for Henry Flynt' is a monotonal pulse, a single repeated attack without the light and shade of stresses. Whether or not this ideal piece counts as 'music', it certainly calls for musicianship, or at least the aesthetic concerns of musical performers. But most importantly for present purposes, in the piece's inevitably non-ideal realization, the performer introduces unintentional stresses. They have to rhythmicize simply in order to articulate, and so despite their best efforts, they impart rhythmic or metrical stress. Listeners too will project a metre —and thus we return to the issues presented in §1, concerning projection of rhythm.

We are pattern-making creatures. If this claim is felt to need empirical support—on which I am not convinced—psychological research, especially in the Gestalt tradition, has shown that we hear an unaccented, fixed-pitch pulse as a stressed pattern. Indeed, the urge

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

to perceive and generate a pulse may be so strong that there is little music which fails to suggest pulsation.[4] However, it is difficult to assess the relative contributions of 'objective' and 'projected' pulse, and debate over 'the given in experience' suggests the difficulty of distinguishing between acoustic and phenomenological phenomena.

Comparison with picturing clarifies the question of production versus perception of rhythm. Not every sequence of sounds can be heard as rhythm, just as not every set of marks on a surface can be seen as a picture; in both cases there are constraints of resemblance and intention. The chaotic noise of rubbish tumbling into a bin lorry cannot normally be heard as rhythmic. Trains and waves are material for imaginative projection of rhythm in the way that the rubbish cannot be. There are limits to what can be interpreted by the listener as a rhythm, just as there are limits to what can be interpreted by the viewer as a picture. Sonic chaos and continuum are not sufficiently rhythm-like for a listener intelligibly to claim that they hear such sounds as rhythmic.

Throughout this discussion of free rhythm and accent, we have yet to define accent. This proves as difficult as characterizing rhythm—indeed it is to some extent the same question. Accent is not a merely physical feature of sounds, characterizable in terms of variation in decibel-level intensity and transformed by musical perception into rhythm. Rather, it is interlocked conceptually with rhythm, forming a holism in the sense characterized earlier, an explanatory interdependence or mutual presupposition of concepts; both rhythm and accent make essential reference to human activity in music-making, dancing and movement in general.

Rhythmic accent is the core case of accent, I believe.[5] But accent can be created also by changes in intensity, pitch, harmonic function or timbre, and depends crucially on context.[6] For instance, *agogic accent* extends a note slightly beyond its normal time value; and the highest note of a melody that leaps upwards and then falls back is experienced as accented, irrespective of its loudness.

Against Cooper and Meyer, and also Scruton, I wish to argue that the concept of accent itself makes essential reference to movement,

[4] This is the position of Clayton (1996, p. 330).

[5] Cooper and Meyer evidently agree that rhythmic accent is the core case, since they define rhythm as 'the way in which one or more unaccented beats are grouped in relation to an accented one' (Cooper and Meyer 1960, p. 6).

[6] See, for instance, London (2004, p. 19).

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

and is not merely a matter of static pattern. It follows from the claim that rhythm, metre, stress and accent are internally related, that Cooper and Meyer's definition of rhythm as 'the way in which one or more unaccented beats are grouped in relation to an accented one' (Cooper and Meyer, 1960, p. 6) cannot constitute an introductory explanation for someone who lacks an understanding of rhythm, since they could not understand what 'accent' means. Their definition is informative, however, if interpreted as asserting an internal relation between rhythm and accent. Cooper and Meyer's mistake is to treat the 'axiomatic' status of accent as arising from our present ignorance of psychological or physiological causes of human responses (p. 6). In fact that status follows from the conceptual truth that rhythm and accent are interdependent—that they constitute a conceptual holism.

Rhythm, I have claimed, is order-in-movement, and one should reject the static, abstract account which treats it as essentially a pattern of possibly unstressed sounds and silence. An abstract, static account is advocated by Malcolm Budd, who argues that rhythmic movement is not spatial, and not essential to experiencing music: 'to hear rhythm—acousmatically—is not to hear imaginatively any kind of spatial movement ...' (Budd 2003, p. 221). (By 'acousmatically', he means 'musically'.[7]) He continues: 'at the basic level, we hear rhythm in music, not as beats causing one another to come into being [as Scruton argues], but as an intentionally designed process in which sounds and silences are grouped into units in which an element is heard as accented relative to the others, patterns of stressed and unstressed moments' (pp. 221–2).[8] For Budd, talk of musical motion is a non-explanatory and eliminable metaphor. The claim that rhythm in music is an intentionally designed process may seem humanistic, but Budd's overall position is non-participant and score-based.

Thus far, I have outlined and tried to defend a dynamic account of rhythm, on the grounds that the abstract account neglects the origins of music in human activity, and fails to respect our intuitions concerning non-humanly-produced pulse. The positive argument is based on philosophical humanism—a position I defend elsewhere —and on the claim that a humanistic account must be a dynamic

[7] The acousmatic is discussed in Hamilton (2007, ch. 4; 2009).

[8] In fact silences are not essential; rhythm might be effected by shifts in volume or even timbre.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

account. Basic features of the concept of rhythm—its dynamic, participant nature—are unjustifiably ignored by static, abstract accounts. Movement is the most fundamental conceptualization of music—the basic category in terms of which it is experienced.

IV

Rhythm and Movement. As stated earlier, rhythm is order within human-bodily-movement or movement-in-sound that is perceivable through one or more of the senses, and achieved when accents are imposed on a sequence of sounds or movement. These claims leave open whether the music literally moves, or whether there is a necessary metaphorical perception, as Scruton argues.

The philosophical consensus is that the ascription of movement to music is metaphorical, since nothing relevant in the music literally moves; the source of the metaphor is taken to be human bodily movement. That consensus does not exclude a dynamic conception, provided that, as in Scruton's account, the metaphor is regarded as a necessary one. Where the metaphor is regarded as dispensable, as it is by Boghossian and Budd, the result is a static account (Boghossian 2002). The version of the dynamic account that I am defending, in contrast, not only rejects the common assumption that the source of the metaphorical projection is human bodily movement; it questions the consensus that metaphorical projection is involved at all. I will suggest that music moves in a literal but non-spatial sense. The writers I discuss, notably Scruton and Budd, are primarily concerned with music rather than poetry or dance, but my discussion forms the basis of a treatment of all of these art forms.

Although he treats metre as an abstract and mathematical rather than a phenomenal feature of a sequence of sounds, Scruton recognizes the vital truth that rhythm is essentially dynamic—that it 'belongs not to number but to life ... [it is] the virtual energy that flows through the music, and which causes me to move with it in sympathy ... Beats do not [merely] follow one another; they ... breathe with a common life' (Scruton 1997, p. 35—my parenthetical addition).[9] These claims are absolutely correct, and express the dynamic and humanistic conception that I have been defending. To reiterate:

[9] See also Scruton (2008); here Scruton does distinguish felt beat from abstract metre.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

although in cases which I termed proto-rhythmic, such as waves and trains, and '"X" for Henry Flynt', listeners impose or project rhythm and stress onto pulses, common sense rightly says that in music or poetry, rhythm is primarily imparted by performers and apprehended—not projected—by listeners.

Scruton is right to reject Malcolm Budd's unacceptably static conception of rhythm, I believe. But the way that he develops his own contrasting position is questionable. He subscribes to the consensus that nothing relevant in the music literally moves, just as nothing in it is literally sad; musical experience involves importing a spatial framework, and organizing the auditory field in terms of position, movement and distance. These concepts do not literally apply to the sounds that we hear, he argues; rather they describe what we hear in sequential sounds, when we hear them as music (Scruton 2008). For Scruton, then, we literally hear sounds and silences, and through a process of imaginative, metaphorical perception, we hear life and movement in them. He thus interprets the basic claim defended in the present article—that movement is a fundamental conceptualization of music—through two further claims: that the movement in question is spatial, and that it is perceived metaphorically. (The first of these is an unreflective assumption; like most writers, Scruton would regard it as an analytic truth.)

I will argue against each of these claims; my suggestion is that because Scruton treats the movement in question as spatial, he has to regard it as perceived metaphorically. In order to make progress on the latter issue, clearly one must know something of the nature of metaphor—an intractable issue on which there has been extensive philosophical debate. However, it must surely be agreed that metaphor involves a primary and a secondary use—an origin and a target. To describe a tree as a human body swaying is to attribute properties of the human body (the metaphor's origin) to the tree (its target). My claim is that the human body is not the source of a metaphor of musical movement, because music and human movement are simultaneously conceptualized in terms of rhythmic movement. (This is not an argument against the static conception, but against any metaphorical view, or version thereof, whether dynamic or static.)

Scruton therefore understates the case when he claims that the musical phenomena that we group together under the rubric of rhythm have their counterparts in other areas of human activity, such as speech, dancing and physical labour (Scruton 2008). For

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

these are more than counterparts—they are the same musical/human phenomenon. Dance, poetry and music are conceptually interdependent in that rhythm is essential to each, and none can be understood independently of it. A piece of music can be in waltz time, or in dotted rhythm; someone can drum their fingers on the table or hammer a nail in waltz time, or in dotted rhythms. Rhythmic descriptions apply to categories or behaviour that are not immediately regarded as music, but are incipiently so. On Bali, groups of women with bamboo poles working on the same or adjacent containers pound the unhusked rice, creating complex rhythms while doing so. In contrast to work songs such as sea shanties, which accompany the work as opposed to being generated by it, this activity —like the finger-drumming and nail-hammering—is musi*cal*, but not music.

Contrast the ascription of rhythm with that of emotional qualities to music (a side issue that is nonetheless ubiquitous in the literature). A general capacity to ascribe emotions requires experience of human behaviour and reactions, but not experience of music; emotion-ascriptions to music are secondary compared with those to people. In contrast, in the case of rhythmic movement we do not project from a primary sense of rhythmic bodily movement, to a secondary sense of rhythmic musical movement, because the musical level has already been reached in describing human bodily movement as rhythmic. To understand rhythmic-movement ascriptions, it is necessary to grasp both musical-poetic and bodily applications; the description of human behaviour is not the primary description of which the musical description is secondary. Music and life are interfused; rhythm is an essentially musical feature of incipiently musical events or processes.

Some may discern an equivocation in the preceding paragraph. It began by contrasting the ascriptions of emotion and movement to music, but concluded by talking of 'rhythmic movement'; surely, however, the claim under consideration is not that the ascription of *rhythm* is metaphorical, but rather that the ascription of *movement* is? Human bodily movement may not have a unique or special status as the source of the metaphor, but—the response concludes—the source of the metaphor could be all kinds of spatial movement, of which one example is human bodily movement.

Is this objection well-founded? Does my argument against the metaphorical consensus rest on an equivocation of this kind? It is difficult to assess the implications of the interdependence of rhyth-

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9264.2011.00297.x

mic ascriptions to poetry, music, dance and bodily movement. In part, I believe, this is because it is so natural to talk of 'rhythmic movement', and hard to separate rhythm from motion. But clearly, further argument is required to vindicate the dynamic thesis that there is a primitive order underlying bodily movement and movement-in-sound (music and poetry)—viz. rhythmic order—an order that involves a non-spatial yet literal sense of movement. To elucidate the kind of movement in question, one must contest Scruton's assumption that the movement must be spatial.

There are two alternative models that I tentatively put forward. These focus on literal temporal movement, and non-travelling movement about a point. The latter is a spatial analogue of metrical movement—the sense in which, in every bar, we return to the fourth beat—which is therefore not literally spatial.

The claim of spatial movement has two parts: that there is an object, identifiable independently of its moving; and that that object changes location. Clearly there is no relevant such object in the case of music. However, there is such a thing as literal movement through time, and hence there can be literal movement in the absence of an object that is identifiable independent of its moving. 'Rapid' means both 'many events in a short period of time' and 'fast movement between two points in space'. 'Rapid fire' means either gunshots in quick succession, or—less usually—gunshots of high velocity. A rapid speech is normally one that is spoken fast and is over quickly—many vocal 'events' occur in a short space of time. The application of this point to music is obvious, and tempo does indeed seem to involve literal ascriptions of movement. A fast piece is one in which many notes occur in a short space of time. A slow piece can have rapid ornamentation, since if rapid notes are rightly heard as decorations of a basically slow melody, the piece is not literally fast; but there is a connection between tempo and frequency of notes, even if it is not direct. Rhythmic movement may possibly be described as literal movement through time; tempo is closely connected with rhythm, though attributions of momentum, for instance, do not obviously refer to movement through time.

It could be argued that the preceding examples do not show that there is literal movement through time, but we just use 'rapid' to mean 'fast movement' or 'of brief duration'. An alternative literalist account of rhythm appeals to a model that is *spatial but non-travelling*. It is not movement along a continuum, as pitch appears to be,

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
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but about a point, or back and forth, like a pendulum, or someone swinging their arms, or the contraction and dilation of the beating heart.[10] Rhythmic marching does not require travel, that is, movement to a new location, across a parade-ground for instance; marching on the spot could exhibit the same rhythm. This kind of repetitive bodily movement is the correlate of metrical movement, the returning to or passing through the beats of the bar such as 'and two' discussed earlier, so familiar to musicians but hard to describe—the sense in which we are always returning to the beginning of the bar.

This movement need not be conceived of spatially. To say, with Scruton, that rhythmic movement in music is 'shared' with bodily movement encourages assimilation to the wrong kind of (spatial) movement; it would be truer to say that many human activities involve rhythmic movement, *which is embodied or expressed in, but conceptually distinct from, spatial (bodily) movement.* Familiar kinds of movement—temporal processes such as a rise or fall in the stock exchange index—do not imply a change in location, yet they involve dead metaphors. Hence my claim that music is an art of temporal process.[11]

Although I am not totally confident in endorsing it, I believe that this article has shown the possibility of a literalist standpoint. Certainly, to hear music, poetry and dance as movement is a fundamental way of experiencing and conceiving them, and it may not involve metaphorical projection.[12]

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[10] Budd (2003, pp. 221–2) makes the claim about contraction and dilation.

[11] A claim defended by Davies (1994, p. 236).

[12] Thanks to Nicholas Bannan, Stewart Candlish, Berys Gaut, Philippa Byers, Jason Gaiger, Peter Goldie, Martyn Harry, Matthew Kieran, David Lloyd, Louise Richardson, Roger Squires, Nick Zangwill. Thanks also to audiences at Music Department Seminars at Columbia, New York; Durham; UWA, Perth; Bath; the BSA Annual Conference, Oxford 2009; and the Aristotelian Society.

Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
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Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. CXI, *Part* 1
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