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RHYTHM IN THEATRICAL ART

By

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ABSTRACT

RHYTHM IN THEATRICAL ART

By

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Rhythm in art is the perception of the relationship of constituent part to part and part to whole in the work of art. Musicologists separate objective (written) rhythm from subjective (rhythm). This study examines the three rhythmic strata of the objective rhythms in theatrical art: the rhythms of language, character change, and episodes. The study relies upon research and comparisons in musicology, linguistics, and experimental psychology. Practical examples from King Lear, Pinter's Landscape, Feydeau's A Flea in Her Ear, as well as other plays, illustrate the process of analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

On a given afternoon two directors are working. One is a band director, the other is directing a play. The band director tells a drummer, "Let's stop and work on this rhythm." The drummer knows quite clearly what is meant. First, the drummer and band director share a common language and understanding of rhythm. The band director may take the tempo of the passage very slowly so that the drummer can effectively execute the relationships between the notes and perform the pattern created by the composer. The incorrect performance of the rhythm would lead to the ruination and possible destruction of the structure of the piece being played.

The theatrical director tells an actor, "Let's stop and work on this rhythm." The actor may have difficulty knowing what is meant. First, the actor and director may not share a common language and understanding of rhythm. Does the director actually mean pace (tempo)? Does the director mean the transition from one motivational unit or 'beat' to another? Is the rhythm of the text, verse or prose, the purpose behind stopping? Or is something else meant? If so, how is it identified? In the meantime the drummer has satisfactorily mastered the rhythm of the passage in question, meanwhile the director and actor may still be working out where to start.

This is not due to a lack of materials or understanding of what rhythm is and how it works in art. But as musicologist Paul Creston pointed out in his book on rhythm that while the literature about rhythm is voluminous, the materials have not been collected and coordinated.[1] In theatrical literature, the place of rhythm is reported as being important and should not be ignored. Nevertheless actual discussion of rhythm may range from a bare

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[1]Paul Creston, Principles of Rhythm (New York: Franco Colombo, 1961) iii.

mention to a chapter.[2] More, there is currently only one book devoted to rhythm in drama.[3]

There may be many reasons for this situation. Most theatrical writers, including Ms. George, have largely ignored the rhythmic studies performed in the sciences, including experimental psychology and the speech sciences as well as work in musicology. Secondly, as linguist Richard Cureton points out, "Rhythm is not one-dimensional."[4] There are many levels of rhythms that interconnect and are perceived on differing levels. Cureton argues, "... all complex rhythms are inherently hierarchical and interactional: their expressive power derives from the intersecting perceptual forms that they present on *many* levels of structure within the expressive medium."[5] The lack of recognition and identification of the differing levels of rhythm also causes confusion.

This study proposes to identify the various rhythmic strata in theatrical art. This introduction serves to define rhythm as a whole, in art, and as part of human experience. The rhythmic strata in theatrical art will be defined and introduced.

Rhythm in art is the perception of the relationship of constituent part to part and part to whole in the work of art. As will be shown, the existence of rhythm lies in its perception. Rhythmitician Charles Elliott writes, "...recent research is showing that rhythmicity is likely basic to human perception and that an understanding of the nature of rhythm may be the key to an understanding of the human perceptual process."[6] The

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[2]Rhythm is briefly defined in John W. Kirk, and Ralph A. Bellas, The Art of Directing (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1985), but receives an entire chapter in Constantin Stanislavski, Building a Character (London: Methuen, 1950).

[3]Kathleen George, Rhythm in Drama (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Press, 1980).

[4]Richard D. Cureton, "Rhythm: A Multilevel Analysis," Style 19 (1985): 254.

[5]Cureton 244.

[6]Charles A. Elliott, "Rhythmic Phenomena - Why the Fascination?"Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes, ed. James R. Evans, and Manfred Clynes (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thompson Publishing, 1986) 5.

interrelationships of part to part and part to whole is the basis for James Joyce's aesthetic of rhythm at the end of A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man, "Rhythm [. . .] is the first formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole or of an esthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the esthetic whole of which it is a part."[7]

Thus, rhythm in art is the perception of the relationship of constituent part to part and of part to whole. The act of perceiving rhythm means the ability to sense groups and patterns. The relationship of constituent part to part and part to whole indicates the structural, organizational basis of rhythm. A rhythm in art may be played at various tempi (or at various sizes in the spatial arts), but the structural interrelationships remain intact. Fridman establishes, "The active principle of rhythm is its organizing function, whether in music or articulated language. . . "[8]

Rhythm comes from the ancient Greek word 'rhythmos,' a word usually interpreted as 'flow.' Historian Werner Jaeger points out that 'flow' is a secondary definition of 'rhythmos.' Jaeger notes the use of 'rhythmos' to indicate stillness, including Prometheus being bonded in rhythm. Jaeger concludes, "Rhythm then is that which imposes bonds on movement and confines the flux of things . . ."[9] By imposing a bond on movement and confining flux, rhythm provides structure and organization to what would otherwise be chaos. Thus, from an early date the structural basis of rhythm was recognized.

Modern definitions of rhythm can vary in wording, but they do indicate common features:

1. "5. Mus. a. That feature of musical composition which depends on the

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[7]James Joyce, A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man (New York: Penguin, 1956) 206.

[8]Ruth Fridman, "Proto-Rhythms: Nonverbal to Language and Musical Acquisition," The Relationship of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication ed. Mary Ritchie Key (Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1980) 78.

[9]Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945) 126.

systematic grouping of notes according to their duration. b. Kind of structure as determined by the arrangement of such groups.
6. Art. Due correlation and interdependence of parts, producing a harmonious whole.
7. gen. Movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions." [O.E.D.][10]

2. "Rhythm, in music, is the organization of duration in ordered movement." and "Accent is the very life of rhythm." [Creston][11]

3. "Rhythm is time bounded regularly [. . .] in poetry and music it is the regularly recurring accent." [Hallock-Greenewalt][12]

4. "Rhythm is the structure of intervals in a succession of events."[Allen][13]

5. "Rhythm, which means temporal patterning, is a concept based on motor functioning."[Martin][14]

6. Rhythm is " . . .the organization of [. . .] time relationships."[Lundin][15]

7. Rhythm is ". . . the organizational and dynamic force in music." [Radocy and Boyle][16]

8. ". . . rhythm thus may be defined as a **response** to certain properties of the sound sequences (the music)."[Gabrielsson][17]

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[10]"Rhythm," Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed.

[11]Creston 1, 28.

[12]Mary Hallock-Greenwalt, Pulse in Verbal Rhythm (N.p.: Philadelphia, 1905) 3.

[13]George D. Allen, "The Location of Rhythmic Stress Beats in English: An Experimental Study I," Language and Speech 15 (1972): 72.

[14]James G. Martin "Rhythmic (Hierarchical) Versus Serial Structure in Speech and Other Behavior," Psychological Review 79 (1972): 487.

[15]R.W. Lundin, An Objective Psychology of Music (New York: Ronald Press, 1967) 111.

[16]R.E. Radocy, and J.D. Boyle, Psychological Foundations of Musical Behavior (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1979) 69.

[17]Alf Gabrielsson, "Rhythm in Music," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans, and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishing, 1986) 139.

Theatrical practitioners have variously defined rhythm, but share many characteristics with the definitions listed above:

1. ". . . rhythm exists as it is perceived or felt by the audience." Also, rhythm is perceivable in various changes and that " . . .there is some order to the changes. . ." [Kathleen George][18]

2. "Rhythm is the quantitative relationship of units -- of movement, of sound -- to the unit lengths agreed upon in a given tempo and measure." [Stanislavski][19]

3. " . . . the orderly, measurable changes of all the elements comprised in a work of art -- provided that all those changes progressively stimulate the attention of the spectator and lead invariably to the final aim of the artist." [Boleslavsky][20]

4. "Rhythm in anything can be defined simply as stress pattern, as organized repetition of emphasis." [Sam Smiley][21]

5. Rhythm is "regular or irregular recurrence of something in the flow of a scene or performance." [John Kirk][22]

6. ". . . rhythm is a regularly recurring accent." Also, ". . . the individual has the tendency to collect the beats into units or groups." [Dean and Carra][23]

7. Rhythm is the same thing as tempo. A person telling an excited story will have a speedy delivery and a speedy rhythm. [Robert Cohen and John Harrop][24]

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[18]George 9.

[19]Constantin Stanislavski, Building a Character (London: Methuen, 1950) 183.

[20]Richard Boleslavsky, Acting: The First Six Lessons (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1933) 112.

[21]Sam Smiley, Playwriting: The Structure of Action (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 140.

[22]John W. Kirk, and Ralph A. Bellas, The Art of Directing (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1985) 231.

[23]Alexander Dean, and Lawrence Carra, Fundamentals of Play Directing, 4th ed.(New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980) 222.

[24]Robert Cohen, and John Harrop, Creative Play Direction (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974) 155-157.

The various definitions from the O.E.D. point to the structural interrelationships of rhythm in talking about "systematic groupings" and the structure created by the arrangement of those groups. In Creston's definition (#2), 'organization' only makes sense in that one perceives the interrelationships of part to part. Further, Creston points out that the agent of the perception is the use of stress or accents. There again, accents may only be perceived relative to unaccented or unstressed parts and to other accents and stresses. Allen and Martin (#4 and #5) both point to structure and patterns (which indicate structure) as features of rhythm. Finally, Lundin, Radocy, and Boyle agree on the organizational elements of rhythm. Organization is recognized through relationships inherent in the structure.

The definitions from the theatrical practitioners contain many fine elements (although Cohen is unhelpful in #7 by confusing rhythm with tempo). It will be shown below how rhythm exists in its perception, thus needing a perceptor. George (#1) mistakenly necessitates the audience for the perceptor, forgetting that at some level the actor, director, designer, and playwright himself is also an audience for the script. She does recognize the organizing, structural element of rhythm. And although Stanislavski's work deals more with the performance-sided question of tempo, his definition of rhythm points to the relationship of part to part and part to whole, as does Boleslavsky's definition. However, to say rhythm is simply a stress pattern is simplistic and incomplete.

Often rhythm is confused with other terms because of the irresistable human desire to perceive rhythms. Such confusion leads to imprecision. Historically, as our word 'rhythm' comes from the Greek 'rhythmos,' likewise our words 'cycle' comes from the Greek word for 'circle.' Thus, historically, rhythm should not be confused with an on-going cycle.[25] A pioneer in the discovery of what rhythm is in terms of human psychology and perception, R.H. Stetson notes that rhythm is much different from the regularity

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[25]Elliott 8.

associated with pulse, cycles, and periodicity. Stetson writes, "It is sheer assumption that regularity is characteristic of 'pure' rhythm . . ."[26] Stetson also proved through experimentation (despite the mythic belief otherwise) that heartbeat and neural discharges are not in any way connected to rhythmic perception.[27] In esthetics, Carl Seashore agreed that there is a fundamental difference between rhythm and periodicity. Seashore argues, "It is the internal organization of the pattern that makes rhythm in the rhythmic arts . . ." Periodic events, like a clock ticking and a heart beating, are not organized. Therefore, they are not inherently rhythmic.[28] Science has turned from looking for a 'biological clock' to discovering the 'oscillator,' which emphasizes embracing the difference between rhythm and periodicity.[29] As Elcanon Isaacs points out, "Rhythm takes place in time, but time is not rhythm."[30]

The difference between rhythm and periodicity also points to the fact that rhythm is not only an object that provides stimulus. Rhythm exists as the response of an organism through the act of perception.[31] A major component of rhythm is the act of perception. Linguist William Morrison Patterson argues, "All the phenomena of rhythm can be explained by the facts of perception."[32] Above, Gabrielsson defines rhythm in terms of

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[26]R.H. Stetson, "A Motor Theory of Rhythm and Discrete Succession I," Psychological Review 12 (1905): 252.

[27]Stetson 258.

[28]Carl E. Seashore, Psyhology of Music (New York: McGraw- Hill, 1938) 147.

[29]Fredrick M. Brown, "Emerging Variable," Rhythmic Aspects of Behavior ed. Fredrick M. Brown, and R. Curtis Graeber (Hillsdales, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1982) 10.

[30]Elcanon Isaacs, "The Nature of the Rhythmic Experience," Psychological Review 27(1920): 276.

[31]Lundin 93.

[32]William Morrison Patterson, The Rhythm of Prose: An Experimental Investigation of Individual Difference in the Sense of Rhythm (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916) 29.

response, which is possible only in terms of rhythm being perceived. Evidently the perception of rhythm in humans is almost constant. Rhythm plays a large role in directing the brain's attention efficiently and hierarchically. Rhythm does this by providing a combination of continuity and framework in which to perceive and organize stimuli.[33] Elliott sums up the near-constancy of rhythmic perception with this note, "Apparently, the human mind assumes that a rhythmic principle operates in the whole of man's environment."[34]

Another pioneer in rhythm perception, Thaddeus L. Bolton discovered that the perception of simple rhythms demands a sequence of impressions in which the impressions occur between 1.0 seconds and .1 seconds. At the faster tempo, events seem to become a long, continuous event. (The transmission of films takes advantage of this.) At the slower tempo, events are too dis-connected to seem patterned, and thus, rhythmic.[35] The near-constancy of rhythmic perception allows for the perception of rhythms where none truly exist. Stetson, working with early telephonic technology, had subjects listen to electrically controlled equi-distant sounds at objectively equal volume. Nevertheless, subjects quickly heard iambs, trochees, and other stress patterns. Stetson, among other observations, concluded, "Because of the influence of the rhythm process, the observer does not actually hear the beats where they actually occur."[36] Bolton, in similar work, notes that it takes conscious effort on the part of the subjects not to hear rhythm in objectively identical sounds.[37]

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[33]Hilary Buxton, "Auditory Lateralization: An Effect of Rhythm," Brain and Language 18 (1983): 254.

[34]Elliott 5.

[35]Thaddeus L. Bolton, "Rhythm," American Journal of Psychology 6 (1894): 237.

[36]Stetson 308.

[37]Bolton 206-7.

Patterson theorizes that since there is no absolute or objective time, observers necessarily have illusions in regard to temporal size or duration, and thus rhythm.[38] An effect of this process is that the mind will re-arrange actually heard events into sensible patterns. In a musical concert ". . .all the notes will be more or less out of time, but the listener must build a conceptual structure which adequately represents the rhythmic relationships between them."[39]

Thus the process of rhythmic perception is two-fold. First, observers tend to perceive rhythm in periodic sounds, thus lending rhythmic grouping to that which is not rhythmic. Secondly, observers tend to "help" non-periodic events into a sensible structure, as at a musical performance. Observers need to consciously work **not** to perform these mental tasks. Such is the near-constancy of rhythmic perception.

The perceptual center for language seems to be neurologically tied to the center for rhythm perception.[40] The ability to perceive simple rhythms seems fundamental to human experience. Entrainment, the ability to act in behavioral rhythms with others, has been observed in infants within twenty minutes of birth.[41] A child's ability to perceive rhythm is limited and develops as the child matures. Charles Sears discovered in experimentation that children needed simple, pronounced time divisions at a lively tempo. Longer, more complex rhythms were difficult for children to understand and reproduce.[42] In more recent years, Payne and Holzman have discovered that children need rhythmic processing to

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[38]Patterson 33.

[39]H. Christopher Longuet-Higgins, and Christopher S. Lee, The Perception of Musical Rhythms," Perception 11(1982): 115.

[40]Charles E. Hoequist, Jr., "The Perceptual Center and Rhythm Categories," Language and Speech 26 (1983): 375.

[41]William S. Condon, "Communication: Rhythm and Structure," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans, and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1986) 68.

[42]Charles H. Sears, Studies in Rhythm, diss., Clark University, 1902 (Worcester,Mass.: Clark University, 1902) 5.

comprehend speech. Their findings ". . . suggest that memory for rhythm per se, at least in regards to accent or stress, is a major factor in memory for speech."[43] Moreover, children with problems of rhythm perception, but not mentally retarded, hearing impaired or emotionally disturbed exhibit reading impairment. Possibly this is because of "deficits in basic perceptual processing" in temporal pattern recognition.[44]

In regularly functioning adults, rhythmic perception regularly assists in the simple comprehension of language. Studies show the rhythm of language exists at the perceptual level and not at the acoustic level. As an acoustical event, most speakers "warp time" at the end of a "breath group." Consequently at the perceptual level, the mind "de-warps" the acoustical signal.[45] Kelly likens this process of mental "sharpening" in maximizing stress differences and groupings to the visual "sharpening" the brain performs when engaged in seeing.[46]

In theatrical art there are three basic rhythmic strata. These rhythmic strata have analogs in music and these analogs will be used to introduce each stratum. Music is a helpful comparative because of the clarity it provides in rhythmic discussions. Music is the only realm of behavior in which a regular, quantitative system of rhythm has been developed.[47] Also useful is the methodology developed in musicology that separates the

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[43]M. Carr Payne, Jr., and Thomas G. Holzman, "Rhythm as a Factor in Memory," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans, and Mansfield Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1986) 45.

[44]Robert F. McGivern, Chris Berka, Martin L. Languis, and Stephen Chapman, "Detection of Deficits in Temporal Pattern Discrimination Using the Seashore Rhythm Test in Young Children with Reading Impairments," Journal of Learning Disabilities 24 (1991): 61, 58.

[45]Andre'-Pierre Bengueral, and Janet D'Arcy, "Time Warping and the Perception of Rhythm in Speech," Journal of Phonetics 14 (1986): 244, 245.

[46]Michael Kelly, "Rhythm and Language Change in English," Journal of Memory and Language 28 (1989): 703-706.

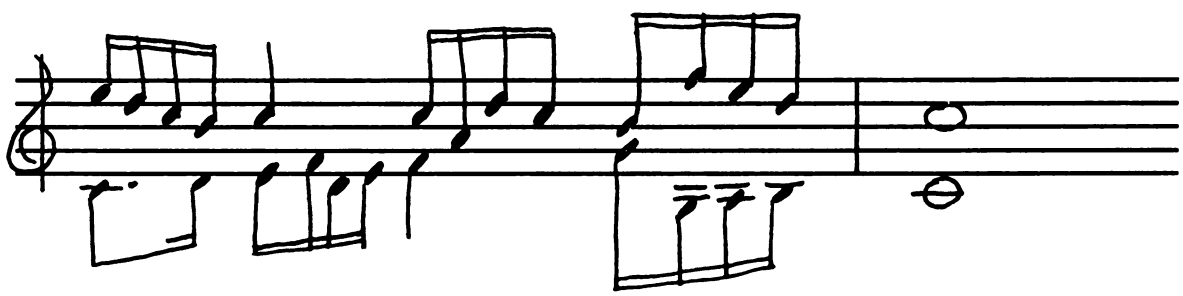
[47]Stetson 253.

subjective rhythm observed by one listening to a performance and the objective rhythm notated by a composer.[48]

This study will examine the objective rhythms - the rhythms notated by the playwright and indicated in the published text - not subjective rhythm of performance. As there are possibilities of interpretation of harmonies and rhythms in music, so is it also in theatrical art. The purpose of this study is to identify basic principles and how those principles act in theatrical art. The examples are to aid identification and understanding.

The three basic rhythmic strata in theatrical art are the rhythm of language, the rhythm of character change, and the rhythm of episodes. These rhythms roughly compare to basic/simple rhythm, harmonic rhythm, and phrasal rhythm in music.

The basic/simple rhythm of music is simply the rhythm of the notes as sounded. Sometimes this is known as the "beat." This classification can confuse. Take for example this brief musical example:[49]



The "beat" might be perceived as the quarter-note(♩), but the sounded notes provide the flow of sixteenth-notes (♬). This compares to the basic rhythmic unit of theatrical art -- the word. As Wenk notes, ". . . rhythm is a natural (and necessary ?) feature of speech . . ."[50]

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[48]Seashore 138.

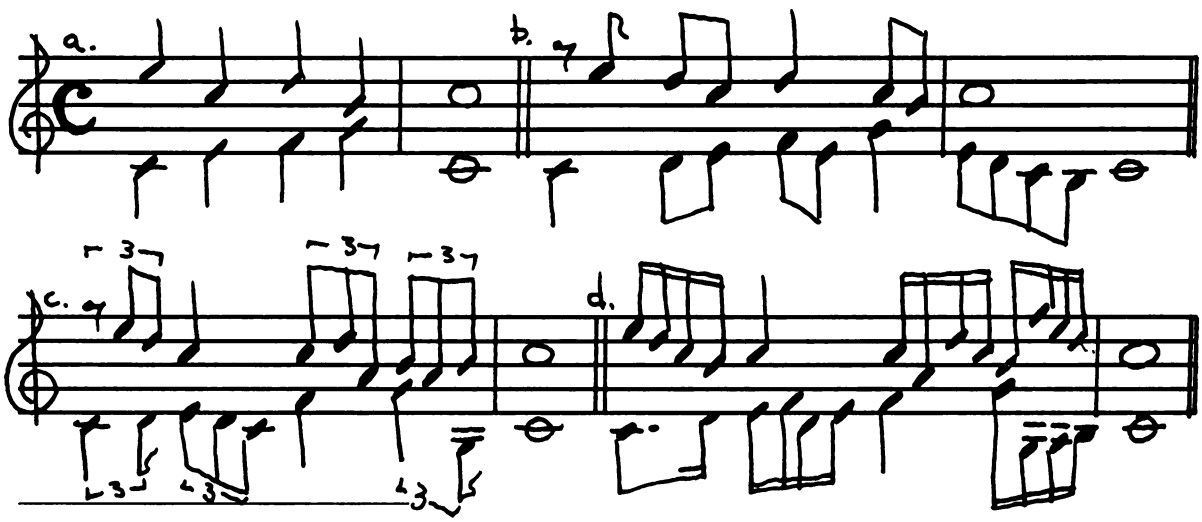
[49]Kent Wheeler Kennan, Counterpoint example Chap. 6, #32d.

[50]B.J. Wenk, "Speech Rhythms in Second Language Acquisition," Language and Speech 28 (1985):170.

Rhythm exists in language hierarchically from syllables into words into phrases into clauses into sentences into paragraphs, etc.[51] In poetic metrics, the basic "beat" is the foot which is made of two syllables, usually a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables. Studies indicate that this alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables may be a human preference.[52] Even in prose rhythm strong syllables appear in the speech stream at even intervals creating the possibility of rhythmic perception.[53]

The study of poetic metrics, prose rhythm, and the rhythm of language has a long history. The rhythm of language, the rhythm of the word in theatrical art will be the first rhythmic stratum to be identified and discussed in this study.

The next stratum of rhythm in music is harmonic rhythm. The brief examples below all posses identical harmonic rhythm despite obvious differences in the basic/simple rhythm notated:[54]



[51]Cureton 245.

[52]Michael H. Kelly, and David C. Rubin, "Natural Rhythmic Patterns in English Verse: Evidence from Child Counting-Out Rhymes," Journal of Memory and Language 27(1988): 726.

[53]Fredrick Erickson, "Timing and Context in Everyday Discourse: Implications for the Study of Referential and Social Meaning," Children's Oral Communication Skills, ed. W. Patrick Dickson (New York: Academic Press, 1981) 257.

[54]Kennan, Chap 6, Ex. 32 a-d.

The harmonic rhythm for each example is thus:  .

The comparable rhythmic stratum in theatrical art is the rhythm of character change. Through the course of speaking dialogue (the rhythmic stratum of language), a character may shift the topic, change methods of trying to achieve some goal, make a discovery, or consciously not change (which may be considered a discovery of sorts). Each type of character change provides another type of rhythmic perception. Like harmonic rhythm, it can be subtle and disputable in its particulars, but its workings are clear. Such changes in conversation have been observed scientifically. Different durational structures in conversation in moving from 'sub-goal' to 'sub-goal' create a larger rhythmic structure than the words used themselves. The 'moves' or transitions from sub-goal to sub-goal are observable and become the markers by which rhythm may be perceived. The rhythm created by these transitions depends on the structure of the plan or 'goal.'[55]

The study of the rhythm of character change has a shorter history than the rhythm, yet it has become the hallmark of the Stanislavski system and used to create the pieces which connect to become the through-line of a character. The discussion of the rhythm of character change will be the second part of this study.

The third rhythmic stratum in music is phrasal rhythm. Phrasal rhythm leads to the larger structural considerations of a piece of music. Phrasal rhythm encompasses the interrelationships of notes to create phrases, the interrelationships of phrases, and the hierarchy of phrases into motives into themes into sections into movements into the larger work. Creston argues this occurs because the perception of rhythm of a group of pulses is not limited by each measure, but by combinations of measures.[56] Cureton uses the first

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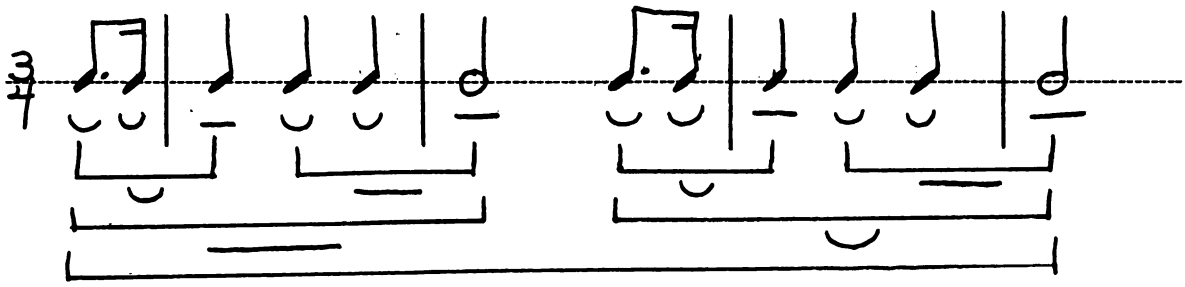
[55]John O. Greene, and Joseph N. Cappella, "Cognition and Talk: The Relationship of Semantic Units to Temporal Patterns of Fluency in Spontaneous Speech, " Language and Speech 29 (1986): 155.

[56]Creston 4-5.

few measures of "The Star Spangled Banner" to illustrate how smaller groups combine to create larger groups or phrases:[57]



Thus the opening of the song has various levels of perceptual shapes.

Musicologist Joseph Machlis describes at length the phrasal rhythm of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.[58] The basic rhythm of "three shorts and a long" is the essential tool used to tie the symphony into a cohesive rhythmic whole. The basic sequence is repeated in many melodic forms and at many tempi, but the structural integrity of the basic rhythm is recognizable throughout.

The theatrical rhythmic analog is the rhythm of episodes. The various units that make up a play have been variously identified. Yet character changes make up episodes in the characters' lives. These episodes join together into dramatic sequences and/or scenes. These notated scenes may have numerous "French" scenes within them. The various scenes/sequences of a play combine into an act, the acts into a play. Literary critics Charles and Elaine Hallett argue that a scene is usually a temporal/spatial unit of action "in which tensions build toward a significant moment and then taper off."[59] Ignoring the published scene markings in Shakespeare's work, the Halletts examine the plays in terms of

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[57]Cureton 244.

[58]Joesph Machlis, The Enjoyment of Music, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977) 276-281.

[59]Charles A. Hallett, and Elaine S. Hallett, Analyzing Shakespeare's Action: Scene Versus Sequence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 1.

sequences which they define as ". . .that unit of action in which Shakespeare raises a single dramatic question and answers it."[60]

The third section of this study will examine the rhythm of episodes, using a study of Shakespeare's structure as well as Harold Pinter's Landscape and George Feydeau's Flea in Her Ear, among others.

Rhythm in art is the perception of the relationship of constituent part to part and part to whole. These relationships are inherent in the structure of the art work. The perception of rhythm is near-constant. The perception of rhythm works on various levels or strata. In theatrical art those rhythmic strata are the rhythm of language, the rhythm of character change, and the rhythm of episodes. Each of these strata of rhythm will be discussed more fully in the study to follow.

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[60]Hallett 3, 7.

CHAPTER I

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RHYTHM OF LANGUAGE

Above we gave an example of a director working with an actor on a given afternoon. The actor stops the scene and asks to work on the rhythm of the language of the scene. As Charles Sears noted, "Everyone can express rhythm in some form, but not everyone can express it in all forms."[61] The actor feels that the rhythm of the language should be important because he guesses that the playwright chooses to write a speech or scene in a particular prose or verse style to establish the intended point at that moment of the play.[62] What will the actor and the director do to determine the rhythm of the language? What is it? How does it work? This chapter will define the rhythm of language, discuss coordinate terms like meter and tempo, and discuss the workings of verse and prose rhythm and how objective analysis may reveal possible meanings.

As noted earlier, rhythm in art is the perception of the relationship of constituent part to part and part to whole in the work of art. Rhythm exists in the cognition of patterns and groups. Experimental psychologists M. Carr Payne, Jr. and Thomas G. Holzman write, "Psychologically, rhythm represents perception of a series of stimuli not as individual items but a group of stimuli." Also as noted earlier, this depends on the relative intensity of specific elements of the stimuli group (accent), the absolute and relative

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[61]Sears 18.

[62]George T. Wright, Shakespeare's Metrical Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 285.

durations of the members, and the temporal spacing between elements.[63] Spain says more simply that rhythm exists in the perception of proportion.[64] This ability to perceive rhythm is irresistible. "No series of impressions is possible that cannot in some way be comprehended as rhythmic."[65] Language instructor K. H. Albrow defines the rhythm of language more specifically in writing:

> The features of greater and lesser prominence, together with features of duration, which have been referred to in Section I [discussion of pitch, prominence, duration, etc.], are organised into patterns which constitute the RHYTHM of English. The UNIT of rhythm consists of one prominent syllable, or more than one syllable grouped in such a way that there is always a syllable of greater prominence to be apprehended initially in the group, plus a further syllable or syllables of lesser prominence.66

The notions of greater and lesser duration and of greater and lesser prominence necessarily depend on apprehension of the relationships of the constituent parts of the word and the relationships of the parts to the whole. Thus the rhythm of language is the basic stratum in the hierarchy of rhythm in theatrical art.

Evidence indicates that rhythm perception and language skills are intimately connected in the brain. This seems to be true even from birth. An infant's first sounds are rhythmic and may be notated as such:

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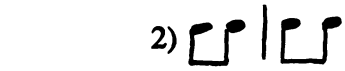
[63]Payne, and Holzman 42.

[64]Delbert Spain, Shakespeare Sounded Soundly (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1988) 27.

[65]Patterson 33.

[66]K.H. Albrow, The Rhythm and Intonation of Spoken English Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching Paper 9 (London: University College London and Longmans Green and Co., 1968) 8.

1)  [iambic?]

2) 

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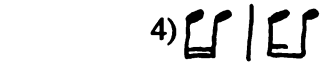
4) 

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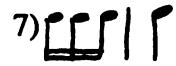
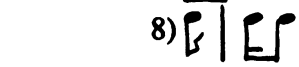
6)  [iambic?]

7) 

8) 

[67]

Some considered that rhythm might be tied to right and left brain phenomena and tested rhythm in relation to handedness. Again it was discovered that rhythm is tied to language centers in the brain.[68] Studies with retarded readers show that the inability to remember auditory rhythm was connected to the inability to read well.[69] Experiments also show rhythm contributes to the identification of unseen speakers.[70]

The connection of rhythm and language in the brain has provided one of the stumbling blocks to researchers working to implement 'automatic speech recognition' in computers. An illiterate child can listen to a sentence and repeat it aloud without understanding what was said. A phonetician can transcribe an utterance in an unknown language. However attempts at automatic speech recognition have largely failed due to the lack of specific knowledge of the coordination of speech and rhythm information by the brain.[71] Recent work suggests one of the reasons for the difficulty is the ability of the brain to anticipate language information based on the brain's ability to apprehend language rhythms.

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[67] Fridman 80-81.

[68]N. R. Ibbotson, and John Morton, "Rhythm and Dominance," Cognition 9(1981):134-135.

[69]Payne, and Holzman 48-49.

[70]Wim A. Van Dommelen, "The Contribution of Speech Rhythm and Pitch to Speaker Recognition," Language and Speech 30 (1987) 325.

[71]James G. Martin, "Aspects of Rhythmic Structure in Speech Perception," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic, and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishing, 1986) 79.

A single syllable spoken as one syllable is self-sufficient in the language information it carries. However, the syllable as part of a continuous utterance contains its own information as well as information from other syllables, both spoken and yet-to-be-spoken. Also the information of the one syllable is also contained in past and future syllables. Thus listeners do not perceive segments individually, and speakers do not produce segments that way. Both language production and perception depend on the ability to perceive rhythmic patterns to coordinate rhythmic information and thus achieve communication.[72]

Experimental psychologist and linguist James Martin notes that syllabic accent is one of the tools of communicating rhythmic information in syllables. This tool seems to depend in English on the alternation of relatively strong and weak accents. Martin writes this sentence, "The window the ball the boy threw hit broke." Then he comments:

> Possibly sentences like this are rarely spoken because they are syntactically difficult, but another reason might be that they are rhythmically awkward and hence harder to pronounce in a natural way. In this case the last four words provide four stressed syllables in a row, a rare sequence in natural speech.[73]

Martin hints, but does not mention that one possibility for the rarity of a string of stressed syllables is that such an utterance would thwart the anticipatory by-product of rhythmic perception. Stress, then, is a tool to aid communication.

SECTION 2

RHYTHMIC CLUES IN VARIOUS TEXTS

The question of finding meaning inherent in the rhythm of a text -- verse and prose alike -- will be considered in this section. English scholar Marina Tarlinskaja argues the very structure of verse lends itself to giving meaning. Verse either reaffirms anticipation or

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[72]Martin, "Aspects" 96.

[73]Martin, "Aspects" 83.

circumvents anticipation. A fine poet exploits anticipation to convey meaning.[74] She states explicitly in another article:

> There is nothing mysterious in such a direct correlation between verse rhythm and the character of a personage. To make an active, dynamic person speak in correspondence with his nature, the poet builds his speech syntactically and rhythmically in such a way that it has a potential to move quickly and energetically in a single stream.[75]

For Tarlinskaja poets have two chief means to provide semantic function through line rhythm. The first is to place usually stressed words on metrically weak positions. The second is to place usually unstressed words on metrically strong positions.[76] To prove her thesis Tarlinskaja made "stress profiles" (a percentage of the occurrence of preferentially stressed syllables in the metrically strong position) of 26 characters from a wide range of Shakespeare's plays. In strictly metered ("canonized") verse the stress profile is as high as 85%. In less strictly metered ("decanonized") verse the profile may be somewhat lower than 75%. Generally in the plays the heroes tend to have more canonized verse and villains more decanonized verse. As an example, Tarlinskaja provides the stress profiles for Brutus and Cassius from Julius Caesar (with a percentage for each of the five strong positions in an iambic line):

Brutus	61.7 / 80.9 / 67.7 / 72 / 86
Cassius	58.6 / 78.7 / 70.2 / 69.5 / 87.9.[77]

Tarlinskaja concludes Cassius tends to have more decanonized verse. This reflects his impulsive temper. She also notes that the two men are rhythmically polarized.

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[74]Marina Tarlinskaja, "Rhythm and Meaning: Rhythmical Figures in English Iambic Pentameter, their Grammar, and their Links with Semantics," Style 21 (1987):1.

[75]Marina Tarlinskaja, "Rhythmical Differentiation of Shakespeare's Dramatic Personae," Language and Style 17 (1984): 294.

[76]Tarlinskaja, "Rhythm and Meaning" 2.

[77]Tarlinskaja, "Rhythmical Differentiation" 293 -294.

Tarlinskaja also argues that a character's rhythm may develop and evolve over the course of the play. She notes that Othello's verse becomes increasingly decanonized as the play continues. Tarlinskaja concludes the downward spiral of Othello's passion is matched by and communicated through the rhythm of his verse.[78]

There are numerous works that explain clearly and thoroughly Shakespeare's verse.[79] However, it would be useful to show some rhythmic variations within the iambic meter. There are numerous rhythmic possibilities tied to the free use of the construction of the verse line from two half-lines. These include the epic caesura, the introduction of midline pauses, shared lines. Another simple variation of the verse line is the so-called 'headless' line.

Shakespeare uses the epic caesura to develop the traditional pentameter line constructed from the joining of two half-lines. An example is "Lag of / a brother? / Why bastard? Wherefore base?" [King Lear 1.2.6.][80] Shakespeare uses this construction on an average of once every 38 lines throughout his known plays and once every 20 lines from Twelfth Night through Tempest. The epic caesura here allows a feminine ending at the half line. Shakespeare maintains the meter, but also adds variety.

The use of epic caesura leads to the possibility of pauses at the mid-line break, particularly in cases where a sentence ends in the mid-line as often occurs in late plays. It might be thought that the addition of a pause will affect the rhythm of a line. This is not necessarily the case. Wright notes:

> one or more pauses may occur in midline, but to the trained ear what counts is that the pattern of alternation which is structurally essential to the line will be resumed after each pause [. . .] [An] actor may make a pause of some length after the fourth

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[78]Tarlinskaja, "Rhythmical Differentiation" 298 - 299.

[79]Spain, Wright, et al.

[80]Wright 165 - 166.

> syllable, but the iambic pattern of the line is not disturbed, only suspended. This capacity for internal delay distinguishes poetic form. . .[81]

Shared lines are another form of the epic caesura. Instead of a pause taken by a speaker, the single line is split by the jump in speakers. Often the shared line indicates the completion of a natural line by two speakers, working as a "hinge" between two speakers. Wright uses the following:

> Laertes. It may be death
>
> King. Let's further think of this. [Hamlet. 4.7.148.][82]

Unrelated to these variations of epic caesura is Shakespeare's use of the 'headless' line which omits the first 'weak' syllable. Often this line variation is used to indicate impatience or a preemptory tone, thus:

> "^ Where the devil should this Romeo be?" [Romeo and Juliet 2.4.1.]
>
> "^ Jailer, take him to thy custody." [Comedy of Errors 1.1.155.][83]

Shakespeare also exploited the developing nature of his language and its variable pronunciation of words. Thus a single word may be used differently in a single line:

> "As fi / re drives / out fire, / so pity pity" [Julius Ceaser 3.1.171.][84]

It might be thought that syllabic ambiguity might equal rhythmic ambiguity. Actually, this is analogous to the dotted-eighth note/sixteenth note pattern in music. This rhythmic figure may be played in a variety of ways dependent upon where it's placed, the genre of the music, and how it's used. This makes the actual figure no less rhythmic than

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[81]Wright 3 -4.

[82]Wright 102.

[83]Wright 175.

[84]Wright 156.

any other. Syllabic ambiguity seems to assist the expressive nature of the verse. For Wright, Shakespeare's tendency to write ten syllable lines with eleven or twelve syllables that might be elided " . . . is to crowd the air with meanings only half-spoken, partly concealed. The hypermetrical half-syllables imply that, just as the line contains more in the way of syllables than the meter promises, so too in the meanings conveyed by the words there is more than meets the ear."[85] Likewise Attridge feels the use of indeterminate and ambiguous syllables provides meaning.[86]

The meter of prose may also found to be complex, but its rhythms can also provide clues to meaning. In English, prose rhythm developed from the literary traditions stemming from Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry, genres that closely resembled each other.[87] In Old English, the rhythmic tendency was trochaic. For example in the account of the murder of King Cynewulf, the thanes "ofslaegen" ("off slain") the King. By contrast we now tend toward iambic phrasing ("killed off"). This change in rhythm was likely due to the influence of the addition of words from the romance languages into English which led to the rhythmic tension in the language caused by the mutual existence of trochaic Anglo-Saxon words admixed with Romance-derived words.[88] Saintsbury describes English prose thus:

> Thus rhythmical prose, in its perfection, is distinguished from poetry by subtle but easily recognisable differences of diction, arrangement, and the like. . .[. . .] It is separated from the various hybrids of the Ossianic, Blakite, or Whitmanian kind in the same way, though not to the same degree, in more respects than one -- especially in the absence of even irregular stichic division. It obeys to the full that universal law of prose which dictates continuous and uninterrupted flow, not merely to the close of the sentence, but (with a difference of course) to the close of

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[85]Wright 158.

[86]Derek Attridge, "Rhythm in English Poetry," New Literary History 21(1990): 1023-1026.

[87]George Saintsbury, A History of English Prose Rhythm (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922) 13.

[88]Saintsbury 19.

> the paragraph. Yet it retains, in a greater degree perhaps than some at least of these hybrids, the rhythmical valuation of every word and syllable . . .[89]

Patterson agrees that to discover the rhythm of prose, one should not merely mark stresses, but to search for relationships which give " . . . a sense of organized time." "Prose thus becomes for some observers a sort of music, built upon elastic unitary pulses, sometimes grouped and always syncopating freely . . ."[90]

Saintsbury lists some factors in the rhythmic composition of prose. For Saintsbury the composition of rhythmic prose depends on the variety of unmetricized sounds and possibilities. Second, in a prose sentence of length, the rhythm arises from the interrelationships of the smaller parts and how those parts relate to the whole. Finally, the rhythm of several sentences arises from the relationships of the component sentences and how those sentences interrelate within their component parts.[91] The best and most attractive rhythm groups are those in which the writer extends and retracts the foot relative to other feet in the composition or cadence.[92] Also, mono-syllabic feet tend to be used as important pivots from foot type to foot type as well as "stepping stones" that move a sentence through its component sequences.[93]

As examples, Saintsbury analyzes a number of prose selections to show how these elements work. One example also shows the use of verbal antithesis that adds to the rhythmic relationships of the words:

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[89]Saintsbury 345 - 346.

[90]Patterson 13 - 14.

[91]Saintsbury 246 -247.

[92]Saintsbury 450 - 451.

[93]Saintsbury 479.

Such / are their / i de as; / such their / re li gion, / and such / their / law. But as / to our coun try / and our race, / as long as / the well com pac ted / struc ture / of our church / and state . . . .[94]

There is no meter, per se, but the rhythm can be seen with clarity.

The rhythm of prose and verse provides clues to possible meanings to the actor and director. The structural nature of rhythm might lead to the conclusion that adherence to rhythm will bind the actor and director. Instead, it should be pointed out that even given the same direction and identical clues; two actors will likely give two very different performances.[95]

Wright uses a short sequence from King Lear to illustrate how rhythm can help illuminate even an obvious situation:

Oswald. Good dawning to thee, friend. Art of this house? [An iambic line.]
Kent. Ay.
Oswald. Where may we set our horses?
Kent. I' th' mire. [King Lear 2.2.1-5]

"Oswald's polite [verse] beginning is refused by Kent in line 2. When in line 3, Oswald courteously provides a potentially iambic half-line for Kent to complete [as noted about shared lines above], Kent's two syllable reply rudely thwarts this metrical gesture."[96]

Wright also shows the anomalous omission of a weak syllable may be used for emotional effect:

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[94]Saintsbury 278.

[95]John Barton, Playing Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1984) 32 & 180.

[96]Wright 111.

"Blow winds, and crack your cheeks; ^ Rage, ^ blow. . ." [King Lear 3.2.1][97]

Also a short line may provide finality to a speech, ". . .a tense moment may gain force and crispness from a decisive closing line that is shorter than the norm:

I can be patient, I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights." [King Lear 2.4.230-1][98]

Wright re-iterates that the rhythm is guided by the meter of the verse form. He scans a line from Macbeth thus:

Af ter / life's fit / ful fe / ver, he / sleeps well [Macbeth 3.2.23.]

Wright recognizes that if read as prose, the line might be scanned like this:

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.

However, Wright rightly argues, "But when it appears as verse, we cannot give it such a reading; we must be guided by the meter, too, to find a reading that is faithful to both meter and rhetoric."[99]

The use of rhythm and meter in verse plays is not limited to Shakespeare. Archibald MacLeish uses a much freer meter in J.B., yet the offered clues are there. For example, the opening of the play is a quick exchange between Mr. Zuss and Nickles, whom later assume the roles of God and Satan:

Mr. Zuss. This / is it.

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[97]Wright 178.

[98]Wright 122.

[99]Wright 245.

Nickles. This / is what?[100] [J.B. p.3]

In this exchange MacLeish rhythmically sets up the relationship between these two characters. Nickles completes the verse line started by Mr. Zuss **and** matches Zuss syllable for syllable. Also, later in the text, after J.B. begins to experience disaster, Mr. Zuss explains to Nickles that J.B.'s continuing praise of his God is to be expected:

Mr. Zuss. It's from / the ash / heap God / is seen
Always! / Always / from the / ashes.[101] [J.B. p. 50]

Rhythmically, the meter guides extra emphasis to the first 'always' through either a trochaic or 'headless' start to the line. The 'always' also gains emphasis by completing an enjambed line. MacLeish also provides emphatic punctuation. Whether the second line is a trochaic line and inversely reflects the preceding line, or a headless iambic line providing stress to the first word; the effect provides rhythmic support to the irony of the words (seeing God from an ash heap).

These rhythmic factors also betray meaning in prose plays. Various plays provide witness to clues of possible meanings through rhythm. Robert Bolt suggests Sir Thomas More's actual speech at the end of A Man for All Seasons. After receiving a verdict of guilty, More speaks his heart:

More. I am / the king's / true subject, / and pray / for him / and all /
the realm . . ./
I do / none harm, /
I say / none harm, /
I think / none harm. /

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[100]Archibald MacLeish, J.B. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956).

[101]The 2nd line might also be scanned: ^ Al / ways! Al / ways from / the ashes.

And if this / be not / enough / to keep / a man / alive, / in good faith /
I long / not / to live.[102] [A Man for All Sesons p. 93]

In More's description of his life ("I do none harm . . ."), Bolt establishes a repetitive pattern in which each phrase twins the other phrases in the sequence. This repetition may be used by More to drive home his point. Very telling is the last line. Bolt could have written a much more regular line, "I do / not long / to live." Instead, Bolt chose a rhythmic construction that, in a series of alternating stresses, suddenly provides two consecutive strong stresses. There is a rhythmic support for More to assert he longs "not to live."

Thornton Wilder exploits rhythm throughout Our Town. In Act I the Stage Manager explains a copy of the play being performed will be placed in a time capsule to show the people of the future an example of early 20th century life.

Stage manager: . . . So, -- people a thousand years from now,
-- this is the way we were
in the provinces North of New York
at the beginning of the Twentieth Century,
-- this is the way we were
-- in our / growing up / and
in our / marrying, / and /
in our / living, / and /
in our / dying. (Choir, in orchestra pit, start "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds.")[103] [Our Town p. 25]

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[102]Robert Bolt, A Man for All Seasons (New York: Vintage Books, 1960). The adaptation of the lay-out of this speech is not to suggest some sort of free verse form. Rather, this helps to graphically illustrate the rhythmic construction more clearly.

[103]Thornton Wilder, Our Town (New York: Coward-McCann and Samuel French, 1938) . Once again the format of the quote is to aid the graphic illustration of the rhythm.

Leading into the end of the speech Wilder builds a repetitive rhythmic pattern in which the interior 'foot' shrinks for the words 'living' and 'dying.' More, he ends on a trochaic 'foot' with weak stress, rhythmically signaling the drifting away ("weaned away") of death later in the play.

Neil Simon relies on rhythm to aid in signaling punch lines. Simon also uses obviously rhythmic constructions because they tend to sound clever. More than audience 'flags,' these signals may also provide clues about the character. A number of examples can be found in the argument that ends Act II of Barefoot in the Park. Corrie complains that Paul is dull.

> Corrie: . . . There are Watchers in this world and
> there are Do-ers. And
> the Watchers sit around watching
> the Do-ers do. Well, tonight
> you watched and
> I Did.[104] [Barefoot in the Park p. 61]

Simon's use of repetition and antithesis is quite clear in this speech. The final touch is Corrie's shift from a trochee (do-ers) to an iamb at the end of the speech which rhythmically supports her thesis.

As Paul and Corrie argue, other rhythmic effects appear.

> Paul. You're impossible.
> Corrie. You're unbearable [She matches his rhythm.]
> Paul. You / belong / in a nursery / school. [He tops her.]
> Corrie. It's / a lot / more fun / than the Home / for the /

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[104]Neil Simon, Barefoot in the Park (New York: Samuel French, 1964).

Fuddy Duddies. [She tops him, leaving him with no recourse but to attempt to touch her.] [Barefoot p. 65]

[Not much later, they match each other again while arguing about going to bed.]

Paul. You can't. / Not now.

Corrie. You did / before. [She matches him. At this point Paul works to maintain the fight.]

Paul. That / was in / the middle / of a / fight.

This / is in / the middle / of a divorce. [Ends on a strong anapest. 'Divorce' scans as one syllable (d'vorce).]

[Again Corrie must top Paul.]

Corrie. Six days / does not / a week make. [Barefoot p. 66]

Corrie's last line not only tops Paul, but also convinces him to say, "You know, I think you really mean it." As with Bolt, Simon might use another option, "Six days does not make a week." But that rhythm would not create the unusual emphasis of two consecutive strong stresses at the climax of Corrie's line.

Allison and Wellborn posit that playwright Harold Pinter is a "prose poet" with his own distinctive grammar and punctuation. Pinter establishes prose rhythm through the use of short, abrupt sentences (many of which are two syllables), periods indicating thought separation, and commas beyond simple grammatical practice to further interrupt the thought process. They point to Beth's line from Landscape:

> "He touched the back of my neck. His fingers, lightly, touching, lightly, touching, the back, of my neck." [Landscape p. 13][105]

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[105]Ralph Allison, and Charles Wellborn, "Rhapsody in an Anechoic Chamber: Pinter's Landscape," Educational Theatre Journal 25 (1973): 219-220.

Another rhythmic tool used by Pinter is a varying elision -- the "Pinter Pause." In Landscape, "Some elisions are two dots long, some three, and one is five dots." These are combined with various pauses and silences. Allison and Wellborn point that the pauses are rhythmic, but unmetric -- very much like the use of silence and rests in the music of Pinter's contemporary John Cage.[106]

The rhythm of language in each instance provides clues to the actor and director of possible meanings. The rhythm of language is founded on the patterns created by syllables, discussed in the next section. The character's language is the basis of the rhythm of character change, discussed in the next chapter.

SECTION 3

THEORY OF LANGUAGE RHYTHM AND COORDINATE CONCEPTS

The basic or "atomic" level of the rhythm of language is the actual rhythm of syllables. This compares to the rhythm of individual notes in music. This comparison is apt despite the superficial differences in notation. It might be thought that music's long history of a clear, quantitative rhythmic language notation is more exact than the rhythm of syllables in words. This thinking provides too much exactitude to musical notation and performance and too much latitude in syllabic rhythm. As to the former, rhythmitician Charles Sears writes:

> When the musician begins his studies certain statements are made to him with regard to the relative values of notes. He is told that a half note should be given half the time of a whole note, a quarter note half the time of a half note, an eighth note half as much time as a quarter, and so on, and that a dot placed after a note adds one half to its length. It is implied that all notes of the same kind should receive equal amounts of time unless a change of tempo is indicated, that a triplet should divide into three equal parts the time usually given to two like notes, that, except for purposes of expression, all measures are of the same length, etc. Toward fulfilling these requirements he strives with the metronome as his assistant.

All quotes from the play come from Harold Pinter, Landscape and Silence (New York: Grove Press, 1970).

[106]Allison, and Wellborn 220.

> How far the trained musician accomplishes what the notes set before him indicate and what he sets out to do is an interesting question . . .[107]

Sears answers the question by experimenting on experienced pianists and finding that ". . . subjects skilled in piano playing [. . .] showed that even good musicians were liable to considerable errors."[108] Noted rhythmic musicologist Carl Seashore also found that irregularity and license in rhythmic production are the rule among the best musicians, indeed, that artistry is not in producing even time, but in deviating from it.[109] Donnington agrees that, "Every performer modifies the written rhythms to some extent, sharpening the dots in march-like music, softening them for lilting music, and so forth."[110] Moreover discoveries show that even computer controlled rhythmic performances must be slightly altered on a repetition of a phrase to ". . . escape an impression of a certain deadness (dullness)."[111]

Frankly, opposite to what might be thought superficially obvious, temporal equality and inequality are not parts of rhythm. Nor are heartbeat and neural discharges linked to the brain's ability to perceive rhythm.[112] Despite the temporal inequality of music, it is perceived to be evenly rhythmic. As will be shown below this is also true of language production.

Above it was said that too much latitude is given to the parameters of rhythm in language production. These parameters are not as wide as might be thought. Linguist

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[107]Sears 44.

[108]Sears 45.

[109]Seashore 146-147.

[110]Robert Donnington, The Interpretation of Early Music (London: Faber and Faber, 1963) 369.

[111]Manfred Clynes, "When Time Is Music," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans, and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1986) 183.

[112]Stetson 258.

Andre' Classe discovered that "emotional or affective" speech does not influence language rhythms. It is nonsense to speak of emotionally neutral speech since all speech is connected to some frame of mind. This fact has not prevented the long history of study and discussion of language rhythm. Moreover, scientific studies do not support the theory that stress is shifted in the syllable or in the word under the influence of emotion.[113]

Neither does intonation change rhythm of language. Phonologist David Brazil acknowledges the common observation that no two readers can make identical intonation choices in speech. Nevertheless, there are some constraints on the supposed infinite choices. Brazil observes, "A reader cannot do just anything if he is to produce an intelligible spoken realization of the text: we all recognize an 'inappropriate' intonation which makes nonsense of what is being read; indeed we often claim that it shows in some way the reader has not grasped its import."[114]

Neither does tempo or pausing change rhythm, nor is there infinite choice in tempo choice. Hallock-Greenewalt found that 50 spoken quantities in a minute were too slow to be well apprehended (too much like a drone). Likewise 120 quantities spoken in a minute were unnaturally fast and too difficult to be apprehended. The average tempo rests between 60 and 100 quantities per minute.[115] The addition of pauses is commonplace. Spain shows that we could tape, "Put it on the table" and insert blank tape between any two words without disturbing meaning.[116] The important tool in language rhythm is accent or stress:

> A listener hearing a sentence finds it important to identify the location of accent and uses all available cues to assist him in his search; and the reason why accent is so

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[113]Andre' Classe, The Rhythm of English Prose (Oxford: Kemp Hall Press, 1939) 36.

[114]David Brazil, "The Intonation of Sentences Read Aloud, " Intonation, Accent and Rhythm: Studies in Discourse Phonology ed. Dafydd Gibbon, and Helmut Richter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984) 46.

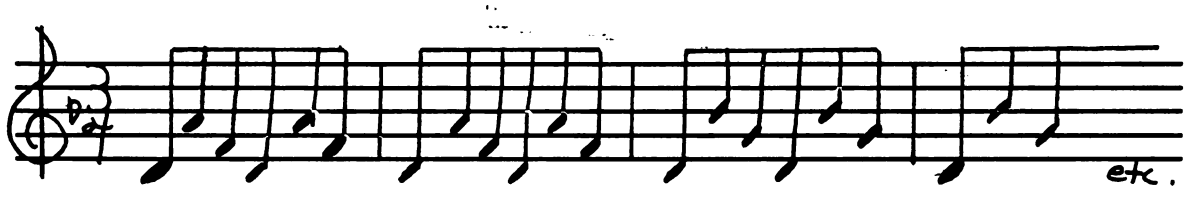
[115]Hallock-Greenewalt 2.

[116]Spain 109.

> keenly sought appears to be precisely because it expresses focus -- thus the perception of accent is as intimately connected with the information structure of the sentence as is accent production.[117]

Accent or stress is the basis of language rhythm. A guide to expressing the possibilities of a rhythm is the meter in which it exists.

One of the tools that facilitates the understanding of rhythm in both analysis and execution is meter. Meter is both the map and frame to rhythm. Meter and rhythm are coordinate concepts and phenomena, but they are not one thing. To illustrate the function of meter, here is the first few measures of a "Prelude in D minor" by Bach:[118]



This brief example shows the purpose behind meter. The time signature and the bar lines are the clues to the meter. This same rhythm could easily exist in a 6/8 meter, but the sound would be quite different. The rhythm would remain the same, but the sound would be different because the meter provides information about placement of accent that Bach wants us to hear in a certain way. Likewise, the string of notes below could be played both in duple and triple meters. The change of meter affects the sound and "feel," but not the rhythm:

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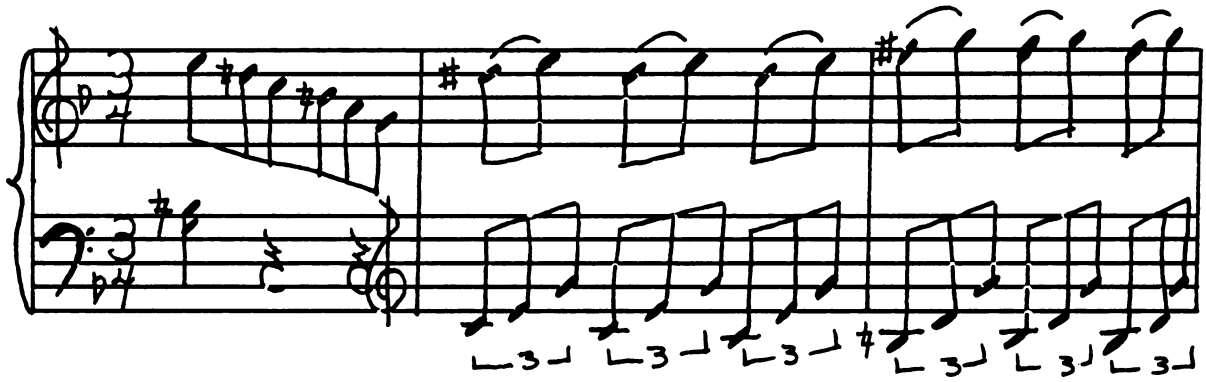
[117]Anne Cutler, "Stress and Accent in Language Production and understanding," Intonation, Accent and Rhythm: Studies in Discourse Phonology ed. Dafydd Gibbon, and Helmut Richter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984) 89.

[118]Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude in D minor.

This is how one rhythm may exist within the structure of different meters. This becomes important when considering the affect of meter in Shakespearean verse, as well as prose rhythms, as was illustrated in the previous section.

Even as one rhythm may exist in different meters to variable effect, different rhythms may co-exist within one meter as happened regularly in the music of the Middle Ages as well as more modern music:



This combination of various rhythms co-existing in one meter also comes to play in Shakespeare's and others' scripts. Shapiro and Beum point out that the meter of a Shakespearean speech, say, is iambic, but a given line's rhythm may be something else.[119]

The building block of language rhythm is the syllable and its relative stress or accent. The English language arises out of the co-existence of two energies in its speech --

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[119]Karl Shapiro, and Robert Beum, A Prosody Handbook (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 60.

the production of syllables and the augmentation of some syllables with stress. Stress demarcates patterns which are not periodic, but rhythmic.[120] Edgar Allen Poe argues rhythmic stress in language is not the same thing as word emphasis because " . . . men emphasize in the most singularly arbitrary manner." Despite arbitrary emphasis the relative rhythmic stress remains unchanged.[121]

To be sure, some have argued stress is not important to rhythmic understanding. These arguments tend to be ineffective. Experimental psychologist Stephen Handel argues there is no connection between the acoustical signal of language and its meaning. He states, "The structure -- not syllable features -- determines the perceptual clues."[122] Of the former idea, it is difficult to understand a total separation between acoustical event and meaning in speech without positing some kind of telepathy. As to the latter idea, a structure may only exist if there are constituent parts of some kind. In language those constituent parts seem to be syllables that create rhythm through varying amounts of stress.

Classe poses a stronger argument. Classe argues stress exists merely as the outward sign of a psychological phenomenon. Classe finds that the position of expected stress may fall on a rest in music as in language. Shifting stress in words doesn't affect comprehension and speakers can believe stress occurs where it doesn't truly exist.[123]

Writing in 1939, Classe did not possess knowledge of discoveries made in the second half of this century. The intimate tie of rhythm and language in the brain is such a discovery that affects his primary argument. The shared use of rhythm by speaker and listener to comprehend speech has been shown in many studies. Also studies show that

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[120]Attridge 1023.

[121]Edgar Allen Poe, "Readings of Pope, Coleridge, Byron, and Longfellow," Discussions of Poetry: Rhythm and Sound ed. George Hemphill (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961) 37.

[122]Stephen Handel, Listening: An Introduction to the Perception of Auditory Events (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989) 423.

[123]Classe 17-19.

speakers are able to correctly stress new words like 'splendidify' and 'porpitude' by analogy to pre-existing words. The existence of malaprops shows that people know rhythm patterns, but insert incorrect phonemes into syllabic positions. Indeed, stress patterns determine what we think we hear.[124] Important to the process of communication, accented syllables increase the predictability of speech.[125] This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

As mentioned above, various studies agree that accents in language tend to occur at roughly equal intervals regardless of the tempo of the speaker. This is also true of syllabic 'feet.' Despite the number of syllables in the 'foot,' they occur at regular intervals. These stress patterns are hierarchically structured and if changed, listeners may have difficulty understanding the speech at all.[126]

Rhythmic beats in spoken English arise out of the "ballistic" pulse created by respiratory, articulatory and related muscles on the initial consonant going into a nuclear vowel sound. These pulses are the basis on which a speaker organizes the rhythm of his speech. The listener then uses these beats to decode the rhythmic structure.[127]

In examining stress in multi-syllabic words and their shifting stress patterns (like 'record'), psychologist Michael Kelly illuminates tendencies in those patterns. Disyllabic nouns tend to have the stress on the first syllable, verbs on the second. This seems to

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[124]Cutler 78 -79.

[125]Payne, and Holzman 45. see also Mark A. Pitt, and Arthur G. Samuel, "The Use of Rhythm in Attending to Speech," Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance 16 (1990): 572.

[126]These studies range over a period of time under varying conditions. See Handel 449. Wayne B. Dickerson, Stress in the Speech Stream: The Rhythm of Spoken English (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 59. Albrow 13. D. James

, "Rhythm and Syntax in Sentence Perception, "Journal of Learning and Behavior 13 (1974): 262.

[127]George D. Allen, "The Location of Rhythmic Stress Beats in English: An Experimental Study II," Language and Speech 15 (1972): 190.

occur because language users prefer rhythmic patterns of alternating strong and weak beats. Long words tend to have alternating stresses. This tendency allows hearers to hear alternation where none exists. Speakers tend to adjust stresses to create alternation. The placement of verbs in context in a sentence creates a bias toward an iambic stress pattern.[128] Also iambic nouns are likely to develop uses as verbs and trochaic verbs are likely to develop uses as nouns.[129]

Finally, Wright asserts, "Syllables are not stressed or unstressed in an absolute sense, but only in relation to the essentially dual level of stress established in each word-string."[130] The determination of the relationships between stressed and unstressed syllables establishes the rhythm of language. This is the basis of verse and prose analysis.

Verse analysis may seem like simple "bean counting," but this is not the case. Cureton complains that even among literary professionals work in prosody is ignored, and thus perpetuates myths about rhythm and meter.[131] For example, Thomas Jefferson believed, "It is the business of the poet so to arrange his words as that, repeated in their accustomed measures, they shall strike the ear with that regular rhythm which constitutes verse."[132]

First, determining the rhythm and meter of verse does not entirely rely on counting ten syllables a line. Instead scansion relies upon the **comparison** (recognizing the relationships) between foot meter and line syntax.[133] Saintsbury discusses prose rhythm and writes, "But as everybody 'speaks prose without knowing it,' so, without being quite

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[128]Kelly 691-692.

[129]Kelly 709.

[130]Wright 2.

[131]Cureton 242.

[132]Thomas Jefferson, "Thoughts on English Prosody," Discussions of Poetry: Rhythm and Sound ed. George Hemphill (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961) 20.

[133]Spain 106-107.

a fool or at all a genius, he may hold that there is nothing much to know *about* it. . ." He then shows that the difference between Thomas Browne and Conyers Middleton, between the Authorized Version and the Revised Version of the Bible depends not on expression particularly, but rhythm.[134]

This raises the question of determining the validity and difference between 'good' and 'bad' rhythm. Experimental psychologist Dirk-Jan Povel sought to discover how tension is created in rhythmic patterns to determine if patterns are more or less rhythmic. Povel found that rhythmic patterns are judged against an unlocated internal clock or sense of equilibrium. Tension is produced by the act of up-dating the internal sense ("clock") against "displaced beats" occurring as incoming events. He concludes the more rhythmic phrases are those that produce tension by creating patterns and then deviating from them to create new patterns.[135] This question of patterns and where shifts occur, leads to the notion of rhythmic sensitivity promoted by Spain. The establishment of, and deviation from patterns is the heart of good verse.

English scholar Marlina Tarlinskaja argues the presence of meter indicates a self-imposed restriction and deliberate choice of possible word patterns built into the sequence of a verse line.[136] Thus the possible rhythms of the line are finite. The basis of verse theory is ". . . the *appearance* of equal time intervals" between important syllables. "The linguistic stress is analogous to the musical meter [. . .] strong and weak beats roughly alternate."[137] The proportional relationships are most important. "The proportion must

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[134]Saintsbury 444 - 445.

[135]Dirk-Jan Povel, "Time, Rhythms and Tension: In Search of the Determinants of Rhythmicity," Time, Mind, and Behavior ed. John A. Michon, and Janet L. Jackson (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1985) 224.

[136]Marina G. Tarlinskaja, and L.M. Terterina, "Verse-Prose Meter," Linguistics 129 (1974): 63.

[137]Handel 429.

consist in a relationship of the foot to the line, or in these and an additional relationship of one of these, presumably the foot, to time."[138]

Thus there may be many ways to look at a line. Cureton scans line 47 of Robert Frost's "Two Tramps in Mud Time" to illustrate the possibilities:

Metrical Rhythm:	The life / of mus / cles rock / ing soft
Word Rhythm:	The / life / of / muscles / rocking / soft
Phrasal Rhythm:	The life / of muscles / rocking / soft[139]

It must be noted, the rhythm of the line remains the same in each examination, despite Cureton's confusing labels. The relationship of strong to weak is identical each time. However, this example illustrates how, as shown above, meters can affect the sound. Wright asserts a series of ten alternating syllables may be iambic, but it is not a line of verse until it appears among other lines of verse. That line of verse, then, may be part of a rhymed stanza, part of a couplet, part of a passage of blank verse, part of an enjambed passage or simply end stopped.[140] The relationships between syllable and foot and between foot and line are inter-connected and provide information about each other.

The most commonly used verse form in theater is the iambic pentameter line, used and developed by Shakespeare. The iambic line developed over time. In Tudor poetry the line consisted of two phrases, one of four syllables and a second phrase of six syllables. Consequently, early users of the line found phrases to fill the measure. Thus the phrase was subordinate to the line. This usage evolved for various reasons. Poets discovered that in English, unlike Latin, stresses are variable. Because of this a satisfying verse line only

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[138]Spain 26.

[139]Cureton 249.

[140]Wright 15.

requires alternating stresses, not exact measures. This discovery allowed poets to develop the line to accommodate English's ability to have successive peaks of intensity.[141]

For example, in Shakespeare the phrase can run over the line, because the mid-line break is variable or absent and Shakespeare thus has more choices of phrases and sentences to employ. Also, variability of pronunciation allowed for greater word choice and usage. Wright provides an example of variations on a single phrase. Each is allowed within the blank verse form in use by Shakespeare:

The night is dark (and)
The night is dark and still (but also)
Dark is the night
In the dark night
The dark, still night
Now the dark night[142]

This is an example of how each phrase has a different rhythm within what might be supposed to be an iambic meter. Not all of the words are iambic or placed to work as iambs, metrically. But they are rhythms chosen to exist within an iambic framework.

Syllables are the basic units of the rhythm of language. The rhythm of language can be guided by being placed within a metrical structure. However, as has been shown, the change of the metrical structure does not change the rhythm. Also, intonation and pause do not affect the rhythm of language. Surely changes in intonation and pause might affect the sound of a piece, but that is not a change in the rhythm.

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[141]Wright 49-52.

[142]Wright 208-210.

SECTION 4

CONCLUSION

The basic rhythmic stratum of theatrical art is the rhythm of language. The syllable is the building block used to construct the rhythm of language. In English, syllables are stressed or unstressed relative to each other. The perception of the relation of comparative stress to comparative unstress allows for communication through rhythm. Playwrights use this experience of rhythm perception in writing plays in both verse and prose. Rhythm may exist in various meters and with various intonations and remain structurally unchanged. The manipulation of rhythm in combination with varying meters provides clues to actors and directors.

Despite the structural invariability of a given written rhythm, it should be remembered this discussion centers on the study of objective (unperformed) rhythms. It has been seen that the clues of the rhythm of language might be exploited in performance. Yet, Wright reminds:

> A particular version of a dramatic text can therefore be only tentative; it represents the hypostasis of a perpetually changing entity, and even the way it represents that entity falsifies to some extent the nature of dramatic production. It pretends that this version of the play is *the* version, is *the* play, when in fact we all know that every future production of the text will change some word, some line, some scene, that every representation will *misrepresent* "the text" in some way."

CHAPTER 2

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RHYTHM OF CHARACTER CHANGE

As before, suppose a play rehearsal is stopped because of a question about rhythm. Another avenue of examination would be the stratum of the rhythm of character change. This stratum of rhythm has been familiar to actors and directors through the wide use of Stanislavski's system, in which the actor and director divide a character's actions and/or activities into units. The shift from unit to unit creates a pattern. This pattern allows the perception of various parts with each other and with the whole of the character's role. Musicologist Anna Pierce notes, "That which articulates the compositional flow is change...[. . .] Change results in a stress, or accent."[143] This relates to the rhythm of language that was explained above. The alternation of stress provides a means to perceive rhythm. However, in the rhythm of character change, duration also plays a part, as will be shown below.

In writing about Stanislavski's exploration of character action, Jean Benedetti explains, "The analytic process, however, whether physical or intellectual, needs to be counterbalanced by a sense of the whole."[144] Stanislavski suggested testing the definition of various character units against the larger definition of the role so that the actor would not get lost in minutiae of the role. This relies on the rhythmic perception of the

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[143]Anna Alexandra Pierce, The Analysis of Rhythm in Tonal Music , diss., Brandeis U., 1968, Dissertations International 69-5449 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980) 25.

[144]Jean Benedetti, Stanislavski: An Introduction (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1982) 70.

interrelationships between the constituent parts of the role and between the parts and the whole.

The effect of the rhythm of character change is summed up by actors David Suchet and Patrick Stewart in a program about acting the role of Shylock and using the changes, or inconsistencies. Stewart concludes:

> . . .With the belief that, if you played all the inconsistencies, when the final inconsistency slotted into place like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle, then you would no longer have an inconsistency, but a complete and wonderfully colorful and complex whole. [. . .] Instead of getting all the consistencies, putting them in a pot, stirring them up, making a blend of them and playing the blend, and playing the blend, from the beginning to the end . . .[145]

Thus the effect of the rhythm of character change is to aid the actor in presenting a rich, complex portrayal.[146]

The rhythm of character change in theatrical art effectively compares to harmonic rhythm in music. In his text on music theory, Robert Ottman defines harmonic rhythm, "*Harmonic rhythm.* The rhythmic pattern created by the frequency of chord change . . ."[147] Harmonic rhythm can appear through having a chord change on every beat as in a chorale:[148]

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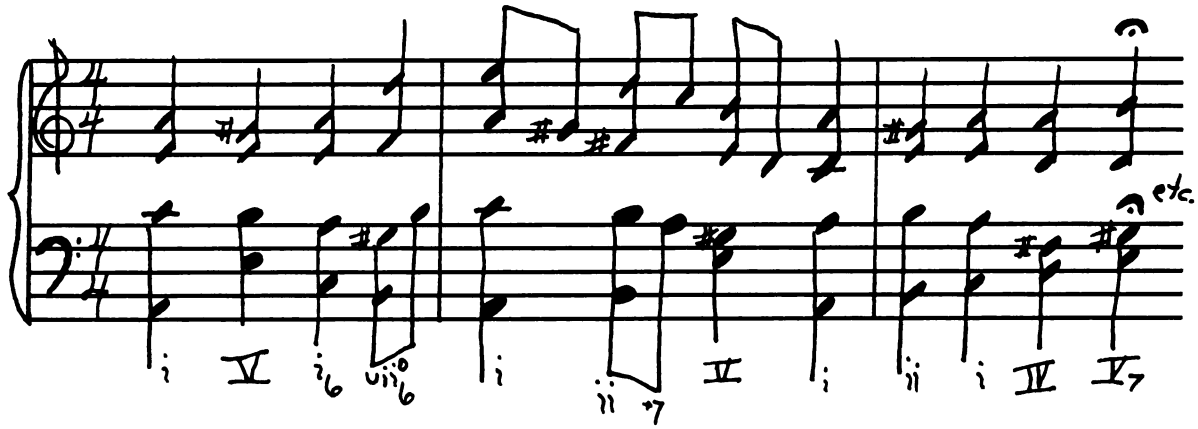
[145]Barton 174.

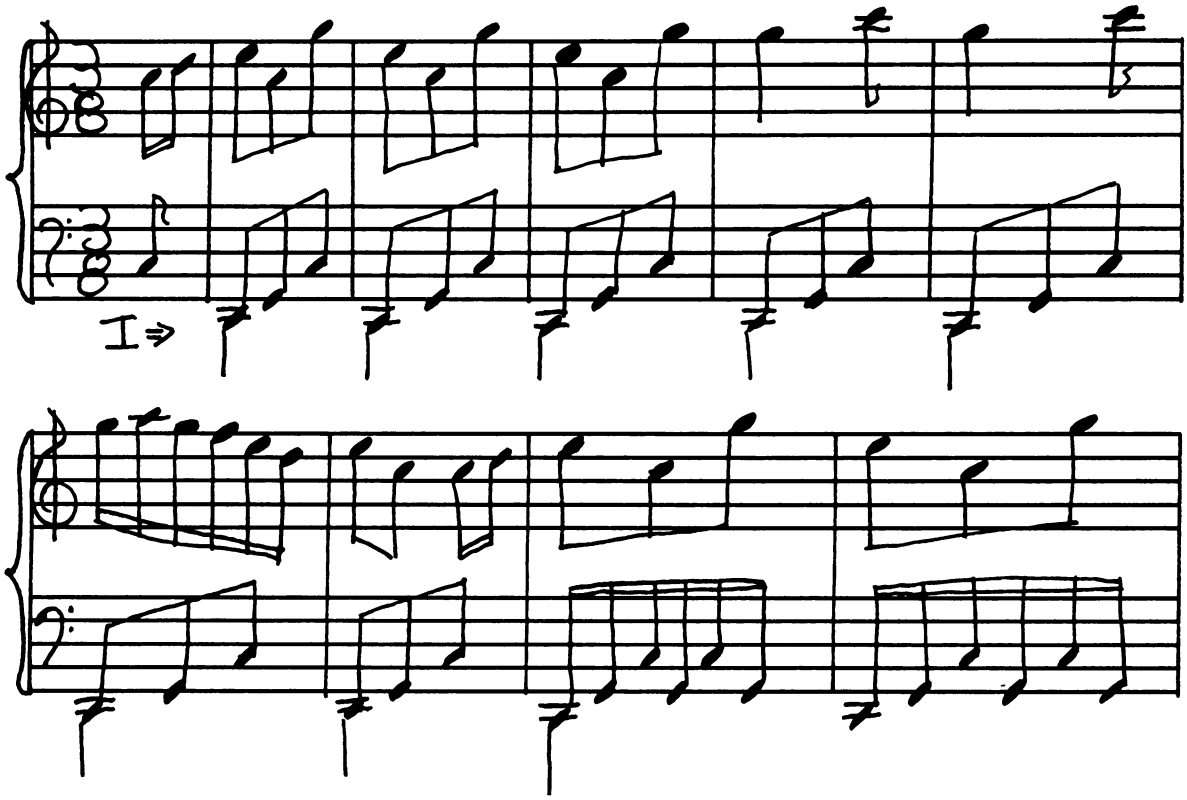
146This compares to harmonic rhythm below. Other than under specific circumstances, the playing of one blend for a performance tends to be boring. This happens when actor "rush" and fail to complete units and change between them. This is analogous to repeatedly playing one chord for a long length of time. The length of time will seem longer because of the lack of change.

[147]Robert W. Ottman, Advanced Harmony: Theory and Practice, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentic-Hall, 1972) 273.

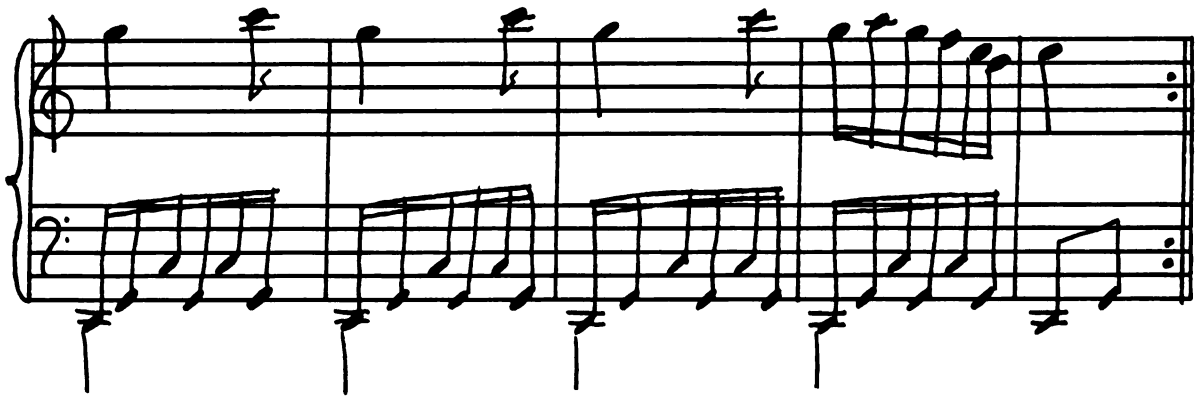
[148]By the author.



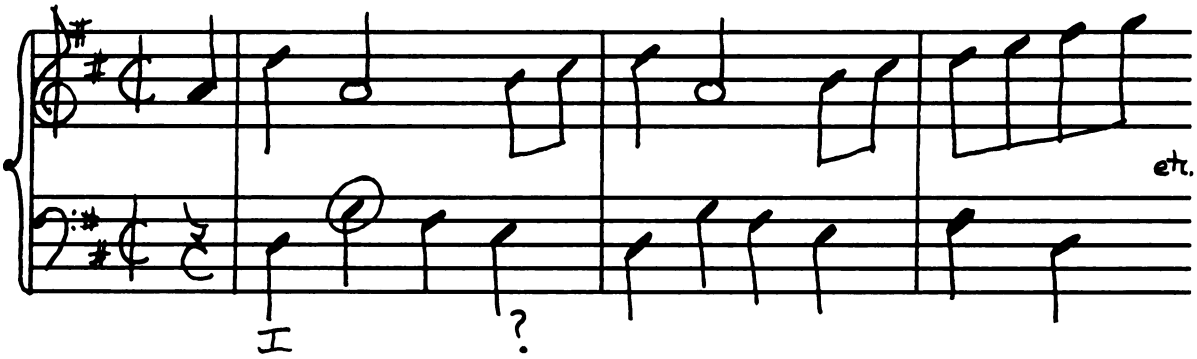
Or there may be many beats (here an entire piece) with only one chord:[149]



[149] Couperin, "Carnival" in: Thomas Benjamin, Michael Horvitz, and Robert Nelson, Music for Analysis (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978) 6.



In the discussion of simple rhythm, it was shown that there are certain variables in the perception and execution of a pattern. This is also true of harmonic rhythm and the rhythm of character change. In the opening measure of a little march by Bach, harmonic possibilities are seen:[150]



The second bass note of the first measure can be looked at in different ways harmonically. The note may be the 7th of a V_7 chord. However, it could also be seen merely as a non-chord tone (a "neighbor tone approached by a jump"). Likewise the fourth beat of the first

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[150]Johann Sebastian Bach, March in D Major.

measure might be a vii°$_6$ chord or it may be an open fifth of a ii chord.[151] While it's not the point of this study to examine the fine points of music theory, this does illustrate some of the options available in the perception of harmonic rhythm patterns. The same is true in the rhythm of character change. Yet, these options exist within the parameters of the rhythmic structure. All choices are not equally valid.[152]

There are two other factors that can affect or enhance harmonic rhythm. One factor is the use of a "pedal tone." This is a single tone sounded, usually in the bass voice, regardless of the various chords sounded above it. An example of this is the bass G♯ in Mussorgsky's "Troubadour" from Pictures at an Exhibition and Chopin's G♯/A♭ in the "Raindrop Prelude."

The other basic factor involved in harmonic rhythm is modulation. In tonal music, modulation is the shift from one tonal center to another. A simple way of doing this is using a "pivot "chord. This is a chord that serves two harmonic functions simultaneously. For example, in the key of G (major or minor), a tonic chord is exactly the same as a sub-dominant chord in the key of D (major or minor).[153] Another possibility of modulation that also applies to the rhythm of character change is the use of "false" modulation. In this instance, a major shift is hinted at and prepared for, but never actually executed. This feature compares to theatrical art in situations where a character change is hinted and prepared, but not executed. These functions will be discussed at more length below.

Another reason that the rhythm of character change is familiar to actors and directors, is that this rhythmic stratum conforms to the experience of everyday life. In the

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[151]Ralph Turek, Elements of Music: Volume II (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1988) 4.

[152]Robert W. Ottman, Elementary Harmony: Theory and Practice, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970) 178. An example of this is the opening of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. It might be possible to make the argument that the opening harmony is, in fact, the tonic and third of an E♭ chord. But that would be difficult to support in terms of the music that follows the opening.

[153]Ottman, "Advanced" 2-3.

chapter above, the link between rhythm and language was demonstrated. The rhythm of character change is like the rhythms created in the process of human communication -- as in a scene in a play. As harmony and harmonic rhythm arises from the interaction of multiple tones, the rhythm of character change arises out of the interaction of people. Communication specialist Paul Byers stresses, "We cannot understand human communication, or tennis, or ping-pong, or chess, or lovemaking by looking separately at the participants."[154]

SECTION 2

RHYTHMIC CLUES IN VARIOUS TEXTS

Actors and directors commonly work with the rhythm of character change, yet a few examples can help illustrate the process. For example, Shakespeare uses many contrastive techniques to establish character changes. In speeches, characters can change the subject on their own, as Hamlet does in the "Rogue and peasant slave" speech. Character change may be illustrative of characters that speak differently in public and in private, like Richard III, Iago, and Lady Macbeth. Another typical type of character change in Shakespeare is his use of characters in disguise who ring changes with people who do and do not know about the disguise, such as Rosalind, Kent, and Portia. An interesting example of this type of change is when Edgar changes one disguise for another on the heath after convincing Gloucester the heath is a great height.[155]

A specific example of a character change is King Lear's change in the opening scene of the play. Lear's relationship with Cordelia turns from love to hate or hateful ire. However, Lear's change comes slowly.

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[154]Paul Byers, "Discussion," Interaction Rhythms ed. Martha Davis (New York: Human Scientific Press, 1982) 136.

[155]Wright 250.

"Nothing?

. . . . . .

Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.

. . . . . .

How, how Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,

Lest you may mar your fortunes.

. . . . . .

But goes thy heart with this?

. . . . . .

So young, and so untender?

. . . . . .

Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower" (King Lear 1.1.88-108)[156]

This slow change with Cordelia contrasts with the more rapid character change Lear undergoes with Cordelia's older sisters. Once again rhythm provides clues.

Grote uses Nora from Doll's House to illustrate this process:

> After Nora, by means of her dance, secures Helmer's promise not to open any mail until after the party, she can begin to look for other solutions to her problems. If, however, the other characters refuse to respond as the objective demands, a character has several options: (1) to abandon the objective and drop out of the action (in which case an unstated goal will have been reached and accepted); (2) to select another, different objective -- should Helmer refuse to help Nora with her tarantella, she might have to steal the letter from the box and destroy it; (3) to break the current objective into smaller, more manageable parts. (Note that Nora in fact does this just before her dance: When it becomes clear that Helmer will eventually read the letter, no matter what she says, then she seeks a more manageable objective -- to delay the reading as long as possible.[157]

This explanation demonstrates a number of factors. First, as with harmonic rhythm, character change arises out of interaction. Secondly, the character changes in the play are particular in nature. The dramatist chose events to occur as they do. For example, in King Lear, Cordelia might tell Lear she loves him in the opening scene. The play would take a sharply different turn. Thus, the character changes are deliberate.

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[156]Wright 243.

[157]Grote 77.

In his acting text, Charles McGaw outlines the character changes for Lomov in the opening of Chekhov's play The Marriage Proposal:

1) He [Lomov] greets Chubukov, Natalya's father. His action here is *to get the father's approval for his proposal.*
2) Left alone, he wonders about the wisdom of making such a proposal. His action here is *to rationalize what he is doing.*
3) Natalya enters, and his action is *to get her to consent to marry him.*
4) Before he can satisfy his desire, Natalya challenges his ownership of Oxen Meadows. His new action is *to stand up for his rights.*[158]

Harold Pinter's Landscape provides an excellent illustration of the rhythm of character change. In this play the two characters, Duff and Beth, do not engage in dialogue. However, their changes arise out of their relationship. In terms of harmonic rhythm, the changes are comparable to a Chopin prelude where a small change of one note may indicate a much different sound and feeling. Also in this play are numerous examples of modulations through the use of pivot phrases that function equally well in an old and new unit. This play also contains examples of one character maintaining a "pedal tone," sounding a continuous note while changes occur above or around it.

Beth opens the play:[159]

[1] I would like to stand by the sea. It is there.
Pause
I have. Many times. It's something I cared for. I've done it.
Pause
I'll stand on the beach. On the beach. Well . . . it was very fresh. But it was hot, in the dunes. But it was so fresh, on the shore. I loved it very much.
Pause
[2] Lots of people . ..

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[158]Charles McGaw, Acting Is Believing (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1955), 81.

[159]Numbers in brackets indicate location of new unit. Number with fraction (4.1) indicates small shifts within a unit.

Pause [A pivot or modulation. The beach is nearly empty. The object of her upcoming speech is her man. This small unit is the pivot that proceeds from talking about the beach to talking about her man.]

People move so easily. Men. Men move.

Pause

[3] I walked from the dune to the shore. My man slept in the dune. He turned over as I stood. His eyelids. Belly button. Snoozing how lovely.

Pause

[4] Would you like a baby? I said. Children Babies? Of our own? Would be nice.

Pause

[4.1] Women turn, look at me.

Pause

[4.2] Our own child? Would you like that?

Pause

[4.3] Two women looked at me, turned and stared. No. I was walking, they were still. I turned. [Throughout this beat is a shift between the conversation Beth tries to have with her man and the intrusion of other women (women who may not be physically at the beach).]

Pause

[4.4] Why do you look?

Pause

I didn't say that, I stared. Then I was looking at them.

Pause

[5] I am beautiful. [This beat will recur throughout the play, providing stress through repetition.]

Pause

[6] I walked back over the sand. He had turned. Toes under sand, head buried in his arms.

Duff

[1] The dog's gone. I didn't tell you.

Pause

[2] I had to shelter under a tree for twenty minutes yesterday. Because of the rain. I meant to tell you. With some youngsters. I don't know them.

Pause

Then it eased. A downfall. I walked up as far as the pond. Then I felt a couple of big drops. Luckily I was only a few yards from the shelter. I sat down in there. I meant to tell you.

Pause

Do you remember the rain yesterday? That downfall?

Beth

[Still 6] He felt my shadow. He looked up at me standing above him.

Duff

[1.5] I should have had some bread with me. I could have fed the birds.

Beth

[6] Sand on his arms.

Duff

They were hopping about. Making a racket.

Beth

[6.1] I lay down by him, not touching. [Landscape pp. 9-11]

Beth talks about the beach, people, her man, her offer of carrying his baby, the staring women, her staring at them, and about being beautiful. Duff says the dog is gone and then sticks solely to being in the park during the rain. In the opening section Beth has had about six changes while Duff has had little more than one. Also Beth's changes tend to stray farther away from the main topic than Duff's changes, as witnessed in her deliberate announcement that she is beautiful.

Another element illustrated by this selection is the effect of character rhythm on the over-all tone or feel of the piece. The extreme genres of tragedy and farce have much stronger and obviously evident character changes than witnessed here. This may lead to the feeling that those plays are more rhythmic, and that the Pinter play's rhythm is somewhat indeterminate. One play is not necessarily more rhythmic than another. However the stresses of a particular rhythmic pattern may be stronger or more obvious than another pattern.

Another section of the play illustrates a "pedal tone" with one character staying on one note while seemingly unrelated harmonies change above it:

Beth

[11.4] Snoozing how lovely I said to him. But I wasn't a fool, on that occasion. I lay quiet, by his side.

Silence

Duff

[2] Anyway . . . . [A modulation. Duff's first shift away from the park.]

Beth

[12] My skin . . . .

Duff

[3] I'm sleeping alright these days.

Beth

Was stinging.

Duff

Right through the night every night.

Beth

I'd been in the sea.

Duff

[4] Maybe it's something to do with the fishing. Getting to learn more about fish. [He changes. She stays with her skin.]

Beth

Stinging in the sea by myself.

Duff

They're very shy creatures. You've got to woo them. You must never get excited with them. Or flurried. Never. [This may be or not be a change. Is he truly talking about fish?] [Landscape p.14]

This illustrates the major types of character change. By not being engaged in regular dialogue, the process is thrown in relief. Changes are caused by the interaction of others. An example of this is the women on the beach that cause Beth to turn and stare at them. Changes may encompass a single line ("I am beautiful.") or many lines (Duff in the first three pages). Lines or line sequences may serve as pivots by functioning

simultaneously as the end of one unit and the beginning of another. Characters may have "pedal tones" and ring out one note while other changes go on around them.

SECTION 3

THEORY OF THE RHYTHM OF CHARACTER CHANGE AND COORDINATE CONCEPTS

Albert Scheflen reviews history and shows the individual has been the main focus of scientific inquiry since the Renaissance. Only in the past 40 years have communication scientists started looking at the participants in the communication process as an integrated concept. (Despite this, one still reads of "turn taking" in communication studies.) Scheflen continues, "*If we observe only one person or one person at a time, there is no way we will observe synchrony or co-action or interactional rhythm.*"[160]

It might be thought in the theater that the solo actor might provide a contradiction to this notion. Yet Eliot Chapple uses such an example in his discussion of interaction rhythms and points out that ". . . out there, as every performer knows, is that multi headed creature, the audience. . ."[161] Also, most one character plays include off-stage characters and invisible on-stage characters to assist in providing a springboard to interactive rhythm.

Alf Gabrielsson lists a number of possible aspects of human response to interactive rhythms. The first aspect is the rhythm as experienced in perceived groupings that provides a feeling of excitement, tension, and release. The second aspect includes overt behavior in movement of head, hands, feet, and limbs. The final aspect includes a slight

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[160]Albert E. Scheflen, "Comments on the Significance of Interaction Rhythms," Interaction Rhythms ed. Martha Davis (New York: Human Science Press, 1982) 15.

[161]Eliot D. Chapple, "Movement and Sound: The Musical Language of Body Rhythms in Interaction," Interaction Rhythms ed. Martha Davis (New York: Human Science Press, 1982) 44-45.

psychophysical response of changes in breathing and heart rate.[162] These phenomena are rhythmic and exist within certain limits of tempo. Daniel Stern states, "Much of human behavior has this characteristic of unfolding at rates that fluctuate, but only within certain limits at a predictable tempo."[163]

As stated in the introduction, in unplanned talk scientists have found clear rhythmic clues in the move from sub-goal to sub-goal as the conversants accomplish some desired end.[164] Jaffe and Feldman assert, "The temporal patterns of conversation have a formal structure, unambiguously definable . . ."[165] These findings are confirmed by psychologists Rebecca Warner and Kim Mooney, as well as Fredrick Erickson.[166] Warner and Mooney note the large body of research under varying conditions, using different statistical analyses and sampling methods, all show this rhythmic tendency in communication.[167]

In another article, Warner relates finding cycles of three to six minutes in length, depending on the participants and the subject of the conversation. Warner lists three important conclusions. Warner's first conclusion is, ". . .speech activity is temporally organized at several levels. . ." The second conclusion is an analogy between the interlocking rhythms of speech behavior and the interlocking rhythms of coordinate

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[162]Alf Gabrielsson, "Rhythm in Music," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic, and Musical Processes ed. James R. Evans and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishing, 1986) 140.

[163]Daniel Stern, The First Relationship: Mother and Infant (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977) 80.

[164]Greene and Cappella 155.

[165]Joseph Jaffe, and Stanley Feldstein, Rhythms of Dialogue (New York: Academic Press, 1970) 3.

[166]Rebecca M. Warner, and Kim Mooney, "Individual Differences in Vocal Activity: Fourier Analysis of Cyclicity in Amount of Talk," Journal of Psycholinguistic Research 17 (1988): 108. also Erickson, "Timing and Context" 258.

[167]Warner and Mooney 99.

physiological behavior. "Rhythms may provide the same benefits for social interaction that they provide for biological systems, where they provide a dynamic form of stability and facilitate the coordination of activities within an organism and between organisms. . ." The third conclusion is the suggestion that rhythmic coordination is involved in many behaviors simultaneously.[168]

The effect of this rhythmicity in communication is to provide a necessary level of predictability. Predictability provides the participants a common field of experience, "Predictability implies some sort of regularity, and communication would be hard to imagine without it."[169] This common field of experience, or regularity, is common to all human interaction and its pervasiveness renders this predictability almost invisible.

Stern uses a film of a Muhammed Ali fight in 1966 to illustrate the interactive rhythms between two people. Ali's left took 1/24 sec. to throw. Study of the film showed that a full 53% of Ali's left jabs were faster than the fastest recorded visual reaction time of 180 milliseconds. Therefore, while at least 53% of Ali's lefts should have connected, actually very few did. Thus, the punch is not the stimulus to which the response would be to dodge or block. Instead predictive patterns of behavior allow opponents to block or dodge unthrown punches. These predictive patterns allow people to do everything from dance a waltz to hold a conversation.[170]

Jeremy Campbell compares the predictive patterns of people in conversation to dancers:

> Two people having a conversation guide each other along like a couple of ballroom dancers who regulate the movements of their partner as they glide across the floor in a waltz. Rhythm is one of the main organizing principles of conversation, as it is in ballroom dancing. It is a social steering mechanism by means of which people

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[168]Rebecca M. Warner, "Periodic Rhythms in Conversational Speech," Language and Speech 22 (1979):394.

[169]Bengueral and D'Arcy 231.

[170]Stern 86 - 88.

> are able to communicate information about the moment now, the next moment and the moment past.[171]

Erickson confirms that in a conversation, "The partners must be able to anticipate that functionally significant slot is about to be arrived at in the next moment. . ." These points of change are "almost metronomic."[172] Thus, as Martin sums up, the perceiver of speech expects an intact utterance and has a shared sense of the shared rhythm that is a type of temporal redundancy that aids perception.[173]

Condon shows the way in which participants can share rhythmicity in that the speaker's body moves in organizations of change precisely in synchronicity with his speech. The listener's body exhibits the same synchronicity with the speaker. This is called "interactional synchrony" or "entrainment."[174] All participants in a conversation group display entrainment. A group can automatically share a rhythm and can then change that rhythm according to situation and context.[175] Separately, Condon and Willett Kempton establish entrainment occurs within 20 milliseconds of a speaker's first sound.[176] Kempton, though, argues that entrainment is not entirely reliant upon sound for the basis of rhythm, " . . .we must hypothesize that synchronization occurs as a result of both

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[171]Jeremy Campbell, Winston Churchill's Afternoon Nap (New York: Touchstone, 1986) 237.

[172]Fredrick Erickson, "Classroom Discourse as Improvisation: Relationships between Academic Task Structure and Social Participation Structure in Lessons," Communicating in the Classroom ed. Louise Cherry Wilkonson (New York: Academic Press, 1982) 160.

[173]Martin, "Aspects" 84.

[174]Condon 56.

[175]Scheflen 17.

[176]William S. Condon, "Cultural Microrhythms," Interaction Rhythms ed. Martha Davis (new York: Human Science Press, 1982) 56 - 57. and Willett Kempton, "The Rhythmic Basis of Interactional Micro-Synchrony," The Relationship of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication ed. Mary Ritchie Key (Hague: mouton Publishers, 1980) 71.

interactants sharing *mutually known rhythmic* patterns."[177] Condon describes the process "like a car following a continuously rapidly curving road."[178]

The most conclusive proof of the process of entrainment is through the study of pathologies. Schizophrenics display behavior out of phase with themselves in terms of speech. If a schizophrenic says something, the gesture will be delayed compared to the sound, instead of the synchrony of regular behavior. Condon notes, "It is very threatening because, if one is talking to him and he's coming in with fast movements when his speech intensity drops down, it is disconcerting. It is out of phase with the articulatory rhythm."[179]

The importance of this shared rhythmicity cannot be over-stressed. Its failure can lead to a complete destruction of the communication act. Erickson studied various question and answer sessions. He found that, even if a subject answered a question correctly, but out of phase; the questioner wouldn't even hear the answer and would move on.[180] Disturbances of even a fraction of a second can prove troubling. Stern shows the effect in the nature of social stimulus. A person expects an acquaintance passing on the street to say, "Hi." The person expects and performs a 0.5 second "Hi." If the acquaintance performs a 0.3 second "Hi," the greeting will seem curt or perfunctory. Likewise, if the acquaintance performs a 0.8 second "Hi," the person may be prompted to ask what the acquaintance wants in terms of a favor. Again, the out of phase word may not even be heard.[181]

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[177]Kempton 71.

[178]Condon, "Cultural Microrhythms" 66.

[179]Condon, "Cultural Microrhythms" 66.

[180]Erickson, "Timing and Context" 260.

[181]Stern 86.

The on-going level of predictability of human interaction relates directly to the stage. The majority of stage work encompasses the presentation of behavior rehearsed to seem spontaneous. Theatrical performance balances the planned and pre-determined with the spontaneous. Beckerman writes, "The delicacy of this progression [of performance] emerges as a balance between spontaneity and determinism."[182]

The way to effect this balance on stage is through awareness of the planned rhythm of character change in the text. Since Stanislavski, this has been done through the identification of a character's "goal" or "objective" or "motivation." Practitioners use many terms. Prominent Stanislavski scholar Burnet Hobgood argues the best English term to equal the meaning of Stanislavski's Russian is the word 'task.' Its meaning should encompass a concept that both impels and implies "something to be done."[183]

As there are many terms used to describe this concept, there are many different ways to define a method of identifying a particular 'task' to be done. Yet, the concept of 'task' seems to also equal the idea of a 'beat.'

> A beat is a single unit of action, and a beat change is the point where a new action begins. A beat change occurs when a new piece of information is introduced or an event takes place over which the character has no control and which by its very nature must change what he is doing.[184]

This explanation provides a definition of a 'beat' or 'task.' It also notes the idea of character change. Finally, it provides a means of locating the boundaries of the beat/task, and thus the location of the character change. The authors provide an example from Oedipus Rex to illustrate. In scene 2, Oedipus first yields to Jocasta about letting Creon go. Then Oedipus begins questioning Jocasta about the murder of Laius.[185] This example

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[182]Bernard Beckerman, Theatrical Presentation: Performer, Audience, and Act (new York: Routledge, 1990) 130.

[183]Burnet Hobgood, "Central Conceptions in Stanislavski's System," Educational Theatre Journal 25 (1973): 155.

[184]Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previto, and Scott Zigler, A Practical Handbook for the Actor (New York: Vintage Books, 1986) 23.

[185]Bruder, et al. 35.

provides another means of locating character change -- by means of a character changing the topic of conversation.

Wright argues that one of Shakespeare's developments in English drama is the insistence on change. Every moment should be marked by some significant change in form, in emotional temperament, in point of view. Shakespeare displays these changes through variation of feet, of line, of syntax shifts relative to the line. Scenes and parts of scenes shift in their development. Wright contrasts this with what he terms the "emotional monotone" of older English plays, "Characters in earlier plays, from Gorboduc to Marlowe, often carry on their blank verse in an emotional monotone; their intensity may not vary a degree in five minutes."[186]

Along with Stanislavski, Meyerhold devoted himself to discovering and teaching the rhythm of character change as part of actor training. Evidently Meyerhold thought the process could be scientifically classified. He established an equation of $N= A_1 + A_2$ as a means of describing the actor's work. In the equation, 'N' is the actor, 'A_1' stands for the artist's conception of an idea with the instruction for its execution from director and others, and 'A_2' equals the actual execution of the conception.[187] Meyerhold worked each of these ideas and their execution into 'acting cycles.' Braun records that the acting cycle is made of three parts:

1) intention 2)realisation 3)reaction.

1) the assimilation of the task prescribed by dramatist, director, or actor

2) the cycle of volitional, mimetic, vocal reflexes working

3) the attenuation of reflex after the task just completed, also preparation for

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[186]Wright 239 - 240.

[187]Edward Braun, The Theatre of Meyerhold (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1979) 165.

the new cycle.[188]

Stanislavski's approach was not so clinical in description. Noted Stanislavski scholar Sharon Carnicke describes that the basis of Stanislavski's work arises from an acceptance of Aristotle's definition of tragedy. Theatre is distinguished from other art forms by action. Stanislavski sought practical application of this idea -- how to transfer the invisible world of the dramatist into living performance.[189]

Stanislavski accomplished this though the principle of partitioning dramatic action into constituent units, ". . .like phrases in music. [Stanislavski] called these phrases "bits" or "episodes" (*kooski*)."[190] Hobgood explains:

> The actor's work in each phrase, then, is to show the character striving to fulfill the task; and of course, dramatists construct plays so that characters usually do not fulfill all their tasks even if they strive mightily to do so, for the action takes a new turn which calls for a new task to be pursued in response.[191]

Carnicke describes a method of how to locate the boundaries of the task. First, examine the 'given' or 'offered' circumstances to describe the present situation. The present situation poses a 'problem' or 'task' to be solved. Then, a choice of action can be found to solve the problem and turn the situation to the character's favor. Like a math problem, there is the suggestion that a logical means of solution will present itself.[192]

David Grote describes a clarification of this system. One may start by locating a given character's last event in the play. Then, locate the stimulus for that event. Then, determine if there exist minor responses between the stimulus and the event in question.

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[188]Braun 166-167.

[189]Sharon Maria Carnicke, "An Actor Prepares/Rabota aktera nad soboi, Chast' I: A Comparison of the English with the Russian Stanislavski," Theatre Journal 36 (1984): 491.

[190]Hobgood 155.

[191]Hobgood 156.

[192]Carnicke 489.

(Grote notes most stimulus/response units are simple in construction.) Then locate the response that precedes the stimulus noted above and repeat the process for each event in the play. Grote notes the last step in the process is an evaluation of the process by judging the parts to the whole.[193]

SECTION 4

CONCLUSION

The rhythm of character change is the most common to actors and directors. The rhythm of character change directly compares to harmonic rhythm in music. The main reason the phenomenon of character change is familiar to actors and directors is its conformity to the process of human communication. Through entrainment, participants engage in behavior that is both spontaneous and predictable. This is precisely like a play that is at once both rehearsed and spontaneous. The rhythms of theatrical art are the organized rhythms of life. Shomit Mitter writes that in the end " . . . action precedes meaning; rhythm *is* character."[194]

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[193]David Grote, Script Analysis (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1985) 66 - 69.

[194]Shomit Mitter, Systems of Rehearsal (London: Routledge, 1992) 38.

CHAPTER 3

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RHYTHM OF EPISODES

On a given afternoon a director stops a rehearsal. The director wishes to work on the rhythm. It may be that the director is actually wanting to adjust the pace, or tempo, of the scene or act. The pacing of scenes and acts in performance is tied to the rhythm of episodes. The rhythm of episodes compares to structural (or phrasal) rhythm in music. This rhythmic stratum differs from the two previous strata by not having a correlation in nature. The cliché about television is true -- dramatic questions in real life can not be solved, discussed, or examined in the short structured time of a play. Life's events are not usually comprehensibly structured.

The introduction established that events occurring between once every 0.1 second and once every 1.0 second can be perceived as rhythmic. Events occurring closer together than once every 0.1 second seem continuous. Events occurring with more than 1.0 second between them tend to be perceived as disparate events. Therefore, the larger rhythms suggested to exist in plays might seem harder to grasp.

However, as shown in the previous chapter, larger rhythmic units can be perceived through the construction of rhythmic patterns. This is true for the rhythm of episodes. For example, the relationships between the acts of a play arise from the smaller rhythmic patterns that make up the act. Peter Townsend cites various sources to mount the argument that rhythmic perception can be distributed from a unit completed to a higher unit within the structure not yet performed. Comparing reading a novel to listening to a symphony,

Townsend writes that at the end of both the preceptor has been aware ". . . of rhythmic relationships at many structural levels of the work."[195]

This stratum deals with the episodes that individually and together make theatrical art. 'Episode' has been used to designate all dramatic units of varying length and compass. Episodes are the events of a play. Generally, the easiest method of finding the episodes is by a process of telling the plot of the play. Each time in the story the teller says "And then . . ." there is an episode of some length. For example, the **act length** episodes of A Flea in Her Ear might be described as follows, "A group of people centered in an insurance director's house meet each other and set up a romantic liaison between the director and his wife that becomes the subject of confusion. And then these people meet an unlikely identical twin of the director at the local hotel. And then these people return to the director's house to find safety and end the confusion they have encountered."

Theorists and critics commonly examine play structure and the rhythm of episodes. David Grote notes that plays are often analyzed in a five part structure : exposition, development, crisis, climax, and denouement. Grote asserts that such an analysis implicitly incorporates the rhythmic aspects of episodes because of the interrelationships between the various parts.[196] Sam Smiley states, "Second, [beats, segments, and scenes] should act as rhythmic controls in a play. They create rhythm insofar as they are individually climactic. At best, each contains a high point of interest."[197]

This process of analysis has also been used regularly by theatrical practitioners since the popularization of Stanislavski's ideas, as described above. Hobgood shows that Stanislavski saw a play in terms of larger episodes made up of smaller phrases. To present properly a scene or act, the actors and director need to understand properly the relationship

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[195]Peter Townsend, "Essential Groupings of Meaningful Force: Rhythm in Literary Discourse," Language and Style 16 (1983): 330.

[196]Grote 153.

[197]Smiley 159.

between the smaller phrases with the larger episode. The relationship to the larger episode holds the phrases together. The phrases join to make the larger episode.[198] It should be pointed out that smaller units, phrases, or beats are not character beats as described in Chapter 2. Rather, an episode beat may encompass one or more character changes.[199]

The basic "'intermediary" episode is the scene. Episode beats (or phrases, etc.) join to make a scene. Scenes join to make an act. Most scenes have a general construction of two or three parts. A three-part scene has: a statement of the beginning predicament, the ensuing development or debate of the predicament, and some resolution (perhaps tenuous and temporary) of the predicament. A two-part scene may include a main scene with main characters discussing the issues of the scene and then other characters may be left on stage to comment on the scene or engage in some antithetical action.[200]

The rhythm of episodes, then, is the interrelationships of smaller and larger units of dramatic action in a play. The perception of the rhythm of episodes is concerned chiefly with play structure. The Halletts clearly state, "Ultimately, of course, understanding the [episode] is only a means to an end, which is to experience the emotional rhythms of the play more fully. [. . .] What is at stake here is the full realization of a play's dramatic rhythms in any given performance."[201]

SECTION 2

RHYTHMIC CLUES IN VARIOUS TEXTS

The rhythm of episodes plays an important part in Shakespeare's plays. Scholar James Hirsh asserts, "One of the ways Shakespeare binds a play together, in fact, is to

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[198]Hobgood 151.

[199]Hallett 27.

[200]Cicely Berry, The Actor and the Text 2nd ed. (New York: Applause Books, 1992)221, 224.

[201]Hallett 9.

establish both thematic and structural connections between scenes in different parts of the play." Hirsh then goes on to show how thematic and structural connections create rhythm.[202]

A clear example of a ternary scene is Act II, scene 1 of The Comedy of Errors. In the first section of the scene Luciana and Adriana engage in dialogue about the missing husband. Dromio comes into the scene and reports his chance meeting with his master's twin. After Dromio exits, the sisters return to their dialogue. Thus an A - B - A, alternating pattern creates a rhythm.[203]

If we use Hirsh's scene boundaries created by a stage cleared of all living characters, this ternary rhythm also appears in King Lear. In scenes II.2 - II.4 Kent remains on stage as Edgar performs a soliloquy. Shakespeare uses this construction to show economically an entire day. The scene starts with, "Good dawning to thee, friend . . ." (King Lear 2.1.1) and ends with, "Alack, the night comes on . . ."(King Lear 2.4.300). Shakespeare might have chosen to place Edgar's speech prior to Kent's scene or after it. Instead Shakespeare chose to place Edgar on stage with Kent and takes advantage of both actors being physically on stage even if emblematically separated under Elizabethan stage convention. Thus the audience can witness a mirroring of the rejected men forced to take on a disguise to survive and aid the man who banished them. Hirsh writes, "only after Edgar's departure does an audience realize that his soliloquy constituted a kind of scene within a scene. Shakespeare tries to have it both ways and succeeds."[204]

Another three-part scene in King Lear is V.2. Edgar enters with Gloucester and says, "Here, father, take the shadow of this tree . . ."(King Lear 5.2.1) Then Edgar exits and the battle occurs off-stage. Edgar re-enters and says, "Away, old man, give me thy

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[202]James E. Hirsh, The Structure of Shakespeare's Scenes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 59.

[203]Hirsh 188.

[204]Hirsh 20 - 22.

hand, away!"(King Lear 5.2.5) Hirsh argues the scene has an A - B - A^1 rhythmic structure. The first and third sections of the scene show Edgar leading Gloucester. However, the off-stage battle leads Edgar to change from addressing (possibly ambiguously) Gloucester as 'father' to the less personal 'old man.' This creates an ironic symmetry -- a rhythmic factor used throughout the play.[205] Telling in this regard is Shakespeare's use of duet scenes.

"Duets [in which characters enter simultaneously, interact, and exit simultaneously] occur more frequently in Shakespeare's plays than solo scenes. Yet one-third of the plays have none at all; only a handful have as many as three; and only King Lear, with five, has more than three."[206] These duet scenes create a rhythmic pattern through their symmetry.

An evil sister (first Goneril, then Regan) has a duet with Oswald in the first and last duets in I.3. and IV.5. Kent and the Gentleman share the second and fourth duets in III.1. and IV.3. Cornwall and Edmund constitute the middle duet in III.5. These duets are also symmetrical in thematic material. Both Oswald duets open with a sister asking a question to which Oswald replies, "Ay, Madam." The first duet portrays the first overt order to humble Lear. The last duet shows the first order in the fight between Goneril and Regan. The Kent/Gentleman duets consist of Kent's questions being answered by the Gentleman's description of off-stage action. Finally, the middle duet between the chief male villains "most explicitly raises the theme of loyalty or devotion that is prominent in all five duets."[207] This string of duet scenes interspersed throughout the action serve almost as drum-beats and enhance the strong rhythmic feeling of the play.

Shakespeare was not alone in using the rhythm of episodes. In The Cherry Orchard, Chekhov also uses rhythm of episodes to telling effect. Greta Anderson argues

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[205]Hirsh 193.

[206]Hirsh 54.

[207]Hirsh 74 - 79.

that Chekhov's noted verbal rhythms create local rhythmic patterns that broaden into larger patterns. She writes

> By understanding the play in terms of musical structure, we can appreciate in greater detail the measured grace and good humor with which the playwright has characters conduct themselves together [. . .] Attention to structural rhythm tends toward a reading of the play more in accord with Chekhov's designation of the play as a comedy than do most interpretations, particularly those which focus on its closing moments.[208]

Anderson shows that Chekhov broke from the Russian theatrical custom of delineating "french" scenes, yet using scenes as distinct units of action within each act. Also, these distinct episodes are usually marked by an entrance or exit. For example, in Act I, Dunyasha exits and leaves Anya and Varya alone for a scene that is ended by Dunyasha's return.[209]

Chekhov creates a rhythmic structure to the four acts of the play by use of repetitive endings. Each of the first three acts closes with the doubled utterance of the verb *poidyom* (translated as "let's go," "come," and "come along").[210] Anderson argues each act ending alternates between harmony and discord. Also, the end of the play purposefully mirrors the end of Act II. Thus, Firs line, ". . . nothing's left, nothing" replaces the expected verb established by the first three acts. The alternation of harmony and discord, and the purposeful repetition of the stage directions from the end of Act II indicates a less than mournful ending. Thus, a rhythmic ending and coda end the play established by the rhythm of the earlier acts.[211] Anderson shows that inattention to rhythm may lead to a distorted reading of the play.

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[208]Greta Anderson, "The Music of The Cherry Orchard: Repetitions in the Russian Text," Modern Drama 34 (1991) 340.

[209]Anderson 344.

[210]Anderson 346.

[211]Anderson 347 - 349.

Leah Hadomi argues that the rhythm of episodes may be clearly seen in Death of a Salesman. "[Willie's] conflicts with himself and with the external world are dramatically manipulated on a variety of formal levels within which the rhythms of the plot are developed."[212] Willie's alternations between reality and fantasy mark the rhythm of episodes in this play. Hadomi finds six scenes in the first act and twelve in the second act. The increase in scene division " . . .is a function of the accelerated tempo of the protagonist's shifts of perspective. . . as well as the progressive weakening of his ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality."[213]

A farce, A Flea in Her Ear, demonstrates the connection between tempo and the rhythm of episodes.[214] Smaller episodes usually correspond to "french" scenes created by entrances and exits. Occasionally an entering character will facilitate the continuation of a dramatic action. Generally, though, an entering character adds to the confusion and changes the course of the scene and act, particularly in this play about mistaken identity. A cursory reading of the text shows a great deal of entrance/exit activity in the play. The number of entrances and exits in each act are as follows: I) 47, II) 93, and III)41. The sheer amount of short episodes can create the impression of a quick tempo. This can be shown through an analogy in music. A string of whole notes will sound slower and less active than a string of eighth notes played at precisely the same tempo. Thus, in theatrical art the rhythm created by a series of short episodes can of itself give the impression of a fast tempo.

Moreover, short episodes are deliberately used by Feydeau. Act II, set in the local hotel, has the most entrance/exit activity. A problem arises of how to maintain that level of

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[212]Leah Hadomi, "Fantasy and Reality: Dramatic Rhythm in Death of a Salesman," Modern Drama 31 (1988) 168.

[213]Hadomi 168 - 169.

[214]All references come from Georges Feydeau, A Flea in Her Ear, trans. Barnett Shaw (New York: Samuel French, 1966).

energy in Act III. Feydeau solves the problem by employing a device commonly used in music. Feydeau starts Act III with longer scenes that progressively get shorter as the act progresses. The play is brought down from the high pitch of the end of II, and the energetic briskness is re-built through the use of the rhythm of episodes.

The building momentum of Act II can be shown through the placement of entrances and exits in the act. The **first half** of the act contains only 36 entrances and exits. The **last quarter** of Act II contains 42 entrances and exits. Then Act III begins with the entrance of the maid and the butler. These characters proceed to have a continuous scene for three pages of text. The wife and a friend have a scene for a page. Then another friend enters, and this trio converse uninterrupted for another two pages of text. This is a quarter of the act. Slightly less than half of the entrances and exits of Act III occur during the final **third** of the act. Therefore, Feydeau has used units of longer duration at the beginning of the act and shorter units at the end of the act. This contributes to the feeling of pace in the farce.

Another factor in the rhythm of episodes in Flea is the thematic structure of the three acts. The first act establishes several character situations. However, Act II focuses largely on the insurance director (Chandel), his wife (Yvonne), his friend (Tournel), and his coincidental twin (Poche).[215] Moreover, the act is structured with focus on Poche in the first half of the act and Chandel in the second half. Thus, generally, the structure of the play's acts is multiple/binary/multiple.

The rhythm of episodes contributes clearly to the effect of a plot-driven farce. This contrasts with a comedy like Barefoot in the Park. Barefoot generally has much longer episodes between the characters. Therefore it does not rely upon the rhythm of episodes to

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[215]To be sure the other characters figure in Act II. Yet, the others' stories figure more prominently in importance and episode length in Acts I and III. Witness the scene between the butler and the maid at the beginning of Act III.

enhance the feeling of tempo. A verbal, character comedy, like Barefoot, must use other rhythmic strata as a basis for judgments of tempo.

The obvious rhythm of episodes in a French farce contrasts broadly with the one-act Landscape. The episodes are not as easily discerned. Neither character physically enters nor exits. As with the rhythm of character change, this lends itself to the feeling of indeterminacy of Pinter's play.

Nevertheless, there seem to be episodes in the play. Usually they are marked by a stage direction of 'silence.' The end of the opening episode does not occur until Beth says, "Snoozing how lovely I said to him. But I wasn't a fool, on that occasion. I lay quiet, by his side." (Landscape p. 14) It is at this point that both Beth and Duff make a character change. Likewise, a page later both turn to a discussion of being in a pub and they start a second episode. ("Silence" at the top of p. 15.) Like a free-form fantasia or rhapsody (like Bach's "Toccata and Fugue in D minor" and Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue"), Landscape moves from episode to episode, slowly revealing ever more about the lives of these two people.

Since the rhythm of Landscape is not as clearly punctuated as in a farce, the rhythm and associated tempo may seem comparatively ethereal. Yet, the progression from episode to episode lends a deliberateness to the rhythm. The combination of ambiguity and deliberateness reflects the character of Beth and Duff. Thus the play demonstrates the strata of rhythm working in concert. The rhythms of language, character change, and episode interact and interrelate. They mutually enhance the effect of the others. The theatrical experience shows its rhythmic face.

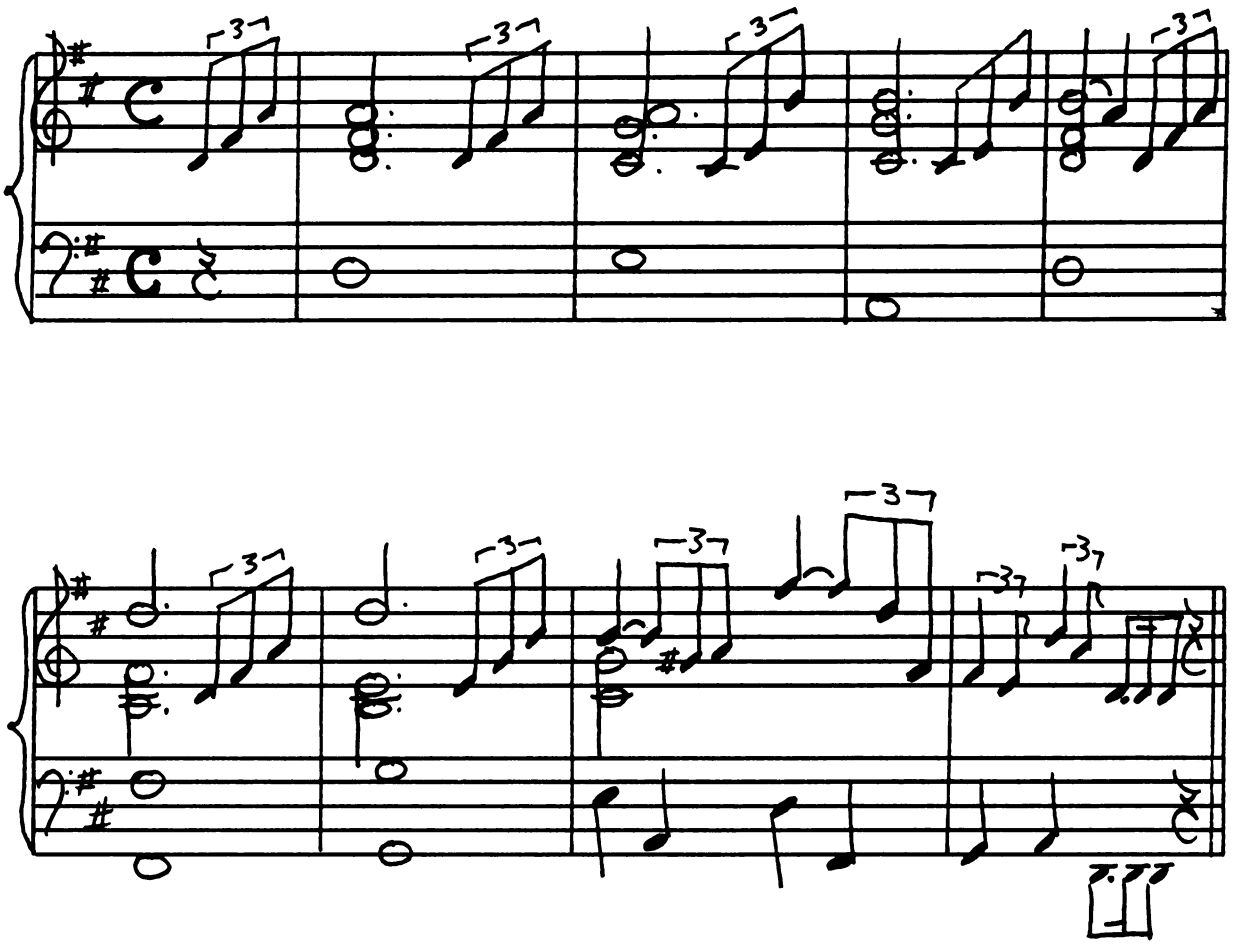
SECTION 3

THEORY OF THE RHYTHM OF EPISODES

In music the phrase compares to the episode 'beat' (or phrase) in theatrical art. Phrases join together into periods. Periods constitute a movement. 'Movements' compare

to theatrical 'acts.' Thus, the rhythm of episodes compares to the structural rhythms of music. Perception of structural rhythm in music begins with understanding of phrases.

Phrases are not located merely by counting measures of a melody. Musicologist William Rothstein notes there are many four-measure phrases in music. However, each 4 measure segment is not necessarily a phrase. Rothstein reduces the opening of the first four measures of the "Blue Danube Waltz" on a ratio of 3:1. The reduction shows that what would be the first four measures are a metrical unit, not a phrase:[216]



[216]William Rothstein, Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989) 7, 8.

As in theatrical art, a musical phrase may consist of more than one harmonic change. These harmonic changes help point the direction of the phrase, as character changes equally point the direction of an episode. Here is an example of a short piece of music that is made of three small phrases. The rhythm of the phrases is short/short/long:[217]

The rhythmic structure of the piece can be notated as being A- A - B. The first phrase is repeated. The beginning of the third phrase implies another repetition of the initial motif. The phrase, though, creates surprise by being different. By analogy, this phrase might be thought of as an anapest. The difference of the third phrase provides stress. Thus, the combination of two comparatively weak elements followed by a comparatively stronger element makes an anapest.

A generally reliable method of locating a phrase on tonal music is through location of cadence points. A cadence is the expression of the return to the tonal center, or, the surprise deviation away from the tonal center even though the center's return has been prepared. Often the cadence coincides- with the end of a rhythmic pattern so that the feeling of completion is reinforced.[218]

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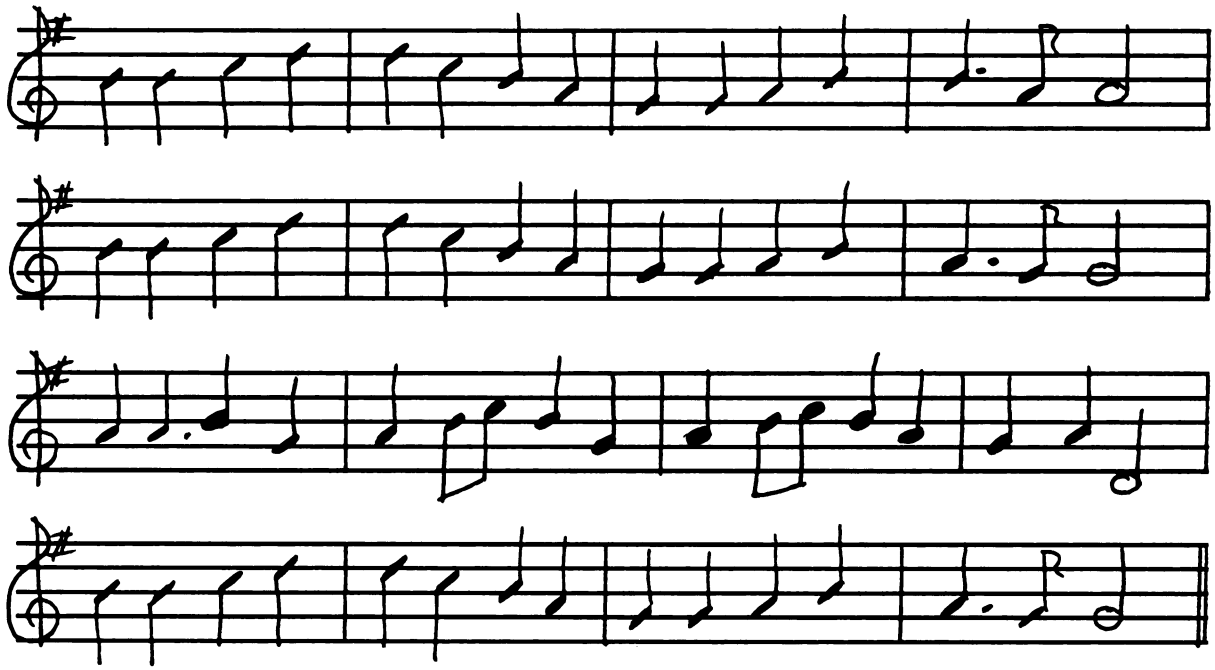
[217]Marie-Laure Bachmann, Dalcroze Today: An Education through and into Music (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 117.

[218]Rothstein 7 - 8.

Phrases may combine together into a 'period.' The several phrases constitute the rhythm of the period.[219] The hymn "Ode to Joy" is a period made of four phrases.



The rhythm of the phrases can be notated A - A - B - A. Then this period may be used as a section of a larger unit, as Beethoven did in writing the "Ninth Symphony."

The structure of larger units may vary widely. Short compositions or short 'out-takes' from larger works may have 'isorhythms;' that is, only one basic pattern as with the Couperin "Carnival" in Chapter 2.[220] The common structure of the Baroque era was binary (A - B) in nature. An example of this type of structure is the tune to "London

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[219]Rothstein 20.

[220]Creston 173.

Bridge." In the Baroque era, often each section is meant to be repeated (thus, A - A - B - B).[221]

After the Baroque era, composers innovated larger musical units and developed symphonic structure. One such structure is the sonata/allegro form. The sonata/allegro form is made of three units that are themselves divisible into smaller units. The first unit is the exposition and includes: the first theme, a bridge (modulation), a secondary theme in a related key, and probably a codetta with a cadence in the contrasting key. The second unit is the development and includes: fragments of the themes in various 'foreign' keys, extra material, and a transition to the 'home' key. The third section is the recapitulation and includes: the first theme, a bridge, the secondary theme in the 'home' key, and a coda in the home key.[222]

Another major structure is that of a theme and variations. This structure is made of a theme repeated numerous times with each repetition distinguished by variation, usually, of melodic material. (A famous example is J.S. Bach's "Goldberg Variations.") Such a piece would have a rhythmic structure of A - A^1 - A^2 - A^3 - A^4 - etc.[223] Other forms include the minuet and trio, and the rondo. The minuet and trio is a large binary form consisting of smaller binary or tertiary units:

minuet A - B - A (or A - B) + trio C - D - C (or C - D) = minuet.

The rondo is composed of a recurring theme separated by varying melodic material or non-repeated themes, thus: A - B - A - C - A - D - A - E - etc.[224] The symphony, then, is constructed out of these elements. The classic symphony has four movements:

1 - Sonata/allegro

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[221]Joseph Machlis, The Enjoyment of Music 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977) 371.

[222]Machlis 223.

[223]Machlis 225.

[224]Machlis 226 - 227.

2 - Theme and variations **OR** Sonata/allegro **OR** some A - B - A piece

3 - Minuet and trio **OR** Scherzo and trio (same structure)

4 - Sonata/allegro **OR** Rondo **OR** Rondo/sonata **OR** Theme and variations.[225]

The rhythmic patterns of movements can thus be notated. Creston notates Scriabin's Piano Sonata No. 1 thus:

I: Large/triple/ternary

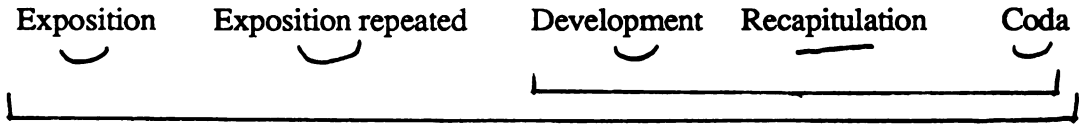
II: Long/quadruple/binary

III: Short/quadruple/ternary

IV: Long/quadruple/binary.[226]

Creston then analyzes Beethoven's Piano Sonata in G Op. 31 No.1 with three movements being short/long/short and the structure being binary/ternary/binary.[227]

Cooper and Meyer provide a simple graphic analysis of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 8:[228]



Cooper and Meyer explicitly add to this analysis, "Now, these large rhythms associated with forms are possible because of clearly articulated phrasing associated with morphological lengths."[229] Thus the interrelationship between the smaller, well-articulated phrases and the larger units are clearly perceptible and create rhythm.

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[225]Machlis 228.

[226]Creston 181.

[227]Creston 175 - 176.

[228]Cooper and Meyer 161.

[229]Cooper and Meyer 161.

Machlis shows the rhythm of episodes is not limited to formal music with an analysis of "Jelly Roll' Morton's "Black Bottom Stomp:"[230]

Intro - 8 measures
A - 16 measures
A^1 - 16 measures
A^2 - 16 measures
Interlude - 4 measures
B - 20 measures
B^1 through B^6 - 20 measures (each)
Coda - 2 measures

Machlis comments, "Such an outline can only hint at the echoed antiphonal patterns, the echoed breaks and rhythms which are surprises in themselves but which give order to the performance through their recurrence."[231] The recurrence of a given structure adds to the creation of a pattern and is, therefore, rhythmic.

The rhythm of episodes in theatrical art mirrors this phenomenon. This can be illustrated in Shakespeare's plays, as shown above. Evidently Shakespeare did not write act structures, yet the rhythm of episodes is quite clear.

Hirsh joins others in arguing that the act divisions in the Shakespearean canon did not originate with the author. Hirsh cites evidence on behalf of his argument. Between 1583 and 1616, some 123 plays have some sort of act division, but only 89 scripts (of 201) printed prior to 1616 have act divisions. Between 1591 and 1610 only 19 of 102 plays likely performed in public theatres have act divisions. Finally, in the period between 1591 and 1607, of 74 printed plays for adult companies, only 5 printed plays by Ben Jonson have act divisions.[232] Therefore, Hirsh does not examine act structure in Shakespeare.

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[230]Machlis 602 - 603.

[231]Machlis 603.

[232]Hirsh 3 -4.

Instead Hirsh argues the important play structure for Shakespeare was the scene. For Hirsh a scene may continue as long as a living character is on stage to continue the scene's action. He ends, " . . . hence a scene division does not occur unless the stage is cleared of all living characters."[233]

Charles and Elaine Hallett agree with Hirsh that act divisions in Shakespearean plays are not of Shakespearian origin. However, they contrast in examining action 'sequences' in the plays. For the Halletts the sequence is a dramatic unit that answers a dramatic question. The sequence fits within a hierarchical scale of beat/sequence/frame. A notated scene may encompass more than one sequence. Likewise a sequence may encompass more than one scene. A frame encompasses a group of sequences and answers a larger dramatic question. The boundaries of each unit are found through a change of dramatic function. The change in function creates rhythm.[234]

As a group of sequences, the frame should be a complete unit dealing with one dramatic question. The Halletts note the frame is made of an introductory sequence, an intensifying sequence, a key sequence that is the dramatization of a major plot event, and a concluding sequence.[235] They illustrate this with an early frame of King Lear. The opening sequence of Lear and his daughters is also the key sequence from which the other events of the play flow. This is followed by an intensifying sequence between Lear and Kent in which the faithful retainer is exiled. The third and final sequence in this frame is a concluding sequence that includes Lear, France, and Burgundy.[236]

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[233]Hirsh 15.

[234]Halletts 11.

[235]Halletts 188- 189.

[236]Halletts 201.

Despite differences in labels, both Hirsh and the Halletts identify the episodic units in Shakespeare's plays and thereby display the rhythm of episodes that Shakespeare employs.

The rhythm of episodes in theatrical art matches the rhythm of forms (or phrasal rhythm) in music. Small phrases made of notes and harmonic changes combine into larger structures. In theatrical art the episode is made of words and character changes that combine into phrases or beats. The larger units in both art forms participate in a larger rhythmic pattern. In this way the rhythmic strata interrelate and affect each other continually.

SECTION 4
CONCLUSIONS

Rhythm in theatrical art is the relationship between the constituent parts and the parts to the whole work of art. Three basic strata compose these constituent parts and the whole. The first rhythm is the basic rhythm of the words. The relationship of word to word and the alternating stresses of language may provide clues to aid the actor and director in deriving possible meanings. The rhythm of character change provides a link to the rhythms of everyday interaction. Communication is a process that is simultaneously predictable and improvised. Rhythm of character change mirrors that process on the stage. Finally, the rhythm of episodes creates a larger scale of rhythm in which the other strata can interact.

This study has examined these strata and shown how they work in various plays. However, this study has remained within the realm of objective rhythm, the rhythms notated in a published script. To better understand the rhythmic phenomena of theatrical art, study of performance rhythms seems logical. Thus the rhythm of movement and gesture, largely not notated in a script, can be added as another stratum. Also, the rhythm of audience reponse can be added to the picture of the rhythm of theatrical art.

Also, it might be worthy of study to determine if an aesthetically pleasing theatrical experience could be created out of nothing but articulated rhythmic patterns. The contemporary popular musical culture of dance and rap music indicates that an audience can be entertained by raw rhythm, unadorned by other material.

The concept of rhythm is intimately tied to the perception of time. While spatial rhythms exist and can be studied, rhythm is commonly considered to happen within time. Time is still largely enigmatic. Is time merely a word tied to the ability to perceive duration? Is time an existing force that follows certain natural laws? Science has only recently started to ask such questions and search for meaningful answers. Time, like the wind, is something more easily experienced than explained.

In ending an introductory discussion of rhythm in music, musicologist Manfred Clynes wrote about music and time in a way that could also be applied to theatrical art.

> In this chapter we have seen how our own clocks may be involved, through [theatre], in the bridge between concepts and the physical world; and also how, biologically, meaning has coopted time to create expressive forms through which we communicate and share the evolving story of our feelings.[237]

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[237]Manfred Clynes, "When Time Is Music," Rhythm in Psychological, Linguistic and Musical Processes, ed. James R. Evans and Manfred Clynes (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishing, 1986) 220.

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