



Arrhythmanalysis and Revolutionary Rupture of Détournement: Lefebvre and the Pedagogical Rhythms of Post-Fordism

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Abstract

Threading together Henri Lefebvre's writing on space, architecture, and time, this article demonstrates the central concern of rhythmanalysis to his general project of overcoming capitalist abstraction. Reading Lefebvre's distinction between linear and cyclical repetitions as rhythmic manifestations of the struggle between exchange-value and use-value, Ford articulates the divergent pedagogies underlying each form of repetition. Lefebvre's project aimed at reclaiming use-value over exchange-value and cyclical over linear rhythms through the coupling of domination-détournement-appropriation, and the author next shows how post-Fordism is a perverse realization of Lefebvre's project insofar as capital today profits from closed-developmental and open-unpredictable repetitions because capital has subsumed détournement by tethering it developmentally toward the generation of the new. This is why Lefebvre's educational theory of rhythmanalysis (and its corresponding conception of listening) is now an insufficient pedagogical response to capitalist abstraction. In response, they build on Jason Wozniak's reading of Lefebvre against Lefebvre to reclaim arrhythmia as a temporal gap necessary for revolutionary projects, developing a theory of arrhythmanalysis. Ford concludes the article with a coda on the political revisions required to Lefebvre's project, which focus on a reevaluation of the actually existing spaces produced by socialist societies and serves to emphasize that rupture and arrhythmanalysis should be strategically deployed rather than uncritically celebrated.

Keywords Henri Lefebvre · Rhythmanalysis · Post-Fordism · Stupidity · Pedagogy · Abstraction

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Introduction

Henri Lefebvre's diverse body of work is united by the discovery of the extent to which capitalist abstractions transform our world and the development of theoretical tools to resist such abstractions. This paper begins, then, by explaining Marx's concept of abstraction before showing how Lefebvre extended this to the study of space and time. Threading together different moments in Lefebvre's oeuvre, it shows that rhythmanalysis and rhythmic interventions were decisive for Lefebvre's struggle to reclaim cyclical repetitions against the domination of linear repetitions through his coupling of domination-détournement-appropriation. However, changes within the capitalist mode of production since Lefebvre's time and our own have shifted such that capital no longer rules through the imposition of linear repetitions. Instead, it's responded to resistance struggles by rhythmically incorporating both cyclical and linear repetitions, as it finds sources of accumulation in both the abstract determinations of the latter and the open indeterminacy of the former. As a result, Lefebvre's praxis of rhythmanalysis might make capital's rhythms sound louder and deeper.

Yet the implications of this problematic are not only political, but educational, too, and the next section builds on existing educational work on Lefebvre, temporalities, and education to articulate the distinct rhythmic pedagogical logics that undergird each form of repetition and his theory of rhythmanalysis. It then builds on Jason Wozniak's (2017) reading of Lefebvre against Lefebvre to reclaim arrhythmia—which he saw as an illness in need of a cure—as a revolutionary tactic whose use lies in its ability to rupture the dictatorship of the present through instituting and sustaining a détournement that can lead to continual appropriations. The remainder of the paper theorizes the pedagogical practice of arrhythmanalysis (Ford 2021a, b). Whereas Lefebvre positioned rhythmanalysis as a bodily pedagogy of listening in order to general more complete and total knowledge, arrhythmanalysis entails a desubjectified pedagogy that remains in a sublime and, potentially revolutionary, state of wonder.

The Spaces and Rhythms of Capitalism and Resistance

A central, motivating drive for Lefebvre was thinking through the implications of real abstractions under capitalism. Marx's theory of value rested on abstract labor and how, under capitalism, labor is abstracted from its concrete reality. Whereas there are innumerable different forms of concrete labor that produce as many qualitatively different use-values for society (e.g., the labor and product of the teacher is distinct from that of the farmer), under capitalism, these qualitatively distinct labors are equated with each other quantitatively through exchange. Because the system is motivated by the production of value, capital is impartial to the concrete characteristics of any labor process or product. Marx identifies that this abstraction is 'not merely the mental product of a concrete totality of

labours’ where, for example, we can label the labor of every different teacher as a single ‘teaching’ (1973: 104). Instead, this mental abstraction itself ‘is nothing more than the theoretical expression of those material relations which are their lord and master,’ which means that we are ‘now ruled by *abstractions*’ (164). The abstraction of labor is material because it determines our subjectivity regardless of our consciousness of it.

Capitalist abstraction is the subjection of everything to the rule—and the purposes—of exchange-value. This is the meaning of something being ‘commodified’: it’s been made into an exchangeable thing that’s equatable with everything else. Lefebvre articulates the capitalist production of abstract space, which is increasingly central to capitalism and the reproduction of capitalist social relations because ‘the capitalist production process, taken as a whole, is a unity of the production and circulation process’ (Marx 1981: 117). He identifies how space serves both functions, as it’s ‘a *product* to be used, to be consumed’ as well as ‘a *means of production*’ (Lefebvre 1991: 85). When space serves as a mechanism for both the production and realization of capital, it’s subjected to the mechanism of capitalist abstraction. Capitalism abstracts concrete—or what Lefebvre calls ‘differential’—space as it reorganizes space to facilitate the production and circulation of value.

Just consider annual academic conferences. They often take place in different cities each year, but in almost every city, there are the same hotels, restaurants, banks, etc. All matter of spatial development, from housing patterns, roads, and transportation networks to parks, plazas, and streetlights are produced to facilitate the production and circulation of commodities, including labor-power. As *different* lived spaces come under the domination of exchange-value, spatial and social differences are flattened and absorbed within capitalism. As Don Mitchell explains it, ‘market designs and considerations thus displace the idiosyncratic and extemporaneous interactions of engaged people in the determination of the shape of urban space’ (2003: 140). At the same time, there is no exchange-value without use-value, which is why abstract space ‘appears homogenous’ (Lefebvre 1991: 285) but, on closer examination, it ‘has nothing homogenous about it’ (307). This is so because value is the contradictory unity of use-value and exchange-value. Thus, for cities to attract tourist events like academic conferences, they try to showcase their *differential* or unique characteristics.

Lefebvre fights against this abstraction to nourish differential and lived realities, which operate according to use and use-value. ‘In and by means of space,’ he proposes, ‘use value may gain the upper hand over exchange value’ (348). By producing space differently, we can overturn capitalist abstraction (Ford 2017). While the capitalist mode of production is oriented toward the domination of space and time in the name of exchange-value, there is always the possibility of appropriating the use-value of space and time through organized struggle. Importantly, appropriation is ‘distinct from the right to property’ in that appropriation is not a new claim on an existing space but rather the ongoing production of new spaces according to the desires of workers and the oppressed (Lefebvre 1996: 174).

In his posthumously published work, *Towards an Architecture of Enjoyment*, Lefebvre positions *détournement* as the mediating factor between domination (exchange-value) and appropriation (use-value). As an intentional practice, *détournement* originates with modern

art, first painting and then musicking, when ‘musicians began mixing themes borrowed from popular song or other musical works into their compositions, themes detached from their content and diverted from their original meaning’ (2014: 96). Through ‘the moment of *détournement*, new aspirations appear’ and what already exists is made open to new uses (98). At the same time, *détournement* is a *mediating* moment ‘when domination ceases’ that provides an *opening* for the reclamation of space from capital’s domination. *Détournement* produces ‘the threshold, the break, the caesura’ between either ‘contemplation and the dream’ or ‘the harsh law of profit’ (153). The practice must be ephemeral and can lead to a new form of domination *or* ‘a more refined appropriation’ (98).

The spatial anti-capitalist revolution is impossible without considering rhythms, which consistently but unevenly concerned Lefebvre. The production of space requires ‘rhythmanalysis,’ which is ‘closer to a pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice)’ (1991: 205). Rhythm is plastic because it’s an energetic relationship that ‘invests places, but is not itself a place; it is not a thing, nor an aggregation of things, nor yet a simple flow’ (206). Here, he introduces a conceptual pairing that preoccupies him later in another posthumously published book, *Rhythmanalysis*: the distinction between linear and cyclical repetitions. The capitalist production of space ‘tends to confine time to productive labour time, and simultaneously to diminish living rhythms by defining them in terms of the rationalized and localized gestures of divided labor’ (408). Through analyzing rhythms, we can overcome capitalist abstraction and domination.

In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre takes the distinction between linear and cyclical repetitions he introduced earlier and concentrates on their relationship to capitalism and resistance. All rhythm, for one, involves temporal and spatial repetition, for there is no rhythm ‘without *reprises*, without returns, in short without measure’ (Lefebvre 2013: 16). Linear and cyclical repetitions have divergent rhythms, which I think again turn on the hinge between exchange-value and use-value. Linear rhythms dominate under capitalism and are ‘modelled on abstract, quantitative time, the time of watches and clocks,’ a ‘homogenous and desacralised time’ that undergirds ‘the measure of the time of work’ (82). Linear rhythms are developmental and repetitive in the sense that they follow predictable patterns that are organized in such a way that they can be anticipated and organized. As such, linear repetitions are the rhythmic patterns of capital’s abstraction of space and time. While linear repetitions, in Wozniak’s (2017) words, ‘delimit becoming by imposing programmed rhythms’ that ‘aim at specific ends, particularly those of capitalist production and accumulation,’ cyclical repetitions are ‘open to eternal becoming’ and ‘have a determined period or frequency that repeats itself differentially’ (499). As ‘movements, undulations, vibrations, returns and rotations,’ cyclical repetitions are defined by lived concrete realities (Lefebvre 2013: 84). Cyclical repetitions align with what Lefebvre wanted space, time, and life to be: *differential*.

Like use-value and exchange-value, under capitalism linear and cyclical repetitions can co-exist in the same rhythmic assemblage, and Lefebvre isn’t so much opposed to the former as he is to its *domination* over the latter. His beef is with the way our rhythms are subjected to the clock and the generalized rule of capital. Just as the ruling class imposes its ideology on the whole of society, so too does the capitalist class structure the rhythms of not just work, but all of life. Think about how

after the introduction of artificial lighting in workplaces and streets, for example, work and life were less determined by the Earth's rhythms and more by those of capital. Their introduction 'announces the rationalized deployment of an abstract relation between time and work, severed from the cyclical temporalities of lunar and solar movements' (Crary 2014: 62). While the biological rhythms of day/night and wake/sleep can't be totally abstracted, they are reformulated under capitalism insofar as night and sleep are reduced to recovery time for more productive activity and work continues throughout the day and night.

The Pedagogy of Rhythmanalysis

The implications of and responses to the abstraction of rhythms through the domination of linear repetitions are not only political: however, they're also educational. Building on the work of Gaston Bachelard (Alhadeff-Jones 2016), Lefebvre developed a theory—or what he also called a *pedagogy*—of rhythmanalysis. Lefebvre's (2013) rhythmanalysis is the attunement to the rhythms of everyday life in order to think with the 'body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality' (31), which 'requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart' (45). The purpose of this educational endeavor is 'to interpret how space and time are socially produced' and 'to unveil how they become a source of alienation' in order to reclaim differential or cyclical repetitions (Alhadeff-Jones 2016: 181). It involves the poetic and embodied understanding of and intervention into the various rhythms in the world. The entirety of the body has to resist capitalist abstraction—which is what unites Lefebvre's work on the production of space, architecture, and rhythms—because the body itself is an assemblage of divergent rhythms.

To make this more concrete, consider Iain Borden's (2001) conceptualization of the skateboarder as a rhythmanalyst. The skateboarder senses the abstract space and linear repetitions of the city, how its flows and uses are programmed and ordered by capital, and in response, they appropriate and transform these repetitions by demonstrating and living the different uses toward which buildings and banks, stairs and railings, can be put. The skateboarder's encounter with the city and its architecture 'involves all manner of physical interrogations, and as such is closer to the rhythms of music or the imagined spaces of poetry and literature than to the sights of the visual arts' (113). Architecture can't just be read as a text because it's inhabited, because people 'emit a bundle of undifferentiated flows that are nearly tantamount to physical ambiguity' (Lefebvre 2014: 125). The rhythmanalyst's bodily appropriation of the city transforms its spaces and rhythms to reassert use-value against exchange-value.

Michael Alhadeff-Jones' insightful study of educational temporalities theorizes rhythmanalysis as a supplement to critical pedagogy. The rhythmanalysis 'of emancipatory education is critical, not only because of the knowledge it may produce but because it leads one to challenge the temporal standards that constrain the educational phenomena it relates to' and is, as such, 'an invitation to transgress' (2016: 216). We can view the comprehension and transgression generated through rhythmanalysis as a moment of *détournement* that opens space for use-value against

exchange-value. Alhadeff-Jones' educational theory of rhythmanalysis is a crucial foundation for advancing the struggle against capitalism inasmuch as it's about not only understanding but action. To make the pedagogical and political potential of rhythmanalysis more robust, I want to flesh out the specific educational logics of the alternative cadences Lefebvre develops, before examining their changed status under contemporary capitalism. Cyclical repetitions remain open to *détournement* and maybe even appropriations. Cyclical repetition and difference are threats to capital, on this model, because they prioritize use-value over exchange-value and mitigate against capital's real abstraction through linear repetition. These antagonistic *tempos* each operate according to distinct pedagogies or educational logics.

Learning is the pedagogical form of linear repetition. The logic of learning proceeds from a state of ignorance to one of competence or mastery. The learning process begins with an inability and results in the actualization of an ability. Tyson E. Lewis helpfully shows how bureaucratic linear temporalities dominate the educational and political landscape through their correspondence with measurement, assessment, and development. Learning is a temporal homogenization that 'reduces time to an indifferent force, a reified and abstracted entity that *happens to us* above and beyond our immanent control' (Lewis 2013: 97). The other way to view learning is through the relation between credit and debt. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) write that, like learning, 'credit runs only one way' (61). As students are increasingly saddled with educational debt, we're constantly following in its wake: 'Credit pursues the student, offering to match credit for debt, until enough debts and enough credits have piled up' (62). Capital forces the pedagogy of learning through the force of debt.

During school, we experience the temporality of credit as the reality of our student debts impact what we major in, where we go to school, what internships we take, what social groups we join, and more. Even after we graduate, we race to catch up to our creditors. The linear time of learning and credit is the authoritarianism of the future that can only ever be a repetition of the present. Debt creates a distinct rhythm that depends on future repayment, which produces 'a memory in a person of a future-to-come.' Such a memory is a future determining the present, as 'with a memory of debt ever hovering, one ends up shaping one's self and daily activities so that one will be able to survive as an indebted subject' because 'debt, as an obligation to repay one day, travels back from the future to occupy the present' (Wozniak 2015: 75). Even after graduation, we're subjected to the real abstraction of labor through learning and credit, as it doesn't matter *what* kind of labor we perform, as long as it will help us repay our debt. Thus, learning and credit accommodate infinite flexibility insofar as we become lifelong learners constantly reskilling ourselves to meet the shifting demands of capital (Ford 2021b).

The pedagogical logic of cyclical repetitions is studying. Whereas learning hinges on the linear movement from ignorance to knowledge, studying is a cyclical *dwelling* in a state of suspension that resists capital's attempts to quantify or measure progress. By suspending the demand for actualization, studying opens up the possibilities of what *can* be as the standards of learning are held in abeyance. Learning's objectives and outcomes are neither abolished nor preserved but are instead rendered latent. The studier is neither ignorant nor knowledgeable, neither a novice

nor a master, but rather a subject that rhythmically sways in a poetic manner that ‘is simultaneously projective and recursive, a suspension of movement *and* its resumption, a continual oscillation of forward and backyard momentum’ (Lewis 2018: 27). In other words, the learner begins developing toward a goal but becomes a studier not by denying but through temporally suspending any end. The learner is required to pay their debts on time and produce determinate knowledge, but the studier always defaults, remaining in a state of wonder. This is not a passive inactivity because of its ceaseless rhythmic sway, a swaying that is itself perpetual because of the constant deferral of any end point (determinant, expert knowledge; repayment of debt). Importantly, as we’ll see below, this rhythm is also defined by discontinuity and arrhythmia.

The Rhythmic Capture of Post-Fordism

With this in mind, we can better excavate the pedagogical logic of rhythmanalysis, which surpasses philosophy and discourse to produce a ‘theoretical thinking’ that is *even more* productive of knowledge: ‘To say that such theoretical thinking goes “beyond discourse” means that it takes account... of the vast store of non-formal knowledge embedded in poetry, dance, and theatre. This store of non-formal knowledge (*non-savoir*) constitutes a potential true knowledge (*connaissance*)’ (Lefebvre 1991: 407). ‘The joy of knowing grows desiccated,’ as he puts it elsewhere, ‘once knowledge is defined and taught and becomes an institution’ (Lefebvre 2014: 26). Opposed to this, rhythmanalysis produces ‘the joy of pure knowledge,’ which ‘is as short-lived as the impure pleasure of power; it wants to endure, to preserve in being, to renew itself. But to do so it requires new acts, new conquests, without end’ (26). He even defines the knowledge generated by rhythmanalysis, as ‘a form of qualitative knowledge still in a state of germination and promise’ (149). While this seems to be akin to studying, the ultimate purpose of rhythmanalysis is to acquire greater and more precise knowledge of the polyrhythms of capital in order to engage in constant creative production. ‘The authorities,’ according to Lefebvre (2013), ‘have to know the polyrhythmia of the social body they set in motion’ (78). The entire goal, he concludes, is to generate and mobilize the lived and differential knowledge of rhythms—through recording them to study and reflect on—putting them ‘into use’ (79).

Today, however, capitalism finds profitability precisely in the openness of cyclical repetition *and* the determinations of linear repetition, which implies a new relationship between both. Maybe this is why Lefebvre’s final book on rhythmanalysis follows from his move away from the city as a bounded place over which we struggle and toward *urbanization* as flexible social fabrics that connect complex ecologies of labor and capital, transportation and communication networks, different groups and societies, and so on (Lefebvre 2003). The urban is formless in that it’s ‘nothing in itself, nothing outside dynamic social relations, a coming together of people’ (Merrifield 2013: 916). The city as a built environment remains even as it changes (decays or grows or stagnates), but the urban is the *assembling* of different networks across space and time. As urbanization produces formless spaces partially and ephemerally through encounters, capitalism moves from being organized

around and for linear domination and toward ‘relative’ and even lived differences, which implies ‘an affirmation of curved time and space, an acceptance that capitalist gravity does not only occur over absolute space, over a passive space; space and time are themselves capitalist constructs, and the mass and velocity of commodities, of capital and money shifting around the market universe, create their own bending and warping of time and space, their own space–time dimensionality’ (912).

These changes, condensed in the move from Fordism to post-Fordism, ironically accomplished Lefebvre’s project. My argument here is similar to Paolo Virno’s take on post-Fordism as ‘a masterpiece’ (2004: 99) in that capital reconfigured itself by subsuming oppositional and alternative movements that rejected Fordist work and society, including its spaces and its rhythms (in addition to massive physical repression and violence). Post-Fordism integrated the demands of social movements—the rejection of stable and long-term employment, the desire for cooperation and education, ‘familiarity with learning and communication networks’ (99), and more into its operation. The working life isn’t a stable and *repetitive* one, but one constantly interrupted, subjected to periods of latency and redirection. Instead of one or a successive series of relatively stable and long-term jobs within the same general field, one has multiple (often overlapping) temporary or short-term and flexible jobs that take place across different sectors.

Without recognizing the incorporation of Lefebvre’s project into capital, however, we can’t properly think about the rhythms of exploitation, oppression, and resistance. Post-Fordism expropriates the interminable reformation of space and time, finding profit and sources of accumulation in perpetual appropriations because *détournement* is absorbed within capitalist logic. In other words, under post-Fordism *détournement*—the opening of unforeseen and uncalculated new desires, events, and knowledges—is subsumed under the demand for production and actualization such that it’s no longer a real rupture. Maybe post-Fordism represents ‘The Failure of Failure,’ as Kim Cascone and Petar Jandrić (2021) title their interview, and in which Cascone says that ‘failure *itself* failed’ as a mode of critique, ‘when corporate media appropriated its stylistic visual and sonic signifiers (glitch) from the underground causing software developers to build these effects into applications as presets for ease of use’ (570). Jandrić agrees, responding that ‘capitalism has managed to appropriate its own critique and turn it into another commodity’ (570).

For another example, consider Brandon LaBelle’s (2018) characterization of our post-Fordist urban environment that’s structured through digital capitalism and its networks as ‘the overheard.’ Of course, there is always more to hear than what is heard, always something else between the audible I can process and the inaudible that constitutes the atmosphere of hearing. In the age of networks, the contours of sound shift in a number of constitutive ways. The growing import of intellectual, cognitive, and affective labor enmeshes the within expansive networks that extend and reframe our mode of rhythmic life so that we don’t only pulsate to local rhythms but to global ones as well. The overheard is one potential interruption that is more akin to cyclical rhythms. To overhear is to be suspended by ‘a type of noise: with what may form into something, but not yet’ (2018: 67). The overheard, as an interruption, is the emergence of a potential rupture of studying that can undo or prevent accumulation.

On the one hand, the interruption represents a potential to challenge the domination of exchange-value over sound, as the linear repetitions of capital's abstract sounds are pierced by the overheard. As overheard sounds enter our bodies in the urban environment, they can potentially *détourn* linear repetitions. At the same time, however, the overheard can't 'escape from ordering principles, algorithmic does, and socio-technical structures inherent to global culture' (64). In post-Fordist capitalism, this becomes increasingly likely, as so many modes of communication are structured through corporate and state platforms that capture, commodify, and surveil our sound. The overheard is an interruption constitutive of cyclical rhythms, but one that provides new data and sources of value for capital and new surveillance technologies for the state.

Another example of capital's flexible accumulation through linear and cyclical repetitions is William Davies' (2019) study of 'Virgin Pulse,' a set of technologies that optimize the worker by monitoring and capturing their pulses in two ways: the body and the metaphorical-social. In terms of the body, the technologies capture the continuous 'stream of data that the programme will generate and analyse' (514) to increase the health, satisfaction, and overall wellbeing (read: productivity) of the worker. In terms of the social-metaphorical, 'taking the "pulse" of an organisation (or any other social system) means monitoring its various vital signs: movements, rhythms, patterns, peaks and troughs' (514). The implications extend beyond the Virgin Pulse suite of technologies and speak more broadly to the ways that the lived body is both subjected to and productive of capital, confirming that post-Fordism profits from both cyclical and linear repetitions so long as they *create* something new. Lefebvre's project to overturn the domination of linear over cyclical rhythms is completed under post-Fordism, but without the emancipatory possibilities for which he hoped. The problem is not so much the relationship between the two, but the flexibility capital uses to appropriate both through the demand of production. In other words, under post-Fordism, the moment of *détournement* is sutured tightly between domination and appropriation. Can we rethink Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis in such a way that *détournement* is reclaimed and cyclical repetitions aren't oriented toward development?

Pedagogically Reclaiming Arrhythmia

In the concluding section of his book on the topic, Lefebvre (2013) delineates the components of rhythmanalysis. The body is always polyrhythmic in that it 'is comprised of diverse rhythms' and it is eurythmic in that it 'presupposes' the polyrhythmic yet unites them to produce a 'normal' body (77). Such unity is not an abstract equality—which Lefebvre refers to as isorhythmic—but more like, as he framed it earlier in the book, 'symphonically,' in which each distinct theory has 'its place, its rhythm, and its recent past, a foreseeable and a distant future' (41). On my reading, the polyrhythmic—whether it manifests as eurythmic or isorhythmic—allows space for a combination of linear and cyclical repetitions. The last component is *arrhythmia* or the gap introduced into any rhythm, measure, or combination thereof. 'In

arrhythmia,’ he writes, ‘rhythms break apart, alter and bypass *synchronization*’ (77). Arrhythmia is a ‘pathological situation’ (77) in need of *preventative* cures.

The goal of these cures is to produce a polyrhythmic society where multiple rhythms coexist. Post-Fordism might be the capitalist manifestation of a polyrhythmic society, and differential repetitions and knowledge produce new value for accumulation precisely by preventatively treating arrhythmia. From this, it follows that installing the arrhythmic within the pedagogy of cyclical repetitions might immobilize post-Fordist accumulation. Capitalism is a rhythmic process of and between investment, production, and realization, and crises are constituted by the breach of these rhythms, their breaking apart: arrhythmia.

While arrhythmia is conceptualized a sickness in need of a cure, Wozniak (2017) innovatively reads Lefebvre against Lefebvre and argues that arrhythmic disruptions can ‘create lacunae or holes in hegemonic temporalities... by suspending processes of exchange-value production’ (504). Building on Wozniak’s work, we can position arrhythmia as an educational rupture of studying that’s necessary for revolution by relating to it as a *détournement* that sustains the break between domination and appropriation, insofar as arrhythmic disruptions are precisely openings for *détournement* and new rhythms of use-value. If linear repetition is rational and planned, and if cyclical repetition entails a new opening that’s always in the process of becoming (which is why it serves as a motor of accumulation in post-Fordism), then perhaps the arrhythmic is the opening to an enduring *détournement* that can’t be captured precisely because it suspends production and remains a potentiality.

As we saw above, rhythmanalysis is conducted through a bodily listening. Yet this bodily listening must be a ‘discriminatory capacity of the auditory and cerebral apparatuses,’ which play ‘the primary role... in the grasping of rhythms’ (Lefebvre 2013: 79). Through their ability to play back sounds, what recording technologies offer Lefebvre’s project are ‘possibilities of reproducing rhythms, studying rhythms’ and ‘therefore of grasping them in their diversity’ (79). Although rhythmanalysis demands that the body also be *grasped by* rhythms, it is still oriented toward the production of new and creative knowledge. Grasping is the act of reaching out, enclosing what’s there, and taking it back to the subject, which integrates the rhythms into its understanding of the world (Ford 2020). This is like the listening pedagogy proposed by R. Murray Schafer in his classic *The Soundscape*. Schafer’s (2004) scaffolded listening pedagogy is a way to learn how to listen for understanding and clarity, which he calls ‘clairaudience’ or ‘clean hearing’ (11), which necessitates ‘ear cleaning’ (208). To clean one’s ear, it’s useful to try to listen to silence and to listen to one sound at a time. Ear cleaning is a postdigital form of listening in which recording technologies provide augment the human ear in order to discern the aspects of rhythms previously missed, or those aspects of our ‘soundscape that have previously gone unnoticed’ as ‘sound events and soundscapes can be recorded for later analysis’ (209). For Schafer, too, capturing sounds helps us better grasp their presence and ascertain fuller knowledge of the world.

Lefebvre wants us to listen to rhythms so we can *hear* them through and with the body, and the connection between hearing and listening is important for the rhythm-analytical project. ‘If “to hear” is to understand the sense,’ Jean-Luc Nancy writes, ‘to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is

not immediately accessible' (2007: 6). Hearing takes place in the continuity between rhythm and meaning while listening occurs in the gap between the two. This gap is the possibility of an arrhythmic *détournement* that's foreclosed through the desire for knowledge and the inability to remain *within* the unthought. It is not so much that Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis is incorrect or unjust in its desire for differential space but that it's predicated on the developmental logic of post-Fordism that insists on endless becoming. While 'the infinity of becoming seems weightless, untethered to tradition, norms, or economic obstacles,' Lewis (2018) argues that it still rests on 'an underlying determinism and developmentalism' that is 'no different from the neoliberal, entrepreneurial self that is equally interested in continual self-fashioning, self-stylization, and self-overcoming' (38). It is in this sense that, for Lefebvre, arrhythmia is indeed an illness for the self in need of constant redevelopment.

Today, however, we might turn from rhythmanalysis to arrhythmanalysis and reclaim the latter as the underlying structure of studying. Rhythms, after all, unite the past, present, and future and consist of continuities and discontinuities. As a pedagogy, the rhythms of studying are not only open to but *defined* by interruptions, unexpected encounters, and new beginnings. There is no guaranteed accumulation over time, for the temporal breaches can undo any prior accumulation. As the pedagogy of cyclical repetition, studying can disable the ever-shifting beginning and end points that define the linear repetitions of learning. By reasserting the centrality of arrhythmia to cyclical repetition, interruptions are set loose from new beginnings and developments so the caesura of *détournement* can persist.

Conclusion: Arrhythmanalysis of Disseizure

Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis lends itself to a constant generation of knowledge and understanding in order to change the world, to reclaim the use-value of the cyclical repetitions of lived bodies from the exchange-value of the linear rhythms of capital and the state. Yet under contemporary capital, rhythmanalysis ultimately produces new data, information, and knowledge for capital to expropriate and valorize. The system develops our capacities to hear and listen for new and different things, a development that occurs according to the regime of recognition. Under post-Fordism, the pedagogical task of resistance is to find 'a kind of stupefaction or stupidity suspending the activity of the mind' (Lyotard 2020: 114). One way this might happen is through *arrhythmic* disruptions, magical and poetic moments of suspension that *hold open* the gap of *détournement*. This stupefaction is important because, 'if capitalism replenishes itself through the operativity of the self (which includes the social, political, and economic forces at work above and below the self),' then 'a suspended self neutralizes these forces' (Lewis 2018: 41).

Jean- François Lyotard's writing on *timbre* provides an example of the puncture that defines arrhythmanalysis and forces the suspension of the self. *Timbre* is an incredibly elusive concept, a catch-all that refers to everything about a sound except for its pitch (frequency) duration (time), and intensity (loudness). It's basically everything we can't *know* about a sound. Because we can't know *timbre*, it remains inaccessible to understanding. The *timbre* happens *now*, and, as a *now* that exceeds

the rhythms of the body, it is ‘what breaks the mind’ (Lyotard 1991: 156). It disorients and suspends the subject by taking hold of us, taking us hostage ‘because by being subjected to its seizure by that matter, the mind is deprived, stripped of its faculty—both aesthetic and intelligent—to bind it, associate it’ (156).

Lyotard goes further still, asserting that not only are we unable to know timbre, but we can’t even *listen to* it with our senses because, during the *now* of timbre, the mind and subject are suspended or in a state of disseizure. During the *now*, there’s not a subject able to think of or experience itself as a subject with ‘its power of synthesis, the sensory forms and conceptual operators, so as to refer to *this* nuance, the reason is that sonorous matter which *is* this nuance is there only to the extent that, then and there, the subject is not there’ (157). Even sensibility is interrupted. The nuance *passes* through us, *affecting* us to the extent that we can’t recount or recall it; there is no ‘I’ to either grasp or to be grasped by rhythms.

If rhythmanalysis is aesthetic in that it concerns the senses, then arrhythmanalysis is *anaesthetic* insofar as it disables sensibility. To sense or understand the *now* of timbre, we would need to retain it, constitute it within some temporal order, and thereby reduce or betray it. The rhythmanalyst’s requirement for knowledge and selfhood blocks the possibility of the rupture of *détournement* by tethering it too closely to production, which is why we might move from rhythmanalysis to arrhythmanalysis. This is a paradoxical form of listening as not-listening, where we’re listening *to not* hear but to disseize the subject that could register timbre; to *try* to listen for that which can’t be heard. If the body is polyrhythmic, then the break of arrhythmia is a rupture not only in capitalist space–time, but in the self as well.

Coda: the Political Organization of Arrhythmanalysis

Capital is, above all else, flexible, as ‘every limit appears as a barrier to be overcome’ (Marx 1973: 409). Under post-Fordism, capital overcame the limits of cyclical repetitions and differential rhythms, incorporating *détournement* and the method of rhythmanalysis into its circuits of production and circulation. Lefebvre’s thought leaves an important legacy for understanding and intervening in the capitalist abstraction of work, space, and time, but this is a legacy on which we have to build and modify according to our current conjuncture. The modification I’ve articulated in this paper has primarily been pedagogical and could certainly appear as a fetishization of rupture and stupor, as if they were valuable in themselves rather than in a certain context and with a particular political orientation.

Revolution, for Lefebvre, in as endless process of temporary *détournements* and ‘a permanent cultural revolution’ (Lefebvre 1996: 180). Lefebvre supplements the Marxist concept of revolution with the Nietzschean concept of subversion. ‘Revolution,’ he writes, ‘acts on the political level, and subversion acts to destroy the political’ (2014: 73). His vision is one where orders are established and undermined continually until we reach communism. Revolution isn’t a rupture or a break with time but takes place ‘by imprinting a *rhythm* on an era’ neither by armed force nor by political or theoretical struggle, but over a long duration so that, ‘a long time after the action, one sees the emergence of novelty’

(Lefebvre 2013: 24). The immanence of Lefebvre's revolutionary conception is perfectly aligned with capitalism today, which produces a temporality that, as Gabriel Rockhill (2019) illustrates, 'constructs a political prison out of the present' by simultaneously obliterating the past and transforming the future into an endless repetition of what exists *here and now*. (17). Postdigital media is an example of such a temporal configuration: 'Whatever is on the front page disappears almost immediately to be replaced by another shock event' (21).

It's necessary to address Lefebvre's dismissal and open denunciation of the actually existing socialist projects at that time for the mere fact that they were, allegedly, not producing new spaces and utilizing the state itself to transform society. This is most explicit in his later theory of the State Mode of Production, which collapses radically different social forms—from fascism and capitalism to social democracy and socialism—together. He opposed these states insofar as each 'plans and organizes society "rationally," thus 'imposing analogous, if not homologous, measures irrespective of political ideology, historical background, or the class origins of those in power' (Lefebvre 1991: 23). Lefebvre's hostility toward capitalist abstractions were as consistent those towards socialist projects. Curry Malott (2017), for instance, cites a lecture from the 1960s that 'begins by arguing that all political ... either work within or against the state' (443).

The latter strategy is the only correct one for Lefebvre, and it's organized around events, moments, or *everyday* resistances that provide experiments in *autogestion*, a term designating the small-scale democratic control of the processes of producing and reproducing life. Rather than either 'political change at the level of the state or... the collective or state ownership of the means of production as such,' revolution entails 'a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the "interested parties," with their multiple, varied and even contradictory interests' (Lefebvre 1991: 422). In sum, the political problem in Lefebvre's project is the sweeping *theoretical abstraction* from historical-materialism. Departing the Marxist theory of 'the transition from capitalism to socialism to communism as a developmental process contingent upon concrete conditions, Lefebvre's conception of democracy as process seems to be purely theoretical' (Malott 2017: 444). Revolutions don't entail taking state power, large-scale organizations and parties, or even social planning.

The second revision, then, is to pursue a contingent and dialectic strategy of *détournement*, appropriation, and organization instead of separating them as Lefebvre does. Defending *détournement* and holding open the moment of stupidity challenges the domination of exchange-value, and so too must the rhythmic appropriations that result from *détournement* and that *détournement* enables. The socialist project *has*, through organized and even large-scale *détournements*, produced spaces of appropriation where use-value has the upper hand over exchange-value and where difference reigned over abstraction. While the mass-built housing projects in Lefebvre's homeland of France and the Soviet Union may have appeared similar, 'mass housing across the Soviet Union... was, despite the appearance of monotony, in fact substantively diverse' (Murawski 2018: 928).

These differences manifested rhythmically throughout the socialist experiment. Even the large-scale planned units were 'subject to constant change over time and

modification into intricate arrays of sub-types’ (928). Different cities that each had distinct forms of producing and reproducing the social existed in networks. Beginning in the 1950s, what the Soviets called microdistricts ‘described neighborhood-scale urban territory that existed in this network and encapsulated the multiscalar correspondence of parts of the single entity’ (Zarecor 2018: 102). Each housed between 5,000 and 10,000 people and included schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, and more. Different social groups, from factory workers to Party elites, lived in the same housing units and microdistricts. Contrary to ‘the increasingly troubled council estates of Britain or the housing projects of the United States,’ Mark B. Smith shows that ‘all kinds of people lived in Soviet microdistricts, bringing traditional family and neighborhood rhythms to complement and clash with those of proto-communist organization’ (109). This is not to romanticize Soviet microdistricts, but rather to identify the ways in which planning and organization, when done collectively, can enable the differential repetition of space and time and how the arrhythmic can be mobilized and wielded collectively.

Arrhythmianalysis is a mode of engagement not poised at the edge of the sensible for *potential* meaning, but one of listening in order *not* to hear: a stupid and *arrhythmic* listening incapable of creating understanding because it interrupts and undoes the very subject who could synthesize the sounds. Arrhythmianalysis doesn’t *produce* knowledge and, contra Lefebvre, doesn’t entail a ‘pedagogy of the body’ that can *sense* them. In fact, the educative and political force of arrhythmia is found in the desubjectification of the subject or the subject’s disavowal. Arrhythmianalysis entails a pedagogy of and for the unthought, *not* to render it knowable but to preserve its ineffability, and therefore to stretch the ruptural moment of *détournement* required for a revolutionary break and appropriation.

While I’ve tried to get at the excess of cyclical and linear repetitions and the surplus of thought in this article, this shouldn’t be interpreted as an uncritical celebration of either or as an argument *against* repetition or knowledge. Ephemerality, uncertainty, and planning should be neither uncritically celebrated nor elevated against each other. At the same time, under the rhythmic capture of post-Fordism, without attending to the arrhythmic, we’re all the more susceptible to returning back into the circuits of capital. Arrhythmianalysis, then, is a *strategic* pedagogical practice that can supplement the theoretical resources Lefebvre provides us in our ongoing fight against capitalist abstraction. Revolution is the imposition of a new rhythm through an arrhythmic rupture of *détournement*.

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