

Prosody as cognition

It is the object of this paper, not to suggest how a new method for prosody can be formulated, but instead to multiply the difficulties, doubts and hesitations which might reasonably face any supposed method. Yet it would arrange these obstacles in such a way that not only might prosody become impossible as a method, but also at the same time the oblivion of prosody, an oblivion which has formed something like the questionless ether in which descriptive thought must swim, and which would solidify into its in truth impossible telos, absolute prose, should become equally troubled, hesitant, and doubtful.¹ The positive results arrived at here will be limited, yet perhaps not so limited as what is likely to ensue from the attempt to furnish such results at once. For prosody *as a method* is the oblivion of prosody. The problem with which the oblivion of prosody faces us is not at all a contingent or unimportant one; rather, it is quite central to the way in which language has become *nature morte*, a dead letter which we daily ingest and regurgitate.

Language has not, of course, completely become this dead letter; indeed, it could not completely become so without ceasing to be language. For this reason some counter-melody is sounded in the prose even of the most zealous attempts to strip poetry of its truth-content. One of the earliest and most cunning all-out attacks along these lines concludes with a hymn to the end of hymnody: the anti-mimetist, once he has shown his audience how the seductions of poetry may lead us to the bad polity, exhorts them, not to stop their ears against those sirens, but to sing back: 'while we listen to poetry we'll be *chanting* these allegations of ours to ourselves as a precautionary *incantation* against being caught once more by that childish and pervasive love'.² Whilst, therefore, it is an important part of this paper's argument to show that prosody will be unable to put one foot in front of the other for so long as it fails to clarify – fails, indeed, even to notice or to ask about – its own metaphysical presuppositions, it will become clear that this paper no less wishes to suggest that metaphysics, in its turn, will never be able to hear itself think until it develops something like a prosody, that is, until it stops taking its own necessary artifice of articulation for so much music, rhetoric, or other seductive or simply godforsaken noise. The

argument takes the form of the essay rather than the treatise, and suggests that prosody has not yet earned the right to the latter form. For the same reason this essay offers no definition of its central concept. Enquiry starts instead from that concept in a damaged form, as the cover-concept for the aesthetic aspects of language – where their description as ‘aesthetic’ and therefore non-cognitive is taken to be part of the damage.

1

Prosody has in this century come in for an extra dose of scientism. Even one surveyor who admits that the theory of versification ‘is not, nor ever will be ... strictly a science’ nevertheless looks forward ‘to a unified field-theory’ and finds it ‘painful to live in a pre-Newtonian age’. The junk must go overboard: ‘we will never have such a theory at all until we survey, understand fully, then divest ourselves of the enormous conceptual errors of the past’. Among such errors may be the very name of prosody itself: ‘the popular current usage of *prosody* to refer to verse-theory is a solecism’, to be replaced by the honest-artisanal ‘versification’.³ Such brisk dispatch may be prompted by a recognition that prosody has taken longer than any other single discipline to stop arguing upon authority. Hephaestion’s *Handbooklet* became, as his commentator has remarked, ‘the single teacher of metric to the western world, and one whose authority went almost unchallenged until the nineteenth century’.⁴ Despite the harshness of the verdict pronounced on his work by subsequent metricians Hephaestion’s dead vocabulary haunts our lecture-halls and classrooms.⁵ Each child broken in to her first iambic pentameter still splutters on the ashes of the Alexandrian library.⁶ Yet the inexactness of this vocabulary is constitutive of its interest rather than an accidental obstacle. Clive Scott once demonstrated that the first line of Gray’s *Elegy* cannot be proven to be an iambic pentameter.⁷ Anyone who witnessed this demonstration will understand that what is being handed down in traditional metrical categories is an abstract of practical wisdom rather than a fully empirical measure. To delete them on the grounds of their approximative character may therefore be misguided. The introduction of a vocabulary drawn from professional linguistics represents ambiguous progress, rather than a flood of light, because an apparently more transparent terminology in fact conceals the nature of what is being handed down: a tradition not susceptible to exhaustive description (and this not as a contingent defect but as central to the peculiar kind of implicit cognition which the prosodic sense really is). The quasi-biological genealogies furnished in Gasparov’s *History of European Versification* – in which the verse line slips from Sanskrit to Larkin like

coiled DNA – strikingly illustrate the truth that the ‘human sciences’ have in many sectors barely begun to think about what the transmission of a tradition really entails.⁸ As well crack quantum mechanics upon the Roman Rite as set linguistics to a total calculus of metrical types.

The metrical tradition has been from the first concerned with poetry as written. The decisive handbook appears to have been compiled not so as to help readers or writers of poetry, but primarily for the purpose of colometry.⁹ Alexandrian students and editors were to be helped to determine line-endings and discover corruptions in texts previously recorded in a continuous lineation which would now count as prose. The *Handbooklet* already represents an advanced stage of oblivion of the bodily experience which lies, desiccated, inside its own terminology: its *feet* not only no longer dance but cannot remember why they bear their name or why they might need to ask about it. ‘The foot is not defined by Hephaestion’.¹⁰ As Douglas Oliver made clear, the diagrams of the prosodists, whether metricians or rhythmicians, have often had no referent.¹¹ They are not inductive, since unlike Oliver’s own attempts they do not proceed from how the lines discussed actually have been read by any living individual. They are so little empirical that it is not even clear in what units the time of prosody is supposed to be measured. Still less can they be transcendental, because it is entirely unknown of what experience they might furnish the condition of possibility. They are neither inductive nor deductive but constitutively amphibious: ‘time-units’ without duration, ‘places’ which can never be visited.

This is not the result of any negligence on the part of prosodists, and in particular it is not the result of some culpable failure to liquidate obsolete terminology. On the contrary, it is the result of a ceaseless assiduity conducted along lines already laid out by what the experience of time and place has itself become, an experience in which the most attentive scrutiny of what a moment might be can see nothing other than ‘a radical and hardly thinkable discontinuity which is set up between these pieces of being and nothingness which constantly swap places in a magical transsubstantiation, such that that which stands on the narrow summit of the now not only has one foot on the earth and one in the void, it tumbles endlessly from the first to the second, tottering like a drunken man or like someone trying to go backwards on a conveyer belt or an escalator’.¹² Such an idea of time is the foundation of nihilism. A quantity of nothings is supposed to be that of which our living experience is made up. Accordingly, we are to understand that this experience is itself a nothing. The subject is to be representation: its fear or hunger, appearance. Why else should the music of poetry seem to contain an intimation of happiness but that each

stress confounds this nihilism? Emphasis cannot but claim that our experience of duration is real. When hours, minutes and seconds drain away in front of us as this sequence of nothings universalised into the measure of life, then outworn iambs, trochees and dactyls carry the promise of a real duration, and, with it, the almost unimaginable promise that our experience might also be for real. Their character as obsolete tradition is the less disadvantageous the more widely the reality of subjective experience is itself regarded as an obsolete tradition. The problem, then, is not that the metricians have not had an appropriately steely set of rulers, but that, as I shall suggest, prosody cannot be grounded on the model of the measurement of an object.¹³

2

In much modern prosody nothing plus nothing equals something. Nothing – that is, the chimerical metrical abstract, obtained goodness knows how, neither by deduction nor by induction – is added to nothing – that is, the pure content of perfect semantic literalness – to produce something, a miraculous body of sound inhabited by its soul of sense. The preferred procedure is still that followed in reason's self-critique.¹⁴ Concepts without intuitions are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind; and just so – thus the professional metricians – with sound and sense. Of course we know that metre 'is' nothing by itself, yet it is still insisted that this in no way prevents us from 'separating it out for analysis'. One recent analyst of 'Versification and its discontents', planning a 'research program', observes a failure to attend to this dictum: 'it is possible for the poet to work out an interplay between the metrical pattern and other patterns. But this interplay cannot be felt and cannot be analyzed and discussed without discriminating the metrical pattern as such from the other patterns'.¹⁵ Just so the emptiness of concepts without intuitions, the blindness of intuitions lacking concepts, can be thought of as reasons not for suspecting the opposition of the terms themselves, but rather as 'a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other'.¹⁶ So that the prosodists, no less than the epistemologists, add nothing to nothing to produce something. Meaning is pumped back into the acoustic carcass, which must, but which cannot, take up its bed and walk.

Were prosody to become possible, indeed, one of the conditions might be a rethinking of the place of idiosyncrasy in the experience of poetry. The truth about such experience cannot be reached by trimming off what are thought of as the merely private extras. This kind of route to supposed objectivity starts with some individual shudder of experience – as when the

thought that *I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floor of silent seas* flits half-noticed across the cerebral cortex of one participating in some grim festival of functions – and then deletes the contingent, the accidental, or the merely personal. It thus deletes, in the event, everything about that experience which makes it an experience: in bracketing out the festival of functions, the functions themselves, and whatever else in the moment should be thought to pertain only to this single point in space-time, it presents a mutilated rump known as ‘the effect of the metre upon the reader’. Here is the experience of ‘the’ ‘reader’ as mechanical doll, in which the range of experiences which readers historically have had, are having, and might have, must know themselves for their own silly and quite private idiocies, and so must measure their lack against this timeless, placeless zombie.¹⁷

As the research programmer mentioned earlier has noted, then, ‘Although people read and write verse, human beings are not in the metricians’ loop because metricians do not know how to include them. Language in the main literary and linguistic traditions remains uncognitive ... mind-free rather than cognitive and mindful’.¹⁸ The division of tasks carves up the material itself, as though this division were a feature of the object rather than of procedures for classifying it. The ‘Critique of Judgement-Power’ discusses prosody thus: ‘in all the free arts there is yet a need for something in the order of a constraint, or, as it is called, a mechanism. (In poetry, for example, it is correctness and richness of language, as well as prosody and meter.) Without this the spirit, which in art must be free and which alone animates the work, would have no body at all and would evaporate completely. This reminder is needed because some of the more recent educators believe that they promote a free art best if they remove all constraint from it and convert it from labour into mere play.’¹⁹ There is no attempt here to legitimate prosody from the benefits it brings to consumers, but only from the role it plays in production. Art is ‘free’, yet requires a ‘constraint’. Prosody is a reliquary containing this volatile fluid, without which the spirit of poetry would vanish into thin air. Otherwise it would be spirit without a body; would be, too, mere play instead of work. Prosodic tradition is understood as a mechanism or a body for turning play into work, and for preventing the evaporation of poetical spirits. Whereas one deconstructive commentary has focused on the ways in which ‘a logical frame is transposed and forced in to be imposed on a nonlogical structure, a structure which no longer essentially concerns a relation to the object as object of knowledge’,²⁰ it might equally be noticed here that the separation between the logical and the a-logical is enforced: culminating in an exclusion whose double character has not always been attended to: ‘there is

no science of the beautiful, but only critique; and there is no fine science, but only fine art'.²¹ Cognition is deleted from prosody, certainly, but prosody is also deleted from cognition. Beauty must not only lack all knowing; equally knowing must lack all beauty. Beauty is corralled in its proper department so as finely to supplement the epoch of absolute prose.

As one social scientist of culture has frankly admitted, we are dealing in such cases less with a demonstration than with an act of faiths: 'The break necessary to establish a rigorous science of cultural works is something more and something other than a simple methodological reversal. It implies a true *conversion* of the ordinary way of thinking and living the intellectual enterprise'.²² This can be well illustrated from the Latin Fathers. A critical incident in the life of S. Jerome concerns such a conversion. In his twenty-second letter, Jerome describes a pattern of binging and purging familiar to many ascetics: 'And so, miserable man that I was, I would fast, only to read Cicero afterwards ... whenever I returned to my right senses and began to read the prophets, their language seemed harsh and barbarous'. He falls ill. 'Meantime preparations were made for my funeral: my whole body gradually grew cold, and life's vital warmth only lingered faintly in my poor throbbing breast. Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the Judge's judgement seat: and here the light was so dazzling, and the brightness shining from those who stood around so radiant, that I flung myself on the ground and did not dare look up. Questioned as to my condition I declared myself a Christian: and he who stood in judgement said "You are lying. You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian".'²³ Wide as the gulf in years stretches from Jerome to Kant to Bourdieu, we are dealing with an early instance of the expulsion of prosody from cognition, which declares *beautiful science* a null set.

There are several ways to adjust these categorical blinkers as they affect prosody. Jacques Roubaud has commented that 'the idea that verse has a purely "sonorous" nature is best regarded as a curiosity. The syntactical structure of language always plays an essential role'.²⁴ The familiar story, in which an initially non-signifying pure noise, a series of tones, pitches and timbres, is only subsequently assembled into signification, is a numbed recapitulation of a narrative which has long ceased to hold the attention of other departments. Once it has been pointed out that, far from representing the obvious starting point, '*hearing a pure noise* demands a highly artificial and complicated frame of mind',²⁵ that what when we wake at 6 o'clock is heard across the street is at once the noise of the venture capitalist's BMW, rather than a kit-form data-set we then piece together as the acoustic after-image of that vehicle, the dependence of even the shiniest new prosodies on the same old tool-box comes clear.

Prosody, then, is cognitive; cognition is also prosodic. The claim that 'in truth, there is no such thing as prose' might look like vocational bravado.²⁶ As one prose voice in the romantic conversation on poetry points out, 'if things go on like this, everything there is will turn into poetry before you can say Friedrich Schlegel. So is everything poetry then?'²⁷ But it draws its force from a context in which the opposite is widely believed. It also meets with confirmation, in one sense, from the surprising quarter of interactional linguistics. The contributors to a recent collection of essays on *Prosody in Conversation* have wanted to question the view that 'words, phrases, and sentences make up the core of language and that prosody is somehow derivative, and can be treated as an expressive overlay that supplements or modulates the more basic propositional content'.²⁸ Instead they draw on the idea that 'without prosody there can be no conversing. It is prosody that animates talk and in large part determines its situated characteristics. Only through prosody do sentences become turns at speaking and come to be seen as actions performed by living actors'.²⁹ The notion that a scientific language, a language carrying cognition, would be, amongst other things, a language stripped of all prosody, as of its entanglement with 'merely' subjective and with intersubjective experience alike, is an idea which took some time to take a grip, but which has in many quarters become an article of an inexplicit, and thus all the more rigidly adhered-to, faith. Even in the formula just given, however, talk is supposed inert until prosody comes to 'animate' it. The volume itself suffocates in just this airless scientism.

If it is the case that 'only through prosody do sentences become turns at speaking and come to be seen as actions performed by living actors', it might be that prosody is one of the aspects of language which cannot be made exhaustively explicit without inducing psychotic collapse. It's hard to imagine the argument over the breakfast table ever coming to an end: 'it wasn't the fact that you asked me to drop the car over at David's that irritated me, it was the way you ended your sentence with a sequence-terminating monophthongal *oh*-token'. If reconciliation depends, that is, not, contrary to some views, on all implicit assumptions being made explicit, but rather on there being some modes of mutual understanding, of cognition, which remain implicit, it may be a kind of psychosis, bent on the monologic comprehension and digestion of intersubjectivity, which wishes to make every last note of our conversation yield up its sense or function to the map. This might suggest that those who take prosody seriously should raise as many difficulties as possible in the face of the ever more strident demand to specify their own method. In particular it suggests that there is a necessary antagonism between advanced poetry and any prosody placing its own writing in the service of the empire of absolute literalness.

What comes into view, then, is the scale of the difficulties facing any effort to exorcise the ghost of dead metaphysics haunting the prosodist's carrel. The chimera *pure noise* is a subspecies of the magical beast *sheer data*. Its flight is towards absolute indifference. This is 'the prose of the world', which was once thought to begin '[i]n the slave'.³⁰ We should be clear that it cannot simply be a question of spotting the mistaken methods or assumptions of current prosody, were it even accurate to describe them as mistakes, and then replacing them with a new and, at last, fully sober method: as though truth were always a matter of going the last extra mile into disenchantment. The 'mistake' is this idea which the scientific prosodist has that his or her method is a fully demythologised one. And since this idea is not only a mistake, but the grain of our daily lives, a new tool-kit won't do the job.

3

Let us try to imagine, then, that we have faced the full extent of the oblivion of prosody in our lives, that we keep this elusive target trapped in front of us, and that we at once hear the urgent voice of the local auditor demanding further progress. Are we to file a report of this kind? 'Sir, With regard to your letter of the 1st inst. concerning progress made by the Department of Absolute Literalness on Research Project 3527/6, *Prosody Without Illusions*, I regret to inform you that as a result of the persistence of western metaphysics [or he may say, 'objective social and historical antagonisms'] and, in particular, in view of the way in which the statutes, ordinances and personnel of the Department are themselves hopelessly bound up with such metaphysics, no further progress has so far been possible on this project. The Department's officers are currently making urgent enquiries as to how western metaphysics may be dismantled or may be in the process of dismantling itself [or he may say, 'about the likely duration of the relevant objective social and historical antagonisms'] so that a severely realistic assessment of the time necessary for the completion of Research Project 3527/6 can be provided to your office.' The two kinds of answers imagined here suffer from complementary defects: for the former, where *western metaphysics* is to blame, the notion that a more primordial thinking, beyond and before the forgetting of the question of being, can be repeated without confecting modern myth; for the latter, where *objective social and historical antagonisms* are at fault, the notion that 'only that spear that wounded you can heal you', that absolute prose would be a real illusion only to be undone by means of a critical prose itself equally disenchanting. It is not necessarily the case that the difficulties have been accurately understood once we have

seen their dependence upon a series of dualisms, whether we want to describe these as Platonic, Cartesian, or to fix upon any other moment in the tradition for the unhappy lapse, and once we have been able to overcome these dualisms, perhaps for example by coming to think of the soul as a 'category-mistake'.³¹ It is tempting to cut the knot: 'Sound *is* sense'.³² Such a sentence might be read either as a slogan or as a speculative proposition. If read as a slogan, it can come to mean that the first term is exhausted in the second. So that we should stick to sense, talk about sound resulting only in hopeless formalism. If read as a speculative proposition it affirms at once the identity and non-identity of the two terms compared, a proposition which implies a question: if sound is sense, how have they come to be thought of as separate? It might be, though, that the delusion that prosody is a non-cognitive extra is best described as relying not upon an ontological dualism but rather an ontological *monism*: one in which 'everything is outside', and in which whatever is to be real must be ejected to the realm of appearance. Is there anything less illusory than hunger? Yet for the dogma that 'all is representation', my hunger, my look, are not themselves knowledge, but must first be represented (as appearance) to a representation (the I which accompanies all my representations) which will process them into the representation of representations, the stuffed replica of our living experience. Contrary to this dogma, the body is, also, subjective. I am my body rather than just having it.³³ So to the general economy of nihilism which is our experience of time as though it were an object prosody opposes the reality of the duration of our experience.

It would be possible to begin thinking about the birth of prosody only upon condition that we stopped thinking of the bodily, and of the musical, as the non-cognitive vessels for a cognitive content. It may be, then, that some of the most promising resources for a renewed prosody would lie in that philosophy of music which understands music as itself a kind of cognition.³⁴ Such a philosophy of prosody would face comparable difficulties; in particular, that of sustaining the claim to a truth-content in a categorial regime built around the restriction of the dominant sense of truth to propositionality. Yet such a restriction begins to let in daylight as soon as we consider what the truth of an argument, rather than of a single monad-like proposition, might be. The truth of an argument is already dependent upon the order in which propositions are placed, and hence upon an artifice of articulation. Many of the contributing factors to the evacuation of all significance from prosody which we have thus far been considering have resulted from a willingness to treat features of the functional organisation of mental work as though they were features of what is being investigated: as though a poetic authorship really were divided into a part which is prosody

and another part which is its semantic content. Were prosody to take its cue from the philosophy of music as cognition, one essential requirement would be a different conception of the relationship between substance and method in prosodic enquiry. Perhaps an approach which placed the individual poetic authorship at its centre, not as a natural but as a traditional, and therefore not simply liquidable, unit, might have its methodologism continually chastened by the complexity of the subject matter. Whereas, therefore, it might notionally be 'best practice', after a criticism of the actually existing conduct of any discipline, to propose a new series of *regulae* for the conduct of that discipline, it should already be evident that only the new critical essay itself could answer such a purpose in this place. Could such an essay be imagined, it would have at its core the notion that historically damaged, complicit, compromised works can yet know the history from which they cannot be detached. So that one might, to offer only a single sentence, imagine an account of Pope's prosody which could think of it neither simply as an accumulation of symbolic capital, nor, naïvely, as an accomplished set of miniature mimeses of the semantic content, but rather as a form of knowledge whose furious pursuit of the rule (and thus of the felicitous transgression of the rule) internalises, yet also exceeds and knows, the polish requisite to domestic luxuries and gentlemanly sociability alike; or a reading of Swinburne in which the evacuation of semantic content in his work could be understood not as a self-indulgent pursuit of ersatz musicality, but as a cognitively astute practice of degeneration apprised of the historical decay of certain aspects of late romantic verse technique; or a study of Wilkinson in which it could be understood how the most helpless scraps of print or chatter are made prosodically animated, yet with no apparent force other than their own abject loss, in a kind of unfree verse. For each such work the vocabulary and procedures of prosody could not be given in advance, but would need to emerge in the course of enquiry, attentive to the languages for prosody historically and nationally and personally available in each case to these authorships, yet not truncating reflection in blind obedience to them. These promissory notes don't yet answer the hard questions, of course; but we need to be sure that what we think of as hard questions are those which concern fidelity to experience, rather than those which come with a forceful enough memo from the auditor.

Augustine was right. 'Truth in the body is better than falsehood in the soul'.³⁵ No programme of cultural criticism is entitled to think itself more *materialist* for suppressing or forgetting prosody. On the contrary, the simple deletion of prosody is idealist. This deletion tells us that we must accept stones for bread. In all dumbstruck prose, including the

prose of scientific prosody, reverberates the accusation heard by Jerome at the judgment-seat: *Ciceronianus es, non Christianus*. Except that today's judgment *ex cathedra* sounds rather different: you're an amateur, unqualified. Critical prosody is a materialism of the beautiful. Could we really say what a stress is, we might have come to the end of our nihilism, because we might be able to understand a single affective duration not as the endless repetition of an instantaneous passage from being into nothing, but as a real experience, the foundation of any possible ontology. In the printed melody of verse is heard, in the voice of the eloquent poet is read, news that such experience is; is, even within the despairing wish to forget, suppress or delete it.

Notes

- 1 I wish to thank the members of the Prosody Discussion Group in King's College, Cambridge, and particularly Rachel Potter, Ian Patterson, Drew Milne and Chris Prendergast.
- 2 Plato, *Republic*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: University Press, 1993), 605b, 608a (p. 359, p. 362). The 'all-out attack' is not on poetry, but on the idea that poetry is an important form of cognition.
- 3 T. V. F. Brogan, *English Versification, 1570–1980: A Reference Guide* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. xix, p. xiii, p. xxiii.
- 4 J. M. van Ophuijsen, *Hephaestion on metre* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 3.
- 5 Paul Maas held that 'Ancient prosody offers us superficial description, mechanical classification, fruitless speculation'. Quoted in Ophuijsen, 3.
- 6 But cf. M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 495: 'The *iambos* was an ancient institution which, to judge by its non-Greek name, had its roots in the pre-Hellenic culture of the Aegean'; and Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and its public in ancient Greece*, trans. A. Thomas Cole (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 35; p. 36, n. 33.
- 7 Paper given to the Prosody Discussion Group, King's College, Cambridge, 1996.
- 8 M. L. Gasparov, *A History of European Versification*, ed. G. S. Smith with L. Holford-Strevens, trans. G. S. Smith and Marina Tarlinskaja (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). The view of tradition followed in this paper is best set out in Theodor W. Adorno, 'Über Tradition', from *Ohne Leitbild: Parva Aesthetica*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, part 1, *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 310–20.
- 9 Ophuijsen, p. 27, describes the *Enchiridion* as 'a repertory which enables a student to go over the process of tracing lines of verse in a continuously written text for himself and helps him to spot corruptions'. For the beginnings of Alexandrian colometry, cf. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 187ff.

- 10 Ophuijsen, 55. Cf. e.g. *Hephaestionis Enchiridion*, ed. M. Consbruch (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1971), 141.
- 11 Douglas Oliver, *Poetry and Narrative in Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. xiii–xiv, and *passim*.
- 12 Michel Henry, *Phénoménologie matérielle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 43. The passage quoted is part of an analysis of Husserl's 1905 lectures on the phenomenology of the consciousness of time.
- 13 Two important existing indications of the imperfect applicability of the model of the measurement of an object are: (1) the 'preliminary definition of stress in performance', in Douglas Oliver, *Poetry and Narrative in Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 5 ('A poetic stress is apparently an instant when we unify into a single conception some of our sense of the form of a poetic line's sound as it has been developing over a small period of time. It necessarily involves unifying with our perception of the sound some conception of the meaning and emotional significance of the stress-bearing syllable in relation to the overall meaning and emotional significance of the poem'; cf. Oliver's 'revised definition of stress', 112), and (2) Clive Scott, 'The Reading of Verse', *The Poetics of French Verse: Studies in Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 82–104, where an impressive case is made (drawing on Bergson, amongst others) for the place of subjective experience in prosody.
- 14 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), 93. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Erkenntnistheorie 1957–8* (Frankfurt am Main: Junius, n.d.), 215.
- 15 Michel Grimaud, 'Versification and its discontents: Toward a research program', *Semiotica*, 88 (1992), 199–242 (p. 230).
- 16 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 93.
- 17 Here, and throughout, I echo John Wilkinson's cadence: 'Our nature is my greatest privacy, and this is the silly and sustaining paradox, that the most idiosyncratic and inadmissible is the most deeply shared' ('Cadence', *Reality Studios*, 9, 1987, 81–5 (p. 82).
- 18 Grimaud, 'Versification and its discontents', 236.
- 19 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), sect. 43, p. 171. For 'Critique of Judgement-Power', cf. Howard Caygill, *Art of Judgement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 1–8.
- 20 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 69.
- 21 Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, sect. 44, p. 172.
- 22 Pierre Bourdieu, 'Flaubert's Point of View', in *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 192–211 (p. 192).
- 23 Jerome, letter 22, in *Letters*, ed. and trans. F. A. Wright (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 124–7. Jerome's view of the relationship between classical rhetoric and prosody, on one hand, and Scripture, on the other, was never wholly stable, and on other occasions he praised the psalms, for example, on humanistic grounds; 'what is there more melodious than the psalms which are now in the style of our Horace and Greek Pindar, now in iambics, now take alcaic form, now swell in sapphics, and now go in half-feet?' (quoted in Alun David, 'Christopher Smart and the Hebrew Bible: Poetry and Biblical Criticism in England (1682–1771)', PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1994, p. 25).

- 24 Jacques Roubaud, *La Vieillesse d'Alexandre: Essai sur quelques états récents du vers français* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1988), 95. My thanks to Chris Prendergast for introducing me to Roubaud's work.
- 25 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 16th edn (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), 163.
- 26 Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Réponse à une enquête sur l'évolution littéraire', *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 866–72 (p. 867).
- 27 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Gespräch über die Poesie', in *Kritische und theoretische Schriften*, ed. Andreas Huyssen (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), 185: 'Wenn das so fortgeht, wird sich uns, ehe wirs uns versehen, eins nach dem andern in Poesie verwandeln. Ist denn alles Poesie?'
- 28 John J. Gumperz, Foreword to *Prosody in Conversation*, ed. Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen and Margret Selting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xi.
- 29 Gumperz, Foreword, p. x.
- 30 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 150, 387.
- 31 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 7–24.
- 32 The view of a fictional character in Iain Sinclair, *Radon Daughters* (London: Vintage, 1995), 248.
- 33 Cf. Michel Henry, *Philosophy and Phenomenology of the Body*, trans. Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 183–221 ('Is there anything less illusory than hunger?', p. 186).
- 34 Cf. T. W. Adorno, 'Music and language: a fragment', in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), 1–6.
- 35 Or, strictly, 'something true in the body is better than something false in the soul': *verum in corpum melius est quam falsum in anima*. Augustine, *De Musica*, in *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin*, le série, 7e partie, volume 4, ed. Guy Finaert and F.-J. Thonnard (Paris: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie., 1947), 375.