Rhythm as self-creation of the subject

In search of the *corporeal-poetical-political continuum*

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1. Three remarks about embodied significations and language

1.1 Speaking "Globish" and speaking one's mother tongue: one and the same subject?

To introduce my speech, I must make three preliminary methodological remarks. The first is that I will express myself in English, which is neither my mother tongue, nor yours. As I have never lived in an English-speaking country, I do not speak English fluently. This confronts us with the general problem of the use of "Globish", which implies the reduction of a speech to its "content" or "message." We may often forget, but there is a strong metaphysical concept regarding the relationship between language, things, and thought underlying "Globish communication." This metaphysics of language postulates that words are signs for things (considered as absent referents), and that language is only a tool, the "dress" of thought, as the Anglo-Irish philosopher George Berkeley put it. Accordingly, there would be no "loss" of semantic content when expressing oneself in one language or another, as the very same things of the world or contents of thought would be indicated in both cases.

However, in a careful reading of *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, we necessarily note that words are anything but innocent tools according to Berkeley, as "[...] most parts of knowledge have been strangely perplexed and darkened by the abuse of words, and general ways of speech wherein they are delivered"[1]. Therefore, to attain clear ideas, "[...] doth presuppose an

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1   Berkeley: A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, §21. http://philosophy.eserver.org/berkeley.html

entire deliverance from the deception of words"[2]. Moreover, the French linguist and poet Henri Meschonnic has shown that Berkeley's metaphysics of language is derived from theology[3]. Berkeley considers words as part of the world after the fall of man. Therefore, according to him, language is deceptive and the philosophical quest for clear ideas is explicitly described as a rise to paradise: "[W]e need only draw the curtain of words, to behold the fairest tree of knowledge, whose fruit is excellent and within the reach of our hand"[4].

As a paradoxical consequence, the metaphysics of language seen as a simple tool to communicate ideas is, in fact, deeply rooted in a theological metaphysics that postulates that language prevents us from exchanging clear ideas and accessing reality. Taking this reasoning one step further, we could say that Berkeley's dream to "[...] make his words the occasion of his lector's own thinking, so that he would be out of all danger of being deceived by words [...] considering his own naked, undisguised ideas"[5], is the dream of a "mind to mind communication", between pure and disembodied spirits.[6]

Speaking "Globish" is therefore completely contradictory with regard to the general topic of this seminar, *Generating bodies*, and the specific topic of my own speech. Indeed, I would like to show that language is every society's most fundamental imaginary institution[7], which shapes our entire relationship to the world; intellectually, emotionally, and physically. A little anecdote shows the importance of language in the embodiment of significations. Several months ago, I was attending a rehearsal of Sophocles' *Antigone*, at the Kleine Académie in Brussels, a theater school run by Luc de Smet, an actor and pedagogue who studied with Jacques Lecoq[8]. Luc de Smet had asked a native English-speaking

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2   Berkeley, §23.
3   Henri Meschonnic: Le signe et le poème, Paris: Gallimard 1975, pp. 64–65.
4   Berkeley, §24.
5   Berkeley, §25.
6   As Meschonnic has shown, there is another strong paradox here: although Berkeley is trying to think beyond language, he cannot escape from language. Indeed, it is his very special use of language in a style of discourse clearly inspired by the Bible and Milton's Paradise Lost that allows him to criticize language and pray for its final demise. Cf. Meschonnic: Le signe et le poème, p. 64.
7   Cf. Cornélius Castoriadis: L'institution imaginaire de la société, Paris: Seuil 1975.
8   Jacques Lecoq (1921–1999) is a famous French actor, choreographer, mime, and teacher, who pioneered a system of physical theater influenced by his practice of Commedia dell' Arte and mime, based on the importance of gestures, bodies, work with a neutral mask, clowns, etc. Ariane Mnouchkine, Christoph Marthaler, Luc Bondy, and the Mummenschanz were among his students.

actor and a native Turkish-speaking actor, who were both playing the scene of the confrontation between Creon and his son Haemon, to study their lines in French and in their mother-tongues. During the rehearsal, he suddenly asked them to change from French to their mother-tongues. It was amazing to note the complete transformation of the body of each of the actors, of their presence, gestures, and tone of voice. So, even when acting — that is, when pretending to be someone else — the use of one language rather than another transforms the fictional character played. Creon, for instance, became immediately royal and majestic, a true tragic character when the actor was speaking English, while he was reduced to a psychological character of a bourgeois drama when the same actor was speaking French.

To me, this small example shows that we are not the same person/subject when speaking different languages, because the language we speak shapes our body. As Goethe stated: "The more languages you know, the more of a person you are." And if language can shape our body, it is because each language we speak shapes for us a different world (seen as an organized cosmos) from the chaos of reality. Each language creates a certain "figure of the sensible/thinkable"[9]: when speaking one language, it is a whole and complex configuration of imagination, traditions, sensations, a whole memory inscribed in our bodies, that come together. Therefore, the "I-speaking-English" (foreign language) is not the same as the "I-speaking-French" (mother tongue). And this is especially problematic with "Globish", which is nobody's mother tongue and which is only spoken in specific professional contexts, isolated from the everyday life and world.

1.2 "To give a paper": about the disembodiment of significations when reading aloud a written text

The second remark I'd like to make by way of introduction, concerns why those two "I's" must be distinguished within the specific context of this seminar, where I shall do what I never do when I speak French: read aloud a written text. In French, we say: "je vais donner une conférence à l'université de Klagenfurt." In English, one would say "I will give a paper at the University of Klagenfurt." Although English scholars have a much more developed culture of oral debate

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9   *Figures of the Thinkable* is the title of the sixth and last volume of Castoriadis' *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*, published posthumously in 1999 (English translation by Helen Arnold in 2007).

than their French-speaking colleagues, the English expression shows better the preeminent position of writing in comparison with the spoken word within academia, especially in the humanities. Regardless of the language spoken, most of the scholars seem to consider an oral presentation to be the reading aloud of a paper. In my opinion, this is an *oxymoron* of sorts, and something I have learned to avoid when giving a talk in French. Let me explain why. When I am listening to someone reading a paper, I usually become bored within a few minutes, and even start to nod off. I cannot help it and when I was a student, I was ashamed of my "reaction" until eventually, over the years, I realized that almost everyone reacts in the same way.

To me, the boredom and slumber of listeners is a reaction by their *thinking bodies* (corps pensants), to the *disembodiment* of what is happening in front of them. Indeed, most of the time, the scholar, while reading aloud a written text, offers an example of the dangers of writing shown in an Egyptian myth told by Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus*: the god Theuth lauds his discovery of *grammata* (letters, signs, writings) as a boon to memory and wisdom. The god-king Thamos disagrees: he predicts that writing will cause the dereliction of memory because people will put all their trust in those "dead signs", instead of exercising their living memory[10]. Indeed, the scholar reading is delivering a dead product, thought-as-an-object, the *result* of a process of thinking that took place previously, and whose shadow is now captured in "dead signs." Most of the time, the scholars reading are not even conscious that they have to reactivate and to invent *hic et nunc* the dynamic of their own vivid thinking process. This can be noticed in their body language (or lack of): monotone voice, body sitting still, face looking down at the text, and lack of eye contact with the audience. With regard to the theme of *Generating bodies*, this means to me that for a thought process to be followed by an audience, it must be deeply rooted in the body. In the same way that a dancer's performance appeals to the kinesthetic capacities of the spectator, a scholar's speech appeals to the auditor's active dynamic of thinking, which implies the body of both: speaker and listener.

To exemplify this, here is a second anecdote, based on my own experience: I teach philosophy three hours a week to an audience of five hundred students. They are in their first year of a bachelor's degree in Law, so they are about eighteen years old and, for the most part, know nothing about philosophy, as it is not taught in Belgian high schools. This class, which is a requirement, frightens

them. I was completely exhausted after teaching my first class in front of this huge audience, "reading my paper". I thought I would never be able to cope with it. But little by little, I realized that I had to "leave my papers" and to work on my physical presence. I started to learn yoga and that helped me realize something very important (a philosopher normally does not pay any attention to such things): when breathing from the upper part of my body, the students were not very concentrated. When I began to become proficient in breathing from the pelvis, the audience's attention improved greatly. I also noticed that I had to be rooted to the ground with my feet (i.e., not wear high heels) with knees slightly bent, as in most traditional dances (flamenco, baratanatyam, and oriental dancing) that I have practiced. All of these transformations of bodily position and ways of breathing helped me speak with a deeper voice: a "chest voice," even sometimes a "pelvic voice," rather than a shrill "head voice." I was then able to play with the *hic et nunc* situation: interacting with the students, making eye contact with them, asking the audience questions, and taking questions from them. In these new circumstances, I do not have the situation "under control." On the contrary, I have learned to create, together with the students, a specific *rhythm* in the *hic et nunc* of each lecture, within a certain framework, flexible but firm.

By speaking of rhythm, I am starting to introduce a theoretical key-notion of my speech. I am referring to the pre-Platonic meaning of the Greek term *ruthmos*. As the French linguist Emile Benvéniste has shown in a famous and important paper,[11] the term *ruthmos* does not refer to the flow of the sea. In its pre-Platonic use, *ruthmos* means the self-deployment of a moving form, which is synonymous with self-creation of a form (*eidos*). I quote Benveniste: "*[R]uthmos* is about a moving and fluid form: it is adapted to the pattern of a fluid element: to a peplos, to the specific disposition of a temper or of a mood. It is the form as improvised, momentary, alterable."[12] That is why I assume that the notion of *rhythm* is also relevant when applied to the process of thinking: thinking alone, as well sharing it collectively. According to Benvéniste, it is Plato who is responsible for the transformation and reification of *ruthmos* into stiffened *cadenza*: no longer the dynamic of a moving form, but the binary alternation of strong and

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10   Plato: Phaedrus, 276d.

11   Emile Benvéniste: "La notion de 'rythme' dans son expression linguistique," reprinted in: Emile Benvéniste, Problèmes de linguistique générale, Paris : TEL Gallimard 1966, pp. 327–335.
12   Benvéniste: La notion de 'rythme', p. 333. The translations of all French and Ancient Greek texts are my own.

weak beats. [13] So, to go back to the empirical situation of a seminar, conference, or lecture: I assume that, most of the time, *when speakers are reading a written text aloud, they create a cadenza of thought rather than a rhythm of thinking.* Because the reading transforms the process of thinking into the transmission of a message between two well-differentiated poles: an active transmitter and a passive receiver. On the contrary, *a rhythm of thinking should be based on the constant interaction of the speaker and the listener, both active.*

1.3 Philosophy on stage: to perform vivid thinking and/or to represent the thought process?

This leads me to my third and last methodological remark, which is about the ambiguity of the English verb "to perform," which can both mean "to act" (to carry out an action) and "to represent" (to play a theatrical part). These two meanings refer to the ancient Greek words *praxis* and *mimèsis*, which are of particular importance with regard to the history of the relationship between philosophy and theater. Thanks to Plato and Aristotle [14] we have forgotten that tragic and comic performances, in the theater of Dionysos, in the ancient democratic city of Athens, were true ritual and political actions (*praxeis*), and not only fictitious imitations of actions (*mimeseis praxeôs*). This is based on the importance of the *chorus*: in the fifth century BC, the tragic, comic, and dithyrambic choruses were composed of citizens. [15] The members of a chorus were free of all military and political duties from the time of the rehearsals until the final performance at the Great Dionysia. In my opinion, this means that singing and dancing in an Athenian chorus was considered a true political act, and a ritual to honor the god Dionysus. [16] Indeed, the tragic performance, in particular, was about creating a

collective rhythm amongst the citizens (members of the chorus and audience) to question the imaginary significations of the community, through the embodiment of those significations, as sung and danced by the chorus. That is why Plato had to challenge tragedy, seen as dangerous and harmful for the soul. [17] Therefore, contemporary philosophy on stage should be questioned in the tensions between attempts to invent ways of performing the vivid process of thinking as *praxis*, and attempts to invent ways of representing this process as *mimèsis*. I shall give one last empirical example to show the significance of what such *praxis* means for me. When I was a teen-ager, I played piano and saxophone a lot. I started with classical music and then turned to jazz. Not too long ago, I realized that as soon as I began to teach and to give talks, I unconsciously used the jazz method of improvisation, somehow transposed into the sphere of *logos*. Whenever I have to give a lecture or a talk, I write a kind of "thinking chords chart," like the musical chords charts of jazz standards in my good old *Real Book*. I work hard on this structure, so as to be able to improvise during the talk, in creating transitions within the specific oral situation (in the way that one uses transition chords to modulate from one tune to another). In the last part of this contribution, I will emphasize the importance of a musical paradigm for understanding the process of thinking, alone and together with others.

2.   Language shapes the body in creating a world/Body shapes language in creating a discourse: about the self-invention of the individual subject in rhythm.

I can now come to the first point of my presentation, which is complementary to my first methodological remark. While language shapes our body, we can equally say that body shapes language. More precisely, we can say that body shapes language in creating discourse, in Benvéniste's definition, "discourse is language in action and necessarily between partners [...] It is language as the speaking human being has taken it upon him- or herself, which alone enables

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13   Cf. Benvéniste: La notion de 'rythme', pp. 333–335.

14   Cf. Sophie Klimis: Archéologie du sujet tragique, Paris: Kimé 2003; Sophie Klimis: "Le drame de la narration: une invention philosophique?" in: Arielle Meyer MacLeod/Michèle Pralong (eds.), Raconter des histoires. Quelle narration au théâtre aujourd'hui ?, Geneva: Métis Press 2012, pp. 57–84.

15   Csapo, Eric and Slater, William J., The context of Ancient Drama, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1994.

16   Cf. Klimis, "Le drame de la narration: une invention philosophique ?"; Klimis, Sophie: "Le souffle citoyen. Inventer le choeur tragique au XXIème siècle: les Perses d'Eschyle, mise en scène Claudia Bosse, Théâtre du Grutli (Genève)-Theatercombinat (Wien), 13–19 novembre 2006," in: F. Fix/F. Toudoire-Surlapierre (eds.), Le choeur dans le théâtre contemporain, 1970-2000, Dijon: Presses Universitaires de Dijon 2009, pp. 101–110.

17   See Klimis, Le souffle citoyen; Le drame de la narration; Sophie Klimis: "La musicalité sémantique du penser-poème grec. Pour une eidétique du prattein-poiein dans le langage," in: S. Klimis/P. Caumieres/L. Van Eynde (eds.), Castoriadis et les Grecs. Cahiers Castoriadis n°5, Brussels: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis 2010, pp. 173–24.

linguistic communication."[18] The complete statement of the thesis that I would like to discuss here is, therefore: *subjects self-create when their bodies shape the common language in creating their specific discourses.*

I will start with the transposition of the expression of the body into language, which is the key step in this process of self-creation of subjects through the creation of their discourses. To understand this key step, let us take a little journey from Antiquity (with Aristotle and the Roman orators Quintilian and Cicero) to contemporary theories in psycho-analysis (with Didier Anzieu) and linguistics (with Henri Meschonnic).

In chapter 17 of his *Poetics*, Aristotle says that "to compose the plots (*myt-hous*), the poet must create an accomplished/perfect form (*teleion*) with the help of the figures of speech (*skhèmasin*)."[19] The Greek word *skhèma/skhèmata* has several meanings: gestures of the body, attitudes, but also figures of speech ("figures de style"). In this quotation, the *skhemata* are commonly translated as "gestures of the body."[20] This translation suggests that the tragic text needs to be performed on stage so as to be *teleion* ("accomplished", "perfect"), or that the poet uses techniques of the body in order to compose his work. But Aristotle insists several times on the self-sufficiency of the tragic discourse, which should already provoke its specific effect as a text while being read.[21] I thus assume that Aristotle has in mind the *skhèmata* understood as *figures of speech*. However, figures of speech, with the provision that they are understood as *the transposition/adaptation within the discourse, of the gestures of the body.*[22] Just as the best poet is the one who can create the best metaphors, because he is able to see the similar within the differences,[23] all the other figures of speech could also be understood as the adoption within the discourse, of the specific embodiment of the poet, of the way he is present in the world as a body.

This idea, that the figures of speech in a discourse are the transposition of the gestures of a specific body, is explicitly expressed by the Roman orators

18   Emile Benvéniste, "De la subjectivité dans le langage," in: Problèmes de linguistique géné-rale, I, 258–266, pp. 258 and 266.
19   Aristotle: Poetics, 1455a22-29-30.
20   Aristote: Poétique, texte, traduction et notes par R. Dupont-Roc et J. Lallot, Paris: Seuil 1980, p. 93; Aristotle: Poetics, edited and translated by S. Halliwell, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995.
21   Cf. Aristotle: Poetics, 1462a11–12.
22   Cf. Sophie Klimis: Le statut du mythe dans la Poétique d'Aristote, Bruxelles: Ousia 1997.
23   Cf. Aristotle: Poetics, 1459a5–8.

Cicero and Quintilian. Tzvetan Todorov, in his book *Théories du symbole*, writes that "the meaning of the term figure (*skhèma, conformatio, forma, figura*) does not change from Theophrast to Quintilian: the figure is defined by its synonym, the form; or in comparison with the gestures and attitudes of the body. Since the body necessarily adopts certain attitudes, holds itself in a certain manner, the discourse always has a certain attitude as well."[24] But for me, this is more than a comparison or analogy: in *De Oratore*, Cicero speaks about "the figures, that the Greeks have given the name *skhèmata* as if they were attitudes of the discourse."[25] According to Quintilian, the word *figure* has two meanings: "either, it is the form, whatever it is, given to the expression of a thought, as the bodies have a different attitude depending on the way they are formed, or this is a reasoned change of the meaning of language in comparison with the ordinary and common way of expressing oneself."[26] Linking these two meanings, Quintilian assumes that "discourse has always a figure […] In the first, more general sense, everything is figured."[27]

So, if all discourse is figured, we can say, with the French philosopher and psycho-analyst Didier Anzieu that the written style of an author is the equivalent and transposition of the specific attitude and gestures of his or her body in oral communication. In *Le corps de l'œuvre*, Anzieu writes: "what is new from oral to written discourse? […] What changes has to do with style. The oral style, used between persons who can hear each other but also see each other, relies on infra-verbal and pre-linguistic factors, such as intonation, mimics of the face, postures, and attitudes of the body […] with writing, which allows communication between absent people, the possibility and the necessity arises of a style within the message: the written text, in order to be interpreted correctly, must not only be composed of statements understandable in the common language code, but must also contain modalities of enunciation, which are stylistic equivalents of the intonation and gestures that specify the intention of the transmitter of a message."[28] Anzieu also develops an interesting hypothesis here about the creative core of an artistic process (he deals mainly with literature). As he states, this core would be an intense event (often a trauma) experienced in the

24   Todorov, Tzvetan: Théories du symbole, Paris: Seuil 1977, p. 65.
25   Cicero: De Oratore, XXV, 83.
26   Quintilian: Institutio Oratoria, IX 1, 10 et 11. http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Ro-man/Texts/Quintilian/Institutio_Oratoria/home.html
27   Quintilian: Institutio Oratoria, IX 12.
28   Didier Anzieu: Le Corps de l'Œuvre, Paris: Gallimard 1981, p. 172.

body of the artist as an *infans*[29], which surfaces again in adulthood. The sudden eruption of this preverbal experience, stored in the body's memory, can be expressed only through a certain invention and/or destruction of the common language, which would amount to the writer's specific style.

To complete this brief survey, I must refer again to the French linguist, poet, and Bible translator Henri Meschonnic, who developed a definition of rhythm inspired by Benvéniste's pioneering study: "[R]hythm within language is the organization of the marks by which the *signifiants* create specific semantics, distinct from the lexical meaning, which I call *signifiance*: which is the specific value of one and only one discourse."[30] According to Meschonnic, meaning is thereby not only about "what is said", but also, "how it is said": the prosody, syntax, and intonation all play a major role in the creation of a broader conception of signification. Rhythm is therefore "the activity of the subject of the enunciation, the organization of the subject as discourse within his or her discourse."[31]

To summarize: rhythm is the self-creation of a subject within language. According to Meschonnic, it is Shakespeare, for example, who has created/invented English and not the English language that has created or invented Shakespeare. There were no pre-existing potentials (no Aristotelian *dunameis*) within the language for a poet, a playwright, or a novelist, to simply actualize into reality. On the contrary, it is the poet who "energizes" the common language by actualizing something that did not exist previously, that is: by creating something radically new within language.

3. The art of reading as the art of listening with the "third ear": towards a political understanding of rhythm with Nietzsche

This second and last part of my presentation is dedicated exclusively to Friedrich Nietzsche. In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*), Nietzsche

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29 A small infant before the acquisition of language. Anzieu develops several monographic studies in this book. For instance, he links Blaise Pascal's obsession with vacuum (both physical and metaphysical), with the emptiness he experienced within his body as a small child (from his biography, we know that Pascal went into a kind of lethargy after his mother's death).

30 Henri Meschonnic: Critique du rythme. Anthropologie historique du langage, Paris: Verdier 1982, p. 216. My translation.

31 Meschonnic: Critique du rythme, p. 217.

talks about the "third ear," a notion that will provide us with the missing link to extend the notion of rhythm from its corporeal/discursive background to politics. So, with Nietzsche, we'll be able to progress one step further in our quest for a notion of rhythm understood as the self-creation of a subject considered as a corporeal-poetical-political *continuum*.

I will start by referring to my second methodological remark. § 247 (Part VIII Aphorism 247) of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil)* provides us with an interesting explanation of the disembodiment often implied in the act of reading a text aloud:

"Der Deutsche liest nicht laut, nicht für's Ohr, sondern bloss mit den Augen: er hat seine Ohren dabei in's Schubfach gelegt. Der Antike Mensch las, wenn er las — es geschah selten genug — sich selbst etwas vor, und zwar mit lauter Stimme [...] Mit lauter Stimme: das will sagen, mit all den Schwellungen, Biegungen, Umschlägen des Tons und Wechseln des Tempos, an denen die antike *öffentliche* Welt ihre Freude hatte."[32]

In this aphorism, Nietzsche began his criticism saying that "wie wenig der deutsche Stil mit dem Klange und mit den Ohren zu tun hat, zeigt die Tatsache, dass gerade unsre guten Musiker schlecht schreiben." So, if reading aloud is disembodied, it is because the text is written *for the eye*, so that its abstracted structure cannot be followed *by the ear*.

In his public lecture about Das griechische *Musikdrama* (*The Greek Music Drama*, 1870), the young Nietzsche had already showed that the vision-centered conception of a text (and of meaning in general) had also "contaminated" the composition of music itself:

"Das Resultat war eine unglaubliche Verkümmerung des Geschmacks: in den fortwährenden Widersprüchen der angeblichen Überlieferung und des natürlichen Gehör's kam man dahin, Musik gar nicht mehr für das Ohr, sondern für das Auge zu componieren. Die Augen sollten das contrapunktische Geschick des Componisten bewundern: die Augen sollten die Ausdrucksfähigkeit der Musik anerkennen. Wie war dies zu bewerkstelligen? Man färbte die Noten mit

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32 Nietzsche, Friedrich: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, in: Sämtliche Werke, ed. by Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari, Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 1980, §247.

der Farbe der Dinge, von denen im Texte die Rede war [...] Es war dies Littera-turmusik, Lesemusik." [33]

If we go back to *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*), Nietzsche explains that the reading aloud should, on the contrary, be a way to rediscover the "musical quality" of texts that even a silent reading should be able to discern. This musical quality of a text seems to me to correspond to what Meschonnic called *rhythm*: both thinkers defend a broader conception of signification than the mere lexical meaning. Both insist on the importance of an oral state: the syntax, the tone of voice, the *tempi*, and the rhythms of speaking, are all crucial for the constitution of the signification of a discourse. To Nietzsche, this *rhythm* is heard by what he calls the *third ear*:

"Welche Marter sind deutsch geschriebene Bücher für den, der das *dritte* Ohr hat! Wie unwillig steht er neben dem langsam sich drehenden Sumpfe von Klängen ohne Klang, von Rhythmen ohne Tanz, welcher bei Deutschen ein 'Buch' genannt wird! Und gar der Deutsche, der Bücher *liest*! (...) Wie viele Deut-sche wissen es und fordern es von sich zu wissen, dass *Kunst* in jedem guten Satze steckt, — Kunst, die errathen sein will, sofern der Satz verstanden sein will! Ein Missverständnis über sein Tempo zum Beispiel: und der Satz selbst ist missverstanden! Dass man über die rhythmisch entscheidenden Silben nicht im Zweifel sein darf, dass man die Brechung der allzustrengen Symmetrie als gewollt und als Reiz fühlt, dass man jedem staccato, jedem rubato ein feines geduldiges Ohr hinhält, dass man den Sinn in der Folge der Vocale und Diph-thongen räth, und wie zart und reich sie in ihrem Hintereinander sich färben und umfärben können: wer unter bücherlesenden Deutschen ist gutwillig ge-nug, solchergestalt Pflichten und Forderungen anzuerkennen und auf so viel Kunst und Absicht in der Sprache hinzuhorchen?" [34]

As shown by the many expressions in this quotation borrowed from music, the *rhythm* Nietzsche has in mind could also be called the "music of signification," as it is about listening to the rhythm and melody of the process of thinking ex-pressed within a text. Although he does not refer to Nietzsche, Castoriadis has developed a concept of "musicality of meaning" (*musicalité du sens*) that takes

into account the melody and harmony of meaning: [35] melody is about the rise and fall in intensity of the general meaning of a sentence, obtained through the ways the meaning of each word modulates the meaning of the whole sentence. [36] Harmony is the consonance of several voices, obtained through the "harmonics" of the significations of the words. When hitting a piano key, we hear all its harmonics. When using a word, we use all its implicit connotations. [37] But what makes an author compose and play a particular "music of signification"? Or, put in other words, what makes an author create this or that specific *rhythm*?

All true philosophical work is for Nietzsche a "masked autobiography" [38], be-cause it is rooted in the singularity of a Will to power (Wille zur Macht), which is its true "author" [39]. I therefore consider the "music of signification" to be expression of the Will to power, understood as the dynamic interaction of desi-res, impulses, and instincts that constitute altogether the singularity of each self[40]. Nietzsche's denunciation of the Cartesian *cogito* as being a superstition of logicians is well known[41]. But what Nietzsche criticizes is the subject of mo-dernity, considered as purely rational, all-mighty, transparent unto itself. In my opinion, the will to power can be understood as a process of subjectification. It is the unity-plurality of a singular self, perpetually self-exploring, self-studying, self-transforming, and self-creating *within a specific rhythm*. This singularity of rhythm is due to the fact that each will to power is unique (although constantly changing), as each of us is a unique, singular body.

We should now see how Nietzsche's reflections on rhythm understood as the "music of signification" heard by the "third ear" can help us to expand our understanding of the process of thinking and of creating significations from the individual to the collective and political point of view:

"Damals waren die Gesetze des Schrift-Stils die selben, wie die des Rede-Stils; und dessen Gesetze hiengen zum Theil von der erstaunlichen Ausbildung, den raffinirten Bedürfnissen des Ohrs und Kehlkopfs ab, zum andern Theil von

33   Nietzsche, Friedrich: Das Griechische Musikdrama, in: Sämtliche Werke, III, 2, p. 7.
34   Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §246.

35   Cf. Cornélius Castoriadis: Figures du pensable. Les carrefours du labyrinthe, VI, Paris: Seuil 1999. See also Klimis: La musicalité sémantique du penser-poème grec.
36   Cf. Castoriadis: Figures du pensable, p. 57.
37   Cf. Castoriadis: Figures du pensable, p. 58.
38   Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §6.
39   Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §4, 6.
40   Cf. Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §6, 23, 36.
41   Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §17.

der Stärke, Dauer und Macht der antiken Lunge. Eine Periode ist, im Sinne der Alten, vor Allem ein physiologisches Ganzes, insofern sie von Einem Athem zusammengefasst wird. Solche Perioden, wie sie bei Demosthenes, bei Cicero vorkommen, zwei Mal schwellend und zwei Mal absinkend und Alles innerhalb Eines Athemzugs: das sind Genüsse für antike Menschen, welche die Tugend daran, das Seltene und Schwierige im Vortrag einer solchen Periode, aus ihrer eignen Schulung zu schätzen wussten: — wir haben eigentlich kein Recht auf die grosse Periode, wir Modernen, wir Kurzathmigen in jedem Sinne! Diese Alten waren ja insgesammt in der Rede selbst Dilettanten, folglich Kenner, folglich Kritiker, — damit trieben sie ihre Redner zum Äussersten; in gleicher Weise, wie im vorigen Jahrhundert, als alle Italiäner und Italiänerinnen zu singen verstanden, bei ihnen das Gesangs-Virtuosenthum (und damit auch die Kunst der Melodik —) auf die Höhe kam"[42]

In the first part of this quotation, Nietzsche does not differentiate between the rhetorical style of an oral and a written discourse in Greek and Latin Antiquity. This rhetorical style, he says, is subjected to laws that are based on the well-educated body of the citizens. According to Nietzsche, the "refined needs of the ears" of the auditors are based on their own physical capacities. Although Nietzsche does not state it explicitly, these "good physical capacities" are those of *citizens of a direct democracy*, who are all well-trained soldiers as well as orators, themselves. Indeed, in ancient Athens as well as in ancient Rome, people were not only listeners. They had several occasions to make speeches (at the Assembly, in courts, etc.). Between the lines, we must therefore understand that the various practices of speech as well as military training, as exercising the capacities of the bodies of the ancient citizens, allowed them to become good orators as well as auditors, having powerful pulmonary capacities.

We must here digress a moment and remember what Plato and Aristotle said about the education of the bodies of citizens and its consequences for the political government. Both criticize the body of the Spartan citizens: a too hard and muscular body, educated only for war. But the two Greek philosophers were also criticizing the too soft and too tender body of the Athenian citizens who avoided physical activity. The citizens they praised were citizens educated by gymnastics and music (*mousikè*): with bodies ready for war but adapted to the *scholè*, the free-time of the free-citizen devoted to political action and philoso-

phical speculation. So, we can begin to see that Nietzsche is rediscovering the *corporeal/rhetorical/poetical/political continuum* by which Plato as well as Aristotle understood citizenship.

While talking about the ancient rhetorical period (sentence), Nietzsche dwells upon a fact: it is the breath that creates the meaning, as shown by the Greek term *pneuma*, which means both "breath" and "spirit." The breath modulates the meaning of a sentence while modulating the intensity and tonality of the voice. And it is also the breath that creates the harmonious unity of a complex sentence (*alles innerhalb eines Atemzugs*). Nietzsche then contrasts the Moderns with the Ancients: while deploring the poverty of the breathing capacities of the Moderns, Nietzsche implicitly dwells on the lack of spirit of Modern citizens[43]. Considering what he has just said about the Ancients, this lack of spirit could be a consequence of the lack of coherence and unity of the Modern citizen body, — the individual bodies of the citizens, as well as the collective and symbolic body of the State. Indeed, Nietzsche is often criticizing *both* the excessive individualism of his contemporaries[44] *and* their standardization,[45] with obtuse nationalism as a consequence[46]. At first glance, these two points of criticism might seem contradictory, but they are not, as the comparison with the Ancients proves.

Indeed, at the end of the quotation (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse* § 247), Nietzsche focuses his critique of Modernity on "expertise" (specialization): unlike the Ancients, Modern orators and politicians are *expert* orators and *expert* politicians. Therefore, expertise means confiscation of the reasoning capacity for the people to judge their orators and politicians. On the contrary, what Nietzsche calls the "dilettantism" of the Ancients actually means the possibility accorded by a society for all people to evaluate and judge every orator and every politician. Therefore, *dilettantism is linked with direct democracy*. As strange as it may

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43   Cf. Klimis: Le souffle citoyen.
44   For instance, in his *Nachlass*, Nietzsche wrote, "[W]e say that the people are sick, when the link between the individual and the whole is broken or loose. Our civilization is sick, because it is maintained and nurtured by a disunited people". Nietzsche: Nachlass, Mp XII, 4, 377.
45   See *Gedanken über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* (*The Future of our Educational Institutions*, 1872), where Nietzsche explicitly criticizes education's standardization of minds, especially concerning higher education of the elites. In those lectures, Nietzsche denounces the transformation of curious and witty young spirits into obedient servants of the State.
46   Cf. Nietzsche: Jenseits von Gut und Böse, §251

sound, Nietzsche seems to be praising Ancient democracy and its collective "dilettantism," while harshly criticizing Modern "expertise" and representative democracy.

However, the last part of the quotation prevents us from making an overly simplistic opposition between the Ancients and the Moderns. The example of the eighteenth-century Italians is therefore significant. All the Italians of that period, men as well as women, could appreciate the great singers, says Nietzsche, because they all participated in a practice of singing. They knew about singing without being professional singers, because they had the corporeal experience of the activity of singing in their everyday lives. As a consequence, the *anchoring in the body of all citizens* of the rhetorical art (for the Ancients) or of the art of music (for the Modern Italians), is the condition of the emergence and acceptance by all the people of the man of genius.[47] Therefore, in this quotation, the man of genius is not seen as an exception or as a danger (as in Modern times), but as the concentrated expression of the "collective spirit." Of course, one could say that this view is rather ingenuous. If the common use of rhetorics amongst the Athenians has "produced" a Demosthenes, their common practice of politics has produced political men of genius such as Pericles but also such as Alcibiades. One must also remember the Athenian procedure of ostracism. Democracy, thus, was obviously suspicious of "great men". Nevertheless, this quotation shows a praise of ancient Greek democracy, quite unexpected from Nietzsche. This seems to me to be linked with the ambivalent Nietzschean call for a genius who would "guide" the young people[48]: on one hand, Nietzsche often describes education as a "dressage" and he speaks of the necessary submission and obedience of the young people to an "enlightened" guide. But on the other hand, this is only a step on the path to discovering and creating oneself, as shown in Zarathustra's final address to his followers, "[N]ow I bid you lose me and find yourselves." If this final step is possible, it is because the guide's "dressage" was actually helping people to free their own will of power, as the great orator helps everybody else to improve their speeches and judging capacities, as well as the great singer's singing encourages everybody else to improve their singing.

Moreover, the collective art of speaking or singing rooted in the bodies may be understood as the political condition of gathering together into one nation. Let's remember that Italy was united as a kingdom in 1861, and that Verdi's Opera *Nabuccho* played a symbolic and major role in the Italian revolution. Italy was previously a collection of provinces under French and Austrian occupation. In 1842, Verdi's famous tune *Va pensiero*, sung by a chorus of Jewish slaves in *Nabucco*, sounded like a hymn of freedom to the Italians. Therefore, I think that Nietzsche's reference to the Italian's art of singing is not innocent. Despite his insistence on referring to the previous century, Nietzsche could be trying to demonstrate the real and contemporary political effectiveness of music.

If this seems strange or exaggerated, simply recall that Plato wrote in two of his dialogues, *Republic* and *Laws*, that any revolution in the musical modes would necessarily lead to a political revolution; that the opera *La Muette de Portici* played a major role in the Belgian revolution in 1830. And let us remember that in 2011, *Va Pensiero* was sung with great emotion by the chorus and the audience in the opera in Rome. The conductor, Riccardo Muti, said, when inviting the audience to sing together with the chorus:

"As we are in our house, quite at home, let us speak together. 'Va pensiero,' in olden days, was a political symbol. I'm not a politician but I can say that if our culture goes on being slain, our Italia will be 'si bella e perduta,' So, as the choir has beautifully sung it, we should join them to sing another time 'Va, pensiero!' "[49]

These examples thus show the relevance of Nieztsche's analysis: the comprehensive art of singing is characteristic of a true, direct democracy. As Riccardo Muti put it, "music is a school of social (and political) life."

4.   The "deinotes" of the human subject or the political ambivalence of rhythm

In conclusion, I would like to stress the ambivalence of the notion of rhythm, which I have tried to construct in this paper. In a famous choral song of *Antigone*, Sophocles emphasizes what he calls the *deinotès* of human beings. This Greek word means both "extraordinary" and "terrifying"[50]. If the human being

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47   Respectively the ancient rhetorician and the modern opera singer…but of course, behind those two characters hides the philosopher, id est, Nietzsche himself!
48   For instance: *Gedanken über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*.

49   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vQ_uQslTko, 1/4/2013.
50   Castoriadis: Figures du pensable, pp. 25 and 28.

is "the most extraordinary and terrifying of all living beings"[51], it is because "he has taught to himself language, thought agitated as the wind and passions which establish laws in the cities"[52] (v. 353–355). According to Castoriadis' interpretation, this means that human beings have invented their own humanity: they have created themselves as human, while acting and producing things[53]. But this extraordinary capacity of the human being to give himself his own essence is accompanied by his terrifying capacity for self-destruction and enslavement of all other living beings (animals as well as natural elements such as wind, earth, and ocean[54]).

The human subject, defined as humanity's most complex and self-reflexive level of self-creation, is therefore also ambivalent. Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian *cogito* has shown that the so-called rationality of the so-called self-reflexive modern subject was a complete illusion, a puppet created by a terrifying will to power. On the other hand, the new "philology" and depth psychology invented by Nietzsche, aimed at exploring the will to power, in an infinite process of self-reflexion and self-creation of a new kind of subjectification. Following Henri Meschonnic's theory, we have called a subject's self-creation within language, the rhythm of his or her discourse. I have also developed the hypothesis that this rhythm was the expression of the specific body (bodily presence in the world) of a subject. Considered from a collective point of view, the notion of rhythm is still ambivalent. It can be the terrifying singular thought of a totalitarian community, formatting bodies and minds through one and the same *cadenza*. We know that dance and singing (especially "drill") have always been used by armies to standardize the anonymous and interchangeable bodies of the soldiers[55]. Capitalism has also produced different kind of *cadenza* to adjust men to machines, as immortalized by Chaplin in his movie *Modern Times*. On the other hand, rhythm is also the extraordinary power that human beings have to collectively create fluid and dynamic patterns of thought or of action, which design a welcoming world for them. Therefore, a rediscovery of the corporeal-poetical-political *continuum* of the subject offers hope for the creation of a true

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51 Sophocles: Antigone, v. 332-333.
52 Sophocles: Antigone, v. 353-355.
53 Cf. Castoriadis: Figures du pensable, pp. 30-32.
54 Sophocles: Antigone, v. 334–352 and v. 364–371.
55 Cf. William H., McNeill: Keeping Together in Time. Dance and Drill in Human History, Harvard: Harvard University Press 1995.

democratic collective rhythm, not any more mistaken with the unvarying *cadenza* of capitalism.

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Im Folgenden sollen einige Überlegungen zur bedeutungsgenerierenden Dimension des Leibes vorgestellt werden. Zunächst wird das philosophische Konzept der Leiblichkeit bei Jean-Paul Sartre skizziert (Kapitel 1). Diesem werden Gedanken aus einer leibmethodologisch orientierten, anthropologischen Medizin gegenübergestellt, insbesondere aus dem Kreis des Denkens von Jakob und Thure von Uexküll und Victor von Weizsäcker. Dabei wird auch auf die Forschungen zur »zweigriffigen Baumsäge« Bezug genommen, die sich im Kontext der Heidelberger Schule der anthropologischen Medizin entwickelt haben (Kapitel 2). Anschließend werden Konzeptionen zur Bedeutungskonstitution durch den Leib in Psychoanalyse und Psychosomatik vorgestellt (Kapitel 3). Der Beitrag schließt mit der Diskussion von Deleuze' Kritik an Psychoanalyse und Phänomenologie (Kapitel 4).

1. Zur bedeutungskonstituierenden Funktion des Leibes bei Jean-Paul Sartre.

Jean Paul Sartre unterscheidet in *Das Sein und das Nichts* drei wesentliche Seinsbereiche, mit denen der Mensch in seiner Leibkörperlichkeit konfrontiert ist: Der *erste* Bereich ist der des »An-sich«, der Materialität, die als opak und undurchdringlich beschrieben wird, und vom Menschen als »klebrig«, »ekelig«, »bedrohlich« oder »widerwärtig« erfahren werden kann. Der *zweite* Bereich ist jener des »Für-sich«, der menschlichen Freiheit, deren Kraft, »Möglichkeit« zu sein, sich im Gefühl der Angst mitteilt. Der *dritte* Seinsbereich ist der des »Für-Andere-Seins«, in dem der Mensch sich von anderen Menschen gesehen sieht und sich als dinghaft-körperlich behandelt wahrnimmt. In der »Scham« erfährt der Mensch, dass dieses Gesehenwerden selbst zu seinem Menschsein