

## VICO AND THE CRITICAL GENEALOGY OF THE BODY POLITIC

The end of a philosophy is the account of its beginning.  
(Maurice Merleau-Ponty)

Body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something  
about the body.  
(Friedrich Nietzsche)

Birth, and copulation, and death.  
That's all, that's all, that's all, that's all,  
Birth, and copulation, and death.  
(T. S. Eliot)

In every reading there is a *corps-à-corps* between reader and text, an  
incorporation of the reader's desire into the desire of the text.  
(Jacques Derrida)

### I. TOWARD A (VICHIAN) DEFINITION OF CARNAL HERMENEUTICS

The body politic is characteristically a *postmodern affair*. By way of it, postmodernity shows its deep discontent with modernity, particularly the modern legacy of the Cartesian *Cogito* which is plagued with dualism, egocentrism, and ocularcentrism. By attending to the performative life of the body, the body politic, carnal hermeneutics<sup>1</sup> is meant to be that philosophical discipline of interpretation which transgresses the limited boundaries of modernity. It is carnal not only because it attends to the

body as flesh but also because the reading of the body politic itself is a carnal act in which the word becomes flesh.<sup>2</sup> Carnal hermeneutics attempts to think *with*, *through*, and *about* the body as the infinite agora of performance. The body politic covers an array of issues ranging from silence and gesture to language, from laughter to cannibalism and violence, from tattoo to torture, from clinics to prisons, from eating and dieting to speaking, from nudity to clothing, from body building to deodorizing and cosmetics, from circumcision to footbinding, from Arabian belly dancers to Japanese *geisha*, from *karate* to *zazen*, from boxing to feminism and liberation theology, from the handicapped to racism, from erotics to sinfulness, from health care to immortality, and more. The discipline of carnal hermeneutics is genealogical in the sense that it traces history backward with a critical or, better, deconstructive ear. Martin Heidegger defines this deconstructive spirit of phenomenological genealogy as "a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are de-constructed down to the sources from which they were drawn."<sup>3</sup>

Let me cite two paradigmatic cases of conceptualizing carnal hermeneutics as an interpretive strategy: one is the reading of a boxing match by Joyce Carol Oates and the other R. P. Blackmur's reading of language as gesture (*not* just gesture as language). Oates reads boxing as a dialogue of two skilled bodies, as an ineliminably *social text*. To quote her unsurpassable, phenomenological description of a boxing match:

Because a boxing match is a story without words, this doesn't mean that it has no text or no language, that it is somehow "brute," "primitive," "inarticulate," only that the text is improvised in action; the language of a dialogue between the boxers of the most refined sort (one might say, as much neurological as psychological: a dialogue of split-second reflexes) in a joint response to the mysterious will of the audience which is always that the fight be a worthy one so that the crude paraphernalia of the setting — ring, lights, ropes, stained canvas, the staring onlookers themselves — be erased by way, ideally, of transcendent action. Ringside announcers give to the wordless spectacle a narrative unity, yet boxing as performance is more clearly akin to dance or music than narrative.<sup>4</sup>

Speaking of language as gesture, Blackmur is most persuasive in arguing for gesture as indigenous to the linguistics of words, that is, the

intertwinement of gesture and words. It is worth quoting him fully:

Language is made of words, and gesture is made of motion. There is one half the puzzle. The other half is equally self-evident if only because it is an equally familiar part of the baggage of our thought. It is the same statement put the other way round. Words are made of motion, made of action or response, at whatever remove; and gesture is made of language — made of the language beneath or beyond or alongside of the language of words. When the language of words fails we resort to the language of gesture. If we stop there, we stop with the puzzle. If we go on, and say that when the language of words most succeeds it *becomes* gesture in its words, we shall have solved the verbal puzzle with which we began by discovering one approach to the central or dead-end mystery of meaningful expression in the language of arts [... G]esture *is* native to language, and if you cut it out you cut roots and get a sapless and gradually a rotting if indeed not a petrifying language.<sup>5</sup>

Carnal hermeneutics does not end with the linguistics of speaking, of writing, and of gesture. It has also "vested interests"<sup>6</sup> in vestemes and gustemes. As for vestemes, we may insist that clothing is really our "second body" or, as Erasmus put it, "the body of the body."<sup>7</sup> As the second body, clothing "speaks" its own "dialect" or "sociolect." Following Hegel's aesthetics, Roland Barthes goes so far as to assert that "as pure sentience, the body cannot signify; clothing guarantees the passage from sentience to meaning; it is [...] the signified par excellence."<sup>8</sup> For Barthes, clothing *fashions* the meaning of the body itself.

Gustemes provide us with food for thought, as it were. Indeed, there is an ineluctable "conviviality" (the Latin *convivium*) or "feast" (the Greek *symposium*) between eating and speaking. It is the same organ called *tongue* which, to borrow the expression of Michel Jeanneret, both "savours words and delights in foods."<sup>9</sup> Vico, who was himself a consummate, festive, and voracious symposiast of etymology,<sup>10</sup> traces the rustic or sylvian origins of the whole corpus of Latin words: the *jurisprudential* word *lex*, for example. In his own words:

First it must have meant a collection of acorns. Thence we believe is derived *ilex*, as it were *illex*, the oak (as certainly *aquilex* means collector of waters); for the oak produces the acorns by which the

swine are drawn together. *Lex* was next a collection of vegetables, from which the latter were called *legumina*. Later on, at a time when vulgar letters had not yet been invented for writing down the laws, *lex* by a necessity of civil nature must have meant a collection of citizens, or the public parliament; so that the presence of the people was the *lex*, or "law," that solemnized the wills that were made *calatis comitiis*, in the presence of the assembled *comitia*. Finally, collecting letters, and making, as it were, a sheaf of them for each word, was called *legere*, reading.<sup>11</sup>

It goes without saying that feeding the hungry and clothing the naked (and by extension sheltering the homeless) are the two aspects of social justice or responsibility which fulfill the basic needs of human/ity. Mao Zedong was fond of saying that there are two interlocking functions of the mouth: feeding and speaking. He propagated the notion that "revolution is not a dinner party." Warriors of a New Guinean tribe (Vico's "giants") do not eat bananas just before a battle because bananas "soften" their spirit.<sup>12</sup> One of the CBS weekday morning programs is cleverly called "Breakfast for Your Head." In savouring Japanese culture as an endless galaxy of exotic mini-texts, Barthes also conceptualizes the Japanese dish *sukiyaki* — among other cultural artifacts — as a "polycentric" text or "an image of the plural" the description of which definitely adds a postmodernist flavor.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the "Slavic Tantrist" Mikhail Bakhtin conjectures that "the origins of language itself may lie in the sharing of food as a primal expression of culture over nature, establishing a connection between *digestion* and *dialogue*."<sup>14</sup> Although it is deemed impolite to talk with a mouthful, we cultivate our *companionship* by eating (bread or *panis*) and talking together (*com*).

## II. THE CARTESIAN *COGITO* AND VICO'S PRIMOGENITAL SIGNATURE ON THE BODY POLITIC

Norman O. Brown rightly contends that "Vico overcomes the disastrous dualism of the seventeenth century, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*."<sup>15</sup> No doubt, Brown has in mind Descartes in particular. In *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, we find one of the most lucid and vivid passages of Vico's that decisively refute Descartes's wrong-headed formulation of the *Cogito* (that is, *Cogito ergo sum*), based on the irremediable bifurcation of the mind as thinking substance (*res cogitans*)

and the body as extended substance (*res extensa*). To wit: for Vico, the Cartesian *Cogito* stands on its head rather than on its feet. Vico writes:

I who think am mind and body, and if thought were the cause of my being, thought would be the cause of the body. Yet there are bodies that do not think; so that body and mind united are the cause of thought. For if I were only body, I would not think. If I were only mind, I would have [pure] intelligence. In fact, thinking is the sign, and not the cause of my being mind.<sup>16</sup>

In a Vichian fashion, Rodin's "The Thinker" epitomizes the towering "cathedral" or piety of embodied thinking. It itself is the artistic creation of the two hands and is the exemplar of the body as organized corporation. Thus, Rainer Maria Rilke, who was a one-time assistant of Rodin, sharpens the wit of "The Thinker" as one who "sits absorbed and silent, heavy with thought: with all the strength of an acting man he thinks. His whole body has become head and all the blood in his veins has become brain."<sup>17</sup>

The modern legacy of the Cartesian *Cogito* is an unrestrained celebration of *disembodied reason*. It goes back to the Galilean mathematization of nature. The Galilean formulation of mathematics as universal science (*mathesis universalis*) became the foundation of Descartes's "first philosophy" (*prima philosophia*) which filtered into the mathematized and mechanized "body politic" of Hobbes who *invented* an artificial Leviathan or, better, Panopticon.<sup>18</sup> Unlike ancients (e. g., Pythagoras and Plato) who *ontologized* mathematical objects, Galileo *methodologized* the mathematical and turned nature into a mathematical manifold. For him, nature is a vast book which is written in mathematical language and whose letters are geometric figures such as triangles, squares, and circles. Edmund Husserl contends that by way of mathematization, Galileo took or, better, mistook what is method as reality itself: "It is through the garb of ideas [*Ideenkleid*] that we take for *true being* what is actually a *method*."<sup>19</sup>

In opposition to the Galilean and Cartesian mathematization of nature, Vico's semiotic phenomenology echoes the "musing" voice of Orpheus who as a musician or magician of sound enchanted the whole realm of nature and made it dance in delight. It points to the *socialization* by humans of things both animate and inanimate. Vico is indeed an Italian Tantrist who observes the way in which the language of the body politic is capable of enchanting and enlivening nonhuman

things:

It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are [*sic*] formed by metaphor from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions. Thus, head for top or beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill; the eyes of needles and of potatoes; mouth for any opening; the lip of a cup or pitcher; the teeth of a rake, a saw, a comb; the beard of wheat; the tongue of a shoe; the gorge of a river; a neck of land; an arm of the sea; the hands of a clock; heart for center (the Latins used *umbilicus*, navel, in this sense); the belly of a sail; foot for end or bottom; the flesh of fruits; a vein of rock or mineral; the blood of grapes for wine; the bowels of the earth. Heaven or the sea smiles; the wind whistles; the waves murmur; a body groans under a great weight. The farmers of Latium used to say the fields were thirsty, bore fruit, were swollen with grain; and our rustics speak of plants making love, vines going mad, resinous trees weeping. Innumerable other examples could be collected from all languages.<sup>20</sup>

The Cartesian *Cogito* may be identified with the panoptic hegemony of vision. It erects the radiant pantheon of "clear and distinct ideas." Moreover, the *Cogito* interlocks ocularcentrism and egocentrism since there is an identity between the "I" and the "eye." It is *video ergo sum* or the mind's I is the mind's eye. Heidegger contends that the "I" (or the "eye") of the *Cogito* as sub/stance becomes the center of thought from which the "I-viewpoint" and the subjectivism of modern thought originate: "the subjectivity of the subject is determined by the 'I-ness' [*Ichheit*] of the 'I think.'"<sup>21</sup> For him, the "I-viewpoint" of the Cartesian *Cogito* highlights the modern age as "the age of the world picture" (*Weltbild*).<sup>22</sup>

The most serious consequence of the Cartesian dualism of the mind and the body, that is, of disembodied reason is that it is incapable of justifying the concept of *sociality* which is the heartland particularly of the humanities and the human sciences. Gerald L. Bruns is poignant when he speaks elegantly of "Descartes's jealousy of the subject," i. e., "the subject's desire to seal itself off or to keep its thinking pure or uncontaminated by the horizon of the other."<sup>23</sup> The phenomenology of the body not only proposes and promotes the notion that "I *am* my body" (as flesh)<sup>24</sup> but also regards the body as a social phenomenon inasmuch as social phenomena are corporeal. Everything is social through and through: where there is no sociality there is no reality.

Speech, for example, may be described as nothing but social relations turned into sound.<sup>25</sup> So is sexuality said to be social relations turned into carnal contact. In *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, Vico observes that "the human mind acts on the body and the body on the mind, since *only bodies can touch other bodies and be touched by them*."<sup>26</sup> Since only the body can make humans visible, there are no invisible humans. It makes more sense to say, therefore, that the world is *one body* rather than one mind since we all are connected to the world first and necessarily by way of the body.

The body is the umbilical cord to the social. To be social is first and foremost to be *intercorporeal*. Only because of the body are we said to be visible and capable of relating ourselves first to other bodies and then to other minds. The body is our *social placement* in the world; with the synergic interplay of its senses, the body *attunes* ourselves to the world. The world, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty has it, is made of the same stuff as the body. Ralph Waldo Emerson, too, privileges the body when he writes: "The human body is the magazine of inventions, the patent office, where are the models from which every hint was taken. All the tools and engines on earth are only extensions of its limbs and senses."<sup>27</sup> In defining the social, the phenomenologist Erwin W. Straus favors the body over the mind when he says that "the body of an organism is related to other bodies; it is a part of the physical universe. The mind, however, is related to one body only; it is not directly related to the world, nor to other bodies, nor to other minds."<sup>28</sup> The mind becomes a *relatum* only because the body is populated in the world with other bodies. It is necessary that we exist as body, as flesh, in order to be social and ethical.

The German Tantrist Nietzsche is truly a progeny and prophet of the Vichian body politic.<sup>29</sup> As such, he occupies a unique place in the history of the body politic. It is no mere accident that Nietzsche, who proposed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that "body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body,"<sup>30</sup> challenges and transgresses the *speculative* conundrum of *theoria* and replaces it with *aisthesis*. By replacing *theoria* with *aisthesis*, Nietzsche attempts to invert Platonism which seeks the eternal Ideas (*eidos*) radiated from the "mind's eye" or, in the language of Hannah Arendt, "leave[s] the cave of human existence to behold the eternal ideas visible in the sky."<sup>31</sup>

In the first place, the aesthetic (*aisthesis*) is a *carnal affair*:

aesthetics, Terry Eagleton emphasizes, "is born as a discourse of the body."<sup>32</sup> In *The Birth of Tragedy*, his first major work, the juvenescent Nietzsche valorizes music as the consummate aesthetic: "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" and that "only music, placed beside the world, can give us an idea of what is meant by the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon."<sup>33</sup> For Nietzsche, in short, the world is "measured" (in the musical sense of *metron*) by the aesthetic of music.

In the second place, if the aesthetic is also — to employ Eagleton's thesis again — the body's rebellion against "the tyranny of the theoretical,"<sup>34</sup> Nietzsche's body politic is a revolt against the long-established and continuing tradition of all that the theoretical implies and entails since the time of Plato. Here the theoretical is opposed to the ordinary everyday life-world of practice (i. e., Plato's "cave world") or, to use the language of Vico, the world of *sensus communis*.<sup>35</sup> *Sensus communis* is non-theoretical (i. e., "judgement without reflection" or jurisprudential) and is shared in common by a group of people, by a nation, or by the entire human race.

Rhetoric is a practical and public art in the classical tradition, and as such it is closely related to the art and ethics of politics.<sup>36</sup> It comes as no surprise that Vico, who is critical of Descartes's *esprit géométrique* at the expense of *sensus communis* or the virtues of the practical, exalts "eloquence" (rhetoric) and defines the topics of the science of politics. Vico declares:

the greatest drawback of our educational methods is that we pay an excessive amount of attention to the natural sciences and not enough to ethics. Our chief fault is that we disregard that part of ethics which treats of human character, of its dispositions, its passions, and of the manner of adjusting these factors to public life and eloquence. We neglect that discipline which deals with the differential features of the virtues and vices, with good and bad patterns, with the typical characteristics of the various ages of man, of the two sexes, of social and economic class, race and nation, and with the art of seemingly conduct in life, a noble and important branch of studies, i. e., the *science of politics*, lies almost abandoned and untended.<sup>37</sup>

For Nietzsche, too, the body *is* (the site of) *sensus communis*. Thinking *through* the body, he offers the social and political theory of the body.<sup>38</sup> He describes the body as a "social structure" in *Beyond*



*Good and Evil*" and as a "political structure" in *The Will to Power*.<sup>40</sup> To quote him fully from *Beyond Good and Evil*: "indeed, our body is but a social structure composed of many souls — to his feelings of delight as commander, *L'effet c'est moi*."<sup>41</sup> It is a *de facto political* statement in that it emulates the edict of Louis XIV, that is, *l'état, c'est moi*. The body houses many souls the plurality of which may be likened to George Herbert Mead's definition of sociality as "the capacity of being several things at once."<sup>42</sup> For Nietzsche, a single body is made of many "souls" each of which may be said of an inscription of the social: the body is made of an ensemble of social effects (*pragmata*). What the science of politics is to Vico, the body as a social structure is to Nietzsche. The ultimate and most trenchant criticism by both Vico and Nietzsche of the Cartesian *Cogito* based on the dualism of the mind and the body as separate substances (*res*) would in the final analysis be that it is deeply egocentric or anti-social; the Cartesian *Cogito* is totally oblivious to the fact that the body is a social affair and that we need our body in order to be social.

### III. CORPOREALITY, RHETORIC, AND GRAMMATOLOGY

Rhetoric is a public ethic because speech is an intercorporeal affair: corporeality and ethnicity are two reversible dimensions of rhetoric. As has been noted above, speech is nothing but social relations turned into sound. For Vico, "a man is properly mind, body and speech, and speech stands as it were midway between mind and body."<sup>43</sup> To put it differently, speech dialogizes the mind and the body. As he puts it, in other words, "words are carried over from bodies and from the properties of bodies to signify the institutions of the mind and spirit."<sup>44</sup>

Language would have been at first sung, just as the first writing must have been painted.<sup>45</sup> In his *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Rilke is unreserved in praising the singing voice of Orpheus: *Gesang ist Dasein*. Hermeneutics, especially carnal hermeneutics, should honor its patron saint Hermes. As the legend goes, the god Hermes was the "magician" of spoken words who was "spellbinding." According to the "Homeric Hymn to Hermes," he invented the lyre out of a tortoise shell, the meaning of whose legend is synonymous with the discovery of the universe (uni-verse) as the sounding orbit. He was a singer or bard (*aoidos*) as well as a player of the lyre, that is, a "herald" (*keryx*): he was a virtuoso of sound-making whose *kerygma* (message) was aired

by, and encoded in, the sound of spoken words. The term *herald* is related to the Latin *carmen* (song) and the Sanskrit *karuh* (to sing) and *karus* (bard), and the herald's voice scales the pitch of the "signifying excellence of voice." As the "master of speech," Hermes was the messenger of Zeus; in his capacity as a herald he gave Pandora her voice. No wonder, then, this genuine Olympian was "the friendliest of the gods to men."<sup>46</sup>

Here I cannot resist the temptation to bring into this discussion the anatomy of Chinese ideography or logography which is quintessentially corporeal and ethical at once for the simple reason that Vico was a comparativist in his effort of discovering the truth of humanity and regarded hieroglyphics or ideograms as the earliest language of humanity. In the first place, Chinese is in significant measure the choreography of human gestures, it is a somatography which when calligraphed becomes an anthology of dancing anthropograms.<sup>47</sup> Both calligraphy and dance, which Stephane Mallarmé calls "corporeal writing" (*écriture corporelle*) and is called the "mirror of gesture" (*abhinaya darpana*) in India, are "performing" arts. As a matter of fact, it is at times said that calligraphy, which is for the Chinese as important as the art of painting, may be improved by watching the graceful performance of dance.

Chinese incorporates speaking and writing: it is an incorporation of the *yin* of speaking and the *yang* of writing. According to the famed thirteenth-century Chinese philologist Tai Tung, the principal aim of Chinese writing is "to make speech visible."<sup>48</sup> When he says that in language as gesture the spoken and the written are identical,<sup>49</sup> Samuel Beckett sounds as if he were speaking of Chinese ideograms as scriptural and dramatic performance which liminally dialogizes rhetoric and grammatology in one stroke. They are speaking pictures as well as written words. Thus Michel Foucault comes to conclude that the calligram which ideogrammatizes the alphabet playfully effaces the oldest oppositions of our alphabetical civilization: "to show and to name; to shape and to say; to reproduce and to articulate; to imitate and to signify; to look and to read."<sup>50</sup>

As dancing anthropograms, Chinese ideography *petforms* well, indeed. By performance, I mean a corporeal dialogue in action. Shoshana Felman evokes the psychoanalytic sense of corporeality or the carnal dimension of language when she defines speech (*parole*) as "corporeal promise" (*promesse corporelle*) which beckons the conjugal

relationship between John Austin's philosophy of language as speech acts and Freudian/Lacanian psychotherapeutic discourse as "talking cure."<sup>51</sup> Speaking of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, Felman stresses the fact that the "true thrust" of the psychoanalytic dialogue between the therapist and the client as "talking bodies" is illocutionary: "fundamentally, the dialogic psychoanalytic discourse is *not so much informative as it is performative*"<sup>52</sup> and thus is by necessity ethical as well.

The rectification of names (*cheng ming*) — calling things by their right names — advanced by Confucius, who stressed the *power* of words (ideograms) in understanding the human and humanity, is an ethical analogue to the body's "upright posture."<sup>53</sup> As the ethical use of the power of words, the rectification of names is an ethical hermeneutic. Following the teachings of Ernest Fenollosa,<sup>54</sup> Ezra Pound comes to conclude that the basic grammar of Chinese ideograms as "visible etymology" and a vortex of corporeal energy is "a discipline of morale and of morals"<sup>55</sup> since it might be said that they support the writing of poetry which has an ethical content. In this regard, I would single out sincerity (*ch'eng*) as an important moral precept that underpins, motivates and governs the thought and action of a Sinitic soul. Some years ago, while I was reading Ivan Morris's fascinating study of the Japanese mind called *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan*,<sup>56</sup> I was profoundly moved by the fact that this is the essence of the East Asian moral soul. This "heroic" phenomenon emanates from the Confucian moral ideal of sincerity (*makoto* in Japanese), and one cannot minimize the influence of the philosophy of the neo-Confucian Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) or O Yomei in Japanese who promoted the (Confucian) theme of the *unity of knowledge and action (chih hsing ho i)* — that ideal which considers knowledge as the beginning of action and action as the consummation of knowledge. The apotheosis of a tragic hero is Saigo Takamori from the Meiji Restoration, who is immortalized in a bronze statue in the Ueno Park in the center of Tokyo. Saigo was a corpulent, "death-defying" hero whose eyes, legs, hands, and fingers were depicted as ready "tools for action." His deed is indeed the embodiment of sincerity.

Sincerity spells syntactically *word-performed* in that the word as performed actually embodies an index of moral virtues. Thus the *keyword* in translating the concept *sincerity* is, I suggest, *performance* which has a familiar ring to those of us who read John Austin's

philosophy of speech acts as "performative utterances" or his theme of "how to do things with words." The idea of performance denotes the fulfillment of the spoken word *in* and/or *as* action by transcending the dichotomy between the mind and the body. For performance as the consummation of one's promised deed requires corporeal transaction. The Confucian formulation of the rectification of names exemplifies the ethics of language-in-performance. Interestingly, moreover, both ideograms *to govern* and *to rectify* are homonyms (*cheng*) and, in Chinese ideographic writing, the former contains the latter as its radical. Hypograms or two ideograms on top of each other — to paraphrase Norman O. Brown slightly — are engaged in a sexual union.<sup>57</sup> In the end, the rectification of names is both *de facto* and *de jure* a *political* concept or a concept of the body politic inasmuch as it is bound to corporeal performance.<sup>58</sup>

#### IV. VICO AND THE WISDOM OF THE FEMININE BODY

The question of the two sexes is for Vico, as we have already noted, integral to the science of politics to which, he suggested, we have neglected to attend. Today feminism or sexual politics defines the tenure and landscape of the body politic in a significant way. Writing the body as social inter(dis)course is a shifting concern of *écriture féminine*. "Through writing her body," Nancy Mairs writes, "woman may reclaim the deed to her dwelling place" which was called by the Anglo-Saxons *banhaus* (bonehouse) and *lichama* (bodyhouse). It is always a "populated house" because others also dwell in woman's writing.<sup>59</sup>

Gynesis — to appropriate the neologism of Alice A. Jardine — signifies the feminine genesis of things and the valorization of the feminine.<sup>60</sup> In so doing, it erases the false dichotomy between the mind (con/ception) and the body (per/ception) which may be called a "patriarchal bifurcation" (Mairs's phrase). Gynesis has surfaced, I think, as a keyword in postmodern thinking that is capable of redefining the human as a being in the world. It is a paradigmatic shifter in the handling of postmodern philosophical discourse.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Sewell, who calls Vico "the truest and greatest Orphic progeny," observes perceptively:

the fertility of the body cooperates in the processes of thinking with language. There remains a great unresolved problem behind this, as behind the use of such words as "fertile" or "pregnant" of ideas, of

the verb "to conceive" in intellectual terms. To relegate these simply to metaphor is to miss the whole point, for they are clues to something that is going on in this field of myth we are exploring. Grammar maintains that the body is operative there as much as the mind. The human organism thinks as a whole, and our division of it into mind and body is the result of overemphasis on logic and intellect in near isolation which has led [or better, misled] us into so one-sided a view of the activity of thought, so gross an underestimation of the body's forms of thought and knowledge.<sup>62</sup>

The Vichian wisdom of the body, just as much as the wisdom of the feminine body, celebrates the filial relationship between mind's "conception" and the body's "perception." One without being fertilized by the other impregnates no meaning.

Gynesis as *jouissance* — the "feminine Imaginary" in a Laconian sense — signifies not only the aesthetic appreciation of the body politic or things carnal but also — as *jouissance* is also spelled playfully "*j'ouïs sens*" ("I *hear* meaning") — resistance against and subversion of ocularcentrism which is implicated in the Cartesian *Cogito* as an epistemological pursuit of "clear and distinct ideas."<sup>63</sup> *Jouissance* auscultates the voice of the feminine, it is bliss or even eroticism of hearing and voicing but not of seeing. Gynesis as *jouissance* promises to show vision's ultimate *cul-de-sac*. If, as Mikhail Bakhtin intimates, ears are naturally anti-official,<sup>64</sup> feminine *jouissance* is rightly a revolt against and an attempt to defenestrate the visual regime of phallogentrism.

The (feminine) body as social discourse confronts and subverts directly the established tradition of the "mind's eye." There is nobody, I submit, who is more insinuating and persuasive than Luce Irigaray on the question of the body politic as *jouissance*. For her, the advocacy of the feminine is an *inter/ruption* of the enduring "scopic regimes" of Western philosophy including the Cartesian *Cogito*. She writes:

Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, maintains the distance. In our culture, the predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch, hearing, has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations [...] The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality.<sup>65</sup>

Many feminists today, moreover, hold not only that women speak

with a "different voice" but also that femininity is allied with the sense of touch more closely than that of sight. There is indeed a stark contrast or opposition between the voyeurism of the "mind's seeing" (eye or I) and the communal intimacy and contact of the "body's touch." They contend that the aristocracy of vision is a peculiarly phallogocentric, patriarchal, and matrophobic institution and the logic of voyeurism is uniquely a male logic. The "participatory" sense of touch valorizes the feminine, whereas "spectatorial" vision glorifies the masculine. To feminize the body politic, therefore, is to accent the sense of touch and to decenter or de-panoptimize the spectre of vision in our thinking. By so doing, we loosen up the global visual grip on, and bring the communal sense of intimacy or proximity to, the oversighted or overtelevised world. Gynesis, when translated into tactility, intervenes and fleshes out masculine ocularcentrism. And *that makes all the difference*. In the final analysis, we may conclude that hearing (sound) *socializes* by decentering its effects, while sight *isolates* by centering its focus in view.<sup>66</sup>

## V. VICO AND THE CARNIVALESQUE BODY

The body politic has a carnivalesque dimension without the discussion of which it would be incomplete. Leszek Kolakowski once put forth the thesis that there persists the dialectical opposition in every age or epoch between the "priestly" and the "jesterly."<sup>67</sup> One is official, canonical, and orthodox, while the other is anti-official, anti-canonical, and heterodox. Mikhail Bakhtin's "Slavic Tantrism," which is deeply rooted in the laughing sutras of Rabelais in the festive age of the Renaissance, is unquestionably carnivalesque, which is to say, both carnal and jesterly at once.<sup>68</sup> The carnivalesque is inherently heresiarchical in that it *deconstructs* the world, it *both destroys* a "real" world *and constructs* a "possible" world. Carnivalization, according to Bakhtin, breaks up the colorless and monotonous monopoly of the established order of things. It dismantles the hierarchical by freely blending "the profane and the sacred, the lower and the higher, the spiritual and the material."<sup>69</sup>

Humor is a response to "the deep-seated recalcitrance of matter" — to borrow the expression of Henri Bergson.<sup>70</sup> The Latin *humor*, according to the philosopher/playwright Luigi Pirandello, designates a bodily substance in the form of fluid, liquid, and moisture, and humans are said to have four "humors" — blood, bile, phlegm, and melancholy.<sup>71</sup>

The humorist sees the world not exactly in the nude but in "shirt sleeves."<sup>72</sup> For Pirandello, the *principium* of humor lies in edifying "the feeling of the opposite" (*negativa*) in what we do and we think. By splitting every affirmation into a negation, humor triggers and engenders the "spontaneous birth" (*ingegno*) of things. To put it more politically, humor as *negativa* uncloaks, unmasks, or exposes the "dirty bottom" and "dirty hands"<sup>73</sup> of the official regime or officialdom.

Vico's *fantasia* (or imaginative universals) points to the way of conceptualizing the body politic as a heresiarchical philosophy of the future. Donald Phillip Verene intimates that *fantasia* suggests "a language of oppositions" in which "the opposed forces of experience are preserved" with the intent of conserving a logic of correlation.<sup>74</sup> Imaginative (or noncategorical) thought is dialogic, whereas nonimaginative (or categorical) thought is monologic. In *The Feast of Fools*, Harvey Cox argues that the periodic rebirth of fantasy as well as of festivity is a necessity and blessing to the rejuvenation and survival of human civilization including its political institutions; and when, he further contends, fantasy becomes an instrument of ideology or a particular political program, it loses its critical and creative punch and becomes shriveled into a caged bird or toothless tiger.<sup>75</sup> It is Nietzsche, a Vichian progeny, who sums up and heralds the essential project of the carnivalesque when he says: "even if nothing else today has any future, our *laughter* may yet have a future."<sup>76</sup>

## VI. EPILOGUE: VICO AND THE FUTURE OF THE BODY POLITIC

The question of the body politic, as we have attempted to show, has long remained in the hinterland of philosophical discourse since Descartes whose disembodied reason has unfortunately had a lasting patriarchal grip on modern philosophy whose "father" he is. It has been a philosophy's orphan who has now been adopted by *écriture féminine*. The incorporation of the body into philosophical discourse is indeed downright subversive and trasgressive. It is a *pharmakon* for the modern mind as disembodied reason.

Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas are two master architects of contemporary social and political philosophy. While Foucault's philosophical contribution lies in his profound genealogical insights into the ethics of the body politic — the medical, incarcerated, and sexual body — as ubiquitous power relations,<sup>77</sup> Habermas's "postmetaphysical"

theory of communicative action, which is characterized by his American admirer Thomas McCarthy as "the *determinate* negation of subject-centered reason by reason understood as *communicative* action,"<sup>78</sup> is at best a limping enterprise because by "sleepthinking" the body politic, it leaves a gaping sinkhole in his philosophy of communicative action. Habermas ensnares and criticizes, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as a philosophy of the subject finding itself centered in its body.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, Habermas is completely oblivious to the fact that the body is the basic grammar of sociality or, as he prefers to call it, communicative action. Without the body (as flesh), without embodiment, Habermas, as the common parlance has it, is sawing the very branch on which he is sitting. It is never enough to say that the body is our primordial anchorage in and linkage to the world. Rather, it must be said and stressed that the body is our active mode of *being (existing)* in the world, thereby endowing the body as well as the mind with an ontological status. From the standpoint of sociality, furthermore, the body has ontological primacy over the mind. This is what Nietzsche, whose thought and the thought of his French progenies are the target of Habermas's scathing criticism in his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, meant by the body as a social and political structure and by the soul as a word for something about the body. Sociality, Habermas must keep in mind, is never the surreptitious liaison of disembodied and invisible minds but is first and foremost the intercorporeal "confrontation" of embodied subjects. *While the mind is necessarily monologic (non-communicative), the body is indelibly dialogic (communicative)*. Only because of the body (as flesh) is the human indissolubly social. In other words, the death of the body is indeed the death of the social itself.

The body politic may be coming to an age as a postmodern event that awaits the resurrection of Vico's anti-Cartesian and seminal insights into it as "first philosophy." The language of the body politic is our "first" if not our "last" language because our very *com/prehension (com/prehendo)* of the world depends on it. Vico's heraldry of the body politic is the "prelude to a philosophy of the future" — to use the subtitle of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*. As Giorgio Tagliacozzo once said forcefully, Vico "is not a past to be re-evoked, but a present to be elaborated, and a future to be pursued."<sup>80</sup> His is the future of the body politic which touches every human event between birth, copulation, and death. To celebrate the homecoming of Vico, then, is



to celebrate the future of the body politic and of the world or cosmopolis as "one body." As carnal hermeneutics deconstructs disembodied reason which has held a hegemonic grip on modernity, it ushers in a new cosmopolitan dawn of our thinking. The end of disembodied reason is the end of modernity and the beginning of postmodernity where the care of the body politic is both the care of the body and the care of the political which are two reversible sides of a single concern.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I used the neologism *carnal hermeneutics* for the first time in "Writing the Body as Social Discourse: Prolegomena to Carnal Hermeneutics," in *Signs of Change*, ed. Stephen Barker (Albany: State University of New York, forthcoming). It should be mentioned here that how to bridge the hermeneutics of the written text and that of the body politic is found in Paul Ricoeur's classic essay, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," *Social Research* 38 (1971), 529-62. The wealth of literature has been appearing in recent years on the subject of the body politic. For the most comprehensive collection of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural essays on the body politic, see *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, 3 parts in 3 volumes, ed. Michel Feher with Romona Naddatt and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone Books, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> See Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *On Boxing* (Garden City, N. Y.: Dolphin/Doubleday, 1987), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Language as Gesture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 3-4. Oliver Sacks's absorbing work entitled *Seeing Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) is concerned with the body politic of the deaf for the struggle of their "ethnic" identity and recognition. See also Gail Dannette Weiss, *The Hermeneutics of Gesture* (Doctoral dissertation in philosophy, Yale University, 1991). George Herbert Mead's idea of the "conversation of gestures" is well known. For a critical discussion of his conception of the hand as uniquely human, see Ruth Leys, "Mead's Voices: Imitation as Foundation, or,



at the same time a conception of the world, because the dualisms which haunt his thoughts are little more than the dilemmas of his age [...] If Descartes is at once an idealist and a materialist (an idealist in metaphysics, a mechanistic materialist in science), this is but a mark of mind perfectly expressing the dilemma of the epoch. The seventeenth century lies between a dying feudalism and a rising bourgeoisie, between faith and science, theology and rational criticism, and this is perfectly expressed through that curious mixture in Descartes himself of prudence and audacity, timidity and assertiveness, impertinence and discretion, which are to be found so conspicuously in his response to the institutions of his time, in the letters he addresses to his contemporaries, and in the preface and prefatory materials of his major published works" (*Philosophy as Social Expression* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974], p. 218).

<sup>16</sup> *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 56. Maurice Merleau-Ponty also writes that "one could say about language in its relations with thought what one says of the life of the body in its relations with consciousness. Just as one could not place the body at the first level, just as one could not subordinate it or draw it out of its autonomy [...], one can say only that language makes thought, as much as it is made by thought. Thought inhabits language and language is its body. This mediation of the objective and the subjective, of the interior and of the exterior — what philosophy seeks to do — we can find in language if we succeed in getting close enough to it" (*Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*, trans. Hugh J. Silverman [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973], p. 102).

<sup>17</sup> *Rodin*, trans. Jessie Lemont and Hans Tausil (London: Grey Walls Press, 1946), p. 33. Heidegger's description of thinking as handicraft (i. e., embodied thinking) is incomparable. See *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 16-17. The hand alone constitutes the *differentia* between *humanitas* and *animalitas*. In his famous "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger wrote: "The human body is something essentially other than an animal organism. Nor is the error of biologism overcome by adjoining a soul to the human body, a mind to the soul, and the existentiell to the mind, and then louder than before singing the praises of the mind [...]" (*Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell [New York: Harper and Row, 1977], p. 204). For the ethnomethodological "sociology" of the hand inspired by Heidegger's conception of thinking as handicraft, see David Sudnow, *Ways of the Hand* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978). Interestingly, Michel de Montaigne wrote of many *expressions* of our hands: "We beg, we promise, call, dismiss, threaten, pray, entreat, deny, refuse, question, admire, count, confess, repent, fear, blush, doubt, instruct, command, incite, encourage, swear, testify, accuse, condemn, absolve, insult, despise, defy, vex, flatter, applaud, bless, humiliate, mock, reconcile, commend, exalt,

entertain, rejoice, complain, grieve, mope, despair, wonder, exclaim, are silent, and what not, with a variation and multiplication that vie with the tongue" [... *et quoy non? d'une variation et multiplication à l'envy de la langue*] (*The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948], p. 332). There may indeed be a direct genealogy between Heidegger's conception of thinking as handicraft as well as his formulation of primitive *Dasein* in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962) and the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's discussion of "manual concepts" based on the original findings of the American anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing. Lévy-Bruhl writes that "With infinite patience he [Cushing] revised the primitive functions of his own hands, living over again with them their experiences of prehistoric days, with the same material and under the same conditions as at that period, *when the hands were so at one with the mind that they really formed a part of it*. The progress of civilization was brought about by reciprocal influence of mind over hand and *vice versa*. To reconstitute the primitives' mentality, he had to rediscover the movements of their hands, movements in which their language and their thought were inseparably united. Hence the daring yet significant expression 'manual concepts.' The primitive who did not speak without his hands did not think without them either" (*How Natives Think*, trans. Lilian A. Clare [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926], p. 161). For the original essay of Cushing, see "Manual Concepts: A Study of the Influence of Hand-Usage on Culture-Growth," *The American Anthropologist* 5 (1892), 289-317. For a series of exploratory essays on Heidegger's polysemic *Geschlecht* which epitomizes his body politic, see Jacques Derrida, "*Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," *Research in Phenomenology* 13 (1983), 65-83; "*Geschlecht* II: Heidegger's Hand" (trans. John P. Leavey, Jr.), in *Deconstruction and Philosophy*, ed. John Sallis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 161-96; and "Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht* IV)" (trans. John P. Leavey, Jr.), in *Reading Heidegger*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 163-218.

<sup>18</sup> For a Vichian critique of "Cartesian linguistics" in Noam Chomsky, see Marcel Danesi, "Vico and Chomsky: On the Nature of Creativity in Language," *New Vico Studies* 7 (1989), 28-42. For a critique of Cartesianism in the human sciences, see chap. 4, "The Genealogy of Technological Rationality in the Human Sciences," in the author's *Rethinking Political Theory* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 51-2.

<sup>20</sup> *The New Science*, *op. cit.*, par. 405 at p. 129. In Chinese, for example, the mushroom-like fungus that grows on trees is called "wood ear" because it is shaped like a human ear.

<sup>21</sup> *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt

(New York: Harper and Row, 1977), especially "The Age of the World Picture," pp. 115-54.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) is one of the most thoroughgoing critiques of visualist epistemology. Hermeneutics, he asserts, is "what we get when we are no longer epistemological" (p. 325). The difference between conversation and inquiry, according to him, is that inquiry, unlike the openness of conversation, turns philosophy into an exchange of views. He proposes that "We must get the visual, and in particular the mirroring, metaphors out of our speech altogether. To do that we have to understand speech not only as not the externalizing of inner representations, but as not a representation at all" (p. 371).

<sup>23</sup> "What Is Tradition?" *New Literary History* 22 (1991). 3. Cf. Wolf Lepenies who writes that "Descartes' travels in time and space led him back to the philosophizing *ego*. Neither imaginary travels in the world of books nor real travels in the book of the world can provide the sound and firm knowledge necessary for the foundation of philosophy. This knowledge the philosopher can only find in himself, alone but secure in a heated room on a cold winter's day" ("Interesting Questions" in the History of Philosophy and Elsewhere," in *Philosophy in History*, eds. Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind and Quentin Skinner [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984], p. 147). Bruns's above-mentioned comment on Descartes's *Cogito* parallels what Goethe said of the ancient Greek (Socratic) dictum "Know thyself." Goethe said of the dictum: it is "a ruse of a cabal of priests. They are trying to seduce man from activity in the outside world, to distract him with impossible demands; they seek to draw him into a false inner contemplation. Man only knows himself insofar as he knows the world — the world which he only comes to know in himself and himself only in it" (quoted in Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990], p. vii).

<sup>24</sup> In *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Paul Ricoeur makes the distinction between the objective "body" (*Körper, corps*) and the subjective "flesh" (*Leib, chair*).

<sup>25</sup> Elias, *The History of Manners*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>26</sup> *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, *op. cit.*, p. 55 (italics added). It is noteworthy that in the carnal culture of the Orient, the unity of the mind and the body is an "achievement" as the result of "cultivation" (the Japanese *shugyō*) and "training" (the Japanese *keiko*). See Yuasa Yasuo, *The Body*, ed. Thomas P. Kasulis and trans. Shigenori Nagatomo and Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 18. For one of the best works on the subject of the Oriental body for our discussion here on the mutual attunement between the self and the world, see Shigenori Nagatomo, *Attunement Through the Body* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> *Society and Solitude* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1870), p. 153.

<sup>28</sup> *Phenomenological Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 211. For

a somatized social theory, see Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

<sup>29</sup> For discussions of Nietzsche's body politic, see especially Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture*, trans. Sean Hand (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) and Georg Staugh and Bryan S. Turner, *Nietzsche's Dance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin Books, 1959), p. 146. For the carnal origins of European thought, see Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge: University Press, 1951).

<sup>31</sup> *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 292.

<sup>32</sup> *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 52 and 141. For Martin Heidegger's discussion of Nietzsche's aesthetics, see *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979). "All art," Walter Pater writes, "constantly aspires towards the condition of music [...] In music [...] is to be found the true type or measure of perfected art. Therefore, although each art has its incommunicable element, its untranslatable order of impression, its unique mode of reaching the 'imaginative reason,' yet the arts may be represented as continually struggling after the law or principle of music, to a condition which music alone completely realises; and one of the chief functions of aesthetic criticism, dealing with the products of art, new or old, is to estimate the degree in which each of these products approaches, in this sense, to musical law" (*The Renaissance* [1893 text], ed. Donald Hill [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980], pp. 106-9). Speaking of Śiva's dance as a temporal and spatial art, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy sums up its threefold significance as follows: "First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is Represented by the Arch: Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the Countless souls of men from the Snare of illusion: Thirdly, the Place of the Dance, Chidombaram, the Centre of the Universe, is within the Heart" (*The Dance of Śiva* [New York: Dover, 1985], p. 65).

<sup>34</sup> *The ideology of the Aesthetic*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. For a comprehensive study of the aesthetic model of the state, see Joseph Chytry, *The Aesthetic State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). For a future model of an aesthetic polity (or the body politic) based on Balinese culture, see Clifford Geertz, *Negara* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), "Conclusion: Bali and Political Theory," pp. 121-36.

<sup>35</sup> Hannah Arendt observes that Vico was the first to comment on and criticized the absence of common sense (*Gemeinsinn*) in Descartes. See *The Human Condition*, *op. cit.*, p. 282. Hans-Georg Gadamer also notes that Vico's *De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione* (*On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. Elio Gianturco [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965]) is a good beginning for the

discussion of *sensus communis*. See *Truth and Method*, ed. and trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 19-30. For an excellent discussion of Vico on *sensus communis*, rhetoric, and ethics including critical comments on Gadamer and Jacques Derrida, see John D. Schaeffer, *Sensus Communis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). Vico's practical philosophy based on *sensus communis* may be correlated to the following two proposals: Stephen Toulmin, "The Recovery of Practical Philosophy," *American Scholar* 57 (1988), 337-52 and Gary Saul Morson, "Prosaics: An Approach to the Humanities," *American Scholar* 54 (1985), 515-28.

<sup>36</sup> Brian Vickers shows that rhetoric is a practical art of politics in the classical tradition and that the power of speech is a system of the political. See *In Defense of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 8-11.

<sup>37</sup> *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> For Nietzsche's own discussion of the social construction of rhetoric and language, see *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, ed. and trans. Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair, and David J. Parent (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>39</sup> Trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 348-9.

<sup>41</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> *The Philosophy of the Present*, ed. Arthur E. Murphy (Chicago: Open Court, 1932), p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> *The New Science*, *op. cit.*, par. 1045 at p. 393.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 237 at p. 78.

<sup>45</sup> See Merleau-Ponty, *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> Our discussion on Hermes is based on Norman O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: The Revolution of a Myth* (New York: Random House, 1947) and Walter F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), pp. 104-23. For discussions concerning the nature and the ontological significance of the spoken word and oral poetry, see Walter J. Ong, S. J., *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); and Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). The following passage from "The Poet," one of the most eloquent passages in the entire corpus of Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings, echoes the Vichian philosophy of language: "The poets made all the words, and therefore, language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. For, though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency, because for the moment it symbolized the word to the first speaker

and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. But the poet names the thing because he sees it, or comes one step nearer to it than any other" (*Essays: Second Series* [New York: Lovell, Coryell, n. d.], p. 21).

<sup>47</sup> See Tchang Tcheng-Ming, *L'Écriture Chinoise et le Geste Humain* (Paris: Guenther, 1937).

<sup>48</sup> *Six Scripts or the Principles of Chinese Writing*, trans. L. C. Hopkins (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), p. 43.

<sup>49</sup> "Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce," in Samuel Beckett *et al.*, *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (London: Shakespeare, 1929), p. 11. Vico thought that the "mute" language of hieroglyphics and ideograms was the earliest language of humankind. See *The New Science*, *op. cit.*, par. 429 at pp. 138-9. Cf. Michael Mooney, *Vico in the Tradition of Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 208.

<sup>50</sup> *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. and ed. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> *The Literary Speech Act*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>52</sup> *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 118-19 (*italics added*).

<sup>53</sup> The human significance of the "upright posture" is discussed by Erwin W. Straus in "The Upright Posture," in *Essays in Phenomenology*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 164-92. Craig Owens has an interesting discussion on "de/nomination" as an act of stripping away one's personal and cultural identity and dignity. See "Improper Names," in *Beyond Recognition*, ed. Scott Bryson *et al.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 284-97.

<sup>54</sup> *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, ed. Ezra Pound (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1964). See also the author's "Misreading the Ideogram: From Fenollosa to Derrida and McLuhan," *Paideuma* 13 (1984), 211-27.

<sup>55</sup> *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1951), p. 88. Concerning the body and its energy in Chinese thought, see Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974).

<sup>56</sup> (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962).

<sup>57</sup> Brown is imagining the placement together of Vico's *The New Science* and Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. See "Preface" and p. 97 in *Closing Time*, *op. cit.*, which reads that two books or two words "get on top of each other and become sexual."



<sup>58</sup> See further the author's "Confucianism as Political Philosophy: A Postmodern Perspective," *Human Studies* 16 (1993), 213-30.

<sup>59</sup> *Remembering the Bone House* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), pp. 7-10. Cf. Luce Irigaray who considers sexual difference as *the* question of our epoch and attempts to formulate it in terms of space and time: "Le maternel-féminin demeure le *lieu séparé* de '*son*' lieu, privé de '*son*' lieu. Elle est ou devient sans cesse le lieu pour l'autre qui ne peut s'en séparer. Menaçante donc, sans le savoir ni le vouloir, de ce dont elle manque: un lieu '*propre*.' Il faudrait qu'elle se réenveloppe d'elle-même, et au mois deux fois: en tant que femme et en tant que mère. Ce qui suppose de modifier toute l'économie de l'espace-temps" (*Éthique de la Différence Sexuelle* [Paris: Minuit, 1984], p. 18). For the religious significance of the body for medieval women, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption* (New York: Zone Books, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

<sup>61</sup> See Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition*, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-90.

<sup>62</sup> *The Orphic Voice* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 35-6. Speaking of Origen's view of the body and its sexuality, Peter Brown writes that sexuality for Origen was "a dispensable adjunct of the personality that played no role in defining the essence of the human spirit. Men and women could do without it even in this present existence. Human life, lived in a body endowed with sexual characteristics, was but the last dark hour of a long night that would vanish with the dawn. The body was poised on the edge of a transformation so enormous as to make all present notions of identity tied to sexual differences, and all social roles based upon marriage, procreation, and childbirth, seem as fragile as dust dancing in a sunbeam" (*The Body and Society* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], p. 168).

<sup>63</sup> The term *jouissance* is used by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément in their work, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Nietzsche speaks of the dancer having his ears on his toes. See *The Portable Nietzsche*, *op. cit.*, p. 336. For a discussion of Nietzsche's "otobiography," see Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, ed. Christie V. McDonald and trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Schocken Books, 1982).

<sup>64</sup> *Speech Genres and Other Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee and ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 141. Craig Owens, who is sympathetic to the feminist movement today, speaks in another context of the "limits of the European project of visualizing the Other" and suggests that "It is time to stop looking, and listen to what the Indians have to say" (*Beyond Recognition*, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-6). The same should be said about men in relation to women.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Owens, *Beyond Recognition*, *op. cit.*, p. 179. In her *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

1985), pp. 23-33, Luce Irigaray contends that it is wrong to *speculate* female sexuality on the basis of masculine "scoptophilic lens" because it is multiple, dispersed, and ubiquitous. She refutes "phallocratism." Cf. *Éthique de la Différence Sexuelle*, *op. cit.*, p. 14: "Il est vrai que, pour que l'oeuvre de la différence sexuelle ait lieu, il faut une révolution de pensée, et d'éthique. Tout est à réinterpréter dans les relations entre le sujet et le discours, le sujet et le monde, le sujet et le cosmique, le micro et le macrocosme. Tout, et d'abord que le sujet s'est toujours écrit au masculin, même s'il se voulait universel on neutre: l'*homme*. N'empêche que l'homme — du mois en français — n'est pas neutre, mais sexué." In *Making Sex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 62, Thomas Laqueur writes that "[...] the longevity of the one-sex model links sex to power. In a public world that was overwhelmingly male, the one-sex model displayed what was already massively evident in culture more generally: *man* is the measure of all things, and woman does not exist as an ontologically distinct category. Not all males are masculine, potent, honorable, or hold power, and some women exceed some men in each of these categories. But the standard of the human body and its representations is the male body."

<sup>66</sup> For an evidence of the centralizing power of vision, see Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). The psychologist Julian Jaynes observes that "there is no hypostasis for hearing as there is for sight. Even today, we do not hear with the mind's ear as we see with the mind's eye. Nor do we refer to intelligent minds as loud, in the same way as we say they are bright. This is probably because hearing was the very essence of the bicameral mind, and as such has those differences from vision [...] The coming of consciousness can in a certain vague sense be construed as a shift from an auditory mind to a visual mind" (*The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976], p. 269). In *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), Northrop Frye is highly poignant and cogent when he comments that "the world of social action and event, the world of time and process, has a particularly close association with the ear. The ear listens, and the ear translates what it hears into practical conduct. The world of individual thought and idea has a correspondingly close association with the eye, and nearly all our expressions for thought, from the Greek *theoria* down, are connected with visual metaphors" (p. 243). He goes on to say that "drama, like music, is an ensemble performance for an audience, and music and drama are most likely to flourish in a society with a strong consciousness of itself as a society, like Elizabethan England. When a society becomes individualized and competitive, like Victorian England, music and drama suffer accordingly, and the written word almost monopolizes literature" (p. 249). The social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz hinted at something very important: "A study of social relationships connected with the musical process may lead to some insights valid for many other forms of social intercourse, perhaps even to illumination of a certain aspect of the

structure of social interaction as such that has not so far attracted from social scientists the attention it deserves" (*Collected Papers*, vol. 2: *Studies in Social Theory*, ed. Arvid Brodersen [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964], pp. 159-60).

<sup>67</sup> "The Priest and the Jester," in *Toward a Marxist Humanism*, trans. Jane Zielonko Peel (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 9-37.

<sup>68</sup> vSee chap. 9, "Mikhail Bakhtin's Body Politic: A Phenomenological Dialogics," in the author's *Rethinking Political Theory*, *op. cit.* For the author's comparison between Vico and Bakhtin, see "Vico and Bakhtin: A Prolegomenon to Any Future Comparison," *New Vico Studies* 3 (1985), 157-65. Bakhtin writes that carnival life "is past millennia's way of sensing the world as one great communal performance. This sense of the world, liberating one from fear, bringing the world maximally close to a person and bringing one person maximally close to another (everything is drawn into the zone of free familiar contact), with its joy at change and its joyful relativity, is opposed to that one-sided and gloomy official seriousness which is dogmatic and hostile to evolution and change, which seeks to absolutize a given condition of existence or a given social order. From precisely that sort of seriousness did the carnival sense of the world liberate man. But there is not a grain of nihilism in it, nor a grain of empty frivolity or vulgar bohemian individualism" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], p. 160). Cf. Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 9: "It is as if stylistic invention and the subversive power of comedy defy censure and liberate repressed desire. Through the magic of language, the rights of the body and its impulses are restored, abundance replaces austerity, and pleasures which are normally covert or repressed can be indulged." Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, ed. John C. Pratt (New York: Penguin, 1977) is, I suggest, a good case of studying in a popular form "novelistic" carnivalization whose main plot is thoroughly heresiarchic. McMurphy and Miss Ratched — the "Big Nurse" as she is called in the novel — represent the dialectic of the playful *yin* and the serious *yang*. McMurphy's playfulness is altogether subversive and disarming. The essence of the carnivalesque theme as subversive is revealed in the "big party" which the inmates hold one night at the instigation of McMurphy in defiance of the official "misrule" of the Institution. Indeed, it is a carnival in the fullest sense of the term as depicted, for example, by Pieter Bruegel — the festive scenes of gluttony, carousal, defecation, and copulation.

<sup>69</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 285-6.

<sup>70</sup> "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 77. Quoted also in Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> *On Humor*, trans. Antonio Illiano and Daniel P. Testa (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>73</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre's play *Dirty Hands (Mains Sales)* deals with a deceptive intrigue in politics. See *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (New York: Vintage, 1989), pp. 125-241.

<sup>74</sup> *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 217-18.

<sup>75</sup> *The Feast of Fools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 82.

<sup>76</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>77</sup> In *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), James Miller discusses Foucault's "philosophy-as-life" which is preoccupied with his body politic both personal and nonpersonal. Since Nietzsche's influence on Foucault is considerable, it is worth noting that Miller's Foucault parallels Alexander Nehamas's Nietzsche in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

<sup>78</sup> "Introduction" to Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. vii.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Danesi, "Vico and Chomsky: On the Nature of Creativity in Language," *op. cit.*, p. 39.