

*Elements of Rhythmanalysis:
An Introduction to the
Understanding of Rhythms*

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The study of rhythm (of rhythms) can proceed in two ways, the convergence of which we shall demonstrate. One can study and compare cases: the rhythms of the body, living or not (respirations, pulses, circulations, assimilations – durations and phases of these durations, etc.). This remains close to practice; in confronting the results, the scientific and/or philosophical spirit should arrive at general conclusions.¹ Not without risks: the leap from particular to general is not without the danger of errors, of illusions, in a word, of ideology. The other procedure consists in starting with concepts, definite categories. Instead of going from concrete to abstract, one starts with full consciousness of the abstract in order to arrive at the concrete.

The second method does not exclude the first; they complete one another. *Specialists*, doctors, physiologists, geologists and historians tend to follow the first, without always arriving at ideas and conclusions that are valid for all rhythms. Here, we follow the second, more philosophical method, with its attendant risks: speculation in the place of analysis, the arbitrarily *subjective* in the place of facts. With careful attention and precaution, we advance by clearing the way.

Is there a general **concept** of rhythm? Answers: yes, and everyone possesses it; but nearly all those who use this word believe themselves to master and possess its content, its meaning. Yet the meanings of the term remain obscure. We easily confuse *rhythm* with *movement* [*mouvement*], speed, a sequence of movements [*gestes*] or objects (machines, for example).² Following this

we tend to attribute to rhythms a **mechanical** overtone, brushing aside the **organic** aspect of rhythmised movements. Musicians, who deal directly with rhythms, because they produce them, often reduce them to the counting of beats [*des mesures*]: ‘One-two-three-one-two-three’. Historians and economists speak of rhythms: of the rapidity or slowness of periods, of eras, of cycles; they tend only to see the effects of impersonal *laws*, without coherent relations with *actors*, ideas, realities. Those who teach gymnastics see in rhythms only successions of movements [*gestes*] setting in motion certain muscles, certain physiological energies, etc.

Is the origin of the procedure that starts with *generalities* found in abstractions? No! In the field of rhythm, certain very broad concepts nonetheless have specificity: let us immediately cite **repetition**. No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without **measure** [*mesure*].³ But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference.

To take a highly remarkable case: the repetition of unity ($1 + 1 + 1 \dots$); not only does it generate the infinity of whole numbers, but also the infinity of **prime numbers** (without divisors) which, we have known since the Greeks, have specific properties. It is necessary to discover the (without doubt diverse) bases of the repetitive and the differential; and to realise that these relations, being contained within the concept, have then to be found and recognised in real rhythms . . .

A glance at the *modern* era (by which we understand the nineteenth century, since the French Revolution) reveals often omitted truths–realities. After the Revolution, against the values of the revolutionaries (and despite the protestations of *reactionaries* wanting a return to the past), a new society was installed: that socio-economic organisation of **our** urban–State–market society. The commodity prevails over everything. (Social) space and (social) time, dominated by exchanges, become the time and space of markets; although not being *things* but including **rhythms**, they enter into **products**.

The everyday establishes itself, creating hourly demands, systems of transport, in short, its repetitive organisation. *Things* matter little; the *thing* is only a metaphor, divulged by discourse, divulging representations that conceal the production of repetitive time and space. The *thing* has no more existence than *pure* identity (which the *thing* symbolises materially). There are only *things* and *people*.

With the reign of the commodity, philosophy changes. In order to expose the social process, we call out to the sum total of activities and products: nature – labour. A double philosophy results from this, the one *reactionary*, the other *revolutionary*. More or less simultaneously: Schopenhauer and Marx. The former fetishises nature, *life*, though not without seeing in it an abyss, a pit from which the ephemeral surges forth. Music evokes the chasm; however this philosophy speaks little of rhythms. By its side, Marx insists on the transformation of brute nature through human work, through technology⁴ and inventions, through labour and consciousness. Yet he doesn't discover rhythms . . .

There was, in the heart of the centuries preceding the Revolution, a critique from the *right* and a critique from the *left* of human (social) reality. The present writing engages deliberately in a critique from the **left**.

From the beginning, this theme imposes itself: What is repetition? What is its meaning? How, when and why are there micro and macro restarts, returns to the past, in works and in time? . . .

a) Absolute repetition is only a fiction of logical and mathematical thought, in the symbol of identity: $A = A$ (the sign reading 'identical' and not 'equal'). It serves as a point of departure for logical thought, with an immediate correction. The second *A* differs from the first by the fact that it is second. The repetition of unity, one (1), gives birth to the sequence of numbers.

b) Differences appear immediately in this sequence: odd and even (2, 3, 4, 5, etc.), divisible (4, etc.), indivisible or prime numbers (5, 7, 11, etc.). Not only does repetition not exclude differences, it also gives birth to them; it **produces** them. Sooner or later it encounters the **event** that arrives or rather arises in relation to the sequence or series produced repetitively. In other words: difference.

c) As it currently stands, would not this production of the

different by the identical (repeated) produce a theoretical shortcoming? Does it not permit the following, highly significant formulation (affirmation): ‘Differences induced or produced by repetitions constitute the thread of time’?

Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in *reality* interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures. Great cyclical rhythms last for a period and restart: dawn, always new, often superb, inaugurates the return of the everyday. The antagonistic unity of relations between the cyclical and the linear sometimes gives rise to compromises, sometimes to disturbances. The circular course of the hands on (traditional) clock-faces and watches is accompanied by a linear tick-tock. And it is their relation that enables or rather constitutes the measure of time (which is to say, of rhythms).

Time and space, the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions. A dialectical relation (unity in opposition) thus acquires meaning and import, which is to say generality. One reaches, by this road as by others, the depths of the dialectic.

In this way concepts that are indispensable for defining rhythm come together. One essential is still absent from the definition: **measure**. A further paradox: rhythm seems natural, spontaneous, with no law other than its unfurling.⁵ Yet rhythm, always particular, (music, poetry, dance, gymnastics, work, etc.) always implies a measure. Everywhere where there is rhythm, there is *measure*, which is to say law, calculated and expected obligation, a project.

Far from resisting quantity, time (duration) is quantified by *measure*, by melody in music, but also in deed and language. Harmony, which results from a spontaneous ensemble, or from a *work of art*, is simultaneously quantitative and qualitative (in music and elsewhere: language, movements, architecture, works of art and diverse arts, etc.). **Rhythm** reunites **quantitative** aspects

and elements, which mark time and distinguish moments in it – and **qualitative** aspects and elements, which link them together, found the unities and result from them. Rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body. **Rational**, numerical, quantitative and qualitative rhythms superimpose themselves on the multiple **natural** rhythms of the body (respiration, the heart, hunger and thirst, etc.), though not without changing them. The bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms of social or mental function. Whence the efficiency of the **analytic** operation that consists in opening and unwrapping the bundle. Disorder and illness, at the worst death, take over the operation. However, the natural and the rational play only a limited role in the analysis of rhythms, which are simultaneously natural **and** rational, and neither one nor the other. Is the rhythm of a Chopin waltz natural or artificial? Are the rhythms of the aphorisms of Nietzsche – of Zarathustra – natural or artificial? They sometimes have the rhythm of a march: that of the body, that of the tempo [*allure*] of the thinker-poet.

Philosophers (including Nietzsche, the philosopher-poet) only presaged the importance of *rhythm*. It is from a Portuguese, dos Santos, that Bachelard, in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, borrows the word ‘rhythmanalysis’, though without developing the meaning any more than did dos Santos.⁶ However, the concept of rhythm, hence the rhythmanalytical project, emerges bit by bit from the shadows.

Now for its unfolding, a panoply of methodologically utilised categories (concepts) and oppositions would appear indispensable:

repetition and difference;
mechanical and organic;
discovery and creation;
cyclical and linear;
continuous and discontinuous;
quantitative and qualitative . . .

Several of these concepts and oppositions are known: employed, picked out, utilised; some are less so: repetition and difference, for example, or even the cyclical and linear. It will be necessary to employ them with care, in such a way as to fine-tune them through use. They converge in the central concept of **measure**. An apparently enlightened, but in fact obscure, notion. What makes the measurable and the non-measurable? Isn't time, which seems to escape measure on account of its fluidity, that which measures itself: the millionths of seconds in the cycles of galaxies, the hours in the seasons and the month? Why and how? Would the spatialisation of time be a preconditional operation for its measurement? If yes, does this operation generate errors, or does it, on the contrary, stimulate knowledge at the same time as practice?

The majority of analysts of time (or rather of such and such a temporality: physical, social, historical, etc.) have utilised only an often minimal part of the above-listed categories. The **relative** remains suspect, despite the discoveries of the twentieth century; we prefer the *substantial* to it (and we often make time a sort of substance, its structure deriving from a divine transcendence).

Analysis and knowledge presuppose concepts (categories), but also a point of departure (enabling us to compose and enumerate a scale). We know that a rhythm is slow or lively only in relation to other rhythms (often our own: those of our walking, our breathing, our heart). This is the case even though each rhythm has its own and specific measure: speed, frequency, consistency. Spontaneously, each of us has our preferences, references, frequencies; each must appreciate rhythms by referring them to oneself, one's heart or breathing, but also to one's hours of work, of rest, of waking and of sleep. The preferences measure themselves; the **measure** (notion and practice) passes through a **frequency**. Precise techniques enable us to **measure frequencies**.

Our sensations and perceptions, in full and continuous appearances, contain repetitive figures, concealing them. Thus, sounds, lights, colours and *objects*. We *contain* ourselves by concealing the diversity of our rhythms: to ourselves, body and flesh, *we* are **almost objects**. Not completely, however. But what does a midge perceive, whose body has **almost** nothing in common with ours, and whose wings beat to the rhythm of a thousand times per

second? This insect makes us hear a high-pitched sound, we perceive a threatening, little winged cloud that seeks our blood. In short, rhythms escape logic, and nevertheless contain a logic, a possible calculus of numbers and numerical relations.

One meaning of the research, a philosophical goal, is to be found here: the relation of the logical (logic) and the dialectical (dialectic), which is to say of the identical and the contradictory.⁷

The intellectual procedure characterised by the **duel** [*le duel*] (duality) has its place here: with oppositions grasped in their relations, but also each for itself. It was necessary to set up the list of oppositions and dualities that enter into analysis by rejecting first the old comparison of **dialogue** (**two** voices) and **dialectic** (**three** terms). Even from the *Marxist* standpoint there were confusions; much was staked on the two-term opposition *bourgeoisie–proletariat*, at the expense of the third term: the soil, agricultural property and production, peasants, predominantly agricultural colonies.

As a method, dual analysis releases itself slowly from ideological, metaphysical and religious oppositions: the Devil and the good Lord, Good and Evil, Light and Shadows, Immanent and Transcendent. For a long time analysis remained at an inferior level: unilateral, attributing unlimited (philosophical) value to one opposition (subject–object). Similarly, *rise and fall, life and death, knowledge and play, before and after* . . . It is only recently, with Hegel and Marx, that analysis has understood the **triadic** character of the approach, by becoming dialectical in accordance with the scheme: *thesis–antithesis–synthesis*.

Analysis that has become dialectical in this way concerns itself with three terms. That does not mean that it strays in the uses (and abuses) of this sacred number: towards metaphysics and theology, towards the trinity of the image, the three reference points of the universe (hell, the earth and the sky) – towards the trinity of the three periods of time and thought (the camel, the lion and the child, according to Nietzsche, or Law, Faith and Joy according to Joachim de Flore).⁸ The immense mythomania surrounding this number shows its importance; the triadic conception has been released from myths since Hegel. Followed by Marx, Hegel *laicised* this sacred number; that is, dialectical analysis observes or constitutes the relations between three terms, which change

according to circumstance: going from conflict to alliance and back again. This in the presence of the **world**, to the extent that it features relations of past–present–future, or of possible–probable–impossible, or even knowledge–information–manipulation, etc. The analysis does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism).

Let us insist on this point! In these observations, the term *analysis* comes up on several occasions without definition, taken as in the vernacular. Now, the analytic approach becomes complex once it borders on *complex* realities. *Classical* analysis isolates an element or aspect of the object. It is reductive by definition. So-called structural analysis casts light on opposed terms – two by two – in order to study their relations and interactions (thus: time and space, signifier and signified, etc.). With regard to **dialectical** analysis, which was for a long time hesitant even after Marx and Hegel, it separates out **three** terms in interaction: conflicts or alliances. Thus: ‘thesis–antithesis–synthesis’ in Hegel; or in Marx: ‘economic–social–political’. Or more recently: ‘time–space–energy’. Or even: ‘**melody–harmony–rhythm**’. Triadic analysis distinguishes itself from dual analysis just as much as from banal analysis. It doesn’t lead to a *synthesis* in accordance with the Hegelian schema. Thus the triad ‘time–space–energy’ links three terms that it leaves distinct, without fusing them in a *synthesis* (which would be the third term).

We arrive at *laws* that do not yet have names and will perhaps never have them. They are:

1) Pleasure and joy demand a re-commencement. They await it; yet it escapes. Pain returns. It repeats itself, since the repetition of pleasure gives rise to pain(s). However, joy and pleasure have a presence, whereas pain results from an absence (that of a function, an organ, a person, an object, a *being*). Joy and pleasure *are*, they are *being*; not so suffering. Pessimists used to affirm the opposite: only suffering *is*, or *exists*. The propositions that precede ground an optimism, *in spite of everything*.

2) What is the relation of the logical and the dialectical (dialectic)? The law of logic says: ‘No thought or reality without coherence’. The dialectic proclaims: ‘There is neither thought nor

reality without contradictions'. It seems that the second affirmation might eliminate the first: discourses that seek to be *true* declare themselves coherent: they never want to be *illogical*. Can contradictions be articulated in propositions or in formulas without contradiction? An open question.

3) What is it to **demonstrate**? What is it to **think** (thought)?⁹

Does not mathematics, which simultaneously demonstrates and discovers, contain the answer to the questions posed? Or must questions be posed alternatively for mathematics (which has progressed for twenty-five centuries without pretending to 'speak the truth' in the manner of philosophers) to respond to them? To extract, to elucidate, to formulate such articulations – an imbroglio, in familiar terms – is the task of philosophy and philosophers. They have occasionally known and said that dialectic does not destroy logic – and that logic (the logical) penetrates dialectic (the dialectical), though without elucidating this *point*.

The spectre of theoretical questioning goes from *pure* abstraction – the logic of identity – to the full complexity of the contradictions of the *real*. An immense questionnaire, the answers to which are given in the heart of the questions, and nevertheless hide *themselves* behind words, in locutions and expressions. It often suffices to chase them out, to bring them into the light of day: to show them.

Lovers of (often fertile) paradoxes can affirm that mathematics is impossible: in order to count up affirmations (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) it is necessary to have numbers at one's disposal. *Petitio principii*?¹⁰ Yes, but mathematics progresses by leaving the initial *paradox* far behind.

The indices and indicators gather themselves together and all point towards the same meaning. Today *man*, humanity, the human species is going through a testing time, where everything is thrown into question: including the existence of space, including the *foundations* of knowledge, of practice and of societies.

In the grip of its own creations, technologies, arms, the species puts itself to the test; it can destroy itself through nuclear power, empty its skies of the indispensable (their blueness), exhaust its soils. In short, the dangers are accumulating. If it survives them, the human race will enter into the silence of **anti**-affirmations,

calling out to demons, to gods, to Laws. It will have **proved** to itself its capacity to live: to organise itself. But during this period, some total risk cannot be avoided. There is destiny – and the end of destiny, the proof of the supreme test. It used to be thought that science and technology would suffice. Yet, necessary and non-sufficient, science and technology pose the problem of all problems. An absolute problem: what can philosophy do? Perceive the situation? Appreciate the risk? Point to a way out?

Delving further into the hypothesis, **rhythm** (linked on one hand to logical categories and mathematical calculations – and on the other to the visceral and vital body) would hold the secrets and the answer to strange questions. Rhythm in and of itself, not music in general, as believed Douglas Hofstadter in *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, in which he gave a good deal of room to melody and harmony – and little to rhythms.¹¹

If the American author of this remarkable book assimilates and transforms one part of European culture (from Bach to mathematical logic), he seems to let another part escape him. In the dance of the *Davidsbündler* (Schumann), rhythm predominates over melody and harmony.¹² To the extent that the study of rhythm is inspired by music (and not just by poetry, by walking or running, etc.) it is closer to Schumann than to Bach. This does not explain the tension and the kinship between mathematical thought and musical creation, but it does shift the question.

Music and musical rhythms will not, following this, take on **immeasurable** importance. Social times disclose diverse, contradictory possibilities: delays and early arrivals, reappearances (repetitions) of an (apparently) rich past, and revolutions that brusquely introduce a new *content* and sometimes change the form of society. Historical times slow down or speed up, advance or regress, look forward or backward. According to what criteria? According to representations and political decisions, but also according to the historian who puts them into perspective. Objectively, for there to be *change*, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a **rhythm** on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner. In the course of a *crisis*, in a critical situation, a group must designate itself as an *innovator* or *producer of meaning*. And its acts must inscribe themselves on *reality*. The

intervention imposes itself neither militarily, nor politically nor even ideologically. Occasionally, a long time after the action, one sees the emergence of novelty. Perspicacity, attention and above all an opening are required. In practice and in *culture*, exhaustion is visible sooner and more clearly than growth and innovation, more obscure realities and idealities.

This book does not pretend to unveil all the secrets, nor to say how this *modern* society functions, although it is certainly more complex than, and different from, those described (in a critical manner) by Marx and then by Lenin.

Symbolically, (so-called modern) *society* underwent something that recalls the great changes in communications. It saw cylinders, pistons and steam jets on steam engines; it saw the machine start up, pull, work and move. Electric locomotives only present to the eye a big box that contains and conceals the machinery. One sees them start up, pull and move forward, but how? The electrical wire and the pole that runs alongside it say nothing about the energy that they transmit. In order to understand, one must be an engineer, a specialist, and know the vocabulary, the concepts, the calculations . . .

The same goes for our economo-political society. The visible moving parts hide the machinery.

Is there nothing left of the visible, the sensible? Is our time only accessible after patient analyses, which break up the complexity and subsequently endeavour to stick back together the pieces? It is not necessary to go too far: a truth pushed beyond its limits becomes an error. The gaze and the intellect can still grasp directly some aspects of our reality that are rich in meaning: notably the everyday and rhythms.

Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**. Therefore:

- a) repetition (of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences);
- b) interferences of linear processes and cyclical processes;
- c) birth, growth, peak, then decline and end.

This supplies the framework for analyses of the *particular*, therefore *real* and *concrete* cases that feature in music, history and the lives of individuals or groups. In each case the analysis should

ride with the movements in whichever work or whichever sequence of actions until their end.

The notion of **rhythm** brings with it or requires some complementary considerations: the implied but different notions of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia. It elevates them to a theoretical level, starting from the lived. Polyrhythmia? It suffices to consult one's body; thus the everyday reveals itself to be a polyrhythmia from the first listening. Eurhythmia? Rhythms unite with one another in the state of health, in normal (which is to say normed!) everydayness; when they are discordant, there is suffering, a pathological state (of which arrhythmia is generally, at the same time, symptom, cause and effect). The discordance of rhythms brings previously eurhythmic organisations towards fatal disorder. **Polyrhythmia analyses itself.** A fundamental forecast: sooner or later the analysis succeeds in isolating from within the organised whole a particular movement and its rhythm. Often coupled empirically with speculations (see, for example, doctors in the field of auscultation, etc.), the analytic operation simultaneously discovers the multiplicity of rhythms and the uniqueness of particular rhythms (the heart, the kidneys, etc.). The rhythm-analysis here defined as a method and a theory pursues this time-honoured labour in a systematic and theoretical manner, by bringing together very diverse practices and very different types of knowledge: medicine, history, climatology, cosmology, poetry (*the poetic*), etc. Not forgetting, of course, sociology and psychology, which occupy the front line and supply the essentials.

We have hovered around a fundamental, therefore perpetual, question. Will it elude us? No, but to find a (the) answer, it is not enough to pose it explicitly. **What is it to think?** And more precisely, what do you think when you speak of **rhythms**? Do reflections, discourses pertain to *thinking*, or simply to the verbal commentary of concrete rhythms?

The Cartesian tradition has long reigned in philosophy.

It is exhausted, but remains present. The 'Cogito . . .' signifies: to think is to think thought; it is to reflect on *oneself* by accentuating (putting the accent on) the consciousness inherent to the act of thinking. Yet what *we* have thought over the course of the preceding pages implies another conception of *thinking*. It is to think that

which is not thought: the game and the risk, love, art, violence, in a word, the *world*, or more precisely the diverse relations between human being and the universe. Thinking is a part, but does not claim to *be* the totality, as many philosophers thought it. Thought explores, expresses. The exploration can hold in store surprises. Likewise, perhaps, rhythms and their analysis (rhythmanalysis).

Since this introduction announces what follows, let us say from now on that rhythmanalysis could change our **perspective** on surroundings, because it changes our **conception** in relation to the classical philosophy that is still dominant in this field. The **sensible**, this scandal of philosophers from Plato to Hegel, (re)takes primacy, transformed without magic (without metaphysics). Nothing inert in the *world*, **no things**: very diverse rhythms, slow or lively (in relation to *us*).

(This garden that I have before my eyes appears differently to me now from a moment ago. I have understood the **rhythms**: trees, flowers, birds and insects. They form a polyrhythmia with the surroundings: the simultaneity of the **present** (therefore of presence), the apparent immobility that contains one thousand and one movements, etc. . . .)

Perhaps a problematic, or at least an outline, of rhythms would find its place here, beside a primary analysis of the **present** and of **presence**?

Might there be hidden, **secret**, rhythms, hence inaccessible movements and temporalities?

No, because there are **no secrets**. Everything knows itself, but not everything says itself, publicises itself. Do not confuse silence with secrets! That which is forbidden from being said, be it external or intimate, produces an obscure, but not a secret, zone. On the contrary. Not only does everything know itself, but the whole world knows it, and knows that of which one can speak and that which can or should rest in silence. To show evidence for this – that secrets do not exist – it suffices to think of sex, of sexuality. Those who never speak thereof (modesty, prohibition, morality, etc.) let nothing on the subject slip by. Rather, those who speak of it less might know more about it than others.

One can classify rhythms according to these perspectives by crossing the notion of **rhythm** with those of the **secret** and **public**, the external and internal.

a) **Secret rhythms**: First, physiological rhythms, but also psychological ones (recollection and memory, the said and the non-said, etc.).

b) **Public** (therefore social) **rhythms**: Calendars, fêtes, ceremonies and celebrations; or those that one declares and those that one exhibits as *virtuality*, as expression (digestion, tiredness, etc.).

c) **Fictional rhythms**: Eloquence and verbal rhythms, but also elegance, gestures and learning processes. Those which are related to false secrets, or pseudo-dissimulations (short-, medium- and long-term calculations and estimations). The imaginary!

d) **Dominating–dominated rhythms**: Completely made up: everyday or long-lasting, in music or in speech, aiming for an effect that is beyond themselves.

Before giving details of the rhythms and even setting out the methods, let us return to the concrete: the **agent** (the analyst).

A philosopher could ask here: ‘Are you not simply embarking on a description of horizons, phenomenology from your window, from the standpoint of an all-too-conscious ego, a phenomenology stretching up to the ends of the road, as far as the Intelligibles: the Bank, the Forum, the *Hôtel de Ville*, the embankments, Paris, etc.?’

Yes, and yet no! This vaguely existential (a slightly heavy technical term) phenomenology (ditto) of which you speak, and of which you accuse these pages, passes over that which quite rightly connects space, time and the energies that unfold here and there, namely **rhythms**. It would be no more than a more or less well-used tool. In other words, a discourse that ordains these horizons as existence, as *being*.

Now the study of rhythms covers an immense area: from the most *natural* (physiological, biological) to the most sophisticated.

The analysis consists in understanding that which comes to it from *nature* and that which is acquired, conventional, even sophisticated, by trying to isolate particular rhythms. It is a difficult type of analysis, one for which there are possible *ethical*, which is to say practical, implications. In other words, knowledge of the lived would modify, metamorphose, the lived without knowing it. Here we find, approached in a different way, but the same, the thought of metamorphosis.

2 The Rhythm analyst: A Previsionary Portrait

In general, one does a portrait of someone who exists and who tempts the painter, the novelist or the playwright. Is it possible to do a portrait of someone who does not yet exist, and which would have to help to bring about his existence? Yes, if one finds the traits that inscribe themselves on a face of the future, which will cast aside false resemblances, thus enabling us to foresee the dissimilarities.

The rhythm analyst will have some points in common with the psychoanalyst, though he differentiates himself from the latter; the differences go further than the analogies.

He will be attentive, but not only to the words or pieces of information, the confessions and confidences of a partner or client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and to *murmurs* [rumeurs], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences.

The psychoanalyst encounters difficulties when he listens out. How is he to orientate his knowledge, forget his past, make himself anew and passive, and not interpret prematurely? The rhythm analyst will not have these methodological obligations: rendering oneself passive, forgetting one's knowledge, in order to re-present it in its entirety in the interpretation. He listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome. A difficult task and situation: to perceive distinct rhythms distinctly, without disrupting them, without dislocating

time. This preparatory discipline for the perception of the outside world borders on pathology yet avoids it because it is methodical. All sorts of already known practices, more or less mixed up with ideology, are similar to it and can be of use: the control of breathing and the heart, the uses of muscles and limbs, etc.

The body. Our body. So neglected in philosophy that it ends up speaking its mind and kicking up a fuss.¹³ Left to physiology and medicine... The body consists of a bundle of rhythms, different but in tune. It is not only in music that one produces **perfect** harmonies. The body produces a **garland** of rhythms, one could say a bouquet, though these words suggest an aesthetic arrangement, as if the artist nature had foreseen beauty – the harmony of the body (of bodies) – that results from all its history.

What is certain is that harmony sometimes (often) exists: eurhythmia. The eu-rhythmic body, composed of diverse rhythms – each organ, each function, having its own – keeps them in **metastable** equilibrium, which is always understood and often recovered, with the exception of disturbances (arrhythmia) that sooner or later become illness (the pathological state). But the surroundings of bodies, be they in nature or a social setting, are also *bundles, bouquets, garlands* of rhythms, to which it is necessary to listen in order to grasp the natural or produced ensembles.

The rhythmmanalyst will not be obliged to *jump* from the inside to the outside of observed *bodies*; he should come to listen to them *as a whole* and unify them by taking his own rhythms as a reference: by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa.

For him, nothing is immobile. He hears the wind, the rain, storms; but if he considers a stone, a wall, a trunk, he understands their slowness, their interminable rhythm. This *object* is not inert; time is not set aside for the *subject*. It is only slow in relation to our time, to our body, the measure of rhythms. An apparently immobile *object*, the forest, moves in multiple ways: the combined movements of the soil, the earth, the sun. Or the movements of the molecules and atoms that compose it (the object, the forest). The object resists a thousand aggressions but breaks up in humidity or conditions of vitality, the profusion of miniscule life. To the attentive ear, it makes a noise like a seashell.

Thus the sensible, the scandal of post-Platonic philosophy, reclaims its dignity in thought, as in practice and common sense. It never disappeared, but has hardly suffered from this transformation that accords it the place of honour in thought and recovers its meaning and richness. The sensible? It is neither the apparent, nor the phenomenal, but the **present**.

The rhythmanalyst calls on all his senses. He draws on his breathing, the circulation of his blood, the beatings of his heart and the delivery of his speech as landmarks. Without privileging any one of these sensations, raised by him in the perception of rhythms, to the detriment of any other. He thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality. He does not neglect therefore (though would this not be an issue in excess of the individual, stemming from social circles and the environment?), in particular he does not neglect smell, scents, the impressions that are so strong in the child and other living beings, which society atrophies, neutralises in order to arrive at the colourless, the odourless and the insensible. Yet smells are a part of rhythms, reveal them: odours of the morning and evening, of hours of sunlight or darkness, of rain or fine weather. The rhythmanalyst observes and retains smells as traces that mark out rhythms. He garbs himself in this tissue of the lived, of the everyday. But the difficulties never cease for him. Being behind the interactions, the intertwinings of rhythms, the effort to discern and note this one or that one imposes itself perpetually. Normally we only grasp the relations between rhythms, which interfere with them. However, they all have a distinct *existence*. Normally, none of them *classifies* itself; on the contrary, in suffering, in confusion, a particular rhythm surges up and imposes itself: palpitation, breathlessness, pains in the place of satiety. The rhythmanalyst has to reach such a rhythm without putting himself in a pathological situation, and without putting that which he observes there either. How? In the street, a cry, a screeching of breaks, an accident makes confused rhythms sensible and breaks them up. Yet the rhythmanalyst does not have the right to provoke an accident. He must simultaneously catch a rhythm and perceive it within the whole, in the same way as non-analysts, people, *perceive* it. He must arrive at the **concrete** through experience. In fact and in practice, an already

acquired ‘knowledge’ [*savoir*] enters onto the scene and delineates the game. (Why the inverted commas around ‘knowledge’? Because it is difficult to know whether knowledge goes as far as science – and consequently whether it avoids ideologies, interpretations and speculative constructions; in such a way that the entrance of ideology is doubtless inevitable, as many recent, and certainly exemplary, cases have shown: psychoanalysis, Marxism and even information technology.)

Will the (future) rhythmanalyst have to professionalise himself? Will he have to set up and direct a *lab* where one compares documents: graphs, frequencies and various curves? More precisely, will he agree to look after *clients*? *patients*? Without doubt, but in a long time. He will first have to educate himself (to break himself in or accept *training*), to work very hard therefore, to modify his perception and conception of the world, of time and of the environment. His emotions will consequently also be modified, in a coherent (in accordance with his concepts) and non-pathological way. Just as he borrows and receives from his **whole** body and all his senses, so he receives *data* [données] from all the sciences: psychology, sociology, ethnology, biology; and even physics and mathematics. He must recognise **representations** by their curves, phases, periods and recurrences. In relation to the instruments with which specialists supply him, he pursues an *interdisciplinary* approach. Without omitting the spatial and places, of course, he makes himself more sensitive to times than to spaces. He will come to ‘listen’ to a house, a street, a town, as an audience listens to a symphony.

Its name tells as much, but the meanings of words fade over time. The **present** offers itself in all innocence and cruelty: open, evident, here and there. It can wear a smile, or be tinged with melancholy, provoke tears. But this evidence is misleading, fabricated. It is an adulterated product that simulates **presence** as a forgery imitates a fact of nature, fruit, a flower, etc. A kind of (dissimulating) simulator of the present: the image!

If you take it for what it **is** (a paint-daubed or coloured scrap of paper), it falls short of its goal. If you take it for what it seeks to evoke, it accomplishes it. You have to ‘have confidence’ in the photo, painting, drawing. It has become a sort of social, also

known as aesthetic (not moral), obligation that gives rise to abuse. But if you have the ability to take the flows and streams (T.V., the press, etc.) as **rhythms** among others, you avoid the trap of the **present** that gives itself as presence and seeks the effects of presences. The latter are the *facts* of both nature and culture, at the same time sensible, affective and moral rather than *imaginary*.

Through a kind of **magic**, **images** change what they reach (and claim to reproduce) into **things**, and presence into simulacra, the **present**, the *this*. Do speech and exorcism exist? Yes. Nothing is more simple: a child could do it. Necessarily, a gesture suffices: to take images for what they are, simulacra, *copies conforming to a standard*, parodies of presence.

The rhythmanalyst will give an account of this relation between the present and presence: between their rhythms. A dialectical relation: neither incompatibility, nor identity – neither exclusion nor inclusion. One calls the other, substitutes itself for this other. The present sometimes imitates (simulates) to the point of mistaking itself for presence: a portrait, a copy, a double, a facsimile, etc., but (a) presence survives and imposes itself by introducing a rhythm (a time). The act of rhythmanalysis [*le geste rythmanalytique*] transforms *everything* into presences, including the *present*, grasped and perceived as such. The act [*geste*] does not imprison itself in the ideology of the *thing*. It perceives the *thing* in the proximity of the *present*, an instance of the present, just as the image is another instance. Thus the thing makes itself **present** but not **presence**. On the contrary, the act of rhythmanalysis integrates these things – this wall, this table, these trees – in a dramatic becoming, in an ensemble full of meaning, transforming them no longer into diverse things, but into presences.

Magic? Yes and no. The power of metamorphosis, but rational and (maybe) even the ground of rationality. This act, this gesture and this perpetual operation are in no way malevolent. They carry a (minor) risk only for those who create for themselves a different *world* out of *things* that are immobile and deprived of meaning. Does the rhythmanalyst thus come close to the **poet**? Yes, to a large extent, more so than he does to the psychoanalyst, and still more so than he does to the statistician, who counts *things* and, quite reasonably, describes them in their immobility.

Like the poet, the rhythm analyst performs a verbal action, which has an *aesthetic* import. The poet concerns himself above all with words, the verbal. Whereas the rhythm analyst concerns himself with temporalities and their relations within wholes.

From any given object, from a simple *thing* (Van Gogh's shoes), a great artist creates a strong presence, and he does so on a canvas, a simple surface. The metamorphosis does not prevent the restitution of the thing *as it is*. Both enigmatic and simple, filling a simple surface, the act [*geste*] of the artist has the power to evoke a time (the wearing away of the pair of shoes), and the presence of a long period of destitution. Therefore a series of *presents*. The **presence** of the scene brings forth all its presents, and is also the presence of Van Gogh, of his life that was poor but dominated by the creative act [*geste*].

Amongst the myriads of texts and quotations on rhythms, one stands out as highly singular: 'When we look at a constellation, we are certain that a rhythm comes from the stars, a rhythm that we suppose because we think that there is 'something' 'up there' that coordinates these elements, and which is more substantial than each star taken separately.'¹⁴ Strange! Because the order of the constellations, which like their names (the Bears, the Chariot) dates from Antiquity, is arbitrary. The constellations result from an act of magic; with neither author nor knowledge, these works of art have reigned and been credited with influence since the Chaldeans. Cortázar's text, extreme in its (intended) naivety, describes an order there where there are only abysses, fabulous distortions and perhaps colossal forces in conflict. Newtonian attraction? Kant even saw in it an image of harmony: 'The starry sky . . . the moral Law'.¹⁵ But today, the starry sky is perceived and conceived as vast and shapeless in a different way (black holes, craters, explosions, circular galaxies and swirls [*tournoiements*]). The movement [*geste*] of humanity once simultaneted¹⁶ the sky, by projecting a human rhythm onto it, appreciating the apparent movements of the celestial objects.

The Heavens! Think what they re-present. Not those of Kant, whose very modern moral rationalism retains traditional traits, but the heavens that spoke, that replied, sent messages without cease, from which the *cherubs* descended, those where the celes-

tial presence lived and to which people ascended; above all the Son of God and the Holy Mother, testifying to the immensity of their absence on Earth. Wise and knowing, theologians and astronomers attempted to grasp and announce to Earth this celestial presence of limitless intensity. The dream of Dante! Some magic words, some signs and rites were necessary to realise this goal and reveal the Presence of god to the world. For believers and the faithful, the gods and the supreme God are everywhere, omnipresent, containing everything, the immense absolute of things that has for its rhythm the descent and ascension (or re-ascension) to Heaven.

But while Presence manifests itself, it was necessary to underline its opposite: the absence that is marked by a malevolent power: the Negative, the Diabolical, the active and personalised Nothingness opposite Being (Beings). In short, the demonical, the author of all disasters and catastrophes. With its rhythms, which are also evoked by certain acts [*gestes*], rites, signs and rhythms, that disturb those of the good. And the master of destructive forces, fire and darkness, storm and tempest, situated on the inverse surface of Heaven, in the infernal shadows. As we cannot seat Satan at the side of God in Heaven, we imagined the Fall, the first sin, before that of Eve, perhaps at the time of an already feminine power (the earlier existence of the enigmatic Lileth). The fallen angel takes his place alongside the malevolent powers. This is the superb cosmology of Dante, more distant for us than the stars of Cortázar.

But the rhythmanalyst has nothing in common with a prophet or a sorcerer. Nor with a metaphysician or a theologian. His act, his deed [*geste*], relates to reason. He hopes to deploy it, to lead it further and higher by recovering the sensible. In short, he is not a mystic! Without going so far as to present himself as a positivist, for someone who observes: an empiricist. He changes that which he observes: he sets it in motion, he recognises its power. In this sense, he seems close to the poet, or the man of the theatre. Art, poetry, music and theatre have always brought something (but what?) to the everyday. They haven't *reflected* on it. The creator descended to the streets of the city-state; the portrayed inhabitants lived amongst the citizens. They assumed the city life.

The rhythmanalyst could, in the long term, attempt something analogous: works [*oeuvres*] might return to and intervene in the everyday. Without claiming to *change life*, but by fully reinstating the sensible in consciousnesses and in *thought*, he would accomplish a tiny part of the *revolutionary* transformation of this world and this society in decline. Without any declared political position.

Since the so-called *modern* era, the concept of the **work of art** has become obscure without disappearing; on the contrary; it extends and differentiates itself into substitutes: the **product** and the **thing**. The rhythmanalyst will bring about many works himself by renewing the very concept of the work.

Desire, of which so much has been said (in psychic terms), is both work and the product of work. Yet it has its rhythm; it **is** a rhythm, whose goal (its end) is either placed outside, or remains internal to, its act (operation). Sensual desire enters into the first case, aesthetic desire into the second. Between need and desire there is a well-known difference, but there is no discontinuity. The intervention of speech and memory does not open up an abyss. Need and desire, sleep and wake, work and repose are rhythms in interaction. This view of temporality defines neither the ones nor the others; it enters into the definitions: into the analysis. We have yet to catch unaware (to grasp) need, desire, reflections and passions in *others*.

Several concepts are established in this ambition. Let us recapitulate: difference and repetition – interaction and composition – cyclical and linear – frequency and measure . . . eurhythmia, arrhythmia, polyrhythmia . . .

3

Seen from the Window

(No! this title belongs to Colette. – I write: ‘Seen from my windows, overlooking a junction in Paris, therefore overlooking the road.’)¹⁷

Noise. Noises. Murmurs. When lives are lived and hence mixed together, they distinguish themselves badly from one another. Noise, chaotic, has no rhythm. However, the attentive ear begins to separate out, to distinguish the sources, to bring them back together by perceiving interactions. If we cease to listen to sounds and noises and instead listen to our bodies (the importance of which cannot be stressed too greatly), we normally grasp (hear, understand) neither the rhythms nor their associations, which nonetheless constitute us. It is only in suffering that a particular rhythm breaks apart, modified by illness. The analysis comes closer to pathology than habitual arrhythmia.

In order to grasp and analyse rhythms, it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely: be it through illness or a technique. A certain exteriority enables the analytic intellect to function. However, to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been *grasped* by it; one must *let oneself go*, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration. Like in music and the learning of a language (in which one only really understands the meanings and connections when one comes to *produce* them, which is to say, to produce spoken rhythms).

In order to *grasp* this fleeting object, which is not exactly an *object*, it is therefore necessary to situate oneself simultaneously inside and outside. A balcony does the job admirably, in relation

to the street, and it is to this putting into perspective (of the street) that we owe the marvellous invention of balconies, and that of the terrace from which one dominates the road and passers-by. In the absence of which you could content yourself with a window, on the condition that it does not overlook a sombre corner or a gloomy internal courtyard. Or a perennially deserted lawn.

From the window opening onto rue R. facing the famous P. Centre, there is no need to lean much to see into the distance.¹⁸ To the right, the palace-centre P., the Forum, up as far as the (central) Bank of France. To the left up as far as the Archives. Perpendicular to this direction, the *Hôtel de Ville* and, on the other side, the *Arts et Métiers*. The whole of Paris, ancient and modern, traditional and creative, active and lazy.

He who walks down the street, over there, is immersed in the multiplicity of noises, murmurs, rhythms (including those of the body, but does he pay attention, except at the moment of crossing the street, when he has to calculate roughly the number of his steps?). By contrast, from the window, the noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, rhythms respond to one another. Towards the right, below, a traffic light. On red, cars at a standstill, the pedestrians cross, feeble murmurings, footsteps, confused voices. One does not chatter while crossing a dangerous junction under the threat of wild cats and elephants ready to charge forward, taxis, buses, lorries, various cars. Hence the relative silence in this crowd. A kind of soft murmuring, sometimes a cry, a call.

Therefore the people produce completely different noises when the cars stop: feet and words. From right to left and back again. And on the pavements along the perpendicular street. At the green light, steps and words stop. A second of silence and then it's the rush, the starting up of tens of cars, the rhythms of the old bangers speeding up as quickly as possible. At some risk: passers-by to the left, buses cutting across, other vehicles. Whereby a slowing down and restart (stage one: starting up – stage two: slowing down for the turn – stage three: brutal restart, foot down, top speed, excluding traffic jams . . .). The harmony between what one sees and what one hears (from the window) is remarkable.

Strict concordance. Perhaps because the other side of the road is taken up by the immense shopping centre, nicknamed Beaubourg after the name that immortalised a president. On this side, people walking back and forth, numerous and in silence, tourists and those from the outskirts, a mix of young and old, alone and in couples, but no cars alongside culture. After the red light, all of a sudden it's the bellowing charge of wild cats, big or small, monstrous lorries turning towards Bastille, the majority of small vehicles hurtling towards the *Hôtel de Ville*. The noise grows, grows in intensity and strength, at its peak becomes unbearable, though quite well borne by the stench of fumes. Then stop. Let's do it again, with more pedestrians. Two-minute intervals. Amidst the fury of the cars, the pedestrians cluster together, a clot here, a lump over there; grey dominates, with multicoloured flecks, and these heaps break apart for the race ahead. Sometimes, the old cars stall in the middle of the road and the pedestrians move around them like waves around a rock, though not without condemning the drivers of the badly placed vehicles with withering looks. Hard rhythms: alternations of silence and outburst, time both broken and accentuated, striking he who takes to listening from his window, which astonishes him more than the disparate movements of the crowds.

Disparate crowds, yes, tourists from faraway countries, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, whose cars but with difficulty find places to park, shoppers come from afar, wholesalers, lovers of art or novelties, people from the outskirts who stream in between the so-called peak hours, in such a way that *everybody*, the *world*, is always there around the huge metallic trinkets; boys and girls often go forth hand in hand, as if to support each other in this test of modernity, in the exploration of these meteorites fallen on old Paris, come from a planet several centuries ahead of our own, and on top of that a complete failure on the market! . . . Many among these young people walk, walk, without a break, do the tour of the sights, of Beaubourg, of the Forum: one sees them again and again, grouped or solitary; they walk indefatigably, chewing on gum or a sandwich. They only stop to stretch themselves out, no doubt exhausted, on the square itself, in the arcades of the Chiraqian Forum, or on the steps of the Fountain of the Innocent,

which now serves only this purpose. The noise that pierces the ear comes not from passers-by, but from the engines pushed to the limit when starting up. No ear, no piece of apparatus could grasp this whole, this flux of metallic and carnal bodies. In order to grasp the rhythms, a bit of time, a sort of meditation on time, the city, people, is required.

Other, less lively, slower rhythms superimpose themselves on this inexorable rhythm, which hardly dies down at night: children leaving for school, some very noisy, even piercing screams of morning recognition. Then towards half past nine it's the arrival of the shoppers, followed shortly by the tourists, in accordance, with exceptions (storms or advertising promotions), with a timetable that is almost always the same; the flows and conglomerations succeed one another: they get fatter or thinner but always agglomerate at the corners in order subsequently to clear a path, tangle and disentangle themselves amongst the cars.

These last rhythms (schoolchildren, shoppers, tourists) would be more **cyclical**, of large and simple intervals, at the heart of livelier, **alternating** rhythms, at brief intervals, cars, regulars, employees, bistro clients. The interaction of diverse, repetitive and different rhythms animates, as one says, the street and the neighbourhood. The linear, which is to say, in short, succession, consists of journeys to and fro: it combines with the cyclical, the movements of long intervals. The cyclical is social organisation manifesting itself. The linear is the daily grind, the routine, therefore the perpetual, made up of chance and encounters.

The night does not interrupt the diurnal rhythms but modifies them, and above all slows them down. However, even at three or four o'clock in the morning, there are always a few cars at the red light. Sometimes one of them, whose driver is coming back from a late night, goes straight through it. Other times, there is no-one at the lights, with their alternating flashes (red, amber, green), and the signal continues to function in the void, a despairing social mechanism marching inexorably through the desert, before the façades that dramatically proclaim their vocation as ruins.

Should a window suddenly light up, or on the contrary go dark, the solitary dreamer might ask himself – in vain – if it concerns a scene of illness or of love, if it is the movement [*geste*] of a child

who gets up too early or of an insomniac. Never does a head, a face appear in the dozens and dozens of windows. Except if there is something going on in the street, an explosion, a fire engine that hurtles without stopping towards a call for help. In short, arrhythmia reigns, except for rare moments and circumstances.

From my window overlooking courtyards and gardens, the view and the supply of space are very different. Overlooking the gardens, the differences between habitual (daily, therefore linked to night and day) rhythms blur; they seem to disappear into a sculptural immobility. Except, of course, the sun and the shadows, the well lit and the gloomy corners, quite cursory contrasts. But look at those trees, those lawns and those groves. To your eyes they situate themselves in a permanence, in a spatial simultaneity, in a coexistence. But look harder and longer. This simultaneity, up to a certain point, is only apparent: a surface, a spectacle. Go deeper, dig beneath the surface, listen attentively instead of simply looking, of reflecting the effects of a mirror. You thus perceive that each plant, each tree, has its rhythm, made up of several: the trees, the flowers, the seeds and fruits, each have their time. The plum tree? The flowers were born in the spring, before the leaves, the tree was white before turning green. But on this cherry tree, on the other hand, there are flowers that opened before the leaves, which will survive the fruits and fall late in the autumn and not all at once. Continue and you will see this garden and the *objects* (which are in no way things) **polyrhythmically**, or if you prefer *symphonically*. In place of a collection of fixed things, you will follow each *being*, each *body*, as having its own time above the whole. Each one therefore having its place, its rhythm, with its recent past, a foreseeable and a distant future.

Are the simultaneous and the immobile deceptive? Are the synchronous, the background and the spectacle abusive? No and yes. No: they constitute, they are, the **present**. Modernity curiously enlarged, deepened and at the same time dilapidated the present. The quasi-suppression of distances and waiting periods (by the media) amplifies the present, but these media give only reflections and shadows. You attend the incessant fêtes or massacres, you see the dead bodies, you contemplate the explosions; missiles are fired before your eyes. You are there! . . . but no, you are not

there; your present is composed of simulacra; the image before you simulates the real, drives it out, is not there, and the simulation of the drama, the moment, has nothing dramatic about it, except in the verbal.

Would it be the *feeling* of the spectacle that appears *spectacular*, that the open window overlooking one of the liveliest streets in Paris shows? To attribute this slightly pejorative character to this *vision* (as the dominant trait) would be unjust and would bypass the *real*, that is to say, its meaning. The characteristic traits are truly temporal and rhythmic, not visual. To release and listen to rhythms demands attention and a certain time. In other words, it serves only as a *glimpse* for entering into the *murmur*, noises, cries.¹⁹ The classic term in philosophy, ‘the object’, is not appropriate to rhythm. ‘Objective’? Yes, but exceeding the narrow framework of objectivity, by bringing to it a multiplicity of (sensorial and significant) **meanings**.²⁰

The succession of alternations, of differential repetitions, suggests that there is somewhere in this present an order, which comes from elsewhere. Which reveals itself. Where? In the monuments, the palaces, from the *Archives* to the Bank of France, meteorites fallen from another planet into the popular centre, for so long abandoned, the *Cour des Miracles*, a place of rogues. Therefore, beside the present, a sort of presence–absence, badly localised and strong: the State, which is not seen from the window, but which looms over this present, the omnipresent State.

Just as beyond the horizon, other horizons loom without being present, so beyond the sensible and visible order, which reveals political power, other orders suggest themselves: a logic, a division of labour, *leisure activities* are also **produced** (and productive), although they are proclaimed *free* and even ‘free time’. Isn’t this freedom also a *product*?

Secret objects also speak, in their own way, sending out a message. The Palace screams, yells, louder than the cars. It screams, ‘Down with the past! Long live the modern! Down with history, I’ve swallowed it, digested it and brought it back up [*restituée*] . . .’. It has as perpetual witness and proof the cop at the junction, Law and Order, and if someone goes too far, he knows he will be arrested, whistled at, trapped, in such a way that the

solitary cop induces the discourse of Order, more and better than the façades of the Square and the junction. Unless he also induces an anarchistic discourse, for he is always there, and of little use; the fear of an accident maintains the order of the junctions more efficiently than the police. Whose presence arouses no protestation anyway, everyone knowing its uselessness in advance.

Could it be that the lessons of the street are exhausted, outdated, and likewise the teachings of the window? Certainly not. They perpetuate themselves by renewing themselves. The window overlooking the street is not a mental place, where the inner gaze follows abstract perspectives: a practical space, private and concrete, the window offers views that are more than spectacles; mentally prolonged spaces. In such a way that the implication in the spectacle entails the explication of this spectacle. Familiarity preserves it; it disappears and is reborn, with the everydayness of both the inside and the outside world. Opacity and horizons, obstacles and perspectives implicate one another because they complicate one another, imbricate one another to the point of allowing the Unknown, the giant city, to be glimpsed or guessed at. With its diverse spaces affected by diverse times: rhythms.

Once the interactions are determined, the analysis continues. Is there a hierarchy in this tangled mess, this scaffolding? A determining rhythm? A primordial and coordinating aspect?

The window suggests several hypotheses, which wandering and the street will confirm or invalidate. Wouldn't the bodies (human, living, plus those of a few dogs) that move about down there, in the car-wrecked swarming whole, impose a law? Which one? An order of grandeur. The windows, doors, streets and façades are measured in proportion to human size. The hands that move about, the limbs, do not amount to signs, even though they throw out multiple messages. But is there a relation between these physical flows of movements and gestures and the culture that shows itself (and yells) in the enormous murmur of the junction? The little bistros on the *rue R.*, the boutiques, are on a human scale, like the passers-by. Opposite, the constructions wanted to *transcend* this scale, to leave known dimensions and also all models past and possible behind; leading to the exhibition of

metal and frozen guts, in the form of solidified piping, and the harshest reflections. And it's a meteorite fallen from another planet, where technocracy reigns untrammelled.

Absurd? Or super-rational? What do these strange contrasts say? What does the proximity between a certain archaism attached to history and the exhibited supra-modernity whisper? Has it a secret – or secrets? Does the State-political order write across this scene, with the signature of the author? Without doubt, but the time and the age that inscribe themselves in the performance of this spectacle, that give it meaning, should not be forgotten. And why the *rue de la Truanderie* and the *passage des Ménestriers*,²¹ preserved throughout the upheavals?

The essential? The determining factor? Money. But money no longer renders itself sensible as such, even on the façade of the bank. This centre of Paris bears the imprint of what it hides, but it hides it. Money passes through circulation. Not long ago, this *capital* centre retained something of the provincial, of the mediæval: historic and crumbling. So many discussions and projects for these predestined or abandoned places! One such amiable and charming project – very 18th century – authored by Ricardo Bofill – was set aside after its adoption.²² Another such project, which made the centre of Paris the administrative centre (for the ministries) of the country, seduced, it would appear, the Chief; his disappearance entailed that of the project. And a compromise between the powers – the State, money, culture – was attempted. Windows for all products, including intellectual ones, correcting the drabness with images most *belle époque*.

How is it that **people** (as one says, since certain phrases like 'the people' and 'workers' have lost some of their prestige) accept this display? That they come in crowds, in perpetual flows? In such a way that the rhythms of their passing weaken or are reinforced, but link up with and follow on from one another, and never disappear (even at night!).

What is it that attracts them to this extent? Do they come simply *to see*? But what? The big building that was conceived not in order to be seen, but in order *to give sight*? Yet, we come to see it, and we cast a distracted eye over that which it *exposes*. We go around this void [*ce vide*], which fills itself up with things and

people in order to empty itself [*se vider*], and so on. Wouldn't these people come above all to see and meet one another? Would this crowd unconsciously give itself the consciousness of a crowd?

The window replies. First, the spectacle of the junction and the perpendicular streets which, not long ago, formed a neighbourhood of the city, peopled by a sort of native, with many artisans and small shopkeepers. In short, people of the neighbourhood. Those who remain live under the roofs, in the attics, with Chinese or Arabic neighbours. Production has left these places, even those businesses that require storage depots, warehouses, stocks and vast offices. Nothing to say about these most well-known facts other than their consequences. For example: the crowds, the masses on the square at Beaubourg, around mediaeval Saint-Merri, or on the *Place des Innocents*, of which it would be too easy to say that it has lost all its innocence. The squares have re-found their ancient function, for a long time imperilled, of gathering, of setting the scene and staging spontaneous popular theatre.

Here on the square, between Saint-Merri and Modernism erupts a mediaeval-looking festival: fire-eaters, jugglers, snake charmers, but also preachers and sit-in discussions. Openness and adventure next to dogmatic armour-plating. All possible games, material and spiritual. Impossible to classify, to count. Without doubt many deviant wanderers that seek, knowing not what for – themselves! But many who seek only to forget, neither town nor country, but their own corners. And for hours and hours they walk, find themselves back at the junctions, circle the places that are closed and enclosed. They almost never stop, eating some hot-dog or other as they walk (rapid Americanisation). On the square, they occasionally stop walking, staring straight ahead of them; they no longer know what to do. Watching, half-listening to those pitching their wares, then taking up again their unrelenting march.

There on the square, there is something maritime about the rhythms. Currents traverse the masses. Streams break off, which bring or take away new participants. Some of them go towards the jaws of the monster, which gobbles them down in order quite quickly to throw them back up. The tide invades the immense square, then withdraws: flux and reflux. The agitation and the

noise are so great that the residents have complained. The fateful hour: ten o'clock in the evening, noises forbidden: so the crowd becomes silent, calm but more melancholy; oh fatal ten o'clock at night! The spectacle and murmur disappeared, sadness remains.

With these places are we in the everyday or the extra-everyday? Well, the one doesn't prevent the other and the pseudo-fête emerges only apparently from the everyday. The former prolongs the latter by other means, with a perfected organisation that reunites *everything* – advertising, culture, arts, games, propaganda, rules of work, urban life . . . And the police keep vigil, watch over.

Rhythms. Rhythms. They reveal and they hide. Much more diverse than in music, or the so-called civil code of successions, relatively simple texts in relation to the City. Rhythms: the music of the City, a scene that listens to itself, an image in the present of a discontinuous sum. Rhythms perceived from the invisible window, pierced into the wall of the façade . . . But next to the other windows, it is also within a rhythm that escapes it . . .

No camera, no image or series of images can show these rhythms. It requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart. A memory? Yes, in order to grasp this present otherwise than in an instantaneous moment, to restore it in its moments, in the movement of diverse rhythms. The recollection of other moments and of all hours is indispensable, not as a simple point of reference, but in order not to isolate this present and in order to *live* it in all its diversity, made up of *subjects* and *objects*, subjective states and objective figures. Here the old philosophical question (of subject, object and their relations) is found posed in non-speculative terms, close to practice. The observer in the window knows that he takes **his time** as first reference, but that the first impression displaces itself and includes the most diverse rhythms, on the condition that they remain *to scale*. The passage from *subject* to *object* requires neither a leap over an abyss, nor the crossing of a desert. Rhythms always need a reference; the initial moment persists through other perceived givens. The philosophical tradition has raised half-real, half-fictitious, problems that are badly resolved by remaining within speculative ambiguity. Observation [*le regard*] and meditation follow the lines

of force that come from the past, from the present and from the possible, and which rejoin one another in the observer, simultaneously centre and periphery.

Here as elsewhere, opposites re-find each other, recognise one other, in a reality that is at the same time more *real* and more ideal, more complicated than its elements that are already accounted for. This clarifies and actualises the concept of *dialectical thought* that does not cease to fill these pages with so many questions and but a few answers!

People make gestures [*gestes*]; they gesticulate. Legs twitch. Gestures are sometimes made with arms, hands, fingers, the head: in short the top half of the body; sometimes with hips and legs: the bottom half. Each segment of the body has its rhythm. These rhythms are in accord and discord with one another. What does one mean when one says of a boy or girl that he or she is fully **natural**? That his or her movements and gestures are *expressive* or *gracious*? etc. Whence comes the effect? Where is the cause?

Nature can serve as a reference point. But one that is rather hidden. If one could 'know' from outside the beatings of the heart of such and such a person (the speaker), one would learn much about the exact meaning of his words. Respiration is heard, announces itself. Running and emotion modify it. The heart remains hidden, like other *organs*, each of which, we know, has its rhythm.

Gestures cannot be attributed to *nature*. Proof: they change according to societies, eras. Old films show that our way of walking has altered over the course of our century: once jauntier, a rhythm that cannot be explained by the capturing of images. Everybody knows from having seen or appreciated this that familiar gestures and everyday manners are not the same in the West (*chez nous*) as in Japan, or in Arab countries. These gestures, these manners, are acquired, are learned.

The representation of the **natural** falsifies situations. Something passes as *natural* precisely when it conforms perfectly and

without apparent effort to accepted models, to the habits valorised by a tradition (sometimes recent, but in force). The age where it seemed *natural* for *young people* to act modestly, to keep quiet, to behave with discretion, respect, and imitate *superiors*, is not long gone . . .

One can and one must distinguish between education, learning and dressage or training [*le dressage*].²³ Knowing how to live, knowing how to do something and just plain knowing do not coincide.²⁴ Not that one can separate them. Not to forget that they go together. To enter into a society, group or nationality is to accept values (that are taught), to learn a trade by following the right channels, but also to bend oneself (to be bent) to its ways. Which means to say: dressage. Humans break themselves in [*se dressent*] like animals. They learn to hold themselves. Dressage can go a long way: as far as breathing, movements, sex. It bases itself on **repetition**. One breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement. Horses, dogs are broken-in through repetition, though it is necessary to give them rewards. One presents them with the same situation, prepares them to encounter the same state of things and people. Repetition, perhaps mechanical in (simply behavioural) animals, is ritualised in humans. Thus, in us, *presenting ourselves* or *presenting another* entails operations that are not only stereotyped but also consecrated: rites. In the course of which interested parties can imagine themselves elsewhere: as being *absent*, not present in the presentation.

Breeders are able to bring about unity by combining the linear and the cyclical. By alternating innovations and repetitions. A linear series of imperatives and gestures repeats itself cyclically. These are the phases of dressage. The linear series have a beginning (often marked by a signal) and an end: the resumptions of the cycle [*reprises cycliques*] depend less on a sign or a signal than on a general organisation of time. Therefore of society, of *culture*. Here it is still necessary to recognise that the military *model* has been imitated in our so-called western (or rather imperialistic) societies. Even in the so-called modern era and maybe since the mediaeval age, since the end of the city-state. Societies marked by the military model preserve and extend this rhythm through all

phases of our temporality: repetition pushed to the point of automatism and the memorisation of gestures – differences, some foreseen and expected, others unexpected – the element of the unforeseen! Wouldn't this be the *secret* of the magic of the periodisations at the heart of the everyday?

Dressage therefore has its rhythms; breeders know them. Learning has its own, which educators know. Training also has its rhythms, which accompany those of dancers and *tamers* [dresseurs].

All different, they unite (or must be united), in the same way as the organs in a body.

The rhythms of dressage seem particularly worthy of analysis. One does not *break-in* a horse like a dog, nor a carthorse like a racehorse, nor a guard dog like a hunting dog. The origin (the lineage, the species or the *race*) enters into account, especially at the beginning. Certain animals refuse dressage. One breaks in elephants but not big cats (except in rare cases!). Can one break-in cats? or only *educate* them?

The sciences of dressage take account of many aspects and elements: duration, harshness, punishments and rewards. Thus rhythms compose themselves.

In the course of their *being broken-in*, animals *work*. Of course, they do not produce an object, be it with a machine, a technique, or with their limbs. Under the imperious direction of the breeder or the trainer, they produce their bodies, which are entered into social, which is to say human, practice. The bodies of *broken-in* animals have a use-value. Their bodies modify themselves, are altered. As in humans, where odours make way for the visual. Dressage puts into place an automatism of repetitions. But the circumstances are never *exactly* and absolutely the same, *identical*. There are changes, be they only by the hour or the season, the climate, light, etc. Dressage fills the place of the unforeseen, of the initiative of living beings. Thus function the ways of breaking-in humans: military knowledge, the rites of politeness, business. Space and time thus laid out make room for humans, for education and initiative: for liberty. A little room. More of an illusion: dressage does not disappear. It **determines the majority of rhythms**. In the street, people can turn right or left, but their walk,

the rhythm of their walking, their movements [*gestes*] do not change for all that.

The time of learning (dressage) divides itself in accordance with a triad:

a) The internal activity of control. Under direction. Punctuated by pauses (for repose . . .).

b) Complete stop. Integral repose (sleep, siesta, dead time).

c) Diversions and distractions. Rewards (a packet of cigarettes, a big prize, a promotion, etc.).

It would be a mistake to note only instantaneous attitudes. Or a series of movements (a film). It's the training that counts: that imposes, that educates, that breaks-in.

This rhythmic model, in use throughout the world, establishes itself over the course of dressage, and subsequently perpetuates itself. Is it not convenient for armies, religious and educational establishments, for offices and monasteries alike? With some variations: *reason* or *unreason* according to the laws of recitation or the wielding of arms? It is through **rhythms** that this model establishes itself. Would it be its (trinity: activity–repose–entertainment) triadic character that confers generality upon it? Perhaps: it would be a paradigm of old rhythms edified on a physiological *basis*, which is to say the human body. Needs and desires produce themselves in the interaction. Which is able to give eurhythmia or even arrhythmia if the rhythms (and needs) are broken.

However, one should not overestimate the importance and the effects of this *military* model instituted by Roman traditions and Latinity. Though not without suffering its influence, the *Protestant* countries have partially overturned it through disputations directed against the Roman Church, against Roman law and against traditional teaching in continental Europe.

Less has been written and discoursed about odour and odours than about sex. A mistake: smells are of great importance. The modern world aspires to be odourless: hygienic. Odours seem not to obey rhythms. The physiological movement of rhythms towards the rhythmized is elucidated in the same way as the influence of dressage on the sensory organs. This model, moreover, reigns absolutely over the female sex. The *dressage* of girls and

women was always harsh, especially in the so-called *privileged* classes. The resistance was equal to the pressure. Why? Without doubt because in femininity the *basic* rhythms have greater force and reach. The figures of this resistance ranged from adored Goddesses to respected matrons, from the lessons of love to the suffragettes. Wouldn't it be through these forces and these conflicts that feminine (called 'feminist') movements have the capacity for renovation in contemporary societies? Have they modified the rhythms impressed by virility and by the military model of dressage? Without doubt . . . but the question exceeds the proposition. In addition, one should believe in neither the immutability, nor the decisive force of sex.

According to this perspective, through rhythms women would have resisted for centuries the virile model, the veritable code of existence promoted and propagated by force, and pressed ideologically; the model that serves dressage was always reinforced by identifications. With whom? With the chief, with the sovereign. The concertant models have great power and great influence. Of course, the femininity upheld by the meanings of vital rhythms, interior and exterior to dressage, did not resist in a single block. It occasionally fainted, in order subsequently to *rebel*.

We can suppose that the western order established since Latinity and the Roman Empire could not easily have broken-in Orientals and Africans. After the efforts that history calls *colonialism*, not without notable effects, the failure of this occidental dressage is today evident on a world scale. It finds ways for those who escape our conjoined models (dressage–identifications–reduced and stereotyped differences).

The *substance* [*matière*] is the crowd (or molecules, corpuscles), it is a *body*.

The crowd is a body, the body is a crowd (of cells, of liquids, of organs).

Societies are composed of crowds, of groups, of bodies, of classes, and constitute peoples. They understand the **rhythms** of which living beings, social bodies, local groups are made up.

The concept passes from vague and confused representations to a grasp of the plurality of rhythmic interactions; to diverse degrees and levels: from corpuscles to galaxies, one more time!

If there is difference and distinction, there is neither separation nor an abyss between so-called material bodies, living bodies, social bodies and representations, ideologies, traditions, projects and utopias. They are all composed of (reciprocally influential) rhythms in interaction. These rhythms are analysed, but the analyses in thought are never brought *to term*. No more so the analysis of precise social facts like *dressage* than the analysis of the theatre, of music, of poetry as rhythms.

An auscultatory examination does not exhaust biophysiological rhythms: it does not grasp them all, does not grasp their interactions. In an analogous way, the analysis of the rhythms of **dressage** does not exhaust the understanding of social rhythms. Even if one inserts training for work, for the repetitive gestures of production, into the process of dressage. Other *sectors* have their own and specific rhythms: those of the town and the urban, for example, or transport. Or those of culture, which is more or less functionalised and linked to market conditions. Liberty is born in a reserved space and time, sometimes wide, sometimes narrow; occasionally reduced by the results of dressage to an unoccupied lacuna. Creative activity, as distinct from productive activity, proceeds from the liberty and individuality that unfurl only in conditions that are external (to them).

Certain terms that have become routine are not without interest: the instinctual, the impulsive, the functional, the directional, even the behavioural; they correspond to research and explorations. Do they reach the level of the *conceptual*? Doubts persist. They seem to be developed in terms of metaphors that signify orientation towards representations. These schemas remain abstract, static: they sometimes take time into account, but scarcely **rhythms**. Yet training, information and communication pass through rhythms: repetitions and differences, linearly or cyclically.

The child, like the young animal, has its biological rhythms, which become *basic* but alter themselves (are altered): hunger, sleep, excretions. The latter in particular are altered by social life: the family, maternity. *Educated* rhythms are human, therefore social, rhythms. Across groups: the family, village or town, institutions, religions, etc., rhythms are continually found, though

sometimes metamorphosed. The consideration of *pure* rhythms could eventually renew the meaning of terms.

The unconscious? This bundle, this parcel (this suitcase) of a word has one meaning, or several. It designates a level of *reality* and a direction of research. With good reason it rejects the Cartesian tradition, so influential in philosophy in our *culture* that identifies being with the conscious; that evacuates being, the true and the *real* from consciousness and thought. But shouldn't the unconscious be that which goes on in the body: in our material and social bodies? Wouldn't the unconscious be seated in the relation between the brain and signs? How does memory function? Beginning with the unconscious, certainly, but is it not for all that a substance hidden behind the scenes, which whispers its lines to the actor? This scenario works no better than the Cartesian scenario. The place of the body, of its exploration and valorisation, which does not return to the oversimplification of psychological materialism: the corporeal subject is *being-in-the-world*.

All becoming irregular [*dérèglement*] (or, if one wants, all *deregulation*, though this word has taken on an official sense) of rhythms produces antagonistic effects. It *throws out of order* and disrupts; it is symptomatic of a disruption that is generally profound, lesional and no longer functional. It can also produce a lacuna, a hole in time, to be filled in by an invention, a creation. That only happens, individually or socially, by passing through a *crisis*. Disruptions and crises always have origins in and effects on rhythms: those of institutions, of growth, of the population, of exchanges, of work, therefore those which make or *express* the complexity of present societies. One could study from this perspective the rhythmic changes that follow revolutions. Between 1789 and 1830 were not bodies themselves touched by the alterations in foods, gestures and costumes, the rhythm of work and of occupations?

One could reach, by a twisty road and paradoxically beginning with bodies, the (concrete) universal that the political and philosophical mainstream targeted but did not reach, let alone realise: if rhythm consolidates its theoretical status, if it reveals itself as a valid concept for thought and as a support in practice, is it not this

concrete universal that philosophical systems have lacked, that political organisations have forgotten, but which is lived, tested, touched in the sensible and the corporeal?

What do these words mean? Do they speak of a day occupied by the media? Or of a day such as the media presents it? Both of these, because the one does not exclude the other.

The media occupies days: it makes them; it speaks of them. The term *day* can be deceiving: it excludes night, it would seem. Yet night is a part of the media day. It speaks, it emotes,²⁵ at night as in the day. Without respite! One catches waves: nocturnal voices, voices that are close to us, but also other voices (or images) that come from afar, from the devil, from sunny or cold and misty places. So many voices! Who can hold back the flows, the currents, the tides (or swamps) that break over the world, pieces of information and disinformation, more or less well-founded analyses (under the sign of coded information), publications, messages – cryptic or otherwise. You can go without sleep, or doze off . . .

The media day never ends, it has neither beginning nor end. Can you imagine this flow that covers the globe, not excluding the oceans and deserts? Is it immobile? It has a meaning: time. A meaning, really? At any given hour, your instrument can fish for a catch, a prey, in this uninterrupted flow of words, in the unfurling of messages. Generally flotsam, with luck a monster: an order, a prayer. Communication? Information? Without doubt, but how can we separate that which has value from that which has none: know it from ideology, the absurd from meaning? But that has not the least importance, except for curious, paradoxical spirits, who stay awake and watch indefinitely. The important: that time

is – or appears – occupied. By empty words, by mute images, by the present without presence.

We must ceaselessly come back to this distinction (opposition) between presence and the present: it takes a long time to prepare the trial (process) [*procès (processus)*]. The already marked difference links back to the philosophical and socio-political critique of the image, of mediation (mediatisation),²⁶ of time, of all representation. The present simulates presence and introduces simulation (the simulacrum) into social practice. The present (representation) furnishes and occupies time, simulating and dissimulating the living. Imagery has replaced in the modern the sacralisation of time and its occupation by rites and solemnised gestures; it succeeds in fabricating, introducing and making accepted the everyday. A skilfully utilised and technicised form of mythification (simplification), it resembles the real and presence as a photo of photographed people: it resembles but it has neither depth, nor breadth, nor flesh.²⁷ Yet the image, as the present, takes care of ideology: it contains it and masks it. Presence is *here* (and not up there or over there). With presence there is dialogue, the use of time, speech and action. With the present, which is *there*, there is only exchange and the acceptance of exchange, of the displacement (of the *self* and the *other*) by a **product**, by a simulacrum. The present is a fact and an effect of *commerce*; while presence situates itself in the poetic: value, creation, situation in the world and not only in the relations of exchange.

Continuous and continual, the media day fragments. As a result, at every moment, there is a choice. You can leave the TV or radio on and go about your business, distractedly following the ocular and verbal chatter. Just by having a modern television or radio, you can hear and/or see images and receive messages from afar, by pressing a button or turning a dial. And beyond the mountains and seas. Sometimes, you come across an image in an unknown language; you can abandon yourself to reverie. More often, you happen to tune into local radio and so you learn a whole load of stuff that you already knew: market-day in the neighbouring village, who won the cycling race, etc., therefore an extremely concrete and close universe.

In truth, if one dares say it, the listeners to this form (informa-

tion) would know what one does not want to know: how people live, that of which the everyday consists. One of several contradictions: the form of communication eludes the content that it so badly needs for a social existence; and nonetheless it works!

Tide or swamp [*marée ou marécage*]? The one does not preclude the other when the media is involved. What you have captured is not just a little rhythm (of images and/or words) in the everyday. And here we are in the heart of paradox: the media enter into the everyday; even more: they contribute to producing it. However, they do not speak of it. They content themselves with illusions. Therefore they do not say what there is. They do not discourse on their influence. They mask their action: the effacement of the immediate and of presence – the difference between presence and the present – to the profit of the latter. You want presence? Turn to literature or the church . . .

Ignorance? Intentional misunderstanding? Here again the one does not preclude the other. But how do you want the men of representation to represent to themselves the leap from presence to representation? They accomplish it, but only a few lucid people (who suffer because of it) know what it is necessary to know: how to occupy time – by displacing the vital interest.

Producers of the commodity *information* know empirically how to utilise rhythms. They have cut up time; they have broken it up into *hourly slices*. The output (rhythm) changes according to intention and the hour. Lively, light-hearted, in order to inform you and entertain you when you are preparing yourself for work: the morning. Soft and tender for the return from work, times of relaxation, the evening and Sunday. Without affectation, but with a certain force during off-peak times, for those who do not work or those who no longer work. Thus the media day unfolds, polyrhythmically.

Mediatisation tends not only to efface the **immediate** and its unfolding, therefore beyond the present, **presence**. It tends to efface **dialogue**. It makes the other, the sensible, *present*, while the *subject* remains completely passive. The subject says nothing, has nothing to say. If it objects, if it falls silent; it comes into conflict with itself, with no other result than to contest one of the rhythms of the world and its own existence.

Dialogue is reduced to dispute. Language becomes ‘soliloquy’: that of the speaker who *discourses* alone, for the *masses* whom he does not see, but who see him . . .

With regard to Hölderlin and poetry, Heidegger wrote: ‘the being of man is grounded in language, but this happens as authentic primarily in dialogue [. . .]. We are a dialogue [. . .]. Dialogue and its unity underlie our *Dasein* . . .’.²⁸ The philosopher speaks of dialogue, **not of communication**.

This point merits a pause. Communication certainly exists, has become fluent, instantaneous, banal and superficial – not touching the everyday, the kernel of banality become product and commodity, an insipid flow flooding the age. Communication devalues dialogue to the point of its being forgotten. It’s serious. Is that a reason to attribute ontological privilege to dialogue? Dialogues are certainly intense moments of communication: a privileged use of the medium of exchange that is language. Doesn’t language emanate from dialogue? Isn’t that to confuse theory with practice? The genesis of languages is tied to societies, to their histories, and not to dramatised moments of the employment of words. It is only too true that in modernity, the informational stocks up on itself, trades itself, sells itself; that it destroys dialogues; that it has an indirect relation to experiential knowledge [*le connaître*] and a direct relation to a vaguely institutional *theoretical knowledge* [*le savoir*]; in such a way that the critique of the informational, of the media (of mediatised life) constitutes a part of experiential knowledge [*connaissance*]. It does not follow from this that the right to information can be set apart from citizenship: necessary though not sufficient.

Restoring the value of dialogue (dialogue as value) from the everyday to poetry (and to philosophy) does not oblige us to devalue the informational: to deny its social and historical reality. Dialogue does not go beyond two parties. Those dialogues traditionally known under the title of ‘Platonic’ stage and set in motion several characters, protagonists or secondary figures; the intense moments are attributed to Socrates and an interlocutor. In everyday life, it more often happens that there are at least three parties: including the (virtual) child, the cat, the dog, the parent, the friend, the neighbour, etc. One island with two char-

acters? This representation leads us to recall the amusing account of Adam and Eve, rather than the metaphysical interventions of Martin Heidegger, who furthermore rightly takes account of interior dialogue: the I with the Self, the Self with the Other. However, the philosopher attaches himself to a single philosophical tradition. Without breaking with it. This leads him to attribute the ontological privilege (being) to any given dramatic situation, from birth to death.

It is necessary to come to an agreement over the expression: **the mediatised everyday**. More complex than it appears, which is to say more contradictory, it says that the everyday is **simultaneously** the prey of the media, used, misunderstood, simultaneously fashioned and ignored by these *means* that make the *apparatuses*. This enables us to note that everyday time is above all composed of weak times, but also consists of strong times: dialogues (including dialogues with oneself, when one puts oneself in the presence of oneself, and when 'one' asks oneself: 'so, what did you make of this day, of this time, of your life? . . .') Which is not at all repetitive). The repetitive monotony of the everyday, rhythmmed by the (mediatised) media need not bring about the forgetting of the exceptional. Although the worst banality covers itself in this publicity label: 'Here is the exceptional'. Whence malaises and questionings to untangle, each one having its own task each day in the hotchpotch of the *privatised* and the public, the bizarre and the unusual, the media and the immediate (which is to say the *lived* in the everyday).