



GILLES DELEUZE

Spinoza: The Velocities of Thought

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I

Won't you close the door? [*Pause*] Won't you close the windows, well, if you can't hear anything? [*Pause; various noises*] There we are... There we are, there we are... This ought to be our last session on Spinoza, unless you have questions. In any case, today whatever might cause you concern, if anything concerns you, you'll have to let me know, and you must intervene as much as possible.

And so, today I would like us to do two things: that we finish, not with the Spinozist conception of individuality, because there, it seems to me that we have stayed enough a long time on this conception, but that we draw conclusions from it concerning a point, a formulation, a rather famous formulation by Spinoza, which is the following: "We experience, we feel and we experience" -- he does not say: we think ; these are some very loaded words: feeling and experiencing -- "that we are eternal." What is this famous Spinozist eternity? Good.

And then finally, it is absolutely necessary for us to draw conclusions about what should have been the implicit theme of all these sessions, namely, well, what relationship ultimately [is there] between an ontology and an ethics, once it's said that this relationship interests philosophy for itself? But the fact is that this relationship was only founded and developed by Spinoza, to the point that someone who would come and tell us: "Well, my project would be to create a kind of ethics that would exist as the correlate of an ontology, that is, of a theory of being", well, we could stop him and say, "very good, we can say some very, very new things along this path, but this path is Spinozist; it's a path signed 'Spinoza'."

Good. You remember -- and I'm reminding you of this not at all to review these points, but to judge them as what we've acquired -- you remember the three dimensions of individuality. First dimension: I have an infinity of extensive parts -- moreover, if you remember more precisely -- I have an infinity of infinite sets of extensive parts external to each other. I'm composed to infinity. Second dimension: these infinite sets of extensive parts external to each other belong to me, but they belong to me according to characteristic relations, relations of movement and rest, about which I tried to state what their nature was the last time we met. Third dimension: these characteristic relations only express a degree of power (*puissance*) which constitutes my essence, my very own essence, that is, a singular essence.

So, the three dimensions are the extensive parts external to each other that belong to me, the relations according to which these parts belong to me, and the essence as



degree, *gradus* or *modus*, the essence singular which is expressed in these relations. And Spinoza never says it, because he doesn't have to say it. But we, his readers, are forced to notice a curious harmony between what and what? Between these three dimensions of individuality and what he calls, on a completely different occasion, the three kinds of knowledge. [Pause]

You remember the three kinds of knowledge, in fact, and you will see the strict parallelism between the three dimensions of individuality as such and the three kinds of knowledge. But that there is such a parallelism between the two must already leads us to certain conclusions. I mean, it's not a thing that he needs to say -- I insist on this because I would also like you to create some rules for reading any philosopher -- he's not going to say "look at this"; it's not up to him to explain. Once again, I insist on this greatly; you can't do two things at the same time. You cannot both say something and explain what you are saying. That's why things are so difficult. It's not up to Spinoza to explain what Spinoza said; Spinoza has better things to do, he has things to say. So, explaining what Spinoza says is not bad, but still it does not go far, it cannot go very far. That's why the history of philosophy has to be extremely modest. So, he's not going to tell us, "look at this", eh? "you can see that my three kinds of knowledge and then my three dimensions of the individual correspond with each other". It's not for him to say. But for us, in our modest task, it's up to us to say this.

And in fact, in what sense do they correspond? You remember that the first kind of knowledge is the set of inadequate ideas, that is, passive affections and passion affects that result from inadequate ideas. It's the set of signs, confused, inadequate ideas, and passions, affects that result from these affections. You have to remember all of that because this is what we've acquired in the last few meetings.¹ And under what conditions, what causes us, from the moment we exist, not only to be doomed to inadequate ideas and passions, but to be condemned and even, at first view, doomed to have only inadequate ideas and passive affects or passions? What creates our sad situation? [Pause] Understand that this is obvious; I don't want to go into too much detail here; I just want you to feel this, to sense this.

It is primarily insofar as we have extensive parts, insofar as we have extensive parts, [that] we are condemned to inadequate ideas. Why? Because what is the regime of extensive parts? Once again, they are external to each other. They pass through infinities, both at the same time. The simplest bodies, which are the ultimate parts, you remember, the simplest bodies, they have no interiority. They are always determined from the outside. What does that mean? Through shock, through shock from another part. In what forms do they encounter each other through shock? In the simplest form, namely that they constantly keep changing their relations since it is always in terms of a relation that the parts belong to me or don't belong to me. Parts of my body leave my body, there take another relation, the relation of arsenic, the relation of anything, the relation of the mosquito when it bites us, the relation... I do not stop integrating parts under my relations. When I eat, for example, well, when I eat, there are extensive parts that I appropriate within myself.

What does that mean, appropriating parts within oneself? Appropriating parts within oneself means making them leave the previous relation they were realizing in order to take on a new relation, this new relation being one of my own relations, namely with meat, I make flesh within me. How awful! [Laughter] In the end, one has to live; it doesn't stop being like that, shocks and appropriations of parts, transformations of relations, compositions to infinity, etc. Good. And this regime of parts external to each other which never cease reacting, at the same time as the infinite sets into which they enter do not cease to vary. It is precisely this

¹ See the successive review of the Spinozist theory of individuation, linked to the individual's dimensions and to the individual's movements toward the second and third kinds of knowledge in the sessions on 3, 10, and 17 February and 10 March 1981.



regime of the inadequate idea, of confused perceptions, and passive affects, and affect-passions that result from them.

In other words, it's because I am composed of an aggregate, an infinity of infinite sets of extensive parts, external to each other, that I do not cease having perceptions of external things, perceptions of myself, perceptions of myself in my relations with external things, perceptions of external things in relation to myself, and all of this is what constitutes the world of signs. When I say: ah this is good, ah that is bad, what are these signs of good and bad? These inadequate signs simply mean: ah well yes, I am encountering parts on the outside that agree with my own parts in their relations; [if] bad, I'm encountering, I'm encountering parts, on the outside as well, that do not suit me, in the relation through which they occur. So, you see that this whole domain of infinite sets of parts external to each other corresponds exactly to the first kind of knowledge. It is because I am composed of an infinity of extrinsic parts that I have inadequate perceptions. As a result, the first kind of knowledge corresponds to this first dimension of individuality. *[Pause]*

And we have seen precisely that the problem of kinds of knowledge was very well initiated by the Spinozist question, namely: well, in a sense, we might believe that we are condemned to the inadequate, to the first kind. Henceforth, how do we explain the possibility that we have to get out of this confused world, this inadequate world, this first kind of knowledge? In Spinoza's answer, it is that yes, there is a second kind of knowledge. But how does he define it, the second kind of knowledge? In the *Ethics*, it's very striking. Knowledge of the second kind is knowledge of relations, of their composition and their decomposition. One cannot say any better that the second kind of knowledge corresponds to the second dimension of individuality, since, in fact, extrinsic parts are not only extrinsic, each in relation to the others, but they are radically extrinsic, absolutely extrinsic.

So, what does it mean that extrinsic parts belong to me? We've seen it a thousand times. That only means one thing for Spinoza, namely that these parts are always determined from the outside to enter under one relation or another, according to one relation or another which characterizes me. And once again, what does it mean to die? To die only means one thing, that the parts which belonged to me according to one relation or another are determined from the outside to enter in another relation which does not characterize me, but which characterizes something else.

The first kind of knowledge is therefore the knowledge of the effects of encounters or the effects of actions and interactions, of the extrinsic parts on each other. Yes, we cannot define it better; this is very clear here, very clear, eh? The effects defined by..., the effects caused through the shock or the encounter of the external parts upon each other define the entire first kind of knowledge. In fact, my natural perception is an effect of the shocks and collisions between external parts which it composes and external parts which compose other forms.

But the second kind of knowledge is a completely different mode of knowledge. It is the knowledge of the relations that it composes and the relations that compose other things. You see, it is no longer the effects of encounters between parts, it's the knowledge of relations, namely the way in which my characteristic relations are composed with others and in which *[Pause]* my characteristic relations and other relations are decomposed. And here, this is adequate knowledge. And in fact, this knowledge can only be adequate, whereas the knowledge, which was satisfied with collecting why, since it's a knowledge which rises toward understanding causes... In fact, any relation whatsoever is a reason, any relation whatsoever is the reason through which an infinity of extensive parts belongs to one body rather than another.



Therefore, the second kind of knowledge – I’m simply emphasizing this -- is that it’s not an abstract knowledge at all, as I have tried to say. If you create an abstract knowledge out of it, all of Spinoza collapses. So obviously, the mistake of commentaries is always seeking, always telling oneself, oh well yes, this is mathematics. But no, it’s not math. It has nothing to do with math. Mathematics is simply a special case. Mathematics can indeed be defined as a theory of relations. So here, yes, math is a section of the second kind of knowledge. It is a theory of relations and proportions. See Euclid. Well, it’s a theory of relations and proportions at that point, mathematics is part of the second kind. But to think that the second kind is a type of mathematical knowledge is an abominable stupidity because, at that point, all of Spinoza becomes abstract. We don’t base our lives on mathematics, [we] must not exaggerate, whereas here, it’s indeed a question of life problems.

That’s why I remind you, I chose as an example -- because it seems infinitely more Spinozist to me than geometry or mathematics or even the Euclidean theory of proportions - - I chose as an example: well yes, what the adequate knowledge of the second kind means is at the level of learning to swim, “ah I know how to swim”. No one can deny that knowing how to swim is a conquest of existence. This is fundamental; you understand, I conquer an element. An element, this doesn’t go without saying, to conquer an element. I learn to swim, I learn to fly, all that is great. Okay, what does that mean? What does it mean? Well, it’s very simple. Not knowing how to swim, what is that? It really means being at the mercy of encountering a wave. So you have the infinite set of water molecules that compose the wave, it composes a wave, and I am saying, it’s a wave because these simplest bodies that I call molecules -- in fact, they’re not the simplest – we would have to go even farther than water molecules. Water molecules already belong to a body, the aquatic body, the body of the ocean, the body etc., or the body of the pond, of a particular pond. [*Deleuze spells it out: é-t-a-n-g*] [*Laughter*]²

Well then, what is knowledge of the first kind? Well, come on, I’m going, I’m starting, I’m within the first kind of knowledge. I’m starting, I’m dabbling (*je barbote*), as they say. What does it mean to dabble? Dabbling is very simple; the word dabble indeed indicates, as we indeed see, that it’s extrinsic relations. Sometimes the wave buffets me, and sometimes it sweeps me away. These are shock effects. These are shock effects, notably, I do not know anything about relations that are composed or decomposed. I receive the effects of extrinsic parts. The parts that belong to me are shaken, receive a shock effect from the parts that belong to the wave. And then sometimes I laugh and sometimes I whine, depending on whether the wave makes me laugh or clobbers me. [*Laughter*] I’m within the passion affects. “Ah mama, the wave clobbered me”. Fine. “Ah mom, the wave clobbered me”, a cry that we continuously repeat as long as we are in the first kind of knowledge, since we will not stop saying: “Ah, the table hurt me,” and that is exactly the same as saying the other hurt me. [It’s] not at all because the table is inanimate. Spinoza is so much smarter than anything they might have said afterwards. It’s not because the table is inanimate that one shouldn’t say that “it hurt me”. It is as silly to say “Peter (*Pierre*) hurt me” as it is to say “a stone (*une pierre*) hurt me”, or the wave hurt me. It’s the same level, it’s the first kind here. Fine. You follow me?

So, on the contrary, I learn to swim doesn’t necessarily mean that I have a mathematical or physical, scientific knowledge of the movement of the wave. It means that I have a skill, an astonishing skill (*savoir-faire*), that is, I have a kind of sense of rhythm, a rhythmicity. What does rhythm mean? What does that mean, all of this? That means that I learn how to compose my characteristic relations directly with the relations of the wave. This doesn’t occur any longer

² The laughter is due to Deleuze’s attempt to distinguish two homophones, *étang* or pond, and *étant* or being, a term introduced frequently in earlier sessions.



between the wave and me, that is, it doesn't happen between the extensive parts, the wet parts of the wave and the parts of my body. It occurs between relations, the relations that compose the wave, fine, the relations that compose my body and my ability, when I can swim, to present my body in relations that are made up directly with the relations of the wave. So, this means I dive at the right moment, I emerge at the right moment, I avoid the approaching wave or, on the contrary, I use it, etc., all of this art of composing relations.

And I was saying, it's the same thing, I'm looking for specific examples that are not mathematical, since, again, mathematics is just one area of that. We must say mathematics is the formal theory of the second kind of knowledge and not the second kind of knowledge. I am saying, it's the same with love. Yes, waves or love, it's the same. In a love of the first kind, well, you are perpetually in this regime of encounters between extrinsic parts. In what is called a "great love", "Camille" [*La Dame aux camélias*] -- how beautiful it is! [*Laughter*] -- well, there you have a composition of relations. Well, my example is serious because "Camille" is the first kind of knowledge, [*Laughter*]³ but in the second kind of knowledge, there you have a kind of composition of relations with each other. You are no longer in a regime of inadequate ideas, namely the effect of parts on my own, the effect of an external part or the effect of an external body on my own. There you reach a much deeper domain which is the composition of the characteristic relations of one body with the characteristic relations of another body, and that kind of flexibility or rhythm that results in your ability to present your body, and henceforth your soul as well, to present your soul or your body according to the relation that is most directly composed with the other's relation. You indeed sense that it's a strange happiness. Well there you have the second kind of knowledge.

And the third kind of knowledge, and why is there a third kind of knowledge? There is a third kind of knowledge because relations, well, these are not essences, Spinoza tells us. The third kind of knowledge or intuitive knowledge, what is it? It goes beyond relations and their composition and decomposition. [*Pause*] This is the knowledge of essences. It goes further than relations, since it reaches the essence that is expressed in relations, the essence on which relations depend. In fact, if relations are my own, if relations characterize me, it's because they express my essence. What is my essence? It's a degree of power of action (*puissance*). Well, knowledge of the third kind is the knowledge that this degree of power of action takes from itself and takes from other degrees of power of action. This time, it is a knowledge of singular essences. [*Pause*] The second and, with all the more reason, the third kind of knowledge, are perfectly adequate.

So, you indeed see that there is a correspondence between kinds of knowledge and dimensions of individuality, which means what, ultimately, this coincidence? This means that the kinds of knowledge are more than kinds of knowledge; they are modes of existence. These are manners of living. But why are these manners of living? This becomes difficult because finally, every individual is made up of the three dimensions at the same time. This is where we will find something of a final problem.

You, me, anyone, any individual has all three dimensions at once. So, what can we do to get by? Every individual has all three dimensions at once, okay. This is exactly the problem: each individual has all three dimensions at the same time, and yet there are individuals who will never get out of the first kind of knowledge. They will not be able to rise to the second or

³ *La Dame aux camélias* is an 1848 novel by Alexandre Dumas fils adapted in 1852 as a vaudeville play. The students' laughter comes, in all likelihood, from the incongruity of the topic under discussion and the example drawn from the nineteenth-century French literary canon. As Deleuze insists in "L as in Literature" in *Gilles Deleuze, From A to Z*, he takes very seriously literary works that some might characterize as being of secondary importance within the canon.



third. They will never succeed in forming what Spinoza calls a “common notion”, a common notion being precisely, I remind you, “the idea of a relation”, the idea of a characteristic relation. With all the more reason, they will never have a knowledge of their singular essence, nor of other singular essences. How do you explain that? It’s not at all automatic; each individual has the three dimensions. But careful, one doesn’t have the three kinds of knowledge by that very fact; one may very well stay within the first. How do we explain this last point? [Pause]

Let’s approach the question differently. When are there oppositions? For example, you can hate yourself; sometimes we hate each other. Hate [is] this kind of opposition of an existing mode from one individual to another individual; what is it? How do we explain hatred? Here we have a first text from Spinoza, book IV of the *Ethics*, the axiom which is at the beginning of book IV. [Deleuze consults his copy] This axiom is going to annoy us greatly, apparently, and Spinoza does not explain much about it.

Axiom: “There is no individual thing” -- that is, no individual -- “There is no individual thing in nature, than there is not another more powerful and strong.” Up to that point, it’s okay. There is no final power because the final power is all of nature. So, there is no final power in nature. A thing being given, it is defined by a degree of power (*puissance*). Well, there is always a higher degree of power. As powerful as I may be, there is always a degree of power... In fact, we have seen that there was an infinity of degrees of power. The infinite existing always in action, for Spinoza, is always given actually, is always given in action, a greater degree of power than the greatest degree of power that I can conceive. So, up to that point, this axiom would not be annoying.

But he adds: “There is no individual thing in nature, than there is not another more powerful and strong, but, whatsoever thing be given, there is something stronger whereby it can be destroyed.” There this text ought to annoy us. Why? Because the second sentence provides unexpected precision. The first sentence tells us: A thing being given, it is defined by its power. But a degree of power being given, that is, something in its essence, the degree of power is the essence of a thing. Well, there is always a more powerful one. Okay, that’s fine. We understand.

He adds a second sentence, careful: By the more powerful thing, the first thing can always be destroyed. This is really annoying. Why? Suddenly, we tell ourselves: Ah well, I didn’t understand anything; what’s going to happen? He seems to be telling us that an essence can be destroyed by the more powerful essence. So, at that point, there is no longer any third kind of knowledge. There is no longer even a second kind of knowledge because what is destruction? It’s obviously the effect of one essence on another. If an essence can be destroyed by the more powerful essence, by the higher degree essence, this is a catastrophe, all Spinozism collapses. We are brought back to the effects; we are brought back to the first kind [of knowledge]. There can no longer be any knowledge of the essences. How would there be an adequate knowledge of the essences, if the essences are in relations such that one is destroying the other? [Interruption; cassette change]

II

[31:15] [A bit later, in book V],⁴ there is a proposition thirty-seven, and the proposition thirty-seven includes, after its statement and after the demonstration of the proposition,

⁴ This small reference, omitted in the BNF recording, is furnished thanks to access to the recording produced by Claire Parnet and Richard Pinhas for Gallimard editions, a double cd entitled *Gilles Deleuze*,



includes an sidebar proposition under the title of “Scolia”, and the Scolia tells us this: the axiom from the fourth part -- see? this is what I have just read -- the axiom from the fourth part concerns individual things insofar as we consider them in relation to a certain time and a certain place, which, I believe, no one doubts. Here, we have to laugh because nonetheless, if I insist on this “what nobody doubts”, he waited so many pages, whereas he could have told us at the level [of book] IV; it would have helped us, and we would have been less annoyed. That’s his business. Why does he only say it long after? He says it when he needs to say it.

What does this detail mean? He tells us: careful, the axiom of destruction, the axiom of opposition, one essence can oppose another to the point of destroying it, that is comprehensible only when we consider things in relation to a certain time and place. He doesn’t tell us more. What does it mean to consider things in relation to a certain time and a certain place? That means considering them in their existence. What does it mean to consider them in their existence, considering them as they exist, as they have passed into existence, as they pass into existence? What does it mean? We’ve seen this.

What is it to pass into existence? It means this: we pass to existence, an essence passes into existence, when an infinity of extensive parts is determined, finds itself determined from outside to belong to it in a particular relation. I have an essence, me, me Pierre or Paul, I have an essence. I say that I pass into existence when an infinity of extensive parts is determined from outside, that is, through the shocks, which refers to other extensive parts, is determined from outside to enter into a relation that characterizes me. So before, I did not exist to the extent that I did not have these extensive parts. That’s what to be born is. I am born when an infinity of extensive parts is determined from the outside through the encounter with other parts to enter into a relation which is mine, that is, which characterizes me. See? At that point, at that point, I have a relation to a certain time and a certain place. What is this time and this place? The time of my birth and the place of my birth. It happened here. It’s here.

Here and now, what is it? But this is the regime of extensive parts, the extensive parts. The sets of extensive parts always have a time and a place. Moreover, it will last what it will last. The extensive parts are determined from the outside to enter into a particular relation which characterizes us. But for how long? Until, until they are determined to enter into another relationship. At that point, they pass into another body. They no longer belong to me. It lasts a certain length of time. [Pause] Good. What does that mean then? How should this enlighten us? In fact, I can only speak of opposition between two individuals to the extent that these individuals are considered to exist, here and now. [That’s] very important for the formation of relations of opposition. It is solely to the extent that individuals are considered to exist here and now that they can enter. This is not a question of kindness or wickedness. This is a question of logical possibility.

I can only have opposition to another individual based on what? As a function of the extensive parts which compose us, which belong to us. That’s the place, the milieu of the opposition. That’s it. It’s the extensive parts. And indeed, this is required; in the oppositions between individuals, what’s this about? In the oppositions between individuals, it’s always a question of knowing into what relation ultimately such infinite sets of extensive parts will enter. Imagine this sad situation: I am fighting with a dog to eat, to eat a kind of mash. [Laughter] Okay. [It’s a] horrible sight. How to recount this, this spectacle? Well, well, [Pause] what is it? You have three terms: food, the dog and me. So, I bite the dog to grab his food. [Laughter] The dog, he swipes me with his paw.

Okay, what’s going on? What is that? You have an infinite set of extensive parts in the meat relation. You have an infinite set of extensive parts in the dog relation. You have an

Spinoza: Immortality and Eternity (2001).



infinite set of extensive parts in relation to me. And all of that swirls around, and all of that collides. Namely, me, I want to conquer the extensive parts of the meat to assimilate them to myself, that is, to impose my relation on them, to act so that they no longer realize the meat relation and so that they come to realize one of my own relations. The dog wants the same thing. I bite the dog, that is, I want to make him run off, etc., etc. ... Him, he bites me. Finally, we get stuck in this. This is the domain of oppositions. Opposition is effort. This is the respective effort of each existent [being] to appropriate the extensive parts. What does it mean to appropriate extensive parts, that is, to act so that they realize the relation that corresponds to a particular individual? Fine. [Pause]

In a way, I can always say: I am destroyed by what's stronger than I am. And indeed, as long as I exist, this is the risk of existence. [Pause] Fine. And this risk of existence is as one with what is called death since, once again, what is death? It is the fact that Spinoza will call necessary in the sense of inevitability, that the extensive parts, which belonged to me within one of my characteristic relations, cease to belong to me and pass under another relation which characterizes other bodies. This is inevitable by the very law of existence. An essence will always encounter a stronger essence than its own within conditions of existence which means that, henceforth, the stronger essence destroys, destroys what? Literally, [it] destroys the belonging of the extensive parts to the first essence. [Pause] Okay, fine.

But I am saying, first -- even if it means correcting this later, and I am saying that it will indeed have to be corrected -- I am saying: suppose now that I am dead. I am dead. Okay, I'm dead. For Spinoza, this will take on an abstract air, but it's linked. It's up to you to make an effort. I'm going to try to say later why it doesn't seem abstract to me but make an effort. I am dead. Fine. What does it mean? Once again, if you accept these premises which are not at all, it seems to me, abstract theory, which are really a manner of living, if this is indeed death, it means that there are no more extensive parts. There is no longer any extrinsic set that belongs to me. I am dispossessed. Fine, I'm dispossessed. I have no more parts. That means: my characteristic relations stop being realized. It means all that, but not just that.

So, what doesn't death prevent? What, according to Spinoza, what that does not prevent is that: my relations stop being realized, fine, but there is an eternal truth in these relations. They are not realized, but we have seen that, for Spinoza, the relations were largely independent of their terms. Realizing a relation means: terms occur that realize the relation. A relation is realized through its terms. Here [in death], there are no more terms which realize it. But the relation is not reduced to the terms which realize it. So, the relation has an eternal truth insofar as being a relation, a truth independent of its terms. It is no longer realized, but it remains actual insofar as being a relation. It's not that it passes into the state of virtuality. There is an actuality of the unrealized relation.

And with all the more reason, there is an actuality of the essence which is expressed in the relation since the essence is not at all an extensive part. It's an intensive part. It's a degree of power (*puissance*). Well, this degree of power no longer corresponds to it at all -- this degree, fine, we saw it the last time -- this degree of intensity no longer corresponds to it in extension. There are no more extensive parts that correspond to the intensive part. Okay, good. But, the reality of the intensive part, insofar as being intensive, it remains. In other words, there is a double eternity, entirely correlative. There is a double eternity, the eternity of the relation or of relations which characterize it, and the eternity of the essence, of the individual essence which constitutes us, which, for its part, cannot be affected by death.

And moreover, at this level, as he says in Book V, from the text that I have just read, at this level, there can be no opposition. Why? Because all relations are composed to infinity according to the laws of relations. There are always relations that are composed, and, on the other hand, all the essences agree with all the essences. Each essence agrees with all the others



insofar as being a pure degree of intensity. In other words, for Spinoza, to say that a degree of power, or a degree of intensity, destroys another degree of intensity, is a meaningless proposition. The phenomena of destruction can only exist on the level they have for status (*pour statut*). And they refer to the regimes of the extensive parts which belong provisionally to me. [Pause]

Henceforth, what does that mean? I feel, I experience that I am eternal. It's not, "I know it." What I would like to have you sense is the difference between the two propositions. "I know, I know, and I maintain that I am immortal". This is, if you will, the proposition; you could say it's a proposition, I don't know, a theological proposition. "I know and I maintain that I am immortal". And, I feel and experience that I am eternal. And in fact, in Book V, Spinoza attacks any conception of immortality. He tells us: no, no. This is not a question of saying that everyone is immortal; it's about saying that everyone is eternal. And this is not at all the same. Why is it not at all the same? How is this presented by Spinoza? What is this experimentation? It's more than -- I think you have to take the word in the strongest sense -- it's not just: I experience, I have experience. Rather, it is: to experience in an active manner. I experience that I am eternal. What is this experiment?

Very curious, if you look in literature, it comes much later; it's in 19th century English literature that you will find a kind of Spinozism of this type, eternity, a kind of experimentation with eternity, and strangely, also linked to the idea of intensity, as if I could only experience eternity in an intensive form. And this is a frequent theme among authors who precisely do not seem to me so far from Spinoza, even if they do not know it, authors like [D.H.] Lawrence, to a lesser extent like [Edward] Boys, a kind of experience of eternity in the form of the intense. There we are.⁵

I'm trying to make this more concrete. As long as you exist, you exist, you oppose others. We all oppose each other. And Spinoza doesn't at all say that we should get out of this. He knows that this is absolutely necessary. It's a dimension. It's a dimension of existence, okay. But, he says, there you go, let's take two extreme cases. Take individual A, individual Pierre. Let's take Pierre, who spends most of it -- you will see how there, Spinoza becomes very nuanced and very concrete -- we can say of Pierre that he spent his life, roughly speaking, in the first kind of knowledge. Yes, this is even the case for most people, since according to Spinoza, a bit of philosophy is still necessary to get out of the first kind of knowledge. You have to ... Yes, fine. Take the case of someone who lives in the first kind of knowledge, the largest part. Why do I specify the largest part? In fact, you have to be very optimistic; this doesn't happen all the time.

This someone, anyway, will have understood a little something in his life, once, not for long. One day, one evening, one evening when he gets home, he will have understood a little something. He felt like he understood a little something. Maybe he will have really understood something, and then all his life, he will spend it trying to forget what he had understood because it was so striking. All of a sudden, he thought, "But what? What ... There's something

⁵ While the identity of "Lawrence", from the Deleuzian perspective, is D.H. Lawrence in all likelihood, there is also T.E. Lawrence in whom Deleuze shows great interest, notably in a chapter of *Essays Critical and Clinical*. As for the other author, the pronunciation of this name on the BNF recording poses certain difficulties. The Paris 8 transcriber of this section, Cécile Lathullère, rendered this as "Powice." However, in searching within the domain of 19th century British authors, I identified a name that was born out by the clearer recording provided on the Gallimard CD of this session. The name is that of a certain Edward Boys, a British naval officer and author of an obscure but apparently well received work, *Narrative of a Captivity and Adventures in France and Flanders between the years 1803-09* (1827). Given Deleuze's always surprising erudition, we can imagine every possibility in order to resolve this small bibliographical dilemma.



wrong.” Everyone, everyone, even the last of the wretches has had this experience. Even the last fool has brushed up against something that... where he said to himself, “But, wouldn’t I be ... Wouldn’t I have spent my whole life deceiving myself?” So, we always emerge a bit from the first kind of knowledge. That is, in Spinozist terms, he will have understood, even on a tiny point, he will have had an intuition of, either of something essential, or else he will have had a kind of, either the intuition of something essential, yes, or an understanding of a relation.

There are even -- so here, we can be very generous -- there are very few people who are totally stupid. There’s always something they understand. I mean, we’re all, we all have our little thing, for example, a sense... some have an amazing sense of a particular animal. It doesn’t stop them from being mean, all that. But there they have, they have something. Ah, yes, there. Or else, the sense of wood. Ah, yes, that. This guy, this imbecile, this imbecile is so mean, [but] at least when he talks about trees, there is something, one feels that there is something. And then we spend our time having these experiences. Ah, there, yes. The feeling that, if you will, it’s over, that even the worst clown... There’s a point at which, no, it’s over being a clown. Finally, there is something. Okay, that’s how it is.

You can tell yourself, well yes, nobody is condemned to the first kind of knowledge. There is always, always a little hope. Fine. Oh, that’s very important. And, because once again, how we save ourselves is solely, and very strangely, in being unable even to talk about duration anymore, in being forced actually to talk about instants. There are always instants in which there is a glimmer in someone. Ah, he was less obnoxious than I thought. It was enough to locate this something. So, of course, sometimes we are so... We no longer want to discover. So, fine. And then, it quickly changes back. It quickly changes back. But I don’t know, the worst police officer, the worst... I don’t know, there is surely a little something about him, surely.

So, Spinoza is not at all calling for the Salvation Army, “you have to save everyone”, no. [Laughter] He wants to tell us something else. He wants to tell us: there we are, there we are, you understand, it’s very complicated because ultimately, your existence is a matter of proportions. What does this mean “a matter of proportions”? Well, okay: You have extensive parts that compose you. And, as long as you exist, there is no question of giving this up. That’s completely stupid: what would it be to give up the extensive parts that compose you, that is, to give up all the combinations of existence, just like that, to withdraw from lived oppositions? I’m withdrawing from lived oppositions. Ah, good, well, I’m only eating grass, I’m living in a cave, etc. This is basically what’s always been called asceticism.

That doesn’t interest Spinoza at all. It even seems to him a very, very shady solution, very, very suspicious. He goes so far as to think that the ascetic is deeply wicked, and that the ascetic pursues an inexpiable hatred, an inexpiable hatred against the world, against nature, etc. So, that’s not what Spinoza wants to tell us at all. He’s telling us: be careful. In your existence, well, it’s a matter of certain relative proportions, between what and what?

You’ll grant me a... So, now, I have my three dimensions of the individual: my extensive parts; second, relations; third, the essence or the intensive part that constitutes us. I can express them in the following form:

The extensive parts that belong to me are just like the inadequate ideas that I have, they are necessarily inadequate. So, these are the inadequate ideas that I have, and the passions that arise from these inadequate ideas. The relations that characterize me when I reach their knowledge are common notions or adequate ideas. Essence as pure intensive part, as pure degree of power which constitutes us, it is still one and several adequate ideas. Spinoza tells us: in your existence, you yourself can have a vague idea of the proportion that there is between the inadequate ideas and passions, since the two are linked, the inadequate ideas and passion



affects which fill your existence, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the adequate ideas and active affects to which you are striving.

I will remind you of the inadequate ideas. I'm going to finish quickly to see if... to ask you if you understood. Inadequate ideas and passions refer to the dimension of existence, to the first dimension: having extensive parts. The other two aspects, knowledge of relations and knowledge of degrees of power, as intensive part, refer to the two other aspects: characteristic relations and essence as intensive part. Suppose that in my existence, I have relatively... It's not a question of renouncing the extensive parts; it would be killing oneself, and we have seen what Spinoza thought of suicide. Imagine that during my existence, I have relatively achieved -- and Spinoza says: the more it would be impossible since you have extensive parts and you are subject to the law of extensive parts -- no, but suppose you have attained, relatively frequently, adequate ideas and active affects. This is a case, a first case.

And the second case, imagine the other case. You have achieved it, very, very rarely, and not durably. Fine. Now, put yourself into the moment of your death. [This is] very concrete, all that. When you die, in the first case and in the second case, what happens? In the second case, when you die, that means, in any case, your extensive parts disappear, that is, they enter into other bodies, that is, they realize other relations than yours. And so, when you die, and when, in the second case, you have held in the majority of your existence inadequate ideas and passive affects, that means that what dies is relatively the largest part of yourself. It's proportionally the greatest part of yourself.

On the other hand, in the other case, it is curious, it is there that a kind of relative proportion comes in. I mean, that's what's important in book V. If you miss it in book V, at the same time he says it explicitly, I think you can't understand the movement of the book V. In the other case: suppose that, in your existence, you have, on the contrary, proportionately reached a relatively large number of adequate ideas and active affects. At that point, what dies from you is a relatively small, insignificant part.

So, it's very curious. It seems to me that there, the idea of existence as a test (*épreuve*) is reintroduced in Spinoza. But it's not a moral test at all. It's like a kind of physico-chemical test. I experience that I am eternal. Yes. What does this text mean? What does it mean? I'm experiencing it from now onward, on what condition? That's not at all the question "does the soul survive the body?", not at all the question. The question of immortality is: in what sense and in what form does the soul survive the body? As it has been posited by theology and philosophy, from -- if you will, there, it seems to me that whatever their differences which are great -- from Plato to Descartes.

From Plato to Descartes, what is posed is really the question of the immortality of the soul. And the immortality of the soul, at that point, it necessarily goes through the problem of a before and an after. Why? What determines the before and the after from the point of view of the immortality of the soul, namely, the moment of the union of the soul and the body, specifically, the before of the soul is before the incarnation, before the soul unites with a body? The after, the after of immortality is after... the soul, after death, that is, after... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

Hence the discomfort of all the authors who wanted to speak of an immortality of the soul. What is their discomfort? It's that the immortality of the soul can be grasped or can be conceived only through the still temporal kinds of a before and an after. And this is already the whole theme of the *Phaedo* which deals with the immortality of the soul, in Plato. The dialogue of Plato, *Phaedo*, proposes a great doctrine of the immortality of the soul, precisely in the form of the before and the after, before the union, after the union.

When Spinoza opposed eternity to immortality, you can see quite well what he means. From the standpoint of immortality, if you will, I can "know" that the soul is immortal. But



what does immortality consist of? It consists of saying that I know, for example, I then know by what knowledge -- that's something else -- but I know that my soul does not die with my body. Even if I admit the Platonic idea that this is a kind of knowledge, I do not know in what form. And everyone says so. Why? Because immortality indeed seems to exclude the before and the after. Through this, it's already an eternity. But precisely it can only be learned or known in kinds of the before and the after. And Descartes will say it again. In what form? That the soul is immortal, this I can say, I am sure, according to Descartes. But, in what form? I do not know. I can at most affirm that, affirm that there is a before and that there is an after, that the soul is not born with the body and that it does not die with the body. I can affirm the that; I cannot assert the what or the body. An intellectual intuition would be necessary, as they say... as they say. But we don't have intellectual intuition. Very well.

Spinoza doesn't pose the problem in that way because, for him, the problem is not at all a before and an after; it's an at the same time as. I mean, it's at the same time that I am mortal that I experience that I am eternal. To experience that I am eternal does not mean that there is a before, that there has been a before, and that there will be an after. It means that, from now forward, I'm experiencing something that cannot exist within the form of time.

And what is it if it cannot exist within the form of time? Namely, that there are two absolutely opposite meanings of the word "part", namely, there are parts that I have. These are the extensive parts, external to each other, and these, I have them in the time mode. Indeed, I have them temporarily, I have them within duration. I have them in time mode. These are parts external to each other, extensive parts that I have. Fine.

But when I say, "intensive part", I mean something completely different. The two meanings of the word "part" differ in nature. Because when I say, "intensive part equals essence", it is no longer a part that I have. These are no longer parts that I have. This is a part that I am. I am a degree of power; I am an intensive part. I am an intensive part, and the other essences are also intensive parts. Parts of what? Well, parts of the power of God, says Spinoza. Good. He talks like that, so fine.

To experience that I am eternal is to experience that "part", in the intensive sense, differs in nature, coexists and differs in nature from "part" in the extrinsic, extensive sense. I experience here and now that I am eternal, that is, that I am an intensive part or a degree of power irreducible to the extensive parts that I have, that I possess. As a result, when the extensive parts are torn from me, equaling death, that does not concern the intensive part that I am for all eternity. I experience that I am eternal, but once again, on one condition, provided that I am raised to ideas and to affects that give this intensive part an actuality. [Pause] It's in this sense that I experience that I am eternal.

So, this is an experiment (*expérimentation*) which means an eternity, but of "coexistence", not an "immortality" of succession. It is from now forward in my existence that I experience the irreducibility of the intensive part that I am for all eternity, that I am eternally with the extensive parts that I have within the form of duration. But, if I have not actualized my essence, or even my relations, if I have remained within the law of the extensive parts which encounter each other from outside, at that point, I do not even have the idea to experience that I am eternal. At that point, when I die, yes, I lose the greatest part of myself. On the other hand, if I made my part intensive, "proportionally the largest", what does that mean? Here, obviously, there is indeed a small difficulty. Now it brings into play, if you will, in a kind of proportional calculation, the extensive parts that I have and the intensive part that I am.

It's difficult since there is no common nature between the two meanings of the word "part". So how can he say that one and the other are larger or smaller relative to each other? He tells us: when I die, sometimes what perishes, namely the extensive parts which go elsewhere, what perishes from me is in some cases the largest part, in the other case, on the



contrary, a fairly insignificant, fairly small part. It would therefore be necessary that the intensive part and the extensive parts have some sort of common criterion in order to return to this rule of proportion, namely, of the two cases, of the two extreme cases in which sometimes the extensive parts that disappear constitute the largest part of myself, sometimes, on the contrary, they constitute only a small part of myself because it is the intensive part which took the largest part of myself.

Well, we cannot go any further, namely that perhaps it's up to us, in existence, to establish this kind of calculation of proportions or lived sense of proportion. It must be said that, yes, what is important in a life? Good. What is important? The criterion of importance. What are you going to give importance to? This is importance. It's... We must almost give to importance importance. This, it isn't important; that, it's important. We would almost have to make of it a criterion of existence. What do people judge as important in their lives? Is it... What's important, is it talking on the radio? Is it creating a stamp collection? Is it good health? Perhaps, all of this... Is it... What is a happy life in the sense that someone dies saying to himself: after all, I generally did what I wanted, I did pretty much what I wanted, or what I hoped for? Yes, that's good. What is this curious blessing that one can give to oneself and which is the opposite of a self-contentment?

What does that mean, this category, what's important? No, we agree, that's annoying, but it's not important. What is this calculation? Isn't that it? Isn't it the category of the remarkable or the important that would allow us to create proportions between the two irreducible meanings of the word "part", what depends on and what results from the intensive part of myself and what, on the contrary, refers to the extensive parts that I have?

So, and then obviously, there is always the problem: premature death. The singular essence passes into existence, good, and then... I'm a baby that gets crushed. Well. How far does the Spinozist rule apply, namely: but the time that I last does not matter in the end? Spinoza says it very firmly, and there, he has the right to say it since he did not die very old, but still, he was not a crushed baby. [*Laughter*] He had time to write the *Ethics*, so still, the babies who die, Spinoza's rule: but after all, when I die, it only means one thing, namely, I no longer have extensive parts.

Here, we are embarrassed when facing the case of premature deaths. Because a premature death ... Fine, we can always say: he has his eternal essence. But this eternal essence, once again, as we read in Spinoza, is not simply an essence like a mathematical figure. It's an essence which exists as an essence only to the extent that it has passed through existence, that is, in which it has realized its degree, in which it has realized its degree for itself, that is, the intensive part that it was. It goes without saying that when I die prematurely, I did not realize the intensive part that I was. In other words, I have not at all expressed, I have not at all "caused to be" the intensity that I am. So, it's okay when you die, all the same, at a certain age, but all those who die before... I believe that there, in fact, you must not... You must rather... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

If we imagine that a correspondent could have said that to Spinoza, to ask Spinoza that, what would Spinoza have answered? I don't think that he would have been clever at all with this. He wouldn't have at all... He would have said something like: well, yes, that it was part of the irreducible exteriority of nature. You see, it's like everything, the whole cohort of people who have existed, who will exist, who are poisoned, etc., that this whole problem of the extensive part of ourselves, was such that in some cases it could indeed make... I would say that, in Spinozist terms, we must almost say: the one who dies prematurely, well yes, this is a case where death is imposed in such a way that, it is imposed in such conditions that, at that time, it concerns the greatest part of the individual concerned.



But what we call a happy life means doing everything we can, and that, Spinoza says formally, doing everything we can precisely to ward off premature death, that is, to prevent premature deaths. What does that mean? Not at all preventing death, but acting so that death, when it does happen, ultimately only concerns the smallest part of me. There we are, I believe, as he saw it, experienced and felt things. Good. I mean, do you have any reactions, questions to ask?... Yes? But no theory, just feeling. [*Laughter*]

Student: In the *Ethics*, when Spinoza says, “I don’t hear,” there is ego, he said I; that when he wants to cite an example, he says Paul or Peter. And when he says: we feel and we experience, it is we who matter. That means it’s all, the aggregate. And in the same way, when he talks about the intellectual love of God in book V, it is: *omnium*, it is all, together. And so maybe, premature death can be corrected, in some way, through this alliance, basically, through this community.

Deleuze: Yes. What you say is quite deeply true because the “we”, that means that, on the level of essences, there can be opposition, once again, only on the level of existences and extensive parts. So, the essences, they all agree with each other, insofar as being essences. So, to say, in fact, that these are the essences whose lives have been relatively successful, who can do, who can take care of these premature deaths, yes, that is fine. You are right. Yes, yes. No doubt, yes. Yes. [*Pause*] Did [Spinoza] have an untimely death? To his liking, surely. He didn’t have an untimely death, however; he died before he finished a book he cared about, eh? But certainly, it’s hard to say how someone died, but it’s hard to imagine him dying other than ... really telling himself that he had done what he wanted. Because that’s true, he did what he wanted.

Student: He has eternity because eternity... [*Interruption; end of cassette*]

III

Deleuze: ... a consequence, yes.

Student: It makes it easier to distinguish the second kind and the third kind of knowledge, because at one point, basically, ... you stop differentiating.

Deleuze: Yes, that’s because I didn’t have time, yes, no, I’m not saying, there can be advantages. You are insisting on a community of the meanings, yes. Once again, for me, it’s only a consequence; the community derives from the essences and is not consecutive from the essences. It’s true, it’s true, there can be a difference. In fact, one could conceive a completely different presentation, which emphasizes the suitability of the essences with each other, above all, yes. I’ll tell you; I think they are only suitable to the extent that they have been successfully realized. So for me, the suitability is... [*Deleuze does not complete this*] So, we wouldn’t be in disagreement, but again there too, it’s a difference in emphasis; as I always tell you in a reading, you are forced to place your own accents. Good!... Yes?

A student: [*Inaudible*] [Deleuze: It’s not what?] [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: I can answer only on the following point: what does Spinoza tell us about this? Oh obviously, for him, going ahead (*aller au-devant*) of death is the very type, it’s almost the summit of inadequate life, and we understand very well why: it’s because he has an idea in which he believes, and I believe that he has an idea, one of the deepest ideas that we have had. He believes that by nature, death, whatever it is, comes only from outside, that death fundamentally is the law of the parts external to each other, and that otherwise, the very idea of death has no meaning, whereas death always comes from outside. Where Spinoza is very strong, in my opinion, is that he is the only one who completely reconciles the idea that death is inevitable, and that all death comes from the outside. It’s generally when we say “death



comes from outside”, we receive as an objection: ah, but then, if death comes from outside, it has no necessity; after all, you might not die, this is stupid (*idiot*). Spinoza affirms at once the radical exteriority of death, all death is external, all death comes from outside. There is never a death that comes from within. Spinoza is among those for whom the very idea of a death drive is a grotesque, absolutely grotesque concept, that it really is... And... Yes?

Richard Pinhas: [*Inaudible at the start*] ...the writer [*Inaudible*], he cites some quite concrete examples that he gave; there is a kind of [*inaudible word*] for the term of duration in relation to the accident, namely such a writer [*inaudible*] including Victor Hugo, and someone else will take two years, three years to do his work, here, like Rimbaud and Lautréamont, and indeed at twenty-five, they will be done, while others will have finished at eighty, and we find exactly the same cases in famous musicians such as Mozart for one case, and Bach for the other. And they say somehow equivalent things; it cannot be said that the work of Bach is more important than that of Mozart, or that the work of Hugo is more important than that of Rimbaud. So, everything happens as if there was a speed of unfolding, a kind of intimate perception of duration given for the creation of a work and that, at the end, there is this accidental relationship which puts an end to this work, but in all these cases, the work will be completed.

Deleuze: Yes, yes, yes, yes... I even think that we should choose, in addition, some non-sublime examples, namely non-aesthetic, non-artistic ones. This kind of apprehension, of evaluation, of time that remains, is a feeling which then is, which is a very, very, deep feeling in existence, and to what extent? It occurs with what kind of quantity; how does it occur? When people feel like they don't have much time left... [they] start organizing, how to say it, tidying up their business, putting things in their place! Oh, that's interesting. Fine, so there are those assessments.

What is very important in what Richard says, it seems to me, is that it is not an overall assessment at all. It is not linked to age, it is not linked to an age, this feeling, in fact, which comes from the depths and which makes me say: oh, well, maybe I'm reaching the end, I'm reaching the end, and this is the opposite of panic; all that is the opposite of anxiety. How to explain it? I come back to this: “death always comes from outside”; yes okay, it always comes from outside. There is no accidental death. Old age also comes from outside; all that comes from outside. It is an attrition of the external parts.

So, what is very interesting is that, on the one hand, there are the general laws of the species. I know that the species implies a particular duration, roughly, a particular overall duration, so there are general determinations of the species, but ... What does it mean that a species lasts for so long? For example, a cat lives so many years, a man lives so many years on average. What do these life averages mean? It means that there are global durations, statistical durations which mark the time according to which extensive parts belong to a particular essence. A cat essence, how long does a cat live? Ten years, twelve years ... [*A student says: Eighteen years!*] Eighteen years? [*Laughter*] Monsters, right, normally? [*Laughter*] Okay, well, those are lucky cats, eh? Eighteen years for a cat, oh là là... What a disaster! Well! Well eighteen years, it's huge, no? I think that's an exceptional cat. [*Laughter*] Humans currently live, I don't know, what's the average length of time? [*Some suggestions*] The time during which, once again, the extensive parts belong to me, in relations that characterize me.

Fine! But what makes these extensive parts belong to me and cease belonging to me, all of that is in the realm of extrinsic accidents, just that extrinsic accidents have laws. It's obvious that they have laws. So, in this sense, death is absolutely necessary, it is absolutely inevitable, but it always responds to laws that regulate the relations between parts external to each other. It's in this sense that it always comes from outside. Simply, precisely, as Spinoza says all the time: “I am a part of nature”, that is, I am open onto this entire world of exteriority. In this



sense, death is inevitable; the more it comes from the outside, the more it is needed. There we are, there we are!

Georges Comtesse: There is a problem ... [*Inaudible*] ... Death comes from outside, if it comes from outside, there is, coming from outside, an affection, [*Pause*] a mortal affection which comes from outside and which passes into the interior. The problem arises or would arise if there is an adequate idea of affection, and if the affects of which Spinoza speaks can, above all joy or sadness, can bring about an adequate idea of mortal affection as coming... that would be a problem that would arise for Spinoza. We must not forget that there are certain texts by Spinoza in which he says: he is like a sick person, and a sick person who will die, who will sink if he precisely does not find a path toward salvation. When Spinoza speaks like that in the first texts, it is not simply a death which comes from outside; it is the effect of an affection, or an impulse which causes a disease and, for this disease, a cure must be found. And the cure is a form of thought or precisely a form of knowledge, as he says. But one cannot simply say, without remaining at a very simple axiom: death simply comes from outside.

For example, for example, there are certain images which take part in affection; it's incomprehensible if one left the lethal affection within the axiom of the radical exteriority. For example, I think of a text by Henry Miller, for example, in *The World of Sex*. Henry Miller relates not an event; he is seeking, for example, as we said earlier, as some attempt to forget their whole existence, certain events, but he is speaking in *The World of Sex* of an almost unforgettable event, and that still affects him, and so he does not understand at all either what produces this affection in him, or what brings about this occurrence of affection when he thinks that it's the event, or he says when he saw the sex of a little girl for the first time, he immediately had a very strange impression that this little girl was splitting in two -- he was eight years old, he said -- this little girl was immediately splitting in two, and there arose a superimposed man with an iron mask, and this is a very strange experience. And so, well, the man in the iron mask said to him, there is a whole series starting from there, he speaks of an African mask and the same hallucination of the man in the iron mask, he says "that there must be a connection between excitement and so-called virile aggressiveness", and precisely this event there, he does not understand the connection. So here we have a type of even secondary affection which, for a writer, well, in his very experience of writing, he doesn't manage to express to himself. So, there are silent or unspeakable affections. And the problem that arises when we talk about, when we want to axiomatize death by saying that it is a death that comes from outside, it's the problem precisely both of unspeakable affection and of effects of affection that arise, and precisely series of events based on its effects.

Deleuze: Well, I admit that I understand everything you say. It may even seem very interesting, but I admit that, in my opinion, it's not at all Spinozist ...

Comtesse: Ah, but I didn't say it was Spinozist!

Deleuze: Ah okay! Because Spinoza would not speak about death that comes from outside, he does not think that, henceforth, it necessarily passes within. Because if you have understood, there is no interiority at this level in Spinoza. Everything is exterior, and it remains exterior.

The only interiority as Spinoza conceives it is -- and he uses the word -- is, instead of singular essence, he will speak of intimate essence. The singular essence is, in fact, defined by intimacy. What does that mean? It means that, insofar as it's an intensive part, it has an interiority, it has an interiority. What does its interiority consist of? Strangely enough, the interiority of a degree of power (*puissance*) is the manner in which it encompasses in itself the other degrees of power, and this is one of the great differences between extensive parts and intensive parts. Any intensive part whatsoever is a *pars intima*, that is, an intimate part. What does an intimate part mean? Once again, this is very specific; that means that a degree of



power, as such, encompasses in itself -- and the lower degrees of power, they do not get mixed in -- but it encompasses in itself both the lower degrees of power and the higher degrees of power. It's in this way that all the essences agree with each other by virtue of this intimacy of all the essences within each essence. What you said earlier, I could repeat at the level of the suitability of essences and of this intimacy of essences. So, there is an interiority at this level for Spinoza, and at the level of existence and extensive parts, there is only exteriority, there is no interiority.

So, the affects which depend on the extensive parts remain only affects of exteriority. As a result, I believe that Spinoza could not embrace the formulation that Comtesse just used, namely, "an affect from outside necessarily passes within". It cannot pass within since internal affect can only be an affect "of essence insofar as being essence", insofar as being an intensive part, insofar as being a degree of power. Whereas [for] the affects coming from outside, this can only be affects that depend on the interactions between parts external to each other. There is no communication between the two. I can go from the first kind to the second kind or to the third. An affect of the first kind, a passion affect does not pass into the interior, that is, does not become affect of essence.

So, your whole development is very interesting, with an example to raise goosebumps! You understand how Miller... Miller is a funny author in this regard, as far as what concerns us here, because there are really pages which are undoubtedly Spinozist in Miller, but he isn't a Spinoza commentator, so he is entirely within his rights. Sometimes he proceeds with the coherence of his own inspiration, [and] he has some very, very Spinozist elements of inspiration. This goes back to all of Henry Miller's pantheism, and then he has inspirations that come completely from elsewhere, if only a whole side that comes to him from Dostoevsky, and then the best, the most beautiful [is] what comes to him from within himself, namely what makes all his aspirations consistent with one another, agree with each other.

And to what extent, if you will, the whole element that you have developed is obviously non-Spinoza, it is not difficult if you remember Spinoza's ideal. Spinoza's ideal -- I did not bring it up again, but I take this opportunity to do so here -- is really that the world of inadequacy and passion is the world of equivocal signs; it's the world of obscure and equivocal signs. And what you have developed in a Miller-like style is the example of an obscure sign. And for Spinoza here, Spinoza is without any nuance: you drag yourself into the first kind of knowledge; you drag yourself through the worst existence as long as you stick to equivocal signs. Whether these signs are those of sexuality, or those of theology, or anything else, no matter where these signs come from, whether they are signs of the prophet, or signs of the lover, it's all the same. It's all the same. This is the world of equivocal signs. And, on the other hand, the entire ascent towards the second kind and the third kind of knowledge is to suppress to the maximum -- which is always to say "to the maximum" by virtue of the law of proportions; we are condemned, of course, there will always be equivocal signs, we will always be under their law, it's the same law as the law of death -- but the more you can substitute for equivocal signs, the domain of univocal expressions, and it's so ... [*Deleuze does not complete this*]

So, the problem of sex, *The World of Sex*, well obviously, Spinoza would not have written a book on the world of sex. Why wouldn't he write about the world of sex? Why is it that, for Spinoza, here, I don't need to replace him, it's obvious here that he tells us something about it, he would say to us: "Oh but it exists, it exists, sexuality exists. It's even whatever you want, whatever you want, but it's your business. Do you make it the main part of your existence or a relatively secondary part?" Why for him, he would say on his own behalf, obviously this is also a question of temperament. By nature, I believe that Spinoza was basically someone chaste, like all philosophers first of all, and especially him. I say, why? Why? It's very ingrained,



if you will, from a Spinozist perspective. For him, sexuality is inseparable from the obscurity of signs.

If there was unequivocal sexuality, ah, he would be completely in favor; it's not that he's against sexuality. If you could manage and live within unequivocal expressions in sexuality, he would say to you: "Go ahead, go ahead, that's what you have to do." But now, it turns out, is he wrong or is he right? Are there unequivocal loves? It would seem, rather, and it seems that we have gone entirely in this direction, that far from discovering resources of univocity in sexuality, we have, on the contrary, juggled, caused the equivocality of the sexual to proliferate, and it has been one of the greatest successes of psychoanalysis to develop in every sense the extraordinary equivocality of the sexual. So, the Spinoza criteria here, it's not about... It's about first understanding them. Spinoza would say: "You understand, you mustn't blame me," but Spinoza would say, tell us, "That doesn't interest me very much" because he would say: "you privilege sexuality... [one musn't] privilege sexuality to this extent because if you stick to the equivocal signs, you find them everywhere. [You] shouldn't worry about it. You can be a prophet as well, you can be a prophet, you can be perverse, you can be a prophet, you don't have to go looking for stuff about... about bisexuality, for example, or about the mystery of sex, or about the mystery of birth. Signs, take them wherever you want, if you like equivocal signs."

But once it's said that Spinozism -- if it is true what I proposed to you, is almost the interpretation, the only point of interpretation to which I held since the beginning of these sessions on Spinoza -- if really Spinozism is a practical effort that tells us, for those who would agree with such a project, with such an attempt, it tells us something that you understand: what causes your sorrow, your anguish, is precisely that you live in a world of equivocal signs. And what I, Spinoza, am proposing to you, is a kind of concrete effort to replace this world of the obscure, this world of night, this world of the equivocal sign, with a world of another nature which you are going to extract from the first, you are not going to oppose from the outside, you are going to extract from the first with great care and which is a world of unequivocal expressions.

In this, Spinoza would be quite modern, quite like us. As for sexuality, he thinks that there is not, that there is no univocal expression of the sexual. So, in a way, okay, it comes from outside, it comes from outside. That is, go ahead, but don't make it the greatest part of yourself, because if it is the greatest part of yourself, at that point, when death arrives, or as well, when impotence arrives, the legitimate impotence of age, when all this comes, well, you will lose the greatest part of yourself. Yes, Spinoza's idea is very odd; it's that ultimately, "the biggest part of myself will be which I will have done during my existence as being the biggest part of myself." So, if I choose a mortal part, if I make a mortal part the greatest part of myself, well, at the extreme, I die entirely by dying and I die in despair... [*A woman student*: Yes but...] Yes?

The student: For me, I think, so if we hold onto the knowledge of the second kind as do most, because even about this condition of the third genre, we dare not speak of it, we don't talk about it, so if we limit ourselves to this condition of the second kind, what happens, what occurs?

Deleuze: Ah, that's fine, that works as well. One should say instead, "What are we missing if we stick to the third kind?"

Student: Why? It must give us something... [*Deleuze speaks at the same time*: Yes, yes, no, yes] It must give us something...

Deleuze: Yes, that's absolutely true. What is missing is that I believe here... it's that, in the knowledge of the second kind, we understand everything... [*Pause*] about what? We understand everything about relations, and there we can go no further than in the area of



relations. What does that mean? That means that we understand the relation, the respective relations between three individuals. Why do I say between three individuals, and not between two or four? Because the relationship between three individuals is the privileged example, A, B, C. I call A, a first individual; I call B a second individual outside the first, and I call C the individual composed by A and B. See why, in this privileged example, I need three individuals. Two individuals who make up their relations necessarily form a third individual. Example: the chyle and the lymph to take Spinoza's example. The chyle and the lymph are parts of the blood; that means, there is an individual, chyle, an individual, lymph, insofar as each in a relation, insofar as their relations are composed, they compose blood, the third individual. So, the second kind of knowledge tells me everything about the relations that compose and decompose individuals.

What is it not telling me? Well, it does not inform me about the singular nature or the essence of each individual considered, namely it does not tell me what the essence of A is, what the essence of B is, let alone what the essence of C is. It tells me how C applies to A and B. You see, that's exactly it; it tells me how the nature of blood applies to the nature of chyle and the nature of lymph since chyle and lymph compose blood.

The previous student: So if I stick to the definition, something essential escapes me, that is, what the essence is, and consequently, at death, the greatest part ought to be saved; we remain [*Inaudible*], I believe.

Deleuze: Yes we do, there we are, so there, you are asking, in fact, a very, very precise question, but that, I did not develop it, not because we cannot develop it, but because that it becomes fairly theoretical. I am saying this for those who are interested in this point; it's how does one, in fact, pass according to Spinoza from the second kind to the third kind: why don't we just stay within the second kind? There, the text for those who will go all the way to book V -- what I am hoping for all here; I am pointing out something which is, given the extraordinarily difficult character of this book V, I am saying why, that the speed of demonstrations, there is something fantastic at the same time, it is a text of beauty! I mean, it's thinking that has reached a level of flight speed, at full speed; it's very curious, this book V -- well, here, if I try to decompose: the second kind proceeds through common notions. Common notions are ideas of relation; once again, this is not at all general or abstract notions; these are the characteristic notions of relations, these are the compositions of relations, that's what the common notions are.

But these are the common notions which are composed relations, which are therefore the ideas of a composition of relations that always lead us -- this is the first moment of Spinozist reasoning -- are always linked to the idea of God. That's strange, and what does it mean? It means a very simple thing: that when we want to consider notions of compositions of relations in nature, you cannot get the proper idea of a composed relation without at the same time forming an idea of God as the basis of the relations which are composed. So, you normally and necessarily go from the common notion to the idea of God as the foundation of all relations. In fact, the idea of God, is defined at this level; at this level, it would be defined like this, "the foundation of all compositions of relations".

But then you see that the idea of God is very strange in Spinoza. I mean, on the one hand, it is necessarily linked to the common notion, to the idea of relations that are composed, but on the other hand, at the same time, it is not a common notion. It's more, it's something more. So, there the idea of God becomes very bizarre, indeed. It is not the idea of the relations which are composed; it is the idea of a veritable concrete foundation for all the compositions of relations. That's fine, it's the idea of an infinite being, as founding all of the relations that are composed. The idea of God is therefore more than a relation that's composed, and yet it is linked to the idea of relations that are composed.



So, I necessarily go from the common notion, that is, from the second kind of knowledge, to the idea of God. And there, the idea of God, therefore, is exactly, I do not see any other [means] to have you understand, it is as if the idea of God had two sides in Spinoza. On one side, it is turned towards the side of common notions. In fact, it is turned to the side of common concepts because it is the foundation of all relations that are composed, and that common notions are always the enunciation of this or that relation that is composed. So, here we have one side turned towards common notions. And, I necessarily go from the common notion to the idea of God.

But once I'm in the idea of God, I realize that there is something more in the idea of God than in common notions, such that it has a side turned to something else, which is what? Namely, God as "container", as itself being an essence which contains all the essences, namely all the singular essences are encompassed in the idea of God. All the singular essences are encompassed, contained in the idea of God, such that the idea of God is like the pivot which makes us pass necessarily from the second kind to the third kind.

Does that solve everything? Yes and no, because very oddly -- and I say that to finish because it is very important in book V, if you follow -- when you read book V well, you will see that God, in book V, is successively, at several propositions distance between them, is presented as, and under, two absolutely different portraits, to the point that some have said "but all that is not okay, it's not okay, we can't contradict each other to that extent, within just few pages distance", and Spinoza feels no need whatsoever to resolve the apparent contradictions, so precisely, I believe, they are apparent. If we follow the order of the text well, we are not bothered by this.

Because in a first series of texts, he explains that we love God, but that God does not return it to us; this is an impassive God. The idea of God gives us the idea of an impassive God, who composes all relations, but who is not affected; we love it, and it does not love us, if you will. It's like a resurrection of the old Epicurean God. You don't expect it to reciprocate; it doesn't matter. And a few pages later, in the love that we have for God, the love of the third kind this time, in the love of the third kind that we have for God, it is God who itself, who loves itself, through our love for it, and it is God who loves us, through our love for it, where there we have a kind of identity of our love for God, of love of God for itself and love of God for us. What is that? This is the third kind of knowledge.

What does that mean? But the contradiction, I don't see it; it does not bother me at all in any case. I would say, the first kind of texts is the idea of God as it relates to the second kind of knowledge, and the second kind of texts is the idea of God related to the third kind of knowledge. As long as God is grasped only as the basis of relations which are composed, it is an impassive God, namely anything is composed very well, everything is good, etc. When one passes to the singular essences obviously, the idea of God changes its sense. From the second to the third kind, it cannot be the same idea of God, because this time, it is the idea of God as being an essence that contains all the essences. The absolutely infinite essence which contains all the degrees of power, the power, or as he says, "has absolutely infinite power which contains all the degrees of power". So, there is a very strong reason for God to have two successive portraits. But it's as if he made two successive pictures of a very Epicurean kind of impassive God and then, on the contrary, a mystical God, the mystical God of the third kind who, through the love we have for it, loves itself and loves us.

The previous student: And that doesn't return into this interiority of the degree of [*Inaudible*]...

Deleuze: Completely, it's the same thing; it's exactly the same thing, there you have intimacy; there is only intimacy...

Richard Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]



Deleuze: No, not really ... Yes, he calls that God, yes ...

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Common notions, here, I'll tell you, that's a very good question because all of these are very practical questions. I am translating your question; I am translating it like this for my benefit: can one be a moderate Spinozist? [*Laughter*] I mean, a moderate Spinozist would be a Spinozist who would say, well yes, I'm going that far, but I can't, it seems, forgive me, but I can't go any further. So, Richard asks us, can we be a Spinozist who remains at the second kind of knowledge and who is content with it. I am very happy with this question.

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: Ah, didn't I get that right?

Pinhas: At no time does one feel the need for this foundation. So, my question is: when and why did Spinoza experience the need for a foundation? I'm trying to understand.

Deleuze: I would say, on two levels he feels the need for a foundation because he has the intimate conviction -- since once again, we are not trying to understand theoretical reasons here -- he has the intimate conviction that the idea of God cannot be treated as a simple common notion, that the idea of God is necessarily the idea of a being both infinite and singular, that henceforth, an infinite being, common notions could give it to us, but a Being at the same time infinite and singular, no. There is something in the idea of God, it's the idea of a Being; it is not the idea of a relation. Common notions are the idea of relations of relations.

So nevertheless, I'm returning once again anyway, although I misunderstood your intervention, if I return to my question: is a mutilated, truncated Spinozism appropriate which would stop at the second kind of knowledge and which would say, "Well no, the rest, it's not okay, I'm not for the rest." I would feel very much in favor of a mutilated Spinozism. I find that at the level of common notions, it's perfect, it's fine, it's fine, for a simple reason. But at that point, there is a condition in order for there to be a truncated Spinozism. To be a mutilated Spinozism, you really have to believe that there is no essence, that there are only relations. If I believe that there are only relations and no essence, that goes without saying, the third kind of knowledge, I don't need it, not only I don't need it, but it loses all meaning. So, one has to see... You can be truncated Spinozism only if you think that, ultimately, there is no being, there are only relations.

Okay, but if you think that there is Being, if you think that the word essence is not an empty word, then you cannot stop at common notions. You cannot say that there are relations, there must be a foundation for relations, that is, relations must be grounded in Being. This is how the idea of God is more than a common notion. A common notion is an idea of relations. Saying the idea of God is both linked to common notions, but it goes beyond, it goes beyond the common notion, you see what he means, it's very simple, he means relations must indeed surpass themselves towards something that exists. There must be a Being. [*Pause*]

Pinhas: Without being radical, I would give an example, I think... We say, "okay for relations", and yet I will tell you, for example, for me as a musician, I need essences. We had seen at a certain point, several years ago, that concerning a particular type of sound, but we can also find this in painting, we have wood essence, we have metal essence, we have, in short, something that objectively goes beyond simple relations. All that does not persuade me, the fact that I myself need, practically, these essences, that the painter needs these essences to express these lights, does not imply a principle of uniqueness which would be the essence that we understand as an essence. [*Deleuze: Okay*] Ultimately, this wouldn't even be entrusted to the level of relations.

Deleuze: No, you aren't doing a truncated Spinozism, but rather you're doing a mutant Spinozism. [*Laughter*] Your radical transformation, you say, "I will keep the essences", so this is not where I would distinguish myself. I would remain much more modest, but... Eh, you



aren't keeping the essences, but you completely transform the Spinozist meaning of the word essence. So, in fact, what you yourself are calling "essence" is ultimately something which is on the order of "the event". It is "the event of wood", it is wood as an "event", and not as a thing, and Spinoza retains for the word "essence" the absolutely traditional meaning it has in philosophy, that is, "what the thing is", as opposed to the accident. On the other hand, you are making a revolution which supposes modern philosophy, namely "essence is the accident". [Pinhas tries to interrupt and contradict Deleuze] Yes, yes, yes, it is, that's what you're doing ... [Laughter] Yes it, yes, yes, yes. You're not doing that? So, what are you doing?

Pinhas: Of course, when you state that wood as an event is going to be, metal as an event, it's going to be effectively a dominant factor... [Inaudible] that we are going beyond towards something, this "towards something", it's, it's something that is not at all the domain of the event, it would be, I can say that tautologies ...

Claire Parnet: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: [to Parnet] Ah, there you want a lot ...

Pinhas: ... the idea, for example, the idea of pure metal, as opposed to the events that the metallic event can produce, [Inaudible] ... the idea of pure metal, I can't describe it, but it's something that I can conceive of.

Deleuze: Obviously, you manage to conceive of it, obviously, but what is your idea of pure metal? There we could take, I see very well, we would ask Spinoza what a metal is for him. He would give a definition through essence, and I'm sure you could give one, but it would be a definition that implies a completely different sense of essence. For me, if someone asks me, "a pure metal today, what is it?", this is essentially what could be called an "operative essence". Essence designates what emerges, what emerges from things as a result of a certain type of operation. So, what operations introduce essence? There, you will have to ask yourself that. So, fine, even if I say that, I can't say it well. But if you will, essence in the sense which seems to me current is something which is inseparable from a certain type of operation, which one causes to occur, in which one causes the thing to occur, for example, the essence of a piece of wood, and there, we can see in what sense the essence is singular, the essence of a piece of wood. This can be seen on the wood plane – I'm saying on the wood plane, but the musician would say something else; a carpenter would say it shows by shaving [the wood] -- you don't even have two woods of the same kind, which... the wood fibers... And this relation... What?

Pinhas: You're reducing the idea of essence. I really meant essence in the strong sense, [Deleuze: But, so did I!] that is, something that's not simply an operative essence. So, I'm choosing an example to try to explain because this is something quite important. Fine, when you say that a relation is eternal, that an essence is something eternal, well, I was thinking of a piece of music. A music piece does not exist until it's performed, indeed; a sound only exists as performed, but at the same time, we know very well that there is, for a completed musical form, which might be a piece that acts, a perfect piece, there is only one possible form, there is only one possible expression, that is, in fact that it be performed or not, happening [Deleuze: I had an almost (inaudible) example] the perfect form of a melody occurs, whether it is performed or not; this concerns us, but it does not concern its essence. And we can say that a perfect melody has an essence, at least I hope in any case, and at that level, when I would say that a particular melody has a metallic essence, the fact that it occurs by metallic instruments or not is only a secondary matter. So that's why the essence of this melody will be a close essence, in any case, I'm thinking of the classical essence, at least, in the classical sense of its definition, but not at all an operative essence, [Deleuze grunts, seeming to disagree] effectively afterwards, we will find some operative relations.



Deleuze: It's you who don't understand because you despise carpenters. It's obvious in what you are saying.

Pinhas: [*Inaudible*]

Deleuze: You're answering me... No, so here, be careful, here, this gets very interesting for me, because you're answering me, "we must not speak of an operative essence because the operative, it ultimately does not concern that the physical material (*matériau*)", and there, you substitute for my example of the carpenter, you substitute an example of musical piece, which is quite good, that you have explained quite well, your musical example. But I would say, if we place ourselves at the level of your musical example, it's quite obvious that [if] your melody is performed by a particular wood or rather than by a particular other one, this operational aspect is very, very secondary compared... [*Interruption; end of cassette*]⁶ [to essence. You are completely right to say that there is a melodic essence there; there is a melodic essence which is not at all confused with the materials proper to the performance of the melody. But that's at the level of your musical example. Now try to put yourself at the carpenter's level. When I say, there is the wood plane which operates on the wood, which brings out its essence.]

IV

...it's not at all because the carpenter is reduced to physical material; on the contrary, it's because at his level, the essence of the wood, the wood shaving operation on the level of carpentry, causes to emerge the equivalent of your melodic essence. It's in relation to music that you can reduce the wood shaving operation to an operation which bears only on the physical material. But if you consider this wood shaving operation in itself, it does not at all bear on a physical material.

Pinhas: I don't know if I'm going to be able to say, in the end, that the wood shaving operation on such a piece of wood is eternal. Or at some level of evidence, you can always tell me that the plane's relation to the piece of wood is eternal, that's true.

Deleuze: Exactly like a...

Pinhas: ... like, like the act of creating.

Deleuze: No, it is not the relation [to creating], no more than in music, you would not accept to say: it's the relation of the bow on the strings. The bow's relation on the strings is realization (*effectuation*), these are, these are coefficients of realization. The relation of the plane on the wood is also a certain sort of realization. But what is not at all a realization is that this operation brings out an essential difference from this particular piece of wood, even within the same kind, there are no two similar trees at this level, no two trees whose lines, fibers, have the same coefficients of resistance, the same degree of permeability, etc., etc. ... And at this level, it seems to me that there is an essence of wood, just as there was an essence of melody. But finally, we are getting bogged down in all this.

Pinhas: But fine.

Deleuze: Yes, I'm going back to your story.

Pinhas: Yes, the internal necessity at this level. I, I accept this idea, I, I accept it, I admit it, but I don't understand why ...

Deleuze: The why? Well, it's you who just said it, I don't understand, it's you who just demonstrated it masterfully...

⁶ The following sentences in brackets are absent from the BNF recording and have been furnished thanks to the alternate recording occurring at this session and published by Gallimard in the double CD (in section 8 of CD 2).



Claire Parnet: Yes indeed ...

Deleuze: You just stated it in a music story, I have my three aspects. You are saying: in a melody, I do have [Parnet: if there is an essence ...] coefficients of performance (*effectuation*) which is equivalent, there, to extensive parts in the instruments with which I incarnate, I perform my melody. [There] is indeed the system of melodic relations, and then you say, there is something more, there is an essence... [Parnet: an essence].

Pinhas: But the essence is not a foundation (*fondement*).

Parnet: But, yes it is, because aren't you the one creating it ?!

Deleuze: Isn't it indeed a foundation of relations, of melodic relations? You have the agents of the melody's performance, the melodic relations. And you are saying, there is an essence, this essence which has the disadvantage of being called foundation?

Pinhas: You understand, I am very perplexed (*ennuyé*) because I do see the need for a foundation in the sense of... behind a plane of proposition, in the most precise (*propre*) and most real sense possible, there is, there is a need for a plane of foundation. But what do I call the plane of foundation in this case? It means an articulated whole, in fact. Yes, I, I'm not sure that this, this, what I'm calling foundation in this case, this, this need for articulation, from which will emerge what is called a concept of "creation" between quotes, corresponds to the notion of foundation in, in Spinoza. I don't have that impression at all.

Deleuze: I don't understand Richard, because you seem to me to be going and you seem to be escaping in all directions.

Pinhas: But I'm looking...

Deleuze: When I propose, yes, you don't want one or the other. When I propose a modest Spinozism which would limit itself to the second kind of knowledge, you tell me: "oh well no, that's not what I want; it is necessary, I necessarily need to keep a sense of the essences". Well then, when I say to you: well, fine then, where is the problem? This is very good, then. At that point, let's maintain the integral Spinozism, and you answer me, "ah well no, I don't see how the essences are foundations." So, I start over again at that point, let's be content with a restricted Spinozism.

Parnet: That doesn't suit you.

Deleuze: And that doesn't suit you. In a way, it's very cheerful, it's what suits you; it's from yourself that you'll find it. [*Pinhas doesn't seem to agree*] You don't want to. No, but I mean, I don't get your attitude because, well then, if I tell you, okay...

Pinhas: Um, um, anyway, okay I, fine, the idea of God doesn't necessarily bother me, I'm saying, good.

Deleuze: I understand that, we don't care, everyone, that it's called that, "idea of God", that doesn't change anything. You can call it "being", you can call it "temple", you can call it whatever you want.

Pinhas: It may be me who's misunderstanding the notion of foundation in Spinoza. I must grasp this idea.

Deleuze: Foundation? [Parnet: It's easy] A foundation, it's is not difficult. There, foundation doesn't yield any particular meaning. He uses the word very rarely, eh, to my knowledge. Yes, once there is the word "foundation", in Latin; the foundation is the reason for something which differs in nature from the thing founded. This is the simplest meaning, namely, a foundation of the relation; it means: something that accounts for the relation and that is not a relation.

So why does Spinoza want a foundation for relations? Because, he thinks – and here, this is very much in line with the 17th century -- he thinks finally that relations cannot be thought on their own, that there has to be a purer, deeper Being than the relation. The relation must



ultimately be internal to something. He does not want to think of relations that would be pure exteriorities. Okay, so you, if you say, do you agree with that... Do you agree with it or not?

Pinhas: Yes, yes.

Deleuze: If you as well don't want to think about pure relationships ... In fact, what you add as a foundation is something that can be called an essence. [Pause] No? You're going to think about it, OK?

Comtesse: We could even say, perhaps, to return to this question, that in Spinoza's discourse, perhaps the idea, the very idea of crossing over signs, equivocal signs towards univocal expressions or towards a one-way or towards a world of relations, this very idea, this very crossing of signs necessarily supposes for its accomplishment, for Spinoza even to think even that it might be accomplished, there must necessarily be an idea of a truth. [Deleuze: That's for certain; there, you are right] So the absolutely infinite being must necessarily be thought of as truth, and we must also think of truth as the immanent cause of all the powers (*puissances*) of Being ... [Deleuze: I completely agree there] without which, the crossing and the one-way are not comprehensible.

Deleuze: Namely, and here to please you, you have to think of light.

Comtesse: One cannot ...

Deleuze: ... and I tried, the, it's a world, it's a world that is necessarily light.

Comtesse: One cannot think of crossing in the end without a third kind.

Deleuze: One cannot think of crossing without the third kind, okay. That, I would say -- so be it, this bothers me -- let's even say, it's not certain, but let's say and in any case, we can't think of the third kind without, a reference to light, to pure light because it's light that is the opposite of equivocity. Univocal expressions, indeed, univocal expressions, in order to be of the second kind, they are moving in any case towards an absolutely necessary medium which is the world of light where there is no more shadow. While the equivocal signs are really chiaroscuro, really the shadows, it's really all that we're saying, but a world of pure light, that's why it's Spinoza's only metaphor, perpetually light, light... What time is it?

Claire Parnet: There's a boy over there

A student: 12:30 p.m, 12:33.

Deleuze: Okay, ah, [*A student has a question that is hard to hear*] Yes, yes, yes, yes, try to speak as loud as you can.

Student 3: I wanted to talk to you about the distinction [*Inaudible*]...

Parnet: You need to speak louder.

Deleuze: I, I will repeat, if I can hear, I will repeat what he says.

Student 3: I'm saying that I would like to speak to you about the moral problem ... [*Inaudible*] ... You felt the need to introduce by doing this course with the idea of a test on the scale of life by making the distinction without, without developing it, of the morality... And I'm asking to what extent there can be in Spinoza a total distinction with morality if he defines life as progress or as actualization of the extensive parts as there are arborescences ...

Deleuze: I can answer that, because here, for me, it is relatively easy. I can answer before you're done, or else do I wait until you're done? [*Pause, negotiations between students*] So, I won't answer right away? Is there something else after that, what you have to say, or not? [*The student responds*] What?... So, go ahead, yes?

Student 3: I'm wondering precisely if, if we keep making progress in terms of essence like that, [and] if we don't have the dimension and specificity of the use of the word "essence" in Spinoza, I'm wondering if, as soon as we talk about essence, if we do not leave immanence, and we are necessarily led to, to judge the copy, to place it before a court, and [Deleuze: well ...] it is all, all the separation of dualism at the level of, of the world of equivocity, and is that pursuing the line in, in what I will call a meaningless tragic world? I wonder if there is a nuance



there that could in Spinoza ... [*Inaudible because of various background noises and voices near the microphone*]

Deleuze: Those are good questions. Oh there, in my opinion, I'm answering because, in addition, these are questions for which the answer is relatively clear this time, it seems to me. I would say this: in my opinion, in my opinion, you can always say, after all, doesn't he reintroduce something like a morality? You defined morality very well. I believe that morality cannot be between, for me, it is essentially the system of judgment. It's the judgment system. There is no other sense of morality, namely, there is a morality when I am judged from one point of view or another, whatever it is, it's the autonomy of judgment of morality.

So, I'm not saying at all that it's wrong, but that's it, something, anything that's being judged, that's morality. The book, the only moral book, there is only one moral book in the world, that's the Apocalypse. And the Apocalypse is not the story of the end of the world; it's the story of the last judgment and the preparation, the preparations for the last judgment. The moralist is a man of judgment to the point that I would even say, all judgment is moral. Judgements exist only as moral. (*Il n'y a de jugements que moraux*)

So, the objection is to say, isn't there still something in the idea of a test (*épreuve*)? I am clarifying: for Spinoza, in my opinion, he himself tells us, "there is never any autonomy in judgment". He says that formally in his theory of knowledge. And what does he mean when he says, "there is never any autonomy of judgment"? He means, judgment is never just the consequence of an idea. There is not a faculty of judging whose ideas would be the object, but what we call a judgment is nothing other than the manner in which an idea is affirmed or is mutilated. This is important.

So, there is no judgment for him; it is the same thing to say, there is no judgment, there is no autonomy of judgment, or to say, judgment is only the consequence, is only the development of the idea. And, he never returns to it, there is no judgment. And yet, he tells us, in particular, he says explicitly in a letter, he talks about existence as a test.

I think he has a very, very good idea in this regard, quite practical. He means, you know, judgments, well, the way you are judged, all that, that's not what matters. Of course, there is a system of judgment; for him, religion, morality, this is a system of judgment, and that's what he denounces. So, what does he mean when he denounces the system of judgment? He means ultimately, there is only one thing that matters, it is not the way you are judged, it is that ultimately, whatever you do, it is always you who judge yourself.

Notice what he means: but there is so much less of a problem with judgment since it's you who are judging yourself. What are you judged by? What you judge is not values that are external to you. It is the affects that come to fill up your mode of existence. You exist in this or that way. Well, this mode of existence is filled, it is realized by affects. What judges you is the nature of your kinds of sadness and joys. So, you judge yourself.

And there, Spinoza is merciless, right, because he has both extremely tender sides and then extremely hard sides; you can feel it through the texts. There are things he can't stand. He can't stand the man who causes his own suffering. He can't stand the whole race of masochists, depressive people; these he can't stand. You will say to me, [it is] easy not to stand for this. But, no, these are the questions of value attributed to this or that thing.

He thinks that this is misery, right, that it's the depths of misery, right, that the guy who fills up his existence with sad affects, well, he judges himself. In what sense? In the sense that he has created for himself the worst, the worst mode of existence. No doubt he could not have done otherwise. All that doesn't matter, but, and Spinoza goes very far; he tells us, these are people so contagious and that they want only for sadness to spread, so it's necessary to be without mercy. They are judging themselves.



In other words, there is no morality. Or I say the same thing in another way, he tells us about the test, but I made it clear in fact earlier, alas too quickly, that this is not a moral test. The moral test is the ordeal in a court. The ordeal in a court is that you are tried, you are sentenced. In the Apocalypse, this whole wonderful and horrible and, well, abject book, it's a fascinating book, so beautiful and so abominable, yes, it consists in telling us, careful, right, and then a whole system, there are secondary judgments, stays (*attentes*), it's a kind of incredible procedure which is set up in that book, the Apocalypse.

Well, that doesn't exist at all in Spinoza. The test that he talks about is something else entirely. He's talking about a test, I said, a physico-chemical test. What does this mean? There, it is not a judgment in the moral sense, that is, in a court; it's like a judgment, a self-experimentation. Self-experimentation is not even like testing a clay vase or a piece of gold. Imagine a gold piece that would test itself. When I talk about a fake coin, I'm choosing the example, you complete it, I won't develop the clay example, it's the same. Spinoza invokes the clay example.

There are many ways for a coin to be false, for a gold coin to be false. A first way to be false is it's not gold. A second way of being false, it has some gold, but not in the true proportion that defines the coin, the corresponding real coin; it has less gold than the true one. A third way of being false is the most interesting for counterfeiters, in the end, the least dangerous, because they are very difficult to prosecute at that case. The coin is correct in all respects; it has exactly the weight of gold, so what is false about it is that it was made outside the legal conditions.

Why is it interesting to make fake gold coins in this sense, in the third sense? It means that the rate is not the same, the rate for medals and the rate for coins. You see, you can therefore be a counterfeiter while still being true. You create gold coins with the same weight as the authentic coin, the same design; you are a forger precisely because you put the drawing on it. In other words, you create a medal, nobody can forbid you from making a medal; it's legal. What is not legal is that this medal has exactly the characteristics of the official piece, and you are playing on the difference in rates between the medal and the official coin. So, there are three ways for there to be a fake gold coin.

What does it mean, a piece of gold that would judge itself? It's according to the affects it has. Let's say the fake gold coin has silver affects. It is silver overlaid with a gold covering. It has silver affects. The gold piece in proportion, inaccurate, has affects of gold, but which don't complete most of it, you see? The complete piece of gold that has as much gold as the real piece has affects of gold and yet it's missing something.

Well, I would say there is a way in which each thing can be presented as judged by itself by creating the self-test. What is it to create the self-test? Well, for example, it's a sound. It's not a judgment. The potter has his clay vase, and he gives a tap. Or else the chemist puts a drop on the gold coin, right? It's a physico-chemical test. Tell me what you are made of, tell me a little. This is not a judgment; it is an experiment. Tell me a little what are you made up of, what your own sound is. So, for example, to return to the example, I tap you there, what sound does it make there? Oh, it's a funny sound, like a potter's vase, eh? So, we would see people who pass for being very elegant or very moral. If we hate them, then, of course, we pinch them.

Parnet: So, you want to pinch me?

Deleuze: No, no, no! We pinch them, and we realize that, well, we say to ourselves, it's curious, they make a funny noise, they are false, eh, they're false. And that shows in what, someone suddenly makes a gesture. Someone in a moralistic speech, someone betrays himself. That's what's so cool about judging yourself. It's, eh, when you betray yourself. Ah well, we see someone talking about pious, lofty things and then, suddenly, a boy or a girl passes by, he



has a funny glance. [Laughter] No, I'm choosing crude examples so that everyone can understand. [Laughter] We say, ah, but what is this, what is this? He has this glance that suddenly is slightly veiled; he has a long sneaky glance, we say, "oh, oh, and what is that? what is it? what does that mean?" Or else Monsieur de Charlus in Proust, right, Monsieur de Charlus in Proust, all of a sudden, has a vocal shift, and we say to ourselves: "hey, what, what's wrong with him?"... That's the physico-chemical test.

So, this is not a moral judgment; moreover, we can even have surprises. A guy there who seems normal (*comme ça*), who even plays at being little working class and who really is working class, all that. Then, there is a vocal sound all of a sudden, and we say to ourselves, it is not that he isn't working class, but it's that he has a tremendous soul; for him to say what he has just said, he has to be something else as strong, or that he has to be a prodigious artist, even if he doesn't know it, something like that, something that betrays someone. I imagine, I imagine that for Spinoza, that's sort of what he's trying to tell us.

You know, you see people exist, people's motivations in their existence, well, there are certain ways in which existence judges itself. It's a bit like that as well in Nietzsche; I'm not saying it comes down to that. When Nietzsche says, don't judge life, don't dare to judge life. He says it's awful, who are all these guys who are judging life? What does that mean? By what right do you dare to judge life? So, it's like Spinoza. They question morality because they challenge any system of judgment; they challenge any court.

But, Nietzsche's complementary idea is a very different meaning of the word "judgment", namely, if it is impossible to judge life, that's because ultimately life does not stop judging itself, and in a whole other sense of "judgment", namely, "you have the life you deserve, so don't complain, never complain". Do not complain, never complain, because ultimately the affects you have, whether they are unhappiness or joy, etc., you deserve them, not at all in the sense that you have done everything necessary for you to have them, but that's not even it. But it's in a cleverer sense, a much subtler sense, namely: "the affects that you experience refer to and suppose an immanent mode of existence". This is where the point of view of immanence is completely preserved. It is an immanent mode of existence that is assumed by the affects that you experience, and ultimately you always have the affects that you deserve by virtue of your mode of existence.

So, in that sense, ah, okay, if you, for example, the tragic ones, the cohort of depressed people I'm talking about, how do you want, it's not difficult, it's not difficult, what I'm saying is not meant badly. You cannot be depressed in the true, clinical sense of the word, even if despite yourself -- I mean despite you, because everything I am talking about, I know that it is not easy -- if despite yourself, you haven't attached a specific value to the values of the tragic and depression and collapse. If you live in a mode for which the idea of collapse has absolutely no meaning, I'm not just saying no, theoretical meaning, but no lived meaning. You can experience affects of unhappiness, as they say, you will not make a drama of it. You can't put a load of anxiety on it.

And it's never at the level of suffering, either physical or moral, that you have, that things are decided. Things are decided in a mode of existence at the level of loads (*charges*) of anxiety that, despite yourself, you place on one thing or another, and here Spinoza would be very, very, he would be like everyone else, he knows them, these loads of anxiety. So, he tells himself that wisdom about the modes of existence is for each person to manage to clarify vis-à-vis oneself into what and onto what we put our loads of anxiety, and what our own vulnerable points are.

That's kind of like the potter's test. The load of anxiety is always there where I snap, where I break, where I crack. The potter's test is to look for points of crack-up, eh? If I don't know my crack-up points... And what is the best way not to know, what is he denouncing in



the judgment and court system? It's a propagation of unhappiness that's created, the taste of unhappiness, the taste of anguish, etc., which is presented to us as a basic value, and that, Spinoza thinks that it belongs to every tribunal.

What he says there, the great Trinity, yes, the tyrant, the priest and what Spinoza calls the "priest", it's very simple, he's "the man of anguish", it is the man who says "you are wrong, you are a sinner, I will judge you". Just as Nietzsche much later will also call him, I am calling "priest" the one, the man of the judgment system, the man of the court, eh, the tyrant, the priest and the man of misfortune, that is, the tyrant, the priest, the slave. For him, that's what bad clay or fake gold coins are.

So what he is talking about is this test, yes, it's at the level: yes, you understand, eh, it's not at all that I am a judge, if I even see my best friend and suddenly, I do this to him, like this, to see how he sounds, how he sounds, and I realize with dread that someone I had seen for twenty years, whom I had thought I knew, well no, there is something there, something that I had completely missed.

So, that can be a wonderful revelation, if it's beauty, if it's an abyss, do you realize? Do we tell ourselves, ah, well then, anyway, it's always quite cheerful, quite fascinating, these moments? It's the kind of self-betrayal, we keep betraying ourselves, right, for good or for ill. So that's good; I don't know if I answered a little, but anyway, I can't answer questions like that; they are too difficult, the answer is in your heart.⁷

Comtesse: In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Nietzsche rightly denounces, concerning the problem of judgment, what he calls, the, the, the error of freedom as the most infamous ideological trick of power (*pouvoir*). And, he says this, power needs to make people believe in individual freedom in order to make people believe that whether they have individual freedom or who believe it to be possible, that individual people are responsible. They need, it needs people to be responsible so that they feel guilty; it needs them to feel guilty in order to be able to operate both its judgment of condemnation and its punishment.

Deleuze: That's signed Spinoza; that's the point where Nietzsche really encounters Spinoza. That is, in Spinoza, you find exactly the same criticism of "freedom" as subject to the same use. Tell me, I'm very perplexed... [Deleuze responds to another student] Yes, right away, yes, yes, yes, yes?

A student: [Inaudible]

Deleuze: Okay, good. So, there's something rather perplexing. I expected to have finished this, but I haven't finished. Ah well, and I would like to move on [Parnet: Us too], so, the time, the next session, I will do it there really, as a conclusion of conclusions, and then, I will do that, I will speak a little about that and about ontology, but, whatever happens, I have to finish next time, whatever happens! [End of session]⁸

⁷ Although I have limited notes on the Gallimard CDs editing to the augmented French transcription, I should note that the Gallimard recording ends right here, rather than about a minute later following the final comments.

⁸ Note: While the transcription has been fully completed by Yaëlle Tannau (Part 1), Cecile Lathuillère (Part 2), Suzanne Larrieu & Véronique Boudon (Part 3), and Guy Nicolas (Part 4) at Paris 8, the translation has been newly developed, in April 2020.

This lecture session was also developed, by Richard Pinhas (of Web Deleuze) and Claire Parnet for publication as two CDs, *Spinoza: Immortalité et éternité* (Gallimard, 2001), in edited form. The augmented French transcription provides time markers corresponding both to the BNF recording and the Gallimard edited recording.