room for this equation in Deleuze's Spinoza—not even as a point of opposition. Being is never indeterminate; it brings with it immediately all the freshness and materiality of reality. I would argue that here, with this real conceptual autonomy from the Hegelian problematic, we can recognize a significant evolution of Deleuze's thought. In the earlier Bergson studies, we noted a certain equivocation on this issue. There was a tendency for Deleuze, along with Bergson, to oppose determination, and to affirm indetermination instead. The proposition of indetermination allowed that being would not be restricted or constrained by an external cause. Both aspects of this position, the opposition to determination and the acceptance of indetermination, have proved to be problematic. In effect, in opposing the rhythm of the dialectical process of determination, Deleuze was accepting its opposite (indetermination), and thus remained locked on the dialectical terrain. However, in the Spinozian context, we find that determination and indetermination are equally inadequate terms. Singularity is the concept that marks the internal difference, the real distinction that qualifies absolutely infinite being as real without recourse to a dialectic of negations. The concept of singularity constitutes the real dislocation from the Hegelian theoretical horizon.

This difference in the two interpretations of the Spinozian substance continues and develops in the interpretations of the attributes. To a great extent, Hegel's reading of the attribute follows directly from his interpretation of substance: Since substance is an infinite indetermination, the attribute serves to limit substance, to determine it (*Science of Logic* 537). Hegel conceives of the theoretical movement from substance to the attributes as the shadow image of the dialectic of determination, which is doomed to failure because it omits the fundamental play of negations. Deleuze's reading of the attribute moves in a very different direction, again based on his different interpretation of substance. Since, in his view, substance is already real and qualified, there is no question of determination, but rather, according to Deleuze, the attributes fill the role of expression. Through the attributes we recognize the absolute immanence or expressivity of being. Furthermore, the infinite and equal expressions constitute the univocity of being, in that it is always and everywhere expressed in the same voice.

If the central issue in the interpretation of substance is determination, the interpretation of the attributes focuses on emanation. Deleuze's theory of expression effectively constitutes a challenge to Hegel's judgment that Spinozism is an "oriental conception of *emanation*" (*Science of Logic* 538). According to Hegel, the Spinozian movement of being is an irrecuperative series of degradations: "The process of emanation is taken only as a *happening*, the becoming only as a progressive loss" (539). Deleuze of-

fers us a response to this Hegelian critique in the form of an extended analysis of the relation between emanation and immanence in the history of philosophy. As one might expect, this Deleuzian history of philosophy completely disregards the Hegelian and dialectical tradition, by considering only positive ontological processes. This positive movement is precisely what philosophies of emanation and immanence share: Both are animated by an internal causality. "Their common characteristic is that neither leaves itself: they produce *while remaining in themselves*" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 171). Since being is singular, its production can involve no other. Nonetheless, there is an important difference in the way in which the emanative cause and the immanent cause produce. "A cause is immanent . . . when its effect is 'immanate' [immané] in the cause, rather than emanating from it. What defines an immanent cause is that its effect is in it—in it, of course, as in something else, but still being and remaining in it" (172). The difference between the essence of the immanent cause and the essence of its effect, therefore, can never be interpreted as a degradation: At the level of essences, there is an absolute ontological equality between cause and effect. In an emanative process, on the other hand, the externality of the effect with respect to the cause allows for a successive degradation in the causal chain and an inequality of essences.

We can clearly see at this point that Spinoza's ontology is a philosophy of immanence, not emanation. The essential equality of immanence demands a univocal being: "Not only is being equal in itself, but it appears equally present in all beings" (173). Immanence denies any form of eminence or hierarchy in being: The principle of the univocity of the attributes requires that being be expressed equally in all of its forms. Therefore, univocal expression is incompatible with emanation. What Deleuze's explanation makes clear is that Spinoza's ontology, a combination of immanence and expression, is not susceptible to the Hegelian critique of the dispersion, the "progressive loss" of being. Deleuze explains this with the terms of medieval philosophy, citing Nicholas of Cusa: "God is the universal complication, in the sense that everything is in it; and the universal explication, in the sense that it is in everything" (175). The immanence and expression of Spinozism, according to Deleuze, presents a modern version of this medieval couple, *complicare-explicare*. Inasmuch as expression is an explicative or centrifugal movement, it is also a complicative or centripetal movement, gathering being back within itself. Deleuze's analysis, then, not only presents Spinoza as an alternative logic of ontological speculation, but also provides us with the terms to respond to the Hegelian critique of Spinoza.

We have thus far treated Deleuze's reading of the opening of the *Ethics* (roughly as far as IP14), which presents in compact form the principles of ontological speculation. We should be very clear about the simplicity of

what has been developed thus far: "a logical constitution of substance, a 'composition' in which there is nothing physical" (79). This logical constitution developed in the opening of the *Ethics* consists of two principles: singularity and univocity. We can affirm this same claim in another way by saying that in the opening of the *Ethics*, Spinoza shows that the definition of God (D6) is not merely a nominal definition, but a real definition: "This is the only definition that presents us with a nature, the expressive nature of the absolute" (81). Through the expression of the absolute as singular and univocal, Spinoza accomplishes a logical constitution of the idea of God. If we read this theological terminology in a traditional sense, though, we will certainly be disappointed. Bergson, for one, reacts to the purely logical character of Spinoza's presentation: "The God of the first part of the *Ethics* is engendered outside of all experience, as a circle would be for a geometrician who has never seen one" (quoted in Mossé-Bastide, "Bergson et Spinoza" 71, from Bergson's course at the Collège de France, 1912). Spinoza is not, however, constructing an image or idea of God in any conventional sense. He is excavating being in order to discover the real ontological principles of speculation. What Spinoza has arrived at is simply the fundamental genetic principles, singularity and univocity, that guide the production and constitution of being. There is nothing hypothetical about the opening of the *Ethics*, then; instead, it is a speculative development of the genetic sequence of being, "a genealogy of substance" (Deleuze, "Spinoza et la méthode générale de M. Gueroult" 432). The principles that demonstrate the reality of the definition of God (D6) are those of the life of substance itself; they are the a priori constitution of being (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 81). When Deleuze says that this definition is a genetic definition, he means precisely that the principles of being are active and constructive: From these principles being itself unfolds.

This is all we know about being (about God) at this point in the analysis: It is singular and it is univocal. There is an implicit polemic in this affirmation about the nature and the limits of speculation. The truths that we can learn through speculation are very few and very simple. Speculation does not constitute the world or construct being; it merely can provide us with the fundamental principles by which being is constituted. Spinoza is clearly conscious of this fact, and if we demand more of his speculation we are bound to be disappointed, as Bergson is, with his "God made of ice." Spinoza's real constitution of being takes place in another field of activity, in an ontological practice, which is autonomous from the field of speculation. On this point, we can see clearly why Spinozian thought is not recuperable within a Hegelian (or within any idealist) framework. Ontological speculation is not productive; it is not constitutive of being. Speculation

merely traces the contours of being's productive dynamic. Soon we will turn our attention to the constitutive nature of Spinozian practice, but first we should investigate a third and final ontological principle: the principle of the powers of being, without which Spinoza's thought would remain speculative and never make the conversion to a practical philosophy.

### 3.3 The Powers of Being

The seeds of the Spinozian principle of power can be found in the a posteriori proofs of the existence of God. Deleuze prepares his treatment of these proofs by first presenting the Cartesian a priori proof as a framework. Descartes's proof is based on the quantities of perfection or reality: A cause must have at least as much reality as its effect; the cause of an idea must have at least as much formal reality as the idea has objective reality; now I have the idea of an infinitely perfect being; and so on. Deleuze claims that Spinoza takes up this Cartesian proof in his *Short Treatise* with an original modification. Like Descartes, Spinoza begins from the idea of God and asserts that the cause of this idea must exist and contain formally all that the idea contains objectively (*Short Treatise* I:3). However, the Cartesian axiom about the quantities of perfection or reality is not sufficient to support this proof. In its place, Spinoza substitutes an axiom of power that links the power to think with the power to exist or act: "The intellect has no more power to know than its objects have to exist and act; the power to think and know cannot be greater than a necessarily correlative power of existing" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 86, modified). Deleuze presents this a priori proof of the *Short Treatise*, however, as merely a midpoint in Spinoza's development.

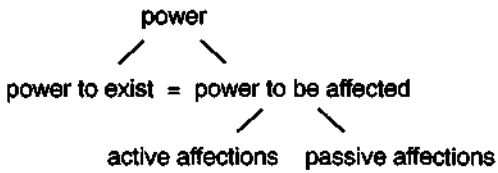
The axiom of power attains a mature deployment in the a posteriori proofs in the *Ethics*. Spinoza offers three demonstrations of the proposition that God necessarily exists, but Deleuze is primarily interested in the third because in this proof Spinoza no longer passes through the idea of God and the power to think, but begins directly with the power to exist. Spinoza's argument proceeds as follows: (1) To be able to exist is to have power; (2) it would be absurd to say that finite beings exist while an absolutely infinite being does not exist, because that would be to say that the finite beings are more powerful; (3) therefore, either nothing exists or an absolutely infinite being also exists; (4) since we exist, an absolutely infinite being necessarily exists (IP11D3). The importance of this proof for our purposes is not its logical coherence, but rather its use of "the power to exist" in the logical foundation. Spinoza makes power a principle of being.

Power is the essence of being that presents essence in existence. The intimate nexus in Spinoza that unites cause, power, production, and es-

sence is the dynamic core that makes his speculative system into a dynamic project. "The identity of power and essence means: power is always act or, at least, in action [*en acte*]" (93). God produces as it exists. Many commentators have recognized in Spinoza's conception of power a naturalism that is in direct opposition to Descartes, and that draws on the work of Renaissance thinkers such as Giordano Bruno. Ferdinand Alquié, for example, explains that this Spinozian nexus constitutes an active principle: "Spinoza's nature (is) above all spontaneity, an active principle of development" (*Nature et vérité* 9).[9] Deleuze accepts this conception of Spinoza's naturalism, but for him it presents only half the picture. In effect, Deleuze complements the reference to Renaissance naturalism with a second reference, a reference to modern materialism (Hobbes, in particular). Spinoza's conception of power is not only a principle of action, Deleuze claims, but also, to the same extent, a principle of affection. In other words, the essence of nature as power implies equally a production and a sensibility: "All power bears with it a corresponding and inseparable power to be affected" (93). Power in Spinoza has two sides that are always equal and indivisible: the power to effect and the power to be affected, production and sensibility. Therefore, Spinoza can add a second aspect to the affirmation of the a posteriori proof of God: Not only does God have an absolutely infinite power to exist, God also has the power to be affected in an absolutely infinite number of ways.

This is precisely the point at which, in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze identified a link between Spinoza and Nietzsche (62). A will to power is always accompanied by a feeling of power. Furthermore, this Nietzschean pathos does not involve a body "suffering" from passions; rather, pathos plays an active, productive role. The Spinozian couple power-affectivity echoes some of these Nietzschean elements. Our use of the term "sensibility" to try to describe the power to be affected may well be misleading. An affection in Spinozian terminology may be an action or a passion, depending on whether the affection results from an internal or an external cause. Therefore, the power to exist of a mode always corresponds to a power to be affected, and this power to be affected "is always filled, either by affections produced by external things (called passive affections), or by affections explained by the mode's own essence (called active affections)" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 93, modified). The plenitude of being, in Spinoza as in Nietzsche, means not only that being is always and everywhere fully expressed, without any transcendental and ineffable reserve, but also that the power to be affected, which corresponds to the power to exist, is completely filled with active and passive affections.

These two distinctions constitute our initial essay in discerning the internal structure of power.




We can begin to see at this point how Spinoza's proposition of the equivalence between the power to exist and the power to be affected can lead us toward a practical theory. To understand the nature of power we have to discover the internal structures of power; but when we investigate the first side of the equation, the power to exist, power appears as pure spontaneity. Its structure is opaque to us, and our analysis is blocked. However, once Spinoza has proposed the equivalence between the power to exist and the power to be affected, we can shift our investigation to the other side of the equation. Here we find a truly differentiated structure and a rich terrain for our analysis. When we pose the question of cause in this context, we find a real distinction: Our power to be affected is constituted by active affections (internally caused) and passive affections (externally caused). Immediately, this distinction suggests the outlines of an ethical, and ultimately practical, project: How can we favor active affections so that our power to be affected will be filled to a greater extent with active rather than passive affections? At this point, however, we are unable to address this task, because we still know too little about the structure of power.

Nonetheless, we should note that Spinoza's principle of power always presents itself as a principle of conversion—a conversion from speculation to practice, from the analysis of being to the constitution of being. Spinoza's power enters the scene at the hour of midnight, at the moment of Nietzsche's transmutation. This conversion is possible because Spinoza's analysis of the internal structure of power, pressing the question of the causal dynamic at every point, illuminates the real steps that we can take in constituting ourselves and our world through practice. We must be patient, though, and not jump too far ahead. With Spinoza's proposition of the principle of power, we have only opened the door (or as Althusser might say, "nous avons ouvert des voies") toward the development of an ontological practice. At present, there is more work to be done in order to prepare this terrain; we must turn back to the three ontological principles we have identified—singularity, univocity, and power—and develop them into a full speculative logic of being.

## Ontological Expression

### 3.4 The Interpretation of the Attributes: Problems of a Materialist Ontology

As we have seen, the Spinozian theory of the attribute solves many problems; but it also raises many others. One of the most serious difficulties that it poses is the threat of an idealist or subjectivist tendency in Spinoza's thought. What is most important to Deleuze in this regard is to maintain a strictly materialist interpretation of Spinoza's ontology (and we will see that there are several tensions involved with maintaining this position). This discussion will help us flesh out the role that materialism plays in Deleuze's thought.

Materialism should never be confused with a simple priority of body over mind, of the physical over the intellectual. Rather, materialism repeatedly appears in the history of philosophy as a corrective to idealism, as a denial of the priority of mind over body. Spinoza corrects Descartes just as Marx corrects Hegel. This materialist correction is not an inversion of the priority, but the proposition of an equality in principle between the corporeal and the intellectual. Deleuze makes clear that this refusal of the priority of the intellect serves to point toward and reinforce the priority of being equally over all of its attributes (thought, extension, etc.). From this perspective, the only true ontology must be materialist. Any privilege of the intellect, in other words, would subvert the ontological structure of the system, so that not only matter but also being itself would somehow be dependent on thought. Deleuze finds it necessary, then, to combat an idealist account of being not only in order to valorize the material world, but more important to preserve the coherence of the ontological perspective. The intellectual and the corporeal are equal expressions of being: This is the fundamental principle of a materialist ontology.

In the context of the Spinozian system, we can identify the central issue in the very definition of the attribute: "By attribute I understand *what the intellect perceives of a substance*, as constituting its essence" (*Ethics* ID4, my emphasis). One of the problems that presents itself immediately is that the definition grants a certain priority to the attribute of thought over the other attributes: Thought is the means of perceiving all the attributes of substance, including thought itself. Several examples illustrating the role of the attribute, such as those in Letter 9 to Simon de Vries, give an even more problematic explanation. In this letter, Spinoza offers two examples of how in the attributes "one and the same thing can be designated by two names." The first of these two is perhaps the more problematic: "I say that by Israel I understand the third patriarch; I understand the same by Jacob,

the name that was given him because he had seized his brother's heel." The distinction here is merely nominal and, more important, the difference resides not in the object perceived but in the perceiving subject, not directly in being but in the intellect.

In Spinoza studies there is a long-standing controversy over the interpretation of the attributes.[10] The nucleus of the dispute involves the position of the attribute with respect to substance on one side, and with respect to the intellect on the other: It is a question of the priority of *ratio essendi* and *ratio cognoscendi*. The idealist or subjectivist interpretation defines the attribute primarily as a form of knowledge, and not as a form of being. Hegel's presentation in the *Science of Logic* is the seminal reading in this tradition.[11] As we noted earlier, Hegel conceives of the attribute as the determination or limitation of substance that is dependent on the intellect and that "proceeds outside the absolute" (538), that is, "which appears as external and immediate over against substance" (537). Martial Gueroult points out that there is a logical contradiction in this reading that weakens the foundations of Spinozian ontology: The attributes cannot be dependent on the intellect because the intellect is a mode of thought, and therefore ontologically posterior to the attributes. "In fact, if the attributes were to result from the idea that the intellect had of substance, the intellect would be anterior to them, and consequently anterior to the attribute of which it is a mode, which is absurd" (I, 50). Hegel himself recognizes this contradiction, but seems to credit it to an error in the Spinozian system rather than to a fault of his interpretation (*Science of Logic* 537). However, the primary issue at stake here, I would maintain, is not the logical contradiction of the subjectivist reading, but rather the priority that it grants to the intellect. The question, I repeat, is the relative import of the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi* in the system as a whole. What is at stake, in other words, are the very terms of a materialist ontology, an ontology that does not found being in thought.

Deleuze provides us with an alternative reading of the Spinozian attributes—an objectivist, ontological interpretation. According to Deleuze, when Spinoza presents the attribute as merely a way of knowing or conceiving, as in Letter 9, he is giving only a partial or simplified explanation of the attribute's real role (61). The attribute does not depend on the intellect; on the contrary, the intellect plays only a secondary role in the functioning of the attributes, as an objective and invisible agent of representation. "All formally distinct attributes are referred by the intellect to an ontologically single substance. But the intellect only reproduces objectively the nature of the forms it apprehends" (65). In other words, the relation of the attributes to substance is prior to and independent of the intellect's apprehension of this relation; the intellect merely reproduces in

objective or cognitive terms the primary ontological relation. The *ratio essendi* is prior to the *ratio cognoscendi*. This objectivist interpretation succeeds in preserving the ontological integrity of the system, and it resolves the contradiction posed by granting a foundational role to the intellect in the theory of the attributes. Nonetheless, we must recognize that we cannot maintain this thesis without a certain strain. Let us return, for example, to the definition of the attributes: "By attribute I understand *what the intellect perceives of a substance*, as constituting its essence" (*Ethics* ID4, my emphasis). How can the objectivist interpretation account for this "quod intellectus de substantiâ percipit" without giving a foundational role to the intellect? (And we should note that reference to the original Latin offers us no way out in this dilemma.) Furthermore, even if we are to accept the intellect as secondary in the foundation of the attribute, how are we to understand what Deleuze describes as its "objective reproduction" of the nature of the forms it apprehends? This "reproduction" is certainly a very weak conception of expression.

Deleuze does not seem to be disturbed by these problems (or perhaps he is determined not to be sidetracked by them), and he does not treat this issue in any depth. What is clear, however, is the insistence of Deleuze's effort to preserve the ontological integrity of the system and combat any priority of thought over the other attributes, even when this effort seems to go against clear statements in the text. The stakes here go well beyond the realm of Spinoza studies, and refer instead to the nature of the return to ontology central to Deleuze's philosophy and the radical difference it marks with respect to other contemporary philosophical positions. Deleuze's philosophy has to be recognized in its difference from both the idealist ontological tradition and any deontological approach to philosophy; instead, through the interpretation of the attributes Deleuze is working out the dimensions of a materialist ontology.

### Remark: Speculative Production and Theoretical Practice

When we broaden our perspective beyond the specific questions of Spinoza interpretation, we can see that Deleuze's objectivist reading marks him as radically out of sync with the intellectual movements of his time, as sustaining a precariously minoritarian theoretical position. The intellectual hegemony in 1960s France of the "masters of suspicion," the partisans of the trilogy Marx-Nietzsche-Freud,[12] although to a certain extent anti-Hegelian, nonetheless (if we can allow ourselves a transposition to the terrain of the Spinozian controversy) have to be counted on the side of a subjectivist reading of the attributes. The various *mots d'ordre* that sprang up from different camps throughout the French intellectual scene in this

period all insist on the foundational role of the intellect, of the *ratio cognoscendi*; consider, for example, the importance of the widespread discourse on "vision," on the seen and the non-seen, or rather the focus on "interpretation" as a privileged field of investigation. Deleuze's proposition of an objectivist ontological speculation in Spinoza runs counter to this entire stream of thought. The general trend, in fact, seems to constitute a forceful attack on Deleuze's position.

So as not to fall into abstract generalization, let us briefly investigate Althusser's reading of Marx as an example—perhaps not a representative example, but certainly one that was influential. One element that Althusser wants to bring into focus, and to bring into question, is the act of reading itself: reading Marx's *Capital*, reading the classical economists, reading capitalist society. Althusser wants us to find in Marx a revolution in the theory of knowledge: "We must completely reorganize the idea we have of knowledge, we must abandon the specular myths of immediate vision and reading, and conceive knowledge as a production" (*Reading Capital* 24). We can distinguish two elements in Althusser's effort to conceive of knowledge as a production. First, we must grasp that there is a distinction between the object of knowledge and the real object—or, to follow Althusser in a Spinozian example, there is a distinction between the idea of a circle and a really existing circle (40ff.). As a second step, however, we must recognize that the importance of this distinction lies in the fact that the two domains exist under different conditions: While the real object is given, the thought object is produced in a specific relation to reality. "No doubt there is a relation between *thought*-about-the-real and this *real*, but it is a relation of knowledge" (87). Althusser's insistence on the centrality of *ratio cognoscendi* is a characteristic central to phenomenological speculation. Before we can consider real things in themselves, according to phenomenologists, we must consider how these things are presented to our consciousness, to our intellect. This is where the Spinozian attribute reappears at the heart of the discussion: "quod intellectus de substantiâ percipit." Althusser's strategy of reading, along with phenomenological speculation in general, coincides perfectly with a subjectivist interpretation of the attribute. Subjectivist reading puts an end to the myth of pure speculation, of a "specular" speculation: There is no innocent or objective reading of the world, of society, of political economy.

At first sight, Althusser's critique, which in this respect is representative of a general intellectual movement, seems to fall directly and heavily on Deleuze's objectivist reading of the attributes. Deleuze gives the intellect precisely the "specular" role that Althusser denounces: "The intellect only *reproduces objectively* the nature of the forms it apprehends" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 65). How can Deleuze possibly maintain the

theory of a specular, objective intellect? How, when the entire French philosophical community is focusing on the *productive* nature of knowledge, can Deleuze relegate the apprehension of the intellect to a *reproductive* role? We are certainly faced with conflicting positions here. Deleuze's philosophy is not a phenomenology. However, when we examine the matter closely, we find that in certain respects the Althusserian critique does not, in fact, directly address Deleuze's argument. First of all, Deleuze is not ignoring the centrality of production; rather, he gives the functioning of the intellect a reproductive role in the theory of the attribute, because the primary production is elsewhere. We have emphasized throughout our reading of Deleuze's various works that his ontology is founded on the conception that being is a productive dynamic. In the Bergson study, we related this conception to the causal discourse of the Scholastics, and in Spinoza we can trace it to Renaissance naturalism. We could summarize Deleuze's ontology in precisely these terms: Being is productive in direct, immediate, and absolutely positive terms. Every discussion of causality and difference is based on this foundation. With this in mind, we can interpret Deleuze's position on the *reproductive* role of the intellect as principally an affirmation of the *productive* role of being. Thus, we can hazard a preliminary Deleuzian response to our first Althusserian critique: Bringing cognitive production to center stage in philosophy masks the fundamental productive dynamic of being that is really antecedent to the intellect, in logical and ontological terms.

This first response, however, can only serve partially to deflect the critique, not answer it. We can approach a more adequate explanation of Deleuze's position if we bring into question the *domain* proper to speculation. Deleuze's speculation does claim an objective representation, but it applies merely to a very specific terrain. Society, capital, and its economy are not appropriate objects of speculation; rather, in Deleuze, speculation is brought to bear exclusively on ontological issues, and, as we have insisted, it arrives at very few, and very simple, ontological principles. Against a phenomenological speculation, Deleuze poses a purely ontological speculation. What would it mean to conceive of this ontological speculation as production? We would have to say, in line with a subjectivist ontology, that singularity, univocity, and power are not principles of being (as real objects), but rather products of our intellectual activity (as objects of our knowledge). In other words, we would have to say that they are not actually principles of being, but rather "quod intellectus de substantiâ percipit." This subjectivization of being would undermine the ontological foundation of the Spinozian system in its entirety. The objectivist interpretation of the attributes claims simply that there are certain principles of being that are prior to, and independent of, the productive power of thought;

these principles constitute the field of speculation. Deleuze, then, tries to preserve the specificity of ontology within its specific domain. What lies outside of the realm of ontological speculation is treated by Deleuze in empirical terms—it will be the foundation of Deleuze's conception of practice.

This second Deleuzian response, however, is still open to a further Althusserian critique. The recognition of the production involved in knowledge and its distinction from reality, according to Althusser, is the defining factor of all materialism: "If we do not respect it, we inevitably fall into either speculative idealism or empiricist idealism" (*Reading Capital* 87). Althusser's materialist and phenomenological speculation is precisely what allows him to propose his famous concept of practice within theory, "the theory of theoretical practice." The objectivist interpretation of the attributes, on the contrary, banishes practice from the field of speculation. Deleuze's thought, then, appears as idealism on both sides of this practico-theoretical synthesis: a speculative idealism and an empirical idealism held loosely together in one philosophy. Clearly, Deleuze's conception of practice does not escape Althusser's indictment: "It is enough to pronounce the word *practice*, which, understood in an ideological (empiricist or idealist) way, is only the mirror image, the counter-connotation of *theory* (the pair of 'contraries' practice and theory composing the two terms of a specular field), to reveal the play on words that is its seat" (57-58). From this perspective, Deleuze's practice, which pretends to be autonomous from speculation, is merely the compliant specular counterpart to objectivist and idealist speculation in a fraudulent word game. Drawing on one of Althusser's favorite texts, the *Theses on Feuerbach*, we have to level the accusation that Deleuze's philosophy can have no practical power; it can merely attempt to think the world, not change it.

With the critique of practice, we have touched the heart of the matter, but we do not yet have control of the terms to investigate it further. Althusser's challenge can serve, for the present, as a critical axis to orient our discussion and highlight the difference marked by Deleuze's approach. Pure ontology and absolute materialism: These are the complementary positions that Deleuze sustains against the tide of his contemporaries.

### 3.5 Combatting the Privileges of Thought

We must return now to consider in greater depth Deleuze's treatment of the Spinozian attributes. The stakes in the discussion of the attributes should be clear. The objectivist interpretation of the attributes seems open to the critique from a phenomenological perspective that it implies an ide-

alist conception of ontology and thus precludes a theoretical practice, or any real notion of practice. Deleuze's concerns, however, point in a very different direction. The real danger, according to him, is that the attribute of thought be given a priority over the other attributes, that the mind be given priority over the body. This intellectualist conception of ontology would not only destroy the univocity of being, but would also subordinate any material and corporeal conception of being to the intellectual realm. This discussion will necessarily be complex, and at points Deleuze's interpretation will seem strained with respect to Spinoza's text, but this complexity and this tension should only indicate to us how important this point is for Deleuze's philosophy, how important it is to combat the privileges of thought.

Deleuze articulates his idea of the equality of the attributes through a theory of ontological parallelism.[13] The idea of a parallelism of the attributes should not be considered as another principle of being; rather, it is simply a logical extension or development of the idea of the univocity of being. If being is always and everywhere said in the same way, then the attributes must be equal expressions. In other words, if, viewed from above, univocity appears as the absolute uniformity of the whole, then viewed from below it appears as the equal participation of all the constituent parts. We can identify three elements that constitute Deleuze's theory of ontological parallelism: autonomy, equality, and unity.

The autonomy of the attributes should be understood foremost as a rejection of the Cartesian conception of the primacy of the mind over the body. Spinoza claims, in opposition to Descartes, that the mind neither controls nor suffers from the body, and similarly the body neither controls nor suffers from the mind. There is a real separation between the attributes. Spinoza conceives the mind, then, as a "spiritual automaton" (*Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* 85) because in thinking the mind obeys only the laws of thought (cf. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 140). The same, of course, must be said of the body: The body is a corporeal automaton because in movement and rest the body obeys only the laws of extension. This conception of the autonomy of the attributes rests on one of the principles of efficient causality: Insofar as two things are different, one cannot be the cause of the other (cf. *Ethics* IP3). The attributes, then, constitute independent series of cause and effect.

The proposition of parallelism, however, goes beyond a mere separation between the attributes. "The order and connection of ideas is *the same* as the order and connection of things" (IIP7, emphasis mine). Spinoza's proposition claims not only that the attributes are autonomous, but also that they are organized in a parallel order: "And indeed, identity of connection means not only the autonomy of corresponding series, but an

isonomy, that is, an equality of principle between autonomous or independent series" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 108). A second component of parallelism, then, is the establishment of an equality of principle among all the attributes, specifically between the two attributes accessible to us, thought and extension. This is the complete rejection of the Cartesian position: Not only is the body formally independent of the mind, but it is also equal to the mind in principle. We must understand equality of principle here in terms of ontological participation. The body and the mind both participate in being in autonomous and equal ways. Once again, this proposition follows directly from the principle of univocity: Corporeality and thought are equal expressions of being, said in the same voice.

We can already recognize that equality does not suffice to explain ontological parallelism. The different attributes are not only equal expressions of being; they are, in a certain sense, *the same expression*. In other words, the modes of the various attributes are the same from the point of view of substance.

> God produces things in all attributes at once: he produces them in the same order in each, and so there is a correspondence between modes of different attributes. But because attributes are really distinct this correspondence, or identity of order, excludes any causal action of one on another. Because the attributes are all equal, there is an identity of connection between modes differing in attribute. Because attributes constitute one and the same substance, modes that differ in attribute form one and the same modification. (110)

The substantial modification (*modificatio*) is the unity of modes that are produced in parallel in the different attributes by a single affection of substance. The concept of the modification itself is the demonstration of what Deleuze calls the *ontological* parallelism: The modes produced autonomously and equally in the different attributes appear as a unity from the point of view of substance in the form of the substantial modification (see *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*). In Deleuze's interpretation, this theory of Spinozian parallelism functions not so much as an analysis of the organization of being,[14] but rather as a central lesson for speculation, one that will guide us throughout our study of the *Ethics*: Every proposition we affirm with regard to one of the attributes must be affirmed equally with regard to the other attribute. In other words, each time we recognize an aspect of the structure or function of the mind, we must ask ourselves how we can recognize a parallel structure or function of the body, and vice versa. (For example, if we are to affirm a certain nature of a true idea of the mind, we must also affirm a parallel nature of a true act of the body.)[15]

Deleuze's reading of ontological parallelism is an original interpretation in Spinoza studies. The beautiful simplicity of it consists in the fact that it follows very directly from the principle of univocity. If being is expressed always and everywhere in the same voice, then all its attributes must be structured as parallel expressions; the substantial unity of the modification, which straddles the different attributes, testifies to the univocity of being. Furthermore, the difficulties that we focused on earlier regarding the priority of thought in the foundation of the attribute seem to be resolved (or at least left behind) by the theory of the equality and ontological parallelism of the attributes. We should recognize, nonetheless, that while Deleuze's interpretation fits very well with the general spirit of Spinoza's ontological system, it does not agree with Spinoza's actual statement in Proposition 7: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (IIP7). Deleuze recognizes that here Spinoza is not proposing an ontological parallelism, but rather an *epistemological* parallelism (99). This parallelism is not established equally among the various attributes, but rather it focuses primarily on the attribute of thought, establishing the relationship between an idea and its "object" ("res ideata, objectum ideae"). The problem is posed most clearly in the corollary of this proposition: "God's actual power of thinking is equal to its actual power of acting" (P7C). To appreciate the depth of this problem, we must keep in mind that "action" in Spinoza's terminology does not refer only to the movement and rest of the body, but equally to all the attributes. (See, for example, IIID3.). This formula of P7C, then, is proposing an equality, but not the equality of the mind and the body; on the contrary, the essence of thought (the power of thinking) is equated to the essence of being (the power of acting). Therefore, we are thrown back on the same problematic terrain of the subjectivist interpretation of the attribute.

Deleuze certainly recognizes this as a serious problem. Once again we are confronted by what seems to be a Spinozian tendency to privilege thought over the other attributes. The theory of epistemological parallelism, Deleuze claims, "forces us to confer on the attribute of thought a singular privilege: this attribute must contain as many irreducible ideas as there are modes of different attributes; still more, as many ideas as there are attributes. This privilege seems in flagrant contradiction with all the demands of ontological parallelism" (114). The privilege that seems to be accorded to thought here goes against the general design of the ontological system. In a first attempt to resolve this problem, Deleuze explains that in the scholium to this proposition Spinoza proceeds from the epistemological parallelism to the ontological parallelism, generalizing the case of thought (of the idea and its object) to all of the attributes. In this way, Deleuze proposes epistemological parallelism as secondary, as merely a

"detour" (99) for reaching ontological parallelism, the more profound theory. This reading, however, is not very well substantiated in the text. The scholium is somewhat suggestive of ontological parallelism, but certainly does not state it clearly; the most suggestive supporting statement, in fact, is very weak: "I understand the same concerning the other attributes" (IIP7S). I do not think that this difficulty should draw into question Deleuze's proposal of an ontological parallelism—indeed, there is sufficient evidence elsewhere in Spinoza's work to support this thesis. The task here is to find a way to reconcile the two parallelisms so that they do not contradict one another; or better, to discover a way of avoiding the epistemological parallelism altogether.

Deleuze embarks, then, on a more involved discussion in order to address this task. The immediate object of this discussion is to rework the interpretation of the epistemological parallelism proposed in IIP7. The fundamental goal, though, which we should keep in mind throughout this complex argument, is to combat the privileges of thought and thereby preserve the ontological foundation of the philosophical framework. We must be careful, Deleuze begins, not to confuse the attributes of being with the powers of being: "The distinction of powers and attributes has an essential importance in Spinozism" (118). While being has an infinity of attributes, it has only two powers: the power to exist and act, and the power to think and know (103). The first power, the power to exist, is the *formal* essence of God. All the attributes participate equally in this essence, in the power to exist, as formally distinct expressions. This is a restatement of ontological parallelism. The second power, then, the power to think, is the *objective* essence of God. "God's absolute essence is formal in the attributes that constitute its nature, and objective in the idea that necessarily represents this nature" (120). The same attributes that are distinguished formally in God are distinguished objectively in the idea of God. This formulation of the two powers gives Deleuze the opportunity to combat the notion of the eminence of thought over the other attributes by subsuming the epistemological perspective within the ontological. "The attribute of thought is to the power to think what all attributes (including thought) are to the power to exist and act" (122). This slippage between powers and attributes sets the terms for a priority between the two powers. Even though Deleuze affirmed earlier that the powers are in some sense equal, here we find that the power to think (objective essence) is dependent on the power to exist (formal essence): "Objective being would amount to nothing did it not itself have a formal being in the attribute of thought" (122). Deleuze's claim of the priority of the ontological power (the power to exist) over the epistemological power (the power to think) thus preserves the equality among the attributes.

Finally, however, there arises yet another case in which it appears that thought is privileged over the other attributes. In the mind there are not only ideas that correspond to objects (*res ideata*), but also ideas of these ideas, and still other ideas of these ideas of ideas, and so on to infinity: "Whence this final apparent privilege of the attribute of thought, which is the ground of a capacity of ideas to reflect themselves ad infinitum. Spinoza sometimes says that the idea of an idea has to the idea the same relation as the idea to its object" (125). Before we enter into the details of this argument, which can easily seem tedious and arcane, we should try once again to clarify what is at stake here. Several commentators have argued that the problem of the idea of the idea in Spinoza is the problem of consciousness, or rather the problem of the reflection of the mind. Sylvain Zac, for example, poses the concept in this way: "Consciousness is the idea of the idea. It is united to the mind just as the mind is united to the body" (*L'idée de vie* 128; see also 121-28). Although Deleuze does not pose the issue in these terms, Zac's proposition makes clear the danger presented for Deleuze by this Spinozian example. The idea of the idea, as consciousness, seems to be constructing an interiority within the mind that, as Zac says, is united with the mind as the mind is united with the body. The principal threat of interiority in this case is the creation of a priority of the mind over the body and the subsumption of the dynamic of being within a mental dynamic of reflection. As we have seen several times, though, Deleuze is not a philosopher of consciousness: What this means is, on the one hand, that he maintains the priority of *ratio essendi* over *ratio cognoscendi*, and, on the other hand, that he refuses any subordination of the body to the mind. Therefore, it is quite clear that when Deleuze approaches this issue his main concern will be to preserve the ontological equality of the attributes. The basic problem, then, can be posed quite simply. While the idea and its object are conceived under two separate attributes, the idea of the idea and the idea are both conceived under the attribute of thought. What does it mean, then, to say that there is the same relationship between the idea and the object as there is between the idea of the idea and the idea? The claim that the two cases constitute the same relationship seems to give thought the capacity to subsume the relationship to all of the attributes within itself: Its priority as the attribute of reflection seems to give it the capacity to reproduce the inter-attribute dynamic completely within thought itself. The threat of an idealist perspective, a philosophy of consciousness, still haunts the Spinozian system.

Deleuze once again calls on the distinction of powers to address this difficulty: The two cases cannot be considered the same when considered from the point of view of attributes, he argues, but only when considered from the point of view of powers (110-11). In other words, the common

relationship in the two cases should be explained by referring the first term to the formal power and the second to the objective power. The first case is very simple. The *res ideata*, as a mode of being (pertaining to one of the attributes), has a certain power to exist, and is thus an expression of formal essence. The idea of this object, however, refers not to the power to exist but to the power to think, and is thus an expression of objective essence. We can apply this same logic to the second case because an idea is also a mode of being. A mode of thought, just like a mode of any attribute, can be referred to the power to exist, as formal essence. When an idea is thus conceived, we can relate another idea to that idea, referring now to the power to think: This idea of the idea is an expression of objective essence. The common relationship that Spinoza is referring to, then, is that in each case the two terms refer to the two different powers: the power to exist and the power to think. This similarity, however, points to an important difference when we consider the two cases from the point of view of the attributes. In the first case, there is a formal distinction between an idea and its object because they are modes of different attributes. In the second case, though, between the idea of the idea and the idea, there is no formal distinction because they are both modes of thought.

> From this point of view we see the unity of an idea and the idea of that idea, insofar as they are given in God with the same necessity, *by the same power to think*. There is consequently only a conceptual distinction (*distinction de raison*) between the two ideas: the idea of an idea is the form of that idea, referred as such to the power to think. (126)

Deleuze is satisfied with this solution. He has answered the intellectualist challenge posed by consciousness by a reference to the different powers and, finally, to the ontological hierarchy of distinctions. The distinction involved in the dynamic of consciousness is not the real distinction that founds being, not the formal distinction that differentiates the attributes, but merely a conceptual distinction (*distinction de raison*). We can pose this clearly in Bergsonian terms: Consciousness does not mark a difference of nature, but merely a difference of degree. We have to admit, nonetheless, that the mind's capacity for reflection (consciousness, the idea of the idea) does give thought a certain privilege over the other attributes. Deleuze's argument, however, drawing on the different powers and distinctions, attempts to show that this privilege is ontologically insignificant.

### Remark: From Forschung to Darstellung

In the previous section we analyzed several examples of Deleuze's effort to preserve the univocity of being on the basis of an ontological parallelism

among the attributes. The opponent in each case is an intellectualist reading of Spinoza's ontology, which at several points seems to give a real privilege to thought; Deleuze's strategy, which we have seen several times in our study, is to subordinate *ratio cognoscendi* to *ratio essendi*. The Deleuzian arguments certainly have a very strong foundation in Spinoza's ontology, in the ontological parallelism of the attributes; nonetheless, these arguments appear weak when, in Spinoza's psychology and epistemology, the problem of privilege continually reappears. To a certain extent, the privileges of thought and the problem of the attributes should be explained as a residue of Cartesianism in Spinoza's thought, but this explanation is not sufficient on its own. The theory of the attributes remains a problem in Deleuze's Spinoza.

Some readers of Spinoza, who, like Deleuze, recognize the centrality of the univocity of being, have tried to resolve this problem by claiming an evolution in Spinoza's thought: Antonio Negri, for example, argues that the theory of the attributes disappears as Spinoza proceeds from the pantheistic utopia that characterizes the first phase of his thought, to the constitutive disutopia of his maturity. The attributes do indeed disappear from the *Ethics* after Part II (with only a brief reappearance in Part V), and Negri links this fact to historical evidence that Spinoza drafted the *Ethics* during two distinct periods, from 1661 to 1665 and from 1670 to 1675 (*The Savage Anomaly* 48). Negri argues, then, that Spinoza's philosophical transformation between these two periods precipitates the rejection of the attributes (59). Negri's argument has come under serious critique, but it clearly points to two issues that (even if we are to question his explanation) must be addressed: The theory of the attributes remains problematic in the context of the Spinozian system, and the attributes are relatively absent from the latter half of the *Ethics*.

It seems to me that there is an alternative or complementary explanation, available in Deleuze's work itself, to account for the disappearance of the attributes. We could argue, consistently with Deleuze's interpretation, I believe, that thought is privileged in the theory of the attributes only in limited or accidental terms: Thought is the principal means of human speculation, and the theory of the attributes is linked to a mode of inquiry. If we imagine that there is something substantial about the priority of thought over the other attributes, we are merely confusing the form of our research with the nature of being. The attributes appear in the *Ethics* not as a form of being, but as a mode of inquiry, as a scientific *Forschung*. Marx makes clear the distinction between *Forschung* and *Darstellung*, between the mode of inquiry and the mode of presentation: "Of course the method of presentation [*Darstellung*] must differ in form from the method of inquiry [*Forschung*]. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its

different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented" (*Capital*, vol. 1, 102). Following this logic, the two phases of Spinoza's thought, which Negri proposes historically, can be identified with two moments or approaches in Spinoza's work.[16] The *Forschung* of the *Ethics*, the moment of speculation, relies on the theory of the attributes "to track down the inner connection" of being. Thought is given a certain priority in this moment, as the model of our speculation. "Only after this work has been done," Marx says, "can the real movement be appropriately presented." What does it mean to present appropriately the real movement of being? Here it means to present being as it makes itself, in the process of its constitution. In other words, only after the analytical moment has brought to light all the distinctions of the terrain can this same terrain be traversed a second time with a different bearing, with a practical attitude, appropriately presenting the "inner connections" and the "real movement" of being in the process of its own constitution. When the moment of research is complete, therefore, after Part II of the *Ethics*, the attributes no longer have a role and they drop out of the discussion. As we move forward in Spinoza's system of emendation, as we shift from speculation to practice, any priority of thought gradually disappears. In fact, Deleuze presents a powerful argument that Spinoza's theory of practice initially privileges the attribute of extension: The body is the model of practice. This seems to me, then, a consistent Deleuzian explanation of the questions of priority. In our research of being, in the moment of speculation, the mind plays the initial role of model; similarly, in Spinoza's *Darstellung*, in our practice of being, the body plays a parallel role.

How does Spinoza make this shift from *Forschung* to *Darstellung*, from speculation to practice? Deleuze's work makes clear that the hinge or the pivot that articulates these two moments is the thematic of power. Spinoza's discussion of power carries the developed ontological foundation onto the terrain of practice. It constitutes, as we claimed earlier, the fundamental passage, the Nietzschean transmutation: the hour of midnight. The speculative *Forschung* of power yields to its practical *Darstellung*. Let us turn our attention, then, to Spinoza's development of the thematic of power.

## Power

### 3.6 The True and the Adequate

The question of the attributes has touched on Spinoza's epistemology, but really it has only scratched the surface. Thus far, we have treated Deleuze's

defense against an intellectualist reading of Spinoza's epistemology. This defense rests primarily on a conception of ontological parallelism that is developed through an extension of the principle of univocity. Now we should turn to Deleuze's positive exposition of Spinozian epistemology, and specifically to Spinoza's proposal that we shift our attention from the true idea to the adequate idea as a more coherent and useful category of speculation. There is certainly a close relation between truth and being in Spinoza, but this nexus reveals not the intellectual character of being, but rather the ontological criteria of truth. We will see that Spinoza's discussion of adequacy brings the epistemological debate back to an ontological plane. The essential role in the argument is played by an ontological conception of the internal causality, or the singular production, of being. The adequate is defined as being: that which envelops and expresses its cause.

From one of his earliest works, the *Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza searches for an intrinsic definition of the true idea. Just as real being is cause of itself and gains its distinction from within, so too the true idea must be defined through an internal causality. According to Spinoza, as we have seen, the mind is a spiritual automaton that produces ideas autonomously, that is, with reference only to the attribute of thought. This basis provides Spinoza with a forceful critique of the traditional correspondence theory of truth that is implied by the epistemological parallelism discussed earlier: The true idea is the idea that agrees or corresponds with its object (*res ideata*). The correspondence theory, which poses merely a formal agreement, is blind to the production process and thus cannot fulfill Spinoza's initial criterion for the true idea: "The conception of truth as correspondence gives us no definition, either formal or material, of truth; it proposes a purely nominal definition, an extrinsic designation" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 131). In epistemology, the extrinsic designation gives a weak conception of truth, just as in ontology the external cause provides a weak definition of being. The external definition, as we saw in the Bergson study, implies merely a "subsistent exteriority." (See Section 1.1.) We can already note from this critique of the correspondence theory that an ontological logic provides the foundation for Spinoza's epistemological investigation.

In this context, the Cartesian proposition of "clear and distinct" as the condition for truth provides us with a much more promising strategy because it addresses not only the form but also the content of the idea. Deleuze argues, however, that the conception of clear and distinct is insufficient for a Spinozian theory of truth in three respects. First, while the Cartesian proposition does succeed in referring to the content of the idea, this reference remains superficial as a "representative" content (132). The content of the clear and distinct idea cannot be a real content because "clear

and distinct" does not recognize or comprehend the efficient cause of that idea. We know that since the mind is a spiritual automaton the proximate cause of any idea is always another idea, but the superficiality of representation is precisely its detachment from this cause. Second, the form of the clear and distinct idea also remains superficial in the form of a "psychological consciousness" (132). This Cartesian form does not attain the logical form of the idea that would explain the connection and order of ideas one to the other. The superficiality in this case is due to the detachment from the formal cause of the idea, which is precisely our power to think. Third, the Cartesian conception does not succeed in posing the unity of the content and the form of the true idea; in other words, Descartes does not recognize the spiritual automaton "that reproduces reality in producing ideas in their due order" (152). In short, the critiques of the "clear and distinct" strategy all spring from the fact that it attempts to define the true while only referring to the idea itself; the Cartesian strategy does not deal with the *causes* of ideas, and thus it cannot explain the process of their production. Once again, in the focus on causality and production, we can recognize Spinoza's ontological approach to truth. Deleuze relates this critique to his notion of expression: To be expressive, an idea must explain or envelop its cause. "A clear and distinct idea is still inexpressive, and remains unexplained. Good enough for recognition, but unable to provide a real principle of knowledge" (152-53). Precisely because of its failure to express or explain the true idea by means of its cause, the conception of truth as clear and distinct does not give us the terms to answer our fundamental questions: Where does truth come from and what can it do for us—or, as Nietzsche might ask, Why do we want truth? A Spinozian definition of truth must involve the expression of causality, production, and power.

The ontological critique of the clear and distinct idea prepares the terms for Spinoza's shift from the true idea to the adequate idea. The essential feature of Spinoza's conception of truth is the internal relation of an idea to its cause: "The adequate idea is precisely the idea as expressing its cause" (133, modified). We can contrast this with the Cartesian theory on all three points just presented. First, the adequate idea presents its content as the expression of its proximate efficient cause (another idea). Second, the form of the adequate idea is a logical form that is explained by its formal cause (the power to think): "The adequate idea is the idea that expresses its own cause and is explained by our own power" (151). Third, the content and the form of the adequate idea are united in the movement internal to the attribute of thought: "The spiritual automaton, manifested in the concatenation of ideas, is the unity of logical form and expressive content" (153). We can see Spinoza's insistence on replacing the Cartesian clear and distinct with his conception of adequateness as an ontologization

of epistemology. "Spinoza's ontology is dominated by the notions of a cause of itself, in itself and through itself" (162). Spinoza's epistemology, too, is dominated by this same focus on causality: Truth, like being, is singular insofar as it envelops and expresses its own cause. Through the causal chain expressed by the adequate idea, through the move from the true to the adequate, Spinoza's epistemology takes on an ontological character. Spinoza's revolution in epistemology is to apply these same ontological criteria that define being as singular to the realm of truth. Along with Thomas Mark, a perceptive American commentator, Deleuze shows that Spinoza's theory of truth is a theory of "ontological truth."[17]

Adequate ideas are expressive, and inadequate ideas are mute.[18] In other words, the distinctive characteristic of an adequate idea is that it tells us something about the structure and connections of being (or at least the attribute of thought) through a direct expression of its efficient and formal causes. From an ontological perspective, the inadequate idea tells us nothing because we cannot recognize its place in the productive structure of thought; it is not situated in the dynamic causal mechanism of the spiritual automaton. One importance of the adequate idea, then, is that through the expression of its causes it increases our power of thought; the more adequate ideas we have, the more we know about the structure and connections of being, and the greater our power to think. Adequacy is infectious, giving rise to always greater expression. "Whatever ideas follow in the Mind from ideas that are adequate in the mind are also adequate" (IIP40). Spinoza, however, accompanies this claim with a realistic assessment of our condition. The vast majority of the ideas we have are inadequate ideas. At this point, it is obvious how Spinoza would answer the Nietzschean question posed earlier: We want truth, or rather adequacy, in order to increase our power to think. The strategy of the adequate idea makes the question of truth a project of power. Once the question of power enters the discussion, however, this epistemological discourse quickly transforms into an ethical project. "Spinoza asks: How do we come to form and produce adequate ideas, when we necessarily have so many inadequate ones that divert our power and separate us from what we can do?" (148, modified). Here, in this transformation of the epistemological toward the ethical, we see a combined application of the principle of singularity (an absolutely infinite being as cause of itself, the adequate idea as enveloping its cause) and the principle of power (being as productivity, truth as creation); the principle of singularity gives us the terms for the definition of the adequate idea, and the principle of power transforms this definition into a project.

Before moving on, let us pause for a moment to recognize the importance of ontological parallelism and its relation to the Spinozian concep-

tion of adequacy. We claimed earlier that if we are to maintain Deleuze's conception of ontological parallelism, then in principle the character or movement of one attribute must in some sense correspond to that of the other attributes, because fundamentally all of them refer equally to the character or movement of being. The concept of truth presents an interesting test for this theory. Following a Cartesian theory, for example, we would be forced to pose, parallel to our conception of a clear and distinct idea or a clear and distinct action of the mind, some conception of a clear and distinct action of the body. Since Cartesian truth does not account for movement and production, it is not easily applicable to the corporeal plane. Spinozian adequacy, on the other hand, since it refers to the nature of being itself and to the genealogy of its production, applies to all the attributes equally: Just like an adequate action of the mind, an adequate action of the body is expressive in that it explains or envelops its cause. The adequate is that which discloses the productive dynamic of being.

### 3.7 What a Body Can Do

With the conception of adequacy, Spinoza is able to develop the epistemological framework to the point where he can pose an initial ethical question, an initial question of power. One aspect of the very steep path that Spinoza is leading us on will direct us to proceed from inadequate ideas to adequate ones. We can easily pose this ethical goal more generally as the increase of our power to think, or more generally still as the increase of our power to exist and act: How can we increase our power to exist, or, in theological terms, how can we approach God (the infinite power to exist and act)? At this point, however, with only an epistemological foundation, we have very little idea how this operation is possible; we are still far from being able to embark on an ethical practice. In fact, posing the ethical question in such grand terms is empty and pointless without some specific and concrete means of addressing our goal.

A further moment of speculation is needed. Spinoza uses the mind as the primary model of speculation; now we have to shift our concentration to the body, from epistemology to physics, because it is the body that will reveal a model of practice. "Spinoza does seem to admit that we have to pass through an empirical study of bodies in order to know their relations, and how they are composed" (212). We will see, however, in the long passage from physics to ethics, that the criterion of adequacy, of expressing or enveloping the cause, remains central to the development of Spinoza's argument. Spinozian physics is an empirical investigation to try to determine the laws of the interaction of bodies: the encounters of bodies, their composition and decomposition, their compatibility (or composability), and

their conflict. A body is not a fixed unit with a stable or static internal structure. On the contrary, a body is a dynamic relationship whose internal structure and external limits are subject to change. What we identify as a body is merely a temporarily stable relationship (IIP13Def).[19] This proposition of the dynamic nature of bodies, of the continual flux of their internal dynamic, allows Spinoza a rich understanding of the interaction among bodies. When two bodies meet, there is an encounter between two dynamic relationships: Either they are indifferent to each other, or they are compatible and together compose a new relationship, a new body; or, rather, they are incompatible and one body decomposes the relationship of the other, destroying it, just as a poison decomposes the blood (cf. Letter 32 to Henry Oldenberg). This physical universe of bodies at motion and rest, in union and conflict, will provide the context in which we can delve deeper into the functioning and structure of power: "In order to really think in terms of power, one must first pose the question in relation to the body" (257). Spinoza's physics are the cornerstone of his ethics.

Deleuze is fascinated by a passage in one of the early scholia of Book III: "No one has yet determined what the Body can do. . . . For no one has yet come to know the structure of the Body so accurately that he could explain all its functions" (IIIP2S). The question of power (what a body can do) is immediately related to the internal structure of the body. This charts the initial direction of our investigation: To understand the nature of power, we must first discover the internal structure of the body, we must decompose the unity of the body according to its lines of articulation, its differences of nature. Deleuze reminds us that the investigation of this structure must be conducted not in terms of the power to act (spontaneity), but rather in terms of the power to be affected: "A body's structure is the composition of its relation. What a body can do is the nature and the limits of its power to be affected" (218). The horizon of affectivity, then, will provide the terrain for our speculation and reveal further distinctions within the body, distinctions within power.

On a first level in our model of power, we find that the power to be affected is filled by active affections and passive affections. The importance of this distinction is clear: To the extent that our power to be affected is filled by active affections, it relates directly to our power to act, but to the extent that it is filled by passive affections, it relates only to our power to feel or suffer (*puissance de pâtir*). Passive affections really mark our lack of power. Once again, the essential logic of the argument refers to expression and production: The active is distinct from the passive in its relation to the cause. "Our force of suffering *affirms* nothing, because it *expresses* nothing at all: it 'envelops' only our impotence, that is to say, *the lowest degree of our power to act*" (224, modified). We said earlier that the power to be

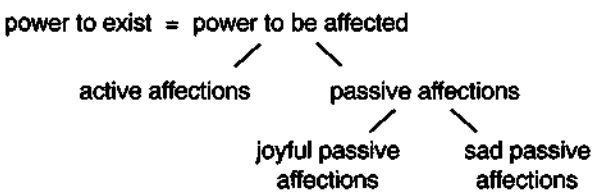
affected demonstrates the plenitude of being in that it is always completely filled with active and passive affections; yet the power to be affected only appears as plenitude from the physical point of view. From the ethical point of view, on the contrary, the power to be affected varies widely according to its composition. To the extent that it is filled with passive affections, it is reduced to its minimum, and to the extent that it is filled with active affections, it is increased to its maximum. "Whence the importance of the ethical question. *We do not even know what a body can do*, Spinoza says. That is: *We do not even know of what affections we are capable, nor the extent of our power*. How could we know this in advance?" (226). This, then, is the first order of business in preparing the terrain for an ethical project: Investigate what affects we are capable of, discover what our body can do.

Spinoza's theory of *conatus* (or striving) marks precisely the intersection of production and affection that is so important to Deleuze: "The variations of *conatus* as it is determined by this or that affection are the dynamic variations of our power to act" (231). *Conatus* is the physical instantiation of the ontological principle of power. On one hand, it is the essence of being insofar as being is productive; it is the motor that animates being as the world. To this extent, *conatus* is Spinoza's continuation of the legacy of Renaissance naturalism: Being is spontaneity, pure activity. On the other hand, however, *conatus* is also the instantiation of the ontological principle of power in that *conatus* is a sensibility; it is driven by not only the actions, but also the passions, of the mind and the body (see, for example, IIIP9). It is this rich synthesis of spontaneity and affectivity that marks the continuity between the ontological principle of power and *conatus*.

At this point the ethical project requires a moment of empirical realism. When Spinoza begins to take stock of the state of our body, of our power, he notes that, by necessity, our power to be affected is largely filled by passive affections. God, or Nature, is completely filled with active affections, because there is no cause external to it. However, "the force by which a man perseveres in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes" (IVP3). To the extent that our power is surpassed by the power of Nature as a whole, to the extent that external forces are more powerful than our own forces, we will be filled with passive affections. Now, since passive affections largely constitute our existence, we should focus our investigation on these affections to see if we can make meaningful distinctions among them.

Within the domain of extension, passive affections are characterized by encounters between our body and other bodies—encounters that can appear as random because they are not caused by us. The order of passions,

then, is the order of chance encounters, of the *fortuitus occursus* (238). A simple encounter between two bodies, however, poses an extremely rich and complex scene for analysis, because one body itself is not a fixed unit with a static structure, but rather a dynamic relationship whose internal structure and external limits are open and continually subject to change. As we noted earlier, what Spinoza identifies as a body or an individual is simply a temporarily stable assemblage of coordinated elements (*Ethics* IIP13Def). An encounter between two bodies, then, will be characterized by the composability or the incomposability of their two relationships. Now, given this dynamic conception of bodies and their interactions, Deleuze proposes two cases of chance encounters that will allow us to distinguish two types of passive affections, and thus descend one more level in our model of power. In the first case, I meet a body whose internal relationship is compatible with the internal relationship of my body, and thus the two bodies together compose a new relationship. We can say, then, that this external body "agrees with my nature" or that it is "good" or "useful" for me. Furthermore, this encounter produces an affection in me that itself agrees with or is good for my nature: It is a joyful encounter in that it increases my power to act. The first case of chance encounter, then, results in a joyful passive affection because it presents a "composable" relationship and thus increases my power to act. In the second case of chance encounter, though, I meet a body whose internal relationship is not compatible with that of my body; this body does not agree with my nature. Either one body will decompose the relationship of the other or both bodies will be decomposed. In either case, the important fact is that there will be no increase of power, because a body cannot gain power from something that does not agree with it. Since this encounter results in a decrease of power, the affection produced by it is sadness. Actual encounters, of course, are more complicated than either of these two limit cases: There may be different degrees of partial compatibility and partial conflict in an encounter, or, further, the affects can combine in a myriad of ways (the sadness of what I hate brings me joy, etc.). These two cases, however, joyful passive affections and sad passive affections, provide us with the limit cases of possible encounters, and thus they allow us to posit a further distinction, describing a second level in our model of power.



It is once again time for a moment of Spinoza's realism. What is the relative frequency of joyful and sad encounters? In principle, or rather in the abstract, humans agree in nature, and thus human encounters ought to be purely joyful. However, this is only true to the extent that our power to be affected is filled by active affections. "Insofar as men are subject to passions, they cannot be said to agree in nature" (IVP32). Therefore, in reality, humans agree very little with one another, and the large majority of chance encounters are sad.

At each point in the investigation of the structure of the body where we have recognized a distinction, we have also recognized that the human condition lies largely on the weak side of the equation: Our power to be affected is filled largely by passive affections rather than active affections; and, further, our passive affections are constituted largely by sad passive affections rather than joyful passive affections. One could easily be disheartened at this point by Spinoza's pessimistic appraisal of the human condition—but that would be to miss the point of the project. The investigation of the internal structure of power and the realistic evaluation of our condition are oriented toward refining the ethical question so that it can provide the basis for an ethical practice; what may appear as pessimism is Spinoza's practical perspective. To appreciate the richness of this approach, consider the typical Nietzschean ethical mandate: Become active. How can such an ethical proposition be transformed into an ethical practice? In other words, through Nietzsche we can clearly recognize the desire, the power (and in this sense the good) of becoming active, but we find no means to follow it through in practice. Spinoza too recognizes ethics as an issue of becoming active, but he delves one step deeper to enrich that ethical perspective. "The ethical question falls then, in Spinoza, into two parts: *How can we come to produce active affections?* But first of all: *How can we come to experience a maximum of joyful passions?* (246). Through the investigation of power, Spinoza has now prepared the terrain for the conversion from speculation to practice that will set his ethics in motion.

## Practice

### 3.8 Common Notions: The Assemblages of Composable Being

Through Spinoza's investigation of the structure of power and his realistic estimation of the human condition we have arrived at the limit of speculation. The human condition resides principally in the point of the minimum of power; when we adopt this position, we can adopt too a truly ethical position. This is the end of speculation and the beginning of practice;

this is the moment of transmutation—the hour of midnight. Spinozian speculation has illuminated the terrain of power, defined its primary structures; now, we must convert this speculative dynamic into a practical project. How can we effect this transmutation? Where can we find the impetus to put a practical project in motion? A first hint that Deleuze gives us is that we must shift our focus from affirmation to joy. "The sense of joy appears as the properly ethical sense; it is to practice what affirmation itself is to speculation" (272). Joy, in other words, is the affirmation of being in the moment of its practical constitution; our increase of power is the affirmative constitution of being itself. It is not immediately evident, however, how our practice can begin with joy. Just like Nietzsche's ethical mandate "become active," so too a Spinozian mandate such as "become joyful" lacks the mechanism by which to initiate a practical project. Deleuze attempts another tack, presenting the project in negative form, to give it a more practical thrust: The first practical task of the *Ethics*, he claims, is to combat sadness: "The devaluation of sad passions, and the denunciation of those who cultivate and depend on them, form the practical object of philosophy" (270; see also *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 25-29). We have already noted, though, that in reality most of our passions are sad passions, that most chance encounters among bodies are incompatible and destructive. How can we begin a practice of joy from such a state? The attack on sadness still lacks an initial practical key.

We should begin instead by looking more closely at Spinoza's physics of bodies: "No one has yet come to know the structure [*fabrica*] of the Body so accurately that he could explain all its functions" (IIIP2S). What does Spinoza mean by structure? "It is a system of relations between the parts of a body," Deleuze explains. "By inquiring how these relations vary from one body to another, we have a way of directly determining the resemblances between two bodies, however disparate they may be" (278). Our investigation of the structure or relationships that constitute the body allows us to recognize common relationships that exist between our body and another body. An encounter between our body and this other body will necessarily be joyful, because the common relationship guarantees a compatibility and the opportunity to compose a new relationship, thereby increasing our power. Precisely in this way the analysis of bodies allows us to begin a practical project. By recognizing similar compositions or relationships among bodies, we have the criteria necessary for a first ethical selection of joy: We are able to favor compatible encounters (joyful passions) and avoid incompatible encounters (sad passions). When we make this selection, we are producing common notions: "A common notion is always an idea of a similarity of composition in existing modes" (275). The

formation of the common notion constitutes the first step of an ethical practice.

This conception of the production of common notions, however, is not yet precise enough to be practical. We must make a distinction, Deleuze explains, between common notions that are more universal and common notions that are less universal. The most universal common notions are those that recognize a similarity from a very general point of view: They may involve, at the extreme, what is common to all bodies, such as extension, motion, and rest. These very universal common notions, however, are precisely those that are least useful to us. On the other hand, the least universal common notions are in fact those that immediately present us with the greatest utility. These notions are those that represent a similar composition between two bodies that directly agree with each other, from their own local points of view. Just as we continually descended within the internal structure of power, here too we must descend to the lowest, most local, level of commonality to initiate our practical project. "Through such notions we understand agreements between modes: they go beyond an external perception of agreements observed by chance, to find in a similarity of composition an internal and necessary reason for an agreement of bodies" (276). We can see, then, especially in the most specific of cases, that the common notion discovers an internal logic, that the common notion envelops and explains its cause, or, in other words, that the common notion is an adequate idea: "Common notions in general are necessarily adequate; in other words, common notions are ideas that are formally explained by our power to think and that, materially, express the idea of God as their efficient cause" (279). The common notion provides us the means to construct for ourselves an adequate idea.

The first adequate idea we can have is the recognition of something in common between two bodies; this adequate idea immediately leads to another adequate idea—in this way, we can begin our constructive project to become active. Deleuze, however, is not yet satisfied that we have presented this initial moment in sufficiently practical terms: "There is, though, a danger that the common notion might appear to intervene like a miracle, unless we explain how we come to form it. . . . Precisely, how do we form (common notions), in what favorable circumstances? How do we arrive at our power to act?" (280-81). When we consider the Spinozian theory of common notions, Deleuze warns us, we should be careful to avoid two dangerous interpretative errors. The first error with respect to the common notions would be "overlooking their biological sense in favor of their mathematical sense" (281). In other words, we should remember that common notions refer principally to a physics of bodies, not a logic of thought: We would do better to locate them as rising up from a Hobbesian

material terrain, rather than from a Cartesian mathematical universe. The second interpretative error we might make with respect to the common notions would be "overlooking their practical function in favor of their speculative content" (281). When common notions are first introduced in Book II of the *Ethics*, they are introduced precisely in their logical order, from the speculative point of view. This speculative presentation regards the commons notions as moving from the most universal (motion, rest, etc.) toward the least universal. The practical progression of common notions in Book V is exactly the opposite: We move from the least universal (a specific compatible relationship between two bodies) toward the most universal. Common notions are not primarily a speculative form of analysis, but a practical tool of constitution.

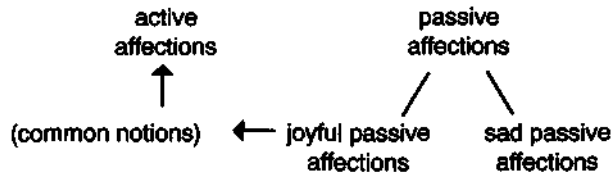
Here, to begin the practical progression, we can assume that by chance we experience a compatible encounter. We can translate the famous epistemological point of departure of Spinoza's *Emendation of the Intellect*, "habemus enim ideam verum" (we have a true idea, or we have at least one true idea), to the realm of bodies and passions: "habemus enim affectionem passam laetam" (we have at least one joyful passive affection). This experience of joy is the spark that sets the ethical progression in motion: "When we encounter a body that agrees with our own, when we experience a joyful passive affection, we are induced to form the idea of what is common to that body and our own" (282). The process begins with the experience of joy. This chance encounter with a compatible body allows us, or induces us, to recognize a common relationship, to form a common notion. There are two processes going on here, however, which Deleuze insists must be kept distinct. In the first moment, we strive to avoid the sad passions that diminish our power to act and accumulate joyful passions. This effort of selection does increase our power, but never to the point of becoming active: Joyful passions are always the result of an external cause; they always indicate an inadequate idea. "We must then, *by the aid of joyful passions*, form the idea of what is common to some external body and our own. For this idea alone, this common notion, is adequate" (283). The first moment, the accumulation of joyful passions, prepares the condition for this leap that provides us with an adequate idea.

Let us look more closely at this second moment, at the "leap" from the joyful passion to the common notion. How do we make this leap? How do we make an encounter adequate? We know that joy is the experience of an affection that agrees with our nature, an affection that increases our power. The same joy is constituted by a joyful passive affection and a joyful active affection; the only difference is that a joyful passion arises from an external cause, while a joyful action arises from an internal cause: "When Spinoza suggests that what agrees with reason may also be born of it, he means that

from every passive joy there may arise an active joy distinguished from it only by its cause" (274-75). The passage from passive joy to active joy involves substituting an internal cause for an external cause; or, more precisely, it involves enveloping or comprehending the cause within the encounter itself. This corporeal logic is parallel to the epistemological logic of adequacy that we discussed earlier. The new encounter is adequate (and active) because it expresses its own cause; that is, it expresses the common relationship between two bodies. This operation of enveloping the cause, however, still remains obscure until we recognize that a joyful passion presents us necessarily with a situation of commonality: A joyful passion can only arise from an external body that is composed of a relationship common to our body. When our mind forms an idea of the common relationship shared between this body and our body (a common notion), the joyful affection ceases to be passive and becomes active: "It is distinct from the passive feeling from which we began, but distinct only in its cause: its cause is no longer an inadequate idea of an object that agrees with us, but the necessarily adequate idea of what is common to that object and ourselves" (284). This process of enveloping or comprehending the cause of an encounter allows Spinoza to claim that "an affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it" (VP3). This process of enveloping the cause, then, constitutes the "leap" to action and adequacy.

The common notions constitute for Deleuze the "ontological rupture" of Spinoza's thought that marks the completion of the transformation from speculation to practice. "Common notions are one of the fundamental discoveries of the *Ethics*" (292; see also *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, chapter 5, in particular 114ff.). With the establishment of the practical perspective, Spinoza has provided a radically new vision of ontology. Being can no longer be considered a given arrangement or order; here being is the assemblage of composable relationships. We should keep in mind, however, that the essential element for ontological constitution remains the Spinozian focus on causality, on being's "productivity" and "producibility." The common notion is the assemblage of two composable relationships to create a new, more powerful relationship, a new, more powerful body—this assemblage, however, is not merely a chance composition but an ontological constitution, because the process envelops the cause within the new body itself. We are suddenly thrown back to the opening definition of the *Ethics*—"Per causa sui intelligo . . . "—but now we read it with an entirely different attitude. *Causa sui*, cause of itself, has acquired a new, practical meaning. The essential characteristic of Spinozian ontological constitution is adequacy, that is, the expression of the causal chain of being. The practical strategy of the formation of common notions, of ontological assem-

blages, has forged the ontological investigation into an ethical project: Become active, become adequate, become being. Spinozian practice is beginning to climb up the same ladder that the analysis of Spinozian speculation has constructed moving downward. Constitutive practice defines the productive series: joyful passive affections → common notions → active affections.




Speculation has mapped the terrain of power, and now practice is inhabiting that terrain, breathing life into its internal structure. Practice is moving upward, constructing the relations of being from below. The driving motor that animates this entire operation is *conatus*: When Spinozian physics is transported to an ethical plane, we no longer see simply bodies in motion and rest, but rather we find bodies infused with desire. As we move from sadness to joy, from passions to actions, we are discovering the path of the increase of our power. We should continually keep in mind that this path of corporeal and spiritual emendation is not simply presented as a vague ethical mandate; when Spinoza poses "becoming active" as a goal, he also presents the practical means of attaining this goal. "There is a whole learning process involved in common notions, in our *becoming active*: we should not overlook the importance in Spinozism of the problem of an educational process" (288). The Spinozian path to beatitude is an apprenticeship in power, an education in virtue.

### 3.9 The Constitution of Reason

Spinozian practice always begins with the body as model. However, while the common notions set off from a corporeal domain, they also construct a theory of ideas that is parallel to the theory of bodies. This constitutive epistemology that we find in the beginning of Part V of the *Ethics* is radically different from the given, preformed epistemology presented in Part II, and this difference is due in large part to the conversion from speculation to practice accomplished on the corporeal plane in Parts III and IV:

> In Part Two of the *Ethics* Spinoza considers the speculative content of common notions; he supposes them given or potentially given. . . . At the opening of Part Five he analyzes the practical function of common notions, supposed given; this function consists in the common notion

> being the cause of an adequate idea of an affection, that is, of an active joy. (286)

The two epistemological arguments share the same categories and terminology, but they approach the topic from different perspectives, with different attitudes. In Part II, in the speculative moment, Spinoza laid out the mathematical and logical order of the three different kinds of ideas, but in Part V Spinoza's practical perspective puts this epistemological order in motion. The common notion, recognized now as a constructive agent, as an assemblage, is the mechanism by which the mind moves from a passion to an action, from an inadequate idea to an adequate idea, from imagination to reason. The formation of common notions is the practical constitution of reason.

The theory that epistemology can be constituted in practice rests on a notion of the materiality of the intellect that solidly locates Spinozian thought both philosophically in the materialist tradition and historically in the age of the birth of modern industry. An early passage from the *Emendation of the Intellect* discussing the method of improving our minds illustrates these connections very clearly:

> Matters here stand as they do with corporeal tools. . . . Just as men, in the beginning, were able to make the easiest things with the tools they were born with (however laboriously and imperfectly), and once these had been made, made other, more difficult things with less labor and more perfectly, and so, proceeding gradually from the simplest works to tools, and from tools to other works and tools, reached the point where they accomplished so many and so difficult things with little labor, in the same way the intellect, by its inborn power, makes intellectual tools for itself, by which it works still other tools, or the power of searching further, and so proceeds by stages, until it reaches the pinnacle of wisdom. (*Emendation of the Intellect* 30-31)

The mind forges the common notion from inadequate ideas, just as the body forges a hammer from iron. The common notion serves as a practical tool in our effort toward the pinnacle of wisdom.

This practical and material perspective provides a new foundation and a new dynamic of movement for Spinoza's system of the different kinds of knowledge: the first kind (imagination, opinion, and revelation), the second kind (reason), and the third kind (intuition). Spinoza directs us to analyze the lowest kind of knowledge in the same way that he insisted we focus on the passions. First, he operates a devaluation: "Knowledge of the first kind is the only cause of falsity, whereas knowledge of the second and of the third kind is necessarily true" (*Ethics* IIP41). However, just as we have seen with regard to the passions, once Spinoza operates this devalu-

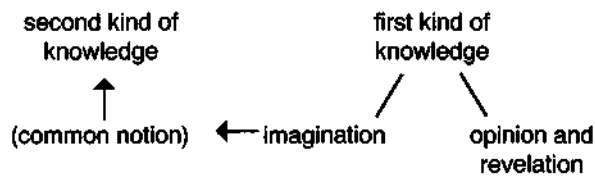
ation he also adopts a realistic attitude and claims that the vast majority of our ideas reside in the first kind of knowledge. Those philosophers who persuade themselves that humans can live strictly by the dictates of reason, Spinoza is fond of saying, end up simply cursing and bemoaning, rather than understanding, human nature. We cannot simply exclude or negate the first kind of knowledge, but rather we must use it as our point of departure. The practical project of epistemology, then, is the movement from the first to the second and third kinds of knowledge. At this point, Spinoza can reassess the value of the first kind of knowledge with a different attitude: Even though it is the only source of falsity, the first kind of knowledge is nonetheless composed of ideas that *may be true*.

This revalorization does not yet give us a practical point of departure. At this point, just as we have recognized the distinction between joyful passions and sad passions, we must discover a relevant distinction within the first kind of knowledge. What imagination, opinion, and revelation have in common is that in each an idea is characterized by signs rather than by expression; in other words, an idea of the first kind depends on an external rather than an internal cause, and is thus inadequate. However, unlike the other two forms, imagination arises from the chance encounters between bodies: "This knowledge is obtained through 'vague experience' [*experientia vaga*], and 'vague' relates, etymologically, to the accidental character of encounters" (289). Spinozian imagination is a material imagination in that it provides the possibility of reading the commonality and conflict in the encounters among bodies. Since it operates on the material plane, where constitutive relationships are possible, the imagination presents us with *indicative* signs. On this terrain, the analysis can open up to the consideration of common notions and composable relationships. On the other hand, the other two forms of the first kind of knowledge, opinion and revelation, present no corporeal encounter, but merely opaque mandates: They merely provide us with *imperative* signs. The causes of these ideas remain obscure to us, and thus they cannot indicate the real genealogy of their formation, their real productive structure. Therefore, while all of the ideas of the first kind may be true, the imagination is distinguished from opinion and revelation because an idea that arises from the material field of imagination gives indications of its cause. In other words, since the imagination presents us with corporeal relationships, it is open to the laws of composability. The imagination not only may be true, but, through the indication of its cause, it *may be adequate*.

The common notion demonstrates the practical force of this distinction and puts it in motion. "If we consider their origin, common notions find in imagination the very conditions of their formation. If we consider their practical function, moreover, they apply only to things that can be imag-

ined" (294). Common notions, as assemblages, are the practical pivot; they are building blocks that arise on the terrain of the imagination to constitute reason. The production of common notions shows that there is what Deleuze calls a "curious harmony" between the imagination and reason. Through the common notion, imagination and reason are linked on a continuum as different stages or planes in the process of intellectual constitution. However, there remains a real difference between them. The imagination begins by affirming the presence of an object, but no matter how strong or intense an imagination may be, we continue to regard the imagined object as present in a possible or contingent way. The specific property of reason is to consider things as necessary. The common notion, then, transforms the fluctuation and contingency of imagination into the permanence and consistency of reason: "An affect which arises from reason is necessarily related to the common properties of things, which we always regard as present ... and which *we always imagine in the same way*" (VP7Dem, emphasis mine). Here reason is presented as an intensified imagination that has gained the power to sustain its imagining by means of the construction of the common notion. "Necessity, presence and frequency are the three characteristics of common notions" (296). Reason is the imagination that returns, the refrain.

Earlier, we found that the central difference between the joyful passive affection and the joyful active affection is the external cause of the former and the internal cause of the later. The common notion operates the transformation, maintaining the affection while enveloping or comprehending the cause. Here, in the epistemological domain, we are presented with a corresponding framework of constitution through assemblage. The imagination, like the joyful passion, is the condition that allows us to begin the process. The central difference between the imagination and reason is the contingency of the former and the necessity of the latter. The common notion operates the transformation that makes the imagination permanent; it is the passage to reason. Therefore, we can plot an epistemological construction parallel to our earlier diagram of the structure of the affects. A constitutive epistemological practice is defined by the series: imagination → common notion → reason.




The keystone of Spinoza's revolution in epistemology is his conception of

the role of the common notion as the link between imagination and reason. Spinoza demystifies reason. In the speculative argument of Part II, reason was defined in a Cartesian, mathematical spirit. Reason was a *given* system of necessary truth, and thus the production of reason was completely obscure. Therefore, the first kind of knowledge, the source of all error, could play no positive role in a project for truth; the only strategy could be its negation. Now, in the practical moment of Spinoza's thought, we find an important distinction between the different forms of the first kind of knowledge and a valorization of the imagination. The imagination provides a real (if fluctuating and contingent) indication of the state of bodies and relationships that are present. The common notion intervenes with the capacity to make our imagining permanent and necessary: The assemblage does not negate the imagination, but instead carries it to the plane of reason. The operation of the common notion makes clear that the Spinozian process of constitution is not at all dialectical. The progressive movement to a further stage is not accomplished through the negation of the present stage, but rather through its composition, preserving it with greater intensity and substance. In this context, contingency and necessity, imagination and reason are not exclusive and opposing couples, but rather they are plateaus linked together on a productive continuum by the process of constitution.

### Remark: Theoretical Practice and Practical Constitution

Now that we have articulated the basic elements of Deleuze's conception of practice in Spinozian philosophy, we can return to Althusser and reconsider the strength of the phenomenological critique we posed earlier. The crux of the issue, from the perspective of our study, is the relationship between speculation (or theory) and practice. We have seen that Deleuze reads Spinoza as an extended drama dealing with the form of this relationship: In the first sections of the *Ethics*, Spinoza investigates being from a speculative perspective and discovers the fundamental ontological principles; later, from a practical perspective, Spinoza leads us toward a real constitution of being in corporeal and epistemological terms. One of the most important contributions of Deleuze's interpretation is to discover and clarify these two related moments in Spinoza's thought: speculation and practice. On this specific point, we may be tempted to say that the positions presented by Althusser and Deleuze are finally not so distant because, in certain regards, Althusser presents a similar relationship between theory and practice.

First we find that theory draws from practice: "Posing and resolving our theoretical problem ultimately consists in theoretically expressing the 'so-

lution,' *existing in the practical state*, that Marxist practice has given" (*For Marx* 165, modified). Inversely, practice is dependent on theory. This is best expressed by one of Althusser's favorite quotations from Lenin: "Without theory, no revolutionary practice" (166). Reading Deleuze's Spinoza, we have also developed a certain interdependent relationship between theory and practice. Ontological speculation prepares the terrain for a constitutive practice; or rather, after ontological speculation (as *Forschung*) has brought to light the distinctions of the terrain, this same terrain is traversed a second time in a different direction, with a different bearing, with a practical attitude (as *Darstellung*), presenting the "inner connections" and the "real movement" of being in the process of its own constitution. In an interview with Michel Foucault, Deleuze gives a slightly different, but I think compatible explanation of this relationship, as a series of relays between theory and practice: "Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, theory is a relay from one practice to another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, a practice is necessary for piercing this wall" ("Intellectuals and Power" 206). Thus, using this image of relays, we can give a Deleuzian reading to Lenin's insight. "Without theory, no revolutionary practice": Without theory there is no terrain on which practice can arise, just as inversely, without practice, there is no terrain for theory. Each provides the conditions for the existence and development of the other.

When we look more closely, however, at Althusser's conception of the relationship between theory and practice, we find a fundamental difference that is often masked, but always present, in his work. The interrelation between theory and practice in Althusser always concedes, in the final instance, a priority to theory; practice is continually undermined, recuperated, subsumed. Consider, for example, how Althusser interprets Lenin's motto: " 'Without theory, no revolutionary practice.' Generalizing it: theory is essential to practice" (*For Marx* 166). Althusser's extension of Lenin involves an important modification. The relation between theory and practice in Lenin's motto could be read as a relationship of equality, but Althusser poses theory as primary, as the essence of practice. The October Revolution gives Althusser a concrete example: "The practice of the Bolshevik Party was based on the dialectic in *Capital*, on Marxist 'theory' " (175). The primacy given to theory here allows Althusser to subsume practice within theory itself. Although, of course, there are other forms of practice, Althusser's analysis always tends to focus on "theoretical practice" as the central political form, the archetype of practice. Theoretical practice is a synthesis of theory and practice, but a synthesis that always maintains the priority of theory.

Even when, years later, Althusser is addressing this position as a problem, in the spirit of self-criticism, he does not substantially modify this essential relation between theory and practice. Althusser claims to want to correct the "theoreticist" error (*Essays in Self-Criticism* 105, 128, 142) that skewed his analysis, and, specifically, he sees the need to revise his "theory of theoretical practice," which represented the culminating point of this theoreticist tendency (147). Here, as always, however, Althusser is very subtle in his self-criticism. When he seems to be modifying a past position, his argument serves instead to reinforce that same position. His self-criticism of the theory of theoretical practice functions in exactly this way: "In *theoretically* overestimating philosophy, I underestimated it *politically*, as those who correctly accused me of not 'bringing in' the class struggle were quick to point out" (150). We have to read this sentence very carefully. Althusser has been criticized (correctly) for not having given sufficient importance to the class struggle as a force of political practice. Accepting this critique, he reframes the discussion of theory and practice in terms of philosophy. His error was to misjudge philosophy—in overestimating philosophy theoretically, he underestimated it politically. He must extend his understanding of philosophy to appreciate its practical, political power. On this basis, he gives a (new?) definition of the theory-practice relationship. Philosophy is "politics in theory," or, more specifically, "philosophy is, in the last instance, class struggle in theory" (150). Social practice is present, but only insofar as it is *within theory*. The displacement of the problem to philosophy allows Althusser to subsume practice within theory once again as a secondary and dependent element.

Deleuze's view of the relationship between theory and practice, in contrast, emphasizes that the two activities remain autonomous and equal in principle. In Deleuze there is no synthesis of theory and practice, and no priority of one over the other. We have shown at great length that, in effect, Deleuze poses the primary condition for a materialist philosophy as the critique of any "theoreticist tendency," of any privileging of thought. (See Sections 3.4 and 3.5.) Let us propose, then, as a first approximation, that theory relates to practice as the activity of the mind relates to the activity of the body, with no direct causal relationship and no priority between the two. "The Body cannot determine the Mind to thinking, and the Mind cannot determine the Body to motion, to rest or to anything else (if there is anything else)" (*Ethics* IIIP2). We should keep in mind, of course, that there is not an identity between the two couples mind/body and theory/practice: Our speculation investigates the principles of being equally in the domain of thought and that of extension; similarly, the practical constitution of being involves both the mind and the body. The common relationship we are pointing to is the autonomy and equality of the terms in each

couple. In this sense, Deleuze can imagine the relationship as a series of relays. It might even make sense in this context to speak of a theoretical automaton and a practical automaton as expressions that equally refer back to the power of being.

These arguments for autonomy, however, should be read above all as polemical positions. Just as Spinoza's claim of the autonomy of the attributes is an attack against the Cartesian primacy of thought, against the theoretical framework that effectively subsumes the body within the order of the mind, so too our Deleuzian claim of the autonomy of practice is a reaction to conceptions of a primacy of theory that effectively subsume practice within theory. For example, when we pose the question of a foundation or cause of a practical act, such as the 1917 Bolshevik insurrection, we cannot look to a theoretical reason that determined it, such as Marx's use of the dialectic in *Capital*, but instead we must search for an accumulation of desires, imaginations, and powers that coincide and become necessary in the event; we need to search, in other words, for the common notions that transformed the joyful passions of the revolutionary encounter into actions. Once again, this proposition of the relative autonomy of a constitutive practice should be read as a polemical position, as an attempt to bring practice out from the shadow of theory and recognize its full force. Just as Spinoza said of the body, Deleuze might say, no one has yet determined what practice can do. The articulation of the practical function of the common notion in Spinoza, however, is a large step toward discovering the power of social practice.

Finally, in contrast to Deleuze, Althusser remains too Hegelian in the continual reemergence of the priority of theory and the continual subsumption of practice within the theoretical domain. The central project of materialist philosophy, in its many historical guises, is precisely to combat this proposition of priority, to challenge the notion of interrelation as subsumption: Bring the body out from the shadow of the mind, bring practice out from the shadow of theory, in all its autonomy and dignity, to try to discover what it can do. With his conception of a practice of common notions, a materialist practice of constitution that refuses to be recuperated within the movement of theory, Deleuze has completely removed himself from the Hegelian terrain. This practical practice cannot be subsumed within the unfolding of spirit in its progressive instantiations. The logic of constitution reveals a progression that marches to a different beat, that accumulates its elements from below in open, nonteleological forms as original, unforeseeable, creative structures. The movement of a Hegelian practice is always recuperated within the logic of order, dictated from above, whereas a Deleuzian practice rises from below through an open logic of organization.

### 3.10 The Art of Organization: Toward a Political Assemblage

Politics arises in Spinoza as a question of bodies. "In order to really think in terms of power, one must pose the question in relation to the body" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 257). The introduction of the ontological principle of power was the key that opened the field of Spinozian practice for Deleuze, and the question of the power of the body served as its primary terrain, as its model. We have seen that Deleuze's interpretation of the common notions in terms of the logic of assemblage has brought to light the real constitutive force of Spinozian practice: A passive affection constitutes an active affection, imagination constitutes reason. The common notion is an ontological mechanism that forges being out of becoming, necessity out of chance. It is the ontological assemblage whereby the chance joyful encounter is made adequate; the joyful encounter returns. From the beginning, Deleuze has posed the common notion and its process of assemblage as part of an ethical project (becoming active, becoming adequate, becoming joyful), but how can we recognize this process in properly political terms? What is the Spinozian process of political constitution, or rather, what is a political assemblage?

Spinoza is able to pose political questions directly in ontological terms by constructing a passage through the juridical domain. The theory of power and bodies is brought closer to political practice in the form of a theory of right: "All that a body can do (its power), is also its 'natural right' " (257). Spinoza's theory of natural right, along with that of Hobbes, is greatly different from the natural law of the ancients. The ancients defined natural law in terms of perfection; they conceived of nature as oriented toward its ends, toward a final cause. Spinoza, as we have seen on several occasions, always rejects the final cause for the efficient cause: "The law of nature is no longer referred to a final perfection but to the initial desire, to the strongest 'appetite' " (259). To understand this proposition of natural right we have to recognize that Spinoza's ontological logic of assemblage and constitution guides the reasoning here: organization versus order. The productivity of being itself is the motor that animates the entire discourse on right. Let us take a moment to work through this constitutive procedure, which should by now be very familiar.

We start with a devalorization. Just as we have seen on other terrains, Spinoza insists that we begin our political thought from the lowest level of our power, from the lowest point of social organization, with a typically Machiavellian *ritorno ai principi*. Just as no one is born rational, so too no one is born citizen. Since no order is predetermined, every element of Spinozian society must be constituted internally with the elements at hand, by the constituent subjects (be they ignorant or learned), on the basis of

the existing affections (be they passions or actions). And we know that the human condition is characterized predominantly by our weakness, that our power to be affected is filled largely by passions. This devalorization, however, is also an affirmation of our freedom. When Spinoza insists that our natural right is coextensive with our power, this means that no social order can be imposed by any transcendent elements, anything outside of the immanent field of forces, and thus any conception of duty or morality must be secondary and dependent on the assertion of our power. "True natural laws are norms of power, not rules of duty" (268). The expression of power free from any moral order is the primary ethical principle of society. "Pushing to the utmost what one can do [aller jusqu'au bout de ce qu'on peut] is the properly ethical task. It is here that the *Ethics* takes the body as model; for every body extends its power as far as it can. In a sense every being, each moment, pushes to the utmost what it can do" (269). This ethical formulation does not primarily place the accent on the limitation (*le bout*) of our power, but rather it poses a dynamic between the limit and what we can do—each time we reach an extreme point, what we can do rises up to move beyond. The ethical task highlights our perseverance, our material *conatus* moving in the world to express our power beyond the given limits of the present arrangement, the present order. This ethical perseverance is the open expression of multiplicity. Spinoza's conception of natural right, then, poses the freedom from order, the freedom of multiplicity, the freedom of society in anarchy.

The society described by the state of nature itself, however, presents us with an unlivable condition, or, more accurately, it presents us with the minimum point of our power. In the state of nature thus conceived, I experience chance encounters with other bodies that, since we are predominantly determined by passions, have very little in common with my own. Therefore, in this condition, not only is my power to be affected filled predominantly by passive affections, but also those passive affections are mostly sad. Just as previously we have moved from passive affections to active affections and from imagination to reason, here we must discover a passage for the increase of our power from natural right to civil right. "There could be only one way to make the state of nature livable: by striving to *organize its encounters*" (260-61). The civil state is the state of nature made livable; or, more precisely, it is the state of nature infused with the project of the increase of our power. And, as we have seen, the increase of our power involves the organization of composable relationships: "If two come together and unite their strength, they have jointly more power, and consequently more right over nature, than either of them alone; and the more there be that join in alliance, the more right they will collectively possess" (*Political Treatise* II:13). The heart of Spinozian politics, then, is

oriented toward the organization of social encounters so as to encourage useful and composable relationships; it is "this art of organizing encounters" (262). Natural right is not negated in the passage to civil right, as it is in dialectical conceptions of society, but rather it is preserved and intensified, just as imagination is fortified in reason. In this transformation the multiplicity of society is forged into a multitude.[20] The multitude remains contingent in that it is always open to antagonism and conflict, but in its dynamic of increasing power it attains a plane of consistency; it has the capacity to pose social normativity as civil right. The multitude is multiplicity made powerful. Spinoza's conception of civil right, then, complements the first notion of freedom with a second: from the freedom from order to the freedom of organization; the freedom of multiplicity becomes the freedom of the multitude. And the rule of the multitude is democracy: "This right, which is defined by the power of the multitude, is generally called a State. And it is absolutely controlled by he who through common consent manages the affairs of the republic. . . . If this charge belongs to a council composed of the general multitude, then the State is called a democracy" (*Political Treatise* II:17). In the passage of freedom, then, from multiplicity to multitude, Spinoza composes and intensifies anarchy in democracy. Spinozian democracy, the absolute rule of the multitude through the equality of its constituent members, is founded on the "art of organizing encounters" (262).

This vision of the freedom and organization of social encounters is, in effect, an extension of Deleuze's ontological theory of common notions. On the epistemological plane, we have seen how the common notion is the mechanism by which practice constitutes an order of knowledge; the practical passage from the joyful passive affection to the active affection, just like the passage from imagination to reason, develops through the common notion. Now, the theory of ontological parallelism tells us that if we can identify such a practical passage in the realm of thought, we must be able to recognize a similar passage in the realm of extension. In other words, if we are to pursue Deleuze's interpretation of parallelism consistently, we have to discover a corporeal common notion that serves to organize the chance, inadequate, and predominantly sad encounters of social bodies into coherent, adequate, and joyful encounters, just as on the basis of inadequate ideas (imagination) the intellectual common notion constitutes adequate ideas (reason). Pushed to its conceptual limits, ontological parallelism means that the constitution of knowledge, the intellectual constitution of community, must be equalled and complemented by a corporeal constitution of community. The corporeal common notion, the adequate social body, is given material form in the multitude.

These outlines of Spinozian freedom and democracy provide us with a general political orientation, but the central element, the process of the formation of the multitude, the process of political assemblage, risks appearing obscure and mysterious until we flesh out its concrete constitutive mechanisms. This, however, is the limit of Deleuze's analysis in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. In effect, this is the limit of a "theory" of democracy, the point at which theory runs into a wall. Only social practice can break through this wall, by giving body to the process of political assemblage.

Chapter 4

# Conclusion
# An Apprenticeship in Philosophy

We have navigated through Deleuze's early work to discern a powerful line of development, a progressive evolution: Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza. This is not, however, merely an exercise in the history of philosophy. It is true that part of my interest in this study has been to demonstrate through Deleuze's work that the history of metaphysics is not dead, that it contains powerful and radical alternatives still very alive in the contemporary problems we face. These philosophers form a foundation for Deleuze's thought in that they provide the material for his own education, for his apprenticeship in philosophy. Deleuze's work, however, does not stop with a revalorization of this alternative tradition: He selects what is living and transforms it, making it adequate to his concerns. In this way, he both makes the history of philosophy his own and makes it new.

Today, an emerging generation is being schooled in Deleuze's thought, developing a new taste for philosophy. In this study I have tried to read Deleuze's work using his method of selection and transformation in order to pursue my own education, my own apprenticeship in philosophy. I have tried to make his work my own. In the process, I have fleshed out a cluster of four themes that coalesce in my mind as the core of this endeavor: ontology, affirmation, practice, and constitution.

## 4.1 Ontology

Deleuze's ontology is grounded in the conceptions of difference and sin-

gularity that he discovers in Bergson and Spinoza. Bergsonian difference defines, above all, the principle of the positive *movement* of being, that is, the temporal principle of ontological articulation and differentiation. Bergson does not ask what being is, but how it moves. This focus on ontological movement can easily be situated in the context of traditional philosophical discussions on the nature of causality. Bergsonian difference must first be distinguished from the difference of the Mechanicists, who pose an empirical evolution in which each determination is caused by a material "other" through an accidental relation. The ontological movement of the Mechanicists rests on a crude conception of the material cause that risks posing being as purely contingent, as a "subsistent exteriority." On the other hand, however, Bergsonian difference must be distinguished from Platonic difference, which relies not on a material cause, but a final cause. The Platonic ontological movement is equally external in that it is determined by its end, by its finality. Finally, Bergsonian difference must be distinguished above all from Hegelian difference, which rests on an "abstract" conception of causality: abstract in the sense that the negative movement of contradictions poses a cause that is absolutely external to its effect. Opposition, Deleuze claims, is too crude a notion to capture the nuances that mark real differences; it hangs loosely on reality like baggy clothes. Bergson's difference, in contrast to all these versions, is defined by a notion of efficient causality. The movement of being is a progression of internal differences in that the cause always inheres within its effect. In this way, ontological movement is freed from any play of negations and is posed instead as absolutely positive, as an internal differentiation.

In the Spinozian context, the positivity of being is characterized by its singularity and its univocal expression. The singularity of Spinoza's being is not defined by its difference from an other, from nonbeing, but rather by the fact that being is different in itself. "Dissociated from any numerical distinction, real distinction is carried into the absolute. It becomes capable of expressing the difference in being and consequently it brings about the restructuring of other distinctions" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 39). Spinozian being is remarkable; it is different without any external reference. In other words, being is singular. Once again, this logic points to the tradition of causal arguments. Just as being is cause of itself and thus supported by an internal causal structure, so too being is different in itself and thus sustained through a notion of internal or efficient difference. The expression of this internal difference is precisely the movement of being. Expression is the opening of being that makes clear its internal causal structure, its genealogy, and thus the expression of singular being cannot but be univocal: Being is expressed always and everywhere *in the same voice*. The singular and univocal expression of being is, in the Spinozian

context, the highest possible affirmation of being. And this proposition casts our thought on the highest plane of ontological speculation.

There should be no doubt at this point that this Deleuzian conception of ontology is radically distinct from the Hegelian and Heideggerian conceptions, particularly with regard to its positivity and its materialism. In Spinozian shorthand, we could say that Deleuze has displaced the center of ontological speculation from "omnis determinatio est negatio" to "non opposita sed diversa"—from negation to difference. This strategy strikes at the very first moves of Hegel's logic, the progression from pure being to determinate being, and, more important, it strikes at the movement of the entire dialectical system. In essence, Deleuze appeals to the precritical world of Spinoza and the Scholastics to demonstrate the weakness of Hegelian ontology. The being that must seek an external support for its difference, the being that must look to negation for its foundation, is no being at all. As we know from Scholastic arguments about the "productivity" and "producibility" of being—its aptitudes to produce and to be produced—a thing cannot be the necessary cause of something outside itself, and an effect cannot have more perfection or reality than its cause. (See Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie au Moyen Age* 595.) The dignity of being is precisely its power, its internal production—that is, the efficient causal genealogy that rises from within, the positive difference that marks its singularity. Real being is singular and univocal; it is different in itself. From this efficient difference at the heart of being flows the real multiplicity of the world. In comparison, Hegelian being can manage neither a real unity nor a real multiplicity—it is abstract in the sense that it can grasp neither its power to produce nor its power to be produced.

Only materialism can adequately grasp this understanding of being. Materialism must be understood here as a polemical position that combats any priority afforded to thought over matter, to mind over body, not in order to invert that relationship and give matter the same privilege, but rather to establish an equality between the two realms. Deleuze's ontology requires a materialist perspective because any priority accorded to thought would weaken the internal structure of being. Materialism, then, is not only a refusal of the subordination of the corporeal to the mental world, but also an exaltation of being with respect to both realms. Deleuze refuses any idealistic conception that in some way subordinates being to thought. "The being of Hegelian logic," for example, "is merely 'thought' being, pure and empty" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 183). Deleuze's being is logically prior to, and comprehensive of, thought and extension equally. This logical priority, however, does not mean that being exists at a distance from the actual world; there is no separation between being and nature. Any term such as being-in-the-world would have no sense in Deleuze's ontol-

ogy because being is always already actual; it is always fully expressed in body and thought. Only a materialist approach can adequately account for both this superficiality and this plenitude.

A first lesson we can draw from Deleuze's philosophy, then, is that what some suppose to be the masterline of metaphysical speculation—from Plato to Hegel and Heidegger—does not have a monopoly on ontological thought. He brings out the coherence of an alternative tradition—from Lucretius and Duns Scotus to Spinoza and Bergson—that is equally rich and varied. In effect, to contest the claims of an idealist ontology we do not need to go all the way to the opposite and propose a deontological perspective, but rather we can pursue the materialist ontological tradition as an alternative. One of the advantages of choosing this alternative is that it allows us to bring out the productivity and producibility of nature, and hence our power to act and our power to be affected. A positive, materialist ontology is above all an ontology of power.

### 4.2 Affirmation

Like the notion of positive ontology, so too the concept of affirmation has been misunderstood and ridiculed by the Hegelian tradition. The great thinkers of the Frankfurt School, for example, have conceived of affirmation as a passive acceptance of the contemporary state of affairs, as a naive and irresponsible optimism. (See, for example, Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* viiff.) Contemporary Hegelians continue this vein of criticism when they claim that philosophies of affirmation remain impotent because they have deprived themselves of the power of negation, they have lost the "magic" of the labor of the negative (Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire* 183-84; see also my "La renaissance hégélienne américaine et l'intériorisation du conflit" 134-38). Affirmation is thus conceived as uncritical, or even anticritical, thinking. Here we are once again faced with a nuance or an alternative that is misunderstood as a polar opposition. In other words, Deleuzian affirmation does indeed contest the Hegelian form of negation and critique, but it does not reject negation and critique *tout court*; rather it highlights the nuances that form alternative conceptions of negation and critique more adequate to his project.

Affirmation, then, is not opposed to critique. On the contrary, it is based on a total, thoroughgoing critique that pushes the forces of negation to their limit. Affirmation is intimately tied to antagonism. The form of the Deleuzian critique harks back to the Scholastic philosophical method: *pars destruens, pars construens*. The key to this alternative conception is the absolute, nondialectical character of the negative moment. This is the way in which Nietzsche "completes" the Kantian project, according to Deleuze.

The Kantian critique must remain partial and incomplete because it guards the suprasensible as a privileged terrain, protecting it from the destructive forces of the critique: Kant can treat claims to truth and morality without endangering truth and morality themselves. The transcendental reserve shields the essential order from any radical destruction or restructuring. Nietzsche wants to give the critical forces free reign, to unleash them across the unlimited horizon so that all values of the established order would be at risk. "One of the principal motifs of Nietzsche's work is that Kant had not carried out a true critique because he was not able to pose the problem of critique in terms of values" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 1). The total critique is always insurrectional; it is an unrestrained attack on the established values and the ruling powers they support; it is a *mise en cause* of the entire contemporary horizon. The negation that forms the core of the total critique is nondialectical precisely because it refuses the conservative attitude of the dialectic: It does not recuperate the essence of its enemy, it does not "preserve and maintain what is superseded" (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §188). There is thus no magical resurrection of the other within the same, but rather a pure and uncompromising antagonism. This is not to say that all that is present is negated, but simply that what is negated is attacked with unrestrained force.

Deleuze's affirmative philosophy does not refuse or ignore the power of the negative, then, but rather points toward a different concept of negation—a negation that opens the field of affirmation. The destruction without reserve creates the space for free and original creative forces. The slave logic of the dialectic tries to pull an affirmation out of the supersession of the negation, but in this case the affirmation is already prefigured in the negation—it is merely a repetition of the same. The master logic, in contrast, engenders a true affirmation that stands on a separate footing. In itself, this negation involves no preservation, but rather a real rupture, a transmutation. The subsequent affirmation, then, looks only to its own power. The love of Ariadne for Dionysus is perhaps the ultimate expression of this affirmation in Nietzsche's work. Dionysus is the god of affirmation, but only Ariadne can affirm affirmation itself: "Eternal affirmation of being, eternally I am your affirmation" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 187). Ariadne's affirmation is a double affirmation, the affirmation of affirmation itself, "the 'yes' that responds to 'yes' " ("Mystère d'Ariane" 151). This is a spiraling affirmation that feeds on its own power, the affirmation that returns: affirmation raised to the *n*th power. Ariadne's affirmation of being is an ethical act, an act of love.

It should be clear that this Deleuzian affirmation is not a mere acceptance of what is. The yes of the ass, the yes of the one who does not know how to say no, is merely the caricature of affirmation. On the contrary, only

the one who knows how to wield a powerful negation can pose a real affirmation. The no of the total critique, the expression of an unrestrained negation, is liberating—it makes one lighter. "To affirm is not to take responsibility for, to take on the burden of what is, but to release, to set free what lives. To affirm is to unburden: not to load life with the weight of higher values, but to create new values which are those of life, which make life light and active" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 185). Affirmation is not the acceptance of being; Deleuze would have it instead that affirmation is actually the creation of being. The concept of affirmation allows Deleuze to transport the power of his ontology to the terrain of sense and value, and thus to formulate an ethics of being. Ethics here is precisely a line of conduct, or a practical guide, for the expression of power, for the active production of being.

### 4.3 Practice

Affirmation, however, is not enough for a Deleuzian ethics. An ethical project cannot remain on the plane of speculation, but must find an avenue to enter the field of practice. Spinoza's conception of joy gives Deleuze the key to this new terrain: "The sense of joy appears as the properly ethical sense; it is to practice what affirmation itself is to speculation. . . . A philosophy of pure affirmation, the *Ethics* is also a philosophy of the joy corresponding to such affirmation" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 272). The affirmation of speculation, then, must be complemented by the joy of practice. This is how ethics realizes its full constructive force, as a practical constitution of being. In effect, affirmative speculation needs a corresponding joyful practice to make good on its claims to creativity and activity. Affirmation by itself, in other words, risks appearing as simply that which grasps and selects the being that is; joy is properly the moment that creates the being to come.

Much of Deleuze's work is concerned with the problem of practice: How can we set the creative forces in motion? How can we make philosophy truly practical? Deleuze finds the key in the investigation of power. The mobile and malleable conception of being found in Bergson and Spinoza already prepares the terrain for this work: Deleuze's ontology focuses on the movement of being, on its genealogy of causal relations, on its "productivity" and "producibility." The thematic of power and production, then, already occupies an essential position. In Nietzsche, Deleuze discerns a distinction between two qualities of power, the active and the reactive, that is, power linked to what it can do and power separated from what it can do. In Spinoza, this same distinction is given a richer definition with respect to the adequate and the inadequate: The adequate is that

which expresses (or envelops or comprehends) its cause; the inadequate is mute. Like the active, the adequate is linked forward to what it can do; but it is also linked backward to its internal genealogy of affects, the genealogy of its own production. The adequate gives full view to both the productivity and the producibility of being. This is the crucial relation that opens up the field of power for Deleuze: Corresponding to the power of being to act and exist is its power to be affected. This power of producibility provides the communicating corridor between ontology and practice.

The importance of the power to be affected is that it reveals distinctions within our power; the power to act and exist, in contrast, appears as pure spontaneity, undifferentiated, and thus remains opaque to our analysis. We must delve, then, into the distinctions within power, within our affectivity, in order to discover the point of departure for an ethical practice. Deleuze's investigation of our power to be affected reveals two tiers of distinctions: At the first level, he poses the distinction between active affections and passive affections; and at the second, he poses the distinction between joyful passive affections and sad passive affections. As Deleuze formulates each of these distinctions within our power, he also recognizes that the human condition lies principally on the weak side of the equation: Our power to be affected is dominated by passive rather than active affections, and the majority of our passive affections are sad rather than joyful. This Spinozian "pessimism" is precisely the point of departure for a joyful practice. With this realistic assessment of our condition, we are ready to set out on the steep path to increase our power, to become joyful, to become active.

Deleuze begins the elaboration of practice on the field of chance encounters and focuses on the encounters with bodies that agree with our nature, that increase our power: encounters that engender joyful passions. A joyful passion, since it is a passion, is always the result of an external cause, and thus always indicates an inadequate idea; however, since it is joyful, it nonetheless opens an avenue toward adequacy: "We must then, *by the aid of joyful passions*, form the idea of what is common to some external body and our own. For this idea alone, this common notion, is adequate" (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 283). Joyful passions are the precondition for practice; they are the raw material for the construction of the common notion. In effect, the common notion is already latent in the joyful passion, because joy necessarily results from an encounter with a body that has a relationship that is compatible or composable with our own. The joy of the encounter is precisely the composition of the two bodies in a new, more powerful body. When our mind forms an idea of the common relationship shared between this body and our body (a common notion), the joyful affection ceases to be passive and becomes active. The

construction of the common notion is, in effect, the enveloping or comprehension of the cause of the affection, and an affection that expresses its cause is no longer passive, but active. The joy of the active affection is no longer contingent on a chance encounter; the joy supported by the common notion is the joy that returns. This is the practical process that fleshes out Deleuze's ethical mandates: Become joyful, become active.

Joyful practice brings ethics back to ontology—it exploits the producibility or composability of being. This is perhaps the largest payoff for Deleuze's extensive and complex investigation into ontology. Being is a hybrid structure constituted through joyful practice. When the common notion envelops the cause of a joyful encounter, and thus makes that encounter adequate, it is making a new incision into being, constructing a new assemblage of its structure. What raises this encounter to the level of being is precisely its comprehension of the cause: Substance, as Spinoza tells us, is that which is cause of itself. The practice of joy is the construction of ontological assemblages, and thus the active constitution of being.

### 4.4 Constitution

Many American authors have tried to pose the general question of the political consequences of poststructuralism. Such investigations have led to a wide range of judgments across the political spectrum. Indeed, one should not expect to find a clear response to such a question about a broad theoretical movement. For example, during the past 150 years, Hegel's philosophy has served as a primary support for a wide variety of political positions, both regressive and progressive, many of which have differed greatly from Hegel's own political views. One should not, of course, look for *the* political position that follows necessary from a theoretical body of work. There is not one, but many corridors one can follow for the passage to action. It will not be very fruitful, then, to attempt a general definition of the politics of poststructuralism, or even of the politics of Deleuze's philosophy. It is more appropriate and more productive to ask ourselves, What can Deleuze's thought afford us? What can we make of Deleuze? In other words, what are the useful tools we find in his philosophy for furthering our own political endeavors? In this spirit, I have tried to discover in Deleuze some tools for the constitution of a radical democracy. The distinctions that I have tried to highlight in Deleuze's work pose the multiplicity of organization against the multiplicity of order, and the assemblages of power (*les agencements de la puissance*) against the deployments of power (*les dispositifs du pouvoir*). Each of these distinctions hinges on a notion of constitution that remains latent, but nonetheless central, in Deleuze's thought. From this perspective, Deleuze can help

us develop a dynamic conception of democratic society as open, horizontal, and collective.

To an extent, this vision of democracy coincides with that of liberalism. Perhaps the most important single tenet of liberal democratic theory is that the ends of society be indeterminate, and thus that the movement of society remain open to the will of its constituent members. The priority of right over good is thought to insure that the freedom of society's development is not constricted or closed by an externally determined *telos*. This political refusal of teleology leads directly to a philosophical refusal of ontology, because ontology itself is presumed to carry with it a transcendental determination of the good. Deontology, then, is the only philosophical position that can support a democratic society open to a multiplicity of ends. Liberal thinkers who reason in this fashion have, in effect, too quickly accepted the Platonic and Hegelian claims about the link between ontology and social teleology; they are still too tied to the logic of contradictions, and thus they miss the important nuances. In other words, in opposition to an ontological vision that determines a conservative, closed society, they believe that a deontological theory is necessary to allow for a democratic, open society. One need not, however, make this leap to the opposite pole, one need not reject ontology *tout court*, in order to affirm the openness of ends in society. The tradition of Western metaphysics is not of a piece, it is not a monolithic block, but rather contains within itself radical alternatives. (The fact that the tradition appears to some so thin in alternatives is really only evidence of the weak state of contemporary philosophical inquiry.) When Deleuze interrogates Bergson, Nietzsche, and Spinoza, in fact, he is reaffirming and articulating an alternative tradition within the history of Western metaphysics that presents a strong notion of ontology but does not propose any teleological mapping or any determination of ends. What Deleuze develops coincides with the liberal vision in its affirmation of the openness of ends in democratic society, but it does not for that reason refuse the tradition of ontological discourse. Deleuzian being is open to the intervention of political creations and social becomings: This openness is precisely the "producibility" of being that Deleuze has appropriated from Scholastic thought. The power of society, to translate in Spinozian terms, corresponds to its power to be affected. The priority of the right or the good does not enter into this conception of openness. What is open, and what links the ontological to the political, is the expression of power: the free conflict and composition of the field of social forces.

This open organization of society must be distinguished from the vertical structures of order. By organization here I do not understand any sort of plan or blueprint of how social relationships will be structured; on the contrary, by organization I understand a continual process of composition

and decomposition through social encounters on an immanent field of forces. The skyline of society is perfectly flat, perfectly horizontal, in the sense that social organization proceeds without any predetermined design, on the basis of the interaction of immanent forces, and can thus, in principle, be thrust back at any time, as if by the indefatigable pressures of gravity, to its zero state of equality. Organization carries within itself the destructive power of Machiavelli's *ritorno ai principi*. This is not to say that social institutions (or other instances of verticality) are not formed, but that they receive a strictly immanent determination, and thus remain always and completely susceptible to restructuring, reform, and destruction (in the spirit, for example, of the Communards, who insisted that all representation be subject to immediate revocation). *Dispositifs*, or deployments, structure a social order from above, from an external space of transcendence; *agencements*, or assemblages, constitute the mechanisms of social organization from below, from the immanent social plane. The horizontality of the material constitution of society puts the weight on practice as the motor of social creation. A practical politics of social bodies sets loose the immanent forces from the strictures of predetermined forms to discover their own ends, invent their own constitution. Once again, we find that the productivity of social being corresponds to its producibility. The horizontal society is the open site that fosters practical creation and composition as well as destruction and decomposition. The model of this constitution is the general assembly, the absolute and equal inclusion of the entire immanent plane: Democracy, as Spinoza is fond of saying, is the absolute form of government.

The processes of social assemblage, of social constitution, are indifferent to the boundaries posed by individualism; or, more precisely, the borders of social bodies are continually subject to change as the practice of assemblage decomposes certain relationships and composes others. There is no contradiction, then, between the individual and the collective; the constitution of society rests on a different axis. The process of political assemblage, the composition of joyful social relationships, moves instead between multiplicity and the multitude. The Deleuzian practice of affirmation and joy, in other words, is directed toward creating social bodies or planes of composition that are ever more powerful, while they remain at the same time open to internal antagonisms, to the real forces of destruction and decomposition. Political assemblage is certainly an art in that it has to be continually made anew, continually reinvented. The multitude is assembled through this practice as a social body defined by a common set of behaviors, needs, and desires. This is Deleuze's way of grasping the living force in society that continually emerges from the dead forces of social order, just like Marx's living labor that refuses to be sucked dry by the vam-

pires set in flight by capital. And this quality of living is defined both by the power to act and the power to be affected: a social body without organs. The composition or the constitution of the multitude does not in any way negate the multiplicity of social forces, but on the contrary, raises the multiplicity to a higher level of power.

All of this, however, remains only the hint of a democratic politics; we still have to flesh out its constitutive mechanisms with concrete social practices. What Deleuze gives us, in effect, is a general orientation that can suggest the paths of future research into the contemporary forms of social assemblage. On the political horizon, the multiplicity of social practices and desires presents us with the conditions of composition or assemblage. This is the field on which the process must be defined: Assemblage must be pursued by bringing together social bodies with compatible internal relationships, with composable practices and desires. In the existing social practices, in the affective expressions of popular culture, in the networks of laboring cooperation, we should seek to discern the material mechanisms of social aggregation that can constitute adequate, affirmative, joyful relationships and thus powerful subjective assemblages. Filling out the passage from multiplicity to multitude remains for us the central project for a democratic political practice.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. This is the argument, for example, of Stephen Houlgate in *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*. We will return to his arguments to consider them carefully in chapter 2, "Remark: The Resurgence of Negativity."

2. In addition to Judith Butler's *Subjects of Desire* and Stephen Houlgate's *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, see Gillian Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism*, and John Grumley, *History and Totality: Radical Historicism from Hegel to Foucault*. For an account that does recognize a successful rupture from the Hegelian problematic in the French thought of the 1960s, see Michael Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth-Century France*.

3. We will deal with the refusal of an "intellectualist" account of being and the bases of a materialist ontology at length in terms of Deleuze's interpretation of the attributes in Spinoza (see Sections 3.4 and 3.5). I do not directly confront Deleuze's ontology with that of Heidegger, but I think posing this question could be very fruitful and deserves a complete study of its own. Here I hope only to indicate the general lines of confrontation so as to offer a helpful guidepost and situate Deleuze's approach.

4. Some authors have recently begun to use "foundation" and "foundationalism" to refer to an idealist conception of the necessary and eternal bedrock that underlies and determines the unfolding of epistemological, ontological, and ultimately ethical developments and "grounding" to refer to a materialist and historical conception of the humus or, more appropriately, the geological sediment that forms the context of our contemporary interventions. Although this is similar to the conceptual distinction I am referring to, I have reservations about the appropriateness of the terms "foundation" and "ground." The organic metaphors evoked by "ground" carry all the problems of a predetermined, "natural" structure or order. (See, for example, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of root structures in "Introduction: Rhizome," *A Thousand Plateaus*.) Furthermore, in the specific context of our study, ground

(*Grund*) plays such a central role in the Hegelian system (see, for example, *Science of Logic* 444-78) that it is difficult to recuperate any difference it might mark from foundation.

## Preliminary Remark

1. I do not mean to suggest that Deleuze's book on Hume is in some way incidental. I have chosen to take a certain slice across the body of Deleuze's work that I have found particularly productive, but it is by no means the only way to approach his work. I have simply done my best to make Deleuze's work my own.

2. Brian Massumi, to my mind the best reader of Deleuze, provides us with a pertinent example. In his Foreword to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Massumi is certainly correct to insist on Deleuze's opposition to "State philosophy." However, Massumi (and admittedly Deleuze too at times) tends to exaggerate the centrality and hegemony of "State philosophy" in the history of Western thought: " 'State philosophy' is another word for the representational thinking that has characterized Western metaphysics since Plato" (xi). Western metaphysics should not be characterized in such a univocal manner; the philosophical tradition contains radical alternatives within it. As a result of this simplification, we also find the tendency to exaggerate the marginality of the opposing tradition that is dear to Deleuze; in other words, even if Lucretius, Duns Scotus, Spinoza, et al. form a "minority" in the sense that they are partially eclipsed by the contemporary political-academic hegemony of "State philosophy" (Plato, Hegel, etc.), nonetheless this "minority" constitutes some of the highest and most central moments of Western metaphysics. My point is that we should not minimize the coherence and the enormous power of this alternative tradition. In any case, Deleuze's opposition to "State philosophy" should not be conceived as an opposition to Western philosophy *tout court*, but rather as an affirmation of its most powerful and most lucid elements. It is perhaps because of this confusion that many in the United States mistakenly regard Deleuze as a "postmodern" thinker.

3. After Deleuze's presentation entitled "La méthode de dramatisation" (The method of dramatization) before the Société française de philosophie, Deleuze's respected professor Ferdinand Alquié charged that by exclusively drawing on examples from biology, psychology, and other fields Deleuze had lost the understanding of the specificity of properly philosophical discourse. Deleuze was noticeably hurt by this accusation and he gave an emotional, affectionate response: "Your other reproach touches me even more. Because I believe entirely in the specificity of philosophy and I owe this conviction to you yourself" (106). What Alquié seemed to misunderstand is that although Deleuze's exemplification may be "unphilosophical," his reasoning and explanation are purely philosophical in the strictest sense.

4. We can see this point very clearly in Deleuze's relation to Duns Scotus: "There was never but one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There was never but one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, who gave being one single voice. We say Duns Scotus because he knew how to raise univocal being to the highest point of subtlety, without giving in to abstraction" (*Différence et répétition* 52). From the point of view of the univocity of being, Deleuze sees the history of ontology as fundamentally supported by the arguments of Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Nietzsche (52-61). The central point here, again, is that Deleuze is not pulling away from metaphysics, but on the contrary reaffirming its highest points.

5. Readers familiar with Deleuze's work might well question the order of my proposed evolution (Bergson-Nietzsche-Spinoza) because Deleuze's *Bergsonism* (1966) appeared after *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962). We can see in an early article, however, "La conception de la différence chez Bergson" (1956), that most of Deleuze's reading of Bergson was established well before he turned to Nietzsche. More important, we find that Deleuze's reading of Bergson leads logically to questions that he seeks to resolve in the study of Nietzsche; in turn, the

reading of Nietzsche reveals questions that lead him to study Spinoza. This is the trajectory I seek to trace from a logic of being to an ethics and finally a politics of being. Therefore, I would justify my proposition of an evolutionary sequence both on the basis of the historical order of Deleuze's consideration of the authors and the logical progression traced by his thought.

6. Even without close examination, the most general facts of Deleuze's biography, particularly the things that he did not do, indicate his difference from nearly all other major French philosophical voices to emerge from his generation: He was never a member of the French Communist Party, he did not attend the exclusive Ecole Normale Supérieure, and he was never fascinated by the work of Martin Heidegger.

## Chapter 1. Bergsonian Ontology: The Positive Movement of Being

1. Hegel is apparently quoting here from *Letter 50* from Spinoza to Jarig Jelles. The original reads "Quia ergo figura non aliud, quàm determinatio, & determinatio negatio est; non poterit, ut dictum, aliud quid, quàm negatio, esse." That Hegel changes the quotation to simplify it for his purposes is not a serious issue; however, in his interpretation he completely distorts its Spinozian meaning. For an extensive analysis of Hegel's misreading of Spinoza's "negativism," see Pierre Macherey, *Hegel ou Spinoza*, pp. 141ff.

2. The work of the Scholastics (from Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus to William Ockham and, much later, Francisco Suárez) gives central ontological importance to causality and to the productivity of being. What I find most important in relation to Deleuze's work is the Scholastic mode of ontological reasoning and the criteria they establish for being. The power, necessity, perfection, reality, and univocity of being are all established through causal arguments; the divine essence is a productive capacity—it exists as the first cause, the efficient cause of everything. (Ockham adds that God is not only the efficient but also the immediate cause of everything.) As Etienne Gilson explains in relation to Duns Scotus, at the foundation of Scholastic ontology are the complementary properties of being: " 'causality' and 'producibility,' or the aptitudes to produce and to be produced" (*La philosophie au Moyen Age* 595). In the course of these ontological discussions, the Scholastics take meticulous care in elaborating and observing the principles of causality. Some of these principles will prove especially useful in our discussion: (1) an effect cannot have more perfection or reality than its cause; (2) a thing cannot be the necessary cause of something outside itself. Finally, while the efficient cause is primary in proofs of the existence of God, the Scholastics in general maintain the four genres of cause inherited from Aristotle (material, formal, efficient, and final) as real causes, even though they change the meaning of the genres significantly. For a detailed analysis of the genres of cause see Francisco Suárez, *Disputaciones metafísicas*, Disputación XII, Sección III.

3. It should come as no surprise, of course, that we find Scholastic resonances in Deleuze's study of Bergson, given both Deleuze's interest in the Scholastics (particularly Duns Scotus) and Bergson's extensive knowledge of Aristotle. Bergson wrote his Latin thesis on the concept of place in Aristotle.

4. In Spinoza we find two important modifications of this Scholastic relationship between being and causality: (1) God is not an uncaused first cause, but cause of itself, *causa sui*; (2) only efficient causes are accepted as real causes. Spinoza inherits the first change from Descartes, and Etienne Gilson explains clearly how this modification of Scholastic doctrine is not so much a departure as a refinement of Scholastic reasoning that serves to intensify the close relationship between causality and real being. "If everything has a cause, God has a cause; if God does not have a cause, one cannot say that everything has a cause, and consequently one cannot prove the existence of God by the principle of causality. This is why the Cartesian proof, instead of being the proof of a first cause that has no cause, is the proof of a

first cause that is cause of itself; for the Scholastic God of *pure action* he substitutes the God that is *causa sui* that will later be grasped by Spinoza" (*Discours de la méthode*, Gilson edition 327). The second modification that we find in Spinoza, the rejection of the formal and final causes, is directed against Descartes. See *Ethics* IP34-36 and IAppendix. (For an explanation of abbreviations in references to Spinoza's works, see chapter 3, note 4.

5. Duns Scotus defines a basic division between *causae per se* that are essentially ordered and *causae per accidens* that are accidentally ordered. See *Philosophical Writings*, p. 40.

6. Deleuze's discussion implicitly sets up a fundamental division in the philosophical tradition that appears historically as a progressively more radical antagonism between Platonism and Aristotelianism. On one side, Hegel inherits the errors of Platonic ontology and exaggerates them, taking them to their extreme. On the other side, the Scholastics and Bergson continually perfect the Aristotelian logic of being. The rough outline of the history of philosophy suggested here, then, has one axis from Plato to Hegel and another axis oriented in an altogether different direction from Aristotle to the Scholastics to Bergson.

7. It may seem at this point that the real antagonism between Bergson and Hegel resides not so much in the claims for the states of being (determinateness and difference), but in the processes that purport to achieve them (determination and differentiation). This line of reasoning could lead us to say that Bergson is adopting Hegel's ends but critiquing his means. However, this attempt to distinguish process from achieved state is a distortion of both Hegel and Bergson. As we noted earlier, in Hegel the state of determinateness is not only founded by a process of negation, but it is constituted by the continual movement of this dynamic. Similarly, Bergson's difference refers not to a static quidditas but to a continuous movement in time. Both Hegel and Bergson present philosophies of time in which no effective distinction can be made between state and process.

8. We will come back to this "explosive internal force that life carries within itself" because this notion is unclear at this point. Deleuze often invokes the Bergsonian intuition in this same context, but that concept does not clarify the situation for us. We should note at this point, however, that this obscure notion constitutes a central point in Bergson's system, as the dynamic of the articulation of being. It is precisely at this point that Nietzschean will to power and Spinozian *conatus* come into play in the later studies.

9. Hegel notes that in etymological terms determinate being (*Dasein*). means being-there, being in a certain place; but, Hegel continues, the idea of space here is irrelevant (*Science of Logic* 110). It is tempting to give significance to the German etymology and explain Deleuze's usage on this basis: Determinate being or *Dasein* relates to space and marks differences of degree, while the "indeterminate" being of differentiation relates to time and marks differences of nature. However, as we have already seen, Deleuze credits the Hegelian *Dasein* of the dialectic with neither differences of nature nor differences of degree: Hegelian being remains an abstraction.

10. This critique of the possible exists already in Deleuze's early period of Bergson study in the 1950s, although at this point he only makes a distinction between the possible and the virtual, not between the real and the actual ("Bergson" 288-89). The complete formulation comes in the second Bergson period, and it is repeated in exactly the same terms in "La méthode de dramatisation" (78-79) and in *Différence et répétition* (269-76). The critique of the possible is directed toward Descartes and takes a slighdy different form in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (30-31, 38-39, 122-26). We will return to these passages later.

11. My point is certainly not to prove that Deleuze has derived his argument from the Scholastics. We can equally well attribute the Scholastic resonances to Bergson and his interest in Aristotle. What is important, however, is that we can understand this point in Deleuze's argument more clearly when we keep in mind the Scholastic arguments or ones with similar concerns.

12. Here we can finally make sense of Bergson's use of "determinate" and "indeterminate." Posed in a Hegelian context they have a completely different meaning. Yet the gap between these two terminological registers reveals a serious issue that has not been adequately treated. In one sense, Deleuze's being must be "determinate" in that being is necessary, qualified, singular, and actual. In the other sense, however, Deleuze's being must be "indeterminate" in that being is contingent and creative. Some of Deleuze's most cherished terms—such as unforeseeable (*imprévisible*), untimely (*intempestif*), and event (*événement*)—insist on this point.

13. The role of the formal distinction in Duns Scotus is to mediate the unity and the multiplicity, the universal and the individual, on two separate planes. See Gilson, *La philosophie au Moyen Age*, pp. 599ff. Deleuze will use the conception of the real distinction in Spinoza to critique the formal distinction of Duns Scotus in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, pp. 63-65.

14. At this point in his work Deleuze finds in Bergsonian *fabulation* only an explanation of obligation and the negation of human creativity. In some of his later works, particularly the books on cinema, he reinterprets "fable-making" or "confabulation" in a more positive light. In fact, in a recent interview with Antonio Negri, Deleuze suggests that we should go back to this Bergsonian concept to develop a notion of social constitution: "Utopia is not a good concept: there is rather a 'confabulation' common to people and to art. One ought to take up the Bergsonian notion of confabulation and give it a political meaning" ("Le devenir révolutionnaire et les créations politiques" 105).

15. It is precisely this final section of *Bergsonism* that irritated the French Bergson community. Later, in the "Remark," we will consider the review of Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule in *Les études bergsoniennes* in which she focuses on this section and objects, "Bergson is not Nietzsche" (120). One might well ask of my reconstructed evolution of Deleuze's thought, Why does *Bergsonism* not fully incorporate the Nietzschean themes and go beyond them? A response would have to agree with Barthélemy-Madaule that Bergson is not Nietzsche; even though Deleuze's interpretative strategy involves a high degree of selectivity, he will never stretch one doctrine to conform to another.

16. A central passage in this regard is Deleuze's description of Callicles' attack on law in relation to Nietzsche: "Everything that separates a force from what it can do he calls law. Law, in this sense, expresses the triumph of the weak over the strong. Nietzsche adds: the triumph of reaction over action. Indeed, everything which separates a force is reactive as is the state of a force separated from what it can do. Every force which goes to the limit of its power is, on the contrary, active. It is not a law that every force goes to the limit, it is even the opposite of a law" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 58-59). This is how Nietzsche's conception of power can be read as a powerful antijuridicism. We will return to this passage later. For an explanation of the distinction between *jus* and *lex* in Spinoza, see Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly*, pp. 96ff.

## Chapter 2. Nietzschean Ethics: From Efficient Power to an Ethics of Affirmation

1. This is one example in which Deleuze appears a little overzealous in his attack on Hegel. "If one considers the ensemble of the history of philosophy, one would search in vain for a philosophy that could proceed by the question 'Qu'est-ce que?' . . . Maybe Hegel, maybe there is only Hegel, precisely because his dialectic, being a dialectic of the empty and abstract essence, is not separated from the movement of the contradiction" ("La méthode de dramatisation" 92). In the discussion following this presentation, Ferdinand Alquié chastised Deleuze on this account: "I regret the rejection, a bit too fast, of the question 'Qu'est-ce que?,'

and I cannot accept what you say, intimidating us a bit, at the beginning, that is, that no philosopher has posed this question, except Hegel" (104). Alquié argues, rightly I believe, that Hegel cannot be singled out so easily and that many philosophers (Plato, Leibniz, Kant, etc.) have emphasized the question "Qu'est-ce que?" in various degrees and in diverse contexts.

2. In this Nietzschean context, Deleuze presents the argument as if it were part of an attack on causality itself; but it is not difficult to bring this back to the notion of the internal cause developed earlier in the Bergson section. Indeed, the argument becomes clearer if we read it as an affirmation of internal cause rather than an attack on causality *tout court*. I would argue, further, that Nietzsche's entire polemic against causality could be read productively as a polemic against the external cause and an affirmation of the internal cause. For an example of Nietzsche's argument, see *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Four Great Errors," pp. 47-54.

3. With this polemical proposition of efficient power, Deleuze is participating in a long philosophical tradition. The ultimate source, perhaps, can be found in Aristotle's distinction between potential being and actual being in *Metaphysics*, Book 5. However, this argument can be found in various forms throughout the materialist tradition, from Ockham to Marx. In fact, Spinoza's distinction between *potestas* and *potentia*, which plays such a central role in Antonio Negri's reading, correlates very closely with Nietzsche's usage of slave power and master power. For an explanation of this distinction in Negri's interpretation of Spinoza, see my foreword to *The Savage Anomaly*, "The Anatomy of power," pp. xi-xvi.

4. This evaluation of the two natures of power is one element that brings Deleuze's Nietzsche very close to Spinoza: "By virtue and power [*potentia*] I mean the same thing" (*Ethics* IVD8).

5. Mario Tronti observes that precisely what is lacking in Hegel's master-slave dialectic is the question of value. This is why Marx needs to combine a critique of Hegel with a critique of Ricardo to arrive at his notion of labor value (*Operai e capitale* 133-43).

6. "There is certainly in the author a sort of resentment with respect to Hegelian philosophy that sometimes allows him to write penetrating passages, but sometimes, too, threatens to misguide him" ("Nietzsche et la philosophie" 353). Wahl is certainly correct in pointing to this danger. Deleuze's defense rests on his development of a nondialectical opposition, which would not be a *ressentiment*, but a pure aggression.

7. Kojève's reading is perhaps the purest version of a personalist interpretation of the confrontation between the master and the slave: "A human-individual comes face to face with a human-individual" (*Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* 10).

8. I can imagine an argument by which Hegel could be defended against the charge that slave contents are being attributed to essence here, but the reading of this passage as an affirmation of labor as essence is so widespread in the Hegelian tradition that I think it is worth considering this point.

9. Nietzsche and Marx are united precisely on a Spinozian proposition: The essence of being is power (*Ethics* IP34). One might well object at this point that in my argument Nietzsche and Marx are not attacking essence per se, but substituting one essence for another. This is true. I would maintain that just as Nietzsche's arguments against causality should be read as arguments against the external causality in favor of the internal cause, the attack on essence is the attack on an external form of essence. The will to power is the essence of being. In effect, charges of "essentialism" are defused in the context of both Marx and Nietzsche. It is true that each relies on a notion of essence, but in both cases it is a historical, material, living essence, a superficial essence that has nothing to do with the ideal, transcendental structures that are usually the issue of "essentialist" arguments.

10. The "refusal of work" was not only a slogan but also one of the central analytical categories of Italian Marxism in the sixties and seventies. Just as Marx discovered surplus value as the general term that envelops the various forms of exploitation (rent, profit, etc.), the "re-

fusal of work" is the general term that comprehends the various forms of proletarian resistance, be it constructive or destructive, individual or collective: emigration, mass exodus, work stoppage, organized strikes, sabotage, and so on. We should be very clear, however, that the refusal of work is not the negation of productivity or creativity; rather, it is the refusal of a relationship of exploitation. In the terms of the tradition, it is the affirmation of proletarian productive force and the denial of capitalist relations of production.

11. In regards to the theme of the attack on essence and the joy of destruction, the connections between Nietzsche and Lenin are profound. For an explanation of Lenin's use of the phrase "the art of insurrection," see Antonio Negri, *La fabbrica della strategia*, pp. 68ff.

12. There is certainly a wide variety of differing accounts of what '68 was, and what it should have been. The reason I think that *Vogliamo tutto* best serves our purposes here is that it gives direct expression to the desires of the workers in action better than any other source I have found. In any case, even if I were to hold that this account is exemplary of the events of '68, I would not claim that it is representative. I should also point out that just as it is a particular reading of Nietzsche that we are following, one defined by Deleuze's selection, it is also a particular interpretation of Marx, that of Italian *operaismo* (workerism) as expressed by authors such as Mario Tronti and Antonio Negri. Deleuze finds resonances with the work of Tronti in his study of Foucault; see *Foucault*, p. 144, note 28 and p. 150, note 45.

13. Pierre Klossowski develops this idea of a selective ontology along different lines in his spectacular analysis, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux*. See, in particular, the chapter entitled "Le cercle vicieux en tant que doctrine sélective," pp. 177-249.

14. Jean Wahl admires Deleuze's formulation of the will to nothingness as the *ratio cognoscendi* of the will to power in general and the affirmation of the eternal return as its *ratio essendi*, but he finds it somewhat inappropriate for the Nietzschean context: "But isn't this exposé of Nietzsche's thought perhaps too Scholastic in appearance?" ("Nietzsche et la philosophie" 378). Wahl is certainly right to note that Deleuze is bringing in an element external to Nietzsche's thought, but, as I hope I have already shown, reference to the Scholastics can help bring to light the ontological grounding of Nietzsche's thought (in the analysis of power, of will, and of causality).

15. Hugh Tomlinson translates "pouvoir d'être affecté" as "capacity to be affected." "Capacity" is a very poor choice because the "pouvoir d'être affecté" does not imply any possibility, but rather is always actual.

16. I use "will," "appetite," and "desire" here according to their Spinozian definitions. Will is *conatus* with respect to the mind, and appetite is *conatus* with respect to the mind and the body. Desire is appetite together with consciousness of the appetite. See *Ethics* IIIP9S.

## Chapter 3. Spinozian Practice: Affirmation and Joy

1. Although this work has had a much smaller general audience than Deleuze's other readings in the history of philosophy, his interpretation of Spinoza has revolutionized Spinoza studies. Along with the reading of Louis Althusser (developed by Pierre Macherey and Etienne Balibar), Deleuze's work is the major influence to have emerged in French Spinoza studies in the last thirty years. The French tradition is very rich. Aside from Deleuze and the Althusserians, some of the major twentieth-century figures who constitute this tradition are Ferdinand Alquié, Sylvain Zac, and Martial Gueroult. We will have ample opportunity to draw on their readings in the course of our study.

2. Nietzsche recognized that he had a spiritual companion in Spinoza. He wrote to his friend Franz Overbeck: "I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted. I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just *now*, was inspired by 'instinct.' . . . My lonesomeness, which, as on very high mountains, often made it hard for

me to breathe and made my blood rush out, is now at least a twosomeness" (Postcard to Overbeck, July 30, 1881, in *The Portable Nietzsche* 92).

3. In a letter to Léon Brunschvicg, Bergson wrote: "One could say that every philosopher has two philosophies: his own and that of Spinoza" (*Ecrits et paroles* 587). An acute analysis of the common themes in the two philosophers is presented by Sylvain Zac in "Les thèmes spinozistes dans la philosophie de Bergson." See also Rose-Marie Mossé-Bastide, "Bergson et Spinoza," which draws heavily on Bergson's courses at the Collège de France. The most significant theme that Deleuze chooses not to treat, both in Bergson and Spinoza, is that of religion and mysticism. Both Zac and Mossé-Bastide consider this a fundamental aspect of the Spinoza-Bergson relationship.

4. We will use the conventional abbreviated notation for referring to Spinoza's works. A stands for axiom, C for corollary, D for demonstration, Def for definition, P for proposition, and S for scholium. Roman numerals are used to refer to the five parts of the *Ethics*, and Arabic numerals to denote proposition or scholium numbers. Thus, *Ethics* IP8S2 refers to *Ethics*, Part I, proposition 8, scholium 2.

5. I use "difference" and "distinction" as if they were interchangeable here because they seem to fill the same role in Deleuze's thought. We might ask ourselves, however, if an important nuance could be discerned between the two terms. It may be, in fact, that the common usage of "difference" implies an other or external cause, and therefore, "distinction" would be a better term for defining the singularity of being. We should keep in mind, of course, the two separate contexts: Bergson's use of difference derives primarily from biology and Mechanicism, while consideration of distinctions in Spinoza must be linked first to Descartes, and then to the Scholastics.

6. Once we pose the common thesis of the singularity of being in Bergson and Spinoza, we have to acknowledge what is commonly held to be the important difference: "While Spinoza's philosophy is a philosophy of necessity, Bergson's philosophy is a philosophy of contingency" (Zac, "Les thèmes spinozistes" 126). Any student of the history of philosophy would point out, along with Zac, that Spinoza is an "absolute determinist," while Bergson constructs an ontology based on "unforeseeable newness." I am very suspicious, however, of this traditional opposition. In Deleuze's work, as in that of Spinoza, we find that the conventional distinctions between necessity and contingency, between determination and creativity, are effectively subverted.

7. Deleuze's insistence on the thematic of expression constitutes a polemic against semiology on ontological grounds. A system of signs does not recognize being as a productive dynamic; it does not help us understand being through its causal genealogy. The "absent cause," which supports much of the French structuralist and semiological discourse in the sixties, denies a positive ontological foundation. In contrast, a theory of expression seeks to make the cause present, to bring us back to an ontological foundation by making clear the genealogy of being.

8. On the relationship between Duns Scotus and Spinoza, Deleuze makes one of his rare forays into philosophical historiography (63-67). It is unlikely, he notes, that Spinoza would have read Duns Scotus directly; however, through Juan de Prado, who is certain to have read Duns Scotus, Spinoza could have received a Scotist account of univocity and the formal distinction. Deleuze then sets this axis of thought, Duns Scotus-Spinoza, against its enemy axis, Suárez-Descartes. The lines of battle are univocity, immanence, and expression (in Duns Scotus and Spinoza) versus equivocity, eminence, and analogy (in Suárez and Descartes). As always, Deleuze's ideas about the history of philosophy are very suggestive, but, from the philological or historiographic point of view, not fully developed. For an explanation of the theory of the formal distinction in Duns Scotus, see Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie au Moyen Age*, pp. 599ff.

9. Alquié presents a definition of Spinozism as the synthesis of Cartesian science and mathematics with Renaissance naturalism.

10. Martial Gueroult presents a thorough history of this controversy. See *Spinoza*, vol. 1, pp. 50, 428-61. Gueroult clearly supports an objectivist interpretation.

11. According to Gueroult, Hegel's interpretation is "the inspiration of a whole line of commentators who, from the beginning of the nineteenth century to today, have continued to maintain a common interpretation" (I, 466). See also pp. 462-68.

12. See Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, for an analysis of the dominant lines of French philosophy during these years.

13. "Parallelism" is not Spinoza's term, but rather is introduced by Leibniz's interpretation. Many have contended that it is not appropriate to apply this term to Spinoza's thought. Sylvain Zac, for example, objects to the use of the term "parallelism" to describe the relation between the Spinozian attributes: "It is not a correspondence nor a parallelism between the mental and the physiological, neither a term-to-term correspondence nor a correspondence of the wholes" (*L'idée de vie* 96-97). Zac argues that the attributes are not parallel, but instead are substantially identical, viewed from different perspectives. For this reason, it is important that Deleuze not claim an equality of correspondence, but an equality of principle. Given this nuance, it is not clear that Zac's objection would adequately address Deleuze's interpretation.

14. Antonio Negri poses forcefully the problem of the attributes as a problem of organization (*The Savage Anomaly* 53ff.). The ontological order that they constitute presents a being that is preformed, an ideal construction. This is the reason, Negri argues, that the attributes must drop out of the discussion when Spinoza develops toward practical and political concerns. Deleuze, however, seems to be either unaware of, or unconcerned with, this problem.

15. We will see that, although Deleuze eloquently proposes this ontological parallelism, he fails to apply it to its fullest at a crucial point in the investigation, when practice emerges on the terrain of constitution.

16. Special difficulties are presented for my thesis by the reappearance of the attributes in Part V of the *Ethics*. Negri maintains that this reappearance is due to the fact that Spinoza drafted different sections of Part V during different periods, that Part V contains residues of the pantheistic utopia of Spinoza's early work (169ff.). My Deleuzian proposal suggests a different explanation. I would maintain that Spinoza's effort in Part V to rise from the second to the third type of knowledge, to rise to the idea of God, requires a new speculative moment, a return to the earlier mode of research. The return to Spinoza's *Forschung* brings with it all of its scientific instruments, including the attributes.

17. In *Spinoza's Theory of Truth*, Thomas Mark gives a thorough account of Anglo-American and analytic interpretations of Spinoza's epistemology. Mark explains that the traditional approach (Joachim, Stuart Hampshire, Alisdair MacIntyre, etc.) poses Spinoza against a correspondence theory of truth and in favor of a "coherence theory" where truth is defined as coherence within the orderly system that constitutes reality. Mark argues, however, that Spinoza is better situated in the much older epistemological tradition of truth as being: "If we wish to see Spinoza's theory of truth in its historical setting, we must contrast the correspondence view not with coherence, but rather with theories of 'truth of being' or 'truth of things': ontological truth" (85). According to Mark, this theory of ontological truth situates Spinoza in the Platonic tradition in line with Plotinus, Anselm, and St. Augustine. Deleuze's reading is consistent with Mark's to a certain point, but the crucial factor is that Mark does not recognize, as Deleuze does, the central relationship between truth and power. Once the question of truth becomes also a question of power, Spinoza's epistemology tends toward a practical epistemology. Therefore, Deleuze's reading situates Spinoza's "ontological truth" not in the Platonic, but the Nietzschean, tradition.

18. A given idea of a circle may be clear and distinct, but it remains inadequate unless it expresses the path of its own production. An adequate idea of a circle might, for example, involve the idea of a fixed radius rotated around a central point; it expresses its cause. A more important and complex example would be the idea of justice: An adequate idea of justice would have to express the means by which we would produce or construct such an idea; it would involve an entire genealogy of ideas that result in this idea.

19. "When a number of bodies . . . are so constrained by other bodies that they lie upon one another, or if they move . . . that they communicate their motions to each other in a certain fixed manner, we shall say that those bodies are united with one another and that they all together compose one body or Individual" (*Ethics* IIP13Def).

20. For an extended discussion of the Spinozian conception of the multitude, see Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly* (187-90, 194-210).

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**Michael Hardt** is the translator of Antonio Negri's *Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (Minnesota, 1990) and Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community* (Minnesota, 1993). The University of Minnesota Press will also publish his forthcoming book, coauthored with Negri, *Labor of Dionysus: Communism as Critique of the Capitalist and Socialist State-form.*