

The Politics of Affect

Spinoza in the Work of Negri and Deleuze

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Abstract

How do we fashion a new political imaginary from fragmentary, diffuse and often antagonistic subjects, who may be united in principle against the exigencies of capitalism but diverge in practice, in terms of the sites, strategies and specific natures of their own oppression? To address this question I trace the dissonance between the approaches of Antonio Negri and Gilles Deleuze back to their divergent mobilizations of Spinoza's affect and the role it plays in the ungrounding and reconstitution of the social body. This dissonance reveals a divergence in their projects, the way these political projects emerge as counter-actualizations, the means by which they are expressed, and the necessity (or not) of a particular kind of historical subject to their realization. Most significantly, it speaks to how we might engage difference and alterity within our own political projects, our collective creations. I conclude with a focus on the productive possibilities provided by Deleuze's writings on the scream, as a vehicle to uncover new terrains of struggle and new possibilities for collectivity.

Key words

affect ■ Deleuze ■ Negri ■ politics ■ Spinoza

The emotions of hatred, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and virtue of Nature as all other particular things. Consequently, they recognize certain causes by which they are understood and they have certain properties which are, *equally deserving of our investigation as the properties of any other thing, whose mere contemplation afford us pleasure.*
(Spinoza, *Ethics* III, Preface)

What forces does this new bring to bear on thought, from what central bad nature and ill will does it spring . . . ? Something in the world forces us

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to think. This something is not an object of recognition but of fundamental encounter. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones. . . . In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed.

(Deleuze, 1994: 136, 139)

THE ENCOUNTER with difference as alterity – as otherness – is frequently acknowledged as a site of fear or ungrounding. Over the past 40 years, difference has persisted as a fault-line within critical theory, addressed or avoided through a variety of conceptual strategies attempting to think the unity of a political subject. In scientific Marxism difference was avoided, subsumed within a concept of the working class. Difference, it was presumed, would fall away as the leadership of that class emerged in the unfolding of capitalist development. In Gramscian approaches difference was articulated within the contours of a hegemonic bloc (see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). More recently in the framing of the political subject, the politics of ontology has taken an affective turn.

This affective turn has been fueled by a growing interest in the work of 17th-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza. The result has been a re-examination of his influence on French philosophy, its centrality in the writings of Matheron (1969), Macherey (1990) Negri (2000, 2003, 2004) and Deleuze (1988, 1990, 1997), and a rereading of his works in relation to questions of a politics of ontology by Montag (2005), Gatens and Lloyd (1999), Duffy (2006) and Williams (2007), among others.

Each era has produced its own inflected readings of Spinoza. The emphasis on the connection between joy and empowerment – the argument that we organize encounters to maximize joy – has become a cornerstone in many contemporary approaches to the constitution of a new political subject, exemplified in Negri and Hardt's insistence on the productive potentials of the multitude and immaterial labor (2000, 2004), Gatens and Lloyd's conceptualization of rational collectivities (1999), and Hardt's *passional social assemblages* (1995). Hardt and Negri's intervention arguably served as a counterpoint to left melancholia, acting, as Montag notes (2005: 657): 'to recover the productive or constituent power of the multitude at the very historical moment that "the fear of the masses" had reached its theoretical peak.'

What ensued was a series of engagements exploring the work that fear and joy do in mobilizing political subjectivities. While Spinoza argues for the necessity of joy – and a reasoned joy at that – in the formation of what we might call emancipatory assemblages, I am specifically interested in the ontological divide that difference (as alterity) presents and the ways we deal with the discomfort that often arises when attempting to bridge it. How do we fashion a new political imaginary from fragmentary, diffuse and often antagonistic subjects, who may be united in principle against the exigencies of capitalism but diverge in practice, in terms of the sites, strategies and specific natures of their own oppression? Forty years ago this question was posed along the fault-line that ran between regional unions and

urban social movements. In the interim, the divide – or perhaps our appreciation of it – has widened in the face of capital's relentless capacities to foment difference as a basis for social division and exploitation, the explosion of a 'world's fair' of laboring forms (see Virno, 2004), and the diversity, scope and scale of contemporary social movements. Hardt and Negri's multitude does not provide us with an answer so much as set the terrain on which the question can be asked.

There are points of commonality in current interpretations of Spinoza that enable us to read ontology via ethics and that shift the very ground on which a contemporary political subjectivity might be constituted. Upon this ground, however, significant divergences persist – particularly in relation to questions of alterity. Negri and Deleuze offer two different, perhaps antipodal strategies. The former emphasizes the joy of communism, the latter the destabilizing moment of the encounter. Both raise questions as to the ways Spinoza might enable us to excavate the discursive regimes that operate in and through subjects: the 'fascisms in our heads' so famously invoked by Foucault (2000). Beyond the emphasis on joy as the *sine qua non* of collectivity, what might Spinoza offer us in terms of the productive possibilities of fear? Not as a site of mobilization or manipulation, but of interrogation and investigation, marking the moment when we as individuals or collectivities recognize this fascism and the way it patrols our attempts to see past alterity to the co-production of new political subjectivities?

Here the divergence between Negri and Deleuze is captured in an exchange between the two (Deleuze, 1995) in which Negri pressed Deleuze to specify the form of political organization best for challenging contemporary capitalism: Negri was insistent, Deleuze evasive. From his opening remarks to his closing comments, Deleuze was more interested in 'collective creation than representation', in the sense of the event rather than the historical conditions that produced it. I would argue the dissonance between these scholars has, at its core, very divergent mobilizations of Spinoza's affect and the role it plays in the ungrounding and reconstitution of the social body. To pry open and illuminate this dissonance is also to uncover a divergence in the projects that it gestures towards, the way political projects emerge as counter-actualizations, the means by which they are expressed, and the necessity (or not) of a particular kind of historical subject to their realization. Most significantly, it speaks to how we engage difference itself *within* our projects, our collective creations.

The question is not simply *who* we should ally with, but *how*. How do we form this social body? Do we follow a *model* consulting a liturgy of already accepted 'others', who should be (politically) correctly incorporated into struggles against oppression? Or alternately do we create 'a *paideia*, a formation, a culture' (Deleuze, 1994: 110), which invites us to fashion alliances that are unforeseen, that might surprise us? To address this question I will review key aspects of Spinoza's work that have animated contemporary thinking about political ontology; explore Negri's and Deleuze's divergent

mobilizations of the affective dimensions of Spinoza's work; and suggest ways that fear itself might provide a point of interrogation in the production of new political subjects. Although Negri and Deleuze have written extensively *on* Spinoza (Deleuze, 1988, 1990, 1997; Negri, 2000, 2003, 2004), I am interested in the ways Spinoza has animated their thinking about the social field, especially in addressing the discomfort that arises in encounters with difference. As Spinoza suggests (E III, Pref.), the sad passions are 'equally deserving of our investigation' and it is the *destabilizing* moment of the encounter, which might be joy or sorrow, which 'perplexes' the soul, 'forces it to pose a problem' (Deleuze, 1994: 139–40). If we attempt to think the modalities that might shape a *new* political subject – either in theory or practice – we must remain open to interrogating the bases of our fears of (or indifferences to) alterity, open to discomfort that is the 'dark precursor' to a new political imaginary.

Spinoza and the New Ontology

The complexity of Spinoza's work means that it lends itself to varied and antipodal readings depending on the interpretation, inflection and amplification given to various statements. I want to avoid an exegetical reading of Spinoza's work here because its sheer openness, arguably, has been the very basis for its renewal.¹ There are nevertheless points of commonality in contemporary readings that have invigorated a radical ethico-politics of ontology, re-imagined across the human/non-human divide; arising from an immanent rather than predictive politics; invested in the positive rather than a negatively fueled dialectic; and, beginning with the work of Gueroult (1968, 1974), expressing a notion of power which distinguishes between *potestas*, a juridico-political power, and *potentia*, or (roughly put) empowerment.² Spinoza's framework has inspired a broad re-shaping of the contemporary political imaginary, embracing the post-human (over a unitary and fixed concept of the subject, with 'man' at its center); the contingent (against the teleological pretenses of scientific Marxism); and an indwelling, vital and immanent concept of power as *potentia* (set against a parasitic capitalism, and other alienating forms of power but not reliant on them for its motor force).

The *radical* potential of Spinoza's corpus can be linked to the coordinates of his thought that emphasize affect as a constitutive rather than derivative quality in political practice, and underscore the relational nature of Spinoza's ontology. For Spinoza, humans must collaborate with one another to enhance their *potentia*, their power to act. In the maximization of this objective, a collectivity that would form for the purpose of exploiting another would lose the possibility of a still greater collective power. Rather, to maximize *potentia* 'nothing is more useful to man than man... all [humans] should look simultaneously to the common advantage of all' and 'seek for themselves nothing that they would not desire for the rest of human beings' (E IV, P18, S).³ This, for Spinoza, is not a moral imperative

handed down from above by a transcendent God, but an immanent reality – the logical outcome of the relational nature of our being in the world, although this course of action is by no means guaranteed.

This process is animated by an affirmative rather than exclusively oppositional politics that traverses his text beginning with his concept of the very essence of things:

things that are said to agree in nature are understood to agree in power (PIII P7) but not in lack of power, i.e. negation, and consequently, not in passion either (PIII P3 S). Therefore insofar as men are liable to passions they cannot be said to agree in nature (E PIV P32 D)... Those things that agree in negation alone, i.e. that which they do not have, really agree in nothing. (E PIV P32)

Spinoza distinguishes forms of power between *potentia*, an indwelling capacity to act, and *potestas*, a form of domination or alienation, which exploits and separates things from what they can do. Thus:

[L]ack of power consists in this alone, that a man suffers himself to be led by things which are outside him, and is determined to do those things which are demanded by the constitution of external things, and not those which are demanded by his own nature, considered in itself alone. (E IV, P37, S)

We can see here a precursor to Marx's theory of alienation and appropriation of surplus value. More importantly, this conception distinguishes between innate power and domination/alienation, providing contemporary Marxists and post-Marxists with a basis for understanding resistance as something more than a reaction-formation to the oppressive capacities of capitalism or other structures of oppression.

For Spinoza, collaboration among individuals is not envisioned in the Hobbesian sense as a coming together of individuals who pre-exist apart from one another. Rather, 'two individuals of the same nature joined with each other constitute an individual which is twice as powerful as either' (E IV, P18, S). Thus:

for Spinoza there is no pre-social state of nature from which previously isolated individuals could emerge only through the juridical mediation of a contract. The atomic individual is the purest of fictions, given that individuality or better singularity... is an effect of social existence. (Montag, 1998: xviii)

Spinoza's conception of the individual allows a political reading of *Ethics* that lifts it out of a narrow interpretation as a social psychology and moves us beyond an understanding of collectivity in terms of a methodological individualism, in which the collectivity functions as a kind of aggregate (for an extended discussion, see Montag, 2005). It enables us to explore the dynamics of collectivity, broadly conceived in terms of cooperation and

co-production across a social field, itself preceding and making possible ‘individual’ inputs.

For Spinoza, the individual refers equally to human individuals (themselves composite individuals, formed of many discrete parts) or nature in its entirety, or a range of non-human things or bodies.⁴ The distinction between ‘individuals’ does not arise through the formal boundaries between modes but a thing’s ability to produce an effect or to be affected. Thus:

[b]y particular things I understand things which are finite and have a determinate existence. But if a number of individuals concur in one action in such a way that all are simultaneously the cause of one effect, then to this extent I consider all of them as one particular thing. (E II, Def. 7)

We can extend this analysis ‘to infinity’ such that ‘we shall easily conceive of Nature to be one individual’ (P II, Lemma 7, S). Spinoza’s complex rendering of the individual bears little resemblance to the anthropomorphic conception that posits the ‘individual’ and the collective, state or community ‘as mirror images of each other’ (Montag, 2005). It is cooperation itself that enables the individual: the social field is the terrain that enables any possible notion of the individual. And as we operate within a social field that prefigures our constitution as individuals, it is a fiction to insist on our mere ability to act on our passions as evidence of our freedom or free will. Freedom, to the extent that it exists, must be arrived at by other means. Thus:

men are deceived in that they think themselves free, an opinion which consists simply in the fact that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which those actions are determined. (E II, P35, S)

Spinoza’s *Ethics* intends to make us aware of this field as already always operative upon us and within us. In this way we might come to a truer understanding of this world, distinguishing emancipative collaborations that enhance our power to act from those collaborations where we are led ‘by our passions.’ This is the task of freedom. The expansion of our capacity to act is at once relational, produced by mutually reinforcing collaborations, and the outcome of a complex interplay of affect and reason. It is through this interplay that we move from a passive experience of joy to an active understanding of the nature of the associations that empower.

This raises interesting questions for those of us wanting to work across difference. Spinoza argues that the motivation for a rational evaluation of our associations stems from the desire to reproduce joyful encounters and avoid painful ones. But the desire to avoid painful encounters might well lead us to steer clear of associations whose discomfort arises, in fact, from a social field that reinforces racism, sexism, class bias or other forms of oppression. How, then, do we traverse the uncomfortable divide presented by difference as alterity?⁵

Here, Spinoza is not arguing simply for the suppression of the passions in favor of a disembodied reason. Key to this question, then, is our understanding of the nature of the relationship between affect and reason in the production of knowledge. The centrality of affect to a process of collaborative emancipation cannot be overstated: the link between joy and empowerment – *potentia*⁶ – is central to understanding the ethico-political dimensions of Spinoza’s ontology. It is central to animating ‘a formal schema of ontological projection’ – the means by which, to draw from Negri, ‘the ontological immediacy... gains normative capability’ (2003: 147). If this affective-evaluative coupling falls away, politics is evacuated from Spinoza’s framework, and the schema risks drifting towards one of two poles. At one extreme, in ignoring affect, one risks rendering Spinozism as a kind of complex systems theory. Manuel Delanda’s early work (1997), although brilliant in other regards, might be considered in this vein. At the other extreme, if we celebrate the fullness of the capacity to be affected, in a manner that holds the moment open, delaying evaluation indefinitely, the risk is a simple inversion of Descartes – a kind of ‘I feel therefore I am’. In their distinct ways, both these approaches might be commended for celebrating life – one for its complexity and the other for the universal capacity to be affected – but the tools to change it remain underdeveloped at best.

Spinoza’s investigation of affect does not simply enable us to reproduce a politics or phenomenology of the subject, a new version, as Grosz notes, of identity politics (Kontturi and Tiainen, 2007). It becomes the mechanism by which the subject itself can be undone, ‘the opening up of the subject to that which is bigger than it’ (2007: 252), the co-production of something new. It confronts at its core Descartes’ conception of relationship between mind and body, reason and emotion, completely undoing a framework that places God in his heaven, man over nature (and woman), humans over animals, reason over emotion. Against this, it offers an affective politics that is deeply implicated within the process of thinking: affective in that it engages the body in a way that Descartes’ model does not, and not subordinated to mind but rather an active component in the production of thought. Against Descartes’ celebration of the *cogito*, the reasoned self is, for Spinoza, only a *possibility* among humans: what they share is the *capacity to be affected* – from which adequate ideas may or may not arise. The capacity to be affected remains a constant feature of the human condition and, in his *Political Treatise*, Spinoza apprehends this emotional register ‘not as vices of human nature but as properties pertaining to it in the same way that heat, cold, storm, thunder and such pertain to the nature of the atmosphere’ (2002: Ch4, P1). Affect is the experience of ‘affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, helped or hindered, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections’ (E III, Def. 3). But the social nature of this experience is not a guarantor of reasoned thought: a passive engagement of the emotions produces ‘inadequate ideas’ – arguably a *form* of thought – certainly not an error, in contrast to the

view of Descartes, but one which understands the interaction with external bodies simply in terms of the effect of the trace,⁷ a reaction (see Macherey, 1990: 43–97). The reactive nature of this interpretation is attributable to the lack of accurate understanding of the innate cause of a thing – its cause in/of itself and the potential to become active in relation to it, or an active engagement in the creation of adequate ideas and active feelings (Deleuze, 1978: n.p.).

Affect is, nevertheless, necessary to this collaborative production of knowledge and immanent production of new subjectivities. As Spinoza argues in *Ethics* Part II: ‘the human mind perceives no external body as actually existing except through ideas of the affections of its [own] body’ (P26), ideas which must involve ‘the nature of external bodies and of the human body itself’ (P28) experienced, in the first instance, as perceptions or hearsay arising from a casual experience or random encounter. The possibility, and it remains only a possibility, is that we may come to understand this connection positively when we appreciate both our own essence and the essence of the thing encountered, and thus the basis for their agreement. For Deleuze this demonstrates Spinoza’s framework as a:

frenzied reaction against Descartes, since it argues from the moment we are born we are condemned to the hazards of the encounter. . . . We cannot come to know ourselves, and we cannot come to know external bodies *except through the affections that external bodies produce on our own*. . . . [I]t excludes all apprehension of the thing ‘thinking by itself’ . . . all possibility of cogito. I never know anything except the commingling of bodies and I do not understand myself except by the action of other bodies upon me and by these comminglings. (Deleuze, 1978: 13–14; author’s translation)

Thinking, then, is immediately implicated in the production of new ideas *and* new unions. But thought does not proceed outwards from the *cogito*, nor is it inscribed in transcendent principles: is a social act emerging in combination. The body ‘itself’ – whether a social body or individual human being – is in a constant state of de- and re-composition in relation to other bodies, even in the most mundane acts of everyday reproduction. It becomes aware of itself in relation to the trace – the effect of other bodies upon it. Its awareness is the product of a multiplicity of encounters whose meanings themselves are deeply invested in the materiality of the social field.

For example, Sarah Ahmed’s discussion (2004) of the Aryan nation shows how love and fear circulate *together* within that community in a complex regime which couples the love for one’s (white) children with the imagined threat from a (black) community, constituting subject positions and a sense of ‘nation’ at the same time. This:

challenges any assumption that emotions are a private matter, that they simply belong to individuals and that they come from within and then

move outwards towards others. It suggests that emotions are not simply ‘within’ or ‘without’, but that they define the contours of the multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects.

Thus ‘feelings make ‘the collective’ appear as if it were a body in the first place’ (2004: 26–7).

What Ahmed describes would correspond, in Spinoza’s terms, to the concept of an inadequate idea. The inadequate idea is a *form* of thought, but indicates: ‘our incapacity to rid ourselves of a trace; they do not express the essence of the external body, but indicate the presence of this body and its effect on us’ (Spinoza, 2002; E II, P16, cited in Deleuze, 1988: 74). The inadequate idea ‘involves the lowest degree of our understanding’, an apparatus of imagination that:

performs two basic functions . . . first, it locates the human subject as the center, or origin of its thoughts, actions, desires, and meanings; second, it reverses the order of nature such that effects appear to be causes, and reality seems to be organized teleologically in the service of human ends. (Sharp, 2007: 4)

Thus for Spinoza superstition could not be explained as mere error (Deleuze, 1994: 50). For Spinoza, the inadequate idea – for example the notion that the sun was a round ball on the horizon 200 feet away – contains within it a kernel of adequacy, ‘not purely subjective but true *in its fashion*’, such that when we recognize the ‘error’ in our thought, at the same time we understand the material circumstances that made it appear ‘to us in this way necessary, that it could not have been otherwise’ (Macherey, 1990: 86–7).

To return to Ahmed’s example, the sense of purity of the Aryan nation is constantly re-invoked and restaged in narrative form and institutional affiliations that emphasize the threat of its violation: thus a fantasy black-on-white violence serves the teleological end of constructing a sense of Aryan purity, made to appear ‘true’ to its members by the concurrent sense of love of self and hate of the other that it generates, or, as Ahmed puts it: ‘the emotional reading of hate that works to stick or bind the white subject and nation together’ (2004: 26). In Spinozist terms, what are arguably the true causes of community (for example, practices of cooperation, social and economic equity, tolerance) are displaced from the social field and attributed, quite literally in this case, to the white body (arising from the imagined purity of the white race). In this construct, imagined purity is thus threatened by the presence or commingling of ‘other’ bodies.

To challenge these regimes, the task is to know how to move from the passive experience of affect, the ‘sad passions’, even love in this case, to active joy. Affect, constituted passively, *does not comprehend its cause adequately* and ultimately limits the capacity to act. Here Spinoza distinguishes between the ‘inadequate idea’ and the common notion, a passive

engagement of the emotions which does not grasp the true cause of the trace from an understanding of its efficient cause. As illustration of this transition Deleuze offers the example of the child, who when knocked down by the wave, imputes to it an ill will – the wave becomes ‘bad’, the child is angry with the wave because it limits the child’s capacity. This inadequate idea is replaced by a common notion when the child understands the wave’s nature and the possibility (or lack of possibility) of becoming active with it. There is no transcendent notion of ‘good’ or ‘evil’ – the intention of the wave is not at issue, but we do not abandon judgment – our relationship is evaluated based on our capacity to act: are we reactive, knocked down without comprehension of a cause – or active, understanding the wave’s nature such that we might swim or surf? This sense of accomplishment is generally accompanied by a feeling of joy (Deleuze, 1978: n.p.).

Thus, becoming *active* is: a state of *becoming*, not being; a social act, a co-production; ethical rather than moral. Our knowledge is of the wave and ourselves producing a ‘common notion’ and a new social body from this interaction, which in itself contributes to active joy. Most important, this second kind of knowledge, this common notion, is not an abstract or mathematical kind of knowledge, but rather concretely related to its context. In this case it is knowledge through the body, a kind of *savoir faire* (Deleuze, 1978). The coherent sense of self is literally ungrounded in the first encounter with the wave, but later replaced by a new social body: swimmer/surfer/wave, the combination and enhancement of active powers.⁸ The motive for collaboration arises from a desire to reproduce the joy that accompanies our enhanced capacity to act. Spinoza emphasizes combinations that emerge between individuals of the same nature: ‘if two individuals of the same nature are joined with each other, they constitute an individual twice as powerful as either’ (E IV, P18, S). But collectivities also exist among beings that are ‘not of the same nature’ but whose actions modify each other, sometimes in a mutually beneficial way. In this instance the union might not be one that is immediately obvious to the observer, who from his or her perspective is more able to view the parts independently than their operation as a whole.⁹

In the absence of moral imperative or the rule of law, the question remains: what might compel us to form emancipatory collaborations across perceived differences, and what might prevent us? There is an apparent dilemma in Spinoza’s framework that is resolved differently by Negri and Deleuze. It begins with an ambiguity about the movement from inadequate ideas to common notions and the role affect plays in this process. It appears, at first glance, that Spinoza offers contradictory arguments on this point. Initially, in *Ethics*, he suggests that we attempt to recreate actively, the joyful encounters that we have experienced randomly or passively.

But painful encounters are not interrogated so much as avoided. Moreover: ‘the best we can do. . . as long as we do not have a perfect knowledge of our emotions, is to conceive a right way of living, i.e. fixed rules that are certain’ (E V, P10, S). We might read this as a Hobbesian

acquiescence to law, a rule of emotion by reason, moving away from ‘bad encounters’ towards active joy (cf. Smith, 2005). But how does one become reasonable? A prescriptive framework of ‘rules for right living’ risks becoming a static system merely encouraging tolerance without understanding, relying on a ‘system of checks and balances’¹⁰ that curtails our worst behaviors but does little to promote new understandings.

Spinoza suggests, however, that becoming reasonable is inextricably bound up with a deeper investigation of all the passions, rather than a simple move from sadness to joy: ‘we should pay particular attention to getting to know each emotion as far as possible clearly and distinctly, so that the mind may thus be determined from the emotion to think those things that it clearly and distinctly perceives’ (E V, P4, S). He continues, moreover, to suggest that we ‘think often on and meditate on the common injuries of human beings’ (E V, P10, S). Here pathos is not curtailed and contained but rather excavated and explored; our understanding of pathos is enhanced *through* logos. These divergent strategies – avoidance or exploration – have consequences for our larger politics.

Negri’s Spinoza and the Joy of Being Communist

Negri’s most sustained engagement with Spinoza, *Savage Anomaly* (2003), was conceived and written during his imprisonment for supposed involvement with the Red Brigade. It is perhaps not possible to think of a more apt venue to express the power, *potentia*, of Spinozist philosophy, in the face of the relentless and subjugating *potestas* of prison: this extraordinary work, itself ‘drafted by the light of midnight oil, in stolen moments stripped away from the daily routine’ (Negri, 2003: xxiii). Is it this context that leads to a peculiar temporality to Negri’s analysis? For Negri, Spinoza’s thought is anomalous for his own time, awaiting the particular historical and geographical moment that would enable its fullest expression.

More important at this juncture is the role joy plays for Negri, especially in forming the common notion. ‘Joy’ gets little explicit mention in *Savage Anomaly* (2003) or *Subversive Spinoza* (2004), addressed by proxy as love or the passions. Nevertheless, a particular understanding of joy animates Negri’s subsequent corpus providing the key to a crucial question that traverses Negri’s work: ‘the dimension of a phenomenology of collective and constitutive praxis that would provide the framework for a contemporary, positive and revolutionary definition of rationality’ (2003: xviii). Negri (2000) explores the role of joy in relation to necessity and liberty – joy that is ontologically constituted in the achievement of liberty, the crown of liberty. It is joy itself, the desire for joy, that *incites us to liberty*:

Spinoza comes to ask himself how liberty comes to deposit itself in the weave of appetite which leads man towards a sovereign good. His first determination is that of joy. ‘Joy’ is an affect whereby the body’s power of activity is increased or assisted. Pain, on the other hand, is an emotion whereby

the body's power of activity is diminished or checked. Therefore (Pr. 38, IV) joy in itself is good. (Negri, 2000: n.p.)

The view is shared by his co-author Hardt when, expanding on Deleuze, he writes:

When we encounter a body that agrees with ours, when we experience the affection of passive joy, we are led to form an idea about what is common between that body and our own... In the first instance we attempt to avoid sad passions and to accumulate joyous ones... there is only one way to make a state of nature viable; by ensuring the organization of encounters. (1991: n.p., my translation)

This reading emphasizes the passive experience of joy that first encourages us to recreate joyful encounters and experiences, then to come to understand the cause of this encounter, which results simultaneously in the production of a common notion and the formation of a more liberatory, social body. Little wonder that Negri (and his co-authors Hardt and Lazzarato) should be interested in the role of immaterial labor in contemporary capitalism, both because they view it as an absolute necessity to the contemporary strategy of global organization of the capitalist work process (Lazzarato and Negri, 1991; Toscano, 2007) and because it thrives on the affective dimension of collaboration. Hardt argues its current centrality to a revolutionary project in a manner that subordinates other forms of struggle.

Although affective labor has never been outside of capitalist production, the processes of economic post-modernization... for the past twenty-five years have positioned affective labor in a role that is not only directly productive of capital but at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy of laboring forms. (1999: 90)

Arguably there is a lot to be said for analyzing the affective and organizational dimensions of a segment of the workforce to think through specific strategies for its radicalization – which, in the case of affective labor, is already partially endorsed in the injunctions to collaborate (Virno, 2004). The troubling question, rather, is what the positioning of affective labor as ‘the pinnacle of laboring forms’ enables and what it denies. We may begin in an aleatory materialism and the ‘full space and open time’ of Spinoza’s politics, in which all of humanity is engaged in the struggle for self-actualization on many planes, but we find ourselves quickly moved to terrain more comfortably coincident with a neo-Leninist determination in which affective labor plays the role of vanguard. Hardt is aware of the challenges of this argument early on. In his dissertation, he transposes Lenin’s concept of determinate abstraction, and method of identification of a potential vanguard to affective labor, which ‘does not yet fully provide a theory of the

subject but serves to delimit the terrain upon which questions of the subject should be posed' (Hardt, n.d.). This strategy of *finding* rather than *producing* a new commonality is repeated in their analysis of the multitude, whose teleology

is theurgical: it consists in the possibility of directing technologies and production toward its own joy and its own increase of power. The multitude has no reason to look outside its own history and its own present productive power for the means necessary for its constitution as a political subject. (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 396)

This is a common notion based on recognition, a collapse of the open-ended possibilities of desire into the sameness of a particular vision of labor. It leaves unasked and unanswered affect's relationship to other impulses – affect is of interest only tied to labor, and for all that labor in a particular form. Its difficult relationship with the liberatory agendas of other forms of social mobilization, expressed even in the problematic history of the Italian left, get papered over (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 100–1), and the possibility that the 'multitude' might exhibit other than an liberatory impulse is not entertained at all (cf. Montag, 2005).

Immaterial labor might well be a critical venue to challenge a current manifestation of capital's project of globalization. But we cannot presume that affect is suddenly 'present' at work and was not there previously. Nor can we presume the subjective unity of a movement around affective labor and the multitude simply by sleight of hand. Whether the 'forced joy' and collaboration of the affective labor can be equated with randomly experienced, poorly understood expansion of active powers (and thus 'passive joy' *pace* Spinoza), needs to be seriously interrogated. Joy has 'labored' under many forms, including the cut-throat collaboration of Donald Trump's *Apprentice* boardroom, or as performances of joy not actually felt (as distinct from passive joy), the latter a hallmark of prostitution, servitude and slavery. One would be hard pressed to argue for their liberatory potential. There is likely more than one short step between the 'communism of capitalism' and communism itself, here, suggesting we think of the affective dimensions of *all* experiences of exploitation and the range of political strategies they gesture towards. To presume affective/immaterial labor or an undifferentiated multitude as a vanguard eclipses past and current differences within and between different fractions of labor (see Virno, 2004), and the ambivalent nature of the multitude itself (see Montag, 2005). It forgoes the opportunity to address these divisions head on.

For Negri and company the 'passions' are a corporeal motivation, a push and pull factor from inadequate ideas/passive joy towards common notions/active joy: a kind of visceral-emotional register of an ethical moment. It is not so much that the analysis is 'wrong' – arguably, it is of crucial importance to a particular site of political engagement; but it does

not address the ambivalence of the multitude nor the challenges presented when one is confronted with difference that unsettles.

Deleuze: Spinoza's Desiring-production

In 1968, Deleuze published his major and minor thesis, *Difference and Repetition* (1994) and *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1990). Arguably a difficult text, *Expressionism* is a work in which Deleuze 'sets out to think Spinoza, or rather think "in" Spinoza . . . dynamically producing rather than reproducing the intellectual movement through which this philosophy has become what it is . . . discover[ing] that which in [Spinoza's] thought causes a problem' (Macherey, 1998: 120–1). This problem, that of expressionism, the 'dynamic movement of conceptualization' (1998: 122), is what Deleuze first engages in *Difference and Repetition*, the first work where he attempts to 'do' philosophy. In these works what is interesting is both what Deleuze retains from Spinoza but also what marks his distance. The transition that Spinoza charts from the inadequate idea to the common notion is reshaped in Deleuze's own framework in *Difference and Repetition*, in Deleuze's exploration of the moment of genesis of thought which moves beyond recognition to the production of something new.¹¹ What Deleuze retains of Spinoza, if we can think of it as a retention, is the sense that thought and error have a materiality, and that true revolutions in thought are accompanied by joy; but this is arguably a joy which does not take the form of beatitude but a different conception of eternity – Dionysian moments of laughter that celebrate the eternal return – the creativity of becoming.

As Deleuze notes in *Expressionism*, 'the link between [the inadequate idea and the production of the common notion] remains mysterious' (1990: 262), and 'when Spinoza discovers that common notions form our first adequate ideas a gap opens between the first and second kinds of knowledge' (1990: 293). Deleuze, then, is more interested in the conditions of the genesis of thought – that precedes the movement from recognition (what we already 'know', whether adequately or inadequately, to the production of something new). A central question for Deleuze and Guattari – the question Hardt and Negri do *not* entertain – is why the masses 'chose to fight for their servitude as if it was their freedom' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000: 29). Deleuze and Guattari favor 'an explanation formulated in terms of desire: no, the masses were no innocent dupes; at a certain point, under a certain set of circumstances, they *wanted* fascism, and it is this perversion of desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for' (2000: 29). For Deleuze and his collaborator Guattari, 'the social field is immediately invested with desire' (2000: 29). The question becomes one of determining the circumstance that can account for desire's perversion, the materiality of the field that constitutes its perversion – if we no longer think of this as a matter of ignorance – and the circumstances in which, in the face of this

perversion, thought, the production of the common notion, can become possible, if we no longer think of this as a question of individual repentance.

Desire, not joy, becomes the central focus of Deleuze's work, arguably a concept of desire which draws upon Spinoza's concept of conatus, this being an innate tendency towards self-preservation which involves a determination to act on affections *however they are experienced or conceived*, through body or mind, through superstition or reason (E II, P9, S; E III, def), but in which, 'self-preservation' can become mobilized in all manner of distinct experiences of self, in addictions, perversions and transformations. The project, for Deleuze and Guattari, is to historicize desire and locate it in a social field, as desiring-production, which situates Spinoza's combinatorial processes – the social nature of becoming active – in relation to a kind of infinite expression of man's co-production with 'the profound life of all forms or all types of beings' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000: 4). This leads Deleuze away from an exploration of sites that express the move from passive to active joy, into more complex determinations of a range of emotional registers. Deleuze, in an inflection rather than an overturning of Spinoza's framework, extends this argument to affect itself, arguing that baseness, stupidity, the sad passions, are not some individual failing – a matter for repentance as the Stoics might have it, 'which complicate or inconvenience the dogmatic image of thought without overturning it' (1994: 151). They are, rather, institutionalized: 'one is neither superior to nor external to that from which one benefits: a tyrant institutionalizes stupidity, but he is the first servant of his own system and the first to be installed in it' (1994: 151). The tyrant rules through the sad passions, as 'a complex that joins desire's boundlessness to the mind's confusion, cupidity and superstition' (Deleuze, 1988: 25).

In this manner, *Anti-Oedipus* could be viewed as an exploration of the variety of regimes engaged in the social production of sad passions, a project in which Deleuze and Guattari seek to overturn the individualized understanding of affective conditions such as paranoia, schizophrenia or 'false problems', such as the fetish of the commodity (Deleuze, 1988: 208) and reinstall them on a plane of production, at the level of the *socius*. Revolution in social organization and in thought appears not in dismissing the false problem, but by establishing the conditions of its conscious actualization. The challenge is not to avoid the sad passions *but to engage them actively*, to uncover the role they can play in the production of thought, following Spinoza's invocation to explore the meaning of all emotional intensities (E V, P18, S).

Malevolence itself, then, plays a productive role when it refuses the assumptions of a common sense (Deleuze, 1994: 150). 'Cowardice, cruelty, baseness and stupidity are not simply corporeal capacities or traits of character or society: they are structures of thought as such' (1994: 151). Deleuze argues:

Spinoza seems to say [that] not only are all the passions affections of essence, but even among the passions, sadnesses, the worst passions, every

affect affects essence! I would like to try to resolve this problem . . . we must take [Spinoza] literally . . . every affection is affection of essence. [T]he passions belong to essence no less than the actions; the inadequate ideas . . . no less than the adequate ideas. And nevertheless there [is] necessarily a difference. . . . [They] must not belong to essence in the same way. (Deleuze, 1981)

For Deleuze the genesis of thought is not a model of the same, but a co-creation of something unforeseen, a ‘long-lasting affair with experimentation.’ Contra Negri, here *thought* emerges through the *violence* of the encounter – not recognition or joy, but when one is *forced* to think (Deleuze, 1994). Deleuze explores the dark precursor to thought, its ungrounding, in *The Logic of Sense* (the tortoise’s refusal of the serialization of the logic of sense; the infinite regression of logic completed only with a leap; the event of sense itself in the interior of non-sense); and in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (2003 [1981]) in the becoming-meat of his subjects. Following Spinoza, we might argue here a becoming active, a forming of common notions even under the most dire of circumstances – from an understanding of sadness, for example. For Deleuze (as for Spinoza) the refusal of the inadequate idea emerges not through an act of will, the desire of the sage to ‘overcome error’, but as a product of encounter. But he elaborates the more complex choreography at work within Spinoza’s texts than an impulse to move from sadness to joy, not where joy is passively experienced, but where one is forced to think under constraint.

The question here becomes how – and why – we move from the security of common sense of ‘everybody knows’ (in Deleuze’s construct), to the production of a common notion. This question sets Deleuze off on an exploration of the sense and sensibility of creations that emerge in discord. Recognizing the gap between the process in which inadequate ideas are formed (the first level of knowledge in Spinoza) and in which common notions emerge (the second level of knowledge), Deleuze is intent on inhabiting the gap, prying it open still wider, making it resonate (1990: 262–93). Deleuze explores the unhinging of sensibility, imagination, memory and thought in a discord, an ungrounding of accepted rationality that opens the possibility for thought:

‘It is not at all a matter of giving privilege to the body over the mind. It is a matter of acquiring knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover in a parallel fashion, *powers of the mind that escape consciousness*. . . . to discover more in the body than we know and hence more in the mind than we are conscious of. (Deleuze, 1988: 90; my emphasis)

Deleuze moves away from an interpretation of a Stoic moment in Spinoza’s passions to focus on the ‘sad passions’ *as a reservoir of knowledge*, not in and of themselves, but insofar as ‘we form a clear and distinct idea of [them]’ (1990: 285). Here Spinoza’s parallelism acquires its force, as a

parallelism ‘that refuses. . . any kind of superiority of one series over another, and any ideal action that presupposes preeminence’ (Deleuze, 1990: 108–9). The relationship between thought and extension that is not mathematical nor speculative, but biological and practical: the common notion is a co-production that emerges in a practice (1990: 260). To be sure, thought is only a possibility, but:

that which can only be sensed. . . moves the soul, ‘perplexes it’ – in other words, *forces it to pose a problem*: as though the object of encounter, the sign were the bearer of a problem – as though it were a problem. . . the violence of that which forces thought develops from the *sentendum* to the *cogitandum*. (Deleuze, 1994: 140–5, emphasis added)

It is not a question of *resemblance* between ‘mind’ and ‘body’, but rather a process of movement, transmission or relay, whereby ‘each faculty is unhinged’, ‘between sensibility and imagination, between imagination and memory, between memory and thought (Deleuze, 1994: 145). . . each disjointed faculty communicates to another the violence which carries it to its own limit’ in a process of escaping the dogma of common sense: ‘what are the hinges if not the form of common sense which causes all the faculties to function and converge?’ (Deleuze, 1994: 141).

It is not the harmony of the senses that marks the possibility for thought, but their discord. Thought emerges in a cramped space, forced and under constraint, beginning with an overwhelming visceral refusal, which is at the same time an affirmation, its ‘dark precursor’. This idea of cramped space, amplified and extended in Thoburn’s treatment, is a ‘mode of engagement with the particular [that] has effects that break open individualized concerns even at the most individual level’ (2003: 25). It does not originate from an act of good will, but *conatus* under constraint, and the refusal of unendurable forces that bear down upon it, that construct it in unbearable ways. For Deleuze, it begins with the scream.

There is much, in fact, to suggest that the scream has a special significance for Deleuze in relation to his understanding of and development of expressionism (as with the hand for Heidegger or the face for Levinas):

It is important to understand the mouth, the interior of the mouth, with meat. . . the mouth then acquires this power of non-localization that turns all meat into a head without a face. It is no longer a particular organ but a hole through which the entire body escapes, and from which the flesh descends. . . This is what Bacon calls the Scream and the immense pity that the meat evokes. (Deleuze, 2003: 24)

It is not simply the ‘powers of non-localization’ – which Deleuze attributes to the mouth – but the analogical nature of the scream as a kind of language, of expression rather than representation, which *evades*

representation. 'A scream no more resembles what it signals than a word resembles what it designates' (2003: 92).

In Deleuze's lectures, he described the particular scream as the set of conditions that forced each philosopher to 'pose a problem', becoming at the same time their life's work and their signature. Thus:

the philosopher is not someone who sings, but someone who screams. *Each time that you need to scream, I think that you are not far from a kind of call of philosophy.* What would it mean for the concept to be a kind of scream or a kind of form of scream? That's what it means to need a concept, to have something to scream! We must find the concept of that scream. One can scream thousands of things. . . . In my definition, the concept is the form of the scream. . . . [P]hilosophers who would say, 'yes, yes!' . . . are philosophers of passion, of pathos, distinct from philosophers of logos. (Deleuze, 1980, emphasis added)

But the scream also has a visceral register, which Deleuze explores through two antipodal figures: *Pope Innocenti X*, as painted by Francis Bacon, and Conrad's *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* – one, a figure of absolute power, the other, absolute powerlessness (as *potestas*). Both are installed within and confronted by the reactive forces of an institutionalized tyranny. The scream expresses their recognition of a limit condition: a horizon, and threshold of thought, of becoming active. Bacon's choice to paint the scream, rather than the horror it induces, affirms the body as a site of struggle, its refusal, even incapacity to submit to that which decomposes it (Deleuze, 2003: 51–3). Thus Innocenti X is held in place, transected by vertical lines that compose, construct and constrain him in an intolerable manner. His scream expresses a para-sense, something the body 'knows' or somehow knows it cannot know, but which forces it, in its own way, to 'pose a problem' which it cannot solve. Thus:

if we scream it is always as victims of invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle that even lie beyond pain and feeling. . . . Bacon . . . reestablishes a relationship between the visibility of the scream . . . and invisible forces which are nothing else than the forces of the future. . . . Every scream contains them potentially. Innocent X screams but he screams behind the curtain, not only as someone who can no longer be seen, but as someone who has nothing left to see, whose only remaining function is to render visible these invisible forces that are making him scream, these powers of the future. (Deleuze, 2003: 51–2)

The scream is a social act, the rendering visible of forces. It *poses* the problem at the level of sensation rather than *resolving* it – triggering an unhinging of faculties, a shock wave that reverberates through the system from sensibility to imagination to memory to thought. The scream is a

redoubled moment – an attempt of the body:

to escape itself by means of itself . . . not simply waiting for something from the structure, it is waiting for something inside of itself . . . in short a spasm, the body as plexus and its effort or waiting for a spasm . . . the interior forces that climb through the flesh . . . The entire body is plexus. (Deleuze, 2003: 15)

The scream makes the terrain of struggle visible. It cannot determine an outcome, but it marks something that can no longer be contained, a horizon and a threshold, or passing into something new:

The invisible forces, the powers of the future, are they not already upon us, and much more insurmountable than the worst spectacle and even the worst pain? . . . It is within this visibility that the body actively struggles . . . [I]t is as if combat had now become possible. (Deleuze, 2003: 52)

Conclusion

How might this help us? Arguably it is this intersection, the impossible collision of different discourses (although Deleuze does not speak of discourses) that simultaneously constructs and dismembers the body, which ‘produces’ the scream. For explanation let us consider another famous scream: Audre Lorde, a black child; the bus, her snowsuit barely grazing the coat of a xenophobic white woman, a scream from the woman, horror on both sides: for the woman the horror of contact with someone, something she considered barely human, a roach; for Audre the horror of understanding she was constructed as such. Here discourse is spatialized, its limits and thresholds played out and across the body, across bodies, present everywhere perhaps, but here intensified, complicated in this site. In segregated America these were the sites of separation and contact: the schools, public washrooms, buses, diners, but also the private (white) homes where (black) maids raised (white) children and (black) gardeners tended (white) lawns. An interpellation of bodies following Althusser, to be sure, but also something more. Not an unthinking response to being hailed by *potestas*, but rather a body pinned, unbearably, to discourse at its limits, a pinning that ‘presents a problem.’

The problem, however, has an uncertain outcome: it might be met with a further clamping down, a more brutal repression, more vigilant attempts at separation in spite of the impossibility of complete containment. Or equally it might engender an orchestrated refusal of a particular kind of social body, and a struggle for its redefinition, a becoming. Deleuze’s scream, then, offers both a multiplicity of sites of subjugation *and* of

irruption, a response, a refusal – ‘I will not be hailed as such’ – the possibility of a proliferation of political subjects, political sites and forms of engagement, whose litmus test is the extent to which one can become active: the Chicano high school ‘blowouts’, the one day strike of illegal immigrants, women’s marches to take back the night, the million man march.

In this view, contra Negri, the common notion has no need of the site of joyous labor (and capitalist labor at that), it works from a more extensive ground, a prolific and diverse range of productive couplings – assemblages that are not limited to labor nor to human combinatorials. Instead of the quest for a form of social organization, we are more deeply into the terrain of the *art* of organization (as Hardt aptly titled his article on Spinoza), one whose litmus test does not originate in the model it provides, but rather in its capacity to maximize the affective powers, the *potentia* of the parties who produce it together, and to patrol and expel any vestiges of reactive rule. Negri’s work takes the form of a manifesto: brilliant in dislodging the left from its melancholia and interrogating a new form of social organization which recognizes the patchwork of oppositional movements not as a ‘lack’ to be reformed in a kind of homogenizing unity, but a fully present political response which seeks a new form of fusion. But it is nonetheless frustrating in that it leaves unasked, and consequently unanswered, questions regarding difficult divisions, conflicts or divergent agendas in this process.

What Deleuze (and Guattari) offer is not the presumed unity of a pinnacle of the laboring form, but rather an open social field. Desire has multiple sites of irruption. This becomes a radical democratization of the experience, expression and possibility for a political engagement, one that neither excludes organization against particular forms of labor, nor subordinates other struggles to them. What provokes this response is not free will, or the ‘good will’ of the thinker. The move from interpellation, from unthinking response to being hailed, to its ungrounding can only occur in a cramped space, a literal and figurative space where discourses collide, or broach their limits, where one is forced to think. Deleuze and Guattari offer this suggestive ‘cramped’ space of politics in their discussion of Kafka and minor literature, in which everything becomes political and the individual is connected immediately to politics, to a social field, rather than ‘the social milieu serving merely as background’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986: 17). Indeed for Deleuze it is in this cramped space that ‘creation traces a path between impossibilities. . . [t]ak[ing] place in bottlenecks. . . . A creator who isn’t grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator’ (Deleuze, 1995: 133).

Key here is Deleuze’s sustained fascination with the *specific material conditions of necessity*, rather than mere possibility, of becoming active under constraint, such as the struggle to speech of the stutterer, the writing of a major language in a minor tongue, the emergence of a minor science under constraints of a major one.

This goes beyond the incorporation of already acknowledged differences that meet us on our shores, the litany of ‘gender-race-and-class’ now

part of any political lexicon. It raises questions about difference not yet named or recognized, whether emerging from the joyful creativity of the human condition, or the dark capacity of capital to create and then exploit distinctions between peoples, in desire's perversion, and the materiality of the field that constitutes that perversion. *Paideia*, then, or model? At the core of this question, for Deleuze and Negri, are divergent engagements with Spinoza's affect, divergent visions of the social body and how it is formed, and new political subjects it brings into being.

A model alone cannot help us. It is only able to recognize in hindsight those differences that matter. For Deleuze, the constitution of this social body is *always* an open question. It must remain a project to be remade in the fullness of the moment – an infinite array of possibilities of becomings that can only emerge in practice. This project is of course centrally implicated in, *but not limited to*, the defeat of a capitalist form of social organization. It is a project without guarantees, which has as its litmus test a continual interrogation of its affective dimensions, a project that must be approached with caution as it might as easily lead to madness as to liberation. For Negri, for all of his allusions to the 'full space and open time' of Spinoza's politics, the project is immediately hinged to a particular form of labor – immaterial affective labor – which he views as central to the contemporary conjuncture; and a particular proliferation of social movements, and the multitude, which he must necessarily recast in the presumed unity of joyous labor – the expression of *potentia*. Negri focuses on the current 'conjuncture of forces' and the role that affect plays in the postmodernism of contemporary capitalism, operating already at the level of the social body but not in any ways at the level of the body itself. Deleuze suggests a delineation of combat emerging in a rather more cramped space of politics, a terrain in which one is forced to invent or create new possibilities out of necessity. At the very least it suggests we need to reflect on all that limits and bounds our politics, that we need to leave the comfort zones of our traditional arenas of operation and venture onto less stable terrain, where a new thought, new practices and a new world become possible.

Notes

1. It is no wonder Spinoza has been rendered as 'an atheist by materialists of the 18th century, an intuitive mystic by pantheists of the 19th century, and a theorist of politics and history in the 20th century' (see Macherey, 1992: 7). Because of his tendency to use commonplace language in subversive ways, Spinoza has been taken up in some very contrary renderings, for instance, in support of liberal notions of democracy (Smith, 2005), or a renewed vision of communism (Hardt and Negri, 2004).
2. I have commented elsewhere on the contested nature of this interpretation of a distinction between *potestas* and *potentia* (see Ruddick, 2008).
3. In this article I draw on the English translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* by Parkinson (Spinoza, 2000) except where indicated. I only modify the translation when quoting from French sources in order to more closely approximate the

French version. In these citations I use standard notation indicating the Part (I, II, III, IV or V), followed by Proposition number (in this case P), demonstration (dem.), definition (def.), scholium (S) or appendix (App).

4. Although Spinoza is quite clear that humans and animals are not of the same nature.

5. The question is all the more significant given the limiting tendencies within Spinoza's own corpus, which, in spite of the analytic possibilities of *Ethics*, reproduces elsewhere many of the very oppressive forms of difference we seek to overcome. That Spinoza was, here, in many ways, a product of his time is particularly evident in Spinoza's discussion of the nature of woman, foreigners and children and their exclusion as subjects of the republic by virtue of their 'nature' (*Political Treatise* 2002[1677]: Ch. 11, para 3, 4; but see Montag, 2005).

6. The difficulty of finding an adequate English word for *potentia* is discussed in Hardt's preface to Negri's *Savage Anomaly* (2003: xi–xxiii).

7. See Spinoza, *Political Treatise* Ch. 2 (2002[1677]). Also Deleuze: 'no-one knows ahead of time what affects one is capable of; it is a long affair of experimentation requiring a lasting prudence. . . you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a mind or body can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination' (Deleuze, 1988: 125).

8. The simplicity of this example also allows us to think about a potentially limitless array of combinatorials in a social body of both human and non-human dimension.

9. The question of Spinoza's concept of nature is a significant one for those of us who want to confront any lingering possibilities of essentialized difference. Spinoza frequently resorts to coeval examples from biology or geometry to explain the dynamics of human collectivity and deny the possibility of elevating the human condition above the rest of nature – Descartes' 'kingdom in a kingdom', to destroy the verticality of Descartes' visions (God above man, man above nature), 'discuss[ing] human appetites and actions just as if the enquiry concerned lines, planes and bodies' (E III, Preface). But he also consigns women, servants and foreigners to a lesser, or perhaps different, nature. Here we might read Spinoza against himself, focusing instead on his disruption of the stability of universal concepts (man, horse, etc.), where he argues in favor of a more materialist reading of our apprehension of things, which is based on an appreciation of the variety of their capacities. Thus:

the notions that are called 'universal', such as man, horse, dog etc., have arisen from similar causes . . . [but] these notions are not formed by everyone in the same way, but they vary in each person in accordance with the thing by which the body was affected more often . . . for example [they] . . . will understand man as an animal of erect stature . . . an animal that laughs, a biped without feathers, a rational animal. (E II, P40, S1)

Humans (and others) are complex composite individuals, who are affected by things in a variety of ways.

10. Smith (2005) splits Spinoza into an optimist who extols the free individual and a pragmatist who advocates ‘checks and balances’ in collective life, resulting in a liberal-democratic Spinoza who confirms an idealized (American) version of democratic rule.

11. The relation between recognition/thought and inadequate idea/common notion is arguably oblique. Common sense might be read either as an inadequate idea or as established knowledge of the second kind, so it would be difficult to draw a strict parallel here. Moreover, for Deleuze, substance turns around the modes (1994 [1968]: 304), and ultimately around their multiplicity, through which substance expresses itself. Ideas refer back not to essence but to events, whereby ‘the problem of thought is not tied to essences but the evaluation of what is important or not’ (1994 [1968]: 188–9), a process whereby learning ‘evolves entirely in the comprehension of problems as such, in the apprehension and condensation of ideal events and bodies’ (1994 [1968]: 192).

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