The Spinoza-intoxicated man: Deleuze on expression

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That Deleuze's thought is heavily indebted to Spinoza is a claim that is both obvious and obscure. On the one hand, Deleuze says quite plainly that he is "a Spinozist," and that Spinoza is for him "the 'prince' of philosophers."[1] On the other hand, it is hard to imagine that the thinker of difference and pre-individual singularities could have anything in common with Spinoza, thinker of the one absolutely infinite substance and monist *par excellence*. One might, under the circumstances, be tempted to divide Deleuze's books into two groups: those in which he speaks in his own name, such as *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*; and those which deal with the history of philosophy, such as *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*.

But to make such a division would be a mistake. Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, far from being peripheral to his own thought, is in fact central to it. Indeed, I want to argue here that Deleuze's ontology of difference cannot be adequately understood outside the context of *Expressionism in Philosophy*. I intend to show that *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* are in large part attempts to articulate an expressionistic ontology, and that they must be read in light of what Deleuze says about expression in his work on Spinoza. Accordingly, what follows is divided into three parts. The first gives an overview of Deleuze's ontology, and shows that it invokes a tripartite distinction among Being, the virtual, and the actual. Part Two traces this tripartite scheme back to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, and fleshes out Deleuze's claim that it is a necessary part of an expressionistic ontology. And in Part Three, I explain how Deleuze both preserves and modifies the Spinozist scheme in his own work. In doing so, I try to show that *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* are attempts "to make substance turn around the modes – *in other words, to realize univocity in the form of repetition*."[2]

1. Deleuze as ontologist

It is often said – indeed, it has become something of a cliché – that Deleuze's texts operate on many levels at once. In Constantin Boundas's apt expression,

they create multiple "series," series which "converge and become compossible" at the same time as they "diverge and begin to resonate."[3] Thus Deleuze's texts contain a highly original semantics, *and* a theory of subjectivity, *and* certain views on the relation of philosophy to political practice. It is less commonly recognized that they contain an ontology – where 'ontology' means, roughly, an account of what there is. But Deleuze's writings abound with ontological claims. *Difference and Repetition* describes its task as the articulation of a "philosophy of ontological difference" (*DR,* xix). Similarly, *The Logic of Sense* insists that any genuinely philosophical inquiry eventually "merges with ontology."[4] Deleuze's work of the late 1960s advances an ontology of difference – that is, a metaphysics in which differentiation and determination are seen as the principal characteristics of what there is.

At the same time, Deleuze's ontology is a kind of transcendental philosophy.[5] His ontological claims emerge from something like transcendental analysis, in that they describe "not the sensible, but the being *of* the sensible" (*DR,* 266). They are a "transcendental empiricism" (*DR,* 56) – "empiricism" because their subject matter is something "which can be perceived only from the standpoint of a transcendental *sensibility*" (*DR,* 144);[6] "transcendental" because they describe not the material world itself, but the conditions of there being such a world. Deleuze's ontology seeks "to determine an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field, which does not resemble the corresponding empirical field" (*LS,* 102), but which makes the empirical field possible.

The notion of a "field," then, is central to Deleuze's ontology.[7] Deleuze not only talks about *a* "pre-individual transcendental field;" he distinguishes *three* fields in his ontological writings. Now, to say that Deleuze distinguishes three ontological fields is merely to say that he makes three different types of ontological claim. It is also to say that claims referring to one field have a different status than those referring to another – that claims about (say) the material field are fundamentally different from ones about a transcendental field. But it is not to say that the two sets of claims concern different worlds. It is not to say that in addition to the empirical world, there is another *actual* realm which transcends it or from which it emanates. To distinguish fields as Deleuze does is just to say that different kinds of ontological claim are formally distinct. A familiar example of a formal distinction in ontology is Heidegger's insistence that the *Seinsfrage* is fundamentally different from questions about entities. To the extent that this is so, Being and entities belong to different ontological fields. Another example – and one Deleuze incorporates into his own work – is Duns Scotus's theory of virtual descriptions. Scotus maintains that some of a material entity's properties are virtual. They genuinely belong to the entity, but do not correspond to any of its material features. "Unity" is an example

of a virtual property. Every entity is unified, so unity may be truly predicated of any object; but we cannot sense an object's unity as we can sense (say) its colour. Virtual properties are indeed properties, but they cannot be isolated in the material world. They are real but not actual. While they do not belong to the same ontological field as material properties, neither do they pertain to an extra-material world. Talk about the virtual is simply a different way of describing *the one* world. Similarly, Deleuze's talk about fields is a way of keeping apart formally distinct types of ontological claim, without suggesting that they describe different worlds. But what are the fields he has in mind?

Difference and Repetition invokes three fields. The ontology put forward here consists of a tripartite scheme: two types of "repetition," and the "difference" that lies between them. This scheme, Deleuze argues, is implicit in even the simplest attempt to explain what "repetition" means. We naturally think of repetition as "difference without concept" – that is, as what appears "when we find ourselves confronted by identical elements with exactly the same concept" (*DR,* 23), such as different drops of water. But how is such repetition possible? What must we presuppose in order for non-conceptual difference to occur? The answer, Deleuze claims, is that this "bare, material repetition (repetition of the Same) appears only in the sense that another repetition is disguised within it, constituting it and constituting itself" (*DR,* 21). This is the "secret subject" of repetition, a repetition that "unfolds as pure movement" (*DR,* 24). Whatever this "more profound" repetition is, Deleuze urges that it not be confused with the "bare, material" kind – that is, with what goes on in the empirical world. He writes:

> We are right to speak of repetition when we find ourselves confronted by identical elements with exactly the same concept. However, we must distinguish between these discrete elements, these repeated objects, and a secret subject, the real subject of repetition, which repeats itself through them. Repetition must be understood in the pronominal. (*DR,* 23)

Thus statements about the empirical world belong to a different field than statements about the profound repetition at its heart. Moreover, there is a third field "between" the two. A third kind of ontological claim can be made about that which lies "*between* the levels or degrees of a repetition which is total and totalizing" (*DR,* 287). This is the field of *difference*. We might also call it the virtual field, since it has to do with ideal structures that are "drawn *from*" (*DR,* 287) the inner repetition and that get "incarnated" (*DR,* 267) in the world of objects. Deleuze denotes these ideal structures with a variety of terms: Ideas, events, intensities, and singularities. Explaining just how these terms are related would take us too far afield. What they all share is that they bridge the two repetitions. Difference is "between two repetitions: between

the superficial repetition of the identical and instantaneous external elements that it contracts, and the profound repetition of the internal totalities of an always variable past" (*DR,* 287).

We find a remarkably similar scheme in *The Logic of Sense*. Deleuze again speaks of a field of virtual structures, a field of difference "behind" the empirical world. But unlike *Difference and Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense* concentrates on one particular kind of virtual structure – namely, events. Events

> are not bodies but, properly speaking, "incorporeal" entities. They are not physical qualities and properties, but rather logical or dialectical attributes. . . . We cannot say that they exist, but rather that they subsist or inhere (having this minimum of being which is appropriate to that which is not a thing, a nonexisting entity). (*LS,* 4–5)

Events belong to the virtual field, since they are "ideal by nature" (*LS,* 53) and are not to be confused with their "spatio-temporal realizations in states of affairs" (*LS,* 149). Statements about events are fundamentally different from statements about "physical qualities and properties" (*LS,* 4). Events are "not what occurs" but are "rather inside what occurs" (*LS,* 149). But at the same time, Deleuze is careful to distinguish *e*vents from what he calls the *E*vent. Events (with a lower-case "e") "communicate in one and the same Event" (*LS,* 53). They are the "bits and pieces" of the Event, which Deleuze calls "the paradoxical instance . . . in which all events communicate and are distributed" (*LS,* 56). Deleuze seems to equate the Event with Being – he claims it is that in virtue of which entities *are*. The Event occurs "*Eventum tantum* for all events, the ultimate form for all of the forms which remain disjointed in it, but which bring about the resonance and the ramification of their disjunction. The univocity of Being merges with the positive use of the disjunctive synthesis which is the highest affirmation. It is the eternal return itself, or . . . one Being for all forms and all times" (*LS,* 179–180). So again we have a tripartite division of ontological fields: the Event; events, or ideal states of difference which "communicate" in the Event; and the world of material objects, which is the "spatio-temporal realization" (*LS*, 149) of these ideal events. This scheme is so similar to the one found in *Difference and Repetition* that it must be the same one, with minor changes in terminology. The Event corresponds to the "good" or "secret" repetition; the material world corresponds to the "bad" repetition, or the repetition of the same; and the field of events corresponds to the difference lying between the two repetitions. Each field is distinct from the other two. So statements about one have a different ontological status than statements about another.

Thus Deleuze's ontology is based on a tripartite distinction among Being, the virtual, and the actual. Let me say a little more about each. First, Being

is synonymous with the Event or the good repetition. Claims about Being are not to be confounded with claims about entities, whether actual (material objects) or virtual (such as Ideas). As I suggested above, Deleuze understands Being in the pronominal mode. He views it as something like expressive agency, something like movement or force. More specifically, he views it as the activity of differentiation[8] – a destabilizing or decentring force which shatters fixed identities. One might think of this by analogy with Heraclitus's primordial fire. In both cases, Being is seen as an incendiary force, a force which makes different and makes difference. Paradoxically, it is because Deleuze understands Being as a differentiating agency that he sees Being as univocal. *All* entities arise through differentiation; to be an entity at all is to have an "identity swallowed up in difference" (*DR,* 56). All entities "share" difference. In this way, "difference immediately reunites and articulates what it distinguishes" (*DR,* 170).

But to to say that Being "is" univocal is not to say that it is predicated only of the actual – that is, of states of affairs in space and time. Like Duns Scotus, Deleuze maintains that virtual structures *are* as well, though not in the same way actual entities are. Being, Deleuze argues, should be understood as "*extra-Being*, that is, the minimum of Being common to the real, the possible, and the impossible" (*LS,* 180). Hence his famous insistence that virtual structures such as Ideas are "real without being actual."[9] For Deleuze, the former predicate has a wider extension than the latter. Nor should Being be seen as the ground of entities, at least not in any usual sense of "ground." Since Being is understood as that which decentres or destabilizes – in short, as that which "makes" difference – we might rather think of it as "a repetition of *ungrounding*" (*DR*, 200). Deleuze wants to say, paradoxically, that the only "ground" entities have in common is the lack of a common ground. That in virtue of which all things are, is the activity of differentiation.

Deleuze's second field is the virtual. Again, this field concerns the differential states or structures which lie "between" the two repetitions, between the secret repetition associated with Being and the repetition of the same associated with the empirical world. The field of difference should be distinguished from both. It is a "transcendental field which does not resemble the corresponding empirical fields, and which nevertheless is not confused with an undifferentiated depth" (*LS,* 102). The entities associated with the virtual are all ideal structures (though "ideal without being abstract" (*WP,* 156)): Ideas, intensities, singularities, and events. Like Duns Scotus's virtual properties, these structures cannot be isolated in material actuality, though they reveal something true *of* the actual. A battle, to borrow one of Deleuze's examples, is something real, and to say that a battle is taking place is to give

a correct description of something going on in the actual world. At the same time, a battle is not an isolable, spatio-temporal state of affairs. It is virtual

> because it is actualized in diverse manners at once, and because each participant may grasp it at a different level of actualization within its variable present. . . . But it is above all because the battle *hovers over* its own field, being neutral in relation to all its temporal actualizations, neutral and impassive in relation to the victor and the vanquished, the coward and the brave. (*LS,* 100)

An event, like any virtual structure, is "*Something*" (*LS,* 157) without being a thing. It is real but not localizable. Thus it is not something possible, even though virtual structures get actualized in much the same way as possibilities get realized. Unlike the possible, the virtual does not *need* to be realized, because "it possesses a full reality by itself" (*DR,* 211). Moreover, to conflate the virtual with the possible is to see the virtual as a mere image of the real, an image which gets existence added to it. If, like Deleuze, we view Being as that which makes different and makes difference, there is no room for such a view.

Deleuze's final field is the actual, which is synonymous with 'material world.' In both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze sees the material world as a manifestation of principles which, though immanent to it, are not actually part of it. It is the actualization of virtual structures. Deleuze therefore speaks of the actual as "an external envelope or a detachable shell" which is "animated by the other repetition" (*DR,* 289) – that is, by the Event. He also calls it the spatio-temporal realization of virtual structures. Of course, this does not mean that the empirical world is just *in* space and time, as if these were passive, indifferent media. On the contrary, Deleuze wants to say that space and time are somehow constituted through the activity of differentiation. Thus he speaks of "the production of existence occurring in a characteristic space and time" (*DR,* 211).

We are now in a better position to understand the different types of ontological claims Deleuze makes, and to see what sets them apart. But while Deleuze's tripartite scheme clarifies some issues, it obfuscates others. For one thing, it is not immediately clear why he invokes three fields. Why not two, or four? Moreover, Deleuze is unclear on how the fields are related. He often suggests that they are linked causally. In *Difference and Repetition*, for instance, he claims that the inner repetition "should be regarded as the cause, of which the bare material and horizontal repetition (from which a difference is merely drawn off) is only an effect" (*DR,* 289). *The Logic of Sense*, however, invokes the Stoic notion of surface effects to suggest that any causal chain linking the three fields goes in the opposite direction, with the

material somehow causing both the virtual and the Event. He argues that in any reversal of Platonism – and he considers his own thought such a reversal – "impassive extra-Being" becomes seen as "sterile, inefficacious, and on the surface of things: *the ideational or the incorporeal can no longer be anything other than an 'effect'*" (*LS,* 7). What is Deleuze up to here? Just what relation holds among the three ontological fields? To answer this question, I now take a necessary detour through Spinoza's account of expression. Doing so will shed some light on how Being, the virtual, and the actual are related.

2. Spinoza as expressionist

It is impossible to understand Spinoza's views on expression without grasping the role of immanence in his thought. Spinoza's entire philosophy could be seen as an ontology of pure immanence. This means two things. First, Spinoza sees Being as univocal. Being "is" one, and everything that is, in so far as it is, has a common, unitary ground. Second, that in virtue of which all entities are is somehow *in* them – it is not, say, a transcendent creator-God, or a Neoplatonic One from which they emanate. Entities manifest a ground with which they are in some sense identical. This ground is substance – for Spinoza, to be an entity at all is to exist "in" or "through" the one substance, to be a modification of that substance's essence. Nothing can be or be conceived outside of substance. All things are "in" it. Unitary Being is immanent in its diverse manifestations.

But what entitles Spinoza to claim that all entities are manifestations of an immanent, unitary ground? Basically, it is his insistence that the one substance can be understood in two different ways. Substance can be seen from the standpoint of its essence, or what it is in itself; or from the standpoint of its existence, or what it is in actuality. Essence and existence, though formally distinct, are not *really* distinct. They are not different *things*. They are, as it were, dynamically identical.[10] The essence of substance is absolutely infinite power, and more specifically, the absolutely unlimited power to exist and generate effects. Spinoza equates essence and power at several points in the *Ethics*. He states, for instance, that "God's power is identical with his essence."[11] Similarly, he claims that "the potentiality of existence is a power," and that the greater a thing's essence, "so also will it increase its strength for existence" (*E,* 53). So substance's essence is the absolutely infinite power to exist and generate effects. But things are not the same with respect to the existence of substance. Substance actually exists as mode, as the "things" which follow from its essence and which express that essence determinately. Substance's essence gives rise to an infinity of modes in an infinity of ways.

Thus substance actually exists not as the power to generate effects, but as those effects. And each expresses, to the extent that it can, substance's essence.

To say this differently, substance is both active and passive, both expressive agency and the expressed enactments of that agency. In essence, substance is *natura naturans*, or 'nature naturing.' It is unlimited productive force, considered in abstraction from any manifestation of that force. But seen from another perspective, substance is just as much the enactments of this agency. It is *natura naturata*, or 'nature natured' – power rendered exhaustively determinate in act. Thus *natura naturans* expresses itself in *natura naturata*. At the same time, "the existence of God and his essence are one and the same" (*E,* 63), and the possibility of viewing substance from two perspectives does not make substance divisible or multiple. *Natura naturans* and *natura naturata* are not different things. Rather, the former is expressed immanently in the latter. Hence the advantage of thinking Being as power. Power is precisely a One that is a Many. It is a unitary, "pent-up" phenomenon whose nature is to pass over into a flux of appearances with which it is identical. Thus we can distinguish power and its manifestations in a philosophical analysis, but they are actually the same thing considered in different ways.[12] So in identifying substance's essence with power, Spinoza is able to keep essence and existence formally distinct without tempting his readers to see them as different things. He is able to say both that *natura naturans* grounds and expresses itself in *natura naturata*, and that this ground is identical with its manifestations. Expression – the movement from power to act – is the concept Spinoza uses to develop an ontology of immanence.

Deleuze bases his reading of Spinoza on the notion of expression. Indeed, he claims that Spinoza's greatest achievement is his expressionistic understanding of Being. "With Spinoza," Deleuze claims, "univocal being ceases to be neutralized and becomes expressive" (*DR,* 40). Two things about expression particularly fascinate Deleuze. One is that in every case, "expression presents us with a triad" (*EP,* 27). Whenever we speak of a power expressing itself in act, we must distinguish three terms: that which "expresses itself," that "which expresses," and that "which is expressed" (*EP,* 27). It is no accident that expression forces us to distinguish three terms. In Deleuze's view, expression always involves three terms, and "remains unintelligible while we see only two of the terms whose relations it presents" (*EP,* 27). Accordingly, Deleuze's reading of the *Ethics* – the expressionistic ontology *par excellence* – is full of references to triads and triadic structures.[13] He claims, for instance, that the essence of substance cannot be understood apart from a triad of properties, namely "perfect," "infinite," and "absolute" (*EP,* 337). Similarly, he claims that Spinoza's understanding of *conatus* is based on an "individual modal triad: essence, capacity to be affected, [and] the affections that exer-

cise this capacity" (*EP,* 339). But the most fundamental triad around which Spinoza's thought turns is "the remarkable division into substance, attribute and modes" (*DR,* 40). To view substance as expressive is to distinguish three terms: substance, or "that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself;" attribute, or that which "constitutes" or "expresses" the essence of substance in a particular way; and mode, or "that which exists in, and is conceived through," attributes (*E,* 45). Deleuze, in short, understands Spinoza's substance in terms of three distinct fields, and argues that this understanding is dictated by the logic of expression.

The second aspect of expression that fascinates Deleuze is that it is a double movement, a duplicating movement. We never encounter expression *simpliciter*; rather, "expression, through its own movement, generates a second level of expression" (*EP,* 105). In other words, "expression has within it the sufficient reason of a re-expression" (*EP,* 105). But how does expression at the first level differ from its re-expression at the second? Simply put, the first is a process of determination. When power expresses itself in act, it first casts itself into some determinate *form.* Hence Deleuze's description of this movement as "formal" or "qualitative" (*EP,* 165). Deleuze has in mind the relation of substance to its attributes here. Each attribute "expresses eternal and infinite essentiality" (*E,* 45), but in one determinate way. Thus Thought and Extension both express the essence of substance, but determine that essence into different forms. Once this first expression has taken place – once substance is considered under one attribute rather than another – substance re-expresses itself at a second level.[14] More specifically, "the attributes are in their turn expressed: they express themselves in modes which designate them, the modes expressing a modification" (*EP,* 105). Each mode expresses the power of substance, after its own fashion and to the extent that it can. So "this second level defines production itself: God is said to produce things, as his attributes find expression" (*EP,* 108). And since production is always of particular modes, Deleuze says that "the production of modes [takes] place through differentiation" (*EP,* 182–183). Thus expression comprises two movements: one from substance to attribute, the other from attribute to mode. The first is qualitative expression, through which substance renders itself determinate in certain (infinite) forms. The second is quantitative expression, through which these forms express themselves in turn through the production of particular modes. Expression comprises both determination and differentiation.

So much for Deleuze's reading of Spinoza. Let me now explain what light it sheds on his own ontology.

3. Deleuze as Spinozist

Some similarities between Spinoza's ontology of immanence and Deleuze's ontology of difference have, no doubt, already suggested themselves. But the two most important similarities parallel the two main themes of *Expressionism in Philosophy*. First, Deleuze's ontology, like Spinoza's, invokes a triad. Just as Spinoza's ontology revolves around the triad of substance, attribute, and mode, so does Deleuze's ontology revolve around the triad of Being, the virtual, and the actual. And this is no coincidence. Deleuze's ontology must invoke three distinct ontological fields, because he, like Spinoza, understands Being in the pronominal. He views it in terms of power or expressive agency. Of course, Deleuze and Spinoza do not understand this agency in precisely the same way. For Spinoza, it is the absolutely infinite power to exist and generate effects. For Deleuze, it is something like the activity of differentiation, a power of divergence or decentring to which "the entire alternative between finite and infinite applies very badly" (*DR,* 264). Nevertheless, both understand Being as a power which expresses itself in act. Consequently, they distinguish this power both from the qualitatively different forms into which it determines itself, and from the quantitatively different entities which actualize those forms. For Spinoza, the determinate forms are attributes and the actualizations are modes; for Deleuze, the forms are ideal structures such as Ideas and events, while the actualizations are empirical entities. So for both Spinoza and Deleuze, the attempt to view Being as expressive requires us to distinguish three ontological fields. This tripartite scheme is dictated by the logic of expression.

   Second, Deleuze, like Spinoza, makes use of the notion of double expression. For Deleuze as for Spinoza, "expression has within it the sufficient reason of a re-expression" (*EP,* 105). When we say that Being expresses itself, we must distinguish two stages. First, Being determines itself into certain forms; next, those forms get actualized through the production of particular things. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze distinguishes expression from re-expression by distinguishing differen*t*iation from differen*c*iation. Differentiation is a "formal" or "qualitative" (*EP,* 165) process. It is "the determination of the virtual content of an Idea" (*DR*, 207), or, more generally, the process through which Being renders itself determinate in ideal structures. Some of these structures get incarnated in the material world through the process of differen*c*iation, which Deleuze calls "the actualization of [a] virtuality into species and distinguished parts" (*DR,* 207). Virtual structures are forced to differenciate themselves. Indeed, as Deleuze writes in *Bergsonism*, "the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized."[15] For Deleuze, the actual does not resemble

the virtual, and a material entity is not a copy of the Idea it incarnates. On the contrary, to actualize an Idea is precisely to differ and diverge from this structure – "the nature of the virtual is such that, for it, to be actualized is to be differenciated" (*DR,* 211). While organisms incarnate biological Ideas, and social entities incarnate social Ideas, these material systems do not resemble that of which they are the actualizations. To be an actualization in the first place is precisely to differ from such virtual structures. So like Spinoza, Deleuze sees expression as a double movement, the dual process of determination and actualization. The movement from Being to the virtual parallels that from substance to attribute; the movement from virtual to actual parallels that from attribute to mode. Deleuze's conception of expression is, at bottom, a slightly modified version of Spinoza's.

The upshot of all this is that in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze is working with a Spinozistic model of expression. Those unfamiliar with Deleuze's work on Spinoza are bound to miss important parts of his own expressive ontology. They will fail to see why Deleuze carefully distinguishes difference from the two repetitions that surround it, events from the Event. They will fail to see exactly why differen*t*iation is not differen*c*iation, why determination is not actualization. But to say that Deleuze uses a Spinozistic model of expression is not to deny that there are crucial differences between the two. There are many. For one thing, Deleuze makes clear that actualization, as he understands it, is not realization. It is not the process through which something merely possible has existence "added" to it and becomes real. It is rather the process through which the virtual – already fully real, in so far as it is virtual – differenciates itself. Spinoza, on the other hand, seems to view *natura naturans* as a potential which *does* get realized in *natura naturata*. After all, substance's power is precisely the power *to exist*. No doubt Deleuze would see it as the power to add existence to essences that are merely possible. The distinction between virtuality and possibility is, therefore, one rift between Spinoza and Deleuze. Another is the way in which they understand the notion of ground. For Spinoza, *natura naturans* grounds *natura naturata* by expressing itself in it. To the extent that all modes are modifications of the one substance, they are all expressions of the same "thing." Deleuze wants to distance himself from this understanding of "ground." If the entities in Deleuze's universe have anything in common, it is, paradoxically, the activity of "*ungrounding"* (*DR,* 292) out of which they originate. All things "share" difference. What they have in common is the lack of anything in common. In this respect as well, Deleuze parts company with Spinoza, while at the same time describing himself as a Spinozist.

The greatest difference between the two, however, has to do with a brief remark Deleuze makes in *Difference and Repetition*. Let me close with it.

> With Spinoza, univocal being ceases to be neutralized and becomes expressive; it becomes a truly expressive and affirmative proposition. Nevertheless, there still remains a difference between substance and the modes: Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, as though on something other than themselves. (*DR,* 40)

Deleuze thinks that although Spinoza is *the* philosopher of immanence, his treatment of substance still contains a residue of transcendence or emanation. Spinoza, in Deleuze's view, privileges substance over mode. How so? One possible answer – and perverse as it may seem – is that Spinoza philosophizes before Heidegger, Deleuze after. Despite Deleuze's apparent indifference to Heidegger, he does seem to accept the validity of the ontological difference. Deleuze carefully distinguishes Being from entities. But Spinoza does not, and cannot, because he identifies Being with substance. Substance *is.* Spinoza thinks of it as *a* being, albeit a being fundamentally different from the "beings" we call modes. For Spinoza, there is a sense in which substance and modes are both "things," in so far as both *are*. But the former is more real, so it is a bigger and better thing. This violates what Deleuze sees as the first rule of an ontology of immanence – namely, that Being be "equally present in all beings," and that entities not be "defined by their rank in a hierarchy" (*EP,* 173). Spinoza, despite his preoccupation with immanence, seems at the end of the day to think that Being is *not* equally present in all entities. He seems to rank entities hierarchically, and to rank substance more highly than mode.

Deleuze will have no truck with this view. He is adamant that substance "be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes" (*DR,* 40). As I suggested above, he wants "to make substance turn around [its] modes" (*DR,* 304). He does not want the realm of particular empirical things to be subordinate to anything. This, I take it, is what he is up to when he bridges Being and the actual with the virtual (instead of with, say, attributes). As I have repeatedly urged, virtual things *are*, but are not actual. They are "surface effects" (*LS,* 4) on the actual. The only actual things there are belong to the third field, the material field. The first and second fields do not "contain" any actual things – since Being is not, and virtual structures are not actual – so there can be no question of anything having "more" Being than material entities. There can be no hierarchy of entities. Being "is" equally present in all entities, and so "is" truly univocal.

I have tried to show that Deleuze is a Spinozist, and that certain themes in his work make sense only in a Spinozist context. I have also suggested that part of what draws him to Spinoza is the ideal of pure immanence – that is, Spinoza's search for an ontology in which Being is said equally of all things. But Spinoza, in Deleuze's view, cannot realize this goal as long as

he privileges substance over mode. To the extent that Deleuze tries to make substance turn on its modes, he might be seen as an even greater thinker of immanence than Spinoza. Perhaps, then, Deleuze is not just a Spinozist. Perhaps he is a more thorough-going Spinozist than Spinoza.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 11. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *EP*.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone, 1994), 304. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *DR*.
3. Constantin Boundas, "Deleuze: Serialization and Subject-Formation." *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York: Routledge, 1994), 101.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 179. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *LS*.
5. For a very different view, see Nick Land, "Making it with Death: Remarks on Thanatos and Desiring-Production." *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 24/1 (Jan. 1993) 66–76.
6. My emphasis.
7. For a detailed and recent discussion of this point, see Deleuze's "L'immanence: une vie . . ." in *Philosophie* 47 (Sept. 1995) 3–7.
8. For now, I do not distinguish differen*t*iation from differen*c*iation.
9. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burcell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 156. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *WP*.
10. I am indebted to D.V. Maxwell on this point. Indeed, my entire reading of Spinoza owes a great deal to Professor Maxwell.
11. Spinoza, *The Ethics*, in *Works of Spinoza*, Volume 1, trans. and ed. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1955), 74. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *E*.
12. As will be obvious, my treatment of power owes a great deal to Hegel's discussion of force and the understanding. See the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 79–103.
13. For an extensive list, see *EP* 337–342.
14. Of course, the first expression need not be thought of as temporally prior to the second.
15. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 97.