

GILLES DELEUZE, LECTURE TRANSCRIPTS ON SPINOZA'S CONCEPT OF *AFFECT*

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COURS VINCENNES - 24/01/1978

Today we pause in our work on continuous variation to return temporarily, for one session, to the history of philosophy, on a very precise point. It's like a break, at the request of some of you. This very precise point concerns the following: what is an idea and what is an affect in Spinoza? Idea and affect in Spinoza. During March, at the request of some of you, we will also take a break to consider the problem of synthesis and the problem of time in Kant.

For me, this produces a curious effect of returning to history. I would almost like for you to take this bit of history of philosophy as a history tout court. After all, a philosopher is not only someone who invents notions, he also perhaps invents ways of perceiving. I will proceed largely by enumeration. I will begin chiefly with terminological remarks. I assume that the room is relatively mixed. I believe that, of all the philosophers of whom the history of philosophy speaks to us, Spinoza is in a quite exceptional situation: the way he touches those who enter into his books has no equivalent.

It matters little whether you've read him or not, for I'm telling a story. I begin with some terminological cautions. In Spinoza's principal book, which is called the Ethics and which is written in Latin, one finds two words: AFFECTIO and AFFECTUS. Some translators, quite strangely, translate both in the same way. This is a disaster. They translate both terms, affectio and affectus, by "affection." I call this a disaster because when a philosopher employs two words, it's because in principle he has reason to, especially when French easily gives us two words which correspond rigorously to affectio and affectus, that is "affection" for affectio and "affect" for affectus. Some translators translate affectio as "affection" and affectus as "feeling" [sentiment], which is better than translating both by the same word, but I don't see the necessity of having recourse to the word "feeling" since French offers the word "affect." Thus when I use the word "affect" it refers to Spinoza's affectus, and when I say the word "affection," it refers to affectio.

First point: what is an idea? What must an idea be, in order for us to comprehend even Spinoza's simplest propositions? On this point Spinoza is not original, he is going to take the word "idea" in the sense in which everyone has always taken it. What is called an idea, in the sense in which everyone has always taken it in the history of philosophy, is a mode of thought which represents something. A representational mode of thought. For example, the idea of a triangle is the mode of thought which represents the triangle. Still from the terminological point of view, it's quite useful to know that since the Middle Ages this aspect of the idea has been termed its "objective reality." In texts from the 17th century and earlier, when you encounter the objective reality of the idea this always means the idea envisioned as representation of something. The idea, insofar as it represents something, is said to have an objective reality. It is the relation of the idea to the object that it represents.

Thus we start from a quite simple thing: the idea is a mode of thought defined by its representational character. This already gives us a first point of departure for distinguishing idea and affect (affectus) because we call affect any mode of thought which doesn't represent anything. So what does that mean? Take at random what anybody would call affect or feeling, a hope for example, a pain, a love, this is not representational. There is an idea of the loved thing, to be sure, there is an idea of something hoped for, but hope as such or love as such represents nothing, strictly nothing.

Every mode of thought insofar as it is non-representational will be termed affect. A volition, a will implies, in all rigor, that I will something, and what I will is an object of representation, what I will is given in an idea,

but the fact of willing is not an idea, it is an affect because it is a non-representational mode of thought. That works, it's not complicated.

He thereby immediately infers a primacy of the idea over the affect, and this is common to the whole 17th century, so we have not yet entered into what is specific to Spinoza. There is a primacy of the idea over the affect for the very simple reason that in order to love it's necessary to have an idea, however confused it may be, however indeterminate it may be, of what is loved.

In order to will it's necessary to have an idea, however confused or indeterminate it may be, of what is willed. Even when one says "I don't know what I feel," there is a representation, confused though it may be, of the object. There is a confused idea. There is thus a primacy, which is chronological and logical at the same time, of the idea over the affect, which is to say a primacy of representational modes of thought over non-representational modes. It would be a completely disastrous reversal of meaning if the reader were to transform this logical primacy through reduction. That the affect presupposes the idea above all does not mean that it is reduced to the idea or to a combination of ideas. We must proceed from the following point, that idea and affect are two kinds of modes of thought which differ in nature, which are irreducible to one another but simply taken up in a relation such that affect presupposes an idea, however confused it may be. This is the first point.

Now a second, less superficial way of presenting the idea-affect relation. You will recall that we started from a very simple characteristic of the idea. The idea is a thought insofar as it is representational, a mode of thought insofar as it is representational, and in this sense we will speak of the objective reality of an idea. Yet an idea not only has an objective reality but, following the hallowed terminology, it also has a formal reality. What is the formal reality of the idea? Once we say that the objective reality is the reality of the idea insofar as it represents something, the formal reality of the idea, shall we say, is—but then in one blow it becomes much more complicated and much more interesting—the reality of the idea insofar as it is itself something.

The objective reality of the idea of the triangle is the idea of the triangle insofar as it represents the triangle as thing, but the idea of the triangle is itself something; moreover, insofar as it is something, I can form an idea of this thing, I can always form an idea of the idea. I would say therefore that not only is every idea something—to say that every idea is the idea of something is to say that every idea has an objective reality, it represents something—but I would also say that the idea has a formal reality since it is itself something insofar as it is an idea.

What does this mean, the formal reality of the idea? We will not be able to continue very much further at this level, we are going to have to put this aside. It's necessary just to add that this formal reality of the idea will be what Spinoza very often terms a certain degree of reality or of perfection that the idea has as such. As such, every idea has a certain degree of reality or perfection. Undoubtedly this degree of reality or perfection is connected to the object that it represents, but it is not to be confused with the object: that is, the formal reality of the idea, the thing the idea is or the degree of reality or perfection it possesses in itself, is its intrinsic character. The objective reality of the idea, that is the relation of the idea to the object it represents, is its extrinsic character; the extrinsic character and the intrinsic character may be fundamentally connected, but they are not the same thing. The idea of God and the idea of a frog have different objective realities, that is they do not represent the same thing, but at the same time they do not have the same intrinsic reality, they do not have the same formal reality, that is one of them—you sense this quite well—has a degree of reality infinitely greater than the other's. The idea of God has a formal reality, a degree of reality or intrinsic perfection infinitely greater than the idea of a frog, which is the idea of a finite thing.

If you understood that, you've understood almost everything. There is thus a formal reality of the idea, which is to say the idea is something in itself; this formal reality is its intrinsic character and is the degree of reality or perfection that it envelopes in itself.

Just now, when I defined the idea by its objective reality or its representational character, I opposed the idea immediately to the affect by saying that affect is precisely a mode of thought which has no representational character. Now I come to define the idea by the following: every idea is something, not only is it the idea of something but it is something, that is to say it has a degree of reality which is proper to it. Thus at this second level I must discover a fundamental difference between idea and affect. What happens concretely in life? Two things happen... And here, it's curious how Spinoza employs a geometrical

method, you know that the Ethics is presented in the form of propositions, demonstrations, etc.... and yet at the same time, the more mathematical it is, the more extraordinarily concrete.

Everything I am saying and all these commentaries on the idea and the affect refer to books two and three of the Ethics. In books two and three, he makes for us a kind of geometrical portrait of our life which, it seems to me, is very very convincing. This geometrical portrait consists largely in telling us that our ideas succeed each other constantly: one idea chases another, one idea replaces another idea for example, in an instant. A perception is a certain type of idea, we will see why shortly. Just now I had my head turned there, I saw that corner of the room, I turn...it's another idea; I walk down a street where I know people, I say "Hello Pierre" and then I turn and say "Hello Paul." Or else things change: I look at the sun, and the sun little by little disappears and I find myself in the dark of night; it is thus a series of successions, of coexistences of ideas, successions of ideas. But what also happens? Our everyday life is not made up solely of ideas which succeed each other. Spinoza employs the term "automaton": we are, he says, spiritual automata, that is to say it is less we who have the ideas than the ideas which are affirmed in us. What also happens, apart from this succession of ideas? There is something else, that is, something in me never ceases to vary. There is a regime of variation which is not the same thing as the succession of ideas themselves.

"Variations" must serve us for what we want to do, the trouble is that he doesn't employ the word... What is this variation? I take up my example again: in the street I run into Pierre, for whom I feel hostility, I pass by and say hello to Pierre, or perhaps I am afraid of him, and then I suddenly see Paul who is very very charming, and I say hello to Paul reassuredly and contentedly. Well. What is it? In part, succession of two ideas, the idea of Pierre and the idea of Paul; but there is something else: a variation also operates in me—on this point, Spinoza's words are very precise and I cite them: (variation) of my force of existing, or another word he employs as a synonym: *vis existendi*, the force of existing, or *potentia agendi*, the power [puissance] of acting, and these variations are perpetual.

I would say that for Spinoza there is a continuous variation—and this is what it means to exist—of the force of existing or of the power of acting.

How is this linked to my stupid example, which comes, however, from Spinoza, "Hello Pierre, hello Paul"? When I see Pierre who displeases me, an idea, the idea of Pierre, is given to me; when I see Paul who pleases me, the idea of Paul is given to me. Each one of these ideas in relation to me has a certain degree of reality or perfection. I would say that the idea of Paul, in relation to me, has more intrinsic perfection than the idea of Pierre since the idea of Paul contents me and the idea of Pierre upsets me. When the idea of Paul succeeds the idea of Pierre, it is agreeable to say that my force of existing or my power of acting is increased or improved; when, on the contrary, the situation is reversed, when after having seen someone who made me joyful I then see someone who makes me sad, I say that my power of acting is inhibited or obstructed. At this level we don't even know anymore if we are still working within terminological conventions or if we are already moving into something much more concrete.

I would say that, to the extent that ideas succeed each other in us, each one having its own degree of perfection, its degree of reality or intrinsic perfection, the one who has these ideas, in this case me, never stops passing from one degree of perfection to another. In other words there is a continuous variation in the form of an increase-diminution-increase-diminution of the power of acting or the force of existing of someone according to the ideas which s/he has. Feel how beauty shines through this difficult exercise. This representation of existence already isn't bad, it really is existence in the street, it's necessary to imagine Spinoza strolling about, and he truly lives existence as this kind of continuous variation: to the extent that an idea replaces another, I never cease to pass from one degree of perfection to another, however miniscule the difference, and this kind of melodic line of continuous variation will define affect (*affectus*) in its correlation with ideas and at the same time in its difference in nature from ideas. We account for this difference in nature and this correlation. It's up to you to say whether it agrees with you or not. We have got an entirely more solid definition of *affectus*; *affectus* in Spinoza is variation (he is speaking through my mouth; he didn't say it this way because he died too young...), continuous variation of the force of existing, insofar as this variation is determined by the ideas one has.

Consequently, in a very important text at the end of book three, which bears the title "general definition of *affectus*," Spinoza tells us: above all do not believe that *affectus* as I conceive it depends upon a comparison of ideas. He means that the idea indeed has to be primary in relation to the affect, the idea and the affect are two things which differ in nature, the affect is not reducible to an intellectual comparison of ideas, affect is constituted by the lived transition or lived passage from one degree of

perfection to another, insofar as this passage is determined by ideas; but in itself it does not consist in an idea, but rather constitutes affect. When I pass from the idea of Pierre to the idea of Paul, I say that my power of acting is increased; when I pass from the idea of Paul to the idea of Pierre, I say that my power of acting is diminished. Which comes down to saying that when I see Pierre, I am affected with sadness; when I see Paul, I am affected with joy. And on this melodic line of continuous variation constituted by the affect, Spinoza will assign two poles: joy-sadness, which for him will be the fundamental passions. Sadness will be any passion whatsoever which involves a diminution of my power of acting, and joy will be any passion involving an increase in my power of acting. This conception will allow Spinoza to become aware, for example, of a quite fundamental moral and political problem which will be his way of posing the political problem to himself: how does it happen that people who have power [pouvoir], in whatever domain, need to affect us in a sad way? The sad passions as necessary. Inspiring sad passions is necessary for the exercise of power. And Spinoza says, in the Theological-Political Treatise, that this is a profound point of connection between the despot and the priest—they both need the sadness of their subjects. Here you understand well that he does not take sadness in a vague sense, he takes sadness in the rigorous sense he knew to give it: sadness is the affect insofar as it involves the diminution of my power of acting.

When I said, in my first attempt to differentiate idea and affect (that the idea is the mode of thought which represents nothing [?]), that the affect is the mode of thought which represents nothing, I said in technical terms that this is not only a simple nominal definition, nor, if you prefer, only an external or extrinsic one.

In the second attempt, when I say on the other hand that the idea is that which has in itself an intrinsic reality, and the affect is the continuous variation or passage from one degree of reality to another or from one degree of perfection to another, we are no longer in the domain of so-called nominal definitions, here we already acquire a real definition, that is a definition which, at the same time as it defines the thing, also shows the very possibility of this thing. What is important is that you see how, according to Spinoza, we are fabricated as such spiritual automata. As such spiritual automata, within us there is the whole time of ideas which succeed one another, and in accordance with this succession of ideas, our power of acting or force of existing is increased or diminished in a continuous manner, on a continuous line, and this is what we call affectus, it's what we call existing.

Affectus is thus the continuous variation of someone's force of existing, insofar as this variation is determined by the ideas that s/he has. But once again, "determined" does not mean that the variation is reducible to the ideas that one has, since the idea that I have does not account for its consequence, that is the fact that it increases my power of acting or on the contrary diminishes it in relation to the idea that I had at the time, and it's not a question of comparison, it's a question of a kind of slide, a fall or rise in the power of acting. No problem, no question.

For Spinoza there will be three sorts of ideas. For the moment, we will no longer speak of affectus, of affect, since in effect the affect is determined by the ideas which one has, it's not reducible to the ideas one has, it is determined by the ideas one has; thus what is essential is to see which ideas are the ones which determine the affects, always keeping in mind the fact that the affect is not reducible to the ideas one has, it's absolutely irreducible. It's of another order. The three kinds of ideas that Spinoza distinguishes are affection (affectio) ideas; we'll see that affectio, as opposed to affectus, is a certain kind of idea. There would thus have been in the first place affectio ideas, secondly we arrive at the ideas that Spinoza calls notions, and thirdly, for a small number of us because it's very difficult, we come to have essence ideas. Before everything else there are these three sorts of ideas.

What is an affection (affectio)? I see your faces literally fall... yet this is all rather amusing. At first sight, and to stick to the letter of Spinoza's text, this has nothing to do with an idea, but it has nothing to do with an affect either. Affectus was determined as the continuous variation of the power of acting. An affection is what? In a first determination, an affection is the following: it's a state of a body insofar as it is subject to the action of another body. What does this mean? "I feel the sun on me," or else "A ray of sunlight falls upon you"; it's an affection of your body. What is an affection of your body? Not the sun, but the action of the sun or the effect of the sun on you. In other words an effect, or the action that one body produces on another, once it's noted that Spinoza, on the basis of reasons from his Physics, does not believe in action at a distance, action always implies a contact, and is even a mixture of bodies. Affectio is a mixture of two bodies, one body which is said to act on another, and the other receives the trace of the first. Every mixture of bodies will be termed an affection. Spinoza infers from this that affectio, being defined as a mixture of bodies, indicates the nature of the modified body, the nature of the affectionate or affected body, the affection indicates the nature of the affected body much more than it does the nature of the

affecting body. He analyses his famous example, "I see the sun as a flat disk situated at a distance of three hundred feet." That's an affectio, or at very least the perception of an affectio. It's clear that my perception of the sun indicates much more fully the constitution of my body, the way in which my body is constituted, than it does the way in which the sun is constituted. I perceive the sun in this fashion by virtue of the state of my visual perceptions. A fly will perceive the sun in another fashion.

In order to preserve the rigor of his terminology, Spinoza will say that an affectio indicates the nature of the modified body rather than the nature of the modifying body, and it envelopes the nature of the modifying body. I would say that the first sort of ideas for Spinoza is every mode of thought which represents an affection of the body...which is to say the mixture of one body with another body, or the trace of another body on my body will be termed an idea of affection. It's in this sense that one could say that it is an affection-idea, the first type of ideas. And this first type of ideas answers to what Spinoza terms the first kind of knowledge [connaissance], the lowest.

Why is it the lowest? It's obvious that it's the lowest because these ideas of affection know [connaissent] things only by their effects: I feel the affection of the sun on me, the trace of the sun on me. It's the effect of the sun on my body. But the causes, that is, that which is my body, that which is the body of the sun, and the relation between these two bodies such that the one produces a particular effect on the other rather than something else, of these things I know [sais] absolutely nothing. Let's take another example: "The sun melts wax and hardens clay." These points are not nothing. They're ideas of affectio. I see the wax which flows, and right beside it I see the clay which hardens; this is an affection of the wax and an affection of the clay, and I have an idea of these affections, I perceive effects. By virtue of what corporeal constitution does the clay harden under the sun's action? As long as I remain in the perception of affection, I know nothing of it. One could say that affection-ideas are representations of effects without their causes, and it's precisely these that Spinoza calls inadequate ideas. These are ideas of mixture separated from the causes of the mixture.

And in effect, the fact that, at the level of affection-ideas, we have only inadequate and confused ideas is well understood for what are affection-ideas in the order of life? And doubtless, alas, many among us who have not done enough philosophy live only like that. Once, only once, Spinoza employs a Latin word which is quite strange but very important: *occurus*. Literally this is the encounter. To the extent that I have affection-ideas I live chance encounters: I walk in the street, I see Pierre who does not please me, it's the function of the constitution of his body and his soul and the constitution of my body and my soul. Someone who displeases me, body and soul, what does that mean? I would like to make you understand why Spinoza has had such a strong reputation for materialism even though he never ceases to speak of the mind and the soul, a reputation for atheism even though he never ceases to speak of God, it's quite curious. One sees quite well why people have said that this is purely materialist. When I say "This one does not please me," that means, literally, that the effect of his body on mine, the effect of his soul on mine affects me disagreeably, it is the mixture of bodies or mixture of souls. There is a noxious mixture or a good mixture, as much at the level of the body as at that of the soul.

It's exactly like this: "I don't like cheese." What does that mean, "I don't like cheese"? That means that it mixes with my body in a manner by which I am modified disagreeably, it cannot mean anything else. Thus there isn't any reason to make up differences between spiritual sympathies and bodily relations. In "I don't like cheese" there is also an affair of the soul, but in "Pierre or Paul does not please me" there is also an affair of the body, all this is tantamount to the same thing. To put it simply, why is this a confused idea, this affection-idea, this mixture—it is inevitably confused and inadequate since I don't know absolutely, at this level, by virtue of what and how the body or the soul of Pierre is constituted, in what way it does not agree with mine, or in what way his body does not agree with mine. I can merely say that it does not agree with me, but by virtue of what constitution of the two bodies, of the affecting body and the affected body, of the body which acts and the body which is subjected, I can at this level know nothing. As Spinoza says, these are consequences separated from their premises or, if you prefer, it is a knowledge [connaissance] of effects independent of the knowledge of causes. Thus they are chance encounters. What can happen in chance encounters?

But what is a body? I'm not going to develop that, that may be the object of a special course. The theory of what a body or even a soul is, which comes down to the same thing, is found in book two of the Ethics. For Spinoza, the individuality of a body is defined by the following: it's when a certain composite or complex relation (I insist on that point, quite composite, very complex) of movement and rest is preserved through all the changes which affect the parts of the body. It's the permanence of a relation of movement and rest

through all the changes which affect all the parts, taken to infinity, of the body under consideration. You understand that a body is necessarily composite to infinity. My eye, for example, my eye and the relative constancy of my eye are defined by a certain relation of movement and rest through all the modifications of the diverse parts of my eye; but my eye itself, which already has an infinity of parts, is one part among the parts of my body, the eye in its turn is a part of the face and the face, in its turn, is a part of my body, etc....thus you have all sorts of relations which will be combined with one another to form an individuality of such and such degree. But at each one of these levels or degrees, individuality will be defined by a certain relation composed of movement and rest.

What can happen if my body is made this way, a certain relation of movement and rest which subsumes an infinity of parts? Two things can happen: I eat something that I like, or else another example, I eat something and collapse, poisoned. Literally speaking, in the one case I had a good encounter and in the other I had a bad one. All this is in the category of occursus. When I have a bad encounter, this means that the body which is mixed with mine destroys my constituent relation, or tends to destroy one of my subordinate relations. For example, I eat something and get a stomach ache which does not kill me; this has destroyed or inhibited, compromised one of my sub-relations, one of the relations that compose me. Then I eat something and I die. This has decomposed my composite relation, it has decomposed the complex relation which defined my individuality. It hasn't simply destroyed one of my subordinate relations which composed one of my sub-individualities, it has destroyed the characteristic relation of my body. And the opposite happens when I eat something that agrees with me.

Spinoza asks, what is evil? We find this in his correspondence, in the letters he sent to a young Dutchman who was as evil as can be. This Dutchman didn't like Spinoza and attacked him constantly, demanding of him, "Tell me what you think evil is." You know that at that time, letters were very important and philosophers sent many of them. Spinoza, who is very very good-natured, believes at first that this is a young man who wants to be taught and, little by little, he comes to understand that this is not the case at all, that the Dutchman wants his skin. From letter to letter, the good Christian Blyenberg's anger swells and he ends by saying to Spinoza, "But you are the devil!" Spinoza says that evil is not difficult, evil is a bad encounter. Encountering a body which mixes badly with your own. Mixing badly means mixing in conditions such that one of your subordinate or constituent relations is either threatened, compromised or even destroyed.

More and more gay, wanting to show that he is right, Spinoza analyzes the example of Adam in his own way. In the conditions in which we live, we seem absolutely condemned to have only one sort of idea, affection-ideas. By means of what miracle could one move away from these actions of bodies that do not wait for us in order to exist, how could one rise to a knowledge [connaissance] of causes? For the moment we see clearly that all that is given to us is ideas of affection, ideas of mixture. For the moment we see clearly that since birth we have been condemned to chance encounters, so things aren't going well. What does this imply? It already implies a fanatical reaction against Descartes since Spinoza will affirm strongly, in book two, that we can only know [connaître] ourselves and we can only know external bodies by the affections that the external bodies produce on our own. For those who can recall a little Descartes, this is the basic anti-cartesian proposition since it excludes every apprehension of the thinking thing by itself, that is it excludes all possibility of the cogito. I only ever know the mixtures of bodies and I only know myself by way of the action of other bodies on me and by way of mixtures.

This is not only anti-cartesianism but also anti-Christianity, and why? Because one of the fundamental points of theology is the immediate perfection of the first created man, which is what's called in theology the theory of Adamic perfection. Before he sinned, Adam was created as perfect as he could be, so then the story of his sin is precisely the story of the Fall, but the Fall presupposes an Adam who is perfect insofar as he is a created thing. Spinoza finds this idea very amusing. His idea is that this isn't possible; supposing that one is given the idea of a first man, one can only be given this idea as that of the most powerless being, the most imperfect there could be since the first man can only exist in chance encounters and in the action of other bodies on his own. Thus, in supposing that Adam exists, he exists in a mode of absolute imperfection and inadequacy, he exists in the mode of a little baby who is given over to chance encounters, unless he is in a protected milieu—but I've said too much. What would that be, a protected milieu?

Evil is a bad encounter, which means what? Spinoza, in his correspondence with the Dutchman, tells him, "You always relate to me the example of God who forbade Adam from eating the apple, and you cite this

as the example of a moral law. The first prohibition." Spinoza tells him, "But this is not at all what happens," and then Spinoza relates the entire story of Adam in the form of a poisoning and an intoxication. What happened in reality? God never forbade whatever it might be to Adam, He granted him a revelation. Adam foresaw the noxious effect that the body of the apple would have on the constitution of his own body. In other words the apple is a poison for Adam. The body of the apple exists under such a characteristic relation, such is its constitution, that it can only act on Adam's body by decomposing the relation of Adam's body. And if he was wrong not to listen to God, this is not in the sense that he disobeyed in this matter, but that he didn't comprehend anything. This situation also exists among animals, certain of which have an instinct that turns them away from what is poisonous to them, but there are others which don't have this instinct. When I have an encounter such that the relation of the body which modifies me, which acts on me, is combined with my own relation, with the characteristic relation of my own body, what happens? I would say that my power of acting is increased; at least it is increased with regard to this particular relation. When on the contrary I have an encounter such that the characteristic relation of the body which modifies me compromises or destroys one of my relations, or my characteristic relation, I would say that my power of acting is diminished or even destroyed. We rediscover here our two fundamental affects or affectus: sadness and joy. To recapitulate everything at this level, as a function of ideas of affection which I have, there are two sorts of ideas of affection: the idea of an effect which benefits or favors my own characteristic relation, and second, the idea of an effect which compromises or destroys my own characteristic relation. To these two types of ideas of affection will correspond the two movements of variation in the affectus, the two poles of variation: in one case my power of acting is increased and I undergo [Éprouve] an affectus of joy, and in the other case my power of acting is diminished and I undergo an affectus of sadness.

Spinoza will engender all the passions, in their details, on the basis of these two fundamental affects: joy as an increase in the power of acting, sadness as a diminution or destruction of the power of acting. This comes down to saying that each thing, body or soul, is defined by a certain characteristic, complex relation, but I would also say that each thing, body or soul, is defined by a certain power [pouvoir] of being affected. Everything happens as if each one of us had a certain power of being affected. If you consider beasts, Spinoza will be firm in telling us that what counts among animals is not at all the genera or species; genera and species are absolutely confused notions, abstract ideas. What counts is the question, of what is a body capable? And thereby he sets out one of the most fundamental questions in his whole philosophy (before him there had been Hobbes and others) by saying that the only question is that we don't even know [savons] what a body is capable of, we prattle on about the soul and the mind and we don't know what a body can do. But a body must be defined by the ensemble of relations which compose it, or, what amounts to exactly the same thing, by its power of being affected. As long as you don't know what power a body has to be affected, as long as you learn like that, in chance encounters, you will not have the wise life, you will not have wisdom.

Knowing what you are capable of. This is not at all a moral question, but above all a physical question, as a question to the body and to the soul. A body has something fundamentally hidden: we could speak of the human species, the human genera, but this won't tell us what is capable of affecting our body, what is capable of destroying it. The only question is the power of being affected. What distinguishes a frog from an ape? It's not the specific or generic characteristics, Spinoza says, rather it's the fact that they are not capable of the same affections. Thus it will be necessary to make, for each animal, veritable charts of affects, the affects of which a beast is capable. And likewise for men: the affects of which man is capable. We should notice at this moment that, depending on the culture, depending on the society, men are not all capable of the same affects.

It's well known that one method by which certain governments exterminated the Indians of South America was to have left, on trails the Indians traveled, clothing from influenza victims, clothing gathered in the infirmaries, because the Indians couldn't stand the affect influenza. No need even of machine guns, they dropped like flies. It's the same with us, in the conditions of forest life we risk not living very long. Thus the human genera, species or even race hasn't any importance, Spinoza will say, as long as you haven't made the list of affects of which someone is capable, in the strongest sense of the word "capable," comprising the maladies of which s/he is capable as well. It's obvious that the racehorse and the draft horse are the same species, two varieties of the same species, yet their affects are very different, their maladies are absolutely different, their capacities of being affected are completely different and, from this point of view, we must say that a draft horse is closer to an ox than to a racehorse. Thus an ethological chart of affects is quite different from a generic or specific determination of animals.

You see that the power of being affected can be fulfilled in two ways. When I am poisoned, my power of being affected is absolutely fulfilled, but it's fulfilled in such a way that my power of acting tends toward zero, which is to say it's inhibited. Inversely, when I undergo joy, that is to say when I encounter a body which combines its relation with my own, my power of being affected is equally fulfilled and my power of acting increases and tends toward...what?

In the case of a bad encounter, all my force of existing (*vis existendi*) is concentrated, tending toward the following goal: to invest the trace of the body which affected me in order to reject the effect of this body, so much so that my power of acting is diminished accordingly. These are very concrete things: you have a headache and you say, "I can't even read anymore"; this means that your force of existing invests the trace of the migraine so fully, it implies changes in one of your subordinate relations, it invests the trace of your migraine so fully that your power of acting is diminished accordingly. On the contrary, when you say, "I feel really good," and you are content, you are also content because bodies are mixed with you in proportions and under conditions which are favorable to your relation; at that moment the power of the body which affects you is combined with your own in such a way that your power of acting is increased. So although in the two cases your power of being affected will be completely actualized [*effectu*], it can be actualized in such a way that the power of acting diminishes to infinity or alternatively the power of acting increases to infinity.

To infinity? Is this true? Evidently not, since at our level the forces of existing, the powers [*pouvoirs*] of being affected and the powers [*puissances*] of acting are inevitably finite. Only God has an absolutely infinite power [*puissance*]. Right, but within certain limits I will not cease to pass via these variations of the power of acting as a function of the ideas I have, I will not cease to follow the line of continuous variation of the *affectus* as a function of affection-ideas that I have and the encounters that I have, in such a way that, at each instant, my power of being affected is completely actualized, completely fulfilled. Fulfilled, simply, in the mode of sadness or the mode of joy. Of course also both at once, since it's well understood that, in the sub-relations which compose us, a part of ourselves can be composed of sadness and another part of ourselves can be composed of joy. There are local sadnesses and local joys. For example, Spinoza gives the following definition of tickling: a local joy; this does not mean that everything is joy in the tickling, it can be a joy of a nature that implies a coexistent irritation of another nature, an irritation which is sadness: my power of being affected tends to be exceeded [*d'ÉpassÉ*]. Nothing that exceeds his/her power of being affected is good for a person. A power of being affected is really an intensity or threshold of intensity.

What Spinoza really wants to do is to define the essence of someone in an intensive fashion as an intensive quantity. As long as you don't know your intensities you risk the bad encounter and you will have to say, it's beautiful, both the excess and the immoderation...no immoderation at all, there's only failure, nothing other than failure. Advice for overdoses. This is precisely the phenomenon of the power of being affected which is exceeded in a total destruction.

Certainly in my generation, on average, we were much more cultured or trained in philosophy, when we used to do it, and on the other hand we had a very striking kind of lack of culture in other domains, in music, painting, cinema.

I have the impression that for many among you the relation has changed, that is to say that you know absolutely nothing, nothing in philosophy and you know, or rather you have a concrete grasp of things like a color, you know what a sound is or what an image is. A philosophy is a kind of synthesizer of concepts, creating a concept is not at all ideological. A concept is a created thing.

What I've defined up to now is solely the increase and diminution of the power of acting, and whether the power of acting increases or diminishes, the corresponding affect (*affectus*) is always a passion. Whether it be a joy which increases my power of acting or a sadness which diminishes my power of acting, in both cases these are passions: joyful passions or sad passions. Yet again Spinoza denounces a plot in the universe of those who are interested in affecting us with sad passions. The priest has need of the sadness of his subjects, he needs these subjects to feel themselves guilty. The auto-affectations or active affects assume that we possess our power of acting and that, on such and such a point, we have left the domain of the passions in order to enter the domain of actions. This is what remains for us to see.

How could we leave behind affection-ideas, how could we leave behind the passive affects which consist in increase or diminution of our power of acting, how could we leave behind the world of inadequate ideas

once we're told that our condition seems to condemn us strictly to this world. On that score we must read the Ethics as preparing a kind of dramatic turn. It's going to speak to us of active affects where there are no longer passions, where the power of acting is conquered instead of passing by all these continuous variations. Here, there's a very strict point. There's a fundamental difference between Ethics and Morality. Spinoza doesn't make up a morality, for a very simple reason: he never asks what we must do, he always asks what we are capable of, what's in our power, ethics is a problem of power, never a problem of duty. In this sense Spinoza is profoundly immoral. Regarding the moral problem, good and evil, he has a happy nature because he doesn't even comprehend what this means. What he comprehends are good encounters, bad encounters, increases and diminutions of power. Thus he makes an ethics and not at all a morality. This is why he so struck Nietzsche.

We are completely enclosed in this world of affection-ideas and these affective continuous variations of joy and sadness, so sometimes my power of acting increases, okay, sometimes it diminishes; but whether it increases or diminishes I remain within passion because, in both cases, I do not possess it: I'm still separated from my power of acting. So when my power of acting increases, it means that I am then relatively less separated, and inversely, but I am still formally separated from my power of acting, I do not possess it. In other words, I am not the cause of my own affects, and since I'm not the cause of my own affects, they are produced in me by something else: I am therefore passive, I'm in the world of passion.

But there are notion-ideas and essence-ideas. Already at the level of notion-ideas a kind of escape from this world is going to appear. One is completely smothered, enclosed in a world of absolute impotence, even when my power of acting increases it's on a segment of variation, nothing guarantees me that, at the street corner, I'm not going to receive a great blow to the head and that my power of acting is going to fall again.

You recall that an affection-idea is a mixture, that is to say the idea of an effect of a body on mine. A notion-idea no longer concerns the effect of another body on mine, it's an idea which concerns and which has for its object the agreement or disagreement of the characteristic relations between two bodies. If there is such an idea—we don't know yet if there is one, but we can always define something even if it means concluding that it can't exist—it's what we will call a nominal definition. I would say that the nominal definition of the notion is that it's an idea which, instead of representing the effect of a body on another, that is to say the mixture of two bodies, represents the internal agreement or disagreement of the characteristic relations of the two bodies.

An example: if I knew enough about the characteristic relation of the body named arsenic and the characteristic relation of the human body, I could form a notion of the disagreement of these two relations to the point that the arsenic, under its characteristic relation, destroys the characteristic relation of my body. I am poisoned, I die.

You see that the notion, differing from the idea of affection, instead of being the seizure of the extrinsic relation of one body with another or the effect of one body on another, the notion is raised to the comprehension of the cause, that is if the mixture has such and such effect, this is by virtue of the nature of the relation of the two bodies considered and of the manner in which the relation of one of the bodies is combined with the relation of the other body. There is always a composition of relations. When I am poisoned, the body of arsenic has induced the parts of my body to enter into a relation other than the one which characterizes me. At that moment, the parts of my body enter into a new relation induced by the arsenic, which is perfectly combined with the arsenic; the arsenic is happy since it feeds on me. The arsenic undergoes a joyful passion because, as Spinoza says so well, each body has a soul. Thus the arsenic is joyful, but me, evidently I'm not. It has induced the parts of my body to enter into a relation which is combined with its own, the arsenic's. Me, I'm sad, I'm heading toward death. You see that the notion, if one can reach it, is a formidable thing.

We are not far from an analytical geometry. A notion is not at all abstract, it's quite concrete: this body here, that body there. If I had the characteristic relation of the soul and of the body of that which I say displeases me, in relation to my characteristic relation in myself, I would comprehend everything, I would know by causes instead of knowing only by effects separated from their causes. At that moment I would have an adequate idea. Just as if I understood why someone pleases me. I took as an example digestive relations, but we wouldn't have to change a line for amorous relations. It's not at all that Spinoza conceived love like he conceived digestion, he conceived digestion like love as well. Take a couple *à la* Strindberg, this kind of decomposition of relations and then they are recombined in order to begin again. What is this

continuous variation of the affectus, and how does a certain disagreement agree with certain people? Why can certain people live only in a certain indefinitely repeated domestic quarrel? They emerge from it as if it had been a bath of cool water for them.

You understand the difference between a notion-idea and an affection-idea. A notion-idea is inevitably adequate since it's a knowledge [connaissance] by causes. Spinoza not only uses the term notion here to qualify this second sort of idea, but he also uses the term common notion. The word is quite ambiguous: does it mean common to all minds? Yes and no, it's very meticulous in Spinoza. In any case, don't ever confuse a common notion and an abstraction. He always defines a common notion like this: it's the idea of something which is common to all bodies or to several bodies—at least two—and which is common to the whole and to the part. Therefore there surely are common notions which are common to all minds, but they're common to all minds only to the extent that they are first the idea of something which is common to all bodies. Therefore these are not at all abstract notions. What is common to all bodies? For example, being in movement or at rest. Movement and rest will be objects of notions said to be common to all bodies. Therefore there are common notions which designate something common to all bodies. There are also common notions which designate something common to two bodies or to two souls, for example, someone I love. Once again the common notion is not abstract, it has nothing to do with species or genera, it's actually the statement [Énoncé] of what is common to several bodies or to all bodies; or, since there's no single body which is not itself made up of several, one can say that there are common things or common notions in each body. Hence we fall back upon the question: how can one leave this situation which condemned us to mixtures?

Here Spinoza's texts are very complicated. One can only conceive this departure in the following manner: broadly speaking, when I am affected in chance encounters, either I am affected with sadness or with joy. When I am affected with sadness, my power of acting diminishes, which is to say that I am further separated from this power. When I am affected with joy, it increases, which is to say that I am less separated from this power. Good. If you consider yourself as affected with sadness, I believe that everything is wretched, there is no longer an exit for one simple reason: nothing in sadness, which diminishes your power of acting, can induce you from within sadness to form a notion common to something which would be common to the bodies which affect you with sadness and to your own. For one very simple reason, that the body which affects you with sadness only affects you with sadness to the extent that it affects you in a relation which does not agree with your own. Spinoza means something very simple, that sadness makes no one intelligent. In sadness one is wretched. It's for this reason that the powers-that-be [pouvoirs] need subjects to be sad. Agony has never been a cultural game of intelligence or vivacity. As long as you have a sad affect, a body acts on yours, a soul acts on yours in conditions and in a relation which do not agree with yours. At that point, nothing in sadness can induce you to form the common notion, that is to say the idea of a something in common between two bodies and two souls. What he's saying is full of wisdom. This is why thinking of death is the most base thing. He is opposed to the whole philosophical tradition which is a meditation on death. His formula is that philosophy is a meditation on life and not on death. Obviously, because death is always a bad encounter.

Another case. You are affected with joy. Your power of acting is increased, this doesn't mean that you possess it yet, but the fact that you are affected with joy signifies and indicates that the body or soul which affects you thus affects you in a relation which is combined with your own and which is combined with your own, and that goes for the formula of love and the digestive formula. In an affect of joy, therefore, the body which affects you is indicated as combining its relation with your own and not as its relation decomposing your own. At that point, something induces you to form a notion of what is common to the body which affects you and to your own body, to the soul which affects you and to your own soul. In this sense joy makes one intelligent. There we feel that it's a curious thing, because, geometrical method or not, we grant him everything, he can demonstrate it; but there is an obvious appeal to a kind of lived experience. There's an obvious appeal to way of perceiving, and even more, to a way of living. It's necessary to already have such a hatred of sad passions, the list of sad passions in Spinoza is infinite, he goes so far as to say that every idea of reward envelopes a sad passion, every idea of security envelopes a sad passion, every idea of pride, guilt. It's one of the most marvelous moments in the Ethics. The affects of joy are like a springboard, they make us pass through something that we would never have been able to pass if there had only been sadnesses. He solicits us to form the idea of what is common to the affecting body and the affected body. This can fail, but it can also succeed and I become intelligent.

Someone who becomes good in Latin at the same time that he becomes a lover...this is seen in the classroom. What's it connected to? How does someone make progress? One never makes progress on a

homogeneous line, something here makes us make progress down there, as if a small joy here had released a trigger. Anew, the necessity of a map: what happened there that unblocked this here? A small joy precipitates us into a world of concrete ideas which sweeps out the sad affects or which is in the process of struggling, all of this makes up part of the continuous variation. But at the same time, this joy propels us somehow beyond the continuous variation, it makes us acquire at least the potentiality of a common notion. It's necessary to conceive this very concretely, these are quite local things. If you succeed in forming a common notion, at whatever point you yourself have a relation with such a person or such an animal, you say: I've finally understood something, I am less stupid than yesterday. The "I've understood" that one says is sometimes the moment in which you formed a common notion. You formed it quite locally, it didn't give you all the common notions. Spinoza doesn't think at all like a rationalist, among the rationalists there is the world of reason and there are the ideas. If you have one, obviously you have all of them: you are reasonable. Spinoza thinks that being reasonable, or being wise, is a problem of becoming, which changes in a singular fashion the contents of the concept of reason. It's necessary to know the encounters which agree with you. No one could ever say that it's good for her/him when something exceeds her/his power of being affected. The most beautiful thing is to live on the edges, at the limit of her/his own power of being affected, on the condition that this be the joyful limit since there is the limit of joy and the limit of sadness; but everything which exceeds your power of being affected is ugly. Relatively ugly: what's good for flies is not inevitably good for you... There is no longer any abstract notion, there isn't any formula which is good for man in general. What counts is what your power is for you. Lawrence said a directly Spinozist thing: an intensity which exceeds your power of being affected is bad (posthumous writings). It's inevitable: a blue that is too intense for my eyes will not make me say it's beautiful, it will perhaps be beautiful for someone else. There's good for all, you tell me...Yes, because the powers of being affected are combined.

To assume that there was a power of being affected which defined the power of being affected of the whole universe is quite possible since all relations are combined to infinity, but not in just any order. My relation doesn't combine with that of arsenic, but what can this do? Obviously it does a lot to me, but at this moment the parts of my body enter again into a new relation which is combined with that of the arsenic. It's necessary to know in what order the relations are combined. But if we knew in what order the relations of the whole universe are combined, we could define a power of being affected of the whole universe, which would be the cosmos, the world insofar as it's a body or a soul. At this moment the whole world is only one single body following the order of relations which are combined. At this moment you have, to speak precisely, a universal power of being affected: God, who is the whole universe insofar as He is its cause, has by nature a universal power of being affected. It's useless to say that he's in the process of using the idea of God in a strange manner.

You undergo a joy, you feel that this joy concerns you, that it concerns something important regarding your principal relations, your characteristic relations. Here then it must serve you as a springboard, you form the notion-idea: in what do the body which affects me and my own body agree? In what do the soul which affects me and my own soul agree, from the point of view of the composition of their relations, and no longer from the point of view of their chance encounters. You do the opposite operation from what is generally done. Generally people tend to summarize their unhappinesses, this is where neurosis or depression begins, when we set out to figure the totals; oh shit, there's this and there's that. Spinoza proposes the opposite: instead of summarizing of our sadnesses, taking a local point of departure on a joy on the condition that we feel that it truly concerns us. On that point one forms the common notion, on that point one tries to win locally, to open up this joy. It's the labor of life. One tries to diminish the respective share of sadnesses in relation to the respective share of a joy, and one attempts the following tremendous coup: one is sufficiently assured of common notions which refer to relations of agreement between such and such body and my own, one will attempt then to apply the same method to sadness, but one cannot do it on the basis of sadness, that is to say one will attempt to form common notions by which one will arrive at a comprehension of the vital manner in which such and such body disagrees and no longer agrees. That becomes, no longer a continuous variation, that becomes a bell curve.

You leave joyful passions, the increase in the power of acting; you make use of them to form common notions of a first type, the notion of what there was in common between the body which affected me with joy and my own body, you open up to a maximum your living common notions and you descend once again toward sadness, this time with common notions that you form in order to comprehend in what way such a body disagrees with your own, such a soul disagrees with your own.

At this moment you can already say that you are within the adequate idea since, in effect, you have passed into the knowledge of causes. You can already say that you are within philosophy. One single thing counts, the way of living. One single thing counts, the meditation on life, and far from being a meditation on death it's rather the operation which consists in making death only finally affect the proportion that is relatively the smallest in me, that is, living it as a bad encounter. It's simply well known that, to the extent that a body is tired, the probabilities of bad encounters increase. It's a common notion, a common notion of disagreement. As long as I'm young, death is truly something which comes from outside, it's truly an extrinsic accident, except in the case of an internal malady. There is no common notion, on the other hand it's true that when a body ages, its power of acting diminishes: I can no longer do what I could still do yesterday; this, this fascinates me in aging, this kind of diminution of the power of acting. What is a clown, vitally speaking? It's precisely the type that does not accept aging, he doesn't know how to age quickly enough. It's not necessary to age too quickly because there's also another way of being a clown: acting the old man. The more one ages the less one wants to have bad encounters, but when one is young one leaps into the risk of the bad encounter. The type which, to the extent that his power of acting diminishes as a function of aging, his power of being affected varies, doesn't do it, continues to act the young man, is fascinating. It's very sad. There's a fascinating passage in one of Fitzgerald's novels (the water-ski episode [in *Tender is the Night*]), there are ten pages of total beauty on not knowing how to age... You know the spectacles which are not uncomfortable for the spectators themselves.

Knowing how to age is arriving at the moment when the common notions must make you comprehend in what way things and other bodies disagree with your own. Then inevitably it will be necessary to find a new grace which will be that of your age, above all not clinging to youth. It's a kind of wisdom. It's not the good health which makes one say "Live life as you please," it's no longer the will to cling to life. Spinoza knew admirably well how to die, but he knew very well what he was capable of, he knew how to say "Piss off" [merde] to the other philosophers. Leibniz came to him to steal bits of manuscript in order to say afterward that they were his own. There are very curious stories about this, he was a dangerous man, Leibniz. I end by saying that at this second level, one attains the notion-idea where relations are combined, and once again this is not abstract since I've tried to say that it's an extraordinarily vital enterprise. One has left the passions behind. One has acquired formal possession of the power of acting. The formation of notions, which are not abstract ideas, which are literally rules of life, gives me possession of the power of acting. The common notions are the second kind of knowledge [connaissance]. In order to understand the third it's necessary already to understand the second. Only Spinoza has entered into the third kind. Above the common notions... You've noticed that while the common notions are not abstract, they are collective, they always refer to a multiplicity, but they're no less individual for that. They are the ways in which such and such bodies agree, at the limit they are the ways in which all bodies agree, but at that moment it's the whole world which is an individuality. Thus the common notions are always individual.

Beyond even the compositions of relations, beyond the internal agreements which define the common notions, there are the singular essences. What's the difference? It would be necessary to say that, at the limit, the relation and relations which characterize me express my singular essence, but nevertheless it's not the same thing. Why? Because the relation which characterizes me... what I'm saying here is not entirely in the text, but it's practically there... The common notions or the relations which characterize me still concern the extensive parts of my body. My body is composed of an infinity of parts extended to the infinite, and these parts enter into such and such relations which correspond to my essence but are not confused with my essence, for the relations which characterize me are still rules under which are associated, in movement and at rest, the extended parts of my body. Whereas the singular essence is a degree of power [puissance], that is to say these are my thresholds of intensity. Between the lowest and the highest, between my birth and my death, these are my intensive thresholds. What Spinoza calls singular essence, it seems to me, is an intensive quality, as if each one of us were defined by a kind of complex of intensities which refers to her/his essence, and also of relations which regulate the extended parts, the extensive parts. So that, when I have knowledge [connaissance] of notions, that is to say of relations of movement and rest which regulate the agreement or disagreement of bodies from the point of view of their extended parts, from the point of view of their extension, I don't yet have full possession of my essence to the extent that it is intensity. And God, what's that? When Spinoza defines God as absolutely infinite power [puissance], he expresses himself well. All the terms that he explicitly employs: degree, which in Latin is *gradus*, refers to a long tradition in medieval philosophy. *Gradus* is the intensive quantity, in opposition to or differing from the extensive parts. Thus it would be necessary to conceive the singular essence of each one as this kind of intensity, or limit of intensity. It's

singular because, whether it be our community of genera or species, we are all human for example, yet none of us has the same threshold.

COURS VINCENNES - 12/12/1980 (EXCERPT)

Intervention of Comtesse: (inaudible on the cassette).

Gilles: I feel coming between you and me still a difference. You tend very quickly to stress an authentically Spinozist concept, that of the tendency to persevere in being. The last time, you spoke to me about the conatus, i.e. the tendency to persevere in being, and you asked me: what don't you do it? I responded that for the moment I cannot introduce it because, in my reading, I am stressing other Spinozist concepts, and the tendency to persevere in being, I will derive it from other concepts which are for me the essential concepts, those of power (puissance) and affect. Today, you return to the same theme. There is not even room for a discussion, you would propose another reading, i.e. a differently accentuated reading. As for the problem of the reasonable man and the insane man, I will respond exactly thus: what distinguishes the insane person and the reasonable one according to Spinoza, and conversely at the same time, there is: what doesn't distinguish them? From which point of view can they not be distinguished, from which point of view do they have to be distinguished? I would say, for my reading, that Spinoza's response is very rigorous. If I summarize Spinoza's response, it seems to me that this summary would be this: from a certain point of view, there is no reason to make a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane person. From another point of view, there is a reason to make a distinction.

Firstly, from the point of view of power, there is no reason to introduce a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane man. What does that mean? Does that mean that they have the same power? No, it doesn't mean that they have the same power, but it means that each one, as much as there is in him, realises or exercises his power. I.e. each one, as much as there is in him, endeavours [s'efforce] to persevere in his being. Therefore, from the point of view of power, insofar as each, according to natural right, endeavours to persevere in his being, i.e. exercise his power ~ you see I always put *effort* between brackets ~ it is not that he tries to persevere, in any way, he perseveres in his being as much as there is in him, this is why I do not like the idea of conatus, the idea of effort, which does not translate Spinoza's thought because what it calls an effort to persevere in being is the fact that I exercise my power at each moment, as much as there is in me. It is not an effort, but from the point of view of power, therefore, I can not at all say what each one is worth, because each one would have the same power, in effect the power of the insane man is not the same as that of the reasonable one, but what there is in common between the two is that, whatever the power, each exercises his own. Therefore, from this point of view, I would not say that the reasonable man is better than the insane one. I cannot, I have no way of saying that: each has a power, each exercises as much power as there is in him. It is natural right, it is the world of nature. From this point of view, I could not establish any difference in quality between the reasonable man and the insane one.

But from another point of view, I know very well that the reasonable man is *better* than the insane one. Better, what does that mean? More powerful, in the Spinozist sense of the word. Therefore, from this second point of view, I must make and I do make a distinction between the reasonable man and the insane one. What is this point of view? My response, according to Spinoza, would be exactly this: from the point of view of power, you have no reason to distinguish the reasonable man and the insane one, but from the other point of view, namely that of the affects, you distinguish the reasonable man and the insane one. From where does this other point of view come? You remember that power is always actual, it is always exercised. It is the affects that exercise them. The affects are the exercises of power, what I experience in action or passion, it is this which exercises my power, at every moment. If the reasonable man and the insane one are distinguished, it is not by means of power, each one realises his power, it is by means of the affects. The affects of the reasonable man are not the same as those of the insane one. Hence the whole problem of reason will be converted by Spinoza into a special case of the more general problem of the affects. Reason indicates a certain type of affect. That is very new.

To say that reason is not going to be defined by ideas, of course, it will also be defined by ideas. There is a practical reason that consists in a certain type of affect, in a certain way of being affected. That poses a very practical problem of reason. What does it mean to be reasonable, at that moment? Inevitably reason is an ensemble of affects, for the simple reason that it is precisely the forms under which power is exercised

in such and such conditions. Therefore, to the question that has just been posed by Comtesse, my response is relatively strict; in effect, what difference is there between a reasonable man and the insane one? From a certain point of view, none, that is the point of view of power. From another point of view, enormous difference, from the point of view of the affects which exercise power.

COURS VINCENNES - 20/01/1981 (EXCERPT)

Bleyenbergh: Composition and decomposition of relations

Spinoza's example in the letters to Blyenbergh: I am led by a basely sensual appetite or else, the other case: I feel a true love. What are these two cases? It is necessary to try to understand them according to the criteria that Spinoza gives us. A basely sensual appetite, even the mere expression, one feels that it is not good, that it is bad. It is bad in what sense? When I am led by a basely sensual appetite, what does that mean? It means that: within it there is an action, or a tendency to action: for example desire. What happens to the desire when am I led by a basely sensual appetite? It is the desire of. Good. What is this desire? It can only be qualified by its association with an image of a thing, for example I desire a bad woman.

Richard Pinhas: several! [Bursts of general laughter]) or even worse, even worse: several!

Gilles Deleuze : Yes. What does it mean? We saw a bit of it when he suggested the difference between adultery, all that. Forget the ridiculous aspect of the examples, but they are not ridiculous, they are examples! In this case, what he calls basely sensual, basely sensual appetite, the basely sensual consists in this, that the action, in all manners, even for example making love, the action is a virtue! Why? Because it is something that my body can do; don't ever forget the theme of power (*puissance*). It is in my body's power. So it is a virtue, and in this sense it is the expression of a power.

But if I remained there with it, I would have no means of distinguishing the basely sensual appetite from the most beautiful of loves. But there it is, when there is basely sensual appetite, why is it? It is because, in fact, I associate my action, or the image of my action, with the image of a thing whose relation is decomposed by this action. In several different ways, in all ways, for example if I am married, in the very example that Spinoza took, I decompose a relation, the relation of the couple. Or if the other person is married, I decompose the relation of the couple. But what's more, in a basely sensual appetite I decompose all sorts of relations: the basely sensual appetite with its taste for destruction, good we can take everything up again on the decompositions of relations, a kind of fascination of the decomposition of relations, of the destruction of relations. On the contrary in the most beautiful of loves. Notice that there, I don't invoke the mind at all, it would not be Spinozist, according to parallelism. I invoke a love in the case of the most beautiful of loves, a love which is not less bodily than the most basely sensual love. The difference is, simply, that in the most beautiful of loves, my action, the same, exactly the same, my physical action, my bodily action, is associated with an image of the thing whose relation is directly combined, directly composed with the relation of my action. It is in this sense that the two uniting individuals lovingly form an individual which has both of them as parts, Spinoza would say. On the contrary, in the basely sensual love, the one destroys the other, the other destroys the one, that is there is a whole process of decomposition of relations. In short, they make love like they are knocking each other about.

All this is very concrete. So it works.

Only we always come up against this, Spinoza tells us: you don't choose, in the end, the image of the thing with which your action is associated. It engages a whole play of causes and of effects which escape you. Indeed, what is it that makes this basely sensual love take you? You cannot say to yourself: Ha! I could do otherwise. Spinoza is not one of those who believes in a free will. No, it is a whole determinism which associates the images of things with the actions. Then what's more troubling, the formula: I am as perfect as I can be according to the affections that I have. That is to say that if I am dominated by a basely sensual appetite, I am as perfect as I can be, as perfect as it is possible, as perfect as it is in my power (*pouvoir*) to be.

And could I say: I am deprived of (*manque*) a better state? Spinoza seems very firm. In the letters to Blyenbergh he says: I cannot say that I am deprived of a better state, I cannot even say it. Because it

doesn't make any sense. To say at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite ~ once again, you will see in the text, if you haven't already seen it, this example which returns ~ because Blyenbergh clings there to this example. Indeed it is very simple, it is very clear. When I say, at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite, when I say: Ha! I am deprived of true love, if I say it, what does that mean to say: I am deprived of something? Literally it doesn't mean anything, absolutely nothing in Spinoza, but nothing! It merely means that my mind compares a state that I have to a state that I don't have, in other words it is not a real relation, it is a comparison of the mind. A pure comparison of the mind. And Spinoza goes so far as to say: you might as well say at that moment there that the stone is deprived of sight. You might as well say at that moment there that the stone is deprived of sight. Indeed, why wouldn't I compare the stone to a human organism, and in the name of a same comparison of the mind, I would say: the stone doesn't see, therefore it is deprived of sight. And Spinoza said expressly ~ I am not looking for the texts because you are reading them, I hope ~ Spinoza responds expressly to Blyenbergh: it is just as stupid to speak of the stone by saying of it that it is deprived of sight as it would be stupid, at the moment when I experience a basely sensual appetite, to say that I am deprived of a better love.

So then, at this level, we listen to Spinoza, and we tell ourselves that there is something which doesn't work, because in his comparison, I take the two judgments, I say of the stone: it can't see, it is deprived of sight, and I say of someone who experiences a basely sensual appetite that they are deprived of virtue. Are these two propositions, as Spinoza claims, of the same type? It is so apparent that they are not the same, that we can be confident that if Spinoza says to us that they are of the same type, it is because he wants to be provocative. He wants to say to us: I challenge you to tell me the difference between the two propositions. But one feels the difference. Spinoza's provocation is going to allow us perhaps to find it. In the two cases, for the two propositions, is the stone (*pierre*) deprived of sight, or is Pierre ~ the name this time ~ deprived of virtue, is the comparison of the mind between two states, a state that I have and a state that I don't have, is the comparison of the mind of the same type? Evidently not! Why? To say that the stone is deprived of sight is, on the whole, to say that nothing in it contains the possibility of seeing. While, when I say: he is deprived of true love, it is not a comparison of the same type, since, this time, I don't rule out that at other moments this being here has experienced something which resembled true love. In other words, the question specifies, I will go very slowly, even if you have the impression that all this goes without saying: is a comparison within the same being analogous to a comparison between two beings? Spinoza doesn't back away from the problem, he takes the case of the blind man, and he says to us quietly ~ but once again, what does he have in mind in saying things like this to us, which are so obviously inaccurate ~ he says to us: the blind man is deprived of nothing! Why? He is as perfect as he can be according to the affections that he has. He is deprived of (*privé de*) visual images, to be blind is to be deprived of visual images; that means that he doesn't see, but neither does the stone see. And he says: there is no difference between the blind man and the stone from this point of view, namely: the one like the other doesn't have visual images. So it is just as stupid, says Spinoza, it is just as stupid to say that the blind man is deprived of sight as it is to say: the stone is deprived of sight. And the blind man, then? He is as perfect as he can be, according to what? You see even so, Spinoza doesn't say to us: according to his power (*puissance*); he says that the blind man is as perfect as he can be according to the affections of his power, that is according to the images of which he is capable. According to the images of things of which he is capable, which are the true affections of his power. So it would be entirely the same thing as saying: the stone doesn't have sight, and to say: the blind man doesn't have sight.

PURE INSTANTANEITY OF ESSENCE

Blyenbergh begins here to understand something. He begins to understand. However, Spinoza Why does he make this kind of provocation? And, Blyenbergh [X] once again it appears to me a typical example of the point at which the commentators are mistaken, it seems to me, by saying that Blyenbergh is stupid, because Blyenbergh doesn't get Spinoza wrong. Blyenbergh answers Spinoza immediately by saying: all that is very pretty but you can only manage it if you insist upon (he didn't say it in this form, but you will see, the text really comes down to the same thing) a kind of pure instantaneity of the essence. It is interesting as an objection, it is a good objection. Blyenbergh retorts: you cannot assimilate the blind man not seeing and the stone not seeing, you can only make such an assimilation if, at the same time, you pose a kind of pure instantaneity of the essence, namely: there belongs to an essence only the present, instantaneous affection that it experiences insofar as it experiences it. The objection here is very very strong. If indeed I am saying: there belongs to my essence only the affection that I experience here and now, then, indeed, I am not deprived of anything. If I am blind I am not deprived of sight, if I am dominated

by a basely sensual appetite, I am not deprived of better love. I am not deprived of anything. There belongs to my essence, indeed, only the affection that I experience here and now. And Spinoza answers quietly: yes, that's the way it is.

This is curious. What is curious? That it is the same man who never stops telling us that the essence is eternal. The singular essences, that is yours, mine, all the essences are eternal. Notice that it is a way of saying that the essence doesn't endure. Now as a matter of fact there are two ways of not enduring, at first sight: the way of eternity or the way of instantaneity. Now it is very curious how slyly he passes from one to the other. He began by telling us: the essences are eternal, and now he tells us: the essences are instantaneous. If you like, it becomes a very bizarre position. To the letter of the text: the essences are eternal, but those things which belongs to the essence are instantaneous; there belongs to my essence only what I experience actually insofar as I experience it actually. And indeed, the formula: I am as perfect as I can be according to the affection which determines my essence' implies this strict instantaneity.

That is pretty much the high point of the correspondence, because a very curious thing is going to happen. Spinoza responds to this very violently because he increasingly loses patience with this correspondence. Blyenbergh protests here, he says: but in the end, you cannot define the essence by instantaneity, what does this mean? Then it is a pure instantaneity? Sometimes you have a basely sensual appetite, sometimes you have a better love, and you will say each time that you are as perfect as you can be, there as in a series of flashes! In other words Blyenbergh says to him: you cannot expel the phenomenon of duration. There is a duration, and it is precisely according to this duration that you can become better, there is a becoming, and it is according to this duration that you can become better or worse. When you experience a basely sensual appetite it is not a pure instantaneity which comes over you. It is necessary to take it in terms of duration, that is: you become worse than you were before. And when a better love forms in you, of course you become better. There is an irreducibility of duration. In other words the essence cannot be measured in its instantaneous states.

Now this is curious because Spinoza stops the correspondence. On this point no response from Spinoza. And at just the same time Blyenbergh does something imprudent, that is sensing that he's posed an important question to Spinoza, he starts to pose all sorts of questions, he thinks he has caught Spinoza out, and Spinoza tells him to back off. He says to him let go of me a while, leave me in peace'. He cuts the correspondence short, he stops, he won't answer anymore.

All of this is very dramatic because it can be said: Aha! Then he didn't have anything to respond If he had to respond because the response that Spinoza could have made, and we are certainly forced to conclude that he could have made it, therefore if he didn't make it, it is because he did not want to, the response is all in the Ethics. Therefore just as on certain points the correspondence with Blyenbergh goes farther than the Ethics, on other points, and for a simple reason I think, which is that Spinoza above all doesn't want to give Blyenbergh, for reasons which are his own, he above all doesn't want to give Blyenbergh the idea of what this book is, this book of which everyone is speaking at the time, that Spinoza experiences the need to hide because he feels that he has a lot to fear. He doesn't want to give Blyenbergh, whom he feels to be an enemy, he doesn't want to give him an idea of what the Ethics is. So he stops the correspondence. We can consider in this respect that he has a response that he doesn't want to give. He says to himself: I will still have problems.

THE SPHERE OF BELONGING OF ESSENCE

But it is up to us to try to reconstitute this response. Spinoza knows very well that there is duration. You see that we are now in the process of playing with three terms: eternity, instantaneity, duration. What is instantaneity? We don't yet know at all what eternity is in Spinoza, but eternity is the modality of essence. It is the modality which belongs to essence. Let's suppose that the essence is eternal, that is that it is not subject to time. What does this mean? We don't know.

What is instantaneity? Instantaneity is the modality of affection of essence. Formula: I am always as perfect as I can be according to the affections that I have here and now. Therefore affection is actually an instantaneous cut. In effect it is the species of horizontal relation between an action and an image of a thing. Third dimension, it is as if we were in the process of constituting the three dimensions of what we could call the sphere. Here I take a word, which is not at all Spinozist, but I take a word which allows us to

regroup this, a Husserlian word, the sphere of belonging of the essence: the essence is what belongs to it. I believe that Spinoza would say that this sphere of belonging of the essence has three dimensions. There is the essence itself, eternal; there are the affections of the essence here and now which are like so many instants, that is, what affects me at this moment; and then there is what?

It is found, and here, the terminology is important, Spinoza rigorously distinguishes between *affectio* and *affectus*. It is complicated because there are a lot of translators who translate *affectio* by 'affection', all of the translators translate *affectio* by 'affection' that, that works, but there are lots of translators who translate *affectus* by 'feeling'. On the one hand this doesn't say much, in French, the difference between 'affection' and 'feeling', and on the other hand it is a shame, even a slightly more barbaric word would be better, but it would be better, it seems to me, to translate *affectus* by 'affect', since the word exists in French; this retains at least the same root common to *affectio* and to 'affect'. Therefore Spinoza, if only by his terminology, distinguishes well between the *affectio* and the *affectus*, the affection and the affect.

AFFECTION ENVELOPS AN AFFECT

What is it, the affect? Spinoza tells us that it is something that the affection envelops. The affection envelops an affect. You recall, the affection is the effect ~ literally if you want to give it an absolutely rigorous definition ~ it is the instantaneous effect of an image of a thing on me. For example perceptions are affections. The image of things associated with my action is an affection. The affection envelops, implicates, all of these are the words Spinoza constantly uses. To envelope: it is necessary to really take them as material metaphors, that is that within the affection there is an affect. There is a difference in nature between the affect and the affection. The affect is not something dependent on the affection, it is enveloped by the affection, that's something else. There is a difference in nature between the affect and the affection. What does my affection, that is the image of the thing and the effect of this image on me, what does it envelop? It envelops a passage or a transition. Only it is necessary to take passage or transition in a very strong sense. Why?

DURATION IS THE PASSAGE, THE LIVED TRANSITION

You see, it means: it is something other than a comparison of mind, here we are no longer in the domain of a comparison of mind. It is not a comparison of the mind in two states, it is a passage or transition enveloped by the affection, by every affection. Every instantaneous affection envelops a passage or transition. Transition, to what? Passage, to what? Once again, not at all a comparison of the mind, I must add in order to go more slowly: a lived passage, a lived transition, which obviously doesn't mean conscious. Every state implicates a lived passage or transition. Passage from what to what, between what and what? More precisely, so close are the two moments of time, the two instants that I consider instant A and instant A', that there is a passage from the preceding (*antérieur*) state to the current (*actuel*) state. The passage from the preceding state to the current state differs in nature with the preceding state and with the current state. There is a specificity of the transition, and it is precisely this that we call duration and that Spinoza calls duration. Duration is the lived passage, the lived transition. What is duration? Never anything but the passage from one thing to another, it suffices to add, insofar as it is lived.

When, centuries later, Bergson will make duration into a philosophical concept, it will obviously be with wholly different influences. It will be according to itself above all, it will not be under the influence of Spinoza. Nevertheless, I am just pointing out that the Bergsonian use of duration coincides strictly. When Bergson tries to make us understand what he calls 'duration', he says: you can consider psychic states as close together as you want in time, you can consider the state A and the state A' as separated by a minute, but just as well by a second, by a thousandth of a second, that is you can make more and more cuts, increasingly tight, increasingly close to one another. You may well go to the infinite, says Bergson, in your decomposition of time, by establishing cuts with increasing rapidity, but you will only ever reach states. And he adds that the states are always of space. The cuts are always spatial. And you will have brought your cuts together very well, you will let something necessarily escape, it is the passage from one cut to another, however small it may be. Now, what does he call duration, at its simplest? It is the passage from one cut to another, it is the passage from one state to another. The passage from one state to another is not a state, you will tell me that all of this is not strong, but it is a really profound statute of living. For how can we speak of the passage, the passage from one state to another, without making it a state?

This is going to pose problems of expression, of style, of movement, it is going to pose all sorts of problems. Yet duration is that, it is the lived passage from one state to another insofar as it is irreducible to one state as to the other, insofar as it is irreducible to any state. This is what happens between two cuts.

In one sense duration is always behind our backs, it is at our backs that it happens. It is between two blinks of the eye. If you want an approximation of duration: I look at someone, I look at someone, duration is neither here nor there. Duration is: what has happened between the two? Even if I would have gone as quickly as I would like, duration goes even more quickly, by definition, as if it was affected by a variable coefficient of speed: as quickly as I go, my duration goes more quickly. However quickly I pass from one state to another, the passage is irreducible to the two states. It is this that every affection envelops. I would say: every affection envelops the passage by which we arrive at it. Or equally well: every affection envelops the passage by which we arrive at it, and by which we leave it, towards another affection, however close the two affections considered are. So in order to make my line complete it would be necessary for me to make a line of three times: A, A, 'A'; A is the instantaneous affection, of the present moment, 'A' is that of a little while ago, A'' is what is going to come. Even though I have brought them together as close as possible, there is always something which separates them, namely the phenomenon of passage. This phenomenon of passage, insofar as it is a lived phenomenon, is duration: this is the third member of the essence.

I therefore have a slightly stricter definition of the affect, the affect: what every affection envelops, and which nevertheless is of another nature is the passage, it is the lived passage from the preceding state to the current state, or of the current state to the following state. Good. If you understand all that, for the moment we're doing a kind of decomposition of the three dimensions of the essence, of the three members of the essence. The essence belongs to itself under the form of the eternity, the affection belongs to the essence under the form of instantaneity, the affect belongs to the essence under the form of duration.

AFFECT, INCREASE AND DECREASE OF POWER

Now the passage is what? What could a passage be? It is necessary to leave the too spatial idea. Every passage Spinoza tells us, and this is going to be the basis of his theory of affectus, of his theory of the affect, every passage is ~ here he doesn't say implicates', understand that the words are very very important ~ he will tell us of the affection that it implicates an affect, every affection implicates, envelops, but the enveloped and the enveloping just don't have the same nature. Every affection, that is every determinable state at a single moment, envelops an affect, a passage. But the passage, I don't ask what it envelops, it is enveloped; I ask of what does it consist, what is it? And my response from Spinoza, is it obvious what it is? It is increase and decrease of my power (*puissance*). It is increase or decrease of my power, even infinitesimally. I take two cases: I am in a dark room ~ I'm developing all of this, it is perhaps useless, I don't know, but it is to persuade you that when you read a philosophical text it is necessary that you have the most ordinary situations in your head, the most everyday ones. You are in a dark room, you are as perfect, Spinoza will say: Let's judge from the point of view of affections, you are as perfect as you can be according to the affections that you have. You don't have any, you don't have visual affections, that's all. There, that's all. But you are as perfect as you can be. All of a sudden someone enters and turns on the lights without warning: I am completely dazzled. Notice that I took the worse example for me. Then, no. I'll change it, I was wrong. I am in the dark, and someone arrives softly, all that, and turns on a light, this is going to be very complicated this example. You have your two states which could be very close together in time. The state that I call: dark state, and small b, the lighted state. They are very close together. I am saying: there is a passage from one to the other, so fast that it may even be unconscious, all that, to the point that your whole body, in Spinozist terms these are examples of bodies, your whole body has a kind of mobilization of itself, in order to adapt to this new state. The affect is what? It is the passage. The affection is the dark state and the lighted state. Two successive affections, in cuts. The passage is the lived transition from one to the other. Notice that in this case here there is no physical transition, there is a biological transition, it is your body which makes the transition.

EVERY AFFECTION IS INSTANTANEOUS

What does this mean? The passage is necessarily an increase of power or a decrease of power. It is necessary to already understand and it is for this reason that all this is so concrete, it is not determined in

advance. Suppose that in the dark you were in deep state of meditation. Your whole body was focused on this extreme meditation. You held something. The other brute arrives and turns on the light, if need be you lose an idea that you were going to have. You turn around, you are furious. We hold onto this because we will use the same example again. You hate him, even if not for long, but you hate him, you say to him: „Hey! Listen. In this case the passage to the lighted state will have brought you what? A decrease of power. Evidently if you had looked for your glasses in the dark, there they would have brought you an increase of power. The guy who turned the light on, you say to him: „Thank you very much, I love you. Good.

We've already said that, maybe this story of increase and decrease of power is going to play in quite variable directions and contexts. But, on the whole, there are directions. If we stick to you, one could say in general, without taking the context into account, if one increases the affections of which you are capable, there is an increase of power, if one decreases the affections of which you are capable there is a decrease of power. We can say this on the whole even knowing that it is not always like this. What do I mean? I mean something very simple: it is that every affection is instantaneous ~ Spinoza, you see how he is very very curious, in virtue of his rigor he will say: every affection is instantaneous, and it is this that he responded to Blyenbergh, he didn't want to say more on it. One could not say that he distorted his thought, he only gave one sphere of it, he only gave a tip of it. Every affection is instantaneous, he will always say this, and he will always say: I am as perfect as I can be according to what I have in the instant. It is the sphere of belonging of the instantaneous essence. In this sense, there is neither good nor bad. But in return, the instantaneous state always envelopes an increase or a decrease of power, and in this sense there is good and bad. So much so that, not from the point of view of its state, but from the point of view of its passage, from the point of view of its duration, there is something bad in becoming blind, there is something good in becoming seeing, since it is either decrease of power or else increase of power. And here it is no longer the domain of a comparison of the mind between two states, it is the domain of the lived passage from one state to another, the lived passage in the affect. So much so that it seems to me that we can understand nothing of the Ethics, that is of the theory of the affects, if we don't keep very much in mind the opposition that Spinoza established between the comparisons between two states of the mind, and the lived passages from one state to another, lived passages that can only be lived in the affects. The affects are joy or sadness There remains for us quite a few things to understand. I would not say that the affects signal the decreases or increases of power, I would say that the affects are the decreases and the increases of lived power. Not necessarily conscious once again. It is I believe a very very profound conception of the affect. So Let's give them names in order to better mark them. The affects which are increases of power we will call joys, the affects which are decreases of power we will call sadnesses. And the affects are either based on joy, or else based on sadness. Hence Spinoza's very rigorous definitions: sadness is the affect that corresponds to a decrease of power, of my power, joy is the affect which corresponds to an increase of my power. Sadness is a affect enveloped by an affection. The affection is what? It is an image of a thing which causes me sadness, which gives me sadness. You see, there we find everything, this terminology is very rigorous. I repeat. I don't know anymore what I've said. The affect of sadness is enveloped by an affection, the affection is what, it is the image of a thing which gives me sadness, this image can be very imprecise, very confused, it matters little. There is my question: why does the image of a thing which gives me sadness, why does this image of a thing envelop a decrease of power (puissance) of acting? What is this thing which gives me sadness? We have at least all of the elements to respond to it, now everything is regrouped, if you have followed me everything must regroup harmoniously, very harmoniously. The thing which gives me sadness is the thing whose relations don't agree with mine. That is affection. All things whose relations tend to decompose one of my relations or the totality of my relations affect me with sadness. In terms of affectio you have there a strict correspondence, in terms of affectio, I would say: the thing has relations which are not composed with mine, and which tend to decompose mine. Here I am speaking in terms of affectio. In terms of affects I would say: this thing affects me with sadness, therefore by the same token], in the same way, decreases my power. You see I have the double language of instantaneous affections and of affects of passage. Hence I return as always to my question: why, but why, if one understood why, maybe one would understand everything. What happens? You see that he takes sadness in one sense, they are the two big affective tonalities, not two particular cases. Sadness and joy are the two big affective tonalities, that is affective in the sense of affectus, the affect. We are going to see as two lineages: the lineage based on sadness and the lineage based on joy, that are going to cover the theory of the affects. Why the thing whose relations don't agree with mine, why does it affect me with sadness, that is decrease my power of acting? You see we have a double impression: both that We've understood in advance, and then that we're missing something in order to understand. What happens, when something is presented having relations which don't compose with mine, it could be a current of air.

I am going back, I am in the dark, in my room, I am alone, I am left in peace. Someone enters and he makes me flinch, he knocks on the door, he knocks on the door and he makes me flinch. I lose an idea. He enters and he starts to speak; I have fewer and fewer ideas ouch, ouch, I am affected with sadness. Yes, I feel sadness, I've been disturbed, damn! Spinoza will say, the lineage of sadness is what? Then on top of it all I hate it! I say to him: „eh, listen, it's okay. It could be not very serious, it could be a small hate, he irritates me damn it: hoooo! I cannot have peace, all that, I hate it!

What does it mean, hate? You see, sadness, he said to us: your power of acting is decreased, then you experience sadness insofar as it is decreased, your power of acting, okay. I hate it', that means that the thing whose relations don't compose with yours, you strive, this would only be what you have in mind, you strive for its destruction. To hate is to want to destroy what threatens to destroy you. This is what hate means. That is, to want' to decompose what threatens to decompose you. So the sadness engenders hate. Notice that it engenders joys too.

Hate engenders joys. So the two lineages, on one hand sadness, on the other hand joy, are not going to be pure lineages. What are the joys of hate? There are joys of hate.

As Spinoza says: if you imagine the being that you hate to be unhappy, your heart experiences a strange joy. One can even engender passions. And Spinoza does this marvelously. There are joys of hate. Are these joys? We can at least say, and this is going to advance us a lot for later, that these joys are strangely compensatory, that is indirect. What is first in hate, when you have feelings of hate, always look for the sadness at base, that is your power of acting was impeded, was decreased. And even if you have, if you have a diabolical heart, even if you have to believe that this heart flourishes in the joys of hate, these joys of hate, as immense as they are, will never get rid of the nasty little sadness of which you are a part; your joys are joys of compensation. The man of hate, the man of resentment, etc., for Spinoza, is the one all of whose joys are poisoned by the initial sadness, because sadness is in these same joys. In the end he can only derive joy from sadness. Sadness that he experiences himself by virtue of the existence of the other, sadness that he imagines inflicting on the other to please himself, all of this is for measly joys, says Spinoza. These are indirect joys. We rediscover our criteria of direct and indirect, all comes together at this level.

So much so that I return to my question: then yes, it is necessary to say it all the same: in what way does an affection, that is the image of something that doesn't agree with my own relations, in what way does this decrease my power of acting? It is both obvious and not. Here is what Spinoza means: suppose that you have a power (*puissance*), Let's set it up roughly the same, and there, first case you come up against something whose relations don't compose with yours. Second case, on the contrary you encounter something whose relations compose with your own. Spinoza, in the *Ethics*, uses the Latin term: *occursus*, *occursus* is exactly this case, the encounter. I encounter bodies, my body never stops encountering bodies. The bodies that he encounters sometimes have relations which compose, sometimes have relations which don't compose with his. What happens when I encounter a body whose relation doesn't compose with mine? Well there: I would say ~ and you will see that in book IV of the *Ethics* this doctrine is very strong. I cannot say that it is absolutely affirmed, but it is very much suggested ~ a phenomenon happens which is like a kind of fixation. What does this mean, a fixation? That is, a part of my power is entirely devoted to investing and to isolating the trace, on me, of the object which doesn't agree with me. It is as if I tense my muscles, take once again the example: someone that I don't wish to see enters into the room, I say to myself Uh oh!, and in me is made something like a kind of investment: a whole part of my power is there in order to ward off the effect on me of the object, of the disagreeable object. I invest the trace of the thing on me. I invest the effect of the thing on me. I invest the trace of the thing on me, I invest the effect of the thing on me. In other words, I try as much as possible to circumscribe the effect, to isolate it, in other words I devote a part of my power to investing the trace of the thing. Why? Evidently in order to subtract it, to put it at a distance, to avert it. Understand that this goes without saying: this quantity of power that I've devoted to investing the trace of the disagreeable thing, this is the amount of my power that is decreased, which is removed from me, which is as it were immobilized.

This is what is meant by: my power decreases. It is not that I have less power, it is that a part of my power is subtracted in this sense that it is necessarily allocated to averting the action of the thing. Everything happens as if a whole part of my power is no longer at my disposal. This is the tonality affective sadness': a part of my power serves this unworthy need which consists in warding off the thing, warding off the action of the thing. So much immobilized power. To ward off the thing is to prevent it from destroying my relations, therefore I've toughened my relations; this can be a formidable effort, Spinoza said: „like lost

time, like it would have been more valuable to avoid this situation. In this way, a part of my power is fixed, this is what is meant by: a part of my power decreases. Indeed a part of my power is subtracted from me, it is no longer in my possession. It is invested, it is like a kind of hardening, a hardening of power (*puissance*), to the point that it is almost bad, damn, because of lost time!

On the contrary in joy, it is very curious. The experience of joy as Spinoza presents it, for example I encounter something which agrees, which agrees with my relations. For example music. There are wounding sounds. There are wounding sounds which inspire in me an enormous sadness. What complicates all this is that there are always people who find these wounding sounds, on the contrary, delicious and harmonious. But this is what makes the joy of life, that is the relations of love and hate. Because my hate against the wounding] sound is going to be extended to all those who like this wounding sound. So I go home, I hear these wounding sounds which appear to me as challenges, which really decompose all of my relations, they enter into my head, they enter into my stomach, all that. A whole part of my power is hardened in order to hold at a distance these sounds which penetrate me. I obtain silence and I put on the music that I like; everything changes. The music that I like, what does that mean? It means the resonant relations which are composed with my relations. And suppose that at that very moment my machine breaks. My machine breaks: I experience hate! (Richard: Oh no!) An Objection? (Laughter of Gilles Deleuze) Finally I experience a sadness, a big sadness. Good, I put on music that I like, there, my whole body, and my soul ~ it goes without saying ~ composes its relations with the resonant relations. This is what is meant by the music that I like: my power is increased. So for Spinoza, what interests me therein is that, in the experience of joy, there is never the same thing as in sadness, there is not at all an investment ~ and we'll see why ~ there is not at all an investment of one hardened part which would mean that a certain quantity of power (*puissance*) is subtracted from my power (*pouvoir*). There is not, why? Because when the relations are composed, the two things of which the relations are composed, form a superior individual, a third individual which encompasses and takes them as parts. In other words, with regard to the music that I like, everything happens as if the direct composition of relations (you see that we are always in the criteria of the direct) a direct composition of relations is made, in such a way that a third individual is constituted, individual of which me, or the music, are no more than a part. I would say, from now on, that my power (*puissance*) is in expansion, or that it increases.

If I take these examples, it is in order to persuade you all the same that, when, and this also goes for Nietzsche, that when authors speak of power (*puissance*), Spinoza of the increase and decrease of power (*puissance*), Nietzsche of the Will of Power (*Volonté de Puissance*), which it too, proceeds What Nietzsche calls affect' is exactly the same thing as what Spinoza calls affect, it is on this point that Nietzsche is Spinozist, that is, it is the decreases or increases of power (*puissance*). They have in fact something which doesn't have anything to do with whatever conquest of a power (*pouvoir*). Without doubt they will say that the only power (*pouvoir*) is finally power (*puissance*), that is: to increase one's power (*puissance*) is precisely to compose relations such that the thing and I, which compose the relations, are no more than two sub-individualities of a new individual, a formidable new individual.

I am going back. What distinguishes my basely sensual appetite from my best, most beautiful, love? It is exactly the same! The basely sensual appetite, you know, it's all the expressions, we can all make suggestions, it is in order to laugh, therefore we can say anything, the sadness After love, the animal is sad, what is this? This sadness? What does it say to us? Spinoza would never say this. Or then it is not worth the pain, there is no reason, sadness, good There are people who cultivate sadness. Feel, feel what happens to us, this denunciation which is going to run throughout the Ethics, namely: there are people who are so impotent that they are the ones who are dangerous, they are the ones who take power (*pouvoir*). And they can take power (*pouvoir*) ~ so far away are the notions of power (*puissance*) and of power (*pouvoir*) ~ the people of power (*pouvoir*) are the impotent who can only construct their power (*pouvoir*) on the sadness of others. They need sadness. They can only reign over slaves, and the slave is precisely the regime of the decrease of power (*puissance*). There are people who can only reign, who only acquire power (*pouvoir*) by way of sadness and by instituting a regime of sadness of the type: repent', of the type hate someone' and if you don't have anyone to hate, hate yourself, etc. Everything that Spinoza diagnoses as a kind of immense culture of sadness, the valorization of sadness, all of which says to you: if you don't pass by way of sadness, you will not flourish. Now for Spinoza this is an abomination. And if he writes an *Ethics*, it is in order to say: no! No! Everything you want, but not this. Then indeed, good = joy, bad = sadness. But the basely sensual appetite, you see now, and the most beautiful of loves, it is not at all a spiritual thing, but not at all. It is when an encounter works, as one says, when it functions well. It is a functionalism, but a very beautiful functionalism. What does that mean? Ideally it is never like this completely, because there are always local sadnesses, Spinoza is not unaware of that, there are always

sadnesses. The question is not if there is or if there isn't, the question is the value that you give to them, that is the indulgence that you grant them. The more you grant them indulgence, that is the more you invest your power (*puissance*) in order to invest the trace of the thing, the more you will lose power (*puissance*). So in a happy love, in a love of joy, what happens? You compose a maximum of relations with a maximum of relations of the other, bodily, perceptual, all kinds of natures. Of course bodily, yes, why not; but perceptive also: Ah good Let's listen to some music! In a certain manner one never stops inventing. When I spoke of a third individual of which the two others are no more than parts, it doesn't at all mean that this third individual preexists, it is always by composing my relations with other relations, and it is under such a profile, under such an aspect that I invent this third individual of which the other and myself are no more than parts, sub-individuals. That's it: each time that you proceed by composition of relations and composition of composed relations, you increase your power. On the contrary, the basely sensual appetite, it is not because it is sensual that it is bad. It is because, fundamentally, it never stops gambling on the decomposition of relations. It is really this sort of thing: Come on, hurt me, sadden me so that I can sadden you. The spat, etc. Ha, like we are okay with the spat. Ho. Like it is long after, that is, the small joys of compensation. All that is disgusting, but it is foul, it is the measliest life in the world. Ha come on, Let's make our scene Because it is necessary to hate one another, afterwards we like one another much more. Spinoza vomits, he says: what are these mad people? If they did this, again, for themselves, but they are contagious, they are propagators. They won't let go of you until they have inoculated you with their sadness. What's more, they treat you as idiots if you tell them that you don't understand, that it is not your thing. They tell you that this is the true life. And the more that they wallow, based on the spat, based on this stupidity, on the anguish of Haaaa, Heu The more that they hold on to you the more that they inoculate you, if they can hold on to you, then they pass it on to you. (Gilles Deleuze looks extremely nauseated).

Claire Parnet: Richard would like you to speak of the appetite

Gilles Deleuze: Of the composition of relations?! (Laughter). I have said everything on the composition of relations. Understand, the misinterpretation would be to believe: look for a third individual of which we would be only the parts. It does not preexist nor does the manner in which relations are decomposed. That preexists in Nature since Nature is everything, but from your point of view it is very complicated. There we are going to see what problems this poses for Spinoza because all this is very concrete all the same, on the ways of living. How to live? You don't know beforehand which are the relations. For example you are not necessarily going to find your own music. I mean: it is not scientific, in what sense? You don't have a scientific knowledge of relations which would allow you to say: „there is the woman or the man who is necessary for me. One goes along feeling one's way, one goes along blind. That works, that doesn't work, etc. And how to explain that there are people who only launch into things where they say that it is not going to work? (general laughter). They are the people of sadness, they are the cultivators of sadness, because they think that that is the foundation of existence. Otherwise the long apprenticeship by which, according to a presentiment of my constituent relations, I vaguely apprehend first what agrees with me and what doesn't agree with me. You will tell me that if it is in order to lead to that, it is not strong. Nothing but the formula: above all don't do what doesn't agree with you. It is not Spinoza who said this first, at first, but the proposition means nothing other than : don't do what doesn't agree with you' if you take it out of all context. If you take this conception ~ that I find very grandiose ~ to its conclusion, the relations which are composed, etc. How is it that someone very concrete is going to lead his existence in such a manner that he is going to acquire a kind of affection, of affect, or of presentiment, of the relations which agree with him, of the relations which don't agree with him, of situations where he must withdraw, of situations where he must engage himself, etc. That is not at all: it is necessary to do this', it is no longer at all the domain of morality. It is not necessary to do anything at all, it is necessary to find. It is necessary to find his thing, that is not at all to withdraw, it is necessary to invent the superior individualities into which I can enter as a part, for these individualities do not preexist. All that I meant takes on, I believe, a concrete signification, the two expressions take on a concrete signification. The essence is eternal.

THE ETERNAL ESSENCE, DEGREE OF POWER (PUISSANCE)

The eternal essence, what does it mean? Your essence is eternal, your singular essence, that is your own essence in particular, what does this mean? For the moment we can only give one sense to this formula, namely: you are a degree of power (*puissance*). You are a degree of power: it is this that Spinoza means when he says, verbatim: I am a part (*pars*) of the power of God', that means, literally: I am a degree of

power (*puissance*). Immediate objection. I am a degree of power, but after all: me as a baby, little kid, adult, old man, it is not the same degree of power, therefore it varies, my degree of power. Okay, Let's leave that aside. How, why does this degree of power have a latitude. Okay. But I say on the whole: I am a degree of power and it is in this sense that I am eternal. No one has the same degree of power as another. See, we will have need of it later, the fact that it is a quantitative conception of individuation. But it is a special quantity since it is a quantity of power (*puissance*). A quantity of power we have always called an intensity. It is to this and to this alone that Spinoza assigns the term eternity'. I am a degree of power of God, that means: I am eternal. Second sphere of belonging: I have instantaneous affections. We saw this, it is the dimension of instantaneity. Following this dimension the relations compose or don't compose. It is the dimension of *affectio*: composition or decomposition between things.

Third dimension of belonging: the affects. That is: each time that an affection executes my power (*puissance*), and it executes it as perfectly as it can, as perfectly as is possible. The affection, indeed, that is the belonging to, executes my power; it realises my power, and it realises my power as perfectly as it can, according to the circumstances, according to here and now. It executes my power here and now, according to my relations with things. The third dimension is that each time an affection executes my power, it doesn't do it without my power increasing or decreasing, it is the sphere of the affect. So my power is an eternal degree' doesn't prevent it from ceaselessly, in duration, increasing and decreasing. This same power which is eternal in itself, doesn't stop increasing and decreasing, that is varying in duration. How to understand this, after all? Understanding this, after all, is not difficult. If you reflect, I have just said: the essence is a degree of power, that is: if it is a quantity, it is an intensive quantity. But an intensive quantity is not at all like an extensive quantity. An intensive quantity is inseparable from a threshold, that is an intensive quantity is fundamentally, in itself, already a difference. The intensive quantity is made of differences. Does Spinoza go so far as to say a thing like this?

COURS VINCENNES - 24/03/1981

This is the last time that we will speak of Spinoza. I'm going to begin with a question that was posed to me last time: how can Spinoza say, at least in one text, that every affection, that any affection is an affection of essence?

Actually, "affection of essence," you feel that it's a slightly odd expression. To my knowledge it's the only case in which one finds this expression. Which case? A very precise text, which is a recapitulative text at the end of book three of the Ethics. Here Spinoza gives us a series of definitions hors livre. He defines or he gives again definitions which, until then, had either not been given or were scattered. He gives definitions of the affects.

You recall that the affects were a very particular kind of affection: this is what follows from that. We often translate it by the word "feeling" [sentiment]. But there is the French word "affect" which corresponds completely to the Latin word "affectus." This, strictly speaking, is what follows from the affections, the affections being perceptions or representations. But in definition one at the end of book three we read this: "Desire is man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something." This definition consists of quite a long explication and, if one continues, one stumbles upon a sentence that also creates something of a problem, for by affection of essence, "we understand any constitution of that essence, whether it is innate (or acquired)." In the Latin text something is missing: the reason for this parenthesis. In the Dutch translation of the Short Treatise, there is the complete sentence that we expect. Why do we expect this complement, "(or acquired)"? Because it's a very standard distinction in the seventeenth century between two types of ideas or affections: ideas that are called innate, and ideas that are called acquired and adventitious.

Innate-acquired is a quite standard couple in the seventeenth century but, on the other hand, the fact is that Spinoza has not used this terminology and it's only in this recapitulation that the resumption of the words innate and acquired appears. What is this text in which Spinoza employs terms that he hasn't employed up until now and in which he issues the formula "affection of essence"?

If you think about everything we've said up until now, there is a problem because one asks oneself how Spinoza can say that all the affections and all the affects are affections of essence. That means that even a passion is an affection of essence.

At the close of all our analyses, we tended to conclude that what truly belongs to essence are the adequate ideas and the active affects, that is, the ideas of the second kind and the ideas of the third kind. It's these that truly belong to essence. But Spinoza seems to say entirely the opposite: 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.

It's not a question of discussing one of Spinoza's texts, we must take it literally. It teaches us that, be that as it may, every affection is affection of essence. Thus the passions belong to essence no less than the actions; the inadequate ideas [belong] to essence no less than the adequate ideas. And nevertheless there was necessarily a difference. The passions and the inadequate ideas must not belong to essence in the same way that the actions and the adequate ideas belong to it.

How do we get out of this?

Affection of essence. What interests me is the formula "of," in Latin the genitive. In French the genitive is indicated by the particle "de." I think I recall that grammar distinguishes several senses of the genitive. There is a whole variation. When you employ the locution "de" to indicate a genitive, this always means that something belongs to someone. If I make the genitive a locution of belonging, this doesn't prevent the belonging from having very different senses. The genitive can indicate that something comes from someone and belongs to her insofar as it comes from someone, or it can indicate that something belongs to someone insofar as this someone undergoes the something.

In other words, the locution "de" does not choose the direction [sens] in which it is inflected, if it's a genitive of passion or a genitive of action.

My question is this: I have an inadequate idea, I have a confused proposition out of which comes a passion-affect. In what sense does this belong to my essence? It seems to me that the answer is this: in my natural condition I am condemned to inadequate perceptions. This means that I am composed of an infinity of extensive parts [which are] external to one another. These extensive parts belong to me under a certain relation. But these extensive parts are perpetually submitted to the influence of other parts which act upon them and which don't belong to me. If I consider certain parts that belong to me and that make up part of my body, let's say my skin; corpuscles of skin that belong to me under such relations: my skin. They are perpetually submitted to the action of other external parts: the set of what acts on my skin, particles of air, particles of sun. I'm trying to explain at the level of a rudimentary example. The corpuscles of sun, the corpuscles of heat act on my skin. This means that they are under a certain relation that is the relation of the sun. The corpuscles of my skin are under a certain relation that is precisely characteristic of my body, but these particles that have no other law than the law of external determinations act perpetually upon one another.

I would say that the perception that I have of heat is a confused perception, and from it come affects which are themselves passions: "I'm hot!" At the level of the proposition "I'm hot!," if I try to distribute the Spinozist categories, I would say: an external body acts on mine. It's the sun. That is to say that the parts of the sun act on the parts of my body. All of that is pure external determinism, it's like the shocks of particles.

I call perception when I perceive the heat that I experience, the idea of the effect of the sun on my body. It's an inadequate perception since it's an idea of an effect, I do not know the cause and from it follows a passive affect; either it's too hot and I'm sad, or I feel good, what happiness the sun!

In what sense is this an affection of essence?

It's inevitably an affection of essence. At first sight it's an affection of the existing body. But finally there is only essence. The existing body is still a figure of essence. The existing body is essence itself, insofar as an infinity of extensive parts, under a certain relation, belongs to it. Under a certain relation! What does that mean, this relation of movement and rest?

You recall, you have essence that is a degree of power [puissance]. To this essence corresponds a certain

relation of movement and rest. As long as I exist, this relation of movement and rest is executed by the extensive parts that, from then on, belong to me under this relation.

What does that mean?

In the Ethics there is a quite curious slippage [glissement] of notions, as if Spinoza had a double vocabulary there. And this is included, this would be so only in accordance with the physics of that epoch.

He passes sometimes from a kinetic vocabulary to a dynamic vocabulary. He considers the following two concepts as equivalents: relation of movement and rest, and power [pouvoir] of being affected or aptitude to be affected. One must ask oneself why he treats this kinetic proposition and this dynamic proposition as equivalents. Why is a relation of movement and rest that characterizes me at the same time a power of being affected that belongs to me? There will be two definitions of the body. The kinetic definition will be this: every body is defined by a relation of movement and rest. The dynamic definition is: every body is defined by a certain power of being affected. You must be sensitive to the double kinetic and dynamic register.

One will find a text in which Spinoza says that "a very large number of extensive parts belongs to me. Hence I am affected in an infinity of ways." Having, under a certain relation, an infinity of extensive parts is the power of being affected in an infinity of ways. From then on everything becomes clear.

If you understood the law of extensive parts, they never cease to have causes, to be causes, and to undergo the effect of one upon the others. This is the world of causality or extrinsic, external determinism. There is always a particle that strikes another particle. In other words, you cannot think an infinite set of parts without thinking that they have at each instant an effect upon one another.

What does one call affection? One calls affection the idea of an effect. These extensive parts that belong to me, you can't conceive them as having no effect upon one another. They are inseparable from the effect that they have on one another. And there is never an infinite set of extensive parts that would be isolated. There is at least one set of extensive parts that is defined by this: this set belongs to me. It is defined by the relation of movement and rest under which the set belongs to me. But this set is not separable from other sets, equally infinite, that act on it, that have influence on it and which do not belong to me. The particles of my skin are obviously not separable from the particles of air that come to strike them. An affection is nothing other than the idea of the effect. The necessarily confused idea since I have no idea of the cause. It's the reception of the effect: I say that I perceive. It's thus that Spinoza can pass from the kinetic definition to the dynamic definition, that is, that the relation under which an infinity of extensive parts belongs to me is equally a power of being affected. But then what are my perceptions and my passions, my joys and my sadnesses, my affects? If I continue this sort of parallelism between the kinetic element and the dynamic element, I would say that the extensive parts belong to me insofar as they execute a certain relation of movement and rest that characterizes me. They execute a relation since they define the terms between which the relation applies [joue]. If I speak now in dynamic terms, I would say that the affections and the affects belong to me insofar as they fulfill my power of being affected and at each instant my power of being affected is fulfilled. Compare these completely different moments: instant A: you are out in the rain, you catch it yourself, you have no shelter and you are reduced to protecting your right side with your left side and vice versa. You are sensitive to the beauty of this sentence. It's a very kinetic formula. I am forced to make half of myself the shelter for the other side. It's a very beautiful formula, it's a verse of Dante, in one of the circles of Hell where there's a little rain and the bodies are lying in a sort of mud. Dante tries to translate the sort of solitude of these bodies that have no other resource than that of turning over in the mud. Every time they try to protect one side of their body with the other side. Instant B: now you open up. Just now the particles of rain were like little arrows, it was horrible, you were grotesque in your swimsuits. And the sun comes out, instant B. Then your whole body opens up. And now you would like your whole body to be capable of spreading out [étalable], you tend toward the sun. Spinoza says that we must not be fooled, that in the two cases your power of being affected is necessarily fulfilled. Plainly you always have the affections and affects that you deserve according to the circumstances, including the external circumstances; but an affection, an affect belongs to you only to the extent that it actually contributes to fulfilling your power of being affected.

It's in this sense that every affection and every affect is affect of essence. Ultimately the affections and the affects can only be affections and affects of essence. Why? They exist for you only as they fulfill a

power of being affected which is yours, and this power of being affected is the power of being affected of your essence. At no moment do you have to miss it. When it rains and you are so unhappy, you literally lack nothing. This is Spinoza's great idea: you never lack anything. Your power of being affected is fulfilled in every way. In every case, nothing is ever expressed or founded in expressing itself as a lack. It's the formula "there is only Being." Every affection, every perception and every feeling, every passion is affection, perception and passion of essence. It's not by chance that philosophy constantly employs a word for which it's reproached, but what do you want, philosophy needs it, it's the sort of locution "insofar as" [en tant que]. If it were necessary to define philosophy by a word, one could say that philosophy is the art of the "insofar as." If you see someone being led by chance to say "insofar as," you can tell yourself that it's thought being born. The first man who thought said "insofar as." Why? "Insofar as" is the art of the concept. It's the concept. Is it by chance that Spinoza constantly employs the Latin equivalent of "insofar as"? The "insofar as" refers to distinctions in the concept that are not perceptible in things themselves. When you work by way of distinctions in the concept and by way of the concept, you can say: the thing insofar as, that is to say the conceptual aspect of the thing.

So then every affection is affection of essence, yes, but insofar as what? When it's a matter of inadequate perceptions and passions, we must add that these are affections of essence insofar as the essence has an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it under such a relation.

Here the power of being affected belongs to essence, plainly it is necessarily fulfilled by affects that come from outside. These affects come from outside, they do not come from the essence, they are nevertheless affects of essence since they fulfill the power of being affected of essence. Remember well that they come from outside, and actually the outside is the law to which the extensive parts acting upon one another are submitted.

When one succeeds in rising to the second and third kinds of knowledge, what happens? Here I have adequate perceptions and active affects. What does that mean? It's the affections of essence. I would even say all the more reason. What difference from the preceding case? This time they do not come from outside, they come from inside. Why? We saw it. A common notion already, all the more reason for an idea of the third kind, an idea of essence, why does this come from inside?

Just now I said that inadequate ideas and passive affects belong to me, they belong to my essence. These are thus affections of essence insofar as this essence actually possesses an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it under a certain relation.

Let's now try to find the common notions. A common notion is a perception. It's a perception of a common relation, a relation common to me and to another body. It follows from affects, active affects. These affections, perceptions and affects are also affections of essence. They belong to essence. It's the same thing, but insofar as what? No longer insofar as essence is conceived as possessing an infinity of extensive parts that belong to it under a certain relation, but insofar as essence is conceived as expressing itself in a relation. Here the extensive parts and the action of the extensive parts are cast off since I am raised to the comprehension of relations that are causes, thus I am raised to another aspect of essence. It's no longer essence insofar as it actually possesses an infinity of extensive parts, it's essence insofar as it expresses itself in a relation.

And all the more reason if I am raised to ideas of the third kind, these ideas and the active affects that follow from them belong to essence and are affections of essence, this time insofar as essence is in itself [en soi], is in itself [en elle-même], in itself and for itself, is in itself [en soi] and for itself [pour soi] a degree of power [puissance]. I would say broadly that every affection and every affect are affections of essence, only there are two cases, the genitive has two senses? Ideas of the second kind and [those] of the third kind are affections of essence, but it would have to be said following a word that will only appear quite a bit later in philosophy, with the Germans for example, these are auto-affections. Ultimately, throughout the common notions and the ideas of the third kind, it's essence that is affected by itself.

Spinoza employs the term active affect and there is no great difference between auto-affection and active affect. All the affections are affections of essence, but be careful, affection of essence does not have one and only one sense. It remains for me to draw a sort of conclusion that concerns the Ethics-Ontology relation.

Why does all this constitute an ontology? I have a feeling-idea. There has never been but a single

ontology. There is only Spinoza who has managed to pull off an ontology. If one takes ontology in an extremely rigorous sense, I see only one case where a philosophy has realized itself as ontology, and that's Spinoza. But then why could this coup only be realized once? Why was it by Spinoza?

The power of being affected of an essence can be as well realized by external affections as by internal affections. Above all we must not think that power of being affected refers more to an interiority that did not make up the kinetic relation. The affects can be absolutely external, this is the case of the passions. The passions are affects that fulfill the power of being affected and that come from outside?book five appears to me to found this notion of auto-affection. Take a text like this one: the love by which I love God (understood in the third kind) is the love by which God loves himself and I love myself. This means that at the level of the third kind, all the essences are internal to one another and internal to the power [puissance] called divine power. There is an interiority of essences and that does not mean that they merge. One arrives at a system of intrinsic distinctions; from this point on only one essence affects me~and this is the definition of the third kind, an essence affects my essence~but since all essences are internal to one another, an essence that affects me is a way in which my essence affects itself. Although this is dangerous, I return to my example of the sun. What does "pantheism" mean? How do people who call themselves pantheists live? There are many Englishmen who are pantheists. I'm thinking of Lawrence. He had a cult of the sun. Light and tuberculosis are the two points common to Lawrence and Spinoza. Lawrence tells us that, broadly speaking, there are at least two ways of being in relation to the sun. There are people on the beach, but they don't understand, they don't know what the sun is, they live badly. If they were to understand something of the sun, after all, they would come out of it more intelligent and better. But as soon as they put their clothes back on, they are as scabby [teigneux] as before. What do they make of the sun, at this level? They remain in the first kind [?] The "I" in "I like the heat" is an I that expresses relations of extensive parts of the vasoconstrictive and vasodilative type, that expresses itself directly in an external determinism putting the extensive parts in play. In that sense these are particles that act on my particles and the effect of one on the other is a pleasure or a joy. That's the sun of the first kind of knowledge, which I translate under the naïve formula "oh the sun, I love that." In fact, these are extrinsic mechanisms of my body that play, and the relations between parts, parts of the sun and parts of my body. Starting when with the sun, starting when can I begin authentically to say "I"? With the second kind of knowledge, I leave behind the zone of the effect of parts on one another. I have acquired some kind of knowledge of the sun, a practical comprehension of the sun. What does this practical comprehension mean? It means that I get ahead, I know what such a miniscule event linked to the sun means, such a furtive shadow at such a moment, I know what this announces. I no longer record the effects of the sun on my body. I raise myself to a kind of practical comprehension of causes, at the same time that I know how to compose the relations of my body with such and such relation of the sun.

Let's take the perception of a painter. Let's imagine a nineteenth-century painter who goes out into nature. He has his easel, it's a certain relation. There is the sun that does not remain immobile. What is this knowledge of the second kind? He will completely change the position of his easel, he is not going to have the same relation to his canvas depending on whether the sun is high or the sun is about to set. Van Gogh painted on his knees. The sunsets forced him to paint almost lying down so that Van Gogh's eye had the lowest horizon line possible. At that moment having an easel no longer means anything. There are letters in which Cézanne speaks of the mistral: how to compose the canvas-easel relation with the relation of wind, and how to compose the relation of the easel with the sinking sun, and how to end up in such a way that I might paint on the ground, that I might paint lying on the ground. I compose relations, and in a certain way I am raised to a certain comprehension of causes, and at that very moment I can begin to say that I love the sun. I am no longer in the effect of particles of sun on my body, I am in another domain, in compositions of relation. And at this very moment I am not far from a proposition that would have appeared to us mad in the first degree, I am not far from being able to say, "the sun, I am something of it." I have a relation of affinity with the sun. This is the second kind of knowledge. Understand that, at the second level, there is a kind of communion with the sun. For Van Gogh it's obvious. He begins to enter into a kind of communication with the sun.

What would the third kind be? Here Lawrence abounds. In abstract terms it would be a mystical union. All kinds of religions have developed mystiques of the sun. This is a step further. Van Gogh has the impression that there is a beyond that he cannot manage to render. What is this yet further that he will not manage to render insofar as he is a painter? Is this what the metaphors of the sun in the mystics are? But these are no longer metaphors if one comprehends it like that, they can say literally that God is the sun. They can say literally that "I am God." Why? Not at all because there is an identification. It's that at the

level of the third kind one arrives at this mode of intrinsic distinction. It's here that there is something irreducibly mystical in Spinoza's third kind of knowledge: at the same time the essences are distinct, only they distinguish themselves on the inside from one another. So much so that the rays by which the sun affects me are the rays by which I affect myself, and the rays by which I affect myself are the rays of the sun that affect me. It's solar auto-affection. In words this has a grotesque air, but understand that at the level of modes of life it's quite different. Lawrence develops these texts on this kind of identity that maintains the internal distinction between his own singular essence, the singular essence of the sun, and the essence of the world.