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### Spinoza's Anti-Modernity

#### Antonio Negri

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#### 1. Spinoza, the Romantic

The paradox marking Spinoza's reappearance in modernity is well known. If Mendelssohn wished to "give him new credence by bringing him closer to the philosophical orthodoxy of Leibniz and Wolff," and Jacobi, "by presenting him as a heterodox figure in the literal sense of the term, wanted to do away with him definitively for modern Christianity"—well, "both failed in their goal, and it was the heterodox Spinoza who was rehabilitated."<sup>1</sup> The Mendelssohn-Jacobi debate can be grafted onto the crisis of a specific philosophical model. It generates a figure of Spinoza capable of assuaging the exacerbated spiritual tension of that epoch, and of constituting the systematic preamble of the relation between power and substance—between subject and nature. Spinoza, the damned Spinoza, had a resurgence in modernity as a Romantic philosopher. Lessing won out by recognizing in Spinoza an idea of nature which was capable of balancing the relation between feeling and intellect, freedom and necessity, and history and reason. Herder and Goethe, against the subjective and revolutionary impatience of the Sturm und Drang, based themselves on this powerful image of synthesis and recomposed objectivity: Spinoza is not only the figure of Romanticism; he constitutes its grounding and its fulfillment.

The omnipotence of nature was no longer to break off into the tragedy of feeling, but it was to triumph over it, by opposing it to a kingdom of completed forms. Spinoza's first reception within Romanticism was thus an aesthetic reception, a perception of motion and perfection, of dynamism and forms. And it remained such, even when the general frame and the particular components of Romanticism were subjected to the labor of philosophical critique. Fichte, the real philosophical hero of Romanticism, considered both Spinoza's and Kant's systems to be "perfectly coherent,"<sup>2</sup> in the incessant ontological movement of the I. For the Schelling of the 1790s, the assertion of a radical opposition between critical philosophy and dogmatic philosophy—that is, between a philosophy of the absolute I founding itself on the critical philosophy and a dogmatic philosophy of absolute object and Spinozism—was quickly resolved into an analysis on which dialectically took on (as Hegel immediately acknowledges) the weight of the objective.<sup>3</sup> Far from becoming antinomial, the absolute position of the I composes itself into a necessary process which, above tragedy, exalts the "spiritual automatism"<sup>4</sup> of the relation between subject and substance. The aesthetic dimension of this synthesis consists in ceaselessly and tirelessly bringing back power and substance, the

productive element and the form of production, to perfection. Romanticism, according to Hegel, is characterized by a capacity to overcome the pure objectivity of the ideal and the natural as a true idea of beauty and truth, initially to destroy the union of the idea and its reality, and to locate the latter in the difference, so as then to bring to manifestation the inner world of absolute subjectivity and reconstruct its objectivity where the overcoming of sensibility is appeased in the absolute character of the result.<sup>5</sup> The filiation of this process is still Lessingian, but the new dialectic expresses and articulates its motivations, while insisting on the propaedeutic of the beautiful along the path leading to the absolute. Spinoza, a certain Spinoza, becomes the central figure in this process.

## 2. Modernity against Romanticism

Are there dissonances in this concert? To be sure—Hegel both forces the absorption of Spinozism into Romanticism and expresses these dissonances. For Romanticism and aesthetics only make up a part of the world, and cannot in themselves exhaust its absoluteness—which is that of effectivity, history, and modernity. Romanticism and aesthetics suffer from a lack of truth, which is revealed by the absence of reflection. But the absence of reflection is the absence of determinations. The incommensurability of Spinozist being is the sign of a lack [manque] of determination; it is characterized by a lack [défaut] of truth. Beyond its extreme originary recovery or cooptation of Spinozist ontology, beyond the pathetic rivalry that Hegel felt toward Spinoza, it is in the Logic's chapter on measure that the confrontation and separation are fulfilled.<sup>6</sup> The issue here is not to relate this episode in detail: others have done so brilliantly.<sup>7</sup> It will suffice to identify the negative concept of being that Hegel attributes to Spinoza, for it is around this definition (or, eventually, around its refusal) that certain essential currents of the twentieth-century debate on the ontology of modernity will develop. Hegel's attack here develops along two lines. The first is, so to speak, phenomenological: it concerns the interpretation of the Spinozian "mode". The latter is defined as the affection of the substance which posits the determinate determination, which is in something other than itself, and must be conceived of by another. But, Hegel objects, this mode is immediately given, it is not recognized as *Nichtigkeit*, as nothingness, and therefore as the necessity of dialectical reflection. Spinozian phenomenology is flat, it rests on absoluteness. But in this case, the world of modes is only the world of abstract indetermination, from which difference is absent, precisely because it wants to maintain itself as absolute. The mode disappears in disproportion.<sup>8</sup> But — and here we move from phenomenology to ontology tout court — this difference and this disproportion, which are revealed by the world of modes, also apply to Spinoza's definition of being in general. Being cannot reclaim itself from the indeterminacy of modes. The indifference of the world of modes is, if in an implicit manner, the whole of the constitutive indeterminations of being, which is dissolved in that reality. Being in Spinoza presents itself as *Dasein*, and can never be resolved. "Absolute indifference is the fundamental constitutive determination of Spinoza's substance,"<sup>9</sup> and in this indifference, what is lacking is the reason of dialectical inversion. Spinoza's substance is the absolute closing of determinations on themselves, in the empty totality that differentiates them. Spinoza's substance is:

[T]he cause, which in its being for itself resists all invasion, is already subjected to necessity or to destiny, and this subjection is the hardest. . . . The great intuition of substance in Spinoza is in itself the liberation from finite being for itself; but the concept itself is for itself the power of necessity and substantial freedom.<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, in Spinoza's substance Hegel (1) recognizes the capacity of representing oneself as the boundless horizon of the real, as the presence of being in general; (2) he confirms the immediate and insoluble aesthetic power of Spinoza's substance, by insisting on its "in itself character; (3) he attributes to Spinoza's substance a fundamental inability to fulfill itself in *Wirklichkeit*, that is, to resolve itself in the dialectical dimension of the reconciliation of the real. This means that for Hegel the Spinozist conception of being is Romantic, but for that very reason, unmodern. Without Spinoza it is impossible to philosophize, but outside of dialectics it is impossible to be modern. Modernity is the peace of the real, it is the fulfillment of history. Spinoza's being and its power are incapable of

providing us with this result.

### 3. The time of modernity

However, there exists another moment, in which, around the theme of modernity, it is possible for us to evaluate Hegel's positions faced with Spinoza. This moment concerns the problem of time. We know that time for Spinoza is, the one hand, the time of presence, and on the other hand, that of infinite duration. The time of infinite duration is "the effort by which every thing strives to persevere in its being." It would indeed be absurd for that power to "involve a limited time, which determines the duration of the thing," for its destruction cannot derive from the essence of the thing, but can only be posited by an exterior cause.<sup>11</sup> As for time as presence—i.e., as singularity, as determination—it gives itself as the residue of the deduction of the insignificance of duration for essence<sup>12</sup> but, at the same time and above all, as a positive grounding and ontological transformation of that residuality: the body, its actual existence, and spirit insofar as it is tied to the body are gathered together into an idea "which expresses the essence of the body *sub specie aeternitatis*."<sup>13</sup> Now, if it is not surprising that Hegel is opposed to the Spinozist definition of time as indefinite duration, his position on the definition of present time is not free from ambiguity. The Hegelian polemic against indefinite duration only serves to provide the new articulation of the polemic against the indifference of the modes of substance. According to Hegel, indeed, the indefinite does not avoid, but radicalizes the problems inherent in the relation between the infinite and finite: its concept must therefore be overcome. Duration must become measure, and therefore mediation of quantity towards quality, and, as it makes its way, the unlimited must arrive at the realization of its own necessity.<sup>14</sup> The reduction of duration to temporality and of abstract temporality to concrete and historical temporality is therefore the path that Hegel points to, to remove Spinozian being from its theoretical destiny, namely being converted into pure nothingness. Here too, dialectics would be in a position to reconstitute the being of reality and would contribute, through this concretization of time, to elaborating the definition of modernity. What remains is the second Spinozian definition of time, as presence and opening-up of power, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Now, how might one be opposed to that Spinozian definition of Dasein, or rather of the determinate being of the mode, which in its singularity is irreducible to *Gewordensein*, and which radically opposes determinate being to any dialectical synthesis? Hegel is especially conscious of this objection when he claims that the dialectical concept of temporality does not nullify concrete determination—in other words, that the event, the determination (as act, *Bestimmung*, as well as as result, *Bestimmtheit*) remains in its concreteness. If the time of modernity is that of fulfillment, this fulfillment of the real could not mystify or conceal the splendor of the event. The Hegelian dialectic could not in any case give up the plenitude of singularity. But here the ambiguity hides an unsurmountable difficulty. Spinozian presence is that of a being full of power, of an indestructible horizon of singularity.

Hegel can well attempt the inversion of power, but this process takes on the appearance of a sophism, since the goal pursued is to reassert the same power. Hegel may indeed denounce in Spinozian being the violence of an irreducible presence and push it towards indifference and nothingness. But each time that this singular presence reappears, the reality that Hegel claims to be void, reveals itself on the contrary to be charged with all positivities, openings, and singular potentialities. Hegel may indeed consider the perspective of a time conceived as indefinite duration to be unsatisfactory, but he can only oppose a repetitive and sterile transcendental movement to a theoretical practice of time where the latter appears charged with present determinations. It is here that the Hegelian system is endangered, here, when the time of modernity as fulfillment of the historical development opposes itself to the emergence of singularity, of the positive time of Dasein, of Spinozian presence.

What then becomes of the Hegelian notion of modernity? Hegel is obliged to reveal the substantial

ambiguity of his conceptual construction. For the rhythm of the transcendental mediation superimposes itself heavily onto the emergence of singularity, and if the transcendental wishes to absorb the energy of the singular, it does not however succeed in doing it justice. The "acosmic", "atemporal" Spinoza expresses a conception of time as presence and as singularity that the great dialectical machine wishes to expropriate, but cannot. Modernity reveals itself not only to be the adversary of Romanticism, but bears witness to a frustrated will to co-opt the productive force of singularity. This frustration does not however eliminate the efficaciousness of repetition: it posits parameters of domination. With Hegel, modernity becomes the sign of the domination of the transcendental over power, the continual attempt to organize power functionally—in the instrumental rationality of power. Thus a double relation simultaneously connects and separates Hegel and Spinoza at the same time. For both, being is full and productive, but where Spinoza sets power in immediacy and singularity, Hegel privileges mediation and the transcendental dialectic of power. In this sense, and in this sense only, Spinozian presence is opposed to Hegelian becoming. Spinoza's anti-modernity is not a negation of *Wirklichkeit* but a reduction of the latter to *Dasein*—Hegel's modernity consists in the opposite option.

#### 4. The fate of modernity

The real, that is, modernity, is "the immediate unity of essence and existence, in other words, of the inner and the outer, in the shape of dialectic." Such is the origin of the storm which has raged in philosophical critique for almost two centuries.<sup>15</sup> During the silver age, and even more during the bronze age of contemporary German philosophy (that is, in the nineteenth century of the "critique of critique", and the great fin-de-siècle academic philosophy), substance and power, *Wirklichkeit* and *Dasein* became increasingly separated. Power was first of all felt to be an antagonism, then was defined as irrational. Philosophy transformed itself bit by bit into a sublime effort to exorcise the irrational, that is, to embezzle power. Hegel's furious will to posit the dialectical hegemony of the absolute substance was first opposed to the crisis and tragic horizon, and second to the ceaseless vocation to renew transcendental teleology according to more or less dialectical forms in an alternation of horizons which—and this did not escape the irony of the greatest figures, such as Marx and Nietzsche—continually offers up pale but nevertheless efficacious images of modernity. The preeminence of relations of production over productive forces detaches itself from the Hegelian utopia of the absolute and takes on the garb of reformist teleology. The schemes of indefinite duration, running counter to those of the dialectical infinite, are renewed as projects of the progressive rationality of domination. Modernity changes sheets without changing beds. And this drags on, exhausting any capacity of renewal, inventing a thousand ways of bypassing the dry, authoritarian and utopian Hegelian intimation of modernity, which it attempts to substitute by used shapes of the schematism of reason and transcendentality. This, until that exhaustion consumes itself and turns reflection upon itself.<sup>16</sup>

Heidegger represents the extreme limit of this process, a process which is perfectly integrated, if it is true that one of the goals of *Sein und Zeit* is to rethink the transcendental schematism,<sup>17</sup> but a process which, at the very moment when it is starting off again on the usual tracks, is completely thrown off. "Our aim in the foregoing treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of Being and to do so concretely. Our provisional aim is the Interpretation of time as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being."<sup>18</sup> But:

If to interpret the meaning of Being becomes our task, *Dasein* is not only the primary entity to be interrogated; it is also that entity which already comports itself, in its Being, towards what we are asking about when we ask this question. But in that case the question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to *Dasein* itself—the pre-ontological understanding of Being.<sup>19</sup>

The theme of presence becomes central once again. Dasein is temporality which is broken and rediscovered at each point as presence, a presence which is stability and autonomous rootedness with regard to any mobility and dispersion of the “they” and to any form of cultural disorientation. The fate of becoming and history is henceforth placed under the sign of commerce and dejection. Effectivity is no longer Hegelian Wirklichkeit but a crude Faktizität. Modernity is fate. In the last pages of *Sein und Zeit*, against Hegel’s mediation and Absolute Spirit, Heidegger asserts that

Our existential analytic of Dasein, on the contrary, starts with the 'concretion' of factually thrown existence itself in order to unveil temporality as that which primordially makes such existence possible. 'Spirit' does not first fall into time, but it exists as the primordial temporalizing of temporality . . . 'Spirit' does not fall into time; but factual existence 'falls' as falling from primordial, authentic temporality.<sup>20</sup>

Here, in this falling, while being this “care,” temporality constitutes itself as possibility and self-projection into the future. Here, without ever falling into the traps of teleology and dialectics, temporality reveals possibility as the most originary ontological determination of Dasein. Thus it is only in presence that fate opens up possibility and the future once again. But how can one authenticate Dasein? In this tragically tangled skein death is the ownmost and most authentic possibility of Dasein. But the latter is also an impossibility of presence: the “possibility of an impossibility” therefore becomes the ownmost and most authentic possibility of Dasein. It is thus that the Hegelian theme of modernity comes to fulfillment: in nothingness, in death, the immediate unity of existence and essence is given. The nostalgic Hegelian demand of Bestimmung becomes a desperate Entschlossenheit in Heidegger—a deliberation and a resolution of the opening of Dasein to its own truth, which is nothingness. The music which provided the rhythm of the dance of determination and of the transcendental has come to an end.

## 5. Tempus potentiae

Heidegger is not only the prophet of the fate of modernity. At the same time as he divides, he is also a hinge-point opening onto anti-modernity, that is, opening onto a conception of time as an ontologically constitutive relation which breaks the hegemony of substance or the transcendental, and therefore opens onto power. Resolution does not just consist in the fact of removing the closure (Entschlossenheit)—it is related to anticipation and openness, which are truth itself as it unveils itself in Dasein. The discovery of being does not only consist in the fact of opening up (Entdecken) that which preexists, but in the fact of positing the established autonomy of Dasein through and against the dispersive mobility of the “They”. By giving itself as finite, being-there is open, and this openness is sight (Sicht): but more than sight, it is Umsicht, forecasting circumspection. Being-there is possibility, but it is more than that: it is the power-to-be. “‘We’ presuppose truth because ‘we’, being in the kind of Being which Dasein possesses, are ‘in the truth’.”<sup>21</sup> But Dasein—and this is implied in the constitution of being as care—is ahead of itself each time. It is the being for which, in its being, the issue is its ownmost power-to-be. Openness and discovery belong in an essential manner to being and the power-to-be of Dasein as being-in-the-world. For Dasein, the issue is its power-to-be-in-the-world, and conjointly, the discovering circumspect preoccupation with inner-worldly being. In the constitution of the being of Dasein as care, in being-ahead-of-itself, the most originary “presupposing” is included.<sup>21</sup>

Presence therefore does not merely mean being present in truth, in the non-concealment of being, but rather the projection of the present, authenticity, the new rootedness of being. Time aspires to power, alludes to its productivity, grazes on its energy. And, when it reverts back to nothingness, it does not forget that power. Spinoza surges forth at the heart of this articulation. Tempus potentiae. Spinoza's insistence on presence fills what Heidegger leaves us as mere possibility. The hegemony of presence in relation to the becoming which differentiates Spinozian from Hegelian metaphysics reasserts itself as the hegemony of the plenitude of the present faced with empty Heideggerian presence. Without ever having entered into modernity, Spinoza exits from it here, by inverting the conception of time—

which others wanted to fulfill in becoming or nothingness—into a positively open and constitutive time. Under the same ontological conditions, love takes the place of "care." Spinoza systematically inverts Heidegger: to Angst (anxiety) he opposes Amor, to Umsicht (circumspection) he opposes Mens, to Entschlossenheit (resolution) he opposes Cupiditas, to Anwesenheit (being-present) he opposes the Conatus, to Besorgen (concern) he opposes Appetitus, to Möglichkeit (possibility) he opposes Potentia. In this opposition, an anti-purposive presence and possibility unite that which different orientations of ontology divide. At the same time, the indifferent meanings of being are precisely divided—Heidegger orients himself towards nothingness, and Spinoza towards plenitude. The Heideggerian ambiguity which wavers in the void resolves itself in the Spinozian tension which conceives of the present as plenitude. If for Spinoza, just as for Heidegger, modal presence, or rather phenomeno-logical entities, have their freedom restituted to them, Spinoza, unlike Heidegger, recognizes the entity as productive force. The reduction of time to presence opens onto opposite directions: the constitution of a presence which orients itself towards nothingness, or the creative insistence on presence. From the same horizon, two constitutive directions open up: if Heidegger settles his accounts with modernity, Spinoza (who never entered into modernity) shows the untamable force of an anti-modernity which is completely projected into the future. Love in Spinoza expresses the time of power, a time which is presence, insofar as it is action which is constitutive of eternity. Even in the difficult and problematic genesis of Book V of the Ethics<sup>22</sup> we can amply see the determination of this conceptual process. The formal condition of the identity of presence and eternity is given before all. "Whatever the Mind understands sub specie aeternitatis, it understands not from the fact that it conceives the Body's present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the Body's essence sub specie aeternitatis."<sup>23</sup> Proposition 30 goes one step further: "Insofar as our Mind knows itself and the Body under a species of eternity, it necessarily has knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God and is conceived through God."<sup>24</sup> The ultimate explanation is to be found in Proposition 32:

Out of the third kind of knowledge, there necessarily arises an intellectual Love of God. For out of this kind of knowledge there arises (by P32) Joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e. (by Def. Aff. VI), Love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as • present (by P29), but insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call intellectual love of God.<sup>25</sup>

Eternity is therefore a formal dimension of presence. But now here is the reversal and the explanation: "Although this Love toward God has had no beginning (by P33), it still has all the perfections of Love, just as if it had come to be."<sup>26</sup> Beware, then, of falling into the trap of duration: "If we attend to the common opinion of men, we shall see that they are indeed conscious of the eternity of their Mind, but that they confuse it with duration, and attribute it to the imagination, or memory, which they believe remains after death."<sup>27</sup> Parallel to this:

This Love the Mind has must be related to its actions (by P32C and IIP3); it is, then, an action by which the Mind contemplates itself, with the accompanying idea of God as its cause (by P32 and P32C) . . . so (by P35), this Love of the Mind has is part of the infinite love by which God loves himself.<sup>28</sup>

Out of this we clearly understand wherein consists our salvation, or blessedness, or Freedom, viz. in a constant and eternal Love of God, or in God's Love for men . . . For insofar as it [this Love] is related to God (by P35), it is Joy.<sup>29</sup>

And the argumentation comes to a close, without any further equivocation, with Proposition 40: "The more perfection each thing has, the more it acts and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts, the more perfect it is."<sup>30</sup> The time of power is therefore made up of eternity, inasmuch as constitutive action resides in presence. The eternity which is presupposed here is shown as the result, the horizon of the affirmation of action. Time is the plenitude of love. To Heideggerian nothingness corresponds Spinozist plenitude—or rather the paradox of eternity, of the plenitude of

the present world, the splendor of singularity. The concept of modernity is burned by love.

## 6. Spinoza's anti-modernity

"This Love toward God cannot be tainted by an affect of Envy or Jealousy: instead, the more men we imagine to be joined to God by the same bond of Love, the more it is encouraged."<sup>31</sup> Thus an additional element is added to the definition of Spinoza's anti-modernity. According to the dynamic of his own system, which takes shape essentially in Books III and IV of the Ethics, Spinoza constructs the collective dimension of productive force, and therefore the collective figure of love of divinity. Just as modernity is individualistic, and thereby constrained to search for the mechanism of mediation and recomposition in the transcendental, similarly, Spinoza radically negates any dimension external to the constitutive process of the human community, to its absolute immanence. This becomes completely explicit in the *Tractatus Politicus*, and already partially in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, for it is probably only the *Tractatus Politicus* which can assist us in understanding the line of thought governing Proposition 20 of Book V of the Ethics, or better, in clearly understanding the whole of the arrangements of the constitutive movements of intellectual Love as a collective essence. What I wish to say is that intellectual Love is the formal condition of socialization, and that the communitarian process is the ontological condition of intellectual Love. Consequently, intellectual Love is what sheds light on the paradox of the multitude and its becoming-community, since intellectual Love alone describes the real mechanism which leads *potestas democratica*?<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, modernity does not know how to justify democracy. Modernity always understands democracy as limit and therefore transfigures it into the perspective of the transcendental. The Hegelian Absolute only gives an account of collective productive force, or of the *potestas* emanating from it, once all singularities have been reduced to negativity. The result is a concept of democracy<sup>33</sup> which is always necessarily formal. And the true result of this operation is merely to subject productive forces to the domination of relations of production. But how can the unsurmountable instances of singularity, the desire of community, and the material determinations of collective production let themselves be reduced to such paradigms? In the most sophisticated conception of modernity, this relation of domination is transposed to the category of the "unfinished", by means of a process which again, as always, reduces and reproduces presence through duration<sup>34</sup> No, the triumph of singularities, their way of positing themselves as the multitude, their way of constituting themselves in an ever broader bond of love, do not amount to anything unfinished. Spinoza does not know this word. These processes, on the contrary, are always complete and always open, and the space which gives itself between completion and opening is that of absolute power, total freedom, the path of liberation. The negation of Utopia in Spinoza takes place thanks to the total cooptation of the power of liberation onto a horizon of presence: presence imposes realism as against utopia, and utopia opens presence onto constitutive projection. Contrary to what Hegel wished for, measurelessness and presence cohabit on a terrain of absolute determination and absolute freedom. There is no ideal, nothing transcendental, no incomplete project which could fill the opening, satisfy or fill a gap in freedom. Openness, disproportion, and the Absolute are completed and closed in a presence beyond which only a new presence can be given. Love renders presence eternal, the collectivity renders singularity absolute.

When Heidegger develops his social phenomenology of singularity, between the inauthenticity of inter-worldliness and the authenticity of being-in-the-world, he develops a polemic against the transcendental which is analogous to that waged by Spinoza, but once again the circle of the crisis of modernity closes on him and productive power convulses itself in nothingness. On the contrary, in determination, in joy, Spinozist love exalts that which it finds in the horizon of temporality and constitutes it as collectivity. Spinoza's anti-modernity explodes here in an irresistible manner, as analysis and exposition of productive force constituted ontologically as collectivity.

## 7. Spinoza *redivivus*

The cycle of definition of modernity inaugurated by Hegel—in other words, the cycle in which the reduction of power to the absolute transcendental form reaches its apex, and consequently, in which the crisis of relation is dominated by the exorcism of power and its reduction to irrationality and nothingness—thus reaches completion. And it is here that Spinozism conquers a place in contemporary philosophy, no longer merely as an historical indicator but as an active paradigm. Indeed, Spinozism has always represented a reference point in the critique of modernity, for it opposes to the conception of the subject-individual, of mediation and the transcendental, which inform the concept of modernity from Descartes to Hegel and Heidegger, a conception of the collective subject, of love and the body as powers of presence. Spinoza constitutes a theory of time torn from purposiveness or finality, which grounds an ontology conceived as process of constitution. It is on this basis that Spinozism acts as the catalyst of an alternative in the definition of modernity. But why should one deprecate a time-honored position of radical refusal of the forms of modernity by defining it with the restrictive term 'alternative'? On the terrain of the alternative, we find compromise positions well-versed in the art of mediation—such as those of Habermas, who over the course of the long development of his theory of modernity<sup>35</sup> has never successfully overcome the feeble and bland repetitiveness of the pages where Hegel constructs modernity phenomenologically as absoluteness forming itself in interaction and incompleteness. No, that is not what interests us. Spinoza redivivus is elsewhere—he is where the break at the origin of modernity is taken up again, the break between productive force and relations of production, between power and mediation, between singularity and the Absolute. Not an alternative to modernity, then, but anti-modernity, powerful and progressive. Certain contemporary authors have happily announced our definition of Spinoza's anti-modernity. Thus Althusser:

Spinoza's philosophy introduced an unprecedented theoretical revolution into the history of philosophy, probably the greatest philosophical revolution of all time, to the point that we can regard Spinoza as Marx's only direct ancestor, from the philosophical standpoint.<sup>36</sup>

Why? Because Spinoza is the founder of an absolutely original conception of praxis without teleology, because he thought the presence of the cause in its effects and the very existence of structure in its effects and in presence. "The whole existence of the structure consists of its effects . . . the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects."<sup>37</sup> For Foucault, Spinoza transforms this foundationless structural originality into a mechanism of the production of norms, which base themselves on a collective present:

And thereby one sees that, for the philosopher, to posit the question of belonging to this present will no longer be the question of belonging to a doctrine or a tradition, it will no longer be the simple question of belonging to the human community in general, but that of belonging to a certain "We", to a We which relates to a cultural whole which is characteristic of its own actuality. It is that We which becomes the object of his own reflection for the philosopher, and thereby the impossibility of ignoring the philosopher's questioning of his singular belonging to that We is asserted. All of this, philosophy as problematization of an actuality and questioning by the philosopher of that actuality of which he is a part, and in relation to which he has to situate himself, might well characterize philosophy as the discourse of modernity and on modernity.<sup>38</sup>

It is from this position that Foucault can propose a "political history of truth" or a "political economy of the will to know"<sup>39</sup>—from a position which reverses the concept of modernity as fate to show it as presence and belonging. For Deleuze, lastly, Spinoza pushes the immanence of praxis in the present to the limit of the triumph of the untimely over effectivity—and the subject, here, finds itself as collective subject, presented in Spinozist fashion as the result of a reciprocal movement of the inner and the outer, on the flattened presence of a world which is always reopened to absolute possibility.<sup>40</sup> Anti-modernity is therefore the concept of present history, recast as the concept of a collective liberation. As limit and overcoming of the limit. As its body and eternity and presence. As



the infinite reopening of possibility. Res gestae, historical practice of theory.

## NOTES

1. Manfred Walther, "Spinoza en Allemagne. Histoire des problemes et de la recherche," in *Spinoza entre Lumieres et romantisme (Les Cahiers de Fontenay 36-37 [March 1985])*, p. 25.
2. Peter Szondi, *Poesie et poetique de l'idealisme allemand* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1975), p. 10.
3. Antonio Negri, *Stato e diritto nel giovane Hegel* (Padua: Cedam, 1958), p. 158.
4. Martial Gueroult, "La philosophic schellingienne de la liberte," in *Studio, philosophica, Schellingsheft 14* (1954), pp. 152, 157.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Asthetik* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1955), trans. T. M. Knox, *Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II, iii.
6. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. G. Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1967), I, iii; *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1989), pp. 327-385.
7. Pierre Macherey, *Hegel ou Spinoza* (Paris: Maspero, 1979).
8. G.W.F. Hegel, *Logic*, p. 329; Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza I. Dieu* (Paris: Aubier, 1968), p. 462; Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnis-Problem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der Neueren Zeit* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1952).
9. G.W.F. Hegel, *Logic*, p. 382.
10. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, ed. E. Behler, trans, S.A. Taunebeck (New York: Continuum, 1990), II, C, #108, p. 101. On this passage, see Cassirer's *Das Erkenntnis-Problem*..
11. Spinoza, *Ethics*, 111P8, *Demonstration* (11/147, 5-6). All quotations from Spinoza will be cited from *Spinoza Opera*, ed. Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1972), 4 vols. Citation will give volume number, page number and line numbers. Translations are from *Collected Works*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1985), with some modifications.
12. *Ethics IV, Preface* (11/209, 1-10).
13. *Ethics VP23, Scholium* (11/295, 29-30).
14. On what follows, see Hegel, *Logic*, I, iii, and Cassirer's *Das Erkenntnis-Problem*.
15. Karl Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans. D. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 199P).
16. Antonio Negri, chapters VIII ("L'irrazionalismo") & IX ("Fenomenologia e esistenzialismo") in *La filosofia contemporanea*, ed. Mario Dal Pra (Corno-Milan: Vallardi, 1978), pp. 151-175. An attempt at a reevaluation of Neo-Kantianism, on the contrary, is to be found in Jiirgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987).

17. The project is announced at the end of the introduction of *Sein und Zeit*. But see also Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. R. Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 19904).
18. *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 19.
19. *Ibid*, p. 35.
20. *Ibid*, p. 486.
21. *Ibid*, p. 270.
22. In *The Savage Anomaly: Power and Politics in Spinoza*, trans. M. Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), I argued that Book V of the *Ethics* presented deep contradictions, and that two different orientations coexisted in it. Today, after having evaluated the numerous critiques that have been raised against my interpretation, I retain above all those which insisted on the excessive linearity of the separation. I retain in particular, as I will emphasize later, that the conception of intellectual love (*amor intellectualis*) as elaborated in Book V, can be re-read from the *Tractatus Politicus*—and hence re-evaluated in light of the whole of Spinoza's system.
23. *Ethics* VP29 (11/298,10-14).
24. *Ethics* VP30 (II/299, (5-8).
25. *Ethics* VP32, Corollary (11/300, 22-27.
26. *Ethics* VP33, Scholium (11/301, 6-8).
27. *Ethics* VP34, Scholium (11/301, 30-31, 1/302, 1-2).
28. *Ethics* VP36, Scholium (11/302,18-25).
29. *Ethics* VP36, Scholium (11/303, 2-9).
30. *Ethics* VP40 (11/306,2-3).      & nbsp;      & nb sp;
31. *Ethics* VP20 (11/292, 15-17).
32. I would like to emphasize again here how the relative ambiguity of Book V of the *Ethics* may be resolved by means of a reading which integrates the conception of intellectual love and the process of constitution of democracy, as it is described in the *Tractatus Politicus*. Against this position, see C. Vinti, *Spinoza. La conoscenza come liberazione* (Rome: Studium, 1984), " chapter IV, which uses the interpretive proposition I developed in *The Savage Anomaly* and radicalizes it so as to find a permanence of transcendence in Spinoza's system.
33. I am referring to the liberal-democratic interpretation of Hegel, as developed by Rudolf Haym, Franz Rosenzweig, and Eric Weil.
34. Jiirgen Habermas, *Kleine Politischen Schriften I-IV* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 444-464.
35. From "Labor and Interaction" [1968], in *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), to "Modernity, An Unfinished Project" [1980], published as "Modernity vs.

Postmodernity" in *New German Critique* 22 (1981), and *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* [1985], trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987).

36. Louis Althusser et al., *Lire le Capital* (Paris: Maspero, 1965), vol. II, p. 50, *Reading Capital*, trans. B. Brewster (New York: Pantheon, 1970), p. 102 (translation modified).

37. *Ibid.*, p. 171; translation, p. 189.

38. Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); trans. R. Dwyer, "Orders of Discourse," in *Social Science Information* 10:2 (April 1971).

39. Michel Foucault, *La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); trans. R. Hurley, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I: An Introduction (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

40. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1986); trans. S. Hand, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

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