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Deleuze will talk of a *parallelism* in Spinoza between the body and the mind. Spinoza himself - as Deleuze tells us - does not talk of parallelism; Deleuze takes the term from Leibniz. I hesitate a long time before gainsaying Deleuze, but it seems to me that there is no need of the concept of a "parallelism" between mind and body here, since they are the same thing. Spinoza says that we do not know what a body can do; Deleuze constructively takes this phrase up in isolation, but Spinoza's point (in *The Ethics* III, 2) is here to argue for the essential sameness of the body and mind and to point out that Cartesianism separates out the two partly because we cannot see (any more than 17<sup>th</sup> century anatomists), when we look at the material things of the body, what it is that causes the mind. We cannot see the workings of the mind in the body. But – Spinoza says – we have not yet looked closely enough at the body to confirm this. Perhaps, today, we are just beginning to do so – for instance, in the work of quantum biology.

More radically, what seems to me to follow from Spinoza is that we will *never* know what a body can do in respect of the mind. If bodies are made up of an infinity of particles (as we saw above) in relation, and each particle in turn is made up of an infinity of particles in relation to each other, then the task of understanding the body, or more specifically understanding it in relation to the mind, is an infinite one – a task coextensive with the infinite task of science. When Spinoza says that no-one knows yet what the structure of the body actually is, he is being funny and provocative. He wants us to understand for ourselves that the *yet* will be infinitely prolonged...

The difference between body and mind is to do with the way in which some individual thing (mind/body) is perceived by us:

...the idea of the body and the body itself – that is, mind and body – are one and the same individual thing, conceived now under the attribute of Thought and now under the attribute of Extension. (II,21)

This seems to me to be an extraordinary thought, the most dramatic moment in Spinoza: mind and body *are the same thing*.

To return to the question of the individual thing: we noted that it is made up of an infinite number of parts or particles which are in relation to each other. We can now say that these parts or particles can each be seen by us either as thoughts or as bodies. It might be said that Spinoza is a materialist, but in fact he is no more a materialist (positing the essential reality of material things) than he is an idealist (positing the essential reality of ideas).

There is also no intrinsic difference between a particle and an individual. The only thing which distinguishes a particle from an individual is that we happen to be looking at a certain individual; it is only relative to that particular individual that particles are defined. This is an instance of what Deleuze told us at the outset, that philosophy starts from the concrete, and goes on from there. So if we take the human body, we can say that it is made up of a series of parts or particles such as the eye, or the hand, or the leg, all of which are in a constructive relation, a *characteristic* relation as Deleuze will say – characteristic, that is, of that particular human body. But we can always change our focus and decide to look more closely at the eye, or the hand, or the leg, and when we do that these particles become individuals which in turn are made up of an infinite series of particles which in turn we can regard as individuals, and so on.... So on until we – currently - reach the Higgs particle.

This movement goes infinitely in the other direction, too. So what was an individual can become, for us, a particle in a larger individual; in turn, that individual can become a particle within a larger scale individual, and so on.... So on until we reach – currently - the limits of the known universe (170 billion galaxies, each with thousands, millions, billions, or trillions of stars). For Spinoza, this is Nature, which each individual opens out onto in an infinite, nested arrangement; Deleuze, in *What is Philosophy?* speaks about how the art work opens out onto the universe in this way.

#### A decision to be made in each case

What follows from this is that in each case, when we are thinking about things or talking about them, we need to make a decision about where in this nested structure of individuals and particles (extending up and down to infinity) we decide to look at something as an *individual*, as a thing. As noted above, it does not say very much to claim that in general we look (and should look) at medium-sized things. Within an infinite structure such as the one Spinoza outlines, we will *always* be looking at medium-sized things. Deleuze's way of saying this is to say that we are always in the middle, always in the middle of something.

To be concrete about it: I go to a gallery space. It consists of an old shop (formerly a hair-dresser's and fruit-and-veg shop) with red painted shutters, and a white painted window and exhibition space. Outside there are a couple of garden spaces, accessed through a lean-to, and beyond that a deceptively large corrugated tin garage/shed which has been split into a projection space and, at the back, a storage space with bits of old timber stuffed into one corner. I am vaguely aware of some of the history of the space because I discussed it (by the by) with the gallerist Frances Coleman. In the front space is something – I am not sure if it is a sculpture or an installation or a sort of painting on the wall and the floor – made of linear pieces of green wax running at an angle across the floor, walls and soffit, such that one could trip up on it, or be framed skew-whiff by it, or see the space framed skew-whiff by it, or see other works in the space framed skew-whiff by it. (This is a work by Rochelle Fry.) Beside it on the wall are four grey photographs, photographs of grey fabric with joints in them, each mounted on grey aluminium sheets, photographs which invoke in me the thought of an anonymous office, a call centre, the space of a worker divided from other workers by mid-height hessian-covered screens. These photographs seem quite close to the skew-whiff wax. (This is a work by Mary Maclean.) Opposite there are a couple of 2x2 timber poles hanging from the ceiling, and two blood-red stripes painted on the wall like shadows or drawings of the poles; to one side, a sheet made of a timber material has been stacked against the wall and the shop front at an angle; the back of the sheet, facing out to the street, is painted red and the red reflects onto the adjacent white walls. (This is a work by Helen Robertson.) At the back of the space is another, larger, photograph by Mary Maclean, also showing the grey backdrop of an anonymous institution, this time less abstractly, because there is part of an orange-red office chair shown. What I have not yet seen or heard, but which I have heard talk about by the artists, are a wax shelf with a small wireless speaker which produces sounds by Rochelle Fry, and a book or books by both Rochelle and Helen Robertson; I am a little

unclear from what I have been told whether these books are both blank, or if indeed both of them will happen, or where they will be located. I have also been told that there will be a performance, or performances, out in the gardens, but again this is vague; the performance may involve the use of painted surfaces, so I am reminded of a work I have seen on Mary Maclean's website which juxtaposes such things with photographs. In the dark space beyond the garden is a projection of two white dots or spots onto the far wall, which is painted white and has an open door to one side; the two spots move around the wall and around each other with a certain humour; often they shoot off the white wall and through the door, appearing further in the distance in the dark storage space at the back. (This is a work by Helen Robertson.) In the storage space is another grey photograph of an interior partition; a block of blue is projected over the top of it. (This is a work by Mary Maclean.) On the back of the projection wall is fixed a TV monitor playing a video in which Helen Robertson is seen closing the red shutters of the gallery. There is a moment when the red of the shutters is reflected off things. This TV monitor is mounted such that it is parallel to the gallery front itself. The shutters in the video have small round holes in them.

Where, here, is the individual? Have I just written about a series of particles, or a series of individuals, or one individual? (Notice that the particles, although mainly, ostensibly, material things or bodies, also consist of things of the mind – ideas, in Spinoza's terminology: discussions, reminiscences, invocations of things to come, the odd concept or two. From another point of view, we could say that the whole thing/description was made up of ideas, things of the mind, all pointing to or having a relation to other things, some of which are ideas, some of which are bodies. Body, idea; it does not matter, *they are the same thing*....) Take Mary Maclean's four grey photographs. They are positioned such as to call into question whether we should regard them as four individual works, or one large rectangular work consisting of four smaller parts. They have been placed, precisely, a little too close to the work by Rochelle Fry; do the two of them together make a work, an individual, or is there a relationship between two individuals here? This question, by definition, is undecidable, in Spinoza's terms (if we take him seriously – that is, if we push to the limit the implications of what he is telling us). What defines an individual is its characteristic set of relations between its constituent parts or particles; therefore, as soon as two individuals are put into relation, they become *at the same time* particles of a larger individual. Rochelle Fry's piece in turn frames both the gallery itself and the larger photograph on the back wall. As a frame, is it part of the work or extra to the work? (A question Derrida debates – and keeps open – in *The Truth of Painting*. As does Deleuze in *What is Philosophy?* And Bernard Cache in *Earth Moves*, who Deleuze invokes.) Or in other terms, is the individual the photograph by Mary Maclean or the photograph framed by the green wax installation?

Take instead the individual video piece in the back space. This shows Helen Robertson closing the shutters of the gallery. We can say that the video itself is an individual, an individual work, with particles made up of the events and things which occur in it – the repeated movement of the body from inside to outside, the movement from light to dark as the shutters are put into place, the momentary reflection of the red surface, the appearance of white holes... Then other particles come along and start to form another individual or series of individuals; for instance, the idea of Heidegger's tool-being from *Being and Time* (again, we can thank Graham Harman for bringing this back into focus) whereby the human is involved intimately - without attention or focus on the objects themselves - in the use of a tool; the tool, for Heidegger, only becomes visible when it is broken, when it is dysfunctional. The video invokes and questions this topic by virtue of the artist appearing in her own video - to what extent was she aware of being videoed as she did the work? To what extent does the fact that it was being made into a spectacle undermine the authentic relation to a series of everyday actions? Beyond this, it implicitly asks the same question about space and architecture – to what extent are these things amenable to the topic of tool-being? To what extent is a gallery a tool, a machine to be operated?

This then raises the question of my, or our, position as an individual in relation to the works or work. We could say that the video depicts the relation between someone opening the shutters and those shutters and the space. There is shown to us a new individual, something that Deleuze will often name as a *machine* or an *assemblage* (which is not the Heideggerian tool, but makes knowing reference to it); this individual is the interplay of the user of the shutters and the shutters themselves. This ecology, this event, is an individual, a set of characteristic relations that have a certain coherence. Occurring within the video, it raises the same question for those of us who visit the exhibition. This is clearly stated by Rochelle Fry's piece, which frames us as we step over it (or trips us up) and so makes us part of a larger participatory machine, a larger individual. A new, ever-new, individual is set up – an ecology of us and a framed place. There is such an ecology implied or created in all the works here which no doubt will be reinforced in the performance piece framed by the garden; each piece should perhaps be viewed not as an object but rather as an individual which includes those particles (us) who come to live that individual, and the works only really occur once that ecology of us has been instantiated. In turn, we could say that there is a total work, a total individual, made up of the particles that are each piece of art, the space – physical (Coleman Project Space), thoughtful (memories, ideas) - in which they sit and to which they knowingly respond, and those – us – who come to see or work or live with them. Art as machine for living.

Deleuze and Guattari have a beautiful phrase for this: they call it a *haecceity*, a term they take from Duns Scotus and which means something like the quiddity – the *thisness* - of something, and this "thisness" can only happen as a participatory thisness, it only happens when the assemblage is encouraged and put into play, as these works at Coleman Project Space do. As they say:

For you will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that.

Tim Gough, April 2015

#### Key to plan below

1. Helen Robertson: *Borromini*
2. Mary Maclean: *Wall 1, Wall 2, Wall 3, Wall 4*
3. Rochelle Fry: *Snoot Snout*
4. Mary Maclean: *Wall 8*
5. Helen Robertson: *spotspot*
6. Helen Robertson: *closing the shutters*
7. Mary Maclean: *Wall 7 and projection*



over page: installation view of *Snoot Snout*, Borromini and *Wall 1, Wall 2, Wall 3, Wall 4*

top: *Borromini*

above left: *Wall 8*

left: still from *closing the shutters*

above: *Snoot Snout* and *Wall 8*



## ways from here to there

### Introduction to Spinoza and art

If Spinoza is currently being paid attention to, then this is not least because of Deleuze's reworking of his favourite philosopher, which he carries out in a number of locations:

- *Expressionism in Philosophy*, from 1968, published in the same year as *Difference and Repetition*
- *Spinoza – Practical Philosophy*, 1970 (1<sup>st</sup> edition)
- *Thousand Plateaus* – Plateau 10 entitled "1730: Becoming-intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...." and especially the two sections *Memory of a Spinozist I and II* (1980, with Guattari)
- *Spinoza and us*, a short essay from 1981 published in the 2<sup>nd</sup> expanded edition of *Spinoza – Practical Philosophy*
- *What is Philosophy?* from 1991 (nominally with Guattari). Particularly relevant is the chapter on art: *Percept, Affect and the Concept*
- "Spinoza and the Three 'Ethics'" in *Essays Critical and Clinical* from 1991, which links the percept of *What is Philosophy?* to Spinoza's notion of essence
- *Immanence: a life* (1995)

The secondary literature on Spinoza and Deleuze is large; two pieces of writing available on line are particularly apposite:

- "Some Remarks on Plateau 10: Becoming-Intense ...." by John Protevi from 1999
- Alberto Toscano's "The Politics of Spinozism—Composition and Communication" from 2012

Deleuze's advice to a correspondent (in *Two Regimes of Madness*) is always to start from the concrete. The instance of an exhibition *ways from here to there* of work by Rochelle Fry, Mary Maclean and Helen Robertson at Coleman Project Space (April-May 2015) gives an excuse to do this - to write something alongside that work, and alongside Spinoza and Deleuze.

What is an individual thing? An individual is something made up of an infinity of parts, or particles, which are all in some relation to each other. If there is a fashion now for emphasising the medium-sized objects of our daily reality as exemplary of things in general (Graham Harman), we could say that in fact *almost everything* is a medium-sized thing or individual, since everything is divisible down

into smaller and smaller parts which relate to other particles. This is Spinoza's idea; as Deleuze puts it, for him "a body, however small it may be, is composed of an infinite number of particles" (1981). We could think this in terms of modern physics: the confirmation in 2012 in the Large Hadron Collider at CERN of the existence of the Higgs particle and Higgs field does not leave science claiming that a (or the) truly elementary particle has been found; according to the developmental and falsifiable nature of science there will always be more work to do, always more particles to be found. The Spinoza in us would say that this will be an infinite task – and this is one of the reasons why Spinoza is one of the founders of the modern concept of science.

Spinoza, and Deleuze, here talk of a "body". However, the particles of which individuals are made up do not necessarily have a material quality to them. Within the region of science, the notion of a material body is inappropriate in respect of elementary particles, where the ambiguities of wave/particle in respect of light photons (for instance) represent an attempt to express with the concept of "relation" and *at the same time* the concept of "body" something which necessarily escapes our classification of things by this conceptual dualism of body and relation. A wave is a relation amongst things within a field, whereas a particle is a body; light does things which are characteristic of both waves/relations and bodies/particles, and although we can see that it implies a sort of real existence that is therefore neither body nor relation, it has not yet been possible to express this real existence as anything other than a sort of mixture of the two.

There is a deeper reason why the particles of which something is made do not necessarily have to be material. This lies in Spinoza's anti-Cartesianism. Descartes splits the world into two types of substance: the extensive world of bodies, and the space of the mind. This is a dualist ontology, a dualist theory of being. Spinoza, on the contrary, posits what we could call (following Manuel de Landa writing in 2002) a *flat* ontology, a theory of being where being has only one character. Being is said of *everything* in the same sense, as Deleuze will put it; whereas for Descartes being is said in two senses – one sense in relation to mind, another sense in relation to space and objects.

Substance (what we commonly think of as material stuff, but which Spinoza tells us to think about in a much wider sense, the broadest sense possible) is one, it is not split into two different realms of thought or being, and the consequence or reason for this (it plays both ways) is that the *mind is the body and the body is the mind*. Spinoza, in his most important book *The Ethics*, puts it this way:



