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Spinoza

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> *Power & Classical natural right*

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The problems of terminology, of the invention of words.

In order to designate a new concept, sometimes you will take a very common word; it will be even there the best fit. Only implicitly will this very common word take a completely new sense. Sometimes you will take a very special sense of a common word, and you will build up this sense, and sometimes you will need a new word. It is for this reason that, when one reproaches a philosopher for not speaking like everyone else, it doesn't make any sense. It is sometimes, sometimes, sometimes. Sometimes it is very well to use only common words, sometimes it is necessary to mark the stroke, the moment of the creation of concepts, by an unusual word.

I spoke to you the last time of this great philosopher who was important during the Renaissance, Nicolas of Cusa. Nicolas of Cusa had to create a kind of portmanteau word, he had contaminated two Latin words. Why? It is a good verbal creation. At that moment one spoke Latin, so it passed by way of Latin, he said: The being of things is the *Possest*, it means nothing if you haven't done Latin, I am going to explain. *Possest*: it doesn't exist as a word, it is an inexistent word, he created it, this word, the *Possest*. It is a very pretty word, it is a pretty word for Latin. It is an awful barbarism, this word is awful. But philosophically is beautiful, it is a success. When one creates a word it is necessary that [xxxx xxxx] there are disasters, nothing is determined in advance.

Possest is made of two terms in Latin, *posse*, which is the infinitive of the verb to be able to [*pouvoir*], and *est* is the third person of the verb to be [*être*] in the present indicative, he is, [*il est*]. *Posse* and *est*, he contaminates the two and it gives *Possest*. And what is the *Possest*? The *Possest* is precisely the identity of the power [*puissance*] and of the act by which I define [xxxx xxxx]. So I would not define something by its essence, what it is, I would define it by this barbaric definition, its *Possest*: what it can do. Literally: what it can actually do.

Power (*puissance*) or *Possest*,

Good. What does this mean? It means that things are powers [*puissances*]. It is not only that they have power, it is that they come down to the power that they have, as much in action as in passion. So if you compare two things, they can't be the same thing, but power is a quantity. You will have, thanks to this very special quantity, but you understand the problem that this causes, power is a quantity, okay, but it is not a quantity like length. Is it a quantity like force? Does this mean that the strongest wins? Very doubtful. First of all, it will be necessary to de-

fine the quantities that we call forces. They are not quantities as we know them, they are not quantities whose status is simple. I know that they are not qualities, that I know. Power (*puissance*) is not a quality, but neither are they so-called extensive quantities. Then even if they are intensive quantities, it is a very special quantitative scale, an intensive scale. This would mean: things have more or less intensity, it would be the intensity of the thing which would be, which would replace its essence, which would define the thing in itself, it would be its intensity. You understand perhaps the link to Ontology. The more intense a thing is, [the] more precisely is that intensity its relation to being: the intensity of the thing is its relation with being. Can we say all this? It is going to occupy us for a long time.

Before getting into it, you see which misunderstanding we are trying to avoid.

Question: on intensity and the thing (inaudible).

Gilles: The question is not what we believe, the question is how we try to get by in this world of powers. When I said intensity, if it is not that, it doesn't do anything since it was already determined, this type of quantity. It is not that. We are here once again to evaluate how it could be important to undertake a discourse on power (*puissance*)? Given the misunderstandings that we are trying to avoid in every way, it is to understand this as if Spinoza told us, and Nietzsche afterwards, what things will be power. Evidently if the formula power is essence, doesn't even mean, if there is something that this formula doesn't mean, one could translate it by the formula: what each wants is power. No what each wants is power, is a formula which doesn't have anything to do with this. Firstly it is a triviality, secondly it is a thing which is evidently false, thirdly this is surely not what Spinoza means. It is not what Spinoza means because it is stupid and Spinoza does not want to say silly things. It is not: Ha!, everyone, from stones to men, by way of the animals, they want more and more power (*puissance*), they want power (*pouvoir*). No it is not that! We know that it is not that since it doesn't mean that power (*puissance*) is the object of the will. No. So we know this at least, it is consoling. But I would like to insist, once again I appeal to your feeling of the evaluation of importance, in what the philosophers have said to us. I would like to try to develop why this history is very very important, this conversion where things (?) are no longer defined by a qualitative essence, man as reasonable animal, but are defined by a quantifiable power (*puissance*).

I am far from knowing what this quantifiable power is, but I will just try to arrive there by passing via this kind of dreaming of what is important, practically. Practically, does that change something? Yes, you must already feel that practically it changes a lot of things. If I'm interested in what something can do, in what the thing can do, it is very different from those who are interested in what is the essence of the thing. I don't regard, it is not really the same manner of being in the world. But I would like to try to show it by, precisely, a precise moment in the history of the thought.

Classical Natural Right

There I open a parenthesis, but always in this vision: what is this history of power (*puissance*) and of defining things by power (*puissance*). I say: there was a very important moment, a very important tradition, where it is very difficult, historically, to get one's bearings, if you don't have some schemas and reference marks, some points of recognition. It is a history which concerns natural right, and this history concerning natural right, it is necessary that you understand this:

today this appears to us at first glance very out of date, as much juridically as politically. The theories of natural right, in the manuals of law, or in the manuals of sociology, we always see a chapter on natural right, and we treat it as a theory which lasted until Rousseau, including Rousseau, up until the 18th century, but today no one is interested in it, in the problem of natural right. This is not false, but at the same time I would like you to feel that it was too scholarly a vision, it is terrible we bypass things and that is why people are really battered theoretically, we bypass everything that is important in an historic question.

I am saying this, and you are going to see why I am saying it now and how it is really at the heart of the stage where I am. I am saying: for a very long time there has been a theory of natural right, which consists of what? Finally it seems important to me historically because it was the compilation of most of the traditions of Antiquity and the point of confrontation of Christianity with the traditions of Antiquity. In this respect there are two important names in relation to the classical conception of natural right: on the one hand Cicero who recorded in antiquity all the traditions on the subject: Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic. He gives a kind of presentation of natural right in Antiquity which is going to have an extreme importance. It is in Cicero that the Christian philosophers, the Christian jurists, will take (more than other authors), it is above all in Cicero that this kind of adaptation to Christianity of natural right, notably in Saint Thomas, will be made. So there we will have a kind of historical lineage that I am going to call for convenience, so that you will find it again there, the lineage of classical natural right, Antiquity-Christianity.

Now, what do they call natural right?

On the whole, I would say that, in this whole conception, natural right, that which constitutes natural right is that which conforms to the essence. I would almost say that there are several propositions, in this classical theory of natural right. I would just like you to retain them, because when I return to power, [*puissance*] I would like you to have in mind these four propositions. Four basic propositions which are the basis of this conception of classical natural right.

First proposition: a thing is defined by its essence. Natural right is therefore that which conforms to the essence of something. The essence of man is: reasonable animal. This has defined his natural right. What, more, in effect, to be reasonable, is the law of his nature. The law of nature intervenes here. There is the first proposition; thus preference is given to the essences.

Second proposition, in this classical theory: from now on, you understand, natural right can not refer, and it is striking that for most of the authors of Antiquity it is very much like this, natural right doesn't refer to a state which would be supposed to precede society. The state of nature is not a pre-social state, certainly not, it could not be. The state of nature is the state that conforms to the essence in a good society. What do we call a good society? We will call a good society, a society where man can realise his essence. So the state of nature is not before the social state, the state of nature it is the state that conforms to the essence in the best possible society, that is the most apt to realise the essence. There is the second proposition of classical natural right.

Third proposition of classical natural right, they emanate from it: what is first is duty: we have rights only insofar as we have duties. It is very politically practical, all this. It is duties. Indeed, what is duty? Here, there is a term, there is a concept of Cicero in Latin, which is very difficult

to translate and which indicates this idea of functional duty, the duties of function. It is the term *officium*. One of the most important books of Cicero from the point of view of natural right is a book entitled *De officiis*, On the Subject of the functional duties.

And why is it this that is first, duty in existence? It is because duty is precisely the conditions under which I can best realise the essence, i.e. to have a life in conformity with the essence, in the best possible society.

Fourth proposition: there follows a practical rule which will have a great political importance. We could summarize it under the title: the competence of the sage. What is the sage? It is somebody who is singularly competent in the research that relates to the essence, and all that follows from it. The sage is the one who knows what the essence is. Thus there is a principle of competence of the sage because it is the sage who tells us what our essence is, what is the best society, i.e. the society most capable of realizing the essence, and what are our functional duties, our *officia*, i.e. under which conditions we can realise the essence. All this is the competence of the sage. And to the question: to what does the classical sage lay claim? One must reply that the classical sage claims to determine what the essence is, and consequently all kinds of practical tasks follow from this. Hence the political claims of the sage.

Therefore, if I summarize this classical conception of natural right, as a result you understand why Christianity will be very interested by this ancient conception of natural right. It will integrate it into what it will call natural theology, making it one of its fundamental parts.

The four propositions are immediately reconciled with Christianity. First proposition: things are defined and define their rights according to their essence. Second proposition: the law of nature is not pre-social, it is in the best possible society. It is life in conformity with the essence in the best possible society. Third proposition: what is first are duties over rights, because duties are the conditions under which you realise the essence. Fourth proposition: consequently, there is the competence of somebody superior, whether this is the church, the prince or the sage. There is a knowledge [*savoir*] of the essences. Thus the man who knows the essences will be capable of telling us at the same time how to conduct ourselves in life. Conducting oneself in life will be answerable to a knowledge, in the name of which I could say if it is good or bad. There will be thus a man of good, in whatever way it is determined, as man of God or man of wisdom, who will have a competence.

Remember these four propositions well.

Imagine a kind of thunder clap, a guy arrives and says: no, no, no, and in a sense it is the very opposite. Only the spirit of contradiction never works. It is necessary to have reasons, even secret ones, it is necessary to have the most important reasons in order to reverse a theory. One day somebody comes along who is going to make a scandal in the domain of thought. It is Hobbes. He had a very bad reputation. Spinoza read him a lot.

Natural Right according to Hobbes

And here is what Hobbes tells us: first proposition of Hobbes: it is not that. He says that things are not defined by an essence, they are defined by a power [*puissance*]. Thus natural right is not what is in conformity with the essence of the thing, it is everything that the thing can do. And in the right of something, animal or man, everything that it can do. And in its right everything that

it can do. It is at this time that the great propositions of the type, but the large fish eat the small ones start. It is its right of nature. You come across a proposition of this type, you see that it is signed Hobbes, it is in natural right that large fish eat small ones. You risk bypassing it, but you can understand nothing if you say: Ah Good! it is like that. By saying that it is in the natural right of large fish to eat small ones, Hobbes launches a kind of provocation that is enormous since what we've just called natural right was in conformity with the essence, and thus the set of actions that were permitted in the name of the essence. Here, permit, takes on a very different sense: Hobbes announces to us that everything that we can do is permitted. Everything that you can do is permitted, this is natural right. It is a simple idea, but it is an idea that is overwhelming. From where is it coming? He calls that natural right. Everyone from time immemorial knew that large fish ate small ones, never has anybody called that natural right, Why? Because we reserved the word natural right for a completely different thing: moral action that conforms to the essence. Hobbes comes along and says: natural right equals power, therefore what you can do is your natural right. In my natural right is everything that I can do.

Second proposition: consequently, the state of nature is distinguished from the social state, and theoretically precedes it. Why? Hobbes hastens to say it: in the social state, there are prohibitions, there are defenses, there are things that I can do but it is defended. That means that it is not natural right, it is social right. It is in your natural right to kill your neighbor, but it is not in your social right. In other words, the natural right which is identical to power [*puissance*] is necessarily, and refers to, a state which is not the social state. Hence, at that moment, the promotion of the idea that a state of nature is distinguished from the social state. In the state of nature, everything that I can do is permitted. The natural law is that there is nothing to defend from what I can do. The state of nature thus precedes the social state. Already at the level of this second proposition, we understand nothing at all. We believe to have settled all that by saying is there a state of nature; they believed that there was a state of nature, those who said that. Nothing at all, they believe nothing in this respect. They say that logically, the concept of the state of nature is prior to the social state. They do not say that this state existed. If the right of nature is everything that there is in the power [*puissance*] of a being, we will define the state of nature as being the zone of this power. It is its natural right. It is thus instinct of the social state since the social state comprises and is defined by the defenses that bear upon something that I can do. Much more, if I am defended it is because I can do it. It is in this that you recognize a social defense. Therefore, the state of nature is first compared to the social state from the conceptual point of view. What does this mean? Nobody is born social. Social by agreement, perhaps we become it. And the problem of politics will be: how to make it so that men become social? But nobody is born social. That means that you can only think society as a product of becoming. And right is the operation of becoming social.

And in the same way, nobody is born reasonable. For this reason these authors are so opposed to a Christian theme to which Christianity equally held, namely the theme that is known in Christianity under the name of the Adamic tradition. The Adamic tradition is the tradition according to which Adam was perfect before sin. The first man was perfect and sin makes him lose perfection. This Adamic tradition is philosophically significant: Christian natural right is very well reconciled with the Adamic tradition. Adam, before sin, is man in conformity with the essence, he is reasonable. It is sin, i.e. the adventures of existence, that make him lose the essence, his first perfection. All of this is in conformity with the theory of classical natural right. Just as nobody is born social, nobody is born reasonable. Reasonable is like social, it is a becoming. And the problem of ethics will perhaps be how to make it so that man becomes

reasonable, but not at all how to make it so that a man's essence, which would be reasonable, is realised. It is very different if you pose the question like this or like that, you go in very different directions. Hobbes, second proposition will be: the state of nature is pre-social, i.e. man is not born social, he becomes it.

Third proposition: if what is first is the state of nature, or if what is first is right, this is similar since in the state of nature, everything that I can do is my right. Consequently, what is first is right. Consequently, duties will only be secondary obligations tending to limit the rights for the becoming social of man. It will be necessary to limit rights so that man becomes social, but what is first is right. Duty is relative to right, whereas, in the classical theory of natural right, it is just the opposite, right was just relative to duty. What was first was the *officium*.

Fourth proposition: if my right is my power, if rights are first in relation to duties, if duties are only the operation by which rights are induced to limit themselves so that men become social, all kinds of questions are put between brackets. Why do they have to become social? Is it interesting to become social? All kinds of questions that did not arise at all.

From the point of view of natural right, Hobbes says, and Spinoza will take all of this up again but from the point of view of natural right, the most reasonable man in the world and the most complete madman are strictly the same. Why is there an absolute equality of the sage and the fool? It is a funny idea. It is a very baroque world. The point of the view of natural right is: my right equals my power, the madman is the one who does what is in his power, exactly as the reasonable man is the one who does what is in his. They are not saying idiotic things, they are not saying that the madman and the reasonable man are similar, they are saying that there is no difference between the reasonable man and the madman from the point of view of natural right. Why? Because each one does everything that he can. The identity of right and power ensures the equality, the identity of all beings on the quantitative scale. Of course, there will be a difference between the reasonable man and the madman, but in the civil state, in the social state, not from the point of view of natural right. They are in the process of wearing down, of undermining the whole principle of the competent sage or the competence of somebody superior. And that, politically, is very important.

Nobody is competent for me. There it is. There is the great idea that will animate the *Ethics* as the anti-system of Judgement. In a certain manner nobody can do anything for me, but nobody can be competent for me. Feel! What does this mean? It would be necessary to put it all in this sentence nobody is competent for me!, They so much wanted to judge in my place. There is also a discovery filled with wonder: Ha, it is fantastic, but nobody can know, nobody can know for me. Is this completely true? In a certain way it is not completely true! Perhaps there are competences. But, feel finally what there could be that is strange in these propositions... Indeed, this whole new theory of natural right, equally powerful natural right, what is first is right, it is not duty, leads to something: there is no competence of the wise, nobody is competent for myself. Consequently if the society is formed, it can only be, in one way or another, by the consent of those which take part in it, and not because the wise one would tell me the best way of realising the essence. Now, evidently, the substitution of a principle of consent for the principle of competence, has a fundamental importance for all of politics.

Therefore, you see, what I tried to make is just a table of propositions, four propositions against

four propositions, and I am simply saying that, in the propositions of the classical theory of natural right, Cicero-Saint Thomas, you have the juridical development of a moral vision of the world, and, in the other case, the conception which finds its starting point with Hobbes, you have the development and all the seeds of a juridical conception of Ethics: beings are defined by their power.

If I've made this whole long parentheses, it has been to show that the formula beings are defined by their power and not by an essence, had political, juridical, consequences which we are just in the process of anticipating. Now, I just add, to finish with this theme, that Spinoza takes up this whole conception of natural Right in Hobbes. He will change things, he will change relatively significant things, he will not have the same political conceptions as those of Hobbes. But on this same point of natural right he declares himself to be drawing from and to be a disciple of Hobbes. You see that, there, in Hobbes, he found the juridical confirmation of an idea that he himself formed on the other hand, him Spinoza, namely an astonishing confirmation of the idea according to which the essence of things was nothing other than their power, and it is that which is interesting in the idea of natural right. And I add, to be completely honest historically, that never does it emerge like that in one blow, it would be possible to seek, already, in antiquity, a current, but a very partial, very timid current, where a conception like this of natural right equals power would be formed already in antiquity, but it will be stifled. You find it in certain sophists and certain philosophers called Cynics, but its modern explosion will be with Hobbes and Spinoza.

For the moment I have not even explained, I specified what could well be called existing things distinguishing themselves from a quantitative point of view. That means exactly that existing things are not defined by an essence, but by power and they have more or less power. Their right will be the power of each one, the right of each one will be the power of each one, they have more or less power. There is thus a quantitative scale of beings from the point of view of power.

The qualitative polarity of modes of existence

It will now be necessary to pass to the second thing, namely the qualitative polarity of modes of existence and to see if the one follows from the others. The ensemble will give us a coherent vision, or will give us the beginnings of a coherent vision of what is called an Ethics.

So you see why you are not beings from the point of view of Spinoza, you are ways of being, which is understood: if each one is defined by what it can do. It is very curious: you are not defined by an essence, or rather your essence is identical to that which you can do, i.e. you are a degree on a scale of powers (*puissances*). If each one among us is a degree on a scale of power, then you will say to me: there are some who are better, or not. Let's leave that to the side. For the moment we don't know. But if it is like this, you don't have an essence or you only have an essence identical to your power, i.e. you are a degree on this scale. Consequently you are indeed ways of being. The ways of being will be, precisely, this kind of existing thing, existence quantified according to power, according to the degree of power which defines it. You are quantifiers. You are not quantities, or rather you are very special quantities, each one of us is a quantity, but of what type? It is a very very curious vision of the world, very new: to see people as quantities, as packages of power, it is necessary to live it. It is necessary to live it if

that says anything to you.

Hence the other question: but at the same time, these same authors, for example Spinoza, will not cease telling us that there are on the whole two modes of existence. And no matter what you do you are led to choose between the two modes of existence. You exist in such a way that you exist sometimes in one such mode, sometimes in another such mode, and the *Ethics* will be the exposé of these modes of existence. There this is no longer the quantitative scale of power, it is the polarity of distinct modes of existence. How does he pass from the first idea to the second, and what is it he wants to say to us with the second? There are modes of existence which are distinguished as poles of existence. Could you open the windows a little.... You don't ask what it is worth, to do something or to undergo something is to exist in a certain way. You don't ask what it is worth, but you ask what mode of existence it implies.

It is what Nietzsche also said with his story of the Eternal return, he said: it is not difficult to know if something is good or not, this question is not very complicated; it is not an affair of morals. He said make the following test, which would only be in your head. Do you see yourselves doing it an infinite number of times. It is a good criterion. You see it is the criterion of the mode of existence. Whatever I do, whatever I say, could I make of it a mode of existence? If I couldn't, it is ugly, it is evil, it is bad. If I can, then yes! You see that everything changes, it is not morality. In what sense? I say to the alcoholic, for example, I say to him: you like to drink? You want to drink? Good, very well. If you drink, drink in such a way that with each time you drink, you would be ready to drink, redrink, redrink an infinite number of times. Of course at your own rhythm. It is not necessary to rush: at your own rhythm! At that moment there, at least, you agree with yourself. So people are much less shitty to you when they agree with themselves. What it is necessary to fear above all in the life, are the people who do not agree with themselves, this Spinoza said admirably. The venom of neurosis, that's it! The propagation of neurosis, I propagate to you my evil, it is terrible, terrible, it is above all those who are not in agreement with themselves. They are vampires. Whereas the alcoholic who drinks, on the perpetual mode of: ha, it is the last time, it is the last glass! One more time, or once again. That is a bad mode of existence. If you do something, do it as if you must do it a million times. If you are not able to do it like that, do something else. It is Nietzsche who said this, it is not me, all objections are to be addressed to Nietzsche. That can work, that can not work. I do not know why we are discussing all this, what I said. All that is not an affair of truth, it touches on what it can touch on, it is an affair of the practice of living. There are people who live like that.

What does Spinoza try to say to us? It is very curious, I would say that the whole of part four of the *Ethics* develops above all the idea of the polar modes of existence. And in what do you recognize it in Spinoza. What do you recognize it in? For the moment I'm saying things extremely simply for the moment, what do you recognize it in. You recognize it in a certain tone of Spinoza's, when he speaks, from time to time, of the strong, he says in Latin: the strong man, or the free man. Or, on the contrary, he says the slave or the impotent. There you recognize a style which belongs to the *Ethics*. He does not speak about the malicious or the good man. The malicious and the good man is the man related to values according to his essence. But the way in which Spinoza speaks, you feel that it is another tone. It is like for musical instruments. It is necessary to feel the tone of people. It is another tone; he tells you: there is what makes the strong man, there is what you recognize as a strong and free man. Does that mean a sturdy type of man. Of course not! A strong man can be far from strong from a certain point of view, he can even be sick, he can be whatever you want. So, what is this trick of the strong man? It

is a way of life, it is a mode of existence that is opposed to the mode of existence which he calls the slave or the impotent. What do they mean, these styles of life? It is a life style [*style de vie*]. There will be a life style: to live as a slave, to live as impotent. And then another type of life. Once again, what is it? Once again this polarity of the modes, under the form, and under the two poles: the strong or the powerful, and the impotent or the slave, that must say something to us.

Let's continue to go into the night, there, and examine according to the texts what Spinoza calls the slave or the impotent. It is curious. One realizes that what he calls the slave or the impotent, it is there that the resemblances ~ and I don't believe I'm forcing the texts ~ the resemblances to Nietzsche are fundamental, because Nietzsche will not do anything other than to distinguish these two polar modes of existence and to distribute them in very much the same manner. Because we realise with astonishment that what Spinoza calls the impotent ... a mode of existence, what is it? The impotent are the slaves. Good. But what does the slaves mean? Slaves of social conditions? We feel, well, that the answer is no! It is a way of life. There are thus people who are not at all socially slaves, but they live like slaves! Slavery as a way of life and not as social status. Thus there are slaves. But on the same side, the impotent or the slaves, he puts who ? It will become more significant for us: he puts tyrants. Tyrants! And oddly, there will be plenty of stories, the priests. The tyrant, the priest and the slave. Nietzsche will not say more. In his more violent texts, Nietzsche will not say more, Nietzsche will make the trinity: the tyrant, the priest and the slave. It's Odd that it is already literally so in Spinoza. And what is there in common between a tyrant who has power [*pouvoir*], a slave who does not have power, and a priest who seems only to have spiritual power. And what is there in common? And how are they impotent since, on the contrary, they seem to be, at least for the tyrant and the priest, men of power. One political power, and the other spiritual power. If we feel, it is that which I call to sort things out by feelings.

We feel that there is quite a common point. And when we read Spinoza, text after text, we are confirmed on this common point. It is almost like a riddle: for Spinoza what is there in common between a tyrant who has political power, a slave, and a priest who exercises a spiritual power? This something in common is what is going to make Spinoza say: but they are impotent; it is that, in a certain way , they need to sadden life! Curious, this idea.

Nietzsche will also say things like this: they need to make sadness reign! He feels it, he feels it very deeply: they need to make sadness reign because the power that they have can only be founded on sadness. And Spinoza makes a very strange portrait of the tyrant, by explaining that the tyrant is someone who needs, above all, the sadness of his subjects, because there is no terror that doesn't have as its basis a kind of collective sadness. The priest, perhaps for completely other reasons, has need of the sadness of man on his own condition. And when he laughs, it is not more reassuring. The tyrant could laugh, and the favourites, the counselors of the tyrant could also laugh too. It is a bad laugh, and why is it a bad laugh? Not because of its quality, Spinoza would not say that, it is precisely a laughter which has for its object only sadness and the communication of sadness. What does this mean? It is bizarre. The priest, according to Spinoza, essentially needs an action motivated by remorse. Introducing remorse. It is a culture of sadness. Whatever the ends, Spinoza will say that at that moment the ends are equal to us. He judges only that: cultivating sadness. The tyrant for his political power needs to cultivate sadness, the priest needs to cultivate sadness as far as Spinoza can see, who has the experience of the Jewish priest, the Catholic priest and the Protestant priest.

Now Nietzsche throws out a grand sentence by saying: I am the first to do a psychology of the

priest, he said in some pages which are very comical, and to introduce this topic into philosophy, he will define the operation of the priest precisely by what he will call the bad conscience, that is, this same culture of sadness. He will say that it is saddening life, it is always about saddening life!, somewhere. And, indeed why? Because it involves judging life. Now, you will not judge life. You won't submit it to judgment. Life is not the object of judgment, life is not able to be judged, the only way in which you could pass judgment on it is first of all to inject it with sadness. And of course we laugh, I mean that the tyrant can laugh, the priest laughs, but, Spinoza said, in a page that I find very beautiful, his laughter is that of the satyr, and the laughter of the satyr is a bad laugh, why? Because it is laughter which communicates sadness; One can mock nature, the laughter of the satyr is when I mock men. I'm being ironic. The kind of intoxicating irony, I mock men. The satyr is another way of saying that human nature is miserable. Ha see, what misery, human nature! It is the proposition of moral judgment: Ha, what misery is human nature. It could be the object of a sermon or the object of a satyr. And Spinoza, in some very beautiful texts, said: what I've just called an Ethics is the opposite of the satyr.

And yet there are some very comical pages in Spinoza's *Ethics*, but it is not at all the same laughter. When Spinoza laughs, it is in the mode: Ho, look at this here, of what is he capable! Ho ho, and this, we've never seen that! It could be an atrocious villainy, was it necessary to do it, to go that far. It is never the Satyr's laughter, it is never: see how miserable our nature is! It is not the laughter of irony. It is a completely different type of laughter. I would say that it is much more Jewish humor. It is very Spinozist, it is go on, yet another step, I would never have believed that one could have done it! It is a very particular kind of laughter and Spinoza is one of the most cheerful authors in the world. I believe, indeed, that all this that he hates is what religion has conceived as the satyr of human nature. The tyrant, the man of religion, they are satyrs, that is to say that, above all they denounce human nature as miserable since this involves, above all, passing judgment on it. And, consequently, there is a complicity, and this is Spinoza's intuition: there is a complicity of the tyrant, the slave, and the priest. Why? Because the slave is the one who feels better the more things go badly. The worse it goes, the happier he is. This is the mode of existence of the slave! For the slave, whatever the situation, it is always necessary that he sees the awful side. The nasty stuff there. There are people who have a genius for this: these are the slaves. It could be a painting, it could be a scene in the street, there are people who have a genius for it. There is a genius of the slave and at the same time, it is the buffoon. The slave and the buffoon. Dostoyevsky wrote some very profound pages on the unity of the slave and the buffoon, and of the tyrant, these are tyrannical types, they cling, they do not let you go. ∑ They don't stop shoving your nose into whatever shit. They are not happy, they always have to degrade things. It is not that the things are necessarily high, but it is always necessary that they degrade, it is always too high. They must always find a small disgrace, a disgrace in the disgrace, there they become roses of joy, the more repulsive it is the happier they are. They live only like this; this is the slave!

And it is also the man of remorse and it is also the satyr man, it is all that and it is to this that Spinoza opposes the conception of a strong man a powerful man, whose laughter is not the same. It is a kind of very benevolent laughter, the laughter of the man said to be free or strong. He says : if this is what you want, then go on, it is funny, yes it is funny! It is the opposite of the satyr. It is Ethical laughter!

