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## **Spinoza, Nietzsche and Deleuze: The Philosophy of the Body**

**Abstract:** The article aims to explore the roots of Deleuzian body beyond the traditional arguments of the philosophy of the body. In this context, firstly, I discuss the attitude of Cartesian dualism toward the body, and its consequences, which form the beginning of early modern philosophy. At the same time, they reflect the old, traditional views on the body. Those visions describe the body as a corpse in itself. With Spinoza and later Nietzsche the body, and soul/mind dualism is replaced with monism and perspectivism. It is from this perspective that the question of “what can a body do?” is posed. Drawing on the philosophies of Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze describes the body as a vast principle of potentiality. Such a body constantly appears as the dimension of the multiplicity that is self-constructing. Therefore, in this article, while discussing how the attitude toward the concept of the body changed from Descartes to Deleuze on the ontological level, I simultaneously try to demonstrate the capabilities of such a new understanding of the body.

**Keywords:** Descartes, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Deleuze, affect, affection, body, becoming, body without organs, desire, machine, immanence, relation

### **1. Introduction: what can a body do?**

What happened during the 17th century in the history of philosophy, and how did the attitude toward the concept of the body change, especially with and after Descartes? I would put forward that the philosophy of the body begins with Spinoza, who criticized Descartes’s account of the mind, and pointed out the question

of “what can a body do?” on the ground of “practical materialism.” In this respect, Spinoza treated the body and mind as one substance.

I will also discuss Julien de La Mettrie’s view on the body in the section on Descartes because he used Cartesian, and Spinozian notions while adopting a mechanistic outlook. Deleuze also used the concept of the machine when he defined the body as the *Body without Organs*.<sup>1</sup> However, there is an essential distinction between their use of the concept of the machine: Deleuzian body is not simply a physical object but also a site of potentiality, and openness, a machine understood as an open system, not a closed one like that of La Mettrie’s.

Then I will focus on the Nietzschean body because Deleuze’s ideas of the body are a development of Spinoza’s and Nietzsche’s philosophy. Nietzsche reformulated Spinoza’s being as becoming. While Deleuze accepted the importance Spinoza gave to the body, he improved its understanding with Nietzsche’s interventions in Spinoza’s stable being. Without Nietzsche, from the perspective of Spinoza and Deleuze, the philosophy of the body can be only partially understood. Thus, Deleuze’s understanding of the body is also profoundly connected to his interpretation of Spinoza’s concept of immanence and Nietzsche’s becoming. In the French philosopher’s view, the body is constantly in the state of becoming, and it is shaped by its environment, experiences, and interactions with others. In the last chapter, I will investigate Deleuzian body as a continuation of Spinoza and Nietzsche’s philosophical heritage.

### 1.1. Descartes — body as a corpse and a machine

I would argue that Descartes’s philosophy was a continuation of Plato’s philosophy but with some remarkable differences. First, for the ancient Greeks, philosophy was the love of wisdom, and was seen as an activity of the soul. Descartes’s dualism is strictly related to Plato’s dialogues, especially *Phaedo*. In that dialogue, Plato argued that the body was the biggest obstacle to reaching wisdom. For him the soul was immortal, and the body was perishable; accordingly, knowledge as a virtue, could not come from the fleeting body pursuing its passions.<sup>2</sup> In Platonism the body was often regarded disdainfully, leading to a desire to escape its confines.

Precisely in this sense, Descartes’s dualism was impacted by Platonism, which inspired Descartes’s views on the soul/the mind and the body. However, until Descartes, no philosopher treated the body and the soul/the mind as two different substances at the philosophical terminological level. Descartes was the first to introduce the term “mind” as a synonym for the soul. It is well-known that there is no precise distinction between the soul and the mind in Descartes’s philosophy. On the

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<sup>1</sup> BwO: Body without Organs, a concept introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus & Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. R. Hurley, M. Seem, H.R. Lane, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2000; G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2005). From now on, I will use its abbreviation in the article.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, transl. D. Gallop, New York: Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 32, 33, 34, 37, 38 & 82 c, d, e, 83, 83 b, c, d, e, 84, 84 a, 84 b, 87 e, 88, 88 b.

contrary, Descartes treated the mind as Plato treated the soul: “a body can very easily perish, whereas the mind by its nature is immortal.”<sup>3</sup>

The problem of the mortal body and immortal soul has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy. With Cartesian distinction between the body and the mind as two different essences<sup>4</sup> of human beings, the issue came up again in modern philosophy with different terminology, and new aspects. For instance, in Descartes’s thought, the soul was subtle like the wind, and made of a different material than the body.<sup>5</sup> Such views on the mind recall the old and traditional interpretations of the soul. Apparently, for Descartes, the soul was reduced to the mind, or the mind was a new word for the soul. I would argue that Descartes concealed the understanding of the soul in modern philosophical terminology as the concept of the mind. And thus, we see the return of Plato in modern philosophy through Descartes albeit in a concealed manner.

Descartes mainly employed the concepts of *res cogitans* (“thinking thing”) and *res extensa* (“extended thing”) to describe the mind and the body, respectively, in *Mediation VI* of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. *Res cogitans* refers to the mind, which he believed to be a non-physical, thinking substance that exists independently of the body, and is indivisible. *Res Extensa*, i.e., the physical body, occupies space, has a shape, and dimensions, and is divisible. Descartes supposed that the mind was superior to the body, and he believed that the mind could move the body, or the mind could cause the motion of the body;<sup>6</sup> in other words, he treated thinking as the action of the mind, which causes the movement of the body. Addressing the differences between them, he said: “The mind is proved to be really distinct from the body, even though the mind is shown to be so closely joined to the body that it forms a single unit with it.”<sup>7</sup>

In Cartesian philosophy, the modern subject, of a dualistic nature, emerged. His famous sentence “I think, therefore I am”;<sup>8</sup> created a conflict between the “I” and “the body.” In Descartes’s thought, “I am” is a non-extended thing:

I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, insofar as I am merely a thinking thing and not an extended thing, and because on the other hand I have a distinct idea of a body, insofar as it is merely an extended thing and not a thinking thing, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, this dualism remains closely associated with the concept of God in Cartesian philosophy. The coexistence of two things whose nature is completely different depends on something transcending these two things: God’s arrangement of the relationship between them. To be more precise, according to Descartes,

<sup>3</sup> R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, transl. D.A. Cress, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company 1998, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 100–101.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 96, 97, 101, 102.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 96.

God or the Infinite Substance regulates the relationship between them without any clash, although they are non-identical.

He mainly mentions two attributes of God in his *Meditation III*: these are the concepts of the infinite and perfection.<sup>10</sup> In Descartes's philosophy, a subject cannot reach the concept of infinity and perfection by itself because it is finite and imperfect; therefore these two concepts must come to the subject from a transcendent dimension as the innate knowledge.

Descartes treated the body itself as a corpse. As he said: "Now it occurred to me first that I had a face, hands, arms, and this entire mechanism of bodily members: the very same as are discerned in a corpse, and which I referred to by the name »body«." <sup>11</sup> He assumed that the mind cannot be subject to physical laws or limitations. As I articulated above, the way he described the mind was reminiscent of the Platonic soul, which meant that it was immortal. Why can't we separate the body and the mind from each other on the ontological level since, according to Descartes, they are not made from the same material? We can separate them only at the abstract level, not in any tangible way because they act as a single unit. To resolve these issues let us quote Descartes at length:

There is nothing that this nature teaches me more explicitly than that I have a body that is ill-disposed when I feel pain, that needs food and drink when I suffer hunger or thirst, and the like. Therefore, I should not doubt that there is some truth in this. By means of these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst and so on, nature also teaches not merely that I am present to my body in the way a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am most tightly joined and, so to speak, commingled with it, so much so that I and the body constitute one single thing. For if this were not the case, then I, who am only a thinking thing, would not sense pain when the body is injured; rather, I would perceive the wound by means of the pure intellect, just as a sailor perceives by sight whether anything in his ship is broken. And when the body is in need of food or drink, I should understand this explicitly, instead of having confused sensations of hunger and thirst. For clearly these sensations of thirst, hunger, pain, and so on are nothing but certain confused modes of thinking arising from the union and, as it were, the commingling of the mind with the body.<sup>12</sup> [emphasis mine, O. I.]

Descartes, in his *Meditation II*, assumed that the nature of the human mind is better known than that of the body.<sup>13</sup> This is because Descartes categorized different attributes of the soul, which show themselves in different ways, as the "I" and the "body" respectively. He argued that although I perceive, smell, and taste with my body, the "I" cannot consist of the parts of my body. At the same time, all types of actions are possible when I am in the body. It is true that without a body, I cannot even think. However, Descartes referred nourishing, walking, perceiving (by touch, sight, hearing, taste, or smell), and thinking to the soul, and added that these actions were the attributed to the soul.<sup>14</sup> Even the passions/emotions spring up from the activities of the soul, and so it was no coincidence that Descartes also wrote a separate book entitled *The Passions of the Soul* (1649). Following the activity of the attributes of the soul, which one of these could be related to the "I"?

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, pp. 76–78.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, pp. 97–98.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, pp. 64–65.

He believed that, although in total four actions were the attributes of the soul, only thinking properly belongs to the “I”; it alone is inseparable from “me.” Since, on Descartes’s approach, the “I” must be connected to thinking, I am a thinking thing. And it is in this regard, that Descartes created a conflict between the “I” and the body. But why did he separate thinking related to the “I” from the other attributes of the soul?

Descartes thought that the attributes of the soul, such as nourishing, walking, and perceiving were shared with animals. The unique attribute of the soul is thinking, and it forms an insurmountable difference between human and nonhuman beings,<sup>15</sup> because the only entity in nature that can refer to itself in the form of an “I am” utterance is human, and this self-reference can only happen through an act of thought. Therefore, Descartes perceived nonhuman animals as devoid of thought, and as mere machines. Faculties of nourishing, walking, and perceiving are not enough to say “I am,” therefore beings in possession of such attributes but devoid of thought can only exist as a body/corpse or a machine. These bodies operate only as automatons; in other words, their body functions like a machine, with bodily processes and movements explained solely through mechanical principles, such as the circulation of fluids, digestion, and muscular contractions. This mechanistic view allowed him to explain physiological phenomena systematically and predictably, just like the functioning of a mechanical device.<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, all bodies are subject to physical laws and can be moved by external forces. The body for Descartes is a corpse, a machine being that consists of physical parts of substance different from the mind. In this respect, for Descartes, mechanistic physics is a method by which one can understand one’s body. In this sense, it works as a closed and static entity, consisting of constant and predictable movements.

After Descartes, Cartesian-mechanistic view became famous as a method of understanding the mind-body problem, especially in the works of Julien Offrey de La Mettrie (1709–1751). La Mettrie summarizes the philosophies of Descartes, Malebranche, Wolff, Spinoza, etc., from such a mechanistic point of view; he adopts the methods of Cartesian mechanism and applies them to Spinoza’s being. In this regard, he also made the body into a machinic being.

It was not an accident that La Mettrie wrote an essay *Treatise on the Soul*. The essay, published in 1750, was an amended version of his *The Natural History of the Soul*, first published in 1745. He tried to find the soul in the matter and discussed three attributes of the matter in organized bodies; its characteristics included extension, motive force, and feeling faculty.<sup>17</sup> He rejected the dualistic structure of human beings, and criticized Cartesian philosophers as well: “They admitted two distinct substances as if they had seen and counted them.”<sup>18</sup> He himself accepted only a single and actual material reality.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, pp. 26–33.

<sup>17</sup> J.O.D. La Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, transl. A. Thomson, New York: Cambridge University Press 1996, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

La Mettrie radicalized Cartesian view, and focused on one side of Descartes's philosophy. He took the description of the machine that Descartes created for the material side of human existence, all bodies, and all animals. He applied it to a single and unified material nature of human beings. In another essay of his *Machine Man* (1747), he referred to Cartesian hypothesis that animals are just machines without a soul and argued that, in this respect, humans are like animals.<sup>19</sup> In *Man as Plant* (1748), he strived to illustrate the functions of the human body based on a comparison with the organization of plants, attempting to show the uniformity of the animal and vegetable structures.<sup>20</sup> For La Mettrie, the soul materialized on the axis of the body, and there was no conflict between the body and the mind. La Mettrie's approach to human beings was a sort of radical materialization and mechanization of the mind with the body as its center. As such, his philosophy was a one-sided continuation of Cartesian view. It remains unclear why exactly La Mettrie followed Cartesian philosophy but then developed a monistic rather than dualistic concept of human's nature. He used Spinoza's concepts of the self-organizing ability of matter and the feeling faculty of matter, while Descartes did not mention any of them. Thus, it seems that La Mettrie designed this understanding of human nature as a development from Spinoza's understanding of being, not Descartes's, but interpreted the mind as a product of the body from a mechanical point of view.

Deleuze criticized the closed machine-body concept and interpreted the body not as fixed, but as something open that constantly establishes new connections related to immanent being. But before I examine this, I will turn to Spinoza's monism alternative to Cartesian dualism, and his attempt to reconstruct the body, which included the criticism of Descartes's assumptions.

## 1.2. Spinoza — body as the source of affection

Spinoza's philosophical alignment with Cartesian principles is particularly evident through his publication of *The Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* (1663). This work, the only one published during his lifetime, underscores Cartesian influence on his early thought. A deeper analysis, with a focus on his magnum opus *Ethics*, reveals that his original ideas can be traced to that treatise.

Nevertheless, Spinoza moved decidedly beyond Cartesian dualism, and introduced an innovative philosophy, firmly rejecting the notion of two separate human essences. This pivotal shift prompts an inquiry into how he navigated the transition from Cartesian dualism to a monism of his own.

Spinoza's divergence from Cartesianism was rooted in his opposition to the dualistic conception of the human as consisting of two distinct substances — mind and body. He instead proposed a single, all-encompassing infinite substance housing infinite modes or attributes.<sup>21</sup> His conception of the infinite, whether referred to as God, Nature, or *Deus sive Natura*, intricately interweaves the One and the

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, pp. 7, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 78–84.

<sup>21</sup> B. Spinoza, *The Ethics and Other Works*, transl. E. Curley, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994, p. 85, D6, Book I.

Many, presenting them as inseparable expressions of the singular entity. This is exemplified in the initial chapters of *Ethics*, where the concept of God is explained as *Causa Sui*.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Spinoza's division of Nature into *Natura Naturans* (the creative power) and *Natura Naturata* (the created world) further elucidates his holistic framework.<sup>23</sup>

Central to Spinoza's philosophy is the assertion that only a single infinite substance, *Deus sive Natura*, exists, and everything derives from it as its modes.<sup>24</sup> In Spinoza's view, the One, whether understood as God or Nature, consistently manifests itself as the Many. His exploration extends to demonstrating how the Many can enrich the One, maintaining an unbroken harmony between the infinite substance and Nature. Unlike Descartes's concepts, Spinoza's philosophy steers clear of a transcendent God and transcendent relationships between attributes and modes. Notably, Spinoza's *Infinite* and *Perfect Substance* is inherently immanent,<sup>25</sup> representing a self-caused, omnipotent entity possessing infinite attributes and modes.

Spinoza's perspective imbues being with naturalistic traits. The simultaneous self-causation of being and the perpetual self-organization of matter underpin his philosophy. The innate tendency, the innate knowledge of the matter/conatus or striving inherent in the matter, is emblematic of its perpetual inclination to persist. Spinoza succinctly captures this idea thus: "Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being."<sup>26</sup>

Integral to Spinoza's framework is the concept of conatus, the drive to endure, inherent in all modes of the infinite substance. This practical materialism, embedded within a framework of naturalism and rationalism, contrasts sharply with La Mettrie's view. Now, it is more evident how La Mettrie used Spinoza's understanding of self-organized matter in the context of a mechanistic view.

In Spinoza's philosophy, human beings are construed as modes of the infinite substance. His monism unites the mind and body into a seamless whole, replacing Descartes's dualism. Spinoza envisions the mind and body as intimately interconnected facets of the same entity. While he emphasizes the causal link between mental and physical aspects, his approach avoids strict reductionism. Rather than positing a conventional soul, Spinoza's philosophy embraces a holistic comprehension of human nature where mental and physical attributes intricately interplay. Such a view envisions the mind and body as two sides of the same coin. Consequently, every mental state corresponds to a physical state, and vice versa. In essence, Spinoza overturns Cartesian primacy of the mind over the body, asserting:

The body cannot determine the mind to thinking, and the mind cannot determine the body to motion, to rest, or to anything else (if there is anything else). [...] No one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of Na-

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<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 85, D1, Book I.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, pp. 57, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, pp. 91, 94, P11, P15, Book I.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 100, P18, Book I.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 159. P6, P7, Book III.

ture alone; insofar as Nature is only considered to be corporeal, and what the body can do only if it is determined by the mind.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, Spinoza's philosophy challenges conventional perceptions that prioritize the mind over the body. He contends that our understanding of the body's potential is often overshadowed by mentalism, leading to a lack of appreciation for bodily capabilities. Moreover, the hierarchical distinction between mind and body creates a disconnection between them. The Jewish thinker reframes this dynamic, underscoring the symbiotic relationship between mind and body. His perspective emphasizes that the mind is not merely an abstraction of the body but an intrinsic component of it. Consequently, he presents a nuanced interplay where both elements contribute to the holistic human experience. In alignment with this notion, Spinoza asserts: "The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body or a certain mode of extension which exists, and nothing else."<sup>28</sup>

Mainly, Spinoza's philosophy is the idea that the mind and body are inseparable aspects of a unified whole. Their intricate relationship underscores the realization that one is at once both mind and body, with their interactions shaping our lived experiences. This insight is epitomized in his assertion that: "The mind does not know itself, except insofar as it perceives the ideas of the modifications of the body."<sup>29</sup> Regarding the scope of the mind's knowledge, Spinoza further emphasizes that the human mind perceives external bodies only through the ideas derived from the modifications of its own body.<sup>30</sup>

In Spinoza's philosophical realm, the dualism between mind and body gives way to a unified relationship, both being distinct dimensions of the same entity. His philosophy embodies rigorous parallelism, and he underscores the essence of this unity stating: "we understand not only that the human mind is united to the body, but also what should be understood by the union of mind and body. But no one will be able to understand adequately, or distinctly, unless he first knows adequately the nature of our body."<sup>31</sup>

The quoted passage raises a question about understanding the body's capabilities. What is the capability of the body and how does a body move?

To comprehensively grasp the nature of the body, delving deeper into the concept of conatus or striving, is essential. This notion encapsulates the inherent drive within each entity to sustain its existence. Spinoza properly captures this essence, noting that: "The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing."<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, Spinoza addresses three primary affections closely tied to the body. However, before examining these emotions, it is crucial to acknowledge his identification of two fundamental forces: *affectus* and *affectio*. Notably, Gilles Deleuze criticized the translation of these terms, advocating for a clearer distinction. *Affec-*

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, pp. 155–156, P2, Book III.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 123, P13, Book II.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 133, P23, Book II.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 134, P26, Book II.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 124, Book II.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 159, P7, Book III.



*tus*, according to Deleuze,<sup>33</sup> should be translated as “affect,” capturing the immediate emotional response elicited by external stimuli, bodies, or events. *Affectio*, in contrast, should be translated as “affection,” encompassing the broader emotional states, including joy, sorrow, anger, and love.

*Affectio*, or affection, pertains to an individual’s passive sensitivity towards being influenced by external objects, other entities, or events. It encompasses the capacity to be acted upon or influenced by external factors. *Affectio* is a neutral term that merely signifies the potential for being affected and does not inherently imply any specific emotional response. The concepts of *affectus* and *affectio* constitute the general framework for the body’s capabilities. This type of bodily potentiality is directly intertwined with how matter organizes itself. These arrangements of matter — specifically the interactions among its modes that form an ordered or ethical pattern — form the realm of *Ethics*. In this context, *Ethics* investigates the existence of bodily life. For Spinoza, the body turned into a source of affection.

Furthermore, every affection triggers a corresponding idea in the mind. While the human body comprises interconnected physical entities, the human mind is a composition of various ideas. In simpler terms, each idea corresponds to a distinct affect, feeling, or emotion in the body. Within this framework, Spinoza categorizes fundamental emotions — joy, sorrow, and desire/*cupiditas*. All other affects emanate from this foundational trinity in Spinoza’s philosophy.<sup>34</sup>

The foundation of ethics is rooted in emotions/affections generated through interactions among bodies. For Spinoza, the assessment of these encounters revolves around their impact on the body’s potency and the will to desire. An encounter that strengthens the body’s power and leads to joy is deemed positive, whereas one that results in sorrow is seen as negative. Consider the concept of “pharmakon” from Greek, which signifies both poison and medicine. When poison acts as a remedy for the body, this interaction is perceived as positive. Consequently, *Ethics*, from this perspective, lacks inherent “Good” and “Evil” as fixed moral constructs. Spinoza rejected the notion that something is inherently desirable due to its inherent goodness. Rather, he contended that something is good because it is desired. This viewpoint underlies Spinoza’s affirmative nature or being. Thus, Spinoza’s ethical framework guides interactions between bodies to enhance their potency. It establishes a relationship between the One and the Many.

This nexus between the One and Many in Spinoza’s thought forms the foundational structure of Deleuze’s concept of the Body without Organs, a topic I will investigate further in the subsequent chapter. In contrast to a monistic structure, Deleuzian bodies are organized as entities comprising intricate layers of relations that forge and sever connections. While this notion aligns with Spinoza’s conception, it manifests an entity stemming from multifaceted relationships. To explore Deleuzian bodies holistically, one must first consider Nietzsche’s perspectivism and his critique of monism. Nietzsche’s critique of Spinoza is accompanied by an appre-

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<sup>33</sup> G. Deleuze, “Lecture Transcripts on Spinoza’s Concept of Affect,” 24.01.1978, <https://www.web-deleuze.com/textes/14> (accessed: 30.08.2023).

<sup>34</sup> B. Spinoza, *The Ethics and Other Works*, p. 161, Book III.

ciation for Spinoza's affirmative ethics and the distinct interpretation of the body it presents. In this light, Deleuze refines the concept of the body, drawing from Spinoza while enhancing it with Nietzschean insights.

## 2. Nietzsche — body as a singing and dancing god

In the first chapter, I argued that Cartesian mind-body dualism was influenced by Platonist philosophy and that Plato's ideas resurfaced in modern philosophy through Descartes. Nietzsche engaged in philosophical competition with Plato and Platonism, considering Plato as his primary adversary, caricature — a stance he outlined in *The Will to Power*.<sup>35</sup> In my view the concept of anti-philosophy, as applied by Alain Badiou to Nietzsche's philosophy,<sup>36</sup> suggests that Nietzsche's philosophy is not so much against philosophy in general but specifically against Platonic philosophy. Therefore, Nietzsche developed a philosophy that diverged from the contours of Platonic thought. What does this mean?

Nietzsche developed a philosophy centered on the affirmation of life.<sup>37</sup> He saw life itself as inherently creative and affirmative. As has been shown above, the idea of transforming being into an affirmative state can be traced back to Spinoza, it is also a perspective shared by Deleuze. Nietzsche admired Spinoza for his affirmative concept of being. Deleuze described this affirmation thus: "Instead of understanding univocal being as neutral or indifferent, Spinoza presents it as an object of pure affirmation. Univocal being becomes identical with a unique, universal, and infinite substance, proposed as *Deus sive Natura*."<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, Nietzsche criticized various aspects of traditional metaphysics and ontology, including Spinoza's monism, which posited the existence of a single ultimate reality. In a critical response, Nietzsche advocated for perspectivism<sup>39</sup> — an idea that knowledge and truth are subjective, and shaped by individual points of view, contexts, and interpretations. He firmly rejected the concept of absolute truths and embraced the diversity of perspectives at the onto-ethical level.

Nietzsche revised Spinoza's being into becoming. The German thinker sought to challenge the traditional concept of being — which was stable and unchanging — and instead embraced the concept of a processual becoming. In Nietzsche's philosophical framework, reality is not static but marked by continuous flux and transformation. Furthermore, Nietzsche's idea of becoming is closely intertwined with his concept of the "will to power." What is "will to power"? Nietzsche closes his book under the same title, with these words:

<sup>35</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, transl. W. Kaufmann, R.J. Hollingdale, New York: Vintage Books 1968, p. 202.

<sup>36</sup> A. Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, transl. B. Bosteels, New York: Verso Books 2011, p. 69.

<sup>37</sup> F. Nietzsche, *WP* [hereinafter referred to as *WP*], pp. 536, 539.

<sup>38</sup> G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, transl. P. Patton, New York: Columbia University Press 1994, p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> F. Nietzsche, *WP*, p. 267.

And do you know what “the world” is to me?... This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by “nothingness” as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be “empty” here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my “beyond good and evil,” without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself — do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles? A light for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? — This world is the will to power — and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power — and nothing besides!<sup>40</sup>

Nietzsche argued that all life forms, including humans, are propelled by a fundamental drive for self-assertion, self-overcoming, and the realization of their potential, rather than mere self-preservation (Spinoza’s conatus). He introduced the concept of the “will to power,” which he viewed as a creative and transformative principle driving the process of becoming.<sup>41</sup> In his view, everything that exists is interconnected with and influenced by this cosmic will, making it the underlying cause of all existence.

Regarding this perspective, Nietzsche criticized Spinoza’s concept of conatus in his philosophy. But why did he do so?

Nietzsche argued that the concept of conatus, often understood as the “will to live” or “self-preservation,” cannot serve as a fundamental drive in his philosophy.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, according to Nietzsche, conatus is a disguised, degenerate form of the will to power, and he marked it as “the lowest form of will to power.”<sup>43</sup> Reducing the nature of being solely to the will to live results in the creation of what could be called “slave bodies.” This is because conatus does not encompass the full essence of life for Nietzsche, for it only preserves it, making its bearer a slave to a mere preservation of life.

Nietzsche viewed the will as a liberating and creative force. In his perspective, it liberates individuals from old values, and enables the creation of new ones. Nietzsche expressed this idea when he wrote, “...my will always comes to me as my liberator and bringer of joy. Willing liberates: that is the true teaching of will and lib-

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<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, pp. 549–550.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 330.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 367.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 406.

erty — thus Zarathustra teaches it... Willing liberates because willing is creating: thus I teach. And you should learn only for creating!”<sup>44</sup>

Slave bodies are fundamentally oriented towards obeying and preservation of conventional values. In contrast, the body that emerges from the view embedded in the will to power must be creative. This means that it constantly engages in the process of reevaluation and recreation. As the body’s capacity for movement and action increases, so does its potential for creativity. Nietzsche’s teaching can be summarized as follows: he advocates saying “No” to anything that weakens or depletes one’s strength and “Yes” to anything that strengthens, intensifies, and justifies the feeling of strength.<sup>45</sup> Relating to the strength of the body, he also says:

My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (-its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies, and ends by coming to an arrangement (“union”) with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on.<sup>46</sup>

Nietzsche views the body as a multiplicity (“The body is [...] a multiplicity [...]”<sup>47</sup>). At the same time, his Zarathustra proclaims “body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something pertaining to the body.”<sup>48</sup> This all resonates with Spinoza’s *Ethics*, where the Jewish thinker also explores the idea of multiplicity within the context of the body, and its inter and outer relations. Nietzsche’s recognition of the importance of the intricate connections between the body, and its experiences, particularly affections, could be understood through his emphasis on having control over one’s emotions and affects. In this context, Nietzsche’s perspective shares common ground with Spinoza’s philosophy, where both philosophers emphasize the importance of managing emotions, and recognizing their illogical nature.<sup>49</sup>

Nietzsche extols, and exalts anything that can affirm life. Among that the most important are the acts of singing and dancing, which are the activities Nietzsche frequently glorifies in his writings. He sees these actions as indispensable philosophical teachings that amplify the intensity of bodily passions and joy, considering them as virtues.

In his words: “the supple persuading body, the dancer whose parable and epitome is the self-joyous soul. Such self-joy of body and soul calls itself: »Virtue«.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, he praises a god that imparts the wisdom of dance. Nietzsche firmly declares, “I would only believe in a god who knew how to dance.”<sup>51</sup> Consequently, he portrays Zarathustra as the harbinger of new joyous teachings, guiding his disciples in the arts of song, and dance during his journey.

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<sup>44</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* [hereinafter referred to as *TSZ*], transl. A. Del Caro, New York: Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 66, 165.

<sup>45</sup> F. Nietzsche, *WP*, p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 340.

<sup>47</sup> F. Nietzsche, *TSZ*, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> F. Nietzsche, *WP*, p. 237.

<sup>50</sup> F. Nietzsche, *TSZ*, p. 152.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

It is important to note that Nietzsche does not regard those who cannot dance as capable of embodying his teachings, asserting, “They have heavy feet and sultry hearts — they do not know how to dance. How could the earth be light to them?”<sup>52</sup> This exclusion underscores the significance Nietzsche places on the vitality and joy embodied in the act of dancing as an expression of life’s affirmation. Such great is the importance of dance that he states “Only in dance do I know how to speak the parables of the highest things...”<sup>53</sup>

One could also say that Nietzsche’s philosophical perspective reveals itself through the metaphor of dance. In essence, the German thinker conceives of the dynamic interplay of “being” or “nature” as a perpetual dance, where “becoming” signifies a continuous state of change and transition. This process of “becoming” represents an ever-shifting ongoing dance.

Within this framework, dance assumes a profound significance. It introduces a new realm of possibilities that serves to affirm the body by loosening its constraints and rigidities. In other words, Nietzsche views dance as a mode of expression that forces it to experiment with the limitations of the physical form, allowing the body to embrace change and fluidity.

Nietzsche’s Zarathustra sings and dances. Zarathustra’s singing means the instillation of new values; his dancing while offering new values is also the application of these new values. Namely, singing and dancing are revaluations of all values. It is no coincidence that Nietzsche wrote some of his writings under the name Dionysius, and glorified the activities of singing and dancing as Dionysiac Powers. Related to these ideas, he underlined:

Singing and dancing, man expresses his sense of belonging to a higher community... there now sounds out from within man something supernatural: he feels himself to be a god, and he now moves in such ecstasy and sublimity as once he saw the gods move in his dreams. Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: all nature’s artistic power reveals itself here, amidst shivers of intoxication, to the highest, most blissful satisfaction of the primordial unity.<sup>54</sup>

Consequently, bodily movements, such as dancing, can be seen as a form of uncovering the layers of possibilities of the body, allowing us to craft numerous new perspectives on reality.

In a similar vein, Deleuze introduces the concept of the Body without Organs (“BwO”), which encompasses diverse viewpoints on reality and prompts a reevaluation of the relationships among the constituent parts of the body. While developing his approach, Deleuze maintains a dual influence, drawing inspiration from both Spinoza and Nietzsche. Now that we have a basic understanding of what constitutes a Spinozian and Nietzschean body, let us delve into the concept of a Deleuzian body, exploring how it diverges and converges with his philosophical predecessors.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, p. 238.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, p. 87

<sup>54</sup> F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, transl. R. Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 18.

## 2.1. Gilles Deleuze — a body without organs as the immanent limit

In the introduction to the collection of essays *Deleuze and the Body*, Joe Hughes asks the following question: “is there a coherent theory of the body in Deleuze, and if there is, what can we do with it?”<sup>55</sup>

I will reply to this question through Deleuze’s interpretation of Spinoza in his book *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, in which he says: “Spinoza can consider two fundamental questions as equivalent: What is the structure (*fabrica*) of a body? And: What can a body do? A body’s structure is the composition of its relation. What a body can do corresponds to the nature and limits of capacity to be affected.”<sup>56</sup>

Deleuze’s philosophy offers a profound definition of the body, rooted in the ideas of Spinoza, which he enriched through his engagement with Nietzschean thought. The Jewish philosopher’s conception of the body is a central pillar of Deleuzian philosophy.

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, in the subsection of the second chapter entitled *The Body*, Deleuze starts with Spinoza’s suggestion for a starting point for science and philosophy, which is the examination of the body. As the chapter continues, he reads Spinoza’s body-centered thought as the domain of Nietzsche’s preoccupation with the power relationships between forces: “What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body — whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship.”<sup>57</sup>

Deleuze examines the body through a Nietzschean lens, categorizing forces working within it as either active or reactive. This view presents the body as a complex phenomenon, composed of interconnected and commanding forces.<sup>58</sup> What sets Deleuze’s interpretation apart from others, is his emphasis on the body’s capacity as a sensibility, an affectivity, and a sensation. On this track he follows Nietzsche.<sup>59</sup>

Deleuze views the philosophies of Spinoza and Nietzsche as interconnected and continuous, considering them as a series of superimpositions building upon each other. To enrich his account of the body derived from their philosophies, Deleuze borrows the term “Body without Organs” from Antonin Artaud’s play, called *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*. He and the experimental, controversial psychoanalyst Felix Guattari (1930–1992) further developed this term into an expansive concept of potential. The BwO is an abstract and dynamic concept that questions the rigid and pre-established frameworks of the physical body. The BwO is a pure multiplicity of immanence, and an unshaped and boundless realm filled

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<sup>55</sup> J. Hughes, “Introduction & Pity the Meat? Deleuze and the Body,” [in:] *Deleuze and the Body*, L. Guillaume, J. Hughes (ed.), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2011, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, transl. M. Joughin, New York: Zone Books 1990, p. 218.

<sup>57</sup> G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, transl. H. Tomlinson, New York: Continuum Press 2002, p. 40.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 40–42.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 62–64.

with intensities, desires, and fluid movements that exist before any organization or categorization takes place.<sup>60</sup> The French thinkers called it even “not a concept, [but] a set of practices”<sup>61</sup> signifying a state where the body is not organized into fixed structures or hierarchies. Instead, it represents a fluid and dynamic intensity of unformed matter. Relating to this, they said:

The BwO causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a *spatium* that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree—to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced. It is nonstratified, unformed, intense matter, the matrix of intensity, intensity = 0; but there is nothing negative about that zero, there are no negative or opposite intensities. Matter equals energy. Production of the real as an intensive magnitude starting at zero. That is why we treat the BwO as the full egg before the extension of the organism and the organization of the organs, before the formation of the strata...<sup>62</sup>

The BwO is not only a field of intensities but also a restructuring of the relationship between the One and the Many. The BwO resonates with *Ethics*:

After all, is not Spinoza’s *Ethics* the great book of the BwO... It is a problem not of the One and the Multiple but of a fusional multiplicity that effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple. A formal multiplicity of substantial attributes that, as such, constitutes the ontological unity of substance.<sup>63</sup>

What, then, does the concept of the BwO entail in terms of redefining the relationship between unity and multiplicity? As previously mentioned, it represents unformed matter and, in this sense, serves as a realm of constant flux. Deleuze and Guattari posed a question: “How do you make yourself a Body without Organs?”<sup>64</sup> To answer this question, it’s crucial to understand the purpose, if any, behind the concept of a BwO.

The French thinkers assert: “We gradually come to realize that the BwO is not in opposition to the organs. The organs are not its adversaries. The true adversary is the organism... The BwO is not set against the organs but rather against the organization of the organs, which we refer to as the organism.”<sup>65</sup> The BwO is an immanent limit.<sup>66</sup> It challenges the concept of the organism, which represents a fixed and habitual relationship between organs, collectively defining what we commonly understand as a “body.”

Instead of adhering to the accustomed relationships among organs, which constitute the broader sense of an organism (and the organism makes up a body), the BwO offers a fresh onto-ethical framework. There are always new relationships as encounters between organs, but it is accustomed to interpret these relationships as

<sup>60</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [hereinafter referred to as *TP*], transl. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2005, pp. 153, 154, 157, 165.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.

<sup>62</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *TP*, p. 153.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 153–154.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 149.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 159.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 154.

fixed functionality of the whole body. Consequently, comprehending the critique of the organism and rethinking the definitions of the body becomes pivotal.

When they mention the BwO it is almost as if Spinoza were talking: “The human body is composed of a number of individual parts of diverse nature, each one of which is in itself extremely complex.”<sup>67</sup> That’s why *Ethics* has been featured as the BwO’s great book. Before doing philosophy we usually have some conceptions of the good and bad, and start with them. Deleuze called such thinking the dogmatic image of thought.<sup>68</sup> The moral presuppositions that predetermined thinking were criticized by Nietzsche as well, and Deleuze adopted his critique and applied it to the fixed definition of the body. As a result, the BwO emerged. Here the following question could be asked: How is it possible to produce a BwO from the body?

It is important to emphasize that “the BwO is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire (with desire defined as the process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it)”<sup>69</sup>. Both Spinoza and Nietzsche propose the fundamental principle of conatus and will to power, respectively, as the organizing force in the material world. These principles give shape to forces and render them visible and corporeal. However, in Deleuze’s philosophy, this fundamental principle takes on the form of desire. Here, desire serves as the creative force capable of producing what Deleuze and Guattari call the BwO. But what exactly does desire mean in Deleuze’s framework?

The first definitions of desire appeared in ancient Greek philosophy, and Plato was the first philosopher to consistently establish the concept of desire, explain its social function, and explain it as a need for completion born of opposites. Symposia functioned as places of desire in ancient Greece. One famous exploration of these themes is found in Plato’s *Symposium*, where characters give speeches on the nature of love. After the monologue regarding the nature of Eros, Socrates says to his friends “If it is not lacking, you cannot desire it, surely.”<sup>70</sup>

Like Nietzsche, Deleuze did not accept the heritage of Plato, because this traditional account of desire was based on a lack, thereby rendering human existence hollowed out, in a way. Namely, lack represents a metaphysical hole that cannot be filled in. In this regard, he built up a new definition of desire against the traditional logic of desire. He followed Nietzsche in understanding the task of modern philosophy as overturning Platonism. *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* explore the social and political possibilities of Deleuze’s previous readings of desire and body. The traditional definition of desire, which essentially began with Plato and according to Deleuze and Guattari, needs to be overcome. Why? Deleuze & Guattari argue thus:

To a certain degree, the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between production and acquisition. From the moment that we place desire on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic (dialectical, nihilistic) conception, which causes us to look upon it as primarily a lack: a lack of

<sup>67</sup> B. Spinoza, *The Ethics and Other Works*, Book II, p. 128.

<sup>68</sup> G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 157.

<sup>69</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *TP*, p. 154.

<sup>70</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, transl. R. Waterfield, New York: Oxford University Press 2008, p. 39, 200a–b.



an object, a lack of the real object. [...] In point of fact, if desire is the lack of the real object, its very nature as a real entity depends upon an “essence of lack” that produces the fantasized object.<sup>71</sup>

In Deleuzian philosophy desire, abstraction, organs, and bodily parts are also understood as machines. Namely, my stomach, my head, my eyes, and my ears are part of the machine, all parts have their very own productions. This is because Deleuze and Guattari reformulate the concept of the machine having human body, and its parts, in mind. In this sense, they say “desire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, an arrangement of desiring-machines. The order of desire is the order of production; all production is at once desiring-production and social production.”<sup>72</sup> At the same time, Nature=Production for them.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, they prefer using the concept of a machine that does not have any purpose except production. A subject or desiring-machine produces reconfigured new organizations, and relations among bodily parts. Let us illustrate it with a familiar example from their philosophy: the relationship between a child’s mouth and the mother’s breast as different machines.<sup>74</sup> When the child’s mouth connects with the mother’s breast, a dynamic process unfolds. In this interaction, the mouth transforms into an instrument for sucking milk, while the mother’s breast adapts to the role of milk production. However, as the mouth disengages from the breast, it encounters air, and this shift prompts the mouth to transition into a state of breathing. Consequently, there exists no stable or fixed, one-sided relationship between individual parts of the body. Instead, the body showcases remarkable multifunctionality. Seeing and noticing the multifunctionality of the body itself generates new realities, and envisions many new perspectives. What is a machine from this perspective? Deleuze and Guattari remark:

A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks [...] every machine functions as a break in the flow in relation to the machine to which it is connected, but at the same time is also a flow itself, or the production of a flow, in relation to the machine connected to it. This is the law of the production of production. That is why, at the limit point of all the transverse or transfinite connections, the partial object and the continuous flux, the interruption and the connection, fuse into one: everywhere there are breaks-flows out of which desire wells up, thereby constituting its productivity and continually grafting the process of production onto the product.<sup>75</sup>

So, one of the most important conceptual components of the “machinic” desire is to be productive, and the productive desire is also affirmative. In this context, desiring-machines produce BwO.<sup>76</sup> That is why, “it is only there that the BwO reveals itself for what it is: connection of desires, the conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities”.<sup>77</sup> In other words, machinery is a working and producing process, but it is also inclined to break. Each machine, whether technical, cognitive, or social, is constituted by a set of connections, relations, and their arrangements — it cannot be viewed apart from these connections, and relations. Such a machine is

<sup>71</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus & Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 296.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 2, 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 5, 38–39.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>77</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *TP*, p. 161.

not a closed or deterministic system, but rather tends to find always new connections and relations, and does not design desire before the desiring process such as the lack does. Thus, desiring-machines raise intensification relations of the bodily parts, organize them in non-accustomed ways, and produce a BwO as multifunctionality of the physical body.

So, the BwO serves as a creative form of resistance against the predetermined nature of relation within multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari employ the concept of a machine whose sole purpose is production, devoid of any other intentions. This machine operates based on the creation and disruption of connections, much like the example of the mouth-breast relationship. Every act of desire establishes a connection, but it can also simultaneously break another. Thus, even rupture itself becomes a new connection as it enters into a relationship with something else. Consequently, the process of desiring, as a machinic process, continually generates new relations, and embodiments. In this sense, desire is a basic drive of the body that challenges, shapes, and activates the multifunctionality of the body.

## Conclusion

The philosophical exploration of the body through the works of Spinoza, La Mettrie, Nietzsche, and Deleuze shows a radical departure from the conventional understandings of the mind-body dualism. Spinoza's response to Descartes's dismissal of the body emphasizes the profound interconnectedness of the mind and body, asserting that the body does not simply serve the mind, but actively generates and shapes each other parallelly. In essence, he perceives the body and mind as two inseparable aspects of a unified whole.

Spinoza revindicates the body, attributing to it a sense of vitality and freshness. He views the body as a dynamic entity, constantly affected by and affecting other bodies. Unlike La Mettrie's deterministic-mechanistic interpretation, Spinoza does not see the body as a closed machine, rather, he recognizes its inherent natural creative tendencies and life force. Nietzsche criticizing Spinoza's monism, on the other hand, introduces the concept of becoming, transforming monism into a pluralistic perspectivism at an ontological level.

Deleuze challenges the traditional understanding of desire as arising from a lack or deficiency. Instead, he posits that desire is an immanent force of production, a creative power that multiplies and intensifies reality without presupposing any perceived insufficiency. Deleuze and Guattari supposed that the desiring process does not have any pre-established form of what it is, and functions as a machine as an open system. In this regard, desire is an immanent principle of becoming, and producing unaccustomed organizations in individual and social-political spheres like the BwO.

Through the philosophical journey from dualism to monism/parallelism and from monism/parallelism to a pluralistic perspectivism, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze invite us to reconsider our standard, conformist, inert understanding of the body. They call for a shift away from Cartesian dualism and towards a dynamic concep-

tion of the body, one that recognizes its inherent vitality, multifunctionality, and its interconnectedness with other bodies — its active role in shaping our experiences of the world.

In embracing this perspective, we are prompted to discard the traditional dichotomies that have separated mind and body, and instead embrace a more holistic and embodied understanding of existence. On this view, the works of Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze offer a profound reimagining of the body, inspiring us to appreciate its complexity, agency, and transformative potential in our philosophical inquiries as well as our lived experiences.

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