

15.09.2007

--- Ola Ståhl

S C E N E (1)

FADE IN:

INT. A LARGE GYMNASIUM -- DAY

A gymnasium. Daylight filters through roof windows (soiled, discoloured). At the centre of the court, a low platform. On the platform, a large table. Chairs too, positioned around the table. Six bodies, seated on the chairs, slumped over the table. HE, SHE, and THE OTHERS. Light shirts, dark chinos, single breasted sport coats in dark blue canvas. The sport coats are hung over the back of the chairs. A microphone, suspended from the ceiling at the exact centre of the table. Surrounding it, a set of four loudspeakers, also suspended from the ceiling. Camera equipment positioned at a distance from the platform, at different angles: a camera to the left of the table; another in front of the table; yet another behind the table, slightly to the right. Tiered rows of audience seating run along the outer wall of the gymnasium. THE AUDIENCE is already seated. HE SITS BACK in his chair. HIS BACK TURNED TO THE AUDIENCE.

VOICE (O.S.)

(speech stuttered, forced, anxious)

The therapeutic, HERE. The diagnostic, HERE. No normative paths of rehabilitation.

HE is WAVING his hands, directing THE AUDIENCE's attention to specific points on the surface of the table in front of him.

VOICE (CONT'D)

To remain, instead, open to heterogeneity. The schizoid. To continuous reflection. An aesthetic practice. An ethico-political site. It is a damaging and damning discourse, their economies: our communal "We," HERE, posed against those others, THERE. Our health. Their illness. Our functioning body. Their disease ridden flesh. Medical professionals. Patients. Rehabilitation. We need another word. Instead. In place of rehabilitation. Another word.

Without turning to face THE AUDIENCE, HE continues to direct its collective attention to different parts of the gymnasium. He does so by WAVING his hands and by POINTING.

YET ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

(languidly, lethargically)

Your concept of self. What is wrapped up is wrapped up in the world around you. In the way you see the world around you. The way people see you. But there is space within for some notion of privacy. A sectioned part. A sectioned space. Within your identity, a sectioned space. Shaped by your interaction with others. But a private space nevertheless, sectioned off.

VOICE (O.S)

(anxiously, agitatedly)

Is it not a private little institution? Are you not still a patient? In that private space? You are still a patient. WE ARE STILL PATIENTS. In order for things to be alive - there must be heterogeneity for things to be alive.

SHE rises. Walks across the space. Gestures towards the audience, seemingly marking out invisible delineations between different sections of the court by reaching out in front of and behind herself, pointing at the hardwood maple floor with open hands.

VOICE (O.S.)

(faster now; volume, moderate)

How can we make every room different, and every encounter different? Where are the cameras? Are the cameras on? Do you get sound? These differences. Spaces of difference. There is a mediated space. With the cameras - their angle - what they record. There is another mediated space. Reflected. A space different, mediated, and different from this space, HERE. It remains outside the realm of the clinical. The clinical, HERE. This space, HERE. The mediated space, HERE. HERE and NOW. Nevertheless. This is not the clinic. This is not the hospital.

SILENCE follows. Eyes, only, their panning movements, erratic. HE scans the room. SHE does so too, nervously. Focus, first here, then there. THE OTHERS, too, seemingly scan the room, moving their heads in unison from left to right as they do so. They then proceed, eyes lowered, to stare perplexedly down at the surface of the table in front of them.

YET ANOTHER VOICE (CONT'D)

(louder now)

Once again, heterogeneity is what is at stake. And temporality. Heterogeneous temporalities. Opinions are not relevant. Exchanges of perspectives. Positions. They mean nothing. It means nothing. It is rhetoric. Bland rhetoric.

Pausing, then with a tortured grimace:

VOICE (CONT'D)

I feel nauseous.

VOICE (O.S.)

(calling out)

We feel nauseous.

CATERERS arrive with buckets (rubber, black), wearing uniform trousers and jackets (black), and shirts (white). They place the buckets on the floor. HE shrugs his shoulders.

YET ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

(calmer now)

Not to worry.

A prolonged period of SILENCE enfolds the gymnasium. Sounds from THE AUDIENCE, extraneous to the foreground action, amplified by the continuous silence.

VOICE (CONT'D)
It involves heterogeneity. In a real sense. In a very real - no,
in a very physical sense. It involves heterogeneity. Difference.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(excitedly)
Are they shooting this? Am I in the shot now? Now? Here. In this
place. Is she in the shot? She will be in the shot. Heterogeneity
is a continuous shift, a continuous becoming. It is productive.
Intrinsically productive.

VOICE (O.S.)
(elatedly)
We need to let something other in. There must be a ruptured site.
A site where we open up onto something other than what is already
given. The dialogical. It is there. Situated in the ruptured
site. Collectivity too. It is that rupture. A violence too.
Affirmative too, is this notion of the dialogical. It is an
affirmative violence.

VOICE (O.S.)
(languidly, quietly)
You are not the person you were. You never will be. You are
always different. Looking back at yourself, as being different,
with the passing of time. To view ourselves differently. No. To
view ourselves as difference. Intrinsically as difference. From a
different angle. Plugged in and from a different angle.

The camera to the left of the table. Its movement, tilting. HE TWITCHES in his chair, clearly
disconcerted by the movement of the camera.

VOICE (O.S.)
To experience oneself as DIFFERENTIATION.

VOICE (O.S.)
Under what conditions can these boundaries be questioned? Here.
Everything is illness here. This is not your private institution.
It is not. It is not a space. Not a space even. It is a plane.
Essentially, a plane. It might appear to be a space, but it is
really a plane. It is where things merge. Nothing emerges here.
Everything merges. In the midst of things. It happens in the
middle. Everything merges.

YET ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)
To what extent does this constitute a site where subjectivity is
produced?

VOICE (O.S.)
(with confidence)
That is not the right question.

VOICE (O.S.)
No.

HE is looking into the camera now. Facial expression cold, stern, distanced. Lips curled. Jaw tense,
angular. Tongue pressed hard against gum. Eyes DARK, SUNKEN.

VOICE (O.S.)
(confrontationally)
And, more to the point, produced DIFFERENTLY? To translate this
situation. Cameras HERE, and HERE, and HERE. Different angles
taken. Microphone HERE, above the table. Another OVER THERE,
another microphone. People watching from the sidelines.

HE gestures towards the audience.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(waveringly now)
To translate this situation, HERE. This situation we put
ourselves in. To translate from one situation to another.

VOICE (O.S.)
And back?

VOICE (O.S.)
(steadied now)
Yes. And back.

HE rests his hands on the surface of the table. PALMS DOWN. Then at an angle, 90°, PALMS FACING ONE
ANOTHER. Hands suspended about an inch above the surface of the table.

VOICE (O.S.)
How to translate from a clinical situation - IN THE CLINIC - to
an extra-clinical situation, HERE. This collective space.

HE lowers his hands, palms still facing each other, an inch, slightly more, until they lightly touch
the surface of the table. HE then raises his hands again, still parallel, about an inch above the
surface of the table, and continues:

VOICE (CONT'D)
From pathology, in a clinical sense, to a non-clinical situation.
From the psychiatric hospital to this space, HERE.

HE repeats the gesture, lowering his hands to the surface of the table, raising them again, an inch
above its surface.

VOICE (CONT'D)
An ethico-political space. This is not the clinic. This is not
the hospital. This is the hospital. And it is not the hospital.
It is, and it is not, the clinic. In a very real sense.

VOICE (O.S.)
And what does such translation help us do? What does it help us
become or think?

RED LIGHT flashing. Enter CATERERS. Onto the table then, the glasses, the bottles, the porcelain
cups, the beige thermoses, the metal spoons.

VOICE (O.S.)
(slowly)
What is the difference of difference?

VOICE (O.S.)
(sighingly)
We are repeating ourselves. This is looped speech.

VOICE (O.S.)
Repetitions in our conversation? Is there a destiny
to the repetition? To the loop? To the circularity that binds us?

Pause.

VOICE (O.S.)
(slowly, in a reflective tone of voice)
You are in a discussion with someone with whom you are very
familiar. You find that person makes a point that you have heard
them make before. You have heard this person make this same point
before, the very same point. In response your question, this
person has made the same point many times before. Repeatedly. You
find yourself thinking, "they are making the point they always
make." Instead you ought to remember that there is time involved.
Always. A temporal texture interwoven with the statement. It is,
in fact, not the same. It is never the same. What is being said.
It is not the same. This person may be saying, word for word,
exactly what was said the last time in response to your question,
but the fact that it is happening again, makes it different. If
you are conscious of the repetition, and the repetition in your
response, that allows you to initiate a deviation. To let
something other in. This deviation is the therapeutic moment.

SILENCE. Everything is said. Finished. THE OTHERS EXHALE, audibly, in consort.
FADE OUT.

IMAGE (1)

It is a peculiar image of space Spinoza offers us: Space is essentially body-space, and body-space, in turn, is at once a commonality, an infinite common plane the univocity of which echoes in each discrete body, and a complexity of distinct bodies in constant flux, entering into compounds and assemblages with one another. Each distinct body thus actualises itself autopoetically on an infinite plane of commonality, and allopoetically in relationships with other distinct bodies that surround it. This is how universes are composed, by bodies congealing, merging. They are, at once, fractal and in becoming, composed of singular entities that form shifting constellations, and common, formed on a common plane of composition the virtual potential of which each body incorporates and expresses. This constitutes somewhat a paradox, albeit a wonderful, passionate and radical one: The being of a body is at once and simultaneously its differentiation and the infinite commonality it incorporates. It is same and different, being and becoming, commonality and differentiation. This is precisely what Deleuze opens up to in those striking passages towards the end of *Difference and Repetition*: 'A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for all beings'.¹ / *He picks the scabs of his elbows and examines their surfaces carefully; one side, a barren, deserted terrain, ravished by drought, exposed to sun, pollution; the other side, its inversion, moist, glistening, a cavity, in proximity now to nothing, distanced from everything, yet far from a negation or a void, its existence liminal and ambiguous. It is and it is not.*

¹ Deleuze, G., *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Patton, P. (London: Athlone, 1994), p. 304.

S C E N E (2)

FADE IN:
INT. A LARGE GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT

The gymnasium, now cast in darkness. In the foreground, the table, lit from above by a single spotlight. Slightly to the right, obscured by lack of light, the vague contours of a mechanism - make-shift projector - rolled in on a table. TECHNICIANS thread a celluloid strip through the mechanism. It CLICKS, LOUDLY and REPEATEDLY. The celluloid strip, damaged now, thrashed by the mechanism, falls to the floor but is soon spliced and rethread by the TECHNICIANS. With a CLICK the spools begin to revolve. Another click, and they stop, then proceed to speed up, NOISILY rewinding the strip onto one of the spools. With a SUDDEN JERK, the mechanism stops, remains still for a moment, then changes direction and proceeds at a slower pace. In the background, a screen lights up. Flicker, first. Then the picture clears. An image of the gymnasium shed in daylight runs in the background, silently. A subtitle spells out "ATMOSPHERE DOES COUNT" in block letters across the screen.

VOICE (O.S.)
(vigorously)

The destiny of disease. It has an endpoint. The endpoint of a disease. A finality. Death. In the process of arriving at that destination, a different path can be taken. Consider atmosphere. "Stimmung." An affective regime. Atmosphere does count. It alters the destiny of disease.

VOICE (O.S.)
(sluggishly)

Does that not sound preposterous ? To alter the destiny of disease?

VOICE (O.S.)
(with unflinching vigour)

A different path can be taken. Life, too, has finality. A destiny. Life outside of illness. Outside of disease. It has a destiny. We die. Experience death. Privately and collectively. It is a private yet public, social and collective experience. As is disease. As is life. It has a destiny too. Collective life has a destiny too. An end. It ends. It is a slow cessation. An endgame. A process with a destiny.

HE sits back in his seat, crosses his legs. THE OTHERS remain slumped over the table, their bodies flaccid. SHE rises. Walks over to the screen. Her moving contour a shadow play, obscuring parts of the projected image.

VOICE (O.S.)

Atmosphere does count. In altering the experience of destiny. Atmosphere counts. In altering the destiny of the process. The reconfiguration of the affective regime.

VOICE (O.S.)
(slowly, deliberately)

I wonder if destiny can be construed as something different? The conception of disease. It is determined. There is a normative notion of health. It determines the destiny of disease. In this situation. Table lit from above.

HE turns his face towards the spotlight. Raises his hands above his face to shade it from the bright light.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Silence now. A quiet buzz.

HE gestures towards the cameras. First, the camera behind him. Second, the camera to his left. Third, the camera to his right. Each gesture SLOW, DELIBERATE.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Music from an adjoining space.

HE reaches out towards the wall at the far end of the gymnasium.

VOICE (CONT'D)
This situation too. It is determined, this situation. To always be posed against a normative narrative of the healthy body.

Silence again. HE lets his head drop. SHE flicks a lock of hair from her eyes.

VOICE (O.S.)
The very binary structure we experience the process of disease within. It can be displaced. In the opening caused by the displacement, another destiny opens up. It opens up. To concentrate on the present, in its nascent stage. The life of the moment. Then it opens up.

VOICE (O.S.)
(with force, emphasis)
The socio-political and institutional mechanisms put to work when confronting illness: INSTITUTIONALIZATION! HOSPITALIZATION! INCARCERATION! THE QUARANTINE! THE ASYLUM! THE LEPER COLONY! These spaces are likely to be reshaped. If the destiny of disease is reconfigured. If it is reconfigured around a theme different than that of its finality. They are likely to be reshaped too.

THE OTHERS nod their heads slothfully, wagging from side to side in their chairs. HE stares vacuously at the screen. SHE remains standing at the side of the screen, averting her eyes.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(quickly, intensely)
You have the hospital, but it is the hospital. It is what the hospital is. Is it a totality? Is it universal? IT IS NOT UNIVERSAL! Illness remains outside of the logic of the universal.

VOICE (O.S.)
To think disease outside of the framework of its finality. To think life outside of the framework of death. What does such thought open up to? To imagine collective life without finality. Without cessation. What does this make possible?

VOICE (O.S.)
(sniggering)
It makes me suspicious.

AUDIENCE laughter. HE gazes into the camera. First, the one to his right, then the one to his left, shifting his attention from one camera to the other. HE draws a line with his left index finger across the surface of the table.

VOICE (CONT'D)

A new destiny? One thing for another. A tooth for a bone. A dagger for a hat. Tin foil for a plastic mug.

VOICE (O.S.)

A shoe for an eye? A horse for a revolver? And so on and so forth.

AUDIENCE laughter, proceeded by silence.

VOICE (O.S.)

(with gravity, renewed emphasis)

Is there a destiny to this conversation? Is there a destiny to what we are doing right here, right now? We leap into something new. A turning. Can the turning of destiny be seen as a leap of faith? The leap of faith. Here. Into this situation. Is it a leap of faith? A leap into something that exceed given conditions? A leap into the new? The unknown? The unstable? The indecipherable? How then to construct a universe for ourselves in this space? A leap altering our destiny. It is to throw the dice. It is to throw the dice, and to throw them again. To throw them again too.

There is a prolonged pause during which no sound, no action, no movement occur. SHE then returns to her seat. THE OTHERS remain passive. Anxious sounds from the audience fill the silence that ensues.

VOICE (CONT'D)

(aggressively)

Here is your autonomy. Take it. It means nothing! When it is on offer, it means nothing. It has to be taken. It has to be violent. By the leap, it is taken. By the violent leap.

SHE SLAMS the palms of her hands against the surface of the table, tilts her head, then, to inspect the loudspeakers suspended from the ceiling. Apart for the slight movement of the cameras, the set is entirely STILL and SILENT. On the screen, a close-up of her face. Then a looped slow-motion shot of the vigorous movement of his hands. HE sits back in his chair. Without turning to face the audience he proceeds to speak:

HE

(his voice coarse, tired)

There is a story by Borges. There is a writer in the story. The writer is about to face a firing squad. In the morning he is meant to face a firing squad. He has not finished his last book. He is sitting in his cell. He is praying that he finish his last book before his execution. Eventually he gets led out to the firing squad. Standing in front of the firing squad, in the moment when they begin to pull the trigger, when he is actually shot at - that time period expands. It keeps expanding. He has the time to rewrite the novel. He finishes the novel. When he is killed. He has actually completed his novel when he is finally killed.

FADE OUT.

IMAGE (2)

Two revolutionary, Spinozist gestures: First, God is grounded in material being, an infinite self-caused substance or common plane of composition upon which universes emerge. This is Spinoza's materialism, and it is an absolutely central, and modern, conception of the immanent, material powers of the world devoid of transcendent and divine authority. Second, this materialism becomes the site of an ethics. The compounds a discrete, distinct body enters into depend on the body's capacity to be affected by other bodies that surround it. The way that compound bodies enter into assemblages with other compound bodies that surround them, depends on the common capacity of the simple bodies that form the compound to be affected by other bodies that surround their compound. Compounds and assemblages are formed by bodies that agree with one another, whose affect on one another increases their common capacity to, in turn, affect and be affected; their capacity, in other words, to act in and upon the world. Compounds and assemblages are not formed, or remain unstable, when two bodies that disagree encounter one another. To act ethically, is to seek encounters with bodies that agree with yours, and avoid encounters with bodies with which you disagree. To act ethically is to be a diagnostician, to map out a series of symptoms, to distinguish between sad affects that diminish capacity and joyful affects that increase capacity, and it is to construct prototypes, new compounds and assemblages, by affirmation, alliance and action rather than negation and reaction. / *From mouth to eye. The eye. The eye itself, too. Is other too. Other too itself. Hand in sight, a perception. To stare deeply. The hand: deep pores perforate its elastic surface; the cells that compose its texture; its cavity too, an abundance. It contains divisions. The hand that holds the pipe. Pipe's texture wooden. Hand is elastic, fractured within. Pipe, a wooden block, its sheen distinct. Beneath it divisions, fractals. They latch on. Infiltrate hand's division. Does the pipe to the hand. Bodies make up fractured space. Is fire too. Is hand and fire. Is pipe. Is fire too.*

S C E N E (3)

FADE IN:
INT. A LARGE GYMNASIUM -- DAY

The gymnasium, once again in daylight. SHE stands next to the table. The mechanical device has been rolled out. The screen remains but no image is being projected. Her speech directed towards an UNDISCLOSED POINT in space (not towards THE AUDIENCE, not towards him (HE), not towards THE OTHERS, not towards either of the three cameras).

SHE
(confrontationally)
Why are you writing this? What do you hope to get out of it?

A prolonged silence. Nothing happens.

SHE
(apologetically)
I broke the fourth wall. I am sorry.

SHE apologises. Profusely. HE nods. THE OTHERS nod.

HE
(coldly)
This is a box. What encloses us. A box. We are boxed in. Enclosed. There are only walls. Nothing but walls. On all sides. Break one. Address the writer. The penmanship. The script. The others remain. The cameras. The audience. This platform. The gymnasium. This space, HERE. Those other spaces. Reflected. Mediated. It does not matter. There is no outside. Nothing on the other side.

SHE returns to her seat. They resume. The tape jolts to a start.

VOICE (O.S.)
(animatedly)
A diagnostics of everyday life. What is it that makes us feel like we are already dead? We sit here. We sit here in front of these cameras. What is this? It sounds trivial. It is real. But it sounds trivial. You work. You go out with your friends. You drink. You take drugs. You enter into forms of conviviality. Adopt collective habits. A sense of communal life. This too is production. Construction too. It is construction too. To recognise the limits. In everyday life there are limits. Boundaries. To recognise these limits, and the liminal spaces also. The passages. Within the texture of everyday life. There are other parameters to explore. You explore them. Fluid ones. There are more fluid parameters. There are passages. There are other configurations.

SHE seems anxious. Her eyes wander across the gymnasium. Stops at the camera to the left of the table. Fixed, now, at the camera.

VOICE (O.S.)
(thoughtfully, at a slow pace)
It is about speed. And slowness. We encounter one another slowly. Over years. At a slow pace. We watch these videos.

SHE gestures towards the screen behind the table.

VOICE (CONT'D)
We read these texts.

SHE makes a gesture towards the table.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Reading a text together is not a spectacular event. Reading a text together repeatedly, over several years. Reading a text together very slowly. Reading a text together restaging, re-enacting, reflecting upon the reading. Restaging and reflecting upon the process. The situation we put ourselves in. The situation we keep putting ourselves in. This situation.

SHE lowers her eyes.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Is this a space for reflection? Slowness? Repetition and slowness?

VOICE (O.S.)
(hesitantly)
I wonder if the slow process is a way to let something "other" into the texture of the everyday? The repeated situation - a rupture, a gap, that allows for a deviant turn?

THE OTHERS nod.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(with increasing speed)
The dynamic in the group. The different settings. Our nomadism. Retreats. Walks, Hikes. Camps.

HE stands up, paces across the room. SHE rises. Stands still.

VOICE (O.S.)
Different spaces create different forms of dialogue. Different movements, too, different physical activities.

VOICE (O.S.)
(an exclamation)
Atmosphere does count!

VOICE (O.S.)
(with emphasis)
"Stimmung." It produces spaces for subjectification. We become ourselves and other to ourselves. We become other to ourselves too. It happens.

Here. Now. Continuously. It involves a process of continuous differentiation.

HE stops, facing her profile. SHE remains standing. SHE does not turn around to face him.

HE

(intense; voice, low)

I feel scripted. These cameras. The microphone. These loudspeakers.

HE points at the items as he names them. Motions rapid. First, the camera to his left. Second, the microphone. Third, the loudspeakers.

HE (CONT'D)

Because I know you so well. Because I have been with you for so long. Because we have lived together for so many years. Through blockages. Through accelerations. Through cessations. In so many constellations. When I speak to you. Now. To you and only to you. Not to the others. Not to the cameras. Not to the tape that record my voice.

HE addresses her directly. Eyes fixed on the contours of her shape.

HE (CONT'D)

I feel scripted. I FEEL SCRIPTED. What does that mean? Are we connected? Plugged in? Linked? Am I even in your proximity? What are these relationships? Sedimented? Habitual? How do they sediment? How do they become so solid, hard, inflexible, closed?

SILENCE. SHE is noticeably uncomfortable, averting her eyes. HE keeps his eyes lowered.

SHE

(hesitantly, cautiously)

You learn how to listen. When working together. You learn how to listen in a very different way from how you would otherwise listen. You take on another's voice. For a finite period of time. You oscillate between voices. You become a third entity. It produces heterogeneity. Your own voice is hollowed out in the process. It happens between positions. Something else is produced. Something other is allowed in. A virus. The camera in front of us. This mediated space. Itself mediated. Mirrored and displaced. The bifurcation of space. It displaces the destiny of our dialogue. We see each other as if through a looking glass.

HE

(animatedly; speech, fragmented)

This is what the dialogical implies? The looking glass? The mirror hall? Trickery? No. Not trickery. There is no trickery. There is no volition involved. In the rupture, the crystal. In the gap. This is where it happens. The dialogical. Through crystal refractions. They open up to deviance.

HE pauses for a moment, then continues. Facing the camera in front of the table:

HE (CONT'D)

Switch the camera off. Cut at that point. You can cut there. At that point.

HE turns around. Stands still next to the table. Hands in trouser pockets. Eyes lowered again. HE remains so for a minute, then leaves the gymnasium. A mechanical, buzzing sound. The sound of an increasingly restless and puzzled AUDIENCE.
FADE OUT.

IMAGE (3)

To say that an infinite substance expresses itself as difference, as discrete and distinct bodies, is to say that being has the power to express itself, that it causes not only itself, but also its expression in different attributes. It is by means of its potential for expression that being differentiates, that being becomes. Such potential for differentiation significantly exceeds any given or existing system of differences and opens up to a virtual realm of variation. Substance is infinite in its potential, its power for differentiation, not in its actuality, not in what is actualised at a given moment in time. Power as potential, in other words, is not the power of actual or given conditions – a form of power to which Spinoza refers as *potestas* as opposed to *potentia* – but a power that opens up to a futural dimension immanent to being – to becomings, to unknown capacities, to the new. This is precisely what is meant by that famous Spinozist call to arms: ‘We do not yet know what a body can do.’² The Spinozist notion of continuous mutagenesis through differentiation allows us to think of the world not as given but as open to futurity. What a striking gesture this is, what a revolutionary opening! It is, thus, a peculiar image of space Spinoza offers us: A complexity, abundant with mutagenetic points; a most radical terrain. The world is opened up to us in all the fullness and abundance of its immanent potential, a potential that is at once common to all existence and singular in each existing body. All of being is an event of becoming and differentiation; a celebration of difference and commonality in the same radical gesture. / *Stellar reflection, from the dark sky onto the surface of the water – the surface of the water a solid black, apart from temporary flashes of reflected light, and the stellar reflection, continuous, but vague. The reflection apprehended by bodies slumped on the beach, contained within them, carried along by them, as an image. As an image? Lodged between the lumps of flesh on the beach, the surface of the water, and the illuminate stellar bodies above.*

² Spinoza, B., ‘Ethics’, trans. Shirley, S., in ed. Morgan, M. L., *Spinoza: Complete Works* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2002), p. 280.

S C E N E (4)

FADE IN:
INT. A LARGE GYMNASIUM -- DAY

The gymnasium, nearly empty now. The set not populated. THE AUDIENCE scarce. CATERERS prepare to serve breakfast at the far end of the space. Cameras are being set up. Microphones too. Nobody is seated by the table. HE enters. Walks across the space. Stops. Turns. His attention now directed at the camera to the left of the table.

HE

(in a tired voice)

You come to the text in the morning. It is dead. It is dead. The sense you get from the text is stultifying. The script is not doing anything. It is dead. Which then suggests that the successful text is alive. Or that you can somehow bring it to life. What does it mean for a text to be alive?
What is it, to bring a text to life?

HE resumes to walk around the table. Takes a seat, facing THE AUDIENCE.

HE (CONT'D)

(with increasing vigour)

Can we think of a text as a space? It literally is space, because it takes up space, but can we expand on that and think of a text as a space, and as something alive? It is necessary to have in place a table of logical distinctions. Even if it is continuously displaced, even if it is the play within such table of logical distinctions that remain significant, it is necessary, first, for it to be established.

THE OTHERS enter in pairs. A silent mass. They take their seats at the table. SHE follows behind them.

HE (CONT'D)

Gaps and jumps. In a text, it is the gaps and jumps that do something for me. I find that it is the jumps and cuts that make it alive. They make it flow. You can jump in at any point and get something out of it. You can jump in at any point, make an intense, creative reading of a fragment. A fragment only. And between fragments there is a flow. Between jumps and gaps and cuts, there is a current, a flow.

SHE sits back in her chair, waits for a moment, then begins to speak:

SHE

(voice, relaxed; pace, leisurely)

You describe it almost as an assault course, with all kinds of stops too. Why should a flow, only, be a good thing, why not stops and blockages?

SHE leans forward, towards him, elbows on the table, but averts her gaze, lowering her eyes.

SHE (CONT'D)

It is a flow. With cuts and jumps. It flows. But that also implies sudden stops. Blockages. Cessations. Break-downs.

CATERERS are now serving coffee in the background. The sharp sound of metal against porcelain is taken up by the microphones and amplified. The entire gymnasium now seems on the verge of a feedback loop. The remaining audience appear apprehensive of the fact.

HE

What is bad in writing is steady progression. Steady progression is the death of the text. When the progression of the text deviates, when it slows down or speeds up, accelerates, breaks down, then the text comes alive. It becomes heterogeneous.

SHE

If there is not an opening where I can enter the text, if it seems closed to me, then it is dead. It is a dead text because it is closed. Because I cannot enter it.

TECHNICIANS move the three cameras. Slow rotations.

HE

(in a distanced voice)

One needs to trip across one's own ideas.

HE pauses. Stares VACUOUSLY into empty space. Then resumes.

HE (CONT'D)

And to say the same thing twice, too. It is crucial. To say the same things twice.

He pauses for a moment, then resumes:

HE (CONT'D)

And to surprise yourself by it.

SHE

(confidently)

You surprise yourself by saying the same thing twice. It is not a problem to repeat the same thing. What you thought of as a problem, repeated, might not be a problem. It might not be a problem, but a passage. It might be a passage. The loop is a passage. Mirrored back at you. And making it explicit in the text. It is a beautiful thing. It makes explicit the process of thought. Its process. Its acrobatics. The acrobatics of thought.

HE bounces his fingers against the table. SHE follows the bouncing movement of his fingers with her eyes.

SHE

It seems too easy. It seems too easy to talk about it in those terms:
Writing. The text. Alive. Dead.

HE
(benevolently)

A dead text? It sounds interesting. A dead text.

And again, savouring each syllable:

HE (CONT'D)

The dead text. The dead letter of the text. What would that be?

SILENCE, without discomfort now. A series of mechanical sounds erupt from the camera equipment. She turns to THE AUDIENCE.

SHE
(casually)

I had a temperature. Now I have a sore throat. I can feel it, my sore throat. When talking I can feel it. But I no longer have a temperature.

FADE OUT.

I M A G E (4)

A Spinozist ethics involves experience. It is essentially experiential; the experience of a becoming that involves you, an event passing through you, a collective or communitarian becoming. It constitutes a continuous doing and undoing, binding and unbinding of the forms, specificities and territories of experience and the practices, or styles of life, to which they correspond. It constitutes a form of expansion of specific territories of experience towards common horizons and increasing collective capacities. Although this is an ethics encompassing an *aesthesis* – it has to do with the forms experience takes, and the altering of those forms – it first appears to leave little room for experimentation. A Spinozist ethics, it seems, has more to do with a programmatic approach, a kind of virtuosity, than with an experimental approach. What happens, then, if we introduce into Spinoza's ethics, a notion of the experiment – an openness to or desire for the unexpected, for ambiguities and uncertainties, for difficulties that may or may not reveal passages into new ethical universes? If, in other words, we introduce into his ethics, a "leap of faith" into what seems "other," a throwing, and throwing again, of the dice? Is this the site of a Spinozist aesthetics, or, at any rate, an aesthetics, Spinozist in inspiration, involving, at all times, multiples of multiples of minute revolutions, each of which incorporates its own specific moment of dissention? / *As she repeated the word, her speech mechanism failed her – the movement of tongue, the flow of air, the synchronised movements of the lips, the twists required – and she lost her grip on the prosodies, the rhythms of the repetition. She stuttered. There was a break in the pattern. Not so much a cessation or a slowing down as a series of blockages interrupting the flow of repetitions but creating, also, another flow, a deviance. In that deviance lay lodged the laughter of the audience. Although it might have appeared malicious to an outside observer, it wasn't so at all. On the contrary, it was an involuntary laughter – shared, common – originating deep inside the deviance, in the deviant turn, in the deviant affect opening language up to its excess.*