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By Gilles Deleuze



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In this extraordinary work Gilles Deleuze, the most renowned living philosopher in France, reflects on one of the figures of the past who has most influenced his own sweeping reconfiguration of the tasks of philosophy. Deleuze's brilliant text shows how current definitions of philosophy do not apply to Spinoza: a solitary thinker (yet scandalous and hated), he conceived of philosophy as an enterprise of liberation and radical demystification much as did Leibniz or, later Nietzsche. Spinoza confronts the grand philosophical problems that are still current today: the comparative role of ontology (the theory of substance), of epistemology (the theory of ideas), and of political anthropology (the theory of modes, passions, and actions). The goal of this book is to determine the rapport among the univocity of Being in the theory of substance; the production of truth and the genesis of sense in the theory of ideas; and practical joy (or the elimination of the sad passions) and the selective organization of the passions in the theory of modes.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In this intricately argued work, Deleuze claims that expression is a key to understanding Spinoza's philosophy: If A expresses B, then A perfectly reproduces all of B's essential characteristics. Nature, for instance, expresses God's essence. Deleuze thinks that Spinoza's use of expression revolutionizes philosophy; God is no longer seen as the world's creator but is identical with it. Furthermore, expression characterizes not only the nature of reality but also the manner in which Spinoza presents his philosophy, for the order in which Spinoza presents his conclusions is supposed to copy the movement of reality. Deleuze maintains that Leibniz shared Spinoza's revolutionary stress on expression. By their use of this idea, they founded modern philosophy. In Deleuze's view, Descartes counts as pre-modern, since he did not use the notion of expression. While Deleuze's grasp of Spinoza's thought is penetrating, his study is suitable only for scholars.

- *David Gordon, Bowling Green State Univ., Ohio*

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About the Author

Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII, Vincennes/Saint Denis. He published 25 books, including five in collaboration with Félix Guattari.

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