

2020 May 18 Donna Haraway, Haretd and Negri and Spinoza

Have just discovered this kindred spirit in a side comment of Hardt & Negri's *Empire*.

Can't afford most of her books that I find on AbeBooks, but have ordered *The Companion Species Manifesto*. Check her out on Wikipedia and some of the 'about this book' discussions on her AbeBooks listings.

Her discussion of post-humanism (Foucault, Althusser) etc, would seem to posit a more realistic picture of things than Wilber's anthropocentrism.

....

btw, not to assign you more reading, but I'm now 100 pp into *Empire* and finding page after page revelatory - from concise explication of Spinoza's importance, not the Ethics, which all my previous philosophical reading referenced, but the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, which everyone before seemed to ignore; to a concise (2 sentence) explanation of Foucault's and Althusser's Death of Man rhetoric: to a synopsis of the history of the theological notion of transcendent divinity from medieval times to its embedding in self-described/congratulatory secular politics and society.

Another of those WHY DIDN'T THEY TELL ME THIS IN SCHOOL? moments

....

"What is antihumanism after the death of Man? Or, rather, what is an antihumanist (or postmodern) humanism?"

... The antihumanism that was such an important project for Foucault and Althusser in the 1960s can be linked effectively to a battle that Spinoza fought three hundred years earlier. Spinoza denounced any understanding of humanity as an 'imperium in imperio.' In other words, he refused to accord any laws of human nature that were different from the laws of nature as a whole. ... If we are to conceive of Man as separate from nature, then Man does not exist. This recognition is precisely the death of Man.

There is a strict continuity between the religious thought that accords a power above nature to God and the modern 'secular' thought that accords the same power above nature to Man. ... Like God. . . this transcendent figure of Man [nb: Hardt & Negri at some length recount the assumption of 'divine' right/power by all political forms from medieval till modern times] leads quickly to the imposition of social hierarchy and domination. Antihumanism, then, [as per Foucault & Althusser] conceived as a refusal of any transcen- [92] dence. . . . is the condition of possibility of thinking this immanent power, an anarchic basis of philosophy. . . .

This is humanism after the death of Man. . . ."

*Empire*, pp. 91-92

Which I shorthand as, the death of Man they are talking about is capital-M Man (capital-H Humanity/Humanism of the sort Adorno & Horkheimer denigrate in *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*), a theological/transcendent notion in secular dress, therefore not man/humanity in the immanent/real sense. Real man continues (as always in the form/condition/struggle of what H&N call 'the multitude', put upon by the dominators.

....

What upsets me is that nobody (as far as I recall, and I think I'm good on this one) ever brought to my attention that what got Spinoza in so much trouble was that he gave human beings essence, that is, the same status as God, angels and whathaveyou, and recognized them as having the same power of self-management (via politics) as God had in heaven. In short, as H&N point out, he reinforced the humanist/democratic view of man (lower case) that the Renaissance had pushed. In the 16thC!

No wonder he got blackballed. It wasn't because was an atheist (as commonly charged) or a pantheist (in the ontological sense) which is what I was taught), but because his style of pantheism made all beings equal, man, animal, transcendentals. He just went way up in my estimation (and his bit in PL would have been bigger if I'd known that). (BTW, H&N credit Guattari's book on Spinoza for making all this known.)