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Preface

REASON IS AT the center of three current debates in the interpretation of Spinoza. The first and broadest is a debate about the influence of Spinoza on the European Enlightenment, which originates principally in *Radical Enlightenment*, the monumental work of Jonathan Israel.[1] Reason in the conduct of life, in the organization of society, and in the institutions—particularly religions—that bridge the personal and the political is a distinguishing feature of Enlightenment ideals. The investigation of reason itself and of its relation to ideals such as toleration, liberty, self-determination, and the value of science is required for their appreciation and also their criticism. In his major works, Spinoza presents a well-developed, detailed, systematic, and influential account of reason and of all of these relations. Understanding that account can contribute to our understanding of Spinoza's place in the Enlightenment.

A second, narrower trend started by Louis Loeb's *From Descartes to Hume* in the 1980's and continued more recently in a different form by Peter Anstey concerns Spinoza's place in the history of philosophy.[2] A traditional distinction, derived from Kant, places Spinoza with Descartes and Leibniz among the continental rationalists, representatives of a long philosophical tradition going back at least to Plato. Rationalism, very briefly, may be understood to be the view that reason and not sensation is the basis of knowledge. In this narrative, the early modern rationalists oppose the British empiricists Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. These empiricists are the early modern representatives of a tradition, going back at least to Aristotle, on which sensation and not reason is the basis of knowledge. Although it continues to shape the curriculum of many universities, historians of philosophy have increasingly criticized the rationalist/empiricist distinction. They argue that philosophical considerations show that the labels do not apply usefully to the figures; that the resulting canonization of the six figures misrepresents history; or—and this is Anstey's view—that different classifications used more widely at the time

are more apt. Spinoza's accounts of reason and its relation to experience are idiosyncratic and complex. Whether and how he belongs to different schools of thought depends on an understanding of them.

Finally, and this is the narrowest trend, the interpretation of Spinoza's *Ethics* has come recently to focus on the place of reason in Spinoza's argument. Michael Della Rocca's book *Spinoza*, which is perhaps at the center of this debate, begins with an exuberant claim: "Spinoza's philosophy is characterized by the most thoroughgoing commitment ever to appear in the history of philosophy to the intelligibility of everything." Behind the claim are some powerful interpretative arguments for the overriding importance of the principle of sufficient reason to Spinoza. However, the principle's prominence in the *Ethics*, and even its presence in the book, is not obvious. Della Rocca's claims about sufficient reason have received a great deal of critical response, both positive and negative. This has been perhaps the most productive and intensely argued debate in recent Spinoza scholarship.[3]

This book is a study of Spinoza's uses of the term 'reason' (*ratio*) in his most important works, the *Ethics* and the *Theological Political Treatise*. I attempt to understand them and to assess the extent to which Spinoza has a unified theory of reason. Even if I were entirely successful, I would not resolve these debates. For the history of ideas, which is Israel's principal concern, what Spinoza means is important, but it may not be as important as what different readers have taken Spinoza to mean. For historians of philosophy, the classification of authors involves a host of interpretative questions and methodological commitments that cannot be resolved by understanding an author's views on reason alone. For students of Spinoza's metaphysics, it is Spinoza's views about reason and not the meaning of his uses of 'reason' that ultimately matter. Those views may well be expressed not in terms of reason but in terms of explanation, intelligibility, or causation—indeed the variety of closely related terms in Spinoza's metaphysics is one of its challenges. Nevertheless, all of the debates start with a single term, 'reason,' which Spinoza does use frequently and in a number of different contexts. I hope that a careful account of what Spinoza means when he uses 'reason' can contribute to our understanding of his metaphysics, his place in the history of philosophy, and the importance of his ideas to the Enlightenment.

Acknowledgments

THIS BOOK WAS written in the Philosophy Department at the University of Otago. I thank the university and my colleagues for providing a fantastic research environment.

The 2012 Conference of the British Society for the History of Philosophy, organized by Beth Lord and emphasizing new approaches to the *Ethics*, prompted my first thoughts about the unity of reason in Spinoza. The rigorous and generous community of historians of philosophy, then and in subsequent years, has been a great help to me. I presented versions of arguments that eventually found their way into this book at the Atlantic Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy at Princeton University; the Mini Conference on Spinoza at The Ohio State University; a Symposium of Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association; The Federal University (UF) of Rio Grande do Sul; UF Santa Maria; UF Paraná; UF Ceará; the Upstate New York Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy; Victoria University Wellington; the University of Sydney; the North American Spinoza Society; the London Spinoza Circle; and Pomona College. I am grateful to audiences at these events and particularly to Mogens Laerke, Eric Schliesser, Daniel Garber, Tamar Rudavsky, Jacob Adler, Steven Nadler, Donald Rutherford, Lisa Shapiro, Marcos Gleizer, Cristiano Novaes de Rezende, César Schirmer dos Santos, Maria Isabel Limongi, Luiz Felipe Sahd, Lia Levy, Alison Peterman, Lewis Michael Powell, Syliane Charles, Chris Laursen, Stuart Brock, Max Cresswell, Anik Waldow, Moira Gatens, Ericka Tucker, Edwin Curley, Alex Douglas, Susan James, and Peter Thielke.

Michael Istvan's work on Spinoza deepened my knowledge of and interest in Spinoza's metaphysics. His dissertation on Spinoza's theory of universals has been an extremely valuable resource to me, and I am grateful also for many conversations. Many thanks to Michael Della Rocca for his patience in discussing his views with me by email and Skype. Yitzhak Melamed and an

anonymous referee read the manuscript for OUP. Both offered extensive and insightful comments on every chapter and improved the book a great deal. I appreciate their help.

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Abbreviations

MANY REFERENCES TO Spinoza's works will be abbreviated by capital letters:

TIE = *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*
KV = *Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well Being*
DPP = *Descartes's* Principles of Philosophy
TTP = *Theological Political Treatise*
TP = *Political Treatise*

Many passages in the *Ethics* will be abbreviated by Arabic numerals referring to the parts of the *Ethics* in which they occur and one or more of the following letters:

d = definition
a = axiom
p = proposition
dem = demonstration
s = scholium
c = corollary
l = lemma
app = appendix

These letters will often be followed by a number referring to where they occur in the order of the part. For example, "2p40s2" will stand for *Ethics*, part 2, proposition 40, second scholium.

References to Gebhardt (ed.) *Spinoza Opera* follow this format: G, volume number, page number, and, where necessary, line number. For example, G3 91 6–15 stands for volume 3, page 91, lines 6 through 15 of the *Opera*.

References to Adam and Tannery (eds.) *Oeuvres de Descartes* follow this format: AT, volume number, page number, and where necessary line number.

Spinoza on Reason

Introduction

THIS BOOK IS a study of Spinoza's uses of the term 'reason'. I wish to understand what Spinoza means where he invokes reason in what, at least on the face of it, are very different ways. Four different uses serve to structure the book. Each opens a chapter, and I take each to be paradigmatic of a given sense.

The first, from Spinoza's metaphysics, makes reason a cause that explains why a given thing exists:

> 1p11dem2 (*Ethics*, Part 1, Proposition 11, Second Demonstration): A cause or reason for each thing must be found, as much for why it exists as for why it does not exist.[1]

The second is Spinoza's formal definition of reason in a scholium near the end of *Ethics* 2. The definition makes reason something both psychological and epistemological—that is, reason is both a kind of idea that we have and a kind of knowledge:

> 2p40s2: It is clear that we perceive many things and form universal notions. [...] from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (2p38c, 2p39, 2p39c, and 2p40); *and I will call this "reason" and "the second kind of cognition."*

The third makes reason a source of demands for particular kinds of human behavior:

> 4p18s: Because reason demands nothing contrary to nature, it therefore demands this: that each person love himself; seek his own advantage, what is certainly to his advantage; want what certainly leads man to greater perfection; and, absolutely, that each person should strive, as far as it is in him, to preserve his own being.

The fourth opposes reason to imagination as a source of organization in human society. In it, Spinoza suggests that one might teach lessons to people in society by appeal to reason but that Scripture does not. It appeals to imagination instead:

> TTP, Chapter 6: I have shown that Scripture does not teach things through their proximate causes but only describes things in the order and in those phrases by which it can most move men and especially commoners to devotion. For this reason it speaks of God and things quite improperly, because undoubtedly its aim is not to convince reason but to affect and occupy men's fancy and imagination.

Each of the four types of use holds inherent interest, and each responds to different problems and precedents. I have written the chapters here, while they do build upon one another, with those problems and precedents primarily in view. Although I will not argue that 'reason' in these passages refers to precisely the same thing, this book does have a general thesis: Spinoza's uses of 'reason' (the Latin term is *ratio*) in his *Ethics* and *Theological Political Treatise* are systematically related in his argument and inform one another. In a conclusion, I step back from details, both historical and textual, and offer an account of the relations among these different uses.

This introduction provides some of the background necessary for understanding the chapters that follow. It starts with a brief account of Spinoza's life and works. I then turn to slightly more detailed accounts of the relationship between *Ethics* and the *Theological Political Treatise* and the accounts of reason of both works. These discussions are very broad and written with the particular purpose of this book in mind. For readers who would like more introductory information about Spinoza or his works, I add footnotes with suggestions for further reading at the end of each section.

Spinoza's Life and Works

Benedictus Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in 1632 and lived his entire short life in Holland. He was born into the Sephardic Jewish community to a middle-class family, to whose trading business he contributed as a young man. In 1656, the community issued a writ of *cherem* or excommunication of Spinoza written in extremely harsh terms. He left the family business and Amsterdam. Spinoza later devoted himself to study and writing as well as to his new profession: lens-grinding. At both Spinoza was highly accomplished

and widely recognized in his own time. The offer of a professorship in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, which Spinoza turned down despite its fairly liberal terms, testifies to his reputation as a philosopher. Letters from both Christiaan Huygens and Gottfried Leibniz attest to his skill as a craftsman. Unfortunately, it is likely that Spinoza's work with lenses contributed to lung disease and his early death in 1677.

The earliest work we have from Spinoza was written in the early 1660's, after he had left Amsterdam. This work includes the earliest correspondence that we have as well as two works that he probably did not intend in the end to publish: the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, written and known to us in Latin; and his *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*, which was probably written in Latin but which is known to us today by a Dutch edition advertised as a translation. Spinoza's early work also includes a book that he did publish and that first brought him to prominence, *Descartes's* Principles of Philosophy, written in Latin. This work has something of the character of a textbook. It recasts the views of Descartes's original *Principles of Philosophy*, in places drawing significantly upon other works such as the *Meditations*, in a deductive argument following the form of Euclid's *Elements*. Significant portions of the work, including but not limited to an Appendix dedicated to "metaphysical thoughts," convey Spinoza's own views, however. I find the work useful both for understanding Spinoza's relation to Descartes and also for understanding his responses to Cartesian ideas. The DPP is important to the latter sections of chapter 1 here.

Spinoza's mature and complete works, the composition of which probably began in 1662 or 1663, include the *Ethics* and the *Theological Political Treatise*, written in Latin. Both works he completed and—although he worried about both and did not in the end publish the *Ethics* during his lifetime—circulated. The TTP was published anonymously in 1670. I will write more about the character and contents of these works, with a focus on the place of reason in them, below. It should be said immediately however that the works are very different in purpose and style, occasionally in the positions that Spinoza defends in them, and perhaps in their intended audience. The *Ethics*, like the DPP, is written in the geometrical method following Euclid's *Elements*. It addresses perennial questions of philosophy aiming ultimately at an account of human blessedness. The TTP is written in engaging prose. It includes, I think, substantial claims of political philosophy that are supposed to be true for all times and places. These claims will be of central importance to me in chapter 4 here. However, the TTP also addresses crises in Spinoza's

own state and his own time. Its purposes are mixed and include political as well as purely philosophical aims.

Spinoza's mature works also include the *Political Treatise* (TP), written in Latin and unfinished, and the *Compendium to Hebrew Grammar*, written in Latin with discussion of Hebrew letters and terms and unfinished. The TP offers more detailed analyses of particular kinds of government—democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy—than the TTP, and it may offer accounts of the function of religion in society and of the relation of the mass of people in society to reason that differ from the accounts of TTP. However, the TP also includes many of the same positions that Spinoza defends in the TTP, and sometimes its versions of the positions help to clarify the TTP. I frequently raise the TP in chapter 4 in the course of discussing the TTP.

Spinoza's works were collected and published after his death in their original form, the *Opera Posthuma* and in a Dutch translation, the *Nagelate Schriften*. During his lifetime, Spinoza was highly regarded for his knowledge of optics, for his deep understanding of Cartesianism, and for his own philosophical positions. His views were always controversial, however, and the TTP in particular provoked scandal. Spinoza's influence has been varied and profound. His moral and political views, in addition perhaps to his metaphysics, helped to shape the European Enlightenment. His metaphysics was a source, both to refute and to recast, for German idealism. Artists and writers have continually been inspired by his work. (A favorite of mine is George Eliot, an early English translator of the *Ethics*, whose masterpiece *Middlemarch* shows many marks of Spinoza's determinism and theory of the affects.) Finally, Spinoza remains a figure of major concern in a variety of philosophical traditions and areas today.[2]

The Ethics *and the* Theological Political Treatise

Spinoza's two great works have a tangled relationship, both historically and thematically. Spinoza began writing the *Ethics* in the early 1660s. It was an attempt to cast his own thought—as he had already done with Descartes's—in a geometric order. The *Ethics* has the feel of a book written for the ages. The geometric order suggests that its propositions hold with necessity, and its topics—including the nature of being, human nature, knowledge, and well-being—are timeless. The TTP, which Spinoza began writing in 1665, has a very different style. It is in places urgent and particular. Although it is a work on political philosophy and has some arguments that apply perfectly generally to all human societies, it emphasizes Holland and focuses on

debates—the freedom to philosophize, the relation of the state to religion—of immediate importance to Spinoza's own political circumstances. Indeed Spinoza's biographer, Steven Nadler, argues that the immediate occasion for the composition of the TTP was religious and political turmoil in Spinoza's own area—the intense criticism of an appointment in a local church—and that the imprisonment and death of a critic of traditional religious views, Adriaan Koerbagh, pushed Spinoza to complete and publish the work. These pressing and specific events brought Spinoza to set aside the *Ethics* for several years to write the TTP. He completed the *Ethics* only after the completion of the TTP, and it is not clear what revisions he made to the one work after the composition of the other.

The tangled history and very different aims of the two works make it difficult to know precisely how one relates to the other. To anticipate a theme of this book, I think that a clear doctrinal connection between the two works may be found in Spinoza's psychology. The TTP offers an account of the nature of religion and the state that positively depends on psychological theses, including a strong view about the power of reason, that Spinoza explicitly presents and defends in the *Ethics* but either does not explicitly introduce or simply presents as self-evident in the TTP. Here my accounts of the nature of ideas of reason and particularly its psychology in chapter 2 inform my account of religion and reason in the state in chapter 4. In short, I argue that Spinoza's account of society in the TTP assumes a particular account of human nature, which is to be found in the *Ethics*. For the most part, accounts of the TTP in this book follow accounts of the *Ethics* not because of any assumptions about the order of composition—indeed I suspect that Spinoza substantially rewrote parts of the *Ethics* as a result of reflection on the TTP—but because of the place of the views in the order of argument. Many of Spinoza's conclusions in the TTP depend upon, or at least may be better understood in terms of, premises in the *Ethics*.[3]

Spinoza's Ethics

Here is a very brief summary of the *Ethics*, which emphasizes reason, but includes enough, I hope, to introduce students new to the work to its structure and central claims. Many of the views described here get much more detailed discussion and interpretation where they arise in particular chapters.

First time readers of the *Ethics* frequently and naturally find the title mysterious. The book has five parts: "Of God," "Of the Nature and Origin of the Mind," "Of the Origin and Nature of the Affects," "Of Human Bondage, or Of

the Violence of the Affects," and "Of the Power of the Intellect, or Of Human Freedom." Of these, perhaps only Part Four and the first half of Part Five recognizably concern what many readers would consider to be topics in ethics. I find that the title reflects Spinoza's project accurately however. Perhaps that point is clearest where one emphasizes his intellectualism in ethics—that is, the extent to which Spinoza takes knowledge to hold value. Spinoza argues in Part Four of the *Ethics*, that understanding is the only end worth pursuing for its own sake (4p26) and that the knowledge of God is the highest good (4p28). In light of these views, accounts from Parts One and Two of what God is and of what the human mind is and knows gain significance. They are arguments in metaphysics and epistemology, certainly, but they are also themselves intrinsic goods, which Spinoza makes available to readers.

Ethics 1 includes central terms and the most general arguments of Spinoza's metaphysics. The most important varieties of thing are *substances, attributes,* and *modes.* Spinoza argues at 1p11 that God exists and at 1p14 that God is the only substance. The attributes are "what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence" (1d4). The nature of attributes remains highly controversial. *Ethics* 2 is somewhat helpful in this respect, in that it begins with examples: thought and extension are examples of attributes. These propositions suggest that an attribute is something like a very basic way of being. Modes are what is in substance and conceived through another. Because Spinoza argues that God is the only substance, we can know that everything else that exists—unless attributes are independent existences—is a mode. Spinoza argues on the basis of these definitions in *Ethics* 1 that all things are in God (1p15); that whatever finite things exist, are determined to exist by other finite things (1p28); and that God could have produced those things in no other way or order (1p33). These final two doctrines are Spinoza's determinism and necessitarianism respectively.

Spinoza mentions reason only after the definitions, axioms, and opening propositions of Part One, in a scholium to Proposition 8, and the term does not appear in the formal presentation until the second demonstration to 1p11. His silence, for critics who emphasize the importance of reason to the *Ethics*, requires some explanation, but there are promising resources for such an explanation in a number of closely related notions, including causation, intellect, and conception, which feature prominently in the *Ethics* from its beginning. Indeed, where reason is finally invoked following 1p11, Spinoza seems to make it equivalent to causation, at least in the context of the demonstration. The demonstration begins: "A cause or reason [*causa seu ratio*] for each thing must be found…."

Ethics 2 begins with an account of human nature and proceeds to accounts of the human mind that include both psychology and epistemology. In the account of human nature, Spinoza proceeds from the propositions that thought and extension exist (2p1 and 2p2), to the view that these attributes cannot be understood in terms of one another and do not causally interact (2p6), to the view that the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things (2p7).

These views contribute to what has come to be known as Spinoza's dual aspect theory and parallelism in his account of the human being (2p7s–2p13). On the dual aspect theory, each human being is a body and, equally, the idea of that body, which is the body's mind. Mind and body are one and the same thing even though they are modes of different attributes (2p7s). On parallelism, Spinoza addresses puzzles, prominent in Descartes, about mind-body causal interaction by defending a nonreductive identity of physical and mental processes.

This is a difficult concept, and one of central importance to many of the accounts of Spinoza's psychology in chapters that follow. Nonreductive identity is familiar to many philosophers in contexts of knowledge or belief. Even if the morning star and the evening star are the one and the same thing, not everyone has known that, so the identity of Phosphorus and Hesperus is nonreductive in belief contexts: suppose, for example that Helen believed that Phosphorus was close to the moon before the war; it does not follow that Helen believed Hesperus was close to the moon before the war.

What is striking about Spinoza's views about mind and body is that he insists that mental and corporeal things, though one and the same, cannot be substituted for one another in causal or explanatory contexts. On such a view, for every causal process in mind, there is an identical process in body. There is, however, no interaction between mind and body, so it would be a mistake to conclude from the facts, for example, that (1) the idea of a penguin that I have on looking at it causes (partially) a further mental state, a will to linger, and that (2) the light coming from the penguin into my brain causes (partially) me to stop and (3) that both these states and the order of them are in some sense one and the same thing with their counterparts that (4) the idea of the penguin causes me to stop. It is a curious view, and one that has generated a great deal of scholarship. For the study of reason in Spinoza, it has the implication that at least many reasons also are restricted by attribute. The reason I want to linger, in part, is that I have had the idea of penguin. The reason I stop, in part, is that there is a penguin present.

From this basic account of the human being, Spinoza moves on in *Ethics* 2 to give an account of the varieties of human cognition, an account that is eventually summarized at 2p40s2. These include ideas of imagination, which, like the visual idea of a penguin, arise primarily from experience in interaction with the external world; ideas of reason, which arise from knowledge of properties common to our body and other bodies together with ideas implied by such ideas; and intuitive knowledge, which is knowledge of the essence of singular things that we attain from our knowledge of God. Ideas of reason belong only to the attribute of thought, of course. They are distinctive psychologically and, because they are for Spinoza a kind of knowledge, epistemologically. Understanding ideas of reason and their relation to reasons in the sense of 1p11dem2 is the principal task of chapter 2 here.

Ethics 3 continues the narrow pursuit of knowledge of the human mind and its blessedness. It begins with a powerful account of what critics frequently call Spinoza's naturalism, his conviction that all things—he has human beings in mind in particular—are wholly natural things and so follow the laws of nature. This metaphysical conviction justifies a kind of methodological naturalism: because human beings are like other things, the same method can be used to understand human beings that is used to understand all other things. *Ethics* 3 is an account specifically of the human affects—roughly, our desires and emotions. It begins with an account associating the possession of knowledge (adequate ideas) with action as a total (adequate) cause. Then it moves to causation in singular things, with a focus on human beings. Our essence, Spinoza argues, is to strive to persevere in being (3p6–3p7). That striving, therefore, is expressed in all of our activity as a total or a partial cause (3p9). Spinoza identifies human desire with striving (3p9) and basic human affects with changes to striving (3p11). So I am happy if my power of acting increases and sad if it decreases. All of the affects are varieties of happiness, sadness, or desire. Included among the varieties of happiness and desire are some affects that are active, or that we have insofar as we are total causes. The rest are passions and instances of the first kind of cognition.

Ethics 4, nominally an account of the human bondage to passion, includes also a substantial part of Spinoza's account of value, which contributes to his views about how that bondage might be overcome. It begins with an account of value: the good is what is useful to us in moving toward an ideal of human nature (4 Preface and 4d1). Then the discussion moves quickly to an account of how passion interferes with our attainment of the good. Because we are finite beings, we can always be overcome by passion so that we fail to attain the good or even act on desires for ends other than what we know to be our own

good (4pp1–17). At 4p18 and its scholium, Spinoza argues that we are able to act well to the extent that we can overcome these impediments and act according to reason. The claim, which is the focus of chapter 4 here, introduces a host of particular claims about valuable ends and actions. What holds value, generally, Spinoza argues, is what helps us to preserve ourselves, particularly understanding, and most of all the knowledge of God (4pp20–28). He goes on to introduce, in a variety of terms, ends and states of particular value, notably the goods of the body (4pp38–39); the value of various affects, such as, for example, the claim that hatred can never be good (4p45); the value of society (4pp35–40, 4p73); and a variety of claims, building perhaps upon the notion of an ideal of human nature, about what the "free man" does (4pp67–73). Spinoza invokes the demands of reason or, in a descriptive manner, what one who is guided by reason does in many of these propositions.

Ethics 5 includes Spinoza's accounts of the what the mind can do to resist bondage to the passions as well as Spinoza's version of eschatology. The former account includes, principally, two techniques. First, we can transform our inadequate ideas (including our harmful passions) into adequate ideas (5pp1–4). Second, we can overcome the power of inadequate ideas by cultivating opposed powerful adequate ideas (5pp7–10s). Spinoza cites 2p38, a source of his account of ideas of reason in Part Five, in discussing both techniques, and I discuss them in chapters 3 and 4 here. They are particularly important to me as indications of a degree of unity in Spinoza's accounts of reason because they link his claims about reason as a source of commands with his claims about reason as a kind of idea and a kind of knowledge. The eschatology of *Ethics* 5 is highly controversial. As I understand it, Spinoza's claim that the mind remains after the death of the body (5p23) and related claims amount to a suggestion that we exist, in one respect, eternally, and we act well when we do what we can to improve that existence. The end of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza makes blessedness a state that we enjoy while we live (5p42), is some evidence of this.[4]

Spinoza's Theological Political Treatise

The TTP does not proceed in a deductive order as the *Ethics* does. It also introduces difficult questions, which I think that the *Ethics* does not introduce, about Spinoza's own commitment to its doctrines. Spinoza sets out in the book to defend the "freedom to philosophize," an ideal which includes what we would recognize today as freedom of speech and thought with a particular emphasis perhaps on the freedom to engage in science broadly

construed. His central contention is that the attempt to discover the truth cannot interfere with religion because religion concerns primarily the guidance of action and not the true and the false. I think that this commitment is clearest in Spinoza's claim about the kingdoms of philosophy and theology in chapter 15: "Philosophy is to be separated from theology . . . neither waits upon the other, but each occupies its own kingdom without any conflict with the other" (G3 188 12–15). The concerns about Spinoza's frankness arise principally with respect to his conception of religion and whether indeed he understands religion to be independent of philosophy. To anticipate, I will present the charge and respond to it on Spinoza's behalf in chapter 4. As he conceives religion, I think, it has its own foundation in reason and therefore need not either conflict with or depend upon philosophy.

The TTP has twenty chapters. The chapters building to chapter 15 develop two arguments to the doctrine of the two kingdoms. Chapters 1–6 present accounts of prophecy (chapter 1), the prophets (chapter 2), the Hebrew people under Moses (chapter 3), Divine Law (chapter 4), historical narratives in Scripture (chapter 5), and miracles (chapter 6), designed to show, in Spinoza's terms, "that Scripture leaves reason absolutely free and has nothing in common with philosophy" (G3 10 16–17). In these chapters, Spinoza emphasizes imagination, which in the *Ethics* is the first kind of cognition. The prophets, on his account, possess extraordinarily strong imaginations. Their prophecy associates with this trait: they experience the world in light of their imaginations. It is the purpose, moreover, of Scripture to describe events in terms that capture their imaginative power. The whole point of religion, so understood, is to capture the obedience of ordinary people by means of these powerful ideas, all of which move them to devotion to God and so to cooperative behavior under religious leaders. Because, Spinoza insists, religion teaches only very simple things and because the miracles described in it together with other claims it makes aim not at truth but at causing colorful and powerful ideas in its readers, religion does not conflict with reason.

Chapters 7–15 build a second argument to the same conclusion. Chapter 7 presents Spinoza's method for the interpretation of Scripture. Scriptural claims, he argues, may "be obscure in relation to truth and reason" (G3 100 26). That, however, does not matter to their clarity and meaning, which must be understood from a foundation entirely in Scripture. Spinoza proceeds to show how particular books of the Bible are misunderstood and how they ought correctly to be interpreted (chapters 8–11) before building an account of the simple message of Scripture, which he calls the word of God and from which he draws tenets of universal faith (chapters 13 and 14). Spinoza argues

that these very basic tenets, several of which will be significant to chapter 4 here, ought to be believed by all citizens but can be believed just as easily by in religious terms as in rational terms. Therefore, once again, theology and philosophy do not conflict, and the doctrine of the two kingdoms is secure.

It follows from this doctrine, Spinoza argues, that the state can and should protect what Spinoza calls the "the freedom to philosophize." Chapters 16–20 of the TTP change tone somewhat abruptly in order to move toward a demonstration of this conclusion. Spinoza offers an unusual and interesting, but also minimalist, version of a social contract theory, in which all parties to the contract retain their natural rights (chapter 16). Then he turns to an example of the Republic of the Hebrews, which has implications that are both universal and specific to Spinoza's own Dutch republic (chapters 17 and 18). The principal theme of the example, which Spinoza makes explicit in chapter 19, is that control of religion belongs properly to the sovereign power in a state. This conclusion may be surprising from a philosopher frequently thought to be a hero of the Enlightenment and of liberalism, but it is consistent with a conception of religion on which its function is obedience. Spinoza nevertheless does turn finally to a defense of what he takes to be substantial freedoms of thought and speech in the final chapter of the TTP. If religion and philosophy are truly distinct, perhaps those freedoms could be substantial in a state that also controls religion. I think that an account of the relation of reason to religion in the TTP can help to show why he contends that they could.[5]

1

Reason in the Metaphysics of Finite Individuals

"REASON" OR *RATIO* has uses of central significance in Spinoza's metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, and politics. Curiously, despite its prominence in the rest of Spinoza's mature work, there is a silence about reason at the foundations of Spinoza's argument. It is not mentioned among the definitions of metaphysical terms, nor among the axioms, nor among the critical opening propositions of *Ethics* 1. The term does not occur at all in the *Ethics* until it arises in an informal passage, a scholium to 1p8. Where it does finally occur in the formal apparatus of the *Ethics*, however, in Spinoza's second demonstration of the existence of God, reason is quite suddenly a focus:

> 1p11dem2: A cause or reason [*causa seu ratio*] for each thing must be found, as much for why it exists as for why it does not exist. For example, if a triangle exists, there must be given a reason or cause why it exists; if however it does not exist a reason or cause must also be given which prevents it from existing or which takes away its existence. However this reason or cause must either be contained in the nature of the thing or be external to it. For example, the reason why a square circle does not exist, its nature itself indicates: manifestly, because it involves a contradiction. On the other hand, the reason why substance exists follows from its nature alone, because it certainly involves existence (see 1p7). But the reason why a circle or triangle exists, or why it does not exist, does not follow from the nature of these things but from the order of all of corporeal nature. From this indeed it must follow either that the triangle necessarily exists now or that it is impossible that it should exist now. These things are evident in themselves.

> From them it follows that this thing exists necessarily for which no reason or cause is given that impedes its existence.

In this passage, Spinoza makes reason equivalent to a cause, and his examples suggest clearly that it also has the sense of an explanation. This chapter presents a general account of reason as explanation, its principal sense in Spinoza's metaphysics. The chapter includes substantial discussion of God, but it focuses on the aspect of metaphysics that Spinoza's uses of reason inform most directly: the metaphysics of finite individuals as Spinoza presents them from *Ethics* 1p11 through the account of the human mind and body at *Ethics* 2p13. A theme of the chapter will be that what might appear to be a strong contrast between God and finite individuals in this passage is not, after all, so strong. Spinoza endorses a traditional view on which human beings are, though in a finite way, very like God. His metaphysics commits him, moreover, to the untraditional conclusion that all finite things are like God in the same way: for Spinoza, each finite thing is, like God, a reason for its own existence.

1.1 Dualism, Idealism, or Materialism?

The *Ethics* frequently leaves readers with the impression that Spinoza is a dual aspect theorist. That is, he accepts the existence of both thought and extension and takes them equally well to present finite individuals. Perhaps the first two propositions of *Ethics* 2, the scholium to 2p7, and Spinoza's account of the human being at 2p13 are the most prominent sources of this impression. Although Spinoza sometimes (for example, at 1d6 and 1p11) refers to the infinite attributes of God in the *Ethics*, Spinoza names no particular attributes other than thought and extension, the subjects of 2p1 and 2p2:

> 2p1 Thought is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking thing.
> 2p2 Extension is an attribute of God, or God is an extended thing.

Spinoza's close identification of God with nature suggests, correctly, that these propositions just mean that thought and extension exist. The scholium to 2p7 adds significant detail. There Spinoza suggests that, just as God is a thinking thing and also an extended thing, so for particular modes, whatever is a mode of extension is also a mode of thought: "a mode of extension and the idea of that mode is one and the same thing but expressed in two ways." So the two aspects of being that characterize God according to 2p1 and 2p2

also characterize each extended mode. Finally, 2p13 addresses the issue of how we human beings fit into this account of the world. A human being's body is a mode of extension, and it is the object of the mode of thought, the idea, that is that person's mind: "The object of the idea that constitutes the human mind is the body, or a certain, actually existing mode of extension, and nothing else."

It is a neat picture, even if it raises difficult questions, and scholars agree that some form of dual aspect theory captures Spinoza's account of the human being. However, scholars who try to understand the arguments of the *Ethics* in greater generality frequently lose the initial impression that Spinoza is a mind-body dualist, and here conclusions vary. This chapter will emphasize two conclusions that, at least on the face of it, appear to be opposed. Drawing principally upon Spinoza's claims about reason, causation, and conception in *Ethics* 1, Michael Della Rocca argues that Spinoza is an idealist:

> If each thing is by its nature conceivable (or conceived) in a certain way, then built into the nature of each thing—whether extended or thinking or whatever—is a relation to mind. Whether this mind is actual or merely possible doesn't matter, for there is a connection between the nature of each thing and thought, and thus, in particular, there is a connection between the nature of each extended thing, qua extended, and thought. The nature of each thing consists, at least in part, in the thing's availability to thought.... Doesn't this claim amount to a form of idealism? the quick and honest answer is: yes, yes it does. (Della Rocca 2015, p. 13)[1]

Emphasizing not claims about reason but particular given reasons—the details of Spinoza's accounts of the world—Edwin Curley concludes that Spinoza is a materialist:

> It is true that some of the general propositions Spinoza enunciates early in Part II have a dualistic ring to them.... But if we follow out the details of Spinoza's treatment of the mind, as it develops in the course of Part II, I do not see how we can characterize it as anything but a materialistic program. To understand the mind, we must understand the body, without which the mind could not function or even exist. In spite of all the parallelistic talk, the order of understanding never proceeds from mind to body. (Curley 1988, p. 78)