The Cambridge Companion to SPINOZA'S *ETHICS*

EDITED BY

OLLI KOISTINEN

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Olli Koistinen
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List of Contributors

DON GARRETT is professor of philosophy at New York University. He is the author of *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* and the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*.

SUSAN JAMES is professor of philosophy at Birkbeck College. She is the author of *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*.

CHARLES JARRETT is associate professor of philosophy at Rutgers-Camden. He is the author of *Spinoza: A Guide for the Perplexed*.

OLLI KOISTINEN is professor of theoretical philosophy at the University of Turku. He has co-edited *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes* with John Biro.

MICHAEL LEBUFFE is assistant professor of philosophy at Texas A&M University. He is the author of *From Bondage to Freedom: Spinoza on Human Excellence* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press) and of articles on Spinoza and Hobbes.

MARTIN LIN is associate professor of philosophy at Rutgers University. He has published several articles on early modern philosophy, especially on Spinoza.

JON MILLER is associate professor of philosophy at Queen's University in Canada. His particular research interest is understanding how early modern philosophers received the ideas of the ancients.

ANDREAS SCHMIDT teaches philosophy at the Eberhard-Karls-Universtät Tübingen. He is the author of *Der Grund des Wissens. Zu Fichtes Wissenschaftslehren in den Versionen von 1794/95, 1804/II und 1812* and of *Göttliche Gedanken. Zur Metaphysik der Erkenntnis bei Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche und Leibniz* (forthcoming).

PIET STEENBAKKERS is lecturer in the history of modern philosophy at the University of Utrecht and holder of the endowed chair of Spinoza studies at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He is a member of the international research team Groupe de recherches spinozistes, and he is currently involved in setting up a research project on Biblical Criticism and Secularization in the Seventeenth Century.

DIANE STEINBERG is associate professor of philosophy at Cleveland State University. She has published articles on Spinoza and is the author of *On Spinoza.*

VALTTERI VILJANEN is an Academy of Finland postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Turku. He obtained his Ph.D. on the concept of power in Spinoza's metaphysics and has published articles on Spinoza.

ANDREW YOUPA is assistant professor of philosophy at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. His research focuses on Spinoza's moral psychology and ethical theory.

Abbreviations

A. SPINOZA, BENEDICTUS DE (1632–77)

Collected works (for further details, see the bibliography):

G = Spinoza. 1925. *Spinoza Opera*. 4 vols. Edited by Carl Gebhardt.
C = Spinoza. 1985. *The Collected Works of Spinoza, vol. I*. Translated and edited by E. M. Curley.

The *Ethics:*

The *Ethics* was first published posthumously with the Latin title *Ethica Ordine Geometrico demonstrata* in Spinoza (1677b). Latin editions of the *Ethica* are included in Spinoza 1914 and G II. Widely used English translations of the *Ethics* are Edwin Curley's in C and Samuel Shirley's in Spinoza 2002. If not otherwise indicated, in this volume all translations of Spinoza's works are from C.

The first Arabic number specifies the part of the *Ethics*. The abbreviations following that numeral are as follows:

a = axiom
da = definition of the affects in the third part of the *Ethics*
app = appendix
c = corollary
d = definition (when not after a proposition number)
d = demonstration (when after a proposition number)
le = lemma
p = proposition
po = postulate
pref = preface
s = scholium

For example, 1p16c1 refers to the first corollary of the sixteenth proposition in the first part of the *Ethics*.

Other works:

CM = *Metaphysical Thoughts* (*Cogitata Metaphysica*).

KV = *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (*Korte Verhandeling van God, de Mensch, en des zelfs Welstand*).
TdIE = *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (*Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*).
TP = *Political Treatise* (*Tractatus Politicus*).
TTP = *Theological-Political Treatise* (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*).

Ep followed by an Arabic number specifies a letter in Spinoza's correspondence.

B. OTHER SOURCES

AT = Descartes, René. 1996. *Œuvres*, publiées par Charles Adam et Paul Tannery, 12 Bde.
CSM = Descartes, René. 1985. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Volumes I and II. Translated by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch.
CSMK = Descartes, René. 1991. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Volume III. Translated by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and A. Kenny.

form of a tree depend on various external factors. However, it also is natural to think that these ordinary things, trees and rocks, are themselves compositional objects, in the sense that they consist of smaller individual things, which in turn consist of smaller things, and so on. The existence of ordinary things is dependent on their parts. However, it is not implausible to claim that this kind of dependency on parts has to stop somewhere, that is, that there have to be simple things out of which all compositional things are ultimately composed. These simple things, it can be argued, have to be completely independent of all other things. Not only is their existence independent of any parts, but, moreover, they cannot have external causes for their existence, because it is natural to hold that when a thing comes to existence through external causes, these causes just arrange preexisting things so that they together compose a new thing. Moreover, it seems that simple things cannot be destroyed through external factors, because destruction through external causes can happen only if an external cause breaks the inner constitution of a thing. Finally, it seems that external causes cannot affect these simple things at all, because a thing can be affected only if it has an inner constitution that can be changed. This kind of independent things that lie at the basis of reality are traditionally called substances. In a certain sense, the existence of all other things is reducible to the ways or modes in which these simple substances exist. The independence of substances characterized above could be labeled *ontological independence*, and from this ontological independence it is a small step to what could be called *conceptual independence*. If a thing is completely independent of everything else and is able to exist alone, its nature, or what it is, cannot be dependent on anything else. Thus, all there is to know about an ontologically independent thing has to be in the thing itself, which means that the thing is conceptually independent.

In 1d3, Spinoza defines substance in terms of ontological and conceptual independence. Something is a substance just in case it *is in itself* and is *conceived through itself*, Spinoza says. Here the in-itself condition signifies ontological independence and the conceived-through-itself condition conceptual independence. Moreover, all other things are nothing but ways or modes of substances. Thus, Spinoza's conception of substance seems to differ in no way from the traditional conception; what makes his metaphysics so startling is the consequences he draws from that conception.

Spinoza argues that any possible substance has to exist by necessity, because nothing external can prevent a possible substance from existing (1p7d). This is an extremely interesting claim, and it is not quite clear whether Spinoza takes it as a self-evident truth – perhaps some background assumptions are needed. It is true that Spinoza endorses a

version of the principle of sufficient reason. For Spinoza, this principle says not only that for the existence of a thing a cause is needed but also that the nonexistence of a thing requires a cause (1p11d2). One might, then, give the following indirect proof for the necessary existence of a possible substance *s*: suppose that *s* does not exist. From the independence of substances, it follows that nothing external to *s* can be the cause of the nonexistence of *s*. Thus, the cause of its nonexistence has to be somehow internal to *s*. But this can hold only if *s* has a contradictory nature; that is, only if *s* is not a possible substance. So we can conclude that any possible substance has to exist by necessity.

In 1d6, Spinoza defines God as a substance that has an infinity of attributes, each of which is infinite in its own kind. From this definition and from the necessary existence of any possible substance, it follows that God necessarily exists. However, the proof of the existence of God involves a difficulty that is absent from the proof of the necessary existence of substance. Even if it were granted that there have to be completely independent things, this is not enough to show that God, defined as a substance having an infinity of attributes, is possible. To understand the problem and Spinoza's solution to it, the notion of attribute has to be investigated. Let us first call the position that there are several independent things, that is, substances, which ground the existence of everything else, *substance pluralism* and Spinoza's view that only one such thing exists, *substance monism*. In substance pluralism the different substances have their own natures, that is, attributes that are responsible for the distinctness of the substances. Attributes are what could be called individuators, and so in Spinoza's substance monism it is assumed that all these distinct individuators, or individual natures, can be had by one thing (1p10s). However, this assumption is problematic, because it is not at all easy to understand how one thing can have several natures. But once the assumption is made, substance monism follows directly from the following three premises: (i) attributes are individuators; (ii) any possible substance exists by necessity; (iii) God, that is, a substance having all possible attributes, is possible. It is easy to show that substance monism really follows from these premises: suppose that besides God some other substance *s* exists. Because attributes are individuators, *s* must have an attribute that differentiates *s* from God. This, however, is impossible, because God has all possible attributes.

Spinoza's ontology and its relation to those of Aristotle and Descartes are considered in Valtteri Viljanen's chapter 'Spinoza's Ontology'. After having given a detailed overview of different interpretations of Spinoza's basic metaphysics, Viljanen emphasizes the importance of Spinoza's transition from considerations concerning concepts to propositions concerning real entities, the essence of which is causal power. Chapters by

Andreas Schmidt and by Jon Miller, 'Substance Monism and Identity Theory in Spinoza' and 'Spinoza and Stoics on Substance Monism', respectively, shed light on different aspects of Spinoza's monism. Schmidt pays close attention to different interpretations of Spinoza's argument for monism and he also considers the problem of how it is possible that Spinoza's God, a simple substance, has several natures or attributes. In Schmidt's interpretation, the key to the solution of this problem is to be found in Duns Scotus's concept of formal distinction. Schmidt also shows how Spinoza's view of the mind–body relation is partly based on monism. Jon Miller argues in his chapter that Spinoza's monism was not something he just borrowed from the Stoics. Whereas the Stoic arguments for monism rely on wholeness and teleology, Spinoza's monism follows from his theory of *per se* individuation.

For Spinoza, contingency is closely related to interaction. Only things that are in interaction can be said to have some of their features contingently. For example, we might be willing to say that a painted floor is only contingently brown, because brownness does not result from the nature of the floor. A necessarily existing substance, however, is in no interaction with other things, and thus all its properties somehow emanate from its inner nature; thus an independent thing completely determines itself (1p16 and 1p16d). Hence it seems that necessitarianism follows directly from substance monism.

However, Spinoza's modal theory has been a subject of a long controversy. Spinoza no doubt accepts the necessity of all truths, but it is not quite clear whether he accepts the absolute necessity of all truths. Truths about finite things have what is called relative necessity, or necessity by reason of cause (1p33s1), and it has been argued that this kind of necessity is consistent with contingency. In his chapter 'Spinoza on Necessity', Charles Jarrett discusses different interpretations of Spinoza's modal theory, reaching the conclusion that Spinoza has only one notion of necessity. Jarrett also compares Spinoza's ontological argument for the existence of God with that presented by Kurt Gödel.

ETHICS, PART 2

In Part 2 of the *Ethics*, 'On the Nature and Origin of the Mind', Spinoza first gives content to the highly abstract metaphysics of Part 1. In the first two propositions Spinoza purports to prove that thought and extension are attributes of God. Even though the official demonstrations of these propositions are somewhat problematic, the scholium to 2p1, where Spinoza offers an alternative demonstration for thought's being an attribute of God, is illuminating. What Spinoza seems to claim there is that if we can conceive some property *F* so that it can be had to an

infinite degree, then that property is an attribute. But because we can conceive a being that is infinite in respect of its power of thinking, thought is an attribute of God. In the same way, even though Spinoza does not do that, we could demonstrate that extension is an attribute of God: we can conceive a being that is infinite in its extension; therefore extension is an attribute of God.

The situation looks like this: God exists and is thinking and extended. One wonders whether these aspects of God are in any way related to each other. What does God think? At 2p3 Spinoza argues that God's thought is directed to himself. He can form the idea of his essence and of everything that flows from that essence. So he acquires the objects of thought from other attributes and because of his infinity in respect of thinking he is able to form an idea of everything. After this, Spinoza goes on to argue that the acts of thought (i.e., formation of ideas) are not caused by the objects thought about in these acts (2p5–p6). This means that God's intellect is not passive, but from his own infinite power of thinking God spontaneously thinks everything that it is possible to think about. This suggests a kind of parallelism between thought and extension; that is, that there are modes of thought that are purely mental that somehow represent the extended realm in such a way that the modes of thought do not have modes of extension, or modes of any other attributes, as their constituents. Thought does not borrow its content from other attributes.

However, there are reasons to think that this picture of parallelism cannot be accurate. One is tempted to endorse it because for Spinoza attributes are conceived through themselves (1p10). This is easy to read as a kind of conceptual independence, which suggests that any necessary tie between thought and what the thought is about is due not to the nature of these attributes but to some other force, as it were. We would like to suggest instead that the conceptual distinction is between the *acts of thinking* and *acts of extending*. God's infinite intellect does not think about a mode of extension because the mode is there, but the intellect affirms the mode's existence from its own power. The infinite intellect, however, obtains its objects from the extended realm. Without objects given to the intellect the intellect could not think about them, but the *act of thought* performed is due to God's infinite power of thinking and is in no way caused by the object. This is how thought–body unions come to be generated.

The aforesaid helps us to understand one of the most famous propositions of the *Ethics*, viz. 2p7 according to which '(t)he order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.' From what has been said, it follows that God forms an idea of every thing. Moreover, he cannot form those ideas without the existence of

the things the ideas are about. In 2p7, by 'order and connection' Spinoza means, as the proof makes evident, their causal order and connection. Read in this way, 2p7 says that if *x* causes *y*, then the idea of *x* causes the idea of *y*. Given what has been said above, it follows that if *x* causes *y*, the idea of *x* and the idea of *y* exist. According to Spinoza's so-called causal axiom, 1a4, the idea of an effect cannot exist without the idea (knowledge) of its cause, which means that the idea of an effect depends on the idea of its cause. Thus, causal dependency between things is matched by dependency between the ideas of those things.

In 2p7s, Spinoza explains his position on the idea–object relation by claiming that in fact any idea and its object are one and the same thing but explained through different attributes. Even though identity theories in general are difficult to understand, what Spinoza says here is in conformity with what we have argued above. When an idea is seen as an act of thought, or a modification of a mind, it is explained through the attribute of thought; but an idea can also be seen as the object of the act of thought (*ideatum*). In this case, the idea is conceived through the attribute of the object.

After giving this kind of account of the relation between ideas and their objects, Spinoza begins his descent from God's mind to finite minds. Human beings are not substances because their nonexistence is conceivable; in this sense they are contingent. However, this does not contradict Spinoza's necessitarianism, because even though particular human beings are not necessary existents in the way substances are, it still holds, as we read Spinoza, that if a human being exists at a certain time, then it is absolutely necessary that he or she exist at that time.

For Spinoza, a human mind is an idea. It has to be an idea of an existent thing because the existence of the idea requires the existence of its object; and the object of the human mind has to be such that the changes in it result in changes, that is, perceptions, in the human mind (2p11–p12). But the only thing with which we have such direct acquaintance is what we call our body. Moreover, Spinoza goes on to deny that the mind could have some other object besides the body (2p13). The argument for this fascinating denial is a compelling one: suppose *X* is not a body and is the object of your mind. Because everything that exists must have some effect, you should by 2p7 have ideas of the effects of that object; but Spinoza holds that you simply do not have ideas of such effects.

The picture drawn of the human mind and of the whole human being in Spinoza's top-down strategy can, then, be summarized as follows: a human being is generated by God's beginning to think an object that we call the human body. Because of this, all human minds are parts of the infinite intellect of God.

ontological views. The reasoning seems to be the following. In the beginning of Part 1, it is made clear that substances are both ontologically and conceptually prior to everything else. Moreover, modes are conceived through their substances (1d5), and because besides substances (with their attributes) nothing but modes exist (1a1), it follows that any idea involves the idea of a substance. But in Spinoza's monism it holds that there is just one substance through which everything else is conceived. Thus, any idea involves an idea in which God is conceived through itself. However, Spinoza does not mean that in being conceived through itself, God is not being conceived *under* any of his attributes. Any identification, according to Spinoza, is property-based, which means that God has to be conceived under an attribute that the intellect perceives to constitute God's essence (1p10s). Thus, in order to have any idea, we must have an idea of an attribute of God, and thus of an essence of God. Even though this may sound strange, things become more understandable when attention is paid to what Spinoza thinks to be the attributes a human being participates in: thought and extension. My thought of a finite thinking thing necessarily treats that thing as limited by an infinite thinking thing, and any idea of a finite body necessarily sees that body as limited by an infinite space. Thus, any idea we have involves an idea of God under some attribute.

The abovesaid may be somewhat confusing, because it seems to go against experience that we should be constantly having ideas of God's infinite thought and infinite extension. However, this oddity is removable. In saying that any idea involves an idea of the essence of God, Spinoza means, as we interpret him, that on the basis of any idea, the mind can form a clear and distinct idea of God; in other words, any idea makes God cognitively accessible to a human being. Spinoza's panpsychism holds that a worm has an idea of its body and thus an idea that involves infinite extension, that is, extension as an attribute, but it would be rather absurd to say that the worm has a clear and distinct idea of God under the attribute of extension. What we have but the worm lacks is the power to realize and work out what the ideas of bodies involve. We have a sort of primordial understanding of space, which makes geometry and, Spinoza thinks, also the basics of physics possible for us to understand. Moreover, for Spinoza there is a kind of geometry of the mind. In this kind of geometry, we have to think of our own finite mental life as being embedded in God's infinite thought, of which we can also form adequate knowledge. Once we make the adequate knowledge of God's essence involved in all of our ideas clear and distinct, we are able to form new adequate knowledge; on that basis, we are able to deduce properties of God. Maybe the easiest way to clarify this is to consider the knowledge we have of geometry. A geometer does not

need anything but the notion of infinite space to be able to see that certain fundamental axioms of space hold, and he or she is also able to understand what kind of individuals the space permits with respect to their geometrical form. This kind of knowledge – proceeding from the formal essences of the attributes of God to the essences of individual things – Spinoza calls intuitive knowledge, and it is not based on bodily affections (2p40s2).

After having explained the general nature of our possibility of acquiring knowledge and its scope, Spinoza begins to shift the focus. The common conception of human beings attributes to them a will. According to Descartes, the will plays a prominent role also in our cognitive life, that is, in the formation of beliefs. When we fall into error, the fault is ours: we accept those ideas of which we do not have a clear and distinct perception. However, Descartes claims that we can always withdraw judgment, at least when the ideas presented to the intellect are not clear and distinct. Spinoza sees the situation quite differently. In his world, there is no place for will as a separate faculty capable of making free choices (1p32, 1p32c1–c2). God's intellect could be called an intuitive intellect in which thinking of an object is creating it; God does not choose from a set of possible worlds which he is able to consider, but realizes everything that can fall under his infinite intellect. In the concluding propositions of Part 2, Spinoza wants to defend his view of the cognitive life as not involving a faculty of assenting and dissenting (2p48–p49). The key to this defence is Spinoza's thought that ideas are inherently judgmental. Every idea involves an affirmation (or denial) and thus, there is in principle no difference between having an idea and believing it. What Spinoza wants to show is that the affirmation and denial involved in ideas is what could be called the doxastic will of Descartes.

That there is no contracausal free will follows directly from the determinism of Part 1. Any supposed act of will follows from previous events and, therefore, nobody is able freely to decide whether to accept or reject an idea he or she is considering. Moreover, 3p2 and especially its scholium involve very subtle considerations concerning the freedom of mind–body agency. Spinoza's point there is to show that even though it appears to us that we do something, for example talk, from the free decision of the mind, that appearance is also due to our ignorance of the causes of our so-called free decisions. So Spinoza has to explain doxastic agency as not involving a commitment to the faculty of free will. The claim that the work of the will is already present in any of our ideas, however, faces the following objection. It is one thing to consider an idea that is in the intellect and another to accept or reject it. It is perfectly possible to consider the idea, *The number of stones in the world is*

even, and withhold assent. Spinoza counters this objection by claiming that an idea that is not believed always requires ideas that are somehow stronger than and in conflict with the idea that is not believed. To take Spinoza's example, if a child imagines a winged horse and perceives nothing else, she cannot help believing that there is a winged horse in front of her (see 2p49s). So it is the perceptual situation of the child that determines which of her ideas amount to beliefs and which do not. The relation between ideas and beliefs in Spinoza can then be presented roughly as follows: if no perception is in conflict with an idea being a belief, the idea is a belief. Spinoza does not want to say that beliefs and ideas have the same extension, but that beliefs form a subclass of ideas.

In this volume, Spinoza's philosophy of mind and knowledge are examined in Diane Steinberg's chapter 'Knowledge in Spinoza's *Ethics*'. After considering the nature of the mind and its relation to the body, Steinberg analyzes justification, scepticism, and the relation between idea and belief in Spinoza. She also investigates Spinoza's famous threefold classification of knowledge. In 'Spinoza on Action', Olli Koistinen considers the nature of the mind–body relation and the role of the will in the formation of beliefs.

ETHICS, PART 3

In Part 3, 'On the Origin and Nature of the Affects', Spinoza begins to construct his philosophical psychology, which forms a fundamental stage on the way to the theory of human happiness. In 3pref Spinoza proclaims:

> The Affects, therefore, of hate, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of nature as the other singular things. And therefore they acknowledge certain causes, through which they are understood, and have certain properties, as worthy of our knowledge as the properties of any other thing, by the mere contemplation of which we are pleased. Therefore, I shall treat the nature and powers of the Affects, and the power of the Mind over them, by the same Method by which, in the preceding parts, I treated God and the Mind, and I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a Question of lines, planes, and bodies.

We believe that the reference to 'lines, planes, and bodies' should be taken very seriously: obviously, Spinoza wants to present a theory of emotions that proceeds with an exact method akin to that of geometry (see also especially 4p57s). The major challenge this project faces is that whereas geometry and such eternal things as God involve no change, we finite temporal beings undergo constant change due to the external causes that affect us. This does not keep Spinoza from holding that it is

possible to present a rigorous theory of how we human beings feel and behave when we find ourselves in certain circumstances, necessarily modified in certain ways by external causes. In what follows, we aim to explicate the way in which Spinoza builds this part of his system.

Spinoza begins by giving us some basic definitions concerning finite causation and emotions. It is a central aim of his ethics to show us how to become as active as possible; and he claims 'that we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause' (3d2), that is, when something happens of which we are the complete cause. In such a case, the effect can be understood clearly and distinctly as something that follows from our own nature alone. What, then, qualifies as action? This is a thorny question. As has been noted in the literature, it is uncertain whether we can be complete causes of *anything* that happens outside us: whenever we make something happen outside us, it seems inevitable that also something else is involved in the process, as we have seen when discussing Spinoza's theory of imaginative idea-forming processes. This makes it difficult to say whether there are any overt actions in Spinoza's strict sense. There may, however, be interpretative moves that offer us an unequivocal answer to this problem. Be this as it may, two points should be noted here (see 3p1). First, what may be called the acts of understanding or intellectual acts, such as forming an idea of a geometrical object on the basis of our adequate idea of extension and then inferring that this object must have certain properties, are, quite clearly, Spinozistic actions. Second, if something epistemically inadequate were to follow from our nature alone, then, as in such cases God forms his idea only insofar as he is modified by a modification that is us, he would have an inadequate idea, which, of course, would go against his omniscience. This means that the adequacy of God's thought is in certain cases produced through one finite human individual alone.

The third and final definition of Part 3 offers us Spinoza's explication of emotion:

> By affect I understand affections of the Body by which the Body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.
>
> *Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the Affect an action; otherwise, a passion.* (3d3)

Here we encounter once again a dynamic notion, that of 'power of acting' (*agendi potentia*). By that notion, we would like to suggest, Spinoza refers to the part of our power that is exercised freely, that is, without being hindered by other finite causes. Emotions are fundamentally about changes in this kind of power. That the notion of force or power

appears here is understandable given that we are modifications of God, an infinitely powerful being. Moreover, and most importantly, this idea underpins Spinoza's all-important *conatus* doctrine, which undeniably forms the very basis of all his subsequent theorizing concerning human emotions and happiness. According to the *conatus* doctrine, '[e]ach thing, to the extent it is in itself [*quantum in se est*], strives [*conatur*] to persevere in its being' (3p6, translation modified), and this essence is nothing less than the 'actual essence' of any finite individual (3p7). The derivation and meaning of this doctrine has been the subject of a lively discussion. Here it suffices to note that the striving in question is a form of power – power to resist at least all those factors that threaten an individual's actual existence.

The resulting view is a compelling one, offering us a uniquely elaborated theory of human existence that starts from the tenet that we are, in essence, dynamic entities or *strivers*, whose existence is determined by the relation our power has to the power of other finite things. From this point of departure, Spinoza constructs his revisionary theory of human action and motivation. Olli Koistinen offers a detailed discussion of this theory in his contribution; here it suffices to note the following. In 3p9s, Spinoza tells us that appetite is *conatus* 'related to the body and mind together', and when we are able to conceptualize what satisfies our appetite, we are desiring. Also, will is not a separate faculty, but our *conatus* as it is manifested as intrinsically judgmental volitions that endeavour to affirm the existence of our body. The same scholium contains a particularly weighty and famous passage:

> From all this, then, it is clear that we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it.

This passage has been widely discussed; it seems to us that here Spinoza is articulating the basic idea of his theory of the good, which rejects invoking any ontologically preeminent final causes in explaining human behaviour. We will say more about Spinoza's theory of the good below, but already here we should appreciate the fact that, for Spinoza, our essence-originating striving determines what is good in the first place. Spinoza explains in 3p11s that apart from desire, there are also two other 'primary affects' or emotions: joy (or pleasure, *laetitia* in Latin) and sadness (or pain, *tristitia*). Joy is the mind's passing '*to a greater perfection*', whereas sadness is its passing '*to a lesser perfection*'. As we should expect given his definition of emotion, these changes in perfection can be stated in dynamic terms as increases and decreases in our power of acting (see, e.g., 3p15). There are thus real power-based criteria for designating certain changes as such that they enhance our perfection, others

Spinoza had defined love as 'nothing but *Joy with the accompanying idea of an external cause*' (3p13s). So the idea is quite plainly (and here we can already see the importance of the above discussed 3p12 and p13) that because we strive to increase our power of acting, we strive to keep in our minds those ideas of external objects that help us to increase our power, that is, ideas of objects we love because they give us joy. And when an idea of a joy-inducing thing is removed, our power of acting decreases, and hence we become saddened. Obviously, that these events are described in terms of power does nothing to diminish the necessity with which they take place.

To obtain a better grasp on how Spinoza proceeds in designating emotions, we may take the following example. In 3p13s, Spinoza says that by 'hate' he means '*Sadness with the accompanying idea of an external cause.*' The scholium of 3p24, in turn, defines 'envy' as '*Hate, insofar as it is considered so to dispose a man that he is glad at another's ill fortune and saddened by his good fortune*'. This term appears later in 3p35:

> If someone imagines that a thing he loves is united with another by as close, or by a closer, bond of Friendship than that with which he himself, alone, possessed the thing, he will be affected with Hate toward the thing he loves, and will envy the other.

A complex architecture of these emotions leads, in the scholium of this proposition, to specifying 'jealousy' as '[t]his Hatred toward a thing we love, combined with Envy', 'which is therefore nothing but a vacillation of mind born of Love and Hatred together, accompanied by the idea of another who is envied.' Spinoza's long catalogue of brief definitions of emotions is located in the end of Part 3; in the chapter 'The Anatomy of the Passions', Michael LeBuffe examines in detail the catalogue and its philosophical underpinnings, pinpointing central problems pertaining to Spinoza's conception of desire and passive joy. Moreover, LeBuffe argues that Spinoza's catalogue should not be understood as an attempt to provide an exhaustive taxonomy of emotions, but as a useful compendium of those affects that are most relevant to his ethical project.

It is particularly revealing to take heed of the way in which Spinoza sees the relationship between his analysis and the common emotion descriptions. In 3p22s, he first explains what he understands by 'pity' and then adds, '[b]y what name we should call the Joy which arises from another's good I do not know.' But clearly the idea is that there is such an emotion. Late in Part 3, after having defined 'indignation', Spinoza remarks:

> I know that in their common usage these words mean something else. But my purpose is to explain the nature of things, not the meaning of words. I intend to

indicate these things by words whose usual meaning is not entirely opposed to the meaning with which I wish to use them. One warning of this should suffice. (da20exp)

The view is striking. Spinoza's analysis is supposed to explicate what kind of emotions, as our modifications, there *must be* as our natures are constituted in certain ways when we are affected by external causes. Finding the proper words for these emotions – and bridging the possible gap between his own and the common usage of terms – is a task of secondary importance. Obviously, Spinoza's contention is that his 'geometry of emotions' reveals the true nature of our psychological life, and can do this without starting from the common way of perceiving and talking about our emotions.

ETHICS, PART 4

From Part 4 of the *Ethics*, 'On Human Bondage, *or* the Powers of the Affects', onward, Spinoza offers us his ethics proper. In 4pref, he tells us what he understands by perfection and imperfection, good and evil. The ontological status of these concepts has generated much discussion. *Prima facie*, Spinoza might be seen as saying that they are nothing real but 'only modes of thinking'. But even though perfection and good are not something built into the very ontological makeup of things, Spinoza is willing to retain these words. The key passage runs as follows:

> But the main thing to note is that when I say that someone passes from a lesser to a greater perfection, and the opposite, I do not understand that he is changed from one essence, *or* form, to another. . . . Rather, we conceive that his power of acting, insofar as it is understood through his nature, is increased or diminished. (4pref)

The idea is, we would like to argue, that changes taking place in an individual's power of acting enable us to make well-founded judgments concerning perfection and goodness: to the extent a thing succeeds in exercising its power more freely than before, it can be said to become more perfect. Accordingly, defining good as 'what we certainly know to be useful to us' (4d1) means that to judge anything that aids us in freely using our power to be good is well-based. Keeping this and the connection between power and essence in mind, it follows that all this squares well with the aforementioned idea of 3p9s that it is nothing external to our essence but our essential striving (and what follows from it) that determines what is *judged* to be good. Spinoza defines 'the end for the sake of which we do something' (4d7) as appetite, that is, as our mental and bodily striving, and he seems to firmly believe that by these moves he has expunged everything teleological from his system.

Given all this, it should come as no surprise that Spinoza goes on to build his ethical theory in terms of power. The definition of virtue is especially revealing because in it we can clearly see the all-important – if also controversial – leap from the domain of descriptive metaphysics into that of ethics:

> By virtue and power I understand the same thing, i.e. (by 3p7), virtue, insofar as it is related to man, is the very essence, *or* nature, of man, insofar as he has the power of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone. (4d8)

The first eight propositions of Part 4 explain that as we all are limited parts of the whole of nature, there happens much in us which does not qualify as virtuous: we are always under passions, our limited power struggling with the power of external causes. These struggles determine the nature of our emotional life. Strikingly, in Spinoza's scheme of things, we have no other option but to fight power with power: 'An affect cannot be restrained or taken away except by an affect opposite to, and stronger than, the affect to be restrained' (4p7). The interconnectedness of ethics and psychology is emphasized by the thesis that it is only through our emotions that we are conscious of the ethically relevant changes in us (4p8); that which gives us joy (by helping our striving) is designated as good, that which saddens us (by hindering our striving) is designated as evil (it should be noted that to the extent that these emotions are passions and thus inadequate ideas, they can lead us astray from what is truly good or useful).

Spinoza's dynamism is not, however, without its intrinsic linkage to his intellectualism. Although an idea's truth or falsity is, as such, of no relevance to its strength (see 4p14–p15), Spinoza emphasizes that 'acting from virtue', that is, acting freely as determined by our own essential power alone, equals understanding, that is, forming adequate ideas, and those things that help us in understanding are with certainty good for us (4p23–p28). In the chapter 'Spinoza's Theory of the Good', Andrew Youpa considers different interpretations of what constitutes the ultimate good for Spinoza and defends an interpretation according to which human beings strive for eternal existence, not for the prolongation of their psychopsychical, temporal being.

Spinoza's position falls in line with the fact that, as we saw above, he has strong reasons related to God's omniscience to claim that causal adequacy must result in epistemic adequacy. But, of course, harmful external causes can keep us from understanding and activity. Understandably, then, Part 4 tells us how to achieve circumstances in which intellectual activities can flourish; and it soon becomes clear that Spinoza is far from recommending a reclusive life. He has already commented that '[t]o

man . . . there is nothing more useful than man' (4p18s), and in 4p29–p37 he explains why this holds. Human beings are often torn by passions, but they can also lead a life of reason; and those who lead such a life know that the greatest good of all, knowing God, is shareable by everyone, not something that would thrust us against each other. Moreover, a rationally structured society can offer us many benefits that would otherwise be out of our reach. As a consequence, Spinoza estimates a well-ordered society as the best way to secure a harmonious life, fit for promoting our freedom, activity, and understanding. This is the line of thought behind 4p40, '[t]hings which are of assistance to the common Society of men, *or* which bring it about that men live harmoniously, are useful; those, on the other hand, are evil which bring discord to the State.' There is thus an important interconnection between Spinoza's political thought and his metaphysics. In the chapter 'Freedom, Slavery, and the Passions', Susan James shows how the *Ethics* can be seen as offering a comprehensive theory of freedom, which reflects and, most importantly, reveals the metaphysical underpinnings of the more restricted political freedom Spinoza defends in his *Theological-Political Treatise*.

After this, Spinoza indicates the ethical status of certain key emotions. Generally speaking, those emotions that arise from reason, from the free exercise of our power of acting, are good; and those things that decrease our power of acting are evil. To take one revealing – and perhaps striking – example: repentance cannot be a virtue (4p54), because it does not arise from reason, but from considering one's own lack of power, or how one's power of acting is restrained. There is, however, an important qualification: the moral worth of an emotion may depend on whether we are talking about a rational or a passionate human being. Spinoza makes clear that for those who are living and behaving from passions, such emotions as repentance, humility, hope, and fear may actually be *good* things (4p54s). They are the least of all evils, in a sense, because they can make those who live under passions form social contracts and behave, for a lack of a better word, decently. Of course, for rational human beings such passions are 'of no use' (4p58s). And we should bear in mind that there are things whose goodness can never be questioned: understanding, anything that helps us to achieve it, and everything we do and feel in virtue of our reason.

The rest of Part 4 is largely devoted to depicting the life of an ideally rational human being, or a 'free man'. Arguably, Spinoza does this in order to give us a paradigm – or as he puts it in 4pref, a model – of a finite but completely virtuous human existence. We can reflect upon our own life against this kind of model, which can offer us guidance and thus have the effect of making us more virtuous than before. 'Free man' is indeed an intriguing entity; for instance, he or she never acts deceptively, even

when deception could save his or her life (4p72, 4p72s). Does this not go against the *conatus* doctrine? Here we should remember that Spinoza is talking about a human being 'insofar as he is free' (4p72d). Given this qualification, it may be considered, in fact, quite plain that nothing deceitful, or untrue, can arise from the free exercise of our power of thinking, that is, from our understanding.

ETHICS, PART 5

The concluding part of the *Ethics*, 'On the Power of the Intellect, *or* on Human Freedom', is also admittedly the work's most difficult one, and there has been considerable disagreement over its worth and status. Spinoza's aim, however, is clear: to show us what to do to achieve freedom and happiness. Despite the fact that Spinoza eventually reaches a rather uncompromising intellectualist position, Part 5 opens in a more mundane spirit, by teaching us a set of techniques to gain control over our passive emotions. Although we cannot have absolute command over our emotional life and get rid altogether of the passions we undergo, these techniques can still help us to achieve a state in which passions 'constitute the smallest part of the Mind' (5p20s). In the chapter 'The Power of Reason in Spinoza', Martin Lin offers a detailed critical examination of Spinoza's remedies for passions, deeming Spinoza overly optimistic with regard to our appetite for rational inquiry. According to Lin, of the techniques Spinoza presents, only one does not rest on questionable assumptions: that in which reason forms associative links between useful maxims of life and circumstances to which those maxims can be applied. Here we would like to focus on the technique Spinoza himself regards as the best one: forming true knowledge of passions, which takes place as follows. Any passive emotion has a bodily state as its object. That state necessarily has features that are common to all physical things. As such common features can only be adequately conceived (by 2p38), there is no emotion 'of which we cannot form *some* clear and distinct concept' (5p4c, emphasis added). The idea seems to be that although this kind of idea-forming process does not altogether eradicate the original emotion, even a passive emotion (or its bodily object) offers us material for adequate ideas, the forming of which makes us more active than before. Moreover, certain deductive relations pertain between adequate ideas, and so Spinoza argues that there is 'the order of the intellect' governing adequate ideas (5p10). Thus, to the extent that we are capable of adequate thought, our minds are ordered according to the intellect, not according to 'the common order of Nature'. Rather strikingly but in keeping with his parallelism (2p7), Spinoza goes on to claim that this can give us 'the power of ordering and connecting

with the help of the enduring body. The eternity of the self is not, for Spinoza, sempiternity or everlastingness, but is comparable to a timeless view. This kind of eternal view is something the self constructs in this temporal life through atemporal, intuitive cognition, and the more one does such thinking, the wider is the view one acquires, which, indeed, makes one more eternal.

Intuitive knowledge is closely connected to the intellectual love of God and ultimately to a state Spinoza calls blessedness. The reasoning underlying this is that in knowing things intuitively, the mind or the self understands. For Spinoza, understanding is by necessity tied to acting, and acting is something that in Spinoza's system is conceptually tied to pleasure. Moreover, in understanding, the subject, that is, the one who is doing the thinking, is conceiving him- or herself as the complete or adequate cause of the adequate ideas involved in the thought process and thus as the complete cause of the pleasure involved in that kind of thinking. Thus, the temporal process that makes the subject consider him- or herself *sub specie aeternitatis* leads by necessity to *self-love*, because love is, according to Spinoza, pleasure accompanied with the idea of that entity as the cause of the pleasure.

The self-love that is essentially tied to adequate thinking is also love of God. This may sound rather odd, because one might think that this kind of self-love cannot have several objects. The mind or the self has to consider itself as the complete cause of the pleasure; were the cause beyond the self, love towards oneself would have to be destroyed. However, for Spinoza, understanding what one is suffices for identifying self-love with the love towards God. The intellect of God is formed through all the finite intellects, and corresponding to any intellect there is a self. These selves are all embedded in God and constitute him. So when I love myself in adequate thinking, I love God for the simple reason that I am, to put it bluntly, a part of God. Moreover, the self-love I feel in adequate thinking is, for the same reason, God's loving himself:

> The Mind's intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity; i.e., the Mind's intellectual Love of God is part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself. (5p36)

For Spinoza, this makes it possible to explain what is God's love towards human beings: it is just the self-love involved in all adequate thinking. God's infinite intellectual love towards himself is constituted by all the finite intellectual self-love of which we are capable. Thus, God cannot love himself with this infinite intellectual self-love without there being

in God the finite entities endowed with intellectual self-love, and so God's loving himself is God's loving all men:

> From this it follows that insofar as God loves himself, he loves men, and consequently that God's love of men and the Mind's intellectual Love of God are one and the same. (5p36c)

There is one problem that Spinoza sees in the intellectual love of God. As we have seen, love for Spinoza is a kind of pleasure, and pleasure is a passage to a greater perfection. However, the intellectual love of God is eternal and, thus, cannot consist in a temporal process (i.e., in a passage). For this reason, Spinoza begins to speak of blessedness, which seems to be his substitute for a kind of eternal pleasure:

> If Joy [pleasure], then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself. (5p33s)

Blessedness is, then, an atemporal eternal state. It is not a passage, but, and this should be appreciated, neither is it everlastingness. So there is no *durational* pleasure that does not consist in a movement towards greater perfection. Blessedness that is involved in the intellectual love of God is, then, an active affect that is the counterpart of durational pleasure in the world of change. This kind of intellectual love of God is, for Spinoza, an affect that cannot be taken away; there is simply nothing that can destroy it. It may be that human beings lead such lives that they are not conscious of God and do not relate what happens in the world to God, but Spinoza's point is that if somebody loves God, nothing can destroy that love. This kind of intellectual love that results from pure understanding is the highest good available to a human being. It contributes to our eternal survival and constitutes our blessedness. As a virtue, understanding is its own reward, something that is never done for the sake of anything else. Thus Spinoza arrives at a highly intellectualist position: there can never be any guarantee of true peace of mind and human happiness other than understanding.

PIET STEENBAKKERS

1 The Textual History of Spinoza's *Ethics*

I. THE PROBLEM STATED

Spinoza's *Ethics* has come down to us in a single version: the Latin text as it appears in the *Opera Posthuma*, published in Amsterdam in 1677, within a year after the philosopher's death. Spinoza himself had prepared the text for the press. He left a final version in his desk, and had given his landlord, Hendrik van der Spyk, and his friends (among them his publisher, the Amsterdam bookseller Jan Rieuwertsz) instructions to provide for its publication.

Summarized thus, the textual history of the *Ethics* would seem to be relatively simple and unproblematic. There are, however, some complications. To begin with, the process of writing the *Ethics* was not straightforward. Spinoza originally planned to present his philosophy in a plain, discursive (rather than geometrical) form. The original Latin text of this early work is lost, but a contemporary Dutch translation of this unfinished *Korte Verhandeling van God, de Mensch en Deszelvs Welstand* (*Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*) survives. He then decided to recast the material rigorously 'in geometrical order'. The conversion of the older text to the *Ethics* proceeded well until 1665. Then Spinoza slowed down the work on the *Ethics*, or perhaps suspended it altogether, in order to write his other masterpiece, the *Theological-Political Treatise*. After the publication of that work in 1670, Spinoza took up the *Ethics* again, though exactly when he did so is unclear. In 1675 he had finished the book and made preparations to have it printed, but then decided to postpone publication. It came out after he died in two versions: the Latin text of the manuscript in his desk was published in the *Opera Posthuma* and a Dutch rendering by the professional translator Jan Hendriksz Glazemaker appeared simultaneously in *De Nagelate Schriften van B.d.S.* ('The Posthumous Works of B.d.S.'). Glazemaker incorporated older Dutch versions of Parts 1 and 2, presumably made by Pieter Balling for the discussion of Spinoza's philosophy in a small circle of friends. The complications in the textual history of the *Ethics*, then, are due to the protracted and interrupted process of writing, the

precautions Spinoza and his friends had to take in publication, and divergences between the Latin and the Dutch texts. The present chapter will discuss the genesis of the text and its relationship to the *Short Treatise* (and, less prominently, the *Theological-Political Treatise*), the circumstances of its publication, and the Glazemaker translation. It will be concluded by a short survey of the subsequent editions of the text.

2. THE GENESIS OF THE *ETHICS*

Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society, visited Spinoza in the summer of 1661, and wrote him a letter immediately upon his return to London, on 26 August (Old Style 16 August). This is the earliest surviving item of Spinoza's correspondence (Ep1). In September Spinoza sent Oldenburg a reply (Ep2) with an enclosure, now lost, in which he presented the basics of his theory of substance 'in geometrical fashion' (*more geometrico*). To the extent that this enclosure can be reconstructed,[1] it bears more resemblance to the geometrically presented first appendix 'On God' that Spinoza had attached to the *Short Treatise* than to the definitions, axioms, and propositions in the opening pages of the *Ethics*. A few months afterwards, in October, Oldenburg asked Spinoza to instruct him clearly and distinctly about the true and primary origin of things (Ep5). Spinoza did not answer until half a year later, at the end of a long letter (Ep6) that consisted practically in its entirety of the treatise 'On Nitre' (a commentary on Robert Boyle's *Tentamina quaedam physiologica* of 1661). Spinoza apparently felt that a clear and distinct account of the true and primary origin of things would far exceed the limits of a letter. Instead of giving an answer, he informed Oldenburg that he had written an entire work on the subject, and was transcribing and correcting that, as yet without any definite plans for publication. The work referred to in this letter is the *Short Treatise*. It is so close to the *Ethics* in scope and contents that it can only be considered a precursor of the latter work. The early exchange of letters between Spinoza and Oldenburg, then, shows that by April 1662, Spinoza had not yet embarked upon the arduous enterprise of unfolding his entire philosophy *ordine geometrico*. Yet he must have started that project, which eventually was to result in the *Ethics*, soon after that.

In February 1663, Simon Joosten de Vries wrote a letter to Spinoza reporting how a circle of the philosopher's friends met on a regular basis

[1] Wolf's annotations to Ep2, in Spinoza 1928, 371–3; Hubbeling 1977b; Hubbeling's annotations to Ep2 in Spinoza 1992, 435–8; Curley's annotations to Ep2 (C, 166–7), Saccaro del Buffa Battisti 1990 (reconstruction on 117–18).

in order to discuss his writings (Ep8). The references and quotations both in De Vries's letter and in Spinoza's reply (Ep9) indicate that what the friends had at their disposal was an early instalment of the *Ethics* rather than the *Short Treatise*. The discussion is about definitions, axioms, and propositions, again on the topic of substance and attributes. This time, however, the wording is close (albeit not identical) to what we find in the initial pages of the *Ethics* and markedly distinct from the appendix of the *Short Treatise*. From this we can infer that at some time between April 1662 and the winter of 1662–3 Spinoza decided to discard the first systematic exposition of his philosophy, the *Short Treatise*, in order to convert the material into an altogether different type of text that eventually developed into the *Ethics*. Because the instalment the friends had before them in February 1663 was already quite a sizable text, consisting of definitions, axioms, at least nineteen propositions, and several scholia, Spinoza must have started well before January 1663 or even before December 1662. We can only guess at Spinoza's exact motives for his rather drastic change of plan.

The most conspicuous difference between the *Short Treatise* and the *Ethics* is the thoroughgoing presentation of the latter in the geometrical order. Spinoza had used this format initially (in the *Short Treatise* and in the enclosure to Ep2) to elaborate a proof for the existence of God in connection with his notion of substance. This is still quite close to Descartes's (reluctant) application of the geometrical order in the Appendix to the Replies to the second set of Objections to the *Meditations*. In the *Ethics*, though, the geometrical presentation is no longer incidental: a comprehensive doctrine of metaphysics, psychology, and ethics is constructed on the groundwork of a restricted number of definitions and axioms. The methodological assumption underlying this edifice is that all modes of reality are ultimately contained in a single substance, God or Nature, from which they can be extracted and presented in a metaphysical deduction by systematically unfolding what is necessarily implied in this foundation. As Spinoza puts it in 1p16: 'From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes (i.e., everything which can fall under an infinite intellect).' The *Ethics* is a sustained attempt to unwrap the necessary implications of the nature of God for human blessedness.[2] This Olympian undertaking was to occupy Spinoza for the next thirteen or fourteen years. In late July or early August 1675 he wrote a letter to Oldenburg informing him that he had gone to Amsterdam in order to have the *Ethics* printed, but upon arrival he had decided to postpone publication because of the increasing hostility towards his

[2] See 2pref.

That Spinoza's mature social and political thought is firmly rooted in the metaphysics expounded in the *Ethics* will not be a matter of controversy. After all, he explicitly claims to have shown what the foundations of society are (*civitatis quaenam sint fundamenta ostendi*), and then proceeds to say 'a few words about man's natural state and his civil state' (*pauca de statu hominis naturali, et civili*) (4p37s1.) In modern Spinoza scholarship, the connections between these admittedly rudimentary passages and the two treatises explicitly labeled 'political' – the *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Political Treatise* – have received ample attention, a classic treatment being Alexandre Matheron's *Individu et communité chez Spinoza* (1988; originally published 1969). Spinoza's 'few words about the state of nature and the civil state' function as a hinge between the metaphysics of human nature – the human passions and their grounding in the *conatus*, the striving to persevere in one's being (3p6) – and a discussion of the meaning of such terms as good and evil, just and unjust, sin and merit. These are 'extrinsic' notions; that is, they receive their meaning from the consent of people in the civil state: in the state of nature, nothing can properly be said to be just or unjust (4p37s2). The nature of men, their specific *conatus* to preserve themselves, gives rise to the dynamic process of interaction that explains why there is a society rather than the deadlock of a war of all against all. And it is by living in a society that human beings ratify, as it were, normative terms such as honourable and disgraceful, just and unjust, sin and merit. In order to realize what is new about this in the *Ethics*, we should note that although the same concept of *conatus* and an early version of the theory of the human passions both already occur in the *Short Treatise*,[7] that early work offers no theory of society, not even an elementary one such as the sketch in *Ethics* 4, p37s2. Pierre-François Moreau (1990) has pointed out that the common view of Spinoza's alleged lack of interest in politics up to 1665 may be in need of some qualification, and he rightly cites *Short Treatise* 2.18 as a counterexample. The case is indeed an interesting one, as Spinoza converted the contents of this particular chapter into the memorable concluding paragraph of 2p49s. In the *Ethics*, that paragraph is precisely the very first adumbration of a theory of social life. I quote some striking parallels. This is from the *Ethics:*

> It remains now to indicate how much knowledge of this doctrine is to our advantage in life. We shall see this easily from the following considerations: [. . .]
>
> [Third] This doctrine contributes to social life [*ad vitam socialem*], insofar as it teaches us to hate no one, to disesteem no one, to mock no one, to be angry at no one [. . .]

[7] *Conatus* (the Dutch term is *poginge*): KV 1.4; passions: KV 2.3–17.

[Fourth] Finally, this doctrine also contributes, to no small extent, to the common society [*ad communem societatem*] insofar as it teaches how citizens are to be governed and led, not so that they may be slaves, but that they may do freely the things that are best. (2p49s; translation modified)

Here are the corresponding passages in the *Short Treatise*:

Of the advantages of the preceding[8]
. . . Third, in addition to the true love of one's fellow man which this knowledge gives us, it disposes us so that we never hate him, or are angry with him, but are instead inclined to help him and bring him to a better condition. . . .

Fourth, this knowledge also serves to further the commonwealth [*tot bevordering van 't gemeen Best*], for through it a judge will never be able to favor one more than another, and being required to punish one in order to reward the other, he will do this with insight, so as to help and improve the one as much as the other. (KV 2.18; C, 127–8)

In both cases the context is Spinoza's exposition of his doctrine that free will is an illusion. But he insists that this thoroughgoing determinism, rather than doing away with ethics, will in fact greatly advance moral and social behaviour. It is worthwhile to have a closer look at the different wording of the two texts. In the *Ethics*, observing the rule that one should not hate nor despise anyone[9] is said to contribute to social life (*vita socialis*), whereas in the *Short Treatise* it is associated with true love of (or charity towards) one's fellow man (*de ware liefde des naasten*). This is in line with the generally more religiously tinged idiom of the *Short Treatise*. The fourth item in the *Ethics* broaches the issue of rational government; in that perspective, the doctrine of the will greatly contributes *ad communem societatem*. As the occurrence of *cives* in the same sentence indicates, Spinoza here uses the word *societas* loosely as an equivalent of *civitas*. The Dutch counterpart in the *Short Treatise* is ambiguous: *'t gemeen Best* is generally interpreted as 'the common Good'.[10] But the Dutch word (a calque of *res publica;* now spelt *gemenebest*) currently means 'commonwealth', in the sense of 'body politic', rather than 'common wealth' (or 'common weal'), in the sense of 'the common good'. In the seventeenth century the word was rarely used in Dutch, and the senses 'commonwealth', 'state', 'common good' tended to be conflated.[11] In view of the parallel passage in the

[8] Caption supplied from the Table of Contents (*Register der Hooftdeelen*).
[9] Spinoza offers this injunction as many as eight times throughout his works: in addition to the two passages under scrutiny here, it is also to be found (in varying formulas) in 3pref, 4p50s, 4p73s; TP 1.1, 1.4; Ep30.
[10] Thus Curley, C, 491, and many other translators.
[11] In de Vries (ed.) *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, entry 'Gemeenebest'.

Ethics, however, it seems likely that *'t gemeen Best* here renders *communis societas* or a close equivalent, possibly *res publica*. Intriguingly, the *Short Treatise* cites an impartial judge rather than rational government as a profitable consequence of this doctrine.[12] This has no match in the *Ethics* – the only occurrence of *judex* there in 4p63s2 does not appear to be connected. It is noteworthy that in the *Ethics* the third item in the list of advantages – the injunction not to hate nor despise anyone – contains an incorrect cross-reference: *ut in Tertia parte ostendam*, 'as I will show in Part 3'. But in fact the reference is to Propositions 35 and 50 of Part 4 – the wrong number is a remnant of the stage when the *Ethics* was still planned as a triptych. Summing up: the undeniable but flimsy social perspective in the *Short Treatise* is taken up again in the *Ethics* but then as a prelude to a proper discussion in Part 4. The foundation of society as Spinoza analyses it in *Ethics* Part 4 is absent from the *Short Treatise*.[13]

After 1665, then, the original Part 3 of the *Ethics* was gradually transformed into three final parts. It is precisely in those parts that the discrepancies from the *Short Treatise* are most palpable. Looking at the *Ethics* in its final form we can observe, I think, three major transformations, all of which were somehow already implied in the basic metaphysics that Spinoza had had from the beginning.

The first innovation is a new theory of *imaginatio*, the first kind of knowledge.[14] With this powerful tool, Spinoza is able to account for the way the affects work, physically and psychologically. This elaborates Spinoza's fundamental tenet that body and mind are a unity. The *imaginatio* is then accounted for as the kind of knowledge that incorporates the experience of an individual human body. In the *Short Treatise*, the imagination is still presented – in agreement with the Cartesian view – as fictitious knowledge, set over against the pure intellect. In the *Theological-Political Treatise* Spinoza begins to rehabilitate the *imaginatio*, when he employs the concept to provide explanations for prophecy, the belief in miracles, and revealed religion.

[12] Neither here nor elsewhere does Spinoza offer a further explanation of why the judge's impartiality is so essential for the commonwealth, but compare Hobbes's eleventh law of nature (in *Leviathan*, chapter 15): without equity, controversies can only be determined by war, and consequently a partial judge will cause war.

[13] The *Short Treatise* invites comparison with the *Ethics*, because the latter was manifestly written as a mature elaboration of the former. The case is quite different for the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*: this is so different in scope from the *Ethics* that the absence of any interest in society (apart from the very general remark in §14) is inconsequential for a study of Spinoza's philosophical development.

[14] For a fuller treatment of the imagination, see Steenbakkers 2004.

Spinoza's second innovation is a refined and powerful theory of the passions, including a systematic inventory and analysis of the forty-eight most important affects, as well as a therapy to remedy the damage they may cause. This is an elaboration of Spinoza's view that everything in nature, even such apparently chaotic and disturbing phenomena as the passions, follows with inexorable necessity from the divine substance. In the *Short Treatise*, the theory of the passions is still basically Cartesian in outlook, constructed as it is upon Descartes's *Passions de l'âme* of 1649. Here, too, his rethinking in the *Theological-Political Treatise* of the emotional foundation of human life and its profound implications for religion and politics must have made him aware of the shortcomings of his earlier views.

The third and final innovation is a new view of the essentially social existence of human beings. This is an elaboration of his doctrine of the relative autonomy of individual modes. The *conatus sese conservandi* also functions as a principle of individuation; that is to say, it is used by Spinoza to account for the infinite variety of modes in nature and their particular essences.[15] Assemblages of bodies may be increasingly complex, and yet all can be considered as individuals:

> If we proceed in this way to infinity, we shall easily conceive that the whole of nature is one Individual, whose parts, i.e., all bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole Individual. (2p13le7s)

This flexible notion of individuality allows Spinoza to consider single human beings as individuals, but also, if that is appropriate, the group, class, nation (3p46), or species to which they belong. This is one of the elements of his view on people as fundamentally social. Another element is Spinoza's view of reason as common to all human beings: people may be divided by passions but they are united by rational insight.[16]

These three innovations are closely connected. In the *Short Treatise* social existence is merely an unpleasant fact of life. In the *Ethics*, however, it receives pride of place. There even is a specific mechanism of interaction between human beings that generates a particular set of affects. Imagining affects to be at work in other people will give rise to similar or otherwise related affects in ourselves.[17] This sparks off a complicated series of interactions, thus creating strong social ties already at the emotional level. Here we see the merging of imagination (the ability to imagine other people's feelings), affectivity, and social ties.

[15] Yet this individuality is only relative: an individual is a composite assembly of bodies that behaves like a single body with respect to its environment (definition of 'individual' in the excursus between 2p13 and 2p14).

[16] See 4p34, 4p35, 4p37s1.

[17] 3p27 ff.

In the *Ethics*, Part 4 Spinoza elaborates this social aspect: he there argues that the force whereby a human being persists in existing is limited and infinitely surpassed by the powers of nature as a whole. This weakness can be strengthened only by cooperation between people under the guidance of reason. In fact, this is what constitutes the *civitatis fundamenta*.[18]

When Spinoza finished his *Ethics* in 1675, Dutch society around him had changed dramatically. In the year 1672, the Dutch Year of Disaster, the brothers De Witt had been lynched in The Hague not far from the house where Spinoza lived. His *Theological-Political Treatise* had been banned; he could not publish his *Ethics* for fear of persecution. It looks as though Spinoza had to go through the experience of writing the *Theological-Political Treatise* before he found the right perspective to finish his *Ethics*. There are also some textual indications for this hypothesis. The prophets Moses and Jesus, so conspicuously present in the *Theological-Political Treatise*, occur in the *Ethics* only towards the end of Part 4 (the prophets in 4p54s, Moses and Jesus in 4p68s). The geometrical presentation of the *Ethics* does not allow any references to external authorities: its synthetic argument requires that all propositions are derived from definitions, axioms, and preceding propositions. When Spinoza included the references to the prophets Moses and Jesus he did so by way of illustration rather than to invoke authorities. Still their occurrence in that context is unusual and is, I think, to be explained as reflecting Spinoza's immersion in the issues of the *Theological-Political Treatise*.

3. *OPERA POSTHUMA*

Publishing the *Ethics* was a precarious undertaking. Spinoza himself put the manuscript away in 1675, and when his friends did publish it in the *Opera Posthuma*, they took safety measures to cover their activities. The book appeared without the publisher's name (Rieuwertsz), without mentioning the place of publication (Amsterdam), and with the philosopher's name abbreviated to 'B.d.S.' In the correspondence, references to people who were still alive were generally avoided and many factual allusions were discreetly suppressed. This covertness makes it difficult to determine who the editors were and what they did with the manuscripts they had at their disposal. I have reconstructed the story of the editing of Spinoza's *Ethics* in detail elsewhere (Steenbakkers 1994, Chapter 1). This section summarizes these findings.

[18] 4p37s1; G II, 236.25–6.

fair-copy the text according to his instructions and under his supervision. After he decided to abandon his plans, he took the fair copy back to The Hague with him and put it away for future publication. This was the copy sent to Rieuwertsz immediately after Spinoza's death. There must also have been an autograph version (Schuller mentioned it to Leibniz), but that was presumably not used in the preparation of the edition. All manuscripts are now lost; we have only the text as it was printed in 1677.

4. THE DUTCH TRANSLATIONS

Perhaps the greatest quandary in the textual history of the *Ethics* is the occurrence of numerous divergences, in Parts 1 and 2 only, between the Latin text as found in the *Opera Posthuma* and its Dutch counterpart in *De Nagelate Schriften*. The first scholar to offer a systematic analysis of this phenomenon was the Dutch poet J. H. Leopold. In his study *Ad Spinozae Opera Posthuma* (1902, 57), he stated that a scholarly edition of the *Ethics* should take into account a careful analysis of all the discrepancies between the two versions.[22] This was an overt criticism of the edition of Van Vloten and Land (1882), who only occasionally mentioned the Dutch translation in their apparatus. Leopold had wanted to make a new critical edition himself, but he never brought that project to fruition. The injunction to base a new edition on a comparison of the Latin and Dutch versions was taken to heart by Carl Gebhardt, in his 1925 edition of *Spinoza Opera*. Gebhardt, however, gratuitously assumed that the differences reflected two distinct drafts of the first two parts of the *Ethics*. He was convinced that throughout his life Spinoza had incessantly been polishing his texts, up to his death.[23] As a result, so Gebhardt thought, various manuscript versions circulated, and the two printed texts ultimately go back to two different stages, *De Nagelate Schriften* showing an earlier state of composition than the *Opera Posthuma* (G II, 340–42). Though ill founded, Gebhardt's supposition unfortunately became quite influential. That Spinoza wrote successive versions of the *Ethics* has been disproved by Fokke Akkerman (1980, 95–101).[24] Akkerman's explanation for the discrepancies is that

[22] Leopold 1902, 57. Leopold's book is in Latin. The most important section of this essential text is accessible in a French translation: Leopold 2005. See also Akkerman 1991.

[23] G IV, 369; cf. G II, 317.

[24] Akkerman 1980, 95–101. Yet Gebhardt's fallacious theory is still to be found in the work of several scholars. Bernard Rousset, for instance, published two articles (1985 and 1988) in which he claimed he could reconstruct the two different versions and even identify passages that Spinoza inserted afterwards (a third layer, that is), in the period 1675–7.

when Spinoza started sending instalments of the *Ethics* to the circle in Amsterdam, one of his friends – probably Pieter Balling[25] – translated these texts into Dutch. He got as far as Parts 1 and 2, and a few pages of Part 3.[26] These are the portions of the text where the Dutch version of *De Nagelate Schriften* markedly deviates from the Latin in the *Opera Posthuma*. When Glazemaker was hired to produce a translation in 1677 he was given the parts Balling had already translated. Glazemaker integrated these into his own Dutch text. The differences reflect the discussions in the Amsterdam circle. A fascinating illustration is the second axiom of Part 2. The Latin simply reads '*Homo cogitat*.' In *De Nagelate Schriften*, this is expanded to 'De mensch denkt; of anders, wy weten dat wy denken.' ('Man thinks; or, to put it differently, we know that we think.') As Akkerman has shown, the expansion does not come from Spinoza himself (let alone from an earlier version, as Gebhardt supposed) but from a gloss provided by the circle of friends. Their source for it was a Dutch translation by Glazemaker of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* 1§8, where Glazemaker followed the French translation of Picot, who had enriched Descartes's *cogito* argument with the phrase 'nous sçauons certainement que nous pensons.' The gloss was duly recorded in Balling's manuscript and thus eventually found its way to Glazemaker's translation of the *Ethics*.[27]

Akkerman's conclusion is that a critical edition of the *Ethics* must be based rigorously on the *Opera Posthuma* and that readings from *De Nagelate Schriften* can only be adopted when there is reason to assume that the editors of the *Opera Posthuma* made mistakes. All other differences should be relegated to the critical apparatus. This is also the approach Akkerman and I follow in our forthcoming critical edition of the text.[28]

A phenomenon that has sometimes invited scholars to speculate about a Latin version of the *Ethics* different from the one printed in the *Opera Posthuma* is the abundance of Latin marginal glosses in *De Nagelate Schriften*. As I have argued elsewhere (Steenbakkers 1997), this was a common practice in Dutch translations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There was a strong purist tendency to include Dutch neologisms in translations, and marginal glosses in the original language were added in order to give the reader a clue to the technical term the neologism was intended to convey. By the time *De Nagelate Schriften* were printed, the habit had become mechanical: Latin equivalents were

[25] Akkerman 1980, 152–60. For Balling's biography, see van Bunge 2003a.

[26] We do not know when Balling died: his wife is referred to as a widow in 1669. At any rate, it appears that he was no longer available for translating the instalments in 1665, for that is when Spinoza asked Bouwmeester to translate Part Three.

[27] Akkerman 1980, 145–6; cf. 97–9.

[28] To be published in the series *Spinoza Œuvres*.

routinely given in the margins without consulting the original texts. This accounts for the many lapses and discrepancies between the Latin terms found in the margins of *De Nagelate Schriften* and the text of the *Opera Posthuma*. None of these will justify an intervention in the Latin text.

5. THE EDITIONS OF THE *ETHICS*[29]

For 125 years, the printed version of the *Ethics* as it features in the *Opera Posthuma* was to remain the only edition of the Latin text. As a result of the great German debates on Spinoza at the end of the eighteenth century, the so-called *Pantheismus-Streit*, there was a new demand for the philosopher's texts. The first complete edition of Spinoza's works (1802–3), *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, by H. E. G. Paulus, was in fact an uncritical reprint of the original seventeenth-century editions. Paulus, who did have the competence to make a scholarly edition, apparently only saw it as his task to make the texts available again in print; there is no critical apparatus, no justification of his editorial choices, no discussion of any textual problems. Paulus did not even put into effect the list of errata in the *Opera Posthuma*. The great merit of his edition is that it made Spinoza's texts available to German philosophy at a crucial moment of its development: this is the edition read by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and it formed the basis of many comments and translations.

In 1830, A. F. Gfrörer published *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera Philosophica Omnia*. This is basically a corrected reprint of Paulus's edition and it suffers from the same weaknesses as its precursor. It seems that Gfrörer's edition only had a limited circulation. It was hardly noticed outside Germany. The same is true for Carl Riedel's *Renati des Cartes et Benedicti de Spinoza Praecipua Opera Philosophica*. Apart from Spinoza's *Ethics*, his edition included Descartes's *Meditations*, Spinoza's *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* and *Political Treatise*, and a treatise written neither by Descartes nor Spinoza: *De Jure Ecclesiasticorum Liber Singularis* by an unidentified author with the pseudonym Lucius Antistius Constans. Riedel's Spinoza texts simply reproduce the edition by Paulus without Gfrörer's corrections.

The most important edition in Germany in the nineteenth century, with a very wide circulation, was that of Karl Hermann Bruder: *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia* (three volumes, 1843–6). It

[29] For a more detailed account, see Steenbakkers 2007, which furnishes all bibliographical details. This is a survey of the editions of Spinoza's works in Germany in the nineteenth century, but it thereby covers most of the editorial work done with regard to Spinoza.

went through several reprints, even in the twentieth century, though all are dated 1843–6. Bruder did go back to the original seventeenth-century texts, but still reproduces some of Paulus's errors. Many commentators and translators worked from this *Opera* edition. Bruder's edition was more or less copied by Hugo Ginsberg for his *Die Ethik des Spinoza im Urtexte* (1874), an undistinguished and uninteresting publication.

With the publication of *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera Quotquot Reperta Sunt*, edited by J. van Vloten and J. P. N. Land in 1882–3, Spinoza scholarship entered a new phase.[30] They were the first editors to provide the texts with an (admittedly slender) apparatus and they took the original editions for their starting point. In the first printing, the presentation of the texts has been carefully executed. Unfortunately, the subsequent printings (^{2}1895, ^{3}1914) are increasingly inferior, each adding new misprints to the ones copied from the preceding.

It is only with the monumental critical edition of Carl Gebhardt (1925, reprinted 1972) that Spinoza's texts are carefully presented again. As we have seen, however, his edition of the *Ethics* is marred by the erroneous assumption that Spinoza wrote two different versions. Gebhardt offers the readings of these alleged versions partly in the text, partly in the *Textgestaltung*, a mixture of commentary and apparatus. As yet there is no truly critical edition of the *Ethics*. The forthcoming edition in the series *Spinoza Œuvres* is intended to fill that gap.

[30] Land was the first scholar to do serious philological research on Spinoza. Apart from his editorial work, he published several articles on textual issues; Land 1882 deals with the text of the *Ethics*.