

‘Spinoza's Cognitive Affects and Their Feel’

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1. Introduction

Spinoza's affective psychology lies literally and figuratively at the centre of his *Ethics*. Its introduction in Part 3 serves as the transition from Part 2's epistemology of ideas to the ethics and politics of Parts 4 and 5. Despite their centrality, relatively little has been written on the affects of the mind, that is, the emotions, in Spinoza's philosophy.¹ Spinoza commentators generally agree that affects of the mind in Spinoza's system involve a kind of cognition, a view sometimes labelled ‘cognitivism.’

Philosophers have applied the term ‘cognitivism’ to a variety of theories. Cognitivism is often contrasted with the view attributed to Hume that emotions are brute feels that contain no cognitive content,² as well as that of William James, who took emotions to be the conscious awareness of physiological events.³ The exact nature of the cognitive content ascribed to emotions differs from writer to writer, however. In Martha Nussbaum's usage, for example, emotions are cognitive in that they bear information in some sense.⁴ According to Robert Solomon's sense of cognitivism, emotions are judgments of a certain sort, lying in certain relations to other mental states.⁵ Very generally, then, cognitivism is the view that emotions, or affects, contain some cognitive content, though that content may not exhaust the nature of the affect, nor may it necessarily be propositional in content.⁶

Most commentators agree that affects in Spinoza's system are cognitive. For example, Michael Della Rocca says, ‘In general, for Spinoza, affects are intentional mental states. They are not contentless sensations (as they are in Hume), but rather cognitive states directed at particular objects or states of affairs.’⁷ As considered in the mind, affects are representations of some sort. Don Garrett also agrees, saying, ‘Every affect [of the mind] is at the same time

an idea (i.e., a representation) of a state of the individual's body, and (indirectly) of external bodies that have contributed to producing that state.⁸ Affects of the mind, then, are held to be ideas.

Several commentators, however, have criticized Spinoza's cognitivist account, claiming he over-intellectualizes the affects, robbing them of their distinctive phenomenal feel.⁹ In a recent article in *BJHP*, Gideon Segal offers such a criticism.¹⁰ As Segal sees it, Spinoza's philosophical system allows no room for the phenomenal feel that distinguishes emotions from simple representations. Just as Spinoza's physical realm involves nothing but Cartesian, mechanistic bodies in motion and so lacks such properties as colour and warmth, so too does Spinoza's mental realm allow only the purely intellectual adequate ideas and common notions, Segal argues. This stark view of the mental leaves no room for the phenomenal feel of the emotions, the *frisson* that assuredly accompanies the cognition involved in an affect.

In this essay, I wish to defend Spinoza's account from this charge. More generally, I wish to show that Spinoza's account of the emotions is not overly intellectual, as Segal makes it out to be, though it is cognitivist. After a section outlining Spinoza's thoughts on ideas and volitions, I will explain Spinoza's account of the emotions, according to which affects are judgments. I will then show how, even given his cognitivism, Spinoza accommodates the phenomenal feel of the affects, which Segal claims to be lacking.

2.1 On the Nature of Ideas

In this section, I will explain Spinoza's theory of ideas and his argument for the identification of ideas and volitions, a path well-trodden by commentators.¹¹ From this discussion I will conclude that Spinozist ideas are propositional in structure and that all of our ideas involve an act of affirmation; that is, our ideas are propositionally structured representations that include an affirmation – they are judgments.¹²

Spinoza defines 'idea' at 2d3, where he says, 'By idea I understand a concept of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing.'¹³ In this definition, Spinoza states that ideas are concepts, by which he means something formed by an action of mind. Spinoza states why he uses the term 'concept' [*conceptum*] in an explanation following this definition, where he says, 'I say concept rather than perception, because the word perception seems to indicate that the mind is acted on by the object. But concept seems to express an action of the mind' (2d3 *explicatio*; Curley, 447; Geb II/84-5). Spinoza offers this explanation because he wishes to distinguish his notion of ideas from Descartes', who holds that perceptions are purely passive, only volitions being active.¹⁴

Spinoza's ideas may be either passive or active, depending on whether they are adequate or inadequate. Spinoza says, 'Our mind does certain things [acts] and undergoes other things, namely, insofar as it has adequate ideas, it necessarily does certain things, and insofar as it has inadequate ideas, it necessarily undergoes other things' (3p1; Curley, 493; Geb II/140). This may initially seem like a contradiction, for Spinoza says in 2d3 that all ideas are mental acts, yet 3p1 suggests that some ideas are inadequate and thus instances of mental passivity. With adequate ideas, our mind is wholly active, which means that the mind is an adequate cause. With inadequate ideas, however, the mind is partially active and partially passive, which means that the mind is only a partial cause, as Spinoza explains in 3d1 and 3d2. In both cases, however, the mind is active in some sense, which is Spinoza's point in 2d3, above. Spinoza takes pains here not to present ideas as purely passive perceptions; ideas are products of mental acts.¹⁵

If Spinoza means to say that ideas are concepts, how ought we to understand him? At the very least, Spinoza's ideas have cognitive or representative content.¹⁶ Spinoza does not explain what he means by a concept here, however. By 'concept', he could mean a psychological entity like a representation or mental act;¹⁷ on the other hand, he could also

mean a logical object, such as a proposition.¹⁸ Spinoza renders a uniform logical reading problematic, however, when he equates ideas with particular affirmations of mind, which are certainly psychological. I will now turn to this equation.

In 2p48s, Spinoza claims:

...we must investigate, I say, whether there is any other affirmation or negation in the mind except that which the idea involves, insofar as it is an idea – on this see the following proposition and also D3 – so that our thought does not fall into pictures. For by ideas I understand, not the images which are formed at the back of the eye...but concepts of thought. (Curley, 484; Geb II/130)

In 2d3, Spinoza has emphasized the activity involved in ideas. He repeats that emphasis here, contrasting ideas with mere pictures passively formed in the eye. Spinoza is not making a distinction here between two kinds of idea, one an imagination and the other an active conception. Instead, he wishes simply to explain that all modes of thought involve acts of the mind, including those that are visual representations. Spinoza makes reference to images formed at the back of the eye as a paradigm of passive idea formation, a view he wishes to reject in its entirety.¹⁹ Once again we see Spinoza distinguishing his view of ideas as active mental entities from that of Descartes, who takes ideas to be purely passive.

The passage quoted above from 2p48s announces Spinoza's wish to discover whether ideas involve a particular activity, that of affirmation, solely on account of their being ideas; he wishes to discover whether ideas *qua* ideas are active in the sense of being affirmative. In short, he wishes to ask whether ideas, by their very nature, are also affirmations.

2.2 Ideas Are Volitions

Immediately after the quote above, Spinoza states 'In the mind there is no volition, or affirmation and negation, except that which the idea involves insofar as it is an idea' (2p49; Curley, 484; Geb II/130). In this statement, Spinoza first establishes that a volition is an act of affirmation or negation. Second, he claims that there are no volitions in the mind except those which ideas *qua* ideas involve. In other words, the only volitions in the mind are those involved in the essence of ideas.

In his article on this subject, Michael Della Rocca focuses largely on the demonstration for 2p49, arguing against what he calls the ‘standard reading’ of 2p49d, according to which it merely states that all affirmations must be accompanied by an idea. Though this may be a possible reading of Spinoza’s text in 2p49d, I believe such a reading does violence to 2p49 itself, as well as to the end of the scholium immediately before it, quoted in the text above. On the ‘standard reading,’ Spinoza’s phrase ‘that which the idea involves insofar as it is an idea’ must be taken simply as ‘that which is necessary for an idea.’ A more natural reading, I suggest, takes this phrase to mean ‘that which the idea involves solely in virtue of being an idea’ or, better, ‘that which an idea involves essentially.’²⁰

Spinoza’s demonstration for 2p49 has two parts. The first involves showing that an affirmation can neither be nor be conceived without an idea, while the second involves showing the converse, that the idea can neither be nor be conceived without the affirmation. These two together are supposed to entail that the affirmation and idea are essentially the same, given Spinoza’s definition of essence in 2d2, which states:

I say that to the essence of any thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is necessarily posited and which, being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken away; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing. (2d2; Curley, 447; Geb II/84)

That is, something belongs to the essence of a thing just when it is necessary and sufficient for the existence or conception of the thing in question. If a volition is necessary and sufficient for an idea, then we may say that the volition belongs to, or is a part of, the essence of the idea.

The first part of the demonstration for 2p49 goes as follows:

In the mind, there is no absolute faculty of willing and not willing, but only singular volitions, namely, this and that affirmation, and this and that negation. Let us conceive, therefore, some singular volition, say a mode of thinking by which the mind affirms that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.

The affirmation involves the concept, or idea, of the triangle, that is, it cannot be conceived without the idea of the triangle. For to say that A must involve the concept of B is the same as to say that A cannot be conceived without B. Further, this affirmation (by a3) also cannot be without

the idea of the triangle. Therefore, this affirmation can neither be nor be conceived without the idea of the triangle. (Curley, 484; Geb II/130)

Spinoza considers the affirmation that ‘the three angles of a triangle equal two right angles.’ This affirmation can neither be nor be conceived, Spinoza claims, without the idea of a triangle. He cites 2a3, which in part states, ‘There are no modes of thinking, such as love, desire, or whatever is designated by the word affects of the mind, unless there is in the same individual the idea of the thing love, desired, and the like’ (2a3; Curley, 448; Geb II/85-6). By citing 2a3 here, Spinoza implies that an affirmation is a mode of thinking and thus must involve the idea being affirmed.²¹

Spinoza then discusses the converse, saying, ‘Next, this idea of the triangle must involve this same affirmation, namely, that its three angles equal two right angles. So conversely, this idea of the triangle also can neither be or be conceived without this affirmation’ (2p49d; Curley, 484; Geb II/130.). Spinoza claims that one cannot conceive of a triangle without affirming that its three angles equal two right angles. Simply by conceiving the triangle, one must make this affirmation, he stipulates.

This claim appears to be false, for it seems we may form an idea of a triangle without thereby affirming that its three angles equal two right angles. Commentators have traditionally written off this demonstration as badly fallacious.²² Since he offers no argument for this claim, so central to his conclusion, it seems that Spinoza fails to demonstrate this proposition.²³

Spinoza concludes 2p49d, saying, ‘So (by d2) this affirmation pertains to the essence of the idea of the triangle and is nothing beyond it.’ That is, the affirmation pertains, or belongs, to the idea of the triangle and vice versa; thus, all ideas are volitions and all volitions, ideas.²⁴ He ends 2p49 by saying, ‘And what we have said concerning this volition (since we have selected it at random), must also be said concerning any volition, namely, that

it is nothing apart from the idea' (Curley, 484-5; Geb II/130) – a problematic generalization, to say the least.²⁵ Despite its problems, however, this demonstration follows the outline I sketched above. The idea is necessary and sufficient for the volition; thus, the idea is essentially involved in the volition and vice versa. In short, then, every idea is volitional and every volition cognitive.

Spinoza defends this doctrine in 2p49s, where he considers the Cartesian objection that one can entertain an idea without affirming it, as one does when one imagines a winged horse yet does not believe that it exists. Spinoza replies that the idea of this winged horse still is an affirmation, saying:

...what is perceiving a winged horse other than affirming wings of the horse? For if the Mind perceived nothing else except the winged horse, it would regard it as present to itself, and would not have any cause of doubting its existence, or any faculty of dissenting, unless either the imagination of the winged horse were joined to an idea which excluded the existence of the same horse, or the Mind perceived that its idea of a winged horse was inadequate. And then either it would necessarily deny the horse's existence, or it will necessarily doubt it. (Curley, 489; Geb II/134)

Spinoza implies that the very idea is also an act, that is, that entertaining the idea of a horse with wings involves the act of affirming wings of a horse. Implicit in this claim is the statement that ideas are propositional in structure. This passage, as well as 2p49 itself, are more than merely that, however; they are also the claim that ideas are affirmations, i.e., beliefs or judgments. In other words, when the Cartesian believes himself to have suspended judgment and not to have affirmed an idea, he has not appreciated the active nature of the idea itself; that is, he may not be aware that his idea is inadequate and that only the presence of other ideas in his mind precludes his believing the idea, or judging the relevant proposition to be true.²⁶

By identifying volitions and ideas, Spinoza is not claiming that volitions do not exist because there are only ideas, nor the converse. Instead, we should understand that ideas can be conceived in several ways, one cognitive and one volitional. In other words, we may refer

to modes of thought as ideas or as volitions, one referring to their cognitive content, the other to their volitional or affirmative nature.²⁷ Considered together, however, they are the affirmation of a representation, which I take to be a judgment.

3.1 *The Affects*

Spinoza turns to discuss the affects in Part 3 of the *Ethics*, where he offers the following as a definition, saying, ‘By affect I understand affections of the Body [in] which the Body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.’²⁸ An affect is an event in which the body undergoes a change in its power and the mind simultaneously forms an idea of this power-changing event. This mirroring relation between bodily events and ideas in the mind is the result of Spinoza’s doctrine of parallelism.²⁹ In this case, however, the relation is between not just any mode of body and its idea, but between a power-changing affection of body and its parallel mental affect. Since this affect is the mental correlate of a change in the body’s power, this very affect must involve a change in the mind’s power as well.³⁰ For, just as a mode of body has its parallel mode of thought, or idea, and an affection of body has its parallel affect of mind, so too does the power of the body have its parallel in the power of the mind. Thus, an affect is a change in the power of the body, which is paralleled in the mind by an idea that itself involves a change in the power of the mind.³¹

In the definition in 3d3, ‘affect’ refers both to a change or affection in the body and the idea of that change, though Spinoza often speaks as though he means only the mental phenomenon by the term ‘affect.’³² In the ‘General Definition of the Affects,’ for example, Spinoza says, ‘An Affect that is called a Passion of the mind is a confused idea, by which the Mind affirms of its Body, or of some part of it, a greater or lesser force of existing than before...’ (3, General Definition of the Affects; Curley, 542; Geb II/203). Note, however, that the discussion is restricted here to affects that are ‘a Passion of the mind.’³³ Thus, one

need not conclude from this definition that all affects are necessarily only ideas. After all, this definition also defines all affects as passions and confused ideas, even though Spinoza specifically states that some affects can be active and involve adequate ideas.³⁴

Considered solely as modes of body, affects are the bodily events associated with certain emotions. Spinoza recognizes this when he says, ‘As for the external affections of the body, which are observed in the affects – such as trembling, paleness, sobbing, laughter, and the like – I have neglected them, because they are related to the body only, without any relation to the mind’ (3p59s; Curley, 530; Geb II/189).³⁵ Strictly speaking, then, the term ‘affect’ refers both to a power-changing affection of the body and the idea of that affection. Because Spinoza is primarily interested in the psychological dimension of the affects, however, he restricts his discussion to the mental; I will follow him in this restriction as well, concerning myself only with affects in the mind.

Considered solely as modes of mind, affects are ideas of a change in the body’s power; further, they are ideas that involve changes in the mind’s power. What I wish to argue next is that these affects, being ideas, are necessarily cognitive.

3.2 Affects are Cognitive

Spinoza regularly suggests that affects have a cognitive content. Consider 4p8, where Spinoza says, ‘the knowledge of good and evil is nothing but an affect of Joy or Sadness...’ (4p8; Curley, 550; Geb II/215). In other words, a cognition, which is propositional in structure and bears a truth value, is identical to an affect of Joy or Sadness.³⁶ Spinoza repeats this theme at 4p14 as well, where he states, ‘No affect can be restrained by the true knowledge of good and evil insofar as it is true, but only insofar as it is considered as an affect’ (Curley, 553; Geb II/219). Again we see that the same thing – true knowledge in this case – can be considered either as something true, namely, a proposition or cognition, or as an affect.³⁷

In his explanation of the General Definition of the Affects, Spinoza asserts that an affect is not only an idea, but an affirmation. He says,

...the Mind passes to a greater or lesser perfection when it happens that it affirms of its body (or of some part of the body) something which involves more or less reality than before. So when I said above that the Mind's power of Thinking is increased or diminished, I meant nothing but that the Mind has formed of its Body (or of some part of it) an idea which expresses more or less reality than it had affirmed of the Body. (Curley, 543: Geb II/204)

An affect is an act in which the mind affirms something which involves a changing power of the body, an act of mental affirmation that also involves a change in the mind's power. One can consider this mode of thought as a cognition, insofar as it involves some propositionally structured, representational content. Further, one can consider it as an affirmation, for the mind necessarily affirms this content. Finally, if we consider that the content of this idea involves a change in the power of the body or mind, then we consider this idea as an affect. In other words, all modes of thought, or ideas, are cognitions; or rather, they are judgments. When the mind forms some modes of thought, specifically, ideas parallel to changes in the body's power, the mind thereby increases or decreases its own power. These modes of thought are affects.

Thus we see that affects are ideas, which are acts in which the mind affirms some propositionally structured, representational idea.³⁸ I understand this act, in which the mind affirms some proposition, to be a judgment. It should be evident why I claim that Spinoza's theory of the affects is strongly cognitivist, as it has been labelled by several Spinoza scholars.³⁹ I will now show how the particular affects are cognitive.

All of the affects, according to Spinoza, are derivatives of the three primary affects,⁴⁰ which are: pleasure or Joy [*laetitia*], pain or Sadness [*tristitia*], and desire [*cupiditas*].⁴¹ When we form certain ideas and affirm their content, the power of our mind is increased. The increase in power involved in forming this idea is felt as Joy. When we form other ideas, affirming their content, our mind's power is decreased, thus feeling Sadness. So, Spinoza

says, 'By *Joy*, therefore, I shall understand in what follows that *passion [in] which the Mind passes to a greater perfection*. And by *Sadness*, that *passion [in] which it passes to a lesser perfection*.'⁴² Passions are simply passive affects,⁴³ which are a kind of affirmative idea, or judgment. Therefore, Joy is a judgment in which the mind passes to a greater perfection, which means that the power of the mind increases. Likewise, Sadness is a judgment in which our mind's power decreases.

Here is an everyday example that may help to illustrate this point. Say that I form a representation of Peter, such that I affirm of Peter that he has harmed me by stealing some of my money. In forming this representation, or idea, I necessarily affirm its content, and thus judge that Peter has harmed me in this way. Next, let us say that, given certain other considerations, forming this judgment renders me less capable of acting in my own interest. For example, by coming to believe that Peter has harmed me, I may not be capable of making certain decisions in the future by which I could benefit. Perhaps this is so because Peter did not in fact steal my money; or perhaps it is so because stealing my money in this case is not a true harm. Regardless, this would be a case of a Spinozist affect. I form and affirm some idea, in which the power of my mind to act in its own interest is reduced. By Spinoza's lights, my power will have been reduced, so I will feel sadness in this reduction. Further, because I believe Peter to be the cause of this sadness, I will feel this sadness as hate towards Peter.⁴⁴ Thus, the *very same* mode of thought is simultaneously a representation, an affirmation, and an affect; that is, it is a change in the mind's power to act involved in a judgment that is felt in a certain way, namely, as hate.

Finally, concerning desire, Spinoza says, 'Desire is man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something' (Definition of the Affects I; Curley, 531; Geb II/190). When we are affected in a certain way, specifically, so that we are determined to do something, we have an affect of desire.⁴⁵ In other words,

affects which cause us to act are instances of desire. It follows that an affect can be both a Joy or Sadness and a desire, since an affect could change our power and determine us to act at the same time.⁴⁶ In fact, I suggest, all affects of desire are also affects of either Joy or Sadness, both of which I have argued are cognitive.⁴⁷ As such, affects of desire are cognitive as well.⁴⁸

Other commentators find different difficulties in this cognitive account of the affects. For example, in the latter half of the *Ethics*, Spinoza argues in favour of a life lived in accord with reason, offering a kind of cognitive therapy to help free us from the bondage of the passions.⁴⁹ Jonathan Bennett rightly points out that, for Spinoza, an affect can only be overcome by an opposing affect; this view is contrary to that of Descartes, who holds that one ought to overcome passion with reason.⁵⁰ In other words, Bennett claims, Spinozist reason seems to be impotent, only affects being able to overcome other affects, a view that stands in contrast with Descartes' focus on the virtues and strengths of reason.⁵¹ So, does Spinoza demean the power of reason? Is Spinoza a predecessor of Hume on this issue and not a cognitivist at all?

I do not believe so. If we understand cognitive therapy as it is found in a Cartesian psychology, where reason stands on one side and passion or affect on the other, then reason would indeed be impotent, for Spinoza. But Spinoza's genius lies in rejecting this very dichotomy; he believes that the objects and acts of the mind cannot be so divided.⁵² For Spinoza, every instance of an affect is itself also a cognition. What Spinoza wishes is that we live so that the rational, active affects dominate our life, not the passions, intending his cognitive therapy as a way of achieving this. In short, we are to employ reason to determine which affects we are to favour and which to overcome. This is not a case where we try to drive one set of brute, irrational passions at another set and hope that the results come out according to the guide of reason. No, this is reason itself employing its force against the

passions. To say otherwise is to divide – falsely – the idea from the affect. In my view, Spinoza very literally believes in the power of reason.⁵³ This also means that we cannot divide the mind into beliefs and desires, for desires are nothing but motivating beliefs. Thus, there are only ideas, some of which, when formed, increase or decrease the power of our minds; these kinds of ideas are affects.⁵⁴

4.1 Segal and the Phenomenal Feel of the Affects

I have presented and analyzed Spinoza's thoughts on ideas, volitions, and affects, arguing that Spinozist affects are simply a subset of the mind's ideas, specifically, those ideas which involve a change in the power of the mind when we form them. As it stands some readers may find this account of the affects to be incomplete, because it fails to explain their phenomenal feel. For example, if the affects are nothing but a kind of idea, then why do they feel so different from the idea that the triangle has three sides?

Gideon Segal criticizes Spinoza's theory of the affects on these grounds. He argues that the rationalist rigor of Spinoza's system prevents him from accounting for the phenomenal feel of the affects. The outline of Segal's argument is as follows. According to Cartesian physics, which Segal attributes to Spinoza, a true description of the physical world contains nothing but precisely quantifiable properties of extension, specifically, figure and motion.⁵⁵ In Spinozist terms, a complete understanding of the physical world would involve common notions, which are universal mathematical, logical, or scientific truths.⁵⁶ These common notions are universal in the sense that they are the same everywhere and at all times. Given parallelism, the mental world ought to be understood in a similar way. In other words, a complete understanding of the mental should involve universal common notions that are the same everywhere and for all minds. How, Segal asks, could such an austere and purely rationalist way of understanding the world possibly account for the phenomenal feel of an emotion, which is an irreducibly idiosyncratic, personal and unique experience? The feel of

an emotion, Segal suggests, is not quantifiable in a way consistent with the universal notions on which any complete understanding of the world must be based, for Spinoza. Therefore, Spinoza's account of the affects cannot accommodate this feel. Thus, Segal says:

...Spinoza left out of his psychology the non-rationalizable aspect of emotions, i.e. whatever in them could not be subsumed under common notions. He therefore was left with the cognitive aspects of emotions, keeping outside of his report the inner feeling which accompanies them. Spinoza's psychology, I claim, disregards any non-cognitive aspect of emotions. ('Cognitivism,' 1)

According to Segal, Spinoza did not include the feel of the affects, because those affective feels were non-cognitive. After surveying Cartesian physics and Spinoza's common notions, Segal reiterates this claim, concluding:

Spinoza's theory of emotions ignores the subjective feelings bound with emotions, although the epiphenomenal presence of this ingredient in each emotion is not denied. Not being amenable to the paradigm of common notions, the inner, subjective awareness to emotions had to remain outside the scope of rational psychology, and therefore must have seemed to Spinoza valueless from a philosophical point of view. ('Cognitivism,' 19)

In other words, because Spinoza's theory of the affects is purely cognitive, Segal claims, it cannot account for the feel that accompanies the cognition in an affect. Therefore, the affective feel plays *no role* in his psychology, being reduced to a mere epiphenomenon. Thus, according to Segal, Spinoza's cognitivism renders his theory of the affects unsatisfactory, because his theory only concerns itself with their cognitive aspect, disregarding completely their feel.

4.2 How Spinoza Accommodates the Phenomenal Feel of the Affects in His System

As opposed to Segal, I believe that Spinoza's system can accommodate the feel of the affects. Segal bases his argument on Spinoza's common notions, which he claims are rooted in a Cartesian model of the physical world. This is not exactly correct, however, since Spinoza's physical world also includes power, while Descartes' does not.⁵⁷ This point of

difference alone is not sufficient to account for affective feel, by any means, but it will be relevant to my explanation below.

Spinoza prepares the ground for his amendment to Cartesian physics when he says, ‘So the power of each thing, or the striving by which it (either alone or with others) does anything...is nothing but the given, or actual, essence of the thing itself’ (3p7d; Curley, 499; Geb II/146). Each thing, including bodies, has as its essence an active power by which that thing strives. This view is quite different from Descartes’, for whom bodies have no such essential motion or power. Spinoza explicitly rejects the Cartesian notion of inert bodies in letters to Tschirnhaus, saying, ‘...from Extension as conceived by Descartes, to wit, an inert mass, it is not only difficult, as you say, but quite impossible to demonstrate the existence of bodies’ (Letter 81, to Tschirnhaus).⁵⁸ For Spinoza, bodies are not inert but have power, by which they are individuated and determined to act. In a later letter, Spinoza says, ‘...Descartes is wrong in defining matter through Extension; it must necessarily be explicated through an attribute which expresses eternal and divine essence’ (Letter 83, to Tschirnhaus; Shirley, 958).⁵⁹ Spinoza’s Extension is essentially dynamic, expressing God’s essence, which Spinoza defines as power.⁶⁰

In short, Spinoza's physics, unlike Descartes’, involves bodies that have more than purely passive properties of figure and motion. For Spinoza, bodies have power. Just as Spinozist bodies have power in a way that Cartesian ones do not, Spinozist ideas have power in a way that Cartesian ideas do not. As I have already explained, Spinoza rejects Descartes’ notion that ideas are purely passive mental perceptions, instead taking them to be acts of mind.⁶¹ I have also argued that an affect, for Spinoza, is an idea of an event in which the body’s power changes, an idea that itself involves a change in the mind’s power. This change in the mind’s power allows Spinoza to accommodate feeling in his cognitive theory of the

affects. Further, this change in power allows us to distinguish affective ideas from other, non-affective ideas.⁶²

Consider how Spinoza defines sadness at the end of Part 3. He says, ‘Sadness consists in a passage to a lesser perfection...the affect of Sadness is an act, which can therefore be no other act than that of a passing to a lesser perfection, i.e., an act [in] which man’s power of acting is diminished’ (Definition of the Affects, III; Curley, 532; Geb II/191). The affect of sadness is a passage to a lesser power, as well as being an act; specifically, it is an act of judgment in which the mind’s power is lessened. Generally, then, an affect is some idea in which the mind’s power changes that will be felt as Sadness or Joy. More exactly, an affect is a kind of idea, which is in turn an act of judgment in which our mind’s power changes. The specifically affective aspect of this mode of thought – that is, what makes it an affect as opposed to a non-affective idea – is the change of power involved in the judgment, which is felt as a kind of Sadness or Joy. Thus, what distinguishes affects from non-affective ideas is a *felt change in power*.

This is not to say that the affective feel and the relevant idea are ontologically distinct. Just as the volition or affirmation is phenomenologically distinct from the propositionally structured representation involved in an idea, so too is the affective feel of an idea distinct from its cognitive content. But the affective feel and the idea are in fact one mode of thought, involving each other essentially, just as the volition and the idea are.⁶³

Understanding affects as felt changes in power involved in certain ideas helps us to make sense of many passages in the *Ethics*. Spinoza says, ‘No affect can be restrained by the true knowledge of good and evil insofar as it is true, but only insofar as it is considered as an affect’ (4p14; Curley, 553; Geb II/219). The mode of thought in question may be considered in two ways: as knowledge, i.e., as an idea, or as an affect. This proposition suggests that modes of mind interact causally not in virtue of their representational content, but in virtue of

their *affective force* – their felt changes in power. As Spinoza says, ‘An affect cannot be restrained or taken away except by an affect opposite to, and stronger than, the affect to be restrained’ (4p7; Curley, 550; Geb II/214). In short, Spinoza's affective psychology involves ideas with varying degrees of affective strength competing to determine how the human being will act. These ideas may be considered as representational cognitions, but they are also acts of mind that, in some cases, involve a change in power that is felt as Joy or Sadness. This felt change in power will have a degree of strength that will determine which affect will overcome which other affect, and so determine how one will act.

Thus we see that affective feel plays a fundamental role in Spinoza's psychology, according to which an affect is the mind's felt change in power involved in certain judgments. This view of the mind accords with Spinoza's physics, which is not strictly Cartesian, as I have argued. In Spinoza's physics, bodies have a degree of power that is distinguished from such Cartesian qualities as direction of motion or figure. An affect is a mode of thought that has a degree of power as well, which is distinguished from its cognitive content. In short, then, the affective strength of an idea is the mental correlate of the force of a certain body.⁶⁴ Thus, we see that Spinoza's dynamic physics parallels quite well with his dynamic psychology.

To recap, I have argued that Spinoza's physics is not strictly Cartesian, because his physics involves bodies that possess power. I have also argued that Spinoza's psychology includes an account of affects as something over and above cognitions. That is not to say that Spinoza has abandoned cognitivism, for these affects, these feelings, are nothing but the power of certain cognitions, which is the correlate of the power Spinoza assigns to bodies. In other words, I have attempted to rebut two central points of Segal's argument, namely, that Spinoza's physics are purely Cartesian and that Spinoza's psychology lacks an account of the affects.⁶⁵

Segal claims that the feel of an affect is nothing but an ‘epiphenomenon’ that is ‘valueless from a philosophical point of view’ for Spinoza. Yet I have shown that the feel of an affect is its power, which plays a central role in Spinoza's psychology. Further, this felt power is not epiphenomenal, but interacts causally with other affects, resulting in human action. Finally, I would argue, Spinoza's entire philosophical project concerns managing and directing the affects toward certain ends; because their feel is central to how the affects work, this feel is far from philosophically valueless.

4.3. The Variety and Seeming Uniqueness of Affective Feel

What of Segal's other charge? According to Segal, Spinoza excludes any aspect of the affects that cannot be subsumed under the common notions, a restriction which Segal claims eliminates their inner feeling. Segal is right that Spinoza's view of the world, both his physics and his psychology, ultimately involves only universal and general laws and properties. In my view, however, such a physics would include both individual bodies and individual affects with certain degrees of power. Further, as I have shown, the felt power of the affects play a central role in the causal explanation of psychological events, just as the power of bodies would play a central role in a causal explanation of physical events. Thus, I feel that I have made some room for affective feel within the restrictive confines of a Spinozist science.

However, affective feel must be universalizable and general, a point that Segal sees as being absolutely inconsistent with the variety and irreducibility of the affects. Again I believe that Spinoza has an answer. First of all, Spinoza is aware of the myriad variety of affects and attempts to account for this within his system. He says, ‘There are as many species of Joy, Sadness, and Desire, and consequently of each affect composed of these...as there are species of objects by which we are affected’ (3p56; Curley, 526; Geb II/184). He also says, ‘Each affect of each individual differs from the affect of another as much as the essence of the one from the essence of another’ (3p57; Curley, 528; Geb II/186). Spinoza

says these things because he holds that the essence of an affect is a result both of the essence of its cause and the essence of the person being affected.⁶⁶ Thus, our affects can be as varied and different as the things that stimulate them. Further, my affects will likely have a somewhat distinct quality from yours. But Spinoza is aware of these facts and manages to accommodate them in his system.

Besides, why must we accept Segal's claim that the feel of the affects is fundamentally resistant to universalizing? Certainly it is not nonsense to say that two people may feel the same emotion, in some sense. And if the two people are very similar in nature and the object of their emotion the same, it is even more likely that they will have a 'shared' experience. I take this degree of generalization to be sufficient for Spinoza's needs, especially given all that has been said above. A complete scientific description of an affect would simply include the fundamental psychological notion that changes in power have a certain quantifiable and universalizable feel of Joy or Sadness in addition to their cognitive contents.⁶⁷

5. Conclusion

I take Segal's main claims to be these: first, that Spinoza does not account for affective feel and, second, that Spinoza cannot accommodate this feel, given that it cannot be understood scientifically. I have argued that Spinoza does include affective feel in his system, placing it at the centre of his affective psychology. I have also shown that Spinoza can account for the bewildering variety and seemingly individual nature of the affects in a systematic way.

To ask for more of Spinoza would be unfair, I think. Spinoza's theory of the affects is a cognitivist theory, to be sure, in that he claims that all affects involve a cognition. This is not an austere intellectualism, however, because Spinoza acknowledges the feel and power of the affects; indeed, their feel and power play a central role in his account.⁶⁸ He even attempts

to accommodate the affects' variety and seeming lack of universalizability. Though it is a cognitivist theory of the affects, it is not naïve, but sophisticated, accounting for many of the intuitions that might underlie a non-cognitivist theory.⁶⁹

¹ I follow convention in translating Spinoza's term *affectus* as 'affect,' though 'emotion' would be acceptable in the context of this article. In other contexts, however, *affectus* is not well rendered as 'emotion,' since *affectus* refers to a phenomenon both mental and physical, as well as one either passive or active, while 'emotion' may connote a mental state one undergoes, which is closer to Spinoza's term *passio*, which is only one kind of *affectus*. See Edwin Curley (tr. & ed.) *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 625. Note also that a similar convention exists in German and French, where *affectus* is translated as *das Affekt* and *l'affect*, rather than as *das Gefühl* or *l'emotion*. See, for example, Wolfgang Bartuschat's and Bernard Pautrat's translations: *Ethik* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992), 223 and *Spinoza: Éthique* (Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 203.

² Hume's view may in fact be more complex than this. For Hume, passions are not propositional, though they may perhaps have intentional objects. In the case of pride, for example, the passion takes as its intentional objects the thing in which one takes pride and oneself. The passion has such objects in virtue of its being a complex mental state involving both a non-representational passion and representational ideas. For a related discussion of the cognitive nature of pride, see Donald Davidson, 'Hume's Cognitive Theory of Pride,' *Journal of Philosophy*, N '76; 73(4): 744-756. For an opposing view, see Annette Baier, 'Hume's Analysis of Pride,' *Journal of Philosophy* JA '78, 75(1): 27-40. For Hume's claim that the intellect is not involved in the passions, which bear no truth value, see Hume, *Treatise*, Book II, Part iii, Section 3 and Book III, Part i, Section 1.

³ William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1950 [originally 1890]), 449.

⁴ Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 114.

⁵ According to Robert Solomon, 'emotions are a kind of judgment,' as he says in a variety of places, for example, 'Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings,' *Thinking About Feeling*, Robert Solomon, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 76. Though Spinoza's view is superficially very similar to Solomon's in that both take emotions to be judgments, I would not attribute to Spinoza the details of Solomon's theory, which involves a sophisticated explanation of emotion as a nexus of certain kinds of judgment, intention, and desire.

⁶ For more contemporary discussion of this issue, see Solomon's *Thinking About Feeling* volume, as well as *Philosophy and the Emotions*, Anthony Hatzimoysis, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁷ Michael Della Rocca, 'Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology,' *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Don Garrett, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 243. See also Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza [Representation]* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7f, where he also argues this point.

⁸ Don Garrett, 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory,' *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 275. R. J. Delahunty agrees as well in his *Spinoza* (London: Routledge, 1985), 244. See also Charles Jarrett, 'Teleology and Spinoza's Doctrine of Final Causes,' *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, Yirmiyahu Yovel, ed. (New York: Little Room Press, 1999), 13. Jonathan Bennett also agrees that Spinoza 'is trying to make the attribute of thought as cognitive as possible' in his treatment of the emotions in *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, [Study] (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984), 256.

⁹ This may be what Edwin Curley has in mind when he says, '...I think it is an overgeneralization to suppose that all emotions must include a cognitive element, and that the cognitive element must always cause the non-cognitive element in the emotion.' Edwin Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 169fn56. He does not explain what he means by 'non-cognitive element.'

¹⁰ Gideon Segal, 'Beyond Subjectivity: Spinoza's Cognitivism of the Emotions' ['Cognitivism'] *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8 (2000): 1-19.

¹¹ For discussions of this identification, see Jonathan Bennett, *Study*, 162-167; R.J. Delahunty, *Spinoza*, 33-36; and Henry Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 119-123. See especially Michael Della Rocca, 'The Power of an Idea: Spinoza's Critique of Pure Will' ['Power of an Idea'], *Noûs* 37 (2003): 200-231, who argues this point in great detail. My discussion here owes much to Della Rocca's and Bennett's work.

¹² This is not to say that Spinozist ideas are all-things-considered judgments, by any means. In fact, they need not even be judgments at which we consciously arrive at all. By judgment, I mean nothing more than some proposition that we affirm. Instead of calling Spinozist ideas 'judgments', I could have chosen to call them 'beliefs.' I chose 'judgment', however, because it connotes an act of mind more strongly than 'belief.' This emphasis on mental action better accords with Spinoza's intent, as I will discuss below. This is essentially Descartes' notion of judgment as well, for he holds a judgment to be nothing more than the volitional act in which we assent to some idea. See, for example, Descartes' *Principles*, I, §34 (CSMK I, 204; AT VIIIA/18). All

citations of Descartes are to John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2 Vols. and to Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch and Anthony Kenny, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), Vol. 3; all three volumes of which are hereafter cited as CSMK. Original language references are to Adam and Tannery, *Oeuvres de Descartes* (revised edition, Paris: Vrin, 1964-76), hereafter AT.

¹³ 2d3; Curley, 447; Geb II/84. All citations of Spinoza are taken from Edwin Curley, ed. and trans., *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), I; hereafter cited as ‘Curley’. Original language references are to Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Spinoza Opera* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925), in 4 vols., hereafter cited as ‘Geb’. I follow Curley’s translation in this essay and employ the notation used by Jonathan Bennett and Michael Della Rocca, which is similar to Curley’s. So, 2d3 is Part 3, definition 3 (and p for proposition, a for axiom, d following the final Arabic number for demonstration, s for scholium, c for corollary).

¹⁴ See, for example, Descartes’ Letter to Regius, May 1641, (CSMK III, 182; AT III/372) and *Passions* I, 17 (CSM I, 335; AT XI/342).

¹⁵ For a similar view of this definition and its explanation, see Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza: II - L’âme* (Paris: Aubier, 1974), 21-22. Gueroult also connects Spinoza’s emphasis on activity in 2d3 to 2p49, as I do below. For a different view, see Wolfgang Bartuschat, *Spinozas Theorie des Menschen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992), 69, and Wolfgang Röd, *Benedictus de Spinoza: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), 64f, who both connect this definition to 2p11, where Spinoza defines the human mind as an idea. They both take this emphasis on action in 2d3 to be Spinoza’s way of defining the human mind as a *res cogitans*, since the mind is an idea and ideas are acts of thought. I do not find their arguments for this connection to be persuasive.

¹⁶ This view is widely accepted among commentators, as I have mentioned in the Introduction. For example, see Michael Della Rocca, *Representation*, 7, who says, ‘When Spinoza speaks of ideas, he means psychological items that have content, that are about something.’ Della Rocca also rejects the logical interpretation of ideas about to be discussed, as I do.

¹⁷ I say ‘representation or mental act’ for the following reason. Among Spinoza’s contemporaries, there was a difference of opinion concerning the nature of ideas. Some, such as Malebranche, saw ideas as objects of the mind; others, such as Arnauld, saw ideas as forms of mental actions, such as perception. I will not discuss whether Spinoza takes ideas to be objects created by a mental act or the acts of mind themselves because it is

not relevant to my purpose here. For a discussion of this distinction in Descartes, Arnauld, and Malebranche, see Steven Nadler, *Arnauld and the Cartesian Philosophy of Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Nadler, *Malebranche and Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁸ For an interpretation that takes ideas at least sometimes to be logical entities, see Edwin Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 124f. For a criticism of that interpretation, see Bennett, *Study*, 50-54, as well as Della Rocca, *Representation*, 8. According to Bennett, Albert Balz believes that Spinoza's use of 'idea' refers to logical entities throughout the *Ethics*. Curley recognizes that the ideas discussed in 2p48 are not logical entities, however, because he believes Spinoza switches from a logical conception to a psychological conception with the introduction of ideas of ideas (see 2p29 for that doctrine).

¹⁹ For evidence that Spinoza would reject a non-cognitive account of imaginations, consider what he says in 2p49s, where he claims that our visual imagination of a winged horse involves the affirmation of wings to a horse. In other words, these imaginations are affirmations and propositional in structure.

²⁰ Della Rocca, 'Power of an Idea.' Gueroult agrees with my reading, glossing 2p49 as follows: 'Les différents actes d'affirmer ou nier (les volitions) ne sont pas extérieurs aux idées, mais appartiennent à leur essence' (Gueroult, *Spinoza: II - L'âme*, 497).

²¹ Spinoza does not specify the nature of this 'involvement' between mode of thought and idea, which is what allows the 'standard reading' its plausibility, though Della Rocca gives definitive reasons to reject it. As I have suggested, I believe 2p49 itself implies that the involvement in question is an essential connection. Consider 1a7, which says, 'If a thing can be conceived as not existing, its essence does not *involve* existence' (my emphasis; Curley, 410; Geb II/47). I take this to be something like '...its essence does not *contain* existence' or 'its essence is not identical to its existence,' as is the case with Substance, as explained by Spinoza in 1p7. Similarly, if we say that the essence of an idea *involves* a volition, I take that to mean that ideas essentially have a volitional nature, i.e., ideas essentially are volitions. Ideas are cognitions that have a volitional nature; a volition is a psychological affirmation of a cognition. I take the French and German translations to follow my interpretation, rendering *involvere* as *envelopper* and *einschließen* or *in sich schließen*, which all translate roughly as 'to contain' or 'to include'. See, for example, Bartushat's and Pautrat's translations: *Ethik*, 199 and *Spinoza: Éthique*, 185. For the relation between cause and essence, see Della Rocca, *Representation*, chapters 4 and 5.

²² See, for example, Edwin Curley, 'Descartes, Spinoza and the Ethics of Belief,' *Spinoza: Essays in Interpretation*, Eugene Freeman and Maurice Mandelbaum, eds. (LaSalle: LaSalle University Press, 1975), 159-189, reprinted in *Spinoza: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, Genevieve Lloyd, ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 193-218 [all pages references here are to the 2004 reprinting], especially 201f. Of the latter half of this demonstration, Bennett, *Study*, 167, says, '[Spinoza] asserts without argument...It is puzzling that we should be expected to swallow this whole, if 'affirmation' means 'belief'.' Bennett and Della Rocca ('Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology,' *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 202), both recognize and condemn this shortcoming in 2p49d. Bennett explains this lapse by claiming that Spinoza confounded two theses: that ideas are propositionally structured and that ideas are beliefs. Della Rocca disagrees, defending Spinoza as intending to offer an interesting theory of belief. I agree with Della Rocca that Spinoza certainly takes 'affirmation' to mean something like 'belief' or perhaps 'judgment.' I am not so sure, however, that Spinoza's account is viable. For related discussion see Margaret Wilson, 'Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge,' *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 89-141, especially 123-126.

²³ It may be that Spinoza was working with the unstated assumption that we *must* affirm that which we see clearly to be the case. This is reminiscent of Descartes, who says, 'I could not but judge that something which I understood so clearly was true' (Meditations 4; CSM II, 41; AT VII, 58). Descartes' exchange with Arnauld over a remarkably similar issue concerning our idea of the triangle makes an interesting contrast to Spinoza's treatment here. See the Fourth Objections (CSMK II, 141-2; AT VII/201-202) and Replies (CSMK II, 155-9; AT VII/221-7).

²⁴ Like 'involve' [*involvere*], 'pertain' [*pertinere*] receives no explicit definition from Spinoza. Another place he employs it is in 1p7, where he says: 'It pertains to the nature of substance to exist,' (Curley 412; Geb II/49) a doctrine that could be restated as 'existence belongs to or is a part of the essence of substance.' Again the French and German translations suggest this understanding, taking *pertinere* as *appartenir* and *gehören*, both of which translate as 'to belong.' See Pautrat's *L'Éthique*, 185 and Bartuschchat's *Ethik*, 201.

²⁵ If Spinoza felt justified in the case of the triangle, however, he would naturally make this generalization, given that he intends to treat human psychology as though it were 'a question of lines, planes, and bodies' (3 Preface; Curley, 492; Geb II/138).

²⁶ Curley's 'Descartes, Spinoza and the Ethics of Belief' is an excellent discussion of this issue. For a view even more critical of Spinoza, see also John Cottingham, 'Spinoza's Critique of Descartes,' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26 (1988): 239-57.

²⁷ Delahunty, employing an idea from Geach, states that, for Spinoza, ideas are both propositional in structure and assertoric in force. When we discuss ideas, then, we refer to their propositional content. When we refer to volitions, we refer to their assertoric force (see *Spinoza*, 33-35). Curley also makes reference to Geach on this point ('Descartes, Spinoza, and the Ethics of Belief,' 208). Perhaps similarly, Della Rocca, in 'Power of an Idea,' claims that ideas are individual expressions of the mind's power, each bearing a kind of psychic force.

²⁸ 3d3; Curley, 493; Geb II/139. I prefer to translate '*quibus*' as 'in which,' rather than Curley's 'by which.' Bennett agrees saying, 'In p59d Spinoza implies that pleasure and unpleasure [his translations of *laetitia* and *tristitia*] cause the upward and downward movements, but his usual view is that they *are* those movements. (That is why I render d3 with 'in which the body's power' etc. rather than 'by which the body's power'...'
(*Study*, 254).

²⁹ 'The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things' (2p7; Curley, 451; Geb II/89). Spinoza applies this to particular modes, including ideas, saying, 'So also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways' (2p7s; Curley, 451; Geb II/90). See also 3p2s, where Spinoza says, 'the Mind and the Body are one and the same thing, which is now conceived under the attribute of Thought, now under the attribute of Extension. The result is that the order, or connection, of things is one...' The exact nature of Spinoza's parallelism or the nature of this 'expression' need not concern us here; all that is relevant is how it applies to affects.

³⁰ So Spinoza says, 'The idea of any thing that increase or diminishes, aids or restrains, our Body's power of acting, increases or diminishes, aids or restrains, our Mind's power of thinking' (3p11; Curley, 500; Geb II/148).

³¹ Spinoza speaks in this manner in the General Definition of the Affects, among other places, where he connects the power of the mind to the power of the body, as I have here. See Part 3, General Definition of the Affects; Curley, 542; Geb II/203. Bennett speaks of the changes in power involved in the affects very generally, not attributing them to the body or the mind, preferring instead to speak of the health of the individual as a whole (*Study*, 254).

³² For a discussion of the relevant terms 'affection' [*affectio*] and 'affect' [*affectus*], and how they are to be understood with regard to body and mind, see Jean-Marie Beyssade, '*Nostris Corporis Affectus*: Can an Affect in

Spinoza be ‘of the Body’?’ *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, 113-128. Beyssade argues that the exact nature of an affect depends in part on how we interpret the phrase ‘at the same time’ [*et simul*] in this definition.

³³ Beyssade agrees. See ‘*Nostri Corporis Affectus*: Can an Affect in Spinoza be ‘of the Body’?’ , 118-119.

³⁴ 3p58: ‘Apart from the Joy and Desire that are passions, there are other affects of Joy and Desire that are related to us insofar as we act’ (Curley, 529; Geb II/187). See the demonstration to that proposition for the specific mention of adequate ideas.

³⁵ Spinoza's setting aside of the purely bodily aspect of emotions is reminiscent of Seneca's Stoic rejection of the relevance of the bodily aspect of emotions as well. Seneca says, ‘For if any one supposes that pallor, falling tears, prurient itching or deep-drawn sigh, a sudden brightening of the eyes, and the like, are an evidence of passion and a manifestation of the mind, he is mistaken and fails to understand that these are disturbances of the body’ See *On Anger*, II.iii.2 in Seneca, *Moral Essays: Book One*, John Basore, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928): 173. The question of the nature of the relation between Seneca's and Spinoza's theories of the emotions is an interesting one, though beyond the scope of this paper. For more on this connection, see Don Rutherford, ‘Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza's Ethics,’ *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 7 (1999), 447-473, as well as his forthcoming book.

³⁶ Allison agrees, citing both 4p8 and 4p14; see *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction*, 145-7.

³⁷ Garrett also suggests that affects and ideas are related in the same way as I argue here. Garrett says, ‘Spinoza construes the affective and the representational as two aspect of the *same* mental events or entities’ (‘Spinoza's Ethical Theory,’ *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 296).

³⁸ In his Introduction to his edited volume, *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, Yirmiyahu Yovel supports my conclusion that ideas have a tripartite nature, that is, that they may be considered in three ways, as a representation, an affirmation, and an affect, when he says, ‘Just as an idea is at once an act of judgment – the affirmation of its own content – so it is also an emotive event. Ideas and emotions are not separate entities, but aspects of the same; the cognitive content is inseparable from an affective event in which it resonates’ (Yovel, *Desire and Affect*, xiv). Interestingly, Della Rocca claims that what I argue for here – that all objects and acts of the mind are in fact ideas, including volitions and affects – is implicit in 2a3 (‘There are no modes of thinking...unless there is in the same Individual the idea of the thing loved, desired, etc...’ [Curley, 448; Geb II/85]). See his ‘The Power of an Idea,’ 204. Note, further, that 2a3 specifically names passions of love and

desire. If Della Rocca is right to trace these doctrines to 2a3, then it must be the case that all passions are really ideas simply from 2a3, as Della Rocca notes (222). I am not certain that all of this is implicit in 2a3, however.

³⁹ Amihud Gilead, who applies the term to Spinoza, says, 'It is clear that the basic affects, and consequently all the affects, depend on and follow from cognition...' in 'Affects' *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, 172. Segal follows him in using this label. Neither discusses the current uses of the term 'cognitivism,' however.

⁴⁰ 3p11s: '...apart from these three I do not acknowledge any other primary affect. For I shall show in what follows that the rest arise from these three' (Curley, 501; Geb II/149).

⁴¹ Bennett argues that joy and sadness are too narrow to render *laetitia* and *tristitia* (*Study*, 253-4). Though I am sympathetic to his concern, I am not sure that his 'pleasure' and 'unpleasure' are significantly better. I have elected to follow Curley's translation.

⁴² 3p11s; Curley, 500-1; Geb II/149. For reasons similar to those cited above in footnote 39, I prefer to translate '*quâ mens...transit*' as 'in which the mind passes.' See Bennett, *Study*, 254. The German translation accords with my preference in this passage, rendering '*quâ*' here as '*in denen*,' which means 'in which.' Inconsistently, however, Bartuschat renders the '*quibus*' in 3d3 as '*von denen*,' which means 'by which.' See Bartuschat's translation, *Ethik*, 223 & 245. The French generally translate the '*quâ*' as '*par lesquelles*,' however, which means 'by which.' See Pautrat's translation, *Spinoza: Éthique*, 223.

⁴³ 'Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the Affect an action; otherwise, a passion.' (3d3; Curley, 493; Geb II/139).

⁴⁴ Spinoza's definition of hate is to be found at Definition of the Affects VII (Curley, 533; Geb II/193) and 3p13s (Curley, 502; Geb II/151).

⁴⁵ I will not address the claim that desire is the essence of man in some sense or another, a claim related to Spinoza's doctrine of the *conatus*. See 3p6 and 3p7 for that doctrine. See also Bennett, *Study*, chapters 9 and 10, and Della Rocca, 'Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology,' *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*.

⁴⁶ This claim, that desire is simply a motivating Joy or Sadness, accords with Bennett's treatment of desire. He finds that desire has no place in Spinoza's psychology that Joy and Sadness do not fill themselves (*Study*, 259). Someone might claim that the Joy we take in something and any desire it might engender are phenomenologically distinct, though I see no reason why that must entail that they are ontologically distinct. They could be two phenomenologically distinct aspects of the same complex idea, or affect.

⁴⁷ Spinoza says, ‘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’ (3p9s; Curley, 500; Geb II/148). My understanding of desire is consistent with this passage. For our judgment that something is good is consequent on our taking Joy in something, which, on my account, would be identical with our desiring more of it. Or perhaps we are given the idea of something we do not yet have, yet this idea brings us some Joy. This Joy we take in the idea is identical with our desire for the object the idea represents. Consequent to feeling this Joy and forming this desire, we may judge the thing to be good. Desire, on this account, is intentional, but not strongly teleological, because the desire is formed as a result of a present Joy, not a future goal. I suspect that Spinoza may have employed more than one sense of desire in the *Ethics*, however. For more on this debate, see Bennett, *Study*, chapter 9 and pp. 261-262, and Jarrett, ‘Teleology and Spinoza’s Doctrine of Final Causes,’ *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*.

⁴⁸ Other commentators who address the cognitive nature of the affects omit or expressly set aside desire, due to its difficult position in Spinoza’s system. See, for example, Segal, ‘Cognitivism,’ 2n2, and Gilead, ‘Affects,’ *passim*.

⁴⁹ For discussion of this aspect of Spinoza’s thought, see Garrett, ‘Spinoza’s Ethical Theory,’ Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction*, chapter 5, and Delahunty, *Spinoza*, chapter 8.

⁵⁰ Bennett, *Study*, 286. Spinoza says, ‘No affect can be restrained by the true knowledge of good and evil insofar as it is true, but only insofar as it is considered as an affect’ (4d14; Curley, 553; Geb II/219). Bennett specifically quotes Descartes’ *Passions* §48, where Descartes says, ‘Some people...never let their will fight with its own weapons, but only with ones which some passions provide as a defense against other passions. What I call its own weapons are firm and determinate judgments concerning the knowledge of good and bad, with which the will has resolved to regulate the actions of this life.’

⁵¹ Delahunty makes a similar complaint (Delahunty, *Spinoza*, 245-6). In fact, this criticism is over a century old at least, having been raised by H. Joachim (Joachim, *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901, 258-9), as well as by David Bidney, *The Psychology and Ethics of Spinoza* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 252.

⁵² So, Lee Rice, quoting an earlier article by Max Whartovsky, says, ‘The true revolution in Spinoza’s account of affectivity is to be found not just in his consistent and thoroughgoing determinism, but also his systematic and consistent denial of ‘the split between the cognitive and the emotive or affective, or between faculties of thought

and feeling, or, more sharply between thought and action” (Lee Rice, ‘Action in Spinoza's Account of Affectivity,’ *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, 164).

⁵³ This is not to say that he holds this power to be superior to the power of irrational affects, only that reason does have some affective power. Indeed, one important point that distinguishes Spinoza from a Stoic or Socratic rationalism is the view that knowledge is not more powerful than belief or even false belief, as he says clearly in the first 17 propositions in Part 4.

⁵⁴ Gueroult agrees that ideas or beliefs do not cause desires via *transuent* causation, i.e., where the cause is external to the effect. Instead, he suggests, ideas and desires are essentially connected, so that ideas are causally related to desires as follows: ‘elle se l'incorpore au lieu de le susciter du dehors’ (Gueroult, *Spinoza: II - L'âme*, 494).

⁵⁵ See, for example, *Principles* II, 4, where Descartes says, ‘The nature of body consists not in weight, hardness, color, or the like, but simply in extension’ (CSMK I, 224; AT VIIIA/42). See also Dan Garber, ‘Descartes’ Physics,’ *Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 286-334: 294. For more on the Cartesian dimension of Spinoza’s physics, see Alan Gabbey, ‘Spinoza’s natural science and methodology,’ *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*.

⁵⁶ For Spinoza's doctrine of common notions, see 2p38. Edwin Curley argues that the common notions are of the infinite modes, which are the laws of physics in *Behind the Geometric Method* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 45f). Bennett affirms this view as well (*Study*, p. 107). See also Yirmiyahu Yovel’s discussion in *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Marrano of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 161) and Gueroult, *Spinoza: II - L'âme*, 328-334.

⁵⁷ Descartes’ physics famously lacks any notion of power or force. Leibniz made much of this, showing by way of a simple thought experiment how this lack leads Cartesian physics into absurdity in an article in *Acta Eruditorum* in 1686. For discussion, see Dan Garber, ‘Lebniz: Physics and Philosophy,’ *Cambridge Companion to Leibniz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 270-352, especially section 4.3.

⁵⁸ *Spinoza: Complete Works*, Samuel Shirley (trans.), (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), 956. I am indebted to Michael Della Rocca’s work in his article in *Nôus*, ‘The Power of an Idea: Spinoza’s Critique of Pure Will,’ for demonstrating the relevance of these letters to Spinoza's psychology. See also the physical digression appearing after 2p13 in the *Ethics*.

⁵⁹ Letter 83, to Tschirnhaus; Shirley, p. 958.

⁶⁰ ‘God’s power is his essence itself,’ 1p34; Curley, 439; Geb II/76.

⁶¹ Della Rocca also makes this point in ‘Power of an Idea,’ p. 224-226.

⁶² Segal believes that Spinoza has no grounds by which to distinguish affects from non-affective ideas. He says, ‘Our experience of being aware to the cognitive content that constitutes an emotion is specific to each occurrence of an emotion, but it is not of a special kind distinguished from our experience or awareness to any other cognitive content, which as such is necessarily accompanied by the inner experience of it’ (‘Cognitivism,’ 3). I of course disagree for the reasons stated below, namely, that affects have a felt power that non-affective ideas lack, a felt power which Spinoza accounts for and in fact on which his system depends.

⁶³ Consider 2a3: ‘There are no modes of thinking, such as love, desire, or whatever is designated by the word affects of mind, unless there is in the same individual the idea of the thing loved, desired, and the like. But there can be an idea, even though there is no other mode of thinking.’ In other words, affects necessarily involve an idea, though we may have some non-affective ideas also. Further, any idea that changes our power will necessarily involve some love, desire, or affect of the mind, according to 3p11s. In short, then, an affect such as love or desire is necessary and sufficient for an idea that changes our power. Thus, they are essentially the same modes of thought, in the same way volitions and ideas are.

⁶⁴ Strictly speaking, all Spinozist bodies have a certain degree of power and, by parallelism, all Spinozist ideas do as well. See Della Rocca, ‘Power of an Idea.’ In other words, all ideas have power, but only those that change the overall power of the individual are felt as affects. Similarly, only those bodies whose individual power changes the overall power of the individual count as bodily affections of the sort described in 3d3. My enterprise in this essay is not to explain the details of Spinoza’s affective psychology, but to show that Spinoza can and does include the felt power of the affects in his system.

⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Spinoza does not provide a more robust physics or psychology. Without these, the details of the parallelism between Spinoza’s physics and psychology must remain unstated. To say more risks advancing my own Spinozist theory in place of an interpretation of Spinoza.

⁶⁶ See Part 2, axiom 1’’, which appears after 2p13 in the ‘Physical Digression;’ Curley, 460; Geb II/99.

⁶⁷ I grant that Spinoza does not offer these common notions of psychology, but Segal’s implies that he could not. Instead, Spinoza only discusses the fundamental principles of physics. Yet, in accordance with his parallelism, he takes both psychology and physics to be fundamental sciences, based on universal and general common notions. Obviously some of these common notions must reference the fact that any being having its power

reduced will find such an experience unpleasant, especially given the fact that every being has as its very essence a desire or striving to increase its power. See, for example, 3p4-3p7. For a discussion of psychology as a basic science in Spinoza, see Donald Davidson, 'Spinoza's Causal Theory of the Affects' *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, 95-112, especially 107-109. Davidson argues that Spinoza's attempt to create a rigorous psychology to match his physics may be doomed to failure. Regardless, this seems to be the project Spinoza undertakes, as he announces in the Preface to Part 3, where he declares he will deal with the affects in the same way that he deals with lines, planes and bodies. In this way, Spinoza's project presages Hume's.

⁶⁸ In fact, even if a being had only adequate ideas, that is, even if a being's mind contained a complete and true representation of the world, that idea would be joyously felt, for adequate knowledge is felt as a kind of Joy. See 3p58 for the active affects – i.e., those that accompany adequate knowledge – as well as 5p15ff for Spinoza's account of perfect knowledge as a kind of joy, namely, love. Finally, consider what Spinoza says at 5p23s: 'For the mind feels those things that it conceives in understanding no less than those it has in the memory' (5p23s; Curley, 608; Geb II/296).

⁶⁹ For more evidence of the unique character of Spinoza's theory, consider how it compares to William James' decidedly non-cognitivist theory. To justify his position that emotions are not constituted by beliefs, James asks what would happen to fear if we removed from the belief in danger the physiological source of the fear. He believed we would be left only with a dispassionate evaluation of a situation in which we were in danger. In other words, James suggests, the emotion lies in the physiological event, not in the idea. But Spinoza the cognitivist can agree with James here. For Spinoza, fear is an idea of some danger that decreases our mind's and body's power. If one withdraws the physiological event, i.e., the change in power, then one is left with a dispassionate idea about our situation, one in which our power does not change. Yet Spinoza holds that affects are constituted by beliefs. Thus, Spinoza's cognitivist theory does not fall neatly onto one side of the debate as James saw it. See James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 2, 449-454.