

WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproduction of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are allowed to furnish a single photocopy or other reproduction for the sole purpose of private study, scholarship, or research.

IT IS A VIOLATION OF COPYRIGHT LAW TO DISTRIBUTE OR REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL ELECTRONICALLY OR IN PAPER FORMAT BEYOND A SINGLE COPY FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL USE.

Power, Freedom and Relational Autonomy

Ericka Tucker

In recent years, the notion of relational autonomy has transformed the old debate about the freedom of the individual in society. A simplification of this debate has two poles: on the one side were libertarian individualists who argued that freedom requires complete independence from society, and on the other were those philosophers who argued that without the social there could be no self to be free in the first place. Rather than the old poles of libertarianism versus social constructivism, relational autonomy theorists sought to find ways to understand how we can be free while being fully situated in social lives (Benhabib 1992; Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000; Barclay 2000; Christman 2004; Westlund 2009; Stoljar 2015). While the freedom of an individual is clearly curtailed in some ways by having to follow the law, for example, it is also clear that the society that supports the individual also makes it possible for the individual to do and to be more, that is, in another sense, to be free. In her article 'Autonomy and the Relational Individual', Aurelia Armstrong argues that Spinoza can best be understood as a theorist of relational autonomy (Armstrong 2009). She argues both that Spinozan freedom is relational and, further, that Spinoza's notion of freedom really is one of autonomy. While I agree with Armstrong that we cannot understand Spinoza's notion of freedom without understanding the social and physical relations by which individual power is constituted, I am less sure that Spinoza's theory of freedom is entirely captured by understanding it in terms of autonomy, unless we understand it as a fully naturalised constitutive conception of autonomy (Oshana 1994). By constitutive autonomy, I refer to Marina Oshana's view that external circumstances – social and political conditions – impinge strongly on individual freedom. For Oshana, the external circumstances that foster or limit individual autonomy are both physical and psychological or ideological – all of which are understood naturalistically. Oshana's account recognises that increasing individual autonomy may involve challenging or changing these external circumstances. That is, social change, for example, may be required for individual autonomy. Oshana's account and Spinoza's conception of relational autonomy would be considered 'constitutive' theories of relational autonomy (Barclay 2000; Christman 2004; Oshana 2006; Stoljar 2015). These accounts are constitutive insofar as they not only 'investigate the effects of external "relational" factors on

agents' autonomy' (Stoljar 2015) as with causal approaches, but also understand autonomy as both created and limited by external circumstances. For Spinoza, individual humans are embedded in natural, social and political circumstances from which they derive their power and freedom. I take this to mean that Spinoza's is best described as a constitutive theory of relational autonomy.¹

I will show how by defining freedom in terms of power, Spinoza understands individual freedom as irreducibly relational. I propose that Spinoza develops his theory of power to understand how individual power or freedom is limited and enhanced by the power of those around one. For Spinoza, the power of an individual is a function of that individual's emotions, imaginative conceptions of itself and the world and its appetites. In this paper (1) I will argue that Spinoza reformulates a concept of freedom in terms of power. (2) His mature theory of freedom as power proposes that individual power is determined through social interaction, and is thus best understood as a relational theory of freedom. (3) I will show that as a consequence of Spinoza's theory, individual power and empowerment relies on those around the individual and, thus, to achieve individual liberation we must pursue collective empowerment.

One approach to understanding Spinoza's conception of freedom as an autonomy theory involves appealing to Spinoza's dictum that to be truly free is to be understood to be the sole cause of one's actions (E1def7). Several chapters in this book have investigated this, and rightly so, since it is Spinoza's explicit definition of freedom (Kisner 2011; Kisner, Steinberg, Green and Sangiacomo in this volume). However, while Spinoza set this out as a criterion for freedom, he spends quite a lot of his work investigating what we might think of as 'unfreedom' – the various ways in which humans individually and as a group are impinged upon by external forces, and how we can increase our freedom. Spinoza calls this unfreedom 'bondage' and argues that real freedom consists in understanding how to emerge from this bondage. His answer to how we combat this bondage is articulated in terms of power – Spinoza is concerned with how we, as individuals, can increase our own power. I propose that to understand what Spinoza means by freedom, we need look not just at his explicit definition – which may even be misleading – but rather, we need to look to the theory of power he formulated to offer a path to liberation from bondage (Armstrong 2017).

Despite his explicit definition of freedom as being understood as the cause of one's actions, I propose that Spinoza theorises freedom as increasing power. We are free, or have an increased degree of freedom in Spinoza's thinking, when we have been able to emerge from the bondage of the force of certain affects and false ideas about the world that diminish our power (TP1.1, TP2.3–2.11). Increasing one's power, in Spinozan terms, is increasing one's freedom. There is much to say about this transition from the vocabulary of 'freedom' to that of 'power' in Spinoza's work, and indeed, much more perhaps than can be said here. While I think that Spinoza's notion of power requires more elaboration than is possible here, we can set out a provisional definition: by 'power' Spinoza refers to the power of acting and thinking of an individual. 'Power' in this sense can be understood as an individual human's capabilities or a group's capacity

to form and achieve its goals. Although a more extended argument is required for my definition of Spinoza's understanding of power, my contribution to this volume seeks to show that, for Spinoza, freedom is correlated with and defined in terms of power. I take Spinoza's theory and concept of power to be his own attempt to reformulate the concept of freedom. In this chapter, I follow the path of definitions in Spinoza's work that brings us from 'freedom' to 'power'. For my purposes, then, the gloss of 'power' above is less important than the conclusion that whatever Spinoza's means by power, he takes this to also be the definition of freedom.

Exploring the connection between freedom and power is vital for this volume, since Spinoza's theory of power is explicitly relational. Individual power, and therefore individual freedom, is determined through social interaction. This does not mean that, for Spinoza, individual 'freedom' is impossible. Rather, he proposes that in order to achieve individual liberation we must pursue collective empowerment.

In section 1, I will offer textual arguments for the correlation between freedom and power and will argue that Spinoza replaces the notion of freedom with his new theoretical term 'power'.

1. From Freedom to Power

Spinoza is possibly best known for his rejection of the notion of free will (E1p32, E2p48–9). In Part 1 of the *Ethics* he infamously denies freedom of the will even to God, who, he argues, acts only through his power, that is, his essence (E1p34). In the appendix to Part 1, Spinoza shores up this rejection of God as one acting through freedom of the will. Although he still refers to God as 'free' he rejects the notion that God's will is free. Instead, he writes that, 'All things have been predetermined by God, not from his free or absolute pleasure, but from the absolute nature of God, his infinite power' (E1app). In the place of 'freedom of the will' of God, a doctrine that is almost universally approved, Spinoza argues that it is not God's freedom or will that cause his actions, but his power (E2p13s15, TTP16, TP2.1). This makes more sense if we substitute Spinoza's term 'Nature', which he uses interchangeably with 'God', to yield the idea that Nature does not act through freedom of the will, but rather through its power. Since human individuals are part of Nature, modes of God, to understand individual power we need to understand the power of God, or Nature. Spinoza argues that individual human power is derived from, or expresses the eternal essence of God, that is, God's power (E1p25, E2p45). Spinoza writes, 'Individuals, insofar as they are part of the power of Nature, constitute a part of the power of Nature' (TTP4). Human individuals, then, have part of the power of Nature.

When Spinoza later formulates his rejection of free will for human individuals, he similarly rejects the idea that human beings have free will, while defining human essence in terms of power. We humans have what Spinoza calls a '*conatus*', or particular individual essence, which Spinoza defines that individual's power:

Therefore, the power of any individual thing, or the conatus with which it acts or endeavours to act, alone or in conjunction with other things, that is, the power or conatus by which it endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing but the given or actual essence of the thing. (E3p7def)

While perhaps unnecessarily wordy, the conclusion is clear: human individuals have as their essence their power.

Yet even as Spinoza rejects the notion of free will, he reintroduces the notion of freedom. He explains in the final lines of Part 2 of the *Ethics* that understanding of the human mind offers us insight into politics. In particular, he says, 'it teaches the manner in which citizens should be governed and led; namely, not so as to be slaves, but so as to do freely what is best' (E2p49s). We may well ask what the meaning of this second use of 'freely' is.

One answer, at least for the human case, is that individuals acting according to the dictates of reason are said, by Spinoza, to be acting freely (E4p52, TTP20, TP3.7). We may take reason to be a certain threshold of human power, particularly the power of the mind to overcome passive affects (*Short Treatise* [KV] 21, 22). However, Spinoza's definition of reason suggests that it is closer to *conatus* itself. He writes, 'To act from reason is nothing else but to do what follows from the necessity of our own nature considered solely in itself' (E4p59def). This last proposal requires that the necessity of our own nature and our essence can be understood as one and the same.

There is another sense in which Spinoza uses reason – and that is perhaps the one closest to what he means by free action – one can 'live by the guidance of reason'. This might at first seem to be a normative conception of reason, but Spinoza avoids this by defining reason in terms of power: 'Man's true power of activity, or his virtue, is reason itself' (E4p52). Here, Spinoza explicitly defines reason in terms of power, allowing us to say that insofar as an individual's power is active, one is living or acting according to reason, and thus is free. However, here it would appear that reason is defined as a high degree of power, or power as active rather than passive. As Spinoza explains in E3p11, the mind can undergo many changes, and indeed 'can pass now to a state of greater perfection now to one of less perfection'. Acting through reason is surely a perfection of the mind. But 'perfection' is defined by Spinoza in terms of power (E1app). Indeed, the two are treated interchangeably. This should come as no real surprise given that Spinoza, in the appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics*, has rejected the usual notion of perfection as being anything other than individual preference. He argues there that 'The perfection of things should be measured solely from their own nature and power' (E1app). By dropping the notion of perfection as mistaken, Spinoza retrieves it by defining it in terms of power. This manoeuvre of using the accepted vocabulary of philosophers but with a new and often tendentious definition is one Spinoza employs regularly. He also does this with the notion of 'virtue' in definition 8 of Part 4 of the *Ethics*, where he writes, 'By virtue and power I mean the same thing' (E4def8) and with the notion of blessedness in Part 5, Proposition 42 where he writes, 'Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself.' From

this we can say that if the transitive property holds of Spinoza definitions, then blessedness is power, or a degree of power. Finally, Spinoza defines blessedness as 'freedom of the mind' (E5pref). The careful reader will note a pattern emerging. Essence, virtue, reason, blessedness and perfection are all defined in terms of power. Freedom is defined in terms of blessedness and reason, and, thus, we can conclude that freedom can be understood in terms of power. To increase one's freedom, for Spinoza, is to have increased one's power.

Why would Spinoza define freedom in terms of power? The reason for this move is hinted at in the appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics* – Spinoza seeks to reclaim a genuine notion of freedom apart from the false notion of free will. To do so, he employs a term that could not be mistaken for free will, and one which he can use to explain that whatever power individuals have, it is through being part of God or Nature. Freedom, in Spinoza's sense, does not transcend nature. Rather, God or Nature is that through which we have the power to act in the world at all.

In this section, I have shown that Spinoza's notion of power was meant to replace the notion of free will. I proposed that freedom is not alone in being redefined in terms of power. In the *Ethics*, virtue, blessedness, perfection and right are redefined as power. We may ask, what does this really accomplish? Once we understand the interconnection between the power of the individual and the power of the collective, we can see how individual freedom is constituted by, and relationally affected by, the power of those around one. Understanding the upshot of the connection between freedom and power requires delving into Spinoza's theory of power. This discussion will be unavoidably technical. However, if we can bear with the technical, we can see what Spinoza offers us – a rich conception of the ways in which social, political and psychological forces shape individual and collective freedom.

2. Individual Power as Relational

As human power derives from Nature, of which each individual is a part, human power is relational from the very start. Each individual derives his or her power from their parthood relation (or mode relation) with Nature (or God). (TTP4 (C2: 126; G iii: 58)) Thus, human power is derived power, and hence relational in at least this first way. What I hope to show is that, for Spinoza, there is another way in which human power is relational, although this second relational dimension of power derives from the first. As each individual, human or otherwise, derives its power from God, so the individuals together are affected by this first relation, their relation to God as parts. This gives rise to the second dimension of their relationality, in that since they are each parts of God, together they are all parts of God, and thus are related to one another. Each individual, as part of Nature, is related to each and every other part of Nature. As all are parts of God or Nature, their interactions impact one another, and these impacts can affect their power. For Spinoza, the more we increase our power, the more we increase our freedom. In this section, I will set out Spinoza's proposals for how individual

power works, how it can be increased and decreased, and how our relations with others affect our power.

For Spinoza, each individual has a degree of power (E3p9, E3p9s, E3p7def). This power is derived from the power of Nature of which each individual is a part. Spinoza calls this power 'conatus' (E3p7def). As the individual is part of nature, so he or she is also made of parts. The forces of the natural world can impinge upon these parts differentially, requiring the individual to coordinate their power by coordinating these parts (E2p13s). One coordinates one's affects through constructing a 'self', that is, an idea of oneself that one uses to interpret and corral one's affects. Spinoza insists that human individuals are made up of parts that can be differentially affected by external forces. Our ideas of ourselves our concept of our 'self' prioritises appetites, interprets emotions and develops strategies for moving about in the world. These ideas of our 'selves', what a self is and ought to be, are then shaped socially. Through social interaction, first in the family and then in the larger community, we shape how we coordinate our ideas, our emotions and our appetites.

An individual's power can increase or decrease depending on the individual's ideas about itself and the world, its affects or emotions, and its appetites – or what it seeks (E3p11s). Power can increase or decrease in each of these dimensions, that is, one can become more powerful by having more adequate ideas, more active affects or more self-preservatory appetites, or less powerful by having less adequate ideas, more passive affects or less self-preservatory appetites.

Each of these dimensions requires some clarification. I will begin with the affects. We may think of affect as an emotion. There are some complications with this, but what Spinoza identifies as affects – hate, love, fear, envy and so on – are what we would broadly call emotions.² Spinoza distinguishes between active and passive affects. Affects like joy express an increase in an individual's power. When one understands the causes of this joy, one becomes more powerful still. Passive affects, like fear, hatred or sadness, express a decrease in an individual's power (E3p11s). The quality of one's idea of oneself and the world can further increase or decrease one's power (E3p1, E3p9). If one understands oneself as part of Nature, and affected by external causes, then one has a more adequate idea of oneself than someone who believes their body to be, for example, impenetrable.³ As an individual gains greater knowledge of themselves and the world, their knowledge is said to be more adequate and their power increased. If one understands the causes of one's affections, one's power increases. If one is ignorant of the causes of one's affections, one's power diminishes.

Desires and appetites are in a sense determined by one's ideas of the world around one and one's affects – however inadequate or passive. These desires can lead one to further knowledge of the world, which increases one's power, or to seek out dangerous or foolhardy things, which diminish one's power. More adequate ideas of oneself and the world have the potential to redirect one's desires, but, for Spinoza, ultimately, desires are more powerful than reason and we humans have a particular gift for seeing the better and doing the worse. What this power amounts to is something rather straightforward, despite it being defined in

terms of perfection, virtue, blessedness and freedom: it is the power to act and think (E3p9s). The greater one's power, the greater one's ability to act and think in the world. Since, as I've argued above, freedom is defined as power, we can see what this freedom really amounts to; namely, for Spinoza, freedom amounts to the capabilities one has to think and act in the natural world of which one is a part. In the next section, I will delve into how Spinoza's notion of power or capability to act and think in the world is relational – that is, determined by forces which are themselves relations.

3. Social Power: The Imitation of the Affects

In Part 3 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza sets out his conception of individual power, or *conatus*. Power is scalar, and can both increase and decrease. More positive affects, more adequate ideas and more self-preservatory desires increase one's power, while affects based on pain, less adequate ideas and less self-preservatory desires decrease individual power. These are the bare bones of the theory, taking for a moment the individual human alone and separate from others, with his or her power determined somehow internally. However, Spinoza does not think that human affects, ideas or desires are created in a vacuum – they are shaped in societies among other individuals to which we closely attend. In the third part of the *Ethics*, from Propositions 27 to 57, Spinoza sets out how individual affects, desires and ideas are shaped by those around us. He begins with a developmental story.

Spinoza notes that individual humans are born among other humans: those who raise us and to whom we look for the most basic cues about what to desire and avoid, what to love and hate, and how to interact with others. While it is hardly revolutionary to note that humans have parents, families, and that they are not indifferent to these other human beings, it sets the stage for Spinoza's psychology and theory of mind. Spinoza writes,

For we find from experience that children, because their bodies are continually, as it were, in a state of equilibrium, laugh or cry simply because they see others laugh or cry. Moreover, whatever they see others do, they immediately desire to imitate it. And finally, they desire for themselves all those things by which they imagine others are pleased. (E3p32s)

As individual humans develop, each shapes his or her goals, affects and ideas in relation to other humans and within a society that shapes that individual in turn. Through the mechanism of joy that increases our power, and our own joy at being esteemed by others, and sadness at being rejected or rebuked by others, our 'selves' are shaped – our actions, our desires, our affects and our ideas about ourselves and the world, in reciprocal relation with other human beings. In Spinoza studies this is referred to as the 'imitation of the affects' (E2p27s, E3p27–57) and is a well-known aspect of Spinoza's psychology (James 1997; Gatens and Lloyd 1999; LeBuffe 2015; Della Rocca 2004; Steinberg 2016). We have the strongest desire

to emulate those we love; however, Spinoza contends that 'We endeavour to do whatever we imagine men [men for whom we have felt no emotion] to regard with pleasure, and on the other hand we shun doing whatever we imagine men to regard with aversion' (E3p31). We seek esteem from others who we perceive to be like us, and shape our actions to conform to what we believe they esteem.

Our relations with others are mediated by our own ideas about them. Our desires, ideas and affects are affected by what we imagine others love, hate, desire and believe. Spinoza holds that if we imagine that someone loves, desires or hates something that we love, desire or hate, this very fact will cause us to love, desire or hate the thing more steadfastly. But, if we imagine he dislikes what we love, or vice versa, then our feelings will fluctuate (E3p27s). Spinoza describes this process as involving 'the imitation of the affects'. He explains how this works in great detail in part 3 of the *Ethics*. I have argued elsewhere that Spinoza's elaboration of this imaginative process (E3p27s, E3p29, E3p31c, E3p32s, E3p33-4) is the foundation of his social theory. What I hope to establish here is the less ambitious thesis that, for Spinoza, our individual human power is relational. As affects, ideas and desires determine individual power, and as individual affects, ideas and desires are shaped by others in society, so we can conclude that individual power is shaped – increased or decreased – by interactions with other individuals. Through his explanation of the imitation of the affects, Spinoza shows us that since human affects, imagination and ideas are shaped socially, so is our power. For Spinoza, each individual human derives their power from coordinating their affects, ideas and desires into a stable and recognisable pattern of motion and rest (E3p17s, E2p13s). This power can increase and decrease. As individual power increases, the individual is able to do more within Nature. Power is the power to think and to act in the world. The sources of this power – emotions, ideas and appetites – are shaped relationally, within and among other human individuals, and in the context of particular environments.⁴

Spinoza's recognition that individual power is shaped socially has been a worry for those in the twentieth century who hoped to bring Spinoza's political philosophy into the Western canon of political thought. For entry, Spinoza had to be seen as a philosopher who did not violate principles of liberal autonomy. In her article 'Spinoza's Ethics and Politics of Freedom', Aurelia Armstrong takes up this worry directly. In order to allow Spinoza's ideas to be taken seriously, commentators like Steven Smith and Douglas Den Uyl had to argue that Spinoza's notion of freedom was not one that was strongly socially embedded in order to avoid his work being understood as 'perfectionist' and 'authoritarian' in the categorisation of Isaiah Berlin. In order to argue that Spinoza does not propose to engineer the social, Armstrong argues, Smith and Den Uyl misrepresent the social nature of Spinoza's conception of individual empowerment, and indeed the essential idea of Spinoza's political works – that the emotions of the citizenry ought to be understood in order to yield political order through affective coordination of the multitude. This places interpreters of Spinoza's political philosophy in a difficult position. Either Spinoza says nothing about the social and is acceptable in contemporary debates about politics, or he is a philosopher of the social, and

therefore of no use to liberal political theory. Those philosophers who have taken this aspect of Spinoza's social philosophy seriously have each had to wrestle with this problem (Wetlesen 1969; Rice 1990; Den Uyl 1985; Balibar 1998; Gatens and Lloyd 1999; d'Allones 1999; Mercon 2007; Armstrong 2009; Sharp 2011; Ravven 2013; Tucker 2013b).

In many ways, this debate within Spinoza studies is a historical relic of pre-behavioural economics and pre-affective neuroscience. Indeed, it is a relic of the Cold War era, when talking about how to coordinate or understand human emotion could only be understood as social engineering, emotional manipulation or even brainwashing. What is interesting about Spinoza is not that he thinks we ought to coerce the public's emotions, but rather that he recognises how powerful emotions are. Not only are emotions powerful, but they are always already shaped within social and political institutions. As such, we have no choice but to take them into consideration when considering these same institutions. Engaging in the work of political philosophy, as Spinoza sees it, requires understanding how emotions are shaped – whether or not we intervene in this process. Any interventions that do not understand the effect on human emotions are liable to harm or to fail. For Spinoza, individual power is indeed reciprocally affected by the power of those around us. How our societies function, what roles they offer individuals and how individuals are recognised affects what kind of power we are able to have (Gatens and Lloyd 1999; Sharp 2007; Gatens 2012; Tucker 2013b). Insofar as there are institutions that repress or limit human power, for Spinoza, we must intervene. If we wish to increase human power, we must change institutions that diminish it and build institutions that enhance it (Sharp 2011; Tucker 2013a; Field 2015).

Spinoza is ambivalent about the way in which affects, ideas and desires are transmitted socially. Bad ideas are as catching as good ones, and he is far from sanguine about the 'best' ideas winning out. Nevertheless, it is clear that those things which yield individual power – affects, ideas and desires – are developed among other humans and are highly susceptible to the influence of the social world. What Spinoza has shown us additionally is that the self, itself, is socially coordinated. For Spinoza, individual humans are complex. The self is that way in which the parts of the complex human body and mind are coordinated. This coordination is a process that happens within societies, within families and within the natural world. As such, one learns how to shape a self in the process of developing one's emotions, desires and ideas about the world situated within a specific cultural, historical, societal moment. Our selves are social. Moreover, how we organise these selves yields our power as individuals. Thus, for Spinoza, our power and our freedom are increased and decreased among others, relationally. Spinoza's account of power is, thus, a relational account. Human power is a function of the affects, ideas and desires which are developed and sustained through social interaction. This means that the power of an individual human is constrained by the affects, ideas and desires of those around that individual. Even Spinoza's free man – an individual with the highest degree of individual power one could have – needs society to survive (E4p37s2, E4p73def, TP2.15). In a

society which denigrates reason or learning, the free man's power may be weakened, thereby weakening the society itself. A society which includes, engages and supports investigation of the natural world empowers its members, with their additional power accruing to the power of the society as a whole. This dimension of Spinoza's work is one that has been a regular theme in an often-overlooked area of Spinoza scholarship (Gatens and Lloyd 1999; Lloyd and Gatens 2000; Gatens 2000; Ravven 2009; Sharp 2007; Gatens 2009; Ravven 2009; Armstrong 2009; Lord 2011; Tucker 2013b; Grosz 2017).

Feminist Spinoza scholars have shown how Spinoza's understanding of individual power as social explains how individual liberation requires reforming social customs, norms, ideas and attitudes, or more specifically, how women's emancipation requires revision of misogynistic norms and practices within communities. Spinoza's theory of the emulation of the affects (ideas and desires) and its effects on the power of individuals has provided the theoretical basis for a critique of theories of freedom as independence or self-sufficiency (Armstrong 2009). For Spinoza, individual freedom can only be achieved socially (E4p37def; Tucker 2015). Feminist theories of relational autonomy emerged out of a similar project to show the way in which freedom can be both constrained and enhanced through relations with others. Whether to call this freedom 'autonomy' is another question, but my aim here has been to show that, for Spinoza, power and freedom are relational.

4. Paradox of Individual (Citizen) and Individual (State) Power

In *Spinoza and Politics*, Etienne Balibar notes what he identifies as a paradox of democracy in Spinoza's work – that is, Spinoza argues for absolute democracy but seems to worry about its power and about the power of those who participate in it. Balibar interprets this as Spinoza worrying about the people, the vulgus, or the multitude (Balibar 1998: 19). However, I think the conflict is something slightly different, and one to which Balibar himself alludes elsewhere (Balibar 1997: 34–5; Balibar 1989: 187).

Spinoza was worried about the power that individuals gain from the state, and about the power of the state itself. While individuals can join their power together, when this power is joined in a state, it can be used against them. For Spinoza, then, it is joining political society that is fraught for the individual, although it is never really a choice. Individuals are already socialised beings who are part of one or more communities. The crucial issue is this: without the state, one is weak. With the state, one is strong, gaining power from the power of those organised together into a state. However, should one differ from those in the state, and find the collective power of the state stacked against one, one's power is again just one's own physical and mental strength, that is, weak.

Against the power of the many we are weak; with the power of the many we are strong. The many, however, can be and probably are often wrong. This is where the worry of Balibar and indeed Spinoza re-emerges – the danger of the multitude. Agreement with them yields power and thus freedom. In moments of disagree-

ment one loses both one's power and, because they are identical, one's freedom at precisely the moment where both matter most. Staying with the collective, even if it disempowers us individually to a certain extent, is always going to be, for Spinoza, better in terms of our overall power. We are always weaker alone, even if our companions are organised fools. Should we make ourselves their enemy, we will learn soon enough that the collective power of fools is strong enough to destroy a single human. Spinoza is quite clear about this: our power alone cannot yield meaningful freedom. We need others – even if they in some sense limit what we are able to be and do – because alone we are weak. Our weakness and dependence on the power of others becomes particularly clear when the power of the state is considered against the individual or for the individual.

Although the challenge of remaining free when part of a state is indeed a challenge, it is not a problem just for Spinoza or his account of power. It is not a weakness in his argument, but a genuine problem with human social and political life. Spinoza's theory tracks a real problem. Instead of magically giving individual humans power against the multitude of which they are a part, Spinoza recognises and theorises how individual power is developed from the social. This is not a weakness or incomplete moment in Spinoza's thought. Rather, it is what makes it a useful theory of power and freedom, as it tracks real places where individuals struggle to gain freedom and power through negotiation with others in the social and political world in which they find themselves. The multitude, in Spinoza, is neither good nor bad necessarily. The power of those around us can either empower us or diminish our power (TP2.13–15, TP3.2, E4p18s). Depending on how our state is organised, and our place within it, other humans can either help us to flourish or if we find ourselves in conflict with the state, those around us may diminish our power (Balibar 1997; Den Uyl 1983). However, without other humans, alone we have very little power (E4app32, TTP16). So even in a diminished form, we are more powerful among other humans than we are alone (TTP4, TTP20, E4p18s, E4p73, E4app9, E4p37s, and in *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (TIE) 14–15). There is no outside to the social – one can escape of course, but not with one's power (freedom) intact. It is almost perverse, at the moment that one is most weak, to call an individual free. Hobbes allowed that there was one moment where resistance to the state is possible, that is, when the state condemned one to jail or death, which may have been nearly synonymous in Hobbes' time (Hobbes 1994: XXI). At this moment one becomes, in Hobbes' view, free from the obligation to the state. This freedom of the state of nature, for Hobbes, is not what we might value as freedom. On a Spinozian view, to call this individual liberated is absurd. Without power, one cannot be free.

Through identifying power and freedom Spinoza shows us a rather stranger aspect of freedom, that through negotiation with those around us we gain our freedom and power at the same time. This moment, where the individual and the state clash is often theorised as a conflict between state power and individual freedom. For Spinoza, it is always a conflict of individual power and state power, and, at the same time, of individual freedom and state freedom – since, for Spinoza, freedom and power are one in the same.

5. Power, Freedom and Collective Liberation

Human beings might have been constructed such that we were utterly indifferent to the emotions, ideas and desires of others.⁵ We might have had a stock of true ideas about the world that meant we did not need embodied experience of the world to flourish. We might have been able to ignore entirely the scolding look of a parent, and the conceptions of the world taught to us in school. We might have been immune to the desire-shaping effects of advertising or peer pressure. This, however, is not the case. We are wired such that we are able to recognise – and indeed often unable to ignore – what we perceive to be the emotions and judgments of other individual humans. We are social beings with constitutively social selves (Barclay 2000: 61–5). Our experiences of the world are shaped by our ideas, emotions and desires, which are in turn shaped by our perceptions of the emotions, desires and ideas of others. We are shaped in ways that are difficult, later, either to recognise or to change. The emotions, ideas and desires of other humans, or at least our interpretations of them, shape who we are, affecting our power and, thus, for Spinoza, our freedom.

I have argued above that Spinoza defines freedom in terms of power. If I have been successful, then we can understand Spinoza's theory of power to be his theory of freedom. Power plays the functional role of freedom – explaining what we are able to do and be. For Spinoza, the power of individuals within a group is mediated by the affects, ideas and desires of that group. If freedom and power are coextensive, then we can conclude that, for Spinoza, the freedom of an individual is ineluctably related to the power of the community of which that individual is a part. Further, we can begin to see the practical dimension of Spinoza's theory of freedom or power – once we know how our freedom is impacted by and impacts the freedom of others, we may revise our strategies for liberation.

Spinoza recognised that our freedom was intertwined with that of others – this intertwining could be empowering or enervating, depending on the degree of freedom of the individuals around us. The final moment in Spinoza's blueprint for individual freedom, power and perfection is not in the *Ethics*, but in the political works. In the *Theological-Political Treatise* and in the *Political Treatise*, Spinoza argues that democracy is both the best, freest and most powerful form of state – the only context in which we could hope for individual empowerment, that is, freedom (TTP5, TTP16, TP7.2, TP11.1). Thus, for Spinoza, the path to individual freedom is through the social and political.

Notes

1. I believe there is also evidence for categorising Spinoza's view as strongly substantive; however, arguing for that would require a different sort of investigation into how specific preferences or goals can diminish the power of an individual and thus be contrary to autonomy however chosen by the individual. Such an argument is compatible with the present account, but outside the scope of the current argument. I am overall in agreement with Keith Green's proposal in this volume.
2. I'm hedging here on two accounts: strictly speaking, Spinoza distinguishes between

conscious and unconscious affects, which some have called a distinction between affects and emotions. This follows a distinction Spinoza makes in Part 3. Further, in the evolving literature in the philosophy and cognitive science of emotion there are competing definitions of emotion. For clarity, I've omitted a discussion of these issues here.

3. There is a much more detailed and technical discussion one could have about the notion of adequacy of ideas in Spinoza, but I hope, for the present, this brief discussion will stand.
4. One might wonder how it is possible for individual humans to increase their power, since this power derives from God. Is it possible to have a greater share of God's or Nature's power? Does one become a greater part of God or Nature? This seems to be entailed, and indeed seems not to be a problem unless we consider God or Nature to be finite. More discussion of this would be useful, but might take us further from the focus of the present chapter.
5. There are those who are able to inure themselves to the emotions of others – at least in part. I refer the reader to a Spinozist account of psychopathologies in Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd's (1999) *Collective Imaginings*.

Works Cited

- Armstrong, Aurelia (2009), 'Autonomy and the Relational Individual: Spinoza and Feminism', in Moira Gatens (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Benedict Spinoza*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Armstrong, Aurelia (2017), 'Spinoza's Ethics and Politics of Freedom: Active and Passive Power', in Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis (eds), *Spinoza's Authority: Resistance and Power*, London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Balibar, Etienne (1989), 'Jus-pactum-Lex', *Studia Spinozana: An International and Interdisciplinary Series*, 1: 105.
- Balibar, Etienne (1997), 'Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality', *Mededelingen vanwege het Spinozahuis*, Delft: Eburon.
- Balibar, Etienne (1998), *Spinoza and Politics*, London and New York: Verso.
- Barclay, Linda (2000), 'Autonomy and the Social Self', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Benhabib, Seyla (1992), *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, New York: Routledge.
- Christman, John (2004), 'Relational Autonomy, Liberal Individualism, and the Social Constitution of Selves', *Philosophical Studies*, 117(1–2): 143–64.
- d'Allones, M. (1999), 'Affect of the Body and Socialization', in Y. Yovel (ed.), *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, New York: Little Room Press.
- Della Rocca, Michael (2004), 'Egoism and the Imitation of Affects in Spinoza', in Yirmiahu Yovel (ed.), *Spinoza on Reason and the Free Man*, New York: Little Room Press.
- Den Uyl, Douglas (1983), *Power, State, and Freedom: An Interpretation of Spinoza's Political Philosophy*, Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Den Uyl, Douglas (1985), 'Sociality and Social Contract: A Spinozistic Perspective', *Studia Spinozana*, Vol. 1: Spinoza's Philosophy of Society. Alling: Walther & Walther Verlag.
- Field, Sandra (2015), 'The State: Spinoza's Institutional Turn', in Andre Santos Campos (ed.), *Spinoza: Basic Concepts*, New York: Imprint Academic, pp. 142–54.

- Gatens, Moira (2000), 'Feminism as Password: Rethinking the Possible with Spinoza and Deleuze', *Hypatia*, 15(2): 59–75.
- Gatens, Moira (2009), *Feminist Interpretations of Benedict Spinoza*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Gatens, Moira (2012), 'Compelling Fictions: Spinoza and George Eliot on Imagination and Belief: Compelling Fictions', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 20(1): 74–90.
- Gatens, Moira and Lloyd, Genevieve (1999), *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*, New York: Routledge.
- Grosz, Elizabeth A. (2017), *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- James, Susan (1997), *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press.
- Hobbes, Thomas (1994), *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Kisner, Matthew J. (2011), *Spinoza on Human Freedom: Reason, Autonomy and the Good Life*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- LeBuffe, Michael (2015), 'Spinoza's Psychological Theory', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/spinoza-psychological/>> (last accessed 7 December 2018).
- Lloyd, Genevieve and M. Gatens (2000), 'The Power of Spinoza: Feminist Conjunctions: Susan James Interviews', *Hypatia*, 15(2): 40–58.
- Lord, Beth (2011), "'Disempowered by Nature": Spinoza on the Political Capabilities of Women', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 19(6): 1085–1106.
- Mackenzie, Catriona and Natalie Stoljar (eds) (2000), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mercon, J. (2007), 'Individuality and Relationality in Spinoza', *Revista Conatus*, 1(2), December.
- Oshana, Marina A. L. (1994), 'Autonomy Naturalized', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 19(1): 76–94.
- Oshana, Marina A. L. (2006), *Personal Autonomy in Society*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Ravven, Heidi (2009), 'What Spinoza Can Teach Us about Embodying and Naturalizing Ethics', in M. Gatens (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Benedict Spinoza*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Ravven, Heidi M. (2013), *The Self beyond Itself: An Alternative History of Ethics, the New Brain Sciences, and the Myth of Free Will*, New York: New Press.
- Rice, Lee (1990), 'Individual and Community in Spinoza's Social Psychology', in Edwin Curley and Pierre-Francois Moreau (eds), *Spinoza. Issues and Directions. Proceedings of the Chicago Spinoza Conference*, Leiden: Brill.
- Sharp Hasana (2007), 'The Force of Ideas in Spinoza', *Political Theory*, 35(6): 732–55.
- Sharp, Hasana (2011), *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Steinberg, Justin (2016), 'Affect, Desire, and Judgement in Spinoza's Account of Motivation', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 24(1): 67–87.
- Stoljar, Natalie (2015), 'Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy', *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/feminism-autonomy/>> (last accessed 9 November 2018).
- Tucker, Ericka (2013a), 'The Affective Disorders of the State', Special Issue: Crimes against Humanity and Cosmopolitanism, *Journal of East-West Thought*, 3(2): 97–120.

- Tucker, Ericka (2013b), 'Spinoza's Hobbesian Naturalism and its Promise for a Feminist Theory of Power', *Revista Conatus*, 7(13): 11–22.
- Tucker, Ericka (2015), 'Spinoza's Social Sage: Emotion and the Power of Reason in Spinoza's Social Theory', *Revista Conatus*, 9(17): 23–41.
- Westlund, Andrea C. (2009), 'Rethinking Relational Autonomy', *Hypatia*, 24(4): 26–49.
- Wetlesen, Jon (1969), 'Basic Concepts in Spinoza's Social Psychology', *Inquiry*, 12: 105–32.