

AFFECT AND THE MOVING BODY

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at exploring the interconnectedness of Spinoza's concepts of the body, movement and affect as they relate to his ontology of freedom. By extracting his structure of thought through the reading of his seminal work *Ethics*, we will attempt to answer the question: *what causes the body to undergo different states of motion and rest?*

Spinoza rejects the dualist view of the mind being the motor of the body's actions, so what is the motor of this action known as movement? A body's impulse to move can be either internal or external to itself. In this paper we will attempt to show that what causes the body to move is a desire to express an internalized affect and by doing this reaching towards a state of true freedom. Therefore the physical -motion and rest- and the affective -affect- are two aspects of a single entity which is the moving body.

INTRODUCTION

It was with the reading of Spinoza's *Ethics* that the first ideas on the body which inform this paper began to emerge. His ontology of the *body* as related to notions of *affect* and *movement* has an underlying structure that can be analyzed and reformulated to help answer the question; *what drives human movement?* In attempting to formulate a response to this question there will necessarily be some appropriation of Spinoza's terms and concepts. However it is his structure of thought that will ultimately be the basis to show that when dealing with the action of motion and rest of the body, i.e. movement, this action can only be free when the movement in itself has no other purpose than that of being expressive of one's internal self-caused affect. To support the point of departure for the thesis we will first make a sketch of Spinoza's concept and structures of thought on the body, movement and affect.

1.1 Spinoza's Mind-Body Problem

In the ontology put forth in his seminal work *Ethics* Spinoza rejects and argues against a number of established dualisms; most notably the mind- body dichotomy and the dialectic between nature and culture, both of which are still avid topics for debate today not only in philosophy but in a number of other interrelated disciplines. Some philosophers believe the two to be separate, dual, entities and others adopt a more holistic or *monist* position. The relationship of the mind to the physical body is central to Spinoza's thinking and one that separates him substantially from Descartes.

Descartes holds the dual view in which the mind and the physical body are considered to be two distinct substances that can have nothing in common. For him substances are fundamentally different things each having its own defining attribute; in the case of the mind the defining attribute is thought, and in the case of the body the defining attribute is spatial extension. This dualist view, also held by Plato and Aristotle, although for different reasons, maintained that the mind is non-physical and thus its faculties cannot be explained in terms of the physical body. Those who believe in this mind-body dichotomy see the mental and the physical as having completely different, almost opposing and irreconcilable properties, where the mind is dominant and in control of the body.



Descartes' illustration of mind-body dualism

Contradicting the dualist view is the monist conception, where it is believed that there exist no fundamental divisions between the mind and the body- that they are both part of one unity. Spinoza was one of the first philosophers to develop the idea of the mind and the body being part of one reality; one single substance that simply exists, lacking the distinction made by Descartes between the creator and the created. Deepening his radical viewpoint, for Spinoza the mind is not a spiritual God-given thing but rather something generated from nature and as naturally derived as the body. This view, with its atheist implications, was particularly radical considering the time and circumstances in which Spinoza lived. For him the mind and the body are two attributes of one same reality which can be seen from different viewpoints but are ontologically the same thing. In his words, "*the mind and the body are one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension*".¹ Thus neither the body nor the mind prevail over the other, neither one is dependent or dominant over the other. The body cannot command the mind to think and the mind cannot make the body be in motion or rest.

*"The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body."*²

From this proposition we can see that for Spinoza the mind is the idea of the body and as such inevitably united to the body. Thought and extension, mind and body are conceived of as one and the same thing. Thus anything that occurs in the mind has its bodily counterpart. Furthermore, the more complex the mechanisms of the body, the more complex the mechanisms of thought in the mind. However for Spinoza we do not have a distinct idea of how the mind works, or what its essence is, and neither do we have a clear idea of what the mechanisms of the body are. Most importantly we do not know what moves the body.

1.2 Spinoza on the Body

For Spinoza the body is a mode which is determined not by its substance but by degrees of motion and rest; "*All bodies either move or are at rest*".³ Indeed what distinguishes one body from another, what individuates a body, is its mechanic properties of motion and rest, speed and slowness. In this sense, a body consists of an intensity of motion, in other words, a transition from one state of motion to another, or variation of motion/rest states.⁴

According to Spinoza by receiving external stimuli from the world we become, through a reflective experience, aware of our body. But while we are aware of its existence, we do not have full knowledge of the body's capacity or its internal mechanisms. We have seen how for Descartes and the dualists it is the mind, with its supremacy over the body, which controls the body and gives it impulses to act. For Spinoza however, we cannot explain the functions of the body through the attribute of thought and we do not know what gives it its impulse. The external stimuli that act on the body are random and confused, creating only unclear -in his words, inadequate- ideas of reality.

To fully understand Spinoza's conception of the body, one must take a look at the role the body plays in his theory of knowledge. Spinoza distinguished three kinds of knowledge of which the body may be capable. The first, *opinion or imagination*, provides only inadequate ideas and cannot be relied upon as a source of truth. It is derived either from vague sensory experience or from the signification of words and images in the memory or imagination. Everything that happens in the mind leaves traces in the body that allow us to recreate the same images through memory. As we will discuss shortly, this ties in with the notion of perception. The second, *reason*, does provide us with truth. It begins with simple adequate ideas and proceeds toward awareness of their more general causes. But it is the third, *intuition*, which is the highest form of knowledge, and the ultimate guarantor of truth and great source of adequate ideas. In intuitive knowledge the mind deduces the structure of reality from the very essence or idea of god.⁵

The first kind of knowledge, imagination, is tied to the idea of perception. However, for Spinoza imagination is not only a perceptual ability which allows something that is absent to be present, but more importantly, it includes the concept of memory through the notion of connection or association. With association the perception of one thing triggers the perception of another thing in a random, non-logical way. It is a form of imagination but shaped by memory. Memory being “*the certain connection of ideas involving the nature of things which are outside the human body*”⁶, and this connection, which is in the mind, is the “*connection of the*

affections of the human body."⁷ By *connection* he is referring to the notion of association, which allows the mind to go from one thought to the next,⁸ and *affections of the human body* are external stimuli that act on a body allowing it to perceive only a subjective view of reality.

For Spinoza, knowledge and ideas engendered by the imagination are inadequate, as they provide a perception of reality not based on reason but on one's subjective viewpoint. This kind of knowledge tells us more about ourselves than about the object of our observation. He illustrates this with the example of a soldier and a farmer observing the traces of a horse. The two will recall different thoughts based on their own subjective view; for the soldier these will bring images of other soldiers and of war, for the farmer they will remind him of a plow and of a farm field⁹. Therefore for Spinoza sense perception cannot be trusted. Subjective properties cannot be trusted. Only mathematical and physical properties - those based on reason- can be a trusted source of knowledge. In other words, our perception of something involves attributing it existence, but it does not give us any knowledge of its true nature.



As we have seen sense perception has its origin in the action of an external body upon one or another of the sensory organs of one's own body. In order to explain how this act of representation yields perception of an external body, Spinoza appeals to the fact that the changed state of one's body is a function both of the nature of one's body and the nature of the external body that caused that state. Because of this, the mind's representation of that state will express something more than the nature of one's own body. It will express through perception the nature of the external body as well. "¹⁰ *The idea of any mode in which the human body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human body and at the same time the nature of the external body.*"¹¹ Perceptions are affections, and our perceptual experiences depend on stimuli which arrive at our various sensory organs from the external world causing changes in our mental and physical states, ultimately causing us to feel a sensation, an emotion- an affect.

1.3 Spinoza on Affect

Through his concept of affect one can again intuit Spinoza's mind-body theory. Although often equated with the emotions, the concept of affect in Spinoza is much more encompassing, including both the mind and the body and referring to the notions of *drive* and *desire*. Affect is at once emotion -of the mind- and sensation -of the body¹². In book III he distinguishes between two possible types of affect; *passions* which are passive emotions caused by agents external to the body, and *actions* which are self-caused and in this sense, active. However, in either case affect pertains to an *affection* that modifies both the body and the mind.¹³

He defines affect as "*affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.*"¹⁴ In this definition we see how affect is referring to a state of the physical body, not only the mind with which emotions are usually associated. Indeed affect starts with the body, and since in Spinoza the body and the mind are one and the same thing, affect is both of the mind and the body. We can also see this from the following proposition: "*the mind is troubled by some affect, the body is at the same time affected with an affection by which its powers of acting is increased or diminished.*"¹⁵

In the above definition of affect one must make a distinction between affect and affection. If affect is the affection of a body, then affection is the state of a body insofar as it is subject to being affected by another body; by the action of another body. In other words, affection implies the mixture of two bodies; one body acting on the other, affecting it, and the other being acted on by the first, being affected by it. Affecting and being affected; active and passive. However, affect does not depend on the affection, it is enveloped by it. In other words, within affection there is an affect.¹⁶

Another term which is important to note in the above definition is *power of acting*. What does he really mean by this? In the first place, by power he is not referring to the power that one can inflict over others, rather to one's own internal power to act; power of one's own being. By increasing or diminishing this power the body undergoes changes in state; a change which implies a passage or transition from one state to the next. He defined the body in terms of

relations of movement and rest¹⁷, not referring to actual extensive movement but to the body's capacity or power to enter into relations of movement and rest. This power, or potential, is what allows us to affect or be affected. Thus defined, affect pertains to a dynamic state, intimately tied to our own capacity for action. Again, if this power for potential action is internal, regarding our being, then the sensation and emotion associated with it are internally motivated. In this sense affect is determined as the continuous variation of a body's power of acting.¹⁸ Spinoza takes the power of the body as a model to explain the affects of the mind.

*"The human body can be affected in many ways in which its power of acting is increased or diminished, and also in others which render its power of acting neither greater nor less"*¹⁹

Spinoza's first definition of affect includes *"the idea of these affections"*. However, we would like to make a distinction between affect and idea. If we look at the affect of love for instance, there is an idea of the loved thing and this idea has a representation -the image of the loved object- but love itself, as a mode of thought, does not represent anything and is not represented by anything. Therefore it is the *idea* of an affect which is representational. Affect is associated with an idea, and that idea has a representation external to the body, but the affect itself does not have a representation and is not necessarily external to the body undergoing that affection.²⁰ Affect in itself is not an idea; it remains within the abstract un-representational realm of pure sensation and emotion.

We have seen that affects are defined and differentiated according to their power of affection. In the Ethics Spinoza condenses all possible affects into three fundamental ones; joy, sadness and desire, and ties these to the notion of power. Hence he defines joy as an increase in the power of acting and sadness as a diminution or destruction of the power of acting. This is equivalent to stating that anything can be defined by its power of being affected and by the potential to express this power through action. In our specific case, when referring to power of acting we will specifically be looking at the body's capacity for movement.

AFFECT AND THE MOVING BODY

Following the visited notions of the body, movement and affect according to Spinoza, the aim here is to explore the notion of *the moving body* by taking a closer look at the particular action of human movement and exploring its interconnectedness with the concepts of affect and freedom. In going to such a specific realm of action and body, in a sense deviating from Spinozistic notions, there will necessarily be certain appropriations of his concepts. However it is his structure of thinking that will inform and drive the thesis.

Thus it becomes necessary to treat Spinoza's structure of thought visited above, almost as if it were a Deleuzian *abstract machine*, and allow ourselves to have his concepts migrate to new contents, albeit initially unformed. "*The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality.*"²¹ It is the diagram of relationships between Spinozistic notions of affect, the body and movement that will allow us to construct a new type of reality; a new set of relations that can help us answer the question: *what drives movement of the body?* What is it that drives the human body towards shaping its form in particular yet varying ways at particular moments in time? In order to begin elaborating a possible answer, we first need to take a closer look at movement itself.

2.1 Movement and Affect

In Aristotelian physics, a body in motion needs an external force to keep it in motion. Today we know that this is not the case, but it was Galileo and Descartes who first reversed this principal, stating that a body remains in motion until it is stopped by another body. So no body has internal power of movement or rest- it can only get this power externally and it is stopped only from an external intervention. "*(...) a body in motion moves until it is determined by another body to rest; and that a body at rest also retains at rest until determined to motion by another.*"²² This is the basic principal of classical mechanics known today as inertia and is also the basis of Spinoza's physics. However, in Physics, classical mechanics essentially deals with inert bodies; those conceived under the attribute of extension but lacking the attribute of thought and

reason and more importantly, lacking the capacity to affect and be affected. In this paper we would like to look at the notion of movement of a body if such a body is not an inert one but instead one that is able to undergo affect and reason, namely the human body. When the affects come into play we must question the above notion of movement as it cannot be accounted for by cause of external bodies alone.

We have seen how for Spinoza affect has a physical component as well as a conceptual one. Movement, which is the action that defines the body, is also not limited to purely physical mechanistic principals, which pertains to the Cartesian conception; instead Spinoza recognizes the greater structural complexity of the body and conceives of it beyond the purely mechanistic form of motion. Indeed, the notions of motion-and-rest²³ and affect are linked through the Spinozistic conception of the body and its power to act, or its degree of potential. By referring to motion-and-rest as one concept, Spinoza is dealing with the idea of transition, implying a change in state of the body- a passage or transition from one state to another. In this respect the body is synonymous with its transitions and its transitions are linked to its potential- to its *power of acting*. Each transition is accompanied by a variation in capacity, a change in the power to affect and be affected.²⁴ Thus, the notion of affect is related to that of motion through the idea of a body and its capacity.

Analogous to the Spinozistic mind-body unity is that of the body-affect unity; if by body we mean the human body and by affect we mean the capacity, potential or power, a body has to create a change in the emotional, affective realm. Since the body is one with its movements, then affect and movement are also linked. Movement has a physical component and a mental/emotional counterpart, both linked by the concept of *affect*. Gilles Deleuze, who considered himself a Spinozist, and indeed leaned heavily on Spinoza's philosophy, put it very clearly in the following quote:

"A body is not defined by the form that determines it nor as a determinate substance of subject ... a body is defined only by (...) the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (...); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (...). Nothing but affects and local movements."²⁵

We have seen that for Spinoza the more complex the mechanisms of a body, the more complex are those of the mind. Thus, continuing the parallel with the mind-body conception, the more complex the movement of a body the more complex the affects that the body is trying to portray. We can see a clear example of this if we observe a modern dance performance. Movement is the substance of dance and modern dance, which is mostly free of the frills and representational quality of classical ballet, strives largely at expressing affective states through movement. Within the discipline, movement in-itself can be defined as a medium for the transference of an emotion/sensation- affect - from the consciousness of one body to that of another. One body is *affecting* another body which is being *affected* by it.



Pina Bausch in
Café Müller

But what can we say about what drives the first body to move in such a way that it has the capacity to affect another body? If it is not receiving external impulse to act, where is it getting this impulse from? If the body that is being affected is passive, then the body that is affecting is active; its affect corresponds to *action*, not *passion*, and as we have seen this type of affect is self-caused. Internally caused affect includes an internally motivated drive and *desire* to affect an external body. Where does the power of this desire come from, where are its roots? As we shall discuss briefly, this desire is intimately tied to the notion of freedom.

2.2 Movement, Affect and Freedom

For Spinoza the necessity for action can come only in two possible ways; either from something within one's own nature, or from something outside of oneself. His notion of freedom emerges from this difference. "*That thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone*"²⁶ Any action brought about from something outside of one's nature is a constrained action and therefore cannot be free. So it is only when one's own nature necessitates an action that one can truly be free. In other words, a body is free when its action is not produced by external causes, but rather self-caused; when it is active not passive. Freedom is the state in which the mind- body is the adequate cause of its actions. He illustrates the lack of freedom with the example of the thrown stone: its movement is not due to the necessity of its own nature, but due to the impulse of the thrower.

The above definition has interesting implications in the light of Spinoza's conception of the affects which we have visited earlier. As we have seen affects can be either passive or active. Passive affects, or passions, are caused by an external body and applying Spinoza's definition of freedom, a body affected by such affects cannot be free. Conversely active affects, or actions which are self-caused, are free. Passions have a negative connotation, they are static, and refer to a state of bondage and dependence to an external body, and as such are finite; whereas active affects are dynamic, unbound and correspond to a state of freedom.

By exploring the Spinozistic notion of freedom, we see that there is an important difference between *acting* as a dynamic active action, or being *acted on* which is a passive action and related more closely to the idea of functioning than to that of acting. Thus to act is to be an active agent, not just a transmitter of causality; the cause of this action can always be traced back to one's own being.²⁷ There is a correlation between affect and action. The actions brought about by an affected body will necessarily be different from those of the affecting body. And when the action in question is movement, then in turn the movement associated with a passive affect will be different from that related to an active affect; the first will be bound by the causality of the external body while the latter movement will be self-caused and free.

2.3 Movement and Utility

Some actions have a utilitarian purpose, others do not. If we understand actions of the body as being either useful or non-useful in the utilitarian sense of the word, meaning they are useless to our vital, everyday functioning, one could correlate that there are movements of the body which have the purpose of fulfilling a utilitarian goal, and others which lack this goal. The actions of animals for instance always appear to have a vital purpose. Birds build intricate nests, bees create hives, ants carve out elaborate underworlds of tunnels and interlocking spaces; they all do it with a very specific vital purpose; protective nests ensure the survival of their offspring, they engineer the most efficient geometrical shape to maximize surface for the production of honey, they create elaborate abodes to attract the opposite sex for mating- there is an *end*. But there are animals, less efficient than ants and bees, which do spend a lot of their time performing actions which at first glance may not appear to be vitally necessary; young mountain goats leap and twist in the air, wolves chase each other through the snow, cranes

leap gracefully together into the air ... , all actions which seem more like play than activities aimed at finding food, growing or reproducing. However most scientists believe that when animals play, they are practicing skills they will need later in life to survive in nature, so experts believe that these actions, movements, for animals are as essential for their survival as food or sleep.

In this respect, human beings are singular animals. If we imagine acting only in those circumstances where the preservation of our existence where at risk, then we can see that the majority of actions which we undertake on a daily basis fulfill a different purpose- one that goes beyond mere preservation of our existence. Or even less drastically, there are a lot of actions we perform that are not useful in the utilitarian sense of the word. They might have a goal, but not a use. Actions linked to artistic disciplines or the pursuit of science and knowledge would fall under this category. They are not utilitarian in the sense that they do not provide the basic sustenance that keeps the machine of the body alive; they lack that vital necessity. These are actions not brought about by a need to respond to an external stimulus, they are not dependent on anything external to the body, they are self-caused and internal.

Naturally, this opens up the debate on the usefulness-or necessity- of the arts and sciences. One could argue that these are of vital importance to man, and that without them we would not have achieved the intellectual and technological advances we have, and that we would not have our current dominant role in the animal kingdom. While this is true, this advancement has gone hand in hand with our particularity as animals; with our curiosity and quest for the unknown. In a Spinozistic analogy, our constant search for complexity is directly proportional to the complexity of our bodies. We advance because we are more complex, and this complexity -reflected both in the body and the mind- enables us to undergo a variety of useless actions. So what motivates this curiosity, this search for the unknown complexities of our reality? What is it that has the capacity to compel someone to dedicate their lives to something that is not vitally useful; to perform actions on a daily basis that do not directly contribute to our vital existence? Since these actions are not caused by an external need then they are necessarily commanded by an internal one- an internal *impulse*. It has been our internal curiosity and avid quest for knowledge and self expression that have brought us to create a

need for disciplines and endeavors that are not strictly speaking useful. But what is this internal impulse?

This general formulation of action can be applied to the specific case of action as movement. As we have seen, for Spinoza the body is defined and differentiated from others by its proportion of movement and rest. Most movements that we perform may not necessarily respond to a vital need for existence, but they respond to external stimuli or signals that call the body to perform this or that particular movement. In this sense they are 'useful' movements, brought about by a necessity external to one's own body. So what about movements that are not strictly speaking 'useful'?

Again, taking the example of the discipline of dance, one could argue that it is not 'useful' movement. As Paul Valery put it in *The Philosophy of the Dance* movement in dance is an action of the whole body which is not anything like the kind of movement needed to fulfill vital everyday existence. Useful acts are determined by an external need; one that is outside the nature of one's body. If the act in question is movement, useful movements in a Spinozistic sense are not free since they come from a need which is external to the body. On the other hand, free acts are not initiated from an external cause and in a Spinozistic sense they are free. Our useful acts are finite and bound to their cause; non-useful acts are infinite and free. In describing dance movement Valery wonders at the "*mystery of a body which suddenly, as though by the effect of an internal shock, enters into a kind of life that is at once strangely unstable and strangely regulated.*"²⁸ What this paper is trying to explore is this *internal shock* which moves the body.

However we do not need to be dancers to understand this notion of internally motivated movement. Our body undergoes instinctive, automatic movements on a daily basis, and these movements correspond to our internal state of *being*. For instance, the thinker who strokes his chin or the nervous person who taps his feet; these actions are instinctive and initiated by internal, although not necessarily conscious, motives. Thus we have seen that the body is not moved by purely mechanistic principals; there is something internal which is the motor of these 'useless' movements. And this internal motor is none other than what we described earlier as abstract sensation and emotion, namely our interpretation of the Spinozistic notion of *affect*. In other words, movements which do not have a purpose- those

that are not caused by an external body -have an internal emotional drive; a kind of internalized abstract affect which instigates the body to move and express its apparent freedom.

Movements generated by internal stimuli tend to express the state of *being* of the body (as we have seen with automatic unconscious movements) or a feeling- an affect. Therefore the free body becomes expressive of the affect that initiated its action. In art this type of communication has often been called *expressionistic*. And in dance, *expressionistic* was the label given to a particular kind of movement developed largely by the German theorist Rudolf Von Laban and his disciple Mary Wigman; a kind of dancing which expressed through movement the dancer's internal emotion. This implies a close relationship between the movement and personal experience. Therefore the dance education imparted by Laban was founded on the idea of training students to find their own type of movement, not to fit into any particular dance mold. He believed that different dancers had particular body types and different styles of movement based on their personal mental and psychological characteristics. For Laban, founder of expressionistic movement, as for Spinoza the physical and mental were two attributes of a single encompassing reality.



Mary Wigman

It is interesting that in one of his major writings about Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze chose the concept of *expression* as the underlying notion in his reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*. Although the concept of expression is not explicit in Spinoza's text, Deleuze's interpretation suggests that it can be seen as a reformulation of the term and that in this sense the *Ethics* is a "*doubly expressive book*."²⁹ Deleuze's book explores this notion starting with Spinoza's triad of substance, attribute and essence and distinguishes the three terms in the light of expression: *substance* is that which expresses itself, *attribute* is that which expresses, and *essence* is that which is expressed.³⁰

Expressionism in art usually denotes an attempt to depict reality through a particular subjective lens, yielding a highly personal and emotive depiction of reality often achieved through the use of distortion and exaggeration for heightened effect. It seems almost ludicrous to associate Spinoza with such a term; he who disapproved of any type of knowledge that was not objective and based on reason, and was distrusting of any knowledge extracted from a

personal perception of reality. However, if by expression we understand a kind of transition that takes us from power to action, then we see that indeed this notion is latent in Spinoza's *Ethics*.

The body affected by an internally caused affect, moves in a way that expresses this affect, and consequently produces an effect, a reaction, in an external body observing the transmission of emotion. This second body is thus affected by the first externally, and as such is not free. The freedom of one body is the cause of termination of freedom in the other. But are either of these bodies truly free? Can movement really be free?

As put forth in this paper, if what allows movement to be free is an internal impulse to express a self-caused affect, then the question could be reformulated: can the self-caused affect which instigates a body for move freely really be purely self-caused? Is there such a thing as an *active affect*? Some might argue that one could always trace affect back to an external body. For instance, if I am nervous and tap my feet, this nervousness is referring to my own being, and the action I perform, movement of tapping my feet, is an expression of this state. So is this a truly free movement?

If one looks at the original cause of the nervousness one might find that it was actually external to the body. For instance I could be nervous because I have an exam- an external cause acting on my body and making me affected in this particular way. Even in the case of dance one could make a similar deduction. One finds the impulse for movement within one's own body, but the need to find that impulse might come from an external body- for instance the audience is waiting for a performance or the choreographer requires this or that movement to convey a story or atmosphere. Thus the origin of a self-caused affect could seemingly be traced back to an external body, breaking down its possibility for true freedom in its Spinozistic sense.

However one could argue that freedom is more of a dynamic rather than a static state of the body. It is more complex than just existing or not existing -there can be degrees of freedom. An action which is self-caused has the appearance of being free; but if its cause can be traced directly back to an external body it is just one level freer than a body moved by an external cause. A body is freer, or less bound, the further away the external cause is from the action in question.

MIGRATING MODELS OF THOUGHT

3.1 Appropriation of Spinoza's Concepts

From the beginning of the paper, we have sketched out certain notions extracted from readings of Spinoza's *Ethics* which instigated a tangent exploration into the conception of the moving body and its relation to affect and freedom. We have been inspired by Spinoza's structure of thought, and to a degree have needed to appropriate his notions in order to build arguments in favor of our thesis. In having a model of thought migrate from one structure to another, we have inevitably made some elastic assumptions and conclusions that are not strictly speaking *Spinozistic*.

Spinoza's concept of the body, its actions and its affects is encompassing and broad. We have extracted the notion of affect as sensation and emotion of the mind-body and stretched it in order to fit an interconnected understanding of affect, the body, its movements and freedom. In attempting to unite these notions we have made certain particularizations. The body is the human body, its actions are variations of motion and rest, and affect associated with a free body is an internal sensation caused by the body and felt physically as a sensation and conceptually as an emotion. Equating the Spinozistic notion of the body with the human body, and applying his definition of *motion and rest* to the human body, has allowed us to explore the notion of movement as related to affect and interrelate it with his ontology of freedom. Movement became thus a particular kind of Spinozistic *action*.

3.2 Affected Movement

With these particularized and appropriated concepts we have made the following deductions. The body can undergo affect; passive if it is externally caused, active if it is self-caused. Accordingly, the body is either passive or active. If the body is synonymous of its variation of motion and rest, i.e. movement, then this movement will be different depending on the kind of affect that the body is undergoing. A body affected by passive affect moves according to laws external to itself, thus it is not free. A body affected by an active affect moves according to laws internal to itself, and thus is free. What kind of movement is this? That caused

by passive affects is useful movement, that which has a purpose, and in its extreme case, is vital to our existence. Movement caused by active affects is useless movement. It is that which does not fulfill any vital or useful purpose in life. Instead it expresses the being of the body; it expresses the active affect and corresponds to creative endeavors and pursuits for knowledge.

Thus movement becomes expressive of the affect which is the very cause of the body's movement. If we adopt Spinoza's notion of freedom, this expressionistic *useless* movement is the only movement which is truly free.

To build a thesis around particularized and thus appropriated concepts might seem problematic to some, and a close scrutiny of the assumptions made could cause a debate on their legitimacy. There is a definite awareness of the loose-fit use made of some of Spinoza's concepts. But it was the reading of Spinoza's complex ontology that incited the posing of these questions in the first place, recognizing that human movement and affect are indispensable part of our being. In addition, it would be hard to deny that in developing his concepts Spinoza himself – as did many others before and after him- deviated from appropriated concepts developed by other philosophers, and made them his by placing them on the lens of his particular point of view.

NOTES

¹ Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*. III.P2 Schol.

² Ibid., II.P13

³ Ibid., IIA'1

⁴ Ibid., IIL1

⁵ Ibid., II P40 Schol. 2

⁶ Ibid., IIP18. Schol.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., II P41

⁹ Ibid., II P18

¹⁰ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/s/spinoza.htm#SH4b>

¹¹ Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*. IIP16

¹² I am referring to *sensation* as the physical component of affect and *emotion* to the mental component of affect based on Spinoza's notion of affect even though he did not use these terms in this way.

¹³ Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*. III. D3

¹⁴ Ibid., III D3

¹⁵ Ibid., IV. P7 Dem.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Lecture Transcripts On Spinoza's Concept Of Affect

¹⁷ Ibid., IIP1,3

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*. III Postulate1

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze, Lecture Transcripts On Spinoza's Concept Of Affect

²¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.142

²² Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*. II.P13 Cor.

²³ Added hyphens to emphasize connectedness of terms.

²⁴ Brian Massumi. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, p.15

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.260

²⁶ Benedict de Spinoza. *The Ethics*, I D7

²⁷ Ibid., IID2

²⁸ Paul Valery, "Philosophy of the Dance" In *What is Dance?* p.60

²⁹ Gilles Deleuze: *A Critical Reader*, p.143

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p.27

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