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## **Nietzsche and Spinoza: Thinking Freedom**

### **Abstract**

Nietzsche's concept of freedom is premised upon a conception of the relationship between freedom and necessity; here I examine that concept of freedom against the background of the philosophy of Spinoza. Both offer powerful accounts of how freedom and necessity might be reconciled; this essay sets out the difference between them by breaking the problem down into those of selfhood, time, reason and culture. It is concluded that for Nietzsche freedom is always premised upon a relationship of the self to itself, whereas for Spinoza it devolves on a relationship between self and others.

### **Keywords**

Freedom, Self, Reason, Necessity, Culture.

## Introduction

The relationship between freedom and determinism is one of philosophy's unresolved questions. If human beings can be reduced to the status of organisms which act according to determining causal factors, it is not possible to talk of freedom, whereas if human beings are free, then they must be unable to act according to any laws of nature. In this essay I examine the thought of two philosophers, Spinoza and Nietzsche, who don't think that causal determinism is entirely irrelevant to our freedom.

Nietzsche himself pointed out the similarity between his (earlier) thought and Spinoza's, remarking to Overbeck in a postcard, "I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor!" He goes on to say:

Not only is his over-all tendency like mine – making knowledge the most powerful affect – but in five main points of his doctrine I recognize myself; this most unusual and loneliest thinker is closest to me in precisely these matters: he denies the freedom of the will, teleology, the moral world order, the unegoistic, and evil. Even though the divergences are admittedly tremendous, they are due more to the difference in time, culture, and science (Quoted in Yovel 1992: 105).

Having downplayed the divergences Nietzsche later becomes a radical critic<sup>1</sup> of Spinoza. Between 1881 and 1888 it seems that Nietzsche increasingly sees Spinoza as an archetypal metaphysician. For Nietzsche, the idea of self-preservation in Spinoza becomes an evidence for Spinoza's denial of the idea of becoming. While in *Beyond Good and Evil* 13 (1886) Spinoza's idea of self-preservation is seen as a leftover teleology,<sup>2</sup> in his late notebooks Nietzsche treats the idea as the very symbol of dismissible metaphysical thought.<sup>3</sup> In a note in 1888 Nietzsche writes:

**Unreason**, randomness, coincidence are equally hated by them [the "Metaphysicians"] (as causes for innumerable physical pains).

*Consequently*, they denied this element in the being-unto-itself, conceived it as "absolute reason and "usefulness."

Equally **change**, **transience** are feared: therein a suppressed soul is expressed, full of mistrust and terrible experiences (Spinoza's case: an opposing type of person would find this change *appealing*)

A *playful* type of being that is overloaded with strength would **endorse** precisely these *emotions*, *unreason* and *change* in a eudemonic sense, including their consequences, danger, contrast, decline, etc. (Quoted in Urs Sommer 2012: 176).

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion see Andreas Urs Sommer, 'Nietzsche's Readings on Spinoza', 2012

<sup>2</sup> "Physiologists should think twice before positioning the drive for self-preservation as the cardinal drive of an organic being. Above all, a living thing wants to discharge its strength – life itself is will to power –: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent consequences of this. – In short, here as elsewhere, watch out for superfluous teleological principles! – such as the drive for preservation (which we owe to Spinoza's inconsistency –). This is demanded by method, which must essentially be the economy of principles" (Nietzsche 2002: 15).

<sup>3</sup> See Urs Sommer 2012: 176

Nietzsche's critique of the idea of self-preservation in Spinoza, which we will focus on later, is related to his idea of *Amor fati*. Nietzsche tells us his formula for his philosophical affirmation: *Amor fati* – love of fate. He says: “what returns, what finally comes home to me is my own self.” In *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, Yovel tells us that this formula, which was not used before Nietzsche, is, in fact, “a polemical transformation of Spinoza's *amor dei intellectualis*, rejecting the primacy of the intellect and putting *fatum* in place of Spinoza's nature-God as the object of love” (Yovel 1992: 104). While for Spinoza the law of *ratio* is the basis of this necessity, indeterminate *fatum*, which cannot be explained through concepts and rational laws, has a crucial role in Nietzsche's philosophy of affirmation. But although they seem to be two opposed approaches, and although this puts Nietzsche in a constant dispute with Spinoza, both formulae involve a kind of “love of necessity” as an important component of freedom.

### The Freedom of the will

In his postcard to Overbeck, Nietzsche cites the denial of freedom of the will as one of the similarities between himself and Spinoza. Yet what is freedom without freedom of the will?

In order to understand Spinoza's rejection of the freedom of the will, it is necessary to begin with his notion of God – Nature. In the Appendix to the first part of *Ethics*, he makes a list of God's properties:

that he exists necessarily; that he is unique; that he is and acts from the necessity alone of his nature; that (and how) he is the free cause of all things; that all things are in God and so depend on him that without him they can neither be nor be conceived; and finally that all things are predetermined by God, not from freedom of the will *or* infinite absolute good pleasure, but from God's absolute nature, *or* infinite power (Spinoza 1996: 25).

These amount to a rejection of the idea of a transcendent God who created the world out of his will, and hence of the idea that God's nature could be different. We call things contingent “only because of a defect of our knowledge” of the order of things (Spinoza 1996: 23). To imagine that the order of things could be different would be to attribute another nature to God, which would be a rejection of the perfection of God (1996: 23). God's freedom which is incompatible with “absolute will,” is in fact, a “free cause,” acting from the necessity of a nature which includes neither will nor intellect. In other words, Spinoza's God has no purpose and no interest in the actions of human beings. Thus, Spinoza defines freedom as self-caused, meaning only God can be free. However, he also claims that ethics promises us to attain freedom. Here the question of how we can reconcile these two claims arises. Before we answer this, we need to look at Spinoza's notion of free will.

The Appendix to part I is crucial because it contains a transition from nature of God to the nature of the human mind. Here a prejudice about the freedom of human beings is exposed: “That all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that they all want to seek their own advantage, and are conscious of this appetite” (1996: 26). Thinking that they are conscious of their appetites, human beings think that they are

free. However, according to Spinoza, this belief in free will is a human error. Spinoza illustrates the point through a thought experiment suggesting that when a stone is set in motion by an external cause, it will think that as far as it can it strives to continue to move. According to this, since the stone is conscious only of its striving, it will believe itself to be free. This is nothing but “that famous human freedom which everyone brags of having, and which consists only in this: that men are conscious of their appetites and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined” (Quoted in Lloyd 1996: 46).

Spinoza claims that men have a tendency to act on account of an end. However, this is an imposition of man’s own way of thinking on nature rather than an understanding of nature. This error arises out of man’s searching nature for what is convenient for man’s own use. Then he adds: “And knowing that they had found these means, not provided them for themselves, they had reason to believe that there was someone else who had prepared those means for their use” (Spinoza 1996: 26).

He adds that the mind is embedded within the causal order of nature, “In the mind there is no absolute, or free, will, but the mind is determined to will this or that by a cause which is also determined by another, and this again by another, and so to infinity” (Spinoza 1996: 62). He explains this point by means of the following “demonstration”:

The Mind is a certain and determinate mode of thinking and so cannot be a free cause of its own actions, *or* cannot have an absolute faculty of willing and not willing. Rather, it must be determined to willing this or that by a cause which is also determined by another, and this cause again by another, and so on (1996: 62).

According to this, the will itself is just a part of a causal chain which is dependent on an infinite chain of circumstances. To desire this or that is not a choice but the outcome of a whole range of conditions.

Now, coming back to our question: if freedom is self-caused meaning only God can be free and if there is no free will, how does ethics promises us to attain freedom? In order to answer this question we should focus on two main ideas in Spinoza: 1) his identification of freedom with rationality; 2) the ethical goal of human freedom is becoming as self-determining as possible. We will address the former later but for now we should note that Spinoza’s determinism and his notion of an immanent God – Nature – are strongly related to his notion of the “self.” Now, all finite things are dependent on God and thus Spinoza distinguishes finite things by the particular way they express God’s power, essence. The essence of a finite thing is its power, or what Spinoza calls, its *conatus*, its striving to persist in existence and to increase its power (Spinoza 1996: 76). This is what he means by self-determination.

Like Spinoza, Nietzsche rejects the idea of the “self” as an idealized unity. He criticizes “idealism” for ignoring the claim of the body and neglecting the impact of psychological and physiological factors upon our apprehension of the world. In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche writes: “there is no ‘being’ behind deed, its effect and what becomes of it; ‘the doer’ is invented as an afterthought, - the doing is everything” (Nietzsche 2007: 26). In Nietzsche’s view, western rationality presupposes a distinction between subject and object, and interprets events according to this distinction. Nietzsche claims that our activity in the world is separated into operations of the “self” as

“subject,” and the world as “object.” Underlying these distinctions is the false belief in an *I* that does something, *has* something and *has* a quality. In the modern conception the “subject” is considered as given and it is abstracted from all contingencies. However, according to Nietzsche, the distinction between subject and object is simply the projection of the subject–predicate relationship that characterizes the grammar of our language onto the structure of the world: “People are following grammatical habits here in drawing conclusions, reasoning that: ‘thinking is an activity, behind every activity something is active, therefore –’” (Nietzsche 2002: 17-18).

Nietzsche argues that the projection of the distinction between subject and predicate onto the world is a product of the error that the “will” is something that produces effects (Nietzsche 2005: 169). From the perspective of the subject it is believed that in every event there is an aim that is regarded as its cause. This cause-effect pattern can be found in the framework of the Cartesian tradition. Similarly, in the Cartesian method of doubt the belief in subjective introspection leads to the belief in “thinking.” Correspondingly, the same causal relationship is transferred to the interpretation of every action within the model of the distinction of doer and deed. All deeds are caused by a doer. According to Nietzsche, there are two psychological tendencies that lead human beings to impose a cause-effect formula on: the first is a belief in the subject as doer, as the causal agent performing deeds; the second is the desire to familiarize experience and overcome anxiety and danger. It is a search not for causes, but for the familiar and also the attempt to find something familiar in it. The need to believe in the existence of a subject, and the need to render events familiar, express nothing more than a desire for the self-preservation of the human being and for the preservation of the existing order.

Up to this point, it seems that Nietzsche’s rejection of the freedom of the will and, correspondingly, of the idea of a unique “self,” accords with that of Spinoza. However, there is a crucial difference. Unlike Descartes, who distinguished two kinds of substance – extension and thought – Spinoza admits only one substance – God whose essence is infinite power. For Descartes, while thought and matter are presented as two different kinds of substances, in Spinoza they are attributes of God. Following this Spinoza transforms the Cartesian thinking substance into his notion of mind which is the mind of God.

Unlike Spinoza, Nietzsche rejects any sort of “substance,” whether it is Descartes’ or Spinoza’s; Spinoza’s “substance” and determinism or law of nature, in fact, imply self-identical “things.” In a passage in *The Gay Science* he writes:

In order that the concept of substance could originate – which is indispensable for logic although in the strictest sense nothing real corresponds to it - it was likewise necessary that for a long time one did not see nor perceive the changes in things. The beings that did not see so precisely had an advantage over those that saw everything “in flux” (Nietzsche 1974: 171-172).

Yovel thinks that this may be directed at Spinoza even though Spinoza’s name is not mentioned: “Nietzsche’s critique of “logic” and rationalist postulates centres around the concept of self-identical “things,” which is also the basis for the category of substance- Spinoza’s major concept” (Yovel 1992: 119). He adds, “the myth of the will,

or the subject as agent, also underlies the concept of substance itself. On several occasions Nietzsche analyses the concept of substance as a consequence of concept of the subject, not the reverse” (Yovel 1992: 120). Nietzsche does not mean that Spinoza supports the idea of the subject – this would be unjust – yet he states that Spinoza did not go far enough and face the indeterminate *fatum* which implies the lack of *any* order and rational ground. However, we should note that this is Nietzsche’s Spinoza whom he read mostly via the secondary literature.<sup>4</sup> For Deleuze, for instance, Spinoza’s substance cannot be a consequence of concept of the subject since substance has been conceived as an act-in-itself and as such through itself and thus the essence of substance cannot be understood without considering the triad of properties, namely “perfect”, “infinite” and “absolute” (Deleuze 1992: 337) or as Della Rocca claims “in order to explain why a given substance exists, one does not need to appeal anything else besides that substance” (Della Rocca 2012: 12).

In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche makes his critique more explicit, referring to Spinoza directly:

The wish to preserve oneself is the symptom of a condition of distress, of a limitation of the really fundamental instinct of life which aims at *the expansion of power* and, wishing for that, frequently risks and even sacrifices self-preservation. It should be considered symptomatic when some philosophers – for example Spinoza who was consumptive - considered the instinct of self-preservation decisive and *had* to see it that way; for they were individuals in conditions of distress (Nietzsche 1974: 291-292).

Now, Urs Sommer claims that Nietzsche’s reading of Spinoza, especially the idea of self-preservation as veiled teleology, has mostly been shaped via his reading of Kuno Fischer’s *History of Modern Philosophy*. In the excerpts from Fischer we see that Nietzsche attempts to distance himself from Spinoza:

“Striving for self-preservation is the first and only basis for virtue.”

There is no free will in the spirit, but rather the spirit is dictated to want this or that by a cause that in itself is dictated by another cause, and this one once again by another one, and so forth into eternity.

The will is the ability to agree and to disagree: nothing else.

On the other hand, *I: Pre-egotism*, drive of the herd are older than the “wanting-to-preserve-oneself.” First man is *developed* as a *function*: out of that an individual is later formed by having **made the acquaintance** of innumerable conditions of the whole, of the organism *as the function*, and eventually having *incorporated* himself (Quoted in Urs Sommer 2012: 171).

“Pre-egotism” and “drive of the herd” are the keywords for the argument that Nietzsche raises against Spinoza. However, it seems that Nietzsche’s argument here stems from his critique of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and Nietzsche’s friend Paul Ree, from his critique of Darwinism and utilitarianism. What is striking here and in all of Nietzsche’s published work is that the idea of Nietzsche does not mention the idea of power – *conatus* – and its expansion in Spinoza. Urs Sommer claims that this is because

<sup>4</sup> See Urs Sommer 2012: 156-184

“By degrading Spinoza to a fainting theoretician of power preservation, Nietzsche wishes to gloss over Spinoza’s dangerous proximity to his own “will to power,” a concept he claims as his own original philosophical creation...Under no circumstances does he want to be mistaken for Spinoza.” (Urs Sommer 2012: 173). Now, Urs Sommer might be right about this, however whether Nietzsche misunderstood or even misread Spinoza extends the scope of this article. However, we can still raise a question about what alternative Nietzsche proposes. We will see below that this alternative hinges on his understanding of the relationship between the individual and time; by focusing on this we can better see that the difference between Nietzsche and Spinoza concerns more than their views about substance and subject.

### **The individual and time**

To understand what Spinoza means by freedom we should inquire into his notion of selfhood – body – and its relation to culture. Of course one may wonder what the borders of a “self” are if there is no Cartesian distinction between body and mind, no “self” that can be separated from its own body and from the rest of the world. Spinoza’s answer is a physics of bodies – be they social or physical – which involves both a preservation of the limits of bodies and a blurring of them.

The human mind does not know the human body itself, nor does it know that it exists, except through ideas of affections by which the body is affected (Spinoza 1996: 47).

The mind does not know itself, except insofar as it perceives the ideas of the affections of the body (1996: 49).

These propositions suggest that the mind knows itself only through the particular ideas deriving from its relations to its body, and correspondingly to other bodies. The mind as the idea of the body has a past in which it was affected by other bodies since it strives to imagine things that enhance the body’s power of acting (1996: 77), yet “when the mind imagines those things that diminish or restrain the body’s power of acting, it strives, as far as it can, to recollect things which exclude their existence” (1996: 78). Thus, these imaginations are associated with affects from the past. However, the “self” is also an actually existing body moving towards the future. While the mind tries to protect its unity as a temporal and spatial being, it is also open to new possibilities by being open to new interactions with other bodies which leave traces on the body as well as in the mind. In that sense, this constant struggle of bodies to articulate themselves in a whole of which they are part, blurs the borders between bodies. Such a relationship with time and with other spatial bodies leaves no room for a fixed identity. In this temporal aspect, in its capacity for imagination and memory, lies the mind’s instability, since numerous different traces of the past on different bodies will create different reactions to present events (1996: 96). Moreover, even the same mind - body - will react differently at different times. This means we have no control over our imagination or our recollection of things. Spinoza shows this by the following demonstration: “If the human body has once been affected by two bodies at once, then afterwards, when the mind imagines one of them, it will immediately recollect the other also” (1996: 78).

So, according to Spinoza mind and body are the same thing and the physical forces that affect the body affect the mind as well. Now, we find a similar approach in Nietzsche. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he writes: “Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body” (Nietzsche 1971: 146). Keith Ansell-Pearson draws our attention to the similarity between Nietzsche and Spinoza in their understandings of the body. Bodies do not evolve by establishing closed boundaries between themselves. This means that “a body does not have an identity that is fixed once and for all, but is essentially informed by a plastic and adaptive power, one capable of profound change. Such change takes place through processes of assimilation and incorporation” (Ansell-Pearson 2005: 46). Both the English word “incorporation,” and the German word used by Nietzsche, *Einverleibung*, literally mean a taking into the body.

Now, so far the Spinozist and the Nietzschean “self” do not seem to be very different. However, for Spinoza, imagination is also a precondition for reason, and reason is a precondition for freedom. This is what Nietzsche rejects.

As we have seen the mind – body – is a part of a whole, meaning Nature or God: “it is impossible that a man should not be part of Nature, and that he should be able to undergo no changes except those which can be understood through his own nature alone, and of which he is the adequate cause” (Spinoza 1996: 118).

Now, there is a crucial link between this account of time – imagination and memory – and freedom. As long as the mind conceives things “from the dictate of reason,” not from the imagination, “it is affected in the same way, whether the idea is of a future or a past thing, or of a present one” since “whatever the mind conceives under the guidance of reason, it conceives under the same species of eternity, or necessity” (1996: 149). In the following Scholium, Spinoza claims that once the mind is affected in the same way by the idea of a present, or future or past thing as a result of conceiving the things “from the dictate of reason,” it “would want the good it conceived as future just as it wants the good it conceives as present. Hence, it would necessarily neglect a lesser present good for a greater future one, and what would be good in the present, but the cause of some future ill, it would not want at all” (1996: 149). This suggests that once we know the reason of an event which makes us sad, for example, we will know how to avoid sadness in the future, and thus be freed from enslavement by our passions. Such knowledge also increases the individual's sense of responsibility since the more I understand the reasons for my actions, the greater is my ability to choose what I will do in the future.

This is an important moment in Spinoza's ethics, and he seems to share this view of the future with Nietzsche, who also sees the future as something that can be “created.” However, Nietzsche himself claimed that one of the main divergences between him and Spinoza lies in their accounts of time. How is this puzzle to be resolved?

In order to understand Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza's philosophy of time we should concentrate on what he says about remembering, promising and forgetting. In ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life’ (Nietzsche 1996: 57–125) he makes a distinction between animals and human beings in terms of different



relationships with time, and asked how it was possible for an animal to become an animal able to make promises. He repeats the question in *GM*: “To breed an animal with the prerogative to *promise* – is that not precisely the paradoxical task which nature has set herself with regard to humankind?” (2007: 35). The task is paradoxical because animals, as *ahistorical* beings, are content with a passive forgetfulness, and thus basically happy, and do not have to bear the burden of living with a past, present and future. This burden is exemplified by the fact that human forgetfulness is not *vis inertiae*, but rather a process where our experiences are digested; its purpose is “to shut the doors and windows of consciousness for a while” (2007: 35). Producing a being with the capacity to make promises requires a counter-device to the active force of forgetting:

...it is the *will's memory*: so that a world of strange new things, circumstances and even acts of will may be placed quite safely in between the original ‘I will’, ‘I shall do’ and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, without breaking this long chain of the will (2007: 36).

Nietzsche celebrates the active force of forgetting and warns about the costs of countering it. According to him, memory is related to the drives and “it is impossible to live happily without forgetting.” This requires knowledge of the plastic power of a human being as well as of a culture to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign. In that sense, memory is not a mere recollection of events, it is also strongly related to our emotional life. Objects, things, people can remind us of what is already forgotten and what we wish to forget. This means that we do not have control over our memories, that it has an existence independent of the will. As Marcel Proust shows, any accidental encounter with a smell or a taste can remind us of our past.

Up to this point it does not seem that there is a significant divergence between Spinoza and Nietzsche on the question of time and the idea that we should relieve ourselves from past events and create our own futures. After all, it might have been Spinoza himself who prompted the idea of eternal recurrence, which Nietzsche seems to have discovered only a few days after his discovery that Spinoza was his precursor (summer of 1881) (Ansell-Pearson 2005: 20). However, later Nietzsche becomes a critique of Spinoza. Why should this be?

As we have seen, Nietzsche himself appreciates Spinoza’s rejection of free will and even accepts that Spinoza attempts to introduce a notion of selfhood similar to his own. But it was no more than an attempt since, as Yovel emphasizes, the concept of substance is a consequence of the concept of subject. Such illusory concepts as substance and subject can only be removed on one condition: that God is dead!

In the *GM* Nietzsche refers to a moment in Spinoza’s life when he “turned his attention to the question of what actually remained for him, himself, of that famous *morsus conscientiae*.” Nietzsche recalls that Spinoza’s God is free, that is, that he is not a God who operates everything *sub ratione boni* since “that would mean that God is subject to fate” (2007: 55). In line with this, Spinoza says that what is left of this bite of conscience is “the opposite of gladness,” a mere sadness that things did not turn out as one expected. Now, this means that “For Spinoza, the world for Spinoza had returned to that state of innocence in which it had lain before the invention of bad conscience...For

millennia wrongdoers overtaken by punishment have felt *no different than Spinoza* with regard to their ‘offence’” (2007: 55-56), saying in effect that the crimes for which they were punished were a mistake, perhaps even an accident. Such an unchristian attitude would have as its consequences the need to learn from one’s mistakes rather than to be bitten by conscience; it would be a situation in which the individual was capable of self-improvement, but it would not entail the need for moral improvement. One’s own crimes would be akin to “illness, misfortune or death,” but nothing more.

However, despite Spinoza’s appearing to endorse this non-Christian approach to ethics – my past misdemeanours were an unavoidable misfortune that I may seek to avoid in the future, but not evidence of my sinfulness – Nietzsche still sees this as an approach to ethics in which the individual is trapped by or tied to the past. In Spinoza’s determinism, then, although sadness at what was expressed in the deed is not the Christian’s guilt, it functions in much the same way, implying just as strongly that “it happened” rather than “I willed it.” Spinoza’s individual is just as much in thrall to his or her memory as anyone else. Moreover, it is still a subject, maybe not a Cartesian subject, but a subject who suffers from the idea of “I could have been someone else.”

Active forgetting, however, is precisely one of the characteristics that Nietzsche attributes to the sovereign individual, the overhuman who has power over himself and his fate. He knows that he does not have power over “it was”: but active forgetting means the absence of guilt. In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche had praised forgetting: “The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred ‘Yes’” (Nietzsche 1971: 139). What Nietzsche suggests is a new relationship with time: through active forgetting – appropriate incorporation – we can redeem the present from the past, which brings with it the power to create our own futures.

Nietzsche here is actually missing Spinoza’s point, which is that as long as we live under the guidance of reason we never suffer from not having been someone else. He misses it because he rejects this Spinozistic notion of reason.

## Reason and culture

As we have seen, according to Spinoza once the mind is affected in the same way by the idea of a present, or future or past thing as a result of conceiving the things “from the dictate of reason,” it “would want the good it conceived as future just as it wants the good it conceives as present.” Reason, for Spinoza, is intimately connected with *conatus* which is the desire to persevere our being. “Each thing” says Spinoza “as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being” (Spinoza 1996: 75). Reason is the faculty commonly set over against natural drives towards self-preservation. In Spinoza’s ethics instead of striving for things because we judge them as good “we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it” (1996: 76). However, it should be noted that Spinoza does not say that we should suppress our passions – that would be impossible, rather by accepting their necessity and understanding their operations, we can become free.

Since *conatus* is the essence of being, acting absolutely from virtue is acting from the laws of our own nature. However, he says, “we act only insofar as we understand. Therefore, acting from virtue is nothing else in us but acting, living, and preserving one’s being by the guidance of reason, and doing this from the foundation of one’s own advantage” (1996: 128).

And Spinoza adds “the essence of reason is nothing but our mind, insofar as it understands clearly and distinctly” (1996: 128). By saying “Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, it has a greater power over the effects or is less acted on by them” (1996: 165) he means that as we come to understand the actual causes of our emotions, we decrease the power of the emotions on us and we also exert the power of our intellect.

Such a “faith in reason” is nothing but another illusion for Nietzsche. In *GS* he criticizes Spinoza in several places along with the other rationalists:

Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfill one more condition of existence than any other animal: man *has* to believe, to know from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life – without faith in reason (Nietzsche 1974: 75).

Further in *GS*, Nietzsche refers to Spinoza: “The meaning of knowing. – *Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere!* says Spinoza<sup>5</sup> as simply and sublimely as is his wont” (1974: 261). Nietzsche, however, claims that we suppose that *intelligere* stands opposed to the instincts, whereas it is “nothing but a *certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another*” (1974: 261).

The gap between two philosophers grows when Spinoza moves to another line of argument: the desire to preserve ourselves leads us to the desire to live with others in a state of harmony and agreement. The cooperation with others in society enhances our rational nature and elevates us to freedom. Two people working together, for instance, produce more power than a single individual. In that sense, the first human being Adam, was the least free man since he did not have any interaction with anyone.

To man, then, there is nothing more useful than man. Man, I say, can wish for nothing more helpful to the preservation of his being than that all should so agree in all things that the minds and bodies of all would compose, as it were, one Mind and one Body; that all should strive together, as far as they can, to preserve their being; and that all, together, should seek for themselves the common advantage of all (Spinoza 1996: 125-126).

“From this,” he concludes that “men who are governed by reason – that is men who, from the guidance of reason, seek their own advantage - want nothing for themselves that they do not desire for other men. Hence they are just, honest, and honourable.” In his *Bodies, Masses, Power*, Montag summarizes Spinoza’s account of parallelism of the mind and body and its relation to freedom through the following formulae: “there can be no liberation of the mind without the liberation of the body” and “there can be no liberation of the individual without collective liberation” (Montag 2000: xxi). Recalling Spinoza’s *amor dei intellectualis* and his insistence on

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<sup>5</sup> “Not laugh, not to lament, nor to detest, but to understand”

determinism, this means only those who can understand the causes of events can reach freedom as long as they live in a society where there is the possibility of being affected by the other spatial bodies infinitely.

According to this, there is neither altruism nor selfishness in nature. This is also related to Spinoza's dynamic character of striving for self-preservation which Nietzsche attacks. For some commentators the phrase "striving for self-preservation" necessarily leads to egoism since if the nature of individuals is alike, there is a gap between self-seeking and seeking the good of others, and such a gap does not bring collaboration but only conflict (Lloyd 1996: 75).<sup>6</sup> Against this, Lloyd states that:

What we find in Spinoza is a reconceptualising of the relations between individuals. Spinoza's point is not that an individual—identifiable independently of its relations with others—necessarily pursues its own interests rather than theirs. It is rather that what it is to be an individual is to be both determined to act through the mediation of other modes and likewise to determine others (Lloyd 1996: 75).

Obviously, Nietzsche disagrees with such a so called harmonious society; especially the reason part, he even would find it a utopian project. What, then, does Nietzsche propose?

As we have seen, there is no opposition between nature and culture in Spinoza, whereas there is in Nietzsche. In fact he even regards the activity of culture as a tyranny against nature. However, Nietzsche's account of nature and culture is more complicated than that: while it is true that he regards culture as a "tyranny against nature", he also believes that there is a selective object of culture whose function is to form a man capable of promising and thus of making use of the future, a free and powerful man who is active. Moreover, he believes "any custom is better than no custom" (Nietzsche 1997: 15). After all it is a culture that produced Napoleon, Goethe, and even Nietzsche.

In that sense, Nietzsche does not simply reject culture; nor does he suggest going back to nature. He criticizes a particular culture; bourgeois-Christian culture which regards the subject as the centre of meaning and which is inseparable from the Cartesian conception of the "self"; the aim of the modern project is to tame the "human animal" and to give birth to a certain type of modern subject: a rational human being who has freedom of the will, where this freedom means being able to subjugate oneself to a universal moral law. It also entails an *agential self* who can be separated from its actions.

In the famous section 'On the Three Metamorphoses,' Nietzsche presents a dynamic relationship between the individual and culture by pointing to three moments

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<sup>6</sup> Lloyd refers to Jonathan Bennett's *Study of Spinoza's Ethics* saying: "Bennett is too restrictive, both in his interpretation of what is involved in Spinoza's equation of self-preservation and the actual existence of individuals, and in his presentation of Spinoza's ethic as a version of egoism. If to preserve one's being is necessarily to exert causal power on some modes, and also to be acted upon by others, the distinction between self and other becomes here something quite different from what we are accustomed to in models of incidental interaction between independently existing individuals."

symbolized by the camel, the lion, and the child. The spirit incorporates the tradition before he/she finds the strength to challenge it, then through the incorporation of the previous stages, he/she creates a new perspective. In symbolic terms, the lion says “no” to life, before being transformed into a child capable of saying “yes”: affirmation is preceded by a negation: “*Destruction as the active destruction of the man who wants to perish and to be overcome announces the creator*” (Deleuze 1983: 177-178). Nietzsche’s sovereign individual, by contrast, is the one who will be able to say “No” (forgetting) to tradition and who will create his/her own perspective. In opposition to the last man’s need for self-preservation stands “the man who wants to perish,” the product of the selective function of culture who is on the way to becoming the overhuman.

This tension between the individual and culture here seems to be very different from Spinoza’s ideal culture. Spinoza insists on the idea that the power of thought of the many is necessarily greater than that of the few against the argument that to let the multitude be engaged with the political matters creates nothing but chaos:

For if, while the Romans are debating, Saguntum is lost: on the other hand, while a few are deciding everything in conformity with their own passions only, liberty and the general good are lost. For men’s natural abilities are too dull to see through everything at once; but by consulting, listening, and debating, they grow more acute, and while they are trying all means, they at last discover those which they want, which all approve, but no one would have thought of in the first instance (Spinoza 1951: 376).

According to this, it seems that there is one “truth,” one ideal state which can be attained through “consulting, listening and debating.” Regarding his determinism which claims that there is a perfect order in nature of which we are part, and his notion of reason, it is obvious that the most ideal state would be the most perfect one which can be achieved only through the “guidance of reason.” As opposed to Spinoza’s ideal harmonious society, Nietzsche claims that culture always demands self-denial: “Self-overcoming is demanded, *not* on account of the useful consequences it may have for the individual but so that the hegemony of custom, tradition, shall be made evident in despite of the private desires and advantages of the individual: the individual has to sacrifice himself - that is the commandment of the custom” (Nietzsche 1997: 11).

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes:

I pursued the living; I walked the widest and the narrowest paths that I might know its nature. With a hundredfold mirror I still caught its glance when its mouth was closed, so that its eyes might speak to me. And its eyes spoke to me.

But wherever I found the living, there I heard also the speech on obedience. Whatever lives, obeys.

And this is the second point: he who cannot obey himself is commanded. That is the nature of living.

This, however, is the third point that I heard: that commanding is harder than obeying; and not only because he who commands must carry the burden of all who obey, and because this burden may easily crush him (Nietzsche 1971: 226).

Whatever lives also obeys, but not all who live command; those who cannot command themselves are fated to be commanded.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, “commanding is harder than obeying.” This means when an individual commands himself/herself he/she pays for this commanding since he/she must be ready to reject every fixed horizon – and every comfort or consolation! – that the existing order imposes.

Thus, as opposed to Spinoza’s freedom which can be attained only by those who can understand the causes of events as long as they live in a society where there is the possibility of being affected by the other spatial bodies infinitely, Nietzsche celebrates an ethics which does not primarily rest on our relation with the others, but on our relation with ourselves, on the art of self-mastery and self-governance. For Nietzsche “Becoming what one is” means being engaged in a constantly continuing process of affirmation of one’s own self; of enlarging the capacity for the responsibility for oneself. This for Nietzsche is freedom.

## Conclusion

For many commentators Nietzsche does not suggest a final message or maintain a philosophical doctrine of freedom; after all, giving it a didactic articulation would be to circumscribe it in advance. This has not stopped commentators from finding in it an identifiable doctrine. For instance, some see the philosophy of affirmation as egoism where every action can be justified as long as it was done for the good of the individual. Some, by contrast, argue that selfishness, or innocent selfishness, in Nietzsche, in fact, is nothing other than altruism:

Nietzsche’s point is precisely that the revaluation of values should show us that we can be most valuable to humanity not by making it comfortable in the present, but by paving the way for its liberation in the future. And since the future liberation of humanity depends on the liberation of those few individuals in the present who are capable of it, which in turn requires that those individuals selfishly devote themselves to becoming what they are, their “selfishness” is actually the greatest gift they can offer to others (Dudley 2008: 163).

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<sup>7</sup> As a faithful follower of Nietzsche, Michel Foucault has a similar approach in his call for “freedom” and a life lived as a ‘scandal of truth’. In his analysis of the art of governance, Foucault turns to the Greek understanding of self and to Christian morality. He asks: how do subjects become active, how is the government of the self and others open to subjectifications? In antiquity, training to achieve self-governance was not different from the training necessary to govern others. Such training was not separate from the process of constituting oneself as a free person. On the other hand, in later Christianity, “there was to be a differentiation between the exercises that enabled one to govern oneself and the learning of what was necessary in order to govern others; there was also to be a differentiation between the exercises themselves and the virtue, moderation and temperance for which they were meant to serve as training”. For Foucault, the real difference between later Christian morality and Greek pagan morality is not a matter of interiority; instead the difference resides in the forms of relationship with the self: “the Greek did not battle the “other”; he crossed swords with himself”. Foucault, Michel, *The Use of Pleasure*. (New York: Pantheon, 1986), p. 77.

This sounds very promising until one realizes that it might be a description of Raskolnikov, who was so fascinated with the idea of the Napoleonic law-breaking figure who justifies what he does for the sake of a higher humanity that he killed a defenceless old woman as a result.

As for Spinoza, recent interpretations have found in his philosophy a proto-Marxist theory of collective humanity, centring on a utopian concept of the multitude. At the same time, this approach has found itself having to consider the role played by leaders in a utopian society. Montag, for instance, suggests that leadership is necessary but at some (unspecified) point in the future the elite will “merge” with the masses when their job is done.

That raises a question about the relationship between human freedom and time that can be found in commentaries on both Spinoza and Nietzsche. In the recent Marxist-inspired accounts of Spinoza, there is the old tension between the claim about a utopian collectivist future and the claim that that future is being created in the present; in the literature on Nietzsche, the question of a liberated humanity’s relationship with the future is an eternally recurring theme. Some Nietzschean commentators have sought to resolve this dilemma by saying that we are already living in an era where Nietzsche’s future is already present for us.<sup>8</sup> They turn to the second essay of *GM* where Nietzsche introduces his striking figure of the sovereign individual. This “ripest fruit on its tree” is both the product of the “morality of custom” and someone who, “having freed itself from the morality of custom,” is “an autonomous, supra-ethical individual.” But even this leaves us with the question of whether the sovereign individual is Nietzsche’s “man of future” or just a “modern” man.

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<sup>8</sup> For further discussion see Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001); Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Richard J. White, *Nietzsche and the Problem of Sovereignty* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); David Owen, ‘Equality, Democracy and self-respect: reflections on Nietzsche’s Agonal Perfectionism’, in *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (Fall 2002); Keith Ansell-Pearson, ‘Nietzsche: A radical Challenge to Political Theory?’, in *Radical Philosophy* 54 (Spring 1990).

## Nietzsche ve Spinoza: Özgürlük Üzerine Düşünme

### Öz

Determinizm ve özgürlük arasındaki ilişki felsefe tarihinin çözümlenmemiş sorunsallarından biridir. Eğer insanları sebep-sonuç faktörleriyle eyleyen organizmalar statüsünde görürsek, o zaman özgürlük kavramından bahsetmemiz çok zor; ancak insanların özgür olduklarını iddia ederseniz, o zaman da doğa yasalarının insan eylemlerinde herhangi bir etkisi olmadığını söylemiş oluruz. Birçok filozof bu iki zıt görüşten birinin savunuculuğunu yaparken, Spinoza ve Nietzsche determinizm ve özgürlük kavramlarının tamamen birbirlerini dışlamadığını iddia eder.

Nietzsche 1881’de Overbeck’e yazdığı bir notta kendisiyle Spinoza arasındaki benzerlikleri şöyle sıralar: özgür iradenin, teleolojinin, ahlaki bir dünya düzeninin, özgeciliğin ve kötülüğün reddi (Alıntı Yovel 1992: 105). Ancak daha sonraki yazılarında Nietzsche Spinoza’yı eleştirir. Nietzsche kendi mottosunun *Amor fati* – kader sevgisi olduğunu söyler. Bu motto Spinoza’nın *amor dei intellectualis*’inin polemik bir transformasyonudur: Nietzsche Spinoza’da karşımıza çıkan akla verilen önceliği reddeder ve Spinoza’nın Doğa-Tanrı sevgisinin yerine kaderi koyar.

Spinoza’nın özgür iradeyi reddetmesinin nedenini anlamak, onun Tanrı – Doğa kavramından başlamayı gerekli kılar. Spinoza *Etik*’in ilk bölümünün Ek kısmında Tanrı’nın özelliklerini şöyle sıralar: “Tanrı zorunlu olarak varolandır; biriciktir; sadece kendi zorunlu doğasından varolur ve eyler; bütün şeylerin özgür nedenidir; her şey Tanrı’dadır ve ona bağlıdır, öyle ki onsuz hiçbir şey varolamaz ve algılanamaz; ve son olarak her şey Tanrı tarafından, onun mutlak doğası ya da sonsuz gücü tarafından önceden belirlenmiştir, özgür irade ya da sonsuz ve mutlak iyi keyiften değil” (Spinoza 1996: 26).

Bu anlayış, dünyayı kendi iradesiyle yaratmış olan aşkın bir Tanrı anlayışını ve buna bağlı olarak da Tanrı’nın doğasının aslında farklı olabileceği fikrini reddeder. Şeylerin düzeninin farklı olabileceğini düşünmek Tanrı’ya sahip olduğundan farklı bir özellik atfetmek demektir, ki bu da Tanrı’nın mükemmelliğini reddetmek anlamına gelir. Aslında Tanrı’nın özgürlüğü ne iradeyi ne de akli içeren ve zorunlu bir doğaya göre eyleyen “özgür neden”dir. Başka bir deyişle Spinoza’nın Tanrısı insan eylemlerine karşı kayıtsızdır.

*Etik*’in birinci bölümünün Ek kısmında Tanrı’nın doğasından insan zihninin doğasına geçiş ele alınır: insanlar arzularının bilincinde oldukları için özgür iradeye sahip olduklarını düşünürler. Ancak özgür iradeye sahip olduğumuza inanmak Spinoza’ya göre insani bir hatadır. Spinoza’ya göre zihin doğanın nedensel düzeninin bir parçasıdır. Zihinde mutlak ya da özgür irade yoktur, onun yerine zihnin bir nedenden dolayı bunu ya da şunu istemesi belirlenmiştir, bu nedenin kendisi de başka bir nedene bağlıdır ve bu da başka bir nedene ve bu sonsuzca böyle gider. Buna göre, irade sonsuz koşullar zincirine bağlı olan nedensel zincirin sadece bir parçasıdır. Bu bağlamda Spinoza bir öze sahip olan sabit, değişmeyen bir kendilik (*self*) anlayışını reddeder.

Tıpkı Spinoza gibi Nietzsche de bir öze sahip olan, bir bütünlüğü olan kendilik anlayışını reddeder. *Ahlakın Soykütüğü*’nde özne kavramının bir illüzyon olduğunu, dildeki özne-yüklem ayrımının dünyayı algılayışımıza özne-nesne



ayrımı olarak yansıtılmasından başka bir şey olmadığını iddia eder. Dildeki özneyüklem ayrımının dünyayı algılayışımıza yansıtılması da etkiler üretme yetisine sahip bir “irade” olduğu inancının bir sonucudur. Ancak bu inanç bir hatadır ve Kartezyen geleneğindeki sebep-sonuç paterninin bir eyleyen ve eylem olduğu anlayışına olan inancı doğurmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu sebep-sonuç anlayışına göre bütün eylemler bir eyleyen tarafından – ki bu eyleyen düşünen, rasyonel öznedir – yapılmaktadır.

Bu noktaya kadar hem Spinoza’nın hem de Nietzsche’nin özgür iradeyi reddettiğini görüyoruz. Ancak her iki filozof arasında önemli bir fark vardır: Uzanım ve düşünce (ruh, bilinç) olmak üzere iki cevher olduğunu iddia eden Descartes’a karşılık Spinoza tek bir cevherin olduğunu iddia eder. Bu cevher özü ebedi kuvvet olan Tanrı’dır. Nietzsche ise herhangi bir cevher anlayışını tamamen reddeder. Yovel’e göre Nietzsche Spinoza’nın cevher anlayışı kendisi de bir illüzyon olan özne anlayışının bir sonucudur. Burada Nietzsche’nin Spinoza’ya haksız bir eleştiride bulunduğunu söylemek yerinde olur. Deleuze’e göre Spinoza’daki cevher özne kavramının bir sonucu olamaz çünkü cevher kendi-içinde-bir-eylemdir ve sadece kendisi aracılığıyla kavranabilir ya da Della Rocca cevherin neden var olduğunu açıklamak için yine cevherin kendisine bakmamız gerektiğini söyler. Nietzsche’nin Spinoza’ya yönelttiği başka bir eleştiri de Spinoza’daki kendiliği-koruma içgüdüsüdür. Ancak bu da haksız bir eleştiridir. Nitekim Nietzsche bu içgüdüğü gücü ya da Spinoza’nın deyişle *conatus*’u koruma içgüdüğü olarak yorumlar. Halbuki Spinoza’da *conatus* gücün korunması olduğu kadar artırılma çabasıdır da. Urs Sommer’e göre Nietzsche’nin Spinoza yanlış yorumlamasının altında kendi güç istenci kavramının Spinoza’daki *conatus* kavramıyla karıştırılmasını istememesidir. Urs Sommer bu iddiasında haklı olabilir ama Nietzsche’nin Spinoza’yı yanlış anlayıp anlamadığı sorusu bu makalenin sınırlarını aşar. Yine de Nietzsche’nin kendisinin ne önerdiği sorusuna odaklanabiliriz. Bu soruyu cevaplamak için her iki filozoftaki birey-zaman ilişkisine bakmamız gerekir.

Zihnin ya da ruhun bedenden ve dünyadaki her şeyden soyutlanabileceğini iddia eden Descartes’ın aksine Spinoza’ya göre bedenle zihin arasında bir ayrım yoktur. Tabii, zihinle beden arasında bir ayrım yoksa, kendiliğin sınırları nedir diye bir soru akla gelebilir. Spinoza, ister toplumsal olsun, ister fiziksel, hem bedenin sınırlarını koruyan hem de bu sınırları bulanıklaştıran bir bedenler fiziği önermektedir. Bedenin bir fikri olarak zihnin öteki bedenler tarafından etkilendiği bir geçmişi vardır çünkü zihin bedenin eyleme gücünü artıran şeyleri tasavvur/hayal etmek için çabalar, ancak zihin bedenin eyleme gücünü yok eden ya da kısıtlayan şeyleri tasavvur ettiğinde, bunların varoluşunu dışlayan şeyleri hatırlamak için mümkün olduğunca çaba sarf eder. Bu tasavvurlar geçmişteki duyulanımlarla ilişkilidir. Ancak, “benlik/kendilik” geleceğe doğru yol alan ve varoluyor olan bir bedendir. Zihin zamansal ve uzamsal bir varlık olarak kendi bütünlüğünü korumaya çalışır, ancak bir taraftan da hem bedende hem de zihinde izler bırakacak öteki bedenlerle yeni ilişkilere açıktır, böylece de her daim yeni olasılıklar yaratır. Bu anlamda, bedenlerin parçaları olduğu bir bütünde kendilerini ifade etme, oluşturma adına verdikleri mücadele, bedenler arası sınırları koruduğu kadar bulanıklaştırır da.

Zamanla ve öteki uzamsal bedenlerle kurulan böylesi bir ilişki sabit bir kimliğe, özdeşliğe izin vermez. Zihnin bu hayal/tasavvur etme ve hatırlama kapasitesi onun değişkenliğine sebep olur, çünkü insanlar aynı objeden farklı biçimlerde

etkilenebilirler, hatta aynı zihin ya da beden bile farklı zamanlarda aynı objeden farklı biçimde etkilenebilir.

Nietzsche'de de benzer bir kendilik alayışı görüyoruz. *Böyle Buyurdu Zerdüşt*'te Nietzsche şöyle der: “Düşüncelerinin, duygularının arkasında, arkadaşım, güçlü bir hükümdar, tanınmayan bir bilge vardır – onun adı bedendir. O senin bedeninde yaşar; o senin bedenindir” (Nietzsche 1971: 146).<sup>9</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson Nietzsche'yle Spinoza'nın beden kavramına yaklaşımlarındaki benzerliğe dikkat çeker: “bedenin sabitlenmiş bir kimliği yoktur, beden temel bir değişim yetisinde olan plastik ve uyumsal bir güçle şekillenir. Böyle bir değişim asimilasyon ve bedene dahil etme süreçleriyle oluşur” (Ansell-Pearson 2005: 46).

Buraya kadar her iki filozof arasında zihin-beden ilişkisi ve bu ilişkinin de kendilikle ilişkisi bağlamında çok bir farklılık olmadığını görüyoruz. Ancak, Spinoza'ya göre hayal gücü aynı zamanda aklın, rasyonalitenin bir önkoşuludur, akıl da özgürlüğün. Nietzsche ise bu anlayışı tamamen reddeder.

Spinoza'ya göre zihin şeyleri hayal gücünden değil de, “aklın prensibinden” algıladığı ölçüde “bir fikirden, ister bu fikir gelecekle, ister geçmişle, isterse de şimdikle ilgili olsun, aynı şekilde etkilenir” çünkü zihin aklın rehberliğinde algıladığı her şeyi sonsuzluk ya da zorunluluğun sonucu olarak algılar. Spinoza'ya göre zihin aklın prensibiyle hareket ederek şimdideki ya da gelecekteki ya da geçmişteki bir şeyin fikrinden aynı şekilde etkilendiği zaman, şimdide iyi olarak algıladığı bir şeyi gelecekte de iyi olarak algılayacaktır. Ancak, şimdideki daha az iyi olan bir şeyi gelecekteki daha fazla iyi olan bir şey adına zorunlu olarak görmezden gelecektir. Ayrıca, şu an için iyi olsa da ileride kötü sonuçları olacak bir şeyi kesinlikle istemeyecektir. İşte tercih dediğimiz şey hayal gücüyle değil de duygulanımların kölesi olmayıp akıl prensibiyle hareket eden birinin bu zorunlu isteği ya da istemeyişidir.

Nietzsche ise “aklın prensibiyle hareket etme” anlayışını reddederek, unutuşun da insan varlığının bir özelliği olduğu, hatta bu yetinin bizi hayvanlardan ayıran yegane yeti olduğunu iddia eder. Nietzsche “aktif unutuş”un önemini hatırlatarak, bu unutuşa karşı girişilen eylemlerin bedelinin ağır olacağı konusunda bizi uyarır. Nietzsche'ye göre hafıza güdülerle ilintilidir ve unutuş olmadan mutlu bir yaşam sürmek imkansızdır. Bu da hem birey hem de toplum seviyesinde geçmişte olanın, yabancı olanın dönüşüme uğratılıp bedenine içine alınması anlamına gelen “plastik güç”le alakalıdır. Bu anlamda, hafıza sadece yaşanmış olayların hatırlanması değildir, duygusal olaylarla da ilgilidir. Nietzsche'ye göre kendimizi gerektirdiği yerde geçmişimizden özgürleştirmeli ve geleceğimizi yaratan yaratıklar olmalıyız. Her ne kadar Nietzsche de Spinoza'yla benzer bir şey iddia ediyor gibi gözükse de Nietzsche'nin zihin-beden ve kendilik arasındaki ilişkide Spinoza'ya yönelttiği temel eleştiri Spinoza'nın akıl kavramı, başka bir deyişle, bireyin aklın prensibiyle hareket etme yetisidir. Nietzsche'ye göre akla atfedilen bu statü bir illüzyondan başka bir şey değildir.

İki filozof arasındaki düşünce ayrılığı birey toplum ilişkisinde iyice artar. Spinoza'ya göre kendimizi koruma arzusu ötekilerle uyumlu bir halde yaşamaya bizi sevk eder. Ötekilerle olan uyum rasyonel doğamızı geliştirir ve bizi özgürlüğe taşır. Bu anlamda Spinoza'ya göre Adem tam da ilk insan olduğu için özgürlüğe ulaşamamıştır, çünkü diğer insanlara bir iletişimi olmamıştır. Nietzsche ise birey

<sup>9</sup> Çeviri yazara ait.

ve toplum arasında böyle bir uyumun olduğunu reddeder. Burada dikkat edilmesi gereken bir husus Nietzsche'nin kültürü ya da toplumu reddetmeyiştir ya da biz insanlara doğaya dönmeyi de önermiyordur Nietzsche; Nietzsche'nin eleştirdiği belli bir toplum yapısıdır: özneyi anlamın merkezine alan ve Kartezyen özne kavramından ayrı tutulamayacak olan burjuva-Hristiyan toplumdur. Modernitenin projesi “insan hayvan”ı eğitmek ve belli bir modern özne yaratmaktır: özgür iradeye sahip rasyonel bir insan varlığıdır bu. Spinoza ancak aklın prensibiyle yaşayan bireyler sayesinde uyum içinde yaşayan bir topluma ve buna bağlı olarak da özgürlüğe ulaşabileceğimizi iddia ederken, Nietzsche eleştirdiği bu toplumun böyle bir özgürlüğe izin vermeyeceğini ileri sürer. Toplumun kendisi de dönüştürülmelidir, bu da ancak öncelikle bireyin dönüştürülmesiyle mümkün olur.

*Zerdüşt*'teki ünlü “Üç Dönüşüm” bölümünde Nietzsche deve, aslan ve çocukla sembolleştirilmiş üç andan bahsederek bireyle kültür arasındaki dinamik ilişkiyi vurgular. Buna göre ruh geleneğe meydan okuma gücünü bulmadan önce aynı geleneğe uyum sağlar, daha sonra da daha önceki aşamaları bedene, kendi içine katma yoluyla yeni bir perspektif yaratır. Sembolik açıdan ise aslan, yaşama “evet” deme yetisinde bulunan çocuğa dönüşmeden önce yaşama “hayır” der: yaşamı olumsuzlama, onu olumlamayı önceler. Nietzsche'nin egemen bireyi geleneğe “Hayır” diyebilen, daha sonra da kendi değerlerini yaratabilen bireydir. Kendini-koruma ihtiyacı olan “son insan”ın karşısında tekrar kendisini yaratma adına “yok olmak isteyen” insan vardır.

Nietzsche'nin bahsettiği bu ilişki Spinoza'nın ideal toplumundan oldukça farklıdır. Spinoza, çoklukların politik meselelere dahil olduğu bir toplumda düzen değil, kaos çıkar anlayışına karşılık birçok insanın düşünce gücünün az sayıdaki insanınkinden çok daha fazla olacağını iddia eder. Buna göre tek bir “hakikat” vardır, “danışma, dinleme ve tartışma” yoluyla ulaşılabilecek tek bir ideal devlet vardır. Spinoza'nın insanların da bir parçası olduğu mükemmel bir düzene sahip doğa anlayışı ve akıl mefhumu göz önüne alındığında, en ideal devletin “aklın prensibi” yoluyla ulaşılabileceği aşikardır. Spinoza'nın bu ideal toplumuna karşılık Nietzsche kültürün her zaman bir kendinden-vazgeçiş talebi olduğunu iddia eder.

Spinoza öteki uzamsal bedenlerle sonsuz bir şekilde etkileşim içinde olduğu bir toplumda yaşayan ve tam da bu sebeple olayların sebeplerini anlayabilenlerin ulaşabileceği bir özgürlük anlayışından bahsederken, Nietzsche öncelikli olarak ötekilerle değil, kendimizle olan ilişkiyi temel alan bir etik anlayışı benimser. Nietzsche'ye göre Ancak böyle bir etik anlayışı bizi özgürlüğe ulaştıracaktır.

### **Anahtar Sözcükler**

Özgürlük, Kendilik, Akıl, Zorunluluk, Kültür.

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