



PROJECT MUSE®

Nietzsche, Spinoza, and the Moral Affects

David Wollenberg

Journal of the History of Philosophy, Volume 51, Number 4, October 2013,
pp. 617-649 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: [10.1353/hph.2013.0076](https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2013.0076)



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/522946>

Nietzsche, Spinoza, and the Moral Affects

DAVID WOLLENBERG*

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE WAS LESS WELL-READ in the history of philosophy than were many of his peers in the pantheon, whether Hegel before him or Heidegger after, but he was not for that reason any less hesitant to pronounce judgment on the worth of the other great philosophers: Plato was “boring”; Descartes was “superficial”; Hobbes, Hume, and Locke signify “a debasement and lowering of the concept of ‘philosophy’ for more than a century”; Kant was an “idiot” and a “catastrophic spider,” etc.¹ Against this overarching trend of negativity, his uncharacteristically positive response to one thinker, a thinker who initially appears to us as quite different from him, is all the more surprising.

In the summer of 1881, between writing the third and fourth books of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche read Kuno Fischer’s *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie: Baruch Spinoza*, which he had requested his friend Franz Overbeck send him. Nietzsche’s response has become well known, as his expressions of enthusiasm for Spinoza are all but unparalleled:

I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted! I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just *now*, was inspired by “instinct.” Not only is his over-all tendency [*Gesamttendenz*] 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 precisely in 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

¹TI “What I Owe to the Ancients” §2; BGE §§191, 252; and A §11. I recognize that these brief quotes do not fully capture Nietzsche’s complex and changing thought (especially on Plato, whom he also calls the *schönsten Gewächse des Alterthums* [BGE Preface]), but it is indisputable that the tenor of Nietzsche’s comments on the Western tradition of philosophy is overwhelmingly negative. There are of course those who he speaks more highly of: first and foremost the pre-Platonic thinkers (especially Heraclitus, though sometimes Empedocles as well), but also Emerson, Goethe, French moralists such as Montaigne, as well as a few others. But he considered these latter thinkers more as psychologists, moralists, and artists than as metaphysicians, with whom he grouped Spinoza.

* **David Wollenberg** recently received his PhD from the University of Chicago’s John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought.

the difference in time, culture, and science. *In summa*: my lonesomeness [*Einsamkeit*], which, as on very high mountains, often made it hard for me to breathe and make my blood rush out, is now at least a twosomeness [*Zweisamkeit*]. Strange [*Wunderlich*].²

Nietzsche's excitement about Spinoza is especially of interest not only because such avid positivity is so uncommon in his writings in general, but also because it occurs right at the start of one of the most crucial turning points in his thought. Within weeks of the postcard to Overbeck, he would first articulate the affirmative attitude called *amor fati* (almost certainly inspired by Spinoza's *amor dei*), conceive the character of Zarathustra (about whom he outlines a book in which Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*, "God or Nature," has been transformed into what Nietzsche calls *Chaos sive Natura*), and have his famous thought of the "eternal recurrence of the same."³

Though Nietzsche would gradually become more negatively disposed toward Spinoza, he would nonetheless continue to turn to him many times again during his remaining years of productivity; the latter's name will appear in all the remaining books Nietzsche published (other than the Wagner polemics and *Zarathustra*, which is largely free of overt historical references), and even write a poem, *An Spinoza*. This *Zweisamkeit* was not lost on Nietzsche's circle: Nietzsche's friend and admirer Peter Gast, in his eulogy for Nietzsche in 1900, saw fit to mention only Spinoza's name among all the many thinkers with whom he could have compared his late friend.⁴

Yet despite this enthusiasm, studying Nietzsche's notes and reading habits reveals that he was not in fact especially well-versed in Spinoza. As I will show below, nearly all of his substantive knowledge came from his readings of Kuno Fischer, a historian of philosophy, and he almost certainly never read the original texts first-hand. But Nietzsche often gleaned his knowledge of other philosophers from secondary literature, and studying the Nietzsche-Spinoza relationship is no less revealing on that account.

A few contemporary scholars have already noticed the affinity between the two, for example Richard Schacht, who has written that in some respects the two

²KSB 6:111, letter 135 (July 30, 1881), translated in Kaufmann, *Portable*, 92. To be fair, Nietzsche's comments about Spinoza are not always so explicitly positive: five years later in *BGE*, for example, he calls him a "sick hermit" and a "poison-brewer" (*BGE* §§5, 25). But while I do not wish to deny that his views on Spinoza evolve, as I will discuss further in this article, even apparent insults such as these must be viewed in context: later in *BGE* he also speaks of "we hermits" and says "every philosopher was first of all a hermit" (*BGE* §§230, 289); he will also claim that what is poison for the "inferior type" can serve "the higher type of men as nourishment or delectation" (§30).

³The series of notebook entries containing these new ideas, immediately following the Fischer notes, are among the most exciting in the Nachlass (KSA 9:518–24, 11 [194–205]). All references to the KSA take the form Volume:Page(s), Entry number(s). On the relation of *amor fati* and *amor die*, see Wurzer, *Nietzsche und Spinoza*, 80–86. Though Nietzsche's notion of the eternal recurrence—at this point described as the *Begierde, alles noch einmal und ewige Male zu erleben*—is by no means identical to Spinoza's call to view temporal nature *sub specie aeternitatis*, Nietzsche may have been inspired by its motivation: a desire to approach an amoral, nonpurposive universe with an entirely affirmative attitude. He opens his next writing, *GS IV*, with a very Spinozistic sentiment: "I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things . . . *Amor Fati*: let that be my love henceforth! . . . And all in all and on the whole: someday I wish to be only a Yes-sayer" (*GS* §276).

⁴Janz, *Biographie*, 3:357.

“are closer to each other than to anyone else in this history of philosophy,” and Yirmiyahu Yovel, who claims that “perhaps no two philosophers are as akin, yet no two are as opposed.”⁵ Unfortunately, the approach taken by authors who have written on this relationship has overwhelmingly tended toward global comparisons of major doctrines—e.g. *amor fati* versus *amor dei*, or the “will to power” versus the *conatus* (Spinoza’s essential tendency toward self-preservation).⁶ While this approach may be helpful in clarifying the history of philosophy, it is nonetheless quite problematic for understanding Nietzsche, because it bypasses Nietzsche’s source for these Spinozistic ideas. It is of little use in this regard to see what Spinoza’s texts have to say on a particular issue, if Nietzsche had not read them himself.⁷

Thomas Brobjer, concurring that Nietzsche never read Spinoza directly, has recently concluded, “[A]ny discussion of Nietzsche’s views and interpretations of Spinoza cannot be based on an analysis of Nietzsche’s and Spinoza’s philosophy (as all studies have done so far) but needs to start from Fischer’s account, which is what Nietzsche read, responded to, and based his judgments and analyses on.”⁸ This is precisely the methodology that the present article will adopt. Reading Spinoza through Fischer’s eyes re-orient us, as his study amplifies the importance of certain themes, and contracts that of others, in ways often very different from how contemporary interpreters tend to read Spinoza.⁹ Fischer’s study is detailed and careful, and while today we may not agree with his judgments on what the fundamental Spinozistic doctrines are and how they should be understood, this presentation of Spinoza’s thought must be our starting point in understanding Nietzsche’s Spinoza image. Fortunately, thanks to Nietzsche’s copious notebook jottings, we can get a fairly good picture of what parts of Fischer’s book he read, what appears to have interested him and what he disagreed with, and both the explicit and subterranean ways in which certain ideas found their way into his published writings. Such a study reveals that Spinoza’s most substantial influence was not via the more famous doctrines mentioned above, but rather, as the *Gesamttenndenz* comment of the postcard to Overbeck implied, his thinking about the affects.

Though this article is not intended primarily as a historical inquiry, attempts to interpret Nietzsche’s views on his “precursor” outside of the context of what he read and when, as previous attempts have done, strikes this reader as a mistaken approach. Therefore the first part of this article will demonstrate that Nietzsche’s

⁵Schacht, *Sense*, 169; Yovel, *Heretics*, 104.

⁶This is the basic framework used by the two authors just quoted, as well as e.g. Stambough, *Other*, 75–94; and Slowacher, “Spinoza und Nietzsche,” 16–24. One partial exception is Wurzer, *Nietzsche und Spinoza*.

⁷Michael Della Rocca (*Spinoza*, 296) for example chides Nietzsche, saying some of his criticisms of Spinoza are wrong and that Nietzsche “should have known better.” But Della Rocca never mentions that Nietzsche’s source was Fischer and not Spinoza himself.

⁸Brobjer, *Context*, 77–82. After completing this article, another study appeared that also concluded Nietzsche’s primary source was Fischer, and which proffers more detailed proof than I do here; see Scandella, “Did Nietzsche Read Spinoza?”

⁹For example, Fischer refers to the discussion of the passions as the *Meisterstück* of Spinoza’s philosophy (Fischer, *Geschichte*, 347), whereas contemporary interpreters tend to be more interested in his metaphysics and epistemology; this is clearly evidenced by the number of pages devoted to each subject in such recent studies as Della Rocca, *Spinoza*; Nadler, *Introduction*; and Koistinen, *Companion*.

knowledge of Spinoza was mediated almost exclusively through Fischer and not derived from Spinoza's works themselves, and moreover will explore what parts of Fischer Nietzsche found especially of note. By beginning with such a preliminary biblio-biographical investigation, we will not only better grasp Nietzsche's self-understanding of an important intellectual relationship, but also better understand a key source that helps clarify some opaque areas of his own writing and thinking.

This analysis will reveal Spinoza (and by 'Spinoza' I henceforth mean Fischer's Spinoza) to be a key inspiration in an unexpected place, namely, Nietzsche's thinking about the affects and their relation to the origins of morality. That influence manifests itself most conspicuously in the first essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, and this will be the topic of my second section (and the primary investigation of this article). I will show that Nietzsche drew freely from Fischer in constructing his picture of the affective difference between master and slave, and how this led to the birth of morality. This essay is one of the most widely read and debated parts of the Nietzsche corpus, so recognizing Nietzsche's source here helps resolve fundamental disputes about his intended meaning and must play a key role in future interpretation of the essay.

Having shown the role that Spinoza plays in Nietzsche's thinking about the origins of morality, I will briefly outline in my conclusion the way that Nietzsche connected certain elements of Spinoza's moral thought (in particular that regarding guilt, as in *GMII*) to his own broader affirmative attitude toward life in general. Seeing how Nietzsche connected Spinoza's thinking about morality with what we today might call one's existential stance helps reveal how Nietzsche attempted to unite these elements in his own thought.

I. WHAT DID NIETZSCHE READ AND WHAT INTERESTED HIM?

1.1 Sources of Knowledge about Spinoza

To what degree did Nietzsche get his knowledge of Spinoza from Fischer? In other words, how literally should we take Nietzsche's 1881 comment to Overbeck that he "hardly knew Spinoza"? In brief, quite literally. Despite scattered mentions of Spinoza's name in Nietzsche's writings prior to this period, there is little evidence that Nietzsche had had any serious encounter with his works. These prior references are generally quite positive—Spinoza is the "purest sage" and the "knowing genius"¹⁰—but lack any critical engagement and never betray any specific knowledge of Spinoza's philosophy beyond that with which an educated reader of the day would have been familiar. And given that after reading Fischer's book his notes immediately reveal criticisms as well as praise, it seems highly uncharacteristic that a prior serious encounter would have left him with such a pure image. This cursory knowledge could have been picked up through many of the thinkers we know Nietzsche to have read, not only the famous influences such as Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Lange, but also lesser-known authors that Nietzsche

¹⁰HH I.157, I.475; translations mine.

pored over during this period, including Afrikan Spir, Friedrich Überweg, Karl von Hartmann, and Eugen Dühring.¹¹ In all these sources he would have encountered a mostly positive presentation of Spinoza, of the sort that could easily have inspired the scattered sentiments of praise that his early writings offer, and they perhaps encouraged him to learn more.

So if Nietzsche had not read Spinoza prior to reading Fischer, did his newfound enthusiasm lead to a direct reading afterward? His notebooks (and what we know of his book purchasing and borrowing habits) give no evidence of this. Reading Fischer's book, he took down a fair number of notes regarding details he found interesting, including quotes from Spinoza in Latin that Fischer provides, as well as comments to himself indicating what he agreed and disagreed with.¹² One would expect, if he obtained a volume of Spinoza himself, something similar. But while we do find a handful of additional references to Spinoza elsewhere in the same notebook, they indicate ideas and facts that would be learned from a secondary source, and can in all cases be convincingly traced back to Fischer.¹³

There is no remaining evidence that Nietzsche read Spinoza himself at this time.¹⁴ We must then ask: how much of Fischer's book itself did Nietzsche actually read? It appears in fact to have been a quite limited amount. While a generous reading of Nietzsche's comment regarding the five main points of doctrine he shares with Spinoza—the denial of “freedom of the will, teleology, the moral world-order, the unegoistic, and evil”—might lead us to suspect that he read quite a few chapters of Fischer's book, those dealing with all these topics, such a suspicion is undermined when we note that in Fischer's concluding chapter, he specifically makes a comment that Spinoza denies “freedom, the difference between good and evil, self-consciousness, moral ends, and ends in general,” a remark so similar that it almost certainly served as the basis for what Nietzsche wrote in his postcard.¹⁵

¹¹He also would have found aficionados of Spinoza in his friends Paul Rée, who was compared to Spinoza in a review of his 1877 book *Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen* (see KSB 5:291, letter 671 [Nov. 19, 1877]), and Lou-Andreas Salomé, whose teacher Hendrik Gillot was a Spinoza devotee. For discussion, see Brobjer, *Context*, 79–80; and part 1 of Wurzer, *Nietzsche und Spinoza*.

¹²KSA 9:517–18, 11[193–94].

¹³For example, Nietzsche writes in a fragment that Moses Mendelssohn thought Spinoza would never have been so foolish (*närrisch*) as to deny teleology (*Zwecke*, KSA 9:493, 11[137]). Fischer had similarly written that Mendelssohn thought Spinoza's denial of *Zwecke* was “foolishness” (*Narrheit*, Fischer, *Geschichte*, 562); cf. also KSA 9:490, 11[132] with Fischer, *Geschichte*, 516–18.

¹⁴One noteworthy argument that he did read Spinoza in this period ultimately fails. Wurzer makes the following case: in Nietzsche's next writing, the fourth book of the *Gay Science*, §333, we find an exact quote: “*Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere!*” says Spinoza as simply and sublimely as is his wont.” This quote, Wurzer claims, is found only in German in Fischer's book; Nietzsche must have seen the original to know the Latin (*Nietzsche und Spinoza*, 73). Gawoll (“Geist,” 50) seconds this argument. Unfortunately, neither author has followed Nietzsche's trail of breadcrumbs far enough. If we proceed through all his notes from reading Fischer, we find at the end an isolated remark: *Teleologie als Asylum ignorantiae*. Fischer's book has a sub-chapter with that name, and if we turn there, we find the following words closing the section: *Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere*—in the original Latin, exactly as Nietzsche copied them.

¹⁵Nietzsche's alteration of *moralische Zwecke* to *moralische Weltordnung* is easily explainable, as only a few pages after formulating this list, Fischer explains the denial of moral ends by pointing to the denial of a specific type of world order (Fischer, *Geschichte*, 550–52). The shift from *Selbstbewusstsein* to *Ungleichheit* does not have an immediately obvious explanation, as Fischer uses the former term with

So our only solid evidence for what interested Nietzsche lies in the *Nachlaß* notes themselves, and they indicate a particularly narrow reading. Nietzsche wrote down about a dozen direct quotes from Fischer's book, as well as a number of comments that are not direct quotations, and a handful of remarks regarding where and why he disagreed. All of these are drawn from chapter 22, which concerns human will, virtue and power, human bondage (*menschliche Knechtschaft*), and the value of the affects. He then appears to have read some opening chapters on Spinoza's predecessors, the chapter on teleology, and the conclusion.¹⁶ What other chapters he read without taking notes, if any, we can never know. But what is of importance is noticing the topics that clearly did interest him: less what Spinoza called the *natura naturans* (i.e. the study of God, substance, and general ontology) and much more the *natura naturata* (i.e. the modes, or individual objects in nature, including human beings).¹⁷ As we will see, this interest continues to drive his future engagement with Spinoza.

Over the next few years we find numerous references to Spinoza in the *Nachlaß*, but nothing that indicates a fresh or more thorough study.¹⁸ And while absence of evidence cannot serve as a proof, the expectation that any such further engaged reflection would leave a trace in the *Nachlaß* is suggested by the fact that after a respite he turns again, with renewed vigor, to Fischer's book on Spinoza in 1887. During this second reading he copied down a tremendous amount of material into his notebooks, of far greater quantity and quality than his previous reading in 1881; the intervening years had clearly not dampened his interest in Spinozistic ideas.

This latter reading occurred in May 1887, shortly prior to his productive stay in Lenzerheide, during a sojourn in Chur where he read a number of books on the history of philosophy available at the local library.¹⁹ His notes are again informative. He turned first to the same chapter 22 mentioned above, on the human will, freedom, slavery, and the affects, and once again these topics provoke the greatest quantity of, and most thorough, comments. His notes on and quotes from other chapters are briefer, but varied enough in their provenance to indicate a

some frequency in the book, and the latter term never. It does reflect Nietzsche's priorities, however: 'Egoismus' gets a half-dozen mentions in *GS* alone, 'Selbstbewusstsein' none. If Janaway is correct that Nietzsche's thinking about *das Unegoistische* was heavily influenced by his reading of Rée, then his pre-existing association of Rée with Spinoza (see note 12 above) could also be an explanation; see Janaway, *Selflessness*, 78.

¹⁶KSA 9:517–519, 11[193–94]. The correlation between Nietzsche's notes and their sources in Fischer can be found in KSA 14:646.

¹⁷Spinoza makes the distinction at *Ethics* Ip29s, as well as in his earlier works.

¹⁸Most of these references fall into one of three categories: (1) further discussions of the affects (see discussion below); (2) lists of past thinkers who either represent forbearers to Nietzsche himself or who made grave mistakes in their judgment (Spinoza apparently falls into both categories)—e.g. KSA 9:585, 12[52]; 9:642, 15[17]; 11:134, 25[454]; 11:151, 26[3]; 11:160, 26[48]; 11:563–64, 36[32], etc., or 3), a certain theory is mentioned, such as overcoming the affects, followed by Spinoza's name as an example of someone who presumably maintained such an idea, with no explicit references to any specific writings—e.g. KSA 10:244, 7[20]; 10:279, 7[108]; 10:340, 8[17]; 11:233–34, 26[280]; 11:226, 26[285]; 11:233, 26[313]; 12:39–40, 1[123], etc. That Spinoza maintains an active place in Nietzsche's thinking during this period is evident both from the sheer number of *Nachlaß* mentions (two dozen times between his two readings of Fischer) and from the poem "An Spinoza" that he pens in 1884 (KSA 11:319, 28[49]).

¹⁹See Riedel, "Lenzerheide," 70–81.

fairly thorough reading of the book, though, if the order of his comments are any indication, not a sequential one. These other chapters concern topics such as the passions, imagination and reason, “God or nature,” and teleological thinking.²⁰

There is no evidence that Nietzsche read the original texts in this period either. All the quotes from Spinoza at this time can be traced to Fischer’s book, and are clumped together based on the chapters of Fischer in which those quotes appear. Though he complains in *GM* about Spinoza’s interpreters, “Kuno Fischer, for example,” implying that he himself has insight into the original text, this complaint is taken almost verbatim from a note he made to himself while re-reading Fischer.²¹ The citation Nietzsche makes to Spinoza in *GM* II.15, about the sting of conscience, is slightly erroneous—but the identical error is found in Fischer’s book.²² Even some otherwise mysterious side comments in these parts of the notebooks, such as an isolated reference to Feuerbach’s *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, are easily explainable when we look at Fischer’s book and find the exact reference in the same chapters from which Nietzsche is taking other notes.²³ And after this concentration of Spinoza quotes that accompany the reading of Fischer, we find no similar engagement in the remainder of the *Nachlaß* (his collapse in Turin would be less than two years later).

To conclude this biographical investigation, I see no evidence to support the case that Nietzsche ever read Spinoza’s works directly. But Fischer’s book clearly did interest Nietzsche greatly, as evidenced by his multiple readings of it, the many comments it provokes in his notebooks on both occasions, the enthusiasm of his postcard to Overbeck, and the dozens of references to Spinoza in his writings.²⁴ We must consequently understand the Nietzsche-Spinoza relationship entirely through the mediation of Nietzsche’s source, and use the *Nachlaß* jottings to guide our study of what particularly interested him (and when). Doing so, we will find traces of influence in unexpected places, as I will show below. We must thus look more carefully at those notes to see more precisely where his interest lay.

1.2 Fischer’s Spinoza

If I have successfully made the case that Nietzsche’s substantive knowledge of Spinoza was entirely mediated by Fischer, then surely the next step is to investigate those parts of Fischer that were of primary interest, and see whether any trace of that interest is evidenced in Nietzsche’s successive writings (especially after the more careful 1887 reading). Using this methodology, we are led to a different

²⁰KSA 12:259–270, 7[4].

²¹KSA 12:262, 7[4]: *Als Gegensatz das gaudium, wenn der erwartete Ausgang nicht eintrifft und die Furcht plötzlich aufhört. Trotz K. Fischer wäre es möglich, daß hier Spinoza die Bezeichnung a potiori gewählt habe: und daß er als den objektiven Kern jedes ‘Gewissensbisses’ das Bezeichnete ansah. Er mußte ja bei sich die Schuld leugnen: was war also ihm die Thatsache ‘conscientiae morsus,’ welche übrig blieb? Cf. GM II.15.*

²²Nietzsche cites “Eth.III, propos. XVIII, schol. I.II,” but there is no scholium I.II: it should simply be scholium II. The error is found in Fischer, *Geschichte*, 359.

²³Fischer, *Geschichte*, 561; KSA 12: 259–270, 7[4].

²⁴There total about 75 references to Spinoza in the KSA, 22 in published works, and the remainder in the *Nachlaß* (all but three of which are subsequent to his reading of Fischer), a sum far greater than to many others with whom Nietzsche is more frequently compared, such as Descartes, Feuerbach, or Emerson.

answer than we would be if we just compared the two authors' texts, for Nietzsche's interest was not necessarily in those doctrines with which Spinoza's name is most associated.

So in what ways did Nietzsche see Spinoza as a precursor, and in what ways were the divergences "admittedly tremendous," as his postcard put it? Looking at the two thinkers on a global level has spurred a number of potential answers from scholars, but while these speculations often have an intuitive propriety to them, they are not borne out by what Nietzsche actually writes. Schacht, for example, writes that "the most obvious and fundamental point of difference . . . [is] Spinoza's retention and ubiquitous use of the term God," even though both recognized that the "old God" of traditional Judeo-Christianity is 'dead.'" Günter Abel highlights Spinoza's focus on a drive to self-preservation, something Nietzsche criticizes in various places. Jan Ohms points to, among other things, Spinoza's attempt to "geometrize" philosophy.²⁵ But contra Schacht, while Nietzsche recognized immediately that Spinoza's God is not the moral God of the Bible, he ultimately concluded that Spinoza's metaphysics did not fully overcome traditional theological thinking, and will remark specifically that behind the veneer, for Spinoza *der alte Gott noch lebe*.²⁶ Contra Abel, while it is true that Nietzsche does come later to argue against an instinctual drive toward self-preservation, at the time of *GS* he is still claiming that there is nothing "older, stronger, more inexorable and unconquerable than this instinct—because this instinct constitutes *the essence* of our species, our herd."²⁷ And contra Ohms, at this period of his thought Nietzsche is still making claims such as "let us introduce the rigor of mathematics into all science as far as possible" and that the world and human activity should be understood according to mathematical necessity; such a "geometric" approach to nature would not have been as repugnant in 1881 as it would have been at other points in his career.²⁸

These interpreters are not necessarily wrong in pointing out these differences between Nietzsche and Spinoza, but they are misleading because they pay insufficient attention—or none at all—to what Nietzsche actually wrote down in his notes. If we look more carefully at these notes however (after both readings), we come to a different answer of what especially interested him. We do not find

²⁵Schacht, *Sense*, 170; Abel, *Dynamik*, 30; Ohms, "Spinozadeutung," 66.

²⁶Schacht does recognize that Nietzsche saw Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura* as still clinging to elements of a metaphysical faith by virtue of its rationalistic worldview (*Sense*, 170). But Schacht never mentions Fischer's book, let alone Nietzsche's notes from his reading that indicate where his interest lay.

²⁷*GS* §1.

²⁸*GS* §246; *HH* I. 106. As to the geometric method as a form of writing or expression, it is interesting to note that in 1872, probably under Goethe's influence, he calls the geometric method an *ästhetische Ausdrucksmittel*, a mask that we must look behind (KSA 7:434, 19[47]). A similar sentiment, expressed more negatively, is found at *BGE* §5. An anonymous reader of this article remarks that Nietzsche's more emphatic criticism of Spinoza five years later in *BGE*, against both the geometric method and the principle of self-preservation, shows that Nietzsche did not continue to take Spinoza seriously past 1881. However my intention here is not to prove that the two philosophers are in fact more similar on these specific issues than has been previously recognized, but rather to show that Nietzsche's notes from Fischer exhibit an interest in Spinoza primarily centered on *different* issues entirely from those previously assumed to be relevant. While the evidence is unambiguous that Nietzsche's view of Spinoza became increasingly negative, I believe his continued engagement with Spinoza on these other themes reveals the opposite of what my reader suggests, that in fact Spinoza maintains a primary place for Nietzsche as a thinker worthy of disputation.

certain topics of broad agreement and others of broad disagreement, but rather a critical engagement with a few primary ideas, first and foremost Spinoza's affect theory and moral psychology. I will consequently focus my attention on that topic, since this is where we find the most direct and significant influence, and where Nietzsche himself admits that he and Spinoza share a *Gesamttendenz*. But this discussion is not entirely isolated: as he put it elsewhere, psychology is "the path to the fundamental problems,"²⁹ and Nietzsche was also interested in how Spinoza's views on moral guilt connect with the latter's broader affirmative stance toward the world called *amor dei*. Thus in my conclusion I will briefly outline how he links these two, the moral and the existential; seeing how Nietzsche relates the two elements with regard to Spinoza helps point the way toward how he does so in his own philosophy.

2. THE MORAL AFFECTS

2.1 *The initial reading of Fischer (1881)*

Although Nietzsche might not be expected to have had much sympathy for a philosopher whose thought could be described as "complete rationalism" or even "complete dogmatism" (as Fischer would describe Spinoza³⁰), where Nietzsche did find some initial affinity, as his letter to Overbeck indicates, is in Spinoza's affective theory of human psychology, including his denial of free will and a voluntary faculty of reason. In this, Spinoza had distinguished himself not only from Descartes before him but also many of the German idealist thinkers who would follow him (for whom Spinoza frequently proved a foil).

Nietzsche, in his 1881 notes from Fischer, observed with interest that according to Spinoza we are psychologically constituted—and therefore entirely determined in our behavior—only by our desires and affects. An 'affect' (*affectus*) for Spinoza is not simply a synonym for what we would colloquially call an emotion: on account of Spinoza's mind-body "parallelism," all mental states must be understood as the modes of thinking corresponding to affections of the body, that is, to the constant changes in the body's power of acting. Depending on their origin and nature, our affects themselves can be further divided into active and passive, with our reasonable ideas corresponding necessarily to active affects.³¹ Reason is thus not an independent faculty; rather, reasonable ideas (the "second and third kinds of knowledge") are the expression of active affects, as opposed to passions.³²

²⁹BGE §23.

³⁰Fischer, *Geschichte*, 548, 584.

³¹BGE §12. Though Fischer does not utilize the terminology of 'drives' with any special emphasis, Nietzsche groups 'drives' (*Trieben*) together with 'affects' in many of his notes from the early 1880s, and hence I will not sharply distinguish between the terms (e.g. KSA 10:268, 7[76]: *Die Thiere folgen ihren Trieben und Affekten: wir sind Thiere. Thun wir etwas Anderes?*). Nietzsche's notes are not detailed enough to determine whether he understood these terms in precisely the same way that Spinoza meant them (which would be an interpretive issue in any case). At the very least, his notes do not sharply differentiate himself from Spinoza in regard to what these terms *mean* so much as they do regarding how these phenomena supposedly arise and behave. For a strong discussion of what Nietzsche meant by terms like 'Trieb' and 'Affekt,' see Richardson, *System*, 21–34.

³²*Ethics* 11p40s2

The *summum bonum* of Spinoza's philosophy is for us to constitute ourselves, so far as it is possible, entirely by such reasonable affects.³³ Though somewhat obscure even within the *Ethics* itself, the necessary relationship between bodies and thoughts implies that the power of ideas over each other must be understood in a way somehow parallel to what we would today call Newtonian relations of force among bodies (explored by Spinoza in the digression following *Ethics* IIp13).³⁴ Insofar as reasonable ideas possess motivational force over other ideas, it is not from their being true, but only from their corresponding to more powerful affects than those others.³⁵ Thus while reason, as Fischer points out, is the very power of the mind, it can nonetheless be overwhelmed by the multitude of passions, which result from external causes.³⁶

While Nietzsche was drawn to this definition of the human soul as an endless competition of affects for dominance—in *BGE* he too would call the soul a “social structure of drives and affects”—he could not accept the latter's sharp distinction between the affects of passion and reason. In his notes, Nietzsche immediately objects to Spinoza's ideas about the inherent goodness of reason and knowledge—not because he himself prefers un-reason and ignorance, but rather because Spinoza has mischaracterized what reason is. According to Spinoza, reason itself is something harmonious, a peaceful repose above the turbulent passions, and to achieve our greatest good, we must orient ourselves toward achieving it.³⁷ But for Nietzsche, this is Spinoza's fundamental error (*Grundirrtum*): there is nothing essential about human nature that makes reason inherently more valuable: the drive for knowledge and reason is just one more affect among all the others, and it is a prejudice to isolate any one of these as our ‘true’ nature. We can find a similar view expressed a few years earlier in *Daybreak* §109, where Nietzsche wrote of six ways in which one drive can moderate another (some of which resemble Spinoza's own techniques for moderating the passions as described in *Ethics* V).³⁸ While such moderating actions are possible, “that one *desires* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all . . . does not stand within our power . . . in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another drive* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is torturing us.”³⁹ A human being is constituted by this endless struggle of various drives, and there is no naturally superior resolution as Spinoza implies. The apparently tranquil nature of understanding or *intelligere*, which Spinoza valued so highly, stems not from its being a higher power but rather from its

³³As Nietzsche summarizes this position in a later note (KSA 12:131, 2[131]): *Glück und Erkenntniß naiv in Abhängigkeit gesetzt.*

³⁴This is admittedly a necessary simplification of one of the more complex series of claims in the *Ethics*. See especially *Ethics* IIp7, IIp12, IIp19, III d3, IVp1. For a good recent treatment, see Della Rocca, *Metaphysical Psychology*. I will further discuss Spinoza's affect theory in greater detail below.

³⁵Spinoza in the *Ethics* refers to three kinds of knowledge, the first referring to knowledge *ex signis* or from *experientia vaga*, the second and third referring to *ratio* and *scientia intuitiva*. For simplicity's sake, I follow common usage in referring the term ‘reason’ to the latter two types of knowledge. (*Ethics* IIp40s2, Fischer, *Geschichte*, 465–69).

³⁶I will refrain here from judgments about whether Fischer accurately characterizes Spinoza.

³⁷See especially Fischer, *Geschichte*, 518–19, the section entitled “Der mächtigste Affekt.”

³⁸Nietzsche had in fact been connecting reason to the affects as early as KSA 7:326, 9[139].

³⁹D §109; emphases in original.

representing a kind of “reconciliation” or “final accounting” at the end of a long internal struggle. Because it reflects a certain calm after the storm, as it were, it is viewed as something “conciliatory, just, and good”—and hence Spinoza is erroneously led to his claim that human beings are united in reason and divided by passions. Knowledge is not to be scorned—Nietzsche in this phase of his thought saw it as quite valuable, and even pleasurable⁴⁰—but not because it is the ultimate achievement of tranquility; it too embodies and produces struggle, and offers no promises of a conclusive peace. The reasonable harmony, the overcoming of conflict, that Spinoza viewed as the best life is in Nietzsche’s eyes not life at all: “concord and lack of struggle—that would be death!”⁴¹

In short, Nietzsche’s initial reading of Spinoza embraced but recharacterized that thinker’s depiction of an agonistic struggle of the affects, while remaining open to the possibility, so crucial to Spinoza’s overall project in the *Ethics*, that the affects can be successfully rearranged and reordered.⁴² Hence one’s philosophical project can be, as Nietzsche’s postcard called for, *making* knowledge the most powerful affect.⁴³

2.2 A Changing Attitude

Over the next several years, Nietzsche will mention Spinoza dozens of times in his notes, before returning to Fischer’s book in 1887. During this time Nietzsche continues to view Spinoza as a worthy interlocutor on the subject of our affective constitution, though the tone of his comments turns increasingly negative. I will quickly highlight two notes from this period that stand out as representative of both where Nietzsche’s interest lay and how his opinion of Spinoza continued to transform.

An 1884 note, for example, complains about Spinoza’s hypocrisy (*Heuchelei*) in saying that we can overcome our affects (an interpretation that will find public expression a few years later in *BGE*, where he polemicizes Spinoza’s “naïvely advocated destruction of the affects through their analysis and vivisection”⁴⁴). His complaint concerns not Spinoza’s picture of a combative struggle of the affects, but rather the implication that there is a subject independent of those affects, a will which can judge, dissect, and replace those affects with “better” ones. Our power is supposed to be always fully actualized, and moreover this actualization *is* the subject: how can it therefore maintain an objective self-image, in order to change itself toward some conception of the good? The independent subject is a fiction: really “the will to overcome an affect is ultimately only the will of another, or of several other, affects.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰E.g. *D* §45, 429, and 550. Admittedly, the discussion at *D* §560 complicates the question of how such change is effected. Discussing this point with the necessary care would require a greater digression into Nietzsche’s views of free will than is possible here. I thank an anonymous reader for bringing this aphorism to my attention.

⁴¹KSA 9:490, 11[132]; cf. also KSA 9:517–18, 11[193] together with GS §§57, 249, and 333.

⁴²See for example KSA 9:526–27, 11[220] where he speaks of *die Möglichkeit, die einzelnen Menschen in ihren Affekten neu zu bestimmen und zu ordnen*.

⁴³See KSA 12:531–32, 10[133]; also KSA 12:323–26, 8[1].

⁴⁴KSA 11:226, 26[285], and also *BGE* §198.

⁴⁵As he puts it in *BGE* §117; see also *BGE* §17, which denies the “I” that thinks.

An 1885 note continues this objection about Spinoza and the independent subject.⁴⁶ Here he again notes with disdain the human propensity to see oneself as an independent cause, an actor: “[T]ucked in that judgment is the entire full deep belief [*der ganze volle tiefe Glauben*] in subject-and-predicate or cause-and-effect.” This false belief is explained as follows. When one notices that something happens, one searches for a reason, an intention behind it, and most of all one who intended it: a subject, an actor. Man is perhaps dependent on such causal explanations to live (Nietzsche calls them here a psychological compulsion [*psychologische Nöthigung*]). This prejudice leads to the presupposition that all acts have an actor (originally man saw all happening as *action*), and this is the origin of the belief in the subject behind the deed.⁴⁷ To which Nietzsche asks, “[I]s this belief in the subject-and-predicate concept not a great idiocy?”⁴⁸ He says that this belief in causality lies in the inconceivability of a happening without an intention, but that in fact, once we eliminate the possibility of a *telos*, we eliminate the possibilities of causation in this sense as well.

I do not wish to put too much interpretive weight on an unpublished note, but it is relevant to observe that Nietzsche contrasts his own position here to “Spinoza and his causalism.”⁴⁹ This is a highly questionable interpretation, though it is difficult to know whether he misread Fischer initially or whether he simply misremembered. Nietzsche is right that causality is at the heart of Spinoza’s philosophy of nature: all events in nature have an intelligible cause, and there is nothing in nature that does not have an effect.⁵⁰ But Nietzsche is mistaken if he is alleging that Spinoza believes a subject ‘causes’ his behavior in this polemicized sense of the term. Rather, for Spinoza the individual is constituted by her passions and actions, which *express* her nature. Nor is there any notion of potential, unexpressed power; as one modern commentator puts it, all power in Spinoza is “act, active, and actual.”⁵¹ There is in fact quite a good deal in common between Nietzsche and Spinoza’s expressive pictures of the relation between an actor and his affects; as Fischer puts it, and as Nietzsche himself came to believe, “affects are the power expression of human nature”⁵² (as I will discuss in greater detail below).

But Nietzsche in this period fails to recognize such commonality; his comments about Spinoza from this period are noticeably harsher, as is clearly evidenced by his scattered attacks in *BGE*.⁵³ But despite (or perhaps because of) this shift in at-

⁴⁶KSA 12: 101–3, 2[83]. The rest of this paragraph’s summary comes from this same note; translations are my own.

⁴⁷The discussion in this note is furthered by the treatment of action found in *GM* II.4, on the origins of punishment. Though there Nietzsche presents a stage of human life in which the concept of free will is absent or underdeveloped, the centrality of *action* is still inherent in the collective demand for retribution.

⁴⁸KSA 12:101–3, 2[83]: *Sollte dieser Glaube an den Subjekt- und Prädikat-Begriff nicht eine große Dummheit sein?*

⁴⁹KSA 12:101–3, 2[83].

⁵⁰Fischer (*Geschichte*, 555) calls it a *System der reinen Causalität*; cf. e.g. Spinoza, *Ethics* Ip29, Ip36.

⁵¹Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 97; Deleuze explores the topic of the always-active nature of *potentia* in far greater detail than I can here.

⁵²Fischer, *Geschichte*, 485. On Nietzsche’s similar view, see e.g. KSA 12:531–32, 10[133].

⁵³E.g. *BGE* §§5, 198.

titude from viewing Spinoza as a pre-cursor to his now being an object of polemic, Nietzsche re-reads Fischer in 1887, turning again first and foremost to the same themes—the struggle of the affects, virtue, and freedom—that he had associated with Spinoza for the last half-decade. Given that these topics would play an important part in his next book, it is not surprising that he returned to Fischer’s text just then. But re-reading these chapters, Nietzsche now recognizes the underlying similarities on precisely these issues. If Spinoza’s “causalism” proved a foil in the mid-1880s, Fischer’s book now becomes a major source of ideas for Nietzsche’s next publication.

2.3 *Spinoza and the Genealogy of Morals*

Nietzsche’s polemic against the idea of the subject, a “doer” independent of his deeds, is manifest in both *TSZ* and *BGE*, but achieves its fullest and most famous expression in *GM* I.13.⁵⁴ While Spinoza’s name does not appear there, I believe that if we look at what Fischer’s book has to say about this theme, we will see a direct engagement on this issue, one that has been unexplored in the literature.

Nietzsche carefully re-read Fischer between writing *BGE* and *GM*, and the influence of this reading is manifest. Not only is Spinoza mentioned four times, but Fischer’s book is the source for the Arnold Geulinx quote at III.18 and the Feurbach quote at III.3.⁵⁵ But individual quotations or name-references aside, the most sustained engagement with Fischer’s book is found in *GM* I’s discussion of the relationship between affects, action, and the origins of morality. That Spinoza’s name is absent here should not entirely surprise us; the more one studies Nietzsche, the more one sees the truth in a claim like Greg Whitlock’s, that “Nietzsche frequently covered the sources of his ideas, with the intensity of his efforts generally varying proportionally with the importance of the contribution.”⁵⁶ I do not mean to imply that Nietzsche is merely copying Fischer here, or that he would never have reached his own position without having read about Spinoza: his stance at times departs from Spinoza’s in crucial ways.⁵⁷ But it appears quite clear that this reading inspired his thinking and sharply shaped the contours of how he would express his own point of view in *GM*.

I recognize that the claim of ‘influence’ is a notoriously difficult one to prove rigorously, and that this exploration must ultimately remain speculative (especially as Nietzsche makes only one explicit reference to Fischer’s book in *GM*—the dismissive discussion at II.15). Without doubt, Nietzsche may have ultimately come to many of the same ideas even had he not read (or re-read) Fischer, and with some hermeneutical acumen one can perhaps already find traces of them latent

⁵⁴E.g. *TSZ* “Von den Hinterweltlern”; *BGE* §§17, 19.

⁵⁵For the former, see Fischer, *Geschichte*, 27 together with KSA 9:518–19, 11[194]; for the latter see Fischer, *Geschichte*, 561 together with KSA 12: 259–70, 7[4]. Colli and Montinari note the Geulinx/Fischer connection at KSA 14:381 but ignore the Feuerbach reference altogether. Clark and Swensen, in the extensive back matter to their translation of *GM*, refer the reader to Feuerbach’s book itself, ignoring that Nietzsche had copied the specific quote from Fischer (*Genealogy of Morality*, 151).

⁵⁶Whitlock, “Boscovich,” 218.

⁵⁷It may also be the case that as he had not in fact read Spinoza’s text itself, he was hesitant to actually directly engage with him on a theoretical issue (as opposed to merely making glancing asides, as was his wont).

in earlier writings. But the evidence is quite convincing that *GM* reveals numerous traces of Fischer's book in both content and form. Understanding Nietzsche as following the same train of thought as Spinoza on these issues will better enable us to make sense of some difficult concepts, as well as see the possible motivation behind important changes that occur in Nietzsche's thought during this period. I will try to demonstrate this in the following way. Many of *GM*'s themes had already been adumbrated in Nietzsche's earlier works. The clearest example of this is *BGE* §260, a paragraph that has been called "the best short guide to the core argument of [*GM*'s] First Essay," and where Nietzsche *in brevis* distinguishes master from slave moralities.⁵⁸ To show that Nietzsche's reading of Fischer in between his writing of the two works had an impact on the later book, I will attempt to answer the following: are there significant changes to Nietzsche's account of the origins of morality as presented in *GM* (especially as compared to the immediately previous accounts in *BGE*), and if so can these changes be explained if we see Nietzsche as following Fischer's lead in his thinking about these issues? I believe the answer to be yes, and I will discuss what I consider the three most significant innovations (or alterations) that appear in the later book's account of the origins of morality: (a) the polemic against the free subject in the particular context of master versus slave morality; (b) the focus on the deceptive (rather than just the weak) character of the slave; and (c) the role that *ressentiment* plays in the account of morality's origins. All three themes are absent from the earlier account at *BGE* §260, but fundamental to the story as presented in *GM*. At the same time, all three have posed serious questions for contemporary interpreters, and so if I can show that Nietzsche's thinking on these themes followed the same line of thought presented in Fischer, it will provide a tool to help us understand what Nietzsche was driving at.

In the next section I will take the following approach: I will highlight each of these ideas as presented in *GM*, show where in Fischer I believe Nietzsche drew inspiration, and show how contemporary debates on Nietzsche's philosophy may be illuminated by seeing the "Spinozistic" background of these ideas (while recognizing that Nietzsche may at the same time have maintained important reservations or differences with Spinoza).⁵⁹ In what follows, I do not pretend to provide conclusive interpretations to these big problems, but rather only to point the way to what I believe is the proper orientation we must take to understand Nietzsche's intentions.

A. *Doer and Deed*. Though the polemic against the myth of the free actor finds earlier articulations in Nietzsche, as mentioned above, *GM* emphasizes the relation of this myth to the birth of morality much more explicitly than did those previous discussions. The false belief in the free actor is arguably even more fundamental to what Nietzsche defines as slave morality than is the 'good and evil' distinction, as this is one of the prime factors behind that distinction to be made: the slave believes the master could choose to act otherwise, and condemns him for not do-

⁵⁸Leiter, *Morality*, 193. Nietzsche himself calls *GM* a "supplement and clarification" to *BGE* on the former's inside cover.

⁵⁹I will only draw from material in chapters of Fischer's book that we know Nietzsche to have read.

ing the ‘right’ thing.⁶⁰ Nietzsche illustrates what he means here with a metaphor: though the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash (*Leuchten*), this flash is not in fact an action of a subject. Rather, this flash, this expression of power, is the lightning. The same holds for human activity. One cannot separate “strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum . . . which was *free* to express strength or not to do so.”⁶¹ There is no “could have done otherwise” and it is thus absurd to demand of strength that it express itself as weakness, or vice versa. No doer exists “behind” the deed, who expends his power according to his whim: the deed is everything.⁶²

This is a difficult and in many ways counter-intuitive claim, one that has provoked a lot of debate in the literature, but we can take a first step toward understanding this idea by seeing its precedent in Fischer’s book. Although today Spinoza is popularly known as a quintessential rationalist, Fischer points out that for Spinoza, the essence of a thing is not its reason, but rather its power of acting.⁶³ Fischer illustrates this idea with a meteorological metaphor nearly identical to the one Nietzsche used: a person acts according to the power of his nature exactly as the sun does when it shines (*leuchtet*). Our power (*Macht*) is not a potential capacity that we can use at will; rather who we are, our affective make-up, is simply the expression of the body’s determined power of acting, for our “affects are the power expressions of human nature.”⁶⁴ There is no arbitrariness (*Willkür*), no indifference point from which a subject could proceed either down the road of activity or that of passivity. “Power consists only in activity; contrariwise, my powerlessness consists in suffering [*Leiden*].”⁶⁵ This activity defines our virtue, for there is no other virtue besides power, and its opposite is not vice, but powerlessness (*Ohnmacht*). Passivity, to the degree that it can even be considered something real, is merely obstructed activity; the term expresses nothing positive. Fischer likens this to shadows that result when sunshine is obstructed: although the sun is an “inadequate cause” of such shadows, they express nothing of the sun itself.⁶⁶

But while activity should not be understood as controlled by a free agent, its manifestations are not therefore arbitrary. Just as Nietzsche claims in I.13 that strength necessarily desires to “overcome” and “become master,” Fischer writes that according to Spinoza we always strive to become “more powerful [*mächtiger*], stronger [*kraftvoller*], more capable [*tüchtiger*].” The popular mind, however, believes otherwise, and holds individuals accountable or responsible for their deeds. Hence, Fischer writes, we hate a man who has done us even a small injury,

⁶⁰Robert Solomon disagrees, seeing the meekness and timidity as at the heart of Nietzsche’s complaint (“One Hundred Years,” 108). “Freedom” in Nietzsche is admittedly a complex issue; I refer here specifically to the “superlative metaphysical sense” that Nietzsche considers both reactive and simplistic (*BGE* §21).

⁶¹*GMI*.13.

⁶²For a more in-depth investigation of what it could mean to understand the deed as an expression of the doer, rather than something separate, see Pippin, *Psychology*, 67–84.

⁶³Discussed throughout chapter 19 of Fischer, *Geschichte*.

⁶⁴Fischer, *Geschichte*, 485. As for the emphasis on the body in particular in Fischer’s interpretation, see *Geschichte*, 506: *die Ursache der Ideen ist der Geist, die Ursache der Affectionen ist der Körper* (*Geschichte*, 506).

⁶⁵Fischer, *Geschichte*, 506.

⁶⁶Fischer, *Geschichte*, 506–7.

but not the lightning bolt that has destroyed our house. The bolt was not free to do otherwise.⁶⁷

Nietzsche is obviously trying to disabuse his readers of this fiction of the free actor, but as scholars have pointed out, it is difficult to make sense of what Nietzsche's alternative picture looks like. Rudiger Bittner has diagnosed the difficulty here quite carefully.⁶⁸ In brief, if we are to avoid distinguishing a doer as something separate from its deeds, then it might seem that we should understand Nietzsche's ontology as entailing only actions, and not agents. That is to say, there are no *things* as such, only endless manifestations of force, or in Nietzschean terms, wills to power. But as Bittner objects, such an interpretation immediately raises many questions of its own. It is difficult to see how a will to power, rather than an actor *with* a will to power, can become a master or slave, for example. Robert Pippin makes a similar objection to such an interpretation: "[T]here cannot just be subduing events. *Someone* must be subdued and held in subjection. . . . We cannot just have a becoming master event. We are left with a person, not a residue of an event."⁶⁹

But if Bittner and Pippin's objections obtain, and we must indeed focus on doers rather than on deeds, it would appear to bring us back to enduring substances, which, as Bittner notes, Nietzsche elsewhere polemicizes. Bittner defines substance here along Aristotelian lines, specifically as something that stays the same over time while undergoing a change in its properties.⁷⁰ And indeed, if this is Nietzsche's only alternative, then he does seem to have painted himself into a corner: an ontology purely of action seems to leave no room for masters and slaves as such; an ontology of substance would seem to leave room for the doer-deed dichotomy that was supposed to be undermined. However, seeing Nietzsche as guided by Spinoza here can help bridge this gap. For Spinoza, humans are not substances but modes, or finite moments of the infinite power of nature (i.e. what Spinoza calls *Deus sive Natura*). A mode is defined not as some enduring presence but as the specific activity that follows necessarily from the power expression (*Kraftäusserung*) of an actualized essence (essence understood here as an effective capacity [*Wirkungsvermögen*] for action).⁷¹ Hence the sun *is* its shining just as for Nietzsche the lightning *is* its flash. Similarly, a human being, as a mode of nature, must be understood as essentially its activity, though the (inevitable) interference of other modes often restrains or negates this activity, resulting in both active and passive affections.

Despite its basis in activity, however, this explanation does not fall prey to the objections mentioned above, for it still allows us to speak of actual individuals. Just as Nietzsche identifies activity with will to power, Spinoza identifies it with the *conatus*, the striving for self-preservation and increase in power.⁷² The *conatus* must

⁶⁷Fischer, *Geschichte*, 379. Nietzsche, it appears, conflated Fischer's two related images, the sun's necessary shining (*leuchten*) and the unaccountable lightning bolt, into his own single image of the lightning bolt's necessary flash (*leuchten*) at *GMI*.13.

⁶⁸Bittner, "Masters."

⁶⁹Pippin, "Lightning," 52.

⁷⁰Bittner, "Masters," 41.

⁷¹Fischer, *Geschichte*, 381–82.

⁷²On the similarities and differences between the will to power and the *conatus*, see Wurzer, *Nietzsche und Spinoza*, 196–200. Fischer, more than Spinoza himself in my opinion, emphasizes the *conatus* not just with self-preservation but with a thing's striving for continual increase in power (e.g. Fischer, *Geschichte*, 381).

be understood not as a possession of an individual but rather as its very definition, its actual expression.⁷³ It is what defines a grouping of parts as a single coherent individual, a single unified drive, rather than as a multiplicity. It individuates an actor as a coherent whole. Insofar as that common drive is maintained, it makes sense to speak of a single mode, one which strives toward certain ends, which has a mind, and which engages in actions (or is subdued in its attempts to act). Though such a mode is never free from the causal chain of nature, it nevertheless can be understood as acting for itself, and “in its action the nature of the thing appears in its complete plenitude of power [*ganzen Machtvollkommenheit*], so far as it extends.”⁷⁴

Hence an ontology of nature as activity does not preclude making sense of individual actors with specific differences, as Bittner asserts it must. I believe this to be, *mutatis mutandis*, very close to what Nietzsche is trying to express in *GMII.13*. To define a thing by its action does not eliminate the possibility of speaking of a thing as such. A unified will to power can itself individuate, and, even if properly understood as action rather than as substance, still allow us to speak of an enduring identity through time.⁷⁵ Because wills can manifest themselves in so many alternative ways, human diversity can be accounted for, and it is even possible to speak to some degree of types.

Exploring how such a process occurs would require too great a digression into each thinker’s metaphysics than is possible here.⁷⁶ More interesting for our purposes here are the *results* of such expressions of power: just as Nietzsche uses his celestial metaphor to illustrate the necessity of both strength and weakness, that is, noble and slave, so too does Fischer use his to explain Spinoza’s parallel dyad of free man and slave.

B. *The Deceptive Slave*. Both Nietzsche and Fischer’s metaphors (the sun metaphor is not found in Spinoza himself) invite an obvious rejoinder: to be sure, it is absurd to imagine the sun choosing not to shine, or a lightning bolt restraining itself from flashing according to its potency, but human nature seems qualitatively different. If power cannot but express itself, how are apparent manifestations of

⁷³The identity of an individual thing with its conatus goes back to Spinoza’s earliest writings and is central to his ontology of individuality (see e.g. his *Cogitata Metaphysica* I.6 §10). For a further treatment of this identity see Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, 97–104.

⁷⁴Fischer, *Geschichte*, 382. The picture in Spinoza is admittedly more complicated than I have laid out here, as Spinoza can be said to offer two account of individuation, first as a characteristic relation of motion and rest among component parts, and second as an intensive degree of power. But Fischer hardly discusses the first type, perhaps because he defines rest as restrained movement (509) and therefore as subsumed under the understanding of an individual as a quantum of activity/power (342 *inter alia*).

⁷⁵I realize it may be objected that Nietzsche would never accept the metaphysics that underlie this Spinozistic picture, given his numerous attacks on substance and the fundamental role that substance plays in Spinoza’s worldview. Does it make sense to speak of modes without substance? For Spinoza, certainly not. But perhaps something like this is what Nietzsche had in mind when he spoke of his own philosophy as *chaos sive natura* (KSA 9:519–20, 11 [197]). While this is not the place to explore what such an ontology would look like, I believe a compelling attempt has been made to understand Nietzsche precisely this way by Whitlock, who has shown Nietzsche as attempting a world picture that “completely inverts the metaphysics of Spinoza” (“Boscovich,” 207); see also Babich, “Chaos.”

⁷⁶For a fuller example of such an interpretation of individuation in Nietzsche, see Richardson, *Nietzsche’s System*, 44–52. For Spinoza, see the entries on ‘individual’ and ‘power’ in Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, as well as Balibar, “Individuality.”

human weakness to be accounted for? How can both Nietzsche and Spinoza, after positing a universal drive for power, then divide humanity in two, for the former, into noble man and slave, for the latter, into free man and slave?⁷⁷

Again, Nietzsche here follows Spinoza's lead, using the explanation of this "paradox" to elucidate the origins of morality. To be sure, Nietzsche's noble/slave dichotomy is not identical to Spinoza's free man/slave dichotomy: if Nietzsche is sincere in presenting nobles as those with the "innocent conscience of the beast of prey . . . [who] murder, arson, rape, and torture, exhilarated and undisturbed of soul," then nothing could be further from Spinoza's free man, who values peace as supreme.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, one important commonality unites both dichotomies, namely that the actions of the noble and the free man follow immediately from their own nature, while those of the slave are a mediated, reactive result of their weakness.

What distinguishes noble from slave? The title of *GM I* implies that the primary distinction between the groups are two different value systems. To quickly summarize, the noble man "conceives the basic concept 'good' in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of 'bad,' which he associates with the weak, contemptible other."⁷⁹ The slave, however, does not merely reverse the polarity of the terms to make himself the good one and the other bad. Rather, he begins by saying "no" to what is 'outside,' what is 'different.'" This action is "fundamentally reaction": he first labels his enemy as the evil one, and only then "as an afterthought and pendant, a 'good one'—himself!"⁸⁰ But behind these two evaluative frameworks lies something even more elemental, the false belief in free will as just discussed. Slave morality is contemptible for Nietzsche not only because it vindicates weakness as a good, but even more so because it is based fundamentally on a lie that the slave fabricates, that the noble (as well as he himself) had the free will to choose the actions he performed. In reality it is absurd, Nietzsche tells us, to demand of the strong that they express themselves as weak, for only the "seduction of language" and the errors "petrified in it" conceive effects as conditioned by a subject that could have done otherwise. But this falsehood is definitional to the slave mentality. "This type of man *needs* to believe in a neutral independent 'subject,' prompted by an instinct for self-preservation and self-affirmation in which every lie is sanctified."⁸¹ Though this judgment is empirically false, it nonetheless leads to the origin of good-evil morality: "this sublime self-deception . . . interprets weakness as freedom, and their being thus-and-thus as to their merit."⁸²

Nietzsche rails against the celebration of weakness (and the simultaneous pretention to have freely chosen weakness) inherent in slave morality, and the colorful

⁷⁷Though *BGE* §260 spoke of master and slave moralities, *GM* generally replaces the former term with 'noble,' and I will follow that practice accordingly. As will be seen below, this term coincides much more closely to Fischer's term for the free man, *großmütig*, though admittedly Nietzsche prefers the adjective 'vornehm.'

⁷⁸*GM I.11*; *Ethics* IVp69.

⁷⁹*GM I.11*.

⁸⁰*GM I.10–11*.

⁸¹*GM I.13*; emphasis in original.

⁸²*GM I.13*.

varieties in which he presents its dishonest nature (such as that encountered by “Mr. Rash and Curious” in I.14) need no recitation here. But the question remains: if all actions express a will to power, how does it happen that humankind gets divided into two, some noble and others slave? Understanding the origin of “slavery” would seem to be fundamental to understanding the origin of conventional morality and in turn Nietzsche’s attack on it,⁸³ but the question of the cause of this bifurcation remains an open one in contemporary scholarship. I will quickly present three of the more compelling answers to this question in the recent literature in order to show the wide range of contemporary debate on the issue, and then show how basing our interpretation on Fischer’s explanation can help resolve some of the disagreements and lacunae in these contemporary analyses.

For R. Jay Wallace, what defines slaves is that they lack the worldly goods that masters have, for example “status, material possessions, and above all political power and influence.”⁸⁴ It is these structural conditions, and a realization or expectation that one will never possess those goods, which give rise to *ressentiment*, which is an “expression of one’s negative emotional orientation toward the powerful.”⁸⁵ But it seems to me that understanding master and slave in terms of ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ raises as many questions as it answers. For one, sharp class distinctions are as alive today as ever, but we do not see the rich and poor today expressing the master and slave moralities as Nietzsche portrays them. Furthermore, if *ressentiment* results from sharp class divides, we would expect at least some positive sentiment from Nietzsche regarding more materially equal societies that do not produce *ressentiment* (or which are at least less prone to it). But what could be less ambiguous than that Nietzsche regards such praises of equality as symptomatic of modern decadence?⁸⁶

Christopher Janaway has emphasized a second way of understanding slaves, namely that of an inherited belief system, one which in the past accorded, and to some degree still does accord, with common emotions of fear, hatred, and the like.⁸⁷ This interpretation jibes with a common-sense conception of morality as a belief system to which we were inculcated during our formative years, one which is at least somewhat arbitrary and which we could abandon should we so choose. And indeed, Janaway’s description does present morality as something that can be shrugged off with minimal difficulty. He pictures the reader of *GM* asking herself the following:

⁸³Aaron Ridley, for example, calls the slave revolt in morality ‘probably the single most important event in Nietzsche’s reconstruction of our moral past’ (*Conscience*, 15).

⁸⁴Wallace, “Slave Revolt,” 116.

⁸⁵Wallace, “Slave Revolt,” 117–18.

⁸⁶To be fair to Wallace, Nietzsche does at one point mention the master’s political superiority. But he then says “the case that interests us” is rather mastery as a “character trait” (*GM* I.5), not as social status. If social status were truly the determining element, it would be difficult to understand how priests as a class could be called the “most powerless,” and why the powerful would sometimes experience resentment themselves (*GM* I.7, I.10).

⁸⁷Technically, Janaway says that the modern reader is not herself a slave, only the inheritor of “an affective allegiance to what counted as good in the conceptual scheme of slave morality” (*Selflessness*, 46 *inter alia*). Nonetheless, Janaway admits that slave morality itself is alive (and dominant) today in this inherited form, even though the conditions of its origins have disappeared.

Suppose I adhere to the concepts “good” and “evil” because I have inherited certain inclinations from a prior stage of development in which forming the concepts “good” and “evil” answered the affective needs of *ressentiment*. Suppose that I also recognize in myself some inclination—mixed with aversion—toward the noble mode of being and valuing. Do I wish to continue adhering to the system of judging according to the concepts of “good” and evil”?

Nietzsche, it is claimed, hopes such a reader will “feel differently” after reading his book.⁸⁸ And Janaway is obviously right that Nietzsche hopes *GM* will produce some emotional response in his readers against conventional morality. But if L.13 is supposed to be at all indicative of morality’s origins, it would seem that we must understand moral values as essentially *expressive* of our natures, and not as an accidental condition, that is, something simply inherited by us that we can maintain or dispose of as we please. The lamb cannot simply recognize the inferiority of its position, and adopt the bird of prey mindset instead.

Brian Leiter strikes me as making the opposite mistake. This is to see human diversity as being the result of certain psycho-physical “type facts,” which are causally and explanatorily primary “in the sense that all other facts about a person (e.g. his beliefs, his actions, his life trajectory) are explicable” as the result of the constitution he has.⁸⁹ A slavish or noble psychology is among such possible type facts.⁹⁰ Leiter supports this interpretation by invoking a metaphor Nietzsche offers near the beginning of *GM*: “Our thoughts, values, every ‘yes,’ ‘no,’ ‘if’ and ‘but’ grow from us with the same inevitability as fruits borne on the tree . . . evidence of one will, one health, one soil, one sun.”⁹¹ Though Leiter does recognize that culture and environment can play an influencing role in determining our being, our type-facts are primary, as they “circumscribe the range of possible trajectories.”⁹² But while this interpretation stays true to the spirit of Nietzsche’s naturalism, it would seem to allow little room for individual change (indeed, Leiter says such type-facts are “largely immutable”⁹³). This strikes me as problematic for multiple reasons, not least because *GM* is telling a story not just about two distinct types of moralities (as *BGE* §260 does) but about the victory of slave morality over the strong. The strong have not simply kept quiet since the slave revolt: they have somehow been *transformed* into weak ones themselves. Leiter addresses this point in a brief footnote, but his concession, that “the behavior of the strong may, at some level, be caused (via some mechanism) to change when the normative universe they inhabit condemns their behavior,” seems to undermine the centrality of type-facts he otherwise emphasizes.⁹⁴ If “some mechanism” changes our type-facts, then they seem ultimately derivative from other factor(s), not fundamentally determinative.

⁸⁸Janaway, *Selflessness*, 105.

⁸⁹Leiter, *Morality*, 91.

⁹⁰Leiter, *Morality*, 217.

⁹¹Leiter, *Morality*, 95, quoting *GM*Pref §2. Incidentally, this image too may come from Fischer, who claims that a “particular fruit is the necessary product of a particular plant,” i.e. that human activity is the necessary result of our particular nature (*Geschichte*, 512).

⁹²Leiter, *Morality*, 81–83

⁹³Leiter, *Morality*, 91.

⁹⁴Leiter, *Morality*, 216.

Though all these interpretations do find partial support in Nietzsche's writing, all strike me as ultimately unsatisfactory for the reasons mentioned. Where to begin then in understanding slave morality? Nietzsche says elsewhere, "[M]orality is the sign-language of the affects."⁹⁵ And given his frequent association from 1881 on of Spinoza with discussions of the affects (and his multiple readings of the chapter on the affects in Fischer), it should come as no surprise that Fischer's discussion of the topic proves a key place to start in our understanding of morality's origins. Reading Nietzsche as following Spinoza's lead here clarifies this idea in a way that stays true to Nietzsche's naturalism while still recognizing the tremendous role played by historical and cultural components and the potential for individual change, all crucial to his philosophy.

The titular theme of *GMI*, the distinction between the two types of moralities, can be found explicitly in Fischer's book. The relevant passage is noteworthy not only because of its marked resemblance to what Nietzsche will write in *GM*, but also because of the connection it explicitly draws between the origin of slave morality and the illusory conception of freedom explored above:

Good or bad, in the Ethical sense,⁹⁶ are those affects which either advance or inhibit human power [*Macht*]. They are as real as the capacity [*Vermögen*] of human nature. Good and evil, in the sense of customary morality, are arbitrary, and therefore imaginary and unclear representations. Thus the judgments of this morality, which speaks always only about good and evil actions, are baseless and vacuous, because they create their predicates from the imagination and attribute to phenomena what does not in fact accord with them.⁹⁷

Although Spinoza does not himself linguistically make this bad/evil (*schlecht/böse*) distinction—he consistently uses the Latin '*malus*'—the theoretical distinction does exist in the *Ethics* between a moralistic *bonum* and *malum* that arise from the imagination (which Spinoza dismisses) and another *bonum* and *malum* that follow from human nature (which the *Ethics* is designed to help us recognize).⁹⁸ Fischer is fully aware of this double meaning of the terms, and takes a major step toward Nietzsche's bad/evil distinction by translating Spinoza with either *schlecht* or *böse* or depending on the context.⁹⁹

In addition to the linguistic difference, the illusion of freedom is, just as in Nietzsche, central to Spinoza's explanation of the origin of the moralistic (good-evil) imagination. For Spinoza, there is perhaps no greater sign of an enslaved mind and a theological mindset than the imagination of a "dominion within the dominion"

⁹⁵BGE §187.

⁹⁶'Ethical' should be taken in the sense of Spinoza's own philosophy as presented in his magnum opus *Ethics*, and not as a loose synonym for 'moral.' In the revised *Geschichte* (1898), 524, Fischer changed *sittlichen* to *realer*, perhaps to clarify any confusion.

⁹⁷Fischer, *Geschichte*, 510. Though Nietzsche does not unequivocally advocate the good-bad over the good-evil morality as explicitly as does Spinoza, he does maintain a clear affinity toward it: "[I]t has long since been abundantly clear what my *aim* is, what the aim of that dangerous slogan is that is inscribed at the head of my last book *Beyond Good and Evil*.—At least this does *not* mean 'Beyond Good and Bad'" (*GMI*.17; emphases in original).

⁹⁸Curley, in his edition, translates '*malus*' and its cognates sometimes as 'bad,' sometimes as 'evil.'

⁹⁹Fischer does not maintain absolute consistency in applying these two terms throughout his entire book.

of nature, free from its laws and able to voluntarily choose its own actions. The slave's mindset is fundamentally world-denying: to explain away his own lack of power, he sees the world as inherently defective, and makes evaluative judgments based on how much it fails to correlate to his ideas of what the world *should* be. Where it is lacking, he names this absence or privation "evil." This worldview is a "reverse idealism based on imaginary concepts of freedom and ideal ends."¹⁰⁰ Behind these illusory moral valuations lies a fundamental misconception about human freedom, the correction of which is one of the goals of Spinoza's philosophy to effect: "[A]s there is [in reality] no choice between activity and passion, no capriciousness [*Willkür*] between the two, so is there also no *moral freedom* and no moral ends, which capriciousness posits, with which activities could be compared and labeled good or evil to the degree to which they match those ends or not."¹⁰¹ In place of this fantasy of moral freedom, Spinoza claims that the true object of all men's desire is "virtue," which is nothing other than capability (*Tüchtigkeit*) or power (*Macht*).

But while positing a monocausal mechanism for human behavior, that is, the desire for preserving and increasing one's power, Spinoza nonetheless provides an explanation for why mankind seems split into two, with many subdued to the dominance of a morality of weakness, self-deception, and imagination.¹⁰² All individuals, weak or strong, strive to act according to the power of their own nature. What characterizes the weak is not an expression of some substitute virtue: this is a contradiction in terms, because one's virtue is by definition the expression of one's strength. Nor is it the case that this power can manifest itself in two ways, one way active or truly virtuous and the other way passively. The two are not opposites in this sense. Rather, what appears as passionate weakness is the expression of externally constrained or suspended activity, a restraint that has resulted not from a free choice but by some natural necessity (*Naturnotwendigkeit*). When the desire for power is not satisfied, sadness results.¹⁰³ But as we always strive for joy, this powerlessness manifests itself self-deceptively as strength (because desires from joy are, *mutatis mutandis*, more powerful than those from sadness, and thus overpower the latter).¹⁰⁴ This self-deception takes two primary forms (often combined), namely arrogance (*Hochmut*) or pusillanimity (*Kleinmut*). That is, the weak either imagine themselves to be more powerful than they truly are, or embrace their weakness as a free choice, as if their passivity were a virtue of true inner

¹⁰⁰Fischer, *Geschichte*, 511.

¹⁰¹Fischer, *Geschichte*, 510.

¹⁰²Fischer, *Geschichte*, 502.

¹⁰³'Sadness' (*tristitia*) is Spinoza's term of art for a decrease in our power of acting, 'joy' (*laetitia*) for an increase.

¹⁰⁴Self-deception here (and the same holds for Nietzsche's discussion mentioned above) is admittedly a somewhat imprecise term, as it implies an actor pulling the wool over his own eyes. However, it should not be understood in this sense of a divided subject who actively hides something from himself that he knows to be false, i.e. as a form of disingenuous mis-representation. The weak do not recognize themselves to be weak but present themselves as strong nonetheless. Rather, because men easily imagine whatever posits their power of acting, the weak genuinely imagine (and believe) themselves to be strong. Generating and accepting such beliefs follow from human nature in the same necessary way as all other actions, as sketched above. It is only from a perspective external to theirs that a claim of deception can be validated against them; see Fischer, *Geschichte*, 494–501.

strength. The *Hochmütige* hate those who are truly *großmütig*, or noble. For these arrogant weak ones, “it is the greatest refreshment to undervalue the strong . . . nothing is more repugnant to him than the merit [*Verdienst*] or virtue [*Tugend*] of others,” because the noble’s (actual) merits and virtues are seen as a robbery of his own (illusory) ones.¹⁰⁵ The *Kleinmütige* act similarly, though more wretchedly even than the former: they want the strong to curb their inclinations, just as they believe they themselves have done.¹⁰⁶ Because our desire for power (whether real or imagined) is ceaseless, these false beliefs follow necessarily as one’s own power of acting is hindered.

I believe this to be exactly what Nietzsche is driving at in *GM* I.10, where he presents the two different mindsets of noble and slave as following necessarily from the degree one is able to act or not (and the character of such action). Noble action is unmediated, while slavish nature is “denied the true reaction, that of deeds . . . its action is, from the ground up, reaction.”¹⁰⁷ It is evident that neither noble nor slave became convinced through argument of their respective moralities (nor can they now become unconvinced); rather both moralities follow from the same monocausal mechanism (the expression of, and desire for more, power), where one group was able to satisfy this desire more adequately than the other. We must be careful here not to put the cart before the horse: one does not engage in this “imaginary revenge” *because* one is a slave; rather, slave morality *is* the affective result of constrained action.¹⁰⁸ Slave morality results from one’s power of acting being constrained or hindered, where such constraints can take psychological, corporeal, structural, ideological and perhaps many other forms.

Understanding morality as a consequence of the degree to which one can successfully express one’s power of acting makes clear that, while involuntary, there is nothing inherent or immutable in individuals that typecasts them as a slave or noble. If the slave morality has been victorious, it is not because masters chose to

¹⁰⁵Fischer, *Geschichte*, 500. Cf. Nietzsche’s formulation: the “self-deception of impotence clad[s] itself in the ostentatious garb of the virtue [*Tugend*] of quiet, calm resignation, just as if . . . [this were] a meritorious act [*ein Verdienst*].”

¹⁰⁶Nietzsche’s “Mr. Rash and Curious” encounters both these types in his trip to the “dark workshop” where values are created (*GM* I.14).

¹⁰⁷*GM* I.10. Admittedly, this point would be clearer if Nietzsche had written that the slaves are denied “true action,” rather than “reaction,” but that this is what he means is clear from the remainder of the section: slaves are unable to genuinely act, while nobles can do so.

¹⁰⁸*GM* I.10. An anonymous reader of this article has argued that if this were the case, slave morality would be coeval with man, when in fact it is a surprising and contingent occurrence that occurred at a specific historical moment with the birth of Christianity. But I believe this to be a conflating of two separate phenomena. Nietzsche in many places divides “the many moralities . . . which have so far been prevalent on earth” into two general categories (usually called master and slave, though not always named); see for example *HH* 1.45; *BGE* §260; *KSA* 10:245–48, 7[22] and *KSA* 12:385, 8[4]. Slave morality in general must be differentiated from what he calls the Jewish (really Christian) slave *revolt*, discussed at *BGE* §195 and *GM* I, which is uniquely important because it has effectively conquered the West to such a universal degree that we no longer even recognize alternative possibilities (see especially *GM* I.7–8). Hence Nietzsche can speak of noble races at various historical times and places before and after the introduction of Christianity (“Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings”), clearly in contrast to non-nobles (*GM* I.11), and why he can explain the noble-slave distinction with a naturalistic metaphor at *GM* I.13. Lambs are lambs by nature, not as a result of Christianity.

adopt the new alternative values scheme, but rather it must reflect some change in humanity that renders individuals unable to express their power as adequately as nobles once did. Hence Nietzsche's claim, in the concluding note to *GM I*, that "every table of values, every 'thou shalt,' . . . requires first a *physiological* investigation and interpretation." Slave morality is not merely false: it is better described as a kind of sickness.¹⁰⁹ (As he puts it later in the book, this moral shift is "the true calamity in the history of European health."¹¹⁰) Where slave morality has been able to dominate a culture's thinking, it becomes effectively impossible to pursue power in an adequate manner, with the result not that men abandon this natural pursuit, but rather that they do so in the inadequate ways of self-deception and hatred of those who act otherwise. While Nietzsche would not simply accept Spinoza's solution to this problem by itself (namely an increase in rationality), it does seem that Nietzsche offers the method of genealogy, an attempt at a kind of enlightenment of the origins of our social norms and practices, in the hope of spurring a new thinking that could lead to such a liberation from slavery. As the end of *GM II* implies, there is room to hope for change. To the degree that changing conditions liberate us from these constraints, fuller expressions of our power will emerge and with them new valuations.

C. *Ressentiment*. Our discussion of slave morality has so far ignored the defining element of Nietzsche's slave revolt: *ressentiment* becoming creative. What exactly *ressentiment* entails has been explored well by others, and I will not repeat their analyses here.¹¹¹ For the sake of simplicity, I will focus on what Nietzsche calls the "essence of *ressentiment*," namely the "imaginary revenge" that from the outset says 'No' to everything outside it, and that is "fundamentally reaction . . . to a hostile external world."¹¹² *Ressentiment* is central to the story of morality's origin that Nietzsche tells in *GM I*, and Bernard Reginster is surely correct in writing that Nietzsche "maintains that the three central phenomena that constitute, in his view, modern morality—the distinction between good and evil, the feeling of moral guilt, and the ascetic ideal—all have their origin in *ressentiment*."¹¹³ I do not suspect this to be an especially controversial claim, but it is noteworthy that in Nietzsche's previous discussions of noble and slave moralities, such as *BGE* §260, neither the term nor even the general idea of *ressentiment* appear in connection with slave morality (in fact, the one mention of revenge is attributed to the masters).¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹It thus makes sense for Nietzsche to encourage affective expressions to be studied scientifically, as a "biological problem"—not only those affects causing *ressentiment* but also "affects that, it seems to me, are of even greater biological value than those reactive affects and consequently deserve even more to be *scientifically* evaluated and esteemed: namely, the truly *active* affects, such as lust for power, avarice, and the like" (*GM II*.11). Nietzsche mentions *Gesundheit* and its cognates 26 times in *GM*, and *Krankheit* 89 times (versus only 9 and 26 times respectively in the considerably longer *BGE*).

¹¹⁰*GM III*.21.

¹¹¹Two of the best studies are Bittner, "*Ressentiment*," and Reginster, "*Ressentiment* and Valuation."

¹¹²*GM I*.10. He elsewhere calls it the "most spiritual" revenge (*GM I*.7).

¹¹³Reginster, "*Ressentiment* and Valuation," 282.

¹¹⁴Other than one early isolated use of *ressentiment* in an 1875 note (*KSA* 8:176, 9[1]), where it appears to be attributed to Dühring), the term is absent from Nietzsche's oeuvre until 1887 and *GM*. But after its introduction, it recurs with some frequency in the later works *TI*, *A*, and *EH* (as well as numerous *Nachlaß* fragments).

Nor does it appear in the context of *BGE* §195, which much like *GM* I attributes the “slave rebellion in morals” to the inversion by the Jews of traditional values.¹¹⁵ The triumph of slave morality is there described only as a “miraculous feat,” but not as an act of revenge. The closest example is found in the second paragraph of *das religiöse Wesen*, about the slaves’ demand for absoluteness in contrast to the Romans’ “noble and frivolous tolerance,” but even here it remains undeveloped.¹¹⁶ When one considers the centrality of this idea in *GM* I, such an ancillary treatment in *BGE* appears surprising.¹¹⁷

But if Nietzsche’s understanding of slave morality in *GM* is partly inspired by his post-*BGE* Spinoza reading, then it should come as no surprise to find that revenge plays a key role in the latter’s account of slave morality, one which may have led Nietzsche to integrate the theme into his next book.¹¹⁸ Fischer presents Spinoza as emphasizing the movement of the slaves as very much a reaction against the free man.¹¹⁹ For Fischer’s Spinoza, individual wills express various degrees of strength (where ‘will’ is to be understood as the conscious affect of desire). The victory of strong wills and active affects define ‘freedom,’ their failure, ‘slavery.’ For the powerful, satisfaction of desires is good and any impediments to such fulfillment bad—hence the non-moral good-bad valuation scheme. But weak wills prove unable to fulfill their desires, and from the subsequent reaction of the weak against the powerful arises the moral valuations of good and evil.

Spinoza emphasizes that the hate, anger, and envy of the slave arise with the same necessity as do all other phenomena. They are the effects of specific causes, and follow from the natures of individual constitutions: “[All] actions follow necessarily as the activity or power expression [*Kraftausserung*] of our being.”¹²⁰ But while these emotions follow from the slaves’ natures, it ultimately does not make sense to speak of two different *types* of human beings, as if some were simply born noble and others slavish.¹²¹ Rather, as already discussed, the monocausal mechanism of the conatus explains a common striving in all humans for power that, depending on its success, continually expresses itself self-affirmatively so far as it can, and otherwise reactively. The more powerful a being is, the more it affirms itself and its desires. As Fischer puts it, “[N]othing fills us with greater joy than the consciousness of our strength [*Kraft*], capability [*Vermögen*], and potency [*Leistungen*].” On the other hand, nothing evokes greater envy than the knowledge of another’s capability (*Tüchtigkeit*) that we lack.¹²² In particular, anything that hinders our

¹¹⁵Nietzsche connects *GM* I’s discussion of the slave revolt to *BGE* §195 at *GM* I.7.

¹¹⁶*BGE* §46.

¹¹⁷E.g. *GM* I.10. Interestingly, Nietzsche in *BGE* sometimes attributes the spirit of revenge to individuals he appears positively disposed to (e.g. *BGE* §§40, 59, 260), whereas in *GM* it seems more restricted to the slaves. But admittedly it would be very Nietzschean for there ultimately to be positive and negative modalities of the same affect.

¹¹⁸Already in 1883, after his first reading of Fischer, Nietzsche had noted that according to Spinoza, the *Unterdrückten* are characterized by *Rache* and *Rechtfertigung* (KSA 10:340, 8[17]).

¹¹⁹*Ethics* IVp57 supports Fischer’s view; whether Spinoza envisioned the slave so reactively is beyond this article’s scope.

¹²⁰Fischer, *Geschichte*, 372.

¹²¹Though Nietzsche in his more rhetorical moments distinguishes master and slave quite disjunctively, he does ultimately concede that one individual can have a psychology containing elements of both (*BGE* §260; *GM* I.15).

¹²²Fischer, *Geschichte*, 362.

striving becomes an object of hatred. We develop a revulsion (*Widerwille*) against the causes of this unhappiness, and this aversion is always directed toward the specific beings or objects that we associate with causing our misery (as opposed to a general sense of emotional dissatisfaction).

Our envy or hatred of others is most provoked when another causes an injury to us, or at the very least is capable of doing such an injury to us, which we cannot recompense in kind. (We of course see this same phenomenon portrayed in Nietzsche's *GM I.13* parable: while the powerful bird of prey has no negative feelings toward the weak lambs, the danger he poses makes him the very symbol of evil in the latter's eyes.) Injuries done "increase hatred and engender retribution."¹²³ We desire that these perpetrators suffer as much punishment as they have themselves afflicted. This desire for vengeance comes to define our very being; we even hate the things the perpetrator loves and love those he hates. But we avoid carrying out such vengeance directly when we think we will get a still worse injury in return. When we lack the power to take any actual action, we therefore imagine ourselves to have power in other ways.¹²⁴ It is here that the thirst for revenge (*Rachsucht*) rears its ugly head in the particularly moral fashion of the slaves. Nothing is as oppressive as the thought of one's own weakness, and therefore we strive to imagine those conditions under which our power of acting is most complete.¹²⁵ The imagination allows us to fabricate conditions that provide happiness, and though illusory, the products of this imagination, such as freedom of the will, nonetheless increase our sense of self.

Of course, from the slave's point of view, these false beliefs do not appear imaginary: insofar as these beliefs accomplish their self-affirmative function, they are genuinely believed. The slave does not want to see his actions as subterraneously motivated by hate, because it is embarrassing to hate, as it reveals weakness.¹²⁶ Consequently, the teachings of prophets and priests have been easily accepted, in which the slavish affects of fear, shame, and the rest are embraced as virtues. This functions as a kind of antidote for the poisonous hatred that would otherwise characterize the slave mentality.¹²⁷

I believe that if we understand the vengeful element of Nietzsche's slave morality in a similar way, it allows us to improve on a recent suggestion of how to understand the slave revolt. The term 'revenge,' ordinarily understood, implies a guilefully designed plot, carried out with the specific intention of harming another. But in a recent article, R. Jay Wallace has capably argued that this common (he calls it the "default") interpretation of the slave revolt, that it was a strategic rebellion artfully crafted by the slaves to harm the powerful, is ultimately unconvincing. As Wallace argues, if the values of slave morality were truly the product of instrumental rationality, invented only for the purpose of undermining others, they would not have the kind of purchase on life that define "values" as Nietzsche understands

¹²³Fischer, *Geschichte*, 372.

¹²⁴Even more so, we desire others to imagine us as having such power. An imagination of power will maintain no purchase if others deny it; see Fischer, *Geschichte*, 362.

¹²⁵Fischer, *Geschichte*, 362.

¹²⁶Fischer, *Geschichte*, 371.

¹²⁷Fischer, *Geschichte*, 498.

them.¹²⁸ Wallace suggests an alternative way of understanding the revolt, which he calls the ‘expressive’ interpretation.¹²⁹ I believe this to be exactly right in its general move, but mistaken in how it cashes out the term ‘expressive.’ For Wallace, as mentioned above, what defines the slaves is that they lack the worldly goods that masters have, for example “status, material possessions, and above all political power and influence.”¹³⁰ It is these structural conditions, and a realization or expectation that one will never possess these goods, that give rise to *ressentiment*, which is an “expression of one’s negative emotional orientation toward the powerful.”¹³¹ While I believe that Wallace is right to emphasize the “expressive” nature of slave morals, I am skeptical, for reasons stated earlier, that we should put too much weight on structural factors to explain the noble or slave mindsets. Though social status may play some ancillary role (Nietzsche admits as much at *GMI.5*), at the heart of Nietzsche’s story is that the slave revolt in morality achieved its success *without* a corresponding revolt in social conditions (as someone like Marx would emphasize as a necessary concurrence). This is part of the reason that the transformation proceeded unnoticed.

GMI.13 plays no role in Wallace’s interpretation, but that section’s relevance becomes more obvious when we consider the text in the light of Fischer’s book. Fischer allows us to build an “expressive” interpretation that stays closer to Nietzsche’s naturalism and the power of the affects. Weakness results in the birth of certain illusions, which, in a qualified sense, affirm one’s own strength. Moral valuations, the belief in voluntary freedom, and the hatred and desire for revenge against the strong are all expressions of a will that has been thwarted in its striving for power. As the result of stunted wills, slave morality grows and even becomes dominant without an intentional or calculative act by the slaves. Belief in these illusions constrains even further the way that the will manifests itself and acts, leading to a vicious cycle in which these illusions continue to hold sway with greater strength. Understanding the slaves’ reaction in this way shows that slaves have indeed created values, though this should not be considered a conscious or intentional act of creation on their part. It is merely the outcome of constrained activity. It is therefore incorrect to assume, as some scholars have, that slave morality must originally be a creation of noble priests, because slaves themselves could not have created values.¹³² Being a master or slave is the *result* of one’s expression of power, not the cause of it, and while it may be true that the slaves’ actions should be understood as fundamentally reactions, this does not preclude a creative

¹²⁸Wallace, “Slave Revolt,” 112–14. Wallace also expresses other concerns about the strategic interpretation, such as how it could have been expected to have an effect, and why it would have led to the elimination of the master morality.

¹²⁹Using different terminology, Bittner has argued that Nietzsche should have had an expressivist-type theory, but did not. He argues that for values to be created in this way, there must be a creator separate from the creative acts, and tries to amend Nietzsche accordingly. But again, I think seeing Fischer as a source helps us see how such a reading might be possible from Nietzsche’s text alone; see Bittner, “Masters.”

¹³⁰Wallace, “Slave Revolt,” 116.

¹³¹Wallace, “Slave Revolt,” 117–18.

¹³²Reginster argues that value creation belongs exclusively to masters, and that therefore the priest must be the primary site of the slave valuation. Reginster, “*Ressentiment* and Valuation.”

element in devising schemes of valuation. Though *Genealogy of Morals* does not provide actionable suggestions to overcome these restrictions on our expression, its characterization of moral values as the outgrowth of a dynamic historical process provides hope for a renewed humanity. There is nothing inevitable to slave morality as the fate of mankind.

3. GUILT, BAD CONSCIENCE, AND THE INNOCENCE OF BECOMING

Much more remains to be said about the relationship between morality and the affects, but in order to see why Nietzsche would have been so broadly enthusiastic about Spinoza, I believe it will be helpful to conclude by briefly showing how Nietzsche links up the origin of morality, as has already been discussed, with another, broader Spinozistic theme, namely one's cosmological or existential stance. For Nietzsche, Spinoza partially succeeded at escaping the moral world order and the notions of guilt that generally accompany it.¹³³ Looking at what Nietzsche says about Spinoza in *GM II*, as well as at his notes of the late 1880s, reveals how overcoming moral prejudices serves as the first step toward the "innocence of becoming" that will be so crucial in Nietzsche's late writings.

3.1 *The Sting of Conscience*

Spinoza is evoked more explicitly in the second essay of *GM*—where Nietzsche discusses the "sting of conscience"—than in the first. Lest there be any doubt that these remarks were shaped by Nietzsche's recent revisiting of Fischer, one need only compare the language here with the nearly identical notes he took after this reading (not to mention the mis-citation of Spinoza's text mentioned above).¹³⁴ While the first essay of *GM* attacked the prejudice of the actor responsible for his deed, the discussion of Spinoza in the second essay attacks one of the consequences of that prejudice, namely guilt.

In *GM II.14*, Nietzsche contrasts the contemporary guilty conscience to the long pre-history of mankind: "If we consider those millennia *before* the history of man, we may unhesitatingly assert that it was precisely through punishment that the development of the feeling of guilt was most powerfully *hindered*."¹³⁵ The moral conscience as we find it today is a late fruit, the outgrowth of an older herd mentality. During that earlier, more innocent period, the "sting of conscience" was prompted by any action that harmed the herd, that is, by the negative consequences of a member of the herd's behavior on the herd.¹³⁶ This perhaps produced sadness, but neither the punisher nor the punished connected punishment with

¹³³On the intimate relationship of the beliefs in free will, guilt, and the moral world order, see *TI* "Four Great Errors" §7.

¹³⁴I refer specifically to KSA 12:314, 7[57] but also 12: 259–70, 7[4].

¹³⁵See also *GS* §117 on the same topic, where we find nearly identical language to that found in his 1881 notes on Spinoza (KSA 9:517–18, 11[193]). (This section is found in *GS III*, largely composed before Nietzsche's reading of Fischer, but Colli and Montinari's KSA commentary indicates that it was heavily re-written late in the final drafting process, and it is this later language which is relevant.) See also KSA 14:256.

¹³⁶*GM II.14*.

guilt. The punished person had simply caused harm; he was an “irresponsible piece of fate.” And consequently the punished person “suffered no ‘inward pain’ [*innere Pein*] other than that induced by the sudden appearance of something unforeseen, a dreadful natural event.”¹³⁷ The guilty conscience was birthed by a later, moral shift in human thinking.

Spinoza, Nietzsche tells us, once realized exactly this, a point on which Fischer had “made a real effort to misunderstand him.”¹³⁸ What Nietzsche presumably means in his criticism is that according to Fischer, the *morsus conscientiae* was precisely an “inward sting” (*einen Biß ins Innere*).¹³⁹ Yet despite this complaint, Nietzsche follows Fischer here in many ways. Fischer too distinguishes Spinoza’s amoral *morsus conscientiae* from what the reader might normally associate with the moralistic term ‘guilty conscience’ (*Gewissensbiß*). The latter is a remorseful embarrassment, linked to bad outcomes for which we are responsible (*selbstverschuldeten Ausgangs*). The former, however, is the woe of a destroyed hope, for example the sensation of a farmer after a hailstorm has destroyed his crop seed. It is the sadness that things have occurred contrary to our expectations.¹⁴⁰ As Nietzsche puts it, men like Spinoza felt “‘here something has unexpectedly gone wrong,’ not: ‘I ought not to have done that.’”¹⁴¹

The moralistic guilty conscience is linked in Fischer to the illusion of freedom, which causes one to say to oneself, “you did this yourself, you alone!”¹⁴² Because the weak assume intentionality behind all action, someone must be to blame for bad circumstances. This illusion once again leads back to the type of vengeful thinking discussed above: if the blame cannot be placed on another person, it must be placed on oneself.¹⁴³ From here we see not only the type of affective mechanism that gives rise to the moral sensations, but also the way that false beliefs are manipulable, a process Nietzsche explains in greater depth in the third essay when he describes the ascetic priest, who says to his flock, “Quite so, my sheep! Someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it—you alone are to blame for yourself!”¹⁴⁴

Exploring the mechanism of this complicated process sufficiently for either thinker would lead us too far astray; what I believe interesting here is that despite the nominal criticism of Fischer’s interpretation, Nietzsche in fact follows it fairly closely himself. The illusion of free will, which both Spinoza and Nietzsche linked to slavish thinking and the birth of morality, finds its outgrowth here in the birth of the modern guilty conscience. In contrast to such a worldview, Nietzsche seeks a return to what he calls the “innocence of becoming,” a state to which it seems he believed Spinoza had at least partly returned.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁷ *GM II. 14.*

¹³⁸ *GM II. 14.*

¹³⁹ Fischer, *Geschichte*, 358.

¹⁴⁰ Fischer, *Geschichte*, 357–59.

¹⁴¹ *GM II. 15.*

¹⁴² Fischer, *Geschichte*, 379.

¹⁴³ Fischer (*Geschichte*, 361) describes this vengeful imagination of just retribution with an idea of “payment in kind,” reminiscent of how Nietzsche in the second essay connects guilt with debt.

¹⁴⁴ *GM III. 15.*

¹⁴⁵ *GM II. 15.*

3.2 *The Innocence of Becoming and the Love of Fate*

It is not through moral action, but through the affirmative attitude of *amor dei intellectualis*, the love of God who is expressed in causal nature, that Spinoza finds the highest form of “blessedness.” And while Nietzsche too will describe *amor fati* as his “inner nature,” it is nevertheless with this move of Spinoza’s that Nietzsche finds his deepest disagreement with him.¹⁴⁶ This is a large issue, and I will attempt here only to sketch the way in which the discussion of morality highlighted above points inherently to these larger issues. As he writes in 1886, “[T]here are more fundamental problems than the moral: these first come to sight when one has moral prejudices behind one.”¹⁴⁷

For the mature Nietzsche, ‘revenge’ became the key term to express the problematic attitude, generally attributed to the weak, with which “the whole of metaphysics, psychology, conception of history, but above all morality, is impregnated.”¹⁴⁸ This vengeful attitude is sometimes attributed to the birth of Christianity, as in the master-slave story of *GM I*; at other times, it seems to have poisoned all (or nearly all) thought prior to Nietzsche himself. In *Zarathustra* he talks of the “revenge against time” with which the will stamps “Becoming” with the character of “Being,” which in a note he says “deprive[s] existence in general of its innocence.”¹⁴⁹

Spinoza was one of the few modern thinkers who Nietzsche believed returned to this state of innocence. He did this by “banish[ing] good and evil to the realm of human imagination,”¹⁵⁰ attempting to replace the Biblical religion with his own amoral *Deus sive natura*. Nietzsche saw Spinoza’s “God” embodying an entirely different kind of nature than that envisioned by the Christian moral worldview:

As everything in the last account happens by virtue of divine power, so is everything in its way perfect, so is there nothing ugly [*kein Übel*] in the nature of things; as the human being is entirely unfree, so is there no evil [*kein Böses*] in the nature of the human will; so are the ugly and the evil not in things, but only in the imagination of human beings.¹⁵¹

But this return to innocence was only partial, and Nietzsche ultimately concluded that Spinoza too was unconsciously guided by the spirit of revenge, even if it did not take the typical Christian form.¹⁵² Nietzsche saw the core of Spinoza’s metaphysical project as the attempt to free the world of its moral interpretation, leaving behind an existing, constant world that could be encountered reasonably.¹⁵³ But with this new “God,” Nietzsche believed Spinoza to still be trapped in the very worldview

¹⁴⁶NCWEpilogue §1. On the comparison between *amor fati* and *amor dei*, see Wurzer, *Nietzsche und Spinoza*, 80–86 and 239–68; as well as Stambaugh, *Other*.

¹⁴⁷KSA 12:20, 5[80]; my translation.

¹⁴⁸KSA 13:425, 15[30].

¹⁴⁹TSZ “On Redemption”; KSA 13:422–26, 15[30].

¹⁵⁰*GM II*.15.

¹⁵¹KSA 12:262, 7[4]. This sentiment is best found in the appendix to part I of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. From the specific reference to *Ethics* Ip33S2 that Nietzsche writes down here, as well as the accompanying content of his notes, it is clear that he is reading Fischer 254–61, which concerns the end of *Ethics* I (on the necessity of all things that follows from the nature of God). Cf. esp. Fischer, *Geschichte*, 258n, with Nietzsche’s notebook here.

¹⁵²See for example his poem “An Spinoza” (KSA 11:319, 28[49]).

¹⁵³KSA 12:131, 2[131].

that he had been trying to escape. He still falls, by Nietzsche's standards, into the category of Platonism, for his attempt to call God nature was nonetheless an attempt to make nature God, that is to say, to both identify it with the good (even if not a moral good per se) and to paralyze it under the aspect of the unchanging and eternal. As Fischer put it, how can joy "be made eternal? This question contains the core of Spinoza's entire ethical teaching."¹⁵⁴ In rejecting the becoming-nature of the world, Spinoza, too, was guilty of the revenge against time.

Nietzsche's clearest statement on Spinoza's attempt to divinize nature can be found in the famous Lenzerheide fragment on European nihilism, where he specifically contrasts his own worldview to Spinozistic pantheism:

So one understands that an antithesis to pantheism is attempted here: for "everything perfect, divine, eternal" *also compels a faith in the "eternal recurrence."* . . . Does it make sense to conceive a god "beyond good and evil"? Would a pantheism *in this sense* be possible? Can we remove the idea of a goal from the process and then *nevertheless* affirm the process?—his would be the case if something were *attained* at every moment within this process—and always the same. Spinoza reached such an affirmative position in so far as every moment has a *logical* necessity, and with his basic instinct, which was logical, he felt a sense of triumph that the world should be constituted *that way*.¹⁵⁵

Spinoza's God did not preserve a moral world order, but he did preserve a God "beyond good and evil," a God who makes the world comprehensible, and who thus provides the same kind of metaphysical comfort that morality once did, namely to "[protect] life against despair and the leap into nothing."¹⁵⁶ Spinoza may have overcome many trappings of traditional morality, but ultimately his "hatred of everything changing [*Wechselnde*]" prevented his true recognition of the innocence of becoming.¹⁵⁷

Nietzsche was right to view Spinoza as a precursor, but only that—not as a brother. From Spinoza, Nietzsche learned something about the origins of morality, but not the extent to which one must go to overcome it. Spinoza had broken free from one God only to yoke himself to another: in the end, his "free man" was no free spirit.¹⁵⁸

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ABBREVIATIONS

I refer to Nietzsche's works using the abbreviations below.

A *Antichrist*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 656–56. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

BGE *Beyond Good & Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 179–435. New York: Random House, 2000.

¹⁵⁴Fischer, *Geschichte*, 539. Nietzsche copied this line in his notebooks (KSA 12: 259–70, 7[4]).

¹⁵⁵KSA 12:213, 5[71] §7; emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁶KSA 12:213, 5[71]. Nietzsche ultimately decided that this "hatred of everything changing" indicates Spinoza's yearning for the "old God" to still be alive, not only in its unchanging, super-temporal nature but also in its infinite power.

¹⁵⁷KSA 12:430, 9[160]; cf. also KSA 13:536–37, 18[16].

¹⁵⁸To properly characterize the relationship of Nietzsche toward Spinoza, we require a subtler understanding than we currently have of Nietzsche's complex view of friendship. I am indebted to the following people for their many helpful comments as I prepared this article: Robert Pippin, Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg, Erik Nelson, Will Wood, and Misha Mintz-Ross, as well as the anonymous referees for the *JHP*.

- D* *Daybreak*. Edited by Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- GM* *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 437–599. New York: Random House, 2000.
- GS* *Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- HH* *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by Gary Handwerk. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- KSA* *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- KSB* *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.
- NCW* *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 661–83. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- TI* *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 463–563. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- TSZ* *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited by Walter Kaufmann, 103–439. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

References to Spinoza's *Ethics* follow the internal geometric ordering of the book. Hence, Ip33s2 refers to *Ethics* part I, proposition 33, scholium 2.

- Abel, Gunter. *Die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984. [*Dynamik*]
- Babich, Babette E. "Nietzsche's *Chaos sive Natura*: Evening Gold and Dancing Star." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 57 (2001): 225–45. ["Chaos"]
- Balibar, Étienne. "From Individuality to Transindividuality." *Mededelingen vanwege het Spinozahuis* 71. Delft: Eburon, 1997. ["Individuality"]
- Bittner, Rüdiger. "Masters without Substance." In Schacht, *Postmoralism*, 34–46. ["Masters"]
- . "Ressentiment." In Schacht, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, 127–38. ["Ressentiment"]
- Brobjer, Thomas. *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008. [*Context*]
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. Translated by Martin Joughin. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 1988. [*Expressionism*]
- . *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. Translated by Robert Hurley. San Francisco: City Lights, 2001. [*Practical Philosophy*]
- Della Rocca, Michael. *Spinoza*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- . "Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Don Garrett, 192–266. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. ["Metaphysical Psychology"]
- Fischer, Kuno. *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*. Vol. 1, part 2, *Baruch Spinoza*. Heidelberg: Friedrich Bassermann, 1865. [*Geschichte*]
- . *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*. Jubilee edition. Vol. 2, *Descartes' Schule. Spinozas Leben, Werke und Lehre*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1898.
- Gawoll, Hans-Jürgen. "Nietzsche und der Geist Spinozas." *Nietzsche-Studien* 30 (2001): 44–61. ["Geist"]
- Janaway, Christopher. *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. [*Selflessness*]
- Janz, Curt Paul. *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*. Munich: C. Hanser Verlag, 1993. [*Biographie*]
- Kaufmann, Walter, trans. and ed. *The Portable Nietzsche*. New York: Viking, 1982. [*Portable*]
- Koistinen, Olli, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. [*Companion*]
- Leiter, Brian. *Nietzsche on Morality*. New York: Routledge, 2002. [*Morality*]
- Ohms, Jan. "Zu Nietzsches Spinozadeutung." In *Philosophie der Toleranz, Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Konstantin Radakovic*, 59–73. Graz: Leykam-Verlag, 1959. ["Spinozadeutung"]
- Nadler, Steven. *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. [*Introduction*]
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited and translated by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988. [*Genealogy of Morality*]
- Pippin, Robert. "Lightning and Flash, Agent and Deed." In *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, edited by Otfried Höffe, 47–64. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004. ["Lightning"]
- . *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. [*Psychology*]
- Reginster, Bernard. "Nietzsche on *Ressentiment* and Valuation." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (1997): 281–305. ["*Ressentiment* and Valuation"]

- Richardson, John. *Nietzsche's System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. [*System*]
- Ridley, Aaron. *Nietzsche's Conscience*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Press, 1998. [*Conscience*]
- Riedel, Manfred. "Das Lenzerheide Fragment über den Europäischen Nihilismus." *Nietzsche-Studien* 29 (2000): 70–81. ["Lenzerheide"]
- Scandella, Maurizio. "Did Nietzsche Read Spinoza? Some Preliminary Notes on the Nietzsche-Spinoza Problem, Kuno Fischer, and Other Sources." *Nietzsche-Studien* 41 (2012): 308–32. ["Did Nietzsche Read Spinoza?"]
- Schacht, Richard. *Making Sense of Nietzsche*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. [*Sense*]
- , ed. *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- , ed. *Nietzsche's Postmoralism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. [*Postmoralism*]
- Slowacher, Harry. "Spinoza und Nietzsche (einige Parallelen)." *Geisteskultur* 28 (1928): 16–24. ["Spinoza und Nietzsche"]
- Solomon, Robert. "One Hundred Years of *Ressentiment*." In Schacht, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, 95–126. ["One Hundred Years"]
- Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics*. Translated by Edwin Curley. New York: Penguin, 1986. [*Ethics*]
- Stambough, Joan. *The Other Nietzsche*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. [*Other*]
- Wallace, R. Jay. "Ressentiment, Value, and Self-Vindication: Making Sense of Nietzsche's Slave Revolt." In *Nietzsche and Morality*, edited by Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu, 110–37. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007. ["Slave Revolt"]
- Whitlock, Greg. "Roger Boscovich, Spinoza, and Nietzsche: The Untold Story." *Nietzsche-Studien* 25 (1996): 200–220. ["Boscovich"]
- Wurzer, William. *Nietzsche und Spinoza*. Monographien zur philosophischen Forschung 141. Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975. [*Nietzsche und Spinoza*]
- Yovel, Yirmiyahu. *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, vol. 2. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. [*Heretics*]