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**THE ETHICS OF POWER:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
NIETZSCHE'S WILL TO POWER AND SPINOZA'S CONATUS**

Hasan Cem ÇAL
118679005

Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep TALAY TURNER

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Tez Danışmanı :

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Jüri Üyeleri

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Juri Üyesi:

(İmza)

..... Üniversitesi

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı:

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

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ABSTRACT

The similarities between Spinoza's philosophy and Nietzsche's have long been debated. While there are many differences between Spinoza's philosophy and Nietzsche's, it can also be said that there are many similarities. For example, the fact that both philosophers have a philosophical understanding based on immanence, that they both prioritize ethics rather than morality, and that they both give priority to emotions in their philosophy, in a way, defines some of these similarities. Although Nietzsche was very critical of Spinoza, it still seems possible to link Spinoza's philosophy with Nietzsche's. Perhaps the most striking similarity between Spinoza and Nietzsche in philosophical terms reveals itself in the basic concepts that constitute a central place in their philosophies of immanence. These concepts are the will to power in Nietzsche and *conatus* in Spinoza. These two rather foundational concepts seem to form the basis of the theoretical affinity between Spinoza and Nietzsche because both give a similar meaning and context to his concept and place his concept at the base of his philosophical activity. This thesis, in its entirety, aims to examine the similarity between the concepts of the will to power and *conatus*, and to underline Nietzsche and Spinoza's philosophical convergence through a comparative analysis of these concepts.

Keywords: The Will to Power, *Conatus*, The Self, The Ethical Self, Ethics

ÖZET

Spinoza'nın felsefesiyle Nietzsche'ninki arasındaki benzerlikler uzunca bir süredir tartışılmıřtır. Spinoza'nın felsefesiyle Nietzsche'ninki arasında birçok farklılık olsa da, aynı zamanda birçok benzerlik de bulunduđu söylenebilir. Her iki felsefecinin de içkinliđi temel alan felsefi bir anlayıřa sahip olması, her ikisinin de ahlaktan ziyade etiđi ön planda tutması ve yine her ikisinin de felsefesinde duygulara öncelikli bir yer vermesi, örneđin, bir bakıma bu benzerlikleri tanımlar niteliktedir. Her ne kadar Nietzsche Spinoza'ya bir hayli eleřtirel yaklařmıř olsa da, Spinoza'nın felsefesiyle Nietzsche'ninki arasında bađlantı kurmak yine de mümkün gözükür. Nietzsche ve Spinoza arasında felsefi açıdan en göze çarpan benzerlik ise muhtemelen onların içkinlik felsefelerinde merkezi bir yer teřkil eden temel kavramlarda kendisini açığı vurur. Bu kavramlar, Nietzsche'de güç istenci, Spinoza'da ise *conatus*'tur. Bu iki kurucu nitelikteki kavram, Nietzsche ve Spinoza arasındaki teorik yakınlığın temelini oluşturur gibidir; çünkü her ikisi de kendi kavramına benzer bir anlam ve bađlam verir ve bu kavramı kendi felsefi faaliyetinin temeline yerleřtirir. Bütünlüğünde bu tezin amacı, güç istenci ve *conatus* kavramları arasındaki benzerliđi incelemek ve bu kavramların karşılařtırmalı bir analizi aracılıđıyla Nietzsche ve Spinoza arasındaki felsefi yakınsamanın altını çizmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güç İstenci, *Conatus*, Kendilik, Etik Kendilik, Etik

INTRODUCTION

What similarities can there be between Nietzsche and Spinoza, whose approaches to philosophy seem to be quite different from each other? As is known, when it comes to these two modern philosophers, the differences are more apparent than the similarities. For example, while Nietzsche says that God is dead, Spinoza thinks that God is everything.¹ While Nietzsche's philosophy is entirely unsystematic,² Spinoza's philosophy is entirely systematic. While Nietzsche writes with aphorisms, poems, epigraphs, Spinoza writes with axioms, propositions, and definitions.³ However, the connection between Nietzsche and Spinoza has also been remarked on. In fact, Nietzsche himself has pointed out some similarities between his thought and Spinoza's in a postcard he sent to his friend Franz Overbeck:

“I am really amazed, really delighted! I have a precursor, and *what* a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: what brought me to him now was the guidance of instinct. Not only is his whole tendency like my own — to make knowledge the most *powerful passion* — but also in five main points of his doctrine I find myself; this most abnormal and lonely thinker is closest to me in these points precisely: he denies free will, purposes, the moral world order, the nonegoistical, evil; of course the differences are enormous, but they are differences more of period, culture, field of

¹ Of course, there is a difference in the way these two philosophers use the concept of God. When Nietzsche says God is dead, he means that the transcendent God of Christianity is dead, that is, belief in him is over. On the other hand, when Spinoza says that God is everything, he does not mean a transcendental God but an immanent God, that is, he identifies nature with God. Yet, however, while one (Spinoza) affirms the concept of God in his own way, the other (Nietzsche) completely denies the concept of God. It is the main difference between these two philosophers when it comes to the concept of God.

² Nietzsche expresses his attitude towards the systematic understanding of philosophy as follows (*Twilight of the Idols*): “I mistrust all systematists and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 456).

³ It should not be assumed that this is just a formal difference. This difference between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's writing styles also manifests itself in the way they conceptualize the world.

knowledge. *In summa*: my solitariness which, as on very high mountains, has often, often made me gasp for breath and lose blood, is now at least a solitude for two. Strange!” (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 177).

As Nietzsche points out, both reject the freedom of the will, teleological thought, dogmatic morality, absolute altruism, and, finally, the idea of evil in itself. As will be noticed, the nature of each of these similarities is a kind of negation. In other words, the factors that unite Nietzsche and Spinoza are, according to Nietzsche himself, mutual negations before mutual affirmations. It becomes all the more understandable if one considers that Nietzsche’s philosophy primarily criticises Western philosophy, Western metaphysics, and Western morality as commonly affirmed by many. As seen in the letter, Nietzsche sees Spinoza as his precursor. Because before Nietzsche, Spinoza attempted a systematic critique of these dogmatic Western values based on Christian morality. It is the reason why Nietzsche was influenced and even fascinated by Spinoza. This total negation unites Spinoza and Nietzsche, despite the fundamental differences in the theory between the two. Nevertheless, is there no similarity between Spinoza and Nietzsche other than a similarity based on mutual negation? We can also ask this question as follows: can an affirmative similarity, in a conceptual sense, be established between Spinoza’s and Nietzsche’s philosophy?

Undoubtedly, the conceptual negations that Spinoza and Nietzsche agreed with also show that they are similar in certain philosophical aspects. In other words, these negations are, of course, the harbinger of mutual conceptual affirmations between the two. Perhaps the most general of these is the affirmation of immanence as an idea by both of them. It can be said that both philosophers are philosophers of immanence. Hence both similarly conceptualize the world. When it comes to the similarity between Nietzsche and Spinoza, all the mutual negations that we pointed out dissolves in the affirmation of immanence. Thus, both are

naturalists in their philosophical theory of immanence. Because both of them ultimately derive their understanding of humanity from their understanding of nature. In essence, both are advocates of philosophical naturalism for their part. Both conceptually construct immanence in a specific way and complement their fundamental negation of Western metaphysics by introducing their affirmative principles of physics. These principles also form the backbone of their understanding of immanence. So, what are these principles at the center of the similarity between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's understanding of immanence?

These principles are the will to power in Nietzsche and *conatus* in Spinoza. These two concepts are essential components of the idea of immanence for both philosophers. Both define and explain the various implications of immanence through these concepts. Therefore, these concepts stand in a unique place in the philosophical understanding of both. Also, the implications of these concepts are similar for both philosophers. Although these concepts often appear to be incompatible with each other, in this thesis I argue that they convey fundamental compatibility. Both concepts essentially signify an affirmative principle of power for both. For both philosophers, an affirmative principle of power is a fundamental component of a non-dogmatic understanding of morality, that is, ethics. Therefore, revealing the similarity between these concepts is likely to reveal a philosophical link between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's philosophy, based on a mutual philosophical affirmation. In other words, establishing the connection between these concepts would also correspond to establishing a possible connection between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's philosophy, which is the actual aim of this study. This study, then, aims to make a specific reading of these two philosophers' conception of immanence on a conceptual scale by making a comparative analysis of the concepts of the will to power and *conatus*.

In the first part of this study, we will discuss Nietzsche's principle of the will to power in general. We will touch on the difference between Nietzsche's principle of the will to power and Schopenhauer's principle of the will to live and explain how this difference resonated with Nietzsche. So, in the first half of this first chapter, we will discuss the actual content and specific implications of Nietzsche's will to power. Next, we will consider Nietzsche's conception of the self. We will explain how he conceptualized the self concerning the principle of the will to power. Then, we will discuss the dimension of this conceptualization concerning Nietzsche's ethical understanding of the self and reveal the connection of the principle of the will to power with Nietzschean ethics. So, in the second half of this first chapter, we will explain how Nietzsche makes sense of the ethical self with the will to power.

In the second part of this study, we will discuss Spinoza's principle of *conatus* in general. To better understand this concept's main implications, we will first describe and explore the Stoics' concept of *oikeiōsis*. After a short reading of this concept, we will draw a general framework of Spinoza's system and explain and explore the principle of *conatus* in this framework. So, in the first half of this second chapter, we will discuss the actual content and specific implications of Spinoza's principle of *conatus*. Next, we will examine how Spinoza conceptualized the self. In this manner, we will first explain how Spinoza theorized the self in his system, and then we will explain how the Spinozian idea of the self is related to the principle of *conatus*. Then, we will discuss the relation of the Spinozian self with the Spinozian ethical self as theorized by Spinoza. In this way, we will reveal Spinoza's ethical understanding of the self with the principle of *conatus*. So, in the second half of this second chapter, we will explain how Spinoza makes sense of the ethical self in its relation to *conatus*.

In the third and final part of this study, we will synthesize the first and second chapters. In other words, we will reveal the intrinsic similarities between the concepts of the will to power and *conatus*. For this, we will first consider Nietzsche's critique of the principle of *conatus* and show that this criticism is unfounded and rather hasty. In this way, we will eliminate Nietzsche's criticism that distinguishes his principle of the will to power from Spinoza's principle of *conatus*. Thus, we will be able to open up to the discussion that the concepts of the will to power and *conatus* are fundamentally similar. We will begin this discussion first by showing the similarities between the Spinozian and the Nietzschean ideas of the self. In this manner, we will argue that the Nietzschean self and the Spinozian self are structured by a similar principle, a principle with the same essential quality, a principle of power. In other words, we will make reconciliation between Spinoza's *conatus* and Nietzsche's will to power in the context of the idea of the self. Then we will open up to the idea that the Spinozian idea of the ethical self and the Nietzschean idea of the ethical self are on a similar line ethically. In this manner, we will argue that both Nietzsche and Spinoza define the ethical self around and within the framework of their original and yet similar principles of power. In other words, we will claim that both Nietzsche and Spinoza, both for their part, see the ethical self as an individual manifestation of an affirmative and active power. Finally, to support this claim, we will explain how there is an ethical interrelation between these two philosophers' specific principles of power. Thus, we will be introducing and linking these two philosophers' ethical theories, which are quite similar to each other, through these principles. Throughout this chapter, our main claim, which expresses the essence of this study, will be the idea that Spinoza and Nietzsche, both for their part, are representatives of ethics of power. In short, in this chapter, we will consider these two philosophers together, in theory, as representatives of ethics of power.

1. NIETZSCHE AND THE WILL TO POWER

This chapter deals with different aspects of Nietzsche's concept of the will to power. The main topics discussed in this chapter are as follows:

- What does Schopenhauer understand from the concept of the will? What does the will to live mean? How is it formulated? What are its ethical implications?
- What is the difference between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer when it comes to the meaning of the concept of the will? What does the will to power mean?
- How does Nietzsche make sense of the concept of the self? In what sense is the self separate from the 'I'? What is the relation of the self to the will to power?
- What is the character of an ethical self according to Nietzsche? What does the concept of the will to power relate to this character? What is the overman?

1.1. The Will to Power in the context of Nietzsche's Philosophy

In this subchapter, I will consider separately Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's approaches to the concept of the will. As it is known, Nietzsche borrowed the concept from Schopenhauer and used this concept in his philosophy. But it should not be forgotten that Nietzsche gave the concept of the will a completely different meaning from Schopenhauer. It is, therefore, necessary to consider Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's ideas about the will individually. In this regard, I will first briefly examine how Schopenhauer interpreted and theorized the concept of the will. Next, I will examine and interpret Nietzsche's published work on how the concept of the will manifests as the will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy. In this way, I will emphasize both the Schopenhauerian roots of the concept of the will to power and show as far as possible how the will to power differs from Schopenhauer's concept of the will. To summarize, the purpose of this subchapter is to provide a brief overview of the concepts of the will and the will to power.

1.1.1. The Schopenhauerian Will

Schopenhauer's will is largely based on Kant's views on metaphysics. Schopenhauer is a Kantian. (Or maybe we can call him Neo-Kantian.) He formed his philosophy under the influence of Kant's philosophy. He adapted the basic components of the Kantian philosophy to his philosophy and placed the concept of the will on these basic components. (In this respect, Schopenhauer's philosophical foundation is based almost entirely on Kant.) In other words, the roots of the concept of the will, which has a central place in Schopenhauer's philosophy, goes back to Kant. Therefore, in order to understand the essence of Schopenhauer's will, it is necessary to take Kant into account.

As opposed to the idea that our experience of reality corresponds exactly to reality itself, Kant argues that our perception is always conditional and is always conditioned by our mind, that is, by the structure of our mind. According to Kant's theory, our mental intuition has two basic forms. These are time and space. (Also, causality as a category of understanding is a reality-form that we impose on reality. For Kant, along with time and space, causality also conditions our perception of reality.) What we must deduce from this theory is that time and space, as mental forms, are not properties inherent in things. Rather, they are the forms that our mind imposes on things. That is, according to Kant, we do not perceive an objective reality, we always perceive a subjective reality. Therefore, our mind also plays an active role, not a passive one, against what we call reality.

For Kant, the world we perceive is the phenomenal world. The world we cannot perceive is the noumenal world (*ding an sich*). So, we do not experience the world objectively. Because we ourselves are subjects. The essence of our existence is to be a subject and to perceive an object from this basis. Since we are a subject, we cannot grasp objects as they are. In summary, we can say this: for Kant, in the

mediated sense of the word, there is no object without a subject, because the subject is the subject to the extent that it mediates the object, that is, the thing in itself in its way.⁴ (In this respect, it is the object, in the fundamental sense of the word, that is, the thing in itself, that makes it possible for the subject to exist as the subject. In this sense, the object is both the mediator and the mediated.)

From the philosophical point of view, it can be said that Schopenhauer started from where Kant left off — from the idea that there can be no object without a subject. Objective reality is also practically impossible for Schopenhauer.⁵ Schopenhauer, however, thinks that we have a unique interaction with the noumenal world. Although we cannot perceive reality as it is, we are not quite outside of it. According to Schopenhauer, body and bodily experience are the most basic examples of this situation.

Our body first appears to us as an object among objects. We realize that we cannot distinguish our body from the body of a stone or a bird. To this extent, all kinds of bodies (*corpus*) present themselves as a phenomenon. In this sense, the body is a representation. It is subject to time and space. But we do not perceive our body only as an object. So, we know more about our body than knowing it is a phenomenon. We sense pain in our body, we sense hunger, we sense pleasure, we sense anger, and so on. (All these are inner and bodily feelings, that is, they do not arise primarily from the perception of the outside.) According to Schopenhauer, all these bodily affects make our body more than just an object. Because we feel

⁴ Allen W. Wood explains this Kantian connection between the concepts of the object and the subject as follows: “We have cognition of objects at all, in Kant's view, only because they affect us in certain ways, leading to our experience of them (KrV A19/B33). But it does not follow from this that all of what we know of them depends on them and on what experience tells us about them. For in order for us to have cognition of objects, our cognitive capacities must also be engaged (KrV AI, B1)” (*Kant*, 27).

⁵ The point at which Schopenhauer dissociates with Kant stems from Kant's inability to explain how the noumenal world created the phenomenal world as it is. Kant says things-in-themselves make our experience possible, but this is absurd, according to Schopenhauer, as causation itself requires a subject. And to the extent that the forms of time and space presuppose the existence of a subject, it is unnecessary to talk about transcendental objects, as Kant did.

our body not as an object among objects, but as a specific object. Our body is ours; it belongs to us. In this sense, our body is not only a phenomenon, but also an entity that cannot be reduced to a phenomenon. Schopenhauer calls this non-phenomenal and naturally noumenal side of the body the will.⁶

We can then say that we perceive our body not only as representation, but also as will. Our body reflects both a representation and a will. According to Schopenhauer, we have access to the noumenal world through our will. (In other words, in our connection with the will, we are affected by that world.) In Schopenhauer, the phenomenal world manifests itself as objects, as in Kant. The noumenal world, on the other hand, in Schopenhauer, in contrast to Kant, is not inaccessible, but embodies itself in the will. So, the world as it appears to us is not only representation but also will.

For Schopenhauer, the will is timeless and spaceless to the extent that it is not part of the phenomenal world. Also, it is not subject to causation. Therefore, it can be said that the will, which is not subject to time and space and causation, will be one and complete. So, the will is always everywhere. Everything is its expression: “For this word [the will] indicates that which is the being-in-itself of every thing in the world, and is the sole kernel of every phenomenon” (Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation, Vol. 1*, 118).

As we said, our body is an expression of this will. According to Schopenhauer, not only our body but also everything living and non-living, that is, all organic and inorganic beings, are an expression of this will. For Schopenhauer, everything is

⁶ Of course, this does not mean that Kant, compared to Schopenhauer, denied the will. According to Kant, the will is a kind of empirical phenomenon, so it is natural. About this natural object of moral philosophy, the will, Kant writes: “By contrast, natural and moral philosophy can each have their empirical part, because the former must determine its laws of nature as an object of experience, the latter must determine the laws for the will of the human being insofar as he is affected by nature [...]” (*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 3).

one under the concept of the will. Things reflect this will by their own nature. This will, which shows itself as a resistance to external factors in inanimate beings, shows itself as a dynamic striving in living beings. This striving is what keeps the living being alive. According to Schopenhauer, everything reveals the will to live as much as it reveals the will. The basic characteristic of the will is that it is a vital force. Thus, in Schopenhauer, the will manifests itself as the will to live (*Wille zum Leben*). (As we shall see, Nietzsche is totally against this characterization of the will. According to him, the will is not life-oriented, but power-oriented.) Schopenhauer writes:

“Every glance at the world, to explain which is the task of the philosopher, confirms and establishes that the *will-to-live*, far from being an arbitrary hypostasis or even an empty expression, is the only true description of the world’s innermost nature. Everything presses and pushes towards *existence*, if possible towards *organic existence*, i.e., *life*, and then to the highest possible degree thereof” (*The World As Will and Representation*, Vol. 2, 350).

In this context, the will to live is directed towards nourishment and propagation. Because these are the most basic needs when it comes to living things. In these ways, living things survive and continue their lineage. If they don’t, they will die and become extinct. In this sense, the will resembles a kind of vicious circle, since living beings use and depend on other living beings for their most basic needs. Our will drives us to survive. In order to survive, we prevent another creature from surviving. And this goes on forever. For Schopenhauer, the underlying cause of this cycle is nothing but the will.

Schopenhauer thinks that the will has no reasonable cause or goal. For him, will is a force that affirms itself forever without a cause. So, will is inherently irrational.

In this context, living beings are similar to puppets directed by the will. Because the will in living things shows itself as the will to live, and Schopenhauer thinks that living things are slaves of this will. The meaning of this is that every living thing — whether it is aware of it or not — is programmed to live. That is, it does not desire anything but survival. Survival is its primary goal. And all of its actions are woven around the goal of survival.

In humans, the will shows itself as an insatiable desire. This desire manifests itself in many different ways. But what is common in all of its manifestations is this: our desire arising from our will is never satisfied and we continue to feel desire for something. Therefore, we are in a constant state of tension. Because, by our nature, we behave towards survival. Thus, the will imposes itself as a painful element. We are in constant trouble to satisfy our will. Schopenhauer expresses it as follows: “Everything in life proclaims that earthly happiness is destined to be frustrated, or recognized as an illusion. The grounds for this lie deep in the very nature of things” (*The World As Will and Representation, Vol. 2, 573*).

According to Schopenhauer, the will as a metaphysical principle is the source of human suffering. For him, the reason we strive to survive is that we try to avoid the conditioning power of the will. We think that this way — that is, by trying to survive one way or another — we will be happy or satisfied. But since the will is a blind force, it has no end, and we continue to desire and therefore to satisfy our desires. And this is the source of our suffering.

For all these reasons Schopenhauer thinks that the will is inherently an evil force. The will, as a universal principle, does not take into account our happiness or well-being, but it constantly disturbs us. Therefore, Schopenhauer thinks that this will that is inherent in human nature must be abolished. According to him, this is

the only way of salvation for human being: human being must deny his willful nature.⁷

But we tend to feel compassion for others first in order to relieve our suffering from the universal will. Because when we look around, we realize that this will that causes us suffering is not only in us but also in everyone: in one way or another, everyone is in pain. In this way, we realize that we are one with the world through the will, and we gain the knowledge that everyone and everything is a manifestation of the will. Thus, we begin to feel compassion to relieve both our own suffering and the suffering of the other.⁸ But we soon realize that this is not the solution either. For we see that the feeling of compassion does not eliminate the suffering created by the will. Compassion only suppresses the suffering but does not abolish it. Schopenhauer says: “The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form” (*The World As Will and Representation, Vol. 1*, 315). Thus, for Schopenhauer, the ethics of compassion is not the ultimate ethical attitude. But if not, what is it?

Schopenhauer argues that the ultimate liberation from the will is in the ascetic way of life. In this respect, it can be said that Schopenhauer’s ethics is an ethics aiming at liberation from the will. Everything that frees us from our will and egoism has an ethical dimension. For Schopenhauer, the will is something that must ultimately be silenced. This is the ultimate ethical goal. The denial of the will is the denial of all the desires that it makes possible. According to

⁷ Here we might ask: if the will is such a terrible thing, why shouldn’t suicide be the solution? But according to Schopenhauer, committing suicide is not a solution. Because suicide shows that the will is affirmed rather than negated. In this way, we do not eradicate pain, but we kill ourselves because we cannot bear it.

⁸ To this extent, we can say that Schopenhauer’s ethics and the ethics of Christianity are similar to each other. Both ethics advise that we should sympathize with those who are suffering in one way or another. Although Schopenhauer is an atheist — though he is sympathetic to eastern religions and eastern spirituality — his ethics show dramatic similarities to Christian ethics. And this is one of the aspects that Nietzsche heavily criticized in Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer, only an ascetic can accomplish this. Because he is the person who sees the meaninglessness of the will and rejects it as it is. For this is the only way to end human suffering: the solution is to eliminate desire.⁹

As can be seen, for Schopenhauer, the nature of the will is almost completely negative.¹⁰ The will is what drives us, it is the life force. But it is also the source of our suffering, the cause of our misery. It is for this very reason Schopenhauer thinks that this negative force must be eliminated. Because our salvation is synonymous with its elimination, that is, its death. In this context, we can say that we suffer when there is some will, and that we attain salvation when there is no will. (Which means that the only thing that a human being has to do is to deny his/her own nature, that is, his/her willful self, and die metaphysically. Which, in a way, is the negation of the positivity of the will.) Thus, Schopenhauer finds the positivity only in the negation of the negativity.

1.1.2. The Nietzschean Will

We have seen that the concept of the will has a negative meaning for Schopenhauer. But as far as Nietzsche is concerned, the opposite is the case. The will has a positive meaning for Nietzsche.¹¹ Nietzschean will is characterized by positivity, not negativity. So, it is not an agonizing factor, but a necessarily self-

⁹ At this point, the similarity between Schopenhauer's ethics and that of Buddhism reveals itself. In Buddhism, too, the ultimate goal is the abolition of desire. What Schopenhauer calls the will is called desire in Buddhism. And what Schopenhauer calls salvation is called *nirvana* in Buddhism. Thus, it can be said that Schopenhauer asceticism converges to Buddhist asceticism rather than Christian asceticism.

¹⁰ The reason Schopenhauer sees the will as a negative force when it comes to human beings is not that the will contains no positivity, but that he thinks that the ultimate horizon of the will is negativity for living things. For suffering and ultimately death are absolute conditions of life.

¹¹ Nietzsche's statements about the absence of such a thing as will in some of his works are misleading. When Nietzsche uses word the will alone, he usually means free will and implies that it does not exist. So, Nietzsche is not against the idea of will, but against the idea of free will. He thinks that will is not characterized by absolute freedom.

affirming life drive. We can simply say this: in Nietzsche, the will is fundamentally an affirmative force.

In fact, Nietzsche criticized Schopenhauer in the context of this concept. This is because the meaning Nietzsche gave to the concept of the will is almost completely opposed to the meaning Schopenhauer gave to it. Although Nietzsche agrees with Schopenhauer when it comes to the dominance of the will, he does not do so when it comes to its fundamental character. Nietzsche criticizes the most basic moral propositions that Schopenhauer derived from this concept. He argues that these moral propositions are neither necessary nor fundamental, but problematic. Nietzsche writes (*On the Genealogy of Morality*):

“I dealt especially with the value of the ‘unegoistic’, the instincts of pity, self-denial, self-sacrifice which Schopenhauer had for so long gilded, deified and transcendentalized until he was finally left with them as those ‘values as such’ on the basis of which he *said* ‘no’ to life and to himself as well. But against *these* very instincts I gave vent to an increasingly deep mistrust, a scepticism which dug deeper and deeper! Precisely here I saw the *great* danger to mankind, its most sublime temptation and seduction — temptation to what? to nothingness? — precisely here I saw the beginning of the end, standstill, mankind looking back wearily, turning its will *against* life, and the onset of the final sickness becoming gently, sadly manifest: I understood the morality of pity, casting around ever wider to catch even philosophers and make them ill, as the most uncanny symptom of our European culture which has itself become uncanny, as its detour to a new Buddhism? to a new Euro-Buddhism? to — *nihilism?*” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 393).

As it can be understood from this paragraph, Nietzsche does not agree with Schopenhauer's moral understanding arising from the conceptualization of the will. He thinks that these moral values come from certain metaphysical assumptions. In other words, Nietzsche argues that Schopenhauer's ethics has been shaped and formed by his metaphysics. Nietzsche is critical of Schopenhauer's metaphysical ethics on the basis that it leads to nihilism. For, from the perspective of the Schopenhauer's will, life is seen as a series of suffering, and the denial of life, that is, the self-negation of the will, is the only remedy. And this is what seems meaningless to Nietzsche. For if life is the will, how is life going to deny life? If the will is the will to live, how is it going to deny its own essence? It seems that from Nietzsche's perspective, this idea (besides being nihilistic) is also paradoxical in nature.¹²

Nietzsche, unlike Schopenhauer, does not attribute a negative meaning to suffering. In certain situations, it is even beneficial and meaningful for him. Even the suffering created by the will is, for Nietzsche, an assumption. He does not think that suffering is bad or evil in itself. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he writes:

“If possible (and no ‘if possible’ can be more crazy) you want *to abolish suffering!* And we? — it seems that *we* want it to be, if anything, worse and greater than before! Well-being in your sense of the word — that certainly is no goal, it seems to us to be an *end!* A condition that would immediately make people ludicrous and contemptible — make us *wish* their downfall! The discipline of suffering, *great* suffering — don't you know that this discipline *alone* has created all human greatness to date?” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 347-348).

¹² Because, according to Nietzsche, the essence of the will is to be active. There can be no absolute passivity of the will. That is why Nietzsche says (*On the Genealogy of Morality*): “[M]an still prefers to will *nothingness*, than *not* will...” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 435).

As can be seen, Nietzsche gives a positive meaning even to suffering. In other words, he does not equate the effect of the will with suffering. In this context, the suffering of the will reveals the character of the will. Suffering is subjective rather than objective. What does he mean by subjective?

For Nietzsche, the effect of the will is subjective. Like Schopenhauer, he thinks the will is the world and everything in it. But Nietzsche, unlike Schopenhauer, does not see the will as a force completely independent of us. We are not the slaves of the will, but its reflectors. The will is us in all its singularity. In this respect, according to Nietzsche, it can be said that the will does not mean a unity but a multiplicity.¹³ Nietzsche sees more than the will to live in this will that encompasses everything and everyone. He argues that the vast majority of human actions cannot be reduced to the will to live. Nietzsche breaks with Schopenhauer at this point because Schopenhauer argues that the ultimate goal of all human acts is survival. Nietzsche is skeptical of this. He thinks that the will as a concept reflects much more than that: it is power that characterizes the will that conditions everyone and everything. That is, the will is not the will to live, but the will to power (*der Wille zur Macht*).

Nietzsche does not think that people's primary motivation is to survive. He finds the impulse to gain power even under the impulse to survive. Thus the will to live is a mode of the will to power. He thinks that the will to live is conditioned primarily by the will to power. In one of his early books, he writes:

“Not necessity, not desire — no, the love of power is the demon of men. Let them have everything — health, food, a place to live, entertainment — they are and remain unhappy and low spirited: for the demon waits and

¹³ For Nietzsche, the will is not a single force that encompasses and represses everything, but a multitude that everything reflects and nurtures for its part.

waits and will be satisfied. Take everything from them and satisfy this, and they are almost happy — as happy as men and demons can be. But why do I repeat this? Luther has said it already, and better than I, in the verses: ‘Let them take from us our body, goods, honour, children, wife: let it all go — the kingdom [*Reich*] must yet remain to us!’ Yes! Yes! The ‘*Reich*!’” (*Daybreak*, 146).

Obviously, Nietzsche does not think that survival makes one happy. He does not believe that survival is a goal in itself, nor does he think that it is the ultimate goal. Because although people can survive, they constantly desire something else, something beyond survival.¹⁴ They always want more. And what they want, for Nietzsche, is power. (It should be noted that power is not a general concept for Nietzsche. So, it does not refer to a certain power. Power is rather the driving force in the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy. It is the orientation of desire. It is an inner impulse with a character.) Nietzsche continues as follows in the same book:

“Not actual need, for they are not so badly off, perhaps they even eat and drink without a care — but they are afflicted day and night by a fearful impatience at the slow way with which their money is accumulating and by an equally fearful pleasure in and love of accumulated money. In this impatience and this love, however, there turns up again that fanaticism of the *lust for power* [...]” (*Daybreak*, 123).

¹⁴ In some cases, people even risk their own lives in order to feel powerful. This is the case in extreme sports, for example. Similarly, when it comes to war, people risk their own lives. And this is one of the reasons why Nietzsche criticizes the will to live: according to him, not every action can be explained by the will to live. Some actions openly manifest themselves as a will to power. They are associated with increasing power, not self-preservation. People reflect more than the impulse to protect themselves in these types of actions.

Nietzsche's point of all this is that the will to power directs all human acts. In other words, each person acts according to his/her own will to power. Although people seem to want different things, what is common in people is desiring of power through what they want. Everyone attributes their sense of power to something else. But the attribution is always the same: power. However, it should be noted that the will to power is not simply desire for power, rather, it underlines that every will is a certain kind of power. That is, every will is a combination of power. Every will wants what strengthens itself. And this will is an expression of its power. In short, power is not what is desired, power is what desires. (So, power, in a sense, gives direction to desire.) That is why the will to power conditions the will to live. Even the will to live echoes the will to power. Every organism defends itself. But every organism does this not just to live, but to increase its power. Why? Because in this way it overcomes an obstacle and proves its strength against those who threaten it. It protects its own life because it wants to increase its own power. Perhaps this is why in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche says: "Whatever does not kill me makes me stronger" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 456).

The main reason why Nietzsche criticizes the idea of the will to live is that this the will in itself means nothing. Because if life is identical with the will and the will cannot be without it, what is the meaning of the will to live? Striving to live while living? Nietzsche does not agree with this, of course. He even finds it pointless. Nietzsche expresses it as follows (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*):

"He who shot the doctrine of 'will to existence' at truth certainly did not hit the truth: this will — does not exist! / 'For what does not exist cannot will; but that which is in existence, how could it still want to come into existence? / 'Only where life is, there is also will: not will to life, but — so I teach you — will to power! / 'The living creature values many things

higher than life itself; yet out of this evaluation itself speaks — the will to power!” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 271).

Thus, Nietzsche denies the existence of the will to live. The will to live does not mean anything in itself, it can only have meaning in connection with the will to power. The will to live is at most a tautology. Thus, the general characteristic of life is not life but power. Life reflects power. Nietzsche expresses this clearly in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

“[I]t will have to be the will to power incarnate, it will want to grow, to reach out around itself, pull towards itself, gain the upper hand — not out of some morality or immorality, but because it is *alive*, and because life simply *is* the will to power” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 355).

As can be seen, Nietzsche equates the will to power with life. For him, life and power are not two separate things. They are one and the same thing. Life expresses the will to power through different channels (organic and inorganic). But at the same time, the will to power expresses life in different modes. So, it can be said that for Nietzsche life itself is a kind of force. Perhaps, in the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy, life can be seen as a mirror that reflects nothing but the will to power.

At the level that Nietzsche equates life with the will to power, he thinks that every living being included in it is an expression of this will to power. It follows from this that every living thing will strive to unleash and increase its own power. At the level where this is the essence of life, it is also the essence of everything alive. Every living thing expresses its power. That is, every living thing is characterized by the quality of its power. On the analogy of the life and the will to power, Nietzsche continues as follows (*Beyond Good and Evil*):

“[L]ife itself *in its essence* means appropriating, injuring, overpowering those who are foreign and weaker; oppression, harshness, forcing one’s own forms on others, incorporation, and at the very least, at the very mildest, exploitation” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 355).

What Nietzsche meant by this is that every living thing acts with the aim of increasing its own power. In this respect, the will to power is a destructive as well as a constructive factor. Sometimes it may be necessary for a person to harm someone else in order to create himself/herself, that is, to practice his/her own power. From this perspective, it can be said that life is like a plane in which everyone is constantly striving to create themselves through their own power. It seems that in Nietzsche’s understanding of the world, every living creature is programmed to test its own power. Every living creature does so, because it is its nature. The way of self-expression is the release of power. Therefore, it is natural for a person to test his/her power on others. What Nietzsche means here is that every action (whether mental or physical) between people is a kind of encounter of forces. For example, one person defeating another in a sport signifies physical strength. But the fact that one has an intellectual influence on the other also indicates a mental power. The nature of this power can be positive or negative. However, it can be said that there is always a form of association among people that allows power to increase or decrease. This is simply what Nietzsche meant by the will to power among people: every human being is in relationships that increase or decrease his/her power. In this context, it can be said that the will to power also has an interpersonal aspect. Nietzsche emphasizes this in one of his early books:

“Benefiting and hurting others are ways of exercising one’s power over them — that is all one wants in such cases! We *hurt* those to whom we

need to make our power perceptible, for pain is a much more sensitive means to that end than pleasure: pain always asks for the cause, while pleasure is inclined to stop with itself and not look back. We *benefit* and show benevolence toward those who already depend on us in some way (that is, who are used to thinking of us as their causes); we want to increase their power because we thus increase our own, or we want to show them the advantage of being in our power — that way, they will be more satisfied with their situation and more hostile towards and willing to fight against the enemies of *our* power” (*The Gay Science*, 38-39).

What should be understood from this is that a will wants to dominate other wills which enables the will to reveal itself as the will to power. (It is not violence or terror that should be understood here by domination. Rather, it should be understood that every will is inherent to affect other wills and to increase this affect as much as possible. In this very sense, the essence of the will is the will to power.) Because the will of the will is not to live. Life is already the precondition of the will. Rather, the will manifests itself through power. Considering that this will characterizes everyone and everything, it can be said that everyone and everything constantly affect each other through this will. In short, the will to power is not only individual, but also collective. Everyone interacts with each other through this will, through this energy. In fact, it is this will that characterizes the very interaction itself. Nietzsche explains this in one of his later works (*Beyond Good and Evil*):

“A ‘will’ can have an effect only upon another ‘will’, of course, and not upon ‘matter’ (not upon ‘nerves’, for example): one must dare to hypothesize, in short, that wherever ‘effects’ are identified, a will is having an effect upon another will — and that all mechanical events, in so far as

an energy is active in them, are really the energy of the will, the effect of the will” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 330).

According to Nietzsche, organic and inorganic beings only reveal this will, the will to power. The root of every behavior can be reduced to it. The essence of every behavior can be traced back to it. Therefore, it is also possible to say that the will to power is a psychological principle. The will to power conditions the psychic as well as the organic. (The organic is, in this context, only one mode of the will to power. The psychic or the psychological signifies another mode of the will to power. In another way, it can be said: the modes of life are characterized by the will to power.) Nietzsche finds this principle beneath all active and reactive energy. Perhaps Nietzsche expresses this most clearly in the following sentences (*Beyond Good and Evil*):

Assuming, finally, that we could explain our entire instinctual life as the development and differentiation of *one* basic form of the will (namely the will to power, as *my* tenet would have it); assuming that one could derive all organic functions from this will to power and also find in it the solution to the problem of procreation and alimentation (it is all one problem), then we would have won the right to designate *all* effective energy unequivocally as: the *will to power*. The world as it is seen from the inside, the world defined and described by its ‘intelligible character’ — would be simply ‘will to power’ and that alone” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 330).

As can be seen from this quote, Nietzsche sees all life, both psychological and organic, as an expression of the will to power. In fact, the world is the will to power. And since we are of this world, we are the expression of this will to power. When we express ourselves, we express our will to power. More precisely, life, characterized by the will to power, expresses itself through us.

It can also be said that the will to power is a metaphysical principle. But this does not mean that the will to power is a transcendental principle. On the contrary, the will to power is a principle based on immanence. It is metaphysical in the sense that it is the principle that conditions all physical activity. So, it is not a principle beyond physics. Rather, the universe and everything in it expresses the will to power. (So, it is a purely physical phenomenon — with all its implications.) Therefore, it is possible to say that the will to power is in a way an ontological principle. Everything grows from it. It is a kind of Nietzschean *hypokeimenon*.

Finally, it must be said that the will to power is also a social principle. By this we mean that the principle that produces human relations is the will to power. The values people have produced, the way they live, what they call good and bad are all expressions of the will to power. Social problems, wars, and various crisis are also examples of this principle. Perhaps Nietzsche was most concerned with this aspect of the will to power.¹⁵ According to him, the will to power manifests itself mostly in the social life of people. Various institutions, religions, organizations and so on are all institutionalized and static forms of a certain will to power. Just as every human being is the embodiment of the will to power, every society is the embodiment of the will to power. In short, both the individual and the community express the will to power.

With all these in mind, we can say that the will to power is a multidimensional concept. It is an organic, psychological, metaphysical and social principle. It is all at once. Therefore, it is open to interpretation in different ways. But one thing is certain: for Nietzsche, the whole existence expresses the will to power. This is Nietzsche's interpretation of existence: existence is the will to power. Everything

¹⁵ I will discuss this aspect of the will to power in detail in the fourth subchapter of this chapter. For Nietzsche had theorized the will to power mostly based on this aspect.

is a mode of it. Everyone reflects it. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche thinks that will conditions things, but unlike Schopenhauer, he emphasizes that the conditioning force is the demand for power, not the will to live. In this respect, the will to power is a concept indistinguishable from life. It is conditioned by life and conditions it. It is in a way the founding principle of the world for Nietzsche. In one of his famous unpublished notes, he says:

“[D]o you want a *name* for my world? A *solution* to all its enigmas? A *light* for you who are best concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most Northerly, most midnightly? *This world is the will to power — and nothing besides!* And even you yourselves are this will to power — and nothing besides!” (*The Will to Power*, 586).

Now that we have briefly explained what the meaning and essence of the will for Nietzsche, it is time to see how Nietzsche engages and uses the will, that is, the will to power, in his philosophy. To see this, of course, it is necessary to see how Nietzsche relates the idea of the self and his ethics in relation to this idea of the self with the will to power. So, let us now consider and discuss the individual and ethical dimensions of the will to power in Nietzsche’s philosophy.

1.2. The Nietzschean Ethical Self in connection with The Will to Power

In this subchapter, I will examine what the will to power means in particular to Nietzsche’s ethics. So, I will examine the idea that the founding concept underlying Nietzsche’s ethics is the will to power. In this context, I will first discuss what the concept of the self means for Nietzsche. I will explain how the self was defined and formulated by him. In this way, I will also provide a basis for making sense of Nietzsche’s ideas about the ethical self. During this discussion, my main source will be Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Then, secondly, I

will discuss how the ethical self in the context of Nietzsche's philosophy relates to the will to power. In this manner, I will examine the types of morality that Nietzsche calls master morality and slave morality and discuss their connection with the will to power. Ultimately, I will argue that the Nietzschean ethical self is related to the individual who has master morality, and that this individual also shows similarities with Nietzsche's conception of the overman (*übermensch*). Thus, I will emphasize the intertwining of Nietzschean ethics with the concept of the will to power. During this discussion, my main source will be Nietzsche's book *On the Genealogy of Morality*. In summary, my purpose in this subchapter will be to reveal the connection of the Nietzschean ethical self, which is based on the Nietzschean idea of the self, with the concept of the will to power.

1.2.1. The Nietzschean Self

Nietzsche is known to be extremely skeptical when it comes to the idea of the self. He also does not believe in the concept of the soul. It can also be said that he basically does not believe in the idea of a stable identity. But Nietzsche still continues to use the concept of the self throughout his work. He has dealt with the concept of the self again and again in his philosophy. It is clear that one of Nietzsche's most famous concepts is self-overcoming. So, for Nietzsche, there is a self to be overcome, at least this is certain. And of course, if there were no self, there would be nothing to overcome. But what is this self? What is the meaning of the self for Nietzsche?

For Nietzsche, the self is a concept as simple as it is complex. It is simple because it has a totality and can be traced back to its origin. It is complex because it is always in flux and what it will do is largely unpredictable. Should we deduce from this that Nietzsche has a paradoxical understanding of the self? The short answer to this question would be negative. Rather, we must deduce from this that

Nietzsche sees the self as something that contains both totality and flux. In other words, it can be said that the self is something that remains constant in its change. From here, we can come to the following conclusion: the self is both the unification of flux in totality and opening of totality to flux. Simply put: the self is something that has its own becoming. But this time the question arises: How does the self contain both unity and multiplicity?

This question is the key to understanding what the Nietzschean self is. And to answer this question, it is necessary to examine Nietzsche's masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. For Nietzsche has put forward an almost systematic theory of the self only in this book. Examining this short and concise theory will provide the answer to this question.

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche identifies the self with the body. In other words, he sees the body as the container of the self, and as such there is no self without it. It collects and organizes bodily sensations. These bodily sensations are states of the body's power to be affected. It is the body that absorbs these affects, and its reaction to the outside manifests itself as the self. In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes: "Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty commander, an unknown sage — he is called Self. He lives in your body, he is your body" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265). In this respect, the body also functions as a foundation in the formation of the self. Thus, it can be said from the Nietzschean perspective that the body and the self are almost identical, or rather, they form two different aspects of the same process. Nietzsche says that even the concept of the spirit is a product of this process: "Your little intelligence, my brother, which you call 'spirit', is also an instrument of your body, a little instrument and toy of your great intelligence" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 264). And the same process underlies even the concept of the soul: "But the awakened, the enlightened man says: I am body

entirely, and nothing beside; and soul is only a word for something in the body” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 264).

Can we say that Nietzsche denied consciousness in this manner? That would be too radical an idea to be realistic. Rather, Nietzsche underlines that what we call consciousness (in this context, spirit and soul can also be seen as synonyms for this concept) always reflects an essence (if it has any essence) that comes from the body. There is no consciousness free from the body. Every consciousness is a consciousness conditioned by the body and its affects. Therefore, there is no consciousness in itself. In this sense, it can be said that consciousness is a mental extension of the body.¹⁶ For Nietzsche, it is as if consciousness is nothing more than mental reflections of bodily forces. Well, with such an understanding, can we talk about what we call ‘I’? That is, does what consciousness calls ‘I’ actually exist? Nietzsche does not consider this to be more than an understatement: “You say ‘I’ and you are proud of this word. But greater than this — although you will not believe in it — is your body and its great intelligence, which does not say ‘I’ but performs ‘I’” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 264).

What should we understand from this? First, we must understand that it is the self that conditions the sense of ‘I’. In this sense, we cannot talk about the concept of an ‘I’ free from the body and therefore the self. Second, we must understand that it is only the self that makes possible any action (whether physical or mental), and that the ‘I’ is in absolute subordination to the self. What we need to understand is simply this: ‘I’ is something that is dominated even though it thinks itself conscious. The self, on the other hand, is something that dominates, although it is not conscious. It rules over ‘I’.¹⁷ What is meant by this is that the self, whose

¹⁶ We will see in the third chapter that Spinoza and Nietzsche agree on this issue, namely that what is called the mind is a kind of extension of the body.

¹⁷ This means that the self directs the ‘I’. The ‘I’ does not realize this, but it is the self that produces its consciousness.

nature is not defined by consciousness, conditions the 'I' whose nature is defined by consciousness.¹⁸ It is the self that is essential in this relationship: "The Self is always listening and seeking: it compares, subdues, conquers, destroys. It rules and is also the Ego's ruler" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

What does Nietzsche actually mean by all this? He actually implies one thing: there is no such thing as free will and that everyone acts according to the affects of their own body. This underlines again that there is no 'I' that makes its own decisions, all decisions are made by the self, which is an output of the body's affections. Every decision, every action, every thought and so on bears the stamp of the self. In this sense, the ego is a kind of puppet of the self.¹⁹ The self is the power that derives the thoughts of the ego, and even the thought of the ego itself. Nietzsche makes this clear in his words:

"Your Self laughs at your Ego and its proud leapings. 'What are these leapings and flights of thought to me?' it says to itself. 'A by-way to my goal. I am the Ego's leading-string and I prompt its conceptions.' / The Self says to the Ego: 'Feel pain!' Thereupon it suffers and gives thought how to end its suffering — and it is *meant* to think for just that purpose. / The Self says to the Ego: 'Feel joy!' Thereupon it rejoices and gives thought how it may often rejoice — and it is *meant* to think for just that purpose" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, in his book on Nietzsche, explains this relationship between 'I' and the self as follows: "Consciousness is never self-consciousness, but the consciousness of an ego in relation to a self which is not itself conscious. It is not the master's consciousness but the slave's consciousness in relation to a master who is not himself conscious" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 39).

¹⁹ In other words, any orientation of the 'I' is determined by the self. So, the 'I' is a kind of stooge of the self. Nietzsche underlines this unconscious subordination of the 'I' as follows: "There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom. And who knows for what purpose your body requires precisely your best wisdom?" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

By looking at these words of Nietzsche, it can be said that 'I' is a kind of shadow of the self. Nothing more. It is just a manifestation filtered by the self. In this sense, it lacks self-determination. Nor does it do more than obey and reflect upon bodily affects. It has no intensity of its own: "The creative Self created for itself esteem and disesteem, it created for itself joy and sorrow. The creative body created spirit for itself, as a hand of its will" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265). So, can it be said that the sense of 'I' is also necessary in a way? I think yes. For the sense of 'I' seems to be a necessary consequence of the self in this context. But it does not seem like it has a meaning in itself. In this respect, everything that can be connected with the sense of 'I' (soul, spirit, senses, etc.) also happens under the monopoly of the self. Nietzsche adds:

"What the sense feels, what the spirit perceives, is never an end in itself. But sense and spirit would like to persuade you that they are the end of all things: they are as vain as that. / Sense and spirit are instruments and toys: behind them still lies the Self. The Self seeks with the eyes of the sense, it listens too with the ears of the spirit" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

Can we conclude from these words that the self, by nature, is always active? Absolutely. Because it produces all the emotions, desires, thoughts, movements, and so on. (These activities are mental as well as physical. In fact, Nietzsche does not seem to separate the two. For him, there is only the activity of the self and its bodily manifestations. And what is mental, in this context, is an expression of something bodily.) None of this can happen without it. Because none of this can happen without the body. In this very sense, the self and the body are one and the same thing. They intertwine with each other. The body is a reservoir that stores all kinds of affects. The thing that emerges with the intensification of the affects in the body is the self. So, is the self a kind of bodily multitude?

I think this expression (bodily multitude) fits with the Nietzschean idea of the self. Because in this idea of the self, the human being seems to be the sum of his/her encounters and the affects he/she has gained from these encounters. The various affects absorbed by the body determine the character of the self. And this character also gives birth to the 'I', which is subject to the self (so that it can fulfill its desires). Thus, the self both appears as the sum of all kinds of affects and also resembles a specific bodily organization of these affects. In this sense, it can be said that every self reflects a multiplicity. Peter R. Sedgwick also emphasizes this: "The self is no mere collection of mental attributes susceptible to being encountered, counted and classified by an introspective self-consciousness but is, rather, a multiplicity" (*Nietzsche: The Key Concepts*, 140). And even Nietzsche himself at one point likens the self to a kind of multitude: "The body is a great intelligence, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a herdsman" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

So, what is the meaning of Nietzsche seeing the body and therefore the self as a multitude? I think this means to be sought in the self reflecting many different forces. (What is meant here by force is any affect that a person derives from the influence of external factors. But it can also be said that each person is also a force for his/her part, because he/she exerts affects on other people.) The forces that the self reflects are so diverse that it cannot be understood in any other way than a multitude. That is why Nietzsche talks about a war and a peace, a herd and a herdsman when defining the self. What this means is that the self can reflect any force. Everything from various emotions to moods, thoughts to actions is mediated by it (and this is why Nietzsche thinks there is no such thing as free will). It is precisely for this reason that Nietzsche does not see any of these at any value in themselves. It is the self that values them as they are. (The most typical example of this is that two people can be affected differently by the same thing. Something can give pleasure to one and pain to another. In this respect, affects are

relative and have no absolute value. They vary according to the age, person, situation, and so on.) In this sense, it is the original inner force. It is the bodily domain in which all forces create themselves. Can the self, then, be thought of as a multitude defined by power relations?

Nietzsche does not seem to define the self in any other way. For him, it can be said that the self is a union of power relations formed by the coming together of various forces (or affects). In this sense, the self is undoubtedly a heterogeneous sum. It reflects multiple forces and is the sum of them. This sum is the character of the self. In this exact sense, the self reflects both unity and multiplicity (which is the answer to the question we asked at the beginning of this subchapter). It reflects a multitude, because it is constantly affected by being constantly active (i.e., on an organic and psychic level). It reflects a unity, because it organizes the affects that arise from being active and defines itself with the predominance of certain types of affects. In this sense, the self expresses a unity with a peculiar multiplicity. In short, it is a unity in its multiplicity.²⁰

So, what is the essence of this unity characterized by the multiplicity of forces? We may also ask the question as follows: what is the essence of the self for Nietzsche? If, for Nietzsche, what creates the individual is the encounters and the affects he/she derives from these encounters (and if their sum is the self), it can be said that Nietzsche thought of the self as a kind of internal power composition, which, in Nietzschean terms, is nothing more than the individual's will to power (as we examined in the second subchapter of this chapter). In this sense, the essence of the self is the will to power. For the self, again, is nothing more than a network of power relations formed by the combination of various forces, which corresponds to the concept of the will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy. In this

²⁰ In Deleuze's words: "Being composed of a plurality of irreducible forces the body is a multiple phenomenon, its unity is that of a multiple phenomenon, a 'unity of domination'" (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40).

respect, there is a direct link between the Nietzschean conception of the self and the will to power. The two concepts are intertwined with each other. The self is activity, and the orientation of the activity is the will to power.²¹

If the will to power is an expression of the self and the self is an extension of the body, the will to power is a kind of bodily force. The body necessarily reveals the self, and the self necessarily reveals the will to power. Thus, by their nature, every single body necessarily reflects a will to power. Various forces pass through the body and are processed by the self.²² And the total force processed by the self is nothing but the will to power. Thus, we can say that the input of the self is the body and the output of the self is the will to power. The relationship between them is not diachronic but synchronic. Each is an analogue of the other.

But what do the body, the self and the will to power mean specifically in Nietzsche's conception of the self? So far, we have examined the various implications of the Nietzschean self.²³ But we did not question whether an ideal self can be derived from this understanding of the self. Is this because there is no ethical dimension in Nietzsche's understanding of the self? If taken in its raw form, yes, this conception of the self does not contain an ethical dimension. Although this self has many practical implications, it seems as if it has no ethical implications. It is as if the only dimension of the Nietzschean self is the empirical one. (In other words, the self appears to be something that can only be observed

²¹ In Sedgwick's words: "The self, in contrast, is an entity in a different sense, for it is a *doer*. The essence of the self is activity. As such, it never merely exists but is in such a way that its engagements characterise it in an essential manner. The self's activity is, in fact, characterised by power relationships" (*Nietzsche: The Key Concepts*, 140).

²² What we need to understand from this is that the self shapes various forces (or affects) to adapt to itself. And actually, this is the process that creates the emotions of the 'I'. This means that any emotion of the 'I' is essentially an affection processed by the self through the body.

²³ Sedgwick wonderfully lists the main features of this self: "Five features emerge from Zarathustra's discussion of the self: 1. The self is embodied and unthinkable without embodiment. 2. It is always superior to consciousness. 3. It is characterised in terms of relations of power (indeed, will to power). 4. The self is a kind of unity. 5. The self is encapsulated by notions of activity and creativity" (*Nietzsche: The Key Concepts*, 142).

and thought through. It is whatever it is, and nothing else. It seems arbitrary to make sense out of it.) Alexander Nehamas points out this issue as follows:

“The self, according to Nietzsche, is not a constant, stable entity. On the contrary, it is something one becomes, something, he would even say, one constructs. A person consists of absolutely everything one thinks, wants, and does. But a person worthy of admiration, a person who has (or is) a self, is one whose thoughts, desires, and actions are not haphazard but are instead connected to one another in the intimate way that indicates in all cases the presence of style. A self is just a set of coherently connected episodes, and an admirable self, as Nietzsche insists again and again, consists of a large number of powerful and conflicting tendencies that are controlled and harmonized. Coherence, of course, can also be produced by weakness, mediocrity, and one-dimensionality. But style, which is what Nietzsche requires and admires, involves controlled multiplicity and resolved conflict. It still, however, does not seem to require what we generally consider moral character” (*Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, 7).

The question, then, is: can the Nietzschean idea of the self also be defined by a moral character? The question may also be asked as follows: is there an ethical aspect of the will to power arising from the self? Certainly. For Nietzsche does not think that every self, and hence every kind of will to power, is equally acceptable. In other words, according to Nietzsche, not every self is an ideal self. For example, Nietzsche does not affirm the will to power of a self with an ascetic understanding of life. According to him, such a view of life is sick. Rather, it is a life-affirming self that Nietzsche sees as ideal. This is such a self that affirms itself through itself. Its main characteristic is to affirm itself in its multiplicity (which, as we shall see in the next subchapter, will be a self capable of creating its own values.) The formation of such a self is also the central problem of Nietzsche’s

ethics. (Nietzsche's concepts of self-overcoming and the overman are also directly related to this problem.) In this context, the Nietzschean self and the Nietzschean ethics are interrelated. In a way, the Nietzschean understanding of the self forms the basis of the Nietzschean understanding of ethics. It is as if the fundamental question of the Nietzschean ethics is this: how can a self that affirms its activity be formed? What are the features of such a self? The question may also be asked like this: what are the implications of the Nietzschean ethical self?

1.2.2. The Nietzschean Ethical Self

In fact, Nietzsche reconsidered the concept of the self and the problems related to it after *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. But he did this by altering the context in which the concept is addressed. Even in *Zarathustra* the self was not thought of as independent of ethics, but it is clear that it is more often discussed in its empirical aspect.²⁴ It is possible that the reason for this is that *Zarathustra* is a book in which Nietzsche brainstormed many different topics.²⁵ From this point of view, perhaps *Zarathustra* should be seen as a book in which many concepts (including the self) are thought and questioned radically. In this respect, it is more meaningful to treat the book of *Zarathustra* (as far as Nietzsche's philosophy is concerned) not as an end but as a beginning. (Though *Zarathustra* can also be seen as the summary of Nietzsche's philosophy.) Because Nietzsche's books after *Zarathustra* also bear the traces of the conceptualizations in *Zarathustra*. In other words, many concepts discussed in *Zarathustra* were also discussed in Nietzsche's later works. They are revisited in different contexts. And undoubtedly the concept of the self is one of them. But how?

²⁴ Here empirical means only to consider what kind of structure and function the self has.

²⁵ In addition, considering that this book is not very systematic in terms of writing style, it can be said that Nietzsche's aim in this book is to present a poetic image of his philosophy (through a central figure of course: Zarathustra).

The self is not mentioned much in Nietzsche's later works. But this is not because Nietzsche ignores the self that signifies the absence of free will, on the contrary, he is very sure of its existence. He is so sure that he does not even name the self anymore. Rather, he attempts to criticize what might be seen as the antithesis of the self in a way, which is the concept of the subject. The concept of the subject is what Nietzsche referred to as the 'I' in *Zarathustra*. So, this is what Nietzsche saw as absolutely subordinate to the self. Nietzsche criticizes this concept because he thinks it stems from superstition, at best from prejudice. He claims that this concept has no meaning in itself and reflects no more than a psychological need. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he writes:

“As regards the superstition of logicians, I never tire of underlining a quick little fact that these superstitious people are reluctant to admit: namely, that a thought comes when ‘it’ wants to, and not when ‘I’ want it to; so it is *falsifying* the facts to say that the subject ‘I’ is the condition of the predicate ‘think’. There is thinking, but to assert that ‘there’ is the same thing as that famous old ‘I’ is, to put it mildly, only an assumption, an hypothesis, and certainly not an ‘immediate certainty’. And in the end ‘there is thinking’ is also going too far: even this ‘there’ contains an *interpretation* of the process and is not part of the process itself. People are concluding here according to grammatical habit: ‘Thinking is an activity; for each activity there is someone who acts; therefore — .’ Following approximately the same pattern, ancient atomism looked for that particle of matter, the atom, to complement the effective ‘energy’ that works from out of it; more rigorous minds finally learned to do without this ‘little bit of earth’ and perhaps some day logicians will even get used to doing without that little ‘there’ (into which the honest old ‘I’ has evaporated)” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 404).

This aphorism, in truth, consists of a kind of negative affirmation of Nietzsche's interpretation of the self. That is, the absence of the subject essentially affirms the self.²⁶ For the self means nothing to Nietzsche but the absence of the subject. That is why Nietzsche thinks that the idea that action always requires an agent is a misunderstanding. Because this thought implies that the agent is independent of the action. It is claimed that the agent reveals the action. But for Nietzsche this is nothing but nonsense. (What Nietzsche rebels against is not the idea of the self, but the idea of the rational agent that is characterized by rational agency, or subjectivity or 'I', whose mind is transparent to himself/herself and who knows his/her intentions and/or motivations before the deed itself. This belief in the rational agency or the subject, for Nietzsche, is a metaphysical error.) For (as we saw in the last subchapter) there is nothing but action according to his understanding of the self, because the individual cannot be anything but the sum of his affections. In fact, even talking about an individual to this extent does not seem logical. Rather, it is more reasonable to talk about a channel that reflects the sum of its affects.²⁷ For Nietzsche, this reflection is nothing but action (*On the Genealogy of Morality*):

“And just as the common people separates lightning from its flash and takes the latter to be a *deed*, something performed by a subject, which is called lightning, popular morality separates strength from the manifestations of strength, as though there were an indifferent substratum behind the strong person which had the *freedom* to manifest strength or not. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the deed,

²⁶ What is meant here is that the idea of the absence of the subject directly brings forward the Nietzschean idea of the self. Because if there is no subject, there is no individual who is aware of his own thoughts, intentions and actions. In other words, there is only the kind of self that Nietzsche conceptualized.

²⁷ What is meant by the individual here is an individual that exists in all its singularity and freely filters external affects. Which corresponds to the traditional understanding of the individual.

its effect and what becomes of it; ‘the doer’ is invented as an afterthought, — the doing is everything” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 404).

Where does Nietzsche find the source of this misunderstanding? Where does this belief that there are a subject and an agent come from? The source of this misunderstanding (as Nietzsche underlined in the first aphorism quoted above) is mainly due to the thought of action through language. The idea that every action (verb) requires a subject is actually a game in which language deceives those who use it. Thus, the structure of the language creates the subject.²⁸ And it makes him/her the creator of the verb (action). This is essentially what Nietzsche opposes. Nietzsche opposes not the structure of language, but its expansion beyond language. In a way, it is the linguisticization of the sensation of reality that Nietzsche opposed to. He thinks that in reality there is no subject, that everything means nothing but actions. Nothing but movement (mental or physical). At this point, the verb gets rid of the subject and attains a meaning in itself. In other words, action is the only indicator of reality. Nietzsche sees reality as nothing more than this: action *par excellence*.

So, if reality is nothing but action, where does the diversity of actions come from? What does the action-based diversity of reality mean? Nietzsche does not seem to need a subject to express this diversity. For this diversity itself denies the subject, because the subject is the name of what remains constant in this diversity. Nietzsche argues that this constancy is impossible. According to him, everything is flux and nothing remains constant in this flux. This certainly includes the subject. Therefore, what is called the subject is at most the body, which does not serve more than a channel function. It produces the self as a channel that senses

²⁸ Nietzsche addresses this issue as follows (*On the Genealogy of Morality*): “A quantum of force is just such a quantum of drive, will, action, in fact it is nothing but this driving, willing and acting, and only the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason petrified within it), which construes and misconstrues all actions as conditional upon an agency, a ‘subject’, can make it appear otherwise” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 404).

diversity as affects. The self, on the other hand, means nothing but the sum of the affects. It is the flux that finds its expression in the body. In other words, the self is an expression of the flux affecting the body. To the extent that the subject is not related to the flux, it is also not related to the body.²⁹ It is not about the self either (except that it is the 'I' produced by the self). In a way, it is a concept that gives reference only to itself. What is the subject then? For Nietzsche the subject is only a belief:

“In every judgement lies the firm faith in subject and predicate, or cause and effect; and even this latter belief (in the form of an assumption that every effect is the result of activity, and that all activity presupposes an agent) is only an isolated example of the first; so that what remains as belief, as the most fundamental belief, is: there are such things as subjects”
(*The Will to Power*, 316).

But this does not mean that there is no self as it is commonly understood. In other words, Nietzsche does not mean that there are no separate individuals. It is only that the actions of these individuals cannot be distinguished from them, that the action and the individual are one and the same. According to Nietzsche, there is no subject only in this respect. That is to say, there is no subject who freely decides on his/her actions and thus is free from his/her actions.³⁰ So, Nietzsche actually opposes the traditional concept of the subject (characterized by free will), which corresponds to the Cartesian and Kantian subject in the philosophical sphere.³¹ Nietzsche finds the agent, the subject, the doer meaningless. Not the

²⁹ This is why the concept of the subject is often associated with the concept of the soul.

³⁰ As Nietzsche said in his unpublished notes: “We distinguish ourselves, the agents, from the action, and we make use of this scheme everywhere — we seek an agent behind every event...” (*The Will to Power*, 317).

³¹ For both Descartes and Kant, the subject is an axiom. It has an autonomous and independent essence. In other words, it has an internal structure that determines itself.

individual. He sees the individual as a center of affect that has a body.³² When the individual reflects his/her affects as an action, he actually reflects himself/herself. That is, he/she manifests himself/herself as action. Essentially, this is what Nietzsche implies.

But what is the source of this thing called the subject? Where does Nietzsche see the source of this? We may also ask the question as follows: what type of self would suggest this idea? If the self is characterized by the will to power, what kind of will to power wants this idea to exist? This last question is one of the central questions of the Nietzschean ethics. Nietzsche's answer to this is simple: the person who wants such an idea to exist and become permanent is the person whose will to power is reactive. This person, in Nietzschean terms, is a person with slave morality. So, what is slave morality?

In fact, to understand what slave morality is, one must first understand what master morality is. According to Nietzsche, these morals are basically opposites. First, master morality refers to a morality that the establishment of values is essential. In this kind of morality, the will to power is active. An individual who has this morality is creative, powerful, confident, energetic and skilled. He is a warrior.³³ He regards what he/she calls good as good and sees those who go against it as bad. Slave morality, on the other hand, refers to a person who cannot produce his/her own unique values, is powerless, unsure, spiteful, and low in energy. He/she is a lower class person. A plebian.³⁴ His/her will to power is reactive. He/she negates what is not like him/her and derives the good from this negative aspect. He/she does not have his/her own idea of good. He/she derives

³² In this respect, we can see the individual as a body that hosts various affects.

³³ But a person with master morality need not necessarily be a warrior in real terms. According to Nietzsche, people with this moral type are rather a type with certain characteristics. This type of morality is a kind of typology.

³⁴ Likewise, slave morality is a typology like master morality. Slave is a type that has certain moral structure. Although he can be a historical figure, he is essentially a type.

the good from what he/she thinks is bad. And he/she calls it evil. Thus, he/she derives his/her pseudo-values from the devaluation of other values. It is at this point that Nietzsche sees these two morals as opposite to each other. Because what one says good the other says evil. The difference is that while the former has its own good, the latter derives the good from the evil (which is what the master deems good). The first is the morality of the masters, the rulers. The second is the morality of the rabble, the priests.

What does the concept of the self have to do with these two morals? In fact, these two different morals are the product of two different wills to power.³⁵ If we consider that the self is also something that reflects the will to power, these two different moral conceptions actually express two different aspects of the self.³⁶ The first has a morality that manages his/her life with his/her own values. The second is a representative of a morality that exists in denial of the values of the first. But ultimately both express their will to power in their specific ways. The former dominates the second through their own values and says: "I am good; therefore you are bad." The second resists being dominated by reversing the values of the first and says: "You are evil; therefore I am good." In this context, we see the manifestation of two different wills to power in the field of morality. In fact, in this context, morality itself shows itself as the will to power. The first reflects an active will to power, the will to power that pushes the moral limits to generate its own values. The second reflects a reactive will to power, the will to power that cannot withstand the pressure of the first, but by reversing the values

³⁵ So, not only the master but also the slave demands power. It reflects the will to power in its own way. In Zarathustra's words: "Listen now to my teaching, you wisest men! Test in earnest whether I have crept into the heart of life itself and down to the roots of its heart! Where I found a living creature, there I found will to power; and even in the will of the servant I found the will to be master" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 271).

³⁶ Of course, this does not mean that the self has only two moral aspects. Even under some conditions, values that point to both master morality and slave morality can be found in the same person at the same time. Nietzsche positions these two types of morality in opposition for practical (and historical) reasons.

of the first, it establishes its own domination and reflects this dominance on the first. These two modes of the will to power conceive two different morals and moral standings. Both moralities shape the will to power according to their original characteristics. Or rather, their characteristic is their will to power.

This is where the concept of subject comes into play. According to Nietzsche, the subject is a pseudo-concept that slave morality has produced to suppress the first. In other words, the concept of the subject is actually a concept that slave morality has produced to suppress master morality. In short, the concept of the subject itself is the product of some kind of will to power. In other words, it is the tool of a specific form of the will to power. The concept of the subject is actually a way for the powerless to affirm themselves in their powerlessness. (So, the concept of the subject is the product of slave morality, and that is what Nietzsche calls the triumph of slave morality. In this way, the concept of the subject, the doer is separated from the deed itself, and again, thanks to this idealization, we have our common conceptualization of responsibility. Modern theorization and understanding of responsibility, then, too, lies in this triumph.) In this way, they, the ones with slave morality, activate their will to power and blame the powerful. Nietzsche emphasizes this as follows (*On the Genealogy of Morality*):

“This type of man [a man with slave morality] *needs* to believe in an unbiased ‘subject’ with freedom of choice, because he has an instinct of self-preservation and self-affirmation in which every lie is sanctified. The reason the subject (or, as we more colloquially say, the *soul*) has been, until now, the best doctrine on earth, is perhaps because it facilitated that sublime self-deception whereby the majority of the dying, the weak and the oppressed of every kind could construe weakness itself as freedom, and their particular mode of existence as an *accomplishment*” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 405).

The concept of the subject is of central importance in this regard. Because in this way the weak would imply that the strong could behave differently. They have a chance to behave differently but are evil because they do not act differently. In a way this constitutes the essence of slave morality. In this way, they build their own understanding of reality around the concept of the subject and try to make the powerful powerless.³⁷ That is, the act of weakening the strong ones is the essence of their will to power. They become strong by making the strong weak. This is the original inclination of their will to power.³⁸

So, when it comes to the will to power, there is only a relational, not a categorical, difference between these two morals. Both are the wills to power. But in relation to the will to power, one is active while the other is reactive. The affects of the former (the master) are organized by his/her self to reflect an active will to power. The affects of the second (the slave) are organized by his/her self to reflect a reactive will to power. This is the fundamental difference. Nietzsche expresses this clearly as follows:

“Morality [slave morality] has therefore always taught the most profound *hatred* and *contempt* for the fundamental characteristic of all rulers: *their will to power*. To deny, subvert and suppress this morality would mean to feel differently about this most hated of all impulses, and to provide it with an assessment that is quite the *reverse*. If the suffering and the oppressed no longer believed that they were *justified* in their contempt for the will to

³⁷ Because in this way they make the powerful disgust his/her power and make him/her powerless. They can make the powerful believe that the powerful may be powerless. They make him/her believe that power is a kind of sin.

³⁸ Nietzsche says, referring to the priests who have slave morality (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*): “That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power; and that is so even when you talk of good and evil and of the assessment of values. / You want to create the world before which you can kneel: this is your ultimate hope and intoxication” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 270).

power, they would proceed to the next stage of their condition: hopeless desperation. This would be the case if this characteristic were essential to life, if it could be shown that even the ‘will to be moral’ was merely the ‘will to power’ in disguise, and that even the hatred and contempt they feel for the will to power is itself a form of power-seeking. The oppressed would then see that they were on an *equal footing* with their oppressors, and that they have no special *privileges* or *superiority* in this respect” (*The Will to Power*, 44-45).

So, if these two moralities reflect the will to power in their own way, can we say that morality is directly linked to the will to power for Nietzsche? Yes. It is what he claims. To the extent that Nietzsche thinks that the ideas in the field of morality (for example, the idea of the subject) are a reflection of the will to power, he also links morality to the will to power. For him, it is the character of the will to power that determines the character of morality. The will to power, which is the basis of all vitality, in Nietzsche’s philosophy necessarily underlies morality. Every morality gives birth to a certain type of will to power. The essence of morality, in this sense, is the will to power. That is, the source of good and bad (or good and evil, etc.) is nothing but the will to power.³⁹ The code of values is written in the self, the body of the will to power. Zarathustra says:

“Zarathustra has seen many lands and many peoples: thus he has discovered the good and evil of many peoples. Zarathustra has found no greater power on earth than good and evil. / No people could live without evaluating; but if it wishes to maintain itself it must not evaluate as its neighbour evaluates. / Much that seemed good to one people seemed

³⁹ Zarathustra specifically refers to representatives of slave morality and says: “You put your will and your values upon the river of becoming; what the people believe to be good and evil betrays to me an ancient will to power. [...] / It is not the river that is your danger and the end of your good and evil, you wisest men, it is that will itself, the will to power, the unexhausted, procreating life-will” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 270).

shame and disgrace to another: thus I found. I found much that was called evil in one place was in another decked with purple honours. / A table of values hangs over every people. Behold, it is the table of its overcomings; behold, it is the voice of its will to power.” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 266-267).

What should we understand from this, except that morality is a reflection of the will to power? One thing: that moral values are relative. It follows from this that there are no absolute moral values. In this respect, the will to power functions as a kind of interpretation-machine. The impulse to interpret the world is the will to power, and the interpretation is morality. According to Nietzsche, a human cannot stop doing this. This is his/her essence. He/she develops interpretations about things and establishes his/her moral in this way. This is his/her creative relationship with the world. He/she moralizes things. In this sense, morality is creative. Zarathustra adds:

“Truly, men have given themselves all their good and evil. Truly, they did not take it, they did not find it, it did not descend to them as a voice from heaven. / Man first implanted values into things to maintain himself — he created the meaning of things, a human meaning! Therefore he calls himself: ‘Man’, that is: the evaluator. / Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating is itself the value and jewel of all valued things. / Only through evaluation is there value: and without evaluation the nut of existence would be hollow. Hear it, you creative men!” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 266).

The meaning of morality as an interpretation, then, is this: all moral values, even the most persistent ones, are interpretations. In this sense, master morality and slave morality are also interpretations. In fact, the reversal of master morality by

slave morality, that is, the immoralization of master morality, is an example of this. Everything that seems valuable and considered good in the morality of the master appears valueless in the morality of the slave. He/she considers all that the master affirms evil. The former, the master, affirms sexual pleasure, wealth, physical strength. He/she calls them good. The latter, the slave, on the contrary, counts sexual abstinence, poverty, and physical weakness as signs of goodness. So, ultimately the latter, makes everything moral by reversing the values of the former (which means that what the master calls good the slave calls evil). This is how he/she distinguishes his/her own morality from the former. In this sense, both are interpretations. Regardless of their character, active or reactive, both take a moral stand towards the world. They moralize the world differently.

At this point, the following question arises: what kind of morality does Nietzsche himself advocate? Does he defend slave morality or master morality? Is he on the side of a moral typology whose will to power is defined by an active character? Or is he for a moral typology whose will to power is defined by a reactive character? Indeed, the meaning of the Nietzschean ethical self is hidden in these questions.

From all this discussion it is easy to think that Nietzsche was an amoralist. Though, in a way, he is. But he is an amoralist in one sense: he does not believe in the existence of absolute values. So, he does not believe in the general validity of values. To keep it simple: he does not believe in nonhistorical, that is, universal values. But does this mean that Nietzsche denies morality? Both yes and no. Yes, Nietzsche denies morality to the extent that the word morality reflects common values. That is, he finds the existence of universal moral values unnatural. But this does not mean that he negates morality altogether. On the contrary, he finds morality essential. What he denies and does not accept are moral values and moral systems that claim to be universal. (So, from the Nietzschean perspective there is

such a thing as good and bad. But there is no such thing as good and evil. For him, good and bad are beyond good and evil.⁴⁰) Thus, Nietzsche actually reveals his own understanding of morality. His moral understanding is not of an ahistoric nature and does not derive universal moral values. His moral understanding is rather a perspectivist one.⁴¹ For him, morality is perspectival and subject to time and space. In other words, its meaning varies from person to person and varies according to the age and place. In this respect, his understanding of morality is essentially an understanding of ethics.⁴² He is a radical ethicist rather than a traditional moralist.⁴³

So, what is the place of the self in this ethic? To the extent that Nietzsche thinks that the self is a bodily entity that reflects the will to power, he thinks that this will to power is necessarily moral in character. In other words, every self displays a will to power in the guise of morality. On the other hand, it can be said that the basis of Nietzsche's understanding of morality is naturalist. It is as if he thinks

⁴⁰ This means that relative values exist for Nietzsche. It is this relativity itself that makes it possible to create value. He also thinks this is necessary for life. He writes (*On the Genealogy of Morality*): "Whoever, like my readers, now starts to ponder these points and reflect further, will have difficulty coming to a speedy conclusion, — reason enough, then, for me to come to a conclusion myself, assuming that it has been sufficiently clear for some time what I *want*, what I actually want with that dangerous slogan which is written on the spine of my last book, *Beyond Good and Evil*... at least this does *not* mean 'Beyond Good and Bad'" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 407).

⁴¹ But this does not mean that Nietzsche's moral understanding is a relative one. In other words, Nietzsche does not suggest an understanding of morality that would affirm any moral attitude. Nietzsche does not imply that every moral attitude is just and acceptable. Rather, he implies that every moral attitude necessarily reflects a particular perspective (a moral perspective).

⁴² Nietzsche's understanding of morality is not a traditional moral understanding as long as there are absolute values understood from morality. He does not speak of absolute values. Rather, he thinks that everyone should create their own moral values and therefore create their own good and bad. In this sense he is more of an ethicist than a moralist in the traditional sense.

⁴³ Bernard Williams explains the fundamental difference between these two concepts, morality and ethics, as follows: "By origin, the difference between the two terms [morality and ethics] is that between Latin and Greek, each relating to a word meaning *disposition* or *custom*. One difference is that the Latin term from which 'moral' comes emphasizes rather more the sense of social expectation, while the Greek favors that of individual character. But the word 'morality' has by now taken on a more distinctive content, and I am going to suggest that morality should be understood as a particular development of the ethical, one that has a special significance in modern Western culture. It peculiarly emphasizes certain ethical notions rather than others, developing in particular a special notion of obligation, and it has some peculiar presuppositions" (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, 6).

that everything is truly moral when it is connected with nature. For him, if it is considered that everything is a flux in nature, the self that will affirm this flux will only be truly moral from Nietzsche's perspective. This means that the self that contains in its will to power of this very flux's affirmation is Nietzschean. Simply put: the Nietzschean self is the self that can constantly re-evaluate its values in this flux.

Does this self correspond to the morality of the master or the morality of the slave? It clearly corresponds to the master's morality. Because the master calls things good and bad only by reference to himself/herself. The slave, on the other hand, calls something good and evil only by reference to another, namely, the master. Master morality is an interpretation of reality. Slave morality is an interpretation of the interpretation of reality.⁴⁴ In this respect, slave morality is the name of a morality that cannot reproduce itself. Master morality, on the other hand, has the opportunity to re-evaluate itself since it is a morality that takes only itself as a reference. The slave does nothing more than reverse the values of the master. But the master reproduces values endlessly. In this sense, natural morality is the morality of the master, because the essence of nature lies in the will to express itself in different ways, as the will to power. And this is nothing but what the master is doing in the name of morality. He calls those things good and bad and never stops doing that. He/she says good and bad several times, not once, but many times. The slave says once good and once evil. Then he stops. (But this does not mean that Nietzsche advocates master morality in its historical context. For

⁴⁴ But it does not follow that slave morality is not a creative morality. In fact, Nietzsche thinks exactly the opposite. According to him, the wickedness and bad intentions of the representatives of this morality made man more intelligent, more alert, and in a way a powerful creature. He writes (*On the Genealogy of Morality*): "Priests make everything more dangerous, not just medicaments and healing arts but pride, revenge, acumen, debauchery, love, lust for power, virtue, sickness; — in any case, with some justification one could add that man first became an interesting animal on the foundation of this essentially dangerous form of human existence, the priest, and that the human soul became deep in the higher sense and turned evil for the first time — and of course, these are the two basic forms of man's superiority, hitherto, over other animals!..." (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 397).

him, master morality is more of a typology. It corresponds to a conceptual typology rather than a historical figure. That is, Nietzsche does not advocate the master as a historical figure or the era in which he/she lived. He basically places emphasis on the ethical attitude of the master as a historical figure, not the historical context of this attitude. In short, what Nietzsche understands from master morality and defends in this type of morality has a conceptual and even a vital dimension rather than a historical dimension.)

Nietzsche actually thinks that the self that affirms the will to power is the ethical self. Although the self cannot fully deny the will to power, it may have organized affects that would decrease its power. Which ultimately results in slave morality. In this sense, the person who has slave morality is the one with low power and debilitating values. He/she is the one who negates this world, rejects the flux, cannot create his/her own values, has no good or bad of his/her own. On the other hand, the master expresses a self that constantly tries to increase his/her power, that is, affirms the will to power. For him/her, everything that increases his/her power is good, and everything that decreases his/her power is bad. His/her values are determined in parallel with the increase and decrease in his/her power. Unlike the slave who has values that even decreases his/her own power, he/she increases his/her power with his/her masterly values. As Nietzsche said in one of his last books (*The Anti-Christ*):

“What is good? — All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. / What is bad? — All that proceeds from weakness. / What is happiness? — The feeling that power increases — that a resistance is overcome” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 487).

From this we understand that the most fundamental feature of the Nietzschean self is that it can organize its affects in a way that increases its power. What figure

does such a self correspond to in Nietzsche's philosophy? The Nietzschean ethical self is actually what Nietzsche calls the overman. This concept is often misunderstood. For when Nietzsche says overman, he does not mean a person who dominates people and suppresses them with violence. According to him, the overman is the one who creates new values and dares to destroy the old ones in order to create these values, affirms the will to power and constantly overcomes himself/herself. In fact, it can be said that the overman is the child in Zarathustra's three metamorphosis. He/she is the one who creates new values. In other words, he/she is the person who has master morality.⁴⁵ He/she is the representative of master morality as he/she creates values and does not refer to anyone but himself/herself to create his/her good and bad. He/she is beyond good and evil. He/she self-overcomes himself/herself and in this very way he/she affirms life.⁴⁶ He/she has master morality as he/she creates his own values. He/she affirms the will to power as he/she continuously and determinedly self-overcomes himself/herself. He/she is the sovereign individual as he/she stands against the herd instinct. And he/she affirms life because he/she affirms the eternal return. So, who and what is the Nietzschean ethical self? The Nietzschean ethical self is the overman, the sovereign individual who has master morality and continuously self-overcomes himself/herself within the affirmation of the idea of the eternal return.

⁴⁵ According to Nietzsche, the moral understanding that will make the overman possible is not a slave morality. Zarathustra, for example, refers to those who have slave morality and says: "I do not go your way, you despisers of the body! You are not bridges to the Overman!" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 265).

⁴⁶ Zarathustra says: "And life itself told me this secret: 'Behold,' it said, 'I am that which must overcome itself again and again'" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 271).

2. SPINOZA AND *CONATUS*

This chapter deals with different aspects of Spinoza's concept of *conatus*. The main topics discussed in this chapter are as follows:

- What does the concept of *oikeiôsis* mean for Stoics? What are the implications of this concept? How can this concept be linked to the Stoics' ethical understanding of the self?
- What are the conceptual implications of Spinoza's philosophical system? What is substance? What is an attribute? What is a mode? What is the place and meaning of *conatus* principle in Spinoza's system?
- What is the relationship between the mind and the body from a Spinozian perspective? How does Spinoza establish the relationship between affects and the idea of the self? What are the nature and implications of the Spinozian self? What is an individual?
- How is Spinozian ethics different from morality in the traditional sense? What is *conatus*? What is the nature of good and evil from a Spinozian perspective? What are the nature and implications of the Spinozian ethical self? What is the relationship between the Spinozian ethical self and *conatus*?

2.1. *Conatus* in the context of Spinoza's Philosophy

In this subchapter, I will examine Spinoza's concept of *conatus* and the Stoics' concept of *oikeiôsis* separately. I examine these two concepts side by side because there are quite remarkable similarities between Spinoza's concept of *conatus* and the Stoics' concept of *oikeiôsis*. I believe that addressing this concept of the Stoics will make Spinoza's concept of *conatus* more accessible and understandable. Thus, I will first briefly examine the Stoics' concept of *oikeiôsis*. I will discuss

what the meaning of this concept is for the Stoics and what its implications are. In this way, I will have formed a theoretical basis to make sense of Spinoza's concept of *conatus* more easily. Next, I will discuss Spinoza's concept of *conatus*, which is the subchapter's central theme. First, I will summarize Spinoza's philosophical system and explain where the concept of *conatus* stands in this system. (Since Spinoza's philosophy is a systematic one, the way to understand and make sense of any of his concepts is to grasp the essence of his system. The concept of *conatus* is no exception, of course.) Finally, I will discuss what this concept (*conatus*) means in his system and its implications. In this way, similarities (and differences) between *oikeiôsis* and *conatus* will be revealed. To summarize, the purpose of this subchapter is to provide a brief overview of the concepts of *oikeiôsis* and *conatus*.

2.1.1. The Stoic *Conatus*: *Oikeiôsis*

It is possible to say that Spinoza's philosophy is versatile. His philosophy has ontological and metaphysical implications as well as epistemological and political implications. Spinoza has been directly or indirectly influenced by many different philosophers. For example, it can be said that Spinoza was influenced by Hobbes in developing his political philosophy.⁴⁷ Or it can be said that his epistemology has similarities with Plato's. On the other hand, it is known that Spinoza was greatly influenced by Descartes and the Cartesian thought. He derived most of his philosophy from his relation to this philosophical understanding. In this context, we can say that Spinoza is a multilateral philosopher and that he formed his philosophy by being influenced by many different philosophers and philosophical schools and traditions. In this context, we can ask the following question: was

⁴⁷ In fact, *conatus*, one of Spinoza's central concepts, is also similar to Hobbes' conception of *conatus*. In this respect, it can be said that Spinoza was influenced by some philosophers when it comes to the usage of concepts.

Spinoza contented with only synthesizing the ideas of the philosophers he was influenced by while forming his philosophy?

In fact, Spinoza disagreed on many issues with many of the philosophers he was influenced by. He was a radical philosopher for his time (just like Nietzsche). His relationship with his contemporaries was polemical, if not problematic.⁴⁸ In this respect, his philosophical insights were also creative rather than the product of a philosophical synthesis. He was building a new philosophy of his own.⁴⁹ And this philosophy was unlike any philosophy or philosophical system up to then.⁵⁰ So, what was the main theme of this philosophy?

It is possible to say that Spinoza's philosophy is ethical. So, it can be said that all implications of this philosophy have an ethical context. (The name of Spinoza's masterpiece directly reflects this: *Ethica*.) The main purpose of Spinoza's philosophical project is to propose a solution to the problem of how a person should live in his relationship with the universe. Or Spinoza's ethical problem can be summed up as a question as follows: how should a person live so that he/she is in harmony with the essence of the universe that conditions him/her? In this sense, Spinoza's philosophy is an ethical philosophy up to its very root. Even his epistemology and political philosophy reflect this ethical concern. In short, what distinguishes Spinoza from other philosophers is the way he formulates ethics and

⁴⁸ It is known that Spinoza never got along with the adherents of the Cartesian thought and Leibniz.

⁴⁹ Of course, Spinoza had borrowed many concepts (substance, attribute, mode etc.) from scholastic philosophy when creating his philosophical system. But he also gave them a different meaning. His philosophy reflected his era in terms of the concept usage. But it was marginal when it comes to the philosophical understanding of the concepts.

⁵⁰ By this we mean that Spinoza's philosophy and philosophical system is unlike any philosophy or philosophical system in Europe. However, Spinoza's philosophy has many similarities with Eastern philosophies. Taoism is the best example of this.

the fundamental importance he attaches to ethics.⁵¹ So, hasn't Spinoza been inspired by any philosopher when it comes to his ethics?

It can be said that Spinoza's understanding of ethics is most similar to that of the Stoics. For both Spinoza and the Stoics, the fundamental philosophical question has an ethical nature: how should one live? The meaning of this question for Spinoza and the Stoics is this: how can a person be in harmony with the universe and its nature? This question is essential to both sides because both understand ethics concerning metaphysics.⁵² So, according to them, there is a fundamental connection between the human and the universe. Both Spinoza and Stoics agree that the universe is everything and it has a rational nature of its own. And a human being is conditioned by the nature of the universe to the extent that he/she is part of the universe and its rational unity. In this respect, the human being is essentially a rational creature for both sides. And what he/she has to do is live according to his/her essence. That is, rationally. But how?

Although there are differences in nuances between Spinoza and the Stoics in terms of ethical theories, both take human beings from a similar perspective. For both of them, human beings, by their nature, are inclined and oriented to live, and move away from what is harmful to them and approach what is beneficial to them. (Because both think that the essence of the universe is existence, and that everything that is subject to it is imprinted by this will to exist, since nothing goes beyond the scope of the universe.⁵³) Both sides agree on this fundamental point.

⁵¹ It must be said that Spinoza is not a moralist but an ethicist. He does not believe in absolute values but thinks that every value sprouts from a perspectivist basis. According to him, there is no good and evil in nature, only good and bad.

⁵² But such an understanding of metaphysics has no transcendental connotation. For both Spinoza and the Stoics, metaphysics can only be seen as the essence that conditions physics. But since both advocate an immanent philosophy, they consider this conditioner to be the universe itself.

⁵³ Here the term will to exist means not just to survive. But it is to express existence. To the extent that people are a part of the universe, they express their existence in different ways, in their own way. In this context, it can be said that human being is a kind of micro universe.

But they express this in different terms. That is, they put forward different concepts to clarify this situation. This is the similarity between Spinoza and the Stoics: they agree when it comes to the basic characteristic of the human nature.⁵⁴ And in relation to this, another thing they agree on is how one should behave in the world. Spinoza clarifies this ethical problem in its connection with the concept of *conatus*. Stoics find a solution to this ethical problem in the context of the concept of *oikeiôsis*. In other words, both of them try to answer a question that is ethical in nature with their own concepts. This question is fundamentally the question of what the ethical self is.

Considering that the Stoics sought an answer to this question before Spinoza, and that this answer is similar to Spinoza's, we must first ask what the *oikeiôsis* is.

In fact, the meaning given by the Stoics to *oikeiôsis* is hidden in the origin of the word. *Oikos* means household (or home) and family in Greek. And the same root is the root of what we call ecology and economics today.⁵⁵ Here we can understand that *oikeiôsis* is a process by which we feel something as ours, that is, we perceive it as our own. According to Jon Miller, "*oikeiôsis* concerns what is appropriate to oneself, what one is oriented to or affiliated with" (*Spinoza and the Stoics*, 103). In other words, *oikeiôsis* is a natural faculty that enables us to conceptualize things as ours. But what are the practical expressions of this concept?

There are degrees of *oikeiôsis* for the Stoics.⁵⁶ That is, there are degrees of feeling and seeing something as one's own. In other words, the Stoics do not consider

⁵⁴ Of course, Spinoza and Stoics do not agree on everything. We will briefly discuss a fundamental difference (conceptualization of nature) between the Stoics and Spinoza in the next subchapter.

⁵⁵ There are also those who translate the concept into English with the following words: "appropriation", "familiarization", "endearment".

⁵⁶ In order to simplify the matter and not to be decontextualized, we will proceed here solely on the basis of Hierocles' *oikeiôsis* interpretation.

oikeiōsis to have a single mode, but to have many modes, each larger than the other. But what is it that human being first feels one's own?

The Stoics' answer to this is the person himself/herself, that is, his/her own body. This is the most primal mode of the *oikeiōsis* for the Stoics. From the moment of birth, a person knows his/her body as his/her own and tries to keep it as it is. That is, he/she sees it apart from the outside and tries to defend it against external forces. In other words, as long as a person identifies himself/herself with his/her own body, he/she tries to keep himself/herself and therefore his/her body alive. In short, he/she tries to protect himself/herself. Self-preservation is his/her primary disposition.⁵⁷ For the Stoics, this corresponds to the understanding of *oikeiōsis* of infants and young children. Because they know no more than thinking about their own well-being and live solely for their own good.⁵⁸ That is, they try to avoid things that will harm their own bodies and to get closer to things that will benefit them.⁵⁹ This is also the main tendency of the understanding of *oikeiōsis*: to protect what we feel as ourselves and try to be in touch with what will enhance it.⁶⁰ But is this just ourselves? So, is our individual body the only thing we feel belonging to ourselves?

In fact, the Stoics think that this first mode of *oikeiōsis* is also found in other modes. But in other modes the essence of this first mode changes. In other words,

⁵⁷ This is what humans have in common with animals. In this respect, the Stoics also consider human as a kind of animal: "The range of self-preserving animals is important: because 'every' animal is self-preserving, then since humans are animals, we, too, have self-preservation as our 'first impulse'" (*Spinoza and the Stoics*, 104).

⁵⁸ Also, the Stoics consider animals to be in this first level *oikeiōsis*. Animals, too, know their own bodies and act out of their instincts. In this respect, it can be said that the Stoics saw a human being as no different from an animal when he/she was born.

⁵⁹ Here, the benefit and the harm can be multi-dimensional. It can be physical or mental. Or it can be both physical and mental.

⁶⁰ In this respect, self-preservation is not just survival. But it is trying to exist in a certain way and state. It is not an end but a result. In this sense, each person's self-preservation is unique. Miller describes this specific understanding of self-preservation as follows: "[S]elf-preservation is not merely an efficient cause — animals are not merely propelled by impulses to preserve themselves. It is an end of their action, a goal for which they strive" (*Spinoza and the Stoics*, 104).

the person still thinks about himself/herself and protects himself/herself but does not grasp this by referring only to his/her own body.⁶¹ Since human being lives in a definite and organized sociality and is different from the animal in this respect, his/her understanding of *oikeiōsis* becomes inclusive of other people after a certain point. According to the Stoics, after a certain age, a person reaches a level of perception that he/she cannot live just by thinking about himself/herself.⁶² Therefore, he/she first thinks about the people closest to him/her, his/her family.

For the Stoics, this is the second mode of *oikeiōsis*. The person first thinks of his/her family after himself/herself. Because they are the others closest to him/her. And in this respect, one sees them as an extension of himself/herself and knows himself/herself in them. Because they see him/her as a part of themselves and behave well and be useful to him/her. Thus, the scope of the understanding of *oikeiōsis* expands. One begins to think of himself/herself no longer only in the context of himself/herself, his/her own body, but in the context of his/her relationship with other people. So, how is it possible that people start to see themselves close to other people and become able to identify themselves partially with them?

The answer to this question for the Stoics is reason. For the Stoics, human being is a creature with intelligence. Therefore, he/she cannot grasp other people only instinctively. A person understands that at a certain stage of his/her development other people are just like him/her.⁶³ In this way, he/she can develop empathy with them. He/she sees that they, too, suffer, feel happiness, starve, sleep, and so on.

⁶¹ Miller writes: “According to this theory [theory of *oikeiōsis*], humans pass through different phases in life, in which they find different ends ‘congenial’ to themselves. It is not the case that one end drops away as a new end is acquired; rather, the new end assumes a higher position in the hierarchy and subordinates or subsumes all lower ends to it, so that a lower end is operative so long as it does not conflict with a higher one” (*Spinoza and the Stoics*, 103-104).

⁶² At this point, the Stoics think that one begins to have reason. In other words, they believe that rational thinking is now possible.

⁶³ It can be said that this development is a kind of cognitive development.

And he/she develops a perception to identify with them.⁶⁴ And just in this way the form of the human *oikeiôsis* changes. He/she will no longer be a creature that thinks only of himself/herself and lives according to his/her instincts. But he/she will live in his/her sociability by identifying himself/herself with all humanity. Because he/she knows that the essence of his/her existence requires this. What is meant by this is this: since the living being called the human is a social being by nature, his/her relationship with other people will bring him/her more benefit than harm.⁶⁵ This is why the Stoics see the boundaries of the *oikeiôsis* beyond the individual. Because the individual is necessarily in relationship with other individuals.

For this reason, the Stoics believe that the *oikeiôsis* is defined by circles that encompass each person. For example, after their families, people sympathize with friends they find close to them. Then they sympathize with the citizens of the city they are in. Then they sympathize with the people in their country. And ultimately, they sympathize with all humanity.⁶⁶ So, they sense that all humanity is one.⁶⁷ And in this way, human beings feel at home not only in their own bodies but in the world. In other words, at this level of perception, human being sees the world as an extension of his/her body and understands his/her essential connection with things. He/she still thinks of himself/herself but understands this through his/her connection with the world. So, is *oikeiôsis* a kind of modest egoism?

⁶⁴ What is meant by identification here is that the person starts to see the other person as himself/herself.

⁶⁵ Similarly, Spinoza says that what is most beneficial to a person is another person. Of course, it will not be just any human, but it will be a person who can benefit us. Let us say he will be a friend.

⁶⁶ What is meant by sympathy here is not compassion. It is the state of seeing the other person as a part of himself. In other words, it is seeing every person as a part of the family called the humanity.

⁶⁷ The origin of the cosmopolitanism of Stoicism lies mainly in this concept.

Yes, *oikeiôsis* can be understood as a form of egoism. But since this concept has no purely instinctive implication, it cannot be conceived as pure egoism. Rather, the Stoics think that people should approach what is beneficial to them and move away from what is harmful to them. They even think it is in the human nature. But since this nature will be indistinguishable from that of the animal only when it is focused on itself, they find the possibility of an ethical self in the worldliness of *oikeiôsis* (which is the comprehension of *oikeiôsis* in relation to all people in the world). In other words, they see the person who affirms all humanity in the *oikeiôsis* as an ethical model. This is the self that is ethical for them. The ultimate ethical self.⁶⁸

So, from all this we understand that for Stoics *oikeiôsis* is a multidimensional concept. But it also has a specific essence. For the Stoics, *oikeiôsis* ultimately lies at the basis of human being's impulse to approach what is beneficial to him/her and to move away from what is harmful to him/her. This is a necessary emotional output of *oikeiôsis*. Indeed, for the Stoics, *oikeiôsis* is a concept that is conceived on different levels of consciousness. For understanding *oikeiôsis* has a social side as well as an individual side. But even at the social point, it can be said that *oikeiôsis* is intertwined with an individual essence. For as the limits of the understanding of *oikeiôsis* expand, human being feels things outside of himself/herself as part of his/her own body. At this point, he/she knows them as his/her own body.⁶⁹ So, it can be said that *oikeiôsis*, in a way, never broke with the notion of the body. So, then, can we say that man wants his own benefit even while he wants the benefit of others in the context of the concept of *oikeiôsis*?

⁶⁸ For this is the ultimate goal of the Stoics' ethics: to enable human to live on a cosmopolitan level of consciousness, that is, to establish his connection with the universe through reason.

⁶⁹ From this point of view, it can be said that the whole world is conceived as the extended body of the person in the phase of *oikeiôsis* referencing the world. That is, the ethical self knows the world as its body.

Yes, we can. For the Stoics speak of benefit and harm, but not pleasure and pain when it comes to *oikeiôsis*, which is the main difference that sets them apart from the Epicureans. As is known, Epicurus thinks that the most basic tendency of human beings is to get closer to the things that give them pleasure and to stay away from the things that they suffer from. The Stoics do not agree with this. For them, pleasure and pain are consequences. They are not the driving forces. The driving forces are benefit and harm. These are the qualities that may vary depending on the situation. While pleasure and pain are merely individual sensations, benefit and harm can be understood through different mediations. For example, the person may see the benefit of his family or the benefit of his friends as his own benefit. But he cannot feel their pleasure as his own. In this respect, *oikeiôsis* is closer to a utilitarianism than to hedonism. But it is also closer to a primitive communism rather than a modern individualism. While the pleasure of the Epicureans refers only to the individual, the Stoics' *oikeiôsis* refers to the whole and reason through the individual. So, can it be said that *oikeiôsis* is a concept that encompasses sociality as much as it encompasses individuality?

To the extent that the Stoics do not consider *oikeiôsis* as reasonless when it comes to human beings, they give it both an individual and a social content. This is how they separate human beings from animals. The animal also thinks about its own benefit and harm, but it does so only by reference to itself. On the other hand, human beings can also think of other people and do not act according to their instincts alone. Because he/she can know that all other people are just like him/her and that every person is a part of the family called the humanity. It is reason, according to the Stoics, that allows him/her to know this. In this respect, human being does not feel his/her own benefit and harm only through his/her own body. But he/she also feels the benefit and harm in his/her relationship with others. That is, he/she creates his/her individuality in sociality. Human being expands his/her individuality towards the social and grasps the social in his/her own individuality.

The conception of individual benefit and harm is surrounded by a social halo in this respect. Which is the essence of the human *oikeiōsis*.

So, how can the concept of *oikeiōsis* be summarized? *Oikeiōsis* is the human faculty based on reason that enables man to live in a way that feels at home in the world. It is to see what is beneficial for one's self as beneficial for another. It is the pragmatic core of the human reason. It is the impulse that enables people to live rationally.

2.1.2. The Spinozian *Conatus*

Like the Stoics, Spinoza thinks that nature functions rationally. But his understanding of nature is slightly different from that of the Stoics. According to him, nature is not structured in a way that focuses primarily on human well-being.⁷⁰ Rather, nature is a whole that includes humans. And in this whole, human being has no privileged position. In other words, it is no different from other creatures (organic or inorganic) in terms of being in harmony with nature. So, how does Spinoza define nature? What does nature mean for Spinoza?

According to Spinoza, nature is God.⁷¹ But this does not mean that Spinoza's God is the creator of nature. Rather it is nature itself. So, nature is identical with God. (In this respect, Spinoza's God is completely different from the Gods of various religions. Because in almost all religions (and especially in monotheistic religions) God is a being transcendent to nature. So, it is, in essence, outside of it. In Spinoza, on the other hand, God is in nature. It finds expression directly in

⁷⁰ In this respect, it can be said that the Stoic understanding of nature is relatively teleological. For them, humans differ from other living things in that they are inherently rational creatures and have the capacity to grasp the essence of nature.

⁷¹ Spinoza defines God as follows: "By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence" (*The Ethics*, 1).

nature.) Spinoza's system is built on this basic axiom. God is what is essentially defined by existence. So, its essence is to exist and cannot be thought of as nonexistent. According to Spinoza, nature is eternal in this sense. Nature's existence requires it to be eternal. And nature is God in just this sense. That is why Spinoza calls God or nature (*deus sive natura*) when speaking of God. Thus, we understand that for Spinoza there is no difference between the created and the creator. The two are one and the same thing. Creation is everything. And it is God. But what are the philosophical implications of this God?

Spinoza identifies his God with substance (*substantia*). For him, substance is something that carries its own cause in itself and needs nothing else to exist in its own way. This is basically what Spinoza understands from substance. Spinoza thinks that in order to understand things, one must first understand God. For him, as much as God is the cause of itself (*causa sui*), it is the inherent cause of everything. Because it is the only thing that has its own cause.⁷² Thus, it is the reason for everything else. In this respect, it can be said that Spinoza's God corresponds to a pantheistic God.⁷³ Spinoza does not separate God from nature and attributes an inherent value to it. God is everything and everything is God. There is nothing that has not been marked by God and does not express God. And the main reason for this is that its essence (*essentia*) contains existence (*existentia*). Everything is in what contains its essence existence and is possible

⁷² Spinoza defines a substance that causes itself as follows: "By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing" (*The Ethics*, 1).

⁷³ There are also those who say that Spinoza is an atheist. But considering his philosophy, it seems more reasonable to say that he is a pantheist. Because he is too far out of theism to take the God of religion seriously even in a negative condition.

and understandable only through that thing.⁷⁴ So, how does God express itself in things?

According to Spinoza, God first expresses itself with its attributes (*attributum*).⁷⁵ God's attributes are the way in which it appeared. They are the infinite qualities and quantities of its existence. In fact, attributes are not things that are added to God. But they are things that are inherent in it and are its mandatory expression. In this respect, God and its attributes cannot be separated from each other. God is its attributes, and attributes are in God. So, what are these attributes?

Attributes are numerous, according to Spinoza. The reason for this is that God is eternal. Since God is an infinite being, an infinite number of attributes necessarily derive from it.⁷⁶ In this respect, attributes cannot be limited to numbers. Because infinity cannot be counted.⁷⁷ But, according to Spinoza, there are still these numerous attributes, but they cannot be known. So, they cannot be experienced.⁷⁸ But again, according to him, every being in God is subject to some of these attributes. And some of the beings in God directly experience some of these attributes. In fact, they are nothing more than the things that exist in these attributes. In short, they are finite expressions of these infinite attributes. We can ask the following question then: what are the attributes that human beings are subject to? What attributes are they in?

⁷⁴ In this respect, it can be said that Descartes' understanding of God is the opposite of Spinoza's. Descartes starts from the singular and progresses to the universal. Spinoza does the opposite. He starts from the universal and goes down to the singular. Descartes' system leads to God. Spinoza's system starts from God. The second system, in this context, is a kind of upside down version of the first.

⁷⁵ Spinoza defines the concept of attribute as follows: "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence" (*The Ethics*, 1).

⁷⁶ Because, according to Spinoza, the thing whose essence involves existence, that is, infinite, cannot contain any negation whatsoever. So, its attributes must also be infinite.

⁷⁷ In Spinoza, the number refers not to the essence, but to the feature. So, even saying God is one is meaningless for Spinoza.

⁷⁸ But these attributes do not refer to anything speculative like Kant's thing in itself. For their necessity is inferred from the definition of God.

According to Spinoza, humans have a being that is conditioned by two attributes. The first of these is the attribute of extension. The second is the attribute of thinking. Through these two attributes, human beings comprehend God or nature, that is, substance. They are already a part of substance through these attributes. In other words, as they perceive these attributes, they are also a partial expression of a sum of these attributes. They are finite parts of these infinite attributes. But these attributes should not be seen as illusions, just because human beings perceive substance in this way (as the union of thinking and extension). On the contrary, these attributes are a necessary consequence of God's essence. They are not an illusion, but an infinite expression of God's necessary existence. Humans, on the other hand, have access to only two of these attributes since they are finite entities. In other words, they are incapable of grasping attributes beyond these attributes. Because their very existence is limited by these attributes. What do we need to understand from all this? So, what is human for Spinoza then?

In fact, people have nothing special in Spinoza's system. They are only one of the living things that are included and subject to two attributes of God. For Spinoza, humans are finite expressions of God's infinite attributes. In his philosophy, finite things that are subject to these infinite attributes are called modes (*modus*).⁷⁹ For Spinoza, humans, like every other singular thing, are simply the modes of God. Modes, on the other hand, are finite expressions of infinite attributes that necessarily emanate from God. In this respect, it can be said that modes are things in which the changes in infinite attributes find their expression. In fact, the changes in infinite attributes are themselves modes. They are the change itself. Humans are also constantly changing, since they are finite entities, that is, modes. And they continue to exist subject to these infinite attributes. Subjection to these

⁷⁹ Spinoza's definition of the mode is as follows: "By mode I understand the affections of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is all conceived" (*The Ethics*, 1)

attributes is in their nature. That is, human being is in God and he/she has no reality or possibility without God. But what then is the nature of human beings' relationship with God or nature?

Spinoza explains this relationship by using two separate concepts. The first is nature naturing (*natura naturans*). The second is nature natured (*natura naturata*). The first of these corresponds to the summation of God and the infinite attributes necessarily derived from it. The second refers to individual things, modes, individuals who are subject to God and some of its infinite attributes. According to Spinoza, the first concept expresses what is in itself. The second refers to something whose existence is not in itself, that is, it must refer to something else in order to be understood (basically, it is in another). For example, God and the attributes necessarily deriving from it can be understood only through them. But to the extent that the modes are subject to God and its attributes, they can only be comprehended through them. But this does not mean that God and its attributes are transcendent to modes. Rather, God, attributes, and modes are a whole. But while God and its attributes directly express the whole, the modes express not the whole but parts of it. What we need to understand from this is that God is more than the sum of its modes, it is an infinite being with infinite attributes. The sum of the modes is not God. Modes are finite beings that God finds expression through various attributes. But what does all this mean in terms of human singularity?

As a nature natured, human being is essentially in a passive state. It is constantly conditioned by things around it, that is, by other modes. The only thing that is not conditioned is God and its attributes, for they necessarily exist, that is, they carry their causes in themselves. In this respect, the human being is not free as a mode. For he/she does not have his/her cause in himself/herself. There is only a partial

freedom for him/her. Only God is free.⁸⁰ For it acts freely because it carries its own cause in itself. By this we mean that God necessarily acts solely through its nature. But this does not mean that God has free will. For it exists not randomly, but in causality (and out of necessity. See the Appendix of the 1st Book of *the Ethics*). Human being is not created by God, but is subject to this ‘compulsory freedom’ of it.⁸¹ In this respect, for Spinoza, human being has no free will. Because he/she does not contain his/her own cause and cannot be understood solely through himself/herself. Given all this, even God is not free in the traditional sense. Because it does not act for no reason. It determines itself. But it still has a determination. In Spinoza, determination and freedom are not contradictory, especially they are intertwined.⁸² For Spinoza, freedom means only one thing: self-determination. Human being cannot determine himself/herself, so he/she is only determined. But how?

What is not free is what is determined externally. As we said, in Spinoza, human is something that is determined externally and therefore is not free inherently. Because other things condition him/her. On the other hand, God cannot be determined externally. Because it has no externality. It is the immanent cause of everything. Everything is in it as a result of its necessary existence. So, everything except God is determined externally. Human being is determined because he/she is in God like everything else. In fact, human being is active and productive like God. But his/her activity and productivity do not determine himself/herself, unlike God. In essence, both God and human beings are determined. But one is determined internally and the other externally. So, how are human beings

⁸⁰ Spinoza distinguishes between what is free and what is unfree (fully determined) as follows: “That thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone. But a thing is called necessary, or rather compelled, which is determined by another to exist and to produce an effect in a certain and determinate manner” (*The Ethics*, 2).

⁸¹ For Spinoza, God is not capable of doing anything for that very reason. God acts necessarily, but also freely. Everything that happens happens in God. As far as God is concerned, there is no possible, only the necessary.

⁸² What is meant by this is that what is free is also determined, but in a very special way.

determined in their singularity? We can also ask the question as follows: how does a human being exist in God?

To answer this question, we have to ask what a mode is. More precisely, what is a mode other than something individual, subject to God's attributes? Spinoza's definition of mode (as we quoted above) sums it up: "By mode I understand the affections of a substance, *or* that which is in another through which it is also conceived" (*The Ethics*, 1). The second part of this definition indicates that a mode does not contain its cause in itself. We already know what that means. So, what does the first part of this definition imply? What does it mean to be the affections of a substance?

In fact, the concept of affect (*affectio*) has two meanings in Spinoza. These two meanings are interrelated. First, affect corresponds to the affect of substance, which means the changes in the attributes of substance. What needs to be understood here is the sum of qualitative and quantitative changes in the attributes of substance. Second, affect refers to a change in individuals (singularities) subject to the attributes of substance. In fact, affect in this second sense is identical to affect in the first sense, but corresponds to its conception in terms of individuality. Affection in the first sense expresses a necessary change in substance by changes in its attributes. The second sense of affect is the comprehension of affect in this first sense in terms of modes. What needs to be understood here is that modes are necessarily changed through God. But modes experience this through their interactions with other modes. That is, modes change and transform in their interactions with other modes and are determined in this way. Affection is what provides this determination and is this determination. Human being is exposed to certain affects in his/her relationship with other people (or things) and exists through them. So, he/she is determined that way. So, it can be said that the essence of human being is the sum of his/her changes (or

modifications), that is, his/her affects. Human being as a mode, under the attribute of thinking and extension, constantly changes (both bodily and mentally) in its interaction with other modes. In this sense, human being is a singular expression of changes in God. In a way, human being expresses God in himself/herself. So, then, what is the essence that gives the individual his/her singularity? How are affective changes in a person organized?

According to Spinoza, the affections (changes in God's attributes) manifest themselves as emotions (*affectus*) in the modes. Emotions are of all kinds. A particular organization of affect in a particular mode brings out a particular emotion. In this respect, it can be said that affect dissolves directly in emotion. Simply, a person's affect directly corresponds to an emotion in him/her. There is only a categorical difference between affect and emotion in this respect. Relationally they are intertwined. From Spinoza's perspective, to the extent that the mode is connected to God through the attributes to which it is subject, it also receives a share of its activity. So, human being is also active as a mode, for his/her part. He/she is not infinitely active like God, but only in a limited way. Human being is active in a limited way and his/her activity is a reflection of the changes in the infinite attributes of God, that is, the affects. What does this mean? It means this: for Spinoza, emotions make human beings more active or more passive as long as the changes in the infinite attributes of God, that is, the affects, are an expression in finite beings, that is, modes. So, human being is active by nature, but since he/she is a mode, that is, he/she is finite, he/she is necessarily externally determined and can easily become passive.⁸³ So, what is the name of this essential activity that belongs to human in Spinoza? We can also ask the question as follows: what is the name of this essential activity in mode?

⁸³ Beth Lord expresses the passivity of the mode in its relation to affects as follows: "Affects are the feelings and desires that arise in us as a result of our encounters and experiences: affects push and pull us in different directions, determining our actions and behaviour, sometimes overwhelming us. Affects are also known as *passions*, because we are passive to the things that affect us" (*Spinoza's Ethics*, 83-84).

Spinoza says it is striving (*conatus*). For Spinoza, this is human's most natural characteristic. It is the expression of the essential activity of all human beings. Human activity as a mode appears as *conatus*. That is, it manifests itself as a will to self-preservation.⁸⁴ Spinoza writes: "Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being" (*The Ethics*, 75). And he adds: "The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing" (*The Ethics*, 75). It can then be said that Spinoza places *conatus* at the basis of human activity. For Spinoza, human being is *conatus*. So, his/her essence expresses the will to exist.⁸⁵ In this respect, it can be said that *conatus* is the stamp of God in human. Human being strives to exist as a finite being. This is the only feature it shares with other finite entities, namely, modes.⁸⁶ The essence of the existence of human being and all other modes is *conatus*. So, it is striving. This striving itself is the way the mode exists. But how?

For Spinoza, the element that constitutes the essence of every finite thing is *conatus*, it conditions those things in a certain way. Everything that has *conatus* strives to persevere in its existence. What we mean by this is the state of everything trying to live and continue living in its own way. But what does this mean? This means that there is no condition in the essence of the thing that would abolish its existence.⁸⁷ According to Spinoza, this can only come from outside. So, it can be caused only by external reasons. The essence of human beings and all

⁸⁴ Of course, *conatus* is not just about self-preservation in its traditional sense. We will examine this issue in detail in the fourth subchapter of this chapter.

⁸⁵ By this we mean that the essence of the mode does not directly involve existence. The essence of the mode is not existence but striving. In this respect, the essence of the mode is its act of striving. It is its fundamental activity. It exists through its striving.

⁸⁶ According to Spinoza, everything animate and inanimate has a *conatus*. Anything that is a mode has *conatus*. But *conatus* manifests itself differently in different things. For example, in animals, *conatus* manifests itself as a will to live. In a stone, it manifests itself as resistance.

⁸⁷ In this respect, act of suicide is completely meaningless for Spinoza. Because suicide is entirely a result of the debilitating effect of external things in the mode. Even death, according to Spinoza, is an external effect. It doesn't literally come from the essence of the mode. Death is merely the result of the finitude of the mode.

other living things is to persevere in their own existence and to make this very existence as active and effective as possible. Yet again, what does this mean?

Spinoza's conception of *conatus* is, as might be expected, intertwined with his understanding of affects and emotions. In fact, for Spinoza, *conatus* is desire (*cupiditas*). Desire is the essence of human being. But how this desire will be shaped, that is, what is desired, is determined by the emotions arising from the affections. According to Spinoza, there are only two types of emotional states and the rest are variations of these two types. The first is joy, the second is sadness. These feelings actually coincide with increases and decreases in *conatus*. So, while emotions in the form of joy support our striving, feelings of sadness hinder our striving. We, as humans, by nature want to preserve ourselves as ourselves and approach things that support our striving.⁸⁸ In other words, we approach what is beneficial to us and move away from what is harmful to us. For Spinoza, this is the essence of the activity of *conatus* (a limited form of God's activity). *Conatus* encourages the human being to act as much as everything else. And the character of this action is different in every person. Yet each person tries to increase his/her power (of action). In other words, they try to organize various affections in a way that increases their power. In short, everyone strives to organize encounters that will increase their power to act (or at least everyone is inclined to it). Those who fail to do so are saddened and their power to act decreases. This is the essence of *conatus* in Spinoza. It is a kind of metaphysical body that expresses the increases and decreases in its power to act. Or, in other words, it is the constant value of the limited expression of God's infinite power in the mode (despite its constant change). (In fact, these changes themselves express fluctuations in *conatus* or desire.) So, finally, how can we define *conatus* in Spinoza's system?

⁸⁸ So, it should be said that *conatus* is not just a passive self-preservation drive. Lord writes: "From our essence follows both our striving to persevere in our being and the determination to act in ways that satisfy that striving. As finite modes, then, we are *essentially determined* to carry on living and being what we are and to do those things that will enhance our life's flourishing" (*Spinoza's Ethics*, 89).

In Spinoza's system, *conatus* corresponds to desire. Desire is the movement of the sum of the variations of the various emotions (basically two emotions: joy and sadness). Various affects create emotions. Emotions also establish desire as a whole. *Conatus* is the name of the activity of this desire. And the orientation of this activity is to continuously expand its field of activity. That is, to constantly increase its power. *Conatus* is the modal expression of self-affirming desire. It is simply the embodiment of the immanent striving to be joyful.

2.2. The Spinozian Ethical Self in connection with *Conatus*

In this subchapter, I will examine in detail what *conatus* means in Spinoza's philosophy. I will discuss the implications of Spinoza's philosophical anthropology based on the idea that *conatus* is the essence of human beings and everything else. My primary purpose in doing this will be to examine the Spinozian ethical self and its connection to the concept of *conatus*. In doing this, I will first consider the place of the self in Spinoza's philosophy. I will explain the relation of the Spinozian idea of the self to the mind-body problem and affect theory. Thus, I will explain what Spinoza understood from the idea of the self and how he depicted the individual (human being) in the universe. Secondly, I will discuss the ethical orientation of Spinoza's understanding of the self. So, I will explain how Spinoza has philosophically constructed the ethical self. Ultimately, I will express the connection of this ethical self with the concept of *conatus* and discuss the central importance that Spinoza gave to *conatus* in a way that is intertwined with the concept of the ethical self. In this context, I will also explain the meaning Spinoza gives to the concepts of good and bad and what he understands from the adequate and inadequate ideas. In short, the purpose of this subchapter is to reveal the meaning of the ethical self, which is the primary goal of Spinoza's philosophical project, in its relation to the concept of *conatus*.

2.2.1. The Spinozian Self

When it comes to Spinoza's philosophy, it is difficult to speak of an idea of the self. He rarely speaks of it. That is, the idea of the self is not a central theme of his philosophy. What is meant by the self is, of course, the self in its traditional sense. It is the subject, the idea of 'I'.⁸⁹ However, there seems to be no such idea in Spinoza's philosophy, as Caroline Williams said: "There is, arguably, no grammatical 'I' in Spinoza's philosophy" ("Subjectivity Without the Subject": Thinking Beyond the Subject with/through Spinoza", in *Spinoza Beyond Philosophy*, 14). As we saw in the previous subchapter, Spinoza also finds the idea of free will irrational. He thinks nothing can be completely free in a universe dominated by necessity, especially if it is a mode. So, can the self in its traditional sense be talked about in Spinoza? Let us ask the question as follows: is it possible to talk about the subject in Spinoza's universe?

It is not possible to talk about the self in Spinoza in its traditional sense. Because in his philosophical system, no self freely takes its own decisions and is not conditioned by anything except itself. The reason for this is (as we explained in the previous subchapter) that human beings, as modes, necessarily have a conditional actuality. That is, all people's thoughts and feelings exist only in their relationships with things outside of them. Moreover, it makes them directly connected and dependent on things. In this respect, people seem to reflect the sum of their affects. In other words, people are the sum of the reflections of these affects on them. So, how are people affected as modes?

⁸⁹ In fact, it is the Cartesian subject: it is the thinking 'I' and the a priori belief in the 'I' as a substance. Descartes argues that 'if there is a thought there must be a thinker' and that consequently the existence of the 'I' is certain. Substance is given an a priori status and it is conceived as something beyond experience. Thinking, which is the basic ground of existence, is inseparable from the 'I', so that the 'I' can be found with certainty in its act of thinking.

This question is a question of how a mode exists. So, we must start by answering this question in detail. According to Spinoza, human existence has a structure consisting of two attributes of substance. In other words, these two attributes are what make human beings exist as they are. A human is a product of the sum of these two attributes, and he/she knows himself/herself through these two attributes as long as he/she is the product of these two attributes. Human beings, as modes, grasp things around them only through these attributes. Furthermore, these attributes correspond to their way of experiencing substance. As we mentioned in the previous subchapter, these are the attributes of thought and extension. However, the substance has infinite attributes. Human being experiences only these two attributes as a mode. Because the human being is a limited entity, the attributes to which he/she is subject to are also limited. According to Spinoza, these attributes are general. In other words, the attributes of thought and extension are found in God limitlessly. On the other hand, a human being is a limited part of these limitless attributes. In other words, he/she expresses a finite existence in the infinity of the attributes. Nevertheless, what is his/her relationship with these attributes?

According to Spinoza, the essence of human beings consists of the mind and body. In other words, a human being expresses himself/herself as a limited thought and limited body within the attributes of unlimited thought and unlimited extension. A human being is subject to these two attributes in his/her way. He/she is both a physical entity and a thinking entity. So, can it be said that Spinoza is a dualist?

Not at all. Spinoza is not a dualist in any sense. The distinction between these two attributes in his system makes him look like a dualist. However, this is an erroneous understanding of Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza is not a dualist like Descartes. Descartes, for example, sees these two attributes (thought and extension) as separate substances. In this respect, Descartes is a complete dualist.

According to him, attributes are themselves substances and have separate existences. Although Descartes thinks that these two attributes cannot be reduced to each other, he thinks that there is an interaction between them. In other words, Descartes first separates the two attributes as substances and then tries to think of them concerning each other.⁹⁰ It is a dilemma that comes from Descartes' double contemplation of substance. Moreover, again, this is a philosophical position that Spinoza strongly disagrees with. So, what does Spinoza think about the relation of these attributes to substance?

As we saw in the last subchapter, Spinoza's substance is one, and it is nothing but God. Attributes for Spinoza are not substance, but perceptible expressions of substance. They are the way substance manifests itself.⁹¹ They certainly exist separately, but they are the expressions of a single substance. That is, although they can be conceived separately, they do not exist separately.⁹² They always exist with God, that is, in wholeness, in one substance. We need to understand that though the attributes of thought and extension are separate, they are just two different aspects of substance. Therefore, it can be said that Spinoza is not a dualist but a monist. In other words, for Spinoza, a whole reality is the activity and the product of a monolithic substance, and its attributes are nothing but various expressions of its eternal existence. Nevertheless, how does this infinite being exist through its infinite attributes?

As we briefly underlined in the last subchapter, while this infinite substance exists through its infinite attributes, these infinite attributes also exist through their finite variants, that is, modes, and this whole is already substance itself. Spinoza's

⁹⁰ Descartes, for example, talks about a pineal gland that provides the relationship between the body and the mind. But he does not explain how the material attribute can condition the immaterial one.

⁹¹ We perceive them as separate attributes; or in other ways, they are two different ways through which we can attain an understanding of God.

⁹² To be exact, we perceive them separately, but they do not exist in God separately.

ontology does not contain a hierarchy. There is no vertical path from substance to attributes and from there to modes (or modality). On the contrary, Spinoza thinks of substance, attributes, and modes as a whole. Substance is in itself, as well as in attributes and modes. Then modes, which derive from infinite attributes of substance, also express substance itself. It means that they are also an inseparable part of the self-expression and self-activation of substance. So, what is the relation of mode to substance?

In this example, we know that a mode, a human being, experiences two infinite attributes of reality or substance. However, because mode itself is a part of reality, it also senses this reality in its way. It does this physically and mentally. In other words, in general terms, it exists under the attributes of thought and extension. The body as a mode reflects the attribute of extension, and the state of thinking as a mode reflects the attribute of thought. Thus, the necessary integration between mode and substance takes place. However, does this mean that Spinoza thinks by separating the body and mind in a mode? The question may also be asked as follows: does not the mind and body of a mode reflect a unity (unity of infinite attributes in substance) as in substance?

Undoubtedly, as in substance, one can speak of unity in a mode. In other words, a mode reflects this unity in terms of its limitation as long as it exists within the substance. It means that the body and mind are not two separate substances but modal expressions that constitute the finite modes' nature within the infinite attributes of substance. So, for Spinoza, the mind and body do not exist separately. They reflect substance by the attributes to which they are subject. In other words, each mode has integrity within itself. The mind and body do not exist in a hierarchical order in Spinoza. On the contrary, they exist simultaneously in horizontal order. In other words, there is no absolute control of one over the other. And this also shows that the body and mind are simultaneously and in the same

way affected by the things around them. Of course, the body and mind are not affected separately by things as much as they reflect a unity. They are affected by their unity. So, then the question is this: how is a mode affected?

The answer to this question is that mode itself is inseparable from affects. It means that a mode, by its very existence, is nothing more than the affections of substance's certain attributes. In other words, a mode is a particular channel that receives the changes in attributes it is subject to. The changes in it are an expression of the changes in the whole to which it belongs. In this respect, substance changes in general, and mode in particular. In short, the most micro-dimensioned expression of the change in substance is mode itself. Affections mark a mode by its existence. Spinoza writes: "Particular things are nothing but affections of God's attributes or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determined way" (*The Ethics*, 19). In this way, it becomes clear how mode expresses God in its way. Indeed, the mode itself is nothing more than an expression of necessary change and eternal activity in God. The particular things, then, are no more than modes defined by affects. From a holistic perspective, they are themselves affections. Nevertheless, how do these modes, which are nothing but the affections of God's infinite attributes, experience themselves? Let us simplify the question and ask again as follows: how do humans exist in their relationship to the universe as particular beings?

For Spinoza, the human being is a mode, or a collection of affects, existing in substance through his/her mind and body. It means that a human being is always open to external conditioning as he/she does not have his/her cause inside of his/her essence. Therefore, as we mentioned in the last subchapter, human beings have no free will, just like any other being. Humans, as particular things or modes, are guided and act by specific affects. It is their way of being and their nature. In

short, the essence of the human in Spinoza is the capacity of being acted upon. However, how is a human affected?

In Spinoza's universe, human beings, like everything else, are affected by the attributes to which they are subject. That is, both their bodies and their minds are affected. Changes in the attribute of extension affect their bodies, and changes in the attribute of thought affect their way of thinking. It should be noted, however, that Spinoza gives priority to neither body nor mind when it comes to affects. Because they are both two different finite manifestations of a substance, they are equally affected by modulation in substance. Therefore, for Spinoza, there is no hierarchy between the body and mind when it comes to affects. Instead, there is an equivalence. Both the body and mind are similarly affected by changes in substance. Spinoza, therefore, thinks that neither the mind can control the body, nor the body can control the mind. Because when it comes to human beings, the mind and body are a composite whole. In mode, they express two different aspects of change in substance. So, in what kind of process is human being affected?

According to Spinoza, the relationship between the human mind and body determines how a person is exposed to affects. For him, the mind is the idea of the body. He writes: "The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, *or* a certain mode of extension which actually exists, and nothing else" (*The Ethics*, 39). So, the mind experiences what is in the body in its way. However, what needs to be understood from this is not that the body takes precedence over the mind. Instead, since corporality is essential in terms of human beings' separate existence, there is such a relationship between the mind and body. In fact, in this context, it can be said that the mind is the quality of an attribute that reflects what is happening in the body. Spinoza thinks this way because every idea to him is an idea of something. Thought certainly exists in its own right, but its relation to things is essential for its existence. What is in the body also happens in the mind.

However, what is in the mind is a mental expression of what is in the body. It is the affections that happen in both the body and mind. They are the changes in substance. For this very reason, Spinoza sees no privilege between the body and mind when it comes to affects, but rather a difference. For Spinoza, then, a human being is the modification of these aspects that constitute his/her nature (within their unity). Moreover, that is what brings us back to our original problem. Given Spinoza's conception of mode, can one speak of the idea of the self, and correspondingly, individuality, in Spinoza?

It can be said that Spinoza's conception of the self perfectly corresponds to his conception of mode. For Spinoza, the self is what a mode is and what it experiences as it is. So, for Spinoza, the self is nothing but the crystallization of the changes of substance in particularity. For this reason, Spinoza's understanding of the self should not be confused with the idea of the subject. Spinoza does not believe in the subject in its traditional sense. He even finds it fallacious. According to him, the self that freely makes its own decisions and exists on its own is not possible. In other words, Spinoza denies the idea of the subject, which is based on the bias of free will. For him, there is a self, but this self does not correspond to a subject. For Spinoza, the self is individuality. Alternatively, instead, it is an individual (*individuum*). So, what is an individual in Spinoza's substance-centered universe?

An individual is an expression of a mode. So, it is the specific way a mode is and does. The Spinozian individuality can be said to be the body.⁹³ What absorbs the changes in substance and becomes the mind's object is nothing but the body. In that case, we can say that in Spinoza, the body is like a reservoir that is

⁹³ Of course, in Spinoza, human is both the body and mind. However, as long as the mind is the idea of the body, it can be said that the body corresponds to a more nuanced attribute when it comes to human beings. The mind is literally intellectual derivation of what is happening in the body. In this respect, the body is the main channel when it comes to affects.

continuously moved by the affects. In that case, it can be said that the individual also consists of a plurality of affections. In essence, the individual himself/herself is nothing more than the expression of this multiplicity of affections. In other words, in Spinoza, the individual is essentially a particularity in his/her relationship with other individuals (modes). It acts through the affects they leave on him/her. So, how do these affects exist in the particularity corresponding to the Spinozian self, that is, in the individual?

As we saw in the last subchapter, Spinoza thinks that the affects evolve directly into the emotions when it comes to mode. According to him, there are two types of emotions. The first is joy; the second is sadness. These feelings (or emotions) exist when it comes to mode. That is, emotions express the changes in a particularity. In that case, we can say that the concept of affect has two different meanings in Spinoza. Affect, in its first sense, refers to changes in substance. It is the general meaning of affect. In its second sense, affect expresses mode itself or the changes in it, such as emotions. In that case, it can be said that this second sense of affect defines the individual. In other words, in Spinoza, the individual is a self affected in various ways and is involved in various emotions. That is why Spinoza says that the essence of human beings is desire. As a meta-emotion, desire reflects the sum of all other emotions and carries all emotions' intensity. As we saw in the last subchapter, Spinoza calls it *conatus*. So, according to Spinoza, desire is *conatus*.⁹⁴ It is the essence of human beings. In just this way, a human being reflects the infinite activity of a substance in a finite way. In other words, he/she shows the changes in substance with an effort to persevere in its existence. It is the founding factor that makes individuality possible in Spinoza. In other words, it is *conatus* that manifests itself as human beings' desire. *Conatus*, which manifests itself as human beings' desire, is the existential principle that

⁹⁴ The reason why desire is *conatus* is peculiar to humans. In other words, *conatus* is desire only when it comes to humans. For example, a stone has no desire, its *conatus* is characterized by resistance.

determines all individuality's orientation. After all, how can we define the Spinozian self?

The Spinozian self is an individual. It is mode itself, which is a particular expression of substance. The individual is a particularity that cannot be separated from its affects. As it is the singular expression of these affects, it contains an emotional multiplicity in its nature. On the other hand, the essence of this individual is desire. Moreover, the orientation of this desire is to persevere in its existence as much as it can. That is, to increase its power by increasing its joy. In this respect, the individual in Spinoza is its *conatus*. In other words, it is the particular expression of the power formed by its affective multitude. Ultimately, it is the integral constellation of affective power.

2.2.2. The Spinozian Ethical Self

We saw that Spinoza's understanding of the self is directly related to his understanding of the affects. Moreover, we also revealed that the primary determinant of this self is desire or *conatus*. Now it is time to explain how desire or *conatus*, an active integrator of these affects, can create the ethical self. Because the most fundamental concern of Spinoza's philosophical project is the realization of this concept, the ethical self, so let us raise the fundamental question of this subchapter as follows: what is the relation of *conatus*, in all its implications, to the Spinozian ethical self?

For Spinoza, everything that exists, each mode, is the sum of its affects. In other words, there is nothing particular for Spinoza that exists free from its affects, and everything that exists consists of its affects. It is precisely for this reason that nothing in Spinoza's universe has free will. Everything acts and exists as its affects direct it. That is, the modalities are and behave as they are. In other words,

they are basically the affects they are exposed to. In sum, it is their affects that determines their behavior. Does this mean that there can be no ethics in Spinoza? We can also ask the question as follows: if there is no conception of free will, is there no possibility of ethics in Spinoza's philosophy?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to understand how emotions manifest in humans. According to Spinoza, emotions are things that exist first in the mind. For as long as the mind is the mind of the body, it is the mind that first derives the idea about its changes. So, it can be said that emotions, in this context, are only the thoughts of the body's affects in the mind. In other words, emotions are the reflection of the affects of the body on the mind. Furthermore, in this respect, of course, it can be said that emotions are affects processed by the mind. Spinoza explains it as follows: "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" (*The Ethics*, 70). Spinoza uses the word affect for emotion in this quote. Because, according to him, every affect necessarily corresponds to an emotion. In other words, each affect has a certain quality in its own right. Moreover, that is how emotion arises in the Spinozian sense. So, what is the nature of emotions derived from affects?

As can be seen from the quote above, Spinoza thinks that there are two kinds of affects that create emotions as they are. Some emotions increase the body's power to act. However, some emotions decrease the body's power to act. This oscillation (increase and decrease) occurs in the body and mind (as we saw in the last subchapter). Therefore, we can say that Spinoza connects the nature of affects directly with the nature of the activity of mode. In short, for Spinoza, some affects increase the activity of mode, while others decrease it. Nevertheless, what is the nature of these affects that generate a variety of negative and positive emotions?

In the Spinozian sense, emotions are variations of affects. However, two types of affects encompass all these variations. The first of these is active affects. The second is passive affects. Spinoza thinks that these affects are the main ones. Emotions that derive from these are also included in one or the other. In other words, every emotion is either a reflection of an active affect or a reflection of a passive affect. Moreover, as seen above, Spinoza thinks these effects are directly related to the increase and decrease in human power. The nature of these affects determines the natural direction of our power. In short, it configures the character of our *conatus*. In other words, our *conatus*' inner dynamics, that is, our desire, determines the things that increase and decrease our power. This internal dynamic itself characterizes these affects and is reflexively characterized by them. But how?

Spinoza divides the affects into two as well as makes a difference between them. It is the active affects that increase our power, and the passive affects that decrease our power. Spinoza thinks that if an affect is due to our nature, we are active. However, if we are only exposed to an affect, if our nature does not cause that affect, Spinoza calls it passive affect. It is why Spinoza says that active affect consists of action, and passive affect consists of passion. We can understand here that every action, in other words, every autonomous activity, is the product of an active affect. On the other hand, every mere exposure, that is, every dependent activity, is the product of a passive affect. Active affects activate us through our nature, while passive affects make us their slaves. It is the meaning of increase and decrease in power for Spinoza: if we are the only cause of our actions, we are intertwined with the active affects, but if we are not fundamentally the sole cause of our actions, we are immersed in passive affects. What do these two types of affect mean in terms of the unity of the human mind and body?

According to Spinoza (as we have seen in the last subchapter), emotions arising from affects exist in the mind. Any emotion, whether it is the product of an active or passive affect, is an emotion produced by the mind. So, actually, every emotion is an idea. It is the idea of an affect that first takes place in the body. Therefore, the mind's idea of affects arises from how the body is essentially exposed to and storing affects. In comparison, the body works as the receptor of affects, the mind functions as the processor of them. Emotions, then, are affects that have been processed. So, what decides these affects to be active or passive?

Although it will be paradoxical, in essence, it is the emotions derived from mode or mode's previous affects and the total desire or *conatus* produced by them that decides whether the affects will be active or passive. A person's *conatus*, the specific and inner power constellation, determines how he/she will be affected by things. Nevertheless, to give a technical answer, the mind itself makes the affects active or passive. That is, it is the way the mind processes affects. If the ideas produced by the mind through affects are adequate, Spinoza thinks that this is an active affect. However, if the ideas that the mind has produced through affects are inadequate, Spinoza says that this is a passive affect. We now understand that the adequate idea drives us into action for Spinoza, while the inadequate idea drives us into inaction (or passion). Spinoza writes: "The actions of the mind arise from adequate ideas alone; the passions depend on inadequate ideas alone" (*The Ethics*, 74). Therefore, as long as we develop adequate ideas about our affects, we continue to act and increase our power. However, if we do not develop adequate ideas about our affects, we cannot maintain our activity and decrease our power. In other words, producing adequate ideas about the effects of the body increases our joy, while producing inadequate ideas increases our sadness. In short, if we act solely out of our passions, we have inadequate ideas about the affects of the body, but on the other hand, if we act solely through our nature, then we have adequate

ideas about the affects of the body. So, what does all this say about human beings' relationship with affects?

What Spinoza implies when it comes to affects is not that some of the affects are passive, and some of them are active. Whether an affect is active, or passive is up to us. So, it is about our total desire or *conatus*. No mode is free in Spinoza's universe. Therefore, human being, as a mode, cannot have absolute freedom. He/she can only have relative freedom. It means that a human being is necessarily subject to passive affects, but he/she is free to the extent that he/she is one with active affects. That is, he/she derives his affects from his/her nature. The basis of adequate and inadequate ideas also lies here. Adequate ideas mean that the mind regulates the body's affects in a way that increases human activity. And on the contrary, inadequate ideas mean that the mind cannot regulate the affects of the body in a way that increases human activity, that is, it decreases this activity. We need to deduce from all of this that it is all about increase and decrease of power when it comes to modes. Of course, it is the same when it comes to human beings. Human beings exist with their active and passive affects. By their nature they are active at times and passive at times. Sometimes they act by themselves; that is, they have active affects. Sometimes they cannot act by themselves; that is, they are under the influence of passive affects. Sometimes, their power increases; that is, they feel joy. Sometimes, their power decreases; that is, they feel sadness. Well then, can we argue that there is a problem of power at the root of the theory of affects?

Spinoza himself associates affects directly with power or *conatus*, the modal or modular signifier of power. The affects are necessarily associated with an increase or decrease in power to the extent that they correspond to emotions derived from the mode's affects. The whole of these emotions establishes desire as it is, which is the essence of a human being (as we explained in the previous subchapter).

Human beings are necessarily the product of their affects, and in this respect, they exist as a kind of singular power combination. Sometimes their power increase and sometimes their power decrease. Nevertheless, they are nothing but the oscillations of their power. So, what is *conatus* in its relationship with active and passive affects, with various emotions?

According to Spinoza, all emotions are essentially about power. That is, it is about an increase or a decrease in the person's power to act. Therefore, every emotion exists directly concerning *conatus*. Spinoza thinks that active affects correspond to joyful emotions. These are emotions that increase our power to act; passive affects, on the other hand, ultimately correspond to emotions of sadness. These are emotions that decrease our power to act. Therefore, the primary reference for every emotion is the increase and decrease of power. So, every emotion is related initially to *conatus*, which is our essence. The quality of our essence is the quality of our *conatus*. Things affect us through this mediation. So, it is entirely up to our nature that we find specific things joyful and specific things saddening. Things give us joy and sadness according to the internal form of our desire. So, the character of our *conatus* determines the content of things that affect us in one way or another. What does that mean?

According to Spinoza, there is no good or bad in itself. In other words, affects do not have an essential nature. The nature of the affects varies from person to person. It means that affects have not one but many meanings. But all of these meanings are emotional in the real sense of the word. In other words, emotions derived from affects are fundamentally different for each person. Spinoza writes: "Each affect of each individual differs from the affect of another as much as the essence of the one from the essence of the other" (*The Ethics*, 101). What we need to understand from this is that our emotions are directly related to our individuality. Since our desire constitutes our individuality, our emotions are

directly related to our desire, that is, our *conatus*. The nature of our *conatus*, on the other hand, is, as is known, the perseverance of our existence. We call things good that will improve and expand our existence, and we call things bad that do not support our existence as it is. Spinoza makes this clear as follows: “[W]e neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it” (*The Ethics*, 76). What this means is that whether we call something good or bad is always related to our desire, the orientation of our power, in short, our *conatus*. Our good is good for us. So, our good is not the ultimate good. What is good is what increases our striving to exist, nothing else. Anything that does not increase or decrease this striving; this effort to exist, we call it bad. It is the origin of our idea of bad (or evil in some ways). So, what does all this mean for Spinoza’s ethics? Let us ask the question as follows: if there is no durable good and no stable bad, can we speak of ethics in Spinoza?

It can be said that in Spinoza’s philosophy, there is no morality in its traditional sense. However, on the other hand, Spinoza is undoubtedly an ethicist. The reason Spinoza is not a moralist is that he does not believe in ultimate good (or the good) and ultimate bad (or the evil). As we have seen above, there is no such thing as the ultimate good and the ultimate bad for Spinoza. All judgments of good and bad (or evil) are relative to him. More precisely, all good and bad judgments are the product of a particular individual perspective to him. So, what is useful and good to one can be harmful and bad to another. In short, what diminishes one’s power can increase another’s power. In this respect, Spinoza is an ethicist *par excellence*. His philosophy is most fundamentally concerned with the establishment of ethics of power. For Spinoza, good and bad are never sublime things. They are always associated with particular individuals and their circumstances. Ultimately, in Spinoza’s universe, good and bad are the product of a particular individual’s singular perspective, that is, a moral reflection of a specific combination of power.

It is a human being who produces good and bad, and human being does this only concerning the orientation of his/her power. The basic idea of Spinoza's ethics is that the views of good and bad are subject to perspective and that this perspective is shaped by the form of the power of the individual, namely *conatus*. It is time, then, to discuss the fundamental question of this subchapter. Let us then ask the question as follows: what is the Spinozian ethical self in this context?

The answer to this question is hidden in the structure of the Spinozian self; as we discussed in the previous subchapter, the individual corresponding to the Spinozian self functions as a singular (or a modular) combination of power. In other words, the individual is the self that strives to exist and always tries to increase its power in just this way. It means that the increase in power and, of course, its decrease cannot be separated from the perspective-based judgments of good and bad. Each individual establishes his/her judgment of good and bad and expresses his/her power and powerlessness through them. It makes Spinozian ethics directly related to the concept of power. For Spinoza, there cannot be a good that does not increase power and a bad that does not decrease power. So, the striving to exist, that is, the effort to increase power, takes precedence over the ideas of good and bad.⁹⁵ Our striving to persevere in our existence is essential and what supports and hinders this effort is variable. So, we can be affected differently by the same thing at different times. However, it is not about the nature of that thing; it is about our nature. Our nature grasps things concerning its power. It highlights that good and bad are a matter of perspective. The form of our desire, our *conatus*, creates our perspective. In this respect, it is possible to say that the Spinozian ethical self will be the individual who continually increases his/her

⁹⁵ Valteri Viljanen explains this dynamic as follows: “[W]e strive to bring about certain effects in virtue of our essences not because they would have some independent goodness but because those effects are simply the effects that follow from our essence alone. Of course, Spinoza admits that they can be called ‘good’ — but only posterior to us striving, or desiring, or wanting them” (“Theory of *Conatus*”, in *Spinoza: Basic Concepts*, 103).

power within his/her ethical perspective. In this context, can we say that the Spinozian ethical self is directly related to *conatus*?

Conatus is undoubtedly the founding factor of Spinoza's ethics. As a mode, a human being exists in his/her individuality with his/her *conatus*. It means that the channel through which a human being expresses his/her various affects is, in a way, *conatus*. Both joy and sadness pass through *conatus*, which is how desire is constructed. It can be said that the ideas of good and bad can only be formed through *conatus*. In this respect, Spinozian ethics is, in a way, based on the theory of *conatus*, the primary self-preservation drive. Nevertheless, what should be understood from self-preservation is not passive self-preservation. As we saw in the previous subchapter, for Spinoza, the self is not a passive but an active particularity. It is, in a sense, a dynamic individuality. Hence for Spinoza, the self-preservation drive does not necessarily imply a passive mode of being. This drive, in itself, is continuously active. Because every individual, that is, every mode with a *conatus*, is continuously activated by affects. Ultimately, the principle of *conatus* should not be viewed as a passive principle but as a fundamentally active principle, for it is the principle that emerges from and kneads all kinds of affects. However, to the extent that *conatus*' essence is self-preservation, the individual characterized by *conatus* always tends to increase his/her power. In other words, the essence of *conatus* is the effort to ensure the constant increase in power. It is what makes *conatus* a dynamic principle. It is a principle that leads the individual to an increase in power on and on. The Spinozian ethical self is directly related to *conatus* because, for Spinoza, the ethical self is nothing but the individual who increases his/her power within his/her unique ethical perspective. So, for Spinoza, it can be said that virtue is power. He writes: "By virtue and power I understand the same thing, that is (by IIIP7), virtue, insofar as it is related to man, is the very essence, or nature, of man, insofar as he has the power of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone" (*The Ethics*,

117). What needs to be understood from this is that true virtue must be defined by the increase in power for Spinoza. It is the core of his ethics. So, how can the Spinozian ethical self be defined?

The core of the Spinozian ethical self is *conatus*. In this context, the ethical self is the one that can make the increase in power as continuous as possible. The ideas of the ethical self are adequate. So, he/she acts only by the laws of his/her nature. Then, the actions of the ethical self are not the product of passive affects but active affects. Therefore, the ethical self is the individual who increases his/her power through his/her active affects. So, the ethical self is also one that can turn external affects in his/her favor. He/she is defined not by a decrease in his/her power to act but by increasing his/her power to act. That is, he/she exists with joy, not sadness. His/her existence is itself a joy. In this respect, it can be said that the Spinozian ethical self is the person who finds virtue in power and in the increase of power. This ethical self converges in this way to God, that is, to the infinite substance. For, just like God, he/she acts according to the laws of his/her nature. Of course, he/she does not act solely according to the laws of his/her nature like God, but he/she does so as much as he/she can. In this respect, he/she is free. Of course, he/she is not free in the sense that he/she is free from affects, but he/she is free because he/she reaches or actualizes an intensity of power that will increase his/her power of influence through the reasonable control of affects. Thus, the Spinozian ethical self can be said to be the person who acts in accordance with the laws of his/her *conatus*. After all, he/she is the person who has a more and more perfect body with each increase in power derived from the active affects of his/her *conatus*. To put it in a Spinozian term, the ethical self is the blessed one.

3. NIETZSCHE AND SPINOZA: THE WILL TO POWER AND *CONATUS*

In this chapter, we will make a synthesis of what has been written so far. In other words, this chapter's content will be to draw a brief conceptual conclusion from what has been written up to this point. In this respect, it can be said that this chapter is a short answer to the main problem of this short study. So, let us raise the question that this short study tries to answer and summarizes the purpose of this chapter: what connection is there between Spinoza and Nietzsche, particularly between the concepts of the will to power and *conatus*?

It seems strange to establish a connection between these two concepts at first. Because when we look at it from Nietzsche's perspective, such a link does not seem to exist. Considering that his theoretical critique of Spinoza also proceeded with the critique of *conatus*, this becomes clear. Nietzsche criticises Spinoza many times, especially in his late notes.⁹⁶ However, these critique's main target is not Spinoza's philosophy as a whole, rather, the principle of self-preservation. Nietzsche targets Spinoza as he thinks he also is one of the advocates of this principle. That is, he identifies the concept of *conatus* with a primary drive of self-preservation.

“Spinoza's proposition concerning self-preservation should actually put an end to change. But the proposition is false; the *contrary* is true. It is precisely a living organism in which it is most clearly shown that it does what it does *not* to preserve itself, but to become *something more...*” (*The Will to Power*, 392).

⁹⁶ Nietzsche also criticized Spinoza in his published works, but these criticisms take a harsher form in his unpublished notes.

It is evident in this passage that Nietzsche refers to Spinoza's concept of *conatus* because there is no concept in Spinoza's philosophical system and vocabulary other than *conatus* to signify the idea of self-preservation in one way or another. However, Nietzsche also appears to identify this concept with an overly simplistic drive of self-preservation. For he says that Spinoza's proposition of self-preservation puts an end to the idea of change. In a way, Nietzsche thinks Spinoza denies the idea of becoming when it comes to the self. According to him, Spinoza's so-called principle of self-preservation, *conatus*, signifies the self's identity with itself.⁹⁷ This kind of idea of the self underlines a self that is resistant to change by its nature, and it is what Nietzsche fundamentally disagrees with. For him, no self is always identical to itself and any self is subject to change constantly. Is this the position of Spinoza then? Is Spinoza a defender of the idea of the self that is identical to itself and is not subject to change?

We can say that Nietzsche was dramatically wrong on this subject. Spinoza had never actually advocated such an idea of the self, i.e., an idea of the self that is identical to itself in and through time. On the contrary, he had insisted on the impossibility of such an idea of the self. It is particularly evident in Spinoza's rejection of the concept of free will. As we have seen in the third subchapter of the second chapter, in Spinoza, the self corresponds to an individuality that is continually becoming. It is essentially the basis of the Spinozian self. According to Spinoza, every self, that is, every individual is always open to external determination and is defined with this fundamental openness. In Spinoza, this openness itself is the essence of the self. Everything in his universe exists in his relation to affects. There is no single self, not even one individual, that is free from affects. Alternatively, to put it in Spinozian terms, what makes a mode a

⁹⁷ We mean here that this type of self is defined as an essentially stable and monadic state of existence. In other words, according to Nietzsche, this type of conceptualization of the self defines the individual only through his/her identity with himself/herself. Furthermore, according to him, this ultimately corresponds to the denial of change when it comes to the idea of the self.

mode is the sum of its affects, that is, its essential openness outside of itself. In this respect, the Spinozian self refers neither to absolute self-identification nor to the negation of change. In truth, it refers only to an individuality that is not in itself and does not remain unchanged. It may even be said, in a sense, that the Spinozian self is change itself. For the self as a mode in Spinoza's universe expresses a change in God or in God's attributes. Far from negating change, it is nothing more than change. So, we can easily say that Nietzsche was wrong about this issue, namely that the self characterized by self-preservation implies an existence that denies change. As we said, in Spinoza, the self or mode or individuality is not defined by anything but change. In his monist conception of the universe, he finds the expression of change precisely in the self as an idea. The idea of the self as the unit of change is perhaps one of Spinoza's most original ideas. So, if Spinoza's sense of the self favors change, what distinguishes Spinoza from Nietzsche in this context?

It is again Nietzsche's critique of Spinoza that seems to separate these two philosophers on this issue. As we have seen in the quote above, the main reason for Nietzsche's criticism of Spinoza is that he thinks Spinoza is glorifying a primitive drive of self-preservation. Nietzsche believes that belief in this very principle leads Spinoza to deny change as far as the self is concerned because if the self is free from change, it will be defined based on its identity with itself. The primary impulse of its existence will be to preserve this identity. In other words, he thinks Spinoza, like Darwin, is the theorist of this will to self-preservation.⁹⁸ He writes (*Beyond Good and Evil*):

“Physiologists should think twice before deciding that an organic being's primary instinct is the instinct for self-preservation. A living being wants

⁹⁸ On the other hand, it is doubtful that even Darwin was a champion of such a primitive idea of self-preservation.

above all else to *release* its strength; life itself is the will to power, and self-preservation is only one of its indirect and most frequent *consequences*. Here as everywhere, in short, we must beware of *superfluous* teleological principles! And this is what the instinct for self-preservation is (which we owe to the inconsistency of Spinoza). Such are the dictates of our method, which in essence demands that we be frugal with our principles” (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 318).

As can be seen from this quote, Nietzsche thinks Spinoza defines the self with a typical will to self-preservation. It is such a will to self-preservation that it withdraws itself from expressing its power as much as it can and strives to exist only in its identity with itself. In this respect, it can be said that not the expression of power but the preservation of itself is the nature of this self. Nietzsche thinks this type of understanding of the self as teleological precisely for this reason. The ultimate goal of this self is nothing but self-preservation. It is its existential horizon. Thus, Nietzsche codes Spinoza as the representative of such a will to self-preservation and condemns him as such. He criticizes him for idealizing and essentializing a particular outcome of the will to power (the will to self-preservation). According to this criticism, Spinoza’s conception of the self is only indirectly related to expression of power and is practically defined by a passive will to self-preservation. In short, the essence of the Spinozian self is, according to this criticism, nothing more than an expression of a passive will to self-preservation and individuality not defined by the principle of power. Well, is this true?

I argue that Nietzsche came to an overly hasty judgment as to the essential characteristic of the Spinozian self. As we saw in the second chapter of this study, Spinoza certainly does not describe the self or the individual as a passive state of being. In fact, on the contrary, there is nothing passive in Spinoza’s universe.

Everything is active in its way as an expression of God and a manifestation of the modular change in God.⁹⁹ This activity is inherently versatile. Everything in Spinoza's universe is affected by each other. There is nothing that is not affected by an external body and does not affect another body. In this respect, Spinoza's universe is nothing but God's infinite activity, that is, the immanent and holistic affection. In this respect, it can be said that God's power is absolute. For God acts only by the necessity of its nature and never ceases to act. In this sense, it can be said that everything in Spinoza is a partial expression of total power.¹⁰⁰ So, as the self is in God, it gets its share from God's absolute and infinite power. The Spinozian self is defined by power. It is the partial sum of an eternally active force. The essence of the self, then, in Spinoza, is its power. He says: "[T]he power, *or* striving, by which it strives to persevere in its being, is nothing but the given, *or* actual, essence of the thing itself" (*The Ethics*, 75). As can be seen, Spinoza makes no distinction between the self (or the thing) and the power. In a universe that is the expression of absolute power, everything is an expression of this very power. It is just what Spinoza underlines here: there is nothing in this universe other than expressions of power. As much as everything is in God, everything is characterized by this power's essential positivity. In a way, by nature, everything affirms its power and programmed to do so. However, what does this mean?

According to Spinoza, God expresses himself in singular things. That is, the power of God manifests itself in individuals. Hence, every self is an expression of power as it expresses individuality and singularity. As we saw in the second chapter, Spinoza calls this principle of power *conatus*, which encompasses and

⁹⁹ This change is, in essence, attributional. Because in Spinoza, each mode is actually a particular expression of an attributive change.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, the origin of the concept of *conatus* is based on this point. The eternal essence of Substance, God, is its unlimited power of acting (*potentia agendi*). This unlimited power of acting is limited in mode and evolves into *conatus*. So, *conatus* is originally a modified power of acting.

guides each of these singularities. According to this principle, everything expresses its power and thus tries to persevere in its being. It means that everything is programmed to express its being as far as its internal power allows. Spinoza writes: “Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being” (*The Ethics*, 75). The meaning of this proposition is that power and singular being cannot be separated from each other. The singular being is power, the modular power, itself. More precisely, it is an expression of, by its nature, a progressive power of acting. In other words, the orientation of the singular being is always directed towards increasing its power. Because the power to which it is subject is inherently self-affirming. What will hinder this affirmation can only be an external cause. Hence, we can conclude that the essence of any self’s existence is to increase its power. For if the self does not have a core that negates itself in its essence, then the self’s essence must be the affirmation of its power. It is what Spinoza understands from the perseverance of the thing in its being. For him, that is the ultimate meaning of self-preservation. If the essence of the self is the expression of its power, then it is also nothing but the affirmation of that same power.¹⁰¹ The affirmation of this power is, in essence, the constant increase of this power. Therefore, for Spinoza, human beings are in a quest to increase their power by nature. Thus, the self’s perseverance in its being and self-preservation of its existence is an expression of an active effort, not a passive one. It is the conceptual point at which Nietzsche misunderstood Spinoza. Nietzsche saw Spinoza’s will to self-preservation, that is, *conatus*, as a principle of passivity. However, as can be seen, the opposite is true. *Conatus* is by no means an

¹⁰¹ Hannah Grosse Wiesmann wonderfully illuminates this point as follows: “In virtue of the *conatus*, a thing will not only affirm its power, but — insofar as it is conscious of its power — it will also affirm whatever serves its self-affirmation. A self-conscious *conatus* will strive for the means that secure its striving; and if it is capable of anticipating future threats and of remembering past threats to its existence, it will understand that its self-preservation is best secured if it strives to increase its power. The striving for increase of power is thus a natural implication of the striving for self-preservation of a thing which is conscious of its striving — such as, for example, a human being. Human beings and, potentially, other self-conscious beings too, therefore naturally tend to increase their power; this tendency is involved in their very affirmation of power” (“Spinoza’s *Conatus* and Nietzsche’s Will to Power: Self-Preservation vs. Increase of Power?” in *AUC Interpretationes Studia Philosophica Europeanea*, 2013/2, 56).

expression of a passive will to self-preservation (or a will to live). *Conatus* is an active will to power that qualifying the character and essential augmentation (or increasing) of the self's power. It means that the self's striving to persevere in its being is essentially geared towards an increase in power. In this respect, the will to self-preservation is the desire of the self to express as much of its power as possible. It is a kind of will to power. After all, *conatus* is nothing more than that. In Spinoza's universe, *conatus* is an umbrella concept that defines the power of the self, the will to power, and the tendency to increase the power that characterizes this will to power. Can we say that, then, Spinoza's *conatus* has similar implications to Nietzsche's will to power, contrary to what Nietzsche thought about the issue?

We can say that. For Nietzsche's principle of the will to power, like Spinoza's principle of *conatus*, is defined by affirming the power of acting one way or another and increasing power due to this affirmation. As we saw in the first chapter, Nietzsche denies Schopenhauer's idea of the will to live. He sees this as a fundamentally conservative principle and instead proposes the principle of the will to power. By the will to power, he does not refer to the preservation of power, but, rather, the transformation and the increase of power. Nietzsche opposes a conservative conceptualization of power since such conceptualization is based on the assumption that the self is a stable entity. Nietzsche, as we have shown in the third subchapter of the first chapter, undermines this assumption. He thinks of the self as an endless becoming and sees power as the essential feature of this self. It is why Nietzsche is so opposed to the principle of self-preservation. Because when it comes to power, he advocates increasing rather than preserving. However, this does not mean that Nietzsche did not have an idea of individuality. He thinks that the individual exists, but he does not define the individual in terms of pure identity. For him, the individual is an expression of power that is continuously modified through various kinds of affects and, therefore, in a state of constant

becoming. As we have seen, we see something similar in Spinoza, although Nietzsche claims the opposite. In Spinoza, the self is nothing more than the expression of a particular power. It is a modification of God's power and, therefore, necessarily tends to express its power. Like Nietzsche, in Spinoza, the self is surrounded by various affects, and these affects determine the character of its power. This self tries to contact the things that will increase its power and avoid the things that will decrease its power. It is because the Spinozian self, as the Nietzschean self, is programmed to increase its power. For its essence is the affirmation of its power. This affirmation essentially signifies the desire for a continuous increase in power of acting. It is the becoming of the Spinozian self. In Spinoza, the self is becoming itself to the extent that it is a modification of God's infinite power and a particular expression of the unlimited power of acting. In this respect, Spinoza and Nietzsche are in complete harmony. Both see the self as a kind of center of some particular sum of power and encode it as such. So, can it be said that these two philosophers' understanding of the ethical self also has a similar base and a similar orientation?

It is possible to say that too. Because both Nietzsche and Spinoza have a naturalistic understanding of morality, and both derive their moral understanding from their understanding of nature. For both, morality is not separate from nature and natural processes. In this respect, we can say that both Nietzsche and Spinoza find the basis of their moral understanding in their philosophical ontology. That is, their understanding of nature conditions their understanding of human beings. In this respect, neither Spinoza nor Nietzsche has an anthropocentric understanding of nature. In other words, according to them, human beings are not outside of nature but, on the contrary, living beings inside of it. Therefore, in this context,

like everything else, human beings are subject to nature.¹⁰² As we have seen in previous chapters, both Nietzsche and Spinoza describe this state of subordination in similar terms. In Spinoza, a human being, like everything else, has (and is) a *conatus* and acts accordingly. That is, like everything else, God's unlimited power of acting programs it, and in this way, it affirms its power. Likewise, Nietzsche's principle of the will to power encompasses everything. Everything strives to increase its power as much as possible and does its best to keep this increase permanent. It, according to Nietzsche, is what nature and/or life is. For Nietzsche, both human beings and the world are the wills to power. The ethical relevance of all this is that both Spinoza and Nietzsche advocate a similar ethical self to the moral they infer from their ontology. It can be said that neither Spinoza nor Nietzsche had a traditional moral understanding. Instead, they have a practical sense of morality, that is, an ethic. Nevertheless, what is the essence of this practical moral, ethics, in these two philosophers?

In both Nietzsche and Spinoza, the essence of ethics is power. More precisely, the goal of ethics for both philosophers is the direct and unmediated expression of power. As we saw in the first chapter, Nietzsche expresses this in his distinction between active and reactive powers. According to him, active power is the expression of the power of a person who expresses himself/herself directly and creates ideas of good and bad only by himself/herself (master morality).¹⁰³ On the other hand, reactive power is the expression of the power of a person who expresses himself/herself only in the mediation of another and cannot determine his/her ideas of good and evil without this mediation (slave morality). Nietzsche

¹⁰² What is meant here by nature is nothing but Spinoza's God. That is, it is both natural laws and the laws of physics. For, as we have seen in the previous chapters, according to Spinoza, the human being is not a kingdom within a kingdom. It is part of the immanent kingdom called nature and is subject to its inherent laws.

¹⁰³ In other words, according to Nietzsche, the individual whose will to power is active is the person who produces ideas of good and bad based solely on himself/herself. The nature of the manifestation of his/her power is, therefore, not reactive but active.

sees the person with master morality between these two types as the ethical self.¹⁰⁴ Because this self makes the affirmation of life possible with the values that he/she derives from his/her power, and, just in this way, he/she guarantees the increase of his/her power. The other, the self with slave morality, denies life with values arising from his/her powerlessness and produces a chain of values that will necessarily end in nihilism.¹⁰⁵ In short, Nietzsche sees the person who affirms life by renewing his/her values and thus increases his/her power as an ethical self. Something similar is right for Spinoza. In Spinoza, too, the ethical self is associated with an increase in power. In him, the ethical self is not a loner or a clergyman, but a person who enjoys life, affirms it and lives it with joy. The ethical self exists in parallel with the state of increasing the power of acting. The increase of one's power of acting is, for him, the ultimate ethical effort. The active affects are the source of this effort because they are the ones that lead us to an unmediated action that comes from our nature alone (or our self only). As long as we are affected by active affects, we are in a state of action. As long as we are affected by passive affects, we are in a state of passion. According to Spinoza, the ethical self, ideally, is no more than the one that acts with his/her active affects. The driving quality of his/her being is simply action, not passion. So, his/her power is an active one, not a reactive one. In short, just like the Nietzschean ethical self, the Spinozian ethical self is, too, the person who affirms life and strives to increase his/her power within the framework of this affirmation. So, finally, can we say that Spinoza and Nietzsche are representatives of an ethical understanding that associates ethics with power?

¹⁰⁴ Here we take "the person with master morality" as a conceptual typology, not a historical model. For, as is known, Nietzsche does not consider master morality to be a much more ideal moral position than slave morality, at least historically. However, on the other hand, it is clear that Nietzsche's idiosyncratic moral understanding also parallels the moral of the master — based on producing new values, affirming life and increasing power. When one glimpses the general lines and the content of Nietzsche's moral understanding, one can see that his morality evokes master morality rather than slave morality. Therefore, here we see no problem using master morality as a concept that signifies a moral typology.

¹⁰⁵ In his unpublished notes, Nietzsche explains how this degenerating moral process works, namely, how values derived from a generalized slave morality result in nihilism.

In both Spinoza and Nietzsche, the ethical self is defined in its relation to power. Both philosophers see the ethical self's fundamental characteristic as the affirmation of the natural power that defines the self and thereby increasing this power. In this respect, it can be said that the ethical self is a power-oriented state of being. Nietzsche thinks that the primary characteristic of this state of being is simply the will to power and defines the good as what increases power and the bad as what decreases power.¹⁰⁶ According to Nietzsche, there is no absolute good, and of course, no absolute evil since good and evil are nothing but manifestations of the will to power in the plane of the morals.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Spinoza, too, thinks that there is no absolute good and no absolute evil. According to him, the good is the thing that increases our power, while the bad is the thing that decreases our power. In Spinoza, the good is what we desire, and there is no transcendental good beyond our desires.¹⁰⁸ In this respect, Spinoza and Nietzsche are, in ethical terms, in perfect harmony. Good and bad for both is a matter of perspective. That is why they are more like ethicists than moralists, for they define the ethical self on this very basis. Spinoza weaves his ethics around the principle of *conatus*. In comparison, Nietzsche presents the principle of the will to power as the central concept of his ethics. Spinoza defines *conatus* as an affirmative principle of power and sees self-preservation as the self-expression of an affectual

¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche expresses this clearly as follows (*The Anti-Christ*): "What is good? — All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. / What is bad? — All that proceeds from weakness. / What is happiness? — The feeling that power increases — that a resistance is overcome" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 487).

¹⁰⁷ Nietzsche writes (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*): "Truly, I say to you: Unchanging good and evil does not exist! From out of themselves they must overcome themselves again and again. / You exert power with your values and doctrines of good and evil, you assessors of values; and this is your hidden love and the glittering, trembling, and overflowing of your souls" (*The Nietzsche Reader*, 272).

¹⁰⁸ Spinoza is very clear on this point: "[I]t is clear that we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it" (*The Ethics*, 76).

and individual power.¹⁰⁹ Again, Nietzsche also determines the will to power as a fundamentally affirmative principle of power and sees self-overcoming as the basic and the ideal orientation of this power principle. As can be seen, both Spinoza and Nietzsche associate ethics and ethical life with power. For both, the ethical self is nothing more than an affirmative expression of power, a state of being that affirms its power. In this respect, it can be said that both Spinoza and Nietzsche characterize the existence of the ethical self with an increase in power. The essential impulse to increase the power of acting is the central motif of both philosophers' ethical conception of the self. In other words, for both philosophers, the increase in power is embedded in the ethical understanding of the self. After all, it can be said that both Spinoza and Nietzsche intertwined ethics and power to such an extent that they cannot be distinguished from each other. One can say that the ethics of both is the ethics of power.

¹⁰⁹ Because for Spinoza, the expression of individual power is also the sum of affectual power. In other words, in Spinoza, what determines the person's *conatus* as a specific will to power is the synthesized totality of its constitutive affects.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to answer the following question: can a conceptual link be established between Nietzsche's principle of the will to power and Spinoza's principle of *conatus*? Of course, another researcher, or reader, will decide whether we have answered this question or not. Therefore, we will not speculate here as to whether we have answered the question. Because we do not think this makes sense. In this short conclusion, then, we will make a few points drawn from this short study. In other words, we will make a few notes that are retrospective and prospective concerning the study only.

Firstly, let us briefly touch on the retrospective notes. It can be said that we have never touched on a fundamental distinction between Spinoza and Nietzsche in this study, which is the approach to the concept of reason that dramatically distinguishes Spinoza's philosophy from Nietzsche's. However, this is not an invisible point, as Nietzsche has often and openly criticized Spinoza and other philosophers for relying too much on this concept when it comes to philosophical practice, that is, philosophizing. Nietzsche is skeptical of this concept because he thinks Western metaphysics has extensively exploited the concept of reason for its benefit. Considering that the concept of reason has a founding place in Spinoza's philosophy, it can be said that Nietzsche's criticism of Spinoza is understandable in terms of the Nietzschean approach to philosophy. Hence, there is a fundamental distinction between Spinoza and Nietzsche in the context of this particular concept, and this is a fundamental distinction that is worth exploring in the future. Of course, due to this study's contextual limitations, we have not taken a glance at this fundamental distinction. Nevertheless, we also find it valuable to illuminate this point, which signifies the most striking difference between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's philosophy. Therefore, we leave this point to those who will be interested in this issue in the future.

Another issue that we cannot address in this study is the body's central place as a radical and constitutive concept in Nietzsche's and Spinoza's philosophy. Although we have indirectly touched on this issue in Nietzsche and Spinoza while discussing how the self is conceptualized in their philosophies, we have not had the chance to address the issue in its entirety directly. Nevertheless, we think that this issue is as important as the issue related to the concept of reason. Because both Spinoza and Nietzsche are among the few thinkers who give the concept of the body a central place in modern philosophy. It can be said that both of them were among the few philosophers who conceptually revived the body. For example, Spinoza claims that we are unaware of the limitations of the body.¹¹⁰ Again, Nietzsche sees the body as a much more exciting and complex concept than the soul.¹¹¹ Therefore, it will be useful to consider this concept (the body), particularly for other comparative analyses of these two philosophers. In short, we believe that the possible connections to be made between Spinoza and Nietzsche are conceptually rich when it comes to this issue, just as in the case of reason.

Secondly, and finally, let us briefly touch on the prospective notes. Although we have discussed in detail the principles of the will to power and *conatus*, in our opinion, this study is only an introduction to this conceptual comparison. It is also possible to establish different connections between these two concepts. For example, it is possible to deal with Nietzsche's criticism of Spinoza through the principle of *conatus* on its own, which is briefly mentioned in this study. A more

¹¹⁰ As is known, Spinoza famously writes: "[N]o one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of Nature alone" (*The Ethics*, 71).

¹¹¹ As is not known, Nietzsche infamously writes: "Granting that 'the soul' was an attractive and mysterious notion which philosophers were rightly reluctant to abandon, it may be that what they have come to put in its place is even more attractive, even more mysterious. The human body, in which the ancient and recent past is alive and embodied, recapitulates the whole history of organic evolution; a great yet soundless torrent seems to rush through, over and beyond it. The body is a more astonishing notion than the old 'soul'" (*The Will to Power*, 371).

in-depth reading of this criticism may reveal why and how Nietzsche chose to read Spinoza as such. Such a reading can also show why Nietzsche subjected Spinoza to such criticism and can enable a much more profound connection that can be established between Nietzsche's and Spinoza's philosophy. Therefore, although we have briefly touched upon this criticism due to our study's contextual limitations, we think that it will be useful to deal with this criticism in detail in the context of these two concepts since it may provide a comparatively more in-depth reading of the concepts.

Another reading that can be made through the concepts of the will to power and *conatus* can also be on these concepts' ethical implications. Although we have mentioned some of these implications in this study, it is still meaningful to make a comparative and detailed analysis of Nietzsche's and Spinoza's ethical theories. This analysis can be realized by considering and putting these concepts (the will to power and *conatus*) into consideration in general. For Nietzsche and Spinoza, as we have seen in our study, are in their right representatives of ethics of power. Therefore, it would not be absurd to directly address their ethical theories through the concepts of the will to power and *conatus*. In short, we think that a study that focuses on Spinoza's and Nietzsche's ethical theories and explains these theories in detail in connection with the concepts of the will to power and *conatus* can be realized.

Finally, another connection that can be established between the concepts of the will to power and *conatus* can be actualized in the context of Spinoza's concept of blessedness (*beatitudo*) and Nietzsche's concept of the overman (*übermensch*). Undoubtedly, these two concepts seem unrelated to each other at first because one seems to express a state (blessedness) and the other a typology (the overman). However, we think that both of these concepts ultimately express a specific ethical state. We believe that achieving this state is the primary goal of ethics in both

philosophers' thought. Considering that the ethical theories of Spinoza and Nietzsche are quite similar to each other, it can, then, might be said that the primary goal of ethical theories of both can also be similar. Hence, it seems possible to establish a connection between blessedness and the experience of being the overman. Because both concepts have similar conceptual connotations (affirmation, joy, freedom, power, et cetera). These concepts can also be linked with the concepts of the will to power and *conatus* in this context. If these concepts (blessedness & the overman) signify a specific ethical state, the others (the will to power & *conatus*) signify the principles that determine the nature of that specific ethical state. Since Spinoza's and Nietzsche's ethical theories are based on their similar principles of power, it can be argued that the ultimate states these ethical theories aim to achieve are also similar ones. Therefore, analyzing these two concepts around Nietzsche's and Spinoza's fundamental principles of power may help reveal other possible similarities between these two concepts. This type of study may also be useful in showing that the principles of the will to power and *conatus* are much more similar than thought and that they, as constitutive and ethical concepts, are, in nature, affirmative.

Of course, many other connections can be made between these two concepts. We have only highlighted a few theoretical possibilities for connections that can be made through these concepts' reciprocal use. In any case, it would go beyond the limits of this study to speculate too much about the possibilities. Perhaps we have already exceeded this limit. Ultimately, what was this study all about? That the ethics of power is possible.

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