

Passions and Affects in Spinoza's *Short Treatise* and *Ethics* and the Role of Stoicism in Spinoza's Theory of Passions

Spinoza's *Short Treatise* has often been understood as *Ethics* in miniature. This opinion is to some extent justified: both works have a broad thematic scope and begin with metaphysical themes, then shift towards discussing the relationship between mind and body, reflections on passions and affects, and ultimately focusing on the question of human well-being and freedom. Nevertheless, there are also some significant differences between the two works: one of the most important being the treatment of passions.

The treatment of passions in *Short Treatise* is itself heavily indebted to Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*. The most obvious debt lies in the arrangement of passions, which follows Descartes' almost *ad litteram*. More important, however, is the fact that Spinoza builds upon Descartes' definition of passion as perception, which he substantially radicalizes. While Descartes based *Passions of the Soul* on a physiological program that primarily understands passions through the prism of animal spirits, such a program completely disappears in Spinoza, and passions are understood as perception in one of the four types of cognition. Passions stemming from lower cognitive abilities (especially opinion) can and should be abandoned, while love stemming from the knowledge of God should be encouraged.

On the other hand, in *Ethics*, Spinoza has somewhat abandoned the program of suppressing passions. In the preface to Part 5, he accuses Descartes along with the Stoics of the notion that passions depend on our will and can thus be controlled – a view he now disfavors. In this contribution, we will first inquire to what extent this is also self-criticism of his early work and try to describe Spinoza's attitude toward the Stoic theory of passions. Secondly, we will try to explore both historic and systematic causes for the significant change in viewpoint between the *Short Treatise* and *Ethics*.