ABSTRACT. I argue that Spinoza’s account of appetite, and its application to human sexuality, is more original than many commentators suggest; and that it offers resolutions to several puzzles in the philosophy of sex. The paper first situates these puzzles in contemporary debates, offers a detailed analysis of Spinoza’s remarks on love in general and sexual love in particular, and concludes with some of the normative consequences which Spinoza attempts to derive from these.

I. SPINOZA AND SEX: SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The following remarks on human sexuality are less a theory than a series of preliminary principles for the development of such a theory. Like most seventeenth century philosophers, Baruch Spinoza wrote little which dealt explicitly with the problems of human sexuality; and, again like most pre-nineteenth century thinkers, his explicit remarks tend to reflect a somewhat less than critical acceptance of the sexual norms of his time. If Spinoza was much a creature of his time in reflecting on sexuality, however, he was a genuine revolutionary in both his criticism of Descartes and his proposal of a new framework to replace the cartesian world view.

From an historico-analytic perspective it appears that many of the central weaknesses of contemporary approaches to human sexuality lie precisely in these cartesian features; and, seen from this same perspective, Spinoza’s radical overhaul of cartesianism may indeed have something to offer by way of a glimpse at a more adequate account of sexuality. To take three random, but perspicuous examples: Singer’s account of the two modes of (sexual) desire is strikingly dualistic; Nagel’s account of natural sexuality (‘completeness’) has often been criticized as overly intellectualist; and, finally, more than one effort at providing a conceptual framework for human sexuality has been criticized for failure to take account of the diversity and pluralism of this sexuality both locally and transculturally.
It is not my present purpose to trace historically (or derive analytically) these cartesian themes as underlying currents of much contemporary writing on sexuality. Indeed, even if a strong case were to be made for the presence of dualism, intellectualism, and platonism within these currents, historical linkage to Descartes would not thereby be warranted. Throughout the Ethica Spinoza is constantly reminding his reader that the order of human emotions (and history) is not the order of logic. In the Appendix to El he suggests that the most pervasive errors of cartesian thought are rooted not in the logic of their concepts, but in the nature of human emotions.

To take a single example from Singer's The Goals of Human Sexuality, talk of "modes of sexuality that belong to the responsiveness of all human beings and that contribute to the great diversity of erotic consummations" (40) is talk which is through and through teleological (or, in today's less captivating jargon, functional): it assumes that act types are partitioned by their ends or goals rather than by the sorts of causes which produce them. Talk of the 'goals' of human sexuality would doubtless send Spinoza into a tirade concerning this pernicious species of functionalism.

Specifying modes or types of sexuality by reference to their goals ('final causes' in Spinoza's jargon) is in fact at the root of Singer's oft-mentioned distinction between the 'sensuous' and the 'passionate'. The former is a necessary condition for the latter in much the same way that the cartesian ego requires the body as a necessary condition for its sentence, but achieves an higher state of being by directing its attentions (goal directedness) elsewhere. Singer is of course adamant in claiming that his dualism does not reflect a valuational distinction for modes of sexuality: no less adamant was Descartes in rejecting the spurious augustinian claim that body was the source of evil, detached psyche the source of higher goods. Yet there is little doubt, when one reaches the closing pages of Singer's study, where the action is from a distinctively 'human' perspective: sensuous sexuality we share with our brethren further down the evolutionary tree, whereas the passionate represents a distinctively 'human' component. Teleological dualism and a platonistic view of human nature are nowhere far from the surface of Singer's dualisms.

With authors who, like Nagel, pursue an avowedly sartrean direction (while turning it to their own ends, as Nagel claims to do) the cartesian elements lie much closer to the surface. Sartre himself argues, persuasively I believe, that his own account of sexuality and human emotion is a derivative of the distinction between the 'in-itself' and 'for-itself'--a distinction which is little more than the cartesian mind-body dualism recast in the raiment of contemporary phenomenology (the emperor's new clothes).

These pervasive problems in many contemporary accounts have a natural mapping to pervasive features of spinozistic method: it is monistic in opposition to Descartes' dualism, it is strongly opposed to an intellectualism of human cognitive and appetitive powers, and it is also overtly nominalistic and anti-functional in its avoidance of talk about a monolithic 'human nature'. Before proceeding to their consequences for a theory of sexuality, I want to say something briefly about each of these features of spinozism.
Spinozistic monism casts thought and extension as two different attributes of a single substance: one important consequence of this is given in E2P7, "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things". A more important consequence relative to a theory of sexuality is that the identity of mind and body is not conceived as special in the human being (E2P13Schol): the mind is in fact a complex of ideas, just as the body is a complex of particles. As we are told in E2P49Cor, while mind and body are two different ways of looking at a single organism, intellect and will are in fact one and the same thing.

The spinozistic elimination of body/mind and will/intellect dualisms leads to a deintellectualizing of human cognition. What we describe as intellect is only one mode of cognition (E1P314), while appetite or conatus constitutes a wider category of cognitive activity characterizing human action. Emotions are here construed as modifications of the mind/body by which its power of activity is increased or diminished, together with the ideas or conceptions of these modifications (E3Def3). Indeed in E2P23 we are told that the human mind does not know itself except to the extent that it perceives ideas of the affections of its body. The essence of human nature is ultimately not intellectual knowledge, but appetite. A crucial passage for understanding Spinoza's account of human appetite is E3P9Schol, which provides definitions in use for several crucial terms mentioned above:

When this conatus is related to the mind alone, it is called will; when it is related to both mind and body, it is called appetite, which is nothing else but man's essence. . . Further, there is no difference between appetite and desire except that desire is usually related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetite. . . . From the above remarks it is clear that we do not endeavor, will, seek, or desire because we judge something to be a good. On the contrary, something is judged to be a good because we endeavor, will, seek, or desire it.

Finally, Spinoza's nominalism is sketched at various junctures of the Ethics as an attack on the aristotelian account of universals. For our purposes, a useful summary is offered in E2P49Schol, which also offers Spinoza's critique of a teleological view of human appetite and knowledge. Spinoza summarizes this lengthy argument and diatribe as follows:

There is no need to spend time in going on to demonstrate that nature has no fixed goal, and that final causes are no more than figments of human imagination. All of this should be evident both from the fundamental causes from which I have traced the misconception, and from P16 and the corollaries to P32, and additionally from the entire set of demonstrations adduced to show that all things in nature proceed from an eternal necessity and with the highest perfection. But I should make one further point, that this doctrine of final causes turns nature completely upside down, for it regards as a cause that which is no more than an effect, and vice versa.
This said, I turn now to the impact of these themes upon a spinozistic account of love and sexuality, taking account wherever possible of definitions and remarks in the *Ethica* which deal with sexual appetite explicitly.

II. LOVE IN SPINOZA

The primary emotions (affections) in spinozistic psychology are pleasure (*laetitia*), pain (*tristitia*), and desire or appetite (*cupiditas*). As we shall shortly see, love and hate are subcategories respectively of pleasure and pain; and sexual desire (*libido*) is a subcategory of love. I believe that Shirley’s choice of ‘lust’ as a translation of *libido* is felicitous one (only rampant puritanism accounts for the fact that the term is so often used pejoratively), so I shall utilize it hereafter.

Now it might be thought at first sight that Spinoza’s characterization of lust as a type of love may run afoul of the contemporary questioning of any obvious relationship between love and sex; but Spinoza’s use of ‘love’ is wider than the use by many contemporary thinkers, but in accord with an earlier medieval usage which saw no conceptual problems with love directed to nonliving objects, and also refreshingly nonromantic. Let us first see what he has to say about the primary affections in E3P11Schol:

We see now that the mind can undergo considerable changes, and can pass at one time to a state of greater perfection, at another to one of less perfection; and it is these passive changes which explain for us the affections of pleasure and pain. Accordingly I shall hereafter understand by pleasure the passive transition of the mind to a state of greater perfection, and by pain the passive transition to a lesser perfection. When it is simultaneously related to mind and body, I call the affection of pleasure titillation or cheerfulness; and pain similarly related I call anguish or melancholy. It should also be noted that titillation and anguish are related to man when one part of him is more affected than others, cheerfulness and melancholy when all parts are equally affected. As to desire, I have already explained what it is in E3P9Schol, and I admit no primary affection beyond these three; for I shall shortly demonstrate that all others arise from them.

The initial definition of love as a subcategory of pleasure follows in E3P13Schol:

From what has been said we clearly understand what love and hatred are. Love is no more than pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause, and hatred pain accompanied by the idea of an external cause. Again, he who loves necessarily endeavors to have present and preserve the object of his love; while, on the other hand, he who hates endeavors to remove and destroy the thing which he hates.

The object of love is the external thing to which the love is directed (not the cause of love). Spinoza summarizes his general account of the
affections in the appendix to E3. Desire is appetite accompanied by consciousness of the appetite. The difference between desire and appetite has no psychological consequences, since the effects of appetite are the same whether accompanied by consciousness or not.

Several interesting consequences follow from these definitions. E3P15 concludes that anything can cause pleasure, pain, or desire; and, indeed, this is one of the general principles in the spinozistic laws for association of ideas. There are as many kinds of love and hatred as there are kinds of objects by which we may be affected; and the passivity by which these affections are characterized also entails their being accompanied by mental images (imaginationes).

Finally, the different emotions with which a single object is associated in different persons are accounted for by differences in the nature or essence of the persons. Spinoza's nominalism precludes talk about an underlying 'human nature' somehow common to all human persons. Such a nature does exist imaginatively, as a blurred image, but fails to denote any real properties or extra-imaginational things. Not only do emotions differ according to essences within a 'species', but also they differ across species: equine lust is not the same as human lust, nor are the lusts of two humans necessarily the same.

All that has been said about pleasure as a passive state of mind is also true of pleasure as an active state of mind, except that here pain and hatred are inapplicable. Spinoza's psychology, like his metaphysics, is act oriented: to the extent that mind or body is active, it necessarily rises to a higher level of perfection.

III. SPINOZISTIC LUST

The definition which Spinoza provides for lust is straightforward and simple, given the foundation which he has laid in the theory of appetite and his account of love. Unfortunately, there is not a single English translation which succeeds in not misrepresenting it. The explanation is given as definition 48 in the general appendix to Ethica III: "Libido est etiam cupiditas et amor in commiscendis corporibus." Shirley translates this as: "Lust is the desire and love of sexual intercourse." In this he follows the earlier (mis-) translation of H.W. White (1883).

Unfortunately for both of these translations, there is no mention of sexual intercourse in Spinoza's Latin (explicit or implicit). The French translators are both more literal and more accurate: "La lubricité est aussi un désir et un amour de l'union des corps" ("Sexual desire is a love of the union of bodies"). The "mixing together of bodies" (corpora commiscére) comes closer to the "skin rubbing skin" model except that it does suggest something more intimate than a handshake. The very intimacy, of course, may suggest sexuality (and indeed in the explanation which follows Spinoza accepts that suggestion), but sexual intercourse is best categorized as one possible goal (among others) of such a love; and Spinoza has already told us that any and all such objects of an appetite are contingent (per accidens) in precisely this sense: any object may be the stimulus for any appetite.

One consequence of a correct reading of this definition is quite straightforward and (from my perspective) quite satisfactory.
makes the appetite sexual are its internal features (commiscére corpora)
I am not claiming that Spinoza makes clear the nature of these internal
features): what (if any) object it is related to is another matter. Sexual
appetite is by nature neither binary nor singulary (these being extrinsic
denominations in any case): masturbation is a full-fledged realiza-
tion of lust as sexual intercourse (whether that intercourse be with a
member of one's own sex, the other sex, or even another species). What
makes appetite sexual is that it triggers a body-mixing desire.

All is not sweetness and light here, for Spinoza has nothing what-
ever to say about the internal features of this desire. That it produces
(or is equivalent to) an heightened awareness (laetitia) follows from his
earlier definitions. It is also easy enough to distinguish it from a love
for geometry (no body-mixing): distinguishing it from a love for choco-
late ice cream, or a love to be and share with friends offers more of a
challenge. If my reading of Spinoza is correct, he is committed to the
meeting of this challenge; but it is one about which he is silent.

One tempting way in which such a challenge might be met would
be to counter that the distinction among the affects at this level must
appeal to 'raw feel' (or spinozistic "intuition"), and that types of pleas-
ure at this level are epistemologically and logically primitive. This is
particularly tempting within a spinozistic context, since Spinoza's ver-
sion of the ordo geometricus gives epistemological primacy to certain
primitive data. To yield to such a temptation, however, would leave the
spinozist open to a charge of vicious circularity. The concept of a body
mixing is supposed to distinguish lust from other types of love. If we
in turn argue that the distinctiveness of such a body mixing is a primi-
tive given, then we are saying something to the effect that what makes
sex sexual is its sexiness; possibly true, but hardly enlightening.

What does emerge, however, is that we cannot explain this mixing
or intermingling of bodies as a relation to other bodies. First, Spinoza
denies the reality of such extrinsic relations. Secondly, and more im-
portantly for purposes at hand, as Spinoza makes clear in his exposi-
tion, it is my internal state of body mixing which makes an external re-
lation sexual: it is not the external relation of my body to another which
makes the internal state a sexual one. Not only do I believe that this is
Spinoza's fundamental point, but I think that it is sound. The trick is
to provide further explanation which is neither trivial nor question beg-
ging.

Before proceeding, I shall attempt to defend several key compo-
nents of Spinoza's account from possible objections. One might first be
tempted to say that sexual desire must be by nature either singulary or
binary: directed either at relief or self-satisfaction (masturbation model),
or at relatedness to another (intercourse model, sartrean possession
model). The consequence of taking the masturbation model is that it be-
comes difficult to explain the values attached to intercourse (a central
problem with Freud's account of 'evacuation lust'). If the binary model
is adopted, masturbation tends to become pseudo-sex or primitive sex (a
central problem with Freud's developmental model). Less bothered by
consistency than was Spinoza, Freud appears to use different models on
different days of the week, or in different works. From a spinozistic
perspective, of course, the root problem lies not in the goals (self, oth-
ers) selected, but in the teleology itself.
What we should say instead is that the essence of sexuality is not understood through its functions (which are many and contingent), but rather through the causal network which makes a desire sexual. This network is characterized by Spinoza in terms of internal states. The internal states will eventually (as we learn more about human appetite) be described as certain neural pathways (NOT localized, since the brain is a parallel rather than a serial processor). They clearly occur at the integration and synthesis level of neural processing: between input analysis (much of which occurs in the central nervous system prior to arrival in the brain) and output determination (goal selection process through motor messages sent back to the spinal cord). Spinoza in fact alerts his readers to the fact that complete definition of the emotions requires causal knowledge of internal states of the body (E2P13, lemmata on bodies); and reminds us in E5Pref that such knowledge is the ultimate province of medicine.

To ‘feel sexy’ (= feel a sexual desire), then, is to have the sort of feeling which is caused by one set of internal states associated with information processing. We don’t need to know what those states are in order to recognize the feeling as a sexual one. We can describe (but NOT define) such a desire in terms of its frequent goals (which are NOT its causes, and are related to it only contingently), but a general definition of such a desire or feeling is the province of medicine (we would say neurophysiology today). We do not face any cartesian problems about how the internal states connect (causally) to the mental components of sexuality, nor need we lumber into the swamplands of freudian metaphysics to locate underlying functions to be served by such states: the states are the mental components, and talk of underlying functions is poetry (or, as Spinoza would have it, ‘figments of the imagination’).

Spinoza does have other interesting points to make in passing, one of which deals with the often mentioned but little understood relation between appetite and imagery (for sexual appetite we should say "fantasizing"). In E3P21Dem he points out that the images of things loved are in the lover, and that the pleasure in their being felt heightens the mind’s own appetition.32 Similar to the point which I stressed above about the extrinsic relation between object and appetite for Spinoza, a similar point should be made about the extrinsic relation between idea and ideatum: the image of Paul in Peter’s mind tells us more about Peter than about Paul.33

Spinoza also provides several suggestions which are relevant to the themes of sexual jealousy and longing. In E3P35Schol we are told:

This is often the case with love towards a woman; for he who thinks of a woman whom he loves as giving herself to another will not just feel pain because his own appetite is held in check but also, since he is compelled to associate the image of the object loved with the sexual parts of his rival, he will feel disgust for her.

This, of course, might be criticized as ‘pop psychology’, since Spinoza has already concluded that any such association will be contingent (= not determined by the nature of the appetite itself). Like Hume, Spinoza does not hesitate to make empirical generalizations based on existing practices; but, also like Hume, he invests these with no eternal status. While such examples hardly constitute an adequate account of jealousy
or sexual rivalry, Spinoza’s insistence that the explanation be provided in terms of imagery (fantasizing) and its laws is a consistent extension of his psychology of sexuality and the theme of body mixing: imagery in this sense is cognition in its most corporeal form. It depends upon the internal states, and not on some real or imagined object as specifying the appetite.34

Some additional themes which appear to me to warrant further exploration as components of a spinozistic theory of sexuality are the account which he provides of a longing in E3P36Schol, the suggestion that satiety is a consequence of a change in bodily constitution (E3P59Schol), the brief statement of reciprocity of love in E3P53, and the general account which he attempts to provide of self satisfaction in E3P29 and E3P30. The fact that Spinoza’s examples often relate to sexual desire, even where he is dealing with general laws of imagination or association of ideas, suggests that he believed that his general approach would be sufficient to provide a satisfactory account of human sexuality. That he did not attempt to work out a more detailed theory of sexuality is as much a sign of his own times as it is an index of his own more proximate interests.

Before closing, a few brief remarks ought to be addressed to normative questions insofar as they relate to human sexuality.

IV. SOME NORMATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Another respect in which contemporary analysis of sexuality may often be flawed is to be found in the tendency to mix descriptive and normative components. To take the most common situation where such a mixing is likely to occur, the attempt to define sexual appetite as related by nature to intercourse (heterosexual) automatically prejudges the status of alternative sexualities (e.g., homosexuality), and succeeds in making masturbation either nonsexual or perverted.35

In this respect also spinozistic architectonic can provide some needed remedies, since Spinoza is careful to keep these descriptive and normative components separate. It is precisely the inability of his contemporaries to do so which leads to some of the most caustic criticism included in the Ethica.36 E3 is devoted to the genesis and aetiology of human affections, while E4 takes up the problem of normative judgment within a communitarian context. Communitarian relations constitute the necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for human achievement of the spinozistic good: and the problem of individual "liberation" (libertas) is taken up in E5.

There remain many unsolved problems in interpreting the text of E5, and this is the least "polished" section of the Ethica since Spinoza was working on it at the time of his death (1677). Accordingly, I wish to limit my discussion to three central principles evoked in E4 as normative, and finally to two critical passages which deal explicitly with sexuality. Since the latter two passages have also been marred by mistranslation, we shall once again return to the Latin text.

Spinozistic psychology is act oriented; and, in the Preface to E4, this orientation is applied to normative issues to produce a version of exemplary ethics. Here we are asked to envisage an individual model of
'human nature' which we may construct for ourselves. This model is that of a being which approaches maximal activity and minimal passivity in its causal relation with environing objects. Within the context of a constructivist ethics, human goods may now be stipulatively characterized as any objects or states which are useful as means to the approximation of this model, evils anything which are obstacles thereto.

The first principle which I wish to underline is what I shall call the 'principle of community', and it evolves in E4P29 through E4P37. The basis of any causal interaction is some similarity of nature, so that the application of normative judgments requires some similarities among beings. Spinoza notes: "No individual thing whose nature is quite different from ours is able to assist or to check our power for action, and nothing whatever can be either good or evil for us unless it have something in common with us." (E4P29) This is a wider principle than the chestnut that 'likes attract', for it amounts to the claim that both attraction (love) and repulsion (hate) require likes. In fact there is no general principle in Spinoza for predicting what will attract what; since we have already seen him insist that anything may give rise to one kind of pleasure or other.

The second principle I shall dub the 'pleasure principle', and its exposition is begun in E4P38, running through E4P41. Its core is that anything which so disposes body/mind to heightened awareness and activity is advantageous to persons. Its immediate consequence is that "pleasure is in itself not evil, but good; whereas pain is in itself evil." (E4P41)

We have already seen Spinoza distinguish between affections as modifications of parts (of mind or body) and as modifications of the entire organism. The third principle which Spinoza brings to play I may call the 'principle of harmony'. We are told in E4P42 that cheerfulness (pleasure as an affection of the whole) cannot be excessive, and is always good, just as melancholy is always evil. Similarly (E4P43), titillation (pleasure as an affection of parts) may be excessive (evil); and, to that extent, anguish may be a counterbalancing good. Indeed the part-whole relation is enormously important for spinozistic ethics, which sees evil and madness as of a kin. Spinoza makes a direct application to sexuality in E4P44Schol:

For sometimes we see persons so affected by one object that they dream that it is before them even when it is not. When this occurs for a person not asleep, we speak of delirium or madness. And no less mad as those consumed with love, fantasizing night and day only of their lover or mistress; and these usually provoke ridicule. But when the miser thinks of nothing but gain or money, or the ambitious person of honor, they are not reckoned to be mad; for they are harmful and are considered worthy of hatred.

So love and desire can be excessive. The playboy (girl) type whose primary goal in life is the multiplication of orgasms is less worthy perhaps of hatred than of ridicule. As Vannoy remarks, such a person is best told to go on a diet. The 'harmony' aspect of Spinoza's normative ethics suggests a return to the Greek notion of a balance of varietal goods: one may indeed have too much of a good thing.
Affections which are in this sense 'imbalanced' can often pass into their contraries, and it is just this application which Spinoza makes in the 19th discussion of the Appendix to E4 (E4App19):

Amor praeterea meretricius, hoc est generandi libido, quae ex forma oritur, et absolute omnis amor, qui aliam causam praeterea animi libertatem agnoscit, facile in odium transit; nisi, quod peius est, species delirii sit, atque tum magis discordia quam concordia fovetur.

The closest we can come to amor meretricius is "mistresslike love" (meretrix = mistress). Spinoza tells us that this type of love is a lust for generation or reproduction. This accords well with our earlier re-translation of lust as an appetite for commingling of bodies: libido generandi is that kind of lust directed at sexual intercourse (but there are other kinds).

So mistressly love, which is a type of sexual desire rooted in intercourse, and which arises from physical beauty, and indeed every sort of love which is associated with some other cause than freedom of spirit, easily passes into hatred; unless, which is yet worse, it should be a species of madness, and then it more fosters discord than harmony.

We are further informed that it arises from physical beauty (forma) and that, since it is more transient (for physiological reasons) than other types of love, it can more easily pass into its contrary (hatred).

One relationship between lust and marriage is explored in the discussion immediately following (E4App20):

Ad matrimonium quod attinet, certum est, ipsum cum ratione convenire, si cupiditas miscendi corpora non ex sola forma, sed etiam ex amore liberos procreandi et sapienter educandi ingeneretur; et praeterea si utriusque viri et feminae, amor non solam formam, sed animi praecipue libertatem pro causa habeat.

Spinoza here relates marriage (NOT sexuality or lust) to the production and education of children, and notes that it is appropriate provided that the desire for intermingling bodies does NOT arise only from physical attraction. This provides at least a little more information about the spinozistic concept of mixing bodies: it may or may not arise from physical attraction, and it may or may not be related to sexual intercourse or procreation.

So far as marriage is concerned, it is certain that it is in accord with reason, provided that the desire for intermixing of bodies should not arise solely from physical beauty, but also from the love of generating children and wisely educating them; and further if the love of each for the other, man and wife, should be associated not solely with a love of physical beauty, but also with freedom of spirit.

Spinoza sees marriage as normatively related to procreation and friendship; but his brief discussion of marriage is a postscript to his inter-
pretation and evaluation of sexual desire, and nowhere does he attempt to forge descriptive or normative links between lust and marriage.

V. CONCLUDING NOTES

I have suggested in the preceeding that Spinoza does have much to offer to contemporary discussions of the nature of human sexuality and normative issues related to these. Of course Spinoza's examples of sexual patterns and behavior constitute only a miniscule subset of the discussions offered in the *Ethica*, but that they are there at all is significant; for they indicate that Spinoza gave some thought at least to the nature of human sexuality, and that he was convinced that the general principles developed for understanding human action could be applied to sexuality without radical restructuring.

The work of providing a general theory of sexuality which could be described as spinozistic remains to be done. Less attention would have to be accorded to the passages explicitly dealing with sexuality, and a great deal more analysis would have to be devoted to his general psychology of human action. Part III of the *Ethica* contains a wealth of material devoted to human action and appetite, but this is the portion of Spinoza's writings least studied by contemporary spinozists. If my general analysis is correct, this neglected portion of the spinozistic corpus is well deserving of more careful attention: not only because of a recently renewed interest in Spinoza among philosophers and historians, but also because Spinoza may well have something to contribute to the recent interest among philosophers in the nature of human sexuality.

ENDNOTES

1 An earlier version of this paper was read at the American Philosophical Association, Western Division, Meeting (Cincinnati, April, 1984), at a session sponsored by the Society for Philosophy of Sex and Love. For comments and criticisms on two earlier versions I am especially indebted to Dr. Alan Soble (Moorhead State University), Dr. Rhoda Kotzin (Michigan State University), and Professor Alexandre Matheron of the Association des Amis de Spinoza in Paris. Matheron's study, "Spinoza et la sexualité" which appeared in the Giornale critica della filosofia italiana (1977, 436-457), was not at hand when this article was written, but I am indebted to Matheron for the many comments which were incorporated into it. Jonathan Bennett's *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984) also postdates the article, and offers one of the best critical accounts of Spinoza's notion and arguments against teleology (cf. 213-230). Although his interpretation is similar to mine, his critical evaluation is not. Like Bennett, I am much indebted to Dr. Edwin Curley, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle) for access to his forthcoming English translation of Spinoza's works. My own translations in this study differ from Curley's only in form, but not in substance.

I employ throughout the standard abbreviations to the works of Spinoza. "E2P13Schol" is, for instance, *Ethica* II, Proposition 13, Scholium; and other abbreviations are equally transparent. The Latin text is that of Van Vloten and Land (Opera Omnia, 2 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914)), but I have also checked these against the less
convenient and less accessible Heidelberg Academy Edition. (Opera, edited by Carl Gebhardt, 4 volumes (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1925)). English translations are notoriously untrustworthy, although the most recent is also the best (Spinoza, Baruch. The Ethics and Selected Letters, translated by Samuel Shirley, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982). The frequently used Elwes translation is by far the poorest of the lot, while the translation by H.W. White, reprinted in the Hafner Library of Classics (Spinoza, Benedict De. Ethics, edited by James Gutmann. NY: Hafner, 1949), is tolerable. The French translation by Appuhn (Paris: Librairie Garnier Fréres, 1934) is superior to any current English version. This translation has also been reprinted in a convenient form with the facing Latin text of the Heidelberg Academy Edition (Spinoza. B. Ethique texte latin et traduction par Charles Appuhn. Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, (1977)). All English translations given in the article are my own, although I have made liberal use of Appuhn, and of the two English versions mentioned above.

1 This point (directed at virtually all philosophers prior to the twentieth century) is made by editors of the principle anthologies devoted to the philosophy of sexuality. Cf. the editors’ introduction to Philosophy and Sex, eds. Robert Baker and Frederick Elliston (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1975), 7-8; and Philosophy of Sex, ed. Alan Soble (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1980), 1-3.

2 Cf. Irving Singer, The Goals of Human Sexuality (NY: W.W. Norton, 1973), 41-45. Singer’s primary distinction is between the ‘sensuous’ and the ‘passionate’. Talk about the manner in which both the sensuous and the passionate ‘function’ (= their goals or aims) pervades this section. The defence of a dualistic vision of the female orgasm (cf. 66-82), which is supposed to replace Freud’s now defunct clitoral-vaginal duality, is also based on a functional interpretation of human sexuality. The Masters & Johnson approach to orgasm (through internal causal states) is typically spinozistic in its avoidance of such functionalisms.


4 Most critics agree that Nagel’s analysis is a failure as an account of the distinction between naturalness and perversion, while some point out that it does underline an important feature of sexuality. Cf. Sara Ruddick, "Better Sex," Philosophy and Sex, 83-104. A similar point is made by Janice Moulton, "Sexual Behavior: Another Position," in Philosophy of Sex, ed. A. Soble, 110-18. Critics who charge that this criticism is unfair to Nagel, who claims only to provide an account of the distinction between unnatural and natural within the domain of sexual desires (as a given) are perhaps correct in suggesting that we are asking of the distinction something which it was not contrived to produce. On the other hand, Nagel himself insists during his lengthy digression on Freud, that any such distinction must rely upon a workable account of sexual desire.


6 An excellent discussion of the historical roots of this monism is to be found in William Charlton, "Spinoza’s Monism," Philosophical Review 90


11 E2P13Schol: "Ex his non tantum intelligimus, mentem humanam unitam esse corpori, sed estiam, quid per mentis et corporis unionem intelligendum sit. Verum ipsam adaequate, sive distincte, intelligere nemo poterit, nisi prius nostri corporis naturam adaequate cognoscat. Nam ea, quae hucusque ostendimus, admodum communia sunt, nec magis ad homines quam ad reliquas individua pertinent, quae omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus animata tamen sunt." ("From the above we understand not only that the human mind is united to the human body, but how this unity is to be understood. But no one can understand the unity adequately or distinctly without first gaining adequate knowledge of the body and its nature. For what we have so far demonstrated is of quite general application, and applies to men no more than to other individual things, all of which are animate, albeit in different degrees.") Cf. Jonathan Bennett, "Spinoza's Mind-Body Identity Thesis," Journal of Philosophy 78 (1981), 573-83.


13 E2P49Cor: "Eodem hoc modo demonstratur, in mente nullam dari facultatem absolutam intelligendi, cupiendi, amandi, etc. . . . Adeo ut intellectus et voluntas ad hanc et illam ideam, vel ad hanc et illam volitionem eodem modo esse habeant. . . ." ("In the same way we can also demonstrate that in the mind there is no separate power for understanding, desiring, loving, etc. . . . Similarly intellect and will are explained, or defined as this or that idea, or this or that volition in the same manner. . . .")


15 E3Def3: "Per affectum intelligo corporis affectiones, quibus ipsius corporis agendi potestia augetur val minuitur, minuitur, juvatur vel coeretur, et simul harum affectionum ideas. Si itaque aliquas harum affectionum adaequata possimus esse causas, tum per affectum actionem intelligo; alias passionem." ("By an affect I understand the affections or
modifications of the body, by which the body’s power for action is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together with the ideas corresponding to these affections.” Cf. J.J. Groen, "Spinoza’s Theory of Affects and Modern Psychobiology," in Spinoza’s Philosophy of Man, ed. J. Wetlesen (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978), 97-118; and Lee C. Rice, "Emotion, Appetition, and Conatus in Spinoza," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 31 (1977), 101-16.


17 In E2P49Schol, Spinoza is concerned with final causes in the aristotelian sense (explanatory models in science), but the critique of teleology also carries over to his moral philosophy. Cf. Paul D. Eisenberg, "Is Spinoza an Ethical Naturalist?", Philosophia (Israel) 7 (1977), 107-33.


19 Spinoza’s characterization of ‘love’ is, however, in accord with ordinary English usage, for which the claim that one loves a cold martini at the end of a hard day’s work need hardly be written off as metaphor. As we shall see, this is consistent with Spinoza’s claim that love is determined by internal states, not by its relatedness to certain external objects (human, alive, etc.).

20 Lest the reader be tempted to see too much anticipation of Freud in Spinoza, it should be underlined that Spinoza would have found the hypothesis of a ‘death wish’ a piece of fantasy. Cf. Debra Nails, "Conatus Versus Eros/Thanatos: On the Principles of Spinoza and Freud," Dialogue (PST) 21 (1979), 33-40.

21 E3P15: "Res queaeunque potest esse per accidens causa laetitiae, tristitiae, vel cupiditatis." Cf. also E3P15Schol: "Hinc intelligimus, qui fieri potest, ut quaedam amemus vel odio habeamus absque ulla causa nobis cognita; sed tantum ex sympathia (ut ajunt) et antipathia. Atque hic referenda etiam ad objecta, quae nos laetitiae vel tristitiae afficiunt ex eo solo, quod aliquid simile habent objecta, quae nos iidem affectibus afficere solent, ut in seq. prop. ostendam." ("Anything may per accidens be the cause of pleasure, pain, or desire." "From this we understand how it may happen that we love some object or hate it without any cause known to us; but only from sympathy (as is said) or antipathy. For such an object is related to objects, by which we were affected in pleasure or pain in this respect only, that it have something of similarity to these objects, by which we are accustomed to be so affected, as we shall show in what follows.")

22 E3P56: "Laetitia, tristitia, et cupiditas, et consequenter uniuscujusque affectus, qui ex his componitur, ut animi fluctuationis, vel qui ab his derivatur, nempe amoris, odii, spei, metus, etc., tot species objectorum, a quibus afficiur." ("There are as many kinds of pleasure, pain, and desire, and consequently of affects compounded of
these (such as vacillation), or of every emotion derived from them (love, hate, hope, fear, etc.), as there are sorts of objects by which we may be affected.

23 Images in the spinozistic sense are the ideational correlates of passive affections of the body. Cf. S. Paul Kashap, "Spinoza's Use of Idea," *Southwest Journal of Philosophy* 8 (1977), 57-70.

24 E3P51Schol: "Videmus itaque fieri posse, ut quod hic amat, alter odio habeat; et quod hic metuit, alter non metuat; et unus idemque homo jam amet, quod antes orderit, et ut jam audeat, quod ante timeat, etc. Deinde, quia unusquisque ex suo affectu judicat, quid bonum, quid malum, quid melius, et quid peius sit..." ("We see accordingly that it is possible for one man to love what another hates, for one to fear what another does not fear, and that one man may now love what he previously hated, or may now dare what he previously feared, and so on. Again, since all judge what is good according to emotions, as well as what is better and what worse (cf. E3P39Schol), it follows that men vary as much in judgment as in emotion.")

25 E3P57Schol: "Hinc sequitur, affectus animalium, quae irrationalia dicuntur (bruta enim sentire nequaquam dubitare possumus, postquam mentis novimus originem), ab affectibus hominum tantum differre, quantum eorum natura a natura humana differt. Fertur quidem equus et homo libidine procreandii at ille libidine equina, hic autem humana." ("Hence it follows that the emotions of animals are called irrational (now that we know the origin of mind, we cannot doubt that beasts think and feel) differ from the emotions of men as much as their nature differs from human nature. A horse and a man are moved by a love for reproduction; but the former by equine lust, the latter by human.")

26 Cf. E3P59Dem.

27 White even goes one step further, in making the lust immoderate. Cf. the edition by James Gutmann, 184: "Lust is the immoderate desire and love of sexual intercourse."


29 The reference is to Alan Goldman, "Plain Sex," in *Philosophy of Sex*, ed. A. Soble, 119-38. In his excellent introduction and critique, Soble correctly notes that the skin-rubbing model as Goldman proposes it has no way of explaining why the experience is sexual. Cf. Alan Soble, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sex," in *Philosophy of Sex* 14-16.

30 E3AppDef48Expl: "Sive haec coeundi cupiditas moderata sit, sive non sit, libido appellari solet." ("Whether this desire for coitus be moderate or not, we are accustomed to describe it as lust.")

31 Their characterization as an 'extrinsic demonization' comes also from Spinoza. Cf. E3AppDef48Expl: "Caeterum ex definitionibus affectum, quos explicuius, liquet, eos omnes a cupiditate, laetitia, vel tristitia oriri, seu potius nihil prae ter hos tres esse, quorum unusquisque varius nominibus appellari solet propter varias eorum relationes et demonimationes extrinsecas." ("It is clear from the definitions of the emotions with which we have dealt that they all arise from pleasure, pain, desire, or rather that they are nothing apart from these emotions, each of which is wont
to appear under a variety of names according to their various relations and extrinsic demonimations.

32 E3P21: "Qui id, quod amat, laetitia vel tristitia imaginatur, laetitia vel tristitia afficietur; et uterque hic affectus major major aut minor est in amante, prout uterque major aut minor est in re amata." ("He who imagines that what he loves is affected with pleasure or pain will likewise be affected with pleasure or pain, the intensity of which will vary with the intensity of the emotion in the object which is loved.")

33 E2P16Cor2: "Sequitur secundo, quod ideae quas corporum externorum habemus, magis nostri corporis constitutionem quam corporum externorum naturam indicant..." ("Secondly, the ideas that we have of external bodies indicate the constitution of our own body more than the nature of external bodies...")

34 Cf. E2P17Schcl.

35 This is one of Soble's central criticisms of Nagel's account of sexuality. Cf. Alan Soble, "Introduction to the Philosophy of Sex," in Philosophy of Sex, ed. A. Soble, 7-8.

36 Cf. E3Pref, where Spinoza is concerned with arguing, particularly against the Calvinists of his day, that one must first understand human behavior before railing against it.


38 Cf. E3Def1 and E3Def2.


40 Russell Vannoy, Sex Without Love: A Philosophical Exploration (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1980), 102.

41 Both Samuel Shirley and H.W. White have "love of a mistress", which obscures a central feature of Spinoza's entire analysis of lust. Whether 'mistressly love' is in fact directed to a mistress is contingent on the extrinsic denominations of particular situations. On Spinoza's account it may be directed toward any thing: we can describe (without defining) it by noting that it is typically directed toward a mistress (lover, etc.).