

The Ethics of Joy

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# The Ethics of Joy



Spinoza on the  
Empowered Life

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Andrew Youpa

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Philosopher Andrew Youpa offers a novel reading of Spinoza's moral philosophy. Unlike approaches to moral philosophy that center on praiseworthiness and blameworthiness, Youpa argues that Spinoza's moral philosophy is about how to live lovingly and joyously, not hatefully or sorrowfully. It is, fundamentally, an ethics of joy.

Central to this reading is a defense of the view that there is a way of life that is best for human beings, and that what makes it best is its alignment with human nature. This is not, significantly, an ethics of accountability, or what a person does or does not deserve. Morality's role is not to assign credit or blame to individuals in an economy of good and evil; rather, it is to heal the sick and empower the vulnerable. It is an ethics centered on what, with respect to mental and physical well-being, requires our attention. Spinoza's ethics adheres to a medical model of morality, enacting and embodying a system of care to ourselves, care to others, and care to things in the world around us.

From this approach, Youpa defends a comprehensive reading of Spinoza's moral philosophy, including its realism, pluralism, and the importance of friendship and education, which are the greatest sources of empowerment and joy. Empowering ourselves and others begins with love: the type of love that Spinoza refers to as the virtue of modestia, or humble devotion to others with their true well-being in mind. Youpa's examination starts with an original interpretation of Spinoza's theory of emotions, and then turns to the metaphysical foundation of his moral philosophy and its normative and practical implications.

## 作者介绍:

Andrew Youpa is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He has published articles on aspects of the moral theories of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, and is co-editor of *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

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