

### Example Question and Model Answer

**Question:** In Part III of his *Ethics* Spinoza articulates an extensive theory of affects (or emotions, as the translators of the book have it). These affects (or emotions) are special kinds of affections that differ from the ordinary affections discussed in Part II. What, according to Spinoza, is the difference between these affects (or emotions) and the ordinary affections? In addition, explain how affects relate to the important notion ‘force of existence’ (*vis existendi*)?

**Answer:** For Spinoza, ordinary affections refer to the instantaneous effects that emerges from a chance encounter between my body and another body, they indicate a state of my body at a particular moment; durational affects or emotions correspond to the changes in the body that occur between two successive encounters. These changes indicate either an increase or a decrease of my ‘force of existence’ (including my body’s ‘power of acting’ and my mind’s ‘power of thinking’). My affects are passive as long as I am only their incomplete and inadequate cause; they become active as soon as I become their adequate cause. Insofar as my affects are passive they only involve inadequate and confused ideas; insofar as they are active they will truly express adequate ideas.

Passive affects that are sad, make me more passive and decrease my power of existence; passive affects that are joyful, make me less passive and bring me closer to an increase in my power of existence. As they remain passive, they do not fully increase this power of existence yet, but they make it easier for me to reach that point; only active affects employ my power of existence in a fully active way. (200 words)

Points allocated:

- The difference between affects and affections is explained properly [7 points]
  - The affects are connected to the increase/decrease in the power of existence [5 points]
  - The distinction between passive and active is clearly indicated [5 points]
- It is made clear that affects can emerge as sad passions (full decrease), joyful passions (relative increase), and true actions (full increase) and what this means. [8 points]