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On Spinoza's Geometrical Demonstrations in Early Writings and The Ethics

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The aim of this presentation is to reconstruct the development of Spinoza's thoughts, based on the recent research on the chronological order of Spinoza's early works. First, I will introduce the philological arguments on the flow of Spinoza's ideas, especially on the chronology of his early works. Secondly, I will discuss the problems emerging from the differences between *the Short Treatise* and *the Ethics*. Then, I will propose a possible interpretation on the mutation of the theory of demonstration in *the Ethics* from that of *the Short Treatise*.

Recent research, especially by F.Mignini, illustrates that, before *the Ethics*, known as Spinoza's main work, *the Short Treatise* preseeds *the Treatise on the Emendation of Intellect*. In *Opera Posthuma* and *De Negelate Schriften*, published in 1677, *the Short Treatise* was not included, as it was in the middle of the 19th century that two copies of *the Short Treatise*, which is believed to have been written originally in Latin and then translated into Dutch, were found and published. Traditionally, it has been thought that *the Short Treatise* was written before *the Treatise on the Emendation of Intellect*, which has always been thought of as the introduction of *the Ethics*. Actually, we now observe some points that *the Short Treatise* and *the Ethics* have in common, and that are lacking in *the Treatise on the Emendation of Intellect*.

However, Spinoza's theory presented in *the Ethics* has radically evolved from *the Short Treatise*. *The Short Treatise*, of which only the Dutch version exists, begins from the demonstration that God is, and then proceeds to the demonstration what God is, and it has two appendices, one of which is written on what God is in a geometrical manner. The demonstration on God's existence in *the Short Treatise* differs from that in *the Ethics*, though we observe there some similarities. First, the demonstration in a geometrical manner starts from 7 axioms, which are equivalent to the propositions in *the Ethics*, and not from definition. Whereas, *the Ethics* begins from 6 definitions. Secondly, the structure of demonstration in the appendix of *the Short Treatise* was to prove 4 propositions on the substance and then show the essential coincidence between Nature and God. In *the Ethics*, however, we demonstrate the nature of the Substance and then the existence of God; the definition of God and its existence are proven true at the same time. Thus, the development on the demonstration that God is is found between the early writing and the later one.

What caused such differences in these demonstrations? The key will be the

theory of definition. In *the Short Treatise*, Spinoza inherited the Hobbesian theory of definition and refuted the Aristotelian one. In *the Elements of Philosophy Concerning Body*, Hobbes distinguishes the definitions of the things of which we can conceive the cause, and the things of which the cause cannot be known. As well as *the Treatise on Emendation of Intellect*, the passage of *the Short Treatise* describes the theory of definition similar to the Hobbesian one. In *the Ethics*, however, a different theory on definition seems to be applied, as some research suggests based on the letter 9 in 1663. In this presentation, the theoretical development of Spinoza's demonstration between *the Short Treatise* and *the Ethics* will be discussed from the point of view of that theory of definition.