



## Notes on the Second Part of Spinoza's Ethics (I)

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*Mind*, New Series, Vol. 47, No. 186. (Apr., 1938), pp. 159-179.

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*Mind* is currently published by Oxford University Press.

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## II.—NOTES ON THE SECOND PART OF SPINOZA'S *ETHICS* (I).

BY H. BARKER.

### § 1.

THE First Part of Spinoza's *Ethics* seems to have attracted an undue amount of attention as compared with the Second Part. The First Part may be said to work out a set of formal determinations applicable to reality as a single whole, without much concern as to what, in actual fact, reality consists of. But as soon as we begin to consider how the actual contents of experience fit into this formal scheme, we have to transfer our attention from generalities about substance and attribute and mode to the actual natures of the two attributes which, according to Spinoza himself, are the only ones we have any acquaintance with. We have to ask what do we find to be the actual facts about these attributes and their modes and about the relations of these attributes and modes, and we then find ourselves involved in questions about knowledge and mind, and the relation of knowledge to its object, and of mind to body, and so on. Now it is the answers that we see ourselves compelled to give about the only two attributes which are known to us, that must determine whether the formal scheme of Part I has any solid basis in experience. It is no use, *e.g.*, for Spinoza to lay down the proposition (I, 10) that each attribute "per se concipi debet", if, as soon as we consider the two known attributes, we see that this proposition is not true of them, since thinking and knowledge, as we actually experience them, are directed upon an objective world and depend upon it for their content and existence, while conversely the only extended world known to us is that with which we become acquainted in perception. The doctrine of the complete independence of the attributes is simply not true as regards the only two attributes with which we are acquainted, taken as we actually experience them. It may be objected that to say this is to beg the question against Spinoza, since he conceives the relation of thinking or knowing to the extended world otherwise. The answer is that Spinoza

apparently did not examine for himself this relation, as it is actually found to be in experience, but simply took over Descartes' dualism of thought and extension, while we, on the other hand, are not committed to this dualism, and must examine for ourselves whether Spinoza's assertions in Part II are true of our actual experience. If they are not, we must conclude that the formal scheme of Part I, so far as it cannot be true if they are not, must also be rejected with them. Thus the philosophical value of Spinoza's metaphysical system really turns much more upon Part II than upon Part I. If Part II is seriously at fault, much of Part I becomes a mere formal exercise in the working out of the mutual relations of more or less arbitrary concepts.<sup>1</sup>

The student who tries to arrive at a clear understanding of Spinoza's account of the human mind in Part II has to encounter formidable difficulties; and, if I may judge from my own rather limited acquaintance with the literature of the subject, he cannot always obtain from the commentators the kind of assistance he needs. In these Notes I propose to state some of the difficulties as they have presented themselves to myself. To give a connected criticism of Spinoza's account one would have to be fairly confident of being able to take his point of view and see things as he saw them. I am not confident of being able to do this, so I have preferred to leave my paper in the form of notes on the difficulties as these arise in Part II.

It may be objected against this procedure that we cannot profitably discuss one Part of the *Ethics* without reference to the other Parts or one proposition without reference to the connected series of propositions to which it belongs. What is true in this objection is that we cannot profitably discuss Part II without reference to Part I, or—to state the point in the most definite way—we cannot profitably discuss any later proposition unless we are prepared to take account of any earlier proposition on which the proof of the later one depends, and again of any still earlier one on which the proof of that earlier one depends, and so on, until at last we come, if necessary, to definitions and axioms. But no more than this is required. It is a plain implication of the geometrical method that no later proposition can 'modify' any earlier one in the sense of 'correcting' it<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> A very little consideration of the definitions of Part I is enough to show us that, e.g., the concepts *causa sui*, *substantia*, and *res libera* reciprocate, while *causa sui*, etc., and *modus* are mutually exclusive. From such relations between a few concepts strings of propositions may be derived, as may be seen in the essay of Avenarius on Spinoza's pantheism, § 18.

<sup>2</sup> Joachim (p. 123) uses the expressions 'modify' and 'modified form' in a way which seems doubtful.

requiring it to be altered; for the earlier one was proved independently of the later one, and therefore the truth of the earlier one cannot be affected by anything which the later one asserts. If we care to use the word 'modify' in the sense of 'substituting more precise statements for vaguer ones'—a substitution which may of course be justified by proving a new proposition—then, no doubt, later propositions may be said to modify earlier ones. A geometer may speak of lines passing through a point in the circumference of a circle, and then show that one and only one of these is a tangent: he can then speak of *the* tangent at that point. Similarly, Spinoza may speak in earlier propositions about substances in the plural, although in a later proposition he claims to show that there is only one substance, *viz.*, the substance which he calls Deus. But his statements about substances or substance-in-general would not be made erroneous by the fact that there was only one thing to which they actually applied. A work such as the *Ethics* in which the geometrical method is used is different in logical character from a modern philosophical work such as Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, and makes, or implies, assumptions which the modern writer would not make. By adopting the geometrical method Spinoza in effect assumes (1) that certain conceptions applicable to reality can be defined once for all with complete clearness; (2) that certain self-evident truths (*e.g.*, the axioms of Part I) can be stated, and certain unquestionable matters of fact (*e.g.*, '*homo cogitat*', II, axiom 2).<sup>1</sup> In other words, he assumes that he is in possession of premisses so clear and certain in themselves that no other knowledge (and, of course, no consequences deduced from the premisses themselves) can in any way affect their truth. A writer who does not make these assumptions is entitled to say to the reader: "The subject-matter which I have to deal with is very complex, and all the parts of it are more or less closely inter-related, but I cannot deal with everything at once. I must start with one part and ignore its relations to some of the others for the time being. Hence my earlier statements must be taken as provisional and liable to qualification, and my final view will only appear in proportion as we are able to survey all the parts of the subject-matter and

<sup>1</sup> I do not see that the use of the geometrical method commits Spinoza to anything more than this, *e.g.*, it does not necessarily commit him, as Caird and Joachim seem to think it does, to applying geometrical categories to a non-geometrical subject-matter. By such application of geometrical categories is presumably meant something more than the use of definitions and axioms.

see them in all their relations to each other". But Spinoza cannot say anything like this, for to say it implies that the geometrical method is not applicable to such a subject-matter.

Spinoza, so far as I can see, takes his geometrical method quite seriously, and does not regard it as a mere expository device. The remark that he used it in expounding views of Descartes with which he did not agree, seems to be sufficiently answered by the consideration that by stating another person's views in such a way as to show the premisses from which they would follow Spinoza did not in any way commit himself to accepting these premisses themselves. But the fact that he took the trouble to state the views of Descartes in the geometrical method does seem to indicate that he regarded the method as the best way of exhibiting the logical structure of any system of doctrine. That he himself had the fullest confidence in the method as used in expounding his own views seems to me to be shown by the difference in the way in which he replies to different types of objection and criticism on the part of his friends and correspondents. When he thinks that it is popular ideas and prejudices that stand in the way of a right understanding of his views, *e.g.*, about the will and freedom, he is willing to explain and argue at great length. But when it is a question about some particular point in the argument of the *Ethics*, he is very ready to assume that his critics have overlooked, or not sufficiently studied, some part of the demonstration, and therefore to content himself with a brief reference back to previous propositions. One may thus easily get the impression that it is the most competent and philosophical of his critics whose difficulties he takes least pains to deal with. Indeed, he seems at times not to see the point, or at any rate not to appreciate the force of their objections; and where this is the case, it is natural to attribute his failure to do so to an over-confidence on his part in the logical strength of his chain of demonstration.

If it ought not to be necessary to study later propositions in the *Ethics* in order to understand earlier ones, then *a fortiori* it ought not to be necessary to go outside the *Ethics* altogether and study Spinoza's other writings in order to understand the *Ethics*. When the commentators think it necessary to do so, they are admitting that Spinoza has not made his meaning clear in the *Ethics*—an admission which he himself was by no means ready to make. There are two cases, however, in which the expediency of having recourse to his other writings can be open to no doubt, and in which Spinoza himself could not but have approved of our doing so. One is the obvious case of the letters in which Spinoza

answers difficulties and criticisms in regard to the *Ethics* put before him by correspondents. The other case is where Spinoza uses phraseology which might be clear enough to his contemporaries but is not so to us, and where he has himself explained it elsewhere, *e.g.*, the distinction between *esse formale* and *esse objectivum*, which is explained in the well-known passage in the *Int. Em.*

## § 2. DEFINITION OF ADEQUATE IDEA (DEF. 4).

This definition, left as it is without any explanation, can hardly but surprise the reader, especially if he remembers that it was an axiom of Part I that a true idea must agree with its ideatum (I, ax. 6). Here, on the contrary, in defining an adequate idea we are to consider it in itself apart from its relation to its object. The agreement of the idea with its object or ideatum is disparaged as an extrinsic character, and the adequacy of the idea is made to depend on the possession of the intrinsic properties of a true idea—by which properties Spinoza means, no doubt, the clearness and distinctness of an idea or again the certainty which it carries with it. But it is difficult to accept these properties as infallible guarantees of truth or adequacy. It may be true that a false or inadequate idea cannot *really* be clear and distinct and cannot *really* carry certainty with it, but then an idea may *seem* to be clear and distinct when it really is not, and we may *feel* certain and yet be wrong.

How did Spinoza come to take the view expressed in the definition? There were, it seems to me, two causes, and these acted in combination: (1) his confused and inconsistent view of the relation of idea to ideatum; (2) his metaphysical view about the independence of the attributes.

His view of the relation of idea to ideatum is expounded in the passage in the *Int. Em.* already referred to (ed. Bruder II, p. 16, §§ 33 ff.). He there insists that a true idea<sup>1</sup> and its ideatum are two distinct entities; the idea is *diversum quid a suo ideato—omnino diversum*, as he says a little further on. The idea is the *essentia objectiva* of the ideatum, but it is also *in se quid reale* and has its own *esse formale*. Now to say that an idea and its object, idea and ideatum, *i.e.*, the having of an object before the mind and the object which the mind has before it, are two distinct entities, of which the one is *omnino diversum* from the other, is against the natural use of language and at once involves us in difficulties; for idea and object, idea and ideatum,

<sup>1</sup> It is important to notice that he is speaking of a *true* idea, for we are thus saved from any complications that might be introduced by error.

are obviously correlatives, the two elements or constituents of a single fact, *viz.*, the ideating or apprehending of an object. To have an idea is to think about an object, to ideate an ideatum. Take away the object or ideatum, and there is nothing left for the ideation to be about. The ideation cannot take place *in vacuo*. An idea is just the ideating of an ideatum, and therefore *not* a *second* entity over and above *its own* ideatum. Spinoza's argument for the distinction in the case of his example of the circle is, that the idea of a circle has not a circumference and a centre as the circle has. This kind of argument has been often repeated since his time, and it may seem, at first sight, profound and convincing, but in reality it is merely confused. What is meant here by the idea? Is it the ideating, the mental event or act or process? But then it is pointless, and indeed absurd, to say that *that* has not a circumference and a centre, for it is not a figure in space at all. On the other, is it the ideatum that is meant, the ideatum which is ideated in the mental act? But *that* is the circle itself and *has* a circumference and a centre, and unless the ideating were the ideating of something that had a circumference and a centre it would not be the ideating of a circle at all.

But it may be objected that the real ground for regarding the idea and the ideatum as two distinct entities is not shown by this case, and can be more easily seen by taking Spinoza's second example. The geometrical circle is an object of thought, and may perhaps be regarded as having no existence outside or apart from thought,<sup>1</sup> but Peter certainly has an existence apart from anybody's idea of him, hence if a person S thinks about Peter, S's idea of Peter is not Peter himself. Idea and ideatum are clearly two distinct entities here, and the *esse formale* of the idea is by no means the same as the *esse formale* of Peter. The answer to this objection is to be found in recognising that just as the word idea was being misused before by taking it apart from its correlative, the ideatum, so the word ideatum is being misused now by taking it apart from its correlative, the idea or ideating. Peter is not an ideatum in the strict sense of the term, except in so far as he is the object of somebody's ideation. If, then, we want to avoid confusion, we must distinguish between Peter as he is in himself whether anybody is thinking about him or not, Peter as a *res in se* we might perhaps say, and Peter so far as he is the object of somebody's ideation, Peter as a *res ideata*. Then we can say quite truly that S's idea of Peter, *i.e.*, what S

<sup>1</sup> Although Spinoza himself speaks of the 'circulus in natura existens' in II, 7 S.

thinks about Peter, *e.g.*, that Peter is a tall man, is precisely identical with Peter as *res ideata*, *i.e.*, Peter's being a tall man. On the other hand, if without drawing any distinction we speak of Peter as the ideatum of S's idea, and think at the same time, as we may very naturally do, of Peter rather as *res in se* than as *res ideata*, then of course we must say that S's idea of Peter is *omnino diversum ab ipso Petro*. This way of speaking is very natural for the purposes for which it would ordinarily be used, but the results of using it in psychology and philosophy are disastrous. For, if the ideatum is identified with the *esse formale* of Peter and separated from the idea, we must have a new ideatum (the *essentia objectiva*) to be the immediate or internal object of the idea; for the idea is not bare ideating, and cannot be left empty. The *essentia objectiva* is then a mental duplicate of the *essentia formalis* (or of part of it) and, as Spinoza himself says, it must *omnino convenire cum sua essentia formali*. It is *diversum quid* in so far as it is a mental entity and Peter a bodily one, but in every other respect there must be a point to point correspondence between the *essentia objectiva* and the *essentia formalis*, otherwise the idea will not be true.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the attributes may now conveniently be brought in. The sharp separation which Spinoza has made between the *essentiae objectivae* of extended things<sup>2</sup> and the extended things themselves connects at once with the view that they belong to different attributes and can have no relation to each other but that of correspondence. To know an extended thing can no longer mean to have it immediately present to the mind's apprehension; the meaning can only be that in the mind there is an *essentia objectiva* to which the *esse formale* of an extended thing in the attribute of extension corresponds. The existence of the extended thing is really inferred in virtue of the doctrine of attributes: we have in unextended thought the *essentia objectiva* of an extended thing—a mystery which may here be passed over—and *therefore* there must exist in the attribute of extension the extended thing itself which corresponds to

<sup>1</sup> I need hardly dwell on the inconsistencies in which Spinoza is thus involved. Suppose the circle of the first example to be a circle drawn on paper. The *essentia objectiva* cannot be something drawn on paper, but, contrary to what Spinoza affirmed, it must have a circumference and a centre, otherwise it will not be the *essentia objectiva* of a circle, and thus there must be an extended image in the mind to represent the extended figure on the paper.

<sup>2</sup> I am not concerned here with the *essentia objectiva* of an idea (the *idea ideae*), but of course Spinoza—consistently in one way, inconsistently in another—does not make a sharp separation in that case.



the idea ; as Spinoza says in I, 30 : *id quod in intellectu objective continetur debet necessario in natura dari*. We can now see how Spinoza is compelled to define an adequate or true idea by means of some intrinsic character. An idea is an affair of thought and is shut up in that attribute ; it cannot wander out and compare itself with its extended ideatum ; it can only try to make sure that it is as clear and distinct as possible in itself, and, if it is certain of itself, it will then be entitled (or inspired) to be certain of the existence of its extended ideatum.<sup>1</sup>

It may be worth while, even at the cost of a little repetition, to consider shortly a re-statement of Spinoza's view about idea and ideatum by a recent writer who appears to be a whole-hearted follower and defender of the philosopher. "If we use the terms 'subject' and 'object' in their modern sense", says this writer,<sup>2</sup> "we may say that Thought 'includes' Extension and Extension 'includes' Thought only in the sense that Extension is the ultimate 'object' (= *ideatum*) of all our Thought and Thought the essential 'subject' (= *essentia objectiva*) of Extension. . . . But from this it cannot follow that Extension is *existentially* included in Thought, for so Thought would not *know* its object, but would contain or possess it ; [nor] that Thought is *existentially* included in Extension, for so Extension would have no 'subject' or correlative consciousness ; and in each case knowledge would be impossible". In the first sentence the writer puts the word 'includes' in inverted commas—presumably in order to warn us that it is being used metaphorically ; but he unfortunately continues to use it (without even the inverted commas) instead of substituting some less misleading phrase. What could be meant by speaking of Thought as included in Extension I do not know ;<sup>3</sup> but if we speak of Extension as existentially included in Thought, what

<sup>1</sup> Spinoza seems thus to be involved in circular reasoning. Before he can assert the correspondence between ideas and extended things, he must know that the extended things which are the *ideata* of the ideas exist *in natura*, and yet he knows this only because he assumes that ideas must have *ideata* corresponding to them.

<sup>2</sup> Hallett, in his book, *Aeternitas*, pp. 291 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The two cases of 'inclusion' are treated as if they were parallel, but they are not. Thought must include an object of some sort, otherwise it would be empty and null ; but there is no *obvious* reason why an extended *res in se* should be the object of a mind or consciousness. We, of course, must start from *res ideatae*, but we have to recognise that there may (and in a sense, must) exist *res* which are *non-ideatae*, so far as we are concerned. Whether these last can be shown to be necessarily *ideatae* by some other mind or minds than ours is a question which can hardly be decided by Spinoza's methods.

we ought to mean is simply that extended things can be and are present to the mind as its immediate objects.<sup>1</sup> If this is denied, then some other immediate objects must be provided to take their place as proxies, by means of which the not immediately present extended things are 'known' (or from which they are inferred). Accordingly we find the writer going on to say: "the object which is *included in* knowledge<sup>2</sup> (*i.e.*, the 'objective content' of the idea) cannot be identical with the object (*i.e.*, the thing) which is *known through* knowledge". What precisely this 'objective content' is we are not told, but it must be involved in the same difficulties as Spinoza's *essentia objectiva*. If existentially different from the thing known (*diversum quid*) it must none the less be qualitatively similar (*debet omnino convenire cum sua essentia formali*), *e.g.*, it must have an extensional character, otherwise it could not be the means through which we know the extended things that are not experienced by us, not 'included in' knowledge, not the immediate objects of knowledge. Finally we are told that there is no "third real *interpositum*" between the thought or knowing and the thing known. The "object *contained* by thought is an abstract *ens rationis* (= objective content of thought) and is no real separate existent, being real only in its relation to the equally abstract act of knowing (= subjective content of thought), by which relation concrete thought is constituted; it thus falls on the side of the subject." It is not necessary to comment in detail on these statements,<sup>3</sup> for the real point is that the 'objective content' or 'object contained in thought' is a useless duplicate of the object known. We may as well apprehend the thing itself immediately as apprehend it by means of another object 'contained in thought'. When we remove the metaphorical phrase 'contained in thought'—which really adds nothing to the word object, if the object is contained *as an object*—then it is plain that two objects are said to be before the mind when in fact it is aware only of one.

### § 3. *Cogitatio* AND *Res Cogitans* (II, 1-3).

The first two propositions of Part II assert that *Cogitatio* and *Extensio* are attributes of Deus or that Deus is both *res cogitans*

<sup>1</sup> Not 'ultimate' objects—whatever that means.

<sup>2</sup> 'Included in knowledge' = known?

<sup>3</sup> The writer seems to be modernising. Spinoza does not distinguish an objective and a subjective content, though he thinks of ideas as formed by the mind's action (II, def. 3). His *essentia objectiva* is *in se quid reale*, and can be itself the object of another idea as its own ideatum is an object for it.

and *res extensa*. It is unfortunate (though perhaps unavoidable) that Spinoza should have used the word *Deus* as he did; it is still more unfortunate that his translators and commentators have acquiesced in his misuse of the word by using the ordinary equivalent of it in their own language; for the 'Deus' of Spinoza is not the 'God' of ordinary linguistic usage. Whether Spinoza himself was able to use the Latin word without being in any way influenced by its ordinary associations, I will not undertake to say. But I think it is extremely difficult for the English reader (even, for that matter, when he is using the Latin text) to avoid being influenced and really misled by the ordinary associations of the word 'God'; e.g., being accustomed to the notions of the divine mind and divine omniscience he will be apt to accept corresponding expressions in the *Ethics* without inquiring as closely as he ought to do into their meaning and warrant on Spinoza's view, or, to put the same point in another way, he will be less critical about the notion of *Deus* as *res cogitans* than he is about the notion of *Deus* as *res extensa*. For this reason I propose to avoid the words *Deus* or *God* as much as possible, and to use the word *Natura*, which Spinoza himself uses as an equivalent for his *Deus*. It may be objected that we shall then be misled by the associations of the English word 'nature', which so often means the material world only. But we do often use the word 'Nature' (with a capital N) in a much wider sense, and indeed in a sense which is comparable with that in which Spinoza uses 'Natura', and, perhaps, by using always the Latin form of the word we may be sufficiently reminded that it is the 'Natura' of Spinoza that we are dealing with.

Our two propositions, then, will now be expressed in the form that *Cogitatio* and *Extensio* are attributes of *Natura* or that *Natura* is both *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. The proof of the propositions runs on the following lines: Particular things such as *cogitationes* and *corpora* are modes of the one substance *Natura*. Hence, corresponding to each distinct type or class of modes there must be in *Natura* some fundamental type of being of which the modes of that type are the particular modifications—in Spinoza's language, an attribute, the conception of which is involved in the modes, or in terms of which they must be conceived. Now the application of this proof to the case of Extension raises no difficulty. Particular material bodies are configurations in space: they presuppose the space which they fill and cannot be conceived except as occupying space.<sup>1</sup> Space itself has a

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that Spinoza's Extension is to be simply identified with space; but it is that, whatever more it may be, and space is enough for the purpose of the argument.

nature of its own apart from those particular configurations in it : it is continuous, infinite, and three-dimensional. Space, then, is that in which the particular configurations become possible, the *ὑλη* to which they give specific forms.

But when we attempt to understand the proof in its application to *Cogitatio*, difficulties present themselves at once. In II, ax. 3 Spinoza asserts that the idea or, as we may say, 'ideation',<sup>1</sup> is the primary *modus cogitandi* : it may be the *whole* content or process of *cogitatio* and can stand alone, whereas all other modes, such as *amor* and *cupiditas* and in general the feelings (*affectus*) imply and depend upon the ideas of their objects. It will simplify our argument, then, if we consider *cogitatio*, in the first instance, as if it consisted of ideas or ideation alone, since, according to Spinoza, it might do so. Now when we consider *cogitatio* as ideation, we see that there is nothing which stands to particular ideas in a relation similar to that in which space stands to particular bodies. There is no entity *Cogitatio* or ideation of which the particular ideas are the specific forms. Ideation is merely a general term for the having of ideas. We have Spinoza's own authority for saying so : for in II, 48, S, he insists that *intellectus* (= our ideation) is related to this or that idea as *lapideitas* is related to this or that stone and *homo* to this or that man. But if *Cogitatio* or ideation is only a general term, it is not a real entity, not an attribute (or *substantia*, as Spinoza would at one time have called it). It may perhaps be objected that there *is* a fundamental common character in all ideations, *viz.*, awareness, the awareness of an object. The answer is that awareness is nothing in itself, it must be an awareness 'of' something, of some object. When you take away the particular configurations from space, space itself remains. But when you take away particular objects from awareness, nothing remains, for there cannot be an awareness which is an awareness of nothing, nor is there any object-in-general of which particular objects are the specific forms. We are dealing again with mere general terms, not real entities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ideation', not in the modern psychological usage in which it is connected specially with imagery and contrasted with 'perception' and 'intellection', but as the correlative of Spinoza's 'idea'.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Arnauld (quoted in Robinson's *Kommentar zu Spinozas Ethik*, p. 37) Descartes compares *Cogitatio* with *Extensio*, and, strangely enough, affirms in so many words the very points in which the comparison does *not* hold good : "Ut enim extensio, quae constituit naturam corporis, multum differt a variis figuris sive extensionis modis, quos induit; ita cogitatio, sive natura cogitans, in qua puto mentis humanae essentiam constituere, longe aliud est, quam hic vel ille actus cogitandi. . . . Per cogitationem igitur non intelligo universale quid, omnes cogitandi modos

The above criticism was put quite clearly to Spinoza by de Vries (Ep. 26 in Bruder II = VV. 8). "*Remotis ab ea [i.e., a cogitatione] omnibus ideis, cogitationem destrui necessum est,*" he says. Spinoza seems to have completely missed the point of the criticism. Obviously what de Vries meant was, that if you take away ideas from *Cogitatio*, there is nothing left; *cogitatio* is not anything substantive of which ideas are the modes. But Spinoza seems to have thought that de Vries was trying to think about *cogitatio* without using ideas, to think with an empty mind: *dum tu*, he says, *res scilicet cogitans, id facis [viz., think about cogitatio], omnes tuas cogitationes et conceptus seponis. Quare non mirum est, quod ubi omnes tuas cogitationes seposuisti, nihil postea tibi cogitandum supersit.* But de Vries, of course, was not trying to think with an empty mind, but trying to think what would be left of *cogitatio* if it were emptied of ideas, and the answer is: nothing, therefore not an attribute or a substance. In I, 5 Spinoza invites us to consider a substance '*depositis affectionibus*', which we can do, he says, because substance is *prior natura suis affectionibus*. Now an attribute is in the same sense prior to its modes, and we can therefore state the difficulty which de Vries felt by saying, that he found *cogitatio, depositis affectionibus et in se considerata*, to be simply nothing at all. It was not the case that de Vries had put away all *his* ideas, for he was thinking about *cogitatio* and *its* relation to *ideae*, and therefore had quite definite things to think about. His point was that when he did think about *cogitatio*, and tried to think what would be left of it when all particular ideas had been removed, he found that nothing at all would be left. There was *nihil cogitandum* left, not because he had emptied his mind of ideas, but because *cogitatio* without any object of cogitation is a nonentity.<sup>1</sup>

*comprehendens, sed naturam particularem, quae recipit omnes illos modos, ut etiam extensio est natura, quae recipit omnes figuras.*" It would have been interesting to be told exactly what was meant by the "longe aliud etc." and the "naturam particularem".

<sup>1</sup> It may be objected from Spinoza's point of view that there cannot be modes which are not the modes of an attribute (*i.e.*, of something substantive). But this objection assumes that the notion of attribute can be applied in exactly the same sense to *Cogitatio* as to *Extensio*; and this is plainly not the case, since *Cogitatio* consists primarily in a *knowing* of other attributes, *e.g.*, *Extensio*, whereas *Extensio* is a kind of being that is not a knowing, *i.e.*, does not involve any reference to other attributes; and therefore it may be substantive in a sense in which *Cogitatio* may not be. It is a radical error on Spinoza's part that he tries to treat *Cogitatio* as if it were exactly like any other attribute, although he cannot really ignore the quite peculiar cognitive function which is of its very essence. He treats it sometimes as if it were mere-being (like *Extensio*), sometimes as if it were a being that is a knowing, and thus involves himself in radical inconsistency.

So far we have been considering *Cogitatio* as if it consisted of ideation only, but we have now to take account of feeling, and it may be said that, since *Cogitatio* covers both ideation and feeling, we must translate the term by some English term, such as 'consciousness', that covers both, and it may then be argued that consciousness in relation to the modes of *cogitatio* is what space is in relation to the modes of *extensio*, the  $\epsilon\lambda\eta$  of which particular ideas and feelings are the specific forms. In other words, consciousness is a sort of mental stuff, of which ideas and feelings are the two kinds. But this notion of consciousness as the common basis of ideation and feeling is due simply to the ambiguity of the word. When we speak of ideation as consciousness, we mean by this latter term consciousness 'of' something, awareness of an object, but when we apply the term to feeling we mean merely that the feeling *is felt*, not that it is the feeling 'of' something. Where the feeling is related to an object, there, as Spinoza rightly says, an idea is present; in *amor* and *cupiditas* there must be the idea of what is loved or desired. If feeling is taken in abstraction from all ideas, it may be regarded as a mental stuff; but then it simply exists or is felt. But ideation or awareness of objects is not a mental stuff: the stuff of ideas is their objects. Why is it, then, that psychologists and Spinoza (when he is talking about the *esse formale* of ideas) regard ideas as a mental stuff? In the case of the psychologists it is because they either in effect accept a doctrine of representative perception, or else start from a confused kind of realism, in which they think of *objects* as first existing apart from 'consciousness' and then entering into consciousness or having it added to them, so that the total mental fact is consciousness + its objects. Whereas the real state of the case is that we start from the awareness of objects and are driven to think of the objects (or some of them) as things that still exist when they are not objects present to our minds. In Spinoza's case, it is because he starts from a rigid dualism of the attributes, and therefore must give the ideas an *esse formale* of their own, and must hold a representative doctrine of perception.

When ideas are regarded both as knowledges of objects and as a mental stuff, or rather, when they are regarded sometimes as the one and sometimes as the other—for it is not really possible to regard them at one and the same time as both—we are naturally involved in a serious confusion, and this confusion, it seems to me, is one of the difficulties in the way of understanding how exactly Spinoza conceived his *Res Cogitans*. But before going on to discuss this latter question, the second proof of

Prop. 1 has still to be considered. We are able to conceive, says Spinoza, an *ens cogitans infinitum*, and since Deus or Natura (by definition) includes all the attributes or infinite types of being, this *ens cogitans infinitum* must be one of them. Is Spinoza entitled to assume so easily that we can conceive an *ens cogitans infinitum*? No doubt we can think of the cogitation of a finite *ens cogitans* being indefinitely extended, in proportion as it *plura potest cogitare*, but the step from *plura* to *infinita* surely needs to be taken with more caution. In I, 17 S Spinoza, according to the interpretation which so far saves his consistency,<sup>1</sup> argued that, *if* we hold intellect (and will) to belong to Deus as *attribute*, then we must also admit that such intellect must be quite different from our own. For our intellect is usually conceived as receptive, *i.e.*, as posterior to the things it apprehends, whereas an intellect that belonged to the very essence of Deus, to *Natura naturans*, would be creative. Now surely such an argument applies just as well to *cogitatio* as to intellect; in fact, it is difficult to see how Spinoza is able to distinguish *cogitatio* from *intellectus* in the case of Deus, since Deus is *expers passionum*—in the demonstration of I, 31 Spinoza seems to have overlooked this—and in our present Scholium to II, 1 it is surely intellect he has in view when he uses a phrase like ‘*quo plura ens cogitans potest cogitare*’. On his own showing, then, the step from *plura* to *infinita* is not so simple as he here represents it to be, for it may involve a qualitative difference, not a mere quantitative extension. But what he does not seem to see, even in I, 17 S, is that the qualitative difference may amount to the disappearance of intellect or knowledge as *intellect* or *knowledge* altogether, since the ground which the finite intellect has for distinguishing between its knowledge and the things it knows—*viz.*, the fact that the things known are known only incompletely and therefore have an existence that extends beyond their existence as known objects—is removed in the case of an infinite intellect. Such an intellect could not distinguish between what was known to it and anything else, since there would be nothing which it did not know. And for the same reason it could not distinguish between what was known to it and its knowledge, for there would be no point at which, for it, the distinction between being in itself and being as known could arise. And again for the same reason we must dismiss the *idea Dei*<sup>2</sup> of Props. 3 and 4 regarded as an idea

<sup>1</sup> See Robinson, *Kommentar, ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> We are not here concerned with any distinction between the *idea Dei* and the *intellectus infinitus* other than that the latter is the faculty of which the former is the object.

standing side by side, so to speak, with its ideatum; for in the nature of the case there would be no means of distinguishing here between *esse objectivum* and *esse formale*. The idea would contain 'objectively' the whole of *Natura* and nothing but *Natura* and therefore could not distinguish itself from *Natura*; nor is it possible to see by what addition *Natura* could be given a 'formal' existence beyond its 'objective' existence in the idea. In the case of *Natura* to think and to be would have to be the same thing.<sup>1</sup>

We are thus brought again to the difficulty of understanding how Spinoza did conceive his *Res Cogitans*. As I cannot profess to have made out satisfactorily how he did, I cannot, in discussing the topic, distinguish clearly between the question of fact or interpretation and the question of what is tenable or would have been reasonable for Spinoza to hold. As we have just seen, his view of the *Res Cogitans* seems far from consistent. He distinguishes it from the *intellectus infinitus*, although knowledge seems the only kind of cogitation appropriate to it. And he relegates the *intellectus infinitus* to *Natura naturata*, although the *Cogitatio* of *Natura naturans* could then, it would seem, be only a power of generating the contents of the *intellectus infinitus*, this so-called 'power' being an empty expression which tells us nothing. One cannot altogether avoid subtleties of this sort, but I do not wish to refer to them more than is absolutely necessary, and will therefore treat *Res Cogitans* and *intellectus infinitus* for the most part as equivalent expressions, although strictly they are not so for Spinoza himself. I will now state three views of the *Res Cogitans* any one of which might be taken at first sight to be a possible view, but all of which seem to involve serious difficulties either in themselves or when compared with definite statements of Spinoza's.

1. Part II is concerned with the human mind and, as is obvious from ax. 2, regards it as an *ens cogitans*. Therefore when Spinoza speaks of *Deus* as *ens cogitans infinitum*, it is natural to think of the *Res Cogitans* as a divine mind analogous to the human mind, but freed from the finite limitations of the latter. Now when we think of a human mind, we think of its ideas or knowledges as the knowledges of an individual, a psychological 'subject', a person who is aware of his own unity and identity

<sup>1</sup> The phrase *idea Dei* as used by Spinoza necessarily introduces an ambiguity into the term *Deus*. For we can say that the *idea Dei* (1) is itself *in Deo* (2). Here *Deus* (1) = the attributes *other than* Thought, but *Deus* (2) = the one substance with all its attributes, but regarded *with special reference* to the attribute of Thought.



in his mental life as he lives it. The ideas or knowledges are the ideas or knowledges of a thinker or knower, and this subject or person is always implied even when not expressly referred to. In like manner, when we think of a divine mind, we can preserve the analogy with the human mind only if we think of the divine mind as implying a subject or personal centre of unity. Did Spinoza think of his *Res Cogitans* in this way? I suppose it would be pretty widely agreed that he did not. (Indeed, it might even be questioned whether he thinks of the human mind itself in this way, although he could not but use language which ought to mean that he does). We regard a man as being essentially a psychological subject or person, but Spinoza's Deus or Natura is expressed indifferently in all the attributes alike. Hence his Deus is described by one commentator as the active inner force<sup>1</sup> which generates, or expresses itself in, all the manifold particular contents of the infinitely many attributes. This description may not convey Spinoza's view accurately, but it suggests the important point that Natura is not pre-eminently a mind or person. Natura is just as much *Res Extensa* as *Res Cogitans*. Again, particular *cogitationes* are all modes of the one attribute *Cogitatio*, but we could hardly say that they are all the thoughts of a single person. The *Res Cogitans* or *intellectus infinitus* may rather be said to generate, or to include, the particular *cogitationes*. According to Spinoza's own statement (II, 11 C) the *intellectus infinitus* includes human minds as parts of itself. We must add that for that very reason it cannot be a mind in the sense in which they are minds; for the parts of an individual mind are thoughts, not other individual minds. This consideration seems to be decisive, though I do not say that it would have been a decisive consideration for Spinoza. We should probably express Spinoza's view better by saying that in any sense in which the *intellectus infinitus* is a unity or whole, human minds cannot be genuine unities or wholes, since they are mere parts of the *intellectus infinitus*. But on either way of stating the matter the analogy between the human mind and Spinoza's *Res Cogitans* or *intellectus infinitus* breaks down, and it was upon that analogy that our first view of the *Res Cogitans* turned.

Perhaps I ought to explain more fully why I say that finite minds cannot be existentially parts of an infinite mind. I do not mean that the contents of a mind are necessarily private to

<sup>1</sup> Camerer, p. 2: 'Naturkraft', 'die innere Lebenskraft der Welt und nichts weiter.' Avenarius, p. 56, is even stronger in his expressions; the God of the *Ethics* is 'ein blindes Wesen, das ohne Willen und ohne Verstand einzig nach dem starren Gesetz seiner Nothwendigkeit wirkt.'

it. There is no reason why two minds should not apprehend the same thing, and no reason why an omniscient mind (if such a mind exists) should not apprehend all that finite minds apprehend. The point is that just because an infinite or omniscient mind, in apprehending what the finite mind apprehends, apprehends it *in relation to all other knowledge*, its apprehension can never coincide with the finite apprehension. The infinite mind may apprehend the same objects but must apprehend them as modified by their relation to all other objects. The infinite mind may even apprehend the way in which the finite mind must apprehend *its* finite objects, but the infinite mind cannot *exist* in the finite state of apprehension, since it cannot empty itself of its other knowledge. We do not get rid of this existential difference by saying that finiteness is merely negative; for the point is that, for lack of the knowledge which it does not possess, the finite apprehension is other than it would be if that knowledge were present. The same line of reasoning is, of course, equally fatal to what I suggested as the more Spinozistic way of stating the matter. The only way in which we can have both finite minds and an infinite or omniscient mind is by taking them as distinct existences, and Spinoza could not do this; even an omniscient mind would not then be infinite in his sense of the term.

It would seem that Spinoza cannot escape the above difficulty on any view of his *intellectus infinitus*. For in the human mind there are inadequate or false ideas, whereas in the *intellectus infinitus* there are only true ideas. To say that all ideas are true, *quatenus ad Deum referuntur* (II, 32) is a mere evasion, since it means that an inadequate idea *taken otherwise than it is in the mind that thinks it is true*, or, in other words, that its inadequacy is causally necessitated (*cf.* reference to II, 7 C), though not seen to be so.

It should also be observed that the difficulty does not arise in the case of *Res Extensa*, for space is everywhere the same in character; smaller spaces differ from larger ones only in magnitude, and there is nothing to prevent us from regarding all spaces as parts of one infinite space.

2. It is a familiar criticism upon Spinoza that he confuses the relation of cause and effect with that of ground and consequence, or that he resolves the former into the latter, or even that he ignores or rejects the former altogether.<sup>1</sup> Now it may be

<sup>1</sup> Joachim (p. 54 n.) goes so far as to say: "the term 'causa', in its more ordinary meaning, has no place in Spinoza's Philosophy, nor does he intend it to be understood in a sense implying temporal sequence."

admitted that he does not sufficiently distinguish the two relations. But it is to be remembered that they do have something in common ; they are both forms of *necessary* connection. Moreover, causal connection, however obscure it may be to us, might be *seen* to be necessary by an intelligence not subject to the limitations of our finitude. In the case of geometrical entities—of which Spinoza speaks as if he attributed to them existence *in natura* (e.g., II, 7 S, I, 11 dem. 2)—even we have insight, e.g., into the connection of the properties of a triangle with the nature or definition of the triangle. Nevertheless Spinoza was quite well aware that we cannot see directly how a given finite mode is connected with the attribute to which it belongs. What we can assert (I, 28) is that any one finite mode must be determined as regards its existence and operation by another finite mode, and so on *in infinitum*. Now, when Spinoza had in view this series of finite modes, each coming into existence, lasting for a time, and then ceasing to exist, he surely must have thought of the relation of cause and effect in its ordinary sense. The determination of finite modes in such a series is a necessary determination, but the necessity is for us unintelligible, since we are referred back from mode to mode indefinitely and can never see, with full comprehension, *how* any particular mode is necessitated to be what it is. I suppose Spinoza would have allowed that we can be confident as a matter of experience that a particular effect in the physical world was determined by a particular cause ; but such empirical assurance would for him be very different from an insight into the dependence of that particular determination on the structure of the physical world as a whole. We must say, then, it seems to me, that Spinoza was aware of the difference between the apprehension of a causal relationship without insight into its ultimate nature and the apprehension of, or insight into, the way in which a consequence follows from its ground. The physical world is known to our finite minds by means of the former kind of apprehension, not the latter ; consequently it is *for us* a mere chain of causes and effects or a complex of such chains.

Now did Spinoza think of minds or a psychical world in the same way ? According to the doctrine of the parallelism of the attributes he ought to have done so, and he does expressly repeat in II, 9 as regards ideas the proposition which he laid down in I, 28 as regards finite modes in general. In that case the connection between ideas would be a mere connection of cause and effect, as unintelligible to us in the world of mind as the connection of the corresponding physical modes is in the physical world.

Ideas (and minds) would be bits of a mental stuff as the physical modes are of a physical stuff, and the pattern of the mental stuff would copy or be identical with the pattern of the physical stuff. We have to remember also that Spinoza boldly asserts in II, 13 S that *omnia (individua)*—not merely human *individua*—*quamvis diversis gradibus animata sunt, i.e.*, all bodies, not merely human or animal bodies, have minds. All these minds would presumably be (like human minds) parts of the *intellectus infinitus* or *Res Cogitans*, which would thus consist of an infinite continuum of mental stuff corresponding to the infinite continuum of corporeal stuff which makes up the content of *Extensio* or *Res Extensa*. Can such a construction represent Spinoza's conception of the *Res Cogitans*? I can hardly believe so.

But it must be allowed that some of the obvious objections which we should bring against such a view, objections based on our ordinary interpretation of our experience, would not have weighed with Spinoza. One such objection is that we have no reason to believe that *all* bodies have minds; on the contrary, there are manifest differences between those bodies to which we attribute minds, and bodies which are not endowed even with life, while even among living bodies we attribute mind to animals only and not to plants. But Spinoza was not the kind of thinker to be troubled by the lack of empirical evidence, as we may see from his assertion that *Natura* has an infinity of attributes, although by his own admission only two are actually known to us. A second objection is even more formidable. In the case of the minds about which we know most, human minds, there appears to be no such complete continuity as Spinoza's theory demands. Such mind as a human being may have in his earliest infancy is nothing to boast of; judged by behaviour, his mind would appear to be in the merest beginning of existence, and it grows gradually. On the death of the body the mind, to all appearance, ceases altogether to exist. That is to say, the human mind appears not to be continuous with any mental existence outside its own term of life. The materials of the body continue to exist after its death, but to suggest that anything analogous happens in the case of the mind would seem to be using language without meaning. Even within its own term of life the existential continuity of the mind's actual 'cogitation' is interrupted, *e.g.*, in deep sleep and other unconscious states. Moreover, its continuity is constantly being interrupted by new sense experiences which are not caused by anything in the immediately preceding mental state. Finally, one mind is not in any direct continuity with other contemporary minds, since minds

communicate with each other only by the instrumentality of their bodies. Of some of these facts Spinoza, so far as I know, takes no account, but to judge from the little he does say in his *Short Treatise* about the first mentioned ones (KV, II, Praef. note 10) he would be quite ready to override the apparent facts with *a priori* speculations.

But there is another kind of objection which can find a basis in Spinoza's own doctrine. In treating the mind as so much mental stuff we have eliminated or denied its cognitive function. Mental stuff (*e.g.*, mere feeling) may exist, but it cannot be true or false, and if an idea is merely a copy in mental stuff of a pattern existing in physical stuff it is not a knowledge: to possess a photograph of an ancient MS. or inscription is not to be able to read it. Moreover, the degree of accuracy or inaccuracy in the copy or photograph can be judged only by a knowing mind able to compare them with their originals. One copy may be defective and another complete, but the defects of the defective copy will be visible only to a mind that has fuller knowledge and is able to see them.<sup>1</sup> Now there is far too much in Spinoza about knowledge and the truth and falsity of ideas to allow us to be satisfied with a conception of the *intellectus infinitus* or *Res Cogitans* which makes these things simply impossible.

3. Are we, then, to reverse our procedure, start from truth and knowledge, and try to interpret the *intellectus infinitus* by reference to them? Can we regard the *intellectus infinitus* as the complete system or whole of truth, while finite minds are those fragmentary parts of it which at a given time actually exist (*i.e.*, are being thought) in the same way as the corresponding finite bodies are those parts or configurations of the attribute of Extension which actually exist at that time? Such a view may seem strange to us, but it might not have seemed so strange to Spinoza. For it may be questioned whether he distinguished as sharply as we do between truth and existence. In the case of existence that is not subject to temporal limitations he is ready to describe such existence as an eternal truth, and we may perhaps infer that eternal truths (properly so-called—see Ep. 28 in Bruder II = VV, 10) in some sense exist.<sup>2</sup> The ideas of things

<sup>1</sup> In the place (II, 43 S) where Spinoza insists that *veritas* is *norma sui et falsi* he also repudiates the copy view and says that an idea is not like a picture; to have an idea is to apprehend or know. But is the *essentia objectiva*, then, a mere act of apprehension, or is it *in se quid reale* as we are told in *Int. Em*? In II, 43 S *idea* = *intelligere*, in *Int. Em.* *idea* = *per se aliquid intelligibile*. Which is it?

<sup>2</sup> 'Unter einer ewigen Wahrheit versteht Spinoza nicht bloss einen ewigen Gedanken, sondern auch eine ewige Realität'—Camerer, p. 24.

that are subject to temporal limitations exist (*i.e.*, are thought) only so far as the things exist; but then these ideas are fragmentary and, at least in some measure, defective or erroneous, and it is only what is true in them <sup>1</sup> that is really included in the *intellectus infinitus*. Some parts of Spinoza's doctrine seem to be better understood on such a view, *e.g.*, II, 8. Its strangeness to us is probably due to the fact that we come to it with preconceptions. We think of truth as existing only in the true thoughts of particular thinkers or minds, whereas Spinoza seems to think of eternal truths as having some higher or more real existence; and again, we think of the knower or mind as the really existing thing and his true thoughts as mere states of his mind, whereas Spinoza seems to resolve the mind into ideas, and, when he wants to speak of it as a unity or whole, calls it the idea (in the singular) which constitutes (or is) the human mind.

I do not say, however, that this third view is Spinoza's, for, in the first place, it conflicts with the conception of the sequence of ideas as a mere causal sequence of events parallel to the sequence of bodily events. A sequence or connection of knowledges must be in some manner a logical sequence, and Spinoza does sometimes imply, however inconsistently, that the sequence of ideas is logical. Secondly, the view involves a dualism within the attribute of *Cogitatio* between truth and psychical existence, and the *intellectus infinitus* would seem to be either not wholly actual or else actual in two diverse ways. I suppose questions about eternal and temporal existence might come in here, but if so I cannot discuss them.

I am unable, then, to make out what Spinoza's own conception of the *Res Cogitans* really was, and can only suggest that he must have thought on the lines, sometimes of the second view, sometimes of the third, without realising their inconsistency.

(*To be continued.*)

<sup>1</sup> II, 43 S at end: *mens nostra, quatenus res vere percipit, pars est infiniti Dei intellectus*. We are referred to II, 11 C, but there the limiting clause *quatenus*, etc., does not appear, and in II, 32 and 36 we are told that *all* ideas, *quatenus ad Deum referuntur*, are true. The question of consistency must in the meantime be passed over.