



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

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## MIND

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

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

BY H. BARKER.

## § 4. PARALLELISM OF THE ATTRIBUTES (II, 7).

ON any interpretation of Spinoza's metaphysical doctrine the seventh proposition of Part II is a proposition of the highest importance, but on the interpretation which I believe to be, on the whole, the right one, the seventh proposition becomes the most important proposition in the whole book. Spinoza at one time, as we know, used the term substance to denote what in the *Ethics* he calls attribute, so that, instead of saying that the one and only substance has infinitely many attributes, he could then have said that *Natura* consists of infinitely many substances. Robinson takes this earlier phraseology as the clue to the interpretation of the metaphysical doctrine of the *Ethics*, and insists again and again that Spinoza's doctrine is not an *Identitätsphilosophie*; that is to say, the one and only substance has no *underlying identical nature*, which is only *manifested in different ways* in the attributes, but, on the contrary, its whole nature is contained and expressed in the different attributes, and the unity of these different expressions consists solely in the sameness or parallelism of the *order and connexion* of the modes of the several attributes: the unity of substance or *Natura* consists in this, that a single *Weltgesetz* or order prevails throughout all the infinitely many attributes.

Now there is one obvious merit of this interpretation: it gets rid of a contradiction in the language used by the commentators about the substance and attributes of the *Ethics* which cannot but strike us as soon as our attention is called to it. The commentators have to say that the substance is one and the same, that the attributes are entirely different from each other, and yet that the attributes constitute the essence of the substance. How one and the same substance can have infinitely many different essences is a puzzle indeed. The trouble goes back to Spinoza himself. In the scholium to II, 7 his language parades the contradiction before our eyes: *substantia cogitans et substantia extensa una eademque est substantia, quae jam sub hoc jam sub illo attributo comprehenditur*. Even if this statement is not to be taken as asserting that two substances are one and the same substance, it does at any rate assert that the substance which cogitates is one and the same substance as that which is extended, although he has said in the immediately preceding proposition that the attributes are wholly distinct, while by definition, as we know, *each* of them *constitutes* the essence of substance. Wherein can the *identity* of the *substantia cogitans* and the *substantia extensa* consist? Not in an identity of *essence*, for the two essences are wholly distinct. In what, then? Further on in the scholium the identity is apparently asserted to consist (as Robinson maintains it does) in the *ordo* or *connexio causarum*.

When the commentators follow, as it is only natural they should do, the emphatic language used at the beginning of the scholium, they are involved in the same inconsistencies and straining of language. *E.g.*, Pollock (ed. 2, p. 152) says: "If we think of Spinoza's Substance as distinct from and underlying the Attributes . . . we shall certainly go wrong." But next he says, "Substance is indeed manifested in the Attributes"; only, however, to retract the word 'manifested' by adding that "The manifestations are themselves the reality". Again, he suggests 'aspect' as the least unsatisfactory description of an attribute, whereas one would think that that word suggests the very ideas he wants to reject, *viz.*, that the distinction between the attributes is superficial, due to the spectators' point of view, and that there is no real plurality in the substance itself. On page 156 he speaks of the attributes as expressing 'the very same reality', but as 'differing in kind', though repeating 'the same order and sequence'. Joachim (p. 25) says: "It is one and the same Reality which manifests both characters (*i.e.*, Thought and Extension)"—a phraseology which would naturally suggest

some distinction between the Reality and the 'characters' which it 'manifests'. But we are told later (pp. 66-67) that "The Attributes . . . are not consequences of God's nature—they *are* that nature: and each Attribute expresses the whole nature of God under some one of its ultimate characters". It is surely obvious to remark that, if the attributes *are* that nature and are *all equally* 'essential to Reality' 'necessary to its being' (p. 26), no *one* of them can express the *whole* nature of God or Reality.

I have thought it worth while to give these quotations in order to show into what straits the commentators are brought when they attempt to expound a combination of three inconsistent doctrines: (1) that the substance consists of the attributes, (2) that the substance is one, (3) that the attributes are many and all wholly different from each other. No ingenuity and no straining of language are equal to the task. The other interpretation, whatever criticism it may itself be open to, does not at any rate land us in a situation which is quite obviously hopeless.

I will take one more quotation, because it may be used to bring out a new point. On page 148 Joachim says: "an idea is at once identical with its 'ideatum', and absolutely distinct from it". How was it possible to make a statement that appears to be flatly contradictory? The explanation is, of course, that we are here concerned with two relations which are not being clearly distinguished either by Spinoza or by his expositor: (1) the cognitive relation of the idea to its object, (2) the existential relation of two modes in different attributes. The attribute of Thought has a quite exceptional function, *viz.*, that it 'knows'—and for Spinoza this really means 'reproduces' or 'copies'—the contents of the other attributes; it has thus a double status, it exists on its own account and it knows the other attributes. If we think of an inscription on stone being copied on paper, we can see at once how a statement like that above quoted, which seems on the face of it so absurd, becomes merely ambiguous, for the identity and the distinctness are not asserted in the same sense. The literary content of the copy and of the original inscription is the same, but the paper copy is a different entity from the stone original. Spinoza is taking advantage of this ambiguity when he says in the scholium: *modus extensionis et idea illius modi una eademque est res, sed duobus modis expressa*. The *modus extensionis* and the *idea* cannot both be the thing of which they are different expressions. But for the fact that we are dealing with idea and ideatum this would be more obvious,

and on Spinoza's view of idea and ideatum—*viz.*, that they belong to different attributes—they should not be called one thing at all: existentially they are quite distinct.<sup>1</sup> The fact that one of the two known attributes has (on Spinoza's view) this double status helps, I think, to conceal the inconsistencies on which I have been commenting.

I think, then, that, notwithstanding our scholium, Robinson's interpretation of Spinoza's doctrine is the right one, or, at the least, that it gives the doctrine which Spinoza ought to have held—further reasons for thinking so will be given presently—but it seems to me that he does not fully bring out (perhaps he was not concerned to do so) the extent to which our whole view of Spinoza's metaphysics must be affected by this interpretation. He admits (p. 163) that Spinoza's earlier mode of statement is in many respects preferable to the later one, *i.e.*, that there are advantages in speaking, not of a single substance, Deus, and its attributes, but of Natura and the *substantiae* of which it consists. But I think we must go far beyond this and say that the later mode of statement is quite inconsistent and misleading. It is evident that if, as I, 10 says, an attribute *per se concipi debet*, then the so-called attribute *is* a substance, for substance is defined as that which *per se concipitur*. The definition of substance also says that substance is that which *in se est*; but this must apply to attribute also, for if the attribute were *in alio* it would be a mode and could not be conceived *per se*. In the scholium to I, 10 Spinoza asserts the exact contrary, *viz.*, that we cannot conclude that, because two attributes are conceived as *realiter distincta* (*i.e.*, conceived without any reference to each other), they are therefore two different substances. But his argument really begs the question. *Id enim est de natura substantiae*, he says, *ut unumquodque ejus attributorum per se concipiatur*. No doubt that is so, *if* a substance *can have* more than one attribute or essence.<sup>2</sup> But the question at issue is precisely whether the supposition that one substance can have two (or more) attributes is not self-contradictory, since it virtually asserts that one substance can be two (or more) substances. To say that

<sup>1</sup> If we were speaking, not of idea and ideatum, but of mind and body, a further confusion would be apt to come in. Mind and body are spoken of as one being, in the sense that they make up one being; but here again Spinoza has strictly no right to use that language.

<sup>2</sup> No wonder that de Vries objected that this had not been proved (Ep. 26 in Bruder II—VV 8). The proofs which Spinoza gives in his reply, using the vaguer word *ens* instead of *substantia*, seem to beg the question as much as ever, if he means to distinguish *substantia* from *attributum*; but a little later he says the two words denote the same thing.

Natura contains, or consists of, infinitely many wholly different substances might (provisionally) pass muster, but to say that the one substance, Deus, has infinitely many totally different essences is to say what is incomprehensible. But in any case, whether we speak of Natura or Deus or Substantia, the same problem emerges, *viz.*, Wherein does the unity of this entity consist, seeing that the entity itself is said to consist of infinitely many wholly different substances or attributes?

Several of Spinoza's correspondents (*e.g.*, Oldenburg and Tschirnhaus) pointed out to him that the totally different substances or attributes become so many different worlds, which have no connexion with each other. Oldenburg and Tschirnhaus, at any rate, would hardly get much satisfaction from such answers as they received. Spinoza himself had already stated the difficulty in a note in the *Short Treatise* (KV, I, 2—p. 26, n. 1 in the Suppl. to Bruder's ed.): If there were different substances, *quae non ad unicum quoddam ens referrentur*, then the kind of unity which we see, *e.g.*, of mind and body in man, would be impossible, since *cogitatio* and *extensio* as different substances have no *communio inter se*. But what is the *unicum ens*? It is here postulated rather than explained. And what could it be, if the substances in Natura are all different and have no *communio inter se*? Natura lapses into a mere aggregate. Later critics, of course, have found the same difficulty in seeing how the unity of Deus is to be reconciled with the infinite plurality of attributes totally different from each other. Joachim, *e.g.*, says (p. 104): "The unity of Substance which seemed so absolute . . . resolves itself into a mere 'togetherness' of an infinite multiplicity".<sup>1</sup> "Die Einheit der Substanz angesichts der Bestimmungen über die Attribute", says Camerer (p. 9), "bleibt ein unvollziehbarer Gedanke".

Now Robinson thinks that on his interpretation he escapes this difficulty. After quoting a number of statements about the difficulty similar to those I have given he says the difficulty is "nur ein Scheinproblem". The unity of Spinoza's Absolute is "keine gleichartige Einheit, sondern Einheit des Ungleichartigen" (p. 286). But of course it is just this 'Einheit des

<sup>1</sup> In the next sentence he says: "The Reality falls apart into a substratum without character, and characters which have no principle of coherence in a substratum." This introduction of a 'substratum' is inconsistent with what was quoted before from pp. 66-67, and shows how necessary it is to keep to one version of Spinoza's doctrine. The 'principle of coherence' might lie in the depths of the 'substratum', and Spinoza could fall back on the plea of our ignorance.

Ungleichartigen' that is the problem. He goes on: "Dass die verschiedenen Attribute, aus denen Gott besteht, keine separate Welten bilden, offenbart sich lediglich durch das Walten in ihnen allen eines und desselben Weltgesetzes". The unity consists solely in the singleness and sameness of the *ordo sive connexio causarum*. Now whether the sameness of the *connexio causarum* in totally heterogeneous attributes is really more intelligible than a more substantive kind of unity I need not inquire. For the point I am at present concerned with is that this interpretation makes the stability of Spinoza's metaphysical system depend wholly on II, 7, and the question becomes all-important, whether this foundation is secure. Has Spinoza in this proposition proved what is required by the demands of his theory? It seems to me that he has not.

In the first place, he has certainly not proved that the proposition can be generalized so as to assert that the same *ordo* prevails throughout *all* the attributes. In the proposition itself he does not even assert a thoroughgoing parallelism of this sort: he asserts only a parallelism of *ideae* and *res*. The scholium extends the parallelism to all the attributes, but in a rather casual way and without attempting a proof, which indeed it would be rather difficult to give since all the attributes but the two he has already referred to are unknown. Joachim says, (p. 126, n. 3): "In ii, 7 Spinoza is thinking primarily of Extension and Thought; but of course the doctrine holds of all the Attributes". Why 'of course'? That Spinoza means the doctrine to apply to all the attributes I do not doubt, but that the doctrine 'holds' of them all is totally unproved and totally incapable of proof. Let us make the utmost concession to Spinoza which we are entitled to make. If we accept his *a priori* assertion in II, 1 and 3 that the *intellectus infinitus* contains ideas of the whole contents of *Natura*, then there will be a parallelism to this extent, that to each of the attributes there will correspond a part of, or set of ideas in, *Cogitatio*. Thus, if we symbolize Extension by E and our part of *Cogitatio* by  $C_e$ , we can symbolize an unknown attribute by X and its part of *Cogitatio* by  $C_x$ . The attributes other than *Cogitatio* and the parts of *Cogitatio* will then 'run in pairs', as Caird puts it (p. 156), with a part of *Cogitatio* as one member of every pair. E will be parallel to  $C_e$  and X to  $C_x$ . But this state of things has not the least tendency to prove that E and X will be parallel. The fact is that the case of *Cogitatio* is a quite special case and we cannot generalize from its relation to the other attributes to the relation of these other attributes *inter se*. The special

character is that it has no independent content of its own. Its ideas or knowledges only repeat *objective* what exists in the other attributes *formaliter*. Consequently a correspondence between *Cogitatio* and the other attributes is implied in the very character assigned to *Cogitatio*. But there is no reason to suppose that any comparable relation holds between the other attributes. The presumption is surely rather against it. A simple illustration will bring out the point. Suppose there were English translations of the whole of French literature and again of the whole of German literature, there would be a correspondence between each literature and its translation, but there need not be any between the two literatures. And it will not do *now* (*i.e.*, on the interpretation we have adopted) to fall back on Spinoza's assertion that all the attributes express the same substance, for we must then ask wherein this sameness consists, and if the answer is, In the sameness of the *ordo*, we are going round in a circle.

Thus, if the unity of *Natura* consists in the sameness of the *ordo* there is no proof for it and a certain presumption against it. And it should be observed that the same kind of difficulty will be repeated within the attribute of *Cogitatio*, whose parts will have no more connexion with each other than the corresponding attributes have.

The only way to save the situation would be to abandon the doctrine of the infinitely many attributes. But it may be surmised that Spinoza would have been anything but willing to do so, and his expositor seems to be of that mind also, for he calls the doctrine 'eine Grundsäule des spinozistischen Monismus' (p. 112). An infinite pluralism a 'Grundsäule' of monism! How can that be? Because "in diesem Pluralismus findete der (cartesianische) Dualismus seine Überwindung, indem die Grundverschiedenheit des Denkens und der Ausdehnung nur zum Spezialfall der unendlich mannigfaltigen Verschiedenheit wird, die innerhalb des absolut Unendlichen statt hat". But what we found was that the relation between *Cogitatio* and *Extensio* is a 'Spezialfall', not in the sense that it is only a special case of a relation that holds between any two attributes differently, but in the sense that it holds *only* between *Cogitatio* (or parts of it) and the other attributes, so that, instead of having overcome the Cartesian dualism, the doctrine of the infinitely many attributes merely repeats that dualism *ad infinitum*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We must therefore agree with Lotze when he says (deutsche Philosophie seit Kant, Diktate, p. 9): Die Sonderbarkeit, dass zwei ausdrücklich für unvergleichbar anerkannte Attribute in dem Wesen der absoluten



When we next consider the proof of the proposition, we may well complain (with Tschirnhaus) of Spinoza's brevity. He simply says: *Patet ex ax. 4, part. 1. Nam cujuscumque causati idea a cognitione causae, cujus est effectus, dependet.* The axiom itself says: *Effectus cognitio a cognitione causae dependet et eandem involvit*; and Spinoza quotes the axiom in his reply to Tschirnhaus (Bruder, Suppl. p. 317=VV 72) in the form: *Effectus cognitio sive idea a cognitione sive idea causae pendet.*

From this meagre material—the variations of form can hardly have any significance—it is very difficult to infer Spinoza's meaning with any certainty; and what adds greatly to our difficulty is the fact that Spinoza himself seems to see none. The natural meaning of the axiom is either (a) that when we know B as an effect (of A) we must know its cause (A)—a proposition which is not merely axiomatic but tautological—or (b) that in order to know B adequately we must see it as an effect, i.e., see how it was produced by its cause A. With (b) we may compare a statement in *Int. Em.* (Bruder II, p. 36, § 92): *revera cognitio effectus nihil aliud est quam perfectiorem causae cognitionem acquirere.* But neither of the meanings seems to suit II, 7, for that proposition applies to ideas in general, and we cannot say that all ideas are ideas of things as effects, nor again that in the case of all things that we know we have an insight into the cause of their production. In the axiom as quoted in the letter, if it stood alone, the addition of *sive idea* to *cognitio* might suggest that the axiom means that the idea of B—since B is an effect of A—must depend upon the idea of A in the same way as B depends upon A. From that statement the proposition would certainly follow at once, but the statement would hardly be axiomatic in the way in which (a) and (b) are; it really involves propositions that are proved in the *Ethics*, as will appear immediately.

But the meaning of the so-called demonstration can hardly be anything very profound or obscure in itself, since Spinoza himself regards the proposition as practically self-evident. The best I am able to do in the way of interpretation is the following: We know from I, 28 that every finite mode is determined by another, and that other by a third, and so on; and we have just been reminded in II, 5 and 6 that the causal series within each attribute is self-contained. Let ABCD be a causal series in the attribute of *Extensio*, and  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  a causal series in the attribute

Substanz vereinigt sein sollen, auf deren Einheit das grösste Gewicht gelegt wird, verdeckt Spinoza nur unvollkommen durch die Vermutung, die unendliche Substanz habe nicht nur diese zwei, sondern unzählige positive Attribute, von denen nur diese beiden uns bekannt seien.

of *Cogitatio*, and let  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  be the ideas or knowledges of ABCD: then the causal order of  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  must reflect, or be identical with that of ABCD, otherwise  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  would not be the ideas or knowledges of ABCD. In other words, the proposition is simply the axiom *Idea vera debet cum suo ideato convenire* (I ax. 6) applied to the causal order. How far  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  would contain an insight into the causal relations of ABCD would depend upon the degree of adequacy of the ideas. To such an interpretation, however, it may be objected, that Spinoza does not refer to the propositions and axiom here quoted, whereas he usually seems rather anxious to drag in all the propositions involved in a demonstration. The interpretation would in fact involve that Spinoza is reading into axiom 4 of I far more than it originally meant.

In view of the uncertainty as to Spinoza's meaning I will not deal further with the proof itself, but will rather go on to say something about the assumptions underlying the proposition. In doing so I shall have to refer to questions which I have already touched on, but at this stage in Spinoza's argument they become more pressing. If I have also to refer to questions that are familiar in the history of philosophy, that can hardly be avoided.

The proposition assumes, first, that there is an *idea* for every *res*, and conversely. This assumption may be taken as guaranteed by II, 1 S. and 3. Second, the examples in the scholium imply that the only case actually before us is that in which the *res* are modes of Extension, and the *ideae* are the ideas of these modes. This assumption may be taken as guaranteed by II, 1 and 2 taken along with ax. 5. In the discussion of the early propositions of II, Spinoza (and his reader) may appear to be regarding the two known attributes from a superior or neutral point of view, contemplating both attributes equally, and affirming the correspondence between them. But strictly this is not of course the case: the thinking of the philosopher falls within the attribute of *Cogitatio*. We were told long ago (I, 10) that each attribute *per se concipi debet*; from which it follows that two attributes (like the hypothetical two substances of I, 2) *nihil inter se commune habent*. But it has now been further impressed upon us in II, 5 that the *Res Cogitans* produces the ideas which are its modes solely by its own action, and without any action upon it by the *Res Extensa*. It is at the same time assumed that the ideas know the corresponding modes of Extension; for in II, 5 Spinoza uses the expressions *ideata*, *res perceptae*, *ideae objectum*, and in II, 7 the *ideae* are obviously meant to be the *ideae* of which the *res* are the *ideata*. But surely we must now

insist on some justification for this assumption and the use of these expressions. For, if we state the bare existential facts of II, 5 and 7, we must say that there is a self-contained causal series of modes of *Cogitatio* and a self-contained causal series of modes of *Extensio*, and that the *ordo* of the two series is the same. But we surely want some explanation of the *additional* relation between the two series, that the modes of *Cogitatio* know the modes of *Extensio*. In the case of attribute X and Extension there would be no such relation. Are we not, in fact, in danger of going round in a circle or involving ourselves in a contradiction,<sup>1</sup> since the correspondence of the two series seems to depend on the cognitive relation between them? We surely at least require some explanation of *how* the cognitive relation is *possible*, when the two attributes are absolutely disparate and independent.

The Spinozist may say the answer is obvious: it is simply the nature of an idea to know its ideatum; for Spinoza it is an axiom that a true idea *debet cum suo ideato convenire*. As to the first statement our reply must be, that it is precisely this nature or property of an idea whose possibility we find it difficult, *on Spinoza's view*, to understand, since the idea belongs to one attribute and the ideatum to another. As for the axiom, its natural meaning is, that an idea must agree with its ideatum *in order to be true*, and this naturally implies that the truth or falsity of the idea can be tested or verified by comparing the ideatum as ideated in the idea with the ideatum known in some further way, as when a person A, who has been asked whether B is in, says, No, I don't think so, but I'll go and see.

The Spinozist may say, This way of taking the axiom won't do; for Spinoza rejects the notion of an external criterion; according to him, the truth or adequacy of an idea is a property internal to it, as def. 4 of II clearly indicates. True, we may reply, but this only makes our difficulty the more obvious. We ask now, How is it possible that an idea or *essentia objectiva*, no matter what properties it may have in itself, can reveal, or assure us of, the existence of an *essentia formalis in another attribute*?

It is worth while to return for a moment to the passage in the *Int. Em.* quoted in § 2, for our difficulty comes up there in the immediate sequel, and we see Spinoza wavering (whether

<sup>1</sup> A circle, if we use the cognitive relation to establish the correspondence and then the correspondence to explain the cognitive relation; a contradiction, if we affirm a cognitive *relation* between things that are *wholly independent* of each other.

he realized it or not) between two quite different views of an idea. In the passage quoted we were told that the idea is an *essentia objectiva et in se quid reale*. But a little later we are told that *certitudo nihil est praeter ipsam essentiam objectivam; id est, modus quo sentimus esse formale est ipsa certitudo*. Now surely *certitudo* cannot at once be a mere manner of perceiving the *esse formale* itself and also an *essentia objectiva* which is *in se quid reale*. What Spinoza no doubt means to say is that in the case of a true idea the *essentia objectiva* brings with it an assurance of knowing the *esse formale*. But our difficulty is precisely to understand how it is able to do this, when it has no access to or communion with the *esse formale*, which exists as a mode of another attribute.

Now in the early propositions of II the conception of the idea or *essentia objectiva* as *in se quid reale* has been greatly strengthened. The *essentia objectiva* can hardly now be regarded even for a moment as a mere manner of perceiving. It is a mode of an attribute, a particular thing, an *esse formale* which is the effect of a second *esse formale* and presumably the cause of a third. But if the existence of an idea is wholly confined to the attribute of *Cogitatio*, and the idea is at the same time a knowledge of an object, then the immediate object of that knowledge must also be contained in *Cogitatio*—in other words, the *essentia objectiva* is not a manner of perceiving, but an object perceived, the immediate object of the idea as a knowing,<sup>1</sup> and this immediate or immanent object somehow carries with it a belief or assurance of the existence of a transcendent thing that is a mode in the attribute of Extension.

The Spinozist may say, You are misrepresenting Spinoza's doctrine here, and begging the question against him; his doctrine is that the idea *exists* in the attribute of *Cogitatio* but *knows* a mode of Extension. There are two difficulties in this answer. (1) The *essentia objectiva* is a particular thing, which has a content of its own; we can see how this content should correspond to or copy the content of the *esse formale*, but we

<sup>1</sup> That existentially the idea is one thing and the ideatum another, and also that the *essentia objectiva* is the immediate or internal object of the idea, is clearly implied in II, 5. For there Sp. asserts that every idea is caused by the agency of the *Res Cogitans, i.e.*, (as II, 9 says), by another idea, and he at the same time denies that the idea is caused by its ideatum. Now, if the *ideatum* were really the internal object of the idea it would be meaningless to suggest or to deny that it is or could be the cause of the idea. Some modern psychologists are guilty of such a gross confusion, but we need not charge Spinoza with it.

cannot see how it can be said to *know the esse formale*.<sup>1</sup> (2) We cannot see how an idea should know immediately what exists in a wholly separate world which has no communion with that in which the idea exists ; such knowledge would be miraculous, and is Spinoza of all people to ask us to accept a miracle ?

Let us take it, then, that Spinoza's doctrine must be stated in the form that the *essentia objectiva* is the immediate object of knowledge and somehow carries with it a belief or assurance of the extra-mental existence of an extended thing, and let us ask once more how this is possible. Obviously the *essentiae objectivae* do not come with letters of introduction explaining that they are the *essentiae objectivae* of extended things. The *essentiae objectivae* must somehow reveal in themselves the character and independent reality of the extended things of which they give us the knowledge. How can they reveal the extended character of extended things ? Only, we must answer, by being themselves extended. How can they reveal the independent reality of the extended things ? Only, we must answer, by themselves behaving as if they were independent things. In other words, we can explain the knowledge of extended things only by transporting them in effect into the ideas and enabling them to be known directly, and, if this is so, the assertion on their behalf of an extra existence over and above their known existence becomes unmeaning. When the extended things are known by us as existing, it is the extended things themselves that are the immediate object of knowledge, not mere copies of them. We are brought, in short, to recognize that Spinoza's absolute separation of the two attributes, of knowledge and reality, is untrue and makes knowledge impossible. If knowledge is to be possible, to have indeed any meaning, there must be some sort of direct apprehension of reality from the very beginning, *e.g.*, we know extended things by directly perceiving them.

How did Spinoza get himself into the impossible position in which we have found him to be ? Because he accepted Descartes' dualism of Thought and Extension in an even more rigid way than Descartes himself had asserted it, and then had to reconcile it with his own metaphysical-religious belief in the unity of *Natura* or *Deus*. Descartes, starting in a more psychological way from the *Cogito*, felt the difficulty of understanding how a knowledge of the extended world was possible, and did his best by rather roundabout methods to solve it. He started from the

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, to know that the copy is a copy, or to be aware of itself as being a copy.

standpoint of the Erkenntnistheoretiker; but Spinoza was primarily the metaphysician, and, accepting the dualism of Thought and Extension apparently without difficulty, and having knowledge before him as a fact, he had to find some metaphysical way of combining the dualism and the fact. His way of doing so was to assert an existential *correspondence* between idea and thing, and at the same time to substitute the notion of the *adequacy* of an idea for the ordinary notion of its truth. But the significance of the substitution is partly concealed by the assertion of the correspondence. On Spinoza's as well as on the ordinary view the idea agrees with its ideatum, but on the ordinary view, interpreted as I have suggested it should be, the agreement is *seen* to hold in virtue of an actual comparison made either by the person himself, or else by some one whose knowledge is fuller than his own, as Mr. Cargill's ideas about distances in Palestine were corrected by Touchwood who had been there. On Spinoza's view it is impossible that the agreement should be *seen*; it is metaphysically *inferred* from the adequacy of the idea (its truth in Spinoza's sense) on the principle that *id quod in intellectu objective continetur debet necessario in natura dari* (I, 30)—a principle which simply inverts the ordinary meaning of the axiom that *idea vera debet convenire cum suo ideato*.

## § 5

Spinoza, as I have already remarked, seems to have had a boundless confidence in *a priori* reasoning, the obvious example being his assertion of an infinity of attributes when experience shows us only two. In this case his assertion is of purely speculative interest. For, since the attributes other than the experienced two are unknown to us, and unknowable by us, and since all the attributes are quite independent of each other, it is wholly immaterial, so far as our experience is concerned, whether the alleged but not experienced attributes do or do not exist. If they do exist, they might as well not exist so far as we are concerned, for their existence can make no difference to our experience. But when Spinoza comes to apply his *a priori* reasonings within the field of experience itself the case is very different, for his reasonings may then conflict with experience, and yet his confidence in them be so great as apparently to blind him to the most evident facts. Our difficulty then is to explain how this was psychologically possible. The only explanation would seem to lie in some serious confusion of thought on his part, and he has accordingly been charged with it. This charge, I need hardly

say, is one not to be brought lightly against a great philosopher, and, if there was the least possibility that the charge was due to a wrong interpretation of Spinoza's view, we should be bound to go upon that assumption and to try to discover where our error lay. But when he lays down a proposition in terms which seem to admit of no interpretation but one, we must simply accept that interpretation and try then to discover the nature of Spinoza's own error.

Such a case presents itself in II, 13. Spinoza there says, in terms which seem to admit of no dubiety, that the *object* of the mind's knowledge is the body, *and nothing else than the body*.<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, the last part of this assertion that occasions the difficulty. That in all (or nearly all) conscious states there is some awareness of the body, however vague, is true enough, but that there is no awareness of anything else is manifestly not true—it is contradicted by Spinoza's own statements, *e.g.*, in 16 C 1 (where he says that the human mind perceives *plurimorum corporum naturam una cum sui corporis natura*),<sup>2</sup> and in 17 (where he says that, when the body is affected by an external body, the mind *idem corpus externum ut actu existens vel ut sibi praesens contemplabitur*). How, then, could he assert the *et nihil aliud* of 13? Again, if the mind's knowledge of the body is necessarily a knowledge of it as *actu existens*, *i.e.*, if the mind's object is always an actually or presently existing thing, this would seem to exclude memory, which may be of something that no longer exists at all and is certainly of things that do not now exist in their past state; yet Spinoza, of course, elsewhere recognizes memory as a fact.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the opening sentence of 19: *mens humana est ipsa idea sive cognitio corporis humani*.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson commenting on this corollary says: "Die Seelendefinition der Ethik will nicht besagen (auch eine derartige Missdeutung ist in der Spinozaliteratur zu treffen) dass der Mensch beständig an seinen Körper denkt, sondern bedeutet, dass der Mensch, indem er die Aussenwelt zu erkennen glaubt, in der Regel nur verworrene Ideen von den Zuständen seines eigenen, durch äussere Körper affizierten Körpers hat." This explanation of the definition seems to me to be explaining it away. Spinoza does not say that the object of the human mind is "as a rule" the body. And there is no warrant for the 'nur'. What Spinoza himself says in 16 C 2 is that our ideas of external bodies *magis nostri corporis constitutionem, quam corporum externorum naturam indicant*; and in 38 he says of the *omnibus corporibus communia* that the mind necessarily perceives them *adequately* when it *suum vel quodcumque externum corpus percipit*. The difficulty of the definition is precisely that Spinoza does not qualify his assertion in any way, but on the contrary adds the emphatic *et nihil aliud*. If, then, a man's body is the only object of his mind, surely he must think of it whenever he does think.

There must, then, it would seem, be some serious confusion in Spinoza's thought, if his assertion of our proposition is to be explained. Among the commentators Pollock frankly recognizes this, and charges Spinoza with using the one word idea to denote two quite distinct relations; others, *e.g.*, Caird and Joachim, are unwilling to admit that Spinoza could be guilty of such confusion, but their own explanations of what Spinoza means when he speaks of the mind as the idea of the body are far from clear. The gist of Pollock's criticism can be given in a couple of sentences. After remarking that the human mind is spoken of as the idea of the body he says: "Now a man can easily think of his own body, but he is not always doing so, and when he does his thought will not be accurate unless he has learnt something of physiology. And even if every human being were an accomplished physiologist, the constant relation of the mind as a whole to the body as a whole would still be something different from the relation of the knowing to the known" (ed. 2, p. 124).<sup>1</sup> As regards the first sentence I think it is preferable to emphasize, not so much the negative statement that we are not always thinking of our body, as the positive one, that, unless something is wrong with the body, we do and must think a great deal more about other things. But it seems to me that Pollock's criticism is substantially right. As he is content, however, to state his criticism quite briefly, it may be worth while to give a rather fuller statement, and also to preface it by a brief statement of what seems the true view of the distinct relations in which the mind stands respectively to its objects, and to its body and external bodies considered not as objects of, but as conditions of, perception.

When the mind, or knower, K, perceives an object in the external world, *e.g.*, the sun, two relations between the mind and the thing (the sun) are involved: (1) the cognitive relation between the mind as knowing and the thing as object, (2) an existential relation between the thing and the embodied mind as existents. The latter relation needs a little explanation. The sun as a cause sets up light waves which travel to the earth, affect the body or eye, and so initiate a physiological process which causes a brain change, in virtue of which, as a condition,

<sup>1</sup> Caird (pp. 197-199) comments on these sentences, and, unless his reader had the sentences actually before him, the comments would almost certainly suggest that Pollock had asserted that Spinoza was logically bound to maintain that "every human being must be an accomplished physiologist." The suggestion would, of course, be quite false: Pollock says 'even if'. I will refer to Caird's defence of Spinoza later.



perception of the sun takes place. The series of events that starts from the sun and has its physical (or physiological) termination in the brain is in its earlier stages a causal series, but in its last stage, *viz.*, that in which perception takes place, and in which the brain functions as the organ or instrument of the mind, we had better describe it by another adjective such as 'instrumental,' for the relation of mind to body or brain is so intimate that the notion of causal action seems inappropriate. I propose to call the cognitive relation the C-relation, and the existential or causal-instrumental process the E-process. Now it is all-important to see and to keep in mind that the relation and the process are quite distinct from each other. For, in the first place, the E-process is always prior in time. In our example of the sun the interval between the start and the termination of the process is about eight minutes, since light takes that time to travel from the sun to the earth, and it is only when the process reaches its termination that perception takes place. The sun as thing is both object and cause, but its causal action is always 8 minutes ahead of its status as visible object; if the transmission of light were instantaneous the sun in the morning would be a visible object 8 minutes earlier. In the case of things close at hand the time interval is practically negligible, but it is theoretically important, because, if we keep it in mind, we shall be prevented from confusing object with cause and from supposing that the E-process intervenes between the *object* and the mind. If anything intervenes between the mind and its object, *i.e.*, if perception involves a process, the process must be psychical not physical. In the second place, the E-process is an inferred, not a perceived process, and more especially so as regards K himself. The point is not merely that much of it is not, and cannot, be perceived *in point of fact*, *e.g.*, the brain processes, but that *theoretically* even if they could be perceived, and in some magical way made perceptible to K himself, yet whatever brain processes he perceived they could never be the self-same brain processes as those which conditioned his perception, since there would always be the time-interval between eye and brain-change: object and cause or stimulus could never be absolutely coincident. In actual fact, of course, K does not perceive the E-process at all: it belongs to science and not to the world of ordinary perception.

If we ask ourselves the question which Spinoza answers in his way in II, 13, *viz.*, What is the object of K's knowledge (or external perception) as a whole?—we cannot possibly answer it as Spinoza does. It is a plain fact that we perceive much more

than the body. *E.g.*, if I turn and face the window of the room in which I am writing, I see not only my own hand and arm, but part of the room and its furniture, part of a garden, houses in the village, and a range of hills. What K knows or perceives is not his body only, but the whole field of objects that come within his knowledge or perception, among which his own body is only one, though for him a constant and very important one. But a difficulty may suggest itself here—it no doubt influenced Spinoza. How is it that, if perception is immediately conditioned by brain processes which are wholly within the body, we are nevertheless able to apprehend things that exist altogether apart from the body and only act upon it externally? It may be for us impossible to answer this question. It is conceivable that the brain processes might have had for their concomitants on the mental side merely sensations and feelings that would have indicated nothing but the state of the body itself: the mind of animals, or at any rate of the lower grades of animals, is often supposed to be of that type. But such is not the case as regards the human mind. Human brain processes are the condition of a knowledge, not only of the body, but of things that exist altogether apart from the body; while of the brain processes themselves nothing is known except by science, and then only in a vague and inferential way. It would be a serious blunder, then, to use the scientific doctrine that perception is conditioned by brain processes to throw doubt upon the directness or value of our knowledge of external things. The E-process is itself a fact of *knowledge* and presupposes on the part of the man of science that very apprehension of external things which it would have been used to throw doubt upon.

Consider now Spinoza's doctrine in relation to the foregoing statement. He asserts, of course, a cognitive relation between the mind and its object; he denies an instrumental relation of body to mind, for they belong to different attributes which have no *communio inter se*; but he asserts a correspondence between events in the two attributes, an identity of the *connexio causarum*. But now II, 13 throws all our previous ideas on these points into confusion. If we follow the epistemological doctrine of the *Int. Em.*, the cognitive relation is the relation of the *essentiae objectivae* in the mind to their *essentiae formales*, and when these latter are extended things it seems obvious to suggest that the knowledge is at the same time a correspondence between ideas and things, whether the correspondence is to be explained on the ordinary view that the mind experiences and apprehends the things, or on Spinoza's metaphysical theory that the ideas and

the things are parallel events in wholly separate attributes. The so-called correspondence does in fact hold between ideas and 'objects' in the strict sense of the latter term as meaning things considered *so far as known only*; for then, as we have seen, the case is really one of identity, and not of correspondence. But it does not hold between things *ἀπλῶς* and ideas, for we can know that our ideas of the things are incomplete. Still the cognitive relation and the relation of correspondence can, on Spinoza's view of ideas, be plausibly identified, especially if we are at liberty to assume that the incompleteness of *our* ideas is somehow compensated in the *intellectus infinitus*. And it will be remembered that on this general view Spinoza, strictly speaking, should argue from ideas to things by means of the *a priori* assumption *id quod in intellectu objective continetur, debet necessario in natura dari*. But now we are told that the mind's one and only object is the body. We are now to regard cognition and correspondence from a quite different point of view. We are to start, as the proof of II, 13 shows, from the empirical fact stated in axiom 4: *Nos corpus quoddam multis modis affici sentimus*—a fact which, as so stated, seems hardly consistent with the total independence of the attributes. We are to treat the correspondence, not as a general one between ideas and the things which are their objects, but as a much more special one between bodily states and their psychological correlates. We are to limit the object of mind accordingly and say it is the body only. And we are in effect to surrender the doctrine of the independence of the attributes by treating the mind as if it were really determined, in respect both of cognition and correspondence, by the body.

Camerer (p. 77) says of II, 13: "Dass die Ideen von den Affectionen des Körpers im menschlichen Geiste sind, wird hier mit der Erfahrungsthatsache bewiesen, dass wir die Empfindung von jenen Affectionen haben, welche selbstverständlich eine Empfindung des eigenen Körpers ist". I think that Camerer here gives us the right clue to Spinoza's reason for asserting the proposition. External bodies can make us aware of their existence only by affecting our own body, and it is these affections of our own body which alone *we* experience; consequently, it would seem, our own body is the mind's only object. The fallacy of this reasoning lies in the ambiguity of the expression 'affections of our own body', Spinoza's *ideae affectionum corporis*, Camerer's 'Empfindung des eigenen Körpers'. No one would wish to dispute that *affectiones* occurring in any other body can make no difference to us; it is only when

*affectiones* are excited in our own body that we experience anything. But this is not to say that what we experience, the object of our experience, is these *affectiones* themselves. The *ideae affectionum* are ideas which depend upon, or are conditioned by, the *affectiones*, but they need not be ideas which have these *affectiones* for their objects.<sup>1</sup> The *affectiones* upon which the ideas or perceptions *immediately* depend are in fact physiological processes, which the *body* may be said metaphorically to 'experience', but which *we*, strictly speaking, do not experience at all and which are objects only for the physiologist. Hence, although the *affectiones* are the *affectiones* of our own body, we must not conclude that the *ideae* corresponding to, or conditioned by, them have necessarily our own body for their object. When we perceive external bodies this is plainly not the case; and, when we are perceiving external bodies, we very often do not even think of our own body as being affected by them at all, though we may do so, *e.g.* when we are dazzled by a too bright light. The danger of confusion and fallacy is all the greater when a single word may be used, like Camerer's 'Empfindung' and our 'affection' above or 'sensation', to denote both process and object. Spinoza uses *affectiones* to denote the bodily processes or facts, and speaks of the *ideae affectionum*, but he fails apparently to see that the *ideae* which occur in the mind when

<sup>1</sup> There is an ambiguity here which should perhaps be noticed more particularly, in order to prevent misunderstanding. An *affectio* may be ( $\alpha$ ) a bodily fact of which we are aware, and so in the technical sense an 'object', or ( $\beta$ ) a physiological process of which we are not aware at all; and our awareness of  $\alpha$  is always conditioned by  $\beta$ . But there are cases of  $\alpha$  in which the bodily fact is so vague, and so internal to the body, as it were, that the description of it as an object seems unnatural, and these vaguer experiences may tend to confuse the really clear distinction between  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Suppose a person is being taught to play the violin. The teacher may take his pupil's hand and place it in the correct position for bowing. Here the pupil sees his own hand and the teacher's hand equally as objects by means of the same visual  $\beta$ ; he has also the tactual experience of his hand being touched and moved, but in ordinary talk we should be less ready to describe this experience as experience of an object, yet of course the touch and movement are objects of awareness in a sense in which the  $\beta$  on which the awareness of them immediately depends is not. And we may have bodily experiences of a much vaguer kind, vague bodily pains and discomfort, which we can perhaps hardly localize at all. If the  $\beta$  process is disordered it may itself give rise to pains, *e.g.*, eye-strain may cause headaches, but such pains are not an awareness of the  $\beta$  process. Thus the distinction between an *affectio* of the type  $\alpha$ , however vague the awareness may be, and an *affectio* of the type  $\beta$ , where there is no awareness whatsoever, remains absolute. The *imagines* of II, 17 S. belong, I take it, to type  $\beta$ .

the *affectiones* occur in the body need not have the *affectiones* or the body for their object. *Ideae affectionum* may mean either ideas which correspond to the *affectiones*, or ideas which are aware of or know the *affectiones*, but Spinoza apparently identifies the two meanings, *i.e.*, identifies correspondence and cognition, but now from a physiological rather than an epistemological point of view.

In 17 S. he says *corporis humani affectiones, quarum ideae corpora externa velut nobis praesentia repraesentant, rerum imagines vocabimus, tametsi rerum figuras non referunt: et quum mens hac ratione contemplatur corpora, eandem imaginari dicemus*. Here, it might seem at first sight, he is certainly distinguishing between the so-called 'images' in the body and the objects of the *mentis imaginatio* which are *corpora externa*. But then he has in view in this scholium the case in which the external bodies are *not* actually present and are not being *really perceived*. So it is to be feared that he would find it even easier in this case to say that the mind is expressing in its ideas only something that occurs in the body; and it might indeed be suggested that it is in the light of this case that we should interpret the case of perception itself, so that we should thus regard II, 13 as asserting that the mind's object is the body in the sense that (where we should ordinarily say that the mind's object is external bodies) the mind is only expressing by means of ideas of external bodies *affectiones* which are occurring in its own body. But if Spinoza was thinking on these lines he would surely have stated 13 in a different way and made his meaning clear; and even then he would still be interpreting his correspondence in two ways, epistemological and physiological, without clearly recognizing that he was doing so. I think, then, that we must agree with Pollock that, when Spinoza speaks of the mind as *idea sive cognitio corporis*, he is confused and is using the word *idea* in a new and strange way.

Caird denies the confusion, and endeavours to defend Spinoza against Pollock, but unfortunately he makes much of the reference to physiology which is quite incidental in Pollock's criticism, and on the really important points merely repeats Spinoza's own confusion. Thus he asks, "What can be the special object of the idea which is a particular mode of thought if not the particular mode of extension which corresponds to it?" (p. 198). Let the idea be an idea (or perception) of the sun. Surely there can be only one answer to the question, What is the special object of that idea? What, then, does Caird mean by his vague phrase 'the particular mode of exten-

sion which corresponds to it'? He goes on to say, "Outside of itself, there is nothing for the individual mind to think, nothing that for it immediately exists, save the individual mode of extension which is the obverse, so to speak, of itself". By the obverse he means, of course, the body. Now the body *as organ* is intimately connected with the mind in a way that nothing else is, but the body *as object* is only one object among other objects, and there is no justification for saying that there is no other object 'for the individual mind to think', and no other thing that 'for the individual mind immediately exists'. The body is normally perceived in an environment of other bodies, and the individual mind may at a given moment be much more intent upon one of these bodies than upon its own body. Finally we are told that "In being the mental correlate of the body the mind *thinks* the body". What is meant by this obscure expression '*thinks* the body'? Joachim also uses this phraseology (p. 71): "God, in being the 'soul' of a thing, thinks the thing, whose soul his act of thought is". On the same page he says: "The intelligence of God is one and the same as its objects: it is the soul-side of them, and is thereby, for God, the reflection or apprehension of them". The first half of the sentence, as an exposition of Spinoza's view, is obviously expressed loosely; in the second half 'soul-side' suggests an existential part or concomitant, 'apprehension' should mean cognition, 'reflection' is somewhere between the two, an existential copy. Later (p. 125) we are told, in like manner but with special reference to the finite body and soul, that "Every body is an idea, and its ideal side is at once its 'soul' and the apprehension of its body". Strictly speaking, no body *is* an idea: Spinoza's own statement (II, 7 S.) is that the *res* is one and the same but the modes are *two* (and therefore not the same). And here, too, 'ideal side', 'soul', and 'apprehension of its body' are equated like the similar expressions above. It may seem pedantic to insist on such points, especially if the quoted sentences are read in their (unquoted) contexts, but I do so in order to justify the remark that expositions of Spinoza which merely repeat his own confusion and obscurity do nothing to answer criticism like Pollock's.

The general charges against Spinoza, then, in the part of II which I am now to examine in more detail are (1) that he confuses the cognitive relation with the existential correspondence asserted by him in II, 7 and now to be taken in the sense of a correspondence between mind and body, (2) that, in consequence of that confusion, he asserts the body to be the sole object of

the mind's knowledge, and (3) that, in spite of his denial of any *communio* between the attributes, his argument repeatedly suggests that he is really thinking of the mind as determined by the body, so that, not parallelism, but epiphenomenalism, would be the word to describe the real tendency of his thought.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robinson (pp. 273-274) puts this predominance of the extended world over thought rather quaintly. For Spinoza, he says, "die bloss gedachte Welt ist der wirklichen nicht ebenbürtig. Wenn die realitas objectiva, wenn das Attribut des Denkens sich so weit wie die äussere Realität . . . erstreckt, so ist doch die intramentale Realität nicht mit der extramentalen zu vergleichen, ihr spezifisches Gewicht ist sozusagen nicht gleich Eins, sondern zwischen Null und Eins zu setzen." Such a view is quite at variance with II 5, which insists that the *esse formale* of ideas depends solely upon the *Res Cogitans*, or attribute of *Cogitatio*, and does not involve the conception of any other attribute; the proposition is evidently intended to assert the complete equality of the attribute of *Cogitatio* with the other attributes.

(*To be concluded.*)