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I.—SOME INCOHERENCIES IN SPINOZISM (I.).

BY A. E. TAYLOR.

I HOPE that the title I have given to these pages will not be misunderstood; to obviate any such possibility, let me explain that its words mean just what they say. I am not offering a *redargutio* of *Spinoza;* like most great philosophers, he has a personality not to be confined within the bounds of any set of formulæ, and a personality is a thing which defies "redargution." What I am concerned with is *Spinozism*, a certain body of principles which Spinoza believed himself to have demonstrated, though, as I shall argue, he has in fact done no such thing, partly because the principles are mutually incompatible, and some of them false, partly because his own *moral* nature was too noble to allow him to be faithful to some of them. If I am at all on the right lines in what I am going to urge, it will be seen that a certain common conception of Spinoza's philosophy is the exact reverse of the truth. His doctrine has often been described, for example, by J. A. Froude, in his study of the *Ethics*,[1] as one to which we may feel a justified but unreasoned moral aversion, but one of which the logical structure is flawless when once its few initial postulates are conceded. I wish to argue that this notion of Spinoza as the terrible impeccable reasoner is completely false, that the iron panoply of logic in which he is imagined to be

[1] *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, I. 339-400.

encased is riven from head to foot by gaping cracks, and that it is just his illogicality which leaves it possible to feel a deserved reverence for so much of his moral and religious teaching. In this matter I feel myself much more in accord with the judgments of Prof. A. Guzzo [1] than with those of the greater number of expositors, and since Prof. Guzzo's work seems to have been little read by students in our own country, I shall not hesitate to use it freely.[2]

I must explain also that I am not undertaking to refute a consistent and consequent Monism, or 'Pantheism,' if there has ever been such a thing, but Spinozism, a doctrine which may profess to be, and mean to be, Monism, but never succeeds in being what it would fain be. Spinoza, whatever he may be, is no consistent Monist or 'Pantheist', for the simple reason that he never succeeds in making his *substance*, or *God*, the one and only reality; his whole scheme of physics, psychophysics, and ethics stands or falls with the recognition that there really are such things as the plurality of bodies and minds believed in by the common man. It is true that he *says* that all of them are 'modes' of his one substance, but it is no less vital to his doctrine that these modes shall be really distinct modes with an individuality of their own which is never explained. Peter's mind and Paul's mind may be both modes in the 'infinite intellect of God', and Peter's body and Paul's body both "modes of God as extended", but it never occurs to Spinoza to deny that the "ideas" which make up Peter's mind 'belong together' in a way in which an 'idea' in Peter's mind and one in Paul's do not, or that the components of the 'complex mode of extension' which is Peter's organism form a whole in a way in which components of Peter's body and components of Paul's do not. Peter's head and Paul's trunk do not constitute a single 'complex mode of extension', as Peter's head and Peter's trunk do, nor does an 'idea A' which is part of Peter's mind contract an association with one which is part of Paul's mind. A really consequent Monism would have to regard the very distinction between one body, or one mind, and another as an illusion of

[1] *Il Pensiero di Spinoza*, 1924, a work to which I never recur without illumination and refreshment.

[2] Suspicion of Spinoza's logic ought to be at once suggested to any reader of the *Ethics* by his fondness for 'proofs' which are said to be immediately evident from a definition, and for the use of *reductio ad absurdum*. The former are no *proofs* at all, but a pretence that proof is unnecessary, and the latter method is almost always fallacious, since there is nearly always an 'omitted alternative' of which the so-called proof takes no account.

" imagination " ; a consequent ' Pantheism ' would have to deny that there *is* anything at all besides its ἓν καὶ πᾶν.[1]

But this doctrine, true or false, is not Spinoza's. *Tat tvam asi* is no catchword of *his* ethics, any more than of those of a Southern European Christian priest or a Cartesian vivisector of the " dumb animals ". Schopenhauer *is*, if you like, a consistent Monist, since he holds that my *natura*, your *natura*, and the *natura* of all the creatures round us really is one thing ; it is the same *natura*. Spinoza is so far from believing anything of the kind that it is fundamental in his *Ethics* that my *natura* is not even the same *natura* as that of my fellow-man ; as he explained to Blyenbergh, if Nero commits matricide and Spinoza does not, the reason is simply that matricide " agrees with the *natura* of Nero, but disagrees with the utterly different *natura* of Spinoza ".[2] The very *crux* of his position is that he proclaims in one breath that there is a single all-embracing individual substance, and in the next that every one of us, though we have all just been declared to be mere ' modes ' of this single individual reality, is so much of an individual as to be literally *sui generis*. The position seems logically quite untenable, but tenable or not, it is plainly not genuine unadulterated Monism. A really thoroughgoing Monism would have to dismiss the *facies totius universi*, which Spinoza told Tschirnhaus is an ' infinite mode mediately produced by God ', as a mere illusion. In fact, it is only a very short step from this recognition of the indefinitely variegated *facies totius universi* as a reality to Pluralism. You have only to insist strongly enough

[1] It might be made the test of a real ' Pantheism ' whether it can, like Schopenhauer, accept the Indian TAT TVAM ASI. Spinoza notoriously cannot. His whole scale of ethical values turns on the thought that the *natura* of A is always radically *different* from that of B, and therefore the " pleasures " of *A* and those of *B* (*e.g.*, the sexual enjoyment of a man and of a horse) are different in kind (*Ethics*, III. 57, Schol.). Indeed, if the nominalism he professes, for example in his correspondence with Blyenbergh, is to be taken strictly, since the *naturæ* of any two men are radically discrepant, the pleasures which two *men* derive from gratification of the ' same appetite ' should also be different in *kind*, though this has, of course, to be conveniently forgotten when he is constructing a general psychology and an ethics. The denial that a " common nature of man " is more than an empty name really removes Spinozism *further* than orthodox Christianity from the thought of ἓν καὶ πᾶν. (The same absolute reality of a plurality of different *naturæ* is equally implied as the foundation of Spinoza's political theory of *jus*.)

[2] *Ep.* XX. Quantum ad me, ea omitto, vel omittere studeo, quia expresse cum mea *singulari* natura pugnant. Thus the *natura singularis* of Nero or Orestes (who figure as illustrations in the discussion) is something really diverse from that of Spinoza, the distinction is not merely a *modal* one, in the scholastic and Cartesian sense.

on the point that, however true it is that the *facies totius universi* remains in some sense the same, it is equally true that it is perpetually changing, and " substance " will become, almost before you are aware of it, a mere collective designation for the complex of *naturæ* which constitute a " multiverse ". And I cannot help believing that if Spinoza's life had not been so untimely cut short, he would have seen himself that his actual position was untenable, and that a choice would have to be made between adhering strictly to the unity of substance at the cost of making substance a wholly unknowable " thing-in-itself ", and abiding by the knowability of substance at the cost of admitting a plurality of substances.

The real source of the trouble—as of most of the worst metaphysical difficulties in the system—is the fatal admission that there are such things as those which Spinoza calls the ' finite modes ' of his infinite substance. We could, I think, just make shift to understand how the one substance expresses its *essentia* in a plurality of ' infinite modes '. We could, for example, understand the statement that extension has a uniform character which is disclosed to us by our study of the unlimited variety of the various geometrical figures possible in it. An Euclidean space has a distinctive character in virtue of the postulates which define it, but the only way to get an adequate insight into this distinctive character is to study the properties which belong, in virtue of these postulates, to triangles, parallelograms, circles, hyperbolas. . . . But all the ' modes ' which come under our study in this way, as we extend our acquaintance with geometry, are the successive *determinants* of the *determinable* ' extension '. They are all ' universals ', ' high abstractions '; none of them is genuinely a *this* and an individual, or, to put the same thing in another way, none of them has a history, and this is just why it is so easy to know them *sub quadam specie æternitatis*. The utmost degree of specification which can be reached on these lines is at best the *species specialissima*. It is quite different when we have to deal with the so-called ' finite ' modes that are the ' particular things ' of every-day parlance, which are all really individual, and have a real history. Peter, Paul, this horse, this crystal, are not simply further and more highly determined determinants of the determinable *man*, or *quadruped*, or *mineral*, in the way in which the two fundamental triangles of Plato's *Timæus* are merely further specifications of ' the right-angled triangle '. Each of them is, what the ' isosceles right-angled triangle ', for example, is not, a τόδε τι. Now, as I say, we can perhaps understand that Spinoza's one substance should, as a consequence

of its ' essential nature ', and of nothing else, find expression in a vast plurality of specifications, so long as these specifications remain at the level of ' high abstractions '.[1] But when we come to the ' finite ' modes Peter, Paul and the rest, we are dealing with genuine historical individuals with ' biographies ', and we cannot evade the question what provides the principle of their individuation. There is nothing to account for it in the professed postulates of *Ethics* I., and Spinoza never touches on the subject. He is content simply to assume the reality of such genuine individuals as a fact of common experience, and to leave us to guess, if we can, how it is to be reconciled with his avowed principles.

For my own part, I confess that I do not see how the reconciliation is to be achieved. Substance, we must remember, is supposed to give itself its own specifications wholly from within, and the only clue we are ever given to the nature of the process is that it is illustrated by the connection of the specific properties of particular geometrical figures, such as the triangle, with the *essentia* pervasively characteristic of extension. (Thus I suppose we might see an example of a mode and its connection with the attribute of substance to which it belongs, in the proposition that it follows from Euclid's postulates that the three perpendiculars from the angular points of a triangle to the opposite sides are concurrent, or that, if two chords of a circle intersect, the rectangles contained by their segments are equal.) But truths of this kind involve no reference to true individuality at all. They might help us to understand the articulation of a geometrical system ; what they leave wholly unintelligible is how *history* gets into the system. It is got in, in fact, simply by taking over the individual things and persons of our every-day thinking bodily, renaming them ' finite modes ' of substance, and refusing to ask whether it is in keeping with the avowed principles of the system that there

[1] And yet *can* we understand this after all ? Take, *e.g.*, the conception of *res extensa* as a something of three (or if you like, of *n*) dimensions. Is there anything *in the concept itself* to suggest the notion of the various figures of geometry ? Spinoza might have profited by the advice given in the next century to Priestly by a bishop, to read the *Parmenides*. If you start your metaphysics with a single ' high abstraction ', you will never extract anything from it except itself. No wonder that Spinoza has to admit (*Ep.* 9) to De Vries that he has really given one and the same definition of both *substance* and *attribute*. (Descartes, I think, escapes *this* difficulty. Substance is, with him as with Spinoza, *id quod in se est*, but not at the same time *id quod per se concipitur ;* it is ' conceived ' through an *attribute*. Thus God, for Descartes, is *the* substance *par excellence*, and is *per se*, but is conceived by us through the attribute of *cogitatio*, as *ens cogitans*.)

should be such finite modes at all. It is true that in the essay on the *Amendment of the Intellect* Spinoza had expressed his belief that the method of which he was dreaming would get rid altogether of abstractions and 'universals', replacing them by 'singulars' which were somehow to do the required work of disclosing necessary connection without paying the price for it in abstraction. But even if such a method were possible at all, it seems at least clear that Spinoza never attained to it. All through the *Ethics* he is reasoning in terms of abstractions while he supposes himself to be dealing with concrete individuals. He never even realises that a general property, *e.g.* of the circle, is not made into an individual fact by simply illustrating his reference to it by a woodcut, like that used in *Ethics* II. 8.[1] One might, indeed, fairly suggest that the very possibility of "finite" modes is already excluded by Spinoza's own line of reasoning in the *Short Treatise.* It is argued there (Ch. 2, p. 21, tr. Wolf) that the infinite substance cannot have given rise to any finite substance, because if it had done so, "having been infinite it would have had to change its whole essence". Now, this reasoning, if valid, does not depend on the use of the word *substance;* it applies equally to an infinite "mode"; if an infinite mode is to originate finite modes within itself, it also, in doing so, must change its very character as infinite. (It would be a mere juggling with words to offer the retort that the difficulty does not occur in the case of modes, because a mode has no *essentia—essentia* is always the *essentia* of a substance; since Spinoza himself constantly speaks of that which does, or does not, constitute the *essentia* of things which he professes to regard as finite modes, such as the body, or the mind, of Peter or Paul, or what he incorrectly takes to be a "particular" triangle. If there is a single infinite individual, and this individual can give rise to no others, plainly there are no finite individuals at all, and it is only by an illegitimate resort to "imagination" that I make the separation between two complex modes involved in the statement that one of them is the organism of Peter and the other the distinct organism of Paul. To be consistent with my Monism, I must say that the dividing line I commonly draw between the bodies, or the minds, of Peter and of Paul is only drawn by an arbitrary fiction. But though Indian thinkers have apparently been willing to say this, Spinoza was not, and could not have said it

[1] We may or may not be satisfied with any of the theories of the Schoolmen about the 'principle of Individuation', but they were at least aware, as Spinoza seems not to be, that there is a problem to be solved, and they seriously tried to solve it.

without making nonsense of his whole ethical superstructure. Peter and Paul *have* to be for him just as much genuine individuals as they are for the 'man in the street', and the fact is only verbally disguised by re-naming them both 'modes'.)

However, let us waive this point and concede, for the sake of argument, that infinite substance can have *real* finite modes, each of which is really one, and really distinct from every other. Even so, we are only at the beginning of the troubles created for us by the existence of these modes. How grave these troubles are is seen by a consideration of the two fundamental propositions that (1) "substance" is their cause, but an immanent, not a transitive, cause (*Ethics* I. 18); and (2) that the attributes of this substance are, each of them, really indivisible, and taken to be divisible only by an illusion of the imagination (*Ethics* I. 15, Schol. The case is argued with special reference to the "attribute" of extension, but the reasoning is equally applicable to any other.)

The difficulty about causality has been so admirably put by Guzzo that I must begin my remarks by reproducing the substance of his criticism. In ordinary life we constantly constate the connection between a change α in one thing A and a change β in a second thing B, and say that A has caused β in B. The causality here asserted is transitive, because the cause is one thing A, and the effect a state β in a different thing B. Spinoza would have us mend our speech by saying not that A causes β in B, but that *God*, as determined by the finite mode A, causes β *in God*, as determined by the second finite mode B. Now verbally, by this formula, we keep within the bounds of *immanent* causality, since God is verbally referred to as both cause and effect. But the device is, after all, only a verbal one for 'saving face'. The patent fact, of which we have to devise some account, is the connection between α, an occurrence falling within A, and β, an occurrence falling outside A, in B. What account of the fact are we to offer? Shall we say that it is the infinite substance itself, as such, which is directly responsible for this connection? If we do, we have broken completely with one of Spinoza's main tenets, that the cause of a finite mode is always 'God as determined by another antecedent finite mode' (I. 28). Or to avoid this difficulty, shall we say that the transaction is due altogether to the finite mode A? Then we are ascribing to the finite modes a connection which falls outside the activity of the infinite substance, and are denying another fundamental thesis of Spinozism, that whatever is at all is "in God" and can only be conceived "through God" (I. 15), since we are recognising in our finite modes a transitive activity which falls outside the purely

immanent activity which is all Spinoza will allow us to attribute to " God ". (It is really the same difficulty which is exposed by Martineau in a rather different terminology when he argues that the ' finite ' modes " institute a *new kind of causality*, other than that by which property depends on essence, *viz.*, that by which *thing comes from thing* . . . they institute a *new order of nature*, other than the order of rational necessity calculating from the dual attributes, *viz.*, an order of scientific experience, spreading a network of *successional connection* through all dimensions of the world ".[1]) And there is no conceivable escape from this *impasse* when once finite individuals, however cunningly ' camouflaged ' as " modes," have been allowed to get a footing in the system; with them transitive causality inevitably makes its appearance, and the immanentism which was to be the central conception of the Spinozistic philosophy is ruined. There are, in fact, only two possible options; either finite individuality is real and transitive causality is real along with it; or else transitive causality is an illusion and there are no finite individuals, only at most " infinite modes ", and the determinable of which they are determinants becomes itself no more really individual than " infinite Euclidean space " is individual. Spinozism is no more than a gallant but hopeless attempt to " have it both ways " which ends by having it neither way.

How hopeless the attempt is, is most readily seen from the glaring contradiction on which Martineau, in particular, has fastened. On the one hand, every detail of existence is to follow from the *essentia* of ' God ' with exactly the same ' necessity ' with which the properties of the triangle follow from its *essentia* as assumed to be formulated in its definition, and for that reason there is really neither contingency nor freedom (except in a Pickwickian sense) anywhere in the universe (I. 29); on the other, the *essentiæ* of the " things created by God " do not " involve existence " (I. 24), which must mean that the existence of these things is contingent.[2] Strictly speaking, to ensure consistency, there ought to be *no* " things created by God "; there should be only the one universal substance, an infinite determinable inseparable from its no less infinite determinants, and the only *essentia* there is should be the *essentia* of this substance as constituted by its infinitely numerous disparate attributes, and this *essentia* should carry with it necessary existence; a " finite

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*,[2] I. 318.

[2] And yet, when we get to Pt. V., we shall be told there (Prop. 6) that mastery over our passions must involve our thinking of *all things* as necessary, *i.e.*, as being just what according to I. 24 they are not.

mode " should be a mere arbitrary figment of " imagination " without genuine existence and without *essentia*. But when once these modes have intruded into the system, since it is so manifest that their existence does *not* follow from the nature of substance " as the properties of the triangle follow from its definition ", there is nothing for it but to make that existence in fact contingent while you are verbally proclaiming that contingency is an illusion of human ignorance.

Indeed, Spinoza's case is even worse than I have so far made it appear. It would not be true even of his " infinite " modes that they follow from the nature of substance as the properties of a geometrical figure follow from its definition. As Tschirnhaus told his master " from the definition of a figure you can never deduce more than *one* property ".[1] He would have been still nearer the mark if he had said " you can deduce none ". No mere manipulation of a definition of a figure will ever elicit from it any property except that which you have already assumed for the purposes of your definition. What you require as the premisses from which you are to deduce the properties of a triangle are the whole body of postulates which together define the universe of discourse to which the triangle belongs, a region of space (Euclidean or otherwise, as the case may be). Even so it is with the deduction of anything from the nature of " substance ". It has, we are told, infinitely numerous attributes, and each of them, in its own way, expresses the same *essentia*. Be it so, and define each of such attributes as is known to us as carefully and exactly as you please ; from your definition of *extensio* or *cogitatio*, taken as a sole ultimate premiss, you will extract nothing but itself. That Spinoza should habitually write as though this had never crossed his mind until Tschirnhaus stated the difficulty, seems to me to show that he had not the same insight into ' geometrical method ' as the philosophers who have been real mathematicians, Plato, Descartes, Leibniz.[2]

[1] *Ep.* 82.

[2] Descartes, it will be remembered, had specified as the subject-matter of *Mathesis universalis*, *ordo et mensura* (*Regulæ*, IV.). Now, both *ordo* and *mensura* presuppose a *real* plurality in that which is ordered or measured. Spinoza has involved himself in the awkward contradiction that though he professes to have demonstrated that there can be only *one* substance, ' God ', it is, as he more than once says, *improprie* that God is called *unus* or *unicus*. And *he* can hardly escape by falling back on the scholastic distinction between the ' transcendental ' and the ' numeral ' senses of the word *one*, since the thesis which is indispensable for the whole of the subsequent construction is that of I. 5, that ' there cannot be *two or more* substances of the same nature or attribute ', where it is precisely *numerical* unity that he is anxious to assert.

It might look at first sight to be a proper reply to the last paragraph to say that I have there myself spoken of the body of the postulates of a geometry as *defining* a space, and thus seem to be conceding that, after all, the infinitely numerous propositions of such a geometry do all follow from a definition, *viz.*, from the definition of a space, or a region of space. But it has to be noted that one cannot define a space directly; one can only reach a quasi-definition of it by making a set of postulates not about *it*, but about specific configurations in it. The assumption, for example, which discriminates the space of Euclid from that of Lobachevsky or Bolyai has to be stated as a proposition about parallel straight lines, or about the angles of a quadrilateral. You have to say that Euclid assumes that only one straight line can be drawn through a given point in a plane parallel to a given straight line, whereas the other two geometers assume that two such parallels can always be drawn; or that Euclid assumes that straight lines in a plane which are not parallel always intersect, the others that there are straight lines which are neither intersecting nor parallel; or again that Euclid assumes that if three of the angles of a quadrilateral are right, the fourth will also be right, the other two geometers that it will be acute. However you prefer to express the critical postulate, *space* is never named in it, and your proposition could not be admitted as a definition of space, or part of such a definition, by any philosopher who, like Spinoza, regards it as self-evident that every proposition must assert a predicate of a subject. (If that position is called in question, there is no longer any reason why, if there is a supreme infinite substance and also a multiplicity of finite things, the finite things *must* be unsubstantial adjectives of the primary substance. They may equally well be, as Christian orthodoxy teaches that they are, " created substances ".)

The denial of transitive causality, then, seems to me a position which could only be consistently adhered to in a philosophy prepared, as Spinozism is not, to regard the existence of finite individuals as a mere illusion. Equally unfortunate, to my mind, is the persistent attempt to deny that extension, in particular, is really divisible, or has parts. Of course we see why Spinoza finds it necessary to insist on the paradox. We cannot deduce extension as a consequence of anything more ultimate. (It has generally been held that Leibniz's strenuous attempt to deduce it from differences in ' point of view ' among his unextended monads really presupposes in its premisses the very difference of position in space it is intended to explain.) But since there is at least one other ' irreducible ' with which a philosophic account of

the universe has to reckon, *cogitatio*, we cannot identify extension with the all-inclusive substance; it must be an attribute of that substance. As an attribute it must express the *essentia* of substance, and, as substance, it is held, can be shown to be one, the attribute must express this unity; it must be rigidly one too. But though Spinoza asserts this consequence hardily enough in words, the facts are really too much for him. No one who is about to plunge into a psychophysical construction like that of *Ethics* II. can get away from the recognition that my body and yours both have their environments, that your environment is not mine, any more than your organism is mine, that both our organisms are exceedingly complex. All through the psychophysical and ethical part of the treatise we consequently find the expressions *bodies*, in the plural, and *parts of body* recurring at every turn, as though the author had forgotten his own declaration that the *res extensa* is only supposed to have parts, or regions, by an illusion of the imagination. It is not surprising, then, to find, as Guzzo has noted, that Spinoza has no sooner made this declaration than he feels it to be an extravagance, and tries to water its meaning down until it becomes a mere common-place. He first reduces the proposition to a mere assertion that the extended is a continuum (which is all that his illustrative woodcut implies). But a continuum, of course, is so far from having no parts or being indivisible, that it is only a continuum because it has an infinity of distinguishable parts; it would not be a continuum if it could not be divided and subdivided endlessly.[1] Finally, we get a still further frittering away of the meaning of the paradox. As an example of the indivisibility of extension we are told that water, considered simply as water, is the same everywhere throughout its whole extent. This is only to say that all water has the same chemical or physical components, that any portion of it behaves like, exhibits the same characteristics as, any other part, a statement which obviously does nothing to justify the assertion that water is only supposed by mistake to have parts, or even the less drastic assertion that a body of water must be a continuum.[2]

The metaphysical framework of *Ethics* I. thus requires, if it is

[1] Unending divisibility is notoriously not a sufficient condition for continuity, though a necessary one. But it was the only condition recognised in Spinoza's day, and the appeal to it is enough for my immediate purpose.

[2] *E.g.*, according to Descartes no body of water is really continuous; it always has 'pores' filled with something other than itself. But it would not follow from this that one sample of it will not behave like any other, since the matter in the 'pores' of both might be alike.

to be retained, the admission that "finite modes" are mere illusions, while the whole edifice of doctrine elaborated in *Ethics* II.-V., demands that they shall be nothing of the sort.

This is a bad omen for the consistency of what is yet to follow, and, in fact, there are equally grave inconsistencies yet to be faced. We are confronted with one of the worst of them in the very opening propositions of *Ethics* II. about the nature of the mind and its relation to the body. The body, we are told, is a "complex mode of extension (a finite one) in God", and the mind is a "complex idea, or mode of thought in God" corresponding exactly to the body. We remark at once, then, that Spinoza simply identifies a man's mind with the series of his acts of cognition and volition; it is they which make up the complex mode of which he speaks. Commonly we distinguish three different things: (1) an act of thinking, (2) the man or person who thinks this thought, or, to speak more accurately, though less idiomatically, thinks this *thinking*, (3) that which the thinking thinks of; or more briefly, we distinguish (1) a *concipient*, if I may invent such a word, (2) a *conception*, (3) a *conceptum*. Spinoza simply identifies (1) and (2) without more ado. We commonly hold that there is such an entity as the man who does the thinking, and if we are to be proved wrong about this, we are at least not proved to be wrong by simply taking the unreality of the distinction for granted under cover of an arbitrary definition.[1] When I say that I am engaged in a certain train of thought, I mean, or suppose myself to mean, something more than that such a train of thought is an actual occurrence, or even that it is connected in an obscure way with the concomitant occurrence of a certain train of cerebral processes; both those statements might be true, and yet—or so, at least, all of us commonly think—*I* might be non-existent. What I suppose myself to mean by *I* is neither the mental events nor the bodily events but the man, or self, who owns both the mind and the body. If this is to be shown to be a mistake, it must be shown to be so by a more refined and careful analysis of *self-consciousness*. But Spinoza has no improved theory of self-consciousness by which to correct the *naïveté* of our common thinking. He merely ignores it. No

[1] And we are certainly not proved to be wrong by a magisterial reference to Kant's assault on the 'paralogisms' of Rational Psychology. Kant's attempt to identify the thinker with the 'I think' which is a mere formal concomitant of thinking (or at least to argue that the identification is possible) seems to me a particularly glaring example of the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness'. He offers us a 'high abstraction' as the complete analysis of a concrete historical fact.

doubt he is careful to tell us that just as there is an "idea" in God of every mode of extension, so there is a second idea of every idea, and this is apparently meant to be his account of consciousness of self. But as Martineau rightly said, what is 'explained' by this theory of the "idea of the idea" is not what everyone means by self-consciousness: it is not the *man* who is said to be aware of *himself*, but his *ideas* which are asserted to be conscious of *themselves*. And the two things are very different. It is one thing to say that I know the Pythagorean theorem and also know that I know it; it is a wholly different statement to say that my *knowing* of the Pythagorean theorem is a knowing that I am knowing it. The first statement is just what all but the "sophisticated" believe to be true, and is thus, at least, highly plausible; the second, so far as it is intelligible, seems to be plainly false. Spinoza's doctrine does not even explain how we could ever have fallen into the illusion of supposing that *we* are self-conscious.

And if it seems at least difficult to subscribe to the identification of concipient and conceiving, there may perhaps be an equal difficulty in accepting the theory of the relation of conceiving and *conceptum* which Spinoza offers us as an account of what we mean by knowing a natural fact. What happens, according to the theory, when, in common parlance, I am said to know a fact about the bodily world? Simply a compresence "in God" of a physical event and a mental event which is its counterpart. But is this enough to constitute knowledge? Manifestly not; on the theory itself there is such a compresence, in God 'as constituting my mind', of an 'idea' corresponding to *every* physical process, in God 'as constituting my body', but of most of these physical processes we are profoundly unconscious. If I am to know the simplest fact about my own body, it is not enough that an 'ideal counterpart' of that fact shall *exist;* the bodily fact and the ideal counterpart—or rather I who am the owner of the ideal counterpart—must further stand in the unique and indefinable relation *known-knower*. Otherwise you might have the closest correspondence between the "modes" of extension and of thought, there might be a determinate a in the one for every a in the other, and yet there would be no *knowledge* of the bodily world. The changes in that world would unfold themselves in their regular causal order; concomitantly there would be a second world of 'ideas' also unfolding themselves in *their* regular order, but there would be no *cognisance* of terms of the one order by terms of the other. Minds answering precisely to the Spinozistic definition might perfectly well be what Münsterberg held the

" mind " described by the psychologist to be, beings which" know nothing by their cognitions and will nothing by their volitions ". Münsterberg, of course, meant his language to be a deliberately paradoxical way of saying that the " mind " discoursed of by the laboratory psychologist is " not the real thing ", but a fiction consciously substituted for the reality. But the question I should like to ask is whether any philosopher who deliberately substitutes ' the existential *compresence* of idea and *ideatum* ' for " *knowledge* of the *ideatum* through the idea " has not *un*consciously confused the fiction with the reality.

Now this confusion, which turns upon forgetting that an act of knowing is not merely something that ' takes place along with ' certain events in the extra-mental world, but is an *apprehension* of those facts by a knowing subject, is, in Spinoza, not a mere casual oversight; it is made almost inevitable by the fundamental *hypothesis* of his whole system. If the various " modes " can be really sorted out as belonging each to an " attribute " of substance wholly disparate from all its other " attributes ", and if it is true that no mode of one attribute can ever contribute to the causation (which for Spinoza, means the rational explanation) of a mode of any other, then thought and extension should go each its own way, each " corresponding ", if you like, in the closest fashion to the other, but wholly unaffected by it. Since no appeal is to be made to any fact of the one order in accounting for any fact of the other, our psychology, theory of knowledge, ethics should never be allowed to make any mention of the existence of bodies; they should deal exclusively with relations between ' modes of thought ', regarded simply as ' mental occurrences ' without any objective reference. We ought to be able to construct an epistemology which should treat of knowing without ever introducing the reference to anything non-mental which is a known object. And in doing so we should be adhering strictly to the line of thought which led Spinoza to define an adequate idea as one which has the internal characteristics of truth, and to exclude all reference to the currently recognised external characteristic, ' agreement of the idea with its object '. We should have, what it seems to me later philosophers have never succeeded in attaining, a thoroughly coherent ' coherency ' theory of truth.

In point of fact, however, it is so abundantly clear that no account can be given of knowing with the least vestige of plausibility which ignores the most patent characteristic of knowing, *viz.*, that it is always the knowing of an object other than itself, that Spinoza himself habitually neglects to observe his own rule that the modes of each attribute are to be explained

exclusively by reference to other modes of the same attribute. To account for the errors into which we are betrayed by 'imagination,' he is forced to fall back on the thesis that our 'ideas' of an external body, until they have been corrected by the teachings of philosophy, represent rather the state of our own body, as affected by the external body, than that of the external body itself (II. 17, Schol.). The states of my own body are thus openly introduced as the really significant determinants of my 'ideas'. For example, I have an hallucination of the presence of Peter's body in some situation in which Peter's body is not really there; this is explained by the usual 'associationist' theory that I imagine Peter to be present because, in consequence of 'association', certain parts of my brain are affected as they would be if Peter were actually there. We need not quarrel with the explanation, but it is flatly incompatible with the previously assumed doctrine that modes of 'thought' must be accounted for exclusively in terms of other modes of 'thought'. It has been now recognised that, after all, there are modes of 'thought'—those involved in sense-perception—which cannot be accounted for except by reference to modes of 'extension'. And this necessary admission is what really gives rise to the formidable difficulty raised by Tschirnhaus,[1] why, if there are an infinity of 'attributes' and every 'mode' is represented in each of them, our knowledge should be confined to modes of thought itself and modes of extension. It might have been a consistent position—though it would have made knowledge of the extra-mental world impossible—to say that a mode of thought can be cognisant of nothing else but modes of the same attribute. But the moment it is admitted that a mode of thought can be the apprehension of a mode of extension, it becomes pertinent to point out that on Spinoza's principles the given mode of thought a_1 is related to the corresponding mode a_2 of extension *only* as it is also related to a_3, a_4 . . . a_n, the corresponding modes of all the "unknown attributes". The relation in each case, is simply that of compresence and correspondence (whatever correspondence may mean). No reason has been given for holding that there is any further and more intimate relation between a_1 and a_2 than between, say, a_1 and the 'unknown' a_3. In the case of a_2 the mere fact that it is compresent 'in God' with a_1 and, in some unexplained way, corresponds to a_1, was supposed to be equivalent to the fact, 'a_2 is known through a_1': by parity of reasoning, seeing that the same conditions are fulfilled for a_3, a_4 and the

[1] *Ep.* 65.

rest, it ought to follow that a_3, a_4 . . . are also known. Spinoza's reply (*Ep.* 66), as we know, was that they *are* known, though not by *our* minds. But this is a mere evasion of the difficulty. Since my mind admittedly can get at and apprehend what is not mental at all, as it does when it knows any fact about body, what is there to prevent it from getting at the whole range of non-mental modes? *Why* should it be able to burst the barriers which separate attribute from attribute in the one case of extension and in no other?

I own I suspect Spinoza of having fallen in his reply into a fallacy which would naturally be facilitated by his identification of the mind with the complex of 'ideas'. There *are* ideas of all the modes of all the attributes, he says, but these ideas 'constitute the minds of some other beings, not our minds'. Now it is true, of course, that the thought or perception of a mode a_3 of some unknown 'attribute' which 'corresponds' to a_2, a mode of extension, will not be the *same* thought as the thought of a_2. But this is no reason for saying that a_2 and a_3 may not be thought of or perceived by the same knowing *subject*. An electrical disturbance in the atmosphere is 'expressed' both by a flash of lightning and a roll of thunder, but we cannot infer that because the visual percept of the flash is a different *percept* from the audible percept of the thunder-clap, one percipient cannot be aware of both. It is not true that every man must be either blind and unable to see the flash, or deaf and unable to hear the crash. Tschirnhaus was entirely right in saying that Spinoza ought to have explained why, out of an infinity of 'modes' which, as expressive of the same fact, stand on the same level only one—the expression in the attribute of extension—is accessible to us.

There are, of course, philosophies to which it need present no difficulty to suppose that there may be creatures whose perceptions are wholly different from ours, revealing to them characters of the external world which we cannot even imagine and concealing from them all which are so familiar to us. But a philosophy which can consistently find a place for such a speculation must be one which is not dominated, like Spinoza's, by the conception of 'attributes', each made up of utterly disparate expressions of the same identical 'modes'. Such philosophies can intelligibly say that if there are percipient creatures such as we are imagining, the range of natural fact disclosed to them and that disclosed to us are simply *different;* the 'modes' they know are *not* counterparts of the 'modes' we know. For Spinoza the problem is insoluble because he assumes that the unknown a_3, a_4 . . . are

really the same fact as the known a_2, and that further the knowing of a_2 by a_1 is accounted for by the consideration that a_1 is the same fact as a_2, only expressed under another 'attribute'.

(The same inadequate notion of what is meant by knowing has often reappeared in later writers who might have learned better from reflecting on the insoluble tangle into which it had led Spinoza. Huxley, for example, criticises Descartes' *cogito* by saying that all we are warranted in assuming as indubitable fact is not *cogito, I* am conscious, but *cogitatur*, there is consciousness going on. He should have seen that Descartes proved his greatness as a philosopher precisely by not falling into this trap. *His* immediate certainty is what it ought to be, a concrete personal fact, *ego nunc et hic cogito, ille homo qui est Renatus Descartes hic et nunc cogitat*,[1] not a mere 'high abstraction'. The only real criticism to which he lies open is that he is content to be sure that *hic et nunc cogito*, where, to exclude all abstraction, he should have said *hic et nunc cogito hoc vel illud*, so preserving the necessary reference to the object of awareness. The concrete fact is never 'awareness exists', but always 'this or that subject is now aware *of* this or that'.) It is this neglect to insist on the unique character of all knowing as an apprehension of an object by a subject which explains the standing and apparently unconscious Spinozistic equivocation by which 'the idea of Peter' may mean either 'the mental complex which corresponds to Peter's brain and nervous system, the mind of Peter', or 'the mental complex which exists when Paul thinks of Peter', Paul's 'idea' of Peter,' or may mean both in the same breath, if it is convenient for the argument that it should. In fact, the two 'correspondences' are of a wholly disparate kind. The 'idea of Peter' which is the mind of Peter 'corresponds' to 'the body of Peter,' in Spinoza's theory, in the sense that it is the same identical thing, expressed first in terms of one 'attribute' and then in terms of another. 'Paul's idea of Peter' does not 'correspond to the body of Peter' in the same sense; in that sense what it 'corresponds to' and 'represents', as Spinoza himself is careful to tell us, is not Peter's body but Paul's body.

[1] And yet this second transcription is not quite adequate. For it only expresses a judgement which *might* be made by a bystander, and *he* might conceivably be mistaken in thinking that 'the man who is René Descartes' is there, or is thinking. And even if the judgement is made by René Descartes himself, he *might* have 'forgotten his own identity'; he might be wrong in thinking of himself as the person known as Descartes, exactly as a lunatic is mistaken when he says he is Julius Caesar or the angel Gabriel. We cannot really dispense with the *ego*, if our statement is to be an indubitable transcript of the immediately certain.

The only sense in which *this* 'idea of Peter' 'corresponds' to Peter's body at all is that it conveys information to Paul about Peter's body, has Peter's body as its *object*, and that when Paul thinks truly about Peter, the information conveyed is correct.

I own that I should find it hard to acquit Spinoza of bad faith if I were not convinced that this prolonged equivocation is quite unconscious; and that it should have imposed on him I can only explain by assuming that this is a consequence of his complete blindness to the real character of awareness, the necessity for a concipient and a *conceptum* as well as for a conception. The trouble in Spinoza's pretended account of knowledge is that the conception and the *conceptum* are confused together by using the same word *idea* indifferently for either, as occasion may serve, and that the concipient, if not disregarded altogether, figures as no more than an empty theatre in which the *ideæ* go through their evolutions. It is precisely the same vicious abstraction which infects so much of the "analysis" which has been so popular among us of late years. We are offered more or less ingenious speculations about the way in which mental operations may be analysed, while it is blindly forgotten that a real operation does not perform itself; it presupposes an operator and a "subject" to be operated on. And this is as true of mental operations as of surgical.

Even so, we have not got to the end of the illogicalities of the second part of the *Ethics*. What the whole of the psychophysics and epistemology are meant to lead up to is an account of the method by which we may rise from 'imagination' with its inadequate ideas, which reveal rather the condition of our own body than the character of our environment, to knowledge. Spinoza himself frankly avows, as Guzzo has noted, that there is a great *lacuna* in the argument just at this critical point. For any detailed account of the transition we are referred (II. 29, Schol. I.) to an unwritten work which appears to be the *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*. Since we only possess the introductory chapters of this projected work, we have to content ourselves with the rather meagre general information given in the *Ethics* itself. All that is said there, in the lemmas appended to II. 13, is that there are some characters which are common to all *res extensæ*, and others which, though not common to all, are common to our own organism and all the bodies of its immediate environment. Since in both these cases there can be no question of the adulteration of our idea of a property by the admixture of elements representative only of the state of *our* body, the 'ideas' of these characters are always adequate, and provide us with a

body of ' common notions ' from which we can deduce rigidly true scientific conclusions. It is these common characteristics of all bodies which are apparently meant by that ' adequate idea of God ' which Spinoza ends by declaring to be always present in every man (II. 47). When he says that all men have, and have always had, an adequate idea of God, and that in this idea we have the foundation requisite to science, what he seems to mean is that we can deduce the contents of geometry and kinematics from a number of postulates which must be true without reserve, because they express the nature of the attribute *extension*. Now, granted that this were so, it is clear that the science you could deduce from these ' common notions ' would never take you beyond the bounds of kinematics ; you could not advance as far as a physics and a chemistry, still less would you have any foundation for what Spinoza really wants to construct, an ethic, a doctrine of moral values. And even so, there is a further awkward question rightly put by Guzzo.

According to Spinoza, it is so far from being true, in the words of Plato, that it is ' hard to discover the Father and Maker of all things, and impossible to speak of Him to the multitude ', that all men whatsoever always have had the ' adequate idea ' of God. How this is to be reconciled with the scornful language used elsewhere habitually by our philosopher about other men's ' idea of God ' is his own concern. Presumably he would say, like Descartes, that they all have the true ' idea of God ', but most of them confuse it with an irrelevant ' image ' of a ' magnified non-natural man ', though one would think the confusion ought to be impossible in a mind where the ' adequate idea ' was already present. But in any case, the admitted fact remains that most men live at the level of ' imagination ' ; their ' adequate idea of God ', which has always been with them, is inoperative. When a chosen few become philosophers, then, their previously inoperative ' idea of God ' must suddenly become an effective force in their mental life. How is this startling " conversion " to be effected ? Why, at a certain date, does my ' idea of God ', which has hitherto been dormant, begin to dominate my whole thinking ? Any answer Spinoza might have attempted would probably have been contained in the missing chapters of the *de Intellectus Emendatione*. But it is abundantly clear that he could not have made the process begin with a freely chosen turning of the mind from darkness to light, since he has expressly insisted on it that subjection to the illusions of ' imagination ' is a strictly *necessitated* consequence of our position in the universe ; we cannot break our own chains (II. 36, IV. 4). Nor again are we

liberated *ab extra* by the rising on us of a spiritual sun which had previously been hidden by the cloak of night, for *all* men have *always* had the 'adequate idea' of God. It remains, then, an inexplicable mystery why not all of them are at any rate at home in geometry and kinematics. It appears then that, when all has been said, there is no sure way to which we can trust for the 'amendment' of our understanding. Perhaps a man will rise from the level of *imaginatio* to that of *ratio* or *scientia intuitiva*, perhaps he will not, and whether he does or does not is dependent on causes which, if Spinoza's rigid necessitarianism is true, he can neither foresee nor control. It is matter of predetermination, or what comes to the same thing, of pure chance. (For if all that can be said is that what will be will be, it makes not an atom of practical difference whether you call this doctrine absolute Predestination, as Spinoza likes to call it, or Absolute Chance.)

It is not sufficiently to the point to reply that there certainly is a great 'something not ourselves' on which we are dependent, whether we call it the 'divine decrees', or the 'order of nature', and that perhaps no philosophy has ever succeeded in showing how our personal freedom and initiative can be conciliated with this dependence. This may be so, and yet, may we not say? no philosophy can possibly be sound which does not at least recognise the need of the conciliation by admitting the manifest *prima facie* fact of intellectual and moral initiative. By his *a priori* assumption of universal and absolute "natural necessity" Spinoza really runs away from the problem with which the philosopher should grapple, and here he reveals the measure of his inferiority, *as a philosophical thinker*, to Descartes. Descartes' *Fourth Meditation* may fall very far short of being a solution of the difficulty, but at least it honestly tries to take into account all the *prima facie* facts; Spinoza mutilates the "appearances" which it is his business to "save", out of all recognition. It is simply not true to say that what I call acting with freedom means being conscious of my act but unaware of any cause for it (I. 36, Appendix). On the contrary, the very reason why I am so confident that my adherence to a doctrine or my adoption of a line of action has been *free* is precisely that, rightly or wrongly, I am convinced that I do know the cause of the decision, and that the cause is myself.

It is open to Spinoza to argue that this conviction is always mistaken, as it must be if his identification of the mind with its 'ideas' is sound; it is not open to him to confuse this definite conviction of personal initiative with 'ignorance', the *absence* of

information. When Socrates remains seated in the Athenian prison awaiting the draught of hemlock, instead of taking the road to Megara or Thebes, as his friends want him to do, and gives as his reason that *he* judges it " best " to abide by the sentence of a legal tribunal, on the face of it there is no resemblance with the case, imagined by Spinoza (*Ep.* 58), of a stone, conscious of its falling, but unaware of any reason why it should be falling. For a real parallel to Spinoza's consciously falling stone we require to go not to the normal actions of responsible human beings but to the psychology of " deferred hypnotic suggestion ". Now I gather from the literature of this subject that though persons who act on such " deferred suggestions " are quite unaware that they are carrying out a movement which has been suggested to them under hypnosis, they reveal, if questioned, that they are puzzled about the reasons for their behaviour, do not " quite know why " they make the movement they do make. But this at once discriminates such behaviour from the action which the ordinary man regards as the proof of his freedom; there he thinks himself free precisely because he believes that he *knows* so well why he does what he does, and is acting on his own personal judgement. *Prima facie*, at least, the two cases are as unlike as they could well be—a philosopher who proposes to explain away the difference between them is, no doubt, entitled to a hearing, but we are also entitled to remind him that the appearances are very much *against* him, and that if he is to prove his case he must do so by fairly dispelling the adverse appearances; he cannot prove it by simply assuming universal determinism.

I would add that he does not make his argument any stronger by merely dubbing the appearances unfavourable to him ' vulgar prejudices ' and affecting the tone of a ' superior person '. Spinoza strikes that note far too often, especially in his correspondence, and though we must make all allowances for a man whose feelings had been naturally lacerated by the experiences of his early life, one may suspect that his frequent resort to it is, sometimes, due to an uneasy suspicion of the weakness of his case.

In a word, I would urge that Descartes has the merit of avoiding two grievous errors which are really fatal to Spinozism:

(1) He rightly insists on the *transcendency* of his *summum ens*, making it a source of all other *entia*, but never dreaming of treating it as a subject of which they are predicates; he sees, what I should say is perfectly true, that a philosophy which puts a *summum ens* at the head of things must be a doctrine of Creationism.

(2) Consequently, he, unlike all Spinozists, can be strictly consequent in his theory of nature as a mechanism. If nature is a machine at all, it ought to exhibit the obvious and salient characteristics of all mechanism, that (*a*) there is always, behind the machine, intelligence, not its own, to construct and operate it; (*b*) that the machine is constructed with a view to definite work to be got out of it, and that 'mechanism' demands the reality of 'final causality', however presumptuous it may be in us, who only see part of its working, to assume that we know just what the purposes of its inventor and operator must be. Descartes' great machine is not, like Spinoza's, one which constructs and operates itself, and all to grind nothing. But Descartes' rejection of final causes from Physics does not mean that he has any doubt that there is a purpose in creation; it is a mere confession of our inability—apart from revelation—to say what the purpose may be.

(*To be concluded.*)