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II.—SPINOZA'S CONCEPTION OF ETERNITY.

BY H. F. HALLETT.

THERE is no doctrine more fundamentally determinative in Spinozism than that of eternity and of its relations with duration and time. We may, indeed, justly assert that the conception of eternity is the very essence of the theory of Spinoza. It follows, therefore, that the present essay cannot but be inadequate and selective: it must leave most essential matters for future discussion and amplification; many, again, and some of prime importance, must be totally ignored, if the proper limits of space are to be observed. It will be well if we can succeed in casting doubt upon some popular misinterpretations of the conception; and if, over and above this, a more adequate account can be suggested in outline, and feebly supported, our work will not have been in vain. Demonstration must await a more ample occasion.

Few philosophers have realised (though many have suspected, and some have acted upon the suspicion) how essential it is for a thinker on ultimate subjects to face up to the problem of time before proceeding to lesser matters. For this is the chart and compass and rudder without which it is fatuous to venture out of the port of facts on to the high seas of speculation. Early in his career Spinoza made up his mind on these matters, and we find the main lines of his doctrine of time and eternity already laid down in those *Cogitata Metaphysica* which he appended to the geometrical version of Descartes's *Principia Philosophiæ* which he published in 1663. His views suffered no reversal or essential change right down to his untimely death in 1677: not that his thoughts turned away from such subjects; on few things, perhaps, did he meditate more often, for few things are more often brought to the notice of the serious philosopher, whatever may be the special direction of his inquiries, and none are more worthy of the consideration of a great philosopher.

It is because it has not always been remembered that the order of discovery often reverses the logical order of nature, that Spinoza's doctrine has been commonly misinterpreted as purely negative. In the order of nature eternity is prior to

duration, and duration prior to time ; in the order of discovery time and duration are prior to eternity. And the position is not rendered any the more safe for the unwary by Spinoza's attempt to identify the order of nature and the order of exposition by the use of the synthetic or geometrical mode in his chief metaphysical work, the *Ethica*. This is, indeed, precisely the sort of 'snag' which constitutes the 'spinosity' of Spinoza.

I. DURATION AND TIME.

We begin with what is more familiar to us, *viz.* *duration*. This term is used by Spinoza much in the same way as we (distinguishing ourselves from the mathematical physicists) use the term 'time'. It means persistence, or as Spinoza expresses it: *existentia, quatenus abstracte concipitur, et tanquam quaedam quantitatis species* (Eth. II. 45 Sch.), or *indefinita existendi continuatio* (Eth. II. Def. 5). It is from this quantitative character of duration that arises the notion of measuring it, which gives us *time* in the Spinozistic sense ; for, observing that some things persist longer than others, and that certain motions (such as the apparent motion of the sun round the earth, or that of the moon, or the swing-swang of the pendulum) are regularly recurrent, we find it convenient to take the durations thus marked off as standards by which to measure the durations of things. Such measurements are only conventionally absolute, but really relative, for the standard is itself a quantity, and is, therefore, as measurable as any other quantity. Time is for Spinoza the measurement of duration by such comparisons (Cog. Met. I. 4 ; Eth. II. 44 Cor. 1) ; it follows immediately that time is not a real thing, but a mental tool. It cannot belong to the Real because it is a mere measure, and its standard is arbitrary. It is an *ens rationis*, a mode of thinking, or rather of imagining (*i.e.*, misthinking) duration. It is an *auxilium Imaginationis* (Ep. 12). Nor can there be an absolute measure of duration, for absolute measure implies an absolute unit ; but such a unit cannot be found in the duration of any existing thing, for that duration is indefinite. The duration of a thing is not proportioned to its absolute nature, but depends upon vicissitude ; it may be long or short as the circumstances of its occurrence determine. In the absence of obstruction each thing would endure for ever. In the absence of its producing cause the duration of a thing cannot even begin. Here, therefore, no absolute unit can be found. Nor can it be found in the nature of duration itself, for duration is neither discrete nor is it a whole. It provides for itself no absolute units either in the

form of *minima* or in that of a *maximum*. Every duration, however small, is a duration, and therefore divisible. Every duration, however large, is partial, and therefore multipliable. But in the absence of an absolute unit of measurement, time as a single absolute measure of duration cannot belong to the Real.

But what of duration itself, the *indefinita existendi continuatio*, can this not be predicated of the Real?

Two distinguishable, but not altogether separable arguments may be extracted from Spinoza's discussions of this important point.

(1) In the first place, duration is existence *quatenus abstracte concipitur, et tanquam quaedam quantitatis species*, and this quantity is conceived as divisible. But the Real cannot be divided, for it must be self-complete and without limit. An incomplete reality is incompletely real. *Nullum substantiae attributum potest vere concipi, ex quo sequatur, substantiam posse dividi* (Eth. I. 12). For if it were divided the sections would either be the same as the whole (and therefore not sections at all), or different from the whole (and therefore incapable of being produced from it merely by division), or again, nothing real at all (which is absurd, since the Real cannot be wholly composed of unreal sections).

Now it might be objected that whatever may be the value of these arguments they apply not only to duration but also to extension, and yet Spinoza retains extension as an attribute of the Real, but rejects duration. Mr Alexander has, indeed, objected to this procedure and has suggested a renovation of the Spinozistic theory in which duration would be retained as one of the infinite attributes of Substance (*Spinoza and Time*, 1921). Spinoza himself, we may be confident, had he been compelled to agree with the arguments in question, would have rejected extension with duration, rather than have accepted duration as an ultimate attribute of Substance coordinate with extension. But he would not have recognised the dilemma, for he holds that we need not conceive extension as divisible, though in imperfect thinking we more easily do so. *Si autem ad ipsam prout in intellectu est attendimus . . . quod difficillime fit, tum, . . . infinita, unica, et indivisibilis reperietur* (Eth. I. 15 Sch.). And this is the true view of extension: *Quare ii prorsus garriunt, ne dicam insaniunt, qui Substantiam Extensam ex partibus, sive corporibus ab invicem realiter distinctis, conflatum esse putant. Perinde enim est, ac si quis ex sola additione et coacervatione multorum circulorum quadratum, aut triangulum, aut quid aliud, tota essentia diversum, conflare studeat* (Ep. 12). Nor need we

concentrate our attention solely on the intellectual conception of extension in order to realise that it cannot be composed of sections (*i.e.*, of extended sections, for the term "unextended section of extension" involves a contradiction), for even finite magnitudes may be incommensurable (*i.e.*, incapable of commensurement in terms of a single unit: Spinoza gives the example of the variations in the distance between the circumferences of two eccentric circles one of which lies wholly within the other). A finite, divided, discrete extension is an illusion of the imagination; but in removing the illusion we do not lose extension itself, or even its quantitative character; but we find that the conception of an infinite, single, indivisible extension involves no contradiction, and may be accepted as real.

It has not always been realised, or not sufficiently, that the contention of Spinoza is that this correction is impossible with duration conceived as a quantity, for duration is essentially divided, for it is characterised by the irreversible distinction of past and future, or its equivalent. If the Real endures then its existence is always essentially divided into what has already occurred and what has yet to occur. If that distinction implied no real division it would be a mere distinction of reason and not the real character of duration which we must affirm it to be. Nor does the fact that the line of division moves steadily towards the future render the division less fatal, for every instant is in turn the division of past and future, and to heal the breach at one place is identical with the creation of it at the next or at another. Division and duration appear and disappear together.

Briefly, the reason why extension survives the process of intellectual criticism and is admitted as an attribute of Substance, while duration is excluded, is that temporal relations are essentially asymmetrical in a sense and to a degree in which spatial relations are not. The latter demand no special (or spatial) variety in their terms, while the former can only be sustained in so far as periods differ from one another in date or epoch as well as in distance from one another. They must differ in temporal quality as well as in temporal quantity; only thus can they be in succession. Remove the distinctions of past and future, earlier and later, before and after, and you remove the essential character of any kind of duration, and all that is left is a neutral form of externality like a dimension of space. But duration is like extension in one feature only, *viz.* its quantitateness or measurability (avoiding the question as to which of these terms is the best expression of the common quality); in its specific quality it is

wholly different: a fact which is too often slurred over in modern speculations, especially of the mathematico-physical type.

(2) These considerations lead naturally to the second and connected set of objections to the predicating of duration of the Real.

The qualitative variety of an enduring being is a successive variety. Whether we think of crude perceived duration with its distinctions of past, present, and future, or of historical time with its distinctions of before and after (and Spinoza, recognizing both, argues mainly against the latter, the former being obviously inapplicable to the Real), there is no getting rid of succession without getting rid of duration. For without change there can be no duration, and without succession no change. But change cannot be predicated of the Real, which can lack nothing and can surrender nothing. In the being of Substance *nihil prius nec posterius dari potest* (Cog. Met. II. 1); *in aeterno non datur quando, ante, nec post* (Eth. I. 33 Sch. 2); and future, past, and present are all one to *Ratio, i.e.*, for adequate knowledge (Eth. IV. 62).

Hence the existence of the Real cannot be an enduring existence, not even an existence enduring without beginning or end (Eth. I. Def. 8).

How, then, is the existence of the Real to be construed? It is not a quantity measurable by time. It does not endure: its existence is not divisible into earlier and later stages. But neither is it momentary. That was a strange misconception expressed by M. Bergson in one of his earlier works, that for Spinoza "*la durée indéfinie des choses tenait toute entière dans un moment unique, qui est l'éternité*" (Les Données Immédiates, ch. 3), but comparable with that even commoner opinion that for Spinoza all multiplicity fades into mere identity in Substance, and all content into vacuity; but for Spinoza, we must contend, the Real occupies neither one moment, nor many moments, nor even infinite moments. God does not exist *ab aeterno*, for that would imply a duration than which no longer can be conceived; He does not exist in a moment, for that would imply a duration than which no shorter can be conceived; and both are impossible, *talis enim est natura durationis, ut semper major et minor data possit concipi* (Cog. Met. II. 10).

Must we conclude, then, that what does not exist in one, many, or infinite moments of duration does not exist at all? By no means; there can be no doubt whatsoever that Spinoza himself draws, and could draw, no such conclusion. No one has ever doubted that he at least attempts to establish a

species of existence beyond the limitations of duration and time, though many have asserted or implied that he has failed to do so. Such existence beyond the limitations of duration he calls an eternal existence, and in the space that remains to us we must attempt an explanation and discussion of some of the interpretations which have been put upon this conception, and make some tentative suggestions of our own.

II. ETERNITY.

§ 1.

There is a short and easy way of interpreting Spinoza's conception of an eternal existence which, though in itself wholly unsatisfactory, and as applied to Spinoza easily refuted, yet must be mentioned, both because it is the common interpretation, and also because it has some apparent basis in expressions used here and there by Spinoza himself. The reading to which we refer is not precisely that which takes eternity as synonymous with necessity, but one which, realising that necessity is at most the logical *proprium* of an eternal existence and not its metaphysical essence, attempts to construe the existence which is eternal as equivalent to, or framed on the analogy of, the being which belongs to necessary truths such as the propositions of Euclid or established scientific generalisations. And *prima facie* there is some evidence for that view in Spinoza's own expressions; the Explanation, for example, which is added to the definition of Eternity at the beginning of the first part of the *Ethica*, seems to bear this significance: *Talis enim existentia ut aeterna veritas, sicut rei essentia, concipitur*, and one has to get well within the mind of Spinoza before it becomes clear how little such words bear the meaning we are prone to attach to them. For eternal truths, as we use the phrase, do not exist at all as such, they hold, or 'subsist,' as the phrase runs nowadays. That is so because they are abstractions; in Hume's useful phrase, they are 'relations of ideas' and not 'matters of fact.' They may be true of existence, they are not themselves existences.

Now Spinoza's point of view is essentially different, and, though remote from both, nearer to that of Plato than to that of Empiricism. For him as for Plato to know truly is to know the real; an eternal truth is in fact the same thing as an eternal reality. It is not an abstract universal, or the connexion of abstract universals. That is the point of the

last part of the sentence we quoted: *aeterna veritas, sicut rei essentia*. He speaks elsewhere of the essence of a man as an eternal truth (Eth. I. 17 Sch.), and the first Corollary to Eth. I. 20 runs: *Hinc sequitur . . . Dei existentiam, sicut ejus essentiam, aeternam esse veritatem*. To a correspondent who asked him point blank whether things and their modifications are eternal truths, he answered: *Omnino. Si regeris, cur eas aeternas veritates non voco? respondeo, ut eas distinguam, uti omnes solent ab iis, quae nullam rem reive affectionem explicant, ut ex. gr. a nihilo nihil fit* (Ep. 10).

An eternal existence, therefore, must not be explained, or explained away, as framed on the analogy of the validity of abstract or universal scientific principles or mathematical truths. For the whole paraphernalia of abstract universals of whatever kind had been definitely relegated to *Imaginatio*, or knowledge of the lowest, most confused, and emptiest kind, resulting rather from impotence than from the power of the mind (cf. Eth. II. 40 Sch. 1). *Possumus videre, apprimere nobis esse necessarium, ut semper a rebus physicis, sive ab entibus realibus, omnes nostras ideas deducamus, progrediendo, quoad ejus fieri potest, secundum seriem causarum ab uno ente reali ad aliud ens reale, et ita quidem, ut ad abstracta et universalia non transeamus, sive ut ab iis aliquid reale non concludamus, sive ut ea ab aliquo reali non concludantur: utrumque enim verum progressum intellectus interrumpit* (De Intell. Emend., Op. Post., p. 388).

Spinoza's own theory of *Ratio* (the Second Kind of Knowledge) is based upon a new kind of abstraction in which universal principles are embodied in universal particulars, and truths of reason are no longer mere 'relations of ideas,' but also and essentially relations of existences, infinite and eternal. Truth is never a mere relation of ideas thought of as pictures or images in the mind; for an idea is the objective essence of a thing, and to have an idea is to know a thing, while to have a true idea is to apprehend reality. The eternity of scientific truths, therefore, rightly conceived, *i.e.* as truths about universal particulars, and not mere hypotheses, is not definable by negation as timelessness *simpliciter*, but as existence of a certain kind. The assertion that it is the nature of *Ratio* to conceive things *sub quadam specie aeternitatis* must not be interpreted as if its objects were 'ideal contents' or 'floating ideas,' applying at any point of time because independent of time-reference; its objects are particular existences which are also universal because they are coextensive with all being.

§ 2.

Before we proceed to a direct exposition of Spinoza's conception of eternity, it will be well to consider as briefly as possible the notion of eternal existence as equivalent to enduring existence purged from those elements which incapacitate it for survival in the Real. Those features are, as we have seen, divisibility and successiveness. The former imperfection is shared by extension as it is uncritically apprehended by *Imaginatio*; the latter, which implies the former, though *eminenter*, is peculiar to duration. The question now is, therefore, whether eternity must not be that attribute of the Real which remains when the offending successiveness has been removed from duration. Without succession there can be, of course, no duration; but may there not remain a non-durational form of existence which is eternity?

The probable argument would be that the successiveness which infects an enduring existence is relative only to this or that observer or experient, and is his subjective addition, (or rather, subtraction) from the eternal co-existent facts. Existence, it would be argued, purged from these subjective ambiguities is not a successive existence, and does not endure in any objectionable sense of that term; but for analytic thought, as for selective perception, features of the eternal whole may be apprehended successively; and though perception presents them in an irreversible order, analytic thought can order them according to its special requirements. In other words, eternity on this view is the fourth dimension of the mathematical physicists, and is, or ought to be, indistinguishable from any of the dimensions of space. In it there is no present, past, or future. Nor are these simply replaced, as in Absolute Time, by the relations of before and after. In passing from the subjective perspective of duration to an objective 'time' by the removal of the point of reference given by the observer's 'now,' we must pass also from an irreversible time to a neutral order which may be read according to the special needs of the thinker. Subjective duration moves from past to future, or, adopting the point of view of the experient, future moves to past; but it does so because past means that which *has been given*, future that which *will be given*, and present that which *is being given*. It is natural and inoffensive to begin with what we already have and are having, and pass on to what we shall have. But in this purified objective 'time,' considered strictly as such, no such distinctions are forthcoming,

and they only appear to be so because we transfer to objective 'time' distinctions which are only valid for subjective time. We imagine ourselves at a point of objective 'time,' and say that what is before that is past, and what is after it is future, and that the flow of time is from the past to the future, *i.e.* from before to after. But if subjective time is unreal we have no right to transfer its direction of flow to an objective 'time' for which past, present, and future have no significance, since in it *all is given*. Objective 'time,' therefore, can have no direction of flow, and the sense of duration which lurks about the terms 'before' and 'after' must be carefully excluded if we are to continue to use them in relation to this purified neutral order.

Objective 'time' must therefore be distinguished from that hybrid form which commonly occupies attention in this connexion, and which is an objective order into which, by the use of memory and imagination, we place the objects of our immediate experience, thus determining its direction of flow, and then proceed to fill out the earlier periods with objects lying beyond our immediate experience but connected therewith in various ways. This is Historical Time, which is transformed into Absolute Time by leaving out the point of reference given by the 'now' or 'present epoch,' but carefully (but illegitimately) retaining the direction of flow. In true objective 'time' the distinction of realised and unrealised disappears, and with it duration itself, and we are left with a neutral order of externality.

No such neutral order is an adequate representation of eternity as it is conceived by Spinoza. For though it is an order of existences, it is not that order which characterises the Real. It suggests that the order of things in time is, with minor corrections for the spatio-temporal perspective of the experient, the real order of existences. But according to Spinoza we know that it is not so. The real order is the logical order, which is not a mere corrected temporal order, but proceeds on a different plan. There is no point to point correspondence between events in time and the stages of logical order. No distinction is more clear in Spinoza than that between the *communis naturae ordo* (Eth. II. 29 Cor. *et* Sch. ; 30 Dem.) and the *ordo intellectus* (Eth. II. 18 Sch.) or *ordo ad intellectum* (Eth. II. 40 Sch. 2 ; V. 10) through which the actual time order of our experiences is distinguished from the logical order of essences. It is precisely the order in which things are conceived which determines their reality or unreality ; for all things are real and eternal in so far as they survive the process of being arranged in the intellectual

order, as all things are illusory and corruptible as objects of mere perception.

Furthermore, and in the second place, the logical order is not neutral ; it moves from essence to expression, from ground to consequent, from Substance to mode. For *Intellectus* the process in time from cause to effect gives place to the procession of grounds and consequents in eternity, and in the same transvaluation *Imaginatio*, the First Kind of Knowledge, gives place to adequate knowledge of the Second or Third Kinds. The change from time-order to the intellectual order, therefore, is not a change to neutrality, but a change from an order of exclusion to an order of inclusion or implication.

§ 3.

What, then, is the account which Spinoza himself gives of eternity? The distinction between eternity and duration arises from the fact that we conceive the existence of Substance as entirely different from the existence of modes (Ep. 12). Eternity is an *attributum, sub quo infinitam Dei existentiam concipimus, Duratio vero est attributum, sub quo rerum creatarum existentiam, prout in sua actualitate perseverant, concipimus* (Cog. Met. I. 4). *Per durationem modorum tantum existentiam explicare possumus, Substantiae vero per aeternitatem, hoc est, infinitam existendi, sive, invita latinitate, essendi fruitionem* (Ep. 12). Further as the duration of a thing is its whole existence (*quantum enim durationi alicujus rei detrahis, tantundem ejus existentiae detrahi necesse est* (Cog. Met. I. 4)) so eternity is that *infinita existentia* which coincides with the real essence of God (*Deo actu competit) quae soli Deo tribuenda, non vero ulli rei creatae ; non, inquam, quamvis earum duratio utroque careat fine* (Cog. Met. II. 1). For this existence is not something which is added to God, even by right ; it is not something that God enjoys or possesses, it is the Divine Being. *Deus vero non potest dici frui existentia, nam existentia Dei est Deus ipse* (*loc. cit.*). Duration is, indeed, the enjoyment of existence, but eternity is existence itself.

It is this infinite realisation of existence, and not an indefinite emptying of existence, that must give us our clue to Spinoza's conception of eternity. What duration is to a conditioned existence that, or not less than that, is eternity to the necessary existence of God ; it is its essence. *Ut nullam Deo durationem tribuamus, dicimus eum esse aeternum*, he says, hastily correcting his not unconsidered assertion that we use the term eternity to explain the duration of God (Cog.

Met. II. 1). We need not consider here the reputed double use of the term duration by Spinoza; it would be easy to show that the ambiguity belonged not to the mind of Spinoza but to duration itself; it was essential for him both to distinguish and to relate the two conceptions: to distinguish them, since he was very much concerned to distinguish an eternal existence from an existence *ab aeterno*; to relate them, since not only are both for him forms of existence, but they are both forms of the same aspect of existence, for duration is clearly related to eternity in a way in which Number (*e.g.*) is not. These are facts which have too often been overlooked, especially by those who have been wont to think of the eternity of Spinoza as the mere negation of duration, or as equivalent to timelessness.

Eternity is a kind of existence, it is existence *par excellence*, an infinite existence; or, as the formal definition runs: *per aeternitatem intelligo ipsam existentiam, quatenus ex sola rei aeternae definitione necessario sequi concipitur* (Eth. I. Def. 8); that is to say, where essence and existence are no longer distinguishable. One of Spinoza's great sayings, characterised by his peculiar intensity of meaning and restraint of expression, is that in which he lays bare the source of the errors of metaphysical writers on this subject, as due to the fact that they attempt to explain eternity in abstraction from the nature of God or perfect being, *quasi aeternitas absque essentiae divinae contemplatione intelligi posset, vel quid esset praeter divinam essentiam* (Cog. Met. II. 1).

It remains next for us to inquire into the peculiar nature of this existence which is not to be conceived as a mere persistence. Have we any experience of such a form of existence? In the absence of such experience we might well accept as abstract conclusions the unreality of duration, and the necessity of a certain intellectual order, but we should have no real apprehension of the nature of eternity.

According to Spinoza we are not left without such experience: *sentimus experimurque nos aeternos esse* (Eth. V. 23 Sch.), for we as men have commerce with and enter into reality; and we do so most truly as entering into the universal being in and through those intellectual perceptions by which our groundedness in the Real is revealed, and our true being enjoyed. *Nam mens non minus res illas sentit, quas intelligendo concipit, quam quas in memoria habet. Mentis enim oculi, quibus res videt observatque, sunt ipsae demonstrationes* (Eth. V. 23 Sch.) Further, as we saw before, Spinoza does not regard our demonstrative knowledge as merely hypothetical and concerned with abstract universal features of

existence, for the objects of *Ratio* are universal particulars: the common properties or universal bases of all finite things; *haec fixa et aeterna, quamvis sint singularia, tamen ob eorum ubique praesentiam ac latissimam potentiam, erunt nobis tanquam universalia, sive genera definitionum rerum singularium mutabilium, et causae proximae omnium rerum* (De Intell. Emend., Op. Post., p. 389). *Ratio* no less than *Scientia Intuitiva* brings us into contact with the Real, and its peculiar failing is not that it is merely hypothetical, but that it is selective and analytic in procedure. Its main concern is not the individual nature of these *fixa et aeterna* as universal particulars, but their necessary connexions and the relations of their constituents. Undoubtedly these connexions and relations are also constituents, but they are conceived by *Ratio* for themselves and not as constituting this or that individual. But in spite of these special limitations it is none the less *de natura Rationis res sub quadam aeternitatis specie percipere* (Eth. II. 44 Cor. 2); and the expression has a peculiar appropriateness as applied to the mode of apprehension that belongs to *Ratio*. In view of the history of the phrase, and also the fact that Spinoza applies it to *Scientia Intuitiva* as well as to *Ratio*, it is improbable that this secondary propriety in any way influenced him in adopting, and so often repeating, this celebrated expression; doubtless he uses it as signifying simply 'qua eternal,' but that *Ratio* is capable of providing a satisfactory idea of the nature of eternity is not suggested by Spinoza. *Ratio* views things 'under the form of eternity,' but it assumes rather than explicates the special nature of an eternal existence. The special concern which Spinoza shows in the proof of this Corollary to exclude all time relations (*absque ulla temporis relatione*), and to emphasise the logical properties of an eternal existence, *viz.* its necessity, has misled many into supposing that he intends here to convey the metaphysical essence of eternity. We may be confident that he has no such intention, for it is necessary to pass beyond *Ratio* to *Scientia Intuitiva* to obtain that further knowledge; the necessary connections and relations of things must be woven into concrete knowledge of individuals as such, and not as mere assembled implicates. In order to experience eternal existence we must be able to take a single view of an individual experience as it were from inside; for thus only to know things *sub quadam specie aeternitatis* is also to feel and prove *nos aeternos esse*. There need be, for us there can be, no real separation of the two forms of knowledge; *Ratio* blossoms into *Scientia Intuitiva*, which reassures itself by means of

Ratio; thus our finitude genuinely reveals itself. The *Ethica* itself is an example of such relations: in the main it is a system of *Ratio*, but again and again it uses conceptions which imply the use of *Scientia Intuitiva*. Of no part is this more true than of the second section of Part V. We might go so far as to assert that it is precisely those propositions which most truly exemplify the processes of *Ratio* that provide the text for the view of Spinozism as reducing relation to identity and existence to a moment; as it is the more concrete teaching of Part V. that must become the essential ground for a true view of eternity.

§ 4.

We have said that it is to *Scientia Intuitiva* that we must look for our main clue to the Spinozistic conception of eternity, but it is not necessary, indeed it would be pernicious, to separate the second section of Part V. of the *Ethica* from the rest of the work. Spinoza means to tell a single story; and in order to show that in the main he succeeds in doing so we may consider next the theory of the *Affectus* which is found in Part III. and which has an important bearing on our main problem.

Spinoza draws a clear distinction between the *laetitia*, *tristitia*, and *cupiditas* of the finite mode, on the one hand, and the eternal *beatitudo* of God and the free man. Conscious of its finitude, each fluctuating mode suffers continual change, which it as continually resists; this change and the striving against change are experienced as *laetitia*, *tristitia* and *cupiditas*. In these *affectus* we are directly aware of processes, which are not to be taken as alternating unconnected states, but rather as felt qualities in which succession has been transcended but not lost, and in which transformation has become a felt, and therefore direct, datum. For Spinoza is emphatic in his insistence upon the identity of the *affectus* with the process and not with the *termini* of the process: *Dico transitionem. Nam Laetitia non est ipsa perfectio. Si enim homo cum perfectione, ad quam transit, nasceretur, ejusdem absque Laetitiae affectu compos esset; . . . Nec dicere possumus, quod Tristitia in privatione majoris perfectionis consistat; nam privatio nihil est, Tristitia autem affectus actus est, qui propterea nullus alius esse potest, quam actus transeundi ad minorem perfectionem* (Eth. III. Aff. Def. III. Explic.). In other words, the finite mind does not merely apprehend its objects and its ideas in their logical or perceptual distinction and order, it directly apprehends their changes towards or

away from perfection, and it apprehends its own existence as a ceaseless urge or struggle against an obstructive environment.

As opposed to these direct experiences of transition and of duration which belong to the finite mode, Spinoza contrasts the eternal blessedness of God: *si Laetitia in transitione ad majorem perfectionem consistit, Beatitudo sane in eo consistere debet, quod mens ipsa perfectione sit praedita* (Eth. V. 33 Sch.). No assertion in the *Ethica* is more decisive for our argument, for *laetitia* belongs to an enduring existence, but *beatitudo* to one which is eternal. As opposed to duration which implies change towards or from perfection, an eternal being, incapable of change, enjoys fullness and perfection of existence, enjoys blessedness, not as though it were something different from its existence and essence, but as the very content of its reality.

It has sometimes been asserted that, in view of Spinoza's own statements about the nature of the fundamental *affectus*, the conception of *beatitudo*, though in itself one of the most attractive features of the system, is really only a beautiful excrescence. For the *affectus*, as transitions to or from perfection, are essentially durational in character; an eternal being, on the contrary, being incapable of such transitions, must lack all affective experience. We may meet that contention by tracing the development of the notion of *beatitudo*. The transition to this conception from that of *laetitia* is through the conception of *mentis acquiescentia in se ipso*, which is defined as *laetitia orta ex eo, quod homo se ipsum suamque agendi potentiam contemplatur* (Eth. III. Aff. Def. XXV.), that is to say it is not mere abstract *laetitia* but a grounded joy, a joy arising from the perception of a perfection already possessed. Now the perfection or reality of a thing, according to Spinoza, is identical with its activity, it is the possession within its own individual nature of adequate genetic causes for its particular content. The essence of a thing in so far as it is real is this activity or grounded content. *Mens nostra quaedam agit . . . quatenus adaequatas habet ideas eatenus quaedam necessario agit* (Eth. III. 1). The actual essence of a finite thing is this real essence modified in proportion to its finitude by the passivity involved in inadequate ideas. The result of this qualification or finitude is to limit existence to the form of duration, so that the *potentia* of the thing appears as its *conatus in suo esse perseverare*, and as *cupiditas*, the third fundamental *affectus*. It follows that *cupiditas* does not belong to God for whom actual and real essence are identical, and who therefore cannot be conceived as enduring. These statements involve important principles which we have no space to elaborate; for the present we

must be content to sum them up dogmatically by saying that genuine activity, as it is found in God and the eternal part of the free man, is not identical with *cupiditas*, and does not imply transient causality; it is one with the logical *nisus* of adequate or grounded ideas.

It follows, further, from the well-known doctrine of *idea ideae* that we are capable of a reflective joy in contemplating our concrete achievements, over and above the direct joy of this or that achieving. For the mind could not unknowingly possess this *nisus* to wholeness which belongs to adequate ideas, for its being is its knowledge: *nostrae Mentis essentia in sola cognitione consistit* (Eth. V. 36 Sch.). Thus though it is not true to say that reflective knowledge *constitutes* individuality, it is certainly the source of our enjoyment of our individuality or perfection *sub specie acquiescentiae*. The mind, therefore, not only experiences its temporal transitions as *affectus*, it also knows itself, and so far as it is active or real knows itself adequately, and in this self-knowledge may be supposed to pass to a greater perfection as reflective knowledge becomes more effective and profound. For the reflective knowledge of the mind must more and more approximate to *Scientia Intuitiva* for which the temporal transitions of *Imaginatio* are superseded by logical transitions which for *Scientia Intuitiva* are rightly apprehended as the eternal *nisus* of ground and consequents. Such concrete intuition is, according to Spinoza, accompanied by delight proportioned to the degree of perfection already achieved, so that *acquiescentia* is not, like *laetitia*, an unreal abstraction or *passio*, but an *actio*, and the proper affective enjoyment of adequate knowledge. It would be strange indeed if the mind could feel its transition to a greater perfection and yet be wholly unaware of the perfection itself to which it has passed; for thus perfection would be wholly relative, instead of being the very standard of the absolute: *per realitatem et perfectionem idem intelligo* (Eth. II. Def. 6). Nor can grounds and consequents be rightly separated as successive or as co-existent in an intellectual space or neutral 'time': their distinctness is not spatio-temporal, and their co-existence, though not spatial, does not lapse into identity or confused altogetherness. It becomes quality, and when Spinoza speaks of the possession of unchanging perfection as being without *laetitia*, we must not understand him as denying that it involves *acquiescentia*; rather we should assert that joy itself would be impossible without some awareness of its *termini*, since though change is not the same thing as difference *simpliciter*, still less is it pure process. Awareness of change without awareness of

achievement or loss is in strictness inconceivable, though the actual estimation of the result may be vague and inadequate.

Now *beatitudo* is identical with that *summa quae dari potest Mentis acquiescentia* (Eth. V. 32), which arises from the Third Kind of Knowledge. It is the affective apprehension, not of transition to or from perfection, but of perfection itself, not of achieving but of achievement. But, it may be objected, the real fallacy in Spinoza's doctrine is not its assertion that *laetitia*, or the affective perception of transition, implies *acquiescentia*, or the affective perception of the *termini* of transition, and that hence an eternal being is not deprived of affective or qualitative content; but the converse assertion that there can be awareness of achievement without awareness of achieving: that a perfect and complete being can, without change or struggle, enjoy not merely the fruits, but also the sense, of victory. That is an objection that seems to run nearer to the heart of the thesis, and we have to admit that Spinoza's own statement about the genesis of *acquiescentia in se ipso* is not altogether unambiguous. *Cum fit, ut Mens se ipsam possit contemplari eo ipso ad majorem perfectionem transire, hoc est Laetitia affici supponitur* (Eth. III. 53), which implies that *acquiescentia* is after all only a transition, and therefore a particular example of *laetitia*. But the use of the term *supponitur* is significant; for there can be no genuine transition in such a case, for the *idea* and the *ideae idea* are one and the same: *Mentis idea et ipsa Mens una eademque est res* (Eth. II. 21 Sch.). True, there may seem to be, with the finite mind, a transition to a greater degree of reflective clearness, arising from our ideas becoming more adequate; but this is necessarily absent from the free mind in proportion to its freedom; and in any case it is not a transition from knowledge of an object to reflection upon knowledge itself: *simulac enim quis aliquid scit eo ipso scit se id scire, et simul scit se scire quod scit, et sic in infinitum* (*loc. cit.*). *Acquiescentia*, therefore, is not a transition in the same sense as *laetitia*, it is not a temporal transition, but a 'supposed' transition, and we must explain this as meaning that the transition is logical rather than temporal. And it is because the transitional nature of *laetitia* does not infect its qualitative content, that perfection itself, which is no transition, may be enjoyed as quality in *acquiescentia*. In *laetitia* the moments of temporal transition are summed up as enduring quality; in finite *acquiescentia* the moments of logical 'transition' are concretely enjoyed *sub specie temporis*; and in *beatitudo* the eternal *nisus* of grounds and consequents is apprehended and enjoyed as that intellectual love which alone among the *affectus* is eternal.

The same distinctions are pertinent in our interpretation of the unchanging character of the Real. The lack of transition in God is not meant by Spinoza as an imperfection in Him, but, on the contrary, as an alternative expression of His perfection, *i.e.* of the absolute completeness of His nature. Transition is denied because it implies imperfection either in its *terminus a quo* or in its *terminus ad quem*, indeed, ultimately in both; but logical 'transition' or *nisus* involves no such imperfection, but is the very ground of all perfection, and the essence of the Real.

It is the distinction between unreal or temporal transition and real 'transition' or logical *nisus* (which analytically appears as *feigned* transition) that makes clear the essential nature of *acquiescentia* and *beatitudo* and their relation to *laetitia*. Temporal transition is unreal because it is a contradiction in terms; duration itself is only possible as achieving grows out of achievement, and achievement out of achieving; and in eternity achievement and achieving are reciprocal, and their reciprocity is love: *quamvis hic Amor principium non habuerit, habet tamen omnes Amoris perfectiones, perinde ac si ortus fuisset sicut FINXIMUS* (Eth. V. 33, Sch.).

Similar considerations will be found to govern Spinoza's conception of the relations of change, causation, and perfection. No theory which accepted the externality of causation could escape the objections with which we have been dealing, for achievement would be external to the process of struggle, and could only be recognised as achievement through our memory of the process which led up to it. But Spinoza's view is that all causation is immanent or genetic in its real nature, though, to the partiality of finite being, it may appear as transient, and therefore as temporal. That is an inescapable fiction in the experience of the finite self; but it need not be an error. Even the finite mind can recognise the ultimate nature of reality, and of causation, not because it is finite but because it is mind. Causation cannot be transient if there is to be real process and achievement, for the memory of a process together with the perception of its *terminus ad quem* could only make that end a real *terminus*, an achievement, in so far as the whole process can be reviewed as a connected whole, and not merely as a series of externally related events. The perfection of the whole, therefore, must already contain all the stages of its achieving, not *sub specie temporis* as stages external to one another and to their end, and leading up to perfection, but *sub specie aeternitatis* and after the manner in which premisses are contained in their explained conclusion.

Spinoza's theory of *laetitia*, then, must be taken as his recognition that the finite mind perceives duration, not as

separated *puncta*, but as quality. Pure externality belongs only to time and measure, and these are unreal. His theory of *acquiescentia*, again, must be taken as signifying that it is insufficient to establish the continuity of duration, since it cannot be adequately perceived as pure process without *termini*. It is always possession, achieving, and achievement, inextricably woven together. Duration is only duration by the pressing in of the past upon the present and the emergence of the future therefrom. It is not a succession of nows, it is process ; but it is not pure process, for successive positions in a real duration are different in quality ; and the essence of existence, even of enduring existence, is that very qualitative growth through which we escape the 'absolute relativity' of mere time (and the self-contradictory phrase exactly describes the logical vice of time).

§ 5.

M. Bergson has well argued that real duration is not a kind of space, but is an intensive quantity, *i.e.* a quality ; the past concentrates itself at the growing point of the present, which it permeates. And it is this permeation of achievement or creation by possession that constitutes the reality of duration, which is thus an enjoyed quality rather than a measurable quantity. This conception of duration was put forward consciously as a refutation of what M. Bergson conceived to be Spinozism, *viz.* the theory that causation is identity, and duration nothing. If the view which we have put forward is correct, the Bergsonian theory of duration is but a partial and inadequate Spinozism : for it is not, strictly speaking, the past as past that permeates the present, but only the past as the given, and therefore as our main source of creative essence. The permeation of the present by the past as such could not make intelligible the reality of duration. It becomes a miracle ! What really operates is not past, which as operating in the present is not past at all, but present ; what operates is what is equally efficient in past, present, and future, and permeates them all, *viz.* eternal essence. With a stern eye directed towards M. Bergson, Mr Alexander protests : "In what sense it can be held that time as we experience it in ourselves is other than a duration which is intrinsically successive passes my understanding" (*Space, Time, and Deity*, I. p. 124). But the implication is not that temporal process is merely successive : or even that it is sufficient to establish its continuity in succession. There can be no succession without change of quality, nor change of quality without permeation of some sort. But the permeation is not that of the present by the past as such, any more than

by the future as such; it is the permeation that we find in the relation of premisses and conclusion, through which the conclusion receives its justification, and the premisses their full content. When we say that the conclusion follows from the premisses we do not mean that the premisses precede the conclusion in time, but that they determine the conclusion. There may be a sense in which, on occasion, *e.g.* in the process of learning, the premisses do precede the conclusion in time, but the premisses are still premisses after the conclusion has been drawn, and indeed, are not strictly speaking premisses at all until the conclusion is drawn. The conclusion, again, cannot in any but the most superficial sense be said to follow the premisses in time, since it is only a conclusion in so far as it is determined by the premisses. Further, even where the recognition of the conclusion follows the postulation of the premisses, it is not the premisses alone as postulated which determine the conclusion but the system within which the premisses operate and the conclusion remains.

Such, in spite of the analogical character of the elucidation, is the nature of the permeation that belongs to duration. The conditions governing abstract formal inference are necessarily an inadequate representation of real productivity; but a perfectly adequate expression of this would pass beyond analogy to identity, beyond abstract implication to concrete production. The creativity of duration is one with the determination of spatio-temporal occurrence of concrete particulars, and this again with the production by the eternal whole of its own finite expressions or partial content. It is the nature of the whole so to express itself and constitute itself, and since *ei non deficit materia* the expressions are of all degrees of perfection, and cannot but appear, therefore, to the finite expressions themselves, as selective and successive, *i.e.* as involving limited duration. The creativity of duration, therefore, is but a finite extract of real creativity which is eternal and constitutive. There is some danger that in our anxiety to maintain the reality of duration, upon which all other reality seems to, and in a sense does, depend, we may imagine either, on the one hand, that it can be real as an unmoving and immovable *hyle*, or, on the other hand, that its reality must be conceived as a creativity that "passeth understanding" and can only be met appropriately in that spirit of artificial stupidity which is sometimes made to pass under a better name. But the reality of duration consists in its positive quality rather than in that quantitative exclusiveness which is its *prima facie* character. That positive quality is caught up into eternity, while its externality and limitation, its negativity, is lost. In the same way the eternal blessed-

ness of God is not a summation of the joys of finite modes (which would necessarily be qualified by their sorrows); it is their consummation, explanation, and infinite completion. *Laetitia* is the realising of perfection in its degrees, its temporal achieving; *acquiescentia* is the realisation of a perfection already achieved; *beatitudo* is the realisation of perfection and its eternal achievement, it is the ideal limit of both *cupiditas* and *laetitia* as they constitute a being for whom transformation involves no succession. Duration only elapses in so far as the mind drifts; for the thinking mind it 'wells up'; for the free man it is a 'well springing up into eternal life'; and for the being that thinks all things and is all things in their real order and efficiency, the existence which 'wells up' is eternity itself.

Further elaboration and defence of our thesis would be impossible without proceeding beyond our present limits of space to those absorbing problems which relate to Spinoza's doctrine of the eternity of the mind. We must content ourselves with something more modest and summary, though also with something much less than adequate. Duration, we shall say, is only a mode of imagining the existence of things; Time is a further aid in perfecting it (*i.e.*, in reducing it to absurdity); but Eternity cannot be discovered by the use of *Imaginatio*, but only by means of *Intellectus*: *si quis talia ejusmodi Notionibus, quae duntaxat Auxilia Imaginationis sunt, explicare conatur, nihilo plus agit, quam si det operam, ut sua imaginatione insaniat* (Ep. 12). And it is because we assume, partly justifiably and partly not, that a real existence must bear some resemblance to the existence we ascribe to the objects of sense-perception, and which we think we understand until we try to explain it, that we rebel against the conception of existence which we are asked to ascribe to the objects of intellect, *i.e.* to real things. But the notion of existence which *prima facie* we derive from sense-perception, *viz.* the occupation of spatio-temporal position, is really negative; we learn nothing but that what is here-now is other than what is there-then. But the very slightest exercise of reasoning or thought leads us from the here-now to the there-then, and their difference is recognised as a difference in unity and not a mere negation. Nor is their unity a mere association or aggregation, or purely quantitative relation (for reason all the parts of space-time are alike), it is a unity of principle which with all its differences (and not only those given) constitutes a concrete universal determining events in space-time, but not itself an event of the same order. So, and only so, an enduring world is constituted, and not of located 'nows'. And perception itself,

therefore, is only possible so far as its *prima facie* principles have been transcended, and mere exclusion overcome. Further, we must recall that it is the clear teaching of Spinoza that *Imaginatio* itself is not necessarily wholly false; when, and so far as, it is taken for what it really is, it is true, and without some transcendence of partiality and fragmentariness there would be no perception, for there would be no content to perceive. No one has ever perceived an event, *i.e.* a point-instant, or even an event-block or continuum of point-instants. What we perceive is something occurring, *i.e.* the content of space-time. What we perceive is essentially something that endures as well as something that occupies point-instants.

Thus when the intellectual criticism of the world of perception carries us to a world which we essentially perceive *sub quadam specie aeternitatis*, we are only moving farther along the road that led to perception from impercipientia. We may freely resign ourselves to that criticism of thought already begun and constitutive of things perceived. That criticism cannot be limited; if it applies to the details it applies to the main business; things are as they are correctly thought, coherently thought; and the existence enjoyed by things is to be interpreted not by the exclusion and otherness that more obviously characterises it in the world of perception (but could never constitute even that) but by the inclusion and identity discovered by reason, and already enjoyed in their degree by the partial objects of perception, and more fully enjoyed as inclusion and identity become more full and intimate.

In duration itself, therefore, we must find the clue to the concrete character of eternity; and though we may well admit that Spinoza passed too rapidly from the clue to the completion, and thereby short-circuited the current of intellectual criticism, and thus concealed the infinite content of eternity, yet we must hold that for him duration is the limited conception, and eternity the infinite. *Deo infinita actu existentia competit . . . atque hanc infinitam existentiam Aeternitatem voco* (Cog. Met. II. 1). And it follows further from the clue provided by perceptual experience, that the existence which is eternity is not an empty form of existence, but particular existence. For it is duration that constitutes the particular content of perceived existences, and it is eternity itself that exists in the eternal, and is thus the very content of the Real. M. Bergson has made duration itself the ultimate reality, but for Spinoza eternity is the reality of duration, and therefore the very stuff of the Real. *Quasi aeternitas absque essentiae divinae contemplatione intelligi posset, vel quid esset praeter divinam essentiam.*