



Spinoza's Doctrine of the Relationship Between Mind and Body

W. Hale White

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single public man dare openly oppose them, so strongly are they rooted in the hearts of the Swiss people.

In his closing paragraph, Mr. Lowell says: "If the Referendum and the Initiative were instruments by which the laboring class could legislate for its own special benefit, they would be mischievous. Class legislation, enacted by a class, is absolutely inconsistent with democracy, which is a government by the whole people for the benefit of the whole people." True; and that is just what Direct Legislation is; it is a means by which any class or group in a community, whether village, city, State, or nation, can bring up its grievances and its proposed remedy for such grievances before the whole people for discussion, and then the whole people decides on the proposed remedy. The laboring class can force a discussion on some measure for its own special benefit, but it cannot, unless the people agree with it, make this measure a law. Direct Legislation will prevent class legislation.

As Mr. Lowell truly says, "If history proves anything, it proves that a democracy in which any one class becomes too powerful is doomed."

ELTWEED POMEROY.

NEWARK, N. J.

SPINOZA'S DOCTRINE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIND AND BODY.

EVERY student of Spinoza has doubtless felt the difficulty of reconciling those propositions in the *Ethic* which appear to make the mind dependent on the body, with other propositions, especially in the fifth part, in which Spinoza maintains, not only the power of the mind over the passions, but its immortality. I propose to offer a few observations, which, if they do not solve the problem, may remove some of its difficulties.

It is presupposed, of course, that the reader is familiar with the *Ethic*, and knows what Spinoza means by extension and thought, and what he understands to be the connection between them.

According to Proposition 13, Part 2, "the object of the idea constituting the human mind is a body, or a certain mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else." For "idea" we may substitute "knowledge," and Spinoza himself uses the phrase "idea or knowledge." The "idea constituting the human mind" is therefore a certain aggregate of knowledge. What is meant by "object"? At first sight it might be supposed that the body is the

mind's "object" in the sense that the mind is merely a kind of transcript of the affections of the body. If so, Spinoza is purely physiological and materialistic, and contradicts himself, not only in the fifth part, but perpetually in the earlier parts of the *Ethic*. For example, in Proposition 18, Part 2, we hear of "a concatenation of ideas which takes place according to the order of the intellect" expressly distinguished from "the order and concatenation of the affections of the human body," and in Scholium, Proposition 29, Part 2, perception "according to the common order of Nature" is declared to be "confused knowledge," and it is the prerogative of the mind to determine itself "internally," and so to arrive at "adequate" knowledge. It is clear that, for Spinoza, the mind has the power to arrange its thoughts in some other order than that of the affections of the body, and to draw conclusions which do not follow from the order in which the affections of the body occur. He maintains, also, that the mind can form conceptions which transcend; that the infinite cannot be conceived by the imagination, but by the intellect alone; and in Proposition 11, Part 3, we find that the death of the body involves the cessation of *memory* and *imagination*, a limitation which is careful and precise, and is exactly that of the fifth part. Once more, according to Proposition 2, Part 3, "the body cannot determine the mind to thought, neither can the mind determine the body to motion nor rest, nor to anything else, if there be anything else." The Scholium, which is rather lengthy, is a polemic against those who disbelieve the latter part of the proposition. The reason why Spinoza lays particular stress on this latter part no doubt was that at the time Descartes and the pineal gland were much in fashion, but he is just as careful to tell us that the body cannot determine the mind.

It is evident, therefore, from a consideration of these early propositions, to say nothing of those which deal with man's power over his passions and those of the fifth part, that to Spinoza the body is not the object of the mind, in the sense that the mind is its separate, but exact reflection or counterpart, and it is difficult to suppose that the immortality of the fifth part was, as some suggest, an after-thought. What Spinoza intends by "object" is in fact *objected*. He denies the existence of two utterly diverse entities, mind and body. How, he thinks, if this be true, are we to pass from one to the other? He takes the conclusions of his first part and applies them to man. The body and mind *are the same*

thing considered under two different attributes. The proposition last quoted means that there is no such thing as an abstract mind issuing its orders to the body, and no such thing as an abstract body controlling the mind. Abstract mind and abstract body are impossible unrealities. Man thinking *in time and existent* is this particular body as thought: man's body is the mind as extension. The highest flights of thought are the body as thought, and (Proposition 39, Part 5) "he who possesses a body fit for many things possesses a mind of which the greater part is eternal." Nevertheless, it is true that the body as thought can "concatenate" its own affections, govern its own passions, and "strive" (the word is Spinoza's own) to acquire such a distinct knowledge of its affections that it cannot be mastered by them.

We now come to the fifth part. The twenty-first proposition proves that "the mind can imagine nothing, nor can it recollect anything that is past, except while the body exists." This calls for no comment. The next proposition is that "in God, nevertheless, there necessarily exists an idea which expresses the essence of this or that human body under the form of eternity." "Essence" is defined, Definition 2, Part 2 (and Spinoza lays much stress on minute attention to this definition), as "that, which being given, the thing itself is necessarily posited, and being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken: or, in other words, that, without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which in its turn cannot be nor be conceived without the thing." The essence of the body (Corollary, Proposition 10, Part 2) is a modification of an attribute of God (extension); and the idea expressing the essence, according to Scholium, Proposition 23, Part 5, is "a certain mode of thought which pertains to the essence of the mind." The essence of this or that human body is a certain form of extension with its affections, and the idea is the knowledge of those affections, or the mind. Spinoza elsewhere distinctly denies the existence of a bare, empty *I*. Man is what he knows, and this knowledge is *through* the body, but nevertheless it is partly under the form of eternity. There is really here no contradiction, save the contradiction of actual fact. Without its object the mind cannot conceive the infinite. Nay more, without its object the mind is *not*, but nevertheless the object is not infinite, nor, as an abstraction, is it the mind. Proposition 23, Part 5, affirms that "the human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal," the proof

being that the ascription of duration or existence through the body is only possible to the mind so long as it is limited in time, but that there is "something" which pertains to the essence of the mind which must "be conceived by a certain eternal necessity through the essence itself of God" and must be eternal.

It is noticeable that the "idea" of the twenty-second proposition here becomes "something,"—a little more indefinite. Spinoza could not go any further than "something." He was firmly convinced, on the one hand, of the reality of mind, but that objectless mind is pure fiction, and that through the object infinity is reached; that, in short, infinity and finitude are each in the other, and one without the other is nothing.

The practical conclusion is that the more we "conceive through intelligence, the larger is the eternal part in us," and (Scholium, Proposition 38, Part 5) "it is possible for the human mind to be of such a nature that that part of it which we have shown perishes with its body, in comparison with the part of it which remains, is of no consequence."

It is not my object to defend Spinoza's creed, nor do I pretend that I have completely understood or explained it, but it is a fair reply to the charge of obscurity that all religion, in so far as it is speculative, is obscure, and Spinoza's is not more so than the Christian mysteries. Neither is it so obscure as the popular notion as to soul and body, nor as many other conclusions of common sense which are clear solely because we have so often repeated them. To break down these conclusions is one of the special functions of philosophy.*

W. HALE WHITE.

* Many parallel passages might be quoted from other authors. "Further, this creative reason does not at one time think, at another time not think (it thinks eternally); and when separated from the body it remains nothing but what it essentially is; and thus it is alone immortal and eternal. Of this unceasing work of thought, however, we retain no memory, because this reason is unaffected by its objects; whereas the receptive, passive intellect (which is affected) is perishable, and can really think nothing without the support of the creative intellect."—Aristotle's "Psychology" (Wallace's translation, p. 161).

"I believe," said Pantagruel, "that all intellectual souls are exempt from the scissors of Atropos. They are all immortal."—Rabelais, "Pantagruel," Book iv., Chapter 27.

"To give heed to her (Wisdom's) laws confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near unto God."—Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter vi., Verses 18, 19.