NOTES

THE ROMANTIC SPINOZA IN AMERICA

By Benjamin Wolstein

That the New England transcendentalists actually brought Kant to America when they introduced Coleridge is generally recognized. The fact that Spinozism was imported when the St. Louis School turned to Hegel and German romanticism has not been given equal recognition. Both of these major philosophic movements in nineteenth-century America admired the character of the saintly Benedict Spinoza, and the St. Louis Hegelians became unwitting defenders of the more important aspects of his thought. The appraisals of his thought and character that appeared in various American journals and histories of philosophy from the sixties to the turn of the century were mostly unfavorable. Yet some of his basic ideas were favorably received in another context; for they had left indelible marks on most of the German philosophies which were gaining increasing support in America during that period.

The rôle of Spinozism in these intellectual currents has escaped the notice of investigators of Spinozism and American philosophy alike. Nevertheless, a review of the pertinent literature has revealed a wide, though critical, interest in its metaphysical, moral, and theological implications. Our concern is limited to late nineteenth-century discussions of Spinoza, partly because of this gross historical oversight and partly because the romanticized version of Spinoza has already been superseded during the last fifty years. The significant materials may be usefully arranged and presented in two parts: first, the Spinozistic influences which may be encountered in the writings of leading German figures, especially Hegel, and secondly, the attitudes, largely of historical interest, which American thinkers expressed toward Spinoza. The various views on three questions discussed in the literature will be presented: (a) geometrical style, (b) the notion of God or nature, and (c) human nature and ethics—and we will conclude with some representative characterizations of Spinoza's enterprise.

On these shores, Hegel was considered the most prominent philosophical romanticist in Germany, and it was largely through Spinoza's direct influence on Hegel that he indirectly influenced American thought. In view of this circumstance, a rightful place could be claimed for Spinozism in the history of American philosophy even if no writings had been expressly devoted to it.

In agreement with most of the other German thinkers of his time, Hegel had acknowledged systematic unity to be Spinoza's supreme insight. As a result of that famous controversy towards the end of the eighteenth century, these figures brought about a revival of interest in Spinoza which provided the focus of a movement often referred to as Neo-Spinozism.[1] Generally

[1] As it turned out, it was not actually a revival of Spinoza but a recasting of his doctrines to meet new needs. See F. H. Burckhardt's introduction to his translation of Herder's *God, Some Conversations* (New York, 1940), for a full account of this renewed interest.

speaking, Neo-Spinozism was the philosophical and poetic expression of both the revolt against mechanism and the pursuit of individuality in an organically changing universe. Their own quest for free self-expression and their passionate search for an emotionally rich life motivated these romanticists to translate Spinoza's scientific faith into an irrational mysticism.

It was perhaps in an autobiographical vein that Hegel wrote, " You are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all." [2] Unfortunately, his polemical criticisms cast a pale shadow on this exuberant praise. Since many of his criticisms and reflections were echoed by American thinkers who were even at odds with absolute idealism, it will be most profitable to center our attention on his interpretations. Despite Hegel's criticisms—the abuse of speculative philosophy, the immobility of substance, the neglect of natural philosophy, the absence of a principle of self-consciousness, and the failure to supply active and organic connectives between the ultimate reality of substance and the concrete world of individual things—his own concept of absolute reason is very close to Spinoza's logical monism. The major difference between these two thinkers on the matter of historical teleology cannot plausibly account for Hegel's overemphasis of his objections. For they appear rather picayune when compared with the many and significant Spinozistic doctrines which were continued by Hegel. Of course, these doctrines were adapted to a different context, but they remained so remarkably Spinozistic that the differences almost shrink to predominantly contextual ones. The disapproval of abstract thinking, moral freedom as rational self-determination, truth as a trait of systematized and concrete ideas, truth as dependent on the internal coherence of propositions, the notion of an infinite, self-propelled, and self-contained substance, the boundless faith in both the intelligible structure of nature and the efficacy of intelligence, human and divine, to get at it—all of these philosophic principles appeared in Spinoza and reappeared in Hegel. Whether Hegel took these principles over directly from Spinoza or from the Neo-Spinozists, or whether both had inherited them from a Neo-Platonic version of Aristotle, is a secondary consideration. These two thinkers are more significantly related than historians of ideas have been wont to admit: for both eagerly sought the permanent element in experience to distinguish true knowledge from mere opinion and they found it in the unified powers of reason.

(a) Two of Hegel's important criticisms of Spinoza presupposed each other. It is essentially because he considered geometrical method an integral part of Spinozism that he regarded Spinoza's substance as static. A philosophy which sought the truth of its content could not use this method, Hegel maintained, for, being merely formal in character, its consistent application did not entail the verification of its results; it served no constructive purpose and would only distort its speculative content. Since this method was static and non-referential, Spinoza could not demonstrate how the two attributes evolved from the one " petrified " substance. He went on to unify Spinoza's theories of truth and reality with his own dialectical method. Despite his

[2] Hegel, *History of Philosophy,* trans. by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London, 1896), III, 282. The following discussion of Hegel's views on Spinoza is based on pages 252–290 of this volume.

extravagant emphasis on historical change, moral freedom was retained as the supreme goal. This decision to vitalize Spinoza's theory of substance was accompanied by an agreement on the superiority of metaphysical monism to the dualism of his contemporaries. While Hegel and other romanticists criticized the immobility of substance, Fichte had absolutized both voluntarism and teleology. He proceeded to set the ego off against the non-ego as a metaphysical absolute, and when this view of the ego got to Schopenhauer, will became the primordial character of existence. Following Spinoza more closely, Hegel merged will and idea in the Absolute and made it move by introducing the dialectical process.

(b) For these philosophers, Spinoza had been a forerunner of their variety of idealism. But his concept of substance, they found, was a rigid, unworkable, and unyielding abstraction. This static notion of substance was combined with a disavowal of its differentiations: they discovered pantheism in the *Ethics*. Hegel reinforced this discovery with a special interpretation of *attributa infinita:* Spinoza's God possessed two infinite attributes of thought and extension rather than an infinite number of them, and they were external to divine substance. The two attributes were distinguished as a matter of human understanding; they were not distinctions in substance but rather two different perspectives in which it could be viewed. This was also Schelling's interpretation.[3] Since human reason was restricted to these two infinite attributes and could survey only differentiated modes and determinate ideas, Hegel maintained that the modes and ideas disappeared in the infinite unity of God; and this gave rise to mystical pantheism. It is difficult to see why he held that the initial seven definitions contained all of Spinoza's philosophy, as everything in this mystical pantheism could be found in the fifth one, the definition of God.

The idea of *Deus sive Natura* was particularly appealing to Herder and Goethe, since it fortified their own interests in the harmony of religion and natural science. After Herder had defended Spinoza against Jacobi's charges of atheism and fatalism, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel also took part in the defense. Only anthropocentric theologians who ceased to contemplate the infinite God, they argued, would label Spinoza an atheist. Hegel suggested that acosmism described this divine substance more accurately, since reality and permanence were ascribed to it and not to the world of finite existences. But Hegel hedged a bit, and because God was not sharply distinguished from that finite world and conceived as Spirit, Spinoza must remain an atheist. In one and the same paragraph, Hegel suggested absolute pantheism and atheism to describe Spinoza's idea of God.[4] Schopenhauer affirmed Spinozistic pantheism without any equivocation, but he imputed very special motives to Spinoza in order to account for the deification of substance or nature. Spinoza wanted to preserve God in name only, and he did not intend to continue in the tradition of medieval theology: but the stake of Bruno and Vanini was still fresh in his memory.[5] This was a de-

[3] Schelling, *The Age of the World,* trans. by F. deW. Bolman (New York, 1942), 230.

[4] Hegel, *op. cit.,* 282. [5] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea,* trans. by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London, 1896), III, 106.

cidedly different slant on Spinoza's natural theology, and it may throw some light on Hegel's indecision in the matter.

(c) Self-consciousness had become a cardinal principle of romantic idealism, and some of its exponents criticized Spinoza for his wholesale omission of it. Spinoza had, to be sure, proposed a *naturae humanae exemplar* in the fourth part of the *Ethics*. But this pattern or model of human nature provided him with but a limited idea of perfection, a mode of thought relatively construed. Since good and evil were human standards of comparison, men must form some such pattern in order to compare them more efficiently. But this pattern had an exclusively relative status, and with the logical transition to absolute substance, it disappeared together with its discriminations of good and evil. For this dissolution of personality in the absolute, Fichte severely upbraided Spinoza.[6] Fichte would not allow the ego to inhere and dissolve in something other than itself; the ego would maintain its identity absolutely. He held that pure consciousness would not be realized in Spinoza's substance because empirical consciousness existed in virtue of something else, not in its own right. And it disappeared in a pure consciousness which had no self-consciousness. Even if such a pure and undifferentiated unity realized itself self-consciously, a permanently dependent status for the ego would be, at best, a caricature of its potentialities. By seeing all of nature and all of its necessities as subjective ideas, he managed to free the ego from this ball-and-chain relationship with the non-ego. Hegel was decidedly more objective in his theory of knowledge, and he remained much closer to Spinoza than to Fichte on this score. Nevertheless, he continued the Fichtean attack on the disappearing ego in Spinoza's *Ethics;* the absolute moment of self-consciousness had to be added.

Fichte and Hegel lived in the romantic world of self-conscious voluntarism set in motion by Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and the breakdown of the French revolution. In that world, growth and purpose were considered to be the absolute features of every phase of every natural and social event. An intense concern with history brought with it a successful reconstruction of past intellectual epochs. It is essentially because the romanticists gained insight into other cultural eras that they fashioned a theory of self-consciousness. By projecting themselves into a past historical situation and retaining their own perspective, they achieved that consciousness of self which emerged out of consciousness of others. When these men wrote the history of philosophy, they criticized Spinoza for failing to use the very perspective which enabled them to analyze and understand him.

The question of teleology is closely related to this matter. Spinoza had eliminated final causes from his theory of substance, and the categories of purpose and obligation were relativized. With Hegel, on the contrary, purposiveness reigned supreme. His moral theory did not result in stoical acquiescence to the purposeless mind of God, and moral progress no longer grew out of the sublimination of human desires in order to attain the intellectual love of God. Moral progress was spelled out in terms of an increas-

[6] Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge,* trans. by A. E. Kroeger (Philadelphia, 1868), 74, 95–97.

ing self-realization which God's endless historical activity determined; moral atheism was rejected and replaced by purposive absolutism. In short, the question of absolute teleology generated the sharpest contrast between Spinoza and the romantic movement in Germany which rehabilitated his reputation and revived interest in his doctrines.

Americans who wrote on Spinoza after the importation of German romanticism did not find it difficult to criticize his views on philosophic method, God or nature, and ethics. Even a cursory reading of the romantics provided them with all of the criticisms they might want to use. It was mainly the idealists like Morris, Royce, and Ladd who insisted on giving Spinoza a fair reading and sympathetic presentation; and Fullerton did by far the most intensive study of the *Ethics* during the forty-year period under consideration. McCosh and Bowen, who adhered to Scottish realism, and Haven, who sought " Christian evidences," gave it the least sympathetic reading, laughing it out of court or actually labelling it an aberration.

There is one striking fact about the philosophic revival in America which fed on German romanticism and idealism after the sixties: its leaders largely failed to recognize and acknowledge any indebtedness, even of an indirect sort, to Spinoza. The St. Louis Hegelians, Alcott, Gronlund, Mulford, Morris, Whitman, and Lloyd are but a few who recognized their connections with Hegel, but made little note of the important ways in which this debt was partially owed to Spinoza.

(a) Because the Cartesian method and terminology were used in the *Ethics,* it was called an ethical geometry. In Spinoza's use of them, Haven discovered the " grand secret of his total aberration " (15: 252); [7] Roe took the method to be part and parcel of Spinoza's philosophy, and felt he had refuted it by showing how geometrical propositions lack ontological reference (31: 643). Although he did not discuss its rôle in Spinozism, Dewey did claim that the method was abused because the premises failed to state their content precisely (11: 250); and he tried, by using that method, to prove that attributes did not possess modes (11: 252). Kroeger, who translated Fichte's *The Science of Knowledge,* rather caustically termed the *Ethics* " a system unartistically built up on a wrong method and upon arbitrarily chosen axioms " (20: 370).

It was Morris who first broke with the German romanticists as well as with the mechanists and realists in America. Admitting that " the geometrical form . . . did not in every instance secure exactness . . . or preserve from logical inconsistency " (23: 287), he proceeded to a sympathetic interpretation of its content. Royce had also sought to ignore methodological technicalities (33: 56, 58), but his characterization of Spinozism was not as clear-cut as Morris's. Though Fullerton's criticisms were rather harsh, he noted " the fact that they are criticisms of Spinoza's system as a system, and not a commentary on the separate thoughts contained in the work [*Ethics*] . . . there are two distinct elements in the philosophy of Spinoza, and objections

[7] The bracketed pair of references is to the appended bibliography; the first refers to the title, the second refers to the page.

against one element do not touch the other. The thoughtful student will find the *Ethics* a mine of precious ore, and, though he may take exception to some of its formal reasonings, he cannot fail to find much that will repay his severest efforts. Few have more to say to the men of our time than Spinoza, who is more modern in some of his conceptions than almost any among our contemporaries" (14: 200). Peirce also realized that geometrical method, though a sign of Spinoza's metaphysical ingenuity, would furnish a "laughing stock to mathematicians" (27: 344). He alone in the experimental pragmatic tradition expressed the need to penetrate beneath the geometrical encrustation and enter the "living stream" of Spinoza's thought; for if Spinoza had thought he reasoned after the manner of Euclid, he would have been positively mistaken.[8]

McCosh (24: 106–7) and Bowen (7: 62), Abbot (1: II, 97–8), the scientific theist, and Bowne (8: 148–150) and Hyslop (18: 66), representatives of idealism, are but a few of the American philosophers who considered Spinoza's concept of nature to be a mechanical one. Bowne's views on static substance provide a satisfactory example: There is no way to make the transition from the eternal one to the temporal many, for "the system breaks down on the very first differentiation," there being "neither motion nor direction in the simple" (8: 148, 150); Spinoza's distinctions between infinite substance and its finite modifications indicated but abstractly the first two phases of a concrete process, and, if taken alone, they became thoroughly mechanistic and immobile. Though Morris (25: 281) and later Fullerton (13: 49) accepted the mathematico-mechanical character of Spinozism, they were both satisfied that its theory of nature was active and not static.

(b) Bascom (4: 183), Dewey (11: 257), Haven (15: 257), Howison (17: 63, fn. 1), Hyslop (18: 65), Ladd (21: 51), McCosh (24: 106), Morris (23: 281), and Phelps (28: 763) are but a few representatives of different movements in American thought who agreed that Spinoza was a pantheist. The sharp divergences among these thinkers testify, among other things, to the strong hold which the romantic interpretation had attained in America. Dewey, the budding practical idealist, was willing to call him a pancosmist instead of a pantheist, while Ladd, another sort of idealist, was "amazed" at this barren and frozen theological geometry; and McCosh freely expressed his amusement. After considering the possibilities of pantheism, acosmism, atheism, and materialism, Bowen finally called him a nihilist (7: 67). Sheldon (38: 3128) and Baldwin (3: 65) placed Spinoza on the side of theism, although the latter did not think that Spinozism was a force for it. The conclusion that the romanticist approach to Spinoza's concept of God held sway in America may easily be drawn. Despite the scattered objections to it, pantheism and Spinoza were practically synonymous.

[8] It has been brought to my attention by Prof. Wiener that G. Boole, *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought* (London, 1854), chap. xiii, had anticipated Peirce in exhibiting the fallacies of Spinoza's proofs in the *Ethics*. Nevertheless, among the philosophers of experimental science in America, Peirce was among the first to point them out.

If they had taken " infinite attributes " to mean an infinite number of infinite attributes, they would have granted Spinoza's God more than two attributes. God would then have been more than the humanly intelligible world, though it was anchored in God. The ability of a finite mode to confer more attributes upon an infinite substance than are accessible to its reason and experience has to remain an open question. Fullerton wrestled with this problem in his treatment of immortality: " The view that immortality is a qualitative state and does not imply continuance in any sense may be supported by the explicit statement (V, 23, schol.) that eternity cannot be defined in terms of time, and cannot have any relation to time. On the other hand, the view that Spinoza means by immortality the continuance in existence of the mind, or a part of it, after the death of the body, appears to be the most reasonable explanation of the language used throughout the discussion (V, 23, schol.; 31, schol., 33, schol., and 34). Yet such a doctrine evidently contradicts the doctrine of the correspondence of modes in the attributes of thought and extension. According to that doctrine the destruction of the body must imply the destruction of the mind. Spinoza seems here to have fallen into the usual difficulties arising from the use of that self-contradictory notion—a timeless eternity. He denies that his reality has anything to do with time, yet he is forced to treat it in terms of time " (14: 199–200). When these difficulties arose, they were handled in one of two ways. It was either suggested with Peirce that " crystal clearness such as we justly require in mathematics . . . is in philosophy the characteristic of second-rates " (27: 344); and maintained with Fullerton that " perhaps the best explanation of his statements lies in supposing that his thought was not entirely clear to himself, and, consequently, contains elements that cannot be harmonized with the rest of his philosophy, or with each other " (14: 199). Or, as already noted, the less sympathetic readers of Spinoza were amused by this exercise in philosophical geometry and denounced it as an aberration.

Another support of pantheism took this problem from the other side. It was not so much the limitations of finite experience which made an infinite substance difficult to conceive as it was a systematic defect in Spinoza's attempt to conceive of modes. If the essence of substance, *i.e.*, attribute, had to be conceived through itself alone, it would follow that attributes cannot possess modes. By definition, modes exist in something else, and since attributes by definition must be conceived through themselves alone, modes are inconceivable. This argument, based on the way attributes must be conceived, did not throw suspicion on the existence of modes. Conceived in this way, however, an attribute may be said to exist only by courtesy of language. For it is that which is perceived of substance and of its modifications; it is their logical aspect which unified them. Though some commentators seriously questioned whether modes could be conceived (*e.g.*, 11: 250–254), they were chiefly concerned with the dialectical problem of uniting a substantival essence with its particular modes. They did not seek to deprive modes of their existence, but were questioning Spinoza's seemingly

dogmatic assertion that modes could be conceived. Since substance is and is conceived in itself while modes are and are conceived in something else, Spinoza's claim that modes must be conceived in something else runs counter to his claim that attribute, the only other thing through which it can be conceived, must be conceived in itself.

This epistemological support of pantheism or pancosmism was reinforced by Spinoza's equation of God and nature as the theological and metaphysical starting point of his system. It motivated the location of God in nature or materialistic pantheism (18: 66), the disappearance of nature in God or spiritual pantheism (12: 56), and Morris took Spinoza to task for this " unjustified and misleading " use of the term " God " (23: 289). For Morris, God and nature were the same when regarded from the point of view of their objective reference. Both of these terms maintained similar meanings in different contexts; one held for the theological context, the other for the context of science. When Spinoza had identified them, he sought to merge these two contexts so that scientific discovery would advance the knowledge of God. But then, for Morris, Spinoza's God was nature, and nothing more.

Other lesser known writers in America participated in this critique of Spinoza. Sears denounced Spinozism as " absurd and revolting " because it denied God volition and design (37: 334); Osgood (26: 279–281), Ramseur (30: 28–29), and Roe (31: 645) were equally though less violently opposed to this thoroughly naturalized view of God. They refused to accept Spinoza's views on divine intention, creation, and personal immortality as well.

(c) Absolute teleology was unacceptable to Spinoza, since the natural order of things was neither good nor bad from an infinite perspective. But he did allow for relative teleology, for estimations of worth that were inextricably related to things desired and means utilized in the human quest for significance in life. When Bowne could not find teleology in Spinozism (8: 150), he had overlooked its relative status. Hyslop, however, recognized the place of this " subjectivism " (18: 65). And it is probably because of the implications of Spinoza's statement that " we neither strive for, wish, seek, nor desire anything gecause we think it to be good, but, on the contrary, we adjudge a thing to be good because we strive for, wish, seek, or desire it " (*Eth.*, III, 9, schol.) that Hyslop characterized Spinoza's influence on ethical theory as chiefly negative (18: 66).

There was a greater interest in expounding Spinoza's doctrines of God and immortality than in culling his philosophic insights about human nature. Fullerton's treatment of the *Ethics* was about the most exhaustive published during this period. But he centered his analysis of Spinoza on the contents of the first, second, and fifth parts of the *Ethics*, with only some extracts from the third and fourth parts. He wrote that " it was not easy to cut into a work constructed as this one . . . I think, however, I have omitted nothing essential to a comprehension of Spinoza's *metaphysical system*, and have preserved intact his chain of argument " (14: v; my emphasis). Fullerton concerned himself chiefly with the metaphysical theory of time as it was reflected in Spinoza's discussions of mind, and he could not see how an un-

localized, timeless, and abstract essence united with a concrete occurrence (13: 74–5). The relation of the temporal and the timeless as it impinged on the immortality of the mind was the basic issue: How did Spinoza make the transition from existence to essence, from part III, where the emotions are treated as natural phenomena, to part IV, where the model of human nature is to be identified only with the adequate ideas of mind, to part V, where the model almost drops out and the essence of mind consists simply in adequate ideas? Fullerton concluded from this that " the essences of the realist are . . . necessarily not pure universals. They always have the flavor of the concrete. And Spinoza's essences, the ' fixed and eternal things ' . . . I have shown to be the hypostatized universals of a realist, endowed with the inconsistent attributes usually granted such entities. They are both abstractions and concrete things " (14: 73). The inconsistencies of medieval realism were caused to return and plague Spinoza.

The comparatively meager comment about Spinoza's views on human nature and ethics is most striking. It doubtless reflects the dominant theological and metaphysical interests of late nineteenth-century American philosophy. It also suggests that the principle of self-consciousness with which German romanticism and idealism had been preoccupied was becoming an increasingly scientific sort of inquiry; and the experimental laboratories of psychology which were founded in the eighties had taken it over in their fashion.

The German romanticists had shared in their veneration of Spinoza the man. They were largely responsible for the revival of interest in his thought after an enlightened century of vilification. They admired his quest for intellectual freedom, his defense of a natural theology, and his separation of theology and politics. Schleiermacher was lyrical in his famous tribute to Spinoza. " Sacrifice with me in reverence to the manes of the holy, persecuted Spinoza. The lofty world-spirit pervaded him. The infinite was his beginning and his end. The universe was his only and eternal love. In holy innocence, in deep humility, he mirrored himself in the eternal world. Full of religion was he, and full of the Holy Ghost. And, so, there he stands—alone and unapproached."

Americans who published on Spinoza during the forty years under consideration utilized much that appeared in the romantic criticisms of his thought. They also utilized, perhaps less consciously, those Spinozistic elements which were incorporated in German systems of philosophy. But they did not generally hold him in such boundless veneration. Where each individual thinker got the inspiration for his ideas is difficult to ascertain exactly; the philosophic value of this type of information is, in any case, dubious. One generalization may be safely suggested, however. While the critical attitude toward Spinoza reflected most of the romantic criticisms, awareness of intellectual debt to him was conspicuously lacking. The tenor of this American attitude was a moralizing one intended as a defense of revealed theology. German idealists had depicted Spinoza as an unfinished

romanticist whose concept of substance was static, who lacked a theory of self-consciousness, who developed a lifeless view of nature, or was unaware of the implications of history and movement, but the Americans rejected Spinoza largely because they found in him little support for orthodoxy.

Everyone who wrote on Spinoza tried to offer an adequate description of his system. The notorious difficulties involved in characterizing it were amply reflected in these attempts at classification. A multitude of " isms " was set forth, and in most cases these " isms " generated less light than heat. Even when cited at random, a hopeless mélange of incompatible views reveals itself, and it practically defies orderly classification. Haven called Spinozism a fatalistic philosophy (15: 257), while Royce tried to catch a multi-faceted glimpse of Spinoza's broad sympathies, and saw everything from a seer to a cold mathematical thinker (33: 41–67). The early Santayana, however, found Spinoza rather narrow-minded, for his thought " all turns in very narrow circles about its center " (35: 144). The life of reason, in 1886, was a life of social and personal accommodation; " it seems much easier and much saner to confess once and for all what seems to be the truth, and then to go about one's other business, guided by the ideal of one's country and of one's heart " (35: 152). In rather sharp contrast, Kroeger considered Spinoza to be a moral weakling who did not even confess to the truth; Spinoza " was not brave enough—had not the character enough, as the Germans would say—to state the result of his investigations with a frankness disregarding all earthly consequence " (20: 365). In response to this caricature, Morris wrote that " the mastery of his system, accompanied by a strictly just correction of its errors and appreciation of its truth, will be the best tribute that any can pay " (23: 290); but he also called Spinoza's conclusions materialistic and fatalistic, for God being " nothing but an abstraction . . . *is* nothing " (23: 289–90). Abbot agreed with Morris that Spinoza's was a purposeless materialism; he termed its unity an illusory monism in which " Extension devours Thought," for his " Extension is a mere machine, and his non-purposive or merely mechanical Thought is Thoughtless " (1, II: 100). On the other hand, Hill argued for the presence of a " chasm " in Spinoza's thought (16: 361), and Snider found the " profoundest dualism of the Seventeenth-Century " in Spinozism because it is " cleft fundamentally into two grand divisions, the metaphysical and the ethical " (40: 191). This was essentially the point Fullerton had made about the disappearing model of human nature as Spinoza moved from the third to the fifth part of the *Ethics* (14: 69–74). On the metaphysical side, Fullerton also called it psychophysical parallelism (13: 17), and Sheldon, in marked contrast, called it a thoroughgoing monism (39: 3130). Baldwin held that it was an absolute realism (3: 67) which led the way to pantheism without being pantheistic, while Osgood maintained that in seeking the unity of thought and being it led the way to fatalism without being fatalistic (26: 274). Though Dewey doubted the reconcilability of the finite with the infinite, Peirce alone raised the really experimental question about the utility of an ideal perspective which was never brought to the bar of experi-

ence and put to the verifying test. It was, to be sure, as useful as any ideal speculation, but Peirce still searched in vain for this element of verifiability. Without it, Spinoza could place but "a child-like faith in the objective truth of his ideas" (27: 345).

These divergent and even contradictory "isms" cast strong doubts on the feasibility of an explicit and integrated formulation of the Spinoza being criticized. They compel the observation that his system was not to be pinned down easily by any one of them. The aspects of it upon which these men centered their attention probably revealed more about their own modes of thought than they did about Spinoza's.

Most of these commentators tried to refute this system analytically, though none sought successfully to locate it in its own frame of reference. They were unsympathetic to Spinoza's philosophic point of view because they did not look into the historical considerations which molded it. His seventeenth-century interests and moral purposes which converged with the demands of the new natural science were generally glossed over. His attempt to combine that science with the ideas of God and nature which he had inherited from a scholastic, Neo-Platonized version of Aristotle, his speculative integration of the medieval absolute divinity with both the method and results of the new science, as well as his development of a theory of human nature as an adjunct of it, and his presentation of this new synthesis in the geometrical manner so dear to those scientists—matters such as these were analyzed from a late nineteenth-century perspective. Spinoza had set his sights on a difficult and rare achievement which was nevertheless within the realm of logical possibility, but the American criticisms did not reflect the historical context of his aim and enterprise.

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