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HEGEL, PANTHEISM, AND SPINOZA

BY G. H. R. PARKINSON

Hegel's acquaintance with the philosophy of Spinoza was of long standing.¹ Soon after he went to Jena, the first collected edition of Spinoza's works was published there in 1802-03. The editor was Paulus, the professor of theology, and Hegel informs us (GP 3, 371) that he collaborated with Paulus in the preparation of the edition. This means that, relatively early in his philosophical career, Hegel was brought into close contact with Spinoza's doctrines. They evidently made a considerable impression on him, and are discussed at length in the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Part I of the *Encyclopaedia*, and in the lectures on the philosophy of religion and on the history of philosophy.

This is not to say that Hegel had a deep and scholarly knowledge of Spinoza. Paulus' edition was not a good one—indeed, it failed to meet the most elementary critical standards²—and it appears that Hegel's part in the work was only a modest one.³ Yet it remains true that he valued highly what he understood, or thought he understood, of Spinozism, which he declared (GP 3, 376) to be “in essence, the beginning of all philosophizing.” A study of Hegel's criticisms of Spinoza can therefore be helpful to the student of Hegel, in that Hegel's own doctrines, which in themselves may seem formidably abstract, are given a concrete manifestation in these criticisms. Such a study is also valuable to the student of Spinoza. Hegel may not always provide the Spinoza scholar with satisfactory answers to problems of interpretation, but his objections to Spinoza are shrewd, and it is important to see if they are fair.

When Hegel discusses Spinoza, the issue of his supposed pantheism

¹ The following abbreviations of the titles of Hegel's works will be used in this paper:

E = *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Lasson, Leipzig, 1930.
GP3 = *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. 3. (The text used is that of the *Werke*, Jubilee ed., ed. Glockner, Stuttgart, 1927-39, Vol. 19).

PR = *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Lasson, Leipzig, 1925-30. (References are to volume and part).

WL = *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Lasson, Leipzig, 1923. (Two vols.). Unless otherwise specified, translations from Hegel and from Spinoza are my own.

² Gebhardt, the editor of what is now the standard text of Spinoza, says that it was little more than a reprint of what had previously been published separately. Spinoza, *Opera* (Heidelberg, 1925), II, 343, IV, 437-38.

³ He says (*loc. cit.*) that he “compared some French translations.” Presumably he is referring to the French version of the notes on the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which are contained in the first volume of Paulus' edition. Cf. Gebhardt, *op. cit.*, III, 389, IV, 437.

comes up repeatedly; Hegel asks in what sense Spinoza can be called a pantheist, and what defects there are in the pantheism that can properly be ascribed to him. These criticisms will be the subject of the present paper. The relevant passages all come from the works of Hegel's maturity, and there is no obvious development in the views that they present; the same themes and the same arguments recur constantly. In what follows, an attempt will be made to present Hegel's criticisms in a logical order.

The first task must be to settle the meaning, or meanings, of the term "pantheism" that Hegel recognizes. The term "pantheism," he says, is ambiguous (PR II, 1, 128). One associates with pantheism the doctrine that God is "hen kai pan" (literally, "one and all"). Now, this may mean that God is the one-all (*das eine All*), the all that remains simply one. But "pan" can also mean "everything" (*alles*), and to speak of pantheism in this sense is to speak of the view that everything is God. This, says Hegel, is the doctrine of the "everything-God," not of the "God who is all" (*die Allesgötterei, nicht Allgötterei*). To be more specific: the doctrine of the "everything-God" is the view that God is all things, where "things" are regarded as individual and contingent. It is the view that "God is everything—he is this paper, and so on" (PR I.2, 195). Hegel asserts that pantheism of this kind is not to be found in any religion, far less in any philosophy. In this sense, then, Spinoza is not a pantheist.

However, Hegel asserts that there is a sense in which Spinozism can be called a pantheism. He says repeatedly that Spinoza's philosophy is an "acosmism"; as such, he declares it to be a pantheism (E, par. 151, Zusatz). Hegel's concept of "acosmism" has two elements, a negative and a positive. The negative element is the view that the world, the "cosmos," does not exist; it is a mere phenomenon, lacking in true reality.⁴ When Hegel speaks of "the world" in this context he has in mind the totality of individual things (*Alles*); Spinoza's acosmism, seen from its negative side, is the denial of the real existence of individual things. Individuality, and indeed distinction of all kind is obliterated; everything is thrown in an abyss of annihilation.⁵ The positive element in Spinoza's acosmism is the view that what does exist, is God, to whom everything is reducible. Individual things are the "modes" of God; fundamental differences of kind—in particular, the distinction between mind and matter—are seen as different "attributes" of God.⁶

It is obvious that acosmism is the very opposite of the doctrine of the "everything-God." Far from saying that God is the world, Spinoza (as Hegel interprets him) says that the world does not exist; only God exists.

⁴ PR I.2, 196; E, par. 50, par. 151, Zusatz; GP 3, 408.

⁵ GP 3, 377; cf. GP 3, 408, and E, par. 151, Zusatz.

⁶ GP 3, 373, 390, 404.

This raises two main questions, the answers to which will occupy the remainder of this paper. (1) How, according to Hegel, does Spinoza argue for this acosmism, and what is the value of these arguments? (2) Is Hegel right in ascribing acosmism to Spinoza? Let us turn to the first of these questions.

According to Hegel, the thesis that the world is a mere phenomenon follows from Spinoza's principle that every determination is a negation (*Omnis determinatio est negatio*).⁷ It is important to realize that Hegel does not regard this principle as false; on the contrary, he says that it represents a "true and simple insight," and that in following this principle Spinoza was on the right track.⁸ Hegel discusses this principle in that chapter of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* that deals with *Dasein*, "determinate being" (Book I, Sec. 1, Chap. 2). Broadly, his argument is that if we say anything specific about a thing—if we say, for example, that it is of this color or this shape—then although what we say is affirmative in form, it involves negation. "Determinacy," says Hegel, "is negation posited as affirmative" (WL I, 100). So, for example, to say that something is red is to say that it is not-blue, not-green, and so on. Now, Spinoza has no real interest in color-words, but he is interested in the concepts of individual (i.e., finite) things, and also in the concepts of what he calls "extension" and "thought"—roughly, the concepts of matter and mind. Applying the principle that determination is negation (Hegel argues) Spinoza concludes that finitude, extension, and thought are all negations, and that therefore none of them is real.⁹

It is not immediately clear how Hegel thinks that Spinoza reached this conclusion; that is, exactly what is the link between the premiss that all determination is negation (which Hegel accepts) and the conclusion that the observed world is unreal (which he does not). However, Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy suggest an answer. It is not difficult, Hegel says (GP 3, 375), for Spinoza to show that the individual is something limited, and that its concept depends on the concept of something else; that, in consequence, it is itself dependent, and so not genuinely real (*nicht wahrhaft wirklich*). Hegel is here attributing to Spinoza the view that what makes the individual unreal is the fact that it is not a self-dependent whole, that can be conceived in isolation from others. It seems that Hegel would say (though he does not make this explicit) that Spinoza is accepting the principle enunciated in *The Phenomenology of Mind* as "The true is the whole."¹⁰ In so doing, Hegel would argue, Spinoza was right; consequently, he was right in rejecting dualism and saying that in a sense everything is one (GP 3,

⁷ WL I, 100; GP 3, 376. Cf. WL II, 164.

⁸ WL II, 164; GP 3, 375.

⁹ GP 3, 375-6; WL I, 250.

¹⁰ Hoffmeister ed. (6th ed., Hamburg, 1952), 21.

373). He was wrong, however, in thinking that this “one” must be a wholly undifferentiated unity.

It now has to be seen how Hegel thinks that Spinoza’s acosmism is to be refuted. In outline, Hegel argues that Spinozism is faulty in that it remains at the level of what he calls “understanding,” an abstract, non-dialectical way of thinking whose deficiencies can be remedied only by “reason,” i.e., by the exercise of dialectical thinking (GP 3, 230). Jacobi, Hegel remarks, had argued that all demonstration leads to Spinozism, which is the only logical way of thinking (GP 3, 374). What Jacobi said is true, if one understands by “demonstration” the methods of the understanding—that is, abstract, deductive reason. But there is a logic which is not that of the understanding, and which does not lead to Spinozism. This logic—dialectical logic—is not the flat denial of everything that the understanding asserts; rather, it includes whatever there is in the logic of the understanding that is rational, whilst eliminating what is irrational.¹¹ This is how Hegel can say that Spinoza, in advancing the principle that determination is negation, was on the right track.

All this has been stated in very general terms. The specific error that Spinoza committed was, according to Hegel, that he regarded negation merely as determinacy or quality, and failed to grasp it as self-negating negation (WL II, 164). This is a reference to a fundamental doctrine of Hegel’s dialectical logic: namely, that the concepts of this logic are in a way self-generated. According to dialectical logic, our concepts are unstable. One concept breaks down and is replaced by its negation. This is negated in turn by another concept; but the new concept—the negation of the negation—is not merely the first concept again, but is a concept of a higher order which contains what is rational in the first two. This, too, breaks down, and the process is repeated until a condition of total rationality is reached. In sum, to speak of the negation of the negation is to speak of a kind of movement among concepts, a kind of self-development. It is clear that such a movement is in Hegel’s mind when he speaks of Spinoza’s failure to grasp the negation of the negation, for he says that Spinoza’s infinite substance is something that is rigid; it is not a movement that starts from itself and returns to itself.¹²

It is natural to ask why the concepts of logic should be self-generated in this way. The answer is that logic, according to Hegel, must not contain any element of contingency, of the merely factual. Hegel ob-

¹¹ GP 3, 377: Spinoza’s doctrine of absolute substance is the truth, but it is not the whole truth. Cf. WL II, 218, on the correct refutation of Spinozism: “First, its standpoint is recognized as essential and necessary, but second, this standpoint is raised to a higher level *out of itself*.”

¹² WL I, 250; WL II, 164; PR III.2, 134.

jected to Kant's theory of the categories for just this reason (E, par. 42), and he finds a similar weakness in Spinozism. Spinoza claims that his whole system follows from a few definitions and axioms. But in fact, Hegel argues, this is not so. Spinoza does not really derive the attributes and modes from substance, but simply takes them as given.¹³

Hegel goes on to argue that if Spinoza were to derive the attributes and modes logically, he would have to regard his substance as life, spirituality (GP 3, 377). He would have to say, as Hegel does, that the movement of concepts is the self-alienation and return to itself of absolute spirit.¹⁴ This he does not do; in Spinozism (Hegel would say) the absolute is only substance, it is not subject or spirit.¹⁵ Relying exclusively on the categories of the understanding, Spinoza emphasizes abstract, not spiritual unity, and his system remains stuck in metaphysical abstraction.¹⁶ But (as Hegel says in the *Phenomenology*) it is essential that true reality (*das Wahre*) shall be grasped, not as substance, but also as subject.¹⁷ As already remarked, this is not to say that Spinozism is wholly wrong; God, says Hegel, can indeed be called a substance. Where Spinoza goes wrong is in his failure to see that his basic concept, substantiality, is "only one moment in the determination of God as spirit" (PR I.2, 191).

Such, according to Hegel, is Spinoza's acosmism, and such are the weaknesses in the arguments that he brings to support that doctrine. It now has to be asked whether this view of Spinoza is correct. The first point to be made is this: a careful examination of Spinoza's writings does not support the view that he believed that attributes and modes are merely phenomena. It is true that they are the attributes *of* substance, and the modes *of* the attributes of substance, so that there is indeed a sense in which there is nothing but substance. But this does not mean (as Hegel supposed) that Spinoza thought that the distinctions that we draw between thought and extension, and between different physical things and between different thoughts, have no basis in reality.

Let us consider the attributes first. In support of the view that they are merely phenomenal, it may be pointed out that Spinoza introduces the mind (or more specifically the intellect) into his definition of "attribute," which states that an attribute is what intellect perceives of substance (Eth. I, Def. 4). He also says that it is what intellect perceives of substance, *as constituting (tanquam constituens)* its es-

¹³ WL II, 164-5; GP 3, 378, 398. Cf. E, par. 151, Zusatz.

¹⁴ Compare the reference above (note 12: WL II, 164) to a movement that starts from itself and returns to itself.

¹⁵ PR I.2, 196 n.; PR II.1, 129; WL I, 151; GP 3, 409; E, Pref. to 2nd ed., Lasson ed., 11.

¹⁶ PR I.2, 196; PR III.2, 129.

¹⁷ Hoffmeister ed., 19.

sence, which some may take to mean “*as if* constituting” But such a subjective interpretation of the attributes would be wrong. There is no space here to discuss the issue at length,¹⁸ but it may be noted that the decisive passage appears to be Eth. II 41. It has been seen that an attribute is that which intellect perceives of substance, as constituting its essence. Now, it may be assumed that in this context, “intellect” is another name for the second and third kinds of knowledge, i.e., ‘reason’ and “intuitive knowledge” (it can hardly refer to the first kind, “imagination”). But Eth. II 41 states that knowledge of the second and third kind is necessarily true. So when Spinoza says, for example, that thought is an attribute of God (Eth. II 1), he means that thought (which the intellect perceives of substance, as constituting its essence) really does constitute the essence of substance.

We turn now to the question of the subjectivity or objectivity of the modes. It is necessary first to be clear about what Spinoza means by a “mode,” and about the meaning of the related term “modal distinction.” In his *Cogitata Metaphysica*¹⁹ (1663) Spinoza gives an account (2.5.1) of various types of distinction, and in the course of this he refers to Descartes’ account of real and modal distinctions in *Principia Philosophiae* I, 60-61. Here, Descartes explains that a modal distinction is, for example, that which holds between shape or movement and the corporeal substance in which they exist, or again between affirmation or recollection and the mind which affirms or recollects. Now, it would be absurd to suppose that Descartes is saying that shape, movement, affirmation, or recollection are unreal. What he means is that they have no separate, independent existence. This is what Spinoza understood by a modal distinction in 1663; it does not of course follow that he continued to think of modal distinctions, and of modes, in this way when he came to write the *Ethics*. The evidence, however, does not suggest any fundamental change in his thought about this matter. It is true that he came to disagree with Descartes about what would count as *instances* of modes; for example, whereas Descartes regards the human mind as a thinking substance, Spinoza regards it as a complex idea (Eth. II 15), i.e., as a complex mode of thought (Eth. II 9). But the *meaning* of the term “mode” does not seem to have undergone a fundamental change.

¹⁸ The subjectivist interpretation is defended by A. H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza* (Harvard, 1934), 146, 152 ff. This interpretation has been strongly criticised by F. S. Haserot, “Spinoza’s definition of attribute” in *Studies in Spinoza*, ed. by S. P. Kashap (Berkeley, 1972), 28 ff. and by M. Gueroult, *Spinoza*, Vol. I (Paris, 1968), 428 ff.

¹⁹ Although the *Cogitata Metaphysica* is an early work, it is noteworthy that Spinoza sometimes refers to it as illustrating his mature views. Cf. Ep. 21 (1665: *Opera*, ed. Gebhardt, Vol. IV, 130); Ep. 50 (1671); Ep. 58 (1674: Gebhardt, *op cit.*, 268).

To see this, it will be necessary to examine in some detail the doctrine of the modes that is presented in the *Ethics*. A mode is defined there as “That which is in something else, through which it is also conceived” (Eth. I Def. 5). It is made clear that a mode does not have a merely subjective relation to that “something else” in which it is. For example, in Eth. I 25 Cor., Spinoza writes: “Particular things are nothing but the affections or modes of the attributes of God, by which those attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way.” Whatever is meant by “expression,” it is hard to see how the term could be used to refer to a subjective relation. The same can be said of the term “follow from,” which Spinoza uses when defining *natura naturata* (in Eth. I 29 Sch.). Spinoza says here that by *natura naturata* he understands “Everything that follows from the necessity of the nature of God, i.e., of each of the attributes; that is, all the modes of the attributes of God, in so far as they are considered as things which are in God, and which cannot exist or be conceived without God.” It is hard to see how something can be said to follow from the necessity of the nature of God if that something is a mere illusion. Finally, we may again make use of Eth. II 41, which states that knowledge of the second and third kinds—which we took to be equivalent to “intellect”—is necessarily true. Spinoza declares in Eth. I 30, that intellect grasps not only the attributes of God but also the “affections” of God, that is, (Eth. I Def. 5) the modes. As the modes are grasped by the intellect, it follows that they have objective reality.

All this may seem a scholastic exercise in the bad sense of the adjective—a game with verbal counters whose meaning is not explained. To see more clearly what Spinoza has in mind, it will be helpful to concentrate on the modes of extension. Spinoza’s views about these modes can roughly be summarized as follows. Just as a cubical shape is to a cubical body, so is a particular body to extension as a whole. A cubical shape has no separate, independent existence; similarly, a particular body has no separate, independent existence. The question now is, exactly what Spinoza means by this. His views about “bodies” (*corpora*) are complex, in that he uses the term “body” in two senses. Sometimes he uses it to refer to what he also calls an “individual” (Def. after Ax. 2, following Eth. II 13 Sch.), that is, a complex entity consisting of smaller bodies. Sometimes he uses it to refer to a *corpus simplicissimum*—a “most simple body” or “corpuscle”—that is, one of the basic physical entities out of which “individuals” are formed (Sch. after Lemma 7, following Eth. II 13 Sch.). Neither an individual nor a corpuscle (Spinoza argues) can be called a self-dependent entity, a substance; but the nature of their dependence is not the same. A body in the sense of an “individual”—say, the human body—is a transient form of the corpuscles that constitute it. It is a way in which they are

organized; a form which they display for a certain period of time, but which they have not always displayed, and will not always display. As this is so, the human body may be said to be dependent on the corpuscles which make it up; it could even be said that it is the way (*modus*) in which certain corpuscles are organized. But this does not seem to be what Spinoza has in mind when he uses “mode” as a technical term; for a corpuscle is itself a body, and is therefore a mode (Eth. II Def. 1; I 25 Cor.). In what way, then, are corpuscles “in” extension, and in what way cannot they be conceived without extension? It seems that we must see Spinoza’s views in the context of his rejection of the doctrine of atoms and the void (cf. Eth. I 15 Sch.; Gebhardt ed., 59). The ultimate corpuscles recognized by physics, Spinoza argues, are not independent substances moving about in a vacuum; they are forms of a single attribute of substance, extension, differentiated simply in respect of what Spinoza calls “motion and rest, speed and slowness” (Lemma 1 after Eth. II 13 Sch.). Spinoza did not write a treatise on physics, and it is not clear how he thought that motion and rest, speed and slowness can differentiate the ultimate corpuscles. But it is at any rate clear that he did not think that a difference in respect of these factors is a purely illusory difference. Of course, if someone thinks that what is really a modal difference is a real difference—if, for example, he upholds an atomistic theory—then he might be said by Spinoza to be under an illusion; but that is an entirely different issue.

So far, it has been argued that Hegel was wrong in thinking that Spinoza held a doctrine of acosmism; that is, that he believed that all differences—whether the difference between extension and thought, or the differences between various particular things—are merely illusory. But it still remains open to Hegel to argue that this is at any rate what Spinoza *ought* to have held. Spinoza’s own principle, *determinatio est negatio*, leads logically (Hegel might say) to the consequence that all difference is merely illusion—as long as negation is taken in the abstract sense in which Spinoza took it, and not in Hegel’s sense of dialectical negation. Now, it is quite possible that there is *some* sense of the principle “Determination is negation” that leads logically to acosmism; but the question to be answered here is whether the principle *as Spinoza understood it* has such a consequence. In the form quoted by Hegel (*determinatio negatio est*) the principle occurs only in Spinoza’s correspondence (Ep. 50; to Jellius, June 1674), where it is used to establish the conclusion that shape (*figura*) is a negation. In the *Ethics* there is a use of a similar principle, which may be termed “Finitude is negation.” This occurs in Eth. I 8 Sch. 1, where Spinoza writes, “Since to be finite is really only a partial negation (*ex parte negatio*) and to be infinite is the absolute affirmation of the existence of some nature (*existentiae alicujus naturae*), it follows . . . that every

substance must be infinite.”²⁰ It may be thought that Spinoza is not using a separate principle here, but is again using the principle that determination is negation. But in Ep. 50, he distinguishes between the finite and the determinate, speaking of “finite and determinate bodies,” so it seems that two principles really are involved in Ep. 50 and in Eth. I 8 Sch. 1. However, the two are clearly very similar, and it is justifiable to consider them together.

Let us examine first the passage (Eth. I 8 Sch. 1) in which Spinoza says that to be finite is really a partial negation. To understand this, it is necessary to compare Eth. I Def. 2. Here, Spinoza says that that thing is “finite in its own kind” which “can be bounded (*terminari*) by another thing of the same nature. For example, a body is called “finite” because we always conceive another that is greater; again, a thought is bounded by another thought. But a body is not bounded by a thought, nor a thought by a body.” In Eth. I 8 Sch. 1, Spinoza does no more than repeat his definition of finiteness except that where he had previously spoken of being bounded he now speaks of negation, or rather of partial negation. We call something finite (he says in effect) in so far as it *is not* something else of the same nature; e.g., we call a body finite, in that it *is not* some other body that we conceive to be greater than it, and we call a thought finite, in that it *is not* a thought which is other than it. Spinoza speaks of “partial negation” here, in that although a finite body is not a certain other body, it *is* extended. It is a mode of the attribute of extension, and this attribute is positive, the “absolute affirmation” (Eth. I 8 Sch. 1) of the existence of a certain nature. Now, it is hard to see why this reasoning should have led Spinoza logically to suppose that finitude is unreal. He might have done so, had he believed that in so far as *x* is not *y*, *x* does not exist; but there is no indication that he did believe this.

The line of reasoning in Ep. 50, where Spinoza argues that shape is a negation, is similar. Spinoza says that it is evident that matter as a whole (*integram materiam*), considered as indefinite, cannot have a shape; to talk of shape makes sense only (*locum tantum obtinere*) in the case of finite and determinate bodies. The determination of shape, then, does not belong to a thing in respect of its being, but belongs to it in respect of its not-being (*est ejus non esse*). Once again, there seems to be no good reason to suppose that Spinoza ought to have held that shape, and indeed every determination, is unreal. In saying that shape belongs to a body in respect of its not-being he means, not that shape is non-existent but (as the context shows) that to say that

²⁰ The connection between infinity and affirmation that is asserted here is also stated in *Cogitata Metaphysica* 2.3.1, where Spinoza says that “the infinity of God is something that is positive in the highest degree.”

something is of a given shape A is also to say that it is not of shapes B, C, etc.

It is now time to consider another part of Hegel's critique of Spinoza. It was mentioned earlier that Hegel argues that the concepts of logic must be self-generating, if logic is not to contain any element of contingency. But Spinoza (according to Hegel) does introduce an element of contingency, in that he is unable to deduce from his concept of substance the different attributes and the various modes, and so has to treat them merely as given. It is interesting that a similar objection was put to Spinoza by Tschirnhaus, a German mathematician who was a friend of Leibniz. Tschirnhaus' objection concerned the modes. He asked Spinoza (Ep. 82; June 1676) how the variety of things can be deduced *a priori* from the attribute of extension; how, that is, a variety of bodies can arise out of infinite extension, taken by itself. Spinoza replied (Ep. 83) that the variety of things cannot be derived from extension alone, and for that reason Descartes' definition of matter in terms of extension was a bad one; instead, matter must be explained by "an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence." This can be confusing, in that Spinoza himself refers to an attribute of "extension," and it is not immediately clear why Descartes should be blamed for defining matter in terms of extension. However, the point that Spinoza is making is made clear by a remark at the end of a previous letter (Ep. 81). Descartes' conception of extension, Spinoza says, is of a merely quiescent mass (*molem . . . quiescentem*); consequently, he has to import motion from outside (*a causa . . . externa*) by viewing it as a result of the action of God. For Spinoza, on the other hand, matter (i.e., the attribute of extension) has to be viewed as essentially dynamic, and hence as generative of the various forms that it takes. It is for this reason that, in an earlier letter to Tschirnhaus (Ep. 60), he stresses that a definition must be genetic; it must "express an efficient cause," which, in the case of God, is an internal or immanent cause (cf. Eth. I 18). In sum: Hegel's objection overlooks the essentially dynamic character of Spinoza's substance.

Let us, in conclusion, offer some general remarks about the way in which Hegel went wrong in his interpretation of Spinoza. Gueroult has argued (*op. cit.*, p. 466) that Hegel saw Spinoza's philosophy through the distorting medium of the philosophy of the young Schelling, which he rejected in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*; in other words, Hegel's attack on Spinoza is in effect an attack on a Schelling who is projected back into the seventeenth century. There is much truth in this suggestion. The famous remark in the *Phenomenology*, "the night in which all cows are black" (Hoffmeister ed., 18), which is usually taken to refer to Schelling's absolute, is roughly paralleled by a remark about Spinoza, to the effect that everything goes into the unity of Spin-

Spinoza's substance as into the eternal night.²¹ More than this: Schelling's absolute is said in the *Phenomenology* to be an identity, the "A = A" (*op. cit.*, 19). Now, in describing Spinozism, Hegel speaks of the "abyss of an identity" (GP 3, 408); Spinoza's substance, he says, is self-identity of an abstract kind (PR I.2, 199).

But there is more to be said about Hegel's erroneous interpretation of Spinoza than this. It can also be argued that Hegel is at fault in that when he tries to place Spinoza within his intellectual context, he places him in the wrong context. He is apt to compare Spinozism with the thought of the East. He says that in Spinoza, the oriental intuition of absolute identity is introduced into Western thought (GP 3, 368; cf. 376); that in his philosophy, all content sinks into emptiness, into a purely formal unity, much as in Indian thought Siva is the great whole, not distinguished from Brahma (WL I, 338). If it is objected that there is no evidence that Spinoza knew anything of Indian thought, Hegel would reply that he understands "oriental thought" to include Jewish thought.²² Now, what is at issue here is not the large question of how much, or how little, Spinoza owed to Jewish thought. What is at issue is the very different question of what he owed to Jewish or oriental thought *as Hegel understood it*; that is, to that view of things "according to which the nature of the finite world seems frail and transient" (E, par. 151, Zusatz, trans. Wallace). In effect, Hegel is here suggesting that Spinozism has to be connected with a religious vision, of the type to which the adjective "mystical" is often applied. Hegel is not the only one to have made this suggestion; but it has been one of the themes of this paper that the suggestion is mistaken, and that Spinoza should rather be connected with a way of thinking—a way that is intimately connected, not with the religion, but with the science of his time.

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²¹ PR III.2, 129. Compare the reference to the 'abyss of annihilation' in Spinoza's system, GP 3, 377.

²² Cf. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*: Bk. I, The Oriental World, Sec. 4, Chap. 3, "The Israelites."