



## Spinoza's System as Theory of Expression

Fritz Kaufmann

*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Sep., 1940), pp. 83-97.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0031-8205%28194009%291%3A1%3C83%3ASSATOE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>

*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* is currently published by International Phenomenological Society.

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/ips.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## SPINOZA'S SYSTEM AS THEORY OF EXPRESSION

It is strange that Spinoza's philosophical system, glorying as it does in its complete impartiality and its rigorous logic, has in the course of time become an object of widely varying interpretations and of most passionate assent and dissent.

To be sure, philosophy has not followed the smooth path of uninterrupted development; in the succession of philosophical ideas, attraction and repulsion have always played a great part. But this wavering interpretation which treats Spinoza's thought now as atheistic, again as pantheistic, as naturalistic and as acosmistic, as rationalistic and mystical, as dogmatic and as scientific, as expression of true experience or as a mere formula—this discrepancy between judgments mirrors the interpreters' bewilderment by a complexity of trends that are not so well balanced as they are, e.g., in Leibniz, and that seem to destroy the *prima facie* unity of the doctrine. Or is there, perhaps, a clue that leads through the labyrinth and rehabilitates the assumption of a systematic whole?

Such a clue may be found by considering the conspicuous part—that, thanks to a peculiar affinity, Spinozism played in the German poetical humanism at the end of the 18th century.

I shall not dwell here on the historical results of this turn towards Spinoza.<sup>1</sup> Nor shall I attempt to explain in detail why the artistic mind finds congenial the philosophy of Spinoza and inclines to lose and recover itself in the cold but enchanting light of his system. For, did it not help to confirm and bring to fruition in Goethe, his friends, and his followers, the original knowledge of the artist's being?

Neither Goethe's nor Flaubert's high admiration of Spinoza was the result of a mere misunderstanding, however productive that may have proved. It was due to a real and basic experience essentially common to the artist and to the philosopher.

This point of agreement is indicated by Spinoza's conception of nature as creative power. Both the artist's intuition and the true philosopher's contemplation presuppose a kind of disinterestedness, to whose presence in Spinoza Goethe bore witness and which the poet himself recognized as a requisite for his own productivity. The withdrawal from practical interests enables the philosopher, as well as the artist, to touch the very roots of being, instead of becoming involved in the concatenation of things as a little wheel amongst others. The

---

1. I restrict myself to indicate the point where this trend merges into the English tradition. The line coming from Spinoza joins the influence of Shaftesbury in Coleridge's poetry and theory of art.

*results* diverge: the philosophical *statement* is of a style entirely different from the artistic *expression*. But the starting-point is the same: both emerge from an original depth of experience which finds a somewhat equivalent documentation. The free detachment from the fixed pattern of the workaday world opens the mind both of the artist and the philosopher for the plastic powers that push forth into the shape of apparent existence: *forma formans formam formatam translucens*.

Let us rely, then, on this solidarity as affording an illuminating approach to Spinoza's theory. Let us examine the *natura naturans* as it expresses itself in the *natura naturata* and let us ascertain what is implied in Spinoza's conception of this manifestation.

An interpretation that understands nature as the self-disclosure of the creative genius appeals not only to the artistic self-knowledge, but is also related to the religious recognition of God as "highest artist."<sup>2</sup> This justifies, in some degree, Spinoza's identification of God and nature. Spinoza has, no doubt, sacrificed many personal features of the God of the Bible in order to establish his idea of nature. This, however, should not prevent us from recognizing that while he represents differently the mundane expression of God's infinite being, he does not entirely exclude the divine revelation. *Expressio* (*exprimit*) is a term in Spinoza's philosophy that is almost as symptomatic and decisive as is the corresponding term *repraesentatio* (which by the way, alternates with *expressio*) in Leibniz' metaphysics. (Though Leibniz' term, focussing as it does an extraordinarily wider range of experience and the most different lines of thought, suggests a scientific and metaphysical depth far beyond Spinoza's expression.) *Expressio* as a substitute for revelation occurs in conformity with that tendency to secularize the main principles of religion which prevails throughout modern philosophy.

In Spinoza this movement sets aside the historical foundation and restriction of God's appearance to man and neglects man's personal confrontation with God. The steady philosophical enlightenment is put in the place of God's historical appearance to selected individuals or to a chosen people; and the knowledge of the unity between mind and nature supersedes the responsibility of a personal partner in a covenant with God.

Nevertheless God remains to be experienced, and even the immediateness of this experience is not at all denied and abolished. It comes in by way of intuition. At least the two first of Spinoza's so-called proofs of God's existence—resting as they do on proposition 7—

2. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 85.

implicitly presuppose the *fact* of this existence and exhibit its necessity. The absolute unlimited power cannot be prevented and, therefore, cannot fail to prove itself and its existence. "An omnipotent being must also of necessity be omnificent."<sup>3</sup> For a power exists only in its manifestations. Existence, ex-sistence, means the stepping forth of this unbound power. Its expression is inevitable: it can neither be obstructed nor can it be withheld. Its appearance is not a favor but is involved in the very essence of *Deus-Natura*. God is truly defined as *causa sui*. *Dei potentia (essendi) est ipsa ipsius essentia*.<sup>4</sup> Substantially power, He is not restricted to a mere attempt to be and to persist in being—to that *conatus* by which the particular modes try to assert their actual essence in the stream and struggle of life. God is life (*vita*) and life is power (*vis*).<sup>5</sup>

The artistic genius exhibits an analogous kind of inward necessity and exactness of expression. The artist's expression is similarly pure, spontaneous, indomitable, and unbroken. The artist, who, as such, is not entangled in nor hampered by the cares of practical life, feels his work as an offspring of nature rather than of purpose and reflection. The essence of nature comes into appearance with a similar frankness and certainty in the microcosmos of his work as in the macrocosmos of the universe:

Der Schein, was ist er, dem das Wesen fehlt?  
 Das Wesen wär' es, wenn es nicht erschiene?  
 (What would appearance be deprived of essence?  
 And essence, would it be, if it did not appear?)

Neither the work of the artist nor that of Spinoza's God is guided by discursive method and speculation; yet no creative manifestation can do without consciousness. Expression is not an event that happens, but a performance that is carried through. Spinoza has never denied to his God and to his actual essence this very character of consciousness inherent in action, although the perfect necessity of God's proceeding is not limited by a consideration of ends.

Spinoza's God having no spiritual transcendence, is not isolated from the sensible world. On the other hand, he is not simply identical with it. He is immanent in it, we would say, much as is the mind in its own expressions. No concrete understanding of any expression is possible without reference to its living origin, the principle of its unity.

3. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 162.

4. *Eth.*, I, 34. Spinoza's position is best characterized by Leibniz' formula: *essentiam per se tendere ad existentiam* (Gerhardt, t. VII, p. 303). To understand and reinterpret the relation between essence and existence, potentiality and actuality, and its metamorphosis since Aristotle remains among the most urgent, metaphysical tasks.

5. *Cog. Met.*, pars II, cap. VI, § 3.

Conversely—there is no expression that possesses articulation and unity, save for an understanding which animates and enlivens the otherwise lifeless data.  $\tau\acute{o}\ \delta\grave{\epsilon}\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \pi\omicron\iota\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\nu\ ,\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \acute{o}\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\ .$  "It is the mind that unites everything."

This expressive movement displaying the *natura naturans* in the *natura naturata* was, it is true, inadequately interpreted by Spinoza when he took it to be a series of consequences or a concatenation of causes. But the primary conception of a context of expression remains visible and dominates the character of and the connection between the main principles of his system. Inasmuch as the universe is regarded as product of expressive power, this system may be rightly considered a quasi-physiognomic interpretation.

It is this thread in the texture of Spinoza's philosophy which connects it with the works of such Arabic and Jewish thinkers of the middle ages as Ibn Sina or Ibn Ezra, with the great stream of mysticism and with the philosophy of nature characteristic of the Renaissance. Thus, at the end of the 18th century, a generation taking up the tradition of "objective idealism" was enabled to fall back upon Spinoza and his *Deus-Natura*. I am inclined to see in these parts of Spinoza's thought the essential quality of his own being, while I am quite aware that his explicit purpose was, perhaps, much more directed to square himself with contemporary mathematics and physics.

The physiognomic aspect of Spinoza's philosophy that had been over-emphasized in writings such as Herder's *Gott* was long neglected in the nineteenth century, but has been recently rehabilitated, to some extent, by interpreters, such as H. H. Joachim, L. Brunschvicg, and H. F. Hallett. Its further examination should afford us an insight, which may prove more conclusive as regards an intrinsic unity than what to our way of thinking is the artificial arrangement of pseudo-mathematical demonstrations in Spinoza's *Ethics*.

We have to come back, therefore, to the character of Spinoza's substance as a dynamic being. It is not an inert mass subsisting at the bottom of change, but a powerful essence as well as an essential power. This means that it has power because it is the quintessence of power itself—just as a state, besides having power, is itself a power. Its being consists in its functioning. Substance, thus, can only be realized by experiencing this power, by being *im-*pressed by its *ex-*pression and by reflecting on the series of its proofs. In this sense Spinoza's *mos geometricus*, the series of his demonstrations, means quite literally a real method, that is a strict pursuit, a true research and reproduction of the original demonstrative process of being. The

order and connection of the philosophical representation follow the order and connection in the self-representation of things.

That is why, I think, we are right in saying that existence in the sense of forthcoming is the proper and necessary verification of God's being. (*Aeternitas est ipsa Dei essentia quatenus haec necessariam involvit existentiam.*)<sup>6</sup>

God's essence in-volves existence. Consequently existence e-volves God's essence. The whole of existence—the universe—is the version, or *one* version, through which the unity of his being unfolds itself.

We have said, that the essential character of a living text and context is to be read and understood. The individual thing as well as the single letter and the single word has no meaning or concrete sense in itself. It must be understood and looked upon in connection with the whole. The all-comprehensive context alone is truly comprehensible in itself and needs no other support. In Plato's terminology—only the *παντελῶς ὄν* is *παντελῶς γνωστόν*: the whole of being is knowable and only the perfect being of the complete whole can be completely known. (Though, of course, not in the way of an Aristotelian definition.)

Speaking, as we did, of the universe as a text and context, we did not move in a circle of mere metaphors, but in the steps of a great tradition and its genuine intercourse with the things as they themselves enter into discussion. According to the conviction of the Greek metaphysicians it is the very essence of true being to show itself in an entirely unconcealed manifestation. Actual being is true (*ἀ-ληθές*) being that uncovers, reveals itself to the concentrated mind, while the distracted one—Spinoza's imagination—embraces the imaginary being of particulars detached from their proper context. The elements and structure of being are known as far as our sense is open, capable, and energetic enough to follow the sense, the meaning of all things, and their final reference to the *ἐν καὶ πᾶν*, the one and the whole. The sense in which we attend to things aims at representing and reproducing the sense and tendency of things themselves. Being is *δύναμις*, power, which tends to manifest itself and can, therefore, be manifested and represented by mind and language. This statement from Plato's *Sophist* resumes, in substance, the great discovery of Parmenides. Things possess and show a universal sense. Following this sense we can properly deal with them: to *be* means to occur in a certain meaning. *Our* meaning tries to realize the meaning of things.

6. *Eth.*, V, 30 dem.

Meaning, therefore, occurs primarily on the side of things and cannot be found by mere introspection "apart from the being in which it has its pronounced existence": οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἔοντος ἐν ᾧ πεφασισμένον ἔστιν εἰρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν.

These Parmenidean lines foreshadow the whole of metaphysical development and its authoritative formulation by Aristotle. *Intellectus* and *intellectum* are ultimately one;<sup>7</sup> for, being as well as reason have their very actuality in the state of eternal and explicit presence of the form (μορφή) of things as it appears in the form of intuition (εἶδος) and language (λόγος).

This tradition, it is true, takes an original turn in Spinoza's philosophy. The classical solidarity of aspect and respect of thing and mind had been endangered by the Cartesian dualism of *cogitatio* and *extensio*. It is, nevertheless, this ancient principle of solidarity which underlies Spinoza's doctrine of the congruence between a thing (*res*) on the one hand and the objective reality of an idea on the other, and which still supports Spinoza's saying that everything has its meaning: *mens rei*.<sup>8</sup> This meaning is the aspect, the idea, which belongs to all things in every attribute and animates or enlightens—"although in different degrees"—their formal existence. And this unity between meaning and being precedes originally all separation between subject and object. There is no accidental and problematic meeting of thing and intellect. The intellect, reaching for its representation of being, and finally of the whole of being, verifies the tendency of representation in the things themselves. The thing itself represents the whole of being in a specific, however restricted, manner: *certo et determinato modo*.<sup>9</sup> The clear and distinct idea, therefore, is *eo ipso* adequate to the thing as it is the outspoken manifestation of its meaning. *Ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum*.<sup>10</sup> The human mind, therefore, figures in God in the same way as does the human body.<sup>11</sup> Or still more flatly: *mens et corpus una eademque res est*.<sup>12</sup>

This *identity* of meaning and context between both sides should not be weakened to a mere parallelism. It requires, however, a further qualification. The identity of order doubtless establishes an equivalence between the realm of things and the realm of thoughts. The same unity of substance expresses itself in two corresponding

7. Cf. Spinoza, *Eth.*, II, 7 Schol.

8. *Eth.*, II, 12 dem. cf. *ibid.* II, 13 Schol.; cf. *Korte Verhandeling*, Appendix § 9 (Gebhardt, t. I, p. 119).

9. *Eth.*, I, 25 Corr.

10. *Eth.*, II, 7.

11. *Eth.*, II, 20.

12. *Eth.*, III, 2 Schol.

manners indeed, or—beyond the range of our human grasp—in an infinitude of infinite attributes. The multitude of attributes is compatible with the unity in God because all of them are ruled by the same order and express, thanks to this accordance, the unity of the universal power of nature. The variety of expression does not mean an expression of variety. The same text is given in different translations. God's glory shines forth in an infinity of glorifications: "The whole earth is full of his glory"<sup>13</sup>—Spinoza refers<sup>14</sup> to this verse of Isaiah<sup>15</sup> in order to show how God's splendor is patent in the world of men and reflected universally in the rise of love and praise toward him.—But even as the whole artist lives in the world of each and all of his works, so also is each attribute God himself in an authentic and adequate, though not exhaustive, expression of his essence. *Substantia sive attributum*—the attribute is the substance itself—present in one essential, comprehensive, and representative appearance.

Being comprehensive itself, the attribute, as a *summum genus*, participates in a distinguishing character of substance, namely in being comprehensible through itself without reference to anything else. It is quite clear why, on the other hand, Spinoza usually avoids saying<sup>16</sup> of the attribute what he says of the substance, sc. that it *is* in itself; the attribute shows substance not in a sterile and, therefore, impossible state of keeping to itself, but in the proper state of exposition, of actual potency.

This interpretation of the attribute as the manifest substance, however, seems to be open to an obvious objection in the line of a famous controversy. It does not take account of the repeated indications which, marking a purposive deviation from Descartes' objectivistic definition, refer the attribute to the intellect—apparently as its attribution or even invention. The term attribute is used "with respect to the intellect, which attributes such and such a nature to substance."<sup>17</sup> Hence our statement calls, not for a modification, but for a completion that may be given, however, within the horizon of our considerations. It is implied in the character of active expressiveness, an expressiveness that is essential to the power of nature. Every true expression as a *λόγος δηλοῦν*, i.e., as a revealing statement, gives explicit evidence of the thing itself. On the other hand, no

13. *Isaiah*, 6, 3.

14. *Eth.*, V, 36.

15. This is the general assumption. H. A. Wolfson (*The Philosophy of Spinoza*, II, 311 ff. traces Spinoza's allusion to *Psalms*, 16, 8-11 or 73, 24 and their commentary by Abraham Ibn Ezra. The difference is irrelevant to our present purpose.

16. For an even stronger statement, cf. *Korte Verhandeling*, Eerste Deel, cap. 11, 17. 3a. (Gebhardt t. I, P. 24).

17. *Ep.* IX. In contrast herewith cf. Descartes, *Notae in programma quoddam*, A.-T.t VIII, p. 348: *Quicquid alicui rei a natura (!) tributum esse cognoscimus, . . . id vocamus eius attributum.*

context of expression is what it is apart from a context of living understanding. Consequently the definitions of substance, attribute, and mode occur in an epistemological as well as ontological formulation. (Similarly Aristotle's *categories* (!) figure in the horizon of the *logos* in order to exhibit their true function. *Substance* for instance is defined as what is neither asserted of, nor present in, a logical subject.) Thus the sphere of manifestation is before and beyond the separation of subject and object: it, therefore, necessarily includes a subjective element, though not in a segregated form.

Our intellect, however, has to be affected in order to act. Only by its manifestation, in the way of experience, does substance become a matter for our concern. *Ens, quatenus ens est, per se solum, ut substantia, nos non afficit; quare per aliquod attributum explicandum est a quo tamen non nisi ratione distinguitur*: "Being, taken as such, by merely subsisting in itself—as substance—does not affect us; it must be disclosed, therefore, through some attribute, from which, however, it differs merely conceptually."<sup>18</sup> God as manifest power is defined by a necessary relation to understanding. That is why Spinoza, quite rightly, defines attribute by reference to the essence of *substance* as well as by reference to the *intellect*. An attribute is *quicquid ab infinito intellectu percipi potest tanquam substantiae essentiam constituens*: An attribute is whatever may be perceived by the infinite intellect as a constituent of the essence of substance.<sup>19</sup>

This point may become still more evident by reference to the theological background of the theory of the divine attributes. In Jewish philosophy the discussion of God's attributes is almost equivalent to that of his names: name understood not as a conventional symbol, but as the expression of his very being. It is only natural that this revelation, being a progressive one, begins with the disclosure of God's relation to his creatures—as the Mighty (*El*), who suffices for everybody's needs (*Sadai*), etc. The revelation of his proper name in an emphatic sense—the tetragrammaton (*Jehovah*)—is the final documentation, the self-assertion and giving away, of God's intrinsic nature: of his being the Being he is (*Eheje ascher eheje*)—the personal counterpart of Parmenides' neutral  $\delta\nu \tilde{\eta} \delta\nu$  and a formula quite congenial to Spinoza's own theory of being.<sup>20</sup>

The name is, like the attribute, one of the ways in which God makes Himself known to human understanding. It is quite appropriate, therefore, that in order to illustrate how God's being is docu-

18. *Cog. Met.*, Ic. 3 (Gebhardt, t. I, p. 204) a statement that does not merely reflect a Cartesian dictum (*Princ.* I, 52), but shows, on the whole, Spinoza's own permanent position. Cf. *ibid.* II, c. X (Gebhardt I, p. 270) and *Korte Verhandeling* II, c. 20 (Gebhardt I, p. 97, n. 10).

19. *Eth.* II, 7 Schol.

20. Cf. *Tract. theol.-pol.*, c. XIII (Gebhardt, t. III, p. 168).

mented by the multitude of his attributes, Spinoza refers to the different names which may characterize a man in different ways, without prejudice to his unity as a person: the third patriarch being known and qualified as Jacob, i.e., *Supplantator*, in relation to his brother, and as Israel, i.e., *Praevalens Deo*, in relation to God.<sup>21</sup>

Attribute, thus, is a *correlative* term accounting for God's being present in what we may call his "objective appearance," that is, in his manifestation on the one hand and his recognition on the other. This very fact is of decisive importance for our understanding of *extensio* and *cogitatio*—the two attributes we know. Our access to the first attribute—extension—is due to the mere and seemingly contingent fact that our mind is just the idea of the body. But the acknowledgment of *cogitatio* as an attribute is guided by the insight that the very structure of expression involves consciousness as a constituent of God's manifestation. *Cogitatio* is disclosed as an essential requisite and, therefore, a constitutive part of God's living, God's manifest essence.

For, of course, there are not the substance and its manifestations on the one hand, and an additional understanding by a subject on the other. There is nothing outside the substance. The substance itself has to answer for its being understood: it has to understand itself. God is the spectator as well as the actor in the display of nature.

I refrain from tracing the line of the reflexive movement of God's *amor intellectualis*, of his spiritual love towards himself. Suffice it to say that one ingredient of this reflexive turn is just the idea in God of his own essence as well as of all things which result from it.

This self-knowledge, however, is the concern of the infinite intellect and is, as such, referred to the *natura naturata*. For this intellect is only a son of God, his pronounced word—*filius, verbum Dei*—an offspring of *cogitatio* within God's paternal nature.<sup>22</sup>

This difference between *cogitatio* and *intellectus* rests upon their different relations to the original unity of God. The integrity of this unity is represented only by the attribute, *cogitatio*, not by the *intellectus*. On the other hand—is not the pluralism of the attributes themselves derogative to the unity of God? Do they not, after all, dissolve this very unity which each of them is said to express?

This question has often been asked. It cannot be answered beyond every doubt and even ambiguity. But we may come closer to

21. Cf. *Ep.* IX (Gebhardt t. IV, p. 46).

22. Cf. *Eth.* IV, 68 Schol.: *Ep.* 73 & 76; *Korte Verhandeling* I, c. 9 & II c. 22, n. 1 (Gebhardt II., p. 48 & 101).

a solution by coupling the problems. Why does Spinoza, contrary to the tradition, represent the divine intellect as only a *modus infinitus Dei*? And why is *cogitatio* God himself in one of his true manifestations? What gives to *cogitatio* this advantage over the intellect? Or what is the deficiency of the intellect in comparison to *cogitatio*? If we know why the intellect is unable to account for God's original unity, we may surmise why and how *cogitatio* is in a position to do so.

For this purpose we cannot stop with Spinoza's statement of the role of the intellect.<sup>23</sup> Spinoza argues that intellection is, like desire or love, a particular mode occurring in the concrete structure of consciousness and lacking, therefore, that independence which is essential to God's manifestation in his attributes. Descartes had already stressed the act of judgment as an action of our whole personal being. Spinoza asserts still more radically the concrete unity and even identity of intellect and will in the affirmations and negations of the human mind.<sup>24</sup> This unity is involved whenever we acknowledge a state of being that is established prior to our understanding (as most people suppose) or simultaneously with it (according to Spinoza).<sup>25</sup> Our cognition means recognition.

It is different, however, with the unity of will and intellect in God as the cause both of the essence of things and of their existence. The divine intellect, while conceiving the essence of things, must itself be the power that accounts for their existence. Such an intellect must contain in an intimate and exalted unity *nosse, velle, and posse*, knowledge, will, and potency. Thanks to this concretion it answers for the *existence* of things as well as for their *essence*. The *Cogitationes Metaphysicae* had referred to an intellect which is not like ours—conditioned (*patibilis*) by the given nature and existence of things, but which involves and determines—as *actus purus*—the very existence of its contents.<sup>26</sup> According to the *Ethics*, however, this super-intellect, this creative power of an *intellectus archetypus*, transcends both essentially and existentially all that we can know of the intellect from our own experience. In the *Ethics*, therefore, Spinoza is disinclined to call it an intellect.<sup>27</sup> But the idea of this intellectual power may help us to secure an adumbration of the unity of *cogitatio* and *extensio*, of thought and realizing power subsisting in the one and same substance.

We may, then, discover a model of this conscious productivity and productive consciousness in the knowledge we have of our own

23. *Eth.*, I, 31.

24. *Eth.*, II, 48 f.

25. *Eth.*, I, 17 Schol.

26. Cf. *Cog. Met.*, II c. 7, 2; c. 10, 8 (Gebhardt, t. I, p. 261, 270).

27. *Eth.*, I, 17 Schol.

actions. In every real action we know our business, know it more or less thoroughly. This understanding pervades, as an inherent character, the whole of our practical life and precedes the emancipation of the merely theoretical action of an intellectual process. From this point of view the transcendence of the hypothetical super-intellect seems to be but a universalization of our own restricted power of considerate action.

Could we not say that the more we know how to act really and in the strength of our undivided being (and real action is no less physical than spiritual), the more we take part in the true demonstration of the universal power? Spinoza only approaches this thought when he emphasizes that the fitter the body for action the greater the eternal part of its soul.<sup>28</sup> We cannot discuss why, in the course of the *Ethics* this participation in eternity seems to be confined to the human mind. Our question is this: If unity between consciousness and realization belongs to the very essence of acting, why is this unity weakened in what many interpreters take to be the mere correlation of separated thought and extension in Spinoza's philosophy? Is not Spinoza's God pure activity?

This question ought to be answered to the point, not by a mere reference to the extent of Spinoza's dependence on Descartes. The problem would disappear if it were held that there *is* no such unity of acting in God, but only a unity of order in the different lines of power. This interpretation, however, is opposed by the letter<sup>29</sup> of Spinoza's philosophy, and, as I think, by its spirit as well. If God is reduced to the sum of his attributes, all possibility of accounting for the uniformity of order in the series of thought, extension, etc., is lost.

At this point we will do well if we return to Spinoza's definition of attribute and the relation to the intellect that it includes. "By attribute," Spinoza says, "I understand what the intellect perceives regarding substance as constituting its essence."<sup>30</sup>

Having already said that some kind of recognition is essential to the self-display of the substantial power, we now have to insist that God's presentation will correspond to our representation. The very manifestation of God as received by the intellect will show a certain reflection of, a certain reference to, the specific character of intellectual processes.

The *tanquam* of our definition and Spinoza's frequent use of the words *qua*, *quatenus*, *sub specie*, etc., are not symptoms of mere sub-

28. *Eth.*, V, 39.

29. Cf., e. g., *Eth.*, II, 7 Schol.: *Modus extensionis et idea illius modi una eademque est res.*

30. "*Per attributum intelligo id quod intellectus de substantia percipit tanquam eiusdem essentiam constituens.*"

jectivism, of fictitiousness or irresolute vacillation; they simply account for the essential part that orientation plays in the correspondence of divine reality and thought. The relation will inevitably produce relational traits and call for relational terms.

Intellect, in the pre-Kantian interpretation, is characterized by an analytical function as the basis of discursive synthesis. The intellect cannot work save under the guidance of a certain aspect, an aspect, however, which is not imposed upon things, but is offered by, and is extracted from them. Consequently in Spinoza's philosophy the primary unity of God's action manifests itself to the intellect as decomposed into the multitude of different, but corresponding attributes. There is here no ingredient of subjective invention, no introduction of something foreign to God's true being. *Mens non potest plus intelligere quam natura praestare*. What occurs is only the polarization of the one light of Deity by the prism of intellect and especially by the prism of a mind like unto ours.

One attribute is differentiated from the other in the same way as it is from substance, viz., by reason—*non nisi ratione distinguitur*.<sup>31</sup> "From this we infer God to be of perfect simplicity."<sup>31</sup> The decomposition and the corresponding composition of attributes merely seems to take place; it is thus that to our manner of conception things are more easily understood: *non fit, sed tantum ratione quasi fieri concipitur ut eo facilius res intelligatur*.<sup>31</sup> God cannot be conceived without such an attribute (*substantia non potest sine illo attribute intelligi*). But it is also true that in the comprehensiveness of his nature he is not without them (*substantia non potest sine illo attributo esse*).<sup>31</sup> There is no difference of content but only a difference in the way of being contained, a difference of form, between God and his intellectual representation. The integrity of God is translated into the differentiation of the attributes. Or, the other way round: Discursive reason unifies the *disiecta membra* of vague experience into a coherent system. But even our intuition, proceeding as it does "from an adequate idea of one or the other of God's attributes,"<sup>32</sup> shows God's unity only under a specific aspect, (*sub quadam specie aeternitatis*), not in its original fullness.

On the other hand, both "names" that we can attribute to God—*extensio* no less than *cogitatio*—eventually preserve that original character of representing him as a genuine power. The almighty Being conveys himself to our intellect through the mediums of self-explanation and self-expansion.

31. Cf.—*mutatis mutandis*—*Cog. Met.*, II, c. 5 (Gebhardt t. V, p. 257 f.).

32. *Eth.*, V, 25 dem.

Quite obviously this holds true for thought as a discursive explication. Spinoza lays stress on the dynamic character of all that results from *cogitatio*. Thus does he describe the intellect: it is an *intellectus actu*, actual intellection, identical with actual volition and never and by no means a merely potential intellect. Thus the ideas are portrayed as the very souls of things, as living conceptions and not as inert images on a blackboard.<sup>33</sup>

But the same applies to *extension*. It is another line of force, a true counterpart to the dynamism of *cogitatio* and to the passionate commotion in the world of mind. "Affect" is a term that is applicable to actions and passions in both realms.<sup>34</sup> When truly experienced, extension is not split into parts of space as it is by the imagination—the same imagination that dissolves eternity into separate units of time. Extension is to space what eternity is to time. In its adequate representation extension is an undivided and indivisible act of extending, the genuine documentation of the absolutely infinite power in a special function. Its activity may be conceived and described as an eternal state of production, establishing a field of power and constituting, thus, the presence of substance as a *res extensa*. The metaphysical and eternal movement is different from, but has, nevertheless, an image in, the physical motion and rest of particular things in time and space. This means—according to Spinoza—that the essential force of extension answers for the energy in the *motion* of moved bodies. And the same force accounts for the energy of *resistance*, the attempt to hold their ground, in resting bodies. Spinoza rejects Descartes' conception of extension as an inert mass (*moles quiescens*). Such a view, he points out, fails to account for the variety of motion and figure manifested by particular things. Moreover it takes extension for a separate being (*was door zig zelfs bestande*),<sup>35</sup> that does not function any more as an expression of the eternal and infinite being.<sup>36</sup> Spinoza's conception of extension is dynamistic, not geometrical. Originally extension is a formative action, an *actus extendendi*, not a reified three-dimensional form.<sup>37</sup> The latter concept, depriving material extension of all genuine productivity, implies neither the essence of a productive power nor does it explain the existence of the infinitude of its products.

As the individual bodies take only a restricted and a changing part in the whole display of motion and rest, they are, in their isola-

33. Cf. *Eth.*, II, 49 Schol.

34. Cf. *Eth.*, III, def. 3.

35. *Korte Verhandeling*, I, c. 2, 26f (Gebhardt, t. I. p. 27); cf. Tschirnhaus' letters 80, 82.

36. *Ep.* 83.

37. *Korte Verhandeling*, *loc. cit.* The interpretation of the term extension as it is proposed in the present article is close to that of Léon Brunschvicg and Lachièze-Rey.

tion, a very poor and insufficient expression of what is actually involved in God's essence. But even so they still are modes of God's appearance. The name *modus* itself is a noteworthy proof of the assimilation of Spinoza's terminology to the principles of his system. He adopted this term for a single thing instead of the term *ac-cidens* (accessory). For, while both were used by Descartes as almost convertible terms, *ac-cidens* did not indicate the alteration which God's appearance suffers from a partial expression, nor did it suggest—as did *modus*—the transitory or permanent participation in the self-sufficient whole of being. The *modus* is a derivative *mode* of expression as well as a *modification* of the genuine expression.

The original unity of the divine power has, at least, some likeness in the realms of modes. It is reflected and quasi-articulated in the synthetic unity of the sum total of its partial expressions. This posterior unity is an individual in a new sense. Though a composition of parts, it is independent of each part in particular. In the realm of extension, for instance, the identity and the productivity of God's power are always represented by the same proportion of motion and rest: and such a permanent proportion, such an invariability of form, is the very definition of an individual being. Thanks to the maintenance of this proportion the universe is an individual, persisting in existence throughout all time; and its face—*facies totius universi*—remains unchanged throughout, even though there is the endless variation in respect to modes.

It is not due to mere accident that such a physiognomic expression, *facies totius universi*, is used to describe the organic structure of this world of appearance. The world, being an explication of the indivisible and unchangeable power, expresses this individuality in a strict and not exuberant sense. The essential unity has a kind of discursive demonstration in the unity of conclusions drawn from God as their premise. The *summa entium* is not the *summum ens* in itself, in its original potency, but it comprises all that necessarily results from it. Restoring itself at every moment to the same structure, the world has the organic character of the  $\xi\omega\omicron\nu \epsilon\nu \acute{o}\rho\alpha\tau\acute{o}\nu$ , of the "one visible living being" as it is organized by the God of Plato's *Timaeus*.

This organic context of the world is reflected by the style of interpretation which is appropriate to the whole of Nature. We may understand the unity of a person through a unity of different utterances, and, in turn, the single utterance by reference to our knowledge of the whole. Just so, the more we understand individual things, the

more we understand God.<sup>38</sup> And to know these things genuinely means to know their union within the whole.

This hermeneutic circle confirms once more the character of the whole system as a portrayal of expressive power. To know the parts without knowing their universal meaning is imaginary knowledge. To the imagination as a distracted mind the intrinsic whole of extension appears in the form of extraneous distention, of mutually exclusive things in space.<sup>39</sup> Interpretative knowledge means, literally, re-collection; and objective re-collection is the very correlate of mental redintegration. The concentrated aspect and respect of thing and mind expresses, quite in accord with the leading principle of the system,<sup>40</sup> the same phenomenon in two corresponding ways. The rise from imagination through reason to intuition is a rise from fragmentary and superficial data of vague experience to a coherent context of an increasingly close and sound understanding.

No context of things without context of comprehension. Every thing appears related to a certain state and level of mind.<sup>41</sup> A thing that is not transparent in the sphere of imagination occurs again on a higher level and in a transfigured sense, disclosing finally to the concentrated mind the centre of nature, revealing to a clearer insight the true meaning of the whole. The final intellection is an *intus legere*, an intimacy of knowledge which discovers in the permanent unity of modal expressions the expression of the substantial and eternal unity.

FRITZ KAUFMANN.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

38. *Eth.*, V, 24.

39. Cf. *Eth.*, I, 15 Schol.; *Ep.* 12.

40. *Eth.*, II, 7.

41. While being opposed to the legend of Spinoza's dogmatic objectivism, I am glad to state my complete agreement with the interpretation of this problem in Léon Brunschvicg's *Spinoza et ses contemporains*.