



## Transcendence in Spinoza

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## II.—TRANSCENDENCE IN SPINOZA.

BY THOMAS WHITTAKER.

EVERY great philosophical system contains elements that point beyond it. This is true even of the system which is perhaps the most logically compact and rounded of all time; that of Spinoza's *Ethics*. The special doctrines I propose to deal with are transcendent both in this sense and in the more ordinary sense of the term, by which it is opposed to immanent. Spinoza's aim as regards the universe being evidently to explain it from within, the doctrines of the infinity of the attributes of God or Substance and of the eternity of the mind have always puzzled those commentators to whom his ultimate view presented itself as a naturalistic pantheism. And the perplexity has been greater precisely because they definitely belong to the reasoned system and cannot be understood as a residue of theological orthodoxy. In trying to understand them, I have been led to reconsider the sources of the system, especially in the light thrown by the contribution of Dr. Carl Gebhardt to the first volume of the *Chronicon Spinozanum* (1921). To develop the conclusions at which I have arrived, a little recapitulation will be necessary.

The distinguishing character of Spinoza's philosophical doctrine among those of modern times is that it takes the universe for its object without presupposing any inherited system to which its theses have to be made conformable. It thus ranks with the systems of the Greek philosophers as no other does; for if a few modern thinkers have assented as little to positions imposed by authority, none have so combined their freedom with thoroughgoing logic and at the same time avoided giving incidental excuse for treating them as apologists for a traditional faith.

Nothing, however, is without its antecedents, and one important condition of this complete and conscious liberty of philosophising can be traced back through the Renaissance to the Middle Ages. More has been added and is still being added to the proof; but the foundation was laid in what will

probably be the most enduring work of Renan, his *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*. It is largely in consequence of that outcome at once of unwearied labour and of penetrating insight that we can now appreciate at its true value the important part taken by the Moslem world in promoting the emancipation of the West and preparing the recovery of Europe from the age of returned barbarism, as Vico called it, to a renewed intellectual civilisation.

The Arabian philosophers whose studies of Aristotle seemed to the mediæval mind to have culminated in the Great Commentary of Averroes, had, we must remember, both secular and religious contacts with Christendom. The religion of Islam under which they lived was one branch of the Judæo-Christian tradition; and in knowledge of Greek philosophy, from translations into their own language, they had, to about the end of the twelfth century, the advantage over the Latin West. Through a complex process of mediætion, they knew the points of view both of Eastern and Western Christians and of the Jews, who were frequently the translators from Arabic through Hebrew into Latin; the Arabic translations of Aristotle having first been made from the Greek through Syriac. In this cosmopolitan culture it was the Arabians who first struck out for philosophical freedom. This they did through a rapid comparison of the three book-religions called revealed with the philosophy of Aristotle. The religions, as they saw, agreed in a kind of ethical theism; teaching that there is one God, who created the world, rules it in accordance with moral law, and has delivered this law to mankind through a revealer. Receiving on the other hand the independent tradition of philosophy, transmitted to them through the latest Neo-Platonists, for whom Aristotle had become the master of the sciences, they found in the philosopher a theology with characters distinguishing it from all the religions. Aristotle's God was indeed one, as against polytheism, but he was not a creator or legislator; and the philosopher's ethics, dealing rationally with the ends of action, presented itself as something independent of command and obedience. Its culmination was a life resembling that of the Deity, in as much as it was a thinking on thought; but this divine life was evidently attainable only by a few, and by them not always. Perhaps from Aristotle's own phrase about the adaptation of some ideas transmitted through popular religion *to the persuasion of the multitude*, they arrived at their own revolutionary idea for facing the intolerant theocracies which had since come into the world. Their effectively new thesis was a clear-cut rejection (stated in peculiar terms) of the

claim of popular religion, even in the forms that were professedly the most purified from heathenism, to be a mode of truth in distinction from utility. Ostensibly they spoke of a *double truth*, philosophical on the one side and theological on the other; but by theology (as contained in the religions) they meant simply the legislation, as they called it, useful for those who lived under it, of Moses, Christ or Mohammed as the case might be. Their own philosophical doctrine was not that of a moral God who had appointed rewards and punishments for obedience or disobedience to His law. For them, pure speculative reason was the highest, and they found it in their interpretation of Aristotle; but, while pursuing philosophic truth, they were ready to be conformists in religion. All the legislations, they said, were alike good for those who had been brought up under them, in so far as they contained ethical precepts similar to those of philosophy, though necessarily practised by the many as an affair of custom and obedience, not of insight.

Of course the official representatives of the revealed religions, when they had the power, could not allow the distinction between two kinds of truth, stated in this form. It was too obviously an evasion of their claims to rule in the names of their lawgivers. By the end of the twelfth century, the Mohammedan clergy, by bringing popular pressure to bear on the Caliphs who out of interest in culture had hitherto supported the philosophers, compelled the withdrawal of toleration. The martyrdom of the philosophers under Islam indeed did not go beyond exile; but their writings, so far as they were properly philosophical and in a religious sense free-thinking, and did not limit themselves to special sciences such as medicine or astronomy, passed into oblivion for their own world.

The torch, however, was handed on to the Christian West through translation into Latin not only of the Arabic versions of Aristotle but of the infidel commentators themselves; and, just when the Church had apparently extinguished the religious heresies of the twelfth century, its chiefs found themselves confronted with a much larger body of ancient thought than had been accessible since the closing of the schools at Athens and the overwhelming of the West by the barbarian invasions. Some credit must be allowed them for deciding to permit the new movement under limits and not simply to crush it out. The Averroist distinction of the double truth was of course officially condemned; but the phrase, as Renan has pointed out, served from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century as some protection for free

thought; and the notion of the separation of theology and philosophy in the sense of the Averroists did not become obsolete until in modern times toleration of a variety of sects within the State had become a definite principle and policy. This policy itself could probably not have been formulated without the preparation for it in the thought of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

The claim to liberty of philosophising by Giordano Bruno and Spinoza is in fact more deep-going than the carefully guarded and limited permission to a few not too heterodox sects to exist, which was all that even the most liberal political legislation was able to carry through for a time. And the almost identical positions of Bruno and Spinoza on the relations between philosophy and theology came to them from Averroism. In positive doctrine, indeed, neither of them can be called an Averroist; for they did not hold the distinctive view of the Arabians put forth as an interpretation of Aristotle's utterances about the active and the potential intellect; though traces of it lingered on in both. The distinction, however, between philosophy and theology, evolved to defend one heterodoxy, was capable of being turned to the defence of heterodoxy in general; and it could not be more generalised than it was by Bruno first and then by Spinoza.

No doubt the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is far more systematic than anything in its kind that had gone before; but in its fundamental distinction between the many who live by a law formulated in books or in the creeds of a Church and the few who live by insight, it does not deviate from the positions of the Arabians or of a thinker of the early Renaissance like Pomponazzi. Where it is modern is in its definite foundation of Biblical criticism and in its appeal to the State as distinguished from the representatives of the theology. Even Bruno, for example, in the late sixteenth century, could still appeal for recognition of the liberty of philosophising to those whom he called the not less learned than religious theologians. He had received his answer from the theologians of the Holy Office. Spinoza, proceeding on this side from Hobbes, argued for the sole right of the civil power to determine what shall be taught or not be taught on religion, and went beyond Hobbes in explicitly declaring that the liberty of philosophising is not only advantageous to the commonwealth but is indispensable to its safety and welfare. Having made this perfectly clear, he was ready to show that the Scriptures, Hebrew and Christian, if rightly interpreted, and if things belonging merely to the time and the particular views of the writers are set aside, furnish a basis for an ethical

theism which the State may adopt as official, leaving philosophers free to seek deeper insight than is possible for those who follow the moral law merely through obedience to legislators whether civil or religious. Of the freedom thus claimed he made the fullest use in the *Ethics*. The link, which at the same time indicates the contrast, between the two treatises, may be found in *Eth.* ii., Prop. 3, Schol.: *Nemo ea quae volo percipere recte poterit, nisi magnopere caveat, ne Dei potentiam cum humana regum potentia vel iure confundat.* For popular religion, even when most purified, moral precepts are divine commands obeyed in view of rewards and punishments. For speculative philosophy, divine commands (if the expression may be used) and necessity of nature are one and the same; and the whole of nature cannot be interpreted as adapted to the purposes of man; whose utility is indeed the measure in determining rational precepts for his own conduct, but does not enable the mind to infer what are the laws of that Nature which is greater than man and includes him as a small part. Nature in this sense and God are identical; and, when we have attained this view, we shall no longer reproach even the weaknesses and absurdities of men, since now they are seen as no less illustrating the power of nature, if not of man, than the things which we admire and in the contemplation of which we take delight (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 57, Schol.).

But here another question arises. Is not the content of the great philosophical systems religious in its own manner? It has at least this in common with the religions, that it goes beyond facts and laws of phenomena to a view of the whole which is not verifiable in the terms of science and common sense. And in detail we find a doctrine like Spinoza's in some respects coincident with that of philosophers who took themselves to be orthodox theologians. One of the most audaciously naturalistic propositions in the *Ethics* (Part iv., Prop. 68), by which it is affirmed that for the free man, who has adequate ideas, the words *good* and *evil* would have no meaning, has been found to be taken over from Maimonides, who in the twelfth century set himself, with a full knowledge of what had been done by the Arabians, to rationalise Jewish orthodoxy on the basis of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. For, according to Maimonides, the story of man's innocence before the Fall signifies that the knowledge of good and evil is not a knowledge of the nature of things as they really are. Spinoza himself, it may be noted, does not disdain to continue the use of the story as symbol; adding to it an interpretation of redemption by the spirit of Christ as a setting free of men from the illusion signified by the Fall. And he

could easily have found other precedents in ostensibly orthodox mediæval thinkers, Jewish or Christian ; who often in effect use the sacred stories as no more than images of truth. Even in the most modern times, we may add, no thinker can altogether dispense with myth and legend to give colour. For myth and legend are creations of the human mind ; and logic does not create, as science does not complete its work without imaginative extension. Thus, all things considered, we need have no difficulty in admitting that the great philosophies and the great religions at their highest point have much in common. And in no philosopher is there less difficulty in finding the point of contact with religious minds than in Spinoza ; whose end, above the moral virtues, is essentially that of the mystics—the contemplative life.

It seems to be now ascertained that the first definite affirmation that the theoretic life is the highest began in Greece with the philosophico-religious school of the Pythagoreans. This affirmation was accepted by Plato, though at the same time he argued that contemplative minds ought to be compelled by the State, in its own interests, to descend to the government of practical affairs. The most typical form, perhaps, was given to the doctrine by Aristotle, who thought that the supreme value of the State itself was in making possible this highest life. From Plato and Aristotle, with shades of difference, the general view passed on to Plotinus and his successors, and thence, after finding expression in the writings of mediæval mystics, was taken over into Christian orthodoxy as wrought out dialectically by St. Thomas Aquinas and embodied artistically in Dante's *Paradiso*. Now this strain of thought, through both Jewish and Christian sources, arrived at Spinoza in the text-books he read in his youth ; as was shown by Freudenthal in his epoch-making essay, *Spinoza und die Scholastik*. (This appeared in 1887 in a collection of Philosophical Essays dedicated to Eduard Zeller : see the remarks of Dr. Carl Gebhardt in his obituary notice of Jacob Freudenthal in the *Chronicon Spinozanum*, ii.) In view, therefore, of now demonstrated facts, the schematic construction by which Spinoza's system was treated as simply a necessary development from Descartes, to which the latter part of the *Ethics* might be regarded as an addendum, is completely exploded. The end at which he aimed had been fixed in his own mind before he came in contact with Descartes and modern science. Profoundly as his mature system was influenced by the mathematico-physical ideal of scientific knowledge set up by the great French thinker, the search for the method of discovering truth in the sciences, or

the promotion of natural knowledge, was not his ultimate aim. He could honour not only Descartes but Bacon and English devotees of experiment like Boyle; but for him their distinctive work was only an aid to philosophic insight. His ultimate aim was nothing less than an intuition of absolute truth concerning the whole. Since this intuition, in his philosophy, carried with it emotional acquiescence, it may be said that for Spinoza, more than for any other modern, philosophy became a religion.

Usually he does not himself call it religion, but places it beyond *religion and piety* in the ordinary sense of the terms. For these are, in his view as in that of the Averroists, something practicable by mankind in general without speculative philosophy. (See *Eth.* v., Prop. 41.) The practical virtues associated with religion, he expressly says, retain all their value for the utility of life even if there is nothing beyond them. But for him, as for the mystics, there is something beyond.

It has been disputed whether Spinoza himself was a mystic. If the state of the mystic is a peculiar experience attained by shutting off all grades of articulate knowledge, he was not a mystic; for the highest grade of insight which he deems attainable includes a kind of knowledge. His mysticism, if it is to be called such, is the accompaniment of definite thought, and is nowhere said to be incommunicable. Yet its historical relation to what has always been regarded as typical mysticism is undeniable; and its relation to the similar, but not identical, culminating point of the philosophy of Bruno confirms the derivation. Bruno, too, has the *intellectual love*, though in him it takes the form rather of infinite aspiration (as he himself calls it) than of acquiescence in insight attained. By Bruno also it is not identified with moral virtue, and not brought under the head of religion, which he, too, associates with practice. These resemblances, both in language and in thought, there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for attributing to a direct influence of Bruno on Spinoza. They are perfectly explicable by common sources. Ultimately the spring of the conception of intellectual love in all its forms was Neo-Platonism. Bruno knew the sources in the actual works of the Neo-Platonists; reading Plotinus no doubt in the Latin translation of Marsilio Ficino, which appeared long before the Greek text was printed. (In 1580, when it appeared, Bruno had left Italy and was on his travels.) In common with Spinoza, he was familiar with the intermediate phases. Both philosophers had read the Cabbalists. Above all, there can be no doubt that both had read the *Dialoghi*



*d'Amore* of Leone Ebreo. The excerpts given by Dr. Carl Gebhardt (*Chronicon Spinozanum*, i.) entirely confirm the inference drawn in the brief study of B. Zimmels (*Leo Hebræus, ein jüdischer Philosoph der Renaissance*, 1886; see *MIND*, O.S., xi., 593). The phrases indicating both the ultimate sources of Leo himself and his influence as a precursor can be given in small compass. But first, it seems worth while to mention a few cases of coincidence which may warn us against rash inferences of direct borrowing. The real evidence of relationship will then seem all the more conclusive.

If we did not know that Bruno (as also Spinoza) cannot have read John Scotus Erigena, whose works were condemned to the flames by Pope Honorius III. in 1225 and had passed out of sight till 1681, the case for direct influence would be very strong. For Erigena and Bruno quote the same lines of Virgil, and the same verse of the same psalm, to exactly the same philosophic purpose; namely, to enforce their own positions as regards the immanence of the world-spirit and the coincidence of contraries. Again, in the time of Shelley, Bruno's works were inaccessible except in a few scattered copies, and it is unlikely that the poet had met with any of them; yet the well-known metaphors in which the moth and the flame represent the lover and the beloved, and Actæon and his hounds figure intellectual love, are conspicuous in the *Eroici Furori*. The hounds of Actæon, in Bruno as in Shelley, are interpreted as his own thoughts, of which he is at once the father and the prey. Thus, in even so remarkable a coincidence between Bruno and Spinoza as the following, I do not think we need see anything more than coincidence. The love of divine things, Bruno finds (*Eroici Furori*, Part i., Dial. 5, 13), is not without affliction in desire, any more than the physical love described by the Epicurean poet (*i.e.*, Lucretius); and hence perhaps the wise Hebrew said that he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Similarly Spinoza, quoting the same saying from *Ecclesiastes* (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 17, Schol.), uses it to illustrate the weakness of human nature, with which true knowledge has to struggle and by which it may be overpowered. Not, he adds (as Bruno does also), that folly is better than wisdom.

The case for the influence of Neo-Platonism is of a different kind. There are certain crystallised expressions that sum up the whole conception of intellectual love in the same pantheistic sense; and these we find emerging and re-emerging from late antiquity to the Renaissance. We also know in a general way the literary continuity (sometimes along side-

paths) of the philosophy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with the last phase of Greek philosophy. Now the final expression, *amor intellectualis*, fixed by Spinoza, is evidently the *νοῦς ἐρῶν* of Plotinus. Leone Ebreo, whose dates are given as approximately 1460-63 to 1520-35, had no doubt read the Latin translation of the *Enneads* by Marsilio Ficino, which appeared in 1492. In him we find *amore intellettivo* and *amore intellettuale*. Of these Bruno took over the former and Spinoza the latter. Again, when Leo says: *il primo amore si è di Dio a sè stesso*, and, with more circumstance, *in lui l'amante, e l'amato, e il medesimo amore è tutto una cosa* (Excerpts 119, 120) this corresponds to the words of Plotinus (*Enn.* vi., 8, 15): *καὶ ἐράσμιον καὶ ἐρῶς ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐρῶς*. The position of Leo that the intellectual love is not a natural passion but an intellectual action, is of course that of Spinoza; and to this there is a corresponding expression in Proclus: *ὁ μὲν θεῖος ἐρῶς ἐνέργειά ἐστιν* (*Comm. in Alcib. I.*). In the intermediate period we find a most decisive witness to the identity of the tradition in John Scotus Erigena: *Caritas in omnibus Deum, id est, se ipsam, diligit* (*De Praedestinatione*, iii., 6). By this the saying of Plotinus given above is linked in the long historical series (though Erigena did not know Plotinus directly and Spinoza did not know Erigena) with the well-known proposition of Spinoza (*Eth.* v., Prop. 35) that *God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love*. Such coincidences are evidently not merely incidental, but point to definite origins; though of course the juxtaposition would be most misleading if we did not bear in mind that inherited philosophical expressions, when worked into the tissue of a doctrine, belong anew to each great thinker as his own.

This is illustrated by the very different developments in the *Eroici Furori* and in the Fifth Part of the *Ethics*. In Bruno they take a poetic form comparable to that of the *Vita Nuova*, which was undoubtedly his literary model. For Dante, indeed, there is a personal object of devotion, at least imaginary, while Bruno avowedly uses the imagery of lovers (and occasionally actual love-poems of his elder Neapolitan contemporary Tansillo, who is an interlocutor in the *Dialogues*) to communicate the idea of aspiration to intellectual beauty and ultimate truth. This is in complete contrast to Spinoza, who, with all his underlying depth of emotion, nevertheless reduces everything to the rigour of quasi-geometrical demonstration. Moreover, as has been hinted, there is a difference in the type of intellectual love described; which in Spinoza may be said to reach the phase

of beatitude, or acquiescence in the knowledge of its object, while in Bruno it remains an infinite pursuit of the infinite. For in the rare cases where he speaks of the desire as achieved, it seems to end in martyrdom (of which he had a strange prevision) or in an absorption of sense and imagination *like a drop of water or a breath in the immensity of the sea or of the spacious air* (Part ii., Dial. 1, 12). This, however, is not strict doctrine. For Bruno, as for Neo-Platonism, there is in reality neither emergence from a ground nor re-absorption into it. And here, as we shall see later, Spinoza is at one with Bruno and the Neo-Platonists. By Bruno and Spinoza alike, the intellectual love is formally distinguished from religion; though with Bruno it seems occasionally to pass into religion in his own sense of a kind of ethical Stoicism. Incidentally he vindicates Epicureanism as having essentially the same end. Epicurus did not teach what the vulgar suppose, but held that the perfection of virtue is to attain impassibility, or even actual beatitude, in endurance (Part i., Dial. 5, 9). Moral virtue and divine or heroic love, according to Bruno's interpretation of Epicurus, are imperfect unless a feeling of happiness has been joined to them which no evil is able to take away. *That beauty, goodness and truth which is the fountain of all other truth, goodness, beauty* (Part ii., Dial. 1, 9) is to be so pursued that the mind, knowing the vicissitudes of mortal things, shall feel for them neither love nor hate (Part ii., Dial. 1, 4). This has an obvious affinity with some expressions of Spinoza; and in Spinoza also, though, as has been said, the intellectual love of God is usually distinguished from religion, there are passages where an approximation may be observed; as for example in *Eth.* iv., Prop. 37, Schol. 1: *quicquid cupimus et agimus, cuius causa sumus, quatenus Dei habemus ideam, sive quatenus Deum cognoscimus, ad religionem refero.*

Philosophically, Bruno's theory of the individual mind or soul in which the intellectual love comes to consciousness is less determinate than Spinoza's. There is indeed for him one certainty. Soul or form is as much substance as body or matter, and substance is imperishable. He quotes with conviction the lines of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the poet affirms the intangibility of the soul by the accidents of death and dissolution: *morte carent animae*. But, for the rest, he does not definitely choose any one expression of his conviction. He can admit the general human mind of the Averroists as one term in a hierarchy; but he does not therefore deny the permanence of the individual soul as such. This he usually seems to imagine as thrown after death into the hazards of

metempsychosis and forgetting its past life; yet, near the end of the Dialogues, he introduces an argument for a disembodied condition of the soul, or at least for an immortality more strictly personal, from its aspiration to a vision which it does not now possess, but which may be achieved *in a more excellent state* (Part ii., Dial. 4). When he says that the human intellect has infinite potency because it is eternal (Part i., Dial. 5, 12), he means the individual human mind and not the mind of the race.

In the case of Spinoza's eternity of the mind, whatever may be the obscurity of the conception otherwise, no doubt ought to be felt that what is meant is the individual mind. Of the general, or common, human mind of the Averroists there are indeed one or two reminiscences which I had overlooked till they were pointed out. With *Eth.* ii., Axiom 1, may be compared the more explicit statement in *Eth.* i., Prop. 17, Schol.: *Si unius existentia pereat, non ideo alterius peribit; sed si unius essentia destrui posset et fieri falsa, destrueretur etiam alterius essentia.* Yet he classes the notion of man as universal among ideas in the highest degree confused (*Eth.* ii., Prop. 40, Schol. 1); and, in the definitive doctrine of the Fifth Part, the *mens* which is eternal is the mind correlated with a particular body, and therefore unquestionably an individual mind.

The doctrine as it is set forth cannot by any means be modernised into Comte's *subjective immortality*, or later theories, on the lines of this, which are sometimes described by the phrase *conservation of values*. According to this type of theory, an achievement of one mind is preserved in the memory of others and then stored up in the social tradition, and so becomes part of a common treasury of thoughts and records of deeds done for humanity. Thus, in terms of Comte's doctrine, a mind that has disappeared objectively (that is to say, from the sum of things actually in the world) lives on subjectively in other minds after the physical death of the individual. Now there is no doubt that such a process does go on socially; and there is a recognition of it in the *Ethics* as rightly a source of mental satisfaction. Like Hobbes, Spinoza did not regard fame as illusory. *Gloria*, he says (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 58), *rationi non repugnat sed ab ea oriri potest.* To take pleasure in reputation, that is to say, can have a good sense when distinguished from *vainglory*. In its good sense *gloria* is defined as *joy accompanied by the idea of some action of ours which we imagine that others praise* (*Eth.* iii., Affect. def. 30). Thus the element of satisfaction in the conviction of a thinker that his thought will be recognised

as serviceable to the human race would not have been disdained by the philosopher who was himself one of the very small number of illustrious minds that we might suppose to have perhaps got beyond Milton's *last infirmity*. This, however, was certainly not what Spinoza meant by the eternity of the mind. For eternity, as he understands it, is something beyond time, even when time is conceived as an illimitable future; which, in the case of human fame, it cannot be, as Cicero, who was as little as any man of letters indifferent to reputation with posterity, had shown in the *Somnium Scipionis*—a relic of antiquity probably well known to Spinoza.

The doctrine of the eternity of the mind, as developed in the Fifth Part of the *Ethics*, when reduced to the minimum of significance, may be stated thus. Every human mind is the correlate, in the attribute of Thought, of the body, or mode of Extension, of which that mind is the *idea*. The existence of the body under certain conditions of time and space implies an essence not thus conditioned. Now this means that it is eternally true that if such and such a body exists, or has existed, or will exist, there is a necessary determination that it should be such and such. (How the body can remain the same while undergoing physical changes is explained in the Lemmas after Prop. 13 of Part ii.) When the mind, or mode of Thought correlated with that body, understands, not by mere experience nor even by reasoning, but by the intuition which finally emerges from reasoning and which is the third kind of knowledge, the eternal necessity that that body should be what it is in essence, there is a knowledge for that mind which is timeless and known as timeless. This eternal truth, known as eternal, is the essence of the individual mind. The insight being *sub specie aeternitatis*, there can be no question either of its coming to exist in time or ceasing to exist. The popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul, Spinoza expressly says, is not, as commonly held—that is, as referring to perpetual duration of an existence in time—philosophically true, but it contains a divination of the truth. In terms that are more Neo-Platonic than his own, but are not inconsistent with his fundamental thought, all have in themselves this eternal essence, but few make use of it. In his own words at the close of the *Ethics*: *Omnia praeclara tam difficilia, quam rara sunt*.

This is the minimum; but various things that Spinoza says show that the meaning, for himself, amounted to more than the minimum. For example: *The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal* (*Eth.* v., Prop. 23). The mind is

subject to passive affections, as distinguished from the intellectual love which is an action, only while the body endures (*Eth.* v., Prop. 34). There is nothing in nature which can take away the intellectual love (*Eth.* v., Prop. 37); whereas, when man is considered as a part of nature, the causes outside him far surpass in power the causes within him (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 3; *cf.* Appendix, cap. 32). Considered as a mode of thinking, as distinguished from imagining—that is, apart from the body, through which images arise—the human mind (by which is meant each individual human mind) is an eternal mode of the infinite intellect of God (*Eth.* v., Prop. 40, Schol.).

Knowledge of this eternity, with acquiescence in the knowledge, we are told, is attainable, and when it is attained the greater and better part of the mind does not perish with the body (*Eth.* v., Prop. 38; *cf.* Prop. 40, Coroll.). It is to this part that the *amor Dei intellectualis* belongs, and this love is eternal (*Eth.* v., Prop. 33), being a part of the infinite intellectual love with which God loves himself (*Eth.* v., Prop. 36).

Since acquiescence in the knowledge is beatitude, it follows that Spinoza had arrived at the conviction that in some sense the individual human mind may attain conscious eternal beatitude. It is clear, however, that in his view only few minds attain it; and there has always remained the difficulty that not all the subtleties of the exposition seem to make it quite compatible with the strict parallelism of the attributes of Thought and Extension.

It is not merely in the Fifth Part that the divergence appears. Turning back to Part ii., we find a similar difficulty arising within the complex doctrine of the *idea mentis* or *idea ideae* (Props. 20, 21). There is an idea of the mind, as the mind is the idea of the body; and this, we learn, is introspective knowledge, knowing that one knows (Prop. 21, Schol.). And, although it is said that *the idea of the mind and the mind itself are one and the same thing, conceived under one and the same attribute, namely, Thought*; or, as it is explained, if we know, we also know that we know; it is not made evident how there can be anything in the attribute of Extension to correspond to this duplication and reduplication in introspective knowledge. Body, Proclus said, cannot turn back upon itself, the whole to the whole; and Spinoza does not try to prove that it can. His own thought, finally expressed, is, as we have seen, that the best part of the human mind is transcendent to the human body. And in all this, it must be repeated (as others have said before), there is no accommodation to popular beliefs. So severe is the philosophical attitude that it seems almost incongruous to mention the

absence of all play of fancy regarding the mind as manifested in time; though, in strict theory, this need not have been excluded; for it does not seem to follow, from the positive part of the doctrine, that each individual mind has only one embodied existence in the course of everlasting time. All that can be said is that eternal essence, in Spinoza's sense, does not necessarily involve more than one temporal embodiment. But this it undoubtedly involves, since there cannot be an essence without something of which it is the essence (*Eth.* ii., def. 2); and, since each thing is one, conceived under the two attributes, how is it permissible, within the doctrine, to set one of the two aspects free, as it were, from its concomitant? Was not Leibniz, having borrowed the parallelism from Spinoza, more logical in asserting successive re-embodiments of the minds or souls which he supposes to go on? Spinoza understood by the essence of the human body, not a particular collocation of particles, but a certain mode of order continuous amid the flux of its parts. Why should this mode not be repeated in new collocations corresponding to new temporal manifestations of the eternal mode that is the mind?

This is arguable; but to follow it out would be to depart from Spinoza's system. Within that system, it seems to me that we have come upon a difficulty not wholly soluble in its own terms, but profoundly suggestive in relation to the future of philosophy. Careful students of the *Ethics* have pointed out that it does not begin, like Descartes' *Principia*, with even a slight outline of theory of knowledge, but plunges directly into what we call, in the opposite use of the term to Spinoza's, an objective deduction of the order of the universe from the nature of Reality. Now the predominant movement of distinctively modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant has been in theory of knowledge. Descartes began by inquiring what is left if we set ourselves to doubt everything. His answer was that primary certainty is on the side of what we now call subjective thought. He was, however, too eager to proceed to the task of constituting scientific knowledge to delay long over what Aristotle had called first philosophy; and the importance of Descartes' influence on Spinoza consisted mainly in furnishing a model and a basis for the sure knowledge of nature in mathematical physics. Locke turned back to preliminary questions about the power of the mind to know; and the succession was continued through Leibniz (in the *Nouveaux Essais*) on the one side, and on the other side through Berkeley and Hume, to Kant's three *Critiques*. Hence it is not surprising that the later world, going back to

the *Ethics* for inspiration on ultimate questions about the universe, should, in the light of analysis carried on for more than a century, find clefs in such a pre-eminently synthetic construction. The remarkable thing rather is that Spinoza himself, following out his direct synthetic method in the rigorous manner of a schoolman, should in the course of his demonstrations raise the subtlest questions as to what we now call the relation between subject and object; which were really easier to state in the syllogistic method of the schoolmen themselves than by the quasi-geometrical method first adopted by him as a means of expounding not his own philosophy but the philosophy of Descartes.

To understand the position more fully, we must turn to the other element of transcendence in Spinoza's system. The two elements are in reality closely connected; for the eternity of the mind reveals in the case of the microcosm precisely what the infinite attributes reveal in the case of the macrocosm; namely, that Spinoza's ultimate doctrine leans by its intrinsic nature to the idealistic as distinguished from the naturalistic side.

His naturalism has indeed been thought to be the completest possible; and it is true that his originality as compared with his ancient and mediæval precursors nowhere comes out more distinctly than in his grasp of the mechanist view of nature as prefigured by one side of Descartes' system. Here he made an immense advance on Descartes himself; for the parallelism of the attributes of Thought and Extension is not Descartes' own doctrine, though it was suggested by it. Descartes held that there are two substances, extended substance and thinking substance, which must be conceived as different in kind and yet as interacting. Both were created by divine volition and cannot continue without it. They are therefore not substances in the sense in which we say that God is Substance. Within the Cartesian school the nature of the interaction between the two substances, and even its possibility, raised endless problems. These Spinoza seemed to have effectively got rid of at a stroke by recognising only one Substance, which is God, and putting in place of extended things and thinking things the conception of these as modes of the two attributes of Extension and Thought. Each thing in nature can be regarded as a single thing with two sides; at once an extended thing marked off from other portions of Extension, and a thinking thing because every portion of Extension has a portion of Thought correlated with it. Between the modes of one attribute and the modes of the other there is no interaction. Everything that appears



to us as body is in its degree animated (*Eth.* ii., Prop. 13, Schol.); and the causal series on the side of the animation of the universe is as unbroken as the mathematico-mechanical sequence that might be traced out by a completed physical science on the side of body.

In dismissing interaction, it may be incidentally observed, Spinoza got rid of a serious psychological error of the Cartesian system. He denies, and gives conclusive reasons for denying, the antithesis of Descartes between will which is infinite and intellect which is finite (*Eth.* ii., Prop. 49, Schol.). Any kind of infinity that may be ascribed to the will can be affirmed also of intellect if intellect is taken in the widest sense. Here there is a coincidence with Bruno, who asserted the infinity of both intellect and will. *Non è terminato* (he says in the *Argument* prefixed to the *Eroici Furori*) *l'atto de la volontà circa il bene, come è infinito et interminabile l'atto de la cognizione circa il vero.*

So impressively was the doctrine of parallelism stated that in the nineteenth century it almost, but not quite, became scientific orthodoxy. Its fascination was in an apparent clearness for which physical science has less care since, for mathematicians, algebraical symbolism has tended to efface geometrical intuition. At present the whole question is again highly controversial; and it is interesting to note that from within Spinoza's system there arose certain puzzles which he could not solve to the complete satisfaction of sympathetic students in his own time.

The great difficulty with which he was confronted did not arise within each attribute, but in the relation of Thought first to Extension and then to the infinite attributes; which include Thought and Extension as the two known to us. That there should be more attributes than those that we know (whatever those may be) was a deduction from the notion of Substance if it was allowed to have attributes. For God as Substance, it was affirmed in the inherited philosophical theology, is infinite, and this infinity is absolute. The conception of absolute infinity, then, being applied to any question raised about the attributes, there seemed to be no reason for stopping short at any finite number (*Eth.* i., Prop. 10, Schol.). Of necessity the progression had been the same for the Greek as for the Hebrew monotheistic idea when it passed over into pantheism. It is by exactly the same type of reasoning that Melissus, in the Eleatic school, and Spinoza, proceeding from Scholasticism and Descartes, prove the mutual implication of unity and infinity in that which is ultimately real. The only difference between *Eth.* i., Prop. 8 and

Melissus, Fr. 6, is that Spinoza proves the infinity of Substance from its unity and Melissus the unity of Being, or that which is, from its infinity: *εἰ γὰρ εἶη, ἐν εἶη ἄν· εἰ γὰρ δύο εἶη, οὐκ ἂν δύναίτο ἄπειρα εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἔχοι ἂν πείρατα πρὸς ἄλληλα*. Now these are equally in both cases propositions about Deity stated in technical language. Poetically, but probably on the basis of some pre-existent philosophical theology, transcendence together with immanence had already been asserted by Aeschylus: *Zeus is all things and what is beyond them*.

But can attributes not known to us have any meaning conceivable by us? This question was most acutely raised by Spinoza's friend and correspondent Tschirnhaus. The correspondence has been found rather tantalising; but I think there is, in the concluding fragment of a letter from Spinoza (Ep. 68, Bruder), not indeed a solution in terms of the system as it stands, but a clear indication of the predominantly idealistic character of the doctrine. For it appears from the letter that, when pressed, Spinoza was obliged to affirm that there is not simply an infinity of ideas corresponding to the infinity of the attribute of Extension, but that each of the other attributes must be conceived as having infinite *ideas or minds* of its own. Thus, if we follow the train of reasoning to its logical conclusion, we must suppose the attribute of Extension to be the basis of one phenomenal world, namely, our own world of ideas; while the attribute of Thought (or animation) contains also infinite other worlds of phenomena correlated with the other attributes; and so is infinitely infinite as contrasted with the simple infinity of each attribute other than Thought. Now mathematico-mechanical method is directly applicable only to Extension; hence the order of things which it presents to us seems to shrink into complete subordination to absolute or universal Thought, which is as boundless as the whole of Reality, since everything that exists, whether known or unknown to us, has necessarily its expression in some idea or mind.

This, as we know, did not become Spinoza's actual teaching. The structure of the *Ethics* was not modified by the criticism. And his conviction is fundamental that mathematical method gives an insight into reality which nothing else can give. Without it, truth would have remained for ever concealed from the human race, and the illusion of final causes would never have been seen through (*cf.* Appendix to Part i.). Beyond the effort by which each individual thing strives to preserve its being (*suum esse conservare conatur*) there is nothing in the universe that can be called teleology; and this also, no doubt, according to Spinoza's general philosophy

ought to be capable ultimately of resolution into mathematico-mechanical necessity. What his doctrine might have been if he had lived earlier or later than the seventeenth century we cannot tell. We can but say that his pantheism was, in its actual statement, neither that of a Platonist of the Renaissance nor of a modern Evolutionist. Its distinctive form is traceable directly to Descartes (*Principia Philosophiae*, iii., §§ 2, 3) who (in this agreeing with the non-mathematical Bacon) laid down the rule that we are not to presume to explain the unknown by imagined purposes of God. Descartes himself was decidedly a theist without any perceptible tinge of pantheism; but, while not denying final causes, he treats it as extremely improbable that everything in the universe was designed for the sake of man; and the imagination that they are thus designed became for Spinoza the very type of the delusion that had set the human mind for ages on the wrong track. Now we may protest that the mechanical model of explanation, when taken as absolute and applied to the cosmos, is shown by modern theory of knowledge to have no ultimate theoretical validity; and that the profoundly impressive passages in which Spinoza identifies universal necessity with mathematico-mechanical determination, like similar passages in Lucretius founded on the obsolete Epicurean physics, while they belong to the permanently great things in literature, are not verifiable science. Yet, when all has been said, there was in both cases an immense liberation. For the most stringent exclusion of all purpose from nature delivers the moralist most completely from what has been called the naturalistic fallacy. If ends in nature are denied, human life is left to be determined by the ideals of humanity. The precept *Follow nature*, if this means the nature that is external to man, conceived not as fact or uniformity but as a power issuing commands, becomes for any one who has really understood Spinoza, the fallacy of trying to turn *is* into *ought*. For those who, starting with that effort to preserve themselves which is the basis of virtue, live according to reason, the ultimate end becomes the common good of mankind. As he shows by calm analysis of the affections, the *conatus* by which everyone aims at self-conservation is fulfilled not by hate and discord but by love and concord. And it is interesting to note that, in exemption from the fallacy of taking non-human nature for a preceptress (thus providing arguments for Edmund in *King Lear*, or for the actual Archelaus of Macedonia as viewed by his theoretical admirers in Plato's *Gorgias*), he is at one with his great pantheistic precursors, teleologists though they were in their manner. Perfection in his own kind is the aim of man for

himself, but not to go beyond the kind (*Eth.* iv., Praefatio). This is also a thought of Nicholas of Cusa. Similarly Bruno says that to cease to be of its kind is for any being the thing most feared: as gods most fear to lose their identity as gods (*Giove sommamente teme di non esser Giove*), so the horse most fears to cease to be a horse (*Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*, Dial. 1); a thought for which the reason, agreeing with that of Bruno, is given by Spinoza: *equus namque ex. gr. tam destruitur, si in hominem, quam si in insectum mutetur*. Suicide (as Schopenhauer also says) always proceeds from causes external to the self. Self-destruction can never be directly an end. As an event its occurrence can be explained: *At quod homo ex necessitate suae naturae conetur non existere vel in aliam formam mutari, tam est impossibile, quam quod ex nihilo aliquid fiat* (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 20, Schol.).

But this does not mean that in man any more than in nature all degrees of reality are equal. No one has more definitely insisted that to have more varied powers of perceiving, imagining and acting is to be higher in the scale of being. While *the highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and all can equally enjoy it* (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 36), there are many kinds of bodily and mental culture of which the attainment can be approved though they are not the highest. Spinoza would have agreed with Bruno, and on the same ground, that to arrive at a level is not the ideal of humanity. Since there are degrees in the mind, says Bruno (*Eroici Furori*, Part ii., Dial. 2), the order of things should not be so perverted *che al fine succeda certa neutralità, e bestiale equalità, quale si ritrova in certe deserte et inculte repubbliche*. Though few live according to the dictate of reason, says Spinoza (*Eth.* iv., Prop. 35, Schol.), yet from the actual order of society, adapted to ordinary human nature, more advantages than evils result; so that human civilised life is to be preferred in every way to that of brutes. As indications for the conduct of the individual life, two sentences sum up his attitude. *Things are in so far good as they help man to enjoy the life of the mind, which is defined by intelligence* (*Eth.* iv., Appendix, cap. 5). *The things that happen to us in opposition to that which the consideration of our utility demands, we shall bear with equal mind, if we are conscious that we have performed what belongs to us* (*si conscii simus nos functos nostro officio fuisse*) and *that the power we possess could not have extended itself so far as to enable us to avoid them* (cap. 32). For, as Spinoza adds in Stoic vein, we are parts of the whole of nature and have to follow; and when our better part, which is intelligence, understands this, it will acquiesce and seek to persevere in its acquiescence.