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ANNETTE C. BAIER

Recent commentators on Hume's *Treatise*, such as Jane McIntyre¹ and Paul Russell,² have emphasized the role of Samuel Clarke as Hume's target in several parts of that work—"Why a Cause is Always Necessary," and "Of the Immortality of the Soul"—as well as in the section on reason's role in moral judgment. Now if Hume sees Clarke's views as the sort he wants to replace with his more secular and naturalist alternative, then Clarke's perceived targets could reasonably be expected to be seen as Hume's perceived allies, at least on some important matters. And as Paul Russell has emphasized, the chief enemy that Clarke recognizes is Spinoza. I agree with Russell that we should see Hume as reacting as positively to Spinoza's *Ethics* and *Theologico-Political Treatise* as he reacts negatively to Samuel Clarke's attacks on Spinoza. But of course Spinozism in an empiricist mode is Spinozism with a considerable difference, as ethics written in Hume's preferred nonabstruse style (and increasingly nonabstruse from *Treatise* to *Essays* and *Enquiries*) sets a different tone from ethics in *ordine geometrico*. As Spinoza chose his mode of presentation to exhibit the sort of controlling reason whose ability to know nature and guide human nature his axioms, postulates, theorems, corollaries, and scholia try to establish, so Hume also chooses his manner of presentation to exhibit the sort of intellectually curious, historically aware, imaginative, and sympathetic reflection on human nature that his more theoretical works elevate to a position of authority in our thinking, feeling, and acting. But then rationalism in a naturalist mode was rationalism with a considerable difference,

and naturalism unites Spinoza and Hume. The differences between them are important, but should not blind us to the agreements.

First a brief word on the frustrating question of whether Hume read Spinoza himself, rather than just Bayle's entry on Spinoza. As far as I know, we have no direct evidence that he did. But the circumstantial evidence seems overwhelming. As Wim Klever writes, "It is hardly possible to maintain that Hume's acquaintance with Spinoza's work was only indirect."³ He clearly read Malebranche and Leibniz, and they read Spinoza. He was a friend of Pierre Desmaizeaux, a known Spinozist. As Hume's correspondence documents, and as Paul Russell has emphasized, the young Hume frequented Spinozist meeting places in London (such as the Rainbow Coffeehouse, Lancaster Court, where he stayed while arranging for the publication of the *Treatise*), and surely knew Anthony Collins, as well as knowing of Clarke's disputes with him and with Bentley and Toland.

But the circumstantial evidence that I shall be concerned with are shared doctrines, including shared peculiar doctrines. Two thinkers might independently of one another arrive at similar accounts of our moral psychology, even accounts as strikingly similar as are Spinoza's and Hume's on sympathy, emotional ambivalence, and vacillation, especially with Malebranche as intermediary. But will anything except the transmission of opinion account for such oddities as a deliberately double definition of a key concept, as an account of sympathy that takes its force to come from the surplus vivacity of the sympathizing person's sense of self? Or for such unorthodox suggestions as that God ("The cause of the universe, whatever it be") can as reasonably be thought of as an infinite spatially extended being as an infinite thinking being? (Demea's Spinozistic contribution in *Dialogues*, Part III.) It is one thing to deny that thinking of the sort that we are familiar with could be an attribute of an eternal perfect being, another to suggest that physical attributes can be attributed with no more (or less) absurdity. Demea wants to rest simply with saying that God is supremely eminent, neither spirit nor matter but gloriously mysterious. What Spinoza had said was that both thought and extension were what could be thought of as constituting the essence of the only substance, God-or-Nature, while neither of them (nor any other attribute which could be thought to constitute this mysterious essence) exhausted the divine perfection. So Demea and Spinoza are agreed in giving parallel treatment to thinking of God as thought and thinking of God as extension, and in refusing to accept either attribute (or their conjunction) as defining God. Demea of course is definitely not Spinoza, nor Hume Demea. But Hume is the author of the *Dialogues* where the supposedly most orthodox participant holds this view, as if in fulfillment of his *Treatise* contention that the Clarkian theologians' and the Spinozists' views collapsed into each other. And he has his other characters in those dialogues disagree over whether it is anything more than the human mind's great propensity to spread itself on

external things that is needed to explain the greater popularity of the analogy of the cause or causes of the universe to intelligence than to generation, vegetation, or animal instinct. Only blind reason-renouncing faith can get Philo to accept the special privilege of the remote analogy to intelligence over the other cognitively equally plausible remote analogies which he has suggested, and even then we should bear in mind his early passing but subversive equation of thought to a "little agitation of the brain." His final position is not so different from his initial position, namely that, in eighteenth century Britain (or in Cicero's Rome, since clearly Hume is inspired by *De Natura Deorum*), only an imprudent fool would publicly question the existence of God, and that those who took the god or gods who are causally responsible for the universe to have something like human intelligence were privileging agitations in their own brains as causes of what such brains discerned as order, over other natural agitations known to cause such order, perhaps naturally and understandable doing so, but scarcely doing so with compelling empirical reason. Philo's empiricist intellect and fecund imagination leave him free to try many analogies, but he admits that, much as he delights in "singular arguments," his common human nature leads him to give irrational privilege to the hypothesis of an intelligent cause. Only faith, not reason, can support such anthropocentric bias.

The reasonable verdict would be that all the suggested analogies are remote and speculative, each about as good or bad as the rest. But if the bias is in favor of something remotely like the sort of agitation in human brains that leads to intelligible speech or writing, rather than to the agitation in arachnic nervous systems that leads to webs being spun, or to the agitation in growing plants or mating animals, then the bias is fairly harmless. It is perhaps no greater than that shown by Spinoza in privileging intellect as that which perceives any divine attribute, any constitution of the essence of the absolutely infinite divine substance. As there is a certain ineliminable relativity to thought and to human thought in any human conception of the universe and its cause or causes, one which virtually guarantees that we will conclude that God is a thinking thing, so there is an ineliminable reference to human thought in any analogy that we make between the whole of nature and its cause(s) and any orderly part of the whole and its causes, virtually ensuring the privileged position of the analogy to thought-caused order. Yet if Spinoza's demonstration that God is an extended thing "proceeds in the same way as that of the preceding proposition [that God is a thinking thing]" (E II P2, Dem.)⁴ and can go without spelling out, so obvious is it that where there is thought there also must be physical power, agitation in matter, then in privileging thought as an attribute, and minds as causes, we are not necessarily underprivileging physical forces.

Hume's conception of cause is not Spinoza's. Spinoza does not require temporal priority in a cause, and this makes a huge difference. We get no

Humean analogue to Spinoza's axiom "the knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, knowledge of its cause" (E I A4), unless this is restricted to inferential knowledge of facts we are not currently observing, or is taken simply to mean that we cannot know anything *to be an effect* unless we can say what it is the effect of. (Hume dismisses this verbal truth as "frivolous" at T 82, in canvassing the bad reasons why it had been thought that "a cause is always necessary," that is, that every event must have some cause.) Spinoza means something less frivolous—the knowledge of an effect "involves" knowledge of its cause in that the event which is the effect cannot be said to be "known" at all, inferentially or by intuition, until its place in the (largely atemporal) causal order is determined, and its dependency on its causes understood. Hume, although he officially follows Spinoza in restricting the term "knowledge" to relations of ideas which are discoverable by intuition or demonstration (T 70), simply dismisses the possibility of a priori "knowledge" of non-present empirical facts,⁵ contenting himself with what Spinoza regarded as inadequate "knowledge from random experience," mere imagination "without order for the intellect" (E II, P40, Schol. 2), which Spinoza contrasts with ratio and scientia intuitiva. That Hume makes his epistemological home in what Spinoza regarded as the "mutilated and confused" realm of ideas of sense, imagination, and historical narrative is of course a huge departure from Spinoza, and since Hume's concept of cause is one derived from this realm, supplemented only by a projected "determination of the mind" which yields the idea of necessity in the causal relation, his concept of cause is far from Spinoza's. He may, however, be able to give his own sense to Spinoza's axiom "From a given determinate cause the effect follows necessarily" (E I, A2), since he insists that necessary connection is of "much greater importance" to the causal relation than its other components (T 77).

Hume's definition of cause is double, and this fact has puzzled most of his commentators, almost as much as they have been puzzled by why he thinks that his offered definitions, singly or in conjunction, succeed in capturing that necessity which is such an important ingredient in causation. Why did he give us two definitions? He says that they "present different views of the same object" (T 170), of cause considered as a philosophical relation and as a natural relation. But since it is a little obscure how exactly he conceives of the relation of any philosophical relation to the natural relation of the same name (resemblance, cause), this has not solved the puzzle to all readers' satisfaction, indeed it has not led all of them to the same solution.⁶ He presents the second definition as a second attempt, needed since the first may "be esteem'd defective" (T 170), although he then allows that the second may also "be rejected for the same reason,"⁷ and then he invites the reader to "substitute a juster definition," if she can. So multiple definitions, or multiple attempts at a "just" and "exact" definition of cause which will "collect" and "join" all the different parts of the definer's preceding reasoning, are accepted as normal and proper,

and Hume seems unperturbed by the doubleness of his own definition (or its multiplicity when supplemented by the readers' attempts). Its "defectiveness" is not seen to lie in its non-unity. This is clearly not the attitude to definition favored by Euclid, nor by such philosophers as Hobbes, who commends the Euclidean geometers who "begin at settling the signification of their words, which settling of significations they call Definitions; and place them in the beginnings of their reckoning" (*Leviathan*, Ch. 4). Nor indeed is it the attitude to definition taken by Spinoza himself in the *Ethics*, where key terms are defined at the start of each book. We might, however, wonder if the definitions in the later books are not prepared for in the previous books' train of thought. For example, the definition of an adequate cause, in Part III, comes as no surprise, given his previous use of causal explanation. Then there are the definitions of the affects, left until the end of Part III, which had explored their nature and interrelationship. Hume himself, in Book III, carefully defines 'artificial' and 'natural' (T 474-475) before using these terms to distinguish two sets of virtues, but he also returns to clarify the distinction at T 579, after he has explored the nature of artifice.⁸ Hume in Part III of Book I, and elsewhere, works to rather than from his definitions and is content to let them approximate to fixing the concept they define. Where could he have learned such habits of philosophizing?

One place⁹ is Spinoza's early unfinished *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, published posthumously in 1677, where there is a fairly extended discussion of "true and legitimate definitions" (T.I.E. §93).¹⁰ (Spinoza also discusses definition in his correspondence with Simon de Vries.) A good definition, Spinoza says, explains the defined thing's "inmost essence" and does not give mere *propria* for essence. To define a circle as a figure all points of whose circumference are equidistant from one center within it would be to confuse properties with essence. Essence would be better given if we defined a circle in terms of a proximate cause, as "a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other moveable" (T.I.E., §96). Given such a definition, we can deduce the property emphasized in the less good definition, and ideally any other properties which the thing necessarily has. This requirement that definitions specify proximate causes raises interesting problems for the attempt to define cause (something that Spinoza himself avoids, contenting himself with a definition in Part I of *cause of itself*, as that which cannot be conceived except as existing, and in Part III of an *adequate cause* as that whose effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it). A good definition of cause will tell us what generates causal ties, as that of the circle tells us what generates circles, how they come to be. A good definition of cause will have to be a causal definition and so seems destined to be circular.

Spinoza ends this early *Treatise* with a discussion of the requirements of a just definition of thought or intellect, saying that such a definition will have to wait until the nature or power of intellect is more fully understood. He

contents himself with listing some properties of the intellect which he has noted. These include the fact that "the mind can determine in many ways the idea of things that the intellect forms from others—as, for example, to determine the plane of an ellipse, it feigns that a pen attached to a chord is moved around two centers, or conceives of infinitely many points always having the same definite relation to some given straight line, or a cone cut by some oblique plane, so that the angle of inclination is greater than the angle of the cone's vertex, or in infinite other ways" (T.I.E., §97). Clearly, he could here have given the simpler case of the circle, discussed earlier, where, although there are better and worse definitions, the circle "is the same however it is defined" (T.I.E., §95). Spinoza clearly prefers constructive to non-constructive definitions, but often several constructive definitions can be given of what we can see to be the same thing, as in the case of the plane of the ellipse (or the globe, mentioned at T.I.E., §72, which can be truly conceived of as what would be produced by a semicircle rotated around a center "even though we may know that no sphere in nature was ever produced in this way"). An important fact about our intellect is its power to conceive of the same thing truly in alternative ways, to triangulate in on an essence by multiple approaches. This last metaphor is not quite right, for Spinoza supposes that once we have our multiple definitions of one thing, we can eliminate some of them as *not* specifying essence, since not specifying the thing by its proximate cause. But there might be several sufficient proximate causes, and we may be unable to see a good reason to prefer one to another, or to apply Hume's fifth rule for judging of causes and effects, and so discern what they have in common.

What I find interesting about Spinoza's discussion of method and definition, when we consider it in relation to Hume's method and definitions in Part III of *Treatise*, Book I, is first, his acceptance of the fact that investigation of the nature of a thing must precede any attempt to define or specify its essence, and second, his taking our ability to come up with multiple real definitions of what we can be sure is one and the same thing to be a positive power of the human mind, not a defect. That we can conceive of God as self-causing both under the attribute of thought and under the attribute of extension is, for Spinoza, an achievement of our minds (or of his, since it is not clear how many others have grasped what he thought he grasped), and our achievement would be yet greater if we could conceive of God's active essence under yet other attributes. By Spinoza's standards, Hume has no need to apologize for the doubleness of his definition of cause, merely for his "incapacity to undertake" to offer yet more intersubstitutable definitions.

It may reasonably be objected that Spinoza was not discussing the definition of relations, but of natural and abstract things, of intellect and the circle, not causation or distance or motion. He seems to be taking a certain repertoire of operations as given, then defining entities as the outcomes of

these operations. Give him a pencil, a string, and hands to attach, to hold, and to guide, and he can give us the forms of the extended world (or, like Descartes, design and make a few compasses to help him). Hume is attempting to define something that was, for Spinoza, too ultimate to admit of definition in terms of other things. But then Hume too finds that cause is so ultimate a category that one must employ it to understand it, and explicitly employs it in his second definition. Even in the first, which presents cause as a philosophical relation (under the attribute of extension rather than thought, we might say), one which it took quite a bit of deliberate philosophical reflection to arrive at, he uses the causative verb "are plac'd," while remaining neutral as to who or what does the placing. God-or-nature? Or, also, the retentive human memory, or even the human brain in whose grooves the traces of observed conjunctions are stored?

Spinoza believed that by *ratio*, discursive intellectual insight, we could see that the various definitions that he gives of, say, the plane of an ellipse, do define one figure. What does Hume rely on in his readers for them to accept his blithe substitutions of one definition for another? Certainly discursive thought. He took twelve sections to get "all the different parts of this reasoning" in place ready for "joining them together" to form his "exact" but fluid definition. It was, he writes, "seemingly preposterous" to "make use of terms before we were able exactly to define them" (T 169). And make use of them he certainly did, as a glance at his section headings themselves makes clear ("The causes of belief," "The effects of other relations," "The influence of belief," "The probability of causes"). But this procedure would seem preposterous only to those who held a Hobbist rather than a Spinozist view about definition, and who were content with nominal rather than real definitions. Hume says his method was required since, to define cause, he was obliged to examine causal inference, since "the nature of the relation depends so much on that of the inference" (T 169).¹¹ It was the important element of necessity in the causal relation that he found to depend upon the fact that we "reason on" what we take to be causal relations, and, as he had shown in "Of the inference from the impression to the idea," it is not cause as a philosophical relation that we reason on, but cause as a natural relation (T 94). It is therefore in his definition of cause as a natural relation that he refers to our reasoning, to capture the element of necessity. The "union among our ideas," resulting in "the determination of the mind" in its causal inferences, is the "object foreign to the cause" in the second definition, as the regularity instanced by a given cause effect pair is the foreign element in the first definition. Of course, only someone who has not followed Hume's reasoning would find either of them really "foreign," rather than native to the concept. But it took considerable philosophical work on Hume's part to naturalize both those "objects" into the circle of the *propria* of causes. Hume's reasoning appealed to what Spinoza calls "bare experience" more than Spinoza would have approved, but it has a

reflexivity which he would approve, since "method is nothing but a reflexive knowledge" (T.I.E., §38). Not merely does Hume examine our causal inferences before offering any definition of 'cause', he does the examination by a series of causal and metacausal inferences—his reasoning in Part III is almost always able to be converted into an instance of its own subject matter (see T 169).

Spinoza, discussing the way to get a definition of intellect or the capacity for inference, writes "either the definition of intellect must be clear through itself, or else we can understand nothing. It is not, however, absolutely clear through itself..." (T.I.E. §107). Intellect must itself be used in order to define intellect, but the task is no easy or trivial one. Method is reflexive knowledge, but intellect's self-knowledge is hard won and Spinoza breaks off his treatise on intellect after offering only preliminary observations on the powers that we know to be proper to intellect. Nor does he define intellect in the *Ethics*. It is there exhibited, not defined, although we do get two propositions about actual intellect,¹² and attempts to characterize closely related concepts such as *ratio* and *scientia*. About the best we get from Spinoza after T.I.E. is in the fifth chapter of the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, where intellect is said to include the power to grasp "a long concatenation of perceptions," and in the *Short Treatise*, where infinite intellect is characterized as a 'Son' of God under the attribute of thought, an immediate infinite mode, and distinguished from an infinite concatenated sequence of ideas, the mediate infinite mode dependent on it. (Both infinite modes are referred to *Natura Naturata*, since only God is *Natura Naturans*.) This does not help us much to understand human understanding, and maybe Spinoza's most insightful claims about that are those that come early on in his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, when he wrote, "Just as men, in the beginning, were able to make the easiest things with the tools they were born with...and once these had been made, make other more difficult things with less labor and more perfectly...in the same way the intellect, by its inborn power, makes intellectual tools for itself, by which it acquires other powers for other intellectual works, and from these works still other tools, or the power of searching further..." (T.I.E. §31). Understanding is an essentially selfextending power, the analogue under the attribute of thought to clever human hands that explore, grasp, and shape and make familiar what is beyond their own spatial limits. To understand that sort of selfextension is to understand understanding. So, in his *Ethics*, Spinoza tries to draw out truths from earlier truths, to use earlier proved propositions as intellectual tools for getting the power to get yet more truths as Descartes had claimed he used each mathematical truth he established as a rule to help establish more such truths. This is perhaps as good a general characterization of reasoning or the power of inference as we are likely to get, and Hume's application of it to reasoning from experience preserves both the bootstraps ascent from the simpler to the more complex of concatenating or inferential

accomplishments (from the causal inferences and probability estimates of animals, pre-linguistic infants, and "peasants" to those of "artisans" [T 132], scientists, systematizers, and ultimately to scientists of human nature and of human inference), and also its essential potential for reflexivity, for turning its powers and its tools on itself. Just as our practical tool-making capacity eventually turns out not just hand-extensions and hand-replacements, but X-ray and other medical technology for understanding our hands and their dexterity, so the human understanding may reasonably aspire not just to designing artificial intelligence, but to understanding itself, to knowing itself through itself, through the reflexive use of its own powers.

Hume in "Of skepticism with regard to reason" threw some fairly cold water on the rationalist or deductivist reflexive project. But I think we miss much of the point of his own *Treatise* if we do not see his project there to be, as much as Spinoza's was, the turning of human understanding on human understanding, as well as the turning of belief-influenced human passion on belief-influenced human passion, in Books II and III. And as Spinoza broke off his attempt to get an adequate definition of the human understanding using only human understanding, and resumed the project of self-understanding later under a wider title, *Ethics*, so Hume breaks off his purely intellectual reflexive project in the course of the conclusion of Book I, resuming it in a new and more morally oriented way in the subsequent books, and eventually, in the third last section of the *Treatise*, is able to return to the topics of human reason and understanding, and survey them as moralist, without any of the agonizing failures of reflexivity that had beset him in the 'Conclusion' of Book I. He no longer finds himself faced with a choice between "a false reason, or none at all" (T 268), but merely with the less painful choices between quick and slow apprehension, a clear head and copious invention, a profound genius and a sure understanding (T 610). Reason, instead of extinguishing itself in its attempt to understand and validate itself (T 183), now gets credited with "all the advantages of art" (T 610). "Art" here includes the artisan's skill as much or more than the philosophical system builder's profound genius, and one great advantage of Hume's empiricist and pragmatist version of the human understanding over Spinoza's deductivist version is that Hume would be able not merely to analogize understanding's progress to progress in tool-making, but to include the latter as an instance of the former. By Book III, understanding for Hume becomes as overtly practical and manual as Spinoza's geometrical understanding implicitly was, given his preference for constructive definitions requiring hands, strings, and pencils. ("Mechanics is in no way to be despised" [T.I.E., §15].) By the time that Hume writes his essays "On the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," and "Of Commerce" and "Of Refinement in the Arts," he associates the mechanical arts closely with all the other arts, civic and intellectual. "Can we expect that a government will be modeled by a people who know not how to make a spinning wheel, or

employ a loom to advantage?" (Es. 273) Hume finds that "industry, knowledge and humanity are linked by an indissoluble chain" (Es. 271), so of course any attempt to understand knowledge without concatenating it with wisdom and the sentiment of humanity, or any of them without considering the customs and degree of progress of the "vulgar arts" of manufacture, trade, and technology, will be doomed to incompleteness, or to worse forms of failure.

I suggest, then, that we can helpfully see *Treatise* Book I as reenacting Spinoza's early failed attempt¹³ to get the human understanding to understand its own essence in order to mend its own insufficiencies,¹⁴ and that we can see the most successful part of Book I, the causal analysis of the causal relation, culminating in the double definition of *cause*, the rules, and the brilliant coda on "the reason of animals," to be following Spinoza's suggestions about the need to use and display the understanding's powers before one can hope to give a "true and legitimate" definition of understanding. The understanding's self-understanding must be "through itself" and need involve no infinite regress (T.I.E., §29).

I think that the resemblance between what Spinoza writes about "imitation of the affects" and about "vacillation" in Parts III & IV of the *Ethics* and what Hume writes about sympathy and about ambivalence is too striking, to anyone who reads both texts, to require much commentary,¹⁵ so I will round off this look at Hume's debt to Spinoza by looking at the two thinkers' treatment of the nature and continuing identity of human persons. This is a topic Hume treats throughout all three books of his *Treatise*, but his initial Book I skeptical treatment of the idea of a simple strictly identical self, reflexively available at all times to that self, is a good place to start. Hume had prepared for his section on personal identity with the section "Of the immateriality of the Soul," which explicitly discusses Spinoza's views. That section was more concerned, however, with theological views which took human souls to be simple substances (views like Descartes' and Clarke's), so the concept of substance comes in for examination and attack, an attack directed particularly at "those philosophers who pretend that we have an idea of the substance of our mind" (T 233). These philosophers definitely do not include Spinoza. He had sharply distinguished his views on substance from those of Descartes, whom he had studied and carefully restated, and from whom he took much of his physics. He emphasizes one fairly obvious implication of his one substance metaphysics in the proposition "The being of substance does not pertain to the essence of man, or substance does not constitute the form of man." (E II, P10). The point is to register a clear denial of an orthodox view, just as later he denies Cartesian views of the will with the denial "In the Mind there is no volition, or affirmation or negation, except that which the idea involves insofar as it is an idea" (E II, P49), leaving the affirmative claim, "The will and the intellect are one and the same," for a corollary to that. For Spinoza there is a nontrivial difference between affirmation and negation, including double

negation, and I think Hume follows him here, too. For Spinoza, the intellect "forms positive ideas before negative ones" (T.I.E., §108, 4), and definitions must be affirmative, must affirm some positive power or essence (T.I.E., §93). The point of a negative claim is to contradict, cancel out, or destroy what someone else (or oneself at another time) has said. (Hume at T 15 says that only existence and nonexistence are true contraries, and regularly employs a dynamic concept of negation as defeat or destruction.) E II, P23 also contradicts a Cartesian doctrine: "The mind does not know itself except insofar as it perceives the affections of the body," and there is fairly obvious anti-Cartesianism in the claim that "The Body cannot determine the Mind to thinking, and the Mind cannot determine the Body to motion, to rest or to anything else (if there is anything else)" (E III, P2), to which Spinoza appends one of his longest scholia. (He also has a series of negative propositions concerning our knowledge of our own and other bodies [E II, P24-P30] where it is a little harder to locate the one or ones who are being contradicted. Hobbes and Gassendi? Hume, at T 191, might be seen to be following him here: "Properly speaking it is not our body we perceive when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions....")

Spinoza's rejection of the Cartesian claim that we can know our minds to be simple nonphysical substances would not put him very close to Hume if he had held that human minds, granted that they must be modes not substances, still had some relatively tight modal unity and unproblematic identity over time, if they were enduring singular modes not readily decomposed into more ultimate modes or successions of such component modes. But Spinoza is as willing to decompose the human person into component and decomposable parts as Hume is into component complex perceptions (and for Spinoza there will be ideas for each of the physical ingredients of the composite individual which is a human body at any one time). Spinoza analyzes "the object of the idea constituting the human mind," that is, the human body, as a composite "Individual," composed of "a great many individuals of different natures, each of which is highly composite." It is "continually regenerated" by the bodies it needs for its preservation (E II, P13, Postulates following L7). What counts as the preservation of one individual, at any level, is the preservation of the "same ratio of motion and rest" in its constituent mobile regenerating parts.¹⁶ Just what the analogue of this constant individualizing ratio is in the highly volatile composite idea which is the enduring human mind is not said in Part II, but once we get to Parts III and IV we get the dynamic concept of *conatus*, "by which each thing strives to persevere in its being," and which is "the actual essence of the thing" (E III, P7). Desire is the consciousness of this striving (E III, P9, Schol), and pleasure or joy is awareness of transition to a greater power to succeed in our self-preservative striving (E III, P11, Schol). The self whose preservation is necessarily sought is a continuously regenerated individual of variable size and shape and varying

ideas and affects. Physically it displays a constant "ratio of motion and rest." Its individuality is highly abstract. One is tempted to say that it is unknowable and ineffable. Strict personal identity becomes of vanishing relevance to ordinary concerns. (As does Derek Parfit's version of Humean personal identity.) We cannot even say with assurance that it is whatever is not preserved in a human corpse, since Spinoza believes that death need not be harmful to us, when we have attained the right sort of knowledge. "He who has a Body capable of a great many things has a Mind whose greatest part is eternal." (E V, P39) Granted that eternity need not involve indefinite duration, and that the fact that one thought as one did while one existed remains a fact, known by God, after one's death, it is still not easy to be sure what exactly Spinoza means here. I certainly do not want to suggest that Hume takes anything like this from Spinoza—except, of course, some confidence that his thoughts will be remembered, and equanimity about the prospect of death.

But Hume does have some odd views about the dynamics of his persisting bundles of perceptions, with their loose identity through time. I refer to his use of the theoretical concept of "vivacity." This is what is transferred from premiss to conclusion in one person's causal inference, what is more or less conserved in ideas that are in a person's memory, it is what association transfers, and a high level of it distinguishes pleasures, sense impressions, desires, passions and willings from the whole realm of ideas of the understanding and the imagination, even from those highest vivacity ideas which form our beliefs and so influence our passions. The vivacity of a perception is not directly transferable from person to person, neither through sympathy nor through testimony—it takes the Humean sympathizer's own impression of self to vivify her ideas of others' passions, and her own experience of the trustworthiness of her informant to get her to believe what he says. I suggest that Humean vivacity of perception is an intellectual descendent of Spinozistic individualizing essence or power of action. (Hume prefers not to use that "antient but more modish" term *action* [T 244], and is suspicious of the term *power*, but is forced to use it to define wealth [T 315] and possession [T 506], as well as to refer to what the master has over his servant or slave [T 315–6].) There are also some traces in Hume's moral psychology and ethics of Spinoza's *conatus*, the tendency we have to maintain our distinctive character. For Hume this character will itself be an expression of the way that psychic vivacity has been acquired (through experiences of pleasure and other sensory experiences), transferred, and expended in our own particular sensory, mental, emotional, action-planning, and active lives. Nothing quite like an individualizing ratio of motion and rest, or their thought equivalents, can be found in Hume's account of personal identity or of distinctive character, but then he does not claim to have any account, even an abstruse theoretical one, which would make a person's identity over time into strict identity. He despairs of finding anything that is unchanging, even a ratio of incoming and

outgoing mental vivacity, or a particular way of transferring it from perception to perception. So one must not claim too much of a parallel here.

Nevertheless, it is worth re-emphasizing (since Wim Klever has already emphasized this¹⁷) that they share a version of a *complex* self, a human individual who is composed of component individuals in just the sense that an individual republic is composed of human individuals, and organized so as to more or less preserve one constitution or "mode of union" (T 16). Both Spinoza and Hume turn to human passions to get anything approximating to a true self-awareness (Spinoza turns to desire, joy, and grief, Hume to pleasurable pride, indirectly to emotions involving 'comparison', and to all sympathy-dependent passions). Hume in Book II springs the "impression of ourselves always intimately present to us" on us, as postulated intramental source of the vivacity that transforms the idea of another's distress into sympathetic distress (T 317). From Book I we might not have guessed that "ourselves is always intimately present to us," and present in a perception with such overflowing vivacity, though we might have guessed that another's vivacity of perception could not be directly transferred to us. But then neither would we, from Spinoza's treatment of the human mind and its knowledge of itself in Part II of the *Ethics*, have anticipated that the actual essence of a human mind is that striving to preserve itself of which it is conscious in desire—although we might have anticipated something like the account of *conatus*. Spinoza and Hume agree in turning to our experience of action and of passion to complete their account of our awareness of ourselves as individuals.

More obviously, they also agree that "there is no absolute or free will" (E II, P48). Both give a vanishingly small role to individual human choice (a larger role, however, to convention or collective intent). Their shared version of nature (and so of our nature) is of a deterministic causal order, which the wise person tries to understand and to accept, or even to love. They agree in their accounts of the naturalness to us of associative thinking, and in appeal to some forms of it to explain many of our typical errors. They agree in their accounts of our capacity for passion-sharing and of our tendency to mental vacillation. These agreements would be hard to deny. They must strike "the most careless, the most stupid" reader of their writings. I believe that they also agree in their version of the coincidence of enlightened egoism and enlightened altruism.¹⁸ The very flexibility of the concept of the self and its boundaries which they share, and their shared emphasis on our capacity for sympathy, help them to get this shared claim in their ethics. For it takes a new secular naturalistic version of human persons and our relation to each another and to the rest of nature if there is to be a secular substitute for God as a *deus ex machina* who sees to it that virtue need not be at the cost of happiness. Spinoza's and Hume's *deus* is internal to the moral machine—a new secular machine, itself built on a science of human nature, on an attempt to get at the anatomy of our emotional lives, to treat "human actions and appetites just as

if it were a Question of lines, planes, and bodies" (Spinoza, preface to *Ethics* III), in order that such truths "can lead us, by the hand as it were, to the knowledge of the human mind and its highest blessedness" (Preface to *Ethics* II). Spinoza keeps the term 'God' for the active power which the universe displays, where Hume is less keen to appropriate the language of his adversaries. Yet even he is willing to speak of "the true religion," and to disavow atheism, so the difference may not be very great.

A great wealth of intellectual influences come together in Hume: Theophrastus, Epicurus, Cicero, Lucretius, Hobbes, Locke, Malebranche, Berkeley, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler. Spinoza's influence is at least as great as any of these. Hume's distinctive reworking of what he took from those who influenced him, his individual ratio of transformation to preservation in the ideas that he inherited, puts all his readers, especially those of us who like tracing the ancestry of vivacious ideas, indefinitely in his debt. Reading Hume enables us not only to enjoy and learn from what he wrote, but to go off in other profitable and pleasurable intellectual pursuits. And tracing the lineage of the secular naturalistic tradition in metaphysics, epistemology, moral psychology, and ethics is not just an intellectual pleasure, it is the naturalist's version of piety. Such investigations are secular religious exercises that can energize our philosophical activities, even perhaps our moral and political action, should we agree with Spinoza and Hume that (in Spinoza's words) "nothing forbids our pleasure but a savage and sad superstition" (E IV, P45, Cor. 2., Schol), and should we support their campaigns against the bondage and oppression which such superstitions have imposed. "Rare the happy times that we can think what we like and say what we think"—rarer in Spinoza's day and culture than in Hume's, rarer in Hume's than in ours, but still not to be taken for granted.¹⁹ Hume's first reviewer took his selection of this utterance of Tacitus' Cato to display the "evil intentions" of the author of the *Treatise*. Spinoza had put the same quotation at the head of the final chapter of his *Theologico-Political Treatise*, and it is hard to believe that Hume's intentions did not include the wish to signal the alignment of his own intentions with those of that infamous critic of organized religion and defender of freedom of thought and speech, a freedom which both he and Spinoza before him used to develop a naturalist metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Hume's agreements with Spinoza are deeper than his more obvious and more superficial disagreements.

REFERENCES

A version of this paper was given at the University of Santa Clara Hume Conference, organized by Elizabeth Radcliffe, February 27, 1993. I am grateful to members of the audience there for helpful discussion, and to Wim Klever for helpful written comments.

1. Jane McIntyre, "Hume, Second Newton of the Moral Sciences," a paper presented at the 18th International Hume Conference, LaFlèche, France, June, 1992.

2. Paul Russell, "Epigram, Pantheists, and Free Thought in Hume's *Treatise*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (forthcoming, 1993); "Skepticism and Natural Religion in Hume's *Treatise*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 247-265; "Atheism and the Title-Page of Hume's *Treatise*," *Hume Studies* 14 (2): 408-423.

3. Wim Klever, "Hume Contra Spinoza?" *Hume Studies* 16 (2): 90. Klever notes that Locke's library contained all of Spinoza's works, and he refers the reader to *Spinoza et la Pensée Française avant la Révolution*, 2nd ed., P.U.F., 1982, for an account of the intense interest in Spinoza there was in France while Hume was there.

4. All translations of Spinoza are from Edwin Curley, ed. and trans., *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). The abbreviation given is of *Ethics*, Part Two, Proposition 2, Demonstration.

5. Spinoza also does not expect reason to discover the timing of particular events, or the duration of particular finite modes. Reason perceives things "under a certain species of eternity" (E II, P44, Cor 2); it is not in the business of vulgar prediction. He writes in Chapter 4 of the *Theologico-Political Treatise*: "We plainly have no knowledge of the way in which things are in actual fact ordered and connected—so that for practical purposes it is better, indeed it is essential, to consider things as contingent." This is no contradiction to E I P29: "In nature there is nothing contingent," if we accept that "a thing is only called contingent because of a defect in our knowledge" (E I P33, Schol.).

6. I have given my version of how Hume distinguishes philosophical from natural relations in Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 89.

7. David Pears, *Hume's System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 119. Pears questions how much weight we should give to the "oracular imprecision" of "the carelessly formulated second definition."

8. I am grateful to Rachel Cohon for pointing out that Hume's policy with "artificial" does not, as I had first thought, contrast with his policy with "cause." In both cases we get both preliminary definitions, then after the terms have been used in exploring what they denote, later revised definitions.

9. Another place would, of course, be Locke's attempts, in *Essay* Book III, to distinguish real essence from nominal essence, and definition of terms signifying substances from definitions of terms signifying mixed modes.

10. T.I.E. abbreviates this treatise's Latin title, *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, and the number gives the paragraph, supplied by Bruder and used by Curley.

11. Similarly, we might say, Spinoza had to give and examine a few cases where we can understand an effect through its cause, in Parts I and II of the *Ethics*, before he is in a position to define an "adequate cause," in Part III, and such definitions as he gives of locutions containing the word *cause* ("cause of itself," "adequate cause") define them through the sort of understanding we have of such causes. For both Spinoza and Hume, causation is the relation we "reason on" and that is about the best we can do to single it out from other relations we can recognize.

12. E I, P30, "An actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, must comprehend God's attributes and God's affections, and nothing else." E I, P31, "The actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, like desire, love, etc., must be referred to *Natura Naturata*, not to *Natura Naturans*."

13. Wim Klever, "More about Hume's Debt to Spinoza," *Hume Studies* 19 (1): 55–74. Klever pairs *Treatise*, Book I with *Ethics* II, and I agree with him that on some topics there is a parallel (e.g., personal identity). But there is nothing in *Ethics* II at all like the conclusion of *Treatise* I.

14. The Latin term *emendatio* has practical and moral overtones. Spinoza's admirer Tschirnhaus wrote a work called *Medicina Mentis* as a development of Spinoza's treatise, and Spinoza himself speaks of "healing and purging" the intellect at T.I.E., §16.

15. I have, perhaps superfluously, commented on it at the Chapel Hill Workshop on Hume's Ethics, February 1993.

16. For a helpful exposition of Spinoza's physics and physiology, as involved in these claims, see David R. Lachterman, "The Physics of Spinoza's *Ethics*," in *Spinoza: New Perspectives*, edited by Robert W. Shahan and J. I. Biro (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 71–112.

17. See Klever, "Hume Contra Spinoza?," 91–92.

18. I argue for this in "Hume as a Closet Spinozist," discussed at the Chapel Hill Workshop on Hume's Ethics, February 1993.

19. Karl Jaspers eulogized Spinoza to Hannah Arendt (who needed some help in appreciating Spinoza's philosophy): "Spinoza, this pure soul, this great realist, the first human being to become a citizen of the world...this down-to-earth passion..." (Karl Jaspers to Hannah Arendt, August 4, 1949, letter 91 in *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers Correspondence*, edited by Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992].)