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PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHEDELICS

Frameworks for Exceptional Experience

Edited by Christine Hauskeller and Peter Sjöstedt-Hughes

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Chapter 13

THE WHITE SUN OF SUBSTANCE: SPINOZISM AND THE PSYCHEDELIC *AMOR DEI INTELLECTUALIS*

Peter Sjöstedt-Hughes

Introduction

The seventeenth-century philosopher Benedict de Spinoza was branded both as a figure ‘God-intoxicated’¹ and as the most monstrous of atheists.² Such polarity was characteristic of a man who, without equal, equalized apparent contraries: mind-matter, theism-atheism, freedom-necessity, past-future, good-evil, God-Nature. He was thus, above all, a *monist*, the absolute monist whose general solution to Descartes’ dualism was final: mind and matter are not two substances that mysteriously interact but are rather two (of an infinity of) expressions of the same *substance* – a substance he names God or Nature, *Deus, sive natura*.³ God is Nature. The epithet of ‘pantheism’ was thus coined to classify Spinoza’s divine equation, twenty years after his death.⁴

1. By Novalis (1772–1801) – ‘*Spinotza is ein gotttrunkener Mensch*’, in Novalis, 1960, p. 651.

2. For instance, by the otherwise-tolerant scholar Pierre Bayle. He called Spinozism (in his 1697, 1702 *Historical and Critical Dictionary*), ‘The most monstrous hypothesis, diametrically opposed to the ideas most evident to the mind.’ Theologian Antione Arnauld 1612–1694) reportedly attacked Spinoza as ‘the most impious and the most dangerous man of this century’ (as reported by Leibniz in a letter to Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels-Rotenburg of 4/14 August 1683; <https://spinozaweb.org/people/385>, accessed 14 June 2021).

3. *Ethics*, IV, Pref.; Spinoza, 1985, p. 544.

4. Coined by British astronomer and champion of Newton, Joseph Raphson in 1697 (see below). The word was used again in 1705 by John Tolland (see Curley, 2013), who had read Raphson. It should be noted that the Cambridge Platonist Henry Moore (1614–1687), who was born two decades before Spinoza (1632–1677), might also now be classified as a pantheist because, as he wrote in a letter of 1649 to Descartes, ‘God seems to be an extended thing’ (see Wolfson, 1934/1965, I, p. 224). Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) may also be classified as a pantheist (see Bruno, [1584] 1998, Fifth Dialogue, pp. 87ff).

Yet we do not commonly perceive this deific Nature in its unified state. We bifurcate Nature into mind and matter, restrict mind to complex animal matter, and then puzzle over their relations.⁵ These are errors human, all too human, resulting in part from our prosaic cognitive apparatus⁶ with supplementation by philosophies sympathetic thereto. Spinoza, however, culminates his masterwork, the *Ethics*,⁷ with a declaration that beyond this standard bifurcated human form of knowledge gained through senses, and through reason, there exists a rare, third kind of knowledge – *intuition* – that becomes cognizant of fundamental essences *sub specie aeternitatis*, under the aspect of eternity: from the perspective of timelessness. In these exceptional insights we feel *ourselves* eternal, and in this lies our immortality: *not as a soul enduring beyond the corpse, but as a mind collapsing into eternity*, even if such eternity is fleeting. The vertex of such intuitive experience Spinoza names ‘the intellectual love of God’, *amor Dei intellectualis*.

This eternal love, I shall argue, is a bliss that is exposure to God or Nature or Substance – existence – in its unabstracted, essential eternal perfection. It is an experience that seemingly divulges a rare, direct cognizance of Spinozism in its general unitive, monistic framework, and is an experience that bears the authenticity stamps of the ‘mystical experience’:⁸ As well as touching upon immortality, it appears noetic, ineffable, passive, and transient (meeting William James’ criteria);⁹ it also encompasses experiences unitive, timeless, and beyond good and evil (meeting Bertrand Russell’s criteria).¹⁰ Even psychiatrist R. M. Bucke includes Spinoza’s peak states in his classic 1901 tome, *Cosmic Consciousness*.

5. In recent decades this puzzle has been named the Explanatory Gap and the Hard Problem of Consciousness (see, respectively, Levine, 1983, and Chalmers, 1995). For a more detailed understanding of this mind-matter mystery, see Kim, 2005.

6. See Henri Bergson’s masterpiece, *Matter and Memory* for the practical bent of perception and consciousness – an analysis that Aldous Huxley referenced in relation to his ‘reducing-valve’ concept (in Huxley, [1954/1956] 2004, p. 10).

7. The full title is *Ethics: Demonstrated in Geometric Order* (1677; Spinoza, 1985, pp. 408–617).

8. Spinoza commentators differ on this point as to whether the Intellectual Love of God can be considered ‘mystical’. This chapter, with its reference to Spinoza’s texts, literature on mysticism, and to direct altered states of consciousness, can act as a weight on the side of interpreting Spinoza’s peak state as being legitimately classified as ‘mystical’. I share this interpretation with the great Spinozan scholar, Frederick Pollock (1880, pp. 184, 291ff.), E. E. Harris (1971), and T. L. S. Sprigge (1984) amongst many others.

9. James, [1902] 1985, pp. 380–382.

10. Russell, [1914] 1951, pp. 1–32.

If we maintain with William James,¹¹ James Leuba,¹² Frits Staal,¹³ and many others,¹⁴ that certain *psychedelic states* are qualitatively similar if not identical to certain mystical states – for there are vast varieties of both psychedelic and mystical states¹⁵ – then one may ask whether Spinoza's intellectual love of God or Nature, considered as a type of mystical state, might be occasioned¹⁶ by certain psychedelic substances. Below I shall provide a phenomenological analysis of the state instantiated by the highly potent psychedelic substance 5-MeO-DMT, a chemical known to elicit profoundly unitive states, and compare this to Spinoza's account of the intellectual love of God, and its relation to the Spinozist cosmology generally. I shall seek to show that the state is indeed aligned to the Spinozistic metaphysic, thereby suggesting veridicality above delusion, and a *Psychedelic-Spinozan Symbiosis*: certain psychedelic states can be understood through the Spinozan system, and the Spinozan system can be intuited through certain psychedelic states. A full personal integration of such unitive states requires philosophy in addition to the intense experience because, to borrow and buckle an old phrase, the rational system without the intuition is *empty*; the intuition without the rational system is *blind*.

An individual may have this blinding singular intuition of what can otherwise be intellectualized as a thriving complexity of interrelated concepts. Deleuze puts it thus:

Spinoza ... is a philosopher who commands an extraordinary conceptual apparatus, one that is highly developed, systematic, and scholarly; and yet he is the quintessential object of an immediate, unprepared encounter, such that a nonphilosopher, or even someone without any formal education, can receive a sudden illumination from him, a 'flash'. Then it is as if one discovers that one is a Spinozist ...¹⁷

By receiving Spinozism in a flash, Deleuze is referring to the words used by the French writer, Nobel laureate Romain Rolland who also expressed his Spinozan

11. James, [1902] 1985.

12. Leuba, 1925, pp. 8–36

13. Staal, 1975, pp. 148–158.

14. Including perhaps, most popularly, Aldous Huxley, [1954/1956] 2004. For opposition to this identification, see Zaehner, 1957.

15. I shall not enter the debate regarding *perennialism* as against *contextualism*: i.e. the debate concerning whether, respectively, psychedelic experiences (rather than their interpretations) are qualitatively identical regardless of one's life and culture, or whether, on the other extreme, they are completely conditioned by one's life and culture. I take a middle position for most cases. Cf. Katz, 1978.

16. I use the word 'occasioned' here to indicate a trigger rather than a sufficient cause, thereby maintaining metaphysical neutrality at this stage.

17. Deleuze, [1970] 1988, p. 129.

illumination as *le soleil blanc de la substance*, the white sun of substance.¹⁸ As well as a writer of various fields of literature, Rolland was also considered a mystic, one who is known for his amorous yet critical correspondence with Freud. Rolland differentiated, against Freud at the time, 'spontaneous religious sentiment' – which Rolland coined as 'oceanic' – from religion.¹⁹ In a letter to the psychoanalyst from 1927, he insists that:

totally independent of all dogma, all credo, all Church organization, all Sacred Books, all hope in a personal survival, etc., [there exists] the simple and direct fact of the feeling of the 'eternal' . . . [the] oceanic, as it were . . .²⁰

Especially with note of the blinding white light that 5-MeO-DMT first elicits to the mind, there seems to be no other more appropriate chemical substance to bring about a flash of intuition of the core eternal Substance/Nature/God of Spinozism – a drug evoking encounter with 'the white sun of substance' itself.²¹

In that which follows an outline of Spinozism will be provided to understand it as a rational system that still today can be viewed as superseding many contemporary worldviews in terms of its harmony, parsimony, and general rationality. This explication will culminate with Spinoza's description of the *amor Dei intellectualis*, including the concept's aetiology with particular note of Aristotle and Maimonides. Thereafter we shall turn our attention to certain unitive psychedelic states with a focus on those evoked by 5-MeO-DMT. A comparative analysis between the phenomenology attributed to the drug and Spinozism will then seek to show that the state is indeed aligned to the Spinozan metaphysic, thereby suggesting veridicality above delusion, and the Psychedelic-Spinozan symbiosis. We shall see that such a symbiosis has potential not merely for personal integration, but for ecological enrichment.

1 Spinozism

Bento, Baruch, and later still, Benedict de Spinoza, was born in Amsterdam in 1632 and buried in The Hague in 1677. He was of Sephardic Jewish descent. The Sephardim, the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula, had been forced, from the fifteenth

18. Rolland, [1924] 2014 (*L'Éclair de Spinoza*, i.e. *The Flash of Spinoza*), pp. 93ff. See also Rolland, [1942] 1959.

19. See Artinian, in this volume. I thank Dr Taline Artinian for bringing to my attention the relationship between Freud, Rolland, and Spinoza.

20. 5 December 1927. All correspondence between Rolland and Freud is translated in Parsons, 1999, pp. 170–178.

21. 5-MeO-DMT is not exclusive in occasioning such radiance, however – as we shall with LSD below. It should also be noted that though the sun can enlighten and nourish, it can also also blind and burn: 5-MeO-DMT should be approached very cautiously, if at all.

century, to convert to Christianity or leave Spain, then Portugal. Many, ostensibly at least, converted; suspicions of feigned conversion instigated the Spanish Inquisition. Others left to more liberal cities in northern Europe, including that of Spinoza's city of birth. Heresy was in his blood. Spinoza was brought up in the Sephardic community but was excommunicated in his twenties for his views. An assassination attempt was made upon him.²² He was published anonymously and posthumously; his books became banned by the Church. Only a century after his death, following the *Pantheismusstreit*, the 'Pantheism Controversy' of the 1780s, did his writings become openly studied and appreciated. In 1835, the writer and poet Heinrich Heine braved the claim that 'Pantheism is the secret religion of Germany'.²³

Spinoza published works on Descartes' philosophy, on politics and theology – including a highly controversial book involving biblical criticism²⁴ – but of most importance were his writings on metaphysics. The *Ethics* was his last work, and his masterwork wherein is contained this metaphysics, this system of explaining reality – a system that had an influence on many thinkers, including Goethe, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Wordsworth,²⁵ Coleridge, Humphry Davy,²⁶ George Eliot,²⁷ Nietzsche,²⁸ Haeckel, Borges, Whitehead,²⁹ Naess, Deleuze, and Einstein, who called Spinoza, 'the greatest of modern philosophers'.³⁰

The following are the basic tenets of Spinozism, or, more specifically, of Spinoza's metaphysics.

22. See Silverman, 1995, pp. 13ff.

23. In *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*: 'It is the religion of our greatest thinkers, our best artists . . . Nobody says it, but everyone knows it: pantheism is an open secret in Germany. We have in fact outgrown deism. We are free and want no thundering tyrant. We are grown up and need no fatherly care. And we are not the botchwork of a great mechanic. Deism is a religion for slaves, for children, for Genevans, for watchmakers. Pantheism is the secret religion of Germany' (quoted in Gerrish, 1987).

24. The anonymously published *Theological-Political Treatise* of 1670, in Spinoza, 2016, pp. 65–354.

25. Note especially Wordsworth's 1798 poem, *Tintern Abbey* (or, *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour*) – in Wordsworth, 1994, pp. 205–208.

26. See Sjöstedt-Hughes, 2019, reprinted in 2021, on this particular influence. This article includes Davy's poem, 'The Spinosist'.

27. George Eliot, the *nom de plume* of Marian Evans, is believed to have created the first translation of Spinoza's *Ethics*, in 1856 (see Carlisle, 2020, pp. 1ff).

28. In a letter to Franz Overbeck of 30 July 1881, Nietzsche wrote: 'I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted. I have a precursor, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just now, was inspired by "instinct"' (Middleton, 1969, p. 177). He later changed his tone, however.

29. Whitehead writes, for instance: 'In the analogy with Spinoza, his one substance is for me the one underlying activity of realisation individualising itself in an interlocked plurality of modes. Thus, concrete fact is process' (Whitehead, [1925] 1935, pp. 102–103).

30. Stated in an interview for Viereck, 1930, p. 373.

1.1 Monism

Substance There is but one substance,³¹ one underlying fundamental reality, that can be expressed in an infinite number of ways.

Attributes These expressions, abstractions, or aspects are named Attributes. Each Attribute is infinite in itself. Humans have access to only two Attributes: Thought and Extension, which are roughly speaking, Mind and Matter or, better, Sentience and Physical Space. However, there are an infinite number of other infinite Attributes, of which we humans are not cognizant.³²

Modes Each particular instance is called a mode. A particular physical object is a mode of the Attribute of Extension. A particular mental state is a Mode of the Attribute of Thought.

Note: For Spinoza, mind and matter are not two separate substances, as was advanced by Descartes (as ‘substance dualism’), but rather mind and matter are two ways of grasping the very same substance. Thus, there can be no interaction, emergence, or downward (mental) causation, between mind and matter – just as there can be no interaction between Hesperus and Venus, as both names refer to the same planet.

1.2 Pantheism

This one substance Spinoza calls *God or Nature*, in part because this one existent reality must have the Attribute of Extension (infinite space) in parallel with Its Attribute of Thought (infinite intellect). That is, Spinoza adds the Attribute of physicality to the notion of the perfect being, thereby completing It, perfecting It, rendering God *immanent* rather than *transcendent*. In Goethe’s words, ‘Spinoza does not have to prove the existence of God; existence *is* God.’³³

Spinoza’s contention that all (*pan*) is God (*Theos*) was named ‘Pantheism’ by mathematician Joseph Raphson twenty years after Spinoza’s death.³⁴ Raphson

31. John Locke defines ‘substance’ thus: ‘The idea then we have, to which we give the general name “substance”, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*; which, according to the true import of the word, is, in plain English, standing under or upholding’ (Locke, [1690] 1964, p. 186).

32. In a fragment of a letter of 1675 (Letter 66), Spinoza ambiguously suggests that the other non-human Attributes each have a complementary alien form of mind (Spinoza, 1985, pp. 440–1).

33. Letter to Jacobi, 1785 (Simmons, 1891, p. 53).

34. In *De spatío reali* (1697), as *pantheismus*. See Thomas and Smith, 1990.

contrasted *pantheism* to *panhylism*,³⁵ the view that everything is insentient matter – today we generally refer to this as materialism or physicalism.³⁶

Note 1: By identifying God with Nature, Spinoza was accused of *atheism* – even by Hume.³⁷ However, considering the ‘infinite intellect’ as an aspect of the universe should suggest otherwise. In the words of Ernest Renan, ‘there is no enlightened mind that does not acknowledge Spinoza as the man who possessed the highest God-consciousness of his day . . . a free faith in the Infinite . . .’³⁸ The Attribute of Thought is both finite (as, say, the mind of an animal) and infinite (the mind of Nature/God) – and this in the relation part to whole: ‘the human Mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God.’³⁹ A pantheist could accept a mind of Nature, an atheist could not. As Pollock put it, ‘God has not been reduced to Nature, but Nature exalted to God.’⁴⁰ However, Spinoza’s God was not personal.⁴¹ The infinite intellect is as similar to the human mind as infinite space is similar to the human body – i.e. radically dissimilar.

Note 2: Spinoza’s ‘Nature’ is not, then, merely physical, but also includes the infinity of other Attributes including Thought. Thus, those accusing Spinoza of being a *materialist*, or *panhylist*, were also off the mark. Pantheism is not panhylism.⁴² Matter is but one expression of reality, it is but an abstraction or extraction – i.e. a part. Likewise, those calling Spinoza an *idealist* are also off the mark as Mind is not productive of matter, but equally expressive of the fundamental substance.

Note 3: *Substance/Nature/God* are thus synonyms.

35. The word ‘panhylism’ was re-coined, apparently without knowledge of its first coinage, by William Pepperrell Montague in 1912, p. 268.

36. Some thinkers distinguish physicalism from materialism, asserting that the former refers to that studied in post nineteenth-century physics. Others, such as Karl Popper and Galen Strawson, classify panpsychism (see below) as a form of physicalism or materialism. For this reason, ‘panhylism’ is a useful term as it excludes panpsychism, whereas ‘physicalism’ or ‘materialism’ need not.

37. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, bk. 1, pt. IV, §V; Hume, [1739] 1985, p. 289: ‘the atheism of Spinoza is the doctrine of the simplicity of the universe, and the unity of that substance, in which he supposes both thought and matter to inhere . . . [a] hideous hypothesis. . .’

38. In Knight, 1882, p. 149.

39. *Ethics*, IIP11c; Spinoza, 1985, p. 456.

40. Pollock, 1880, p. 355.

41. See, e.g. *Ethics*, VP17c; Spinoza, 1985, p.604: ‘strictly speaking, God loves no one, and hates no one’. T. L. S. Sprigge, in this respect, wrote that ‘What people tend to feel is missing in Spinoza’s God is love for men and goodness. . . . [Spinoza finds] something to reverence in the terrifying side of nature. . .’ (1984, p. 158).

42. In his letter (Ep. 73/71) to Henry Oldenburgh of 1 December 1675, Spinoza writes against a concurrent misunderstanding of his metaphysics: ‘some people think [my work] rests on the assumption that God is one and the same as Nature (by which they understand a certain mass, or corporeal matter). This is a complete mistake’ (Spinoza, 2016, p. 467).

43. Lundborg, 2014, p. 87.

Note 4: According to the late Swedish author on psychedelic culture, Patrick Lundborg: ‘Pantheism is . . . [a] psychedelic core value.’⁴³ This he claims in his final article, ‘Note Towards the Definition of a Psychedelic Philosophy’ wherein he summarises the findings of his research and experience on psychedelic experiences, showing that the intuition of pantheism is a common occurrence. ‘The concept behind pantheism says that everything that is alive is charged with the same presence. . .’⁴⁴

1.3 Panpsychism

All matter then, not just complex animal matter, is but one expression, or Attribute, of Substance/Nature/God. Therefore *all (pan) that exists physically must have its parallel mental Attribute (psyche)*. An Attribute is an expression, and an expression is an abstraction – it is not the full, concrete reality which it expresses. *The portrait is not the person*. Our perception of matter is but a portrait. Consequently, we see that Spinoza’s monism implies a *panpsychism* – that all things have mind. Spinoza is explicit:

[We] understand not only that the human mind is united to the body, but also what should be understood by the union of mind and body. . . . For the things we have shown so far are completely general and do not pertain more to man than to other individuals, all of which, though in different degrees, are nevertheless animate. . . . And so, whatever we have said of the idea of the human body must also be said of the idea of any thing.⁴⁵

Because they are fundamentally identical, mind *cannot have emerged* from matter in the animal past, nor can mind emerge from matter in the present – neither diachronically within gestation nor synchronously from extensive brain to thinking mind. Such common belief betrays an inherent and unwitting dualism.

Because mind and matter are but different expressions of the same underlying reality, one would expect to find neural correlates of consciousness, and mental change accompanying bodily change through brain damage, chemical ingestion, etc. – as is the case. At its core there is nothing unscientific about Spinozism,⁴⁶ so long as one distinguishes science as a method from any dogmatic belief system, such as the panhylist (and thus unwittingly dualist) tendency still observed in the

44. Ibid.

45. *Ethics*, IIP13s; Spinoza, 1985, pp. 457–458.

46. Ernst Haeckel even goes so far as to say that Spinozan ‘pantheism is *the world-system of the modern scientist*’ (Haeckel, [1895/1899] 1905, p. 190, his italics).

47. The late philosopher of mind Jaegwon Kim wrote in that, ‘cognitive science seems

special sciences – a manifestation of the Cartesian legacy that continues to permeate Western approaches.⁴⁷

Note 1: Such panpsychism, or *parallelism*, animates Nature: all is alive. We note in passing here how this suppressed Western philosophy, somewhat revived of late,⁴⁸ bridges to *animism* – not only of the European pagan past, but to the Amerindian ontologies of past and present that are, in relation to animism, interdependent upon the cultural use of psychedelic substances, and other practices that conduce to exceptional experiences.⁴⁹

Note 2: Such panpsychism offers much value in our general approach to Nature with regard to the ecological crisis in which we find ourselves – it is for this reason that Deep Ecology is explicitly founded upon Spinozism. As the movement's founder Arne Naess claimed, 'No great philosopher has so much to offer in the way of clarification and articulation of basic ecological attitudes as Baruch Spinoza.'⁵⁰ In fact, the very word 'ecology' was coined⁵¹ in 1866 by the artist, zoologist, popularizer of Darwin's thought in Germany, and devoted Spinozist, Ernst Haeckel, who wrote that Spinozism was 'the loftiest, profoundest, and truest thought of all ages'⁵² – and that this was 'the *new sun* of our realistic monism, which reveals to us the wonderful temple of nature in all its beauty'.⁵³

1.4 Value

A mind, and thus a being, is essentially individuated through its having a *conatus*: a striving to persevere in its own being.⁵⁴ The fathoming of *good and evil* are relative to this conatus: what is good to a being is what helps that being persevere, what is evil is that which hinders this conatus. As Spinoza writes:

As far as good and evil are concerned, they also indicate nothing positive in things, considered in themselves, nor are they anything other than modes of

still in the grip of what may be called methodological epiphenomenalism' (Kim, 2005, p. 11). Epiphenomenalism is the view that substance is matter, and that mind emerges from it yet has no causal efficacy in itself.

48. Notably by Galen Strawson, e.g. 2009.

49. See Luna and White, 2016; and Kopenawa and Albert, 2010/2013.

50. Naess, 1977, p. 54.

51. As *oekologie*, in Haeckel, [1866] 1988.

52. Haeckel, [1895/1899] 1905, p. 141.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 250, my italics.

54. For a good aetiology of the concept of the *conatus* from Aristotle onwards, see Wolfson, [1935] 1966, II, pp. 195–208. With regard to Spinoza's use, Wolfson writes that '[w]hen related to the mind alone, the conatus is called will (*voluntas*), but when it is related at the same time both to the mind and the body, it is called appetite (*appetitus*)' (p. 203).

55. *Ethics*, IV, Preface; Spinoza, 1985, p. 545.

thinking, or notions we form because we compare things to one another. For one and the same thing can, at the same time, be good, and bad, and also indifferent.⁵⁵

There is no absolute, objective good or evil that exist outside Substance/Nature/God, as this is all that exists. Spinoza is a nominalist rather than a Platonist in this respect. As opposed to traditional religion, such a morally relativist view is reported as prevalent in mysticism – Bertrand Russell, for instance, writes that ‘[m]ysticism maintains that all evil is illusory ... [a] position to be found in Spinoza.’⁵⁶ Spinoza notes, however, that altruism often serves the conatus via reciprocity, thus kindling the possibility of civilization. Friendship and merriment, trade and infrastructure, kindness and nobility, all frequently aid both the individual and society. But ultimately, might is right.⁵⁷ Joy is the affect, and effect, of power, and as such ‘good’ can only be subjective: ‘Joy consists in the fact that man’s power, insofar as he consists of mind and body, is aided or increased, all things that bring Joy are good.’⁵⁸ Spinoza’s ethics are descriptive and naturalistic, not prescriptive and transcendental.⁵⁹

1.5 Neutral Monism

Because mind and matter are parallel it is fair, then, to call Spinozism a *panpsychism* as all things have minds. However, considering that Substance/Nature/God has an infinity of infinite Attributes *other than* mind and matter, the term *neutral monism* also serves as a fair designation of Spinozism. Mind and matter are equally fundamental Attributes of reality, yet reality (Substance/Nature/God) with its other equally fundamental but unknown Attributes, is *more than mind and matter*. Thus the ‘neutral’ prefix for Spinozism does not refer to something *other than* mind or matter, but to something *more than* mind or matter. As a consequence,

56. Russell, [1914] 1951, p. 26.

57. In *The Theological-Political Treatise* Spinoza writes that ‘each individual has a supreme right to do everything it can, or that the right of each thing extends as far as its determinate power does’ (ch. 16; Spinoza, 2016, p. 282).

58. *Ethics*, IV, Appx., XXX; Spinoza, 1985, p. 593. We see such thought reflected in Nietzsche: ‘What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power. ... What is joy? – The feeling that power increases – that a resistance is overcome’ (*The Antichrist*, §2; Nietzsche, [1889/1895] 1968, p. 115).

59. That is to say that in Spinoza’s system, there can be no moral standards (ideals, Forms) that lie objectively outside Nature, because Nature is all. This has the consequence that normative propositions (ought-statements) are merely conditioned upon (unwittingly or not) conative personal preferences or cultural norms rather than upon objective truth (see Sjöstedt-Hughes, 2015, ch. VII: ‘Neo-Nihilism’, pp. 75–98).

60. *Ethics*, IIP35s; Spinoza, 1985, p. 473.

there is no contradiction in holding concurrently here a panpsychism and a neutral monism, as part to whole (see Figure below).

1.6 Determinism

There are two main reasons why Spinoza rejects free will and endorses a determinism and fatalism. Firstly, as regards determinism, free will is rejected because Substance/Nature/God is perfect, complete, and thus has inviolable *laws of Nature* that cannot be freely transgressed. Though today we often formulate these laws in purely physical terms, because the physical is parallel with the mental, these laws also pertain to the mind. Spinoza writes that though we are mostly ignorant of the causes of our actions and thoughts, this is not a licence to believe that our actions and thoughts are uncaused, undetermined, and therefore free – in his own words: ‘men are deceived in that they think themselves free, an opinion which consists only in this, that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined.’⁶⁰ For Spinoza, both mind and matter are not transparent, they are both insufficiently known – both in themselves and in their aetiology. Mind and matter are both abstractions of a more complete, more concrete, substantial reality that has a set nomology that no being is free to alter. Free will is rejected by the same principle by which miracles are rejected.

1.7 The Eternal

The second reason Spinoza rejects free will is due to the fatalism that accrues because Substance/Nature/God in its human-mind-independent reality is *eternal*, timeless: perfect thus complete, indivisible, immutable being.⁶¹ *Duration* is merely our way of perceiving this eternal reality through Extension and Thought.⁶² We do not have scope to look at the intricate arguments for the ultimate unreality of time, such as those maintaining that the essential aspects of time are only *subjective* – e.g. the length of the specious present; the speed of time; the relativity of time to one’s relation to gravity, space, and velocity; the differentiation of the past, present, and future, etc. The last point is the basis of J. M. E. McTaggart’s celebrated 1908 paper, ‘The Unreality of Time’. This paper was anticipated and no doubt inspired by Spinoza who writes that ‘in eternity, there is neither when, nor before, nor after.’⁶³ McTaggart, in fact, fortifies his paper at the start by charging that ‘time is

61. *Ethics*, IP19; Spinoza, 1985, p. 428: ‘God is eternal’.

62. See *Letter 12*: ‘The difference between Eternity and Duration arises from this . . . it is only of Modes [of Thought and Extension] that we can explain the existence by Duration. But [we can explain the existence] of Substance by Eternity, i.e. the infinite enjoyment of existing. . .’ Spinoza, 1985, p. 202. See also *Ethics*, VP23d; Spinoza, 1985, p. 607.

63. *Ethics*, IP33s2; Spinoza, 1985, p. 437. See also Spinoza’s exquisite *Letter 12* of 1663, on the nature of the infinite (Spinoza, 1985, pp. 200–205).

64. McTaggart, 1908, p. 457.

treated as unreal by Spinoza.⁶⁴ Elsewhere McTaggart linked this unreality to Spinoza's virtue ethics: 'Spinoza . . . held that all that is real is really timeless. And he held that this fact made death insignificant, and freed those who realized it from the fear of death.'⁶⁵ Spinozism is a monism not only of God and Nature, and Mind and Matter, but also a monism of past and future. Consequently, our minds are not free to alter what we conceive as the future, as it already exists.

Note 1: There is *no free will*, but there is *mental causation*, just as there is physical causation. Physical causation is determined therefore mental causation must be determined as they are parallel. But one must add that by 'mental causation' is not meant psychological-to-physical causation, as this would imply a psycho-physical dualism. There is neither psycho-physical (downward) causation, nor psychophysical (upward) causation, but only a (lateral) psychophysical-to-psycho-physical causation (as far as humans are concerned). Such causal parsimony is a tonic to many current problems in the philosophy of mind.

Note 2: Spinoza advocates that one gain 'freedom' over the affects, or the emotions that make one suffer, i.e. the 'passions'. This *freedom is determined* by reading and reasoning about one's and others' psychological issues. The *Ethics* contains much analysis of such issues, and thus presents itself in part as an early modern psychology text, anticipating later studies of the workings of the subconscious. Yet, more fundamentally than today's practice, Spinoza symbiotically interweaves psychology with a greater fatalistic metaphysic. Seemingly paradoxically, *the more one realizes that everything is necessary, the more free one becomes* – because one frees oneself from suffering from remorse, blame, anger, envy, etc. Nothing is itself to blame for anything because everything that happens is necessary not contingent. Of course, reading and reasoning about these things is itself determined by prior causes. Therefore, *freedom is determined by necessity, and realizing necessity determines freedom*. Spinoza's masterpiece is called the *Ethics* because it advances a *virtue ethics* promoting a powerful, stable state of mind, a blessed, virtuous peace of mind. As Spinoza states, virtue is power – returning the term to its origins.

	PANTHEISM	
Substance: –	God / Nature	– Perfect, Eternal Being
Attributes: –	Thought / Extension / <i>ad infinitum</i>	– Imperfect Expressions
Modes	PANPSYCHISM / PARALLELISM	
	NEUTRAL MONISM	

65. McTaggart, 1927, p. 502.

66. *Ethics*, VP23; Spinoza, 1985, p. 607.

2 *Amor Dei Intellectualis*

Because there is no dualism of mind and body, there can be no mind, no soul, that exists as such after the death of the body. This is a consequence of the mind-matter parallelism that Spinoza's monism entails. However, towards the end of the *Ethics*, Spinoza unleashes a line that has vexed many Spinoza scholars. Spinoza writes: 'The human Mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the Body, but something of it remains which is eternal.'⁶⁶

The term 'eternal', as stated, does not denote an infinity of time, but rather an absence of time, existence without duration. The Roman statesman Boethius expressed it thus: 'the eternal . . . embraces the whole of time in one simultaneous present.'⁶⁷ For Spinoza, God/Nature/Substance is, in itself, the eternal.⁶⁸ Further, our minds are part of the mind of God/Nature/Substance, as there is but one substance – we are part of Nature, both physically and mentally: 'the human Mind . . . is a part of Nature . . . the human Mind is a part of a certain infinite intellect.'⁶⁹ Our intellect, however, is mostly restricted to our finite body – what Spinoza calls the *first* and *second kinds of knowledge*, respectively relating to perception/imagination/opinion and, secondly, to the addition of inference and conceptualization (i.e. reason and science).⁷⁰ But there is, Spinoza claims, a difficult and rare *third kind of knowledge* that he names 'intuition'. In the fifth part of the *Ethics*, he writes that the 'third kind of knowledge proceeds from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things.'⁷¹ That is to say, we shift from understanding things through the *abstractions* that are Thought and Extension, to a *concrete, real* cognizance of the essence of existence – a raw, unmediated exposure – which is eternal, timeless, and infinite rather than finite: the part fuses into the whole.⁷²

Insofar as the Mind conceives the present existence of its Body it conceives duration But eternity cannot be explained by duration But the things we conceive in this second way as true, or real, we conceive under a species of eternity, and to that extent they involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.⁷³

For Spinoza, such a fusion achieved beyond abstraction is the *summum bonum*. In his earlier *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza writes that 'the

67. Boethius, [524] 2008, p. 166 (ch. V, §VI).

68. 'Eternity is the very essence of God' (*Ethics*, VP30d; Spinoza, 1985, p. 610).

69. *Letter 32*, of 1665; Spinoza, 2016, p. 20.

70. *Ethics*, IIP40s2; Spinoza, 1985, pp. 477–478.

71. *Ethics*, VP25d; Spinoza, 1985, p. 608.

72. T. L. S. Sprigge calls it 'an intuitive grasp of reality in the concrete' (Sprigge, 1984, p. 173).

73. *Ethics*, VP29d&s; Spinoza, 1985, pp. 609–610.

74. *Emendation*, §13; Spinoza, 1985, p. 10.

highest good is to arrive . . . [at] the knowledge of the union that the mind has with the whole of Nature.⁷⁴ And this union he names the ‘Intellectual Love of God’, *amor Dei intellectualis*.⁷⁵ Through the Intellectual Love of God, you (body/mind) become God; God becomes you. *The intuition is the identification*; there is no subject-object dichotomy. The Intellectual Love of God is the infinite *intellect* bonding, *loving*, uniting with the finite mind. God is eternal, thus you become eternal. Moreover, ‘the Mind’s intellectual Love of God is part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself.’⁷⁶ One becomes a vessel for the self-consciousness of Nature/God/Substance when one enters such a state of existence. (Here we hear echoes of Aristotle’s God, the *Prime Mover*, Who, in Its cosmic narcissism, is perfect thought thinking about itself as perfect thought.)⁷⁷

There are thus *two parallelisms*: the mind and the body, and the mind and God/Nature/Substance. Spinoza is more explicit on this in the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*: ‘the Soul can be united either with the body . . . or with God.’⁷⁸ He calls such a second parallelism ‘Rebirth,’⁷⁹ and refers this ultimate state of being⁸⁰ to the term ‘glory’⁸¹ in the Scriptures (Latin: *Gloria*; Hebrew: *Kavod*),⁸² even though he is generally dismissive of the understanding of these texts.⁸³

Thus, one cannot enjoy life after death, though one can enjoy eternal existence – death occasions Rebirth, from duration to eternity. Consequently, acquaintance with the third kind of knowledge can assuage the fear of death (thanatophobia)⁸⁴ as McTaggart noted. It is a blissful taste of death – this is where the metaphysics informs the virtue ethics: peace of mind acquired through reason (the second kind of knowledge) and, more rarely but effectively, intuition (the third kind). It may be objected that it is more reasonable to insist that without time, there can be no experience, as it is a condition thereof. Deleuze differs: ‘the soul’s eternity can indeed be the object of a direct experience.’⁸⁵ But recall that this is not the experience of any afterlife – as Pollock puts it: ‘Spinoza’s eternal life is not a continuance of

75. The term is first used in *Ethics*, VP32d; Spinoza, 1985, p. 611.

76. *Ethics*, VP36; Spinoza, 1985, p. 612.

77. Book Lambda in *The Metaphysics*; Aristotle, 2004, pp. 353–388.

78. *Short Treatise*, ch. XXIII: ‘On the Immortality of the Soul’; Spinoza, 1985, p. 141.

79. *Ibid.*, ch. XXII; p. 140.

80. A comparison can be made here to the Eastern concepts of, respectively, *Maya* and *Brahman* (see Tiebout, 1956, p. 520).

81. *Ethics*, VP36s; Spinoza, 1985, p. 612.

82. The Hebrew term *kavod* can also be translated as ‘radiant light’ (see Kellner, 2006; Strassman, 2014). *Exodus* 40:34 reads: ‘Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory [kavod] of the Lord filled the tabernacle.’

83. It should be reiterated that the ‘soul’, or mind, is not separate from the body or the cosmos (God), but an expression of it.

84. See *Ethics*, VP38; Spinoza, 1985, p. 613.

85. Deleuze, [1968] 2013, p. 314.

86. Pollock, 1880, p. 294 (my italics). E. E. Harris conveys it similarly: ‘The eternity of the

existence but a *manner of existence*.⁸⁶ It is perhaps better referred to as a *state of existence* than as an *experience*, as it goes beyond the human mind and body, and beyond the perception *associated only* with the first and second kinds of knowledge. If time is unreal, and if experience can be veridical, then timelessness can be experiential.⁸⁷

Such non-dualistic immortality has a history that reaches back to at least Plato⁸⁸ and the neo-Platonists.⁸⁹ We also see a Peripatetic lineage: in Aristotle's *De Anima* (*On the Soul*), he writes that 'there is an intellect characterized by the capacity to become *all* things. . . . It is, further, in its separate state that the intellect is just that which it is, and it is this alone that is *immortal and eternal*'.⁹⁰ Influenced by Aristotle, the twelfth-century Jewish thinker, Maimonides (Rambam) echoed that, 'it is said: "when thy righteousness goes before thee, the *glory* of the Lord shall gather thee in" (*Isaiah* 58:8). Once it has entered upon eternal life, that intellect remains permanently in one state.'⁹¹ Spinoza was well-versed in these thinkers^{92, 93} and it has been claimed that the Peripatetic-Maimonidean lineage's 'logical outcome is Spinoza's love of God'.⁹⁴ Maimonides, who spoke of our human, closed 'gates of perception'⁹⁵ that only allowed through 'flashes of illumination'⁹⁶ – long before Spinoza, Rolland, and Huxley – argued that such illumination

"immortal" part of the human mind . . . [is] not a continued duration after the death of the body, but a *quality of being*' (Harris, 1971, p. 673 (my italics)).

87. See Moreau, [1994] 2021 (*Experience and Eternity in Spinoza*) for an expansive analysis of this issue.

88. Consider especially the *Timaeus*, §37 (Plato, [c.360 BC/1965]1976, pp. 94–95).

89. Plotinus, for instance, writes of his own heightened experiences: 'how can we represent as different from others what seemed, while we were contemplating it, not other than ourselves but perfect at-oneness with us? This, doubtless, is what is back of the injunction of the mystery religions which prohibit revelation to the uninitiated' (Plotinus, 1964, p. 87; sixth *Ennead*).

90. *De Anima*, Bk. III, ch. 5; Aristotle, 1986, p. 204 (my italics).

91. Maimonides, [1190] 1952, p. 195 (my italics).

92. There is evidence that Spinoza read Maimonides' *Guide* as he wrote the *Ethics* (see Harvey, 1981, p. 169).

93. Another Jewish thinker that had reportedly had a significant though indirect influence on Spinoza was Prophetic Kabbalah founder Abraham Abulafia (1240–1291), a commenter on Maimonides' *Guide*. Abulafia even spoke of 'divine intellectual love' (see Idel, 1988a, p. 20; Harvey, 2007). Other Jewish influences include Abraham Ibn Ezra, Levi Gersonides, Joseph ibn Kaspi, Isaac Polle-gar, Hasdai Crescas, Judah Leon Abravanel, and Abraham Shalom (see Green, 2015). Gentile influences include notably Giordano Bruno and René Descartes.

94. Stated by Julius Guttman, in his Introduction to Maimonides, [1190] 1952, p. 33.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

97. E.g. *Ibid.*, p. 189 (bk. III, ch. LI, excursus).

through unity, which he also called ‘the love of God,’⁹⁷ is ‘the point of all religious practices.’⁹⁸

If, with James, we identify intoxicants (including psychedelics) as parallel to religious practices as means to achieve the same goal – the ‘mystical state of consciousness’⁹⁹ as he calls it – and if we classify the *amor Dei intellectualis* as such a state,¹⁰⁰ then it follows that certain psychedelic states may be identified with the Intellectual Love of God. Let us open the gates to see.

3 5-MeO-DMT Phenomenology

5-Methoxy-*N,N*-dimethyltryptamine, or 5-MeO-DMT for short, is a molecule first synthesized in 1936¹⁰¹ but used traditionally in snuffs from the bark resin of certain Virola trees by Amerindian cultures, who have referred to it as the ‘semen of the sun.’¹⁰² The substance is also found in the secretions of the Sonoran Desert Toad, *Bufo alvarius*.¹⁰³ These secretions, or their synthetic cousin, are often dried, heated and inhaled as a vapour. The state such inhalation occasions lasts, from a prosaic temporal perspective, for about ten minutes. Though 5-MeO-DMT is a tryptamine, along with the ‘classic’ psychedelics drugs (LSD, psilocybin DMT, etc.), it is, in contradistinction to them, hardly visual, in fact hardly sensible at all. Yet the experience is profound. In the Shulgins’ wide and comprehensive tomes on the chemistry, context, and phenomenology of hundreds of psychoactive substances, 5-MeO-DMT is firmly placed in the class of the most potent psychedelics. The following report therein is typical:

[25 mg smoked 5-MeO-DMT] began with a fast-rising sense of excitement and wonder, with an undertone of ‘Now you’ve done it,’ but dominated by a sense of, ‘WOW, This Is IT!’ There was a tremendous sense of speed and acceleration. In perhaps 10 more seconds these feelings built to an intensity I had never

98. *Ibid.*, p. 196 (bk. III, ch. LII). Abraham Abulafia, aforementioned, wrote three handbooks on how to achieve exceptional experience through religious practice (see Idel, 1988b).

99. James, [1902] 1985, p. 379. That James’ conceptions of mystical states align with what Spinoza speaks of, we can begin to show with statements from James such as: ‘In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 419.)

100. As mentioned, R. M. Bucke ([1901] 1957, pp. 276–282) and T. L. S. Sprigge (1984, p. 173), amongst others, have classified it thus.

101. Hoshino and Shimodaira, 1936.

102. Metzner, 2013, p. 12. See also Shulgin and Shulgin, [1997] 2020, pp. 535–538.

103. See Ken Nelson’s seminal text, *Bufo alvarius: The Psychedelic Toad of the Sonoran Desert* ([1984] 2021).

104. Shulgin and Shulgin, [1997] 2020, pp. 533–534.

experienced before. The entire universe imploded through my consciousness. It's as if the mind is capable of experiencing a very large number of objects, situations and feelings, but normally perceives them only one at a time. I felt that my mind was perceiving them all at once. There was no distance, no possibility of examining the experience. This was simply the most intense experience possible; a singularity, a white-out (as opposed to a black out). . . . Here I had the feeling . . . of being part of the universe of beings . . . with a longing for a single group/organism awareness. . . In a few minutes it faded to a . . . strong feeling of gratitude toward the universe in general. . .¹⁰⁴

Another account from the Shulgins' book reveals not only the power but also the potential danger of 5-MeO-DMT:

(with an unknown but large amount, smoked) I observed the subject pass very quickly into an almost coma-like state. Within seconds his face became purple and his breathing stopped. I pounded his chest, and breathed for him, and he seemed to emerge in consciousness, with the comment, 'This is absolute ecstasy' . . . In the awake condition he [became] increasingly lucid, but on closing his eyes he became possessed with, what he called, 'The energy of terror.' He could not sleep, as upon closing his eyes he felt threatened in a way he could not tolerate. Three days later, medical intervention with antipsychotic medication was provided . . .¹⁰⁵

Such darkness is rare yet there. More often, the state is illuminating. The white light reported above commonly inaugurates the state of the 5-MeO substance. A more recent initiate reports that:

It's like a Supernova suddenly exploding silently in the centre of your head . . . like looking at the centre of the Sun at mid-day You are a drip in the ocean, that suddenly becomes the entire ocean, and then you are the entire ocean in a drop.¹⁰⁶

Sun, supernova, ocean – all metaphors for an intensive state of existence that is near impossible to convey through our language, based as it is on ordinary, common concepts and percepts. Music may act as a better metaphor. One can approach such experiences from dismissing them as hallucinatory to accepting them as veridical – i.e. approaching them as illusions or as realities. I shall here explore the latter approach by comparing the 5-MeO state with Spinozism, the latter of which I consider to be a more parsimonious and harmonious

105. *Ibid.*, p. 534.

106. Matthews, 2020, pp. 62–63.

107. A lineage can be traced from Christianity and the dualism of mind and matter to

approximation to reality than the dualism and panhylism that still haunt the Church and the Academe (to the detriment of the Earth).¹⁰⁷

There are certain aspects common to both the 5-MeO state and Spinoza's *amor Dei intellectualis*, viz. the eternal/timeless, the non-sensible, the non-rational, the non-conative, the non-intentional, the apophatic, and the post-anti-thanatophobic. Let us compare them.

3.1 *The Eternal/Timeless*

Though the state lasts ten minutes or so to an outside observer, to the inner explorer the 5-MeO state seems to occur in some kind of immediate flash. But by this is not meant a 'momentary' flash. The 5-MeO state seems not ten minutes, not a fraction of a second, and not an everlasting infinity of duration. It is more akin to a break away from duration, not a moment therein. After the event one is often surprised and sceptical of the time suggested by the clock. Stepping outside of time is a stepping outside of standard sentience. One has a consciousness of the white sun for a few seconds at the start, but then consciousness is lost, yet, paradoxically, the state entered into is supremely intense – a 'white-out' rather than a blackout, as reported above. One enters what seems to be a state of excessive non-time, the eternal. Such a state is common, perhaps essential, to reports of 'mystical states',¹⁰⁸ and also known through other psychedelic compounds. For instance, in R. H. Ward's 1957 book on his LSD trips, he notes that he had the 'suggestion of the infinite as something eternally standing behind a life-time. Once more I was in terror of being *annihilated in the infinite*'.¹⁰⁹ This appears as a heightened sense of Spinoza's eternality that envelops our lives, in the shadows. Spinoza writes that 'though we do not recollect that we existed before the body, we nevertheless feel that our mind . . . is eternal, and that this existence it has cannot be defined by time or explained through duration'.¹¹⁰ I suggest that this intuition can be brought to the fore of the mind through 5-MeO, and certain other psychedelic substances in sufficient dosage. If time is but an abstraction forged by our finite minds, then the fathoming of the eternal via psychedelics can be seen as a variant of Spinoza's intellectual love of God/Nature.

mechanism (a seventeenth-century form of panhylism), physicalism (modern form of panhylism), and industrialization, to the ecological crisis (see, e.g. Haeckel, [1895/1899] 1905; Klages, [1913] 2013; White, 1967; Naess, 1977; Merchant, 1980; Matthews, 1991). There is much to say about the Church's suppression of Spinozism, the apotheosis of Nature, and the emergence of the ecological crisis.

108. See Russell, [1914] 1951, pp. 21ff.

109. Ward, 1957, p. 65. Interestingly Ward related such experiences to the thoughts of Russian thinker P. D. Ouspensky.

110. *Ethics*, VP23s; Spinoza, 1985, pp. 607–608.

111. *Ethics*, IIP40s2; Spinoza, 1985, p. 477.

3.2 *The Non-Sensible*

Psychedelics commonly inaugurate experiences closely associated with radical visualization, augmenting outer perception and fostering inner perceptions. Often there is a fusion of percepts and concepts, with additions of states of mind hitherto unknown. For Spinoza, such experience *per se* would generally constitute a special type of the ‘first kind of knowledge’, experience ‘mutilated, confused, and without order.’¹¹¹ The 5-MeO state, however, is distinct as a psychedelic as it is not consciously visual – bar the initial white light that dominates over all other sensations. One loses all the senses, all concepts and reason (the ‘second kind of knowledge’) – one is cut off, as it were, yet something profound remains. Spinoza’s ‘third kind of knowledge’, intuition, like this experience, is non-sensible, non-conceptual, and non-inferential (non-rational, not irrational) – though it is cognitive.

3.3 *The Non-Conative*

But the state is *not conative*, that is, the *conatus* essential to our finite being, the drive to persevere in our being, is lost. The core element of the self is lost. There is no will or appetite. Emotions, for Spinoza, are derivative of conatus: joy comes with the successes of the conatus, sadness with its failures of achievement. Thus, without conatus, there is no self and no emotions associated therewith. Spinoza’s God (Nature) is without conatus or emotion, and not bound to a particular body. The experience of 5-MeO in this manner again aligns with these ontological aspects of Spinoza’s system. The finite mind is lost through its forging into the mind of Nature. This union is the highest virtue,¹¹² though it is a bliss (‘blessedness’) without necessary relation to the body’s conatus.

3.4 *The Post-Anti-Thanatological*

There are thus *teloi* beyond the needs, desires, and emotions of the finite body. It is this acquaintance, this unity, momentary yet eternal, that is, after the event, anti-thanatophobic: one begins to lose the fear of death, because one knows it to be not annihilation but fusion. Attaining tranquillity of mind through this state and later (second-kind) reflection is the final stage of Spinoza’s virtue ethics:¹¹³ the mastery of the ‘passions’, the negative emotions, which include, finally, the fear of death, that afflicts mankind. Associating psychedelics with such metaphysics grounding virtue ethics shows us the potential modern-day end-of-life therapeutic value such substances hold.

112. ‘[The] greatest virtue is understanding things by the third kind of knowledge.’ *Ethics*, VP25; Spinoza, 1985, p. 608.

113. *Ethics*, VP38; Spinoza, 1985, p.p. 613ff.

114. Brentano, [1874] 2015, pp. 92–93.

3.5 The Non-Intentional

Though the 5-MeO state, and the *amor Dei intellectualis*, are cognitive, they are so more as a 'state' than as an 'experience', as the latter carries connotations of perception, conception, emotions, duration, memory, desires, and – linked thereto – *intentionality*. What is of perhaps special note to the phenomenologist is that the state we are referring to exists without the common framework of subject to object, of knower to known. The fusion of the finite and infinite mind inhibit this, but without inhibiting mind as such. Many have accepted German philosopher Franz Brentano's claim that a necessary condition for mentality is that mentality must have an object. As Brentano says: 'Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.'¹¹⁴ To distinguish the mental from the physical, Brentano claims that, 'the reference to something as an object, is a distinguishing characteristic of all mental phenomena.'¹¹⁵ 5-MeO, however, falsifies such a claim. There can be mentality without intentionality. There are no concepts, percepts which could act as objects; moreover, there is no knower distinct from known – the fusion effaces the subject-object dichotomy. Deeper, or higher, states of mind reveal the limitations of proposing conditions and essences of what the mind is or can be. The ambit of any philosopher of mind should encompass these higher regions.

3.6 The Profound

The preceding comparative aspects are mostly *apophatic*: they describe what the state is not, rather than what it is. Through this *via negativa* I have sought to show the similarities between the 5-MeO state and the state Spinoza calls the *amor Dei intellectualis*. I should not say that the two states are qualitatively identical, but rather that the former is a more immersive variant of the latter – these exceptional states are not binary but rather lie on a spectrum. On a lower end of this spectrum of the unity of the finite mind with the infinite one, lies *nature connectedness* – finite inter-mind fusion: the extended mind (yet not extended *ad infinitum*). Panpsychism and pantheism both lie on an experiential line ranging from the finite to the infinite – they differ *in degree*, not kind, in terms of merged experience.

What 5-MeO and *amor Dei intellectualis* both share, however, is a feeling of immense profundity. As mentioned, the conatus is lost, and with it the emotions, except, if one can classify it as an emotion, this *sublime feeling*¹¹⁶ of importance, though an importance without relation to an object of importance (without intentionality). The trail of this feeling can persist for weeks, months, a lifetime. There is nothing more profound than the cosmos, Nature, itself; it is the non-

115. Ibid., p. 102.

116. See Dickins, in this volume.

117. Jonas, 1973, p. 52.

religious *blessedness* Spinoza speaks of, associated, however, with the notion of *Gloria* in the religious tomes. Hans Jonas argues that we require a new ethics to counter our ecological issues, one that must now factor Nature as a vulnerability and prime value. This cannot be achieved, he writes, without ‘restoring the category of the sacred, the category most destroyed by the scientific enlightenment’¹¹⁷ – but, *prima facie* paradoxically, the restoration of the sacred cannot be achieved by religion, which is anthropocentric and ‘dead’ to us.¹¹⁸ Spinoza’s identification of God and Nature, and his identification of finite and infinite mind in the *amor Dei intellectualis*, offers us a route out of our *alienation* from Nature,¹¹⁹ providing us with a secular approach to the *sacred*, one that would thus meet Jonas’ aspiration to address planetary concern.¹²⁰

4 Coda

As we saw Deleuze observe, Spinozism can come via a long study of a nexus of concepts, or via a flash of intuition. One might speculate that Spinoza started with the intuition and proceeded to explicate it through his ‘geometric order’, *à la* Descartes.¹²¹ In other words, the ‘intuition’ spoken of is not an appendage to the end of the *Ethics*, but rather its inception. The intuition sparks the system, the system substantiates the intuition. If we now identify the intuition with certain psychedelic states, we can then proffer the *Spinozan-Psychedelic Symbiosis*: certain unitive psychedelic states are an intuition of the Spinozan system; the Spinozan system can, in turn, substantiate the psychedelic state. This flash of Spinozism benefits not only our tranquillity as individuals but also, potentially, advances the solution to the ecological crisis of the world. The white sun of substance is the radiant sustenance to our orbiting planet.

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118. In the Nietzschean sense.

119. On alienation, see Hauskeller, in this volume.

120. Ernst Haeckel had already proposed this in the late nineteenth century. See Haeckel, 1892/1894, and [1895/1899]1905, ch. XVIII: ‘Our Monistic Religion’, pp. 217–226. See also Holt, 1971.

121. Descartes was inspired to his philosophy through an intuition in a dream (see Maritain, 1946).

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