

SYSTEMS OF SUBSTANTIALITY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF IDENTITY AND MONISM

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1. Denying the role of copula leads to different forms of naturalism (p. 65-66).

"The copula imparts significance to the predicate; it brings into being the meaning of the predicate as a revelation of the nature of the subject. The copula leads from the ideal into the real. Just as the I does not in itself contain any sort of thought, but is merely a philosophical or grammatical subject, so too the copula contains nothing but a *relation* between the subject and the predicate; it testifies to the reality of the predicate in the subject, and places the being of the subject in the predicate (...) It is the nature of substance, not in a special or particular, but in a universal and comprehensive, form. In a similar way to that in which the I expresses the hypostaticity of substance, the copula, the ontological bond, points symbolically to the nature of substance, <piety [p/tusis]; the predicate is only one of its innumerable revelations."

2. Parmenides's doctrine and the pan-unity of substance (p.66-68).

"Parmenides's doctrine of the one and immovable being laid the foundations of the future systems of the philosophy of identity and of the pan-unity of substance. Everything that is, "coming to be and perishing, being and not being, changing place and altering in bright colours is immersed in this ocean of identical being, is merely one of its shapes, one of its changing faces. How is this unity revealed? By means of mystical contemplation, selfimmersion, or by means of metaphysical speculation. The former takes place in Indian idealism, but also in post-antique Euro- pean metaphysical idealism (Eckhart, Bohme, and others); the latter, in speculative-metaphysical idealism, a current to which Parmenides, who holds to an epistemological immanentism, also belongs: "Thought and the object *predmet* of thought are one."

3. Heraclitus, Leucippus, and Democritus' system of oneness of the substance (p. 69-71).

“On one hand, Heraclitus, in agreement with Parmenides, holds that ‘[t]his world-order did none of gods or men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an everliving fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.’”³⁹ “All things are an equal exchange for fire and fire for all things, as goods are for gold and gold for goods”.⁴⁰ “They do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself [*lit.* how being brought apart it is brought together with itself] : there is a back-stretched connexion, as in the bow and the lyre.”⁴¹ “It is necessary to know that war is common and right is strife and that all things happen by strife and necessity.”

4. Spinoza's pantheism and the doctrine of modes (p. 71-74).

“Spinoza's goal is a Parmenidean pan-unity, which he seeks in a concept of substance or God whose distinctive feature is self-causality [*cans a set*), such that essence includes existence within itself: *essentia involvit existentiam* (definition 1). Substance exists in itself, and is conceived through itself (definition 3) This distinction between existence and conception at once introduces a concealed Cartesian dualism (between thought and extension) in the concept of substance (...) “ [n]o substance can be or can be conceived without God” and “ whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be, or can be conceived, without God.” (.) In this way, Spinoza immerses all shapes of being in the ocean of the one absolute substance, having declared them to be a state or product of it.”

5. Spinozism and the anti-hypostatic monism which use elements of negative theology (p. 75-77).

“The greatest difficulty of Spinozism concerns the problem of hypostaticity. Substance, or God, is anhypostatic. Spinoza painstakingly protects the anhypostatic substance or God from hypostaticity, seeing in hypostaticity a definition and a limitation of the undefinable (*omnis definitio est negatio*). Although Spinoza recognizes God as a free causality, that is, as a self-causality, he nevertheless understands this self-causality as operating only according to the laws of nature, and determinedly avoids the doctrine of a free creation. (.) For the sake of monism, Spinoza sacrificed the real plurality of hypostases, and even hypostaticity itself, yet retained all those acts which are inseparable from hypostaticity: cognition and will -love. (.) The only way left in which to camouflage these speculations, and to avoid the question of spirit and of consciousness here, is to drown, in the abstract origin of reality or being, everything which cannot be reduced to that origin, using the method of negative theology”.

6. Leibniz's system of hierarchical scale of monads (p. 77-80).

“It is characteristic of Leibniz's whole system not only that the monads are linked in a continuous unity, but also that change is always continuous and is brought about by way of imperceptible and infinitely small quantities, by way of obscure and unconscious representations. With the

help of this idea, Leibniz establishes a hierarchical scale of monads. This hierarchy consists of the lowest monads, which have the most confused representations; of souls, whose representations attain clarity of perception; and, finally, of spirits, which possess reason and a likeness to God: “although each substance expresses the entire universe, spirits express God rather than the world, whereas other substances express the world rather than God”.

7. Similarities and differences between Leibniz, and Spinoza’s systems (p. 80-82).

“The difference between the fundamental projects of Leibniz and Spinoza lies in Leibniz’s introducing into his conception an idea of God the Creator, who brought this world into being, and who can exist without it, whilst Spinoza openly asserts *substantia sive Deus*, that is, he proclaims an atheistic cosmism (pantheism) or an acosmic (or even an anti- cosmic) deism. Yet it is precisely at this point that Leibniz’s system reveals its vacillation and contradictoriness. On the one hand, God in an indefinite way converges with the world, as its highest stage or as a monad of monads, the monads’ universal center, a *centre par tout* a center which is everywhere], the world-soul, and then Leibniz’s thought inevitably becomes a pluralistic Spinozism, that is, a pantheism; but on the other, God is defined as “the basic unitary thing, the original simple substance” and “[a]ll created or derivative monads are produced by him. (...) The ambiguity and unclarity of this doctrine of God, according to which He on the one hand vaguely blends into the cosmos, whilst, on the other, He remains transcendent to it, indelibly marks both Aristotle’s and Leibniz’s philosophies. This aspect of Leibniz’s thought, which is historically significant, does not, however, affect the question with which we are occupied here, since it sheds no light on the problem of the hypostaticity of the spirit”.

8. Schelling’s monism “from the *deus implicitus* to *deus explicitus*”. (p. 82-85).

“If Schelling travels in this way a path which leads from objectivity to subjectivity, in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* he already travels the opposite path from subjectivity to objectivity, with his doctrine that intellectual intuition is a way of perceiving that which lies beyond the distinction between subject and object, a way of perceiving absolute identity. The problem, which had already confronted Fichte and then Hegel in all its gravity, the problem, that is, of how to understand subject and object not in their difference from each other (as in Kant) but in their unity — in other words the problem of the I-ness of the cosmos and the cosmic character of the I (Fichte’s I and not-I) — presents itself to Schelling too. Instead of drowning the object in the absolute I, like Fichte, or dissolving the subject-object relation into the logical predicate alone, without a subject, Schelling, coming close to Schopenhauer here, immerses them both in the dusk of an unconscious absolute identity, in which there is at first no bifurcation between subject and object. These last appear as identity’s actions, stages, or potencies, possessing, evidently, no greater ontological force than Spinoza’s modes. (...) The world, therefore, is God’s becoming. From the *deus implicitus* comes forth the *deus explicitus*. Schelling, imagining that he is just furnishing an authentic, well-grounded thesis, wants to

fence himself off from pantheism. The primal identity is a dark, Schopenhauerian will, subsisting within Divinity as a *prius* of God himself, and which, in its disintegration and its fall away from Divinity, gives rise to the world, but, at the same time, to God.”.

9. Heresy, antinomy and realism: solution of Triadicity. (p. 85-88).

“The catharsis of thought, which is obtained as the result of this tragedy of philosophy, leads to thought’s renewal through the deepening of its self-knowledge, its knowledge both of its strengths and limitations and of its nature. And the fundamental conclusion which follows will be that a thought which expresses substance will inevitably contain antinomies within itself: the single principle is fulfilled in triadicity, and thought turns out to be fated to this deliberate self-sacrifice. And the living truth of the gospel is laid bare anew: if the grain does not die, it cannot come back to life and cannot bear fruit”.