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ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE IN PART 3 OF SPINOZA'S *ETHICS*

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Lendo o Livro 3 da *Ética* de Spinoza surgem algumas dificuldades. Parece faltar significado específico ao “poder de atividade”. Existe ambigüidade em relação aos significados das palavras “adequado” e “inadequado”. As seguintes questões precisam ser respondidas: como pode a mente trabalhar tanto se tem idéias adequadas e inadequadas, levando em conta que a natureza da mente é trabalhar para se preservar e aumentar o seu poder? É a essência da mente realmente a idéia de um corpo atualmente existente? Que motivos teríamos para transformar uma emoção passiva em uma emoção ativa se não existe nada defeituoso na natureza? Proponho examinar cada uma destas dificuldades usando a distinção entre essência e existência dada nas Partes 1 e 2 da *Ética* e aplicando-a na Parte 3, o que Spinoza nem sempre fez ou nem sempre fez claramente.

A number of difficulties arise in reading Book 3 of Spinoza's "Ethics". There appears to be a lack of a specific meaning of "power of activity". There is ambiguity concerning the meanings of the words "adequate" and "inadequate". The following questions need answering: How can the mind strive both in so far as it has adequate and inadequate ideas, being that the nature of the mind is to strive to preserve itself and increase in power? Is the essence of the mind really the idea of an actually existing body? Why would we want to change a passive emotion into an active emotion if there is

nothing defective in nature? I propose to examine each of these difficulties by using the distinction between essence and existence given in Parts 1 and 2 of the "Ethics" and applying it to Part 3, which Spinoza did not always do or did not always do clearly.

Book 3 of Spinoza's *Ethics* is pivotal to the entire work. It deals with human affections or those things which follow from the nature of God and those affections which lead to the knowledge of God. Book 3 examines the essence of the human being which is the starting point of our adequate knowledge of other things. Because of this important position, it should be read carefully. When reading Book 3 of the *Ethics* one inevitably runs into a number of difficulties which need to be worked out not only because they are an obstacle for understanding that book but also because they can prevent one from better understanding the last two books of the *Ethics*. These difficulties are: (1) the lack of a specific meaning of "power of activity," (2) ambiguity concerning the meanings of the words "inadequate" and hence "adequate," (3) answering the question: how can the mind strive both insofar as it has adequate and inadequate ideas, being that the nature of the mind is to strive to preserve itself and increase in power? (4) determining if the essence of the mind is really the idea of an actually existing body, and (5) finding out why we would change a passive emotion into an active one if, in the first place, there is nothing defective in nature. I propose to examine each of these problems by applying the distinction between essence and existence given in Parts 1 and 2 of the *Ethics* to Part 3. I believe that Spinoza when writing the latter books of the *Ethics* did not always keep in mind this distinction and hence generated certain problems which were not resolved. By using this distinction I will provide a resolution of these problems which have not, to my knowledge, been adequately dealt with in the literature.

I will begin by stating Spinoza's distinction between essence and existence of both substance and affections of substance (modes) and then show how this distinction can be used to resolve the difficulties in Part 3 that I mentioned above. Spinoza says that the essence of substance involves its existence (E1Def6) which means that existence belongs to the nature of substance (E1P7). This existence is an eternal truth (E1P8S2). The cause for the existence of substance is contained within itself (E1P8S2), for there is nothing outside of substance to cause it. The power of substance is its essence (E1P34), and to be able to exist is power (E1P11D3). The essence of substance excludes all imperfection (E1P11S), for nothing involving negation belongs to its essence (E1Def6).

The essence of an affection or mode is a modification of substance (E2P10C). The essence of a mode does not involve necessary existence (E1Ax7, P24, E2Ax1) or duration (E1P24C), but it can exist in substance and have duration (E2P8C). The essence of the human mind is the idea of an existing thing (E2P11) which is the body (E2P13).

Spinoza does not define essence but in E2Def2 says:

... there pertains to the essence of a thing that which, when granted, the thing is necessarily posited, and by the annulling of which the thing is necessarily annulled; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and, vice versa, that which cannot be or be conceived without the thing.

One can then have essence of an affection without existence but never existence without essence because then we would not know what a thing is or what we are talking about. By "existence" Spinoza means the duration of a mode in relation to other modes and to substance. Existence does not mean the thing in and of itself. That would be the essence of a thing. It means how a thing affects and is affected by other things.

1. POWER OF ACTIVITY

In *Ethics* Part 3 Definition 3¹ Spinoza defines the emotions as affections of the body by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished and ideas of these affections. Power of activity applies equally to the human mind and the body. A question arises: what does Spinoza mean specifically by "power of activity"?² In order to answer this question, we must look for hints at various places in his writings. First, I will start with what Spinoza says about God (substance) and then proceed to human beings. In E1P34 Spinoza mentions the power or essence of God. God's power, he says, is his essence. God does not, like human beings, strive to persevere in existence. His power does not increase or decrease (E5P17D). It just manifests itself throughout nature. In order to increase or decrease in activity there must be something external to a thing, and there is nothing external to God. God's omnipotence has been actual from eternity and will remain actual

¹ Hereafter, I will use the following abbreviations: E for *Ethics* Def for Definition, Ax for Axiom, P for Proposition, D for Demonstration, S for Scholium, C for Corollary, Post for Postulate, Ep for Letter. I have used the following translations: Shirley (1982) and Curley (1985).

² Joachim (1901), p. 202 refers to an emotional idea as "the reflection of the tone of life in our body or in some part of it. It is the degree of mental being which that tone of life involves, and it claims only to be the consciousness of the lowering, raising, or actual pitch of the vital energy of our body." Roth (1929), p. 106 sees an emotion as the immediate feeling of the state of our body. It is our awareness of the increase or decrease of our vital energy. The emotions provide us with an idea of the rise and fall of our power of existence. McShea (1969), p. 136 says that power is different from energy or force. Power is the ability of a system to achieve its own good. By good he means essence, not subjective consciousness. This power is the function of the understanding. Parkinson (1975), p. 14 tells us that to speak of the power of a mode is to speak of what it will do if not interfered with. Bennett (1984), p. 254 states that Spinoza's notion of an affect (pleasure and unpleasure) is a change to a greater or lesser degree of vitality and self-sufficiency.

for eternity (E1P17S). God's power is that by which all things are and act. In E1P25 Spinoza tells us that God is the efficient cause of the essence and existence of things and in E1P25C that particular things are modes which express the attributes of God in a definite and determinate way. These statements mean that we would not have any power without God's power and that our power is much more limited than God's power. Our power is only a modification of God's power. Human power is part of God's power (E4P4D). In E1P17S he shows how the omnipotence of God excludes an intellect or will. Intellect and will, which are really one and the same thing, are infinite modes of the attribute, thought. They do not constitute the essence of God. But finite modes which fall under that attribute are included under intellect or will.

When Spinoza talks about the essence of a human being, he is talking about the power of a person (E4Def8). Power is the ability of the organism to preserve itself (E3P6) and increase in activity (E3P12). Human power is limited. In this respect it differs from the power of God. It increases and decreases depending on its relation to the power of other objects. Power is also virtue, the ability of an organism to bring about what follows from its own nature and not the nature of some other organism (E4Def8). When talking about existence Spinoza says that the ability to exist is also to have power (E1P11D). Although he is talking about substance in this demonstration, what he is saying here also applies to human beings. What follows from our nature can never be an idea which is contrary to our persevering in existence. But we are part of nature and are often surpassed in power by causes stronger than ourselves. Therefore, it is not always in our ability to persevere in existence and increase in power. But the virtuous or successful person is one who has this ability, at least for a certain time, and who is able to find things external to himself which help preserve himself and increase in power and avoid those things which do the

opposite. Whether or not one is successful in doing this is often due to an individual being in a particular environment at a certain time. The environment may or may not be conducive to that individual's increase in power.

The essence or power of a human being can be described further by appetite or desire. Appetite is man's essence or *conatus* related to the mind and body. Desire is consciousness of this appetite. It is the very essence or nature of each thing insofar as that thing is conceived as determined by some given state of its constitution to do something (E3P56D). There is a desire in us insofar as we act, i.e., insofar as we bring about some affect in our nature or some other nature. When in our existence we are acted upon by external objects, this desire is affected by external objects and we are said to be passive. But it is one and the same desire (appetite) by which we act and by which we are acted upon (E5P4S), or we can be determined to one and the same action by adequate or inadequate ideas (E4P59S). When we act or have adequate ideas, our emotions are active, and we experience joy, for example. This power or desire is the efficient cause of all our active emotions. By itself it has no properties. It is the driving force that emanates from our nature. But it has properties when in its existence it affects or is affected by external objects which orient its desire in a certain direction.³ The power of acting or being acted upon is manifested in different parts of the body and its ideas.

The human body can affect other bodies (E2Post6) and be affected by other bodies in many ways by which its power of activity is increased or diminished (E3Post1). Desire or appetite which is increased or diminished by external causes is called

³ Bidney (1962), p. 100 attempts to show that it is incompatible to hold that desire is an essence and an affect. Rice (1977), p. 115 notes a terminological shift. The *conatus* is desire insofar as human nature is active, but it is not identified with human nature as a passion since essence (*conatus*) is always active.

pleasure or pain (E3P57D). A passive emotion like sadness is derived from the power of external objects affecting this power. Desire is always particular, either the desire to preserve oneself which is a continuous desire to preserve oneself and increase in power or a particular object which affects this desire and causes a desire toward a particular thing, such as love of another person.⁴ Since desire is an emotion, it can be described as an idea, a mental activity, or a body, a physical activity. Although the mind or body is a complex made up of different parts (ideas and bodies), there is one idea, an adequate one, which may express this desire more forcefully than an other-idea.⁵ All other adequate ideas are related to it and are modifications of this idea. Each idea if it is adequate has its own essence, and it is related to other ideas or essences. In its existence an individual undergoes changes because it is affected by external objects. These changes are affections or properties of the individual. One should then make a distinction between those adequate ideas which are part of the complex which constitutes the individual (the essence of the individual) and those images or affections which come to the individual or complex from without (the existence of the individual). The adequate idea is the essence or constitutes the essence. The image is the existence or properties which the individual acquires. Each part of the body and its idea has an essence. When they all work together in a rational manner, the power of the individual is maximized. It is possible then for one idea or one part of the body to express its power as forcefully as its nature dictates and for all the other parts of the body (ideas)

⁴ Hampshire (1951), p. 138 warns us that we cannot talk about the essence of an emotion such as jealousy. The jealousy of one person at a particular time is different from any other jealousy, either that of a different person or the same person.

⁵ One may here see a similarity to Leibniz's dominant monad, but whether he got this idea from thinking about this in Spinoza, I do not know.

to work together with it. In working through the first difficulty we can say that power has to do with the essence not the properties of a thing. Existence has to do with properties or with how the power of the individual affects or is affected by objects external to it.

2. ADEQUATE AND INADEQUATE IDEAS

In Spinoza there is some confusion over the use of the words "adequate" and "inadequate", and I would like to clarify these meanings. All God's ideas are adequate. God's ideas are adequate because he is completely active. There is nothing outside of God, therefore, God has no passive or inadequate ideas.⁶ Human beings have adequate and inadequate ideas.⁷ Human beings, since they are a part of nature, have inadequate ideas or are always passive to some extent, but they are not entirely so. They are acted upon by other parts and God. They are acted upon insofar as they are a part of nature (E4P2). An individual organism is generated from an outside cause. In the case of the infant, the parents are the outside cause. But once the individual exists, it has its own nature (adequate idea), and anything outside of this can then be considered external to it, such as what affects its desire.

Spinoza talks about a person's love of God (an adequate idea in the human mind) as being part of the infinite love which God has of himself (E5P36). This is not the complete love that God has of himself. That would be God's love of himself (an ade-

⁶ Spinoza in the *Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts*, Part 2, chap. 7 says that God has inadequate ideas only insofar as he is considered as constituting the human mind.

⁷ Parkinson (1954), chap. 6 suggests the view that no human ideas are true. Only God's idea is true or agrees with its *ideatum*. Ideas that human beings have are incomplete and only part of God's idea. God has an idea of the whole. Human beings, at best, have only fragments of the truth.

quate idea in God's mind which would include all God's ideas). It is God's love of himself only insofar as God is expressed through a particular human mind. There is a difference then between God's love of himself and a person's love of God, the former being identical with God's complete love of himself and the latter being identical with God's love of himself expressed only through that person. One must remember that God's idea of himself is self-caused, whereas our idea of him is caused by him.

There are ideas which arise from the power of the human mind. These ideas or one of them constitutes the essence of the person. In this sense these ideas are adequate and are an adequate cause, but although God has these same ideas, he has other adequate ideas as well. His idea of himself is different from our ideas of him (although at least one of his ideas is the same as ours), mainly because his idea is composed of many more adequate ideas. I have only my own ideas. God has his which includes mine and everyone else's. His ideas are complete. He has all the ideas there are. Not only does God have more ideas, but his ideas are qualitatively better or more adequate than my ideas, i.e., he does not undergo any emotions. All my ideas, except for my idea of God which is identical with his idea of me, are inadequate in comparison to God's ideas. But in relation to an individual mode only those ideas which affect the mode from outside are inadequate. With a given individual, we can distinguish between ideas that are caused from within that individual (the essence of the individual) and ideas that come to that individual from without (the existence of the individual). So in a sense we can call the first ideas adequate; the others inadequate.

There are two senses of "adequate" and two senses of "inadequate" here. In the first sense of "adequate," all God's ideas are adequate because these are all the ideas there are. I shall call this adequate₁. In the second sense of "adequate" only those ideas

which stem from my nature (*conatus*) are adequate. I shall call this sense of "adequate," adequate₂. These ideas constitute my essence, but God's nature includes these and all other adequate ideas. According to the first sense of "inadequate," inadequate₁, my ideas are inadequate because they are not as complete as God's and are associated with passive emotions. According to the second sense of "inadequate," inadequate₂, all those ideas which affect my nature from without are inadequate. These ideas constitute my existence. My essence is to have power of activity. My existence involves this power in relation to the power of other individuals.

Inadequate₂ ideas can be false when they fail to correspond to the object they are said to correspond to. A false idea, like an inadequate idea, arises when we have an image of something outside of ourselves. In this respect the mind errs because its body is affected from outside and because it has an idea (image) which indicates the present constitution of its body more than it does the nature of an external body (E4P1S). The idea is either incomplete or defective. False ideas cause me to have an inadequate idea of myself or my own body, but these inadequate ideas can be the source of pleasure (pride is an increase in activity) or pain (humility is a decrease in activity). They are the same as passive emotions which are affects in us caused by something external. Passive emotions may or may not be advantageous, but in no case do they allow a clear understanding of ourselves, our body, or external objects. This understanding is reserved for adequate ideas or true ideas in the case of external objects. Passive emotions are most advantageous when seen from the perspective of adequate ideas, since we can never eliminate passive ideas completely. Our essence then is to have only adequate₂ ideas. Our existence is to have a combination of adequate₂ and inadequate₂ ideas.

3. THE STRIVING OF THE MIND

Spinoza says that all ideas in God are adequate, but the human mind is composed of both adequate and inadequate ideas. For him the mind strives both insofar as it has adequate (clear) and inadequate (confused) ideas (E3P9). If striving to persevere in its being is the essence of a thing (E3P7), and power is the ability to preserve in one's being (E4P18S), why would the mind strive both insofar as it has adequate and inadequate ideas?⁸ Through its power of acting the mind strives to preserve itself and increase in power (E3P6&12). It endeavors to think only of the things that affirm its power of activity (E3P54). It avoids those things that diminish its power (E3P13). The problem is why would the mind strive to decrease in power (have confused ideas). If it does it must be confused about its striving. Outside objects affect the striving of the mind. They may add to or subtract from the ability of the mind to increase in power. We desire those objects which bring about an increase in power in us, but we do not always understand our desires or have a clear idea about them. Although we desire basically to increase in power, we may choose something which brings about a decrease. This happens because of the power of an external object is greater than our own.

Although Spinoza admits that we strive to affirm and strive to deny (E3P25), he also admits that the mind strives to image those things which increase the body's power of acting and exclude those things which cause it to decrease in power. This striving involves the existence of a thing. He says that what one endeavors to promote or remove are often imaginary (E3P51S). To imagine and

⁸ Martineau (1895), p. 236 states that both understanding and imagination share in the universal endeavor. Joachim (1901), pp. 225-226 believes that the *conatus* manifests itself temporally and eternally.

recollect is to have confused ideas. So, even though the mind is confused, it strives in its confusion to increase its power. In E3P28 Spinoza uses striving in connection with the imagination. Using the imagination involves error, so we may strive to do what is not beneficial to us. The only way we can avoid error, but not the strength of things more powerful than ourselves, is to strive from a clear and distinct understanding, i.e., from being unaffected by external objects.

Spinoza tells us that the idea that constitutes the essence of the mind is not simple (E2P15).⁹ For him this means that the mind is a complex composed of both adequate and inadequate ideas. We have seen that the essence of the mind does not involve inadequate ideas, so Spinoza must be using "essence" in a different sense. I will take this different sense to mean existence or essence₂. He talks about the essence₂ or existence of a complex, and he talks about the essence₁ (the original sense of essence) of something more simple. An example of the latter sense would be desire. The latter sense is more exact, and it becomes more exact when he says that desire which arises from reason is the essence of the mind (E4P61D), and the essence of reason is understanding (E4P26). The composite sense of "essence₂" (existence) involves the whole individual which includes both adequate and inadequate ideas. The simple sense includes only adequate ideas. So in order to eliminate the third difficulty we can say, using the simple sense of "essence₁," that the mind strives to persevere in its being insofar as it has only adequate ideas, and, using the complex sense of "essence₂" (existence), the mind strives to persevere in its being insofar as it has both adequate and inadequate ideas.

⁹ Bennett (1984), p. 233 thinks that the word "essence" can stand for a thing's entire nature.

4. THE ESSENCE OF THE MIND

Spinoza states that the essence of the human mind is a modification of God's attributes (E2P10C). It is also the idea of an actually existing body (E3P3D, E2P11 & Ep64) and consists in affirming the actual existence of its body (E3 General Definition of the Emotions, Explication). Elsewhere he says that the essence of things produced by God does not involve existence (E1P24) and that the essence of man does not involve necessary existence (E2Ax1). How is it possible for the essence of the human mind to involve existence and not involve existence? These statements seem contradictory. The existence of the mind does not necessarily accompany the essence of the mind, but it can. God has ideas of things which do not exist (E2P8), and we can have ideas of things which do not exist, e.g., a mermaid. If the existence of the mind does accompany its essence, then the essence is simultaneous with the duration of the individual while itself being timeless. In the mind of God things always exist, before and after the duration of the individual. But these things have only temporal existence in the mind of human beings. God, though, must have an idea of the temporality of human existence since all ideas are in God and all his ideas are eternal. The only knowledge that the human mind has of the body is through ideas of the affections by which the body is affected (E2P19), and the idea of the human body is composed of many ideas of components parts (E2P15D).

Both essence and existence have to do with power or activity. The essence involves adequate ideas in the mind of God and in the human mind. The existence of God involves adequate ideas, but the existence of human beings which involves duration involves inadequate ideas.¹⁰ Adequate ideas in the human mind are

¹⁰ See Joachim (1901), Book I.

always accompanied by inadequate ideas, so the human mind as a whole can never be completely active. Duration is the indefinite continuation of existence (E2Def5), and our body's duration does not depend on its essence or God's absolute nature (E2P30D). It depends on the common order of nature. According to this order or the way we ordinarily see things, we can have only a very inadequate knowledge of the duration of particular things external to us (E2P31).

In order to solve the fourth problem we must again point out the different senses of "essence."¹¹ "Essence" is sometimes used in the sense of existence when the mind has both adequate and inadequate ideas. I have designated this sense of "essence," essence₂. It is the striving of the individual to preserve itself and increase in power amid external obstacles. This sense of "essence" has to do with the existence and duration of the human mind and body. The mind has duration only when it expresses the existence of the body while the body endures. This notion of essence has to do with confusion and the imagination. It is the desire or striving that is stimulated from without. This desire is more related to existence than to essence₁, being that existence is changeable and subject to duration, whereas essence₁ is not. So essence₂ is the idea of an actually existing body. "Essence" is used in a more exact sense when Spinoza talks about the essence of reason as being the understanding of the mind (E4P26D). This sense of "essence," essence₁, is the same as desire which involves knowledge of God. Desire that arises from reason is the essence of the human mind. This is more akin to God's idea of the essence of the human mind. When the mind understands, it understands because it conceives the body's essence under a species of eternity (E5P29), and God

¹¹ This again depends on how we view the *conatus*. Is it something simple or complex?

has an idea of the human body under a species of eternity (E5P22). So the essence of the mind in this sense is not the idea of the body actually existing. The essence of the mind is the idea of the essence of the body under a species of eternity. In this sense the essence of the mind is eternal (E5P23D). But it is still related to temporal existence and inadequate ideas because it is part of the complex of adequate and inadequate ideas. "Essence" is used in still another sense, "essence₃," when it is abstracted from human existence and considered only in the mind of God without any inadequate ideas. If we take the essence of the human mind to be part of God's essence, and in God there is no striving to increase in power because his power does not change, then the human essence in this sense does not increase in power. By pointing out these different meanings of essence, I think we can answer the question: how is it possible for the essence of the human mind to involve and not involve existence?¹²

5. CHANGING PASSIVE EMOTIONS TO ACTIVE EMOTIONS

The fifth problem occurs in Book 3 but permeates the entire *Ethics*. In E3Pref Spinoza tells us that there are no defects in nature. Hatred, anger, envy, etc., follow from the necessity of nature as all other things. In E1P33S2 he says that things have been produced by God with the highest perfection, and they follow from a most perfect nature. In E4Pref he states that one meaning of "perfection" and "imperfection" is that they are modes of thinking, but another meaning is that perfection indicates reality or the essence of each thing insofar as it exists and produces an effect without regard to duration. If emotions, such as hatred, anger,

¹² For further discussion of the different meanings of "essence" see Rivaud (1906).

envy, are confused ideas or passive emotions, put us in bondage, and are not beneficial to us, how can they not be defective? What is not beneficial to us is defective. Is not bondage a defect that keeps us from increasing in power? Does not Spinoza himself tell us that we should change these passive emotions into active ones? Are not emotions confused ideas? How can everything which follows from God be perfect, and yet we should be willing to change some of our emotions? Is the change itself, if it occurs, determined? There are a lot of questions here but not too many answers. One wonders if Spinoza is simply describing the nature of reality or if he is also making some recommendations. One usually makes recommendations in order to solve a problem or improve a situation. But in this case we can say that some individuals overcome some of their passive emotions and others do not. Either way things happen of necessity, and whatever happens of necessity is perfect. This is not always clear in Spinoza, but it is perhaps the only way we can make sense of what he says.

The main difficulty here is sorting out the different meanings of "perfection" and associating one with temporality (existence) and the other with eternity (essence₁). Spinoza tells us:

We conceive things as actual in two ways: either in so far as we conceive them as related to a fixed time and place, or in so far as we conceive them to be contained in God and follow from the necessity of the divine nature. (E5P29S)

The first way pertains to existence or a thing being affected by outside forces in the temporal world; the second way pertains to essence or a thing not being affected by outside forces in the atemporal world. In our temporal existence everything is as it is and cannot be other than what it is. Perfection and imperfection, good and bad, beautiful and ugly are modes of thinking (inadequate ideas) in the temporal world. They are actually ideas that we have

at particular times. Depending on the idea, we sometimes increase in power and sometimes decrease. A passive emotion may change into an active emotion when we become more aware of certain causes. Doing the latter is becoming more aware of our determined nature, ourselves, and our ability to increase in power. Is this becoming more aware of itself determined?¹³ This is the most difficult question and one which Spinoza seems to answer in the affirmative. Some people are able to become more aware of themselves than others and hence more successful at overcoming passive emotions. These people are said to be freer but are not free in the sense that their actions are uncaused. We may here ask if Spinoza is proposing an ethic which strictly follows from his metaphysics or one which has some practical benefits whether or not it agrees with his metaphysics?

The atemporal (essential) meaning of "perfection" involves complete timelessness, since time is only a mode of thinking. It involves all of God's ideas or things seen from the perspective of substance and not from a human perspective which involves inadequate ideas. From the perspective of substance all things endeavor to increase in power and are affected by objects which cause an increase. The answer to the main question of this section seems to be that whether we are determined temporally or atemporally whatever happens is perfect. Imperfection is viewing things from the human perspective (existential or temporal).

In summary, the problems discussed above can be solved by arriving at the following conclusions. Power has to do with the essence, not the properties of a thing. It is an idea (adequate) that is caused solely by the individual. Existence has to do with properties or how the individual affects or is affected by outside causes.

¹³ Sprigge (1989) provides an answer to this question. For a different response see Lucash (1985), pp. 491-499.

The individual strives to preserve itself and increase its energy, activity, or power. This striving is the desire (essence₁) which arises from reason or the idea of the essence of the body under a species of eternity. Essence₂ involves the striving insofar as it is affected from without. Finally, power is perfection or the essence of a thing. It is understanding a thing from an atemporal viewpoint. All other uses of power have to do with the existence of a thing¹⁴.

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¹⁴ I would like to thank an anonymous referee for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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