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INDIVIDUALISM, PHYSICALISM, AND SPINOZA ON MINDS AND BODIES

ROBERT LANTIN

Department of Philosophy
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122
USA

Neste artigo, primeiro tento mostrar que a filosofia da mente spinozana – interpretada seja segundo a teoria da identidade (tipo-tipo ou instância-instância), seja segundo o que se pode denominar funcionalismo proposicional – está comprometida com a doutrina do individualismo. Após isto, proponho uma caracterização geral do individualismo que difere da visão atualmente aceita, e mostro que (algumas) versões tipo-tipo e instância-instância do fisicalismo, assim como (algumas) versões estreitas e amplas do funcionalismo constituem exemplos de individualismo. Finalmente, com base em um experimento de pensamento concebido de modo que tanto o ambiente físico interno quanto o externo de dois gêmeos moleculares permaneçam fixos, mostro que eles podem mesmo assim possuir conteúdos mentais diferentes, e concluo que as restrições do individualismo, como definido, não fornecem condições suficientes para individuar alguns estados mentais intencionais, evidenciando assim a inabilidade do individualismo – e, por extensão, da visão de Spinoza – de resolver o problema mente-corpo.

In this paper, I first try to show that Spinoza's philosophy of mind – whether interpreted along the lines of a type-or token-identity theory or that of what may be termed propositional functionalism – is committed to the doctrine of individualism. Then, I propose a general characterization of individualism that departs somewhat from the currently accepted view, and show that (some)type- and token-identity versions of physicalism, as well as (some) narrow and wide versions of functionalism, fall under its heading. Finally, based on a thought experiment construed in a way such that both the internal and external physical environments of two molecular twins are fixed, I show that they may nevertheless entertain distinct mental contents, and conclude that the strictures of individualism, as characterized, fail to provide sufficient conditions in order to individuate some intentional mental states, thus

stressing individualism's – and, by extension, Spinoza's view's – inability at solving the mind-body problem.

The general argument of the paper is directed against individualism, and therefrom moves in two directions at once. On the one hand, it is aimed against two important current theories of mind, namely, (i) type- and token-identity theories, and (ii) functionalism. Here, the central claim is that *both* theories are committed to individualism. On the other hand, it is aimed against what I shall refer to as a physicalistically-minded interpretation of Spinoza's views on the nature of the human mind. Here, my contention is that this interpretation of Spinoza is committed to individualism.

I shall develop the argument by first characterizing the physicalist interpretation of Spinoza's views on minds and bodies (sections 1 to 6). I shall then characterize individualism (sections 8, 9, and 10), before moving on to show how the physicalist approach to Spinoza's views (section 11), as well as type- and token-identity theories and functionalism (sections 12 and 13), fall under its heading. Finally, I shall propose a thought experiment (sections 14 and 15) aimed at showing that individualism is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem.

I should specify from the outset that this paper deals primarily with current views in the philosophy of mind, and is intended neither as a scholarly work in seventeenth century philosophy, nor as an attempt at providing a new interpretation of Spinoza. Nevertheless, I believe it is important that certain connections be made explicit between contemporary and classic views on the nature of the mind, and the present paper should be regarded as a modest step in that direction.

1. According to leading commentators¹, Spinoza's views on the nature of the human mind are best understood when considered

¹See Curley, E.M. (1969), Wilson, M.D. (1980), and Odegard, D. (1971).

from the following general interpretive framework:

- [GF] (i) since Spinoza's philosophical system comprises only one metaphysical category, it is taken to be entirely compatible with what is known as the unified view of science;
- (ii) however, given that the attributes of thought and of extension are *not* reducible one to the other, provision must be made for both extended *and* non-extended objects;

from (i) and (ii), it follows that

- (iii) all extended and non-extended objects will ultimately be subsumed under the strictures of, respectively, a universal physics and a universal psychology;
- (iv) the universal physics will provide the fundamental laws of physical events and nomological explanations of physical phenomena;
- (v) the universal psychology will provide the fundamental laws of psychological events and nomological explanations of psychological phenomena.

2. Thus construed, [GF] shows at once the peculiarity of Spinoza's views. On the one hand, premise (i) provides a direct answer to Cartesian dualism. In Spinoza's system, there is *no* 'metaphysical space' between extended and non-extended objects. Minds and bodies do *not* belong to different ontological categories, but are different 'expressions' of a unique substance. Yet, on the other hand, premise (ii) accounts for the self-containedness of each of the attributes of thought and of extension, therefore discarding any strict reductive views according to which all non-extended objects – ideas, thoughts, volitions, sensations – are

(will be) ultimately reducible to extended ones. Further, premises (iii)-(v) account for what may be termed, at least provisionally, a 'strict parallelism' between physics and psychology, since, (a) for *every* extended object, there will correspond a non-extended one, and (b) for *every* non-extended object, there will correspond an extended one. In other words, for Spinoza, a one-to-one relation *necessarily* obtains between objects of both sciences, which leaves *no* room for a realm of merely possible objects, the latter having, by definition, *no* actual referents. As it stands [GF] might not go unchallenged, but I shall nevertheless assume it to be a reasonably plausible starting point for reading and interpreting Spinoza's views on the nature of mind and its relation to bodies.

3. According to a possible interpretation of [GF], it would seem to follow that for Spinoza, mental phenomena are somehow identical with brain events. More precisely, this line of interpretation would hold that *descriptions* of a given mental event and of its corresponding physical event would have different senses, while having the same reference. According to Curley, this interpretation, however – call it the type- or token-identity reading – faces an important problem. While it is highly plausible to hold that all my mental states, events, or processes have their corresponding brain states, events, or processes, who would hold that, say, my coffeemaker, while undergoing different physico-chemical changes in the process of brewing my cup of coffee, undergoes corresponding *mental* or *conscious* changes? No one defending an identity theory would ever be prepared to ascribe *any* kind of mind-related states to coffeemakers and the like. But, *in a sense*, Spinoza *does* hold that *all* extended objects have their corresponding 'minds'².

4. Clearly, Spinoza *does* hold that for every mode of extension,

²See Margaret Wilson (1980), for a defense of that view.

there is a corresponding mode of thought. He writes that

the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things (*E II P 7*)...[A] mode of Extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, expressed in two ways...[W]hether we conceive Nature under the attribute of Extension or under the attribute of Thought or under any other attribute, we find one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes – that is, the same things following one another...[A]s long as things are considered as modes of thought, we must explicate the order of the whole of Nature, or the connection of causes, through the attribute of Thought alone; and in so far as things are considered as modes of Extension, again the order of the whole of Nature must be explicated through the attribute of Extension only. (*E II P7S*)³

This passage of the *Ethics*, I take it, states rather straightforwardly the point I made above, to the effect that there *is*, for Spinoza, a sharp one-to-one mapping between thought and extension. Now, a possible way out of the impasse one is led into from the perspective of a type- or token-identity view runs as follows:⁴

- [PR] (i) ‘ideas’ and ‘modes of thought’ are *not* to be confused with mental phenomena; the latter are only a subset of the former;
- (ii) since an idea ‘involves affirmation or negation,’ it should be conceived as a proposition;
- (iii) modes of extension, that is, the *ideata* with which ideas agree, are to be conceived as facts;

³All quotations are taken from Samuel Shirley’s translation of the *Ethics*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1982.

⁴This view, which may be termed the “propositional reading”, is taken from Curley’s interpretation. See Curley (1969), pp.121-126.

- (iv) the relation between thought and extension is to be conceived as an identity of true proposition and fact.

Curley states his view – I shall refer to it as the ‘propositional interpretation’ – as follows:

The fact and the true proposition are the same thing, expressed or viewed in two different ways. To talk about a mode as a proposition or idea, bearing logical relations to other propositions, is to conceive the mode under the attribute of thought. To talk about it as a fact, having causal relations with other facts, is to conceive it under the attribute of extension. But the propositions which make up the set that gives a complete and accurate description of the world are identical with the facts they describe, and the causal relations between the facts have their counterpart in the logical relations between propositions. . . This is to say that wherever you have two facts standing in a causal relation you also have two propositions standing in a logical relation, the proposition describing the cause entailing the one describing the effect. The set of true propositions is the world conceived under the attribute of thought; the set of facts, the world conceived under the attribute of extension. But the two worlds are not two, they are one. (1969, pp. 123-4)

The propositional interpretation has a net advantage over the previous one in that it solves the apparent problem the identity theorist faces when confronted with what I termed Spinoza’s strict parallelism. On this interpretation, the changes my coffee-maker undergoes – or, for that matter, *any* extended object – are paralleled with true propositions describing these changes, which in *no* case commits one to ascribing mental or conscious states, events, or processes, to *all* extended objects. As mentioned above, conscious beings, for Curley, are only a subset in the realm of modes of thought. He holds that

it is only when something else is added to the mind's "perception" of the body that consciousness arises... *E II P 19* and *E II P 23* together, then, say that the mind does not know the body except insofar as it perceives itself, or has ideas of ideas, or is conscious. It is worth noting in this connection that, while every individual thing has a "mind" containing ideas of the affections of its body (*E II P 13 S*), the existence of ideas of ideas is proven only for human minds (*E II P 20*)... Since I am identifying the possession of an idea of an idea with consciousness, it seems natural to say that an idea of an idea is a special kind of proposition about a proposition, namely, one expressing what is sometimes called a propositional attitude (for example, "A knows that *p*"). (1969, pp. 128-9)⁵

5. Having ideas of ideas is therefore equivalent to entertaining propositional attitudes, and, if this view is correct, this is proved only for human minds. Now, if one asks how *A*'s propositional attitudes are individuated, the answer would seem to be: in terms of *A*'s body, so that two identical bodies undergoing identical physical states would entertain the same propositional attitude and therefore would be related to the same proposition, which is to say, they would entertain identical mental contents. However, since it individuates mental contents individualistically, this view faces serious problems. In what follows, I shall try to show that Spinoza's philosophy of mind – whether interpreted along the lines of a type- or token-identity theory or that of what may be termed propositional functionalism – is committed to the view known as individualism. Further, I shall be concerned to show that this latter view fails to solve the mind-body problem.

6. Spinoza's philosophy of mind raises a number of notorious problems. Given [GF] above, Spinoza seems committed to a correspondence theory of truth, a view which is highly

⁵For an opposed view, see Margaret Wilson, *op. cit.*, p.116.

controversial.⁶ Further, one may question whether the denial of possible objects really holds; or whether Spinoza's account of false ideas is plausible at all; or, again, whether or not his view entails the strong doctrine of necessitarianism.⁷ However, I shall not address any of these problems – at least not directly. Instead, I shall try to make sense of Spinoza's view from the perspective of current theories of mind.

More specifically, I shall argue that since the two possible current theories of mind taken to be compatible with Spinoza's view – namely, type- and token-identity theories and what I shall call 'propositional functionalism' – are committed to the view known as individualism, *and* that individualism is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem, it follows that Spinoza's view, *thus construed*, is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem.

7. My general argument, then, runs as follows:

[GA] (i) construed under the strictures of [GF], Spinoza's views on the mind-body problem are compatible either with type- or token-identity theories *or* with propositional functionalism;

but since

(ii) type- and token-identity theories *and* propositional functionalism are committed to individualism;

and

(iii) individualism is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem; from (i), (ii) and (iii), it follows that

(iv) Spinoza's view, *thus construed*, is committed to individualism; and, therefore

⁶For attributing the view to Spinoza, see Curley, *op. cit.*, pp.122-123. For a divergent view, see Allison, H.E. (1987), pp.102-103. For a survey of criticisms of the correspondence theory of truth, see BonJour, L. (1985).

⁷On necessitarianism, see Allison, H.E., *op. cit.*, pp.75-78.

- (v) Spinoza's view is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem.

I take it that premise (i) of [GA] is supported by the material of sections 1 to 6 above. Support for premise (ii) will follow in sections 8 to 13 below. I begin by characterizing individualism, and then move on to show how identity theories and functionalism fall under this heading.

8. Individualism partly stems from the idea that whatever the mind *is*, it is individuated in terms of – in relation to – physical states or events or processes occurring either *within* or *within and without the body* (or its equivalent or counterpart). That is, all mental states or events or processes are individuated *either* in terms of *or* in relation to, descriptions of physical states or events or processes *of* the body (or its equivalent or counterpart). These latter physical states, in terms of – in relation to – which mental states are individuated, will hereafter be referred to as 'individuating states'. Also, the term 'state' will henceforth stand for 'state or event or process'. As for the disjunctive phrase 'either in terms of *or* in relation to', it is meant to capture both the non-dualist and the dualist versions of individualism.⁸

There are two kinds of individualism:⁹ (i) an internal kind – where the 'individuating states' are taken to consist of all and only descriptions of (physiological) states occurring *within* the organism, that is, the organism considered from the skin inwards;

⁸Although I shall address the latter in passing only, I think it is worth noting that both ontological positions may fall under the heading of individualism. Accordingly, a dualist version of individualism would individuate mental states *in relation to* physical states *of* the body; while a non-dualist version would individuate mental states *in terms of* physical states *of* the body.

⁹The following two paragraphs rely, somewhat freely, on ideas proposed by Colin McGinn. See McGinn (1989).

and (ii) an external kind – where the ‘individuating states’ are taken to consist of descriptions of internal states *and* of causally related states occurring in the organism’s physical environment. The former kind claims to individuate an agent’s mental states solely in terms of neurophysiological states, while the latter, on the grounds that two ‘neurophysiological twins’ may nevertheless entertain distinct mental states, claims that an agent’s mental states are to be individuated in terms of neurophysiological states *and* of causally related states occurring in the agent’s physical environment.¹⁰

Also, each kind of individualism comes in two different varieties: a ‘strong’ variety, and a ‘weak’ variety, yielding the following further distinctions: (i) strong internalism – where all and only descriptions of *brain* states (or their equivalent or counterpart) will count as genuine individuating states; (ii) weak internalism – where all and only descriptions of states of the *entire* organism (or its equivalent or counterpart) that is, the organism considered from the skin inwards, will count as genuine individuating states; (iii) weak externalism – where genuine individuating states will be said to comprise descriptions of internal states *and* of causally related states occurring within the organism’s *immediate* physical environment; and, finally, (iv) strong externalism – where genuine individuating states will be said to comprise descriptions of internal states *and* of causally related states occurring within the organism’s *global* physical environment.

9. Thus construed, individualism captures at least four different kinds of reductive theories of mind, *viz.* type- and token-identity

¹⁰The externalist’s claim against internalism will be qualified later on. As for the ‘neurophysiological twins’, I am referring to Twin Earth-type examples and thought experiments where two physically indiscernible agents (in this case, a ‘from-the-skin-inwards’-type of indiscernibility) nevertheless entertain distinct mental contents. My treatment of externalism as being a *kind* of individualism is a radical departure from the current view, according to which both positions are contrasted.

physicalism; narrow and wide functionalism.¹¹ Individualism, at least *prima facie*, does *not* apply to either eliminativist or instrumentalist theories of mind. The eliminativist does not face the problem of individuating mental states identified by content, since, by denying that mental contents have any ontological status, she simply ends with *nothing* to individuate.¹² Accordingly,

¹¹I consider 'narrow' and 'wide' functionalism to be, roughly, corresponding to the internal and external kinds of individualism. Harman writes: "I claim that psychological explanations are typically wide functional explanations. That is, I claim that such explanations typically appeal to an actual or possible environmental situation of the creature whose activity is being explained. A narrow functional explanation appeals only to internal states of the creature and says nothing about how the creature functions in relation to an actual or possible environment." (1988), pp.11-20.

Ned Block's distinction between '*a priori*' and 'empirical' functionalists, or, respectively, 'Functionalists' and 'Psychofunctionalists', seems to be more or less equivalent to that between externalist and internalist kinds of individualism. Block writes: "This difference between Functionalists and Psychofunctionalists gives rise to a difference in specifying inputs and outputs. Functionalists are restricted to specification of inputs and outputs that are plausibly part of common-sense knowledge; Psychofunctionalists are under no such restriction. Although both groups insist on physical - or at least nonmental - specification of inputs and outputs, Functionalists require externally observable classifications (e.g., inputs characterized in terms of objects present in the vicinity of the organism, outputs in terms of movements of body parts). Psychofunctionalists, on the other hand, have the option to specify inputs and outputs in terms of internal parameters, e.g., signals in input and output neurons." (1980), p.272. On 'empirical' functionalism, see also Joseph Owens, (1983).

¹²Stich characterizes the position thus: "'Eliminativism', as we shall use the term, is a fancy name for a simple thesis. It is the claim that some category of entities, processes or properties exploited in a common or scientific account of the world do not exist." Ramsey, Stich, and Garon (1989), p.4. In the conclusion of the paper, Stich writes that "[if] these [connectionist] models turn out to offer the best accounts of human belief and memory, we will be confronting an *ontologically radical* theory change - the sort of theory change that will sustain the conclusion that propositional attitudes, like caloric and phlogiston, do not exist" (p.38).

I shall ignore these two latter positions.¹³ Further, it is not at all clear that the externalist's claim against internalism applies to *all* mental states or events. If one considers, say, pain states, as opposed to belief states, again *prima facie*, it seems quite likely that two 'neurophysiological twins' will undergo, given the same conditions, identical mental states, which amounts to the claim that internalism provides – or at least seems to provide – sufficient explanations of certain mental phenomena. I take it, then, that the externalist's charge is rather inconclusive, *if* it is to apply to both sensations *and* propositional attitudes. I shall therefore ignore the former kind of mental phenomena, and concentrate only on the latter – which is to assume, of course, that there is a distinction between the two.¹⁴ In other words, I shall consider mental states identified by content, or, more precisely, intentional states.

To sum up the argument so far: I have provided a rough characterization of individualism, according to which the view comes (i) in two different versions, *viz.* dualist and non-dualist; (ii) in two different kinds, *viz.* internal and external; (iii) in four different varieties, *viz.* strong and weak internalism; strong and weak externalism. I have also claimed that what ties all of (i)-(iii) is the general claim that whatever the mind is, it is individuated in terms of or in relation to physical states *of* the body (or its equivalent or counterpart). Further, I have restricted the view to positions which afford mental states with some ontological status, either in a reductive or non-reductive fashion, thus ex-

¹³This is of course a somewhat caricatural way of putting things. Obviously, both eliminativism and instrumentalism are much more complex positions, but it falls beyond the scope of the present paper to address these views.

¹⁴See McGinn (1982), pp.7-11.

cluding eliminativist and instrumentalist positions.¹⁵ I have also restricted the externalist's claim to certain mental phenomena, *viz.* mental states identified by intentional content. I now have to support these claims and face an obvious objection.

10. A possible objection could run as follows:

It isn't at all clear that individualism is simply a claim that "whatever the mind is, it is within the body", or, as you say, "individuated in terms of physical states of the body". Consider the externalist's claim. She holds that mental states are individuated in terms of internal *and* external states, the latter occurring in the agent's physical environment. How can you claim that mental states are individuated in terms of physical states of the body in this case? Isn't the externalist's claim going *exactly against* your claim?

Reply: *Prima facie*, the externalist's claim is to the effect that the 'individuating states' are *not* solely states occurring within, but, rather, states occurring within *and* without the agent's body, these latter states occurring *either* in the agent's immediate *or* global physical environment. So it does seem that the externalist holds that mental states are individuated partly in terms of states occurring *independently* of the agent's body. The question whether there *are* physical states occurring independently of an agent's body is *not* at issue. The question at issue is, rather, *how* some of those states are to count as genuine 'individuating states', and the externalist's answer consists in showing that these 'environmental states' are to count as individuating states *insofar* as they *affect* the agent's *body*. In other words, there is no *immediate* correlation between mental states and states occurring in the agent's physical environment. Rather, externalism holds

¹⁵This amounts, roughly, to what Stich, in the context of a discussion of theory changes, calls *ontological conservatism*. See Ramsey, Stich, and Garon, *op.cit.*, p.6.

that mental states are correlated with states *of* the body.¹⁶ This is all that is needed in order to claim that externalism is a kind of individualism. Individualism takes individuating states to be physical states *of* the body (or its equivalent or counterpart).

Given the foregoing characterization of individualism, I now turn to show how this view applies to the interpretation of Spinoza's position on the nature of the human mind that I outlined in the opening sections.

11. In *E II P 13*, Spinoza holds that:

The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body – i.e. a definite mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else.

From this proposition, he concludes that ‘the object of our mind is an existing body, and nothing else.’ In the Scholium to *P 13 II*, he adds the following:

From the above we understand not only that the human Mind is united to the Body, also what is to be understood by the union

¹⁶For a similar view, see Garfield, Jay L. (1988), Chapter 4. Garfield terms ‘Naturalistic Individualism’ what I here refer to as ‘weak externalism’. He writes: “Naturalistic Individualism proposes that in order to accomplish this interpretive task [the task of deciding which of the organism’s *physical* states and processes are going to count as *functional* or *computational* states and processes] it is necessary to watch the organism interact with the environment, and see how the neural stuff acts when confronted with particular types of stimulation, when the organism performs certain kinds of action and solves certain kinds of problems, and to interpret the states accordingly.” (p.67). Further, Garfield holds that “Although the facts responsible for determining interpretations are on this account [Naturalistic Individualism] naturalistic (comprising relations of the organism to distal stimuli and objects), the phenomena that get interpreted (only *internal* states and processes), and the generalizations over them, obey the individualistic supervenience principles. . .” (p.94).

of Mind and Body. But nobody can understand this union adequately or distinctly unless he first gains adequate knowledge of the nature of our body... In proportion as a body is more apt than other bodies to act or be acted upon simultaneously in many ways, so is its mind more apt than other minds to perceive many things simultaneously; and in proportion as the actions of one body depend on itself alone and the less that other bodies concur with it in its actions, the more apt is its mind to understand distinctly.

Mind and body are therefore one and the same 'thing', or 'entity'. They are united. In a way, then, we *may* characterize them as 'identical', for whatever occurs in the body will be reflected in the mind, and *vice versa*. So just as we may speak of the idea of a body, we may also – we *must* – speak of the body of an idea. Further, we are told that in order to understand the unity of mind and body, we must *first* know the nature of our *body*. It is precisely this last claim that commits Spinoza to individualism.

This passage of *E II P 13 S* seems to lead quite straightforwardly to an interpretation according to which Spinoza indeed defends a 'kind' of materialist theory of mind, for since mind and body are one and the same 'thing', *by* knowing the *body*, we come to know the mind.¹⁷ This much would seem to support and justify the general framework we began with (section 1), as well as the first premise of [GA] (section 6). Further, it seems that in the same passage, Spinoza distinguishes *human* minds from minds in general on the basis of the degree of complexity and autonomy of the *body*. More complex and autonomous bodies bear superior minds; and superior minds are 'more apt to understand distinctly.' Again, it seems to be clear that this analysis is based

¹⁷This passage is crucial to the whole interpretation being conveyed. It is clear that for Spinoza, knowledge of the body is *not* equivalent to knowledge of the mind. However, it is *through* knowledge of the body that we *come* to know the mind: the process gives a clear priority to knowledge of the body, and this fuels the physicalistic reading I am trying to delineate.

on considerations of the human body. Now, proposition 14, II of the *Ethics* reads as follows:

The human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things, and this capacity will vary in proportion to the variety of states which its body can assume.

This proposition follows from what was just said. As regards the states which the body can assume, it is quite obvious that they will include the affections of *external* bodies as well as affections internal to the body itself, thus providing for the possibility of our having ideas of bodies other than our own. This is roughly what proposition 16, II amounts to. If I think of an apple, my thought will be explained by the fact that my body is or has been affected by some external object. In other words, simple thoughts may be accounted for in terms of causal relations occurring either within – in the case of memory – or within and without my body. Now, if I take an apple as an *object* of thought, that is, if my thought is *about* an apple, a further explanation will be needed, for in this case, the object of my thought is another thought, or, to put it in Spinoza's words, my idea is in fact an idea of an idea. If my thought of an apple has as its extended correlate the affections the apple has or had on my body, what will be the extended correlate of my thought *about* an apple? We find an answer to this question in proposition 21, II. It reads as follows:

This idea of the mind is united to the mind in the same way as the mind is united to the body.

In the Scholium, he adds

This proposition is understood far more clearly from Sch. Pr. 7, II. There we showed that the idea of the body and the body itself – that is, (Pr. 13, II) mind and body – are one and the same individual thing, conceived now under the attribute of Thought and now under the attribute of Extension. Therefore the idea of the mind and the mind itself are one and the same thing, conceived under one and the same attribute, namely, Thought... For in fact the idea of the mind – that is, the idea of an idea – is nothing other than the form of the idea in so far as the idea is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to its object.

Curley understands it in the following manner:

The idea that is the object of my idea of an idea will have as its ideatum a modification of my body and it will agree with that modification. This amounts, on my interpretation, to saying that what I know when I know that something is the case is a proposition which describes some fact about my body.¹⁸

In sections 4 and 5 above, we saw that for Curley, ideas of ideas are in fact propositional attitudes. If this interpretation is correct – and in the context of the present discussion, I think it apparently is – we still do *not* know what are the extended correlates to propositional attitudes – *knowing, believing, desiring*, and so forth. Just *what* is it to *know* or to *believe* something to be the case? Curley tells us what the *object* of knowledge or of belief is – namely, an affection of the body – but that does *not* tell us what it is to know or to believe something. And obviously, given proposition 7, II, and, for that matter, the system as a whole, there *must* be an extended correlate to propositional attitudes.

My claim is that Spinoza *must* hold that propositional attitudes have as their extended correlates affections of the body. In contemporary terms, this amounts to saying that Spinoza *must*

¹⁸ Curley, *op. cit.*, p.129.

individuate contents of thought in terms of physical states of the body, and this is *exactly* what commits him to individualism. Further, given his non-dualist view, it seems reasonable to interpret his position along the lines of what may be termed an 'identity theory'. Here, as far as I can tell, there are two candidates: either one identifies (a) types or tokens of mental states, events, or processes, with types or tokens of physical states, events, or processes; or (b) mental states with functional states. Both views, I claim, fall under the heading of individualism. To show this, I shall consider, in turn, type- and token-identity theories, and functionalism.

12. The Token Identity Theory (*TO*) identifies a *particular instance* of a given mental event with a *particular instance* of a firing pattern occurring in the brain of a given individual, so that, for example, my wanting tea at t' , say, t' , is not identical with your wanting tea at t'' , say, t'' , since – from a physicalist version of *TO* – they involve two different firing patterns occurring in the brain, say, f' and f'' .

From the point of view of a Type Identity Theory (*TY*), these two occurrences, *viz.* ($t' = f'$) and ($t'' = f''$), would not be distinguished, since on that theory – and, again, from a physicalist point of view – mental state *properties* are identified with physico-chemical *properties* of brain states, so that my wanting tea, say, S , regardless of the moment at which it occurs – and, for that matter, your wanting tea, regardless of the moment at which it occurs – is identified with a specific brain state property, say, P . In sum, any instantiation of S will be identical with the instantiation of P , that is, $S = P$. From this, it follows that, on *TY*, if $S = P$ obtains, then $[(t' = f') = (t'' = f'')] = \dots = (t^n = f^n)$ will obtain, whereas the converse is certainly *not* valid, for, on *TO*, ($t' = f'$) is certainly *not* identical with ($t'' = f''$), so that

TY implies *TO*, but *TO* does not imply *TY*.

It should be noted, further, that so characterized, it turns out that *TY* has a much stronger explanatory force than *TO*, for type identities are amenable to general laws of nature, whereas there cannot be any law formulated in particular terms.¹⁹ However, thus characterized, both *TY* and *TO* are fully compatible with (at least) strong internalism, for they both propose to identify mental states with brain states – mental properties with brain properties for the former; mental particular instances with brain particular instances for the latter.

13. As regards functionalism – which claims to identify mental states with functional states – although it is compatible with *TO*, it is quite obvious that in order to gain any notoriety on the methodological level, say, for psychology, it must be a “type theory”.²⁰ But to identify types of mental states with types of functional states is to claim that any two individuals sharing the same functional state will also share the same mental state, as well as the converse, that is, that any two individuals sharing the same mental state will also share the same functional state – described in either internalist or externalist terms.

Now, the important point is to the effect that a given functional state *must* be realized physically, although *not* in any one specified type of material stuff. That is, *any* kind of material stuff will do just fine for a functionalist.²¹ This peculiarity of the func-

¹⁹ McGinn (1982), pp.26-29.

²⁰ Stephen Schiffer writes that “Nowadays a noneliminativist antidualist about mental properties is most likely to claim that they are properties of a kind that I shall call *functional properties*, using that expression in the broadest possible way.” (1987), p.21. About ‘properties’, he adds: State-tokens are the particulars (as opposed to universals) that satisfy open sentences such as “*x* is a C-fiber stimulation”, “*x* is a pain”, or “*x* is a belief that the girl bit the monkey”, while state-types are the properties expressed by these open sentences”, p.273, note 7.

²¹ See Block, N. (1978). He writes: “... the functionalist argument against

tionalist view is taken to be a net advantage over both physicalist versions of the type- and token-identity theories; and also over behaviorism. Functionalism accounts for the possibility of there being identical functional states realized in material stuff of different composition. But, on the other hand, what the functionalist – in either version – is compelled to hold, is that two identically composed material “bodies” undergoing identical physical states *cannot* realize, under the same conditions, different functional states; and, hence, since mental states are identified with functional states, the two identical “bodies” *must* instantiate identical mental states. This is precisely what commits functionalism to individualism.

Having shown that Spinoza’s view on the nature of the human mind, as well as (some) type- and token-identity theories and functionalism all fall under the heading of individualism, I now turn to provide an argument aimed at showing that individualism is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem.

14. If it can be shown that two identically composed individuals undergoing the same functional or physical state described either in terms of internal *or* external states *of* the body do *not* share the same mental state, then functionalism (of either version) and physicalism (of either version) are in trouble. In other words: if two identically composed individuals sharing the same individuating states described under the strictures of either internalism *or* externalism of either variety do *not* share the same mental state, individualism is in trouble, that is, individualism cannot provide sufficient conditions in order to individuate some mental states identified by content. In the next section, I will propose a thought experiment aimed at showing that, indeed, individualism *is* in trouble and that, consequently, it is not adequate for

physicalism is that it is difficult to see how there *could* be a nontrivial first-order physical property in common to all and only the possible physical realizations of a given Turing-machine state.” (p.270).

Manuscrito, Campinas, XVII(1):35-64, abril 1994.

solving the mind-body problem.²²

The argument supporting the third premise of [GA] runs thus:

- [AI] (i) either the mental contents of two identically composed individuals sharing the same individuating states described under the strictures of either internalism or externalism of either variety are necessarily identical, or individualism cannot provide sufficient conditions in order to individuate some mental contents;
- (ii) the mental contents of two identically composed individuals sharing the same individuating states described under the strictures of either internalism or externalism of either variety are *not* necessarily identical; therefore,
- (iii) individualism cannot provide sufficient conditions in order to individuate some mental contents.

In order to support the second premise of [AI], I shall propose a thought experiment construed such as to fix both agents' internal and external physical environments while, at the same time, retaining a sharp distinction between their respective belief contents.²³ The setting, therefore, will not be that of the usual twin planets, but, rather, that of what might be called 'twin communities' inhabiting the same planet – thus stressing socio-linguistic and cultural differences being at the very basis of both agents' belief contents and, by the same token, putting the

²²I am assuming, of course, that an adequate solution to the mind-body problem must include, amongst other things, an account of necessary and sufficient conditions for the individuation of mental states, and that failure to meet this last requirement implies failure to solve the problem.

²³This thought experiment draws extensively on the "Locust-Cricket" thought experiment presented by Lynne Rudder Baker. See Baker (1987), pp.119-122.

accent on the non-individualistic aspects involved in the individuation of certain mental states identified by content.

15. The year is 2094 A.D. The setting is an emergency room in New York City's Granny Smith Hospital, where two young men in their early thirties lie in separate beds, surrounded by countless medical devices attached to each one's body. The two young men, we learn, were rescued from an airplane crash that took place a few hours before. Air Canada's flight 815, we are told, had to circle La Guardia International Airport for approximately 90 minutes before it could get its permission to land, but, unfortunately, ran out of fuel and so was forced to attempt a "suicidal" landing, which ended tragically, killing all but our two young men who, by the way, were coming to New York City to attend a conference sponsored by the Apple Growers of North-America during the 'Apple Week in the Big Apple' events.

The two young men, Winston Keating and Twinson Teaking, lie in stable condition. They both suffer from multiple fractures, and both have lost their voice box. Fortunately – "it's a miracle!" cried one nurse – no brain damage has been diagnosed in either Winston nor Twinson. Winston comes from "Appletown", British Columbia and Twinson comes from "Pometown", Tribish Locumbia, a remote independent state located in the Rockies. The Locumbians have their own language and their own religion, stemming from very peculiar metaphysical and cosmological visions of the universe, at the center of which pomegranates are said to comprise divine powers of longevity.

Winston is a native speaker of English whereas Twinson's native language is Twenglish. Twenglish, oddly enough, overlaps with English, but with one exception: in Twenglish, the word 'apple' designates *pomegranate*, whereas, of course, the English word 'apple' designates *apple*. In Twinson's hometown, fa-

mous for its 'apples', no one has ever seen an apple, for the only fruit growing in Pometown is the pomegranate; but of course, all Locumbians refer to pomegranates using the word 'apple'. In his famous 2042 edition of the *Twenglish-English Dictionary*, Tom A. McIntosh renders the Twenglish word 'apple' by the English word 'pomegranate'. As for all other Twenglish words, the translation is homophonic. Further, all contexts in which the Twenglish word 'apple' occurs are unproblematically translated into English as '*x* is a large fruit containing many seeds in a red pulp'; and 'No *x* is to be found in the recipe of the world famous American baked Pie'; and 'No *x* has ever been reported to come anywhere near Isaac Newton's head'; and 'Never in his lifetime has Guillaume Tell seen an *x*' and 'The expression "The Big *x*" has never been used to refer to New York City'; and so on.

Suppose further that the Locumbians have a peculiar religious faith which prompts them to believe that pomegranates are somehow endowed with a strong spiritual power. In fact, in Tribish Locumbia, pomegranates are sacred and, therefore, are not edible. Each Locumbian household has its pomegranates disposed strategically in each room. For example, before each meal, Locumbians enter a state of meditation which lasts a few seconds, at the end of which they utter what sounds like 'An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away.' This, according to their religion, builds a kind of spiritual defense against all physical diseases. Twinson, of course, shares this belief with the rest of his community. In Appletown, on the other hand, the expression 'An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away' has become a sort of *lieu commune* amongst the community. In effect, no one *really* believes in the medicinal powers of apples despite the nutrients they contain. In fact, they believe that apples have *no* medicinal powers at all. The expression is a mere saying that gets carried around more or less ironically.

Now, back to Granny Smith Hospital where Winston and

Twinson are slowly recuperating from their respective injuries. Recall that both have lost their vocal box. So they have been attached to an artificial one, and since there's only one such device per unit, both Winston and Twinson are attached to the same device. One day, just before lunch, the nurse walks into the room with a drawing that, she hopes, will bring a little more color on the empty wall facing the beds. Using thumbtacks, she puts the drawing on the wall. The picture shows what looks like an apple, and prompts both patients, *via* the artificial voice box, to utter, simultaneously, 'An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away.' Of course, this single tokening of the expression, when considered semantically, must count as the expression of *two different beliefs*, for in no way can Winston's belief be identified with, or even be considered similar to, Twinson's belief. In effect, Winston believes (i) that the drawing he perceives is that of an apple; (ii) that apples have no medicinal powers; whereas Twinson believes (i) that the drawing he perceives is that of an 'apple' (pomegranate); (ii) that 'apples' (pomegranates) are sacred and that they have spiritual powers. On the other hand, if we consider both internal and external states described in non-intentional and non-semantic terms, we are forced to admit that they are identical for both Winston and Twinson. The two agents share the same physical environment; they are stimulated by the same external object; *all* their internal states, described in non-intentional and non-semantic terms are identical;²⁴ *token-wise*, the firing patterns responsible for their 'verbal' behavior are the same. In other words, the two agents share the same functional and physical states, construed *either* following the strictures of psychofunctionalism *or* the strictures of wide functionalism. Now, before drawing any conclusion, let me consider a few

²⁴This latter claim will be challenged on the grounds that *unless* both individuals are physical duplicates, they will *not* share *all* their internal states. But this charge may be dealt with by assuming both agents to be neurophysiological twins.

possible objections that come immediately to mind.

16. A wide functionalist might raise the following objection: 'Since the objects of beliefs (*viz.* apples and pomegranates) are physically different, the two agents do *not* share the same environment and *that* is sufficient for their entertaining different beliefs'. This objection will not do. For the agents are stimulated by the same physical object, *viz.* a *drawing* of what looks like an apple, and one may very well consider that apples and pomegranates share a sufficiently similar appearance so that Winston sees the drawing *as* an apple, while Twinson sees the drawing *as* an 'apple' (pomegranate). Whether apples and pomegranates are physically the same is beside the point for, as I said, there is *one* physical object in the visual field of both agents. Therefore, both agents share the same physical environment.

Another objection might go as follows: 'Since the objects of belief of both agents are physically different, even though they share, in your thought experiment, the same physical environment, their internal states will *not* be identical, for the way each agent acquired his beliefs about apples/pomegranates was sufficiently different to produce different patterns of beliefs as regards other properties of each fruit. Therefore, the very difference in the *acquisition* of the set of beliefs about apples and pomegranates accounts for the different beliefs upon perception of the drawing.' This objection fails for a very simple reason. One can easily imagine both agents acquiring their respective set of beliefs as regards apples/pomegranates in an identical manner. Both agents have acquired all their respective beliefs about apples/pomegranates from, say, the same videotape during childhood, which makes the acquisition of each set of beliefs, at least when considered in purely non-intentional and non-semantic terms, identical. So each and every physical aspect – internal *and* external – of both agents is identical, and they yet entertain different beliefs.

A third objection, of a quite different sort, is still possible. Someone may assume the thought experiment to hold, and yet consider it entirely irrelevant for the purpose of criticizing, say, functionalism. Roughly, one could simply point out that since the kind of behavior the functionalist wants to explain is *non-intentional behavior*, the fact that two physically indiscernible agents *may* nevertheless entertain different intentional states, will turn out to be of no great importance, and for obvious reasons.²⁵

This objection appears to beg the very question at issue, that is, providing a solution – or at least a framework that could lead to something like a solution – to the mind-body problem. If one asks what *is* the mind-body problem, part of the answer consists in showing that given a non-eliminativist and non-dualist stance – for instance, a reductive stance – the mind-body problem is *precisely* the problem of accounting for the intentionality of human behavior. So the decision of addressing *non-intentional* behavior in order to solve the problem presupposes that intentional states have been *proved* reducible to non-intentional states, which is *exactly* what the thought experiment shows *not* to be the case. In other words, the objection stems from an argument which is either circular, or has no bearing on the initial problem.

17. I now turn to a few concluding remarks. First, I think that the second premise of [AI] holds, *if*, of course, the thought experiment is taken to be plausible at all. Assuming that it is, individualism, then, as construed in sections 8 to 10, does not provide sufficient conditions for the individuation of certain mental states identified by content and, consequently, is not adequate

²⁵This objection is considered by Joseph Owens, *op.cit.*, pp.541-547. After pointing to the fact that the objection stems from what he calls a 'positivistic epistemology', that is, 'an epistemology which distinguished sharply between the epistemic character of observational and theoretical terms', he goes on to say that '... of course, this is now a widely rejected epistemology; there are good reasons for thinking that what we readily characterize as observational terms are not theory independent in this sense.' (p.547)

for solving the mind-body problem. Further, it follows that the conclusion of [GA] holds, that is, Spinoza's view, as construed, is *not* adequate to solve the mind-body problem.

As regards the mind-body problem and, more specifically, the problem of the individuation of mental states identified by content, the following question thus arises: If individualism does not work, what, then, will do the job? The answer – at any rate, part of the answer – would be, roughly, that the linguistic and social environment is a necessary condition in order to individuate some of an agent's mental states identified by content.²⁶ But if this is correct, then the problem as to what distinguishes the physical and the social environments, must be addressed. Given a non-dualist materialism as the general metaphysical background, it would seem that the social environment is *somehow* physical. But what does that mean? What does a linguistic environment look like?

It is very tempting to declare that the social and linguistic environment *has* to be physical in one way or another and go on, from that principle, to examine the relation between the social and the physical environments – assuming, of course, that mental contents are *not* individualistically individuated. But here, the

²⁶This is indeed a conclusion reached by Tyler Burge in (1979). Commenting on his famous 'arthritis'-arthritis beliefs, Burge concludes that 'The upshot of these reflections is that the patient's mental contents differ while his entire physical and non-intentional mental histories, considered in isolation from their social context, remain the same... The differences seem to stem from differences "outside" the patient considered as an isolated physical organism, causal mechanism, or seat of consciousness. The difference in his mental contents is attributable to differences in his social environment. In sum, the patient's internal qualitative experiences, his physiological states and events, his behaviorally described stimuli and responses, his dispositions to behave, and whatever sequences of states (non-intentionally described) mediated his input and output – all these remain constant, while his attitude contents differ, even in the extensions of counterpart notions. As we observed at the outset, such differences are ordinarily taken to spell differences in mental states and events.' (p.79)

first question should go something like: What does 'physical' mean? For, if we assume the current acception of the term, it seems that the 'issue' turns out *not* to be one at all – to put things mildly.

Yet another strategy is very tempting, namely, that of eliminativism, and the non-individualism towards which the present paper leads me *seems* to be compatible with such an approach. However, it should be clear that a strategy such as eliminativism is only seemingly right, given that one crucial aspect of the anti-individualist argument was to show that the socio-linguistic environment is a necessary condition for the individuation of some mental contents, thus resisting elimination. A more promising strategy, I believe, is that of naturalism, but it falls beyond the scope of the present paper to pursue this view. To be sure, there are many more objections that were not considered here, and certainly the question still remains: Is non-individualism really defensible? Nevertheless, I hope I have provided a sense of its plausibility as a philosophical doctrine.²⁷

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