# Mind and Body: Spinoza and Leibniz

### 1. Spinoza: From Parallelism to Identity

1. Against Descartes: the mind is not a substance. (a) Substance necessarily exists (*Ethics* IP7, P11). (b) I do not necessarily exist (EIIA1). (c) So, I am not a substance (EIIP10). (d) And since there is only one substance (EIP14), I could not be the composite if two substances anyway.

    2. Mind and body 'run' in parallel: "*P7: The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. Dem.*: This is clear from IA4. For the idea of each thing caused depends on the knowledge of the cause of which it is the effect. […] *Schol.*: Before we proceed further, we must recall here what we showed [in Part I], namely, that whatever can be perceived by an infinite intellect as constituting an essence of a substance [i.e. attribute] pertains to one substance only, and consequently that the thinking substance and the extended substance are *one and the same substance*, which is now comprehended under this attribute, now under that. So also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are *one and the same thing*, but *expressed in two ways*. […] For example, a circle existing in Nature and the idea of the existing circle, which is also in God [i.e. Nature], are one and the same thing, which is explained through different attributes. Therefore, whether we conceive Nature under the attribute of extension, or under thought, or under any other attribute, we shall find *one and the same order*, or one and the *same connection of causes*, that is, that the same things follow one another. [… So] long as things are considered as modes of thinking, we must explain the order of the whole of Nature, or the connection of causes, through the attribute of thought alone. And insofar as they are considered as modes of extension, the order of the whole of Nature must be explained through the attribute of extension alone. […]" (*Ethics* IIP7, emphases added)

    3. The argument seems to be this: since there is an idea of everything in God *or* Nature (EIIP3), every mode of extension (i.e. every extended thing) has a corresponding mode of thought (i.e. an idea), such that a particular mode of thought *A* *represents* a particular extended mode *B*. Total *representationalism*: individual minds are ideas of their bodies, and thus represent *every* state of their bodies, however dimly or 'inadequately'. Likewise, every particular object has corresponding ideas, which constitute 'its' mind.

    4. Modes are defined in terms of conceivability 'through' something else (EID5). Since the conceiving-through relation *is* the causal relation, it follows that the modes are essentially caused entities, whose definition includes a 'causal profile'. So, understanding *A* is to understand how *A* came about, and what it will cause in turn. This is why P7 concerns the 'order and connection' of things and ideas.

    5. But given the conceptual independence of attributes (EIP10, EIP10S), there is a causal–explanatory barrier between attributes. Hence, it is not possible to *explain* the 'order and connection' of extended modes in terms of modes of thought, and

neither can extended modes *cause* modes of thoughts. But given total representation, there is an *isomorphism* between the parallel causal-explanatory systems of modes.

6. This looks as if Spinoza advocates property (or 'modal') dualism (without interaction). But P7S also claims that *A* and *B* 'are one and the same thing': *A = B*. This is a *mind–body identity* theory. What is the argument for this?

7. Extended modes *share* the 'order and connection' with modes of thought. If *A* has ten immediate effects, then *B* has ten immediate effects. Given the identity of indiscernibles (cf. Leibniz's Law), these properties cannot make the difference. But the properties of thought and extension cannot explain the difference either, given cross-attributive closure. Now the PSR comes in: since there is *no reason* to regard *A* and *B* as different, they are 'one and the same'. Equivalently, modes of thought are (numerically) identical with modes of extension in virtue of the *attribute-neutral* 'order and connection' properties that they share.[1]

8. This is *maximal monism* about substance (numerically one substance), paired with monism about modes (one kind or type of mode), but combined with conceptual dualism/pluralism: we understand God/Nature in two different ways, or under two (incompatible) conceptual frameworks.

## 2. Leibniz: Pre-Established Harmony (or Concomitance)

1. *Critique of Occasionalism* (Readings [3 and [4]). Malebranche writes: 'A true cause as I understand it is one such that the mind perceives a necessary connection between it and its effects' (*Search after Truth*, VI.2.ii). Since there is a necessary connection only between the divine will and its effects (it is inconceivable that God wills *x* and *x* does not obtain), God is the only true cause. When the billiard ball strikes, this is an occasion for God to *make* another ball roll away and put the first one to rest. Bodies and minds hence merely provide occasions for divine action. As such, they are causally totally inert: since divine causes *suffice* for every effect, all other causes are redundant.

2. Monads are self-contained, complete entities, whose 'dealings' with the world is but an intrinsic and determined stream of more or less clear perceptions.

3. By extraordinary divine planning, the stream of perceptions in *one* monad is such that perceptions *seem* to follow one another naturally. For instance, when I sit down I feel some pressure against my back. But there is no causal connection here. Similarly, the flow of perceptions *between* different monads is in harmonious agreement: when I see moving my arm, you see my arm moving; whenever I say 'harmony', you hear 'harmony'. But these events are not causally related at all; it only *appears* to us as if they were.

4. This solves the problem of mind–body interaction by explaining it away.

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1  Della Rocca, M. (1993). Spinoza's Argument for the Identity Theory. *The Philosophical Review*, *102*, 183–213.