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JOY ACCORDING TO DESCARTES AND SPINOZA

There are few images of Descartes and Spinoza that survived to the modern times. The portrait of the first of the two, the author of theories nearly stripping us of any hopes of ever becoming free from the influence of affections marring the clear thoughts, displays a carefully posed man looking at us. He seems to be effortfully surpressing an almost rougish smile, as though he had performed an amusing practical joke just a moment ago. The second one, teaching that our action (power, essence) is synonymous with joy, looks forward with a melancholy-filled stare. Spinoza's faint smile appears to fade as we move our sight up his face, from chin to forehead. Could it be that both men found joy troublesome?

It is not possible to present all variations of this affect, more numerous than the subjects of the senses. Therefore, this article will concentrate on the most characteristic qualities of joy, underlined by both philosophers.

In the treatise *Passions of the Soul* it is not *res cogitans*, but *l âme* (lat. *Anima*), the resident of corpus pineal, that is subjected to the unsettling and unhinging feelings, *affections*¹ caused my the movement of the life breaths in the body. These experiences are blurred and hard to capture discoveries by nature, very hard to comprehend due to "the alliance between the soul and the body".² Descartes does not describe the soul as a substance, as he called the bodies and the minds before. The way it affects the mind

¹ Terms such as *affection* written in italics are used in a technical sense according to the way they appear in the works of Descartes and Spinoza and should be distinguished from the common use in everyday language.

² R. Descartes, *Passions of the Soul*, art. XXVIII (= PS; all the quotations from the translation based on the 1650 London edition of an unknown translator available from http://net.cgu.edu/philosophy/descartes/Passions_Part_Two.html). It can be assumed that the unclear description results from the nature of the discovery itself and the limitations of speech, incapable of giving a name to such subtle and beforehand unknown phenomena.

and body can be compared to the function of the blister of air in a mason's level, regulating the mutual location of both portions of the liquid in a glass tube. Together with the "drop" of air they create a whole without touching each other, and whatever befalls one of them is immediately displayed in the movement and the position of the other.

The reading of *Passions...* on the soul tells us that it feels and experiences, but it does not cognize. Ideas, as Descartes puts it, being "*similar to images of things*", are subjected to the mental powers and it is *mens*, not *anima*, that conceptualises, claims, denies, wants and does not want, and even imagines. The soul, much like the mind, *perceives*, although not as clearly and vividly as the latter, and not the ideas, but motions of the "animal spirits". They are shaking it, and the intellect recognises their kinds by experiencing the movements in the soul and realises what it feels, conceptualising the proper terms. There is a long way from naming a sensation and understanding its source to realising its nature and what this knowledge can be used for, however.

Explaining its complication, Descartes calls upon the theory of distinction and hierarchy of the functions of the mind. Established in *Meditations* and repeated in *Passions of the Soul*, it claims that "...there remains nothing in us which we ought to attribute to our soul, unless our thoughts, which are chiefly of two kinds, to wit, some actions of the soul, others, her passions. Those which I call her actions are all our wills because we experimentally find they come directly from our soul and seem to depend on nought but it. As on the contrary, one may generally call her passions all those sorts of apprehensions and understandings to be found within us because oftentimes our soul does not make them such as they are to us, and she always receives things as they are represented to her by them."³

According to the definition, the affects of the soul are "apprehension, resentments, or emotions of the soul, attributed particularly to it, and caused, fomented, and fortified by some motion of the spirits."⁴ The phrase *attributed to it* isn't a fortunate one; in fact, apprehensions or emotions are *are found already present in it*. The soul notices their presence in itself, but does not capture the moment of their occurrence, and the search for their causes is the occupation of the mind. Therefore the *Passions...* claim that the *anima* is passive, subjected to emotions.

Commonly, in spite of this theory, the soul is attributed with a capacity to take action. Descartes explains it as a custom, according to which it was

³ PS, art. XVII.

⁴ PS, art. XXVII.

an usual practice to create a name for what is more “noble” and include in it also what is more common. That is why the soul is said to act, although *in fact it experiences* actions (therefore we accept an error to respect a custom). Such a troublesome image in language will make a proper expression of philosophical ideas more difficult more than once.

Descartes attempts to make a clear distinction between the fields of the will and the mind. In *Principles of Philosophy* and *Meditations* the intellect is a passive function; it receives the ability to perceive (*perceptio*), to feel, to imagine and to purely understand, its feeling is *certainty*. In opposition to it the will, an active and “superior” resort of the mind that wants, and therefore desires, despises (does not want), claims, denies and *doubts*. The fact of acceptance of the superiority of the will over the intellect tells a lot of Descartes’ understanding of the human nature. The rule that “*The active*” is better than “*the passive*” is undeniable; when related to the mental powers, however, it would be hard to admit that a doubt as an act of will could be more perfect than the most enlightened grasp of the truth by a passive intellect. Everyday experience shows how reluctantly the will affirms or rejects judgments clearly put in the natural light of the mind as true, how commonly we choose the worse, even knowing the better.

When does the mind experience *joy*, the *passive state* of the soul? Is it possible to cause it by an act of will and, thus having changed one’s mood, strengthen the natural light of the reason, see the world brighter and notice only its limitations, but also the possibilities it offers to us? What is it and what conditions does it depend on? Answering these questions requires certain initial establishments.

Let the first one be the “*rule of relativity*” introduced in the first article of *Passions of the Soul*, claiming that what is an action towards one thing is an experience in relation to another. It makes an axis of considerations on the processes taking part in the uneven gland placed in the middle of the brain, where the movement of the spirits presents the soul with indifferent or emotion-rising sensations and motions of the body.⁵ The soul is a unity, it does not consist of parts; “the same which is sensible is rational”,⁶ the impulses are desires to it, depending on what they are directed at. It can be assumed that the intellect is a soul *picking up on* the contents of the perceptions and does not differ from the will, or the soul governing the perceptions, in any other way than by the very way of relating to the subjects

⁵ PS, art. XLVII.

⁶ *Ibid.*

of thinking. Being a unity, the soul is unable to change the movement of the animal spirits awakening its feelings by an act of will – it is therefore not possible to cause joy in oneself by the “demand” of will.

The second establishment concerns the *object* of the consideration. The “rule of relativity” enables us to limit the analysis to the passive states of mind and reasoning about the processes taking part in the body basing on it. The first part of the treatise includes a physiological model of occurrence of affects and substantiates the next establishment, according to which “the principal effect of all the passions in men is, they incite and dispose their souls to will the things for which they prepare their bodies so that the resentment of fear incites him to be willing to fly; that of boldness, to be willing to fight, and so of the rest.”⁷

The considerations on joy can be found most of all in the 2nd part of *Passions of the Soul*. Descartes underlines that the sensations caused by the subjects of the senses are not connected to the qualities of those things, but to their malevolence or their usefulness to the body. Joy is not therefore the final accomplishment of the efforts of the mind or its objective, but a mean leading to a more important end – a certain gain. The feeling of joy should sign the *presence* of what is related to our well-being and direct the will, conditioning the body to an appropriate course of action. Other affects shaking the souls might, however, enfeeble the force of will and weaken its influence on our behavior. In general, though, the sensations help distinguishing between important and non-consequent perceptions and make us prone to and enduring pursuit of what is profitable to us.

The intellect and the will, in their search for subjects beneficent to the body are exposed to three primal, and possible only to them, experiences. The soul is therefore shaken by six basic affects:

- astonishment, love and hatred (experiences of the intellect),
- desire, joy and sadness (feelings of the will).

All of them are by character observations, sensations (in an sensoric sense of the word) or affections caused, supported and reinforced by the movement of the animal spirits.⁸ Since the will does not learn but decide (in the extreme cases *doubts*), its actions, and possibly also experiences, are conditioned by the intellectual processes.

Describing the origins of joy, Descartes says that joy awakens in us under the impact of considering the current good, imagined as our own

⁷ PS, art. XL.

⁸ PS, art. XXVII.

(analogically, imagining our own evil and considering it as a “current” one causes sadness to the soul). It will be prudent to return to this thesis on an occasion; for now, it can be noticed that *without consideration* and *imagination* the feelings of the soul would be merely unvaried observations, rising the astonishment of the intellect at best. Before the joy sets in, the will needs to experience *desire* (*cupiditas* or *appetitus*), directed towards the object shown by the intellect. It also creates the awareness of “myself”. The lack of self-consciousness makes the experiences characteristic for the will impossible, and even excludes its activity. In an animal, the will is replaced by instincts. What, on the other hand, happens in the soul of a small baby, whose intellect does not yet evolve an awareness of its own existence? It should be reasoned that it is not capable of joy or sadness, and the experiences of its “will” are limited to the appetition.

A human is overjoyed not only by his *own* good. Joy can be caused by a view that “things fall out as they should do”,⁹ even if the course of events concerns other people. The role of the intellect and its experiences, *astonishment* and *love*, in the creation of such a feeling becomes even more visible. When good befalls someone we *consider* worthy of it, and evil reaches the one who – as we *believe* – deserves it, we experience joy because our vision of the world order has been confirmed; the *mind* knows what course of events should be, and the world admits *it* to be correct. A joy overwhelming us with the news of the goodness of the world befalling the *good* is written to be *serious* – not accompanied by laughter. It will make its appearance when evil catches up with someone we *believe* to have deserved it. The joy of a punished evil shakes the mind stronger than the previous one – the laughter, similarly to the mockery, is an affect engaging the body. The mockery is born in the intellect, as a matter of fact, but it is accounted as an affect for the very reason of moving the body and appears in it by voice, facial expression, gesture and the inability to “bite one’s tongue”.

Both the serious and the mocking joy has its source in the *intellectual* satisfaction of the subject who realises s/he knows how things should be, how they really are and – most importantly – who is aware *s/he knows about that*. Its narcissistic feature is caused by *love* as an affect of the intellect, directed towards the same subject discovering its own proficiency and experiencing an “inward satisfaction, which is the sweetest of all the passions”.¹⁰

The description of the origins of the affects and their ties to the states of body are not enough to provide with ways of subjugating them. It is also

⁹ PS, art. LXII.

¹⁰ PS, art. LXIII.

important to know what they are, how they are connected to the subjects of the senses, what their dynamics and strength depend on. This knowledge is expressed among others by the definitions of the passions of the soul. *Joy* is “a pleasing emotion of the soul, wherein consists her enjoyment of good that the impressions of the brain represent unto her as her own”.¹¹ Here, however, we come to a doubt.

The description of the origins of joy mentioned above spoke of an existent good, *imagined* (not perceived) *as one’s own*. In this situation the will, always directed towards the future, *may desire it* – the touching of the intellect (consideration, imagination) according to the “theory of relativity” will appear in it as an appetite or desire. On the other hand, the definition of joy underlines the joy from good, *presented* to the soul *as its own*. When we keep the intellectual aspect of the soul (“the intellect recognises good as its own”) in mind, and ask about its will, it will turn out to be oblivious – it has no reason to desire something that is a subject to the soul. The affect will not start and will not move the will.

Cupiditas and *appetitio* throw the will out of immobility; is it aware, however, what it experiences – joy or sadness? The soul is unified, as the intellect it makes itself aware of the kind of feeling and knows whether joy merely overtakes it (*yoje, qui est une passion*), or it is a sensation included into a reflection, a purely intellectual joy (*la yoje purement intellectuelle*).¹²

What would a purely intellectual joy be? Descartes realises that, according to his theory, the soul, unlike the body, achieves practically no profit from its actions other than a pleasant emotion or enjoyment it feels when realising its own activity. The aims and movements of the body regard its well-being; what the soul achieves for itself, compared to the favours done to the body, is not much indeed.¹³ This small bit is the intellectual joy – not a *passio*, but an *actus*, an act of the soul, originating “by the sole action (of the soul)”¹⁴ and for that reason called “a pleasing emotion in her”.¹⁵

In the state discussed here the soul does not regard any other object than itself, so the only good considered by it as *its own* may be *its action* only. The intellectual joy would not then fit – despite a common name –

¹¹ PS, art. XCI.

¹² PS, art. XCI, p. 90.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 91; see also art. CXLVII – being under the influence of a book or a play we experience various passions “but withal we take a delight to feel them excited in us and this delight is an intellectual joy, which may as well spring from sadness, as all the rest of the passions” (ibid.).

¹⁵ PS, art. XCI.

into the category of an *affect of joy*, a passive state of the soul, dependent as all other affects on the movement of the life breaths. If it were to depend on them, it would be in a negative way only – when the motion is not too violent, the soul is able to direct its attention onto itself.

The first shaking of the intellect is, as it was said, astonishment. Thus moved, it can experience *love* or *hate*. Where does the idea of having the intellect experience “*purely intellectual joy*” come from, since joy belongs to the affects of *will*? It is self-cognition that seems to be the inspiration to such an re-ranking of the affects seems to be self-cognition. An *aware* experience of joy (as well as sadness) shows that the recognition of these sensations by the intellect indeed either brightens it, enhancing its functioning (possibly in an excessive fashion akin to bravado or mania), or disables it, pushing it into a state similar to dimming. Apart from that, joy and sadness have no power of *claiming* and repulsing, typical for desire, love and hate; those affects are more reminiscent of light or darkness, showing up in the mind when as the intellect *it understands that it understands*, or even when *the only thing it knows, is that it knows nothing*.

According to the mentioned rule of “one thing, two names” the *affect of joy* might be seen by the intellect as its own motion, shaking noted in the context of an influx of ideas filled with the content of sensoric observations or as an *act of the soul* called for that reason *will*. It is pleasant to act according to one’s own rule, but less pleasant to be subjected to an action – the pure joy of the soul (perhaps a more proper phrase than “the intellectual joy”) would be possible when it would always have all its objects “in itself” and could perceive those which the will currently wants to perceive. The object of the action and the “acting nature” would be then parts joined together by the force of love.

While the body is alive, such a unification remains unreachable, and in its place we experience a varied multiplicity. The intellect grasps its parts and in a form of image-ideas places them at will’s disposal. The mass and speed, with which they appear and disappear is a sheer earthquake to the mind, a hell of affects, a boiling mixture of astonishment, joy, anxiety, hope, desire and disgust, over which neither the idle reason nor the active will have any control. When everything goes the way it should not and nothing ends as it ought to, instead of joy, the mind experiences an “intellectual sadness”. Descartes says – and he probably knows what he means – that it is not a feeling, but something accompanied by the feeling of sadness. To see its own im-potence is to a soul a state too unspecified, ambivalent, for will to lean towards *yes, I do want it* or *no, it is not what I want*, and at the same time not sufficiently aimed at the *entire relation* of its powers, to cause in

it the terror of an imminent madness. To watch itself drowning, but not be ridden of hope for rescue – it is the state in which the soul experiences sadness.

One of the peculiarities of the discussed theory of affects is a thesis that sadness and hate are feelings more *primal* and necessary than joy and love. By warning of dangers and helping to remove what is harmful to the body, they are more beneficial than joy and love. These latter make the life more perfect, but it is possible to exist without perfection, and all more so without the means leading to it.¹⁶

It could be asked whether an “unpleasant weakness” in the form of upset feelings we feel when we notice something bad or lacking in ourselves (it is an approximate way the sadness works) warns of something in itself and helps to get rid of anything or quite the opposite, directed not towards the future, but revealing the current state, does it not take away the strength necessary for dealing with lacking, removing what is bad – in other words, action? Are not the feelings of the sort of joy “foremost” in the sense they allow to survive an amount of time in sadness and hate thanks to a hope for turning the fate? Descartes convinces that joy (as well as feeling akin to it) “joy is *commonly* more hurtful than sadness, because this, enduing a man with reserve and wariness, does in some sort incline him to prudence, whereas the other render those who give themselves up thereunto inconsiderate and rash”.¹⁷ Sadness, angst and cautiousness certainly often accompany each other, it is doubtful, however, whether such a coincidence of experiences “makes one prone to be reasonable”, or rather, when as a result of a habit they become permanent marks of one’s soul, they do not turn into suspiciousness, a character trait. The conclusion saying that joy, by making us rash and careless, *usually* is more *harmful* than sadness, which is “an unpleasant languishing, wherein consists the discommodity the soul receives from evil, or defect, which the impressions of the brain represent unto her, as belonging to her. And there is also an intellectual sadness, which is not the passion, but which wants but little of being accompanied by it”,¹⁸ appears similarly doubtful. Lack of sensibility might result from the temperament, speed, strength and permanency of the stimulations and the reactions of the organism to them, and therefore from the inborn way of the circulation of the animal spirits. The disastrous effects of careless course of action should cause anxiety, sadness and carefulness, but not necessarily reasonable disposition;

¹⁶ See PS, art. CXXXVII.

¹⁷ PS, art. CXLIII, (*italic mine*).

¹⁸ See the definition of sadness, *ibid.*, art. XCII.

both it and the sensibility do not demand the banishment of joy from the mind. Pushed into an affect of unpleasant weakness, convinced of being bad or lacking, from where and by the force of what would the mind draw the strength outweighing its shortages, but necessary to move the will, so that it would want to examine, compare and judge all “pros” and “cons”?

Cartesian rules of proper dealing with the active function of the mind, the free will, standing at the foundations of morality required the will not to be exposed to unnecessary and violent influences of “animal spirits”. To this end, it was prudent to avoid exaggerated, unhealthy body movements and ensure a peaceful surroundings for it. Normal life situations, to which the soul is exposed, practically ensure its enslavement as long as it remains in the service of the body. Why must it be so? The thesis of a fallen, sinful and immoral to the very core human condition, worsened yet by the ways of the world, is not sufficient as an answer to the question of “*what should we do?*”.

The question above summarises the central problem of *Ethics* as well. In an attempt to answer it, Spinoza introduces his own assumptions, changes the arrangement of notions and equalises the meaning of some of them. An important trait of the Spinozian theory of nature is its immanentism. It has many premises, both practical and theoretical; among the first we can find the then-modern idea of infinite, unlike just unlimited nature, among the latter an axiom of *Everything that is, is either in itself, or in something else*. An infinite nature can be comprehended only as what is *in itself*; ourselves – as *what is in something else*. The similarity of the meaning of this notions and the meaning of “substance” (or that which is in itself and comprehends itself *per se*, without resorting to the meaning of other ideas) enabled to introduce the famous *sive* into the language of *Ethics*. Assuming the viewing point to be a place inside an *infinite* nature a possibility of thinking anything apart from it is excluded – therefore God is included into the infinity and assumes an immanent position towards nature as well. All three notions express the same eternal, timeless, infinite being. Having no borders, permeating everything; what is, what is in it and out of it. Spinoza assumes as well that the terms *God*, *nature* and *substance* set a context for other descriptions and order thinking about the area of so-called extended things, taking part in movement, their cognition and cognition of cognition, finally they set the borders of meaning of the idea of *existence* (an act constituting the *modi* of nature). The considerations of affects find a relation to the original unity, viewed from a different angle and from a different point of view each time, in these notions (God, substance, nature).

In Spinozian system of nature, there is no place for an idea of soul (*anima*),¹⁹ as the animate objects *are not composed* of inert matter that would need to be animated by an immaterial factor. We ourselves and all things known to us exist *in and out of substance* (according to the rule: what is, is in itself, or in something else) as its *modi* (examples, varieties, ways of existence). *Modi* do not split up from the substance; everything that benefits from existence makes an epifany, a blossom, a flare in the substance, nature, or, if we have courage to think of it – in God. Thus understood, the nature lives *for itself*, everywhere one and everywhere the same, with nothing as its aim, but also without rejecting anything that belongs to the manifestation of its existence. While introducing new simplifications to the terminology, Spinoza will say of this very *existence* that it differs in nothing but the name (i.e. the point of our view) from force, and therefore necessity. In relation to the concept of “God” existence means as much as will, and so knowledge, or force – obviously, the borders of meanings of the mentioned terms are crossing.

Spinoza’s terminological reductionism does not end here. Def. VI of the second part of *Ethics* reads: “Reality and perfection I use as synonymous terms”. This sentence will be crucial to understanding the affect of joy, “the transition of a man from a less to a greater perfection”,²⁰ or, as we would say nowadays, to a fuller realisation. To avoid a mistake of premature interpretation, the meaning of the concept of “perfection” needs to be explained. In *Preface* to the fourth book of *Ethics* there is an explanation basing upon the Latin word *perfectum* – done, finished, perfect. We think of the reality as of a process of purposeful changes; we search for pursuing aim especially in the animate nature, we see their completion and cease to function when a “life purpose” is accomplished. This kind of thinking habit forces us to believe that an organism of more advanced progress is more perfect, and one that developed all the qualities imprinted into it by nature – as perfect in its own kind. One can be therefore *perfect* from time to time, though s/he is *real* constantly. Such an understanding of perfection turns our attention to the final aspect, while the infinite nature knows no “finals” (*finis* – the end, the objective, the finale, the destination), it has

¹⁹ *Anima* is ‘soul’ in a very specific meaning. Its task is to move, to enliven, but not necessarily “to think”. In the philosophy of Spinoza any associations connected with animation aspect of soul would dim the principal thesis, according to which organic bodies are nothing else but bodies as such, or, in other words *affections* of the substance when considered as the extended thing.

²⁰ B. Spinoza, *Ethics*, translated from the Latin by R. H. M. Elwes (<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~rbombard/RB/Spinoza/ethica3.html>).

no tasks or aims ahead of itself. Reality is a *current* (functional) nature, *natura naturans*, a fulfillment *finished* in any given moment of its changes is therefore *natura naturata*. There are no contradictions in this sentence. It expresses the same state of affairs observed from various points of view. An obstacle preventing the acceptance of it as correct appears to be a score of certain concepts from the everyday language, assimilated and accepted by metaphysics. One of them is a “thing” understood as a singular, separate entity made of parts, meaning different “things”, from material theoretically infinitely divided and from uncountable quantity of forms. Meanwhile, nature in Spinoza’s understanding is indivisible, in other words, it exists only as a one whole but infinite copy. How would be what is commonly believed to be “things” related to it?

Instead of “things”, *Ethics* mentions varieties of substance. This concept requires a broader explanation – it will not be understood *as such* without telling *what is being varied*. The variety is in God as a whole nature at one time, or a game of interdependant exemplifications of the substance. In its metamorphoses, or acts, its power, or its nature, action and perfection is expressed. The condition of the synonymity of all these concepts is relating to the eternal, indivisible, infinite whole, comprehended as One, and not to its infinite exemplifications (modifications).

Where do the constant modifications in the eternal nature come from? Spinoza proposes to tie the meanings of the terms *substance*, *modi* and *affectio* and says that nature is stimulated in infinite number of ways, among which two allow us to recognise ourselves – the stimulation by extending and by “thinking”. By this we received the answer to the most troubling question – how to understand the relation of man and nature. First of all, let us not speak of a relationship, ties, binds etc. These phrases assume a separate existence of independent things, from which a new whole can only be formed, while it exists infinitely. It should not be therefore said that we are *tied* to God and nature. According to Spinoza this relationship is too “weak” to show the real state of things. In every moment of our life we are exemplifications of nature, and by that means of God, a living, stimulated being of infinite power.

It is also needed to discard our imaginations of continuity of our own existence or of the psychophysical identical state throughout our entire life. While nowadays the idea of multiple, complete change of the matter of our bodies causes no angst, the possibility of losing the personal identity constantly appears to be terrifying. Ever since we discovered the meaning of the word *I*, each time we use it we reinforce a conviction that it describes ever better a familiar entity of a peculiar character and constant and unique

traits. In a confrontation with the facts known to everyone from autopsy this view is impossible to hold, but even in this case we are prone to ignore the facts to be able to sustain a convention of interpreting the experiences, ensuring a communication with the human community.

Community, much like “relationship”, assumes a whole to be made out of many. If we miss that feeling so much, since it is a need displayed in so many various situations, it appears that the easiest, and at the same time most radical, of its fulfilments would be creation of such a system of putting our experiences in order that will lead them all to one source and would allow to draw them all from it. Spinoza assumes that the source term of such a system would be the triad of *God, nature, substance*. Existence has been equalled in it to force, force to reality, and this – to perfection. Perfection, action means being stimulated, occurring in an infinite number of ways. The multitude becomes a way of existence of unity, let us remark – with no necessity of dividing it to parts. It can be said that *modi* of the substance are the symptoms of stimulation, not creations existing separately from the creator. There is an infinite number of the *affections* in the infinite nature. Spinoza assumes that when considered as a sentient thing, it “has” all the ideas of every single of its *affections*, as well as the ideas of those ideas; to speak humanely, the substance is self-knowledge.

And human? Well, this word has been created for a simpler management of the ideas, it is an universal lacking a designation in nature. The question is about a *really existent* human. As it can be seen, the linguistic image suggests “someone” singular, possessing an identity of self despite the passage of time, gifted with a personal character, etc. If someone like this were to *rejoyce*, crossing from a minor to a greater perfection, it should be believed that s/he would keep the individual character and identity, and will gain skill or trait s/he has not possessed before. Gain – but where from? If out of nowhere, s/he must have had them before, either being unaware of them (where from would s/he then learn that s/he “has” them, and how would s/he recognise them?), or knowing, but not putting them into reality. Perfection is reality (an act, an action); therefore joy works by shifting from a poorer to a fuller reality, from acting with a lesser force to using a greater one and in a broader scale. To be able without doing, and then to “enable”; just to assume, and then to gain a certainty – thus is joy expressed. Whose? Certainly not that of nature or God. The substance, or God, being everything does not pass from “lesser” to “greater” *affections*. The human joy?

The one who suspects is not the one who has the *proof*, even being “the same” person. When *suspecting* that the air presses the mercury in a bowl and pushes it into a glass tube, but without knowledge how to

design an experiment proving this hypothesis, one *is not the same* human that designed and conducted the appropriate research, or the one who after many trials and calculations brought the observation to a formula written down with the use of symbols. Does it mean “Blaise Pascal” was a multitude of people? Which one of them, by God, was the *real* Pascal, rejoicing with the discovery of a new law of nature?

If the discourse constructed for the needs of *Ethics* could replace the scheme of thoughts imprinted together with the structure of the language in early childhood, questions as this one would not be necessary (or possible). Blaise Pascal would turn out to be infinite collections of *affections* (*modi*) of the substance, the two kinds of which – extended and “thinking” – might be partially known to us. The nature realises them by the means of all the possible variations concerning for instance the being of “extended Pascal” – starting from mixing the genetic material of the parents, through all the stages of growth and development, reaching maturity, through the forms of the body health and its possible illnesses, recovery from them and expirations caused by them. Parallely to them the substance modifies itself as the ideas of all these forms and the ideas of their ideas. Blaise Pascal is an infinity. A different one, as it is filled with different forms and ideas, is the infinity known as “Rembrandt van Rijn”.

Their joys are the *affections* of *their bodies* (in fact: the sequences of *modi* discussed in all the nature as extended thing), in which the force of action increases “locally”. Parallely to the stimulations of the extended nature *affections* of its ideal aspect occur, which is why Spinoza will say that the affection of joy expresses itself also as the idea of the increase of force.

How does the activity (reality, act) of a given body work? The activity of nature understood as a whole are all its aspects. A *body* is a part of this whole artificially divided from it by us, concerned as extension. The fact we grasp it in such a way does not change its nature in any way and does not separate it from the substance. The possibility of the fragmentation of the infinity comes from it itself – its ideal aspect is filled with essences (ideas) expressing something akin to an algorithm, using what makes it possible to place the singular ideas in sequences. An example of such a system of forms and their essences might be a *mountain* and a *lowland*. Both in space and among ideas the mountain assumes the existence of a lowland and one enables understanding what the other is. If a lowland is covered, the mountain will disappear; their reality (*in actu*) and force with which they dwell in nature, resisting erosion and human activity, demands that the nature expressing itself in both those aspects cared for

their existence by being affected. A granite rock stroked by lightnings that resists their force and remains untouched *enjoys* the existence. The idea of its force is a modification of the substance; it is true that the mountain will not learn it, but the ideas of the human bodies (our minds) might grasp the other ideas of substance by perceiving them and comprehending their contents.

The *act* of an idea is an expression of its essence by it; all the ideas claim and deny something about themselves. The activity of extended things will be expressed in space, which essence (action) is giving place in three dimensions. By acting, the extended things of the nature prove the being of extension, and above that they add to it something coming from them alone: the rock – a drive to emerge upwards, the granite – the solidity, the rain – the humidity falling down from the clouds, etc. What results just from their essence in a sequence of events in space is called *adequate cause*. When a thing is such a cause (when an event would not take place without its participation) we speak of its *affection* in a sense of an action; the lightning strikes the peak of the mountain, the rain pours to the ground, Rembrandt paints the portrait of Saskia, Pascal creates an original metaphor. When an event would not take place without a different, active thing, we speak of a partial (inadequate) cause.

It is hard to understand what would be the *idea of joy* and *joy* of a dry land on which the rain starts to pour. It can be grasped by the poets, and by the means of their talent by some of the readers. The soil poured with water becomes heavier and muddy, stretches in a way borrowed from water; broken by heat it becomes stony, as though looking up to the ideal of a stone, a granite nudget. *Affection* of nature, modifying itself to a dry or muddy soil cannot be concerned as its action – in all of these examples it is not the sole cause for its state.

It is easier to understand the idea of joy and joy as an affection experienced by a human. When Spinoza claims that there is a part of *joy*, or crossing from a lesser to a greater perfection (force with which one acts) even in such *affections* of human mind as realisation of one's own finity, the powerlessness of a body consumed by a disease or of ignorance, he pronounces a thesis opposite to that by Descartes, of the nature of the "intellectual sadness" and of the feeling of sadness accompanying it.

Perception of the sadness, or a hampering of the rise of the force or even a shift from a greater to a lesser perfection, by the mind as *its own* state happens by the medium of the *idea of sadness*, joined to the idea of the mind hampered in its drive to learn. It is, however *the mind itself that recognised* that the reduction of the perceiving force is taking place *in it*, so it *makes*

something happen. Its force, or perfection, or *joy*, is raised by the degree of that knowledge. This property of the human mind has been used in a variety of cognitive therapies, in which the patients are taught to control their actions, starting from, for instance, making distinction between and naming experiences. While doing it it is assumed (as Spinoza always did) that an own successful action (for example, an adequate recognition and naming of a phenomenon) not only does not reduce our strengths, but paradoxically multiplies them. One who accomplished something will find it easier to do it again – as though the knowledge of succeeding once gave him/her and additional portion of force. A feeling that *I know “what and how” and I know that I know it* is something more than an intellectual certainty. When viewed as one of many states of mind in a sequence, it is a turning point, ending the losing of the force and beginning its recovery. When viewed as an event in the scope of thinking of the substance, or God, we should consider an infinite number of ideas expressing all the possible states of this specific mind (an idea of a specific body), and put into consideration a fragment of a sequence made of ideas expressing an ability to perceive, connect, name, etc. ever less clearly. This fragment of the sequence of ideas shows the declining ability to think, called sadness. When in a sequence of such fading ideas there occur an idea of an idea – called insight, an act of self-knowledge – the character of the sequence will change. The idea of an idea has an increased force, it is not a normal *a*, but an *a squared*.

The view of Descartes on sadness and hatred as of primal affects and more necessary than joy would prove to stand against nature according to the *Ethics*. Spinoza assumes that the first affect of every being is *a drive to sustain one’s existence*. Sadness hampering *its force* cannot precede joy or be more beneficial than it. In other case, instead of ever greater perfection, we would head for the diminishing of our existence.

translated by Konrad Żelazny

Summary

The following article summarises some of the aspects of joy as a spiritual state (Descartes), and as an affect/stimulation of the modi of nature (Spinoza). The psycho-physiological (Descartes) and ontological (Spinoza) placement of joy creates basic differences in evaluation of the said state by the two philosophers. As a result, the moral instructions provided by them to the reader vary in an approach to the emotions and their effect on human

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actions. Descartes values the importance of sadness as an affect warning us from dangers; Spinoza claims that joy (as different from pleasure) can never be excessive and encourages pursuing it as a mean to achieve happiness.