

1 Ought we be monists? Discuss, drawing on the views of one or more of: Cavendish, Hume, Leibniz, Spinoza.

Introduction

In this essay I will argue in agreement with the statement that we ought to be monists. In particular, I contend that Spinoza's argument for monism is forcefully made and therefore the burden is on the pluralist to prove that monism isn't true. In what follows I will follow Rocca's strategy in defending Spinoza's argument. I shall begin by elucidating three key concepts, go on to expound the argument, and anticipate potential objections along the way. I conclude that Spinoza's argument can readily circumvent all of these objections.

Three ontological concepts

The defining tenet of Spinoza's monism is as follows:

1. Only one infinite substance (God) exists.

Three key concepts are at work in Spinoza's argument for monism. They are substance, attribute and mode. Let us elucidate these three terms.

2. Substance is "that which is in itself and conceived through itself".

Spinoza understands the notion of "conceiving" in terms of explanation. If A is conceived through B, then A is made intelligible in terms of B. Accordingly, when Spinoza says that substance is "conceived through itself" or self-conceived, he means that substance is not made intelligible in terms of something else – it is self-explanatory.

3. Attribute is "what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence".

Attribute tells us what it is to be a substance S: it is not something that exists separately from S. Attribute is therefore not ontologically distinct from substance. To the extent that attribute "constitutes the essence" of S, an attribute is fundamental in the sense that all other features of S can be understood in terms of it. To illustrate, let us say that S has the attribute of thought. Other less fundamental features of S such as imagining, desiring, willing etc. have to be understood in terms of thought. By contrast, the attribute of thought is not conceived through any other feature of S. So, like S, the attribute of S is self-conceived.

4. Mode is "that which is in another through which it is also conceived".

The concept of mode is best explained in contrast with attribute. So whereas an attribute is a self-conceived feature of a substance S, a mode is a feature that is dependent on other features of S. For example, the mode of a table (e.g. its being two inches wide) has to be understood in terms of the attribute of extension. To put things in more figurative terms, we can think of attribute as the starting point of the chain of explanations that comes with S.

Modes are different points in the explanatory chain; they all have to be understood in terms of that one attribute.

If we add all the claims (1, 2, 3 and 4) together, this leads to the following picture: all that exists are substance and mode. But in so far as everything apart from God has to be conceived in terms of it, God is the only substance. Everything else are modes of God.

Up till now I have assumed that the relationship between substance and mode is one of conceptual dependence. But this assumption can be challenged. Let us briefly look at an alternative reading of the contrast between substance and mode.

An alternative reading of the relation between substance and mode

Joachim suggests that we should understand the contrast between substance and mode as the 'metaphysical correlate of the logical antithesis of subject and predicate'. My criticism of this reading matches that of Curley: it doesn't sit well with Spinoza's definition of substance and mode. (1), (2) and (4) together imply that everything else apart from God are in God (Ethics 1p15). But if we are to add this claim to Joachim's interpretation, we would have to accept that particulars like trees, apples, people, cats, etc. are properties of God. It turns out that things that we typically think of as real are not subjects of predication after all. They are just predicates.

What adds to the absurdity is the fact that Joachim's reading, as Bayle forcefully puts it, renders God changeable. Here is what would happen if we assume that finite things are properties of God. It is quite clear that we all have different desires. At any particular instant, I might want something that you do not want (e.g. I might want a cup of coffee to brighten my day; the same need not apply to you). In that case, we would have to predicate contradictory properties of God.

We can argue at the outset that this result is unacceptable. Not to mention it contradicts textual evidence: it is quite clear that in Part 1 of the Ethics Spinoza was hoping to postulate a God with nothing in common with man. As such, Spinoza's postulation of God's immutability is fundamental to his argument for monism. Joachim cannot justify this alternative reading when it undermines one of Spinoza's commitments.

In short, if Spinoza's argument is to be tenable, we must understand the relationship between substance and mode as one of conceptual dependence, as opposed to predication.

I shall now argue that this reading of Spinoza makes his argument defensible against potential criticisms.

Evaluating Spinoza's argument for monism

Spinoza's argument can be formulated thus:

- A. Two substances cannot share the same attribute (1p5).
- B. It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist (1p7).

- C. God, defined as the substance as infinite attributes, exists (By 1p7).
- D. As a result, no substance besides God can exist (From A to C).

How do we get from (C) to (D)? Spinoza's reasoning is this: God is a substance with infinite attributes. Because of that, if other substance besides God exists, that substance would have to share attributes with God. But sharing of attributes is prohibited by Spinoza. So, no substance besides God can exist.

In what follows I will consider each step and evaluate potential objections along the way.

- A. "There cannot be two or more substances of the same attribute". (1p5)

1p5 is motivated by considering what would happen if we allow that two or more substances can share the same attribute. Spinoza argues that when this happens, we have no way of telling these substances apart. Since this is an absurdity, Spinoza concludes that any sharing of attributes is impossible.

But why should we accept that there is no way of telling these substances apart? According to Spinoza, in order to tell A apart from B, we need to refer to some difference between A and B. This difference has to reside in a difference in their properties (1p4). By asserting the truth of (1p4), Spinoza is upholding the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. This principle stipulates that no two distinct things have all their properties in common. (1p4) is a corollary of this principle.

So we have two options. We can tell two substances apart based on a difference in their attributes or in their modes. But the first option isn't really open to us. For we have been assuming that these substances share the same attribute. The question is whether we can tell them apart based on something other than a difference in attribute. Accordingly, our question now becomes whether substances of the same attribute can be individuated by their modes.

Spinoza rejects this possibility, however. Spinoza has made one thing very clear: modes must be understood in terms of attributes but not the other way around. In light of this, we are permitted to ignore any differences in modes when we try to tell two substances apart. Unfortunately, we have already eliminated attributes as individicators of substances. So we are left with no legitimate grounds for telling substances with the same attribute apart. This is why Spinoza rejects the sharing of attributes amongst substances.

In opposition to this, Leibniz argues that substances of the same attribute can be individuated by attributes that they do not share. An example would be helpful here. Suppose that substance A has attributes x, y and substance B has attributes y, z. Although they both share the attribute y, there are other attributes which they do not share. This amounts to a difference in attributes. It appears that it is possible for two or more substances to share an attribute, at the end of the day.

However, Spinoza can readily overcome this objection. He can argue that Leibniz's example is ruled out by his definition of attribute. In this example, attribute y would not enable us to

think of one substance in particular, because more than one substance has this attribute. This clearly goes against Spinoza's stipulation that each attribute "constitutes the essence" of substance i.e. there is a one-to-many relation between attribute and substance.

B. "It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist". (1p7)

The idea is that the concept of substance involves existence. By contrast, existence is not inherent in the concept of modes.

The reasoning behind 1p7 is this. For Spinoza, "no substance can be caused by anything else" (1p6c). Since Spinoza understands causation in terms of conceptual dependence, if substance is caused by anything else, it would have to be conceived through something other than itself, contrary to the nature of substance. Spinoza therefore concludes that substance cannot be caused by anything else—it must be caused by its own nature.

C. "No other substance besides God can exist". (1p14)

God is by definition a substance. Applying 1p7 to the case of God, Spinoza concludes that God necessarily exists. Why "necessarily"? This is because, just as other conceptual truths (e.g. a triangle has three sides) are necessarily true, God's existence, which is inherent to the concept of God, is also necessarily true.

Next comes the final step in Spinoza's argument. By God Spinoza understands a substance with "an infinity of attributes" (1d6). If any other substance were to exist apart from God, it would have to share attributes with God, contrary to 1p5. So, if God exists necessarily, then no other substance apart from God can exist.

Garrett argues that there is something suspicious about this kind of reasoning. He prompts us to recall how Spinoza goes about arguing for his monism. Spinoza begins arbitrarily with the claim that God exists. This claim is arbitrary because he could have used 1p7 to prove that any other substance exists. Consider what would happen once we have "proved" that this other substance exists. Why, we wouldn't even be able to grant God's existence, because there can be no sharing of attributes amongst substances! And God, being a substance with "an infinity of attributes", would have shared at least one attribute with this other substance.

My response to this criticism coincides with that of Curley's. Spinoza didn't arbitrarily begin with the claim that God exists. If anything, he is justified in doing so. 1p7 can only be used to prove God's necessary existence, because God is the only substance with a coherent nature. Any substance which doesn't have "an infinity of attributes" is incoherent. To see why this is so, consider the following experiment. Begin by positing a substance S with just one attribute (e.g. extension). There is no reason to restrict S from possessing an extra attribute (e.g. thought). After all, thought and extension are isolated from each other. They won't destroy each other. So, we should supplement it with an extra attribute. And we can repeat this process ad infinitum. The Principle of Sufficient Reason stipulates that every fact has to be reasonably explained: if we simply assume that a substance can have a limited number of attributes, we are leaving something unexplained. But this is unacceptable. So only a

substance with an infinity of attributes have a coherent nature. Such a substance would be God.

Conclusion

I have argued that Spinoza's argument for monism should be read in a particular way, and that, so understood, it can readily overcome potential objections. It is up to the pluralist to convince us that monism is false. (1994)

A5 In what sense, if any, was Spinoza a materialist?

Introduction

In this essay I will argue against the statement that Spinoza was a materialist. If this statement is to make any sense, we have to treat Spinoza as positing the extension attribute as fundamental. However, it turns out that the extension attribute is derivative of the attribute of thought. I therefore suggest that Spinoza's philosophy ends in a kind of idealism.

I will motivate a materialist reading of Spinoza in section two. In section three I employ Newlands' arguments to show that a materialist reading of Spinoza doesn't sit well with his philosophy. A much better interpretation is to understand Spinoza as a kind of idealist.

The starting place of a materialist reading of Spinoza

Materialist readings of Spinoza claim that the following is true:

(M) The attribute of extension is fundamental. The attribute thought depends on the attribute of extension.

This requires clarification. For Spinoza, attributes are "what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence" (Ethics 1d4). An attribute tells us what it is to be a substance.

If we supplement (M) with 1d4, this leads to the following claim: there are different ways of describing the sole possible substance, God. We can think of God as extended, or we can think of its essence as thought. Although there are a multitude of ways to conceive of God, extension is the most fundamental way of conceiving God.

(M) is motivated by the Spinoza's claim that "matter... must necessarily be defined by an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence". This claim is found in his letter to Tschirnhaus. Here "matter" most likely refers to the sole possible substance, God – for according to Spinoza, God is the only possible substance with "an infinity of attributes" (1d9). Accordingly, here Spinoza is pointing to the idea that God is to be understood as matter. Since the fundamental attribute of matter is extension, other properties of matter (e.g. thought) would have to bear a relation to extension. This is what the materialist means by (M).

Although this materialist reading of Spinoza has a prima facie plausibility, I shall now argue that it doesn't accord with Spinoza's philosophy. In particular, I contend first that Spinoza has to understand the attribute of thought as fundamental, and second that, so understood, the attribute of thought becomes the only genuine attribute of God. These two theses combined constitute the basic elements of idealism.

A better interpretation: an idealist reading of Spinoza

A. The attribute of thought is the most fundamental

My criticism of materialist readings of Spinoza coincides with that of Joachim's: they don't sit well with Spinoza's definition of attribute. As I have already noted, Spinoza claims that "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence" (1d4). What Spinoza means by this is that, in order for something to be an attribute, it has to bear a relation to the intellect: because whenever the intellect thinks of a substance, it always conceives of it in terms of an attribute. This implies that an attribute is essentially related to a feature of thought – that of intellectual perception.

What adds to my argument is the fact that Spinoza made an even bolder claim in an early letter. He said and I quote: "I understand the same by attribute, except that it is called attribute in relation to the intellect, which *attributes* such and such a definite nature to substance". Here Spinoza explicitly says that all the other natures (i.e. attributes) of substance are dependent on thought. What follows from this is that the attribute of thought is fundamental, and that all the other attributes (including extension) derive from it.

We might even generalize this argument. Thought dependence not only pertains to attributes. This will become clear once we see that Spinoza also defines substance in terms of a feature of thought: "substance is that which is in itself and conceived through itself" (1d3). So, just like attributes, the attribute of thought is fundamental in our understanding of substance. Since substance constitutes the basic ontology of Spinoza's ontology, we have to conclude that the attribute of thought is very fundamental in Spinoza's philosophy.

This result directly contradicts (M). (M) stipulates that extension, as opposed to thought, is fundamental in Spinoza's ontology. It is true that there is textual support for this reading. Spinoza's claim in his letter to Tschirnhaus gives testimony to this. However, as we have seen, if Spinoza accepts (M), he would find it difficult to reconcile (M) with his definitions of attributes and substance. Would he want to accept that his theory is inconsistent? Obviously not. The easy way out is to abandon (M) and accept the idealist reading. It is common for philosophers to vacillate between opposite views. The important thing is to identify a particular interpretation as the most consistent tendency of their views.

B. The attribute of thought is the only genuine attribute

We can go even further with my line of reasoning. Materialist readings of Spinoza stipulate that God has a multitude of attributes (e.g. extension and thought). In as much as thought is a property of God, it still is a genuine attribute, albeit less fundamental. So the materialist might think that, even if we are to go with the idealist reading – even if we are to postulate thought as the fundamental attribute of God – we can still properly say that God has the attribute of extension, albeit derivatively.

The problem is precisely that, if we are to adopt an idealist reading of Spinoza, thought will become the only genuine attribute in Spinoza's philosophy. We can't even say that extension is a proper attribute of God.

If thought is, as we have seen, that pervasive in Spinoza's ontology, then (here I quote Newlands) "the apparent plurality of God's attributes would dissolve into a plurality of ways

of thinking about God". In other words, since all different ways of conceiving God are just features of thought, all these different attributes are ontologically dependent on thought. But Spinoza clearly claims that in order for something to be an attribute it has to be wholly self-contained (1p10). Because attributes other than thought aren't wholly self-contained (they can't be characterized without reference to thought), they violate this criterion. As a result, attributes other than thought do not count as attributes. Hence, extension doesn't qualify as an attribute of God (again, contrary to (M)).

Evaluating idealist readings of Spinoza

At this point the materialist might turn to the following kind of objection: if at the end of the day thought is the only attribute, why do we have the illusion that there exists a plurality of attributes? We don't generally think that everything that exists derive from thought, do we? If idealist readings of Spinoza can't provide us with a plausible explanation, it is hard to see why this reading is tenable.

My answer to this is that, even though our intellects perceive the sole substance God as though it has a plurality of attributes, God doesn't actually exhibit this diversity of attributes. By accepting this, I am endorsing a kind of subjectivist interpretation of attributes: our perception of the multiplicity of attributes does not correspond to the actual nature of God.

It is useful to distinguish the subjectivist interpretation of attributes from the idealist reading of Spinoza. One doesn't imply the other. Anti-idealist readings of Spinoza can readily grant that our perception of attributes is subjective. On the other hand, idealist readings of Spinoza can deny this subjectivist interpretation of attributes – they might argue that it should be apparent to the intellect that God only exhibits the attribute of thought. Here I am endorsing both views.

I, like Hegel, conclude that we come to think that there is a plurality of attributes because our perception of reality is flawed. God only has one unified attribute but we come to believe that attributes are diversified. As such, our intellect provides the ground for our mistake. This conclusion supports our position that thought underlies all the other attributes: no attributes can be conceived without being essentially related to an activity of thought. It is this activity that is responsible for our systematic mistake. So our idealist reading of Spinoza remains plausible.

Here the materialist might turn to another objection, one relating to a different kind of absurdity. Up till now we have only considered two ontological categories: substance and attribute. There is actually an extra ontological category in Spinoza's philosophy: a mode. A mode, according to Spinoza, is "the affection of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is also conceived" (1d5). Modes are ontologically dependent upon substances. How does modes fit into our idealist reading of Spinoza?

Materialists reading of Spinoza, the materialist could argue, has no problem incorporating modes into their picture. When Spinoza claims that modes are "in" the substance, he really means that finite modes such as dogs, trees, tables, people require God i.e. matter to exist.

This is not a controversial position at all. It only says that particulars such as dogs, trees, tables and people are corporeal things.

By contrast, if Spinoza is an idealist, he would have to assert that human beings are simply modifications of thought. Recall that modes are, like attributes and substance, essentially related to the activity of thought (1d5). So it turns out that finite modes are at best elements or derivations of imagination and thought. So humans, being finite modes, do not have bodies. We are just activities of the intellect. Idealists reading of Spinoza might sound plausible at first because they only assert that thought is the fundamental attribute of God. But they don't sound so plausible after all, given that this priority of thought implies that particulars e.g. dogs, trees, tables and people are derivations of thought.

I take this point as correct, but I argue that we should still favor idealist over materialist readings of Spinoza. It is true that neither interpretations are wholly satisfactory. The fact remains that materialist readings of Spinoza render his system incoherent, whereas idealist readings of Spinoza force us to challenge our everyday intuitions. But if we have to make a choice between incoherency and absurdity, it is clear that we should favor the latter as opposed to the former. Spinoza's views can still be defensible even if they give way to absurdity. On the other hand, if his views are obviously incoherent, there is no hope of remedying them.

Conclusion

I have argued that Spinoza should be understood as an idealist, as opposed to a materialist. This is because if we are to understand Spinoza as a materialist, that would render his system incoherent. In particular, my arguments have demonstrated that the priority of the extension attribute doesn't sit well with Spinoza's definitions of attribute and substance. In light of this, we should think of Spinoza as an idealist, even if this reading gives way to absurdity. (1826)

B11 Is marriage an institution worth keeping? Discuss, drawing on the views of thinkers in the early-modern philosophical debate.

Introduction

In this essay I will argue that marriage is an institution worth keeping. It is true that contemporary marriages in the early modern period deprives women of their selfhood. But this flawed nature of contemporary marriages can be corrected. The solution is to adopt a sexless union of minds in marriage. It is too quick to renounce marriage when we can adopt new models in place of it.

In what follows I will draw on the views of Astell and Cavendish to illustrate my point. I will begin by characterizing Astell's pessimistic outlook on marriage, and go on to offer Cavendish's renegotiated concept of marriage as a solution to the problem of marriage.

Marriage understood in terms of slavery

In her *Reflections upon Marriage*, Astell was very clear that she did not think of marriage as an institution worth keeping. To use her own terms, she believes that women are "either forced or deceived into entering the state of marriage". How does she arrive at such a view? As Broad details, there are three steps to her argument that we should denounce marriage altogether:

- A. Slavery is, by Locke's definition, morally objectionable.
- B. Marriage is a form of slavery.
- C. Therefore, marriage is morally objectionable.

I shall now go over each step. I contend that Astell's argument against marriage is *prima facie* plausible.

- A. Slavery is in itself morally objectionable

In *Two Treatises*, Locke provided us with a definition of slavery. According to him, the conditions of slavery involve three components.

First, to be a slave is to be subject to the arbitrary power of another man. When a person P is subject to the arbitrary power of another man, that other man can freely control P's properties, whether it be P's life or P's other possessions. I say 'freely' because the other man can dispose of P's properties without being held to accountable to any moral principles.

Second, the other person need not exercise this arbitrary power over P in order for P's condition to count as slavery. So long as P is under the threat of another person's absolute dominion, P is in a condition of slavery.

Third, a slave is always in a state of insecurity. Things might be doing well for P, but P is always susceptible to the master's inconstant arbitrary will. So understood, slavery prevents a man from fulfilling his duty of self-preservation. This is because his means of self-preservation can always be taken from him violently. To the extent that slavery violates the law of self-preservation, slavery is morally unjustified.

- B. Marriage is a form of slavery

Astell argues that marriage displays all the elements of slavery.

When a woman marries, she is subject to the will and desire of her husband. To illustrate, consider Sprint's the Bride-Womans Counsellor, a wedding sermon of the early modern period. It states that the woman must not only obey her husband, but must also only desire what "her husband would approve and allow". To this extent, marriage governs the wife "absolutely and entirely". The wife must not only show outward respect for her husband, but also "submit her reason" to her husband's liking.

Once a woman has entered into a state of matrimony, she will always be under the threat of her husband's dominion. Her husband might treat her well, but nothing prevents the husband from dominating over her, even if he never exercises that capacity.

The wife is always in a state of uncertainty. Common law in Astell's time stipulates that when a woman marries a man, her legal status will be "subsumed under that of her husband". So even if the husband disposes of her property, no law would "afford her redress". So, the wife cannot be sure that her husband will treat her well.

It might be objected that married women in Astell's time are not enslaved because (unlike slaves) their husbands (masters) cannot kill them without legal consequences. My response is that taking lives with impunity is not a necessary condition for slavery. As Locke details, for P to be in a condition of slavery it is sufficient that some other person has absolute power over P. This absolute power might only pertain to P's material property or P's liberty.

C. Marriage is morally wrong

Incorporating Locke's ideas, Astell argues that marriage is wrong because it violates the wife's duty to preserve herself. It is important to note a distinction here. Whereas Locke understands "property in our person" to mean that we have a duty to preserve our body, material property, etc., Astell equates "property in our person" with our immaterial mind, as opposed to our physical body.

When Astell says that marriage is morally objectionable, she means that it takes away what should rightfully be the wife's: her reason. Since marriage forces the wife to listen to her husband's every wish, her moral liberty is sacrificed. In the Christian Religion, Astell talks about how the wife's only purpose is to please her husband, and to "sooth his pride and flatter his vanity". It wouldn't be possible for the wife to cultivate virtues, since her business of pleasing her husband occupies all of her time. For example, she would have to constantly think of ways to give praises to her husband (e.g. convince her husband that he is an upright person even when he makes mistakes). Astell contends that this sort of behavior encourages deceit in women. This could, Astell continues, potentially lead to the wife's damnation.

Although Astell's argument is *prima facie* plausible (after all, it is a valid argument based on plausible assumptions), I argue that we can avoid her conclusion that the institution of marriage is not worth keeping. My strategy is to reject premise (B). I contend that we can

re-understand marriage (using Cavendish's model) in a way such that it no longer involves elements of slavery.

Marriage re-understood as an intellectual partnership between husband and wife

(B) is motivated by the idea that marriage deprives the wife of her reason.

Similarly, Cavendish argues that contemporary marriages in the early modern period are problematic because they deprive of the wife of her selfhood. In response to Dolan, who asserts that the wife should give up her independence because "marriage and selfhood are radically incompatible", she argues that husbands and wives should be spiritual equals (in *The Blazing World*, the Empress was told by the spirits that "there was no difference of sexes amongst them"). Unless we reformulate the concept of marriage, there would be no place for the wife to speak for herself and judge for herself, and that would prove to be her intellectual downfall.

So Cavendish and Astell appear to have been thinking along the same lines. They both find contemporary marriages objectionable because these marriages undermine the intellectual independence of women. But it is useful to point out that, while Astell only refers to mental slavery in the matrimonial state, Cavendish uses physical sexuality to further demonstrate the sexual hierarchy inherent in marriage. This difference in approach can be accounted for once we realize that Astell and Cavendish think differently about metaphysics. Astell, for example, adopts a kind of Cartesian dualism. To the extent that we are only our mind, slavery within marriage has to manifest itself as a form of mental submission. By contrast, Cavendish accepts some kind of materialism – she regards humans as corporeal things, and minds as properties of matter. As a result, the threats imposed on the wife by the husband are as prominent in the physical realms as in the spiritual realm. Therefore, Cavendish talks about how the wife is threatened by pregnancy (which could lead to death) and betrayal (the husband could confiscate all of her material property). She also describes heterosexual sex as 'a disease' (*True Relations*), to the extent that it exemplifies a physical difference between male and female body parts and hence the subordination of women to men.

Despite this important difference, in so far as Cavendish's renegotiated concept of marriage overcomes spiritual inequality (contrary to (B)), it still stands as a solid response to Astell's argument against marriage.

Two important elements are involved in Cavendish's concept of marriage. First, marriage is a sexless reunion of minds. As I have just noted, heterosexual sex renders gender unequal because it is traditionally depicted as exemplifying the physical subordination of women to men. Therefore, by eliminating the difference inherent in the bodies of men and women, spiritual inequality within marriage would become unfounded. Cavendish is very clear about this condition of marriage when she notes that her love for her husband is "not amorous love", which is according to her "a disease" (*A True Relation*).

Second, marriage makes room for spiritual eroticism in place of physical eroticism. In the prefatory materials to her 1662 volume of plays, Cavendish acknowledges her husband's contribution to this work of hers. But this work only shows her name on the title page.

Through this collaborative authorship, Cavendish and her husband Newcastle “join their wits in matrimony”. They are able to build their marriage upon their collaborative works. And the fact that Cavendish includes only her name on the title page indicates that she even in this relationship she can successfully retain her independence from her husband.

Another useful example of marital collaboration is the *Convent of Pleasure*. It is quite clear that there is tension between Cavendish and Newcastle’s contributions to the play. Right from the start Cavendish considered the possibility of replacing heterosexual marriage with lesbian relationships. Lady Happy and the princess were establishing a romantic relationship when it was suddenly revealed that the princess was in fact a prince. There is reason to think that Newcastle is responsible for this sudden turn of events, because as Billing notes, the prince reveals himself as a man right after Newcastle’s two songs. This shows that even though Cavendish and Newcastle work together to produce this play, there is a complex authorial relationship between the two: their views are not unified – at times they conflict with each other. But they still work together to produce the ending in the end.

In short, Cavendish’s picture of marriage encompasses all aspects of spiritual equality between men and women. Not only do the husband and wife retain individuality within the relationship, but they are also given equal standing through collaborative authorship: both the voice of the wife and the husband are given equal importance. Under this image of marriage, the wife is no longer required to give up her reason and to blindly obey her husband (contrary to (B)). She has the freedom to speak for herself and to demonstrate good judgement by opposing her husband (when the husband is in the wrong).

Conclusion

The statement that “marriage isn’t worth keeping as an institution” is motivated by the idea that the marriage state stands as a form of slavery. However, I have argued that, if we are to re-understand marriage as a kind of collaborative authorship, this problem would dissolve immediately. As a result, we still have reason to think that marriage is worth keeping as an institution. (1853)