TREATISE

of

RATIONAL METAPHYSICS

Principles of Spinoza's *Ethics*

Gary Sugar

To him that hath, more shall be given.

Luke 8:18

Contents

Foreword *iii*

Citation Conventions *vii*

Chapter One: God, Divine Attributes, and Modes 1

Chapter Two: The One and the Many 36

Chapter Three: Mind and Body 57

Chapter Four: Eternity, Duration, and Time 86

Chapter Five: The Real, the Rational, and the Actual 99

Chapter Six: Opinion, Reason, and Intuition 117

Chapter Seven: Passion, Happiness, and Beatitude 163

Appendices:

1: The Rational Way of Living 196

2: The Certainty of Reason 228

3: Outline of the Argument 241

4: Summary of Revisions 248

Foreword

Descartes published his *Discourse on Method* in 1637. In its appendices on optics, meteorology, and geometry, he explained and demonstrated the modern methods for science and mathematics that we still follow today; and in the *Discourse* itself he explained a new method for philosophy. Dissatisfied with the uncertainty of the traditional philosophies, which relied on conjectures and probable reasoning, he explained a method founded in his certainty of his existence and using only deductive, necessary reasoning; and then in *Meditations, Principles,* and *Passions of the Soul* he demonstrated a rationalist philosophy largely deduced from reason. Spinoza was born in 1632 not far from Descartes' residence. In his first philosophical treatise, *Emendation of the Intellect,* he improved and further elaborated Descartes' method of rational analysis and deduction; and in his subsequent works, he then used this even more strictly rationalist method to improve Descartes' metaphysics and moral philosophy, with the result that in 1677, just forty years after Descartes had published his discovery of the method, Spinoza's *Ethics* was published; and I contend and will explain in this book that his revision of the rationalist philosophy in *Ethics* is fundamentally correct and always at least close to correct. But Spinoza's philosophy was not well received in his era. Unlike Descartes, who had cautiously written his philosophy, "in such a way as to make it acceptable anywhere, and to avoid giving the slightest offense to anyone", and often "preferred to leave it to the theologians", Spinoza chose instead to have *Ethics* published posthumously. For he had deduced and demonstrated purely rational explanations of God, the soul, and morality, which affirmed some religious ideas, such as spiritual union with God and eternity, but denied any supernatural or miraculous causes or plan in nature or history, and denied any divine authority delegated to scriptures, priests, or kings, which therefore disagreed too much not only with the traditional philosophies Descartes had refuted, but also with the theologies and moral doctrines of the established churches and the opinions and sentiments of most European people. Therefore, Spinoza's philosophy was widely condemned, and publication of *Ethics* was soon suppressed throughout Europe; and therefore, while scientists and mathematicians continued to use the new methods Descartes had explained for their inquiries, and have made exponential progress, Western philosophers after Spinoza soon lost confidence in the rationalist method and turned to different methods, all of which again relied on conjectures and deferred to some other final authority, such as their faith, their senses,

or their moral sense, which they found more urgent than the authority of reason; and hence, there has been no further development of the rationalist philosophy.

Therefore, because I'd been convinced by Descartes that the rationalist method is the right method for philosophy, and I'd seen how following it had freed Spinoza from the preconceptions of his peers to discover what is clearly true, I decided to learn and follow the method as they explain it as well as the similar methods of other rationalist philosophers, such as Parmenides and Adi Shankara, so I could use the method to analyze Spinoza's metaphysics the same rational way he analyzed Descartes' metaphysics, and likewise try to clarify some ambiguities and correct some remaining errors, in order to continue the development of the rationalist philosophy and therefore, if I could, to move the rationalist metaphysics still closer to the truth. This purpose might sound grandiose or quixotic, partly because of the popularity of the newer philosophies and their pronounced skepticism toward reason and the rationalist method. But the rationalist method of deducing the nature and properties of reality from an idea of reality that cannot be doubted is not unsound; and it does not depend on the exceptional intelligence or imagination of an author, but depends only on using the method correctly to infer one thing from another in the order of reason. So I have used this method and have tried to follow it as strictly and carefully as I could to analyze the metaphysics in Spinoza's *Ethics;* and I've deduced the things I've considered most important, and have written demonstrations of them arranged in the rational order; but the rationalist method is endless. There are always clearer ways to explain things; there's always more detail that can be deduced; and there will always be errors to correct. Therefore, my approach to writing this book is endless revision, which benefits me not only by helping me to improve my understanding, but also by helping to keep the philosophy of reason and rational contentment present and clear in my mind. I upload new drafts frequently.

Yet I can't recommend whether any particular person should read what I've written so far or wait twenty years for my best draft. I can't even recommend whether any particular person should ever read this book. For although it's true that contemplating the principles I've tried to demonstrate does fill my own mind with a clear understanding of the perfection and necessity of all things, from which rational contentment, or happiness, necessarily follows, it's still true that rationalist philosophy is far from popular and has rarely been popular. Even in India, where Shankara's rationalist philosophy is considered authoritative by many, it is acknowledged by all that, for most people, it takes months or even years of meditation on the basic principles of his

philosophy to understand them and recognize their reality. I think the difficulty has little to do with a person's intelligence, but more so with their habitual ways of thinking or with their emotions. For even though rationalist demonstrations are generally simple and self-evident, they can seem hard to understand mainly because we cannot picture rational or metaphysical principles in our imaginations and, moreover, because these principles rarely agree with what we can picture and consider common sense, and often disagree with our personal feelings, or what we may be conditioned to prefer to believe. Parmenides wrote, "You must not let habitual experience in its variety force you along this way of thinking, that what is not is what is. You must not let the unseeing eye, and the ear, full of sounds, and the tongue, to rule; but judge the argument by reason." Descartes wrote similarly, "I would not encourage anyone to read this book except those few who are able and willing to meditate in earnest with me, and to withdraw their minds from the senses and all preconceived opinions."

I will explain throughout this book how I distinguish the true and adequate ideas in my understanding, or intellect, from the partial and confused ideas in my imagination, such as my sense perceptions, memories, fantasies, and moral feelings; but for now I can give some examples. Descartes gives the example that he can understand a chiliagon, or thousand-sided polygon, and deduce its properties clearly and distinctly in his intellect, but he can't picture the chiliagon clearly and distinctly in his imagination. But further, he also explained the relation of geometry to arithmetic, and he introduced exponential notation in arithmetic, which led to the discovery of higher dimensions and 'non-Euclidean' geometrical objects and their properties, which too we can deduce clearly and distinctly and understand with certainty, though we can't picture them in our imaginations. For another, more fundamental but more complex example, suppose I now consider the abstract principle of reason, that a thing must be identical with itself. Insofar as I consider the principle in my understanding, in relation only to reason, I recognize clearly and distinctly that it is self-evident and must be true of all things in reality, always and everywhere. But insofar as I consider the principle in my imagination, in relation to images of various particular things in various times and places, I might easily imagine things or relations between things that cause me to doubt the rational principle; and so for this reason some philosophers modify the principle in deference to their memory and sense perceptions, to say that a thing must be identical with itself "at the same time and in the same way"; and some philosophers, in deference to their feelings and fantasies, or creative imaginations, prefer to reject the principle. So we can see from this example how the things we can understand and

know with certainty may be obscured in our minds by things we are only imagining confusedly. I will explain in the latter parts of this book how it is that we imagine things as differing in various ways in various times and places, and how we imagine transformations of things, and how we can understand things, and also how we can understand indefinitely many perpendicular dimensions but imagine three; but again, these are only some examples of why it's necessary to withdraw one's mind from any doubts that might arise from preconceptions or conjectures, and attend only to reason, as we deduce things from the first principle of reality in the rational order.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that the demonstrations I have written in this book are not meant as proving that a God or necessary being and its divine properties exist in reality, nor even as proving that reality exists, but as explaining as clearly as I can, that the existence of reality, which no one can doubt, is necessary, and as explaining that reality has certain other rational and necessary properties, besides 'that a thing must be identical with itself', which must also be true always and everywhere, both in my mind and in my world. For when I say there is no reason to prove the existence of reality, because it is already immediately self-evident and cannot be doubted, I mean no more nor less than Descartes means, when he demonstrates that I already know and cannot doubt my own existence, because it is immediately self-evident. For by reality I do not mean something abstract or transcendental, or something external to me, but the same reality I know in my own concrete existence and experience. Therefore, when I deduce the nature and properties of reality, my purpose is to understand them as they explain my nature and properties, and thereby, to recognize their reality concretely in my experience, and to that extent, to understand and know, as Spinoza says, "myself, God, and all things", in the same way I can understand and know concretely that a thing must be identical with itself because I am myself and therefore must be identical with myself. I will explain this further throughout this book.

Citation Conventions

Works of Spinoza

E = *Ethica* (Ethics).
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 = Part 1, Part 2, etc.
Praef = Preface
D1, D2, etc. following the Part number = Definition 1, Definition 2, etc.
Ex1, Ex2, etc. = Explanation 1, Explanation 2, etc.
Ax1, Ax2, etc. = Axiom 1, Axiom 2, etc.
P1, P2, etc. = Proposition 1, Proposition 2, etc.
D1, D2, etc. following the Proposition number = Demonstration 1, Demonstration 2, etc.
C1, C2, etc. = Corollary 1, Corollary 2, etc.
S1, S2, etc. = Scholia (Note) 1, Scholia 2, etc.
Adn = Adnotatio (Footnote)
A = Appendix
L1, L2, etc. = Lemma 1, Lemma 2, etc.
Post1, Post2, etc. = Postulate 1, Postulate 2, etc.
AD1, AD2, etc. = Definitions of the Emotions, 1, 2, etc.

Thus, E2P10CS, for example, refers to *Ethics,* Part 2, Proposition 10, the Note (Scholium) to the Corollary; and E1D6Ex refers to Part 1, Definition 6, Explanation.

TIE = *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (Emendation of the Intellect).
Paragraph numbers follow the Bruder paragraphing given in the translations by Boyle (London, 1963), Curley (Princeton, 1985), and Shirley (Indianapolis/ Cambridge 1992).

Ep1, Ep2, etc. = Epistolae (Letters) 1, 2, etc. from Spinoza's correspondence.

KV = *Korte Verhandeling* (Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being).

PPC = *Renati Descartes Principorum Philosophiae* (Descartes' Principles of Philosophy).

Prol = the Prolegomenon
Otherwise as *Ethics.*

CM = *Cogitata Metaphysica* (Metaphysical Thoughts, appendix to *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy*).

CG = *Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae* (Hebrew Grammar).

TTP = *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Treatise on Theology and Politics).

TP = *Tractatus Politicus* (Politics).

Works of Descartes

AT = *Oevres de Descartes,* ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 2nd edition (Paris: Vrin/C.N.R.S., 1964-76).

AT I–V = *Letters*
AT VI = *Discourse on Method* and *Essays*
AT VII = *Meditations, Objections and Replies*
AT VIII = *Principles of Philosophy, Comments on a Certain Broadsheet*
AT IX = *Meditations* and *Principles,* French editions
AT X = *Rules for Direction of the Mind, Description of the Human Body,* and *The Search for Truth*
AT XI = *The World* and *Passions of the Soul.*

Internal References

1Pref = the Preface to Chapter 1
1Def1,Ex = the first Definition in Chapter 1, and its Explanation
1.0 = Proposition 1.0
1.0D1, 1.0D2, 1.0D3 = the Demonstrations of 1.0

1.0C1 = the first Corollary
1.0N1 = the first Note to 1.0
1.0N1n = the Footnote to the Note
A1.21 = the twenty-first Article in Appendix 1.

Chapter I: God, Divine Attributes, and Modes

In this chapter, I will demonstrate and explain the nature of reality and the origin and nature of the things in reality as I understand them in Spinoza's philosophy. That is, I will demonstrate that reality, or "God" (E1D6), exists necessarily by virtue of its nature and is thereby the cause of all things; and I will show that reality consists in an infinity of infinite "attributes" (E1D4), such as thought, which we conceive in relation to extension; and that each attribute generates and contains in itself an infinity of properties, or "modes" of itself (E1D5), as for example a man's mind and all his ideas are modes of thought and his body and all its motions are modes of extension. And thereby, we will begin to understand in what sense "a man's mind and body are one and the same thing, conceived either through the attribute of thought or through ... extension" (E3P2S), and in what sense "the human mind is one with the whole of nature" (TIE13), and moreover how this knowledge can lead us, "as it were by the hand, to knowledge of the human mind and its highest beatitude" (E2Praef).

Definitions[1]

1. By the essence of a thing I mean that which explains the thing or what the thing is, or in other words, that which is in the thing, which if posited, affirmed, or given the thing is posited, affirmed, or given, and which if negated, denied, or removed the thing is negated, denied, or removed (E2D2).[2]

Explanation: By the essence, or nature, of a thing I do not mean a particular property of the thing, but the thing itself, which has the property. Therefore, Spinoza explains that a definition, or demonstration of the idea of a thing (Ep9), "if it is to be called perfect [or adequate], must explain the inmost essence of the thing, and must take care not to substitute for this one of its properties" (TIE95).

---

[1] "I acknowledge that in ordinary usage these words might mean something different; but my purpose is to explain, not the meanings of words, but the natures of things, and to refer to these things with words whose usual meanings are not too far from the meanings I will give them." Spinoza, E3AD20Ex.

[2] "When we say that something is contained in the nature or concept of a thing, this is the same as saying it is true of that thing, or can be asserted of that thing." Descartes, *Second Set of Replies,* Definition 9.

Therefore, by the properties of a thing I understand all that necessarily pertains to its essence, or whatever is in the thing that follows from and therefore "can be deduced from" its essence, or in other words, whatever is natural or essential in the thing, as the property of a triangle, 'that it has three angles', is essential in the triangle. For if the triangle is given, its property, 'that it has three angles', must also be given; whereas if only the property is given, the triangle is not necessarily given (E2P10S2).

Therefore, the essence of a thing, or in other words the thing itself, might be, by Spinoza's more customary vocabulary, either a "substance … which exists in itself and is conceived through itself, so that conception of it does not require conception of another" (E1D3), or a "mode … which exists in another through which it is conceived" (E1D5); whereas a property, which follows from the essence of another thing and is in it, is by definition a mode of the thing. Therefore, by a property of a thing, I understand an essential mode, or modification, of the thing.[3]

Lastly, by an "accident" I mean that which is in a thing, or a certain mode, or modification, of the thing, that does not follow from and therefore cannot be deduced from the thing's own essence considered in itself, as a certain triangle might be modified by a certain square in such a way as does not necessarily follow solely from the essence of the triangle (CM1.1). Therefore, the essence of a thing explains the essence of its properties, and the existence of the thing explains the existence of its properties, but neither the essence nor the existence of a thing's accidents can be adequately explained solely by the essence or existence of the thing.

2. By abstraction I mean conception of any of a thing's modifications, or anything that is in it, distinctly from its other modifications, or whatever else is in it.

Explanation: For example, the property of a certain triangle, 'that it has three angles', can be conceived or explained in abstraction from the other modifications of the triangle, such as its property, 'that it has three sides', and the accident, 'that it is modified in a certain way by a certain square'. For conception of the property of the triangle, 'that it has three angles', as it actually is in the triangle, necessarily involves conception of the other modifications of the triangle insofar as the property in question is

[3] "The fact that its three angles are equal to two right angles is contained in the nature of a triangle." Descartes, *Second Set of Replies,* Postulate 4.

modified by them; whereas conception of the property as it is in itself does not necessarily involve conception of the other modifications of the triangle.[4]

Note: Like Spinoza, I will, mainly in this chapter, sometimes use examples from geometry, like triangles, circles, and spheres, because we can easily define an "entity of reason" (Ep12, CM1.1, see 6.2N2), such as a circle or a sphere, and understand it in abstraction as existing anywhere always with the same properties, whereas it's hard to define a real entity, such as a man, and understand his essence in abstraction from the ways he might be accidentally modified or understand him as existing anywhere always with the same properties.

3. By a cause I mean that which explains the existence of a thing (E1D1), or in other words, that which if given or affirmed the existence of the thing is given or affirmed (E2P10S). By an effect I mean the thing, considered as existing in reality.

Explanation: By an "adequate cause" of a thing I understand a cause that explains the existence of the thing's essence, which therefore explains the existence of all the thing's properties (E3D1, Ep60). Therefore, considering also his axiom, that "knowledge of an effect depends on and involves knowledge of its cause" (E1Ax4, see 6.0), Spinoza explains that an adequate definition of a thing must demonstrate how the essence of the thing follows from an adequate cause.

> A circle, for example, should be defined as follows: it is the shape described by the motion of a line that is fixed at one end and free at the other. This definition clearly includes the proximate cause of the circle from which all its properties can be deduced. For insofar as we conceive a circle this way we can clearly infer [for example] its property that all lines drawn from the center to its circumference must be equal. (TIE96)

I will explain this further, with many more examples, throughout this book.[5]

By an "inadequate cause" of a thing I mean a cause that does not explain the existence of all the thing's properties, but only the existence of one or more of its modifications, as for example a cause of the property of a circle, 'that it is a closed curve',

[4] "When things are separated only by a mental abstraction, you cannot help noticing their conjunction and union when you consider them together." Descartes, *Letter to Delaunay,* July 1641.

[5] "Where, I ask, could the effect get its reality from, if not from the cause? And how could the cause give it to the effect unless it possessed it?" Descartes, *Third Meditation.*

does not necessarily explain the existence of all the other properties of the circle, and as a cause of its accident, 'that it is intersected by a certain square', likewise does not explain the existence of all its properties.

4. By a generating cause I mean an adequate cause of everything in a given genus (E1P8S2).

Explanation: I understand a thing to belong to a particular genus, class, kind, etc. insofar as it can be explained in relation to or comparison to another or others in that genus, or in other words, insofar as it can be explained or defined by distinguishing it from another or others in the genus. For example, a white sphere belongs to the genus 'white' insofar as it can be explained in relation to a white cube, but to the genus 'sphere' insofar as it can be explained in relation to a black sphere. And in the same way, a particular man belongs to the genus 'man', or 'human', insofar as he can be explained in relation to other men, and to the genus 'animal' insofar as he can be explained in relation to other animals, and to the genus 'terrestrial' insofar as he can be defined or explained in relation to other things terrestrial, and so forth.

5. By God, or reality, I mean a substance that is conceived absolutely independently of any other, that is, that which exists neither in nor in relation to any other and is therefore conceived neither through nor in relation to any other (E1D6, KV1.7).

Explanation: By God I understand a supreme and perfect being that is the cause of all things.[6]

Spinoza defines God as "an absolutely infinite being, or substance consisting of an infinity of infinite and eternal attributes" (E1D6). But as he also says, a substance is "that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception" (E1D3); and therefore, instead of defining God through the attributes or through the properties, 'that God consists in an infinity of attributes' or 'that God is absolutely infinite', I have defined God through "a true definition that includes nothing but the simple nature, or essence, of the thing defined" (Ep34). I will explain this further throughout this treatise; and I will also deduce the attributes and properties from this definition.

[6] "By the word 'God' I understand a substance that is infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, supremely intelligent, supremely powerful, which created both myself and everything else that exists." Descartes, *Third Meditation.*

Furthermore, by reality, "or being" (PPC1A4), I mean that which exists, or what is (CM1.1, E1P10S-11S); and by "nothing", or "non-being", or "nothingness", I mean that which does not exist, or what is not, or in other words, absolute negation of reality, being, or existence (CM2.10, Ep50).

6. By an attribute of God I mean a substance that exists in itself but in relation to another, and is therefore conceived through itself but in relation to another (E1P2, E1P10S, KV A1, Ep2, Ep9).

Explanation: An example is thought, which is conceived through itself in relation to extension, as our minds are conceived in relation to our bodies (E2P7S). But I will explain this, too, much further throughout this book.

In his early *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being,* Spinoza wrote, "the attributes of which God consists are nothing but infinite substances, each of which must of itself be infinitely perfect" (KV1.7Adn); but on the other hand he does not call God a substance in *Short Treatise* and instead always refers to God as a "being". Conversely, in *Ethics* he defines God as an absolutely infinite substance; but he avoids calling an attribute a substance and says "thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same substance, comprehended now under one attribute and now under another", and he acknowledges that "for the present I cannot explain these matters more clearly" (E2P7S). Yet he does explain clearly that "everything that exists, exists either in itself or in another" (E1Ax1), from which it follows that an attribute must be either a substance, which is in itself (E1D3), or a mode, which is in another (E1D5). Furthermore, he says an attribute is not a mode (E1P29S) and, also, that each attribute must be conceived through itself (E1P10). Therefore, by an attribute I understand a substance that exists and is conceived in relation to another; whereas by God I understand a substance that exists and is conceived in relation to no other. But again, I will explain this much further throughout this book.

Axiom

I am thinking. That is, I know I exist.

Explanation: I will explain my certainty of this axiom in Appendix 2; and I will explain throughout this treatise how this knowledge of my existence is the foundation of my mind, or self, and all my other knowledge.[7]

Propositions[8]

Proposition 1.0

God, or being, necessarily exists (E1P11).

Demonstration 1: I am certain that I exist; and I am certain that my existence is not non-existence and cannot be non-existence. Therefore, I am certain that reality and existence, or being, exists and cannot be non-being, or not exist. Therefore, I am certain that God, or being, or reality, necessarily exists (PPC1P6-7, E2P45).[9]

Demonstration 2: If God, or being, did not exist, it would be nothing; that is, being would be non-being, and hence it would not be itself. Therefore, being, or God, or reality, cannot be conceived as non-existing and must be conceived as necessarily existing (E1P11D1).

Or, to say it another way, if reality did not exist, nothing would exist. But nothing, or non-being, is that which does not exist, and therefore the existence of nothing, or

---

[7] "Know yourself." Thales, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers.*

"This knowledge, 'I am thinking, therefore I exist', is the first and most certain to present itself to anyone who philosophizes in a correct order." Descartes, *Principles,* 1.7.

"It is clear there can be no other foundation for the sciences than this; for we can easily doubt everything else, but we cannot in any way doubt this." Spinoza, PPC Prol.

"Because the self alone cannot be negated, it is that which remains and is clearly understood after reflecting on the verse, 'Not this, not this'." Shankara, *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 2.1.

"You may call it knowledge, the self, or whatever you like; but its existence cannot be doubted, as it is the witness of all things." *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 2.3.

[8] I have listed the propositions and corollaries in Appendix 3, Outline of the Argument.

[9] "I exist; therefore God exists." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 12.

non-existence of reality, is a contradiction, which can be expressed in words but cannot be conceived and cannot be true. Therefore, reality, or being, necessarily exists.[10]

Demonstration 3: The existence of a thing, whether it is granted or not, must either be identical with the thing itself or else be something other than the thing. But the existence of God cannot be something other than God; for God, or reality, is defined as existing neither in nor in relation to any other, and therefore, there can be no other. Therefore, God and the existence of God must be one and the same (E1P20); or in other words, being and the being of being are one and the same, or existence and the existence of existence are one and the same. Therefore, insofar as God, or being, is conceived, the existence of God is conceived. Therefore, insofar as God, or being, or reality, is conceived, it must be conceived as existing; and therefore, the non-existence of God, or non-existence of reality, is inconceivable and impossible, again, because it is a contradiction. Therefore, God necessarily exists.

Demonstration 4: This demonstration proceeds similarly. For just as the existence of a thing must either be identical with the thing or be something other than the thing, the cause or explanation of the thing's existence, whether granted or not, must also be either identical with the thing or something other than the thing. But a being that exists neither in nor in relation to any other cannot be caused by another, because again, there can be no other. That is, it must be conceived as caused by itself (E1P11D2). Therefore, insofar as God, or reality, is conceived, it must be conceived as the cause of its own existence, or in other words, that which explains its existence. Therefore, insofar as reality is conceived, its existence must be conceived as explained by its essence, either as its essence or as a property of its essence.

But the properties of a thing follow from its essence. For if the essence of the thing is given, all its properties are necessarily also given, whereas if only one of the thing's properties is given, its essence and other properties are not necessarily given; and hence, the existence of the thing, or essence, must be prior to the existence of any of its properties (E1P1). Therefore, the existence of God cannot be one of God's properties but must be the essence of God (E1P20).

---

[10] "What is, is and cannot be what is not." Parmenides, frag. 2.

"God cannot incline to nothingness, since he is supreme and pure being." Descartes*, Conversation with Burman.*

Therefore, "the existence of God is God himself, as his essence" (CM2.1); and hence, insofar as God is conceived, the existence of God is conceived. Therefore, God must be conceived as existing; that is, God necessarily exists, and the essence of God, or being, is the cause that explains God's existence (E1D1).[11]

Note 1, Proposition 1.0

It may seem hard to understand that the existence of nothing, or non-existence of reality, is inconceivable; for there have been many philosophers who thought they could conceive the existence of nothing, or "nothingness", as some have called it to avoid saying as obviously "nothing is conceivable" or "nothing can exist". The reason it might seem that we can conceive the existence of nothingness, or non-existence of reality, even though "we cannot in any way imagine it, much less understand it" (CM1.3), is that we can imagine, or "feign" (CM2.10), something transparent, or something without any apparent qualities, like empty space, and call that nothing or nothingness. So it's natural that we might err this way; for "when we fail to distinguish imagination from understanding, we think that what we can easily imagine is clear to us, and that what we imagine we understand" (TIE90). I will explain this and similar errors much further throughout the rest of this book.

Corollary 1, Proposition 1.0

God is the only substance in reality, or nature (E1P14).

Demonstration 1: If there were any substance or anything other than God, or being, it would have to be non-being, or nothing, which is absurd. Therefore, there can be no substance other than God.

Demonstration 2: Whatever exists must exist either in itself or in another (E1Ax1). If on the one hand another substance were to be conceived as existing in God, it would have to be identical with God, for a substance is that which exists in itself; therefore,

---

[11] "When he is comprehended by the thought, 'He is', his real essence shines forth in revelation." *Katha Upanishad*, 6.13.

"Moses said unto God, when they ask, What is his name, what shall I tell them? And God answered him, I am that I am. Therefore tell them I Am has sent you." *Exodus* 3:14.

there would be no substance conceived other than God. But if, on the other hand, another substance were to be conceived as not in God, it would be conceived distinctly in relation to God, which is absurd, since God is defined as that which is conceived in relation to no other. Therefore, God, or reality, must be the one and only substance; and hence, inasmuch as the essence of a thing is its nature, in that respect the essence of God is nature. Therefore, by the essence of God, or nature, I understand the essence and substance, or reality, of all things in nature; and by the existence of God, which is God's essence, I understand existence itself, or absolute being, "without which nothing could be or be conceived" (E2P10S2).

Note 2, Proposition 1.0

Therefore, if someone objects that nothing can be conceived absolutely independently of the mind conceiving it, and that the definition of substance therefore implies a contradiction or impossibility, note that substance, or reality, is not conceived absolutely independently of the mind conceiving it; for the mind is not something other than reality but something in reality. That is to say, as I sit here now, writing this, I conceive a mode of substance insofar as I conceive myself, or insofar as I conceive my mind; and I conceive a modification of myself insofar as I conceive myself writing; and I conceive other modes of substance insofar as I conceive anything external to me. For by a mode I mean that which is in another, and by a substance, that which is in itself; and all things that exist, exist in substance, or reality. So when I say, "I am", I mean I exist in reality; and when I say, "I am writing", I mean I exist in reality, and writing exists in reality, in me; and when I say, "I am human", I mean I exist in reality, in the genus 'human', or the general quality 'human' exists in reality, in me.[12]

Corollary 2, Proposition 1.0

God, or being, is not an abstraction but absolutely concrete (E1P15, TIE76).

Demonstration: By abstraction I understand conception of any of a thing's modifications, or anything that is in it, distinctly from its other modifications, or whatever else is in it. But God, or substance, is in itself and cannot be distinguished in any way from

[12] "From all this it follows that of nature all in all is predicated." Spinoza, KV1.2.

any other, because there can be no other. Therefore, God cannot be conceived in abstraction from any other and must be conceived as absolutely concrete. I will explain this further in Chapter Two and throughout the rest of this book.

Corollary 3, Proposition 1.0

God, or reality, is absolutely infinite.

Demonstration: If God, or reality, were limited, it would have to be limited by another; for if it were limited by itself, or more of itself, it would not be limited; and if it were limited by nothing, it would again not be limited. But reality cannot be limited by another, because there is no other. Therefore God, or reality, or existence, consists in absolutely infinite and unlimited substance.[13]

I acknowledge that, in the same way the argument that the existence of nothing is inconceivable may seem difficult to understand, the argument that reality cannot be limited by nothing may also seem hard to understand, because there have again been many philosophers who doubted it. But "there can be no doubt they are not actually considering nothing as the negation of all reality, but are imagining or feigning it as something real" (CM2.10). They are, for example, likely imagining reality as a kind of body or number of bodies surrounded by a transparent or empty place, which they are calling nothing or nothingness. But an empty place, or anything else that we can imagine, understand, or in any way conceive, is not nothing but something (AT VIII 49-50). So it's worth repeating that, although some philosophers may mean various things by these words, by nothing, or non-being, or what is not, I mean absolute negation of reality, being, or existence; and therefore, by nothing I do not in any way understand something that can exist, do anything, cause anything, or in any way affect anything (PPC1A7, PPC2A1, Ep21).

---

[13] "I say the notion I have of the infinite is in me prior to that of the finite because, by the mere fact that I conceive being, or that which is, without thinking whether it is finite or infinite, what I conceive is infinite being." Descartes, *Letter to Clerselier,* April 1649.

"To be able to not exist is weakness; whereas to be able to exist is power. Therefore, if what now necessarily exists were only finite beings, finite beings would be more powerful than an absolutely infinite being, which is absurd." Spinoza, E1P11D3.

Note 3, Proposition 1.0

Like Parmenides, Shankara, Descartes, and Spinoza, I have demonstrated first that God, or reality, or "pure being" (AT V 147), exists necessarily and is the cause of itself, or in other words, that being cannot be non-being, or what is cannot be what is not, and existence cannot be conceived except as existing. For the existence of God, or being, or existence itself, is the first and highest truth, or the deepest, most fundamental truth, on which all other truths depend, and from which they follow as properties, in both our minds and nature (E1P16C3, E2P10S). Moreover, this truth is absolutely self-evident and certain, in both philosophy and our experience. Therefore, "the true method for philosophy is the path by which truth itself is sought in the right order" (TIE36), "according to the standard of the given idea of the most perfect being" (TIE38), that is, in the order of adequate causes in nature, proceeding from a clear and distinct idea of "the being that is the cause of all things (see 1.0C4), so that its essence, represented in thought, may be the cause of all our ideas" (TIE99), and, moreover, so that "truth may be the standard of both itself and falsity" (E2P44S), inasmuch as from this absolute truth we can now deduce other truths and demonstrate how they follow from it by clear and distinct relations of identity and non-contradiction; for as we have seen, the absolute truth is that what is, is, and the standard of truth is that what is must be what is and cannot be what is not.[14]

Yet this true and adequate idea of God is hard for many people to recognize clearly and distinctly in their minds or understand, because they cannot picture or feel it in their imaginations, or in other words, "because they cannot imagine God as they are used to imagining bodies" (E2P47S); and so the idea of God, or absolute being, is obscured in their minds by ideas and emotions they do imagine and feel.[15] So when

---

[14] "One way, that what is, is and cannot be what is not, is the right way of demonstration; for demonstration must follow truth." Parmenides, frag. 2.

"For the existence of God is the first and the most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all others proceed." Descartes, *Letter to Mersenne,* May 1630.

[15] "Although this knowledge is in the intellects of all men, it is obscured by their desire for the objects of sense perceptions and so forth. When the intellect is purified, the man becomes capable of understanding the absolute." Shankara, *Commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad,* 3.1.8–9.

"Many are convinced there is some difficulty in knowing God, and even in knowing what their soul is. The reason for this is they never raise their minds above things which can be perceived by the senses. They are so used to thinking of things only by imagining them that whatever is unimaginable seems to them unintelligible." Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 4.

they consider rational arguments for the necessity of God's existence, they can't understand and recognize what the arguments demonstrate; and for this reason, doubts and objections arise in their imaginations. Some assert that a contradiction can be true. I will consider this general objection to reason in Appendix 2, where I will show that, although I can say anything in words, I cannot conceive a contradiction clearly and distinctly in relation to my fundamental knowledge that I exist without knowing with certainty that it cannot be true. But others have raised more specific doubts, which they abstract, or induce, from ideas of the many finite, dependent things they can imagine and then apply to the idea of the one infinite and independent thing. The most famous and skillful of these objections, which I consider representative of all the other objections I've seen, are those that were made by David Hume and Immanuel Kant, who argue that the existence of a necessary being cannot be demonstrated through a purely rational, or as Kant calls it, "analytic", proof, because they say the existence of a thing can only be demonstrated through what he calls a "synthetic" proof.[16] Hume understands such synthetic proofs as a posteriori demonstrations that must necessarily involve evidence from the senses; whereas Kant claims there can also be a priori synthetic proofs.[17] But for our purpose here the differences between them are of no importance; for we need only consider their united objection to rationalist demonstrations of the idea of God and the existence of God, so that we can better understand the principal kinds of doubts that might arise in our own imaginations.

Hume's objections have as their foundation an induction from the number of his ideas that are the ideas of finite images (see 6.1N1), or as he calls them, "impressions":[18]

> After the most accurate examination, of which I am capable, I venture to affirm, that every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea... That the case is the same with all our simple impressions and ideas, 'tis impossible to prove by a particular

[16] Descartes and Spinoza use the terms 'analytic' and 'synthetic' in a different way (see 6.2N6).

[17] Hume: "There is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments a priori." *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* Part 9.

Kant: "Every reasonable person must admit that all existential propositions are synthetic." *Critique of Pure Reason,* 626b.

[18] Hume defines impressions as "all our sensations, passions, and emotions", and ideas as "the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning".

> enumeration of them... But if anyone should deny this universal resemblance, I know no way of convincing him, but by desiring him to show a simple impression, that has not a correspondent idea, or a simple idea, that has not a correspondent impression...
>
> Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise by chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas or the ideas on the impressions... And I find by constant experience, that the simple impressions always take the precedence of the correspondent ideas, but never appear in the contrary order.[19]

Hume therefore conjectures that all our ideas are derived from impressions. Therefore he argues that the idea of a substance is not the idea of a simple or single thing; for he says the idea of a substance is not the idea of a simple impression, but an idea abstracted from the ideas of several distinct simple impressions:

> The idea of a substance ... is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them.[20]

Spinoza agrees with some of this. He makes a similar argument regarding general ideas (1Def4Ex), both those which he calls "universals", such as 'man', 'horse', and 'dog', and those which he calls "transcendental", such as 'entity', 'thing', and 'something', all of which he explains as abstract ideas, or modes of the imagination that are abstracted from the distinct ideas or definitions of numerous distinct individuals (E2P40S1). But note that the same cannot be said of the idea of absolutely infinite substance; for substance is defined, or in other words, the idea of substance has been demonstrated, not only without contradiction, but also simply, that is, without the aid of any other definition from which it might be said to be abstracted. For absolutely infinite substance, or reality, is defined as that which is conceived absolutely independently of any other, or that which is conceived neither through any other nor in relation to any other; and hence, insofar as the idea of substance is conceived truly, as it is defined, it must necessarily be conceived both simply and concretely. Therefore, the idea of substance, or

---

[19] *Treatise of Human Nature,* 1.1.1.

[20] *Treatise,* 1.1.6.

God, insofar as it is conceived truly, is necessarily simple and concrete; and it is, moreover, a simple idea with no correspondent impression, as Hume desired we show to refute his fundamental argument; for we cannot picture an adequate idea of absolutely infinite substance in our imaginations as an impression or image, though we can understand it with certainty (E1P8S).[21] I'll explain in Chapter Two how we conceive substance both adequately as simple and indivisible and inadequately as divisible and complex.

Kant's objections also involve analogies with finite, dependent things. He argues first that,

> To posit a triangle, and yet to reject its three angles, is self-contradictory; but there is no contradiction in rejecting the triangle together with its three angles. The same holds true of the concept of an absolutely necessary being. If its existence is rejected, we reject the thing with all its predicates; and no question of contradiction can then arise. There is nothing outside it that would then be contradicted, since the necessity of the thing is not supposed to be derived from anything external; nor is there anything internal that would be contradicted, since in rejecting the thing itself we have at the same time rejected all its internal properties.[22]

But note that Kant has shown only that if "the thing itself" could be rejected, that is, if it could be conceived that God, or reality, did not exist, as it can be conceived that a particular triangle does not exist, no necessary reason for the existence of reality would then be given. But Kant cannot show that such an idea is conceivable; for as we have seen, reality and the existence of reality must be conceived as one and the same, so that insofar as reality is conceived, its existence is thereby also conceived; and therefore, reality cannot be conceived as non-existent. If one should reply that if reality did not exist both it and its existence would be nothing, I say again that this is absurd, since reality is defined as that which is not nothing, as nothing is defined as that which is not reality; and hence, it is impossible to conceive anything, or even doubt anything,

---

[21] "How else can we show the idea of a thing than by giving its definition and explaining its attributes? Since this is what we are doing concerning the idea of God, there is no reason for us to be bothered by the words of men who deny the idea of God merely because they cannot form an image of him in their brain." Spinoza, PPC1P6S.

[22] *Critique,* B 622–23.

without thereby conceiving reality and knowing with certainty that it exists. Therefore, reality, "the thing itself", cannot be rejected. Therefore, Spinoza does not beg the question when he assumes the existence of a being that cannot be conceived except as existing. It is Kant who begs the question when he assumes the existence of such a being can be doubted.[23]

But to this Kant replies that existence cannot "be contained in the concept of a thing that is considered as possible". To illustrate this, he argues that the conception of a particular thing, such as a sum of money, conceived as containing existence in itself as one of its properties, in addition to its other properties, will not demonstrate the thing's existence; that is, it will not put the money in one's pocket.[24] Moreover, he points out that if the existence of the thing were one of its properties, the thing conceived as existing would be a different thing from the same thing conceived as possible, since it would have an additional property, namely existence. Kant therefore concludes, rightly, that the existence of a thing cannot be one of its properties.[25] But forceful as this objection is in refuting some, more confused ontological arguments, it cannot be said to apply here; for as I have emphasized, Spinoza demonstrates, not that existence is one of God's properties, but that existence is the essence of God. Therefore, I say again that Kant assumes an inconceivable premise; for God is existence itself and cannot be considered as possibly existing, but must be considered as necessarily existing.[26]

Hume goes still further, to doubt Spinoza's axiom that for every effect there must be a cause (E1Ax3). He argues that from examination of experience no impression of causation, or a "necessary connection" between things, can be discovered; and therefore, recalling his previous argument, that all our ideas are derived from impressions, he concludes that our ideas of causation are at most unproved habitual inferences.[27] However, as Hume himself readily admits, a man can be regarded as sane, or rational, only if he does make these inferences.[28] But why must a man make these inferences to

---

[23] "We doubt the existence of God as long as the idea we have of God is not clear and distinct but confused." Spinoza, TTP6Adn.

[24] *Critique,* B 622-23.

[25] *Critique,* B 624, 626–29. Kant's term is "predicate"; but note that, in the passage quoted earlier, he equates "property" and "predicate" as synonyms in a similar context.

[26] "He does not exist possibly... He exists necessarily; that is, his nature involves necessary existence." Spinoza, PPC1L2.

[27] *Treatise,* 1.3.2; 1.3.6.

[28] *Treatise,* 1.4.1; *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* ch. 124–26.

be regarded as sane? Is it not because we in fact do know there are necessary connections, or relations of dependence, between things? We have already seen, from the example given of the idea of substance, that Hume's fundamental claim, that all our ideas are derived from impressions, must be rejected as false; and therefore we see that this new argument, with its premise denied, does not demonstrate that there is no basis for our unanimous application of Spinoza's axiom, or for our nearly unanimous assent to it,[29] but instead, demonstrates at most that our knowledge of causation is not derived from impressions.

But if it is indeed true that for every effect there must be a cause, then it must also be true that for the necessity of this relation in reality there must be an explanation; and perhaps someone objects that we have not yet seen this explanation. But we have seen, without the aid of the idea of causation, that God cannot be nothing, and moreover, that God and the existence of God must be conceived as one and the same, and therefore, that the non-existence of God, or reality, is a contradiction and, therefore, impossible, so that God must exist necessarily. Furthermore, we have seen for the same reason that the essence of God is the cause of the existence of God; for by a cause I mean that which explains the existence of a thing, and we have seen that God's essence explains God's existence. Therefore, I will show in the following demonstrations that for everything that exists there is a cause, and that the cause is God.

Corollary 4, Proposition 1.0

God is the cause of everything conceivable (E1P16, E1P35).

Demonstration: If a thing were conceived as not in God, or being, it would be conceived distinctly from being, which is absurd, because being cannot be conceived in relation to another (1Def5). Therefore, whatever might be conceived must be conceived as existing in God, or being.

To say it another way, if the thing were conceived as not in being, it would have to be conceived as non-being or in non-being, or in other words as nothing, which is absurd, because if the thing can be conceived it's something, not nothing.

[29] "... a general maxim in philosophy". *Treatise,* 1.3.3.

And lastly, to say it one more way, if anything conceivable did not exist in reality, reality would be in that respect limited, which is again absurd. For as we have seen, reality must necessarily be absolutely infinite and unlimited.

Furthermore, the things that exist in reality are not something other than reality; for again, there can be no other. In other words, the essence of reality, or God, involves or comprehends in itself whatever things might be conceived as existing. Therefore, the essence of reality is the cause, or that which explains the existence, of everything conceivable. That is, the essence of God is the cause of every conceivable essence, and the existence of God is the cause of every conceivable effect, or in other words, every conceivable thing; and hence, nothing can be conceived that is not necessarily in God and in that way caused by God.[30]

Note 4, Proposition 1.0

Therefore, everything conceivable, or in other words everything possible, necessarily exists in reality, and nothing is really contingent, or merely possible (E1P29). Yet, as Spinoza explains, particular things often seem contingent, or only possible, because we have only imperfect knowledge of them and the particular causes that might determine their existence or exclude their existence in a particular time or place.

> A thing is called necessary either in respect to its essence or in respect to its cause; for the existence of a thing necessarily follows either from its essence and definition or from a given cause. A thing is called impossible for similar reasons, namely, inasmuch as its essence or definition involves a contradiction, or because no cause is granted that is determined to produce the effect in question. But a thing is called contingent only because of the deficiency of our knowledge; for if we do not know whether the essence of the thing does or does not involve a contradiction, or if we do know that its essence does not involve a contradiction, but, because we do not know the true order of causes, we still must doubt whether the thing exists, then the thing cannot appear to us as either necessary or impossible, and so we call it 'possible' or 'contingent'. (E1P33S1)

[30] "Whatever can be conceived must be what is. For if it can be conceived it can be what is, but it cannot be what is not; for what is cannot be what is not." Parmenides, frag. 6.

"Therefore truth cannot allow that anything comes from what is not." Frag. 8.

That is to say, what is must be what is, and hence, whatever is, is what must be, and nothing that is could possibly exist in any other way than it does; but insofar as our minds are limited, or finite, we imagine the particular causes of things only partly and inadequately, and therefore, to that extent, we imagine that particular things might be otherwise than they are. But I will explain this much further and much more particularly throughout this book, especially in Chapters Four and Five, where I will explain how we conceive things both as existing eternally in God and as existing temporally in particular times and places, and in Chapter Six, where I will explain what fantastic and fictitious things are, and in Chapters Five and Seven, where I will explain how a man's will is both necessary but also free in some ways and constrained in others. Moreover, I will also explain in Chapters Six and Seven how understanding the idea of necessity is the foundation and means of a man's rationality and rational contentment, or happiness (E2P44, E4A32, E5P6).[31]

Note 5, Proposition 1.0

So we have established thus far that reality necessarily exists; that the essence of reality is existence; that there can be nothing that is not in reality; and that reality, or existence, is by its nature and definition the sole cause both of itself and of the things in reality. And for reasons that will become clear and distinct as we deduce the properties of reality, I have followed Spinoza and many others in calling reality "God". For I will show throughout this treatise that reality in itself is a supreme and perfect being that "creates, understands, and preserves, or loves," all things in reality (CM2.8); and I will show in Chapter Seven how a man's understanding of the idea of reality is the foundation and means of his enjoyment of a perfect and absolute bliss, or eternal beatitude. "For beatitude is nothing but the absolute self-contentment that arises from one's intuitive knowledge of God; and to perfect one's intellect is likewise nothing other than to understand God and the attributes and actions of God that follow from the necessity of his nature" (E4A4).

---

[31] "Here, no doubt, my readers will hesitate, and think of many things that give them pause. So I ask them to proceed slowly step by step with me, and to make no judgment about these things until they have read to the end." Spinoza, E2P11S.

"As my last conclusions are demonstrated by the first, which are their causes, so the first are in turn demonstrated by the last, which are their effects." Descartes, *Letter to Morin,* July 1638.

Proposition 1.1

God, or reality, consists in an infinity of divine attributes (E1D6).

Demonstration 1: If any attribute, or any substance that is conceived through itself but in relation to another, did not exist in reality, it would have to be something other than reality, which is absurd, and moreover, reality would be to that extent limited, which is also absurd; for we have seen that reality must be conceived as absolutely infinite, that is, as either consisting in or containing everything conceivable. Therefore an infinity of attributes must exist in reality.

Furthermore, insofar as an attribute is conceived as existing in reality, it must be conceived as in that respect identical with reality; for an attribute must be conceived as existing in itself. Therefore, insofar as an attribute is conceived as existing in itself it must be conceived as that which "constitutes the essence of God", or that in which God, or reality, consists (E1P20D). Therefore, God, or reality, or absolutely infinite substance, consists in every conceivable attribute; and therefore, "absolutely infinite being must be defined as a being that consists in an infinity of attributes, each of which … expresses the reality, or being, of substance" (E1P10S).

Note 1, Proposition 1.1

Therefore, by an attribute of God I understand God, or substance, or that which is conceived through itself in relation to no other, insofar as a substance can be conceived through itself in relation to another in God, as for example I conceive thought through itself in relation to extension. For I am "immediately aware" of myself through thought (AT VII 160), and I'm aware that I'm conceiving myself through thought, or "thinking substance", in relation to another that is not my awareness in thought, namely something I'm perceiving through thought as extended, or having dimensions such as length, width, and depth (E2P7S).[32]

Demonstration 2: Insofar as a thing is conceived, it must be conceived either as caused by itself or as caused by another (E1Ax4). But a substance, or that which exists in itself

[32] "I have, on the one hand, a clear and distinct idea of myself insofar as I am only a thinking, non-extended thing, and also, on the other hand, a clear and distinct idea of body insofar as it is only an extended, non-thinking thing." Descartes, *Sixth Meditation.*

and is conceived through itself, must necessarily be conceived as prior to anything that exists in and is conceived through another (E1P1); that is, it must exist and be conceived prior to any mode of a substance, and thus, it cannot be caused by a mode of a substance.

Therefore, insofar as an attribute, or substance, is conceived, it must be conceived as caused by something that exists in itself, namely by God, or by itself, or by another attribute. But an attribute cannot be conceived as existing in or through another attribute; for insofar as an attribute is conceived in relation to another attribute it must be conceived as existing in and through itself; and hence insofar as it is conceived in relation to another attribute, it cannot be conceived as having anything in common with the other attribute (E1P2) or as in any way caused by the other attribute (E1P3). For "if two things have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other, since the effect would have nothing in it in common with the cause, and hence, whatever it did have, it would have from nothing" (Ep4).

Therefore, insofar as an attribute is conceived, it must be conceived either as caused by itself insofar as it exists in itself or as caused by God insofar as it exists in God. If it is conceived as caused by God, it must be conceived as existing, because God necessarily exists. But an attribute can be caused by God only insofar as it is identical with God; for on the one hand, there can be nothing that is not in God, but on the other hand, an attribute is in itself. If however, an attribute is conceived as caused by itself (E1P7), that is, as explaining its own existence, it must again be conceived as existing (E1D1, E1P9). But again, there can be nothing that is not in God, whereas an attribute is in itself. Therefore, an attribute necessarily exists and is that which constitutes the essence of God, or that in which God, or being, consists; that is, God, or being, is identical with whatever attributes might be conceived.

Furthermore, each attribute is conceived in relation to another. Therefore, however many attributes might be conceived, yet another is always conceivable in relation to them; and insofar as it can be conceived it must be conceived as the cause of itself and therefore as necessarily existing. Moreover, substance is absolutely infinite and therefore must necessarily either consist in or cause to exist whatsoever is conceivable. But as we have seen, substance can be the cause of an attribute only insofar as it is the cause of itself. Therefore, substance consists in an infinity of attributes.

Corollary, Proposition 1.1

An attribute must be conceived as infinite in its substance (E1P8).

Demonstration 1: An attribute is that which constitutes, or "expresses" (E1P10S), the essence of substance, or that in which the essence of absolutely infinite substance consists. But the essence of substance cannot be conceived as limited. Therefore, substance consists in an infinity of attributes, and each attribute expresses infinity in its substance (E1D2).

To say it another way, insofar as an attribute is in itself and is in substance, the attribute and substance are identical. Therefore, insofar as substance is infinite in itself, an attribute of substance must also be infinite in itself. Therefore an attribute must be infinite in its substance.

Demonstration 2: If an attribute of God were limited in its substance it would have to be limited either by itself or by another of the same substance; for it cannot be limited by nothing (1.0C2D). But if it were limited by itself, or more of itself, it would not be limited; and if it were limited by another of the same substance, it would not be in itself (E1D2), and therefore it would not be an attribute (1Def6), which is absurd (E1P5). Therefore, an attribute cannot be limited in its substance; that is, each attribute of God, or each substance in reality, must be infinite.

Note 2, Proposition 1.1

Therefore, we have seen that God consists in an infinity of infinite divine attributes; and we have seen that insofar as each attribute, such as thought, is in itself, that is, insofar as it is a substance, it is identical with God, or absolutely infinite substance; whereas, considered in this same respect, that is, insofar as it is in itself, the attribute is thereby also considered as distinct from the other attributes in God (E1P10S).

This relation of substance and its attributes may seem hard to understand, not only because we cannot picture it in our imaginations, but also because it might seem paradoxical (E2P7S). One might picture various metaphors, such as the image of an 'infinity' of 'infinite' circles in an 'infinite' sphere, or an 'infinity' of 'infinite' spheres superimposed in one 'infinite' sphere, or an 'infinite' richness or density of attributes

existing throughout substance, and so forth; but it's important to recognize that such images, and such analogies, are necessarily inadequate and partly false. I will explain more adequately and particularly in Chapter Two how an attribute is conceived without contradiction both as identical with God and as distinct from the other attributes, and why we can conceive and understand that God consists in an infinity of attributes, but can only conceive thought distinctly in relation to extension and do not distinctly conceive the other attributes in God; and I'll demonstrate in Chapter Three how we conceive thought in relation to extension and thereby conceive conception as constituting the essence of thought and conceive quantity as constituting the essence of extension.

Note 3, Proposition 1.1

Spinoza developed his theory of the attributes to explain the "real distinction between mind and body" that Descartes had demonstrated in *Meditation Six.* Nearly all philosophers both before and after Descartes and Spinoza frequently confuse the distinction between the mind and body with other distinctions, especially the distinction between the understanding and the imagination, or in other words, between the mind or intellect itself (see 6.2-3) and the mind considered insofar as it is affected by images and feelings (6.1). For example,

> The mind can best reflect when it is free of all such distractions as hearing, or sight, or pain or pleasure of any kind, that is, when it ignores the body and becomes as far as possible independent, avoiding all physical contacts and associations as much as it can, in its search for reality. (Plato, *Phaedo,* 65c)
>
> Certainly as sight is in the body, so is reason in the soul. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1096)

But in *Meditations* and *Principles* Descartes demonstrated a simpler and more fundamental distinction between the mind considered as a thinking, non-extended thing and the body considered as an extended, non-thinking thing; and he explained that "thinking is to be identified here not only with understanding, willing, and imagining, but also with sensory awareness" (AT VIII 7). He therefore explained the mind and body as distinct substances, having nothing in common (AT VII 176); but Spinoza

understood that a substance, which is in itself, must be infinite, and he understood that God, or reality, is the only substance. So to explain the distinction between mind and body, he adapted Descartes' further explanation that, "To each substance there belongs one principal attribute; in the case of mind, this is thought, and in the case of body it is extension" (AT VIII 25); and he explained correctly that an attribute is "a certain eternal and infinite essence" (E1P10S), "which expresses the essence of substance" (E1P19D), or "constitutes the essence of God" (E1P20D). Furthermore, Spinoza understood rightly that, whatever exactly an attribute of substance might be, since there were clearly at least two of them (E1P10S), there must necessarily be infinitely many (E1P8S), since God is absolutely infinite and there can be nothing in substance that limits the number of its attributes (E1P9) and nothing external to substance that limits the number of attributes (E1D6Ex, E1P11).

But the definition Spinoza gives in E1D4, "By an attribute I mean that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance", does not meet all the requirements for an adequate definition he lists in *Emendation of the Intellect,* since it explains one of an attribute's properties, namely its relation to an intellect, rather than "the inmost essence of the thing" explained through an adequate and proximate cause (TIE95-96). For "the cause for the existence of a thing must either be contained in the nature and definition of the thing itself or else exist outside the thing" (E1P8S2), but "if the thing is uncreated", or "eternal" (E1D8), or in other words "caused by itself" (E1D1), its definition "should exclude any idea of a cause ... except the thing itself", and moreover, "should exclude any doubt that the thing exists" (TIE96-7). But Spinoza's definition, "By an attribute I mean that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance", does not exclude any idea that an attribute might have as its cause, or as part of its cause, the nature of the intellect perceiving it; and therefore it does not exclude any doubt that whether perceived or unperceived by an intellect the attribute necessarily exists. Therefore, I have defined an attribute as 'that which exists in itself, and is conceived through itself, in relation to another', or 'substance, insofar as a substance can be conceived in relation to another'; for as I have shown, this definition adequately explains the essence of an attribute, such as thought, which we conceive in relation to extension, and immediately affirms its existence both in one's experience and in absolutely unlimited substance, or God. I will explain this much further in Chapters Three and Five, where I will also explain some important errors that follow from the definition Spinoza gives but do not follow from an adequate definition.

Note 4, Proposition 1.1

We have seen in the preceding notes that insofar as each attribute is in itself, it is distinct from the other attributes; whereas insofar as God, or substance, is in itself, it is identical with all the attributes. As I mentioned in Note 2, this might seem paradoxical. But further, Spinoza demonstrates in E1P13 that "absolutely infinite substance is indivisible", which might seem to contradict his definition of God as a substance consisting in an infinity of attributes. As I also mentioned, I will clarify these apparent difficulties in Chapter Two, where I will demonstrate that an attribute can be conceived as a distinct entity only in relation to the other attributes but not in relation to God, since God cannot be conceived as divided into attributes. Note therefore that insofar as an attribute, such as thought, is conceived as a distinct entity in relation to any of the other attributes, it is thereby conceived as belonging to the genus 'attribute'; for a thing belongs to a genus insofar as it can be conceived in relation to another or others in the genus (1Def4). But the genus 'attribute' is not God, or substance, but is instead an abstracted idea of the totality of two or more attributes of substance; whereas God, or substance in itself, is the generating cause of its attributes insofar as it is the sole cause of itself (E1P8S2). But again, I will explain this further in Chapter Two.

At the risk of making a point that is still somewhat obscure seem even more obscure, we might now gain some advantage from considering the ways we understand the generation of attributes in substance; for as we consider the relations of substance and its attributes in Spinoza's ontology, or metaphysics of beings and causes, we might gain our first clue to a difficult but important point in his epistemology, or metaphysics of thinking and knowing, namely the relations of "reason" and "intuition" (E2P40S2). For when I showed that an infinity of attributes necessarily exist, there were two parts to the demonstration: first, that no matter how many attributes might be conceived, yet another can be conceived in relation to them and, thereby, must be conceived as existing, and second, that insofar as it is absolutely infinite, substance is necessarily the cause of whatever is conceivable. Note that the first part of this demonstration, by itself, shows that the number of existing attributes is unlimited, because whatever thing is conceived as existing in itself must be conceived as self-caused, or necessarily existing; whereas the second part shows a positive and necessary generating cause for the infinity of such beings, since as we have seen, absolutely infinite substance and the infinity of attributes are one and the same. That is to say, if the attributes are

considered as those things which constitute the essence of substance, the infinity of attributes is then understood intuitively and all at once through conception of substance; whereas if they are considered as the totality of things that exist in themselves but in relation to others, the infinity of attributes is then understood rationally, through an abstract idea or general definition of an attribute conceived in conjunction with an "entity of reason" (CM1.1, E1A), namely the idea of infinite counting. This recalls Descartes' similar distinction between intuition and deduction:

> Two things are required for intuition; namely, that the proposition be understood clearly and distinctly, and also that it be perceived all at once and not bit by bit. But deduction ... does not seem to take place all at once, but rather, involves a kind of movement of our mind in inferring one thing from another. (AT X 407)

Again, I acknowledge that much of what I've explained in this note is still somewhat obscure. I will explain these things further and much more adequately in Chapter Two, where I'll explain how God, or absolutely infinite substance, can be conceived both adequately as one and inadequately as many, and also in Chapter Six, where I will demonstrate and explain the three kinds of knowledge, or opinion, reason, and intuition. Therefore, let us now return to inferring, or deducing, "bit by bit" the properties of substance and its attributes, but keeping in mind that insofar as we conceive God, or substance, concretely and adequately in our experience, we are thereby intuitively conceiving its attributes and properties "all at once".

Proposition 1.2

God, or being, generates in itself, that is, each attribute generates in itself, an infinity of properties, or modes of itself (E1P16).

Demonstration: The properties of a thing follow from its essence; that is, the essence of the thing explains the essence of its properties, and the existence of the thing explains the existence of its properties (1Def1Ex). But the essence of God is absolutely infinite in itself and is therefore the cause of everything conceivable in itself (1.0C3-4) and, therefore, every conceivable property, or mode of itself; and likewise, the essence of an attribute is infinite in its substance and the cause of everything conceivable in its

substance (1.1C). Therefore, an infinity of properties must follow from the essence of God and thereby from the essence of each attribute; or in other words, being, or each attribute, generates in itself an infinity of properties, or modes of itself.

Note 1, Proposition 1.2

There can thus be no accidental modifications in a substance; for as we have now seen, the essence of a substance explains the essence and existence of every conceivable modification of the substance, and hence, the modifications of a substance must all be properties of its essence. In other words, there can be nothing that is accidental, or contingent, in reality (E1P29, 1.0C4).

Note 2, Proposition 1.2

To say that being is the generating cause of an infinity of modes is not to say that being is their genus (see 2.0N1, 4.0N), but rather, that being, or substance, is the adequate cause of every conceivable thing in every conceivable genus, or in other words, that from the essence, or definition, of substance an infinity of properties, or modes of substance, necessarily follow. So too, an attribute is not the genus of its modifications (E1P12), but the generating cause of every conceivable thing in every conceivable genus in the attribute, as thought, for example, is the adequate cause of every conceivable idea in every conceivable genus of ideas (TIE101), and as extension is the adequate cause of every conceivable body in every conceivable genus of bodies. Therefore, substance, and each attribute of substance, contains in itself an infinity of infinite modes of itself (E1P21-23) and an infinity of finite modes of itself (E1P28).

Spinoza explains in E1D2, "a thing is called finite in its own kind if it can be limited by another thing of the same nature". Therefore, by a finite mode of a substance, I understand a mode that is conceived as modifying, or present in, only some modes in the substance, and is therefore conceived as limited by the other modes; and by an infinite mode, I understand a mode that is conceived as modifying or present in every mode in the substance, and is therefore not conceived as limited by any other.

Spinoza mentions "created nature", or the created universe, as an example of an infinite mode of God (E1P29S, KV1.9); and he mentions infinite intellect and infinite motion as examples of infinite modes of thought and extension (KV1.9, Ep66, E1P31). Some examples of more particular infinite modes of God, or "modes that

follow necessarily from the absolute nature of God or an attribute insofar as it is modified by a modification that exists necessarily and as infinite" (E1P23), include the following infinite "properties of God", which are present or true in every mode of substance and are "always and everywhere the same" (E1P21, E3Praef).

> That God necessarily exists; that he is one alone; that he exists and acts solely from the necessity of his nature; that he is the free cause of all things; that all things are in God and depend on him so that they can neither be nor be conceived without him; and that all things are determined by God, not from his free choice or personal pleasure, but from his absolute nature, or infinite power" (E1A).

Therefore, as I will demonstrate more adequately throughout this book, and especially in Chapter Six, it is the infinite modes, or "common properties" of reality, insofar as they are conceived in thought, as the infinite modes of thought, that constitute the "common notions", or "ideas of reason", which must be true "always and everywhere", and therefore constitute the truths, or true and adequate propositions, that might be denoted by the words of a true and adequate rational philosophy. (E2P40S, E3Praef, TIE101, TTP4).

Some examples of the finite modes of reality, or the finite things in nature, are men, air, molecules, and galaxies; nations, treaties, and wars; and colors, harmonies, and theories; together with other things both infinitely greater and infinitely less than we can imagine. But our primary concern in nature is ourselves, so I will explain most things in this book from my own perspective rather than the perspectives of other finite things.

Some examples of the finite modes of thought are a man's mind and the finite modifications of his mind, such as his opinions, sensations, desires, and feelings. Some examples of the finite modes of extension are a man's body and the finite modifications, or motions, of his body. I will explain this much further throughout this treatise, but it's worth noting here that Spinoza's Latin term *modus,* usually translated as "mode", can also be translated as "way". So I am a way of being; and my mind and ideas are ways of thinking; and my body and motions are ways of extending, or moving.

Note 3, Proposition 1.2

All things in nature are really properties, or modal explanations, of substance, or reality. Therefore the real definition of a particular thing, which adequately explains the essence of the thing in words, must denote God, or substance, or that which is conceived in relation to no other, not in itself, or insofar as it is absolutely infinite, but only insofar as it is modified in a particular way (E2P11C). For example, the infinite mode, 'that God is absolutely infinite' (that thing, the essence of which is denoted by the words *that God is absolutely infinite*), is in reality God, insofar as God is absolutely infinite. And so too, a particular finite thing, such as my opinion, 'that I am writing this book', is in reality God, or being, insofar as Gary Sugar thinks he is writing a book.

Note therefore that the modes of substance are not really distinct entities, but are instead abstracted properties, or distinct explanations, of the same essence or thing, in the same way as, for example, the property of a particular triangle, 'that it has three angles', is not really distinct from the triangle or the other essential properties of the triangle, because it is really the triangle itself insofar as it has three angles (CM2.5, E1P15S, 1Def2). I will demonstrate and explain this much more particularly in the following chapter, concerning the distinction of entities; and I'll explain in Chapters Three and Six why we imagine ourselves as distinct individual minds and imagine the things external to our minds as distinct three-dimensional bodies and motions of bodies.

Corollary 1, Proposition 1.2

Insofar as each attribute is identical with God, or substance, its modes are identical with the modes of substance (E2P7S).

Demonstration: The modes of an attribute, or substance, are not external to its substance, but in it. But each attribute, insofar as it is in itself, is necessarily identical with God, or absolutely infinite substance, insofar as it is in itself. Therefore, insofar as an attribute is in itself, its modes are identical with the modes of God. Or to say it another way, insofar as each attribute "expresses the essence of substance" or "constitutes the essence of God" (E2P19-20), its modes express or constitute the modes of God.

Corollary 2, Proposition 1.2

The modes of each attribute must be conceived through the attribute, that is, not through any other (E2P6).

Demonstration: The modes of an attribute, or substance, are conceived through the attribute (E1D5). But each attribute is conceived through itself and not through any other attribute. Therefore, the modes of an attribute must be conceived through the attribute, and not through any other.

Note 4, Proposition 1.2

For example, conception of an idea, or mode of thought, involves and requires conception of thought, without which the idea can neither exist nor be conceived, but does not involve conception of extension or any mode of extension; and conception of a body, or mode of extension, involves conception of extension but does not involve conception of thought. Therefore,

> As long as things are considered as modes of thinking, we must explain the whole of nature, or the connection of causes, solely through the attribute of thought; and as long as things are considered as modes of extension, the order of the whole of nature must be explained solely through ... extension. Whereas, of things as they are in themselves [in God], God is really their cause insofar as he consists in an infinity of attributes. (E2P7S)

I will explain in Chapters Two and Three how we conceive extension and the modes of extension through our conception of them in God, or absolutely infinite substance, but only perceive them through our conception of thought.

Corollary 3, Proposition 1.2

The order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute (E2P7).

Demonstration 1: We saw in Corollary 1 that insofar as an attribute is in itself, it is identical with God, or absolutely infinite substance, and that its modes, which are in

it, are therefore identical with the modes of God. Therefore, the order and connection of modes in an attribute must be identical with the order and connection of modes in God; and therefore, the order and connection of modes must be identical in every attribute.

Demonstration 2: If an attribute were modified differently from God or differently from the other attributes, that is, if there were more than one order and connection of modes in reality, or if more than one order were possible, a definite cause, or explanation, would have to be granted (E1Ax3, E1P8S2). But there can be no cause either external or prior to reality, or the infinity of attributes. Therefore, only one order and connection of modes can be possible in reality and, thereby, in the infinity of attributes (E1P33). Therefore an attribute cannot be modified differently from God or the other attributes, and the order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute.

Note 5, Proposition 1.2

There is thus a mode of thought, or idea, corresponding to each mode of extension, or body of motion, in reality and, conversely, a mode of extension corresponding to each mode of thought. Therefore to each infinite mode of thought, such as the infinite conception of ideas in thought, there corresponds an infinite mode of extension, such as, in this case, the infinite motion of bodies. And likewise, to each finite mode of thought, such as a particular man's mind, there corresponds a finite mode of extension, namely the man's body; and in the same way, to each mode of thought, or each idea, in the man's mind there corresponds a modification of extension, or in other words, a corporeal motion, in his body (E5P1).

Therefore, as I sit here now writing this, there is a sequence of physical motions in my body that seems to originate in my brain or head and then travel through the nerves and muscles in my arms and fingers to depress the keys of my typewriter; and likewise, corresponding to this motion, there is an idea, or volition (E2P49), in my mind that seems to originate in my idea of my head and communicate through my ideas of my arms and fingers to my ideas of the keys. So in this way, there is an order and connection of motions of bodies in extended substance from my brain, through my nerves, muscles, and fingers, to the keys of the typewriter; and there is likewise an order and connection of ideas in thought from the idea of my brain through the ideas of my arms and fingers to the ideas of the keys; but there is not in any way a connection from my

mind or my ideas to my body or the motions of my body, or from any mode of thought to any mode of extension. Yet the order and connection of modes is the same in thought as it is in extension; and hence, for every idea that modifies my mind in a particular way there is a physical motion that modifies my body in the corresponding way; for considered as they are in reality, or God, my mind and body are the same finite mode of reality, and the modifications of my mind and body are the same modifications of the same absolutely infinite substance.

Therefore Spinoza says, "The body cannot determine the mind to think, nor can the mind determine the body to motion or rest" (E3P2). This explanation may seem hard to understand, because it often seems that our minds or thoughts do determine our bodies to move. It seems that way because we are aware of the determinations or decisions that arise in our minds, whereas we are not aware of the corresponding determinations of our bodies except insofar as we perceive them as motions that seem to reflect the determinations in our minds. And conversely, it often seems that the images and feelings we are aware of in our minds are determined by changes in our bodies, because we perceive the external things that affect us as motions of other bodies that are affecting our bodies. I will explain these points much further throughout the rest of this treatise.

Proposition 1.3

From each mode generated in a substance, whether infinite or finite, there follow a finite, or indefinite, number of properties, or modifications.

Demonstration: If there were no properties following from the essence of a particular mode of a substance, the generating power of the substance would be to that extent limited, which is absurd (1.2). Moreover, if no properties pertained to the essence of the mode, nothing would pertain to its essence; that is, its essence would be nothing, which is also absurd. For the essence of the mode explains the essence of its properties, and the existence of the mode explains the existence of its properties; and therefore it is the cause of its properties (1Def3). Therefore, "nothing has no properties" (PPC2A1), and "nothing exists from the nature of which an effect does not follow" (E1P36). But a mode, whether infinite or finite, cannot be the cause of every mode in its substance, since it cannot be the cause of itself or the cause of any prior modes from which it might follow as a property. Therefore the mode cannot be the cause of an

infinite number of properties, but only a finite number of properties. In 2.0N5 I will explain Spinoza's meaning in calling it an "indefinite" number.

Note 1, Proposition 1.3

For example, from the essence, or definition, of the infinite mode of substance, 'that substance necessarily exists', it follows, or in other words, it can be deduced, 'that substance exists infinitely', 'that substance exists always', 'that substance cannot be destroyed', and so on. And from the essence of a finite mode, for example a particular sphere, whose essence is defined by "the rotation of a particular semi-circle" (TIE72, TIE95), it follows and can be deduced, 'that its circumference is its longest dimension', 'that its diameter is twice the length of its radius', 'that all its radii are of equal length', and so on; and from the last of these properties, 'that all its radii are of equal length', it can be deduced 'that none of its radii is longer than another of its radii', 'that any triangle drawn from the center to the surface must be an isosceles', and so on. I will explain an example of one of my own properties in Chapter Two.

Corollary, Proposition 1.3

Each finite mode of a substance is accidentally modified by an indefinite number of external causes (E4P3-4).

Demonstration: Each finite mode of a substance must exist in another finite mode that is greater; for a substance generates in itself every conceivable modification of itself, and a greater finite mode is always conceivable, to infinity (E1D2); and therefore, each finite mode is a modification of an indefinite number of greater finite modes. Furthermore, from each of these greater modes, in which the mode in question exists, there must follow an indefinite number of other modes; and some of these other modes might modify the mode in question. But such modifications of the mode would not follow solely from the mode's own essence; that is, they would exist in the mode not as properties of its essence but as accidents (E2P9D). Moreover, a substance generates in itself every conceivable mode of itself (1.2); and therefore, it necessarily generates every conceivable accident among its modes. Therefore, each finite mode of a substance must be conceived as modified, not only by an indefinite number of properties, but also by an indefinite number of accidents.

Note 2, Proposition 1.3

For example, a sphere might be conceived as existing in a greater mode in which the body of the sphere is conceived in conjunction or union with the body of a cone in such a way that their intersection follows as a property. Though the intersection is in both the cone and the sphere, that is (E1D5), though it modifies both, it is nevertheless not a property of either body in itself, but is instead their accident. That is, the cone is the external cause of the modification of the sphere, whereas the sphere is the external cause of the modification of the cone.

Note that not only bodies, but ideas as well can be conceived as accidentally modified; for insofar as the idea of the sphere is conceived in conjunction with the idea of the cone, the idea of their intersection is also conceived. Therefore, a true idea of this particular sphere or this particular cone, as it actually is, must contain the idea of their intersection, since the intersection is an actual modification of the bodies in question. But again, the idea of the intersection does not follow solely from the idea of either body in itself. Therefore, the idea of the intersection is an accidental modification of the idea of each of these particular bodies.

Or to give another example, the finite idea, 'that I am writing this book', can be conceived in conjunction with the finite idea, 'that today is a Wednesday', so that their intersection, namely the idea, 'that I am writing this book on a Wednesday', follows as a property. But again, the intersection does not follow from either of these ideas in itself; that is, it is not a property of either idea in itself, but is instead their accident.

Note 3, Proposition 1.3

In Letter 4 (1661), Spinoza does not yet distinguish between accidents and properties: "By a modification, or accident, I mean that which exists in and is conceived through another." But in *Metaphysical Thoughts* (1663), he seems to recognize that there can be no accidental modifications in a substance and, moreover, that every accident of a mode is in reality a property of some other, greater mode:

> Being is divided into substance and mode, not into substance and accident. For an accident is nothing but a mode of thinking, inasmuch as it denotes what exists only in a certain respect. For example, when I say that a triangle is moved,

> the motion is not a mode of the triangle, but of the body in which the triangle is moved. Hence the motion is called an accident with respect to the triangle; but with respect to the body, it is called a mode. For the motion cannot be conceived without the body, though it can be conceived without the triangle. (CM1.1)

But in *Ethics* (1665–77), Spinoza rarely uses the term 'accident', and when he does, it's always in reference to what are actually accidents of accidents; e.g. "If the human body has once been affected by two bodies at once, whenever afterwards the mind conceives one of them, it will at the same time remember the other. Therefore in this way anything can accidentally be the cause of joy, sorrow, or desire" (E3P14-15). But when Spinoza refers to what I have called an accidental modification but doesn't use the term 'accident' he must instead give a full definition, like "modes in which the human body is modified by external bodies" (E2P16). Yet he often mentions modifications of a finite mode casually, without saying in any way whether they're properties of its essence or accidents. This leads to some confusion, particularly in E2P23, E2P27–29, and E2P48, in which he appears to be saying that human essence, i.e. the essence of a particular man, is modified only through accidents, that is, not through any properties of its own, which is absurd. For example, he says in E2P27D, "Every idea of a modification of the human body involves the nature of the human body only insofar as it is considered as modified in some definite mode (see Prop. 16)", and the passage he references in E2P16 says, "for the idea of every mode, in which the human body is modified by external bodies, must involve the nature of the human body together with the nature of the external body". Therefore, I have reintroduced the distinction between properties and accidents, so I can more easily explain the ways we are affected both by our own properties and by external things, without as much risk of confusion.

Note 4, Proposition 1.3

So we have seen in this chapter that God, or being, necessarily exists and is the cause of all things. And we have seen that God therefore generates and constitutes an infinity of infinite attributes; that God and therefore each attribute causes, or generates, an infinity of properties, or modes of itself, both infinite and finite; that each mode thereby generates its own properties; and that each finite mode is accidentally modified

by external causes, or other finite modes. But as I have emphasized, the idea of God, or absolute being, is hard for many people to understand, because they cannot picture being in their imaginations as they are used to picturing individual finite things, or 'beings'. And so there have been many philosophers who have posited the existence of only individual finite beings or only a composite of finite beings. They describe some particular finite beings as existing and others as not existing or as somehow both existing and not existing; but they can't explain why or by what power these things exist, or even what existence is.[33] So they either deny that these things have causes or, more often, posit only inadequate partial causes that describe accidental modifications of things but do not adequately explain why the things exist. "For example, if I throw a ball against a wall, the wall determines the ball to come back toward me, but it is not the cause of the motion" (AT III 354), because it is not the reason why I and the ball and the motion exist. But I have shown in this chapter that existence is the essence, or nature, of God, or being, and that being exists by virtue of its nature; and I have shown that an infinity of individual things exist in being, not because existence or being is somehow added to their natures, but because they are essential modes, or properties, of being. I will explain this further, and how each individual being exists in some times and places but not in others, and how fictitious beings and abstract beings exist or do not exist, throughout the rest of this treatise. But first, I will explain in Chapter Two how being is conceived without contradiction both as one absolutely infinite and concrete thing and as containing an infinity of individual finite things.

[33] "They believe either that the nature of God pertains to the essence of created things or that created things can be or be conceived without God, or most likely, they do not have a consistent opinion. I think the reason for this is their failure to observe the proper order of philosophizing. For the divine nature, which they should have considered before all else, since it is prior both in knowledge and in nature, they believe to be last in the order of knowledge, and that the things called objects of the senses are prior to all." Spinoza, E2P10S.

Chapter II: The One and the Many

In *On Generation and Corruption,* Aristotle wrote,

> Some of the older philosophers thought that what is must of necessity be one. The void, they argue, is not; but unless there is a void with a separate being of its own, what is cannot be many, since there is nothing to keep things apart… But although these opinions appear to follow logically, yet to believe them seems next to madness when one considers the facts. For no lunatic seems so far out of his senses as to suppose that fire and ice are one. (1.8)

As if in reply, Shankara wrote in his *Commentary on Bhagavad Gita* that, although what is really is absolutely one,

> Indeed, not even the dullest or most insane person regards water and fire or light and darkness as identical; how much less, a wise man. (13.3)

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the various things in reality can be distinctly conceived or distinguished one from another; that is, how God, or substance, can be conceived adequately as absolutely one indivisible being, yet also inadequately as consisting in an infinity of distinct attributes, and furthermore, as containing in itself an infinity of distinct properties, or modes of itself, both infinite and finite. I will then be able to explain more easily throughout the rest of this book how we conceive things in all these ways simultaneously, and how we thereby conceive reality and the things in reality both adequately as one and inadequately as many.

Definitions

1. By a real distinction I mean a distinction between two things that must be conceived as having nothing in common (AT VIII 28, CM2.5, E1P15S).

2. By a modal distinction I mean a distinction between two things that can be conceived as having something in common but can also be conceived in abstraction as distinct parts of a whole or as a whole and a distinct part of the whole.

Explanation: If the two are conceived as having nothing in common, they are thereby conceived as really distinct, each from the other, "for conception of the one does not involve conception of the other" (E1Ax5, but see 5.1N2).

But if the two are conceived as having something in common, they can be distinguished from each other only insofar as one can be conceived in abstraction as divided from the other. Descartes and Spinoza call this a modal distinction, because the modes of a substance have their substance in common.

Lastly, by a whole I mean anything that can be conceived as divisible; and by its parts, I mean the things into which it might be conceived as divided, as for example the properties of a triangle can be conceived as parts of the essence of the triangle (1Def2).[1]

Note: Descartes and Spinoza also define a third kind of distinction, the "rational distinction" or "distinction of reason"; but they mean several things by this term. They sometimes mean a kind of modal distinction between distinct principles of reason; they sometimes mean a modal distinction between ways of considering a thing in relation to various other things; and they sometimes mean a merely verbal distinction between synonyms. I will use this term only for distinctions between principles of reason.

3. By a relation I mean the same thing as a distinction, whether real, modal, or verbal; but a relation of contradiction is impossible.

Explanation: By a relation of identity I understand the same thing as a verbal distinction between a thing and itself or a synonym. By a relation of difference I understand a real or modal distinction; and there are therefore, strictly speaking, as many kinds of relations of difference as there are distinctions between different things (AT X 382). Lastly, by a relation of contradiction I understand a merely verbal relation that can't really exist or be conceived.

---

[1] "When we conceive one thing apart from another, this happens only by an abstraction of our mind or because the things are truly distinct." Descartes, *Letter to Delaunay,* July 1641.

"This intellectual abstraction consists in my turning my thought away from one part of the contents of this richer idea the better to apply it to the other part with greater attention." *Letter to Gibieuf*, January 1642.

"The word 'part' has to be taken in a very wide sense, as signifying everything that goes to make up a thing: its modes, its extremities, its accidents, its properties, and in general all its attributes." Descartes, in Arnauld and Nicole, *Logic or the Art of Thinking*, Part 4, Chapter 2.

4. By an analogy, or comparison, I mean a relation of two things determined by a genus that contains a lesser genus, which contains one of the things, and also another genus, which contains the other, analogous thing.

Explanation: For example, the analogy, 'black is to a black sphere as white is to a white sphere', is determined by the genus 'color', which contains the lesser genera 'black' and 'white'.[2]

Propositions

Proposition 2.0

A substance, that is, absolutely infinite substance or an attribute, must be conceived as indivisible (E1P12-13).

Demonstration: If a substance were divided, it would have to be divided by another; for if it were divided by itself, it would not be divided; and if it were divided by nothing, it would again not be divided. But if the substance in question is God it cannot be divided by another, because there is no other (1.0C1). And if the substance is an attribute, it too cannot be divided by another. For an attribute is conceived as existing in itself; and therefore it must be conceived as neither existing in nor having anything in common with another (E1P2); and it cannot be conceived as containing in itself anything except itself and its own properties. Therefore, an attribute cannot be conceived as affecting another or as in any way affected by another. Therefore, insofar as a substance is conceived truly and adequately, it must be conceived as indivisible.

Corollary 1, Proposition 2.0

A substance, namely God or an attribute of God, must be conceived as simple and perfect (CM2.5, E1P13D).

Demonstration 1: A substance is that which exists in itself and must be conceived through itself. Therefore, there can be nothing existing in a substance or conceived as

[2] "We should note that comparisons are said to be simple and straight-forward only when the thing sought and the initial data participate equally in a certain nature." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 14.

existing in a substance except the substance itself insofar as it is infinite. Therefore, insofar as a substance is conceived truly, it must be conceived as simple and perfect.

Demonstration 2: If anything in God, or absolutely infinite being, were really different from being, or in any way distinct from the essence of being, it would have to be non-being, which is absurd. Therefore, there can be nothing in being except being; and there cannot in any way be differences or distinctions in being. Likewise, if anything in an attribute, or substance, were in any way different from the essence of the attribute, it would have to be a different substance or attribute of substance, which is likewise absurd. Therefore, there can be nothing in an attribute except the attribute or substance itself; and there cannot in any way be differences or distinctions in the attribute.[3]

Note 1, Proposition 2.0

Hence we have seen again that an adequate idea of a substance cannot be conceived as "a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination", as Hume thought (1.0N3), or be conceived as a genus or whole divisible into particulars or parts, as some other philosophers have thought, but must instead be conceived as absolutely simple, insofar as the substance is conceived truly. To say it one more way, if a substance were only a genus or only an abstract idea of what is really a collection or composite of particular things, then only the many particular things would really exist, and the substance in which they're conceived as existing would in itself be nothing but a name; that is, the many particular things would exist in nothing, which is absurd. Or on the other hand, someone might say that each particular thing in the substance really exists in itself; but if it did exist in itself, it too would be a substance and, evidently, also nothing, which is also absurd (1Def1Ex); but moreover, it would still be limited by the other particular things, and hence it would be both in itself and in a greater whole

---

[3] "Only as one can the one be understood." Yajnavalkya, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.20.

"What is, is indivisible; for it is all alike. Nor is there anything that could prevent it from holding together, nor anything less; for it is all full with what is." Parmenides, frag. 8.

"In the absolute there is no particularity. There is no name, no form, no action, no distinction, no genus, no quality." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* 2.3.6.

"The unity, simplicity, or inseparability of all the attributes of God is one of the most important of the perfections which I understand him to have." Descartes, *Third Meditation.*

and therefore not in itself, which is again absurd. Therefore, we have seen abundantly that a true and adequate idea of a substance, such as being or thought, is not a compound or abstract idea, but must instead be absolutely simple and concrete.

But further, there have also been other philosophers who erred in a similar but more explicit way; for they say explicitly that being is really nothing, or somehow the same as nothing, or somehow both the same and not the same as nothing. They err these ways because they fail to distinguish imagination from understanding; and so they imagine a fictitious idea of simple being or existence, which they feign to abstract or distinguish from any idea of something existing, and they confuse this idea with nothing existing or 'nothing in particular' existing, which they call nothing. In all cases, they have failed to recognize that every particular thing that exists, exists in reality, or absolutely infinite being, so that an adequate idea of being, though absolutely simple and indeterminate, nevertheless contains in itself, or comprehends, everything particular or determinate, or in other words, that it contains every conceivable inadequate idea of being. And moreover, "there is no doubt they are not actually considering nothing as the negation of all reality, but are imagining or feigning it as something real" (CM2.10).[4]

Therefore, we have seen that substance, or reality, is in itself and is the cause of itself, and is infinite, indivisible, simple, and perfect. But as we can see from these examples of doubts philosophers have raised, this truth can seem difficult to understand, since we cannot picture it in our imaginations as we picture our common-sense experience and all our fantasies (E1P15S). But I have shown in agreement with Parmenides, Shankara, Spinoza, and many others that this truth is self-evident and absolutely certain; and later in this book I will show how it is to our highest advantage that we contemplate and understand this truth. For as I'll explain, especially in Chapter Seven and Appendix 1, it is understanding this truth, that reality and all the things in

[4] "The other way, that what is not is, can never predominate. For you can neither conceive what is not nor express it." Parmenides, frag. 2.

"The verse 'Non-being indeed was this in the beginning' does not mean the cause of the universe is the absolutely non-existent. For the preceding sections of the scripture explicitly deny that the absolute is non-existing, and in fact define the absolute as what is. Therefore, since the term 'being' ordinarily denotes that which is differentiated by names and forms, the term 'non-being' was meant to denote the same substance prior to its differentiation." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 1.4.15.

"The greatest deceptions arise when things that are conceived clearly and distinctly in the understanding also appear fictitiously in the imagination. For if they are not distinguished, the certain, or true, idea is mixed up with the confused ideas." Spinoza, TIE74.

reality are really one, and recognizing this truth concretely and "all at once" (1.1N4) in our experience, that constitutes our highest, and inmost, and only perfect enjoyment of reality, or beatitude.[5]

Note 2, Proposition 2.0

The many names Spinoza uses for God might seem to contradict the simplicity and indivisibility of God's nature. Spinoza sometimes calls distinctions between them rational distinctions; but they are really synonyms. That is, insofar as I adequately conceive, for example, God, nature, substance, being, existence, reality, perfection, what is, or the absolute, I conceive the same concrete thing. Each name seems to connote something slightly different due to the ways we're accustomed to seeing or hearing these words in other contexts. For example, 'God necessarily exists' and 'what is must be what is' mean the same thing, but the latter way of saying it seems to imply some particular properties of necessity more obviously. For another example, 'all things are in God' and 'all things are in substance' mean the same thing as 'all things are in reality' or 'all things are in nature', but the latter ways of saying it are likely easier for many people to understand. Therefore I try to use whichever of these names seems easiest to understand in a particular context or whichever might best emphasize a particular relation.

Corollary 2, Proposition 2.0

Each mode of a substance, whether finite or infinite, can be conceived inadequately as infinitely divisible (Ep12, E2P15, E2L7S).

Demonstration: Insofar as a substance is conceived adequately as it is in itself, it must be conceived as indivisible. But the substance contains in itself an infinity of modes, or properties of its essence, each of which constitutes an inadequate explanation of the

---

[5] "It is wise to listen not to me but to reason and know all things are one." Heraclitus, frag. 50.

"You may study philosophy and scriptures; you may worship the gods, observe ceremonies, and sing devotional hymns; but liberation will never come, even after a hundred years, without realizing the oneness." Shankara, *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination,* 6.

"If we come to know God this way, we necessarily unite with him ... and it is this union alone that constitutes our beatitude." Spinoza, KV2.22.

substance, and each of which can be conceived in abstraction as it is in itself (1Def1-2), or in other words, insofar as it can be distinguished, or conceived as divided, from the other modes in the substance (2Def2). Therefore, each mode of a substance can be conceived as infinitely divisible; because if any mode could not be conceived as infinitely divisible, the modes that follow from it as properties and properties of the properties could to that extent not be conceived in abstraction as they are in themselves. Therefore, insofar as a substance is conceived inadequately, not through itself but only through its modes, each of its modes can be conceived as infinitely divisible.[6]

Note 3, Proposition 2.0

I explained in 1.2N2 how each infinite mode of a substance must be conceived as present in every mode of the substance, because if one were not, it would be conceived as limited, or finite, in the substance, which is absurd. And so we have now seen that if any infinite mode of a substance could not be conceived as infinitely divisible, conception of any other modes of the substance in abstraction would be to that extent impossible; that is, conception of its own indefinitely many properties as they are in themselves would be impossible, and conception of the infinity of finite modes of the substance as they are in themselves would also be impossible. Therefore, insofar as a substance can be conceived inadequately through its modes, each infinite mode in the substance can be conceived as infinitely divisible.

Likewise, each finite mode can also be conceived as infinitely divisible; for if one could not be conceived as infinitely divisible, the infinite modes of which it is part could to that extent also not be conceived as infinitely divisible, and moreover conception of the mode's indefinitely many properties in abstraction as they are in themselves would be impossible.

Therefore, insofar as a substance can be conceived inadequately, every mode of the substance, both infinite and finite, can be conceived as infinitely divisible (E2L7S, Ep32). Therefore,

[6] "The absolute is known in two aspects: first, as qualified by limiting conditions due to the diverse generation of names and forms, and second, as the opposite, that is, as free of all limiting conditions whatever. There are many texts that show these aspects of the absolute as making the difference between the objects of ignorance and the objects of knowledge." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 1.1.11.

> In regard to the parts in nature, we maintain that division never takes place in substance, but always and only in the modes of substance. Therefore, when I divide for example water, I divide a mode of substance, and not substance itself, which although variously modified, is always the same. (KV1.2.21)

Note 4, Proposition 2.0

Modes are not really distinct one from the other, but are instead modally distinct properties of the same essence or thing, which can be conceived as distinct things in abstraction only insofar as their substance, or adequate cause, is not conceived adequately insofar as it is simple and perfect. Therefore, by that which is conceived as dividing modes, or wholes, into parts, that is, by division itself, I understand nothing real, but negation of what is real, or in other words, not substance, or being, but negation of substance.

> Determination does not pertain to a thing according to its being, but on the contrary, according to its non-being. Therefore, determination is negation. (Ep50)

Therefore Spinoza calls modes of division "entities of reason" (see 6.2) and "entities of imagination" (see 6.1); "for if anyone looks outside his intellect for what is meant by these words, he will find nothing" (CM1.1). For a mode of reality exists and is what it is insofar as it explains reality, and it is determinate insofar as it explains nothing, that is, insofar as it does not adequately explain reality.[7]

Note therefore that in the quotation above from Letter 50 Spinoza is using the term "determination" only in the sense of "limitation" or division of the things in nature. Elsewhere, he frequently says that God determines all things; but he does not mean God negates all things and means instead that God causes all things and thereby causes each thing both insofar as it explains reality and insofar as it is limited by other things and does not explain reality. I will explain throughout the rest of this treatise how we

[7] "What makes the infinite different from the finite is something real and positive; but the limitation which makes the finite different from the infinite is non-being or the negation of being." Descartes, *Letter to Hyperaspistes,* August 1641.

distinguish determinate things, not by actively negating other things, which is absurd (1.3), but by passively not conceiving the other things.[8]

Note 5, Proposition 2.0

I explained in Proposition 1.2 that a finite number of properties follow from the essence of a mode of substance; for a mode cannot be the cause of every property in its substance, since it cannot be the cause of itself or the cause of any prior modes from which it follows as a property. But now I say that a mode can be conceived as infinitely divisible, or divisible "to infinity" (Ep12). This may seem paradoxical but doesn't actually imply a contradiction; for we should not confuse "that which is called infinite because it is unlimited with that whose parts cannot be equated with or explained by any number, though the maximums and minimums of the whole might be known" (Ep12).

> If infinity were inferred from the multitude of parts, it would be impossible for us to conceive a greater multitude of parts… But this is absurd; for in [a given area] we conceive twice as many parts as in half the area; yet the number of parts assignable in both half the area and the whole area exceeds any definite number. (Ep81)

Therefore, Spinoza calls such a number not infinite but indefinite. And so too, the number of parts in a mode is rightly called indefinite (AT VII 112). For the number of parts in an actual, existing mode, for example a certain sphere, must be some actual finite number, and the number of parts in each part must also be a finite number, and so on. For if a thing actually were infinitely divided, so that there was nothing left to divide further, it would then be nothing but division itself (E1D2); that is, it would be nothing (E1P15S), which is absurd. Therefore, however the sphere might be conceived as divided, through whatever conceivable modes of division, or "entities of

---

[8] "A limitation is merely a negation or denial of any further perfection, and such a negation does not proceed from a cause, though the thing itself which is so limited does." Descartes, *Second Set of Replies.*

"That by which a thing is said to be determined to any action, is necessarily something positive, as is self-evident." Spinoza, E1P26D.

"Hence it happens that we also imagine as if they were beings all those modes the mind uses for negating, such as blindness, extremity or limit, boundary, darkness, etc." Spinoza, *Metaphysical Thoughts,* 1.1.

reason" or "entities of imagination", the number of its parts must always be finite. And thus, though the number of parts in a mode must be finite, each mode is infinitely divisible. I will explain what numbers are and how we conceive them in Chapter Six.[9]

Note 6, Proposition 2.0

So we have seen that insofar as a substance is conceived adequately as it is in itself, it must be conceived as indivisible, but also that insofar as the substance is conceived inadequately through its modes, each mode can be conceived as infinitely divisible. Under Propositions 2.2 and 2.3, I will explain more particularly how we conceive the infinite modes and finite modes of a substance in abstraction as distinct entities; but first, I will explain how we conceive the attributes of substance as distinct entities.

Proposition 2.1

An attribute cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to God (E1P10S, E1P12D).

Demonstration: An attribute and God cannot be conceived as different parts of a whole, because if they could, the whole would have to be something other than God, in which God and the attribute would both exist, which is absurd, because there cannot be anything other than God, or absolutely infinite substance, which is in itself. Furthermore, an attribute cannot be conceived as a part of God; for if it were, God would then be conceived as a whole divided into attributes, which too is absurd, since God cannot be conceived as divisible (2.0). Lastly, God and an attribute cannot be conceived as having nothing in common, because God cannot be conceived in relation to another (1Def5), and moreover, because insofar as it is in itself, an attribute is identical with God and therefore has itself in common with God (1.1). Therefore, an attribute cannot be conceived as distinct in relation to God; that is, if an attribute is conceived in relation to God, God alone is conceived, in relation to no other, and the infinity of attributes are conceived, or understood, "all at once" but indistinctly in God.

[9] "Number, in things themselves, arises from the distinction between them." Descartes, *Principles,* 1.60.

Corollary 1, Proposition 2.1

An attribute can be conceived as distinct, that is, as really distinct, in relation to another attribute (E1P4, E1Ax5, E1P10S).

Demonstration: An attribute is defined as that which is in itself and is conceived through itself in relation to another. Therefore, an attribute and another attribute must each be conceived through themselves and as having nothing in common; that is, they must be conceived as really distinct one from the other (Ep4, E1P2; but see 5.1N2).

Corollary 2, Proposition 2.1

An attribute can be conceived as distinct neither in relation to one other attribute nor in relation to any other definite number of other attributes; that is, it can be conceived as distinct only in relation to all the other attributes.

Demonstration 1: Each attribute is conceived through itself, that is, not through any other (E1P10); for a thing cannot be conceived through that with which it has nothing in common (E1Ax5). Therefore an attribute that is conceived as distinct must be conceived distinctly not from one, two, or three other attributes, but from all the other attributes.

Demonstration 2: If an attribute could be conceived as distinct in relation to a definite number of other attributes, it would then not be necessary that however many attributes might be conceived, yet another must be conceived as existing in relation to them. But this is absurd; for we have seen that God, or being, necessarily consists in every conceivable attribute, and we have seen that whatever attribute might be conceived must be conceived as the cause of itself, and therefore must be conceived as existing.

Note 1, Proposition 2.1

Therefore an attribute can be conceived as really distinct from the other attributes, but cannot be conceived as distinct from God, or reality. But to say that an attribute is conceived not in relation to God, but in relation to the other attributes, is not to say

that conception of the attribute does not involve conception of God, but instead, that conception of it does not involve conception of God insofar as God is considered as absolutely infinite, i.e. as "consisting in infinite attributes" (E1P10S). For insofar as an attribute is in itself and is in God it is identical with God, and hence conception of the attribute is in that respect the same thing as conception of God.

Note 2, Proposition 2.1

An attribute is that which is in God but is not explained by the essence of the other attributes. Each part of that which is constituted by the other attributes, that is, each other attribute, exists in itself and must be conceived through itself. Therefore, the other attributes do not constitute one distinct entity, but rather, a totality of distinct entities, each conceived through itself in relation to the others, each infinite and indivisible, and each identical with the essence of substance insofar as it is in itself.

As I'll explain further in the next chapter, the substance thought is the attribute of God that we conceive through itself in relation to the other attributes, and extension is all the other attributes, which we perceive in relation to thought, so that we conceive our minds through thought and perceive bodies in extension. This differs somewhat from the way Spinoza explains the attributes and extension; for he says that thought and extension are both attributes of God, and that there are also indefinitely many other attributes "unknown to us" (Ep65). But again, I will explain this much more adequately throughout the rest of this book and especially in Chapter Three.

Note 3, Proposition 2.1

I mentioned in 1.1N3 that Spinoza adapted the term 'attribute' from Descartes' explanation that, "To each substance there belongs one principal attribute; in the case of mind, this is thought, and in the case of body it is extension" (AT VIII 25). Note that this use of the term 'divine attribute' in reference to a substance that is conceived in relation to another is only accidentally related in this way to the traditional term 'divine attribute', which refers to divine properties (CM1.3), or infinite modes of God, and often to names for God considered as modes, such as, for example, "unity, eternity, necessity, understanding, will, life, omnipotence" (CM2.11). This can be confusing, because Spinoza uses this term in the traditional way frequently in *Metaphysical Thoughts,* and sometimes in *Short Treatise,* and a few times in *Ethics*. Note therefore

that Spinoza is referring to traditional divine attributes, or infinite modes of God, when he explains in CM2.5, "We can clearly conclude that all the distinctions we make between the attributes of God are nothing but distinctions of reason, and that they are not really distinct from one another." I will explain this kind of modal distinction under the next proposition.

Proposition 2.2

An infinite mode cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to its substance, that is, in relation to its attribute or in relation to God.

Demonstration: An infinite mode and its substance cannot be conceived as different parts of a whole, because if they could the whole would have to be something other than the substance, in which it and the mode would exist; but this is absurd, because the mode is in its substance, and the substance is in itself. Further, an infinite mode cannot be conceived as a part of its substance, because a substance cannot be conceived as divided into parts (2.0). Lastly, an infinite mode cannot be conceived as having nothing in common with either its attribute or God; for a mode exists in and is conceived through its attribute and God; that is, it has itself in common with its attribute and God (E1P15). Therefore, an infinite mode conceived in relation either to its attribute or to God cannot be conceived as distinct; that is, the substance alone is conceived, and the infinity of infinite modes in the substance are thereby conceived, or understood, all at once in the substance but indistinctly.

Corollary, Proposition 2.2

An infinite mode can be conceived as a distinct entity, that is, as modally distinct, only in abstraction, or in other words, in relation to the other infinite modes (E1P4, E1D2, CM2.5).

Demonstration: Substance generates in itself an infinity of modes, both infinite and finite. Therefore, an infinite mode might be conceived as a part of the infinity of modes in its substance or as a part of the infinity of infinite modes in its substance (2.0C2). Furthermore, each infinite mode generates in itself an indefinite number of posterior infinite modes (1.3); and thus, an infinite mode might be conceived as a part of a prior

infinite mode, in which it exists and is conceived and generated. Therefore, an infinite mode can be conceived as distinct in relation to the infinity of infinite modes or in relation to another infinite mode or some other infinite modes; that is to say, it can be conceived as distinct only in relation to the other infinite modes.

Note 1, Proposition 2.2

In his second demonstration of the indivisibility of substance (E1P13S), Spinoza says, "a part of substance can mean only finite substance", which obviously denies that an infinite thing can be called a part of anything. But he acknowledges elsewhere that there are in substance not one but numerous infinite modes (E1P21-23, E1A, Ep64, Ep83). Moreover, we have seen abundantly that modes, or the parts of the whole of nature, are not really distinct, but are only modally distinct explanations of the same essence or thing, as for example, the infinite property of substance, 'that substance exists necessarily', is a modally distinct explanation of substance, of which other infinite properties, such as 'that substance exists always' and 'that substance cannot be destroyed', are parts, or partial explanations (see 6Def3). Therefore, I attribute Spinoza's assertion that a part of something must necessarily be finite to his eagerness to demonstrate that substance cannot be divided.

Note 2, Proposition 2.2

An infinite mode can be conceived as a distinct entity in abstraction, that is, in relation to the other infinite modes or in relation to some other infinite modes. Therefore, an infinite mode that is conceived as a distinct entity is thereby conceived as belonging to a particular genus, such as the genus 'infinite mode' or another, more particular genus of infinite modes; for as I have said, I understand a thing to belong to a particular genus insofar as it can be explained in relation to another or others in the genus. For example, in *Metaphysical Thoughts* Spinoza mentions the traditional division of "divine attributes" (2.1N3), or infinite divine properties, into the genus 'communicable', which includes properties possessed both by God and by man, and the genus 'incommunicable', which includes properties possessed only by God; and he also proposes his own division of divine properties into "God's attributes that explain his essence in action, and others, unconcerned with action, that explain his manner of existing" (CM2.11). But the infinite modes can also be divided into genera in indefinitely many

other ways. For example, each of Parts 1 to 5 in *Ethics* is a genus of the principles of reason, or infinite modes of thought, it demonstrates and explains, as for example Part 1 contains principles 'Concerning God' and Part 2 contains principles concerning 'The Nature and Origin of the Mind'; and scholars have often noted subdivisions of the principles, or propositions, in each part into lesser genera. And in the same way, each chapter in this book is a genus of the principles it explains; and each chapter is subdivided into lesser genera containing propositions that explain God, divine attributes, infinite modes, and finite modes.

Proposition 2.3

A finite mode cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to its substance, that is, in relation to its attribute or in relation to God.

Demonstration: This demonstration proceeds in the same way as the previous demonstration concerning infinite modes. For a finite mode and its substance cannot be conceived as different parts of a whole, because if they could the whole would have to be something other than the substance, in which it and the mode would exist, which is absurd, since the mode is in its substance, and the substance is in itself. And furthermore, the mode cannot be conceived as a part of its substance, because a substance cannot be conceived as divided into parts. And lastly, the mode cannot be conceived as having nothing in common with either its attribute or God, because the mode exists in and is conceived through its attribute and God, and therefore, has itself in common with its attribute and God. Therefore, a finite mode conceived in relation to either its attribute or God cannot be conceived as distinct; that is, the substance alone is conceived, and its infinity of finite modes are thereby conceived, or understood, all at once in the substance but indistinctly.

Corollary, Proposition 2.3

A finite mode can be conceived as a distinct entity, that is, as modally distinct, only in abstraction, or in other words, in relation to its world, or the other finite modes (E1P4, E1P28).

Demonstration: A finite mode and the other finite modes can be conceived as different parts of a whole, but not if the whole is conceived to be a substance, that is, only if the whole is conceived to be a mode. Therefore, a finite mode can be conceived as distinct in relation to its world, or the other finite modes, or in relation to a part of its world, or some of the other finite modes, insofar as they and it can be conceived as parts of greater modes.

Furthermore, a finite mode can also be conceived as a part of the infinity of modes, or as a finite part of the infinity of infinite modes; and therefore, it can be conceived distinctly in relation to the infinity of modes or the infinity of infinite modes. But note that if the mode is conceived as a part of the infinity of modes or as a part of the infinite modes, it is thereby conceived, on the one hand, distinctly in relation to the other finite parts insofar as the properties of its essence are not properties of their essence, but also, on the other hand, as having something in common with the other finite parts, inasmuch as the infinite modes, or infinite properties, of its substance are present in every mode in the substance and thus constitute "the same" (E3Praef) "common properties" of every mode, as for example, it is a common property of every mode in God, or substance, "that they are in God and are so dependent on him that they can neither be nor be conceived without him" (E1A). Therefore, a finite mode is distinguished from the other finite modes in its substance insofar as it is conceived in relation to them; but insofar as it is conceived as sharing the essence and properties of the infinite modes with every mode in the substance, it is to that extent not distinguished from the other finite modes.

Note 1, Proposition 2.3

Therefore, we have seen how both infinite and finite modes can be distinctly conceived only in abstraction from their substance, in relation to other modes. In *Metaphysical Thoughts,* Spinoza repeats Descartes' explanation of modal distinctions (AT VIII 29), "Modal distinction is shown in two ways, that between a mode of a substance and the substance itself, and that between two modes of the same substance" (CM2.5). But we have seen that the difference between a substance and a particular mode of the substance cannot be distinctly conceived; that is, insofar as the substance is conceived adequately, the mode cannot be conceived distinctly and the substance alone is conceived as infinite and indivisible. This is especially important to note when Spinoza explains the distinction between "Nature naturing", or substance in itself, and "Nature

natured", or the totality, or "universe" (Ep32), of dependent modes in the substance (E1P29S). For the modes can be distinguished only in relation to each other.

Note 2, Proposition 2.3

I explained in 2.2N2 how an infinite mode that is conceived as a distinct entity is thereby conceived as belonging to a particular genus; and in the same way, a finite mode conceived as a distinct entity is thereby also conceived as belonging to a particular genus. A man, for example, can be conceived as distinct in relation to his world, and inasmuch as he is thereby conceived in relation to the other finite mode, or other modes (2.0C2), besides himself, he is thereby conceived as belonging to the genus 'finite mode', or 'individual thing' (E2D7, E2P40S1). And likewise, through more particular modal distinctions, the man can be conceived in relation to other men, or other animals, and so on; and he is thereby conceived as belonging to the finite genera 'man', 'animal', and so forth. Or again, he can be conceived in relation to other men or other things of his nationality, or to others of his age, family, occupation, and so forth, and he is thereby conceived as belonging to their genera. For as we have seen, each finite mode exists in an indefinite number of greater modes of which it is part, and each of these greater modes can be conceived as divided in an indefinite number of ways. Therefore, a finite mode can be conceived in abstraction, or distinguished in relation to the other finite modes, in indefinitely many ways, and thereby as belonging to an indefinite number of genera.

Note therefore that each finite genus in a substance can be conceived as infinitely divisible like any mode in the substance (2.0C2). For we have seen that, for example, the finite genus 'terrestrial' can be conceived as belonging to the infinite genus 'individual thing', and we can see likewise that 'animal' can be conceived as belonging to 'terrestrial', and 'human' can be conceived as belonging to 'animal', and 'Gary Sugar' can be conceived as belonging to 'human'; and in the same way, we can likewise see that I can be conceived as the genus of any of my parts, which in turn can be conceived as the genera of their parts, and so on. I will explain this further in the next chapter,

and I'll explain more particularly how we conceive finite general ideas, and their adequacy or inadequacy, in Chapter Six.[10]

Note 3, Proposition 2.3

In the second axiom following Lemma 3 of his "brief preface concerning the nature of bodies" (E2), Spinoza explains,

> So far we have been discussing only the simplest bodies... We will now turn to composite bodies.

This should not be taken as asserting the existence of atoms, or indivisible finite modes, but only as acknowledging that, so far, Spinoza had been considering finite modes in abstraction, as though they were simple, to simplify his illustrations, but that now he would explain these modes more adequately, insofar as they are divisible, or "composite" (see 5.2N4).[11]

For a mode can be conceived in abstraction as one, insofar as it is in itself and is conceived distinctly from the other modes; and it can also be conceived somewhat less inadequately as both one, insofar as it is in itself, and many, insofar as it is composed of, or can be divided into, its modifications, or parts, as for example I can conceive my body as a whole and simultaneously as divisible into parts.

Note that not only bodies, but ideas as well can be conceived as infinitely divisible; for we have seen how they are divisible into infinite principles of reason and their genera and into finite ideas and their genera. Descartes perhaps didn't consider this or,

---

[10] "An impression is of a thing which is both a universal and a particular, but it is determined mainly by the particular aspect ... Even where one wishes only to determine a universal, whether for instance this is a cow or a horse, inasmuch as one alternative is discarded and the other is settled on, the main thing is determination of which particular universal it is. In this way, everything is both a universal and a particular in relation to other things." Shankara, *Commentary on the Yoga Scriptures,* 1.7.

[11] "The existence of atoms, or parts of matter which have extension and yet are indivisible, involves a contradiction, because it is impossible to have the idea of an extended thing without also having the idea of half of it, or a third of it, and so conceiving it as being divisible by two or three." Descartes, *Letter to Gibieuf,* January 1642.

"All composition arises from these three kinds of distinction ... real, modal, and rational." *Metaphysical Thoughts,* 1.5.

more likely, didn't consider his mind an idea or his ideas parts of his mind; for he says in *Meditation Six,*

> There is a great difference between the mind and the body, inasmuch as the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible. For when I consider the mind, or myself insofar as I am merely a thinking thing, I am unable to distinguish any parts within myself; I understand myself to be something quite single and complete.

But he did note in *Meditation Three,* "I have various thoughts which I can count", and in *Principles* he explains the division of ideas into genera and species. It's hard to be sure why he didn't consider the multiplicity and divisibility of the ideas in his mind as demonstrating its divisibility; but I think he was likely considering his mind as only the simple power of conception, or his inmost awareness. I will explain more particularly throughout the rest of this book how we conceive our minds inadequately in abstraction as divisible into parts, but also adequately and concretely as simple and indivisible awareness, or intuition.

Note 4, Proposition 2.3

In E1P21–22 Spinoza demonstrates that every mode that follows "from the absolute nature" of a substance or an infinite mode must in turn "exist necessarily and as infinite". Yet this should not be understood as showing that nothing finite can follow, but only as showing that no particular finite thing can follow from an infinite thing by itself, that is, that an infinity of finite things must instead follow together as "one infinite individual" (E2L7S). For the properties of a thing are modes of the thing, that is, they are in it (E1D5); and therefore, to say that nothing finite can follow from a thing that is infinite would be to say that an infinite thing contained nothing finite, which is absurd (E1D2, 1.2-3). Therefore, an infinity of finite modes, together with their order and connection, follow necessarily from the essence of substance inasmuch as that which is not impossible is necessary, or in other words, inasmuch as no other order can be conceived in reality (1.2C3D2, E1P33). For each finite mode follows from an indefinite number of greater modes; that is, it is a part, or property, of a greater mode, and a part of a part of a still greater mode, and so on. Conversely, each mode generates, or causes and determines, an indefinite number of lesser modes, or parts of

itself; and each of these natural parts, or properties, both partly causes and partly determines or limits each of the other parts, inasmuch as its own essence is an essential part of their adequate cause which expresses and thereby determines that which none of them can be (see 6.2N3) and, also, that which none of them can either absolutely exclude or exclude in that particular mode (E3P5, 2.0N4). Furthermore, each mode also partly causes and partly determines its accidents, or accidental parts, and thereby partly causes and determines its world's accidental parts (1.3C); and each mode also partly causes and determines the essence of its world and, thereby, the properties of its world, insofar as it is a part of their cause which determines that which none of them can either be or exclude.

> Therefore it follows that each body [each thing], insofar as it exists as modified in a definite way, must be considered as a part of the whole universe, which therefore must agree with the whole and cohere with the other parts. (Ep32)

For we have seen that,

> A particular finite mode cannot exist or be determined to act unless it is determined to exist and act by a cause which is likewise finite and determinate, and this cause cannot exist or be determined to act unless it is determined by another cause which is also finite and determinate, and so on to infinity. (E1P28)

For example, it is a property of reality, or an essential part of the whole of nature, that I am sitting here now writing this book. However, it is not a property of my own individual essence that I am writing this book, because writing this book does not follow solely from my own essence, but follows instead from my essence in conjunction with the essences of, for example, the editions of Spinoza's *Ethics* and the criticism of his *Ethics* I have read, and the leisure I've found for reading and writing, and the schooling and guidance I received as a child, and so on. Therefore, though my writing this book is a property of reality, it is nevertheless an accident of my own individual essence on the one hand and, likewise, an accident of my world's essence on the other hand, since my writing this book is part of the intersection of me and my world (1.3N2). In other words, it is a property of my essence that if everything else in nature was as it is, I would be writing this book, but that if certain things were different, I would not be writing this book; and conversely, it is a property of my world that it

could not exist as it is if I were not writing this book or if I were in any other way different than I am. So in this way, I and my modifications are partly determined, through the infinite series of finite causes, by everything else in reality; and likewise, each other finite thing in reality is partly determined by me and also by everything else in reality, to infinity.

Finally, to say that a mode is conceived, not in relation to its substance, but in relation to another mode, is not to say that conception of the modes does not involve conception of the substance, but rather, that insofar as the modes are conceived distinctly in relation to one another, the substance in which they exist is not conceived adequately insofar as it is infinite, indivisible, simple, and perfect, but only inadequately, insofar as its essence can be explained by the modes in question (E2P11C). Yet, as I'll explain further throughout this treatise, it is impossible to conceive these modes as existing in only this way, because existence itself is the essence of God; and therefore, in that respect, "Every idea of a body or any particular thing actually existing necessarily involves the eternal and infinite essence of God" (E2P45); and hence we necessarily conceive particular things "as actually existing in two ways", both insofar as we conceive them inadequately as they are in themselves and insofar as we conceive them adequately as they are in God (E5P29S). For God, or reality, is not an external cause of its modes, but their substance (E1P18); and the modes of substance are not really distinct one from the other, but are instead distinct properties, or modally distinct explanations, of that which is conceived truly and adequately as absolutely infinite and absolutely simple being.[12]

[12] "This one is Brahmana, it is Indra, it is Prajapati; it is all these gods. It is the five great elements, the earth, wind, ether, water, and light. It is both these great things and those small things intricately mixed from origins of various kinds, those born from an egg, those born from a womb, those born from excretions, those born from a sprout; horses, cows, humans, and elephants, and everything else there is, both everything that breathes and moves or flies and everything that does not move." *Aitareya Upanishad,* 3.5.3.

"Combine things whole and not whole, what is drawn together and drawn apart, in harmony and discord, the one, the all, all from the one." Heraclitus, frag. 10.

Chapter III: Mind and Body

In E1P17S, Spinoza explains his understanding of God's power of intellect, but tentatively.

> If intellect pertains to the divine nature, it cannot ... be posterior to or simultaneous with the objects of its understanding, since God is intellectually prior to all things. On the contrary, the truth and essence of things is what it is because it exists as such in the intellect of God as an object of his understanding. Therefore God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived as constituting his essence, is in fact the prior cause of all things, both of their essence and of their existence. This seems to have been recognized by those who asserted that God's intellect and God's power are one and the same.[1]

In this chapter I will develop this view and show that it is correct; and from this I will deduce the nature and origin of the conception of ideas in minds and perception of quantity, or dimensions, in bodies, so that we can better understand "the union of a man's mind and body" (E2P13S) and "the union of the mind with the whole of nature" (TIE13).

Note first, however, that the "intellect of God" that Spinoza explains in this quotation from E1P17S is not the "infinite intellect" he considers later in E1P31, which explains, not an absolutely independent and active, "creating" intellect, but a dependent, or passive, "created" intellect, namely an infinite "mode of thought" (see 3.2). For as we have seen, and as Spinoza emphasizes (E2P5-7), although each mode of thought is the cause of other modes of thought, there cannot be a mode of thought that is "the prior cause of all things"; not only because a mode cannot be the cause of itself (E1P24), but moreover because a mode of thought cannot be the cause of any mode of extension, or body (1.2C2):

[1] I acknowledge that this quotation seems more ambiguous in its context, which is confused (see 5.0N2 and 5.2N4). Note that Spinoza wrote similarly but unambiguously in *Metaphysical Thoughts:* "We clearly and distinctly perceive that God's intellect, and his power and will, by which he has created, understands, and preserves, or loves, created things, are not distinguished from one another in any way, except in regard to our thought." CM 2.8.

> The actual being of things, which are not modes of thought, does not follow from the nature of God by reason of his having prior knowledge of them [in thought]. Rather, the things that are the objects of ideas follow from their own attributes in the same way, and by the same necessity, as ideas follow from thought. (E2P6C)

Therefore, the divine intellect, or intellect of God, that Spinoza explains in E1P17S cannot be a mode of thought, or even thought in itself. And indeed, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, an intellect that "is in fact the cause of all things, both of their essence and of their existence", can only be, as Spinoza says, an intellect that is identical with the essence, or power (E1P34), of God, or reality. In other words, just as God "is the cause of things as they are in themselves insofar as he consists in infinite attributes" (E2P7S), God's intellect likewise conceives things as they are in themselves insofar as it consists in infinite attributes. Therefore, I will demonstrate in this chapter that just as "God's intellect and God's power are one and the same", God's conception of things and God's creation of things are also one and the same.

Definitions

1. By activity I mean expression of power. By passivity I mean privation, or negation, of power.

Explanation: By power I mean that through which a cause produces its effect (E1Ax3). But God is the sole cause and the effect. Therefore, the power of God, by which God exists and acts, "is his essence" (E1P34), which as we have seen, is existence (1.0D4); and hence, the cause, the power, and the effect are the same thing. Therefore nothing exists in nature, or reality, except absolutely infinite activity (E1P30), or in other words, absolutely infinite and active power.

2. By the essence of a thing, or that which explains the thing, I understand its activity or power, or in other words, that which is positive in a certain relation, whether simple, compound, or complex, of activity to passivity, which if given or affirmed the thing is given or affirmed, and which if negated or denied the thing is negated or denied (KV A2).

Explanation: Nothing exists except activity, and passivity is really nothing. Therefore a thing's activity is what the thing is, and its passivity is what it's not. Therefore a thing's activity is that which if given or affirmed, the thing is given or affirmed, and which if negated or denied the thing is negated or denied. Therefore (1Def1) a thing's activity and its essence are the same thing.[2]

3. By conception I mean the activity of explaining a thing (E1Ax4, E2D3).

Explanation: By conception of a thing I mean the activity of creating an explanation of it, or in other words, the activity of causing an adequate or inadequate explanation of the thing's essence to exist (KV1.1Adn, CM2.12).

4. By perception I mean conception insofar as it involves absolute passivity in relation to a thing that is perceived (E2D3Ex).

Explanation: For example, as I'll show in this chapter, we conceive ideas and perceive bodies.

But by perception I do not mean passivity itself in respect to causing an explanation to exist, because passivity, or privation of power, "is in itself nothing" (Ep21), whereas perception is something positive, which clearly affirms the existence of something, such as a body (E2Ax4, AT VII 80). Therefore by perception I understand conception insofar as it involves absolute passivity in relation to a thing that is perceived (E1P2-3, E3P2). I will explain conception and perception much further with many examples throughout this chapter and throughout the rest of this book.

Note: I have defined these terms 'conception' and 'perception' in agreement with Spinoza's definitions in E2D3, "By an idea I understand a conception of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing", and, "The term 'perception' seems to imply that the mind is passive in relation to its object; whereas 'conception' seems to express an activity of the mind". But Spinoza's usage is inconsistent. In E2P12–13, for example, he follows his definition correctly: "The mind perceives whatever happens in the object of its perception ... which is the human body, or a particular mode of extension, and nothing else." But in E2P20–23 he contradicts this explanation, now claiming that the mind also perceives itself, that is, that the object of a mind's perception might also be the mind itself, or "one and the same thing, conceived

[2] "Whatever exists expresses the nature, or essence, of God in a definite and determinate way; that is, whatever exists expresses the power of God in a definite and determinate way." Spinoza, E1P36D.

through one and the same attribute, namely, through thought" (E2P21C). But by the definitions in E2D3, a mind, or idea, that is the object of its own perception would be "a conception of the mind which the mind forms … by an activity of the mind … in relation to which the mind is passive", which is absurd. Therefore I do not claim consistency with Spinoza's usage throughout *Ethics* but only with the definitions he gives.

5. By an intellect I mean anything that has the power of conception. By a thing I mean whatever can be conceived.

6. By a mind I mean an intellect conceived in thought (E2D3).

Explanation: I do not call God's absolutely infinite intellect a mind, nor do I call thought in itself a mind; for by a mind I mean a mode of thought, or mode of thinking substance.

Spinoza makes no distinction between an intellect and soul or spirit, or in respect to modes of thought, between a mind and soul.[3] Yet he often does distinguish "between the intellect and the imagination" (E1P15S); but as we will see, by these terms he distinguishes the understanding, or intellect in itself, from the intellect considered insofar as it is affected, or modified, by external causes. I will explain that distinction in Chapters Five and Six.

7. By an object I mean a thing that is related to an intellect, whether by conception or by perception, considered insofar as it can be conceived as passive in relation to the intellect.

Explanation: Using the same word for objects of conception, such as ideas, and objects of perception, such as bodies, can be confusing; but Spinoza and other philosophers use this term both ways so frequently, I don't think there's an alternative to retaining this usage.

8. By an idea I mean that which is conceived in thought, that is, a mind, or anything conceived by a mind, or an object conceived by thinking (E2D3).

[3] "For I consider the mind not as a part of the soul, but as the thinking soul in its entirety." Descartes, *Fifth Set of Replies.*

Explanation: Therefore, by our ideas, or "thoughts", I mean not only our reasoning or opinions, nor only "a dialogue of the soul with itself",[4] as popular usage often seems to imply, but as Descartes explains, "everything that is in our mind when we conceive something" (AT III 392), "so that we are immediately aware of it ... including, for example, all the operations of the will, the intellect, the imagination, and the senses" (AT VII 160).

9. By a body I mean that which is perceived by a mind, or the object of a mind's perception (E2P13).

Explanation: By a body I do not mean extension, but a mode of extension or extended substance (E1P15S).

We often distinguish mind from body as we distinguish the activity in one's head, which seems to contain most of the imagination, from the activity in one's trunk and limbs, or in other words, as we distinguish the activity of a scholar from the activity of an athlete. Similarly, we sometimes distinguish mind from body as we distinguish the activity of the brain, nerves, and so forth from the activity of the bones, flesh, and so forth. And as I showed with the examples from Plato and Aristotle in 1.1N3, we often distinguish mind from body as we distinguish the activity of the intellect, or understanding, from the activity of the imagination, or senses and feelings.

Yet these various modal distinctions are not the same as Spinoza's and Descartes' "real distinction" between the mind and body (2Def1-2). For Spinoza and Descartes distinguish mind from body as they distinguish thought from extension; and hence, by the human mind they mean something that cannot be explained as a thing extended, but only as a thing conceived, that is to say, a thinking, non-extended thing; whereas by a body they mean something perceived as extended, or having dimensions, such as length, width, and depth (AT VII 78).

10. By quantity I mean that which an intellect conceives as constituting the essence of an object of perception; and by a dimension I mean a determination or measure of quantity (TIE108, Ep12).[5]

---

[4] Plato, *Theaetetus,* 189e.

[5] "By a dimension I mean simply a mode in respect of which some object is considered to be measurable, [such as] length, width, and depth." *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 14.

Explanation: As I'll explain in this chapter, an intellect is absolutely passive in relation to an object of its perception and cannot conceive it except as an absolute limit to its conception, which we call quantity, or size. I will also explain in Chapter Six how we perceive quantity and dimensions in distinct individual finite bodies, in agreement with Descartes' explanation of matter as quantity.[6]

11. By motion I mean the activity of a body, and by rest, the passivity of a body.

Explanation: As I explained in Definition 2, by the essence of a thing I understand its activity, or that which is positive in a certain relation of activity to passivity, which if given the thing is given, and which if negated the thing is negated. For as we have seen, nothing really exists in nature except absolutely infinite activity.

> Therefore, the human body is nothing else than a particular proportion of motion and rest; and the objective essence [idea] of this existing proportion, which is in the thinking attribute, this I say is the soul of the body. (KV A2)

Furthermore, we have also seen that "division never takes place in substance, but always in the modes of substance" (KV1.2.21); and therefore, we can see that "bodies are distinguished from one another, not in respect to substance, but in respect to motion and rest, or quickness and slowness" (E2L1).[7]

Note: Descartes and Spinoza often use the terms 'motion' and 'rest' in a different way (KV 2.19Adn). By motion they mean not the essence or activity of a body, but the "local motion" (PPC2D8) or change of place of a body in relation to another body (1.3N3); and by rest they mean the local motion of a body "regarded as at rest" in relation to another body.

> If we wished to characterize motion strictly in terms of its own nature, without reference to anything else, then in the case of two contiguous bodies being

---

[6] "I recognize no matter in corporeal things apart from that which the geometers call quantity and take as the object of their demonstrations, i.e. that to which every kind of shape and motion is applicable." Descartes, *Principles,* 2.64.

[7] "Parmenides posits two principles, calling them the hot and the cold, and of these he relates the hot with being, and the cold with non-being." Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* I, 5.

"If the rest increases and the motion decreases, the pain or sorrow we call cold is thereby produced; and conversely, if motion increases, then the pain we call heat is produced." Spinoza, KV A2.

> transferred in opposite directions, and thus separated, we should say there was just as much motion in the one body as in the other. But this would clash too much with our ordinary way of speaking. For we are used to standing on the earth and regarding it as at rest. (AT VIII 54)

But in this book I mean by the term 'motion' the activity of a body, and by 'rest' absolute passivity, or negation of motion.

12. By space I mean that which a mind conceives as dividing bodies.

Explanation: That which is conceived as dividing bodies is really nothing (2.0N4) considered as dividing the quantities, or sizes, of particular modes, or properties, of extension from one another. Therefore space and the things that are conceived in space, such as points, lines, and surfaces, as well as spaces defined by three or more dimensions, are not real, concrete things, but merely distinctions, or "entities of the imagination" and "entities of reason", expressing no essence or reality in themselves, but only division, or negation, of essence (Ep12, E1A, AT VII 381).[8]

> It is plain that the whole of matter considered without limitation can have no shape and, therefore, that shapes can exist only in finite, determinate bodies; for he who says that he perceives a shape merely indicates thereby that he conceives a determinate thing and how it is determinate... As shape, then, is nothing but determination, and determination is negation, a shape therefore can also be nothing but negation. (Ep50)

And so, for example, "a circle is the space described by a line one end of which is fixed and the other moving" (Ep60), which constitutes a distinction, or limitation, or determination, of the quantity of a circular thing.

I acknowledge that for the purpose of this book I have defined the terms 'space' and 'quantity' somewhat differently from Descartes' definitions, which make space, quantity, and extended substance all the same thing (AT VIIIA 40, 45-46, PPC2D1, D6).

[8] "It is not that there are substances [bodies] in the world which have length but no width or width but no depth; it is rather that the geometrical figures are considered not as substances but as boundaries within which a substance is contained." Descartes, *Fifth Set of Replies.*

Propositions

Proposition 3.0

God, or being, is the absolutely infinite divine intellect (E1P17S).

Demonstration 1: Absolutely infinite being can be conceived (1.0C3); and nothing exists except being (1.0C1). Therefore, nothing exists that cannot be conceived; and therefore, absolutely infinite conception is conceivable. But God, or absolutely infinite being, is necessarily the cause of everything conceivable (1.0C4). Therefore, God is the cause of absolutely infinite conception and is an absolutely infinite intellect.

To say it another way, nothing exists that cannot be conceived, but nothing can be conceived except conceiving. Therefore, nothing exists except conceiving, and being and conceiving are the same thing. Therefore, absolutely infinite being, or God, is an absolutely infinite intellect.[9]

Note 1, Proposition 3.0

It may seem hard to understand that nothing can be conceived except conceiving, though it is self-evident, both immediately and rationally. I'll explain this further to clarify the apparent difficulty under Propositions 3.1 to 3.3, where I will demonstrate that the bodies and motions of bodies which we perceive insofar as we conceive our minds and ideas are really also modes of conceiving.

Demonstration 2: Absolutely infinite and indivisible being can be conceived; but it cannot be conceived by another, because there is no other. Therefore, being must be conceived by itself or by a part of itself; but being does not have parts (2.0). Therefore, being conceives itself, and is an absolutely infinite intellect.

Demonstration 3: By an intellect I mean anything that has the power of conception; and by conception I mean the activity of explaining a thing, or in other words, the activity of creating an explanation of the thing. But God is the sole cause of the essence

[9] "Conceiving and being are the same thing." Parmenides, frag. 3.
"The absolute is being, knowledge, and infinity." *Taittiriya Upanishad,* 2.1.1.

and the existence of all things; that is, God's power, or activity, creates and explains all things; and hence, God conceives all things. Therefore, God, or being, is the absolutely infinite divine intellect; and God's conception of things is identical with God's causation of things, or creation of their essence and existence.[10]

Corollary 1, Proposition 3.0

God, or being, is not an object of conception, but the absolute subject of conception.

Demonstration 1: By an object I mean a thing that is conceived as passive in relation to another (3Def8); but there can be no other. Therefore, the divine intellect cannot be an object, but must be a subject. Furthermore, there can be no other subject, because again, there is no other. Therefore, the divine intellect is the absolute subject of conception.

Demonstration 2: Being cannot be passive in any way, but must be absolutely active (3Def1Ex). Therefore, being cannot be a passive object of conception, but must be the absolutely active subject of conception. "For God is intellectually prior to all things" (E1P17S).[11]

Corollary 2, Proposition 3.0

Being conceives itself.

Demonstration 1: We saw this in 3.0D2; for we saw that being cannot be conceived by another and must be conceived by itself.

---

[10] "In God, willing, understanding, and creating are all the same thing without one being prior to the other even rationally." Descartes, *Letter to Mersenne,* May 1630.

"To create a thing is to posit both its essence and its existence... So when God creates he creates at once both the nature of a thing and the thing itself." Spinoza, KV1.2Adn.

[11] "He is never thought, but is the thinker. He is never known, but is the knower. He is the witness, and there is no other witness." Yajnavalkya, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 3.7.23.

"The scriptures deny that the absolute is an object of the act of knowing. But this does not mean the absolute cannot be explained; for what the scriptures mean to explain is that in the absolute there are no distinctions between the subject of knowing, object of knowing, or act of knowing." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 1.1.4.

Demonstration 2: By conception I mean the activity of explaining a thing. But being is the sole cause of its own essence and existence (E1P3, 1.0D2-4); that is, it creates and explains its own essence and existence. Therefore, being conceives itself; and the nature of its conception is self-conception.[12]

Corollary 3, Proposition 3.0

The divine intellect has an absolute power of conception; that is, it is absolutely free of perception.

Demonstration 1: By perception I mean conception insofar as it involves absolute passivity in relation to another. But there can be no other. Therefore, being conceives itself; and it neither conceives nor perceives any other.

Demonstration 2: Conception is an expression of power, or activity; whereas perception involves privation of power, or passivity. But being is absolutely infinite, and moreover it is the sole cause of itself. Therefore, the power of being is absolutely infinite, or in other words, cannot involve privation, or in any way be conceived as passive. That is, the divine intellect is absolutely active. Therefore, the divine intellect has an absolutely infinite power of conception and is absolutely free of perception.

Corollary 4, Proposition 3.0

Being, or substance, cannot be perceived.

Demonstration: Perception is conception insofar as it involves absolute passivity in relation to another. But there can be no essence, or thing, the conception of which is distinct from conception of being (2.1-2.3); and hence, there can be no conception that involves absolute passivity in relation to being or in respect to explaining the essence of being (E1P15). Therefore, being cannot be perceived.

---

[12] "Conceiving is the same as conceiving that being is; for nothing can be conceived without being, in respect to which there is any expression. For nothing else is or can be except being." Parmenides, frag. 8.

To say it another way, being, or substance, cannot be conceived as an object, but must be conceived as a subject (3.0C1). Therefore, being cannot be an object of either conception or perception and therefore cannot be perceived.

Corollary 5, Proposition 3.0

The object conceived by the divine intellect is the whole of creation, or in other words, the divisible universe.

Demonstration: The whole creation, or universe, or "Nature natured" (E1P29S), is the infinity of modes considered as conceived and existing in substance, or being, that is, all that is conceived by substance that can be conceived as dependent, or passive, inasmuch as it is not caused by itself but caused by substance, or "Nature naturing". Therefore the created universe is the object conceived by the divine intellect, or that which "is what it is because it exists as such in the intellect of God as an object of his understanding" (E1P17S); for by an object of conception I mean a thing that is conceived by an intellect, considered insofar as it can be conceived as passive in relation to the intellect.

Note 2, Proposition 3.0

We have seen that whereas being in itself, or substance, must be conceived as absolutely simple (2.0), the created universe, or modes of substance, can be conceived as infinitely divisible (2.0C2), or in other words, that being in itself is nature conceived adequately as simple and indivisible, whereas the universe is nature conceived inadequately as divisible and complex. So the divisible universe is the whole of created nature, of which a particular man and all other created things are parts; whereas God, or being, cannot be conceived as a whole consisting of parts, but must instead be conceived as absolutely infinite, simple, and active power.[13]

---

[13] "He is the uncreated creator of all, and knows all. He is all-powerful and all-knowing consciousness." *Svetasvatara Upanishad,* 6.15.

"The scriptural doctrine of creation does not refer to the highest reality, but to the world of appearances as it is characterized by names and forms. Moreover, this doctrine is meant primarily to show that the absolute is the self of everything." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 2.1.33.

Note that since God, or being, is in itself absolutely simple and indivisible, its conception of itself must also be simple and indivisible (CM2.7, E2P4). This recalls Descartes' explanation of intuition: "Two things are required for intuition; namely, that the proposition be understood both clearly and distinctly and also all at once" (1.1N3). So we can see how intuitive knowledge has its origin and foundation in God's self-conception, because it involves conception of all things all at once, "since all things are in God and are conceived through God" (E2P47S). I will demonstrate and explain this more adequately in the sixth chapter of this treatise, concerning the three kinds of knowledge.

Note 3, Proposition 3.0

In Definition 7, I defined an idea as an object conceived in thought; but we have seen that God, or being, cannot be conceived as an object and is not conceived solely through thought, but must be conceived through itself. Therefore, I acknowledge that, because Descartes, Spinoza, and many others frequently refer to an adequate conception of God as "the idea of God", I have generally followed that usage, though it strictly speaking disagrees with the way I've defined 'idea'. This seems to involve little risk of confusion, but it's worth noting.

Note 4, Proposition 3.0

So we have seen in Proposition 3.0 and its corollaries that God, or being, or absolutely infinite substance, cannot be perceived, but must be conceived as absolutely intellectual; and therefore, we can see that God cannot in any way be adequately conceived through quantity, motion, or space. This truth seems to have been recognized by almost all monist philosophers, and likewise by almost all dualist philosophers, who describe God as a transcendent intellect or spirit, existing separately from or beyond the material universe, which God created. However, these latter have failed to recognize that the objects of God's conception are not external to God but in God (E1P15), or in other words, that the essence of nature, or the divine intellect or thing, inasmuch as it is the generating cause of the things that follow from it and, moreover, inasmuch as there can be nothing external to it, must necessarily comprehend, or explain in itself, the infinity of essences, or things, in the whole of nature, not only insofar as nature is conceived adequately as absolutely active, creating nature, but also insofar as it can be

conceived inadequately as passive, created nature. It is thus that Spinoza writes, not of "God and nature", but of "God, or nature".

But now someone who is familiar with Spinoza's text might object that, whereas I've said that God is absolutely intellectual, Spinoza explicitly states that "God is an extended thing" (E2P2); and though he "denies that God is corporeal", this denial seems to mean only that "extended substance", or "infinite quantity", cannot be conceived as "limited by any definite shape" (E1P15S). For as Spinoza explains, he could not understand how extended substance, which we clearly perceive as external to thought (E1P10S), could be created by God unless God were extended, since "one substance cannot be created by another substance" (E1P6), with which it has "nothing in common" (E1P3). Therefore he asks, if "extended substance is not one of God's infinite attributes", then "by what divine power could it be created"? (E1P15S). I will answer this question in the corollaries and notes to the next proposition; but first, let us examine Spinoza's demonstration of E2P2, where he claims to show positively that God is an extended thing.

The demonstration reads as follows: "The demonstration of this proposition proceeds in the same way as that of the preceding proposition." Therefore let us compare E2P2, "Extension is an attribute of God; that is, God is an extended thing", with E2P1, "Thought is an attribute of God; that is, God is a thinking thing." Note that if the demonstrations proceed "in the same way", as Spinoza says, then strictly speaking, one of the two propositions must contain an error; for the first proposes an active, "thinking" God, whereas the second proposes a passive, "extended" God. But since Spinoza has already demonstrated abundantly that God must necessarily be conceived as absolutely active, or creating (E1P17, E1P29S, E1P34), it is obvious that it is E2P2 that contains the error. Therefore, we can see that God, or substance in itself, cannot be extended, but must be extending, insofar as extension can be attributed to God.[14] Again, I will clarify how God creates extension in the corollaries to the following proposition.

[14] Cf. Spinoza's comment on Descartes: "[By his definition] extension is that which consists of three dimensions; but by this he does not mean the activity of extending, nor anything distinct from quantity." PPC2D1.

Proposition 3.1

An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as an infinite divine intellect.

Demonstration 1: God, or the absolutely infinite divine intellect, exists in itself and is conceived through itself. Therefore insofar as an attribute of God exists in itself and is conceived through itself, or in other words insofar as it is a substance, its essence and activity are identical with the essence and activity of the absolutely infinite divine intellect, or God. Furthermore, each attribute is infinite in its substance; and therefore, its essence expresses infinite activity in its substance. Therefore, an attribute has an infinite power of conception within its own substance and is hence an infinite divine intellect.

Demonstration 2: An attribute must be conceived through itself and is the cause of itself (1.1D2). Therefore an attribute conceived as a distinct entity must be conceived as creating and explaining its own essence and existence. Therefore the attribute conceives its essence and existence; for as I have said, by conception of a thing I mean the activity of creating an explanation of the thing. Furthermore, the essence of an attribute is infinite, and therefore its power of conception is infinite. Therefore, an attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as an infinite intellect.

Corollary 1, Proposition 3.1

An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as conceiving itself.

Demonstration: This was shown in the preceding demonstration; for an attribute must be conceived through itself, and therefore it conceives its own essence. Therefore, the activity of an attribute, and the nature of its conception, is self-conception.

Corollary 2, Proposition 3.1

An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as perceiving the other attributes.

Demonstration: The conception of an attribute as distinct must be in relation to the other attributes (2.1C). But each of the other attributes must be conceived through itself, and therefore, cannot be conceived through another, that is, not through the attribute in question. Therefore, insofar as the attribute is conceived as distinct, it must be conceived as conceiving itself in relation to the other attributes, with which it has nothing in common; and hence, its conception, or self-conception, necessarily involves absolute passivity in respect to explaining the essence and existence of the other attributes; that is (3Def4), it perceives the other attributes.

Note 1, Proposition 3.1

Therefore, an attribute's power of conception and its power of perception are not distinct modes of intellectual activity, but are instead the same activity, considered on the one hand in relation to the attribute, or intellect, in question and on the other hand in relation to its object, the other attributes (E2P7S, E2P20). In other words, perceiving the other attributes is not a mode of an attribute, but the attribute itself; for conception of itself in relation to the other attributes, or perception of the other attributes, is the essence, or definition, of the attribute.

This use of the term 'perception' may seem confusing, because many philosophers have used this term for something similar to what Descartes and Spinoza call sense perception, which is a kind of imagination, or perception of distinct finite objects (see 6.1). Similarly, many philosophers have used the words 'conception' or 'concept' for various kinds of distinct finite or general ideas and sometimes distinct principles of reason. But in this book I mean by these terms the power of conception, which in a substance is simple, perfect, and undivided.

Furthermore, I also distinguish the way I've defined perception from Descartes' broader definition of it as "the operation of the intellect" (AT VIII 17), by which he means both what I call perception of extension and what I call conception of thought (AT XI 343). Spinoza sometimes uses this term the way I have defined it, and sometimes the way Descartes defined it (3Def4N).

Corollary 3, Proposition 3.1

An attribute conceived as a distinct entity must be conceived as conceiving quantity as constituting the essence of the other attributes.

Demonstration: Quantity is that which an intellect conceives as constituting the essence of an object of its perception; and as the preceding corollary shows, the object of perception of an attribute that is conceived as distinct is the totality of other attributes. For insofar as an attribute perceives the other attributes, it is active, not in respect to explaining the object of its perception, or the essence of the other attributes, but only in respect to explaining another, which it conceives in relation to the other attributes, namely itself. Therefore, insofar as the attribute conceives itself, it perceives the totality of other attributes as an external object infinitely limiting its own conception; and therefore the attribute conceives the infinite activity of extending an absolute limit to its conception, or in other words quantity, as constituting the essence of the other attributes. Therefore, an attribute conceived as a distinct intellect is necessarily conceived as conceiving quantity as constituting the essence of the other attributes.

Note 2, Proposition 3.1

These relations of conception and perception, or conception of quantity, may seem hard to understand, because we cannot picture or imagine them. One might picture an attribute's conception metaphorically as light radiating from within itself, thereby revealing itself to itself, and perception as the same light illuminating the totality of other attributes, thereby revealing, or perceiving, it as an external object. Or one might picture conception as light and perception as a reflection of the light, or conception as light and perception as a shadow. But it is important to recognize that such images, and such analogies, are inadequate and partly false.

I will explain perception more particularly, and give some examples of conception of quantity and dimensions in bodies, and space dividing bodies, throughout the rest of this treatise, and especially in Chapter Six, where I will demonstrate why we imagine bodies in three-dimensional places and how we imagine material qualities such as shapes and colors, in order to explain more particularly how I am perceiving my body

as an object limiting my conception, and how I am thereby conceiving quantity as constituting its essence.[15]

Note 3, Proposition 3.1

In a letter dated August 1675, Spinoza's "acute correspondent", Walter Tschirnhaus, requests an explanation of why the human intellect does not perceive an infinity of distinct attributes.

> Though I gather that the universe is one, it is clear that by your thesis it is expressed in an infinity of modes [through the infinity of attributes], and therefore that each individual thing is also expressed in an infinity of modes. Hence it seems to follow that the mode constituting my mind and the mode constituting my body, though one and the same mode, are yet expressed in infinite modes: first, through thought; second, through extension; third, through some attribute of God unknown to me; and so on to infinity, since there are in God an infinity of attributes, and the order and connection of modes seems to be the same in all. Hence arises the question: Why does the mind, which represents a certain mode, which is expressed not only in extension but in infinite other ways, perceive that mode only as expressed through extension, that is, as the human body, but not as expressed through any other attribute? (Ep65)

Spinoza answers,

> Although each particular thing is expressed in infinite modes in the infinite intellect of God, yet those infinitely many ideas, by which it is expressed, cannot constitute one and the same mind of a particular thing, but infinitely many minds, since each of these infinitely many ideas has no connection with the others. (Ep66)

---

[15] "Mortals in their minds assign two forms, of which they should not assign one, and in this they stray from the truth. They distinguish these forms as opposites and therefore mark them with opposite signs. To one, they assign the blazing fire of heaven, gentle, very light, everywhere the same, but not the same as the other. And to the other, its opposite in form, they assign unknowing night, a dense and heavy body." Parmenides, frag. 8.

But to this Tschirnhaus objects that if there are modes of thought, or ideas, paired, or "connected", with the modes of every attribute, whereas the modes of extension, or bodies, are connected only with their own ideas, namely their minds, is "the attribute of thought not then pronounced to extend much more widely than the other attributes? But since each of the attributes constitutes the essence of God, I cannot see how the one thing does not contradict the other" (Ep70). To say it another way, does Spinoza's reply not contradict propositions E2P7 and E5P1, which state that the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of bodies? Are there not by Spinoza's reply more ideas than there are bodies, and more connections of ideas with other things than connections of bodies with other things? Is this not a contradiction? But if there are not more ideas than there are bodies, must we then conclude that each particular thing is expressed in an infinity of unconnected bodies? If so, how could we understand such a conclusion?

But as I have shown in Proposition 3.1 and its corollaries, each attribute, if conceived as distinct, must be conceived as conceiving itself and perceiving the other attributes. In other words, an attribute, insofar as it conceives itself as constituting the essence of substance, must thereby perceive the other attributes as also constituting the essence of substance (E1D4). Moreover, the attribute conceives its own essence, that is (E1D1), it conceives it as conception itself, and it conceives quantity as constituting the essence of the other attributes.

There are thus an infinity of pairs of attributes and objects of their perception constituted by the other attributes, and therefore, an infinity of "worlds constituted by different attributes" (Ep63), each having "no connection with the others" (Ep66), but each having the same order and connection of modes. Yet it is not thought or a mode of thought that conceives and comprehends every attribute, but rather, the absolutely infinite intellect of God, or being. Therefore, recalling that the modes of an attribute must be conceived through the attribute and that the order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute, we can now understand without difficulty that,

> Although each particular thing is expressed in infinite modes in the [absolutely] infinite intellect of God, yet those infinitely many ideas [conceptions], by which it is expressed, cannot constitute one and the same mind [intellect] of a particular thing, but infinitely many minds, since each of these infinitely many ideas has no connection with the others. (Ep66)

Furthermore, note also that we can now understand without difficulty another objection Tschirnhaus could have raised, namely that, because the order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute, when I conceive and use the words 'body', 'extended', and 'three-dimensional' to describe the mode I'm perceiving insofar as I conceive my mind, the infinitely many other "minds" that correspond to me in the other attributes are all simultaneously modified in the same ways as I am and, therefore, are all conceiving and using the same words 'body', 'extended', and 'three-dimensional' to describe the modes they're perceiving in the other, "unknown attributes"; and likewise, just as I do, they all call their own substance or attribute 'thought'.

Lastly, note that Spinoza's reluctance to speak of "beings possessing three, four, or more attributes" (Ep63-64) is therefore explained by his having no intuition that there are such beings, which in fact cannot exist.

Note 4, Proposition 3.1

In another letter, dated June 1676, Tschirnhaus requests of Spinoza,

> Since you have mentioned Descartes' opinion, that he cannot deduce the variety of things from extension except by supposing that it was brought about in extension by a motion initiated by God, I should like you to do me the kindness of showing how, from extension as conceived in your philosophy, the variety of things can be demonstrated a priori… For you have not shown how this must necessarily follow a priori from the essence of God, a point whose demonstration Descartes believed to surpass human understanding. (Ep82)

Tschirnhaus had previously asked Spinoza in January 1675,

> Since extension when conceived through itself is indivisible, immutable, etc., how can we deduce a priori the many and various forms that it can assume, and consequently the existence of shapes in the particles of a body? (Ep66)

In reply to Letter 66, Spinoza had said he needed more time to consider the question, but he replies to Letter 82,

> In regard to your question as to whether the variety of things can be demonstrated a priori solely from the conception of extension, I think I have already shown clearly enough that this is impossible. That is why Descartes is wrong in defining matter through extension; it must necessarily be explained through an attribute that expresses eternal and infinite essence. But perhaps I shall sometime discuss this with you more clearly; for as yet I have not been able to arrange anything in an orderly way on this subject. (Ep83)

This was not the first time Spinoza noted this difficulty. As early as 1661, in his *Short Treatise Concerning God, Man, and His Well-Being,* Spinoza or an editor wrote in a footnote, "What is said here about motion in matter is not said seriously. For the author still intends to discover its cause, as he has already done, to some extent, a posteriori" (KV1.9Adn); and in *Metaphysical Thoughts*, he wrote, "There are many things that exceed our grasp but which we nevertheless know to have been brought about by God, for example, the … division of matter into indefinite particles, which I have clearly demonstrated, although we do not know how that division occurs" (CM1.3); and in *Emendation of the Intellect,* he wrote, "In the idea of quantity, perceived by means of a cause, the quantity is determined, as when a body is perceived to be formed by the motion of a plane, a plane by the motion of a line, or a line by the motion of a point. All these are perceptions which do not serve toward understanding quantity, but only toward determining it" (TIE108).

In my opinion, it's hard to be sure what Spinoza meant in these quotations; but it seems that, like Descartes, he too could not understand in what exactly the power or activity of extending and moving bodies consists and, moreover, that he couldn't understand what in extension could correspond to the "entities of imagination" (E1A) we conceive in thought as dividing bodies. For if the distinctions between bodies are imaginary or products of sense perception, it would seem they can only be conceived as divided in our minds.

But furthermore, interpreting the same Letter 83, Gottfried Leibniz wrote in his *Refutation of Spinoza,*

> Spinoza believed that matter, as commonly understood, did not exist. Hence he often warns us that matter is badly defined by Descartes as extension, and extension is poorly explained as a very vile thing which must be divisible in place,

> since he says "matter should be explained as an attribute expressing eternal and infinite essence".

Here too I think it's hard to be sure what Spinoza meant by "it must necessarily be explained through an attribute that expresses eternal and infinite essence"; but my guess, since it agrees with my own understanding of our perception of extension, is that he probably did mean that matter is in some way ideal or only perceived. But in any case, I have demonstrated in the preceding propositions and their corollaries how each attribute of God expresses infinite and eternal essence, or intellectual activity, and how each attribute conceives infinitely active quantity as constituting the essence of the other attributes, and how nature and its attributes can be conceived inadequately as divisible. I will explain this further in the following propositions and their corollaries; and in Chapter Six I will explain in agreement with Descartes how the material qualities we perceive in bodies are actually modes of quantity.

Proposition 3.2

The object conceived by an attribute is the divisible universe, or whole creation, conceived through the attribute, which Spinoza calls the immediate infinite mode of the attribute (E1P28S, E1P31, E2P4).

Demonstration 1: The modes of an attribute are not external to the attribute but in the attribute and conceived through the attribute. Therefore, insofar as the attribute conceives itself (3.1C2) it necessarily conceives its modes. Furthermore, insofar as an attribute is conceived through itself, it is identical with absolutely infinite substance insofar as it is conceived through itself, and to the same extent its modes are identical with the modes of substance. Therefore, in the same way that the object conceived by substance, or God, is the whole divisible universe of modes (3.0C5), the object conceived by an attribute of substance is the whole universe of its modes.

Spinoza calls this mode the immediate infinite mode of the attribute (Ep64), because all the other modes of the attribute necessarily follow from it as its properties or parts, and therefore no other, more particular mode of the attribute can be conceived as prior to it (1.3).

Demonstration 2: Insofar as an attribute conceives itself, it necessarily conceives its infinity of modes. Furthermore, its infinity of modes considered as a whole is that which can be conceived as passive in relation to the attribute, inasmuch as it is determined and caused by the attribute (1.2). Therefore, the object conceived by the attribute, or that which is conceived by the attribute insofar as it can be conceived as passive in relation to the attribute, is its infinity of modes, or the whole universe of its modes.

Note 1, Proposition 3.2

The essence and activity of an attribute is self-conception (3.1C1); and the activity of a mode of the attribute is therefore a property, or modally distinct explanation, of the attribute's self-conception. Therefore, the infinity of modes, or whole universe generated in the attribute, is that which explains the activity of the attribute insofar as it can be explained by an infinitely divisible mode of self-conception, which must be conceived as distinctly conceiving both itself and all the other modes of the attribute, or every conceivable particular thing, both infinite and finite, in every conceivable genus of things in the attribute (2.2N2, 2.3N2). So in this way, even though the immediate infinite mode of an attribute must be conceived as an object in relation to the attribute, it must also be conceived as an intellect, or subject of conception, in relation to itself and the other modes.

Note 2, Proposition 3.2

In Letter 64, Spinoza identifies the immediate infinite modes of thought and extension thus: "In thought, absolutely infinite intellect; in extension, infinite motion and rest" (3Def11N). Spinoza's reference to the immediate infinite mode of thought as the "absolutely infinite intellect" points out the disagreement between on the one hand his accurate but tentative explanation of the divine intellect in E1P17S, where he correctly identifies God's intellect with God's essence and power (3Pref), and on the other hand his error in making thought "extend much more widely than the other attributes" in his reply to Tschirnhaus about the "unknown attributes" (Ep66, 3.1N3). Spinoza recognized that God's intellect must necessarily be absolutely infinite, but he apparently mistook our attribution of conception to the essence of thought as showing clearly and distinctly that the power of conception belonged uniquely to thought (E2D3), as he also apparently mistook our attribution of quantity to extension as showing that

quantity belonged uniquely to extension. But the immediate infinite mode of thought cannot be an absolutely infinite intellect; for "an absolutely infinite being must necessarily be defined as consisting in infinite attributes" (E1P10S). Therefore I call this mode of thought, not the absolutely infinite intellect of God, but the infinite "mind of God" (TTP1), or the mind of the universe; for by a mind I mean an intellect in thought, or in other words, a mode of thinking. Therefore, by the mind of God I mean God, or substance, conceived insofar as it can be conceived as an infinite mind thinking every conceivable idea in every conceivable genus of ideas, both infinite and finite. For the mind of God distinctly conceives every conceivable relation of activity to passivity in thought; and in this way, it thinks every conceivable idea and every conceivable relation among its ideas, both infinite and finite.

Corollary 1, Proposition 3.2

Insofar as an attribute conceives its immediate infinite mode, it necessarily perceives the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Demonstration: Insofar as an attribute conceives itself, it necessarily perceives the other attributes (3.1C2). Therefore, insofar as an attribute can be explained by its immediate infinite mode, its conception of this mode necessarily involves perception of the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Note 3, Proposition 3.2

Therefore, insofar as thought conceives its immediate infinite mode, it thereby perceives the immediate infinite mode of extension; and in the same way that the immediate infinite mode of thought, or mind of God, consists of infinite intellectual activity and passivity, generating an infinity of minds and ideas, both infinite and finite, the immediate infinite mode of extension likewise consists of "infinite motion and rest" (Ep64, 3Def11N) generating an infinity of extended bodies and motions of bodies, both infinite and finite, or in other words, the physical universe.

Furthermore, insofar as thought conceives itself, it conceives infinite quantity as constituting the essence of extension; and therefore, insofar as thought conceives an infinity of ideas divided into various genera, it thereby perceives the corresponding bodies, and it conceives, as constituting their essence, an infinity of dimensions, or

modes of quantity, divided into various places. I will explain this further, especially in Chapters Four and Six.[16]

Corollary 2, Proposition 3.2

The immediate infinite mode of an attribute conceives in itself indefinitely many mediate infinite modes, to infinity.

Demonstration: The immediate infinite mode of an attribute is conceived as an infinite thing or intellect. That is, it has an infinite power of conception. Therefore (E1P22), the objects of its conception must be conceived as both infinite and indefinitely many, to infinity (1.3, 2.0N5). Spinoza calls the infinite objects conceived by the immediate infinite mode of an attribute "mediate" infinite modes of the attribute (E1P23D).

Note 4, Proposition 3.2

The objects conceived by the immediate infinite mode of thought explain the essence of thought insofar as it can be explained by modally distinct objects of a created mind, namely the infinite mind of God. Therefore, the indefinitely many mediate infinite modes of thought constitute indefinitely many distinct infinite ideas, through which God knows and understands all things, clearly and distinctly (E1P21D). For indefinitely many distinct mediate infinite modes follow in the mind of God, each following necessarily from that which is prior to it in the order of nature, as for example, the infinite idea, 'that substance exists always', follows from the prior infinite idea, 'that substance exists necessarily'. Note therefore that each mediate infinite mode is a property, or modally distinct explanation, of those from which it follows; whereas each is also a thing, or essence, in itself which explains in itself those that follow from it as its properties. Therefore "that effect is the most perfect [explains reality the most adequately] which is produced immediately by God [or an attribute]; whereas each effect is less perfect in proportion to the number of its intermediary causes" in the order of nature (E1A). In other words, the mind of God conceives indefinitely many distinct

[16] "So all things are named light and night, and names are given to each class of things according to the power of one or the other. Yet everything is equally full of light and night, as both are equal, since to neither belongs any of the other." Parmenides, frag. 9.

infinite ideas, which I have called the principles of reason, and it conceives them in what I have called the order of reason.

Note that the infinity of finite modes, together with their order and connection, also constitutes a mediate infinite mode, or infinite idea, which follows necessarily from the essence of substance as one infinite and infinitely divisible, or "composite", "individual" (E2L7S, 2.3N4), which the immediate infinite mode of thought, or mind of God, also generates. So the mind of God conceives this infinite individual and thereby conceives, clearly and distinctly, not only every infinite idea, but also every particular finite idea.

Corollary 3, Proposition 3.2

Insofar as the immediate infinite mode of an attribute conceives its mediate infinite modes, it necessarily perceives the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Demonstration: Insofar as an attribute conceives itself, it necessarily perceives the other attributes. Therefore, insofar as an attribute can be explained by its immediate infinite mode, its conception, or generation, of indefinitely many mediate infinite modes necessarily involves perception of the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Note 5, Proposition 3.2

Therefore, insofar as the immediate infinite mode of thought, or mind of God, conceives its mediate infinite modes as infinite objects or knowledge it perceives the corresponding modes in the other attributes as indefinitely many infinite modes of extended substance constituting infinite laws of motion, which are present in, or modify, every body of motion, both infinite and finite. Some examples of infinite modes of motion are, 'that motion is infinitely active'; 'that motion is infinitely divisible'; that "a [mediate or finite] body in motion or at rest must be determined to motion or rest by another body, which is likewise determined to motion or rest by another body, and that body by another, and so on to infinity" (E2L3); and that "if certain bodies composing an individual finite thing are made to change the existing direction of their motion, but in such a way that they can continue their motion and keep the same

mutual relation as before, the individual thing will likewise preserve its own nature without any change of form" (E2L6).

Proposition 3.3

Each finite mode of a substance must be conceived as constituting a mode of intellectual activity, or self-conception.

Demonstration: The activity, or essence, of a substance is self-conception. That is, the activity of a substance explains and affirms in itself its own essence and existence, and it thereby explains and affirms the essence and existence of its properties, or modes. Furthermore, the modes of a substance are not in any way really distinct from the substance, but are instead properties, or modal explanations, of the substance; and hence, the essence, or activity, of a mode is likewise not in any way really distinct from the activity of the substance, but is instead a determinate expression of its activity of self-conception. Therefore, insofar as each mode of a substance is conceived, its activity, or essence, must be conceived as constituting in itself a mode of intellectual activity, or self-conception.

Note 1, Proposition 3.3

Each finite mode of a substance is also a mode of the immediate infinite mode of the substance (3.2). That is, each finite mode is a finite but essential part of the immediate infinite mode, which can be distinguished from it only in relation to the other finite parts, or the other finite modes in the substance (2.3C). Moreover, each finite mode is also an essential part of a greater finite mode, which is in turn an essential part of a still greater finite mode, and so on to infinity. And conversely, each finite mode contains in itself an indefinite number of lesser modes, or its parts and their parts and so on. But as we have now seen, all these modes must be conceived as constituting modes of intellectual activity, or conception. Note therefore that each finite mode of thought constitutes, on the one hand, an idea conceived in the minds of an indefinite number of greater, prior modes of thought, and on the other hand, a mind in itself, conceiving an indefinite number of its ideas, which constitute lesser, posterior modes of thought. Yet it is obvious that we do not distinctly conceive our ideas as constituting minds in themselves conceiving their own ideas; and likewise, it's also obvious that we do not

distinctly conceive the indefinite number of greater finite minds in which our minds are conceived as their ideas. I will demonstrate the reason for this in Chapters Five and Six of this treatise, namely that we conceive ourselves as distinct things, or distinct individual minds and bodies, only insofar as we conceive our own individual imaginations, or in other words, only insofar as we are individually affected by accidental modifications (E2P23-24).

Note 2, Proposition 3.3

As we have seen in the preceding propositions, the nature of conception is self-conception. Therefore the "ideate", or "objective essence", of an idea, or in other words, "that of which it is the idea" (E1Ax6), is nothing but the "formal essence" of the idea, or in other words, nothing but the idea itself (TIE33-34). This may seem hard to understand, but I will explain in Chapter Six how, by conceiving ourselves and our ideas, we imagine ideas of things outside our minds and bodies insofar as they affect us, as well as fictitious and false ideas.

But further, this distinction between the formal essence and objective essence of an idea seems to explain Spinoza's meaning when he says correctly that the mind "perceives [conceives] itself", through an "idea of the mind", which is the "same thing" as the mind, or "one and the same thing, conceived under one and the same attribute", but also says incorrectly, "the idea of the mind is united to the mind in the same way as the mind is united to the body" (E2P20-23). For this merely verbal distinction between "the idea of an idea" (E2P29) and the idea itself, or between an idea considered as conceiving itself and the same idea considered as conceived by itself, is easily confused with the real distinction between an idea the mind conceives and the corresponding body, or motion of a body, which it thereby perceives.[17]

[17] "There is no distinction between the soul and consciousness of it." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 2.3.29.

"Because knowledge is its very nature, it does not need any other knowledge for knowledge of itself, in the same way as a light does not need another light." *Self-Knowledge,* 29.

Corollary, Proposition 3.3

Each finite mode of an attribute must be conceived as perceiving the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Demonstration: Insofar as an attribute conceives itself, it necessarily perceives the other attributes (3.1C2). Therefore, insofar as an attribute can be explained by any of its finite modes, conception of the mode necessarily involves perception of the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Note 3, Proposition 3.3

Therefore, insofar as a finite mode of an attribute is conceived as conceiving itself, it must be conceived as perceiving the corresponding modes in the other attributes. So we can understand from this that insofar as a man conceives the particular finite mode of thought that is his mind, he perceives as an extended object that which corresponds to him in the other attributes, namely his body (E2P13). Furthermore, in the same way, insofar as the man conceives his ideas, he necessarily perceives the corresponding motions of his body. For as we have seen, conception and perception are not distinct activities, but the same activity considered on the one hand in relation to the attribute or intellect in question and on the other hand in relation to the object of its perception. So in this way, "The human mind is the idea of the human body" (E2P15D), and thought is "that which the intellect [conceives] as constituting the essence of substance", whereas extension is "that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance" (E1D4).

Note 4, Proposition 3.3

Therefore we have seen in this chapter that the activity of a substance is self-conception, and that the activity of a mode is a modally distinct explanation, or property, of self-conception, and therefore, that all things have the power of conception in proportion to their power of activity. Therefore, we can see that since the order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute, a mode of thought, such as a man, has the power of conception in the same proportion as his body has its power of activity, or power of motion (E2P13S, 1.2C3). And hence we often imagine our brain as the seat

of the intellect (AT VIII 315), since it seems by far the most active part of our bodies; and we often imagine our eyes as windows to the soul, since they seem by far the most active exposed parts of our bodies. And conversely, we can hardly imagine any intellectual activity in such comparatively inactive objects as trees and rocks and even humans when they sleep; for we can hardly discern any physical activity, or power of motion, in their bodies, as seems to consist in rocks of nothing greater than molecular motion.

I acknowledge that there are likely many who will deny or doubt this explanation. They will object, variously, that only man has the power of conception, or only animals, or only plants and animals, or only some higher animals, and so forth. But note that those who say beasts have minds also say their minds are active only insofar as their brains and so forth are active, and that those who say plants feel also say their minds are active only insofar as their bodies are active, or in other words, that the power of conception is in these things in the same proportion as they express power, or reality, or in other words, insofar as they act. Note also that those who assert which things have minds and which things do not can offer neither adequate reasons nor any direct evidence for their opinions, which they consider common sense. For they cannot explain why anything has the power of conception or what the power of conception is; and they have never observed any individual mind except their own nor observed anything external to their mind which they did not perceive as a corporeal image or body. So it is only by analogy that they conjecture that any external things that do not speak and say they have minds do have minds; and therefore, they conjecture that only humans have minds or only the things that seem most similar to humans have minds. So for these reasons it's natural that we have this prejudice; but I have shown, in agreement with Spinoza, Parmenides, Shankara, and many others, that nothing exists except being, that being conceives itself, and that being and conceiving are the same thing, both in God and in the whole of nature and all its parts.[18]

---

[18] "His self dwells in all things. He is within all things." Yajnavalkya, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* 3.7.1.

"As the mixture is in the wanderings of the body at any time, so it is in the man's mind. For it is the same thing that thinks, in each and all. For what is, is all full with thinking." Parmenides*,* frag. 16.

"Burman: 'But in that case even stones and suchlike are going to be in God's image.'

"Descartes: 'Even these things do have the image and likeness of God, but it is very remote, minute, and indistinct.'" *Conversation with Burman.*

Chapter IV: Eternity, Duration, and Time

Plato exclaims in *Theaetetus,*

> This doctrine is remarkable. It declares that all the things we like to say 'are' really are in process of becoming… We are wrong to speak of them as 'being', for none of them ever is; they are always becoming. On this matter, with only the exception of Parmenides, the whole series of philosophers can be seen to agree. (152e)

Yet, although Parmenides does demonstrate that what is exists "all at once" and cannot really change (Fragment 8), he also says about particular things,

> According to the way of seeming, these things have come into what is, and thus they now exist; and in time, having been born and grown, they will likewise pass from what is. And men assign fixed names to these things by which to call them. (Fragment 19)

In this chapter and the next, I will explain how the existence of God, or what is, must be conceived as eternal and unchanging, but also how the existence of the particular things in God can be conceived in various ways. That is, I will explain how eternity differs from even infinite duration, or sempiternity, and which things are eternal and which things are sempiternal, and what time and change are, and which things are temporal and changing, so that I'll then be able to explain throughout the rest of this book how we conceive things adequately as being, but also conceive some things inadequately as always becoming.

Definitions

1. By eternity I mean necessary existence, or existence itself insofar as it cannot be conceived except as existing (E1D8).

2. By duration I mean continuance of existence (E2D5); and by time I mean a measure or determination of duration (CM1.4, Ep12).

3. By change I mean any difference in a thing or its modifications between one time and another time (CM2.4); and by becoming I mean the existence of a thing that is changing.

Propositions

Proposition 4.0

God, or being, is eternal; or rather, God is eternity.

Demonstration: Eternity is "existence itself insofar as existence is conceived as necessarily following solely from a thing's definition" (E1D8); that is, eternity is necessary existence. But necessary existence is the essence, or definition, of being (1.0D4). Therefore, being and eternity are the same thing.

Corollary, Proposition 4.0

Being belongs to no genus; its essence and existence must be conceived as absolutely infinite and self-generating.

Demonstration: A thing belongs to a particular genus insofar as it can be defined in relation to another thing in the genus (1Def4Ex). But being is defined in relation to no other. Therefore, being belongs to no genus (KV1.7).

But furthermore, God, or being, is the generating cause of its attributes; that is, it generates them all at once in itself insofar as it is the cause of itself. Therefore, inasmuch as being is identical with its attributes, or in other words, inasmuch as substance is absolutely infinite, it is in that respect its own generating cause.

Note, Proposition 4.0

Note therefore that God is, strictly speaking, not eternal but eternity. I acknowledge, though, that I frequently do refer to God as eternal, because the usage is familiar and seems to involve little risk of confusion.

But on the other hand, Spinoza explains in E4, Preface, "we are accustomed to refer all the individual things in nature to one genus which is called the most general, namely the notion of being, which pertains absolutely to all individuals". Note that this general idea of being is abstracted from the ideas of many dependent beings, and is therefore not an adequate idea of being, since it is not the cause of itself, and its essence is therefore dependent or contingent being, not absolute, necessary being, or eternity. Moreover, this inadequate idea of being cannot be conceived distinctly in relation to an adequate idea of being (2.2-2.3, 3.0N2). I will explain this further throughout this chapter and the next; and I will explain general ideas further and how we conceive them in Chapter Six.

Proposition 4.1

Each attribute, insofar as it is conceived as distinct, must necessarily be conceived as eternal.

Demonstration: Each attribute, if conceived as distinct, must necessarily be conceived as explaining its own existence, that is, as identical with its existence, or in other words, as self-caused, or necessarily existing (1.1D2); that is, it must be conceived as eternal. In other words, the essence of an attribute explains necessary existence insofar as a thing that is in itself must necessarily exist (E1P20D); for an attribute is being, or eternity, insofar as a substance can be conceived in relation to another in eternity (1.1N1). So in this way the attribute and the other attributes are conceived as belonging to the genus 'eternal' (1Def4Ex).

Corollary, Proposition 4.1

Neither eternity nor any eternal thing is in duration or time; instead, the duration of each particular mode in each substance is in eternity.

Demonstration: Whatever exists, exists in reality, or eternity (4.0). Therefore (E1Ax1), duration, or "continuance of existence" (E2D5), must be either a mode of eternity or eternity itself. But by continuance of existence I understand existence that might be limited or unlimited, whereas by eternity I understand necessary existence. That is, I understand that eternity and duration are not identical and that the duration

of a thing must therefore exist in eternity as a mode of existence, which can be conceived as a distinct thing only in relation to another mode (2.2-2.3). Therefore, "Duration is a mode of existence … which we attribute to things only insofar as their essence can be distinguished from their existence" (CM2.1), or in other words, insofar as their existence is conceived as determined and caused, not by their own essence, but by the essence of another, or insofar as they are conceived inadequately as distinct, dependent beings.[1]

Note 1, Proposition 4.1

Therefore eternity, or in other words the existence of God and God's eternal attributes, "cannot be explained by duration or time, even if that duration is conceived as without beginning or end" (E1D8Ex). For insofar as an eternal thing is conceived adequately as simple and perfect (2.0), its eternal existence must also be conceived as simple and perfect; and therefore, "in eternity there is no when, or before or after, or any [distinct] mode of duration or time" (CM1.2). So even sempiternity, or infinite duration, cannot be conceived as a part or partial explanation of eternity, except inadequately. For eternity is God, and as we have seen, God cannot be conceived as divided into parts; that is, if anything is conceived in relation to God, God alone, or eternity alone, is conceived simply and all at once. Therefore, "Eternity can be defined neither in terms of time nor in any way related to time" (E5P23S).

There is thus no real difficulty in the seeming paradox, 'Does God endure, or grow older with the passage of time?' For God, or eternity, is conceived as neither in duration nor in time, but instead, duration and time are conceived in God. Therefore, to conceive God as enduring or growing older would be to conceive the existence of God at one time, such as today, as constituting a greater part of eternity than it constituted at another time, such as yesterday; but this is absurd, because the existence of God is the same thing as eternity, and it cannot be conceived as divided or having parts. In other words, the existence of God today and the existence of God yesterday must be

[1] "We should regard the duration of a thing simply as a mode under which we conceive the thing insofar as it continues to exist." Descartes, *Principles,* 1.55.

conceived as one and the same eternity (CM2.1).[2] Furthermore, for the same reason, Spinoza explains that, "God's activity is the same in creating the world as in preserving it" (CM2.10). For God's eternal act of creation is likewise the same today as yesterday.[3]

Note 2, Proposition 4.1

Therefore God, or absolutely infinite substance, generates itself, and thereby generates everything conceivable (1.0C4), in the only possible order (1.2C3D2), all at once in eternity. Therefore, Spinoza explains that it cannot be said truly that God acts for an end, or a final or future purpose; and he explains further,

> This doctrine concerning the end inverts nature. What is really a cause it considers as an effect; and conversely, what is an effect it considers as a cause. What is prior in nature, it makes posterior; and what is supreme and perfect, it makes imperfect. (E1A)

I will explain this further throughout the rest of this treatise and, in particular, how we imagine time and change, and how we imagine our desires, hopes, and fears, and how they are determined by the necessity of all things (E4Praef, AT VIII 15).

Note 3, Proposition 4.1

A thing is called alive if it has the power of conception, or awareness, or if it has the power of determining its own motion. But as we have seen, the essence, or activity, of a substance is self-conception, and the activity of a mode is therefore a modally distinct explanation of self-conception and, thereby, of perception of its body's power of determining its motion (3.3N3). Therefore, in that sense, all things are alive, or "animate", insofar as they express reality and power (E2P13S), or in other words in

---

[2] "Neither has it been, nor shall it be; because it is, all alike, all at once, one. What birth for it would you seek? What means and what source would you find for it to grow? Neither can you say nor can you conceive that it came from what is not; for it can neither be said nor be conceived that what is, is what is not." Parmenides, frag. 8.

"Hesiod spoke of days. He did not understand, the nature of days is one." Heraclitus, frag. 106.

[3] "Nothing remains to be done by him; for he is already perfect." *Svetasvatara Upanishad,* 6.8.

"If we consider the infinite power of God, we must think that everything he created was perfect in every way." Descartes, *Principles,* 3.45.

proportion to their activity (3.3N4). Therefore, by the life of a thing I understand its existence; and hence, by the life of God I understand eternity, and by the life of a mode I understand its duration (CM2.6).[4]

Proposition 4.2

Each infinite mode, insofar as it is considered as following from the existence of a substance, that is, from God or from an attribute, whether immediately or mediately, must necessarily be conceived as eternal (E1P21-22, Ep10).

Demonstration 1: Each infinite mode, insofar as it is conceived as following, either immediately or mediately, from the existence of God or an attribute, is thereby conceived as following necessarily from that which exists necessarily. Therefore, considered this way, the existence of the mode is conceived as necessary, or eternal.

Demonstration 2: Insofar as an infinite mode is conceived in relation to its substance it cannot be distinguished from the substance (2.2); and as we have seen, the substance must be conceived as eternal (4.0-4.1). Therefore, considered this way, the mode must be conceived as eternal.

Corollary, Proposition 4.2

Each infinite mode, insofar as it is considered as existing, not as it follows from a substance, but through its essence alone, is understood not as eternal but as sempiternal, or always existing (E1P21, E2P11D).

Demonstration: The essence of a mode does not adequately explain necessary existence (E1P24); that is, its existence depends on the existence of another prior to it in the order of nature; and therefore, if considered through its essence alone, it cannot be conceived as eternal. But we are considering the mode as existing, and we have said that it is infinite, that is (E1D2), that it is a modally distinct explanation of every other

[4] "This whole world, whatever there is, is created of and moves in life." *Katha Upanishad*, 6.2.

"It is perhaps for this reason that Thales thought all things are full of gods." Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 41.1.a8.

"Anaximander said the principle and element of all things is one infinite and animate substance, from which arise all the heavens and the worlds within them." Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Physics,* 24.33.

mode in its substance, and is therefore present in every mode in the substance. Therefore, there can be nothing in the substance that excludes the existence of the mode; that is, there can be nothing "by which it could be destroyed" (E4Ax1) or by which its existence could be limited. For each infinite mode partly explains, and is present in, every part and, therefore, every temporal part, of the infinity of modes in the substance. Therefore its duration, or continuance, must be "conceived as without beginning or end" (E1D8Ex).[5]

Note, Proposition 4.2

Therefore, insofar as an infinite mode of a substance, such as the created universe (3.0C5), or the mind of God (3.2), or the physical universe (3.2C), is conceived through the essence of its substance, or insofar as it follows necessarily from the essence of its substance, it must be conceived as existing and present infinitely and eternally; whereas insofar as it is conceived through itself, or only insofar as it is in itself, it must be conceived as existing and present "infinitely and always", or sempiternally with an infinite continuance (E1P21). And likewise, each particular infinite mode of thought or extension, such as the particular infinite idea, 'that God is the cause of all things', and the particular infinite mode of extension, 'that motion is infinitely active', is also conceived both adequately through its substance as eternal and inadequately through itself as sempiternal.

Furthermore, we have seen that the infinite created universe can be conceived as divisible not only into an infinity of infinite parts, but also into an infinity of finite parts. Therefore, insofar as we conceive, for example, the infinite and sempiternal physical universe insofar as it can be conceived as divisible into finite parts,

> We conceive the whole of nature as one infinite individual whose parts, or constituent bodies, vary in infinite ways without any change in the individual as a whole. (E2L7S)

Note therefore that whether an infinite mode is conceived as following necessarily from its substance and therefore existing eternally, or is conceived in abstraction as

[5] "That which is infinite is immortal." *Chandogya Upanishad,* 7.14.1.
"The infinite is immortal and indestructible." Anaximander, frag. 3.

existing infinitely and always, it cannot be conceived as changing or even growing older with the passage of time. For if the duration of an infinite mode is conceived as divided into temporal parts, such as days or years, the temporal parts must still be conceived as parts of its whole infinite duration. So to say the mode grows older would be to conclude that an infinity of parts grows larger from the argument that as one counts it the count grows larger, which is absurd.

Proposition 4.3

The duration of a finite mode depends on the order and connection of modes in eternity.

Demonstration: The duration of a finite mode does not follow from its essence, but must instead follow from the existence of another (E1P24), as a determinate, or "conditioned" (E1P21D), existence.

> A body [finite mode] is determined to exist and to act by causes, which in turn are determined to exist and to act, in a fixed and determinate way, by other causes, and these last are also determined by others, and so on to infinity. Therefore, the duration of a body depends on the common order of nature, that is, on the constitution of things, or structure of the universe. (E2P30D)

> So when we say that God has decided a triangle shall exist, we are saying nothing but that God has so arranged the order of nature and of causes that the triangle shall necessarily exist at such a time. (CM1.3)

As we saw in 2.3N4, the external causes, or conditions, for the existence or non-existence of a finite mode are the other finite modes, or the parts of its world, in their necessary order. For example, the existence of a finite mode such as a man depends on the existence and presence of some external modes such as foods, and the absence of others such as poisons; and as Spinoza shows, the interdependence of these conditions must be conceived to infinity (E1P28). Therefore, the duration of a finite mode depends not only on its own nature, or essence, but also on the order and connection of modes in its world; that is, it depends on the order and connection of finite modes in its substance. So in this way the duration of a finite mode is a property, not of the

mode's essence considered in itself, but of something greater; for all things are properties of substance, or eternity.

Note 1, Proposition 4.3

Therefore, the finite duration, or continuance, of a finite mode is in eternity and can be conceived distinctly only in abstraction, in relation to the durations of other finite modes (2.3C); and hence,

> To determine this duration, we compare it with the durations of other things … This comparison is called time. And therefore, time is not a mode of things but merely a mode of thinking which serves to explain duration. (CM1.4)

That is, the existence in time of a finite thing is its duration, or continuance of existence, conceived in relation to the durations of other finite things, as the duration of a man's body or any of his motions can be conceived in relation to the durations of other, external bodies or motions of bodies, and likewise, as the duration of his mind or ideas can be conceived in relation to the durations of other, external ideas (Ep12, CM1.1).

Note therefore that there is not one, absolute or universal time in which all finite things exist; there are instead an infinity of distinct times and an infinity of distinct temporal relations existing among the infinity of finite modes in the infinite and sempiternal divisible universe, all of which exist all at once but indistinctly in eternity. For an example,

> Let us suppose a very long train traveling along the rails with a constant velocity ... and two events (e.g. two strokes of lightning A and B) which are simultaneous with reference to the railway embankment... An observer sitting in the train is hastening toward the beam of light coming from B, whilst he is riding on ahead of the beam of light coming from A. Hence the observer will see the beam of light emitted from B earlier than he will see that emitted from A.
>
> We thus arrive at the important result: Events which are simultaneous with reference to the embankment are not simultaneous with respect to the train, and vice versa. Hence every reference-body has its own particular time; so unless we

> are told the reference-body to which the statement of time refers, there is no meaning in a statement of the time of an event.[6]

This is only one kind of example, which involves the speed of visible light, but we can understand from it that the actual time, or present, of one thing is in the past for another thing and in the future for a third thing, or in other words, that the time of each thing is actually different from the time of each other thing.

Yet we measure the durations of things conventionally, but in part falsely, in relation to "the durations of things that [seem to] have a fixed and determinate motion" (CM1.4), such as clocks, planetary orbits, and so forth. And so, as Descartes explains it,

> To measure the duration of all things, we compare their duration with the duration of the greatest and most regular motions which give rise to years and days, and we call this duration 'time'. Yet nothing is thereby added to the duration, taken in its general sense, except for a mode of thought. (AT VIII 27)

Note the similarity to how we determine and measure places and distances between places. For by a distance, or a measure of extended substance, I mean any mode of imagination through which the quantity of a modification, or dimension (3Def10), of a body can be imagined in abstraction and compared with the dimensions of other bodies as a part might be compared with the whole or with other parts of the whole; and therefore, by a place I mean the quantity of a body, imagined in abstraction and considered insofar as it is a part of a greater body, that is (2.3C1), insofar as it might be conceived in relation to another part of a greater body.

> For example, when a ship is under way, a man sitting on the stern remains in one place relative to the other parts of the ship with respect to which his position is unchanged; but he is constantly changing his place relative to the neighboring shores, since he is constantly receding from one shore and approaching another. Then again, if we believe the earth moves, and suppose that it advances the same distance from west to east as the ship travels from east to west in the corresponding period of time, we shall again say that the man sitting on the stern is not

[6] Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory,* Chapter 9.

> changing his place; for we are now determining the place by means of certain fixed points in the heavens. Finally, if we suppose that there are no such genuinely fixed points to be found in the universe … we shall conclude that nothing has a permanent place, except as determined by our thought. (AT VIII 47)

So in this way the idea of a place is abstracted from the idea of a body, or mode of extension, whereas an idea of time is abstracted from an idea of the duration, or continuance of existence, of the body. Therefore, insofar as a body is conceived in relation to a particular place, or in other words, insofar as it is conceived in relation to the other parts of a particular whole, the duration of the body is thereby conceived in relation to the durations of the other parts; and thus a particular mode of time is necessarily conceived insofar as a particular place is conceived. That is, the time and place of a particular body or mode of motion can be distinguished "only insofar as the existence of the mode can be distinguished from its essence" (CM2.1).

Lastly, note that, just as we can imagine fictitious indivisible finite modes of substance, or atoms, we can likewise imagine fictitious indivisible modes of time, or 'moments'; but note also that, as every mode of a substance can be conceived as actually infinitely divisible, so too, a moment can be conceived as infinitely divisible. Note therefore that, in the same way that we can imagine finite modes as divided, as we imagine bodies for example divided by points in space, we can also imagine the durations of the modes as divided by points in time, or 'instants', and hence that, just as points in space are really nothing in themselves, since bodies are not really divided, instants too are really nothing, since the durations of the bodies are also not really divided. Therefore instants, or the modes of division in time, are actually nothing but distinctions, or "entities of the imagination... For if anyone looks outside his intellect for what is meant by these words, he will find nothing" (CM1.1).

Note 2, Proposition 4.3

Spinoza defines change as "whatever variation there can be in a subject [thing] while the very essence of the subject remains intact" (CM2.4). Therefore, by change I understand any variation, or difference, that can be conceived in a finite thing or its modifications between one time and place and another time and place, or in other words, any difference that can be abstracted from the order and connections of finite modes in eternity insofar as other things accidentally modify the thing in question in

indefinitely many different ways. For insofar as a finite thing is conceived as distinguished from other finite things by time and space, and thereby as temporally enduring, it must be conceived as always or "constantly changing" (AT VIII 47) in relation to them, since each relation is different from the other relations, and each accidental modification of the thing caused through these relations is a different modification (1.3C).

Therefore, conceived in this way, in relation to any particular time and place,

> Terrestrial vapors constantly rise to the clouds and descend from them; the air is forever agitated by winds; the sea is never at rest; springs and rivers flow ceaselessly; the strongest buildings eventually fall into decay; and plants and animals are always growing or decaying. In short, there is nothing anywhere that is not changing. (AT XI 10-11)

But since the order and connection of finite modes can be distinctly conceived only if the modes in question are conceived as distinct entities, change cannot be conceived in relation to eternity or any eternal thing, because the eternal things must be conceived as simple and indivisible (4.0-1), and therefore nothing finite can be conceived distinctly in relation to them (2.3); whereas conception of time, which compares finite modes and their durations, necessarily involves conception of change. Therefore, by the changing things I understand finite modes considered temporally in relation to each other; and by the unchanging things I understand the infinite things, namely God and the attributes of God, together with their eternal properties considered insofar as they are eternal (4.1N1), as well as the infinite modes of God and God's attributes considered insofar as they are in themselves sempiternal, or always existing (4.2N).

Note 3, Proposition 4.3

The idea of eternity is hard for many people to understand for the same reason the idea of God, or reality, is hard to understand. For it is really the same idea as the idea of God, inasmuch as the existence of God and essence of God are the same thing; and therefore, in the same way it can seem hard to understand that reality, or being, exists in itself, and is the cause of itself, and is infinite, indivisible, simple, and perfect, it can likewise seem hard to understand that the existence of being, or eternity, is also in itself, the cause of itself, and infinite, indivisible, simple, and perfect. So for this reason,

there have been many philosophers who instead of eternity have imagined a fictitious idea of universal time as fundamental or prior to everything, or prior to anything really or actually existing; and they have thereby imagined that the being of time or the being of becoming is prior to the being of being or the being of beings, which is a contradiction (E1P1), from which indefinitely many errors and further contradictions necessarily follow (CM2.10); and in similar ways, some philosophers have imagined that being is the same thing as time or the same thing as becoming, which too involve contradictions, from which indefinitely many other errors follow. They err in these ways because the idea of absolute being is obscured in their minds by the force of their senses, memories, fantasies, and feelings, all of which involve ideas of time and change.

Furthermore, for the same reason, we often see eternal or sempiternal metaphysical principles explained inadequately and confusedly as temporal stories in myths, inadequate philosophies, and interpretations of rationalist philosophies, so that metaphysical priority, such as the absolute priority of God's eternal act of creation, is imagined in creation myths as temporal priority in a narrative story that happened in a fictitious universal past.

Therefore, when Shankara explains the conditions for a student of a rationalist and monist philosophy, he specifies an ability to understand the difference between the eternal and the temporal as the first condition, followed by an ability to inquire without personal emotion, an ability to attain certainty and tranquility, and a desire for liberation.[7] Spinoza similarly emphasizes the importance of understanding the difference between conceiving things adequately as eternal in God and conceiving them inadequately in relation to time and change (E2P44C2, E5P29). I will demonstrate and explain in the following chapters and Appendix 1 how our ability to understand eternity and discriminate the eternal from the temporal in our experience is the foundation and means of our ability to inquire dispassionately and attain certainty, tranquility, and freedom.

[7] *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 1.1.1, *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 1.2.

Chapter V: The Real, the Rational, and the Actual

In *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* Diogenes Laertius attributes the Delphic maxim, "Know yourself", to the founder of Hellenic philosophy, Thales of Miletus. Yet Diogenes also attributes to Thales the saying, "The most difficult of all things is to know yourself."

I will explain how we can understand and know ourselves and benefit from this knowledge throughout the rest of this book; but first, in this chapter, I will demonstrate the relations of a finite intellect with reality and the various things in reality; and I will thereby explain what a man's real self is, and how it is eternal in God; and how the rational part of his self participates in sempiternity; and how his actual or individual self, or the changing part of him, suffers mortality.

Definitions

1. By the real order of nature I mean nature, or being, as it is in itself in eternity (E1P33S2, E5P29S); and by the formal order of nature I mean the same eternal order, but as it is in a distinct attribute of being (E2P5-7).

2. By the rational order of nature I mean the order and connection of the infinite modes of nature, which are equally present in all things, always and everywhere (E1P21, E3Praef, TIE76).

3. By the actual order of nature I mean the order and connection of the finite modes of nature, each of which is present in its own time and place (E2P9, E5P29S).

Propositions

Proposition 5.0

The activity of a finite mode of being, conceived in relation to being, is the real essence, or real self, of the mode, as it exists in eternity (E5P23).

Demonstration 1: Being is the cause of everything conceivable (1.0C4), which it generates all at once in itself, or eternity (4.0C). Therefore, a finite mode conceived in relation to being must be conceived as existing in eternity (E2P45S).

Furthermore, we have seen that the activity of a thing is its essence (3Def2); and we have seen that the activity of a substance is self-conception (3.0C2, 3.1C1) and that the activity of a mode is therefore a mode of self-conception (3.3). Therefore, the essence, activity, and self of the mode are the same thing. Therefore, I call the activity of a mode conceived in the real order of nature, in relation to being, or eternity, its real essence, or its real or absolute self.

Demonstration 2: Insofar as a finite mode is conceived in relation to God, or being, in the real order of nature, it cannot be distinguished from being, and its existence likewise cannot be distinguished from eternity (2.3). Therefore, insofar as the mode is conceived this way, its real essence, or real self, must be conceived as involved in and indistinguishable from absolutely infinite being, or eternity, and its activity is indistinguishable from the activity of absolute being conceiving itself (3.0C1).

Corollary, Proposition 5.0

Conception of the real essence, or real self, of a finite mode does not in any way involve perception.

Demonstration: The real essence of a finite mode cannot be conceived as a distinct entity; that is, insofar as the real essence is conceived, being alone is conceived (2.3); and we saw in 3.0C3–4 that being can neither perceive any other nor be perceived by any other, because there is no other. Therefore, conception of the real essence, or real self, of a finite mode of being does not in any way involve perception.

Note 1, Proposition 5.0

Therefore, conception of the real essence, or real self, of a man's mind, or in other words, conception of the real essence of the mode of thought that is a particular man, does not involve perception of extension, that is, neither insofar as extension is considered as infinite, nor insofar as it can be explained by the man's body. For as we have seen, conception of the real essence of the man's mind is indistinguishable from

conception of its substance, or in other words conception of absolutely infinite and simple being conceiving itself as the absolute subject of conception (3.0C1-2).[1]

Note 2, Proposition 5.0

In E1P17S, where Spinoza explains, at least tentatively, that "God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived as constituting his essence, is in fact the prior cause of all things, both of their essence and of their existence" (3Pref), he cautions,

> Since therefore God's intellect is the one and only cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence, as we have shown, it must necessarily be different from them in respect to both essence and existence. For that which is caused differs from its cause precisely in what it has from its cause… Therefore, God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, differs from a man's intellect in respect to both essence and existence, and cannot agree with it in any respect other than the name.

But to this argument, Spinoza's friend Tschirnhaus objects that, "since God's intellect differs from our intellect both in essence and existence, it will therefore have nothing in common with our intellect, and therefore (Book 1, Proposition 3) God's intellect cannot be the cause of our intellect" (Ep63). That is, Spinoza's argument for his claim that God's intellect differs from a man's intellect in both essence and existence contradicts E1P3, "If things have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other," as well as E1Ax4, "The knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the

---

[1] "That which is the subtlest essence, this whole world has that as its soul. That is reality. That is the self. That is you." *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6.9.4.

"This all-knowing self is never born and never dies. It has not come from anywhere; nor has it become anything. Unborn, constant, and eternal, beyond past or future, it cannot be harmed." *Katha Upanishad*, 2.18.

"In the supreme self, there are no distinctions between the subject of knowing, object of knowing, and act of knowing. It is absolute being, consciousness, and bliss, and shines by itself alone." Shankara, *Self-Knowledge,* 41.

"The shining sun in the center of your soul cannot lose its beauty and splendor. It is always present, and nothing can take away its loveliness." Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle,* 1.2.3.

"This proposition, 'I am', 'I exist', is necessarily true whenever it is conceived in my mind." Descartes, *Second Meditation.*

knowledge of its cause." Moreover, as Spinoza explains many times, "God is the cause of himself", yet it is self-evident that God does not differ from himself. But Spinoza replies to Tschirnhaus merely by repeating the argument (see also 5.2N4). In my opinion, his argument, that "what is caused differs from its cause precisely in what it has from its cause", is so obviously false, and so obviously contradicts nearly all of his metaphysics, I can hardly believe it was the actual reason for his assertion that God's intellect differs from man's intellect in all but the name.[2]

But I think it's also obvious that Spinoza had another, more compelling reason to say a man's intellect has nothing in common with God's intellect, namely, that his theory of the attributes could not explain the relation, since it assumed that the power of conception as we know it belonged uniquely to the essence of thought, as it also seems to have assumed that quantity in some way belonged uniquely to the essence of extension. Of the many contradictions that follow from Spinoza's inadequate explanation of the attributes and extension, I consider this one the most important, because it prevented him from giving a simple and clear explanation of the union of a man's mind with God and eternity.

Proposition 5.1

The activity of a finite mode of an attribute, conceived in relation to the attribute, is the formal essence of the mode, which is eternal in the attribute (E2P8, E5P22).

Demonstration: An attribute is necessarily conceived as generating every conceivable mode of itself in eternity (1.2, 4.0C). Therefore, a finite mode conceived in relation to its attribute in the formal order of nature (5Def1) must be conceived as eternal; for insofar as the mode is conceived this way, it is conceived as a necessary property of that which exists necessarily.

Moreover, the activity, or self-conception (3.3), of the mode, conceived in relation to its attribute, cannot be conceived as distinct from the activity of the attribute (2.3); that is, the mode is conceived insofar as it explains the attribute, whereas the attribute is conceived simply and perfectly, and its eternal existence is also conceived simply and

[2] "It is a common axiom and a true one that the effect is like the cause. Now God is the cause of me, and I am an effect of him, so it follows that I am like him." Descartes, *Conversation with Burman.*

perfectly. Therefore, the formal essence of a finite mode must be conceived as eternal in its attribute (E1D1, E1P7).[3]

Corollary, Proposition 5.1

Conception of the formal essence of a finite mode does not involve distinct perception of the formal essence of the corresponding mode in any other attribute; that is, it involves perception of such modes only insofar as it involves perception of the other attributes as an infinite and indivisible object.

Demonstration: A finite mode cannot be conceived as distinct in relation to its attribute (2.3). Therefore, the formal essence of a finite mode, that is, a finite mode conceived in relation to its attribute, can neither be conceived nor be perceived as a distinct finite thing, either by itself or by any other. Therefore, conception of the formal essence of the mode in question does not involve distinct perception of the formal essence of the corresponding mode in any other attribute, except insofar as conception of the mode's attribute as infinite and indivisible necessarily involves perception of the other attributes as infinite and indivisible.

Note 1, Proposition 5.1

Therefore, conception of a man's eternal self, that is, conception of the formal essence of the mode of thought that is a particular man, does not involve perception of the man's body as a modally distinct object. That is, conception of the formal essence of the man's mind is indistinguishable from conception of thought as an infinite, indivisible, concrete, and eternal subject of conception and, thereby, perception of extension as an infinite, indivisible, concrete, and eternal object. And thus, whatever we "understand under the form of eternity" (E2P44C2), or as it is in eternity, we understand, "not by conceiving the present actual existence of the body, but by conceiving the essence of the body under the form of eternity" (E5P22), or insofar as it cannot be distinguished from the essence of extension in eternity.

[3] "I am thinking; therefore I am." Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 4.

Note 2, Proposition 5.1

Since the formal essence of the mind is conceived distinctly from the formal essence of the body insofar as thought is conceived distinctly from extension, whereas the real essence of the mind and body are conceived as the same thing in relation to absolutely infinite reality, it might be more accurate to call the distinction between the mind and body a 'formal' distinction rather than a real distinction, and then say there are no real distinctions (2.1). But because in that sense there are no real distinctions, I think there may be little need to have a separate word for it; and because others have used the term "formal distinction" differently (AT VII 120), and because Descartes and Spinoza both do call the distinction between mind and body a real distinction (PPC1P8, E2P10S), I think it's probably less confusing to retain their use of the term than to change it.

Note 3, Proposition 5.1

In Letter 10, in reply to a question from "the learned young man Simon de Vries", Spinoza wrote,

> To the question whether individual things or their affections are eternal truths, I say certainly. I did not call them eternal truths only to distinguish them from those which do not explain an individual thing or affection of a thing, such as 'nothing comes from nothing'. This and similar propositions I call absolutely eternal truths, by which I mean simply that they do not have any place outside the mind, etc.

I think it's likely that in the last sentence Spinoza was following Descartes' description of common notions like 'nothing comes from nothing' as "eternal truths which have no existence outside our thought" (AT VIII 22-23). But Spinoza understood correctly that thinking and reason are present not only in human minds as Descartes supposed, but infinitely (Ep2); and in *Ethics* he explains common notions correctly as ideas of "those things which are common to all and equally in the part as in the whole" (E2P37), or in other words, infinite ideas of things that exist infinitely in nature. Furthermore, his description of common notions in this letter as "absolutely eternal" recalls E1P21, "All things that follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must have existed always and as infinite; [and] through the attribute they are eternal

and infinite." Therefore, I interpret "eternal in an absolute sense" as meaning that an infinite mode of thought like 'nothing comes from nothing' is both eternally true in God and thought (4.2) and sempiternally, or always, true in itself (4.2C); and I interpret "it does not have any place outside the mind" as meaning that it's likewise true both in God and not in any particular place but everywhere in the divisible universe (E2P37). Whereas an individual finite thing, like the mode of thought, 'I am writing this book', is also eternally true in God and thought, but in itself is only true in some particular times and places in the universe (4.3N1). I will explain these points further under Propositions 5.2 and 5.3.

Proposition 5.2

The activity of a finite mode, conceived in relation to the infinite modes in its substance, is that which I call the rational essence, or rational self, of the mode, which participates in infinite, or sempiternal, existence.

Demonstration: A substance generates in itself an infinity of infinite modes, each of which is present in and partly explains each of the infinity of finite modes and is the same in every part as in the whole. Therefore, each finite mode of a substance can be explained as a part of the infinity of infinite modes in the substance. Therefore, insofar as the activity, or self-conception (3.3), of a finite mode is conceived in relation to the infinite modes in its substance it must be conceived as identical, insofar as it expresses reality, with the activity of the infinite modes, which as we have seen exist sempiternally, or always (4.2C). Therefore, insofar as the activity of a finite mode is conceived in relation to the infinite modes of its substance, that is, insofar as its rational essence is conceived, it is conceived as a part of those things that exist infinitely, or sempiternally, or always.

Note 1, Proposition 5.2

Therefore, the human mind is conceived as participating in infinite, or sempiternal, existence insofar as it is conceived as an idea in the infinite mind of God, or in other words, as a finite but essential part of the mind of God (3.2N4, E2P11C), or "insofar

as it is a part of the whole of nature" (E4A6), which "varies in infinite ways without any change in the whole" (E2L7S).

Corollary 1, Proposition 5.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance is conceived in relation to the infinite modes in the substance, that is, as a part of the infinite modes, it must be conceived as having an infinity of properties in common with the other modes in the substance.

Demonstration: The essence of each of the infinity of infinite modes in a substance modifies, or is present in, every mode in the substance and, therefore, every finite mode in the substance. Therefore, each finite mode, insofar as it expresses reality, is modified by the infinity of infinite modes, or infinite properties, in the substance; and therefore, it has all these properties in common with the other modes in the substance.

Note 2, Proposition 5.2

Therefore the infinity of infinite ideas, or principles of reason, in the infinite and sempiternal mind of God are present and true in a man's mind and in every idea in his mind. For example, it must necessarily be true in every mode of thought, as in all substance, that, "A substance is by nature prior to its modifications" (E1P1). Note how from this infinite mode other infinite modes (E1P22), or "common properties" (E2P40S1), or "common laws of nature" (E3Praef), follow in the rational order, as the sequence of these examples illustrates: "that a substance is the adequate cause of its modifications" (E1P16C1), "that a substance determines each of its modes to exist and act in a definite way" (E1P26), "that each mode that has been determined in a definite way by its substance cannot render itself undetermined" (E1P27), and so on. Therefore, note again that, "that effect is the most perfect which is produced immediately by God, whereas each effect is less perfect in proportion to the number of its intermediary causes" (E1A) in the timeless, or sempiternal, rational order of nature.

Corollary 2, Proposition 5.2

Insofar as a finite mode of an attribute is conceived in relation to the infinite modes in the attribute, or insofar as its rational essence is conceived, that which corresponds

to the mode in the other attributes must thereby be perceived insofar as it is modified by the infinite modes in those attributes.

Demonstration: An attribute must be conceived through itself in relation to the other attributes; and insofar as the attribute is conceived, the other attributes must thereby be perceived (3.1C2). Furthermore, the modes of an attribute are conceived through the attribute; and therefore, insofar as the modes of the attribute are conceived, the corresponding modes in the other attributes must likewise be perceived (3.2C3, 3.3C). Therefore, insofar as the rational essence of a finite mode of an attribute is conceived as modified by the infinite modes in its attribute, that which corresponds to it in the other attributes must be perceived insofar as it is modified by the infinite modes in those attributes.

Note 3, Proposition 5.2

Therefore, conception of a man's rational essence, or rational self, necessarily involves perception of the essence of his body in relation to the infinite modes of extension, that is, in relation to the whole physical universe, or infinite and infinitely active motion and the infinite properties, or parts, thereof, "which must be the same always and everywhere" (TTP4). For insofar as the infinite modes of thought, or common notions, are conceived as modifying the man's mind, the infinite modes, or common properties, of extension are thereby perceived as modifying his body; and this perception consists in conception of an infinite and infinitely active quantity of motion and the infinity of infinite properties of motion, which are the same in all bodies and determine them to exist and move in the ways they do (TIE101, 2.3N4, 3.2N3).

Note 4, Proposition 5.2

I showed in 5.0N2 how it appears that Spinoza argued that "God's intellect and a man's intellect agree in nothing but the name" only because his theory of the attributes could not explain the relation. He argued that an effect "differs from its cause precisely

in what it has from its cause", which Tschirnhaus correctly called false. As part of this argument, Spinoza gave as an example of this alleged principle,

> A man is the cause of the existence of another man, but not of the other's essence; for the essence is an eternal truth. So with regard to their essence the two men can be in full agreement, but they must differ with regard to existence; and for that reason if the existence of the one should cease, the existence of the other would not thereby cease. But if the essence of the one could be destroyed and rendered false, so too would the essence of the other. Therefore, a thing which is the cause of the essence and existence of some effect must differ from that effect in respect to both essence and existence. (E1P17S)

What this example, or alleged analogy, actually illustrates is, mainly (see also 6.2N3), that we cannot adequately explain the cause of a thing in a temporal order, but can only imagine and describe some parts of its cause; whereas we can explain it adequately in the simple and indivisible eternal order or in the divisible rational, or sempiternal, order (TIE101). For a man is not the adequate cause of another man, but only a property or part of the adequate cause. Considered in the rational order, the adequate cause of the man must be conceived as the whole infinite and sempiternal universe, inasmuch as the order and connections of finite causes are infinite and infinitely interrelated (2.3N4, 4.3, E1P28, E4A); whereas considered in the eternal order, in the same way that, as Spinoza says, the formal essence of the man must be conceived as "an eternal truth", the existence of his formal essence must also be conceived as an eternal truth (5.1). So neither the essence nor the existence of either man can be conceived as rendered false, or absolutely ceasing to exist. And just as this explanation of the existence of a real finite thing by a finite, or temporal, 'efficient' cause is partial and inadequate, so is any other explanation of its existence by a finite, temporal cause, whether efficient, 'material', 'formal', or 'final', or any finite combination of them (E1A, E4Praef, AT VIII 15), since as we have seen, the thing is "a part of nature, which cannot be conceived adequately through itself alone independently of the other individual parts" (E3P3S, E4P2); and therefore an adequate explanation of its existence must be infinite and timeless.

This kind of error might also explain Spinoza's claim in *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* that "it is self-evident that the component parts are prior at least by nature to a composite whole" (PPC1P19, CM2.5), which Descartes does not claim in the

corresponding section of *Principles,* and which Spinoza does not repeat in *Ethics* when he demonstrates the same proposition, i.e. that God is not composed of parts. For even though almost all the traditional philosophies also claimed that the parts of a thing must be prior to the whole, we know it is false because we know the whole infinite and infinitely divisible universe is distinctly and adequately conceived as prior in nature to its infinity of distinct properties, or parts, which it generates (E2P4, 3.2). Yet it's obvious that someone imagining transformations of bodies in an inadequate temporal order might imagine the parts of a particular finite body as necessarily existing prior to the whole. But these temporal material causes likewise cannot adequately explain the effect, either by themselves or in combination with any finite number of finite causes, because the effect can only be explained adequately in the infinite and eternal real order or the infinite and timeless rational order.

Proposition 5.3

The activity of a finite mode, conceived as a distinct thing in relation to its world, or the other finite modes, is the actual essence, or individual self, of the mode, which has a finite, or limited, duration (E2D7, E3P6-8).

Demonstration: The activity, or essence (3Def2), of a finite mode is a mode of self-conception (3.3); but conceived through itself alone it does not adequately explain necessary existence (E1P24). That is, its existence is not self-caused but depends on the existence of another; and therefore, if considered through its essence alone, it cannot be conceived as necessary, or eternal. But the mode is conceived distinctly in the actual order of nature (5Def3) not only through its essence but also in relation to its world (2.3C), that is, in relation to the external causes of its existence in some times and places and its non-existence in other times and places (4.3N1). Therefore, insofar as the actual essence of the mode is considered as existing, its existence must be conceived as a limited continuance of existence, or finite duration.

Note 1, Proposition 5.3

We saw in 4.3N1 that insofar as a finite mode is conceived in relation to another finite mode, its duration is likewise conceived in relation to the other mode's duration, and that this comparison forms a mode of time; and we saw in 4.3N2 that insofar as the

modes are conceived this way they are thereby conceived as always changing in relation to each other. Therefore, insofar as the mode is conceived as a distinct individual thing in relation to its world, both it and its world must be conceived as temporally enduring and always changing.

Note therefore that each actual modification of the mode must likewise be conceived as having a limited duration and as always changing in relation to the mode itself, as for example, a man's opinions and passions, or those of his ideas that arise partly from external causes (see 6.1N1, 7.1N1), must each be conceived as having a limited duration in his mind and always changing, insofar as the accidental modifications of his mind are conceived as coming into existence and passing out of existence in relation to his own continuance of existence.

Corollary 1, Proposition 5.3

Conception of a finite mode of an attribute as a distinct entity, that is, conception of it in relation to its world, necessarily involves modally distinct perception of that which corresponds to it in the other attributes (E5P23S).

Demonstration: Insofar as the modes of an attribute are conceived, the corresponding modes in the other attributes must thereby be perceived (3.3C). Therefore, insofar as a finite mode of the attribute is conceived as a distinct entity, that which corresponds to it in the other attributes must be perceived as a modally distinct, or individual, thing, or object.

Note 2, Proposition 5.3

Therefore, conception of a man's individual self, that is, distinct conception of the mode of thought that is a particular man, necessarily involves perception of the man's body as a distinct physical object enduring in time.

> Thus our mind can be said to endure, and its existence can be defined by a period of time, only insofar as it involves the actual existence of the body, and thus far only can it have the power of determining the existence of things in time and conceiving their existence in terms of duration. (E5P23S)

Furthermore, we saw in 4.3N1 that perception of the duration, or existence, of a body as constituting a particular mode of time necessarily involves perception of the essence of the body as constituting a particular place. Therefore, by the individual self, or actual essence, of the mode I mean the mode "conceived in relation to a particular time and place" (E5P29S), which constitutes the mode's own actual present. Note also that each time and place must be conceived as affected, or partly determined, by particular 'past' causes, and as partly causing or determining particular 'future' effects, since the actual order of finite causes and effects follows necessarily (E2P48). Therefore, by the actual present, or rather, by my actual present, as I sit here now writing this, I understand my mind and perception of my body as they are actually modified in this particular time and place; and by the past I understand an inadequate idea of the accidental, finite causes of the present; and by the future, an inadequate idea of the accidental effects of the present.

Note 3, Proposition 5.3

I explained in 4.1N3 that by the life of a finite mode I understand its duration; and therefore, by its death I understand the limit of its duration. But we have seen that the durations of things are not really distinct, and so I also explained that the limit of a mode's duration is therefore really nothing; for the mode really exists eternally and actually continues to exist indefinitely. But we have also seen that each accidental modification of the mode, or each part of its intersection with its world, might either partly cause, or determine, some property essential in the mode, thereby partly causing or aiding its continuance in existence (E2Post4), or partly exclude some property essential in the mode, thereby weakening the mode and partly causing its destruction, or death (E3P4), or in other words, decomposition of its properties, or parts. Taking bodies as an example,

> Whatever causes a change in the proportion of motion and rest among the parts of a body thereby causes the body to assume a different form; that is, it causes its destruction. (E4P39D)

And since for each mode of extension there corresponds a mode of thought, partial destruction of the body is accompanied by partial "destruction of the soul, since this is only an idea of the body having this proportion of motion and rest" (KV2Praef).

Therefore, although the mode is really eternal, insofar as it is conceived as a distinct individual in relation to its world it is thereby conceived as a whole in some times and places but not as a whole in other times and places. Therefore, a man for example is called alive in those finite modes, or times and places, in which he is thought to exist as a whole, and he is called dead in those times and places in which parts of him, such as memories of his name or deeds, are thought to exist though the whole is thought not to exist. Therefore Spinoza says,

> I have no reason to maintain that a body does not die unless it turns into a corpse; and indeed, experience seems to teach otherwise. It sometimes happens that a man undergoes such changes that I would hardly say he is the same man. (E4P39S)

For if a man has changed in such a way that what had seemed essential parts of him no longer seem to exist, he can be conceived as in one way the same man, but in another way a different man. And likewise, I can conceive myself as the same person I was when I was a child, yet in another way as a different person than I was yesterday. For we have seen that a particular thing, like 'Gary Sugar', can be conceived as an infinitely divisible genus of particulars (2.3N2), and we have seen that each particular in the genus actually exists in its own time and place. For there is not one, absolute or universal time, in which all finite things come into existence and pass out of existence; there are instead an infinity of modally distinct times, each abstracted from the infinity of finite things and relations among finite things existing in eternity; and hence all things are actually alive in their own times and places, and death is really nothing. Therefore Spinoza says, "insofar as a man lives according to the guidance of reason … he thinks of nothing less than death, and his wisdom is instead a meditation on life" (E4P67).[4]

[4] "Nothing is born, and nothing dies. This is the absolute truth." *Mandukya Upanishad,* 3.48.
"Thus birth is extinguished, and perishing unheard of." Parmenides, frag. 8.

Corollary 2, Proposition 5.3

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance is conceived as a distinct thing in relation to its world, its activity must be conceived as constituting an endeavor to continue in existence (E3P6).

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode is conceived as a distinct thing, its activity is thereby conceived as expressing the power of the mode in a changing, temporal relation to the power of its world (4.3N1-2, 5.3N1), that is, in a changing, temporal relation to the power of external causes, by which it can be partly caused or destroyed (E3Post1, E4Ax1), and each of which conversely might be partly caused or destroyed by the power of the mode (2.3N4). Therefore, insofar as the actual essence of the mode expresses power, or posits and affirms its own being (E3P4D, 3.3), it must be conceived as temporally "endeavoring to continue in existence" (E3P6), by affirming everything that can cause or determine its existence and thereby "opposing everything that can exclude its existence" (E3P6D). Therefore, "the endeavor of each thing to continue in existence is nothing but the actual essence of the thing" (E3P7), or the essence, or activity, of the mode considered insofar as it is determined in a particular way in a particular time and place.[5]

Note 4, Proposition 5.3

Therefore by volition, or power of the will, or "the faculty of affirming and denying" (E2P48S), I understand the actual essence, or endeavor, of a finite mode, such as a man, or in other words, the power of his intellect, or his power of conception, considered as a distinct, changing mode of actuality; and so in this way, his "will and intellect are the same thing" (E2P49C), and "affirming and denying is what thinking is" (CM2.12). Furthermore, by appetite, or desire, I understand the mode's endeavor considered insofar as it involves perception of the corresponding endeavor of the object of its perception, or in this case, the endeavor of the man's body. Spinoza says, "between appetite and desire there is no difference, except that desire is usually related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetite" (E3P9S), or more generally, "by

[5] "To make this clear, let us consider a very simple kind of example. A motion has a force of continuing in its state. This force is really nothing but the motion itself." Spinoza, CM1.6.

desire I mean any of a man's endeavors, urges, appetites, and volitions", or "the man's essence insofar as it is determined in a particular way to do something" (E3AD1). Therefore, by the actual essence of a man I understand his endeavor, or desire, to conceive and affirm ideas of the properties of his own mind and body and, thereby, his endeavor to conceive whatever things external to him might determine the properties of his mind and body to continue in existence (E3P12).[6]

Note therefore that our desires, or appetites, are strictly speaking not determined by 'final causes', or ends that we seek, but instead determine the ends we imagine we seek.

> What is called a 'final cause' is nothing but human appetite insofar as it is considered as the first cause of something. For example, when we say that habitation was the final cause of this or that house, we surely mean nothing but that a man, [insofar as] he imagined the comforts of domestic life, had an appetite to build a house. So habitation, insofar as it is considered as a final cause, is nothing but this particular appetite, which is … considered a first cause because men are generally ignorant of the causes of their appetites. For as I have said, they are conscious of their actions and appetites, but not aware of the causes by which they are determined to desire something. (E4Praef)

In other words, the man is affected by external causes in such a way that he imagines the comforts of domestic life (see 6.1); and he has the property that, modified in the ways he is, he necessarily desires the comforts he imagines (see 7.1); and from this desire and other external causes his desire to build a house in a particular way necessarily follows (2.3N4).

This explanation may seem hard to understand, because we often imagine that we might choose to act otherwise than we do, or to intend different outcomes than we do, as it now in some ways seems to me that I might have chosen not to write this book or to write a different book. For we imagine that it is solely by our own determination that we act as we do, as it in some ways seems to me that it is solely by my own determination that I am writing this book. But would I be writing this book if I had not happened on Spinoza's and Descartes' books, or if I had not been taught to read

[6] "In this way, the self is identified with desire alone." Shankara, *Commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad,* 4.4.5.

and write, or if my understanding had in indefinitely many other ways been differently modified? And could I, with my particular mind, or essential nature, modified in the particular ways that it actually is, really have chosen not to write this book in these particular circumstances? That is to say, could I really choose in any way to act differently than I do in the same circumstances without being a different person or thing than I am? So as we have seen, and as these examples illustrate, insofar as we recognize the external causes of our ideas, or desires, we recognize that we cannot possibly act otherwise than we do; whereas, it is only insofar as we are ignorant of the external causes of our ideas that we imagine we could act otherwise than we do (E1A, E2A, E3P2S).

But this should not be interpreted as meaning that we have no freedom of the will, but instead as meaning that we are free only in certain ways, in some of which we are absolutely or wholly free and in others, only partly free. Spinoza was obviously troubled by some confusion in the ways Descartes explained this, and in particular Descartes' claim that we freely choose when we err (E2P49S). Therefore Spinoza makes many arguments against the idea of free will, or at least the phrase "free will", throughout *Ethics;* yet he contradicts them all, but also corrects Descartes' explanation the right way, when he demonstrates that the will and the intellect or understanding are not different faculties (AT VII 56-60), but "the same thing" (E2P49C), and then devotes *Ethics,* Part 5 to demonstrating "The Power of the Intellect, or Human Freedom". For we call a thing free insofar as it determines its own actions; and though we have seen that all things in reality are determined by God, that is, by necessity itself, we have also seen that in agreement with this necessity I have for example the property 'that if everything else was as it is I would be writing this book, but if certain things were different I would not be writing this book', and we have seen that the existence of my essence is an adequate cause, or determination, of this property. So we can see that I necessarily but freely conceive and will the existence of this property in agreement with God's determination of it, inasmuch as I necessarily but freely conceive and will the existence of my essence, or self; and hence, we can see that in each particular time, place, and circumstances in which I live, I will or choose what a thing with my essence, or nature, necessarily would choose. I will explain further in Chapter Seven how a man's will to choose is absolutely or wholly free insofar as he conceives himself in relation to the unchanging infinite things in nature, but is only partly free insofar

as he conceives himself in relation to the finite, changing things, or in other words, in relation to his world in a particular time and place.[7]

Note 5, Proposition 5.3

Therefore, we have seen in this chapter that the essence and existence of a finite mode is conceived in three ways: first, as existing eternally in its substance; second, as participating in the sempiternal existence of the infinite modes of its substance; and third, as existing temporally in a particular time and place. Therefore, as I sit here now writing this, in this particular time and place, or in other words in this moment, I am, first, an essential property of reality, or eternity, or an eternal property of infinite thought, or God thinking. But further, I am, second, a necessary and sempiternal part of the whole of nature, or in other words, a particular finite idea in the infinite and everlasting, or timeless, mind of God. And I am, third, the same idea conceived only in relation to a particular time and place, or in other words, one of indefinitely many infinitely divisible and always changing temporal parts of the whole essence and life of 'Gary Sugar'. For as I will explain in the next two chapters, insofar as I conceive my actual essence, or individual self, existing in this particular time and place, I am conceiving an inadequate idea of my real essence, or real self, which I am simultaneously also conceiving adequately and perfectly as existing in God, or eternity.

[7] "We can easily get into difficulties if we attempt to reconcile divine preordination with the freedom of our will, or attempt to understand both at once. However, we shall get ourselves out of these difficulties if we remember that our mind is finite, whereas the power of God is infinite." Descartes*, Principles,* 1.40–41.

Chapter VI: Opinion, Reason, and Intuition

At the end of *Ethics,* Part Two, 'The Nature and Origin of the Mind', Spinoza wrote,

> I think I have explained the nature of the human mind and its properties at sufficient length and as clearly as the difficult subject matter permits. (E2A)

In the third chapter of this book I explained the nature and origin of the mind and its conception of ideas and its perception of bodies, and I tried to clarify some points that seem ambiguous in *Ethics* and Spinoza's letters. In this chapter, I will try to clarify Spinoza's explanations of the "three kinds of knowledge" (E2P40S2), and how our knowledge of the finite, changing things in nature is inadequate and confused, but how our knowledge of the infinite and unchanging things can be adequate and certain. So in this chapter and the next I will reverse the order of my exposition and ascend from the actual order of finite things to the rational order of infinite things and the real order of eternal things, so I can more easily explain, in this chapter, how we can correct our opinions insofar as we understand reason and God and, in the next chapter, how we can thereby emend our passions.

Definitions

1. By knowledge I mean true and certain ideas.

Explanation: "A true idea must agree with its ideate, or that of which it is the idea" (E1Ax6). But we have seen that the nature of conception is self-conception, so that an idea must necessarily agree with its ideate, since the ideate is itself (3.3N2). Therefore, by knowledge I mean ideas considered as they are in themselves.[1]

> From this it is clear that certainty is nothing but the objective essence [the idea of a thing] itself. That is, the mode of thinking by which we are aware of the formal essence [the ideate or thing] is certainty. Hence it is clear that, for the certainty of truth, no other sign is needed than having a true idea. (TIE35)

[1] "As far as ideas themselves are concerned, if we consider them only in themselves and do not relate them to anything else, they cannot, strictly speaking, be called false; for whether I am imagining a goat or a chimera, it is just as true that I imagine the one rather than the other." Descartes, *Third Meditation.*

Yet, as I will explain in this chapter, we often mistake the truth that is in an idea insofar as it is true in itself for truth in relation to a greater idea of which it is only a modification or part; and in this way, we err. Therefore, as I'll explain, the right method of seeking the truth consists "not in seeking a sign of truth after acquiring an idea" but in seeking the truth "in the right order", that is, in the order of adequate causes, to ensure that the idea in question is not only true in itself, but a true and adequate idea of the thing we seek to understand (TIE36).

2. By understanding a thing, or adequate knowledge of the thing, I mean conception of the thing's essence, through which all its properties are conceived (TIE95-99, E2D4, Ep60, AT VII 220).

Explanation: Spinoza equates adequate ideas with Descartes' "clear and distinct ideas", which he too contrasts with "confused ideas" (E2P36, E3D1, see 6Def5). Note, however, Descartes' definitions of clear and distinct:

> I call a perception clear when it is present and manifest to the attentive mind, just as we say that we see something clearly when it is present to the eye's gaze and stimulates it with a sufficient degree of strength and accessibility. I call a perception distinct if, in addition to being clear, it is so sharply separated from all other perceptions that it contains in itself only what is clear... [Therefore] a perception can be clear without being distinct, but cannot be distinct without being clear. (AT VIII 22)

It's hard to be sure what Descartes means by this definition of distinct, because if it meant what he calls really distinct, only the idea of his mind insofar as it is really distinct from his body would be clear and distinct, but if it also meant what he calls modally distinct, every idea would be clear and distinct. Therefore, using those definitions, which I have followed (2Def1-2), I will show in this chapter that we have ideas that are clear, distinct, and adequate (6.2), but also ideas that are clear, distinct, and inadequate (6.1). Yet I acknowledge that I frequently follow Descartes' and Spinoza's usage, because it's well-known; and so, with few exceptions, when I say "clear and distinct", I mean clearly and distinctly adequate.

3. By inadequate knowledge of a thing I mean conception of any of its modifications, through which its properties are not all conceived.

Explanation: Spinoza frequently uses the term "partial knowledge" (TIE63, E2P11C), by which I understand inadequate knowledge of a mode, since a substance cannot be conceived as having parts (2.0). And for the same reason, by the term "partial cause" (E3Def1), I understand an inadequate cause of a mode (1Def3Ex).

4. By error I mean inadequate knowledge insofar as it is not known to be inadequate (E2P35).

Explanation: An idea must necessarily agree with its ideate, which is itself; that is, an idea must necessarily be true in itself. "But falsity or error cannot consist simply ... in ignorance, or privation of knowledge"; because "privation is nothing" (E3AD3Ex, Ep21), whereas error in itself is something positive; and thus, "ignorance and error are not identical" (E2P35D). Therefore, error consists in partial or inadequate ideas insofar as they are not known to be inadequate, that is, insofar as they are not accompanied, or modified, by doubt, that is (TIE78), by other ideas that assert their inadequacy.

5. By a fiction or confused idea I mean an idea compounded from two or more otherwise distinct ideas; and by a false idea I mean a fiction insofar as it is not known to be fictitious (E1P8S2, TIE63-68).

Explanation: For example, an idea of the mythical beast, the Chimera, was compounded from parts of the ideas of a lion, a goat, and a snake. For another example, Spinoza frequently mentions ways confused or fictitious ideas of God are often compounded from an inadequate idea of God or the word 'God' and ideas of various finite things, such as human qualities or wondrous images. I will explain fictitious and false ideas further under 6.1C5.

6. By a contradiction I mean two ideas compounded in such a way that they negate each other.

Explanation: By a contradiction I do not mean ideas compounded in a merely confused or vaguely contrary way, but two ideas compounded in such a way that they clearly and distinctly negate each other and therefore in sum actually express nothing. Some examples of contradictions are 'the existence of nothing' and 'square circle'. "For if we know the nature of a circle and that of a square, we cannot compound the two to make a square circle" (TIE64); and hence, "though we can express a square circle in

words, we cannot in any way imagine it, much less understand it. So it is nothing but a word, and its impossibility cannot be counted as an affection [mode] of being, for it is only a negation" (CM1.3).[2]

Note therefore that, strictly speaking, the word 'nothing' is itself a contradiction, since it expresses not something but nothing, or the idea of a thing that is not a thing and is "only a negation". Likewise, the seemingly paradoxical sentence, 'This sentence is false', is also a contradiction, which does not actually express anything, or in other words, expresses nothing. And in the same way, in arithmetic (see 6.2N2), the number zero and expressions that divide by zero are also contradictions that express nothing.

Note further that, whereas a contradiction expresses nothing and in itself is therefore neither true nor false, an absurd proposition, or proposition that affirms a contradiction as true, is necessarily false, as for example 'a circle is square', or 'a square circle exists', and 'nothing exists', or 'nothing is true', are absurd and false; and in arithmetic, an equation that results from dividing by zero or makes one equal zero is also absurd and false. Note therefore that a paradox, or an idea or argument that seems to imply a contradiction might be true, is necessarily inadequate or confused. I think it's worth mentioning that a contradiction can sometimes seem profound or interesting, because we can't understand it, even though it doesn't actually express any reality, truth, or knowledge.

Propositions

Proposition 6.0

Knowledge, or conception, of an effect depends on and involves knowledge of its cause (E1Ax4).

Demonstration 1: All existing things, or effects, are conceived through God, or reality, which is their adequate cause (E1P15). But conception of the things in reality is not conception of something other than reality, but conception of reality itself insofar as it is adequately or inadequately explained by their essence. Therefore, conception of the effect depends on and involves conception of the cause.

[2] "All self-contradictoriness or impossibility resides solely in our thought, when we make the mistake of joining together mutually inconsistent ideas." Descartes, *Second Set of Replies.*

Demonstration 2: Conception is the activity of explaining a thing, or in other words activity in respect to causing an essence, or the explanation of a thing or effect, to exist; and thus, a thing is necessarily conceived through its cause. Therefore knowledge, or conception, of an effect depends on and involves conception of its cause.

Note, Proposition 6.0

Note that an adequate and distinct idea of a particular thing follows, and can be deduced, or distinguished, from an adequate idea of its adequate cause as the part is distinguished or abstracted from the whole, as for example, having equal radii is a property, or part, of the essence of a circle which can be deduced from it (1Def3Ex), or for another example, as the adequate ideas of all things follow necessarily, and can be distinguished as particular things, in the infinite mind of God, which is their adequate, or generating, cause (3.2C2).

But note also that deduction of the adequate idea of a particular real finite thing from an idea of the infinite things (E1P21-22) or from the idea of another finite thing (E2P24) must necessarily be an infinite deduction (TIE93, E2P9), since the interdependence and intersections of particular finite things are infinite and infinitely many (2.3N4, 5.2N4). Note therefore that such a deduction is impossible in a finite intellect, such as a man's intellect (Ep10, Ep80-83).

> It would be impossible for human weakness to follow the series of particular mutable things, not only because of their innumerable multitude, but also because of the infinitely diverse circumstances surrounding each of them, since any of these circumstances might be a cause of the existence or non-existence of the thing. (TIE100)

Therefore, inasmuch as our minds are finite, or limited, it is beyond our powers to distinguish the adequate idea of any particular real finite thing from ideas of the other finite things or from ideas of the infinite things, because it is "a part of nature, which cannot be conceived adequately through itself alone independently of the other individual parts" (E3P3S, E4P2).

For example, though I can distinctly conceive, and express in words, an inadequate idea of my own property, 'that if everything else was as it is I would be writing this

book, but if certain things were different I would not be writing this book', I nevertheless cannot distinctly conceive an adequate idea of this property, because an adequate and distinct explanation or definition of this property would necessarily involve adequate and distinct definitions of all the conditions it involves, or in other words, all the other finite properties of nature, which as we have seen are indefinitely many, to infinity. I will explain this further throughout this chapter.

Proposition 6.1

A finite mode has partial knowledge of the things it conceives through their partial, or inadequate, cause (E2P24-31).

Demonstration: This follows both from the definition of an inadequate cause and from the preceding proposition. For knowledge of the effect depends on knowledge of the cause; so insofar as the thing is conceived through a partial cause, the knowledge of it must also be partial.

Corollary 1, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, in relation to its world, it has partial knowledge of its modifications (E2P23, E2P28).

Demonstration: A finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing only insofar as it conceives itself in relation to its world, or in other words, in relation to those properties of its substance that are not properties of its own essence (2.3C). But conception is self-conception, and therefore an intellect conceives itself and no other. Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself this way, it conceives its world, or is active in causing the essence of its world to exist, only insofar as it conceives itself in relation to that which it conceives in conjunction with its world, namely their intersection, or accidental modifications (1.3N2). Therefore, the mode conceives itself as a distinct thing only insofar as it conceives itself and its properties, or essential modifications, in relation to its accidental modifications, or accidents (E2P23).

But we saw in the previous note (6.0N) that insofar as the mode conceives its properties as distinct things, it cannot conceive them adequately, because an adequate idea of any of its properties necessarily involves adequate ideas of the infinitely many ways

the property is determined by the other finite properties in its substance (E1P28). Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, it has distinct but inadequate, or partial, knowledge of its properties.

Furthermore, insofar as the mode conceives itself this way, it also has distinct but partial knowledge of its accidental modifications and, thereby, the accidental modifications of its world; for insofar as the mode is the partial cause of its own accidents, it is thereby the partial cause of its world's accidents (E2P25-27, 2.3N4). And thus, "in this way, nothing of these things is ever perceived except accidents" (TIE27, AT VII 73).

Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing in relation to its world it has partial knowledge of its modifications.

Note 1, Proposition 6.1

Spinoza calls this "the first kind of knowledge", or "opinion", or "imagination" (KV2.1, E2P40S2, TIE82); and Parmenides calls it *doxa,* which is usually translated as "opinion", "appearance", or "seeming"; and translations of Shankara call it "imagination", "names and forms", "empirical knowledge", sometimes "the mind", and sometimes *maya,* or "illusion". Therefore, by the first kind of knowledge, or opinion, I mean the self-conception, or experience, of a finite intellect insofar as it conceives itself as a distinct individual in relation to its world and individual things in its world.

I distinguish opinion from imagination thus: by opinion I mean partial conception of a finite mode as modally distinct in relation to the other finite modes (5.3); whereas by imagination I mean the corresponding perception of a finite mode in the other attributes as distinct in relation to the other modes in those attributes (5.3C). Therefore, by a man's opinions I mean his conception of the accidental intersections of his mind, or his ideas, with external ideas, or in other words, his ideas affirming or denying that this or that particular distinct finite idea actually exists or is true; and by his imagination I mean his perception of the intersections of his body with distinct external bodies in various finite shapes and sizes.[3]

---

[3] "Imagination is nothing but contemplation of the shape or image of a corporeal thing." Descartes*, Third Meditation*.

"We call it opinion because it is subject to error, and has no place in anything of which we are certain, but only when we guess and conjecture." Spinoza, KV2.2.

Corollary 2, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a mode of time and a changing temporal relation between itself and the thing.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily distinguishes the continuance of existence, or duration, of the thing from its own duration; and this comparison of its own duration with the duration of the external thing forms a mode of time and a temporal relation between itself and the thing (4.3N1). Furthermore, insofar as the mode imagines itself and the external thing this way, it imagines the accidents that modify each of them as coming into existence and passing out of existence in relation to its own existence, thereby always changing each of them in a temporal order (5.3N1).[4]

Corollary 3, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode of an attribute distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a three-dimensional place containing itself and the thing.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode of, for example, thought conceives itself as a distinct thing, it necessarily perceives the corresponding mode of extension (5.3C1), namely its body, and it conceives a mode of quantity as constituting the essence of its body (3.3C); and likewise, insofar as it conceives any other mode of thought, it perceives that thing's body. Therefore, insofar as the mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it imagines a distinction between its body and the other thing's body; and this distinction forms a dimension by which the quantities of the two bodies can be measured in comparison with each other; for by a dimension I mean a mode by which the quantity of a body can be measured (3Def10). Furthermore, the mode distinguishes both its body and the other body from a greater body, or place, which it imagines as containing them (4.3N1); and this distinction forms a second dimension extending equally from the first. Finally, the mode distinguishes the place it imagines as containing itself and the other mode from the rest of its world; and this third

[4] "Thus, according to the way of seeming, these things have come into what is, and thus they now exist; and in time, having been born and grown, they will likewise pass from what is. And men assign fixed names to these things by which to call them." Parmenides, frag. 19.

distinction forms a third dimension extending equally from the second. So in this way, insofar as a finite mode of an attribute distinguishes anything finite in its world, it imagines a three-dimensional place containing itself and the thing; and so it imagines its body and other bodies in places within places intersecting with other places, according to how it imagines their quantities, or sizes, and the sizes of their motions, affecting its own body and each other.

Note 2, Proposition 6.1

Therefore, by imagination I understand perception of finite bodies in particular, or distinct, but always changing times and places; and by opinion I understand conception of finite ideas as true of things in distinct times and places, or true of those times and places. Note therefore that an individual opinion cannot actually agree with another opinion (E3P56-57, E4P32); for an opinion is by definition a finite idea conceived insofar as it can be distinguished from the other finite ideas, or in other words, a finite idea conceived insofar as its properties are not the properties of any other finite idea (see 6.2N3). Therefore, though a particular opinion might seem similar to another opinion, whether another in the same mind or another in some other mind, and though it might therefore be inadequately expressed by what seem to be the same words as another opinion, it nevertheless cannot actually agree with any other. For example, my opinion, 'that today is a Wednesday', might seem to be expressed by the same words as your apparently similar opinion 'that today is a Wednesday'; but though the words might look and sound similar, they are not the same words, since the former are my words, as I imagine and understand them, and the latter, your words, as you imagine and understand them; and likewise, though the two opinions might seem similar, they are, on the one hand, my opinion, involving certain partial and inadequate ideas of my particular time and place, and on the other hand, your opinion, involving certain partial and inadequate ideas of your time and place (5.3N2). Therefore, in this way each opinion is a distinct partial and inadequate way of conceiving things. I will explain this further in the following corollaries and notes.

Corollary 4, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode imagines, or distinguishes, anything finite in its world, it necessarily conceives it as belonging to a particular genus.

Demonstration: We saw in 2.3N2 that insofar as a finite mode is conceived as a distinct entity it is thereby conceived as belonging to a particular genus. For a thing belongs to a genus insofar as it can be conceived in relation to another or others in that genus, as a man, for example, conceived as distinct in relation to his world is thereby conceived as belonging to the genus 'individual thing'; and likewise, conceived through more particular modal distinctions, in relation to other men, or other animals, and so forth, he is thereby conceived as belonging to the genera 'man', 'animal', and so forth. Therefore, by conception of particular finite modes as distinct things, or conception of particular opinions, I understand conception of finite things considered as belonging to various genera; and hence, by opinions I understand general ideas, or generalizations.

Note that conception of particular things as belonging to a particular finite genus, or "species" (CM1.1), or "universal" (E2P40S1), involves three distinctions in the same way perception of a place involves three distinctions. For we distinguish the particular things within the genus from each other, and we distinguish the things from the genus itself, and we distinguish the genus from the rest of the world; and in the same way that we imagine places within places intersecting with other places, we imagine genera within genera intersecting with other genera.[5]

Note 3, Proposition 6.1

So for example, my opinion, 'that I, Gary Sugar, a human animal, am sitting here now at my desk on a Wednesday writing this book', involves general ideas of myself, my activity, my time and place, and certain parts of my intersection with the external world.

Note therefore that through general ideas our understanding is necessarily partial, or "fragmentary" (E2P40S1). For insofar as a finite mode is conceived as belonging to a particular genus, it is conceived only insofar as it can be conceived as a distinct part of the genus, as a man, for example, conceived through the genus 'human', is thereby conceived only insofar as he can be conceived in relation to men, but not insofar as he

[5] "Similarly, the philosophers have arranged all natural things in fixed classes, to which they have recourse when they encounter something new. These classes they call genus, species, etc." Spinoza, CM1.1.

"And the logicians say a correct definition of a thing must be by a genus and difference... But I will propose other rules for definitions, according to a true logic." KV1.7.

is related to other things. Moreover, like our conception of any other distinct finite idea, our conception of the genus itself is also partial, as in this case 'human' partly explains an indefinite number of greater modes in which the man in question and other 'men' actually exist or can be imagined as existing; and thus, the word 'human' actually denotes not one, but an indefinite number of distinct inadequate ideas, or general explanations, of an indefinite number of distinct finite modes, in distinct times and places, each involving 'men'.[6]

Therefore, insofar as general ideas, or opinions, are not modified by other ideas that assert their inadequacy they necessarily constitute errors of the mind, from which not only true ideas but also more errors necessarily follow. Or as Descartes explains it,

> Whenever men notice some similarity between two things, they have the habit of ascribing to the one what they find true of the other, even when the two are not in that respect similar. (AT X 359)

And thus, "though such a conclusion might be certain, it is still not sufficiently safe unless we take the greatest precautions. For without such precautions, we immediately fall into error" (TIE21Adn).[7]

> Such errors are the result of conceiving things too abstractly; for it is clear that what I conceive as in its true object I cannot validly apply to anything else. Such errors also result from a lack of understanding of the primary elements of nature as a whole; for when we proceed without due order, we confuse [infinite] nature with [finite] abstract ideas, which in their spheres are true enough, but when misapplied, confound themselves and invert the order of nature. (TIE75)

Therefore, by finite genera, or species, or universals, I understand "fragmentary and confused ideas" of the whole of nature (E2P40S1). And thus, "Universals always have a wider extension in our intellect than their particulars can really have in nature" (TIE76).

---

[6] "For when I ask what a species is, I am only inquiring into the nature of a mode of thinking that is itself really a being and is distinct from another mode of thinking." Spinoza, CM1.1.

[7] "The object directly perceived is a particular thing; but what is inferred is a universal, and it is well known that there is sometimes an illusory superimposition onto the thing from the universal that seems similar." Shankara, *Commentary on the Yoga Scriptures,* 1.43.

Therefore, Spinoza explains in CM2.7, "I attribute to God knowledge of particular things and deny him knowledge of universals except insofar as he understands human [and other] minds." That is to say, the universals, or finite genera, that I imagine in my mind are some of the genera conceived and understood clearly and distinctly in the infinite mind of God, which generates every conceivable idea in every conceivable genus (3.2); but the mind of God does not conceive the genera it conceives in my mind as existing in any other mind, or as existing in any other way outside my mind, and only knows them as parts of my imagination in the same way it conceives and knows the genera imagined in other minds as parts of their imaginations.

Note 4, Proposition 6.1

Note that a particular finite intellect's conception of general ideas, or opinions and images, is limited in proportion as the intellect itself is limited: "A finite thing, being limited, is capable of forming in itself simultaneously only a certain number of distinct images" (E2P40S1). For even though opinions and images in themselves are infinitely divisible, nevertheless, to the extent that the individual essences of our minds are limited (2.1N3, 3Def2), we can conceive only a limited number of "entities of the imagination" (Ep12), or modes of division, by which we distinguish the parts of opinions and images and their parts. But conversely, in proportion as a finite intellect expresses more of reality, it conceives a greater number of distinct opinions and images, which therefore are more particular, or less general, and hence less inadequate (TIE55). This partly explains the superiority of a man's mind to the minds of lesser things (E2P13S); for we call a thing more intelligent insofar as its opinions seem more numerous and particular than another's.

Note further that, in the same way, a given part of a particular mode might likewise express more or less of reality than its other parts, and therefore, that the mode's conception of the accidental modifications of this part might also express more or less of reality, as for example, our opinions and images of the modifications of our eyes seem to express more of reality in more numerous and particular ways than our opinions and images of the modifications of lesser parts of our bodies (E2P14-16).

From this we can understand that the imagination, "the so-called common sense" (TIE82, AT VII 32), is, strictly speaking, only tactile (E2Post3,6); for insofar as one's eyes, optic nerves, and so forth are accidentally modified by intersections, or "collisions" (PPC2Ax19, E2L3Ax2), with the motions of light and the shapes therein, the

mind sees things; and insofar as one's ears and so forth are accidentally modified by the motions of air and the shapes therein, the mind hears things; and insofar as one's tongue and so forth are accidentally modified by the motions of foods and the shapes therein, the mind tastes things; and so on.[8]

Therefore, by the actual material qualities we imagine in things I mean general ideas of the sizes, shapes, and motions, or quantity, dimensions, and physical activity, that we perceive and can measure in the things (E2L7); and by the accidental qualities we imagine in them I mean general ideas of the ways we are affected by them, namely "sensations" such as "colors, sounds, smells, tastes, heat, hardness, and the other tactile qualities" (AT VIII 23, Ep6), all of which involve ideas of "the constitution of our own body more than the natures of the external bodies" which we imagine these qualities are in (E2P16C2). So Descartes explains that for example, "Flavor is no more an intrinsic quality in salt than pain is in a sword" (AT II 44). He elaborates,

> When we say that we perceive colors in objects, this is really the same as saying that we perceive something in them whose nature we do not know, but which produces in us a certain very clear and vivid sensation which we call the sensation of color... We do not really know what it is that we are calling a color; and we cannot find any intelligible resemblance between the color which we suppose to be in the objects and that which we experience in our sensation. (AT VIII 34)

> As for hardness, our sensations tell us nothing more than that the parts of a hard body resist the motions of our hands when they come in contact with them. If, whenever we moved our hands in some direction, all the bodies in that area moved away at the same speed as our hands approached them, we would never have any sensation of hardness. (AT VIII 42)

> But there are other qualities, such as size and shape and number which we clearly perceive to be actually, or at least possibly, present in objects in a way exactly corresponding to our sensory perception or understanding. (AT VIII 34)

[8] "We cannot perceive any body by our senses unless it is the cause of some change in our sense organs, that is, unless it somehow moves the minute parts of the matter of which these organs are composed." Descartes, *The World,* ch. 4.

But note that, as Descartes says, although our ideas of the sizes and shapes of things might "at least possibly" exactly correspond to their objects, they also might not. For example,

> Even if we know the sun is more than 600 diameters of the earth distant from us, we nevertheless also imagine it as much closer. For we imagine the sun so close not because we don't know its true distance, but because an affection of our body involves the essence of the sun only insofar as our body is affected by it. (E2P35S)

Therefore, recalling that whatever ideas we conceive we necessarily conceive as modes of certainty, or belief, note once more that insofar as our opinions and images of things are not modified by knowledge of their inadequacy we necessarily err in respect to them, that is, we mistake them for adequate ideas. So if we look at the sun and believe it's as close as it appears,

> The error does not consist in simply seeing the sun this way, but in the fact that while we see it this way we are not aware of its true distance or the cause of our seeing it this way. (E2P35S)

We call these errors common sense, both insofar as we're deceived by accidental qualities we imagine in things and insofar as we're deceived by the ways we imagine their actual qualities; for our opinions of particular finite things necessarily conform to the limits of our own common sense, or imagination. Note therefore that whereas there are properties of imagination, such as perception of time and three-dimensional space, which we all necessarily consider common sense, there are also accidental modifications of each person's individual imagination that, strictly speaking (6.1N2), only they consider common sense. I will explain how we can correct our common-sense errors through science and reason under Proposition 6.2.

Corollary 5, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode conceives its accidental modifications, or opinions and images, it has partial knowledge of the ways they accidentally modify each other (E2P18, E2P28).

Demonstration: The accidental modifications, or opinions and images, the mode conceives in its mind constitute the intersection of its mind with its world; and therefore, through conceiving them the mode has partial, accidental knowledge of itself and its world (6.1C1). Furthermore, each accident in its mind, or each opinion or image, is in turn modified by its own accidents, or its intersections with other opinions and images, since as we have seen, a substance generates every conceivable accident among its modes (1.3C). And of any accidental modifications formed in this way among two or more of its ideas, the mind is again a partial cause, and therefore, it has partial, or fragmentary, knowledge of such accidents.

Note 5, Proposition 6.1

Therefore, by confused, fictitious, or fantastic ideas, I understand the mind's partial conception of accidental combinations and abstracted intersections among its opinions and images, or in other words, conception of composite things that exist only in its imagination, such as, for example, the image of a winged horse, which is formed from combined parts of the image of a bird and the image of a horse,[9] or for another example, as "when the uttering of words and a tree are recalled to memory, and the mind attends to them in a confused way without distinction, it forms the idea of a tree speaking" (TIE57Adn). Note therefore that all our opinions and images of particular finite things, both internal and external, are necessarily confused in this way to at least some extent, inasmuch as they are all necessarily affected by accidents with each other (E2P24-29).

Furthermore, we saw that our opinions might or might not be accompanied, or modified, by the knowledge that they are inadequate; and in the same way, they might or might not be modified by the knowledge that they are confused.

---

9 TIE63-68, PPC1P15S, E1P8S2, E2P28, E2P49S.

> If the mind perceived nothing but a winged horse, it would regard the horse as present to itself, and it would have no cause for doubting its existence, nor any faculty of dissenting, unless the image of the winged horse was connected to an idea that excluded the existence of the horse or if the mind perceived that its idea of the winged horse was inadequate and, thereby, either necessarily denied the horse's existence or necessarily doubted it. (E2P49S)

Therefore, by fantasy, or "fiction" (TIE50), I mean opinions, or images, insofar as they are accidentally confused; and by false ideas I mean fictitious ideas insofar as they are not modified by knowledge that they are fictitious (TIE66-68).[10]

Note therefore that insofar as the mind does recognize that things it conceives in its fantasies are not actually present external to itself, but only in its imagination, its opinions and images of them in that respect constitute not errors or false ideas but rather a kind of power of the mind.

> If the mind, while imagining things as present, is at the same time conscious that they do not really exist [external to its imagination], this power of imagination must be attributed not to a weakness of the mind but to the power of its nature. (E2P17S)

So for example,

> When painters try to create sirens and satyrs with the most extraordinary bodies, they cannot give them natures which are new in all respects; they simply jumble up the limbs of different animals. Or if they do think up something so new that nothing similar has ever been seen before, something that is therefore completely fictitious and unreal, at least the colors they use in the composition must be real. (AT IX 20)

---

[10] "There can be no falsity except in composite natures which are put together by the intellect." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 8.

"Note that a fiction, considered in itself, does not differ much from a dream, except that the causes present to the senses of the waking, from which they infer that those presentations are not presented at that time by things outside them, are not present in dreams. But error [falsity] is dreaming while awake. And if it is conspicuous, it is called madness." Spinoza, TIE64Adn.

For another example, when I'm trying to think of how I can say something in this book, I often review what I've already written about the subject together with things others have written about it, so that the words and phrases I read might accidentally combine in my mind in a way that can express my meaning. I will explain further how we conceive, recall, and communicate with words in Notes 6 and 7; and I'll explain how words can express true and adequate ideas under Proposition 6.2.

Note 6, Proposition 6.1

We saw in the previous note how a finite mind conceives composite or fantastic opinions and images through the accidental intersections of its ideas. Note further that these accidental intersections or connections of the opinions and images in its imagination also explain the association and temporal recall of ideas in its mind (E2P18S). For insofar as the mind conceives any of its accidental ideas it also partly conceives accidents of the accident, or intersections of that idea with other ideas; and so in this way, insofar as the opinion or image is accidentally modified in the mind by another opinion or image, conception of the one necessarily involves and recalls partial conception of the other (E2P36, E3P14-15).[11]

> From this we clearly understand why the mind, from thinking of one thing, should pass directly to thinking of some other thing, which has no likeness to the first. For example, from thinking of the word *pomum* a Roman will pass directly to thinking of an apple, which has no likeness to the spoken sound, nor anything in common with it other than that the man's body has often been modified by them both; that is, the man has often heard the word *pomum* while he beheld an apple.
>
> And in this way each man will pass from one thought to another as association has arranged the images of things in his body. For example, a soldier on seeing the tracks of a horse in the sand will pass from thinking of the horse to thinking

[11] "The individual self, which is produced by imagination and is capable of effecting further imagination, has its memory determined by the thought impressions of which it is possessed. Hence, its impressions are always followed by memories in accord with the impressions." Shankara, *Commentary on Mandukya Upanishad,* 2.16.

> of a horseman, and then to thinking of war, and so on; whereas a farmer, from thinking of a horse, will pass to thinking of a plough, and then a field, and so on. (E2P18S)

Note in Spinoza's first example that the mind can pass from an image of the word *pomum* to any of an indefinite number of associated general images of apples; and conversely, when the mind imagines that it actually sees an apple, or in other words, sees something it imagines as belonging to any of those genera, it can pass from them to associated general ideas of the word *apple* or *pomum* and thereby recall the word. And in the same way, the mind might pass to the word *fruit,* or to the image of an apple tree, or to anything else that might be generally or accidentally associated in its imagination with the image of an apple or the genus 'apple'. So we can see from this that the more genera the apple is imagined as belonging to, or the more numerous the other ideas within those genera, or the more numerous the ideas associated with any of the genera or ideas within them, the more easily the mind can pass from the image of the apple to other ideas.

But it can also happen that the mind imagines that it actually perceives an individual thing which it does not imagine as belonging to any particular finite genus because it does not imagine anything else in the same genus; and so to that extent it doesn't imagine the thing as belonging to any genera associated with other particular images to which it could pass. "This affection of the mind, or thought of an individual thing insofar as it alone engages the mind, is called wonder" (E3P52S), or "imagination of a thing on which the mind remains fixed because the individual image has no connection with others" (E3AD4). For example, suppose I see a blue apple. I necessarily imagine it as belonging to the genus 'individual thing', and I also imagine it as belonging to the genera 'fruit' and 'blue' insofar as I imagine other fruits and other blue things; but I cannot as easily imagine it as belonging to the genus or species 'apple' or to a species of blue apples, because I do not imagine any other blue apples; and for similar reasons I cannot easily imagine it as belonging to any other species of fruit. Therefore, to that extent my mind cannot easily pass from the particular image to other images; and so my mind remains fixed on the image, or in other words, I wonder at the blue apple.

Spinoza, Shankara, and Descartes also explain several other properties of memory and wonder, including, for example, that wonder can help us to learn new things, but can also hinder our ability to reason, understand, and act (AT XI 384-386, E3P52S);

that our mental operations of induction or "enumeration" (AT X 387) and analogical reasoning (AT X 359, TIE57) depend on and involve memory; that our memories are necessarily partial, general, and confused (AT VIII 21, TIE82); that a recalled idea may or may not involve a distinct idea of a past time and place when we first perceived it (AT V 219, TIE83); that we may or may not recognize that it is a recalled idea rather than a new idea (AT V 57); that we often confuse what is actually present with recalled ideas, as a man who sees a rope might confuse it with the recalled image of a snake;[12] that memory can be strengthened or aided in various ways by wonder (AT XI 384, TIE82), external references (AT III 723), repetition (AT X 409), review (AT III 143), orderly classification (CM1.1, AT III 48), or understanding (TIE81); and that our memories, or what we think we remember, are often biased by our emotions and, conversely, that our emotions are often partly determined by memories. I'll explain these last points further in Chapter Seven.

Lastly, note that insofar as the mind of a given thing, or any part of its mind, expresses more of reality, or is more intelligent, than another thing or part of its mind, the number of accidentally associated ideas in its imagination or a part of its imagination must also be greater and, therefore, that its memory of things, or its conception of 'past' images, and its prescience of things, or conception of 'future' images, and likewise all its other fantasies, as well as the images that can cause it to wonder, must to that extent be more complex, or more particular, or detailed.

Note 7, Proposition 6.1

Insofar as a finite mode, such as a man, conceives himself as belonging to a particular genus, such as 'human', he conceives himself insofar as his qualities seem similar to the qualities of the other members of the genus, such as in this case other men. Note therefore that insofar as the man imagines himself and another man this way and imagines an opinion or motion of the other man, he thereby imagines a similar opinion or motion in his own mind or body; for "if the nature of the external body is [seems] similar to the nature of our own body, then the idea of the external body in our thinking will involve an affection [modification] of our own body similar to the affection of the external body"(E3P27). This explains the "imitation", or communication, of the

[12] Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 1.1, Preamble.

opinions and motions of external things from their minds and bodies to our own mind and body through words, gestures, illustrations, and so forth.[13]

So for example, when I hear a man say the words *apples are red* I imagine not only the words and my own opinion of apples, but also what I think he means by the words, or his opinion of apples. But note that even though accurate communication might be possible this way, words and so forth are accidentally and generally associated with various and different ideas and images, both in different minds and in the same mind; and so for this reason, "Nothing can be expressed so accurately that it cannot be misinterpreted" (TTP12). I will explain in the next chapter how communication, or imitation, of the ideas of others also includes imitation of their emotions, and how we can be persuaded by them; but first, I'll explain under the next proposition how it is possible to communicate adequate ideas and how they might be understood.

Proposition 6.2

A finite mode has adequate knowledge of any properties it conceives that are present and the same in an effect and its cause (E2P38-39).

Demonstration: This follows from 6.0; for knowledge of an effect depends on and involves knowledge of its cause, and we are positing conception of properties that are identical in the effect and its cause. For insofar as these properties constitute both the cause and the effect, conception of them is to that extent the same as conception of the effect through its adequate cause. Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives these "common properties" it has adequate knowledge of them (E2P40S2). But note that this knowledge is not necessarily distinct.

Corollary 1, Proposition 6.2

A finite mode of a substance has adequate knowledge of the infinite modes, or common properties, in the substance (E2P38).

[13] "Imitation comes naturally to man even in his childhood; and indeed, all his learning comes originally through imitation." Aristotle, *Poetics,* IV, 1448b, 5–7.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance is conceived in relation to the infinity of infinite modes in the substance, it is thereby conceived as having an infinity of properties in common with the other modes in the substance (5.1C1). Therefore insofar as the mode conceives itself in relation to the infinite modes (5.1), it conceives those properties "that are common to all things ... which do not constitute the essence of any individual thing" (E2P37) and are the same "equally in the part and in the whole" (E2P38). Therefore these rational properties are conceived through the mode in question in the same way they are conceived through their adequate cause; and therefore, the mode has adequate knowledge of them; that is, it has adequate knowledge of the infinite modes in its substance.

Corollary 2, Proposition 6.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives an infinite mode of the substance through an adequate cause, it knows it is true always and everywhere.

Demonstration: A finite mode, such as a man, conceives an infinite mode through an adequate cause insofar as it conceives it as following necessarily from the essence of its substance or from the essence of another, prior infinite mode that it knows to be true always and everywhere (E1P21-22). Therefore it conceives the mode as modifying substance insofar as it is infinite and eternal or as modifying the whole universe insofar as it is infinite and sempiternal. Therefore it knows the mode, or rational principle, is true always and everywhere.

Note 1, Proposition 6.2

Spinoza calls this "the second kind of knowledge", or "the common notions", or "true belief", or "reason" (KV2.1, E2P40S1-2); and Parmenides calls it *logos,* which is usually translated as "reason", but sometimes "law". Therefore, by the principles of reason, or common notions of the intellect or understanding, I mean the infinity of infinite

modes of thought, or infinite ideas in thinking substance, which as we have seen, must be equally present in every mode of thought (E2P45).[14]

Note that inasmuch as the principles of reason are infinite, or present and true in the whole of reality, they must therefore be present and true in the whole of one's mind; whereas particular opinions and images can be present and true only in certain parts of one's imagination in particular times and places (AT VIII 19, 6.1N1-2). For example, the particular idea of reason, 'that God is the cause of everything conceivable', is necessarily true always and everywhere and therefore in the whole of my mind; whereas my personal opinion, 'that I am writing this book', is true only in certain times and places, namely in certain parts of my imagination.

Note 2 , Proposition 6.2

By science I mean conception of things insofar as they can be understood through reason.[15] Therefore, by a purely rational and adequate science, or a rational philosophy, or "wisdom" (TIE31, AT IXB 4), I mean conception of adequate ideas of the things in nature insofar as the whole is modified by reason (E2P47S), or in other words, clear and distinct knowledge of the infinite and everlasting properties of nature (E2P40).

Note that the principles of a rational science, such as the necessary and infinite truths denoted by the propositions in Spinoza's *Ethics,* can be adequately expressed in words because an infinite mode is the same in both the whole and each of its parts, so that a finite part of an infinite mode can be associated in the mind with a word or combination of words (6.1N6), which might be understood by another to whom the words are communicated (6.1N7), since the rational, or infinite, idea is the same in both minds. But note that, although a word or combination of words might name a substance, such as thought or God, it cannot actually be associated with an adequate conception of the substance, since a substance must be conceived as infinite and

[14] "It is evident that the idea we have of the infinite does not represent merely one part of it, but really does represent the infinite in its entirety." Descartes, *Fifth Set of Replies.*

"As for reason, I am inclined to believe that it exists whole and complete in each of us." *Discourse on Method,* 1.

[15] "By science I mean the skill to solve every problem, and thus to discover by one's own efforts everything capable of being discovered in that science by means of our native intelligence." Descartes, *Letter to Hogelande,* February 1640.

indivisible and not having finite parts that could be accidentally associated with the words. Therefore a substance must be defined through words that on the one hand affirm the essence and existence of the substance in their own being and the being of any ideas associated with them but also, on the other hand, deny any determination, or negation, in the substance (TIE89, KV1.7, E1D6Ex).[16] So in these ways a rational science can be expressed and communicated in words.

Furthermore, there is a rational science called logic concerning transcendental "entities of reason" (CM1.1), or the rational properties of transcendental genera, such as 'thing' or 'entity' (E2P40S1), which constitute a transcendental logic of propositions deduced or abstracted from the first principle of reason, 'what is must be what is and cannot be what is not', in the transcendental form, 'a thing must be what it is and cannot be what it is not'. Logical propositions deduced from reason this way therefore explain self-evident relations of identity and non-contradiction that must necessarily be true of all things, such as, 'a thing must be identical with itself', 'a thing cannot both exist and not exist', 'a thing cannot be both itself and not itself', 'things cannot be both identical and not identical', 'things that are identical with another thing must be identical with each other', and so on.

There is also a rational science called mathematics concerning the ideas of measures and numbers, or certain "entities of reason or aids to imagination" (Ep12, CM1.1) abstracted from an idea of the infinite divisibility of the modes of substance, or quantity considered insofar as extended substance can be conceived as divided into distinct finite bodies. Descartes and Spinoza explain how we conceive measures and numbers both inadequately as entities of imagination and adequately as entities of reason, or "aids to imagination".

> If we consider quantity as it exists in the imagination, it will be found to be divisible, finite, composed of parts, and manifold. And from the fact that we are able to delimit quantity as we please, conceiving quantity in abstraction from substance, there arises measure to delimit quantity in such ways as enable us to imagine it easily. And likewise from the fact that we separate the affections [modes] of substance from substance itself, and arrange them in classes so that

[16] "And so there is the teaching 'Not this, not this'. For this is the way to communicate the true nature of the absolute, by denying its imaginary forms; whereas the absolute itself cannot be denied." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Scriptures,* 3.2.22.

> we can easily imagine them, there arises number by which we delimit them. Hence it can clearly be seen that measure and number are nothing but modes of thinking, or rather, modes of imagining. (Ep12)

> Of these, number serves to explain discrete quantity, and measure to explain continuous quantity. (CM1.1)

> For if we consider the order of the parts in relation to the whole, we are then said to be counting; and if on the other hand we regard the whole as being divided up into equal parts, we are measuring it. (AT X 448)

And so Descartes explains how, for example,

> When we see two stones, and direct our attention not to their nature but merely to the fact that there are two of them, we form the idea of the number which we call 'two' ; and when we later see two birds or two trees, and consider not their nature but merely the fact that there are two of them, we go back to the same idea as before. This, then, is the universal idea; and we always designate the number in question by the same universal term 'two'. (AT VIII 27)

In other words, when we imagine two stones, we imagine a genus 'stone' divided into two parts, and when we imagine two birds, we imagine a genus 'bird' divided into two parts; and when we imagine these ideas together in a greater genus we imagine the genera, 'one' and 'two'.

> And in the same way, when we see a shape made up of three lines, we form an idea of it which we call the idea of a triangle; and we later make use of it as a universal idea, so as to represent to our mind all the other shapes made up of three lines; and when we notice that some triangles have one right angle, and others do not, we form the universal idea of a right-angled triangle. (AT VIII 28)

But as Descartes explains further, insofar as we only imagine shapes, measures, and numbers our conception of them is necessarily inadequate, or vague and confused;

whereas we can on the other hand conceive and understand them truly and adequately through reason.

> Geometrical figures are composed for the most part of straight lines; yet no part of a line that was really straight could ever affect our senses, since when we examine through a magnifying glass those lines which appear most straight we find they are quite irregular and always form wavy curves. Hence, when in our childhood we first happened to see a triangular figure drawn on paper, it cannot have been this figure that showed us how we should conceive of the true triangle studied by geometers, since the true triangle is contained in the figure only in the way in which a statue of Mercury is contained in a rough block of wood. But since the idea of the true triangle was already in us, and could be conceived by our mind more easily than the more composite figure of the triangle drawn on paper, when we saw the composite figure we did not apprehend the figure we saw, but rather the true triangle. (AT VII 381–382)

For the rational idea of the infinite divisibility of quantity is present in our minds (5.2C1), and from this idea rational ideas of all possible shapes and numbers necessarily follow (1.3).[17]

So we have seen in this note both how we conceive rational logic and how we conceive mathematical objects. For we have seen how,

> The mind has within itself ideas of numbers and shapes and also has such common notions as 'If you add equals to equals the results will be equal'. From these it is easy to demonstrate that the three angles of a triangle equal two right angles, and so forth. (AT VIII 9)

Therefore, by mathematics I understand rational analysis of the properties of measures and numbers, or the ways we can conceive bodies or ideas of bodies divided by entities of imagination or reason in agreement with the common notions of a rational logic.

---

[17] "Propositions such as 'A shape is not a body', 'A number is not the thing numbered', 'A surface is the limit of a body', 'A line is the limit of a surface', 'A point is the limit of a line', 'Unity is not a quantity', etc., should be removed completely from the imagination if they are to be true." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 14.

Note that inasmuch as there is necessarily an idea, or mode of thought, corresponding to each body, or mode of extension, there is necessarily a mathematical idea corresponding to each mathematical body or figure, as for example the equation for a circle corresponds to the extended figure, or shape, of a circle. "For the idea of a circle is not something that has a circumference and center; nor is the idea of a body itself a body" (TIE33, 3Def11Ex). Therefore, by arithmetic I understand conception of the modes of division of quantity in thought, such as numbers and equations, insofar as our idea of the divisibility of nature can be modified in agreement with a rational logic; whereas by geometry I understand the corresponding perception of the modes of division of quantity in extension or space, such as lines, surfaces, and shapes (3Def12Ex), insofar as our ideas of their divisibility can be modified in agreement with logic.[18]

Lastly, our conception of the infinite modes of thought, or reason, involves perception of the corresponding infinite modes of extension (5.2C2); and hence there is a rational science of bodies, or metaphysics of bodies, called physics, which defines and demonstrates the universal or "primary laws" of motion that must be true always and everywhere (TTP4). For some examples, (1) Nothing exists in the physical universe except physical activity, or modes of motion. Bodies are complex, infinitely divisible quantities of motion, only modally distinct one from another. (2) There is no physical force except the endeavor of modes of motion to continue in existence, or preserve the essential relations among their parts. Attraction and repulsion are abstracted from the connections of finite modes in greater modes and their relations with other modes that aid or hinder their continuance (E3P3S). (3) There is no void. Space is abstracted from the imagined divisions of modes of motion, considered as quantity. (4) Nothing finite can be absolute. Whatever is finite must be a mode, or part, of a greater thing that is also finite, to infinity; and conversely, anything finite can be conceived as divisible into lesser parts, also to infinity. (5) There is no absolute or universal time. Time, like measure, is an abstraction, imagined by an observer, comparing the duration of its properties, or actions, with the durations of external bodies, or accidents, "some moving more slowly than others, some more quickly, and some with equal speed" (E2p44S). (6) Conceived temporally, each individual body must be conceived as endeavoring to exist, act, and grow in relation to the others, which constitute external causes, each of which partly helps and partly hinders its existence and growth; and

[18] "Therefore, without any hesitation I introduce the terms of arithmetic into geometry." Descartes, *Geometry,* 1.

therefore its endeavor involves always changing as best it can in relation to them. (7) There is no absolute or universal place or space. We conceive and understand an infinity of dimensions in infinite extension; and we can imagine indefinitely many dimensions in extended objects; yet we imagine them and ourselves in three-dimensional places abstracted from their relations with ourselves and our worlds. (8) The finite body, or place, or "part of the universe", we imagine ourselves contained in as "microorganisms living in the blood" of something greater (Ep32) seems to be what we call light; for it seems that we can imagine nothing more perfect than light. But we know with certainty that the light we imagine is only a finite mode of the infinite divine light, as Parmenides, Shankara, Descartes, and Spinoza, and many others, seem to have recognized.

Corollary 3, Proposition 6.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it has adequate but imperfect knowledge of itself and its properties.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode, such as a man, conceives itself in relation to an infinite mode of its substance, it conceives itself in relation to a property of nature, or rational principle, that is present, the same, and true in all things, and is therefore present and true in its own essence and all its properties. Furthermore, we are assuming the finite mode in question has distinct and adequate knowledge of the infinite mode. Therefore, insofar as it conceives itself this way, it has true and adequate knowledge of itself and its properties. But because there are infinitely many infinite modes in its substance, the mode cannot distinguish them all, since its power of conceiving distinctions is finite; and moreover, insofar as it conceives an infinite mode distinctly it does not conceive its substance insofar as it is simple and perfect (2.2C). Therefore, the mode's conception of itself in relation to an infinite mode, or principle of reason, is adequate but imperfect.

Note 3, Proposition 6.2

In the preceding corollaries, I explained our knowledge of reason in agreement with Spinoza's explanations in E2P37–40 and elsewhere throughout *Ethics* and *Emendation*

of the Intellect. But I acknowledge it is possible to interpret E2P39 as defining another kind of reason. The proposition reads, "Of that which is common and proper to the human body and any external bodies by which the human body is customarily affected, and is equally in the part and the whole of each of them, the idea in the mind will also be adequate." I think it's hard to be sure what Spinoza meant by this proposition, but I acknowledge that it can be interpreted as asserting that, besides adequate knowledge of infinite properties of nature common to all things, we also have adequate knowledge of finite properties common to ourselves and only some external things. I do not deny that Spinoza might be vaguely imagining that such properties exist (6.1N2, E2P40S1), but he does not give any demonstration of their existence or any clear explanation or example of what they could be. In my opinion, if he did try to demonstrate the existence of finite common properties he would have to say they're conceived as both identical and not identical in two distinct finite things, which is a contradiction.

Spinoza in fact does make a similar error, at least hypothetically, in E4P18S, where he argues, "If two individuals of completely the same nature are combined, they compose an individual twice as powerful as each one singly", which is strictly speaking impossible, because if they had the same nature they would already be the same individual. For as Spinoza explains correctly in E1P4, "Two or more distinct things are distinguished from one another either by a difference of the attributes of the substances or by a difference of the affections of the substances"; whereas in E4P18S he is positing two distinct individuals that do not differ by either a difference of the attributes of substance or by a difference of the affections, or properties (1.2), of the substance. Furthermore, he explains correctly in E2D2, "There pertains to the essence [or nature] of a thing that which, when given, the thing is necessarily posited, and which when negated the thing is necessarily negated"; whereas in E4P18S he does not mean that if one of the two individuals is posited or negated the other is necessarily also posited or negated. And he explains in TIE55, "The same difference that exists between the essence of one thing and the essence of another also exists between the actuality or existence of the one thing and the actuality or existence of the other"; whereas in E4P18S he again does not mean the actuality or existence of the two individuals is "completely the same". Therefore, I think it's evident he does not have an adequate idea that two distinct individual things can have the same nature, but is only vaguely imagining it.

Moreover, I have in any case demonstrated by a positive argument, in agreement with Spinoza's arguments everywhere else, that a finite intellect cannot distinctly

conceive an adequate idea of any particular finite thing, including even its own properties, because the idea of a finite thing involves ideas of its infinitely many relations with other finite things (6.0N). Therefore, in the following corollary I interpret E2P39 differently, in agreement with what I can demonstrate without contradiction.

Corollary 4, Proposition 6.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it has adequate but imperfect knowledge of its accidental modifications and their causes (E2P39).

Demonstration: This demonstration proceeds in the same way as the previous demonstration (6.2C3). For insofar as a finite mode conceives itself this way, it conceives itself adequately in relation to a property of nature that is present and the same in both itself and all its modifications and their causes. Therefore, to that extent it has adequate knowledge of not only its own properties but also of its accidental modifications and their causes, both internal and external.

Note 4, Proposition 6.2

Therefore, insofar as I clearly and distinctly understand reason and conceive myself and my modifications in relation to reason, I have adequate knowledge of myself and my modifications and their causes (E5P4). For example, though I necessarily imagine myself as a distinct individual, insofar as I understand the principle of reason that all things are really one and conceive myself in relation to this principle, my opinion that I am a distinct thing is modified and corrected, and so to that extent I am less affected by the opinion, or in other words I believe it less (6.1N3). And likewise, though I necessarily imagine that the things external to me are contingent (E2P31S), insofar as I understand the principle that all things are necessary and conceive the things I imagine in relation to this principle, my opinion that they are contingent is to that extent modified and corrected. Or for another example, as we saw in 6.1C4, all the opinions of particular finite things that arise in my mind are necessarily generalizations and in that way inadequate and partly false. But insofar as I conceive these opinions in relation to my rational knowledge that they are necessarily generalizations, I understand that they are inadequate, and to that extent I cease to err in respect to them. And for one

more example, we saw in 6.1N6 how ideas are recalled in the imagination by general associations with other ideas and, conversely, how the imagination can remain fixed on an object of wonder because of its novelty. But insofar as I clearly and distinctly understand what wonder and recall are, and understand the infinite variety of nature, I can correct my wonderment and the distraction or confusion from accidental associations by understanding them through reason, and therefore I can more easily direct my thoughts in an order that assists my understanding. So in these and similar ways, my opinions can be corrected through reason.

Note 5, Proposition 6.2

I explained in the previous note how we can modify and correct the opinions that arise in our minds insofar as we can conceive them in relation to our knowledge of reason. And in the same way, we can likewise modify our general ideas of the histories of finite things in nature insofar as we can conceive them in relation to reason; and the more we do modify our general ideas this way, through logic, mathematics, or metaphysics, the more rational or scientific they'll be and the more they will agree with the truth. We call this method empirical science (Ep10).

> The method of interpreting nature consists mainly in composing a history of nature and deducing from it, as much as from certain data, the definitions of things in nature. (TTP7)

This method is necessary for interpreting, or describing, the particular properties of particular finite things or particular finite genera of things, because we cannot deduce them solely from reason, since such a deduction would have to be infinite (6.0N); so whereas "in philosophical thinking we do not [should not] proceed from conjectures, in daily life we must follow what [seems] probable" (Ep56, AT VII 25).

Note therefore that the general theories, or "fictions" (E2P10S), of empirical science can never be understood as adequate and certain, or true always and infinitely, except insofar as we can understand them as agreeing with principles of reason (E2P40-42, Ep6), since our conception of the particular finite things and causes in nature must necessarily be partial and confused. For example, suppose I observe many apples, and I notice that all the apples I've seen have been red. I cannot know with certainty whether the next apple will or will not be red, but because I have only seen red apples,

I will imagine a general idea of red apples and to that extent believe all apples are red. But suppose I then observe some green apples and notice they are young and I think I remember that the red apples I saw were mature. I will then necessarily imagine and to that extent believe that all young apples are green and all mature apples are red. So we can see from this how by observing more apples I recognized my error of believing all apples were red but still erred by believing all mature apples were red and all young apples were green. Note therefore that, insofar as our general ideas of the qualities of particular things are not accompanied, or modified, by other ideas that in some way assert their inadequacy, we will "immediately fall into error" even if "we take the greatest precautions" (TIE21Adn); that is, we will necessarily mistake them for adequate ideas. This is the cause of our continual eagerness as empirical scientists to attribute the limits of our own imaginations and partial knowledge to nature.[19] But we can avoid this danger and correct these errors insofar as we recognize through reason that nothing absolutely true, or nothing that is always and infinitely true, can be abstracted, or deduced or induced, from our opinions and images of finite things, except insofar as the particular observation or theory proves the thing can be imagined.[20]

But on the other hand, we can be certain of our observations and theories insofar as we can modify or correct them by conceiving them in relation to reason. For example, suppose I observe and measure many objects shaped more or less like right-angled triangles. The more of these objects I observe, and the more accurately I measure and compare them, the more partial knowledge of right triangles I will have; and based on this knowledge I can imagine and describe a theory for all right triangles that may seem probable and useful for technology. Yet proceeding only this way, no matter how many triangles I observe I can't be certain that my theory is correct or that the next right triangle won't differ; whereas I can be certain of rational principles such as the Pythagorean Theorem, and hence I can know my theory is true insofar as it agrees with the Pythagorean Theorem or any other rational principle, but also that insofar as it

---

[19] "They are ill discoverers that think there is no land, when they can see nothing but sea." Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning,* 2.7.5.

"Above all, we must guard against wasting our time by making random and unmethodical guesses about similarities." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 10.

"They think they understand a thing sufficiently when they cease to wonder at it" (Spinoza, TTP6), or "can easily remember it" (CM1.1, E1A).

[20] "Although probable conjectures may pull me in one direction, the mere knowledge that they are merely conjectures, and not certain and indubitable reason, is itself quite enough to push my assent the other way." Descartes, *Fourth Meditation.*

disagrees with any rational principle it must be false. For another example, we saw in 4.3N1 how Einstein's theory that "every reference-body has its own particular time" can be shown to agree with reason; whereas we have also seen that his theory that "the velocity of light plays the part of a limiting velocity, which can neither be reached nor exceeded by any real body"[21] can be shown to disagree with reason (1.2). So in these and similar ways our empirical theories, or at least parts of our theories, can be affirmed or denied by reason.[22]

Empirical scientists' use of mathematics to correct or improve their observations and theories has been increasingly common and effective, especially since the time of Galileo and Descartes, as scientists have developed increasingly sophisticated methods for collecting and measuring data and increasingly sophisticated mathematical models for refining and analyzing data; but empirical scientists have rarely used principles of rational metaphysics as extensively. Descartes did use principles from his metaphysics to guide his empirical inquiries; and it seems obvious how much this approach freed him from the constraints of traditional opinions and other common-sense preconceptions; and it also seems obvious how much subsequent scientists have benefited in their inquiries by following the principles of necessity, quantity, natural causation, and continuity in nature he established to replace the more imaginary (3Def11N, 3.1N4) traditional principles, which "had not enabled any progress to be made in all the many centuries in which they were followed" (AT IXB 18). Spinoza likewise used principles from his metaphysics to improve the empirical theories in his historical and political works, which again obviously helped to free him from preconceptions and biases (TTP7).

Descartes planned to add rules for empirical science to his *Rules for Direction of the Mind* but apparently never did; and Spinoza apparently planned to discuss empirical method in his *Emendation of the Intellect* but never did. But they did explain

---

[21] *Relativity: The Special and General Theory,* Chapter 12.

[22] "All things accord by number." Pythagoras, in Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras,* Chapter 29.

"You will learn these things too, how the things of opinion would have to be, to be provably passing through all things altogether." Parmenides, frag. 1.

"The universe is a grand book written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it. Without them one wanders about in a dark labyrinth." Galileo, *The Assayer.*

"The way we understand the nature of anything of any kind must be through the universal laws and rules of nature." Spinoza, E3Praef.

"We can never prove these things by experiments, but only by reasoning and calculation." Ep6.

throughout their works some of the ways we are naturally prejudiced to consider this or that general idea or theory common sense or obviously true; and they explained how we can correct or improve these ideas by conceiving them in relation to reason. And they likewise explained some of the ways we are naturally biased toward imagining both what we hope and what we feel is morally right or even beautiful, and how we can emend our biases insofar as we understand ourselves and our emotions through reason. I will explain this last point further throughout the rest of this book.

Note 6, Proposition 6.2

The mind is modified by the infinity of infinite ideas, or reason, insofar as it expresses reality, or acts; and therefore, a man reasons, or understands, insofar as his rational intellect acts. This further explains the superiority of a man's mind to the minds of lesser things. For in proportion as our minds express more of reality, or a greater mode of activity, we not only conceive a greater number of distinct propositions or ideas, but also, in the same proportion, we conceive a greater rational essence, or mode of reason (E2P39C), or in other words, a greater power of understanding. However, note that the power of our opinions, or partial and confused ideas, might also be greater, so that they might be proportionately more present in our minds (E4P5). I will explain the power of our ideas in the next chapter and Appendix 1, and how the force of external causes can overpower our knowledge of reason, so that the confused ideas and emotions in our imaginations can obscure and bias our ability to understand.[23]

Descartes wrote in *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* "Some people, of course, are born with a much greater aptitude for this kind of insight than others; but our minds can become much better equipped for it through method and practice" (AT X 402); and he elaborates the following "postulates" in his *Second Set of Replies,*

[23] "Men should follow reason, common to all. Yet most men live as if each had a wisdom of his own." Heraclitus, frag. 3.

"Confusion in mortals' hearts leads their intellects astray ... so they regard being and non-being as both the same and not the same." Parmenides, frag. 6.

"The common notions may conflict with the preconceived opinions of some people who, as a result, cannot easily grasp them; whereas the same notions are perceived with the utmost clarity by others who are free of such preconceptions." Descartes, *Principles,* 1.50.

> The first request I make of my readers is that they should realize how feeble are the reasons that have led them to trust their senses up until now, and how uncertain are all the judgments they have built up on the basis of the senses, and that they reflect long and often on this point… Secondly, I ask them to reflect on their own mind and all its attributes, until they have become accustomed to the habit of perceiving the mind clearly, and realizing that it can be known more easily than any corporeal thing… Thirdly, I ask them to ponder those self-evident propositions they find within themselves, such as 'A thing cannot both exist and not exist' and 'Nothing cannot be the cause of something', so as to exercise their intellect in its pure form, freed from the senses… Fourthly, I ask them to consider how the properties of things are contained in their natures, as for example, the fact that its three angles are equal to two right angles is contained in the nature of a triangle… Fifthly, I ask them to spend a great deal of time and effort on contemplating the nature of the supremely perfect being, and above all, on the fact that whereas all other natures contain possible existence, the idea of God contains necessary existence… Sixthly, I ask my readers to ponder all the examples I went through in my *Meditations,* both of clear and distinct perceptions, and of obscure and confused perceptions, and thereby accustom themselves to distinguishing what is clearly known from what is obscure... Seventhly and lastly, I ask them to understand that it is quite irrational to cast doubt on the clear and distinct perceptions of the pure intellect merely because of preconceived opinions based on the senses, or because of mere hypotheses which contain some element of the unknown. (AT VII 162–164)

And in relation to especially the third and fourth of these postulates, about self-evident propositions and how the properties of things are contained in their natures, Descartes explains in *Principles,*

> It is good for the student to work for a long time at practicing on very easy and simple questions like those of mathematics; and then, when he has acquired some skill in finding the truth on these questions, he should begin to tackle true philosophy in earnest. (AT IX 14)

For it is often easier to recognize logical relations of identity, difference, or contradiction and understand logical or rational principles like 'a thing must be identical with

itself' or 'the properties of a thing are contained in its nature' in relation to mathematical objects like numbers and geometrical figures, about which we have few preconceptions or biases, than in relation to real finite things like human beings or infinite things like God and the universe, as for example, understanding that one cannot equal zero is likely easier for most people than understanding that being cannot be non-being, or what is cannot be what is not.[24]

Note 7, Proposition 6.2

Spinoza demonstrates in E2P40 that "whatever ideas follow in the mind from adequate ideas in the mind are also adequate"; and he explains that this "is the foundation of our reasoning". That is to say, whereas we saw under Proposition 6.1 how opinions and images follow accidentally, or dialectically (6Def5), in our minds, we can now see how rational ideas follow deductively. For we have seen how each infinite mode of thought, or principle of reason, in a man's mind is not only an adequate cause and explanation of the adequate ideas that follow from its essence as its properties, but is also a partial or inadequate explanation of the essence of the prior ideas of reason from which it follows as their property (E1P23). For example, the principle of reason, 'that substance exists infinitely', is an adequate cause and explanation of its properties, such as 'that substance exists always' and 'that substance exists everywhere', but is also a partial and inadequate explanation of such prior ideas of reason as 'that substance exists necessarily'.

Therefore, since the ideas of reason are present and true always and infinitely, and therefore adequately explain all created things, the "true method of discovery" (TIE94), or rational analysis, by which we can deduce, or in other words, distinguish and define, the principles of reason that explain a particular thing or idea, proceeds thus:

---

[24] "Truth might have evaded mankind forever had not mathematics revealed to men a different standard of truth." Spinoza, E1A.

"Mathematics accustoms the mind to distinguishing arguments which are true and valid from those which are probable and false. For, in mathematics, anyone who relies solely on probable arguments will be misled and driven to absurd conclusions; and this will make him see that a demonstrative proof does not proceed from probable premises, which in this respect are equivalent to false ones, but only from those which are certain." Descartes, *Conversation with Burman.*

> After inquiring into a thing, and forming a certain conception, or idea, of it, I then inquire whether this true idea is an adequate idea of the thing; that is, I ask myself, what is the cause of this idea or conception? (Tschirnhaus, Ep59)

For example,

> In investigating the properties of a circle, I ask whether, from the idea of a circle according to which it consists of infinite rectangles, I could deduce all its properties. That is to say, I ask whether this idea involves the efficient [adequate and proximate] cause of the circle. Since it doesn't, I look for another cause, namely that a circle is the space described by a line one end of which is fixed and the other moving. Since this definition now expresses the efficient cause, I know I can deduce from it all the properties of the circle. (Spinoza, Ep60)

For as we have seen, an adequate definition of a particular thing, from which all its properties can be deduced, requires that we clearly distinguish how it follows from an adequate cause. But if we have not distinguished an adequate and proximate cause of the thing and have therefore formulated only an inadequate definition of it, from which only some of its modifications can be deduced, further consideration of the definition will eventually reveal its inadequacy.

> When the mind attends to an idea that is [inadequate or] false and deduces whatever follows from it, it will eventually discover its [inadequacy or] falsity. But if the idea is true [and adequate], when the mind considers it, and deduces from it the truths that follow, it will then proceed successfully and without interruption. (TIE104)

Therefore, the rationalist method of analysis consists in an endeavor to distinguish and enumerate enough essential properties of the thing so that "its definition will become self-evident while we attend to those of its properties that we do understand clearly and distinctly" (TIE107). And when we have found a cause and definition that does explain all the thing's properties, "then, so that all our ideas may be led back to one, we shall endeavor to connect and order them so that our mind, as far as possible, represents the true order and connection of things in nature, both in the whole and in the parts" (TIE91). Then we need merely "bring forth all our ideas from that one idea,

which represents the source and origin of the whole of nature" (TIE42); and because "the truth, as we have shown, makes itself manifest", the truth of "all things will then flow to us, as it were, spontaneously" (TIE44) in the rational order of causes (TIE99).

And indeed, this has been my method and my experience in developing and writing this book. For example, the first problems I considered when I became interested in Spinoza's metaphysics were the problems of the attributes that Tschirnhaus had identified; and I noted that Spinoza's definitions of God and an attribute did not "explain the inmost essence of the thing [but] substitute for this one of its properties", and moreover did not "exclude any doubt that the thing exists" (TIE96-96). So to find adequate definitions of God and an attribute I enumerated their other properties that I did know clearly and distinctly, so I could consider them and see whether any of them expressed their inmost essences and adequate definitions. And once I had enumerated all their properties that I knew and understood, I didn't have to look far for the essence of God, because Spinoza identifies it as necessary existence in E1P20; and on consideration of this property it became clearly and distinctly self-evident in my mind that God is a substance whose essence is existence. And similarly, I did not have to look far for an adequate definition of the essence of an attribute, because I knew that "anything that exists, exists either in itself or in another" (ElAx1), and I knew that an attribute was not a mode, which is in another (E1P29S) and, moreover, that an attribute is conceived through itself (E1P10); and therefore I knew an attribute was a substance. But I also knew from E1P10 that, unlike God, an attribute has the property that it is conceived distinctly from another attribute; and so it became clearly and distinctly self-evident that an attribute is a substance that is conceived in relation to another, whereas God is a substance that is conceived in relation to no other. And since from both of these definitions it was self-evident that the substance in question was its own adequate cause and must therefore exist, and that every conceivable property of the substance must follow, I knew both definitions were adequate.

Furthermore, whenever I have considered any other effect in nature, such as the perception of time or duration, I have endeavored to explain such an effect in conformity with what I already knew to be true and necessary in God, or nature, such as 'that God necessarily exists' and so forth. And to aid this endeavor, I have often considered the explanations of the effect in question given by previous authors, especially Spinoza, Descartes, Shankara, and Parmenides, not only to help me enumerate the properties of the effect, but moreover so that I could divide their explanations into such parts as might clearly and distinctly either agree or disagree with what I already

knew of reason, and thus (E2P42) as it were reveal to me their truth or falsity and adequacy or inadequacy (TIE75). And when I have then ordered and connected what is true and adequate in these explanations so that they proceed without any interruption from the idea of God, more truths have then revealed themselves to me (E2P40), "as it were spontaneously" (TIE44), as consideration of any of God's infinite properties, such as, 'that God necessarily exists', can reveal the properties, or parts, of that property, such as 'that God exists always' and 'that God cannot be destroyed'. For when I conceive an idea of time or duration in conjunction with the idea that God necessarily exists, the necessary truth, 'that God exists always', will thereby make itself known to me clearly and distinctly; and in the same way, when I conceive an idea of death or destruction in conjunction with the idea of God's necessity, the necessary truth, 'that God cannot be destroyed or die', will then likewise make itself known to me.

For another example, I might now consider the traditional notion, or general opinion, that as we get older time seems to pass more quickly. Because I understand the nature and origin of time and how I form an idea of time by comparing my own duration to the durations of other things, I can deduce the proximate cause of the effect, namely that insofar as I imagine my own duration as longer, I thereby imagine the durations of other things as proportionately shorter. Note that even without considering the traditional or general idea in order to analyze its cause I might nevertheless deduce the effect "as it were spontaneously" by considering an adequate idea of the nature of time and deducing its properties. For one more example, I might now consider the traditional notion that time seems to pass more quickly when we are experiencing joyful emotions, and less quickly when we experience sorrow. I can analyze the truth or falsity of this idea by considering it in relation to an adequate idea of how we conceive time and adequate ideas of the natures and causes of joy and sorrow (see 7.1C1), so that I can determine whether adequate causes for such an effect really exist, and if so, what they are. Or again, even without considering and analyzing the traditional notion, if its principle is true I might deduce it by spontaneous "synthetic" deduction (AT VII 155-156) by considering an adequate idea of time in conjunction with adequate ideas of joy and sorrow and deducing the properties that follow. Note therefore from all these examples that the more I clearly and distinctly understand of

reason, or the more distinct principles of reason I have previously deduced, the more readily I will deduce more principles of reason (AT VI 66-67).[25]

Furthermore, when I have deduced and defined how a principle of reason follows in nature as a property of its proximate cause, I will then necessarily endeavor to deduce the properties of the new principle, because the order and connection of rational ideas follows necessarily; and hence, I will eventually discover whether I have defined the principle adequately or inadequately. For if I have defined it inadequately or falsely, consideration of the definition will eventually reveal inadequate or false ideas following from it, which contradict ideas I already know to be principles of reason; whereas if I have defined it adequately, consideration of the definition will then reveal the true and adequate ideas that follow from it "successfully and without interruption" (TIE61). Note therefore that the more I clearly and distinctly understand of reason, or more principles of reason I have previously deduced, the more readily I will discover any inadequacy or falsity in new definitions, and furthermore, that when I have deduced several properties of an idea of reason, and have ordered and connected both it and its properties so that they proceed without any interruption from the idea of God, I will then recognize, clearly and distinctly, that I have defined the thing through its adequate cause and, therefore, that the definition is adequate (TIE91-98). Therefore I call the certainty of reason 'rational certainty' to distinguish it from the mode of certainty, or belief, that is involved in even false ideas.

So in these ways the propositions of a true and adequate rational metaphysics can be discovered and defined. And although, so far, the propositions we have deduced in these ways, defining the common properties of nature and the common notions in thought and common laws of motion in extension, "are as yet very few" (TIE22), the number that remain for us to deduce from them extends to infinity.

---

[25] "When one has true principles and follows them, one cannot fail to come upon other truths from time to time." Descartes, *Principles,* Preface.

"Each truth that I found became a rule for finding further truths." *Discourse on Method,* 2.

Proposition 6.3

A finite mode has adequate knowledge of the things it conceives through their adequate cause (E2P40).

Demonstration: This follows both from 1Def3Ex and from 6.0; for knowledge of an effect depends on knowledge of its cause, and therefore, insofar as the thing is conceived through its adequate cause, the knowledge of it must necessarily also be adequate. For there can be nothing necessary for adequate knowledge of the thing that is not in its adequate cause, so that conception of the cause involves, or comprehends in itself, conception of the effect.

Note 1, Proposition 6.3

Spinoza calls this "the third kind of knowledge", or "clear knowledge" (KV2.2), "perfect knowledge" (E5P10S), or "intuition" (E2P40S2); and Shankara calls it "intuition", "pure awareness", "pure consciousness", "direct vision", or "true knowledge"; and Parmenides calls it *alethia,* which is usually translated as "truth", but sometimes as "revealedness" or "unconcealedness", and sometimes as "reality".

I explained in the previous note (6.2N7) how the rationalist method consists of clearly and distinctly conceiving ideas of reason, or the second kind of knowledge, insofar as they follow necessarily in our minds. Note therefore that insofar as an infinite mode of thought, or principle of reason, such as 'that God exists always', is conceived through, or as following from, an adequate cause prior to it in the rational order of nature, such as 'that God exists infinitely' or 'that God exists necessarily', one's inference or knowledge that it is necessarily true is in that respect an intuition (E2P47S, E5P28).[26]

---

[26] "It follows that those propositions which are immediately inferred from first principles can be said to be known in one respect through intuition, and in another respect through deduction." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 3.

"For if we have deduced one fact immediately from another, then provided the inference is evident, it already comes under the heading of true intuition." Rule 7.

"Given the numbers 1, 2, and 3, no one fails to see that the fourth proportional number is 6; and we see this clearly because we infer the fourth number in a single intuition from the ratio which we see the first number has to the second." Spinoza, E2P40S.

But further, we have seen that in the real order of nature God or any substance must be conceived as indivisible, and therefore that insofar as an infinite mode is conceived in relation to the adequate cause of all things, or God, it cannot be conceived distinctly from God, but instead the infinity of infinite modes are conceived all at once but indistinctly in God (2.2). Therefore, the propositions of a rational philosophy, which in themselves constitute abstract principles of reason, or the second kind of knowledge, can be conceived as constituting intuitive knowledge of reality, or the third kind of knowledge, or "summit of wisdom" (TIE31), insofar as they are conceived immediately and concretely, and with absolute certainty, through an adequate idea of God or "an adequate idea of the attributes of God" (E5P25D).

In the following corollaries and notes I will explain how through the third kind of knowledge we can also know finite things concretely and with absolute certainty.

Corollary 1, Proposition 6.3

A finite mode has adequate but indistinct knowledge of its own properties (E2P28S).

Demonstration: A finite mode of a substance must be conceived as a mode of self-conception (3.3). Furthermore, the essence and existence of the mode explains the essence and existence of its properties; that is, the existence of the mode is an adequate cause of its properties (1Def3). Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself as existing, it conceives its properties through their adequate cause, and it therefore has adequate knowledge of its properties. But as we saw in 6.0N, a finite mode, or intellect, cannot distinctly conceive an adequate idea of any particular finite thing, because the adequate idea of a finite thing necessarily involves adequate ideas of all its relations with infinitely many other finite things, whereas the mode's power of conception is finite, or limited. Therefore the mode has adequate knowledge of its properties, but insofar as this knowledge is adequate it cannot be distinct. In the following corollaries I will explain how the mode has adequate knowledge of its properties' infinitely many relations with other things even though the mode itself is finite.

Corollary 2, Proposition 6.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, i.e. in relation to its attribute or God, it has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of itself (E5P30).

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to God, or being, it conceives its real essence, or real self, which as we have seen, cannot be distinguished from absolutely infinite and indivisible being (5.0). In other words, the mode conceives itself insofar as its essence is identical with being, which is the adequate cause of all things, including the mode itself. And in the same way, insofar as the mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it conceives its formal essence, which cannot be distinguished from the attribute, or the adequate cause of itself and all the other modes in the attribute (5.1). And since the mode has adequate knowledge of the essence of a thing insofar as it conceives it through its adequate cause, it therefore has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of itself insofar as it conceives itself in relation to its attribute or God.

Note 2, Proposition 6.3

Therefore, a finite mode of thought, such as a man, knows he exists by immediate intuition, or pure awareness of being; and he cannot in any way doubt that he exists and knows he exists, except fictitiously or merely verbally (6Def5). For insofar as he conceives himself in relation to his substance he knows with absolutely immediate and

self-evident certainty that he's conceiving himself existing and thinking, or in other words, that he is the subject of conception. I will explain this further in Appendix 2.[27]

Corollary 3, Proposition 6.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, it has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of its accidental modifications and their causes (E2P32, E5P14).

Demonstration: This demonstration proceeds in the same way as the previous demonstration. For insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, it thereby conceives everything that is in or affecting its own essence, namely its modifications and their causes, also in relation to the substance. Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, it conceives its modifications and their causes through their adequate cause, from which they cannot be distinguished (2.2, 2.3); and therefore, the mode has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of itself, its modifications, and the causes of its modifications. So in this way, the third kind of knowledge "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to adequate knowledge of the formal essence of things" (E2P40S2).[28]

Spinoza says in E5P24, "The more we understand individual things, the more we understand God", and "This is evident from E1P25C", which explains that nothing exists except God. This is true, but it may give the impression that a true understanding of God can arise from consideration of one or more individual finite things; but as we have seen, a true understanding of God can arise only from itself or from reason, and we have now seen that a true understanding of individual things arises from

---

[27] "The one independent witness is self-revealed and cannot be negated or contradicted." Shankara, *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 2.3.

"When someone says 'I am thinking, therefore I am, or I exist', he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind." Descartes, *Second Set of Replies.*

[28] "Attainment of the self is nothing other than awareness of the self. In non-attainment of the self, the sole barrier is superimposed false knowledge. Therefore, attainment of the self is nothing but removal of false knowledge by regarding it through true knowledge, which is awareness." Shankara, *Commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* 1.4.7.

conceiving oneself, them, and all things in relation to a true understanding of God and thereby conceiving their essence through their adequate cause.[29]

Note 3, Proposition 6.3

Therefore, we have seen in this chapter that we conceive things in three ways simultaneously. Insofar as we conceive ourselves as distinct, or individual, finite things, in relation to other distinct finite things, our knowledge is partial and confused; and insofar as we conceive ourselves as finite parts of the infinite things, in relation to the whole universe and distinct principles of reason, our knowledge is adequate but imperfect, so that we can correct our opinions in relation to them one by one, or "bit by bit" (1.1N4); and insofar as we conceive ourselves as necessary properties of God, or simple and indivisible substance, our knowledge is adequate and perfect, so that our opinions are corrected all at once. So whereas we saw in 6.2N4 that insofar as I distinctly understand the principles that all things are one and necessary in God, I can consider and correct any opinions of things as distinct or contingent that arise in my mind, we have now seen that insofar as I conceive things through my intuitive knowledge of God, opinions that things are distinct or contingent, or opinions that in any other way disagree with reason, do not arise in my mind. Likewise, we saw that insofar as I clearly and distinctly understand what wonder and recall are, and understand the infinite variety of nature, I can correct any wonderment or distracting accidental associations that arise in my mind; but we now see that insofar as I conceive my real self in God, wonder and confused accidental associations do not arise in my mind.

So, as I sit here now writing this, I am perceiving, or imagining, through the first kind of knowledge, my own individual body; and beyond that, through the accidental modifications of my body, I am imagining other, external bodies, such as my desk and typewriter and the pictures on my walls and the world visible through my window, and I'm imagining three-dimensional places that contain my body and these other bodies; and beyond that, I can recall and imagine or fantasize greater and greater bodies and places, and farther and farther distances, indefinitely. And through the second

---

[29] "Behold how things absent are securely present to the mind. For it will not severe being from its connection with being, whether it is scattered everywhere throughout the universe, or whether it is all collected together." Parmenides, frag. 4.

"Therefore, meditate on the self alone; for in it all these are one." Yajnavalkya, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* 1.4.7.

kind of knowledge, I am conceiving reason, or the infinite properties of thought, and I am thereby perceiving the infinite modes of extension; that is, I'm perceiving the infinite properties of motion, insofar as they are present in my body and everywhere; and I can conceive and understand the idea of quantity as infinite and containing an infinity of dimensions, and I can thereby adequately understand the things I'm imagining through the first kind of knowledge. And finally, through the third kind of knowledge, I am conceiving thought in itself adequately and perfectly, and I am thereby perceiving extension in itself as infinite, eternal, simple, and concrete; and furthermore, I'm conceiving substance, or being, as absolutely concrete and the absolute subject of conception; that is, I'm conceiving absolutely infinite and simple intellectual power, or absolutely active conception, absolutely free of perception, through which I know and understand God, myself, and all things adequately and perfectly.

Therefore, although I have frequently said, "as I sit here now writing this book", we have seen in this chapter that, although I am absolutely certain that I'm perceiving things this way, I'm also certain that it's really only my opinion, and in reality a partial and confused idea, that I'm sitting on a chair and writing a book in a particular time and place. For "we conceive things as actually existing in two ways, [both] insofar as we conceive them in relation to a particular time and place, and insofar as we conceive them as contained in God, following from the necessity of the divine nature in eternity" (E5P29S). And as we have now seen, insofar as I conceive myself in relation to God, I know and experience that the pure awareness that is my real self is God, and that my opinion is really God insofar as 'Gary Sugar' has the opinion that he is sitting on a chair and writing a book (E2P11C); and I know and experience that the things I imagine as external to me, such as the chair and the book, are also God expressed in particular ways, and that God is their real self too. For insofar as I conceive myself in relation to God, or simple and indivisible absolute being, I do not conceive distinctions between myself and other things, and therefore I do not conceive opinions or perceive images, but I instead conceive, understand, and experience all things as one and as myself; and in this way I know myself and all things adequately and perfectly. For insofar as I conceive myself this way I do not only conceive perfect truth in itself and know it is true; I also recognize that, to the extent that opinions and images do arise in my mind and are not emended by reason, the things I imagine and the opinions I have of them are partly true but confused and partly false ideas of the same reality I

know perfectly as myself, or God; and hence, I know them as they really are. So in this way, I conceive and know only truth.[30]

[30] "As the flowing rivers in the sea disappear, giving up names and forms, he who knows the supreme absolute becomes the supreme absolute." *Mundaka Upanishad,* 3.2.8–9.

"This universe of plurality is really an illusion. The reality is the undifferentiated absolute; and I am that." Yoga Vasistha, 3.21.35.

"Taintless and partless, the pure light of the self is the supreme light of the absolute, which is not lit by anything else and is known only to those who discriminate the self as the witness of all objects." Shankara, *Commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad,* 2.2.9.

"The knower of the self sees duality but does not see it as duality, because of his direct vision of non-duality. He acts but does not see it as his individual self acting, because he is anchored in the absolute." *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 10.13.

"The essence of our mind consists solely in knowledge, of which God is the principle and foundation." Spinoza, E5P36S.

"So when we say the human mind perceives this or that, we are saying nothing but that God, insofar as he is explained through the nature of the human mind, or insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea." E2P11C.

"Therefore, all ideas are true insofar as they are related to God. For all ideas which are in God agree entirely with their objects." E2P32.

Chapter VII: Passion, Happiness, and Beatitude

In a letter to his friend Elisabeth of Bohemia, Descartes wrote about Seneca's essay, 'On the Happy Life',

> It seems to me that Seneca should have taught us all the principal truths we need to know in order to facilitate the practice of virtue and to regulate our desires and passions, and thus to enjoy a natural and true happiness. That would have made his book the finest and most useful a pagan philosopher could have written. (AT IV 267)

This perhaps describes the plan Descartes followed in writing *Passions of the Soul;* but it seems to describe the plan Spinoza followed in *Ethics* even more closely. So after he had explained the nature of God, the first principle of all things, in *Ethics*, Part One, Spinoza wrote at the beginning of Part Two,

> I will now pass to explaining those things that must necessarily follow from the essence of God, or infinite and eternal being; but not indeed all of them, since I have demonstrated that infinitely many things must follow from it in infinitely many ways, but only those that can lead us, as it were by the hand, to knowledge of the human mind and its highest beatitude. (E2Praef)

And likewise, in the previous chapters of this book I have demonstrated all the principal truths that were necessary so that in this chapter I can now explain how the three kinds of knowledge involve three kinds of emotions, and thereby how we suffer passions of joy and sorrow insofar as we imagine ourselves in relation to the finite, changing things in nature, but how we enjoy happiness and beatitude insofar as we understand ourselves in relation to the unchanging infinite and eternal things.

Definitions

1. By enjoyment I mean a thing's conception of its power to exist and act; and by suffering I mean a thing's weakness, or passivity, insofar as it is acted upon by another (E3P53, E3AD25, E4P37S1).

2. By an emotion I mean a thing's enjoyment or a modification of its enjoyment (E2D3).

Explanation: As I'll explain in this chapter, Spinoza distinguishes the enjoyment involved in opinion, or partial knowledge, as joy, the enjoyment involved in reason, or adequate knowledge, as happiness, and the enjoyment involved in intuition, or perfect knowledge, as beatitude. But he also frequently refers to happiness and beatitude as kinds of joy (E3P59, E5P36S). This may be confusing, and sometimes leads to apparent but merely verbal contradictions (E5P17C, E5P36C). So I instead call happiness and beatitude kinds of enjoyment and restrict the term 'joy' to partial enjoyment, or enjoyment that partly involves passivity, or suffering (E4P47S).

3. By an active emotion I mean a thing's enjoyment or a modification of its enjoyment that is caused solely by the thing's own determination; and by a passion, or partly passive emotion, I mean any modification of the thing's enjoyment that is determined partly by another, external thing (E3D2-3).

Propositions

Proposition 7.0

The power of an effect depends on and involves the power of its cause (E5Ax2).

Demonstration 1: All existing things, or effects, exist and act through the power of God, or nature, which is their adequate cause (E1P15). But the existence and essence of the things in nature is not something other than nature, but nature itself insofar as it is adequately or inadequately explained by their existence and essence. Therefore, the power of an effect depends on and involves the power of God, or in other words, the power of its cause.

Demonstration 2: By a cause I mean that which explains the existence of an effect; and by power I mean that through which a cause produces its effect. Therefore, the effect can have no power except through its cause, since anything conceived as explaining the power of the effect to exist and act would be conceived as a cause of the effect. Therefore, the power of an effect depends on and involves the power of its cause.

Note, Proposition 7.0

We saw in Chapter Three that God, or absolutely infinite being, is an absolutely infinite intellect; and we saw that the nature of its activity, or expression of its power, is self-conception. Furthermore, we saw how self-conception constitutes the essence and being of a finite thing, such as a man; and we have seen how the man's power and self-conception depend on and involve the power of God. Therefore, in this chapter I will explain how a man's emotions, or his enjoyment of power and his weakness or suffering, are properties, or essential modes, of the infinite power of God; and I will explain how they are determined by it in relation to other finite things and in relation to infinite things and eternal things.

Proposition 7.1

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, in relation to its world, it knows and suffers indefinite duration, or mortality (E2P30).

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing in relation to its world, or the other finite modes, it conceives its duration in relation to their durations and thereby imagines its existence as temporal and changing (6.1C2); and therefore it imagines itself, or its actual essence, as endeavoring to continue in existence in relation to external causes from which either its existence or its non-existence in a particular time and place might follow (5.3C2). Furthermore, the duration of the mode depends on the order and connection of these modes in eternity or in the infinite and sempiternal universe (4.3), which the mode conceives only through a partial cause, namely itself. Therefore (6.1), the mode can have only partial knowledge of its duration; and thus, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct individual, it knows and suffers indefinite duration, or mortality (E2D5Ex, E4D4).

Corollary 1, Proposition 7.1

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing in relation to its world, it necessarily suffers passions of joy and sorrow.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode, such as a man, conceives itself in relation to its world, it conceives its properties in relation to its accidents (6.1C1D), each of which partly causes and partly excludes the existence of its essence and properties and therefore partly determines and modifies its enjoyment of power to exist and act (2.3N4). Therefore, these accidents constitute passive emotions, or passions, of the mode; for by a passion I mean a modification of the mode's enjoyment that is determined and caused partly by an external thing. Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, and thereby conceives opinions and perceives the corresponding images (6.1N1), its emotions must necessarily be passions. Therefore, by a man's passions I mean the accidental modifications of his mind and body considered as emotions; and hence, by his sentiments I mean his opinions considered as emotions, and by his feelings I mean the corresponding images of his body considered as emotions.[1]

Spinoza calls a passion that partly causes or determines the power of the thing or its properties "joy", and a passion that partly excludes the thing's power "sorrow". But note that he uses these terms in reference to a man's conception of the accidental modifications of his mind; whereas he uses the terms "pleasure" and "pain" in reference to the man's perception of the corresponding accidental modifications of his body (E3P11S).

Note 1, Proposition 7.1

We saw in 5.3N4 that insofar as a finite mode, such as a man, is conceived as a distinct individual thing, its essence, or power, must be conceived as consisting in an endeavor, or desire, to continue existing, and that it must be conceived as always changing in indefinitely many ways insofar as the accidental modifications of its mind are conceived as coming into existence and passing out of existence in relation to its own continuance of existence. Note therefore that, conceived this way, its passions

[1] "Passions, desires, and aversions have exactly the same seat as the impressions of forms and colors." Shankara, *A Thousand Teachings,* Verse, 15.13.

constitute modifications of its endeavor, inasmuch as through a mode of joy, or pleasure, it conceives its power and desire as increasing in some particular way and through a mode of sorrow, or pain, it conceives its power and desire as decreasing in a particular way; for a passion, or accidental emotion, temporally aids, or increases, the mode's power insofar as it partly causes the essence (E4P39) or any property (E4P38) of the mode (E4P31), and conversely, it hinders, or decreases, the mode's power insofar as it partly excludes any of its properties (E4P30), since as we have seen, each property of a thing is a distinct expression of the thing's essence, or power (1.3, 2.3N4).

Therefore, because the mode necessarily desires to continue existing, it necessarily desires joy or pleasure, and it cannot possibly desire sorrow or pain (E3P28), except as part of a greater joy or greater pleasure, inasmuch as an accident of the mode that increases the power in one of its parts, thereby causing joy or pleasure in that part, might also diminish the power, or cause sorrow or pain, in another of its parts (E4P42-44). For our passions, or partly passive emotions toward particular finite things, are not simple and constant, but indefinitely complex and always changing, so that we often suffer conflicting passions of joy and sorrow in relation to the same object, and we also suffer varying passions in relation to it insofar as we and it are modified differently in different times and places (E3P17S).

Note 2, Proposition 7.1

Spinoza explains in *Ethics,* Part 3 that a man's various passions all consist of combinations of joy and sorrow, or pleasure and pain, and various kinds of external, or accidental, causes, insofar as they modify his power and desire; and therefore Spinoza deduces and demonstrates, "the principal emotions and vacillations of the mind, which arise from combinations of pleasure, pain, and desire" (E3P59S), such as love and hatred, hope and fear, as well as pity, devotion, envy, longing, jealousy, and so forth, and hence the various ways by which our emotions, or desires, arise and change. For example, we saw that a finite mode, such as a man, necessarily desires joy or pleasure and cannot possibly desire sorrow or pain. Therefore Spinoza explains love as joy, or increasing enjoyment and desire, insofar as it involves a particular idea of its cause, which the man therefore loves; and he explains hatred as sorrow, or decreasing enjoyment and desire, insofar as it involves an idea of its cause, which the man therefore hates (E3P13S). Therefore by joy and love I understand the same emotion, considered on the one hand as a mode of enjoyment and on the other hand as a mode of desire,

so that, "A man who imagines that what he loves is destroyed necessarily sorrows, and a man who imagines that what he loves is preserved necessarily rejoices" (E3P19); and conversely, "A man who imagines that what he hates is destroyed necessarily rejoices" (E3P20), and a man who imagines that what he hates is preserved necessarily sorrows.

For another example, Spinoza explains that, because we imagine the particular causes of things only partially and confusedly, we necessarily imagine a thing that we love or hate modified at least partly both by images of causes that seem to determine its existence and presence and by images of causes that seem to exclude its existence or presence, so that our minds to at least some extent must vacillate between ideas of the thing existing in our presence and ideas of things that might prevent it from existing in our presence. So insofar as we love and desire a thing, our minds vacillate between joy and sorrow, insofar as we imagine things that might determine or prevent its existence and presence; and conversely, insofar as we hate a thing, we vacillate between joy and sorrow insofar as we imagine things that might exclude its existence or presence or things that might determine its existence and presence. Spinoza calls this kind of joy "hope" and this kind of sorrow "fear" (E3P18S2). Therefore, insofar as a man imagines himself as a distinct thing, he necessarily suffers vacillating passions of hope and fear.

In E3P56 Spinoza explains, "There are as many kinds of joy, sorrow, and desire, and consequently of every emotion compounded of these, such as vacillations, or of every emotion derived from these, like love, hatred, hope, fear, etc., as there are kinds of objects by which we are affected"; and in E3P57 he explains, "Each emotion of each individual differs from the emotion of another to the same extent that the essence of the one differs from the essence of the other." For each passion of each individual finite thing in each particular time and place is itself a unique finite thing, formed accidentally by the intersection of a part of the individual in question and part of another, external thing; and each external thing that affects the individual affects each of its parts in a unique accidental way (6.1N2); and further, each accidental intersection of these accidents with each other also affects the individual in a unique way (6.1C5).

So we can see that in the same way that we have only partial and confused knowledge of the particular things we imagine insofar as we consider them in the actual, temporal order of finite things (6.1C1, 6.1C5), we likewise can have only partial and confused knowledge of the passions we thereby imagine and feel toward them insofar as we consider them in a temporal order; for in itself "a passion is a confused idea" (E3ADG). But on the other hand, considered in the rational and timeless order

of the infinite things, or "the laws and rules of nature, according to which all things happen" (E3Praef), the nature, properties, and adequate causes of passions like love, hatred, hope, and fear are the same in all things; and hence insofar as we consider our passions that way we have the power to understand them adequately through reason (6.2C4, E3P56S). I will explain this last point more particularly under Propositions 7.2 and 7.3 and in Appendix 1; and I will also explain in Appendix 1 several more of the principal passions Spinoza defines and demonstrates, such as anger, kindness, envy, jealousy, pity, ambition, and repentance.

Corollary 2, Proposition 7.1

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, it necessarily endeavors to imagine whatever it loves or hopes, and thereby whatever might seem to exclude that which it hates or fears (E3P25-26).

Demonstration: We saw this in Notes 1 to 2; for we saw that the mode necessarily desires joy and thereby whatever can prevent sorrow, and we have seen that love and hope are kinds of joy and that hate and fear are kinds of sorrow (E3P50S). Therefore, we can see how love, hatred, hope, and fear affect our opinions, so that we are necessarily biased toward imagining what we desire and, hence, "readily believe what we hope and are reluctant to believe what we fear" (E3P50S).

Note therefore that, insofar as we understand this principle, reason always encourages caution (E4A30), not only in our expectations but in all our opinions. I will explain under Proposition 7.2 how, "insofar as we endeavor to live by the guidance of reason, the more we endeavor to depend less on hope, to free ourselves from fear, and to direct our actions by the certain counsel of reason" (E4P47S).

Note 3, Proposition 7.1

Spinoza explains in E4P5, "The force and growth of any passion, and its perseverance in existing, are not defined by the power by which we ourselves endeavor to persist in existing, but by the power of an external cause compared with our own." For the power or endeavor of a passion, "by which it endeavors to persist in its being, is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself" (E3P7D, 5.3C2); and the proximate cause that defines the actual essence of the passion is not ourselves alone but the conjunction, or

union, of part of our mind or body with part of an external idea or body, by which the passion is formed as their intersection (1.3C).

In E4P9–13 Spinoza then explains how various relations between oneself and an external cause in a particular time and place determine how much its power affects us and, thereby, partly determine the power of a passion caused by it, such as the actual presence and proximity of the thing, or its apparent imminence, or the apparent probabilities of its presence and proximity. For example, "The image of a future or past thing is weaker, other things being equal, than the image of a present thing; and consequently, an emotion toward a future or past thing is weaker than an emotion toward a present thing" (E4P9C); and for another example, as we saw in Note 2, an emotion toward a thing we imagine as possible is stronger or weaker insofar as we imagine causes that could determine its existence and presence or causes that could exclude its existence and presence (E4P12).

Furthermore, Spinoza explains in E3P44, "Hate completely conquered by love passes into love, and the love is therefore greater than if it had not been preceded by hate", because it involves a greater change and increase in one's power. The same is true of all our passions of joy and sorrow; and therefore hope for example that was preceded by fear affects us more powerfully than otherwise, and fear that was preceded by hope likewise affects us more powerfully (E3AD14-17).

Lastly, Spinoza explains in E3P52S that any of our passions can be affected by wonder (6.1N6), causing the imagination to remain fixed on an object of passion due to its novelty or strangeness.

> If wonder is aroused by an object we fear, it is called consternation or shock, because wonder at some evil keeps a man so suspended in considering it that he cannot think of other things by which he could avoid that evil. But if what we wonder at is a man's prudence, industry, or something else of that kind, because we consider him as far surpassing us in this, then the wonder is called veneration … and if we wonder at the prudence, industry, etc. of someone we love, our love will thereby be greater, and this love joined with wonder or veneration is called devotion.

An important example of this is devotion to the image of a wondrous deity, or an idea of a wondrous ultimate reality, which we imagine as paradoxical, or beyond our understanding, or capable of making impossible things possible (TTP6).[2]

Note 4, Proposition 7.1

In 6.1N6, I explained how opinions and images of things can be accidentally associated in our imaginations, so that insofar as two images, for example, accidentally modify each other in our imaginations, conception of the one necessarily involves and partly recalls conception of the other. And likewise, our passions can also be accidentally associated with other passions, as well as with images and opinions. So in the same way that by seeing an apple a man might recall the word *apple,* he might also recall and feel his love or hate of apples, or his love or hate of a particular person who loves apples, or his love or hate of a place where he has seen apples, or his love or hate of something that resembles an apple, and so on indefinitely (E3P14-18). Likewise, Descartes explains,

> When I was a child I loved a girl my age who had a slight squint. The impression the sight made in my brain when I looked at her eyes became so closely connected to the simultaneous impression which aroused in me the passion of love that for a long time afterwards whenever I saw someone with a squint I felt a special inclination to love them simply because they had that feature, but at the time I didn't know that was the reason for my love… So when we are inclined to love someone without knowing why, we may suppose it is because they have some similarity to something we loved earlier, though we may not be able to identify it. (AT V 57)

So in this and indefinitely many similar ways, "anything can be an accidental cause of joy, sorrow, or desire" (E3P15), or any other passive emotion or combination of

[2] "Partly from devotion and partly from a desire to oppose those who cultivate the natural sciences, the common people prefer to remain ignorant of natural causes, and are eager to hear only what they can least understand and regard with the greatest wonder." Spinoza, TTP6.

"It can happen that we think we are ignorant of things we really know, as for example when we suspect that they contain something else which eludes us, something beyond what we intuit or reach in our thinking, even though we are mistaken in thinking this." Descartes, *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* Rule 12.

emotions, insofar as we are affected by passions toward things that actually exist only in our imaginations but are partly recalled by association with things that seem to resemble them or in any other way remind us of them.

Corollary 3, Proposition 7.1

Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a mode of vanity through which it compares itself, or its own power, to the power of the other thing, and thereby enjoys pride or suffers dejection.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it imagines itself and the thing as belonging to a particular genus (6.1C4); for a thing belongs to a genus insofar as it can be conceived in relation to another thing in the genus. Therefore, insofar as the mode imagines itself and the other as constituting modes of power (3Def2), the distinction it imagines between them within the genus constitutes a comparison, or measure, of its enjoyment of power in relation to the power of the other; and this comparison constitutes a mode of vanity, through which the mode forms an opinion of itself as strong or weak compared to the other. Furthermore, insofar as the mode conceives itself as stronger, it conceives only enjoyment of power, or joy (E3P53); but insofar as it conceives itself as weaker, it conceives its enjoyment of power as limited by and excluded from external power which it does not enjoy, and hence it suffers sorrow (7.1C1, E3P55). Therefore, by pride I mean the joy involved in imagining one's own power insofar as it seems greater than another's, and by dejection I mean the sorrow involved in imagining one's weakness insofar as one's power seems less than another's.

Note 5, Proposition 7.1

Spinoza defines pride somewhat confusedly as "overestimation of oneself arising from self-love" (E3AD28), which, strictly speaking, is impossible, since as we have seen, every idea is true in itself (6Def1Ex). So even insofar as a man might imagine and believe, proudly but falsely, that he is in fact Julius Caesar, he does not actually overestimate himself, but to that extent underestimates not only those ideas in his mind which assert the fictitiousness of his fantasy (E2P17S), but also all the other ideas in his mind which assert the power of the greater mode that is his whole mind or actual

self, as well as his ideas of others like him and the fact that they too can enjoy proud fantasies.

Furthermore, because Spinoza likewise defines dejection confusedly as underestimation of oneself, he argues falsely that, because we necessarily desire to love and esteem ourselves (E3P54), dejection must be "very rare"; and therefore, he conjectures that "those who are believed to be the most dejected are usually the most ambitious" (E3AD29) but are concealing it "under a false appearance of piety" (E4A25). Yet it is obvious that dejection is not rare but is in fact something we all suffer in some ways in relation to some things just as we all enjoy pride in relation to some things.

On the other hand, perhaps recognizing these facts, in E4P57S Spinoza defines pride and dejection somewhat more adequately as sometimes arising from a comparison of ourselves with others.

> I must not omit to mention here that the term 'proud' is also applied to a man who thinks too meanly of others; and so in this sense pride should be defined as the joy arising from false belief, in that a man thinks himself above others. And the dejection which is the opposite of this pride should be defined as the sorrow arising from false belief, in that a man thinks himself beneath others.

And he says in E3P55S,

> Everyone will most enjoy considering himself, when he considers something in himself which he denies concerning others … and on the other hand, if he imagines that his own actions are weaker compared to others' he will sorrow.

And in E4P57S he also says correctly,

> The dejected man's … sorrow arises from the fact that he judges his own lack of power by the power, or virtue, of others.

I think it's likely Spinoza defined pride and dejection primarily in the traditional but inadequate and confused ways, as overestimation and underestimation of oneself, because he was thinking of the confidence or hubris that is a property of pride and the diffidence or fearfulness that is a property of dejection. I will explain these and several other properties of pride and dejection, and how they bias our opinions and

sympathies, in Appendix 1, Articles 21–25; but it's worth noting here that our passions that arise from pride or dejection in relation to external things are neither simple nor constant, but indefinitely complex, always changing, and often vacillating, and also that passions determined by pride or dejection in relation to things which exist only in our imaginations or memories are often recalled by association with things or circumstances that remind us of them. So for example, in the same way Descartes felt an affection for anyone who resembled his childhood friend (7.1N4), if he had thought he surpassed her in some way or was surpassed by her in some way, emotions of pride or dejection might also have been recalled when he saw someone who resembled her. Or conversely, if he felt emotions of pride or dejection in relation to things he perceived as actually present, images might have been recalled in his mind of times and places when he had felt similar emotions of pride or dejection in relation to her.

Note 6, Proposition 7.1

Spinoza frequently explains that the words 'good' and 'evil' do not denote actual qualities of things or acts, but only opinions or sentiments in our imaginations, and moreover, that there can be no real or absolute evil. For God, or absolute being, is the cause of all things insofar as it is the cause of itself; and therefore, God can be said to consider things good or evil only inasmuch as absolutely infinite being conceives itself and all its infinitely many properties, or all things, as absolutely perfect and necessary. For as we have seen, if anything is conceived in relation to God, God alone, or perfection itself, is conceived simply and all at once (2.3). Therefore, God necessarily considers all things good insofar as they express reality or act and cannot possibly consider anything bad or evil. Therefore, when we speak of good and evil, we cannot mean anything absolute, or "metaphysical" (CM1.6), except that God, or reality, is in itself absolutely perfect; and thus, nothing is really, or "metaphysically", bad or evil (KV2.25, Ep19, Ep23, E1A, E4Praef, E4P37S).[3]

[3] "To God all things are beautiful, good, and just; but men suppose some things unjust and others just." Heraclitus, frag. 102.

"The supreme indifference to be found in God is the supreme indication of his omnipotence." Descartes, *Sixth Set of Replies.*

"In the absolute world, there is no evil." Shankara, *Commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad,* 8.4.1.

"That there is no absolute evil is self-evident." Spinoza, CM1.6.

"No one will understand my meaning correctly unless they take great care not to confuse the infinite power of God with the finite power of a human king." E2P3S.

Yet we often call a thing good,

> in relation to another that is not as good, as one says that a man is bad in relation to another who is better, or that an apple is bad in relation to one that is good. This is nothing but saying that something is good because it agrees well with a general idea that one has formed of these things. (KV1.10)

Therefore, by this definition, "the words 'good' and 'bad' denote nothing positive in things considered in themselves, and are nothing but modes of thinking, or notions we imagine by comparing things with one another" (E4Praef); and so, defined this way, "good and evil are nothing but relations ... or entities of the imagination" (KV1.10).

But still, things can be said to be actually good or evil in relation to a particular finite thing, for example, a particular man, insofar as they aid or hinder his power of activity, or the preservation of his being (E4D1-2). And thus, by this definition, "one's knowledge of good and evil is nothing but one's consciousness of the emotions of joy and sorrow" (E4P8), or consciousness of one's transition to a greater or lesser power of activity (7.1N1, see also 7.2N5). Note therefore that in this sense 'good' and 'evil', or 'good' and 'bad', and likewise 'beautiful' and 'ugly', denote nothing that is actually in external things considered in themselves, or insofar as they are external, but only what is in our emotions.[4] Hence,

> One and the same thing can be, at the same time, good, bad, and indifferent, as music, for example, might be good to one who is melancholy, bad to one who is mourning, and neither to one who is deaf. (E4Praef)

Or to give another example, a certain food might be more good than bad for a man who is healthy, but mostly bad for one who is sick; and another food, or medicine, might be mostly bad for one who is healthy, but mostly good for one who is sick (E4P63S2, E3P59S).

But on the other hand, love in itself, or joy in itself, is always good; and hate, or sorrow, in itself, is always bad, or evil (E4P41). But although love in itself is necessarily

[4] "We commonly call something 'good' or 'evil' if our internal senses or our reason make us judge it agreeable or contrary to our nature; but we call something 'beautiful' or 'ugly' if it is represented as such by our external senses." Descartes, *Passions of the Soul,* II, 85.

good, love for a particular finite thing that causes joy in parts of one's imagination can be excessive, inasmuch as it might also cause sorrow in other parts (E4P44), and in that way can be bad for one's essence as a whole (E4P60). For example,

> Extravagance, drunkenness, lust, greed, and ambition are nothing but excessive love or desire for luxuries, drinking, women, wealth, and glory. (E3P56S)

Whereas hatred, on the other hand, together with,

> Envy, derision, contempt, anger, vengeance, and every other emotion involving hatred or arising from hatred, are always bad. (E4P45C1)

I will explain these things more particularly in Appendix 1, where I will consider "what there is of good and evil in the emotions" (E4Praef), or "true knowledge of good and evil" (E4P14), so that we might understand "the rational way of living" (E4A), by which a man "endeavors, as far as he can, to do good and rejoice in happiness" (E4P73S). But first, I'll explain in the following note how we judge things good or evil because of the ways they seem to affect things other than ourselves.

Note 7, Proposition 7.1

We saw in Note 2 that, "A man who imagines that what he loves is destroyed, necessarily sorrows, and a man who imagines that what he loves is preserved, necessarily rejoices" (E3P19). Furthermore, we saw in Note 6 that the man judges things good insofar as he imagines them causing him joy, and judges them evil insofar as he imagines them causing him sorrow. Therefore, a man judges things good and evil not only insofar as they seem to help or hinder his own power of activity, but also insofar as he imagines them helping or hindering the things he loves (E3P22). Conversely, we also saw in Note 2 that, "A man who imagines that what he hates is destroyed necessarily rejoices" (E3P20), and a man who imagines that what he hates is preserved necessarily sorrows; and therefore, he judges things good and evil insofar as he imagines them hindering or helping things he hates (E3P24).

But furthermore, Spinoza explains that we also judge things good and evil because of the ways they seem to affect things we imagine as like us, even if we have previously "felt no emotion toward them" (E3P27). For we saw in the previous chapter that

insofar as a man imagines himself as belonging to a particular genus and imagines the modifications of another thing in the genus, he thereby imagines a similar modification in himself, and we saw that this explains the communication of ideas from one thing to another (6.1N7). As I mentioned, this communication of ideas also includes communication of the passions of others. So insofar as a man imagines himself and another thing as belonging to for example the genus 'human', and he imagines the pleasure or pain, or any other passion, of the other man, he thereby imagines and feels a similar passion in himself (E4P50S). Spinoza calls this kind of sympathy with the passions of external things "imitation of emotions" (E3P27). So for example, when I see a man injured, I feel the pain I imagine, and wince; and when I hear that other men love and desire a particular thing, I feel myself desire that thing; and I feel Achilles' anger, Arjuna's compassion, and Hamlet's sorrows, hopes, and fears.[5]

Therefore, recalling that a man judges things good insofar as he imagines them causing him joy, and evil insofar as he imagines them causing him sorrow, we can see that insofar as he imagines himself through the genus 'human', he necessarily judges things good and evil insofar as they seem to aid or hinder the power of activity of other men or mankind; and insofar as he imagines himself as belonging to a particular nation, he judges things good and evil insofar as they seem to aid or hinder his fellow countrymen or his nation; and likewise, insofar as he imagines himself through the genus 'animal', he judges things good and evil insofar as they seem to aid or hinder other animals; and so on through an indefinite number of genera.

Therefore, we judge things good and evil depending on how we imagine them affecting us, and how we imagine them affecting things we love and hate, and how we imagine them affecting things we imagine as like us. Note therefore that one's personal morality, defined in these ways by one's personal sentiments and sympathies, should not be confused with a conventional or received morality, as might exist in one's personal and political alliances with other things and are defined as established customs or laws (E4P37S2, E4P72), and still less, with a universal, or "metaphysical" (CM1.6), morality, as exists only in fiction and myths. For there is not one, absolute or universal morality which binds all things or even all men; there are instead an infinity of modally distinct moralities, each determined by the endeavor, or desire, of a particular individual. Therefore, one's personal sympathies with the opinions and passions, or

[5] "Epic poetry and tragedy, as also comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, in general, modes of imitation." Aristotle, *Poetics,* I, 1447a, 14–17.

inadequate ideas, of things one loves and things that seem like oneself, should not be confused with rational understanding, or adequate ideas of the common properties of nature, which are the same in all things (6.2); and for the same reason, emotional sympathy, or "compassion" (E3AD24), should not be confused with the rational emotions of mercy and generosity toward all things, which I'll explain under Proposition 7.2.

Note 8, Proposition 7.1

So we have seen that, insofar as a man conceives himself as a distinct individual thing in relation to the external world, he knows and suffers mortality, passions, and vanity, and he judges the things external to him as good or evil in relation to each other and in relation to himself. This seems to explain one meaning of the biblical story of the first man. For when Adam ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and hence distinguished the other things in Paradise, and gave them names, and conceived them in relation to his individual self through vanity (TTP4, Ep19, E4P37S1), he thereby lost his immortality in Paradise and was exiled to a life of suffering. And so have many others said that from vanity come suffering and death.[6]

Proposition 7.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it knows and participates in infinite, or sempiternal, existence.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to an infinite mode of its substance, it conceives itself insofar as its conception is identical with conception of the infinite mode, or in other words, it conceives itself insofar as it is a finite part of the infinity of infinite modes, each of which is the same in every part as in the whole (2.3N2). Furthermore, we saw in 6.2C2 that insofar as a finite mode conceives an

[6] "So we see that through false knowledge a man regards his body and the parts of his personality as his true self; and he is driven by desires and aversions, and he performs righteous and unrighteous acts, and he is born and dies." Shankara, *Commentary on Bhagavad Gita,* 13.2.

"It is in the imagination alone that the devil contrives his wiles and deceits." Teresa, *The Interior Castle,* 5.3.10.

infinite mode adequately, it knows the infinite mode is a property of nature that is present and true always and everywhere. Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself this way, it knows and participates in infinite and sempiternal existence.[7]

Note 1, Proposition 7.2

For example, insofar as I conceive myself in relation to an adequate idea of the infinite divisible universe, I understand that I am a part of the universe insofar as it is infinite, and I know my understanding of its infinity and immortality does not in any way differ from the infinite idea itself insofar as it is infinite and immortal, because I know this idea is the same in the whole and all its parts. For another example, suppose I conceive myself in relation to the principle of reason, 'that insofar as a finite mode conceives itself distinctly from its world, it has partial knowledge of its modifications'. Insofar as I conceive myself in relation to this rational principle, I recognize its reality in myself, and I understand that it is equally present in all finite modes and the same as it is in me, infinitely and always.

Corollary 1, Proposition 7.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it knows and participates in infinite and sempiternal enjoyment, or happiness.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to an infinite mode of the substance, it conceives itself insofar as it is identical with a property of nature that enjoys an infinite and sempiternal power to exist and act (4.2C), and therefore it conceives itself insofar as it knows and participates in infinite and sempiternal enjoyment of power; for by enjoyment I mean a thing's conception and knowledge of its power to exist and act. Furthermore, an infinite mode of nature cannot be conceived as suffering, because by suffering I understand a thing's weakness, or passivity, insofar as it is acted upon by another thing external to it, and there is nothing outside an infinite mode that can act upon it. Therefore, insofar as a finite

[7] "Reason is immortal, all else mortal." Pythagoras, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers.*

mode conceives itself in relation to an adequate idea of an infinite mode of its substance, it conceives itself as participating in infinite and sempiternal enjoyment and cannot possibly conceive itself as suffering. This emotion is called happiness.[8]

Note 2, Proposition 7.2

I showed in 7.1C1 that the emotions involved in the mind's conception of its opinions are partly passive insofar as these emotions are partly determined not by the mind itself but by causes external to it. But we have now seen that the emotion involved in the mind's conception of principles of reason is wholly active, or in other words, that this emotion is not determined by anything external, but solely by the mind itself insofar as it is modified by infinite ideas that are the same in itself as in all things.

Furthermore, I showed in 6.1N2 and 7.1N2 that each accidental modification of a mode, or each of its opinions or passions, affects only parts of its imagination, and affects each part differently, and might therefore determine joy in some parts and sorrow in others. But I also showed in 6.2N1 that, because a principle of reason is infinite in nature and the same in its parts as it is in the whole, a man's conception of it affects his whole mind equally and in the same way; and hence we can now see that it affects his whole mind with enjoyment, or happiness.

In E3P11S, where Spinoza explains that he uses the term "pleasure" for joy considered insofar as it involves perception of the body, he distinguishes pleasure, which "affects one part of a man more than the others", from "cheerfulness", which "affects all parts equally". Therefore, by cheerfulness I understand happiness considered insofar as it involves perception of the body, or happiness considered as a feeling (7.1C1D). But further, in the same note Spinoza also refers to the opposite, or negation of cheerfulness, as "melancholy". I prefer to call this emotion or genus of emotions unhappiness or suffering, because in popular usage melancholy usually seems to mean something closer to dejection (E4P35C2), and in traditional philosophical usage melancholy was usually only one kind of unhappiness, along with others such as sanguinity, cholericness, and phlegmaticness.

[8] "The infinite alone is the cause of happiness, because the infinite cannot be the cause of thirst or the seed of sorrow." Shankara, *Commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad,* 7.23.1.

Corollary 2, Proposition 7.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it necessarily enjoys self-contentment (E4P52).

Demonstration: By vanity I mean a thing's conception of itself as strong or weak compared to another thing it imagines as in the same genus as itself (7.1C3). But insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to an infinite mode of its substance it conceives itself insofar as it is identical with a property of nature that is the same in all things, through which all things enjoy sempiternity and rational happiness. Therefore, insofar as the mode conceives itself this way, it does not conceive any difference between itself and any other finite thing in any genus of finite things, and hence to that extent its idea of itself cannot be limited or affected by vanity.[9]

Note 3, Proposition 7.2

Therefore we should not confuse rational self-contentment, or happiness, with pride, or self-conceit. For by happiness or self-contentment I mean "the joy [enjoyment] that arises from a man's contemplation of himself and his true power of activity ... or reason itself, insofar as he understands reason" (E4P52); whereas by pride I mean the mode of vanity and passion through which a man enjoys imagining his virtue, or power of activity, insofar as it seems greater than some other's power of activity. For as we have seen, a man is partly passive, and therefore suffers unhappiness, insofar as he conceives himself distinctly in relation to others; and therefore, unemended pride does not constitute a mode of happiness, but instead actually limits one's happiness (E4P37, E4P55-57). But we can correct these errors and emend proud or dejected passions insofar as we understand, first, that we infinitely surpass some things and are infinitely surpassed by others; and second, that we share an infinity of properties with all things and thereby participate with them in infinite happiness and self-contentment; and third, "that we exist and act only by God's will", and therefore that all things that exist are equally expressions of God's infinite power and perfection (E2P49S). Therefore, by rational self-contentment and rational humility I mean the same thing, namely

[9] "Reason is by nature equal in all men." Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 1.

rational understanding and enjoyment of one's relations with the whole of infinite nature, and thereby with all things in nature (AT XI 452).

Therefore, we likewise should not confuse rational humility with dejection, which Spinoza often calls humility. In *Short Treatise,* Spinoza followed Descartes' distinction between "humility as a vice", which arises in the imagination, and "true humility", or "humility as a virtue", which arises in the understanding (KV2.8, AT XI 447); but in *Ethics,* although he explains what I have called rational humility (E4P53D), he reserves the term humility for dejection or the sorrow involved in dejection. I acknowledge that in other contexts, because we necessarily desire pride (7.1C2, E4P56S), it often seems appropriate to refer to moderate dejection as humility; but in this book, I will reserve the term humility for rational humility.[10]

Corollary 3, Proposition 7.2

Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives any of its passions in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it necessarily enjoys happiness and rational self-contentment.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives any of its passions in relation to an infinite mode of its substance, it conceives its passion in relation to a property of nature that is present and the same in both the passion and itself, and through which the

[10] "When the art of reflection was discovered, dissensions diminished and concord increased; for those who possess it feel the pride of predominance yield to the sentiment of equality." Archytas, frag. 4.25.

"Those who possess this knowledge and this feeling about themselves readily come to believe that any other person can have the same knowledge and feeling about himself, because this involves nothing which depends on someone else. That is why such people never have contempt for anyone." Descartes, *Passions of the Soul,* III, 154.

"He who counts himself more blessed because he alone enjoys well-being not shared by others, or because he is more blessed and fortunate than others, knows not what true happiness and blessedness are. For a man's true happiness and blessedness consist solely in wisdom and knowledge of truth, and not in thinking he is wiser than others, or that others are without true knowledge." Spinoza, TTP3.

"There is no proportion between the finite and the infinite; so the difference between the greatest, most excellent creature and God is the same as that between the least creature and God." Ep54.

mode enjoys rational happiness (7.2C1) and self-contentment (7.2C2). Therefore, to that extent, the passion is emended, or "ceases to be a passion" (E5P3).[11]

Note 4, Proposition 7.2

For example, suppose I feel sorrow because something I consider bad has happened. I feel this sorrow only insofar as I imagine that the events in my life are contingent, or could have happened differently; but insofar as I understand that all things that exist are necessary parts of the whole of nature, so that neither I nor anything else could exist otherwise, I necessarily feel happiness and love for the whole of nature as it actually is and, thereby, love for everything in nature; and so to that extent, the sorrow affects me less. Or suppose I love a particular finite thing external to me. This love affects only part of my imagination and therefore can become excessive, so that it becomes a cause of a greater sorrow in other parts of my imagination. But insofar as I understand the nature and properties of love, and understand that my joy and love are actually caused not only by this particular thing considered in itself, but by the whole of nature as it must be, my passion is emended so that it agrees with my love of nature as it is; and to that extent it ceases to be a passion affecting only part of my imagination, but becomes instead a part of my love for the whole of reality, which affects my whole mind in agreement with all the other parts of my love of reality, so that my desire for the particular thing cannot become excessive (E4A31). Or for another example, we saw in 7.1N3 how wonder can affect our passions by causing the imagination to remain fixed on an object of passion due to its novelty or strangeness. But insofar as I adequately understand the infinite power of nature (1.3), I can correct my wonderment and instead enjoy a rational delight in the infinite variety of nature, which again fills my whole mind with love and happiness. Lastly, we often see in the arts how tragic drama or poetry for example can arouse imitative passions of devotion, pity, hope, and fear but then emend or 'purify' them in relation to rational ideas such as the idea of

[11] "Achilles beheld the terrible eyes shining, and he spoke in winged words. Why have you come now, child of Zeus? Is it to witness Agamemnon's outrageousness? Such arrogance might soon cost him his life. But the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, answered him. I have come down from the sky to calm your anger. But will you listen?" Homer, *Iliad,* 1:199–207.

"To Arjuna who was overcome with pity and grief, and eyes full of tears and agony, Krishna replied. How have you fallen from the path of enlightenment in a time for battle? Cast off this weakness of heart and stand up. You are the scorcher of foes." *Bhagavad Gita,* 2.1–3.

necessity. So in these and similar ways, the more I understand myself and my emotions adequately in relation to reason, the more the whole of my mind is filled with enjoyment unmixed with any suffering; and the more my mind is filled with enjoyment, the less my passions, or desires and aversions, can affect me.

So we have seen how a finite mode, such as a man's mind, is partly passive insofar as it conceives opinions and thereby suffers passions partly determined by external things, but is wholly active insofar as it conceives its passions in relation to reason; for we have seen that reason is infinite and the same everywhere, so that conceiving reason affects the whole of the man's mind and all its parts or modifications with enjoyment of power that is determined by nothing external to the mind but by itself alone. Therefore, "A man's true power of activity, or virtue, is reason itself, insofar as he understands reason" and thereby understands his emotions and enjoys happiness (E4P52D), because as we have now seen, understanding and happiness are the same thing, considered on the one hand as a mode of knowledge and on the other hand as a mode of power, or enjoyment.

From this we can see in what a man's strength of mind consists, and in what his weakness consists.

> For we call emotions strong when we compare the emotion of one man with that of another and see one man more than the other disturbed by the same emotion, or when we compare with one another the emotions of the same man and find that the man is affected or moved by one emotion more than another emotion. For the strength of every passive emotion is defined by the power of an external cause as compared with our own power; and the strength of our mind is defined solely by knowledge, whereas its weakness is defined by the privation of knowledge involved in its inadequate ideas. (E5P20S)

Note therefore that a man's distinct and adequate knowledge or understanding of one kind of passion might be clearer or more present in his mind than his adequate knowledge of another kind. For example, if he understands the causes, nature, and properties of anger more clearly and distinctly than the causes, nature, and properties of envy, his power to recognize and emend passions of anger as they arise in his mind will to that extent be greater than his power to recognize and emend envy as it arises. I will explain this more particularly in Appendix 1.

Note 5, Proposition 7.2

I explained in 7.1N1 that joy is the mind's transition in a particular time and place to a greater power of activity and that love is joy insofar as it involves an idea of its cause; whereas sorrow is its transition to a lesser power of activity and hatred is sorrow insofar as it involves an idea of its cause. But we have seen that insofar as a finite mode conceives principles of reason, its emotions are wholly active; and therefore we can see that the mode can be determined to a lesser power of activity, through which it can suffer sorrow or hatred, only through its passions, or the emotions involved in its opinions (E3P59); whereas through its understanding, or insofar as it understands its passions, it can know only unmixed enjoyment, and thereby love.

Furthermore, we have seen that "one's knowledge of good and evil is nothing but one's consciousness of the emotions of joy and sorrow" (E4P8, 7.1N6); and hence, we can see that insofar as a man understands his emotions through reason he can neither hate anything nor consider anything in reality bad or evil, but must instead enjoy and love everything and consider everything good. "For what would perhaps rightly appear very imperfect if it existed on its own is quite perfect when its function as a part of the universe is considered" (AT VII 55). So Spinoza says, "knowledge of evil is inadequate knowledge", and hence, "if the human mind had only adequate ideas, it would form no notion of evil" (E4P64). Therefore, "insofar as we understand, we can desire nothing except what is and must be; nor can we find absolute happiness in anything but truth" (E4A32).

Lastly, a thing is called free insofar as it acts in a way determined by itself; and it is called constrained, or bound, insofar as it acts in a way that is determined by another (E1D7). Therefore, a finite mode suffers partial constraint, or bondage to external causes, insofar as it conceives opinions and thereby suffers passions; whereas it enjoys freedom unmixed with bondage insofar as it understands.[12] Spinoza explains, "Any act that can be determined by a passive emotion can also be determined by reason without a passive emotion" (E4P59). For a simple example, insofar as a student says "the angles of a triangle equal two right angles" because he has memorized the rule and hopes to please his teacher, his power is partly free but partly constrained by the particular desire and its converse, fear of displeasing the teacher; but on the other hand, insofar as he

[12] "The clear and distinct ideas we form seem to follow solely from the necessity of our nature in such a way that they seem to depend absolutely on our power alone. But with confused ideas it is the contrary; they are often formed against our will." Spinoza, TIE108.

says it because he understands and therefore agrees with the rational principle his power is unconstrained and wholly free. For another example, I explained in Note 4 how my love and desire for a particular thing can become excessive and a cause of pain, but how it cannot become excessive insofar as I understand my desire through reason; and hence, I suffer bondage to the external cause insofar as it affects me with passion and desire, but I enjoy freedom insofar as I understand my passion and thereby enjoy the power to govern my desire in agreement with reason and happiness. And in the same way, all our acts that we conceive in a temporal order are determined partly by the constraints of passion and at least partly by the freedom of understanding. Therefore, by bondage, or unhappiness, I understand obedience to one's passions of joy and sorrow, or pleasure and pain, insofar as they accidentally determine our opinions and desires;[13] and by freedom, or happiness, I understand agreement with reason, through which we understand ourselves and act in pursuit of our true advantage in accord with the infinite laws of God, or nature, and enjoy an infinite and immortal love of reality as it is and for all things in reality as they are and must be.

Note 6, Proposition 7.2

We saw in the previous notes that the more a man understands himself and his emotions adequately through reason, the more the whole of his mind is affected with enjoyment unmixed with any suffering, and that the more his mind is affected with enjoyment, the less his passions and desires for external things can affect him. Spinoza calls this rational power of the mind, or property of happiness, "courage", or "the desire by which an individual endeavors to preserve his own being according to the dictates of reason alone" (E3P59S). Furthermore, we saw that to the same extent, the man's mind is also filled with love of all things, so that he cannot hate anything. Note therefore that insofar as his endeavor, or desire, is affected by this love of all things, he enjoys the rational emotions of mercy and generosity toward all things, or in other words, the rational desires to spare them whatever suffering he can (E3P47), and to aid them however he can in their ability to enjoy rationality, and thereby to unite with

[13] "A slave to his passions cannot be free." Pythagoras, in Stobaeus, *Physical and Moral Extracts.*

"A mind bound by the bridle of passion runs like a horse driven by another." Shankara, *Commentary on the Yoga Scriptures,* 1.37.

"I call a man's lack of power to moderate and control his emotions bondage. For a man at the mercy of his emotions is not his own master." Spinoza, E4Praef.

them in happiness (E4P37). Or to say it another way, insofar as he understands reason and enjoys happiness, he desires that the external things which affect him also understand reason and therefore also enjoy happiness.

> Therefore, those actions which are directed only to one's own advantage I relate to courage, and those which are directed to another's advantage I relate to generosity. So moderation, sobriety, presence of mind in danger, etc., are kinds of courage, whereas courtesy, mercy, etc., are kinds of generosity. (E3P59S)

So in the same way that a man's desires and aversions can be emended and moderated by courage, "cruelty, for example, is opposed [emended] by mercy, which is not a passive emotion but a power of the mind by which a man moderates anger and vengeance" (E3AD38Ex). Therefore we see how, through understanding reason, we enjoy the courage "to bear patiently with whatever happens that goes against our own advantage" (E4A32), and likewise enjoy the generosity "to bear patiently with others and any injuries they do us, and to practice whatever promotes harmony and friendship" (E4A14). I will explain this more particularly in Appendix 1.

Note 7, Proposition 7.2

A finite mind, such as a man, knows itself through its conception of itself and its own ideas. Insofar as it conceives these ideas in relation to ideas external to itself, or in other words, in relation to its world, they necessarily involve inadequate knowledge (6.1C1), through which the mind suffers indefinite duration, or mortality (7.1), and a temporal endeavor to continue existing (5.3C2); whereas, insofar as it conceives these ideas in relation to the infinite modes of which they are parts, they involve adequate knowledge (6.2C1, E5P4), through which the mind participates in infinite duration, or the immortality of the infinite universe (7.2). But note that insofar as a finite mind conceives itself as a part of the infinite modes in its substance, it understands its mortality inasmuch as it knows its duration is finite (4.3); and therefore, its knowledge of infinite duration, and its accompanying rational love of existence, necessarily involves knowledge of its mortality and hence agrees with its temporal endeavor (E4P18S). Therefore, "The mind endeavors, both insofar as it has clear and distinct ideas and

insofar as it has confused ideas, to continue in its own being for an indefinite period of time, and moreover is conscious of this endeavor" (E3P9).

Yet there is another, still higher kind of adequate knowledge, by which the mind conceives itself, not in relation to other modes, but in relation to its substance, that is, in relation to infinite thought or absolute being. This kind of knowledge cannot be conceived as belonging to the mind by virtue of its duration, or continuance, or any particular mode of existence, but instead belongs to the mind by virtue of its necessary existence, or substance, in eternity. For as we have seen, neither God nor any of God's divine attributes can be adequately conceived through any idea of duration or time; and hence God, or eternity, or necessary existence, "cannot be defined in terms of time, nor in any way related to time" (E5P23S).

Proposition 7.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, or substance, it knows and enjoys self-causation, or eternal existence.

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it conceives its formal essence. But the formal essence of the mode cannot be conceived as distinct from its attribute; that is, the attribute, or the enjoyment of eternal existence, is conceived as simple and indivisible (5.1). Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, its essence, or activity, is involved in and indistinguishable from the infinite and eternal activity or power of conceiving the attribute and perceiving the other attributes, or in other words, the infinite and eternal power of causing the essence of its attribute to exist (3.1D2). Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it knows and enjoys self-causation, or eternal existence. Therefore, insofar as we conceive ourselves this way, in relation to simple, infinite, and eternal thought, "we feel and experience that we are eternal" (E5P23S).

Corollary 1, Proposition 7.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it necessarily enjoys eternal bliss, or beatitude (E5P27).

Demonstration: We saw this in the previous demonstration; for we saw that insofar as the mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it knows and enjoys perfect and eternal power. Spinoza calls this perfect enjoyment *beatitudo,* which is usually translated as blessedness or beatitude; and Shankara calls it *ananda,* which is usually translated as bliss, but sometimes as blessedness or beatitude.

Note 1, Proposition 7.3

Therefore, insofar as a man conceives himself in relation to his substance through the third kind of knowledge (6.3C2), or intuition, or in other words, insofar as he clearly conceives his intuitive knowledge of himself, God, and the attributes of God as the subject of conception (5.0N1), he knows and enjoys eternal bliss, or beatitude. Therefore Spinoza says, "The third kind of knowledge depends on the mind as its formal cause insofar as the mind is eternal" (E5P31), and "From the third kind of knowledge there arises the highest possible contentment of mind" (E5P27). For as we can now see, intuition of God and beatitude are the same thing, considered on the one hand as absolutely perfect and concrete knowledge and on the other hand as absolutely perfect and concrete enjoyment.[14]

Corollary 2, Proposition 7.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives any of its modifications in relation to its attribute or substance, it necessarily enjoys beatitude (E5P32).

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives any of its modifications in relation to its substance, it conceives the modification through its adequate cause; and therefore it conceives the modification adequately (6.3). But insofar as the mode conceives the modification adequately it cannot conceive it distinctly; that is, it conceives the

[14] "It is being, consciousness, and bliss." Yajnavalkya, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 3.9.28.

"The bliss of the enlightened man is the self. His bliss does not need to be occasioned by the presence of anything external. For him, all is bliss, always and in every way occasioned by the self." Shankara, *Commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad,* 7.25.2.

substance alone as simple and indivisible (2.2, 2.3, 6.0N). And as we have seen, insofar as it conceives the substance, it enjoys perfect and eternal bliss, or beatitude.

Note 2, Proposition 7.3

Therefore, "we take pleasure in [enjoy] whatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge, and this pleasure is accompanied by the idea of God as its cause" (E5P32); for as we have now seen, insofar as we conceive anything, or any of our ideas or emotions, in relation to thought in itself, or our inmost awareness or intuition, we thereby enjoy beatitude, or bliss, and we recognize clearly and distinctly that God, or the substance itself, is the cause of our bliss and the cause and real essence of ourselves and all things (6.3N3).[15]

From this we can see,

> how much the knowledge of particular things I have called intuitive or 'of the third kind' is more powerful than and superior to the universal knowledge I have called knowledge of the second kind. For although I have shown in a general way in Part 1 that all things, and consequently the human mind, depend on God both for their essence and their existence, nevertheless, that demonstration, though legitimate and beyond all chance of doubt, still does not affect our mind as much as when this is inferred from the very essence of any particular thing we assert to be dependent on God. (E5P36S)

The reason for this difference in power is the second kind of knowledge involves conception of only some of God's properties, and is therefore in itself imperfect, abstract,

---

[15] "Some attend the games to compete for glory. Some come to peddle their wares. The best come to delight in the spectacle, like a philosopher." Pythagoras, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers.*

"I am ever in harmony with this father of ours; and the earth ever appears to me a paradise. Each moment a fresh form, a new beauty, so that weariness vanishes at these ever-fresh sights; and I see the world filled with blessings." Jalal-ad-din Rumi, *Spiritual Couplets,* IV, 8.

"You already know God is everywhere. It is obvious, then, that where the king is, there is his court; and so wherever God is, there is heaven. Without any doubt then you can believe that where his majesty is present, all glory is present." Teresa, *The Way of Perfection,* 28.2.

and inadequate, whereas the third kind of knowledge involves conception of God's essence with all its properties, and is in itself adequate, perfect, and concrete.

Furthermore, we saw in 7.2C3 how we can correct our passions as they arise in our minds by understanding them in relation to reason, so that they cease to be passions and to that extent we feel only happiness; but just as we saw in the last chapter that we can correct our opinions only one by one and "bit by bit" in relation to distinct ideas of reason, we likewise can only correct our passions one by one in relation to reason. But we now see that insofar as we conceive ourselves and our ideas in relation to our attribute or substance, insofar as it is simple, indivisible, and perfect, our passions are emended all at once; that is, insofar as we conceive ourselves this way, to that extent passions do not arise in our minds, and we feel only bliss, or perfect and eternal enjoyment; and therefore, to that extent we conceive nothing unhappy, irrational, or evil, but only what is rational, happy, and good (E5P20). Therefore, we can see how intuition or beatitude constitutes a man's real and inmost power, and hence that "it is not because we control our passions that we enjoy beatitude; it is instead because we enjoy beatitude that we can control them" (E5P42).[16]

Many authors describe beatitude or bliss as feeling peaceful, and many refer to beatitude as tranquility (AT XI 471). For even though the feeling of enjoyment of power is the same in joy, happiness, and beatitude, because passions affect each part of the mind or body differently and in always changing ways, they often feel disturbing;

---

[16] "The self is pure, free from decay and death, free from hunger and thirst, and free from sorrow. The self desires nothing that is not good, wills nothing that is not good. Those who seek and realize the self fulfill all their desires and attain the supreme." *Chandogya Upanishad,* 8.7.1.

"For one who understands the unity of the true self and as such is attached to truth, there is no possible false attachment to results pertaining to time and place; for such falsity would be self-contradictory. All means of 'going', such as ignorance, desires, and deeds, are burnt away by the fire of true knowledge, and no 'passing' is possible. For one whose desires are all fulfilled, one who has realized the self, 'all desires disappear here'". Shankara, *Commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad,* 6.15.1.

"And this is mental prayer, to understand these truths." Teresa, *The Way of Perfection,* 22.8.

"If a man meditates on these things and understands them properly, he is filled with an extreme joy. Joining himself willingly entirely to God, he loves him so perfectly that he desires nothing at all except that his will should be done. He does not shun evils and afflictions, since they too come from God. He accepts them with joy, without any fear of evils, and his love of God makes him perfectly happy." Descartes, *Letter to Chanut,* February 1647.

whereas happiness and beatitude feel peaceful or tranquil, because they affect the whole mind or body equally in an unchanging way.[17]

Note 3, Proposition 7.3

In E5P39 and E5P40C, Spinoza says, "He whose body is capable of the greatest amount of activity has a mind whose greatest part is eternal", and, "The eternal part of the mind is the intellect, through which alone we are said to be active, whereas that part which I have shown to perish is the imagination", both of which are partly true but strictly speaking confused and partly false, because the mind is eternal and has no part that is not eternal, and moreover, because its formal essence or substance is simple and indivisible (5.1). I think what Spinoza meant by the "part that is eternal" is the mind itself, or formal essence, and by the part that is not eternal, the part of the imagination, or actual essence, that in a particular time and place is not emended by either intuition or reason and therefore does not clearly and distinctly know and experience that it is eternal.

Similarly, again considering things in a temporal order, Spinoza describes as "reborn" a man who clearly and distinctly recognizes his real self and the bliss with which it fills his mind.

> When we become aware of these effects, we can truly say we have been reborn… For this our second birth takes place when we become aware in ourselves of the completely different effects of love produced by this knowledge, as different from [pleasure] as the [imagination] is different from the [intellect]. This may

[17] "When the mind is freed from imagination through true knowledge of the self, it becomes still and tranquil." Shankara, *Commentary on the Mandukya Upanishad,* 3.34.

"A little more than four years ago I came to understand through experience that the mind, or more accurately, the imagination, is not the intellect. So I asked a learned man, and he told me this was so, which brought me no small consolation. For since the intellect is one of the soul's faculties, it was an arduous thing for me that it should be so restless... But I have now seen that the faculties of my soul were occupied and recollected in God while my imagination on the other hand was distracted." Teresa, *The Interior Castle,* 4:1:8.

"They say the empyreal heaven where the Lord is does not move as do the other heavens; and similarly, it seems to me that in the soul that enters here there are none of those movements that take place in the faculties and the imagination; nor do those stirrings take away its peace." *The Interior Castle,* 7.2.9.

"Peace is not the absence of war, but a virtue which arises from strength of mind." Spinoza, TP5.4.

> rightly and truly be called rebirth; for only from this love and union comes eternal and immutable existence. (KV2.22)

For insofar as a man recognizes his real self as pure intuition, or the pure subject of awareness, and feels it filling his mind with perfect and eternal bliss, he to that extent can desire nothing else; and insofar as he knows how to recognize eternal bliss in his mind, he knows how he can emend his imagination and passions even more, and to that extent, it is his sole endeavor (E5P26).

For even though I do emend all my passions to the extent that I conceive myself through intuitive knowledge and bliss, because I am finite and the power of external causes to affect me infinitely surpasses my own power, there must always be some extent, however great or slight, to which I do not conceive my passions through either intuition or reason, so that they remain to that extent unemended. So even though it is possible that by conceiving myself this way I can "suffer scarcely any disturbance of soul" (E5P42S), my opinions and desires must always be to at least some extent affected by passions (E4P4C, 7.1C2, 7.1C3), which in or through themselves are conceived not as eternal but mortal (5.3). Therefore, even though it is true that the more I conceive myself through perfect intuitive knowledge the less passionate I'll be and the less prejudiced and biased my opinions will be, I can still never be absolutely dispassionate, and my opinions can never be absolutely unbiased. So reason nevertheless still urges caution. I will explain this further in Appendix 1.

Corollary 3, Proposition 7.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, or being, it knows and enjoys self-generation, or eternity (E5P30).

Demonstration: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, or absolute being, it conceives its real essence. But the real essence of a mode cannot be conceived as distinct from being; that is, being alone, or eternity, or the enjoyment of self-generation, is conceived as absolutely simple and indivisible, in relation to no other (5.0). Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, or being, its essence, or activity, is indistinguishable from the absolutely infinite activity, or power, of causing the essence of being to exist. Therefore, insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, it knows and enjoys self-generation, or eternity.

Corollary 4, Proposition 7.3

Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, it necessarily enjoys absolutely infinite beatitude, or absolute bliss (E5P32).

Demonstration: We saw in the previous demonstration that insofar as the mode conceives itself in relation to God, it knows and enjoys absolutely infinite power, or in other words, absolutely infinite enjoyment, or absolute bliss.

Note 4, Proposition 7.3

Spinoza calls his philosophy *Ethics,* or *Emendation of the Intellect;* for Spinoza's philosophy is reason, and his ethics are the lessons of reason. From the ethics of abstract reason we learn virtue, that is, to understand and seek our true advantage in the world of modes, in community with others, or to understand and enjoy true happiness. From the ethics of intuitive reason we learn religion, that is, to love God before all things and, thereby, to love all things as ourselves, or to understand and enjoy eternal bliss, or beatitude. For insofar as we clearly and distinctly understand God, or eternity, as the origin and substance of our minds, we clearly and distinctly "feel and experience that we are eternal" (E5P23S).

Hence we can now understand without difficulty the meaning of man's "salvation" (E5P32-36), the life of beatitude. For we can now understand Spinoza's definition of beatitude.

> As joy and pleasure consist in the transition to a state of greater perfection, beatitude consists in the mind's possession of perfection itself. (E5P33S)

That is to say, insofar as the mind is conceived in relation to God, it is conceived insofar as it is identical with God, that is, with perfection itself. Therefore, insofar as the mind conceives itself in relation to God, it necessarily conceives God as the cause of the highest possible enjoyment, and indeed, of a perfect and absolute enjoyment, namely enjoyment of eternity, or necessary existence. For God, or being, is the cause of its own absolutely infinite existence, and therefore it necessarily loves itself as the cause of its own infinite and eternal bliss; but not as a man might love a particular

finite thing, but instead through an absolutely perfect, infinite, and eternal love that is identical with God's nature and power (E5P37); and thus, in that respect, God is love. Therefore, insofar as the mind is conceived as identical with, or indistinguishable from, "the whole of nature" (TIE13), it is conceived as existing in absolute agreement with all things, that is, as loving God, or nature, and thereby as loving all things in nature as itself (E5P36). Therefore,

> A wise man, insofar as he is considered wise, suffers scarcely any disturbance of soul, but being conscious of himself, and of God, and of all things as they exist by a certain eternal necessity, he never himself ceases to be, but eternally and always enjoys true contentment. (E5P42S)

That is to say, a man who is wise, who lives freely under the guidance of reason, perceives the passage of his days, or the parts of his duration, or life, with neither fear nor regret, but rather, with courage and delight. For insofar as he is wise, a man conceives himself and all things in relation to God, and he rejoices in eternity.

Appendix 1: The Rational Way of Living

Spinoza wrote at the conclusion of *Ethics,*

> If the path I have shown as leading to contentment of soul seems very difficult, this goal nevertheless can be found. Indeed, what is so rarely found is bound to be difficult. For if salvation were ready to hand and could be found without great toil, how could it be that it is almost universally neglected? (E5P42S)

Yet we aren't either happy or unhappy, or either saved or lost; we are all partly happy and unhappy. So if the path to happiness seems long or steep, still each step we take along its way increases our happiness and salvation; and each step consists of nothing more difficult than understanding. For enjoyment of rationality and happiness does not require resisting our passions, but only understanding our passions; because the more we understand our passions, the less they affect us and the less we desire anything but happiness.

Therefore, in this appendix, I have attached explanations to Spinoza's 'Summary of the Rational Way of Living' (E4A), so I can show more particularly how we can benefit from an adequate understanding of reason and rational metaphysics in our endeavor for worldly happiness and our enjoyment of eternal beatitude, or bliss.

1. All one's endeavors, or desires, follow from the necessity of one's nature in such a way that they can be understood either through it alone or insofar as one is a part of nature that cannot be conceived adequately through itself alone independently of the other individual parts.

Explanation: All one's endeavors follow from one's nature, or essence, either insofar as it is in itself or insofar as one's nature is affected, or modified, by the other individual things in nature. From one's own nature, or essence, as it is in itself, there necessarily follow one's essential properties, or essential endeavor or desires, and also the rational endeavor or common properties of the whole of nature, which are present and the same in each finite part, or each individual thing, in nature. And from one's nature considered insofar as it is affected by external causes, or the other parts of the whole of nature, there follow accidental modifications of one's nature, or accidental desires.

Note therefore that in the following articles, by "desires that follow from one's nature alone", Spinoza does not mean desires that follow as properties of one's unique, individual nature, which we cannot understand except either inadequately (6.0N) or indistinctly (6.3C1), but desires that follow as rational, or common, properties of the whole of nature, which we can understand distinctly and adequately (6.2C1). Therefore, Spinoza is distinguishing between the rational desires common to all things in nature and the accidental desires that are determined by one's interactions with the other, external things in nature.

2. The desires that follow from one's nature in such a way that they can be understood through it alone are those related to the mind insofar as the mind is conceived as consisting of adequate ideas. The other desires are related to the mind only insofar as it conceives things inadequately; and their force and increase must be defined not only by one's own power but also by the power of external causes. So the former are rightly called active emotions, or actions of the mind, and the latter, passive emotions, or passions of the mind. For the former always indicate one's power, and the latter, one's weakness and fragmentary knowledge.

Explanation: The mind's conception of the rational desires that follow solely from its own nature is adequate because the mind conceives them through an adequate cause, namely itself inasmuch as an infinity of properties of the whole of nature are present in itself (6.2C1); whereas its conception of the desires that follow from the conjunction, or union, of its nature with the natures of external causes, or the other parts of nature, is fragmentary and confused (6.1C1, 6.1C5).

Moreover, one's passions are partly passive not only insofar as they involve passivity in relation to external things, but also insofar as each particular passion is active in only some parts of one's mind that are conceived as affected by a particular external thing in a particular way but inactive in other parts that are not conceived as affected by the thing that way; whereas the emotion involved in understanding is an action of one's whole mind which affects all its parts equally.

3. One's active emotions, or those desires that are defined by one's own power, namely by reason, are always good; whereas the other desires, or passions, might be either good or bad.

Explanation: One's active emotions, which follow from reason, affect the whole of one's mind with enjoyment, and are in that way necessarily good; whereas one's

passions, or accidental emotions, affect parts of one's mind with joy and other parts with sorrow, and are in that way partly good and partly bad.

4. Hence it is before all things useful in life to perfect one's intellect, or reason, as far as one can; and the highest happiness or beatitude for mankind consists in this alone. For beatitude is nothing other than the absolute self-contentment that arises from one's intuitive knowledge of God, or nature; and to perfect the intellect is likewise nothing other than to understand God and the attributes and actions of God that follow from the necessity of his nature. Therefore, insofar as a man is guided by reason, his ultimate goal, or highest desire, by which he endeavors to govern all his other desires, is that through which he is brought to an adequate knowledge, or understanding, of himself and all things that fall within the scope of his intellect.

Explanation: We conceive ourselves and all things in three ways simultaneously: through opinion, or imagination, which is inadequate, partial, and confused; through reason, which is adequate but imperfect; and through intuition of God, which is perfect. Through intuition of God, or indivisible absolute being, insofar as it is the only reality, both in one's mind and in one's world, we conceive and experience perfect and eternal enjoyment. Spinoza explains that an endeavor to know oneself and all things through intuitive knowledge of God, "cannot arise from the first kind of knowledge, but from the second" (E5P28). For example, such an endeavor, or desire, can arise from reading and understanding Spinoza's rational explanations of intuition and beatitude in *Ethics.* Shankara explains similarly, "The means to liberation is knowledge. This knowledge should be explained again and again until it is firmly established."[1] He also repeats Yajnavalkya's explanation that the ways to establish this knowledge firmly in one's mind are learning the principles of reason from a teacher, rational reflection on them, and focused meditation on them.[2] How much of each of these methods is most helpful varies from person to person; but in all cases, the only goal is knowledge and the only means is knowledge, namely knowledge that nothing exists except God, and that the perfect understanding of God that is the foundation of one's mind is God.

Shankara emphasizes that students of a rationalist philosophy can rarely recognize the concrete reality and attain liberation through rational instruction alone without

[1] *A Thousand Teachings,* Prose, 1.2.

[2] *Commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* 2.4.5.

meditation; and he recommends in particular either of two approaches to what he calls the highest meditation. The first approach is "one-pointed" meditation on a clear and distinct conception of the absolute, or absolute being, either alone in itself or, especially at first, accompanied by an aid to the imagination, such as the image of breath or light, or words like "All this is God", or "Atman is Brahman" ("The real self is the absolute"), or "I am that", or "I am", or the syllable, "Om". Shankara explains that for some it can even be helpful to meditate on an idea of the absolute accompanied by the image of a wondrous deity to which they feel a passionate devotion, because as they acquire a greater understanding, their devotion to the image will be emended.[3] The second approach is meditation on a clear and distinct conception of one's real self, by inquiring in one's mind for the source of one's mind, which is pure awareness, or the pure subject of awareness, and is identical with the absolute. The main advantage of either approach is that insofar as we can learn from it to recognize clearly and distinctly in our experience the difference between "superimposed" imagination and pure awareness, we learn how we can direct our attention to our real, inmost self, which is God, and understand ourselves and all things in relation to God, and thereby know and enjoy ourselves and all things perfectly.

5. There can thus be no rational life without understanding; and things are good only insofar as they help one to enjoy the life of one's mind, which is defined by understanding. So too, things are bad, or evil, only insofar as they hinder one's power to perfect one's reason and enjoy rational life.

Explanation: As I'll explain in this appendix, not only unpleasant things can be bad in this way, but pleasant things too, inasmuch as they can distract one's attention or endeavor from perfecting one's reason and thereby enjoying the highest good (E4P43-44).

6. Therefore, since everything that is caused solely by one's own nature must necessarily be good, nothing evil can befall one except through external causes, or insofar as one is a part of the whole of nature, whose laws one's nature is compelled to obey, and to which it must conform in an almost infinite number of ways.

[3] *Commentary on Bhagavad Gita,* 15.l.

7. A man is bound to be a part of nature and to follow the common [actual] order of nature. But if he dwells among individual things that are in harmony with his nature, by that very fact his power of activity will be assisted and fostered. But if he resides among things that are not in harmony with his nature, he will hardly be able to conform to them without undergoing a great change in himself.

Explanation: External things agree with a man's nature insofar as they too are parts of the whole of nature, containing in themselves those common properties of the whole of nature that are the same in all. Moreover, particular external things might assist a man's power of activity insofar as their presence assists his existence and growth or the existence of any of his properties, as the presence of certain foods, for example, assists or partly causes the existence and growth of the man and his properties, causing him joy, or pleasure; or conversely, external things might hinder a man's power of activity, as the presence of certain poisons partly excludes his existence or the existence of his properties, causing him sorrow, or pain (7.1C1).

8. Whatever in nature we judge to be evil, or capable of hindering us from being able to exist and to enjoy rational life, it is permissible for us to remove or destroy in whatever way seems safest. On the other hand, whatever we judge to be good, or capable of helping us to preserve our being and to enjoy rational life, it is permissible for us to take and use as we please. And indeed, as an absolute rule, it is permissible by the highest natural right for anyone to do whatever he thinks will promote his own advantage.

Explanation: By natural right I understand the power of each thing in nature to act freely in accord with the laws of nature, or God. For the absolute and universal right of God is nothing but God's absolute and universal power; and the power by which the things in nature exist and act is really the power of God, insofar as each thing expresses reality, or power, in its own nature, or essence. Therefore, by universal natural right I understand the power of the infinite laws of nature, or the power of nature considered insofar as it is the same infinitely and always, through which each individual thing is determined to exist and act as it does (2.3N4); and by the natural right of an individual thing, such as a man, I understand the power of nature considered insofar as it is expressed by the essence or nature of the man. Therefore, insofar as a man acts in pursuit of his own actual and rational advantage, he acts in accord with the laws of his own nature and in accord with the laws of universal nature; and he therefore acts by the highest, or absolute, natural right, and he has as much right over nature and the

other things in nature as he has power (E4P37S2, TTP12, TP2). This seems to explain one meaning of the Upanishadic text, "The body is an eater of food, and it is eaten as food. So food is founded in food, and life is founded in life. He who knows that food is founded in food knows the foundation";[4] and Spinoza says similarly, "Fish are determined by nature to swimming, and the larger ones to eating the smaller; and hence, it is by the supreme right of nature that fish are masters of the water, and the larger ones eat the small" (TTP16).

9. Nothing [seems] more in harmony with the nature of an individual thing than others of the same species, and therefore [it seems] there is nothing more useful to us for preserving our own being and enjoying a rational life than a man who is guided by reason. And since among individual things we [apparently] know nothing more useful than a man who is guided by reason, one [apparently] cannot better employ one's skills and ingenuity than in helping to educate men so that they might live under the rule of their own reason.

Explanation: We are each, strictly speaking, unique, individual finite modes of nature, each with our own individual properties that differ from the properties of the other finite modes; but we share an infinity of rational properties with all things, and therefore the more the things external to us act in agreement with reason the more they act in agreement with our own nature and can help us preserve ourselves and enjoy a rational life. Therefore, it is to our advantage that we endeavor to help whatever things affect us enjoy the ability to act in agreement with reason.

Yet we also conceive ourselves inadequately through indefinitely many finite genera, or species, as I for example conceive myself inadequately through genera such as 'human', 'animal', 'American', 'male', and so forth. Since it often seems that humans generally express more reality and affect us more powerfully than other things in nature, the many inadequate and confused arguments for assigning a special ethical distinction to mankind, or the genus 'human', that Spinoza attempts throughout *Ethics,* Part 4 might seem to agree with common sense or one's personal sentiments; but on the other hand, note in the following articles how many disadvantageous passions arise from imagining oneself inadequately, through this or that genus, as 'like' or 'similar to' other things in nature, but which do not follow from understanding oneself adequately through reason.

[4] *Taittiriya Upanishad,* 3.7.1.

10. Insofar as men feel envy, or any other emotion of hatred or anger toward one another, they are in that respect opposed to one another; and hence, the more powerful they are, the more dangerous they are than other things in nature.

Explanation: By hatred I understand sorrow, or pain, insofar as it involves a mode of blame, that is, insofar as it involves the idea of a finite cause, or in other words, sorrow or pain insofar as its cause is only partly, or inadequately, conceived as something in particular, which we therefore hate; for as we have seen abundantly, insofar as we understand the adequate cause of all things, namely God, or nature, it is impossible to suffer sorrow or blame anything.

By anger I understand hatred considered as a mode of desire, or in other words, hatred considered as a desire to imagine the destruction or removal of the thing one hates; and by envy I understand hatred considered insofar as it involves hating to imagine someone's joy, or increased power to exist, and loving to imagine their sorrow, or partial destruction (E3P24S). I will explain throughout this appendix the reasons why we are so inclined to emotions of envy and anger toward others whom we imagine through the same genera as ourselves (E3P55S1, E3P49S).

11. Yet men's hearts are conquered, not by force, but by love and generosity or kindness.

Explanation: By love I understand enjoyment insofar as it involves an idea of its cause, whether adequate or inadequate. By favor or kindness I understand love considered insofar as it involves a desire to imagine the preservation and joy, or increased power to exist, of the thing one loves; and by generosity I understand the rational desire, or activity of reason, that follows from a rational love of all things, by which one enjoys an endeavor to aid others in their ability to live and enjoy rationality.

Note that insofar as a man imagines that someone whom he hates, i.e. that something he imagines as in the same genus as himself and hates is likewise affected with hatred toward him, he will thereby imagine and feel, or "imitate", the sorrow or pain involved in this hatred toward himself, and hence he will feel pain accompanied by the image of his enemy as its cause; and thus a new reason for hatred arises, while the original hatred continues. So in this way, hate is increased by reciprocation or vengeance (E3P43).

Conversely, insofar as a man imagines that someone whom he hates loves him, he will thereby imagine this love toward himself, and hence he will imagine and feel joy,

or pleasure, accompanied to some extent by the idea of his enemy as its cause; and thus, he will to that extent love his enemy, and will therefore feel conflicting and vacillating love and hatred toward him but in sum hate him less (E3P41). So too, if his enemy does him a kindness he will again feel joy accompanied by the idea of his enemy as its cause, and to that extent love him. Therefore hate is increased by reciprocation, but can be overcome by love and kindness or generosity (E3P43).

12. Therefore, it [seems] before all things useful to men that they establish close relations with one another and as it were bind themselves together with such ties as most effectively unite them into as it were one body, and as an absolute rule, that they act in whatever way most serves to strengthen their friendship.

Explanation: Reason urges us to form whatever alliances we can with the other things in nature for our mutual advantage, since their power combined with ours is greater than our own power alone. Yet "the essence of a thing does not increase through its union with another thing, with which it makes a whole, but on the contrary, remains unchanged" (KV1.2). That is, the individuals that compose an alliance remain individuals; and what is best for the whole or most of its parts might be bad for some of the parts; and even when what is best actually is best for all the parts, a majority might still prefer what is worse, as often happens (AT VI 16). Therefore, when a choice is possible, reason urges caution in choosing and preserving only alliances that seem likely to bring more advantage than disadvantage, but on the other hand also encourages an endeavor to preserve and strengthen one's alliances that do seem advantageous.

13. To this end skill and watchfulness are needed. For men are various and changeable, since they do not live solely by the guidance of reason, and [seem] for the most part envious and more inclined to vengeance than mercy. So it requires a great power of understanding to bear with other men, each according to his understanding, and to restrain oneself from imitating their passions.

But those whose skill is to criticize or scorn mankind, and to censure vice rather than teach virtue, and to weaken rather than strengthen men's minds, are a hindrance both to themselves and to others. Hence many men, from too much impatience of mind and a false zeal for religion, have chosen to live among beasts rather than among men.

14. Therefore, although most men [appear to be] ruled by their passions in all their deeds, the advantages that follow from living in their society still [seem to] greatly exceed the disadvantages. Therefore it is best to bear patiently with the injuries that they do us and to practice whatever promotes harmony and friendship.

Explanation: In the centuries just previous to Spinoza's era, philosophers commonly considered the advantages and disadvantages of a communal monastic life versus the rustic life of a solitary hermit, insofar as they could help or hinder a monk's ability to enjoy a life of intellectual, or spiritual, contentment. Neither of these lifestyles is commonly considered today; and living as Spinoza prefers, in a human society under the rule of a political state, could hardly be avoided; whereas solitude is generally disparaged as a kind of dejection. Therefore, it seems more relevant today to emphasize that, "When imagination or sensation is strongly active, it is not easy for the mind to understand things" (AT VII 358), but insofar as "we are not disturbed by emotions contrary to our nature, the power of the mind by which it endeavors to understand things is unhindered, and it has the ability to form clear and distinct ideas" (E5P10). For although it is possible to understand ourselves adequately and perfectly through our intuitive knowledge of God and "suffer scarcely any disturbance of soul" even in busy social situations and even when we are insulted or injured, still, our power to understand always might be overcome by the deeds and passions of others, but on the other hand always benefits from quiet contemplation and reflection, and can often benefit from rest of the imagination or avoidance of external pressures even without rational reflection or meditation (AT IV 220). And so Descartes remarks about his lifestyle, "Living here, amidst this great mass of busy people who are more concerned with their own affairs than curious about those of others, I have been able to lead a life as solitary and withdrawn as if I were in the most remote desert, while lacking none of the comforts found in the most populous cities" (AT VI 31). For even though a rational desire for tranquility might seem to resemble dejection, it is impossible for a man to feel lonesome, impatient, or sorrowful insofar as he enjoys rational understanding and happiness.

Yet there often may be an actual advantage to be found in a social activity, or it cannot be avoided for reasons of courtesy or practical impossibility. Therefore Spinoza cautions that, in the company of others, it sometimes requires a great power of understanding to bear patiently with them despite the injuries they might seem to cause us. I will explain further throughout the rest of this appendix how in even disagreeable social situations it can be possible to understand ourselves adequately and perfectly

through rational knowledge of our emotions and intuitive knowledge of God, and thereby suffer scarcely any disturbance, or how we can, as Descartes says, "elevate our minds so high that we are simply untouched by any offense from others" (AT IV 538).

Spinoza also cautions that in the company of others it often requires great power of understanding to avoid imitating their opinions and passions. I will explain this further too, but it's most important to recognize that we imitate the passions of others only insofar as we imagine them and ourselves as belonging to the same genera. Moreover, note further that imitation of emotions also partly explains our desire for the company of others and participation in social activities with them. For we feel a desire to enjoy whatever we imagine others like us enjoying (E3P27); and we feel a desire to imagine them enjoying and loving the things we enjoy and love (E3P31); and we feel a desire to imagine them enjoying and loving our company (E3P30). But insofar as we understand ourselves adequately through reason and intuition of God, we are unaffected by imitative social passions, and are instead affected only by happiness, or love of all things insofar as they express reality or affect us, and a rational, or true, self-contentment.

15. Conduct that brings about harmony is that which concerns justice, honesty, and honorable living. For men resent not only what is unjust or dishonest, but also what is considered dishonorable or contempt for the accepted customs of their society. But the most important qualities for winning their love are those concerning religion and piety.

Explanation: By rational religion I understand those desires and actions that follow from one's having an adequate understanding of God, or nature, namely to love God before all particular things and thereby to love all things as oneself. By rational, or true, piety I understand the desire to do good that follows from an adequate knowledge of reason and understanding the rational way of life (E4P37S1); for "if we consider that a good man is one who does all that true reason tells him, it is certain the best thing is to try always to be good" (AT IV 490).

Yet expressions of religion and piety may be falsely or even justly interpreted as presumptuous or discourteous (TTP Praef); and freedom of mind, or rationality, is often resented as appearing disrespectful or contemptuous. For there are many irrational and wondrous ideas that are the objects of someone's love or devotion, especially concerning religion, morality, and politics; and moreover, it often happens that

someone has a true religious understanding and emotion that is only partly confused with devotion to wondrous images or an inadequate philosophy.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that, similarly, whatever principles of reason, or adequate ideas, we distinctly understand, we to at least some extent also know inadequately as opinions, which we necessarily believe in a passionate way and desire to express in a passionate way; and hence we can be tempted to exceed the bounds of courtesy even when what we mean to express is rational. I will explain this further, and why it generally happens that "debates in the schools slowly and without their noticing it make the participants more argumentative and opinionated" (AT IX 18), under Article 25 concerning the difference between passionate emotions of ambition and glory and rational emotions of courtesy and generosity.

Lastly, Spinoza defines honorable living generally as "that which is praised by men who live according to the guidance of reason" (E4P37S1). For it is impossible to deduce what in particular would agree most with reason in a particular time, place, and circumstances. Therefore, Spinoza calls honorable not anything in particular, but whatever seems to be generally praised by the wisest or most rational individuals. For this purpose one might emulate examples from history or moral fables; but conduct based on these examples does not always bring peace; for "those who govern their conduct by examples drawn from these works are liable to fall into the excesses of the knights-errant in tales of chivalry, and conceive plans beyond their powers" (AT VI 7). Or one might follow advice such as the Delphic or Pythagorean maxims and so forth; but we know that despite their wisdom and emphasis on avoiding conflicts with others the Pythagoreans and likewise Spinoza himself were persecuted for their honorable conduct. And as Spinoza notes, even though Descartes had resolved "to govern myself in conformity with the opinions of those with whom I should have to live" (AT VI 23), "he too was maligned this way, as happens everywhere to the best men" (Ep43). Therefore, Sophocles' man of many ways says, "I am rightly called evil for my deeds; for many have been the enemies that hated me."[5] Therefore, reason urges caution above all.

16. Harmony is also often the result of fear, but such harmony is insecure. Furthermore, fear arises from weakness of mind and hence does not belong to the use of reason. Nor does pity, despite its appearance of piety.

[5] *Odysseus,* Frag. 965.

Explanation: By fear I understand sorrow arising from the image of an undesirable but possible outcome; and by hope I understand joy arising from the image of a possible but desirable outcome. Note that although fear might sometimes resemble rational caution and can be called good insofar as it causes one to avoid actual dangers, it is bad in itself, since it is a kind of sorrow and hinders rather than aids the growth of one's intellect and power to act; whereas hope is necessarily good in itself, but is often bad insofar as it causes one to underestimate actual dangers.

By pity I understand sorrow that arises through sympathy, or imitation of another's sorrow through imagining him and oneself as belonging to the same genus and thereby imagining and feeling his sorrow and therefore a passionate desire to relieve his sorrow. Conversely, by congratulations, or vicarious pleasure, I understand joy that arises through sympathy with another and, thereby, a passionate desire to celebrate and preserve his joy.

Therefore hope, fear, and moral sympathy can bear a certain resemblance to piety, but falsely; for they arise not from virtue or understanding, but from weakness of the mind and ignorance of the causes of things. Whereas by true or rational courage, or strength of mind, I understand a rational desire to do whatever promotes one's true advantage in accord with reason, or in other words, a desire to enjoy the being and growth of one's intellect, which constitutes one's actual virtue (E4P23); and by rational generosity I understand a rational desire to help others enjoy the being and growth of their intellects.

17. Again, men are won over by generosity, especially those who lack means to support their own lives. Yet it is far beyond either the power or the advantage of any private person to come to the aid of everyone in need; and it is furthermore a practical impossibility for one man to establish personal friendship with all. Therefore, responsibility for the poor falls upon the society as a whole and concerns only the common advantage.

Explanation: The ethics of a society is called politics; but the rational way of living concerns one's own individual ethics. Note therefore that mercy and generosity are properties of happiness, and therefore that merciful generosity, or charity, is necessarily good inasmuch as it affects one's whole mind with love and unmixed enjoyment. Therefore, charity in itself is always advantageous; but aiding others who are in need is not always possible or prudent, and we cannot deduce from reason what in particular is most prudent in a particular time, place, and circumstances.

18. The care to be taken in accepting favors, and in returning them, are quite different.

Explanation: Reason encourages caution in making promises or accepting obligations, because resentments can easily arise. Spinoza explains that because of changing conditions a promise might become difficult or impossible to keep (TTP16, TP2.12); and Descartes explains that with further knowledge a promise or obligation that had seemed wise or reasonable might later seem unwise. "In particular, I counted as excessive all promises by which we give up some of our freedom... For I saw nothing in the world which remained always in the same state, and for my part I was determined to make my judgments more and more perfect, rather than worse. So for these reasons I thought I would be sinning against good sense if I were to take my previous approval of something as obliging me to regard it as good later on, when it had perhaps ceased to be good or I no longer regarded it as such" (AT VI 23–24). And several of the Delphic maxims advise similarly, "Do not make an oath", "From a pledge comes ruin", and, "Make promises to no one."

For similar reasons, it is best to avoid receiving personal favors from those who seem likely to expect repayment, or tokens of gratitude, or an obligation to honor or imitate their opinions, unless on the other hand refusing their favor seems more likely to give them cause for offense. Moreover, men love particular things, and consider them good, useful, or beautiful, each according to his own personal desires and sympathies; and consequently, when they do each other personal favors, they often expect a greater repayment, or more gratitude, than the favor seems worth to the recipient; so again, resentments can easily arise. But sometimes refusing their favor might seem to cast scorn on their offer or refuse their friendship and would therefore feel ungenerous or discourteous; and then it's best to accept their favor and express one's gratitude, and to repay them abundantly without delay. But insofar as men are guided by reason, and thereby enjoy freedom of mind, they desire nothing for themselves that they do not desire equally for all, namely the ability to live and enjoy rationality (E4P37, E4P70-71).

19. Furthermore, amorous love, or the lust associated with physical beauty, and indeed any kind of personal love that has anything but freedom of mind as its cause, can likewise easily change into hate, unless even worse, it becomes a kind of madness, arising more from discord than harmony.

Explanation: By personal love I mean love for a particular person, and by personal friendship I mean friendship with a particular person. Therefore by personal love I understand joy insofar as its cause is inadequately understood, or imagined, as consisting solely in the essence, or activity, of a particular person; for such joy is adequately understood as caused partly by one thing, partly by another, but wholly and perfectly by the nature of reality itself, or God. Therefore personal love always involves a kind of error (E4P48), from which further errors must necessarily follow, except insofar as they are emended by reason; and therefore, caution and understanding are needed to ensure actual enjoyment of one's friendships.

Spinoza mentions amorous love in particular, because our desire for the organic pleasure involved in lust often affects us so powerfully that it becomes accidentally but strongly associated in our minds with otherwise unrelated images and passions; and therefore it often moves us to love or desire things we otherwise would not love, and sometimes even things or persons we otherwise hate, or persons who hate us; and so it can become "a kind of madness". But to a lesser extent, mixed emotions of love and hate necessarily arise in all our personal friendships; for as I have shown, distinct individuals cannot actually agree in any way except insofar as they agree with reason and, thereby, with all other individuals; and hence, no two personal opinions or sentiments can actually agree. For although distinct individuals might seem to agree in particular ways, and although distinct opinions might be expressed in the same words, they only seem to agree due to the weakness of our individual powers of discernment (E2P40S1, E3P57S, E4P32). Therefore, although we naturally tend to imitate our friends' opinions, on the other hand, the more particularly we come to know one another, the more we tend to discover our differences and disagreements.

Furthermore, we have seen that nothing finite can be conceived as a distinct individual except as always changing, and hence, that neither a man nor any of his personal qualities or opinions can be conceived as distinct things except as always changing in an indefinite number of ways. Therefore our love for particular things or particular persons and their personal qualities is always insecure, except insofar as we understand that the cause of all things is God, or in other words, insofar as we love God before all things and thereby love all others as ourselves.

Yet as we have seen, it seems far from rational and hardly possible for a man to live away from all others; and it seems hardly possible or wise to live among others, with whom we work, trade, and so forth, without forming personal friendships with them. Therefore, it is to our advantage to enjoy and strengthen our friendships with them,

but cautiously and moderately; and to endeavor at all times to repay their favors generously; to repay whatever injuries they might seem to cause us with cheerfulness and generosity; to honor and congratulate them but not excessively; to bear patiently with them, each according to his understanding; to regard with delight the variety and changes in their opinions and passions; and to guard ourselves from imitating their opinions and passions against our own actual advantage or reason.

But above all, to preserve one's friendships and one's own happiness it is wise to keep ever-present in one's thoughts one's rational understanding that whatever sorrow or injury one might suffer through one's friendships is in reality a necessary part, or essential property, of the nature of reality itself, as it must be. For insofar as we imagine ourselves as distinct individuals, we are necessarily tempted to blame all our sorrows on others (E3P54); and in this way we are continually tempted to hate our neighbors and envy our friends. Therefore, in Articles 21 to 25 I will consider the modes of vanity, namely pride and dejection, insofar as they partly determine, or bias, our opinions, sentiments, and moral sympathies in all our personal friendships and other individual relations, and how through understanding we can free ourselves from the bondage of vanity.

20. As for marriage, this can be in agreement with reason [especially] if the desire for physical union arises not only from lust, but also from a desire to conceive children and educate them wisely, and in addition if the love of both the man and the woman arises not only from physical beauty, but primarily from freedom of mind.

Explanation: It is impossible to deduce from reason whether marriage or celibacy, or raising children or remaining childless, would better assist any particular person's ability to preserve and enjoy the life of their intellect; but insofar as they understand and enjoy rational happiness, their desire for family or solitude is unaffected by organic or social passions; and whether they marry or remain celibate, their true happiness can consist of nothing but understanding themselves and their emotions in relation to reason and the idea of God.

Spinoza explains what jealousy is in relation to marriage and similar amorous friendships, and Descartes explains that jealousy "results not so much from the strength of the reasons which make us believe we may lose the good we possess, as from the high esteem in which we hold it, which causes us to regard the slightest grounds for doubt as considerable" (AT XI 459); but jealousy can arise in a lesser way in any personal friendship. Spinoza explains that this kind of jealousy involves hatred

toward someone whom we imagine as a rival for the affections of the friend we love, as well as vacillating hope and fear, and thereby conflicting and vacillating love and hatred or blame toward one's beloved. Like any other passion, jealousy can be affected by vanity, but it can also be corrected by understanding, or rationality (E3P36).

Spinoza mentions the education of children. Both he and Descartes frequently emphasize how the preconceptions of childhood are principal causes of error, and in particular how preconceptions acquired from inadequate and partly false philosophies are often obstacles to understanding, but also how learning to understand mathematical and logical necessity can help students learn to understand metaphysical necessity and an adequate rational philosophy. Furthermore, Spinoza recommends generally, "the best thing we can do, as long as we do not have perfect knowledge of our emotions, is to conceive a right way of living, or fixed rules of life, and to commit them to memory and continually apply them to particular situations that are frequently encountered" (E5P10S). But he notes that, "by praising acts which are customarily called right and blaming those customarily called wrong" (E3AD27Ex), "parents generally spur their children to virtue only by incentives of glory and envy" (E3P55S). He mentions how, "those who are subject to emotions of humility, repentance, and reverence can be guided far more easily than others, so that in the end they may live from the guidance of reason, i.e., may be free and enjoy the life of beatitude" (E4P54S); but he also mentions how sometimes, "boys or young men, unable to bear patiently the scolding of their parents, run away to join the army" (E4A13). I will explain the principles of these emotions and in particular the effects of praise and blame under Articles 21–25.

Lastly, although Spinoza refers to "the man and the woman", making what he likely considered a common-sense distinction, it is impossible to deduce from reason any properties of finite genera like 'man' and 'woman', or 'masculine' and 'feminine' (TP11). Similarly, when Spinoza twice refers to a disposition to pity, or compassion, as "womanish" (E2A, E4P37S1), he is again making an inadequate and confused distinction. I will show under Article 24 that a disposition to pity is actually a property of dejection, or imagining oneself as weak, whereas the opposite disposition is a property of pride, or imagining oneself as strong. Note therefore that we imagine ourselves through indefinitely many other genera, besides 'man' and 'woman' and 'sex' or 'gender', and that through each relation with other things that we imagine through these genera we either suffer dejection or enjoy pride, which I'll explain under the following articles.

21. Flattery can also produce a kind of harmony, but at the cost of bondage or deceit. And indeed, none are more eagerly swayed by flattery than the proud, who wish to be first but are not.

Explanation: By pride or arrogance I understand the enjoyment involved in imagining one's power, or virtue, insofar as it seems greater than another's, or the mode of vanity by which a man enjoys the opinion that he is strong, or superior compared to another (7.1C3). Note that inasmuch as his pride determines a pleasurable mode of desire, the man necessarily endeavors to preserve and increase his pride; and since his pride arises from a comparison of his strength, or virtues, with the weakness or faults of others, he endeavors to praise power and strength, and yet to imagine others like him only insofar as they seem weaker than him or insofar as they seem to flatter him; for insofar as he enjoys pride, his sole desire is to imagine himself glorying over others. Therefore, insofar as a man is proud, he is to the same extent envious and intolerant of others except insofar as he imagines them praising or flattering him.

Furthermore, for the same reason, insofar as the man enjoys pride and imagines himself as superior to others, he endeavors to affirm that things really are the way he imagines them; and therefore, to that extent, he endeavors to affirm what he considers common sense, namely his own opinion, and to doubt whatever contradicts or asserts the inadequacy of what he considers common sense; and therefore he endeavors to affirm partial and inadequate causes of things, and to doubt the adequate causes, and to consider what is relative to him alone as absolute; and hence, in these ways his opinions, though inadequate and confused, are confident and stubborn (TTP Praef, E4P56S).

Spinoza wrote, "It would take too long to enumerate all the evils of pride" (E4P57S); but like many other authors, he emphasizes how through pride we are biased toward confidence, or hubris. I showed in 7.1C2 why "we readily believe what we hope and are reluctant to believe what we fear" (E3P50); but through pride our judgment is biased even further toward confidence. For through pride we endeavor to imagine we are stronger and bolder than our peers; and therefore through pride we endeavor to scorn their fears as cowardly and to doubt whatever dangers they fear, and therefore, to shun forming any alliance with them for protection or help except insofar as we imagine them praising us and honoring our opinion. So in this way, pride can resemble rational courage, but falsely.

22. In dejection, on the other hand, there is a false appearance of piety and religion. For even though dejection is the emotion opposite to pride, the dejected man is most like the proud.

Explanation: By dejection, "guilty humility" (KV2.8), or "humility as a vice" (AT XI 447), I understand the suffering involved in imagining one's power only insofar as it seems less than another's, or the mode of vanity by which a man suffers the opinion that he is weak, or inferior compared to another. Note that inasmuch as his dejection determines a painful mode of desire, the man necessarily endeavors to diminish or destroy his dejection. Therefore, since his suffering arises from a comparison of his weakness with the power, or virtues, of others, his sorrow will be diminished, and hence he will rejoice, insofar as he imagines the weakness or faults of others (E3P55S); and so he endeavors to imagine others only insofar as they seem weak and therefore to imagine those who seem strong only insofar as they might be criticized, and to reserve his praises for weakness and lowliness, or "dejection itself" (E4P57S). Therefore, insofar as a man suffers dejection, he is to the same extent envious and critical of others' virtues, except insofar as he imagines them too criticizing the strong and praising weakness; for insofar as he imagines them praising him or his opinion, he is to that extent not dejected but proud.

Furthermore, insofar as the man suffers dejection and thereby sorrow, he endeavors to doubt that things are really the way he imagines them; and so he endeavors to doubt what he considers common sense, and therefore to imagine negations, fantasies, and things that seem wondrous, sublime, or paradoxical. Yet inasmuch as through dejection he endeavors to doubt even his own opinion and to consider all things relative, his opinions are necessarily diffident and vacillating; but again, insofar as he imagines anyone praising his opinion he is to that extent not dejected but proud and confident.

Note that insofar as we suffer dejection we still "readily believe what we hope and are reluctant to believe what we fear", but that this endeavor is partly modified by an endeavor to doubt the confidence of others; and hence, through dejection we feel conflicting and vacillating boldness and fearfulness, but in sum we are biased toward fear and imagining dangers, and we therefore endeavor to form alliances with others for protection, help, and sympathy. So in this way, dejection can resemble rational caution but inadequately and often falsely.

Though neither Spinoza nor Descartes mentions it explicitly, there is a kind of dejection involved in the passion they call repentance. Spinoza defines repentance as "sorrow accompanied by the idea of oneself as the cause" (E3P51S) or "sorrow

accompanied by the idea of some deed we believe we have done from a free decision of the mind" (E3AD27); and Descartes says repentance is "the most bitter of all passions" (AT XI 377), "because its cause lies in ourselves alone" (AT XI 472). To say it another way, through repentance we suffer pain or sorrow not only because something we think bad or evil has happened, but also because we blame ourselves and imagine ourselves as weak or inferior compared to someone who would have acted more wisely or honorably. Spinoza points out that increasing knowledge often involves repentance, or "increasing sorrow", because we often recognize our previous errors as we learn (E4P17S); but he emphasizes that repentance involves believing falsely that we acted as we did "from a free decision of the mind", because insofar as we understand necessity, or reason, we know we could not have acted differently and, moreover, to the same extent we cannot suffer vanity or suffer sorrow in any other way (7.2C3). Therefore, Spinoza says, "Repentance is not a virtue, that is, it does not arise from reason; and he who repents what he has done is twice unhappy and weak" (E4P54). For insofar as we conceive ourselves in relation to reason we can understand our errors and enjoy an endeavor to do better without suffering dejection (E4P59), and instead enjoy rational self-contentment, or happiness, even if the effects we thought evil continue.

In *Ethics,* Parts 3 and 4, Spinoza frequently refers to "the proud man" and "the dejected man". Therefore, note that each of us is necessarily proud in some ways and dejected in others (E2P15), both in comparison with other men and in comparison with other things; for we distinguish ourselves from external things in an indefinite number of ways, through an indefinite number of genera, in which we necessarily surpass some things and are surpassed by others. Furthermore, we also imagine ourselves as belonging to genera which in turn belong to greater genera, in which our kind may surpass some things and be surpassed by others, as for example, I imagine myself as belonging to the genus 'human' and imagine this genus as in turn belonging to a greater genus insofar as men can be distinguished from other animals and so forth; and therefore, I enjoy pride or suffer dejection insofar as I think humans are superior or inferior to other things. For another example, I imagine myself as belonging to the genus 'American' and in turn imagine this genus as belonging to a greater genus insofar as Americans can be distinguished from the citizens of other states; and again, I enjoy pride or suffer dejection insofar as I imagine that America or Americans are superior or inferior.

Note therefore that through any particular genus we necessarily enjoy imagining ourselves or our kind only in comparison with those things that we think we surpass

and suffer imagining ourselves in comparison with those that we think surpass us; and therefore we necessarily endeavor to consider ourselves through the genera in which we seem to surpass others . A man, for example, considering himself through the genus 'athlete', or 'physically strong', necessarily enjoys comparing himself with those who seem weaker and suffers comparing himself with those who seem stronger; and therefore, insofar as he suffers in comparison with another in that genus, he necessarily endeavors to consider himself through some other genus, such as 'intellectually strong' or 'physically beautiful', through which his virtue seems superior. But note that if the other man's strength seems extraordinary, he can continue imagining himself through the genus 'physically strong' without suffering dejection insofar as he imagines the other man's strength as beyond ordinary human limits and therefore an heroic object of wonder (E3P55CS); or he might for example continue to feel pride in his strength as an 'amateur athlete', insofar as he distinguishes the stronger man as a 'professional athlete'.

So we have seen that a man might be proud insofar as he compares a particular quality in himself to a similar quality in one of his peers who seems weaker, but dejected insofar as he compares the same quality in himself to a similar quality in another of his peers who seems stronger. Therefore we can see that we are determined to pride and dejection not through our actual qualities in themselves, but only through modes of comparison, which in themselves are really nothing but distinctions; and hence, insofar as we imagine ourselves as distinct things in relation to our worlds, our enjoyment of reality, or actual happiness, is limited by pride or dejection, or some combination of them, in each of our relations with other men and other things. Therefore, pride actually differs from dejection only inasmuch as through pride we do not recognize our weakness or unhappiness, whereas through dejection we recognize our unhappiness but inadequately; and hence, unemended pride is in that respect actually worse than unemended dejection, inasmuch as through pride we limit our happiness and yet have no desire to do otherwise (E4P54S, E4P56S).

Therefore, we have seen how insofar as we imagine ourselves in relation to others we suffer the bondage of vanity and unhappiness. But we have also seen how we can emend these errors and free ourselves from vanity and unhappiness insofar as we understand reason (E2A). For insofar as we conceive ourselves through reason, we do not compare ourselves with others through finite genera, but instead conceive ourselves insofar as we share an infinity of properties with all things and participate with them in infinite happiness.

23. Shame, too, can contribute to harmony, but only in matters that cannot be concealed. Moreover, shame is a kind of sorrow, which does not follow from reason.

Explanation: By shame I understand dejection, or sorrow, insofar as one imagines oneself criticized as weaker, or less virtuous, than another; whereas by glory I understand pride, or joy, insofar as one imagines oneself praised as stronger or more virtuous than another. Therefore, recalling that we necessarily endeavor to imagine whatever increases our joy or decreases our sorrow, we can see that insofar as we compare ourselves with others, through whatever genera, we necessarily endeavor to imagine ourselves praised above them and whatever excludes imagining ourselves criticized as below them (E3P30) and, furthermore, that insofar as a man imagines himself praised by others, he necessarily endeavors to win more praises, since glory, or pride, is in itself a pleasurable mode of desire.

Note therefore that insofar as a man enjoys the praises of others, he to that extent suffers bondage to their opinions (TIE5), and that even though his hope for praise is good in itself insofar as it is in itself a mode of joy, it can also be either good, insofar as what he imagines his peers praising actually is good, or bad, insofar as what he imagines them praising is actually bad and foolish, as often happens. Conversely, fear of shame is in itself painful, or bad, yet it can also be called good to the extent that what seems shameful actually is bad; for insofar as a man is ashamed of what actually is bad and foolish, to that extent, he has a desire to act wisely and do good (E4P58S). So in these ways a desire for praise and to avoid shame can bear a resemblance to piety, but inadequately and often falsely.

Note further that a man might imagine himself praised or criticized by others even though they are actually far from imagining him so grandly or lowly. Furthermore, he might also imagine himself more grandly or less grandly than the way he thinks others imagine him; or in other words, he might doubt the wisdom of the opinion he thinks others have of him. Note therefore that insofar as he imagines himself praised by others, he necessarily endeavors to affirm the wisdom of their opinions, and to consider them common sense, and to that extent, to affirm conventional, or received, opinions of what is common sense; but note on the other hand that insofar as his endeavor to believe their praises is modified by dejection, or in other words, insofar as he doubts that he actually is as strong as others think he is, he suffers a fear of disappointing their opinion and thereby suffering an even greater dejection. Conversely, insofar as the man imagines himself criticized or blamed by others, he necessarily endeavors to that extent

to doubt the wisdom of their opinions, and therefore to doubt what they consider common sense, and to that extent, to imagine whatever asserts the inadequacy of conventional common sense and, generally, whatever contradicts the popular or traditional opinions of things. So conformist pride, or pride modified by praise, can bear a resemblance to piety, but inadequately and often falsely; whereas rebellious or nonconformist pride, or pride modified by shame, can bear a resemblance to freedom, but falsely (TTP2).

24. The other painful emotions toward men are directly opposed to justice, honesty, courtesy, piety, and religion. And although indignation seems to make an outward show of justice, men live without law when each man feels personally entitled to judge the deeds of others and to judge for himself his own or others' rights.

Explanation: Spinoza defines indignation as hatred toward someone who has harmed another. Therefore, by indignation I understand pity accompanied by a mode of blame, that is, sympathy with another's sorrow or injury insofar as it involves an idea of someone else as its cause, whom we therefore hate (E3P22S).

Note that pride is opposed to pity, whereas dejection fosters a disposition to pity. For insofar as a man is proud, he enjoys imagining himself glorying over the weaker or less fortunate, and hence, to that extent, he cannot possibly sorrow over their weakness or misfortune, except insofar as he imagines them praising him; and conversely, to the same extent, he readily sympathizes with those he imagines as the strongest and enjoys imitating their pride, which he venerates as something wonderful and heroic (E3P56CS). Whereas on the other hand, insofar as he is dejected, he considers himself weak and unfortunate and therefore readily sympathizes with others he considers weak or unfortunate, and he therefore both venerates and imitates their suffering; for insofar as he is dejected he can to that extent actually enjoy nothing more than considering their weakness and feeling pity for them (E4P57S). Therefore, insofar as they compare themselves with others, men pity those who seem less fortunate but otherwise like themselves, and envy those who seem more fortunate but otherwise like themselves (E3P32S); but whereas through pride we endeavor to venerate the strong and fortunate and to pity but few, through dejection on the other hand we endeavor to pity everyone, and yet to blame the strong and fortunate.

Yet because one's emotions of indignation and the accompanying opinions of impropriety or injustice are determined only by one's own accidental sentiments and sympathies, or personal morality, and not by a real or universal morality, they should

not be confused with a fictitious absolute or "metaphysical" justice (CM1.6). For as we have seen, "as an absolute rule, it is permissible by the highest natural right for anyone to do whatever he thinks will promote his own advantage"(E4A8). And similarly, one's personal morality should also not be confused with a conventional morality, as might be defined by the laws or customs of a political state or other alliance, which as we have seen might actually be advantageous, both to oneself and to others, but also might be disadvantageous. Therefore, whereas reason on the one hand emends and discourages irrational emotions of indignation, it on the other hand encourages a rational desire to promote laws and conventions within one's alliances that seem likely to foster one's own advantage and, especially, the allies' or citizens' common advantage, such as, in politics, their ability to live unharmed, each by the rule of their own reason, and to enjoy rational emotions of mercy, generosity, and gratitude.

Yet it's impossible to deduce from reason how much participation in politics, or in governing any other alliance with others, is to a particular man's best advantage in a particular time and place. But note that in the case of politics the power of a man to affect the laws and policies that may affect him varies but is usually "insignificant compared to the power of the entire state" (TP9); whereas it's natural that a political state should suffer at least some tyranny, corruption, and injustice, because ambition and greed are properties of human nature, and arrogance is a property of dominion (TTP 7.27). Therefore, participation in politics or a concern for politics often requires a great power of understanding to avoid one's suffering excessive indignation and disadvantageous distractions. So, even more than it is wise to help the government to govern itself and act rationally, it is wise to "conquer oneself" (AT VI 25, E4P69) by keeping present in one's thoughts the knowledge that virtue consists in seeking one's own actual and rational advantage, and thereby the rational advantage of others, and the knowledge that things are truly good or evil only insofar as they help or hinder one's ability to understand, and above all, the knowledge that all things in reality are as they must be, and that no one does or suffers anything except what God determines, in the infinite expression of divine power (Ep30, E4P73, TTP16, TP2-3).

25. Courtesy, or a desire to please others as determined by reason, is a kind of generosity, which arises from piety. But if it arises from passion, it is a kind of ambition, or the desire by which, under a false cover of piety, men stir up discords and quarreling. For he who desires to help others to enjoy the highest good with him will endeavor above all to win their love, and not to win their admiration for himself or his teaching,

nor to give them cause for envy. In conversation he will avoid speaking of men's faults and will speak sparingly of human weakness, but will dwell instead on man's virtue, or power, and the means by which it can be perfected, so that others may thus endeavor as far as they can to live in accord with the dictates of reason, not from fear or disdain, but solely from joy.

Explanation: Through a rational religion, or an adequate understanding of God, or nature, we necessarily love God before all particular things and thereby love all things as ourselves. Through piety, or an adequate understanding of reason and the rational way of living, we desire to do good in pursuit of our own advantage, or happiness, and we thereby desire to enjoy the rational emotions of love and generosity and, therefore, to aid others and unite with them in mutual gratitude and friendship.

By ambition, on the other hand, I understand a desire for glory, or praise, or in other words, glory itself considered as an enjoyable mode of endeavor. Note that insofar as men are ambitious, they are necessarily opposed to one another; for the endeavor of each one is to imagine himself praised above the others. Therefore, insofar as they are ambitious, each man endeavors to distinguish himself and his virtues from his peers and their virtues, so as to imagine himself as something specially virtuous and to communicate this grand image of himself to others, so that they too might have cause to praise him. Furthermore, his ambition is frustrated by the achievements and boasts of his peers; and therefore he endeavors, not only to surpass their achievements and boasts, but also, to expose faults in their achievements and errors in their boasts, and hence, to interpret them in the worst light; and thus, his ambition consists as much in envy, or hatred, of his peers as it consists in love of himself (E4P58S).

Note further that insofar as men are ambitious, they necessarily desire that everyone should praise their opinions and love and hate whatever they love and hate (E3P31S), hence by their differences stirring up quarrels (E3P51). For men differ insofar as they form opinions and actually agree only insofar as they understand reason. Moreover, a man is ambitious insofar as he imagines that his opinions or sentiments seem more intelligent or wiser than the opinions of others like him; and hence, insofar as he is ambitious, he endeavors to distinguish his opinions from the opinions of his peers, so as to present his opinion as something special or wonderful, and to shame those who disagree in the hope that they will repent their own opinions and honor his. Therefore, insofar as a man is ambitious, he endeavors to discover disagreements with his peers, and to find errors in their opinions, and hence, to interpret their opinions in the worst light, except insofar as they seem to flatter him or his opinion. For ambition is a kind

of pride, and as we have seen, insofar as a man is proud, his sole desire is to imagine himself glorying over others (AT IX 18).

Dejection on the other hand is opposed to ambition, but not necessarily to learning. Spinoza wrote in *Short Treatise,* "Dejection is what prevents us from doing what we would have to do to perfect ourselves. We see this in the skeptics, who deny that man can have any truth, and by that denial deprive themselves of having truth" (KV 2.8). But we have seen that a similar kind of skepticism can also be determined by pride, inasmuch as through pride a man endeavors to doubt the adequate causes of things and to affirm only his personal opinions; whereas through dejection he doubts himself and his power to understand and learn. For insofar as a man is dejected, he suffers from thinking he and his opinions are weak, ignorant, or unintelligent compared to another and his opinions; and hence, his desire is to that extent, not to distinguish himself and his opinions from others and their opinions in the hope of being praised above them, but rather to conceal his individual self and his actual personal opinions through "bashfulness", or fear of being criticized or derided by others (E3AD31), and to imitate, or "emulate", them and their opinions (E3P27S). Therefore, note again that through dejection the man recognizes his weakness, or unhappiness, but inadequately, and therefore, that through dejection the opinions he endeavors to imitate or learn from those he considers superior to him might be true or false or good or bad. Note also that insofar as the man suffers fear of criticism and a hope of concealing his individuality, his hope of concealment is accompanied by a fear of discovery, and therefore that insofar as he imagines his weakness, or inferiority, exposed to others, he can to that extent enjoy nothing more than the image of them pitying and helping him rather than blaming him; for insofar as he imagines himself praised by anyone, he is to that extent neither dejected nor bashful, but proud and ambitious.

Therefore, whereas piety and courtesy are actions of the understanding, arising solely from reason, ambition and bashfulness are passions of the imagination, arising from vanity. And whereas, through ambition, we desire to speak of our own individual power, or the power of our kind, and to impose our personal opinions on others, and through bashfulness, to conceal our weakness, or the weakness of our kind, and to imitate the opinions of others, through piety, on the other hand, we desire to speak of our true power and virtue, namely rational understanding, insofar as it is common to all and might be enjoyed by anyone. Therefore, insofar as we suffer vanity we endeavor to win the praises of others, or otherwise, to win their pity; whereas insofar as we enjoy

virtue we endeavor to aid their understanding with our understanding, and to encourage and aid their enjoyment of love and generosity with our love and generosity, but cautiously and moderately, and in accord with their individual understanding, and only to the extent that they express an actual and rational interest, so as to live peacefully with them in friendship and mutual gratitude.

26. Apart from mankind, [it seems that] we know of no individual thing in nature whose mind we can enjoy and with which we can unite in friendship. Furthermore, regard for one's own advantage does not require a man to preserve the things external to him in nature, but rather, to preserve or destroy them according to their usefulness to him, and to adapt them to his own advantage.

Explanation: We sympathize with external things insofar as we imagine them as like us. Furthermore, it often seems that of the individual external things we imagine as present, we know nothing else as useful to us as other men; and it seems that we know nothing else besides men who can join with us as equal citizens of a political state. But although moral sympathy and common sense might therefore seem to suggest that humanity is as it were specially sacred (E4P18S, E5P36C), reason nonetheless demonstrates that all things are sacred, each thing to itself, and each thing to God. Therefore, we actually do right to use the things in nature according to our own advantage, and to hold nothing specially sacred except conventionally, through our political and other personal alliances, and thereby to that extent to honor mankind, and one's city, neighbors, family, and so forth, in accord with custom and courtesy (TTP16, TP2-3). Yet we also do right in accord with our own best advantage to enjoy insofar as we can, and in relation to whatever things we can, the rational emotions of mercy, generosity, and charity, inasmuch as these emotions always involve unmixed happiness.

27. The advantage we get from the things external to us, apart from the experience and knowledge we gain from observing them and changing them from one form to another, is ultimately the preservation of our bodies, and in this respect, the most advantageous things are those that can feed and nourish the body in such ways that all its parts can best perform their functions. For as the body is more capable of being affected in various ways and of affecting external bodies in various ways, so is the mind more capable of thinking. Therefore to nourish the body as it needs, one must use many foods of different kinds. For the human body is composed of numerous parts of different natures, which need a continual supply of foods of various kinds so that the

whole body is equally capable of all that can follow from its nature, and consequently, so that the mind too is equally capable of conceiving many things.

Explanation: Because "we lack the infinite knowledge that would be necessary for a perfect acquaintance with all the goods between which we have to choose in the various situations in our lives" (AT IV 308), we have to rely on empirical conjectures and probable reasoning to judge the advantages and disadvantages of particular foods and other goods; and although we can look for the most scientific and least biased opinions, we can't know with certainty how true or false they are or how closely they apply in our circumstances. But on the other hand we can deduce from reason and know with certainty that, because our desires for particular things can easily become excessive, a greater variety of foods and other goods is generally better. This seems to explain one meaning of the Delphic maxim, "Nothing too much."

Note therefore that the foods which best aid the growth of our bodies and minds do not consist solely of foods that we eat. For we nourish our bodies and minds also with foods consumed through our eyes, ears, and so forth, such as words, pictures, and music. Here too, a greater variety seems generally better; but note on the other hand that insofar as words, pictures, and music clearly and distinctly express reason they can to that extent nourish one's whole mind or body equally (E4P61).

28. To provide such a variety of goods, human power would hardly suffice if men did not lend one another their assistance. But money supplies a token for all things, with the result that its image captivates the minds of the multitude; for they can hardly conceive any kind of pleasure that is not accompanied by the idea of money as its cause.

29. But this is a vice only in those who seek money, not because of poverty or to meet their needs, but because they have found ways to make money, by which they raise themselves to a state of splendor in which they glory. They nourish their bodies according to custom, but grudgingly; for they believe the money they spend on preserving their bodies is lost. But [insofar as] men understand the use of money, and wisely govern their desire for money according to their needs, they live content with little.

Explanation: Having money is good insofar as it can help to support one's life and health and the growth of one's intellect, and "for conforming to the customs of the community" (TIE17). Furthermore, if the need arises in one's personal encounters with others, who are poor or unfortunate, it can be advantageous to have money to

support merciful but moderate charity. But on the other hand, excessive enjoyment of wealth or treasures, or a desire to give others cause for congratulations or envy, can distract one's imagination from enjoyment of rational understanding, or happiness (TIE4).

30. Since all things are good that aid the parts of the body in performing their functions, and since pleasure consists in this, that a man's power is aided, or increased, insofar as he is composed of mind and body, it is clear that whatever brings one pleasure is in that respect good. But since the things in nature do not act with the purpose of affecting us with pleasure, and since their power of acting is not adjusted to suit our needs, and lastly, since most pleasures affect only a part of the body, it follows that the desires arising from pleasures can easily become excessive unless we take care to follow reason. Furthermore, when we follow our passions, we are led to overestimate whatever seems attractive in the present, and to underestimate what will happen in the future.

Explanation: Insofar as we are affected by emotions of joy and pleasure our power of desire is to that extent increased; whereas insofar as we are affected by emotions of sorrow and pain our power of desire is to that extent decreased. Therefore, the things we desire and love affect us more powerfully than the things we fear and hate; and hence, we generally underestimate the dangers involved in our desires. Therefore, reason always urges caution and moderation.

Moreover, insofar as we conceive a thing as present, we conceive only ideas that assert its existence and thereby assert its power; whereas insofar as we conceive a thing as possible or probable in the future, we also conceive ideas that partly exclude its present existence and thereby assert its weakness. Therefore, a thing conceived as present affects us more powerfully than things conceived as future; and so for this reason, even when we know what would be better in the future, this knowledge can be overcome by a desire for a lesser good in the present.

Furthermore, we have seen that insofar as we imagine the passions of others whom we consider like us or superior to us, we necessarily imitate their emotions and therefore desire the things they seem to love and desire; and so we can see how for this reason we are often moved to desire things that are not to our own best advantage and even things we would otherwise judge more harmful than good.

Lastly, we have also seen how wonder can affect any of our passions, so that our minds remain fixed on an object of passion due to its novelty or uniqueness. Therefore we desire novel or unusual pleasures more fixedly than those that seem ordinary. But

such pleasures are to the same extent insecure, not only because we risk a greater sorrow when the rare thing has been lost or consumed, or because enjoyment of an object that few can possess may give others cause for envy, but because our wonder at the thing's novelty will naturally diminish as we become used to its presence, so that we will then seek new objects of wonder.

But insofar as a man understands what is truly good, he seeks only what will aid the preservation and health of his body and the growth of his intellect; and therefore he uses to his advantage whatever pleasant things come his way or are readily available; and he enjoys them as he can, but cautiously and moderately, not to the point of weariness or disgust, nor with any intent to give others cause for congratulations or envy. Therefore, insofar as he is wise he endeavors to refresh and recreate himself with moderate and pleasant foods and drinks, with scents and the beauty of plants and animals, with the arts, music, and the theater, with books and schooling, and with exercise, sports, and games, and so on, such as anyone might enjoy without injury to another (E4P45S).

31. Superstition, on the other hand, seems to assert that whatever brings pain is good and whatever brings pleasure is bad. But again, neither God nor anyone but the envious takes pleasure in our weakness or misfortune. For the more we are affected with pleasure, the more we [can] pass to a state of greater perfection and hence the more we [can] participate in the divine nature. Nor can pleasure ever be evil when it is governed by a true regard for one's own advantage. But he who on the other hand is guided by fear and does good solely to avoid evil is not guided by reason.

Explanation: Happiness or bliss consists in the mind's activity of understanding and, thereby, its activity of emending its own emotions, or in other words, in love for the whole of reality, or love for reality itself, and thereby, in love for each individual thing in reality. Therefore, as we have seen, insofar as a man understands his emotions, his desires must necessarily be good, and so he is guided, not by fear of what is evil, but only by love of what is good. And although unemended pleasure affects only parts of the mind and actually limits one's happiness or participation in the infinite divine nature, on the other hand, insofar as pleasure is emended, or modified by understanding, it constitutes true growth of one's whole intellect and power to enjoy happiness. Therefore, those who avoid even moderate pleasures actually follow, not virtue, but a kind of bondage, in which they take pride, making but a false show of religion, morality, or virtue (TTP Praef, E5P10S). For as we have seen, happiness, or bliss, is not

the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; and we do not enjoy bliss because we govern our passions; it is instead because we enjoy bliss that we are able to govern our passions.

32. But the power of a man is extremely limited and is infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes; and thus, we do not have an absolute power of adapting to our use the things external to us. Nevertheless, we will bear patiently with whatever happens that goes against our own advantage, insofar as we know that if our power was insufficient to avoid those things, it is because we are but a part of the whole of nature, whose order we follow. If we clearly and distinctly understand this, that part of us that is defined by understanding, that is, the better part of us, will acquiesce and will endeavor to continue in acquiescence. For insofar as we understand, we can desire nothing but what is and must be; nor can we find absolute happiness in anything but truth. Therefore, insofar as we understand, the endeavor of the better part of us is in harmony with the whole of nature.

Explanation: We have seen that the power of the mind over its passions consists chiefly in this (E5P20S):

1. In adequate knowledge of one's emotions insofar as they can be understood through reason and intuition of God. For as we have seen, insofar as we adequately understand our emotions in relation to reason and God, we necessarily rejoice in happiness and cannot possibly feel any sorrow, or hate anything, or consider anything in reality bad or wrong, but must instead rejoice in infinite perfection.

2. In recognizing that the knowledge and bliss in one's understanding, or intellect, which are related to unchanging eternity, are absolutely true and certain; whereas the opinions and passions that arise in one's imagination, and are related to time and change, are partial and confused, or inadequate and partly false. For insofar as we recognize our unchanging real self, and thereby conceive ourselves and all things in relation to God, confused opinions and disturbing passions cannot arise in our minds. Therefore it is to our highest advantage to familiarize ourselves with the nature and properties of our real self, and to understand its identity with God, or absolute being, so that we can easily recognize God, or reality, in our experience.

3. In emendation, or correction, of one's emotions that do arise, that is, in understanding the various passions and thereby recognizing one's own passions as they arise

and, hence, conceiving them not only through ideas of their external causes, which the mind imagines only partially and confusedly, but more so, through ideas of their adequate causes, or in other words, through reason. For as we have seen, insofar as we understand our passive emotions, they cease to be passive; and insofar as we understand reason, we enjoy happiness. Therefore it is to our advantage to familiarize ourselves with the causes and properties of the various passions, so that we can easily recognize and emend them.

4. In the multiplicity of ways in which the ideas and images of external things can be associated in one's imagination with clear and distinct ideas of reason, so that one's adequate ideas will be readily recalled to the imagination. For example, reason teaches that hatred should be met with love and generosity or cheerfulness, and should not be repaid with more hatred; yet the force of passion is such that we are liable to forget this precept when we need it most (E4P15). Therefore it is to our advantage that we often reflect on the injuries we frequently meet with and at the same time the best ways to meet such injuries with love, generosity, and cheerfulness; and thus, the appropriate remedy will become so associated with each injury that it will be close to hand when needed (E5P10S).

5. In the power by which the mind can order and connect its opinions in agreement with its knowledge of reason and intuition of God, so that to that extent one's actual endeavor and desires are in perfect agreement with nature. For example, if someone recognizes that he often fails to govern or moderate his desires, he can strengthen his power to do so by reflecting and meditating on what true happiness and courage are, and how happiness is superior to passions of joy or pleasure, and how his enjoyment of external things can truly aid him. Or if a man often finds himself moved to sorrow through pity, he can emend his pity by reflecting and meditating on what the rational emotions of mercy and generosity are, and how they are properties of happiness and are superior to pity. And for one more example, if someone recognizes that he is in some way proud and ambitious for honors, or that proud thoughts frequently arise in his mind, or if conversely he finds himself despising honors bestowed on his peers, or otherwise suffering negative, dejected thoughts, he can emend his passion and desire by reflecting or meditating on his knowledge of what true happiness and self-contentment are, and how they are superior to the bondage of ambition and glory. So we can see from these examples how it is to our best advantage to understand and contemplate

adequate ideas of the rational virtues and their causes and properties, so as to fill our minds with happiness, and thereby emend our passions.

Therefore we have seen how adequate knowledge, and most particularly, how intuitive knowledge, or the pure awareness whose foundation is God, can benefit a man in emending his passions, if not absolutely removing them, nevertheless causing them to occupy the least part of his mind. For as we have seen, insofar as we adequately understand God, or reality, we thereby conceive and experience an absolutely unalloyed love for that which is infinite, eternal, and immutable, or in other words, an absolute bliss and love of all things in reality.

Appendix 2: The Certainty of Reason

Rationalism and rational metaphysics have flourished only rarely and briefly in man's history. For it seems that wherever the constraints of the traditional myths, superstitions, and dogmas have been loosened enough for rational inquiry to proceed, the twin forces of irrationality, namely our prejudicial passions on the one hand and our paralyzing doubts on the other hand, thus also unshackled, have soon confounded men's minds into believing, variously, that they really know nothing, or that they know nothing of the infinite and eternal things, or that whatever they do know of such things, they know without the certainty of reason. Hence, the most fundamentally adequate rational metaphysics, such as Parmenides' in ancient times and Descartes' and Spinoza's in modern times, have been deduced and demonstrated only to be challenged and almost instantly swept aside by the newer and more popular but fundamentally inadequate common-sense and romantic or moral philosophies, all of which in some way deny the certainty of reason and posit as their first principles assertions and conjectures which agree more with their authors' and admirers' preconceptions and passions than they agree with reason. I have shown in the previous chapters how these preconceptions and passions arise in our minds; and so that we can also understand the skeptical doubts that might arise, I will demonstrate in this appendix, not only that skepticism in regard to reason and rational metaphysics is unfounded and absurd, but moreover, that we can know nothing absolutely certain of reality and the things in reality except what we know through rational metaphysics.

I. The Sage and the Sophist

In the early fifth century BC, shortly after the discovery of mathematical necessity and the apparently related first awakening of Hellenic philosophy, Parmenides of Elea, who is often called the father of metaphysics, wrote this proposition:

> One way, that what is, is and cannot be what is not, is the right way of demonstration; for demonstration must follow truth. (Fragment 2)

As I will show, this proposition represents the foundation of the rationalist philosophy, or rational analysis of our idea of reality against the standard of reason, through which

a rational metaphysics, or a true and adequate explanation of reality and the relations of things in reality, can be discovered, defined, and demonstrated with certainty.

But "confusion in mortals' hearts leads their intellects astray" (Fragment 6), and it was consequently not long, only some fifty years, before Gorgias of Leontini, the Sophist, countered Parmenides with his own, skeptical proposition:

> If anything is, it cannot be known. (*On Nature,* Chapter 1)

Few of the ancients were troubled enough by arguments for an absolute skepticism to abandon philosophical inquiry as entirely futile; yet even fewer were convinced by Parmenides' argument for a strictly rationalist method of inquiry, because they saw how it led almost immediately to an absolutely monist philosophy they could hardly understand or believe; and therefore they continued their philosophical speculations in ways that did not strictly distinguish between the uncertainty of believing opinions they considered common sense or morally compelling and the certainty of understanding principles of reason they could clearly and distinctly recognize as self-evident.

II. Two Thousand Years Later

Two thousand years later, René Descartes, the founder of modern, Continental Rationalism, who is often called the father of modern philosophy, took his inspiration from his understanding of mathematical necessity (AT VI 9) and, turning his attention to metaphysics, claimed to demonstrate, "with the most perfect certainty" (AT VII 145), the two propositions upon which, as he said, a rational metaphysics depends: "I am thinking, therefore I exist" (AT VI 32), and "It is impossible that God should ever deceive me" (AT VII 53-54). But first he assembled powerful arguments for an absolute skepticism, so he could then show that we can know nothing with certainty except what we deduce from these two propositions (AT VII 12). But as we know, almost four hundred years later, Descartes' arguments for skepticism have indeed persuaded many to doubt everything, whereas his arguments for the certainty of reason and rationalist metaphysics have persuaded almost no one, but have instead acquired such disrepute that, today, profession of metaphysical certainty about almost anything is generally disparaged as the mark of the naive, the fanatical, or the lunatic. But as I will explain, though Descartes did not convince us all that he had demonstrated both of

these propositions with certainty, he did convince many of us that, if they could both be known with certainty, skepticism would thereby be refuted, inasmuch as reason and the conclusions of reason would be established as absolutely certain. Therefore I will consider Descartes' arguments against skepticism in his *Meditations* and the *Objections and Replies.*

In *Meditation I,* Descartes establishes an apparently absolute doubt, or in other words, an absolute skepticism. For he argues not only that he can doubt the testimony of his senses, since they "occasionally deceive us", but also that he can doubt his perception of his body, "eyes, head, hands, and so on", since as he says, he might be "dreaming", so that such perceptions "could be imaginary". But what is more, he then argues that he can doubt even those ideas "which seem most evident", such as that "two and three added together make five" or "that a square has no more than four sides"; for he claims there might be a malicious God, or "a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me." And hence,

> There is not one of my former beliefs about which a doubt might not properly be raised... So in the future I must withhold my assent from these former beliefs just as carefully as I would from obvious falsehoods. (AT VII 21-22)

In *Meditation II,* however, Descartes claims to discover that there is at least one thing of which he can be absolutely certain, namely, that he exists; for he reasons that whether he doubts or affirms his existence, that is, whether he thinks that he may not exist or thinks that he does exist, he thereby demonstrates that he is thinking, or is: "I am thinking, therefore I am." And thus,

> This proposition, 'I am, I exist', is necessarily true whenever I propose it or conceive it in my mind. (AT VII 25)

But then, in the beginning of *Meditation III,* Descartes seems for a moment to resume his former, absolute doubt; for now he says that he cannot be certain of "anything" unless he knows that God exists and is not a deceiver. Therefore he proposes, and claims to demonstrate, the existence of a supreme, absolutely veracious God; and he then claims to deduce from this fact that whatever he perceives "clearly and distinctly" is true (*Meditations III–V*).

But from the first, Descartes' critics have objected that his order of reasoning is circular, since he uses his clear and distinct ideas, or reason (AT V11 147f.), to demonstrate, first, that he is certain of his existence, and second, that God cannot be a deceiver, and only then, that reason is infallible. To this, Descartes replies,

> When I said that we can know nothing for certain until we are aware that God exists, I expressly declared that I was speaking only of knowledge of those conclusions which can be recalled when we are no longer attending to the arguments by means of which we deduced them. Now awareness of first principles is not normally called 'knowledge' by logicians. And when we become aware that we are thinking things, this is a primary notion which is not derived by means of any syllogism. When someone says 'I am thinking, therefore I am, or I exist', he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind ... by experiencing in his own case that it is impossible to think without existing. (AT VII 140)

In this appendix, I will develop this reply and show that it is correct, even if Descartes' argument as written may be somewhat obscure or incomplete. That is, I will show that his argument is neither circular nor otherwise unfounded but is perhaps imperfect or imperfectly expressed. And therefore, with the guidance not only of Descartes, but also of Parmenides and Spinoza, I will show that we are certain that we exist, that we can be certain that there is not a malicious God that is deceiving us insofar as we reason, and therefore, as I will explain, that we can be certain of the absolute infallibility of reason and the absolute authority of its conclusions in our experience. Therefore, let us examine in turn each source of our certainty, or each of Descartes' two fundamental propositions, to clarify their meaning and truth, and refute the skeptic's objections as they arise.

III. I Am Thinking

Descartes' first demonstration, 'I am doubting, therefore I am thinking, therefore I am', has been called inadequate, or unfounded, because as a reasoned argument, it depends for its validity on what are known today as the Laws of Thought, or "first

principles" of reason, which Descartes, while meditating, has not yet established or distinguished as indubitable, such as (1) that a thing must be identical with itself, (2) that a thing cannot be both itself and not itself, and (3) that a thing cannot both exist and not exist. For if the first of these, the Law of Identity, can be doubted, then the I that thinks and therefore exists might not be I, and if the second, the Law of Non-Contradiction, then the I that thinks and exists might also not think or exist, and if the third, the Law of Excluded Middle, then again I might exist or not exist. Or to give another example,

> If someone were to doubt whether something can come from nothing, he would immediately be able to doubt whether he exists when he thinks. For if I could affirm something of nothing, namely, that it can be the cause of something, then at the same time and by the same right, I would be able to affirm thought of nothing and hence to say that I am nothing when I think. (Spinoza, PPC1P4S)

Therefore, I can be certain that the proposition, 'I am', is true only if I'm certain that the laws of thought are also true. For as we have seen, if I could doubt the certainty of the laws of thought I could then doubt my existence without thereby knowing that my doubting demonstrates my existence. But as Descartes and Spinoza suggest, since I actually am certain that I exist, the objection demonstrates, not that I can be uncertain of my existence, but rather, that my knowledge of the certainty of the laws of thought is necessarily involved in my knowledge of my existence, inasmuch as my certainty that I exist necessarily involves certainty that I am and must be identical with myself; that I cannot be both myself and not myself; that I cannot both exist and not exist; that my existence cannot be non-existence; and so forth.

For as Descartes says, I am certain that I exist, not because he has given me a syllogism that proves it, but because I know I am thinking, or exist, "by a simple intuition of the mind", or in other words, by simple and immediate certainty, exactly as if I am the knowing, or thinking, that I exist (*Meditation II*). Note therefore Descartes' definition of intuition:

> Two things are required for mental intuition. First, the proposition intuited must be clear and distinct; and second, the whole proposition must be understood all at once, and not bit by bit. But when we think of the process of

> deduction ... it does not seem to take place all at once: inferring one thing from another involves a kind of movement of our mind. (AT X 407)

That is to say, Descartes' demonstration, or deduction, 'I am doubting, therefore I am thinking, therefore I am', though adequate and certain, does not prove my existence to me or free me from doubt about my existence; but rather, inasmuch as it agrees with my immediate intuition, it merely explains to me "bit by bit" why it is that, though I can doubt anything else, I cannot doubt my existence.

But to this some philosophers object that Descartes has not actually established an intuition that he is thinking and exists, but only that thoughts are occurring. But this is saying Descartes just thinks he thinks, which is absurd. For the objection clearly acknowledges that Descartes has established not only that thoughts are occurring but also that he is aware of these thoughts; and he has said explicitly that awareness is what he means by thinking (AT VII 32, 160, 352). So this awareness is what he means by a "simple intuition" that he is thinking and exists.

But now someone still might object that merely calling my awareness of my existence an intuition is not enough to free me from doubt; for if I am doubting everything, I can thereby doubt this intuition too. But again, I'm not doubting everything. I'm only doubting whatever I can doubt; and I say again with absolute certainty that I am aware, and I know I exist, and I can neither doubt that I exist nor conceive that any argument, however ingenious, could persuade me to doubt that I exist.

> This conviction is so firm that it is impossible for me ever to have reason for doubting it, and therefore, there are no further questions for us to ask: we have everything we could reasonably want. What is it to me that someone might feign that the perception whose truth I am so firmly convinced of may appear false to God or an angel, so that it is, absolutely speaking, false? Why should this alleged absolute falsity bother me, since I can neither believe in it nor have even the slightest suspicion of it?.. Such a conviction is clearly the same as the most perfect certainty. (AT VII 144-45)

Therefore, I am not begging the question when I say I am certain of my existence. It is the skeptic who is begging the question when he claims I can doubt my existence. "For I am speaking here of true doubt in the mind, and not of what we often see, when someone says in words that he doubts, although his mind does not doubt" (TIE77).

Furthermore, we have seen how adequate knowledge and certainty of the laws of thought, or first principles of reasoning, is necessarily involved in one's certainty of one's existence; for we have seen that insofar as the laws of thought are conceived clearly and distinctly in relation to one's knowledge of one's existence, "they cannot be called into doubt without immediately putting this unshakable foundation of ours also into doubt" (PPC1P4S); and hence we have seen that insofar as we understand them this way, "we cannot doubt them unless we think of them, but we cannot think of them without at the same time believing they are true" (AT VII 146). Therefore, we can now see that insofar as we conceive reason, or thought in conformity with the laws of thought (E4P59), in relation to our knowledge of our existence, we must necessarily conceive it as certain, so that we cannot doubt, but must absolutely affirm, whatever conclusions we might clearly and distinctly deduce in conformity with the laws of thought either from the laws of thought themselves or from the proposition, 'I am thinking', so long as we "attend to the arguments by the means of which we deduced them" (AT VII 140).

Therefore, I can deduce two kinds of conclusions with certainty: first, logical, or "transcendental" (E2P40S1), conclusions, which follow from the laws of thought, and second, existential, metaphysical conclusions, which follow from the proposition, 'I am thinking'. For through my conception of the laws of thought considered in themselves I conceive, and therefore can infer, nothing definite that really exists, but only the ways that real things might conceivably be related (AT VIIIA 8). Whereas, through my conception of the proposition, 'I am thinking', I know that a real thing, or being, does exist, and that it exists thinking. Therefore, I can infer from 'I am thinking' not only an epistemology, or metaphysics of thinking and knowing, but also an ontology, or metaphysics of being, insofar as my knowledge of reality, or being, conforms with the laws of thought.

But "this will proceed the more easily and successfully, the better we have defined the thing in question" (TIE94). For "what is this 'I' that I know" in the propositions, 'I am thinking' and 'I am' (AT VII 27)? It is not just a name, but the name of something real, which exists thinking; and as we have seen, since I know something real is thinking, I must also know and can understand clearly and distinctly that reality exists and that thinking exists (AT VIIIA 8). But further, we have seen that my intuition of my existence must necessarily also involve intuition of the laws of thought, such as 'that a thing must be identical with itself' and 'that a thing cannot both exist and not exist'; and therefore, we can now see that, insofar as I am certain that I exist and am

thereby certain that reality, or being, likewise exists, I can also be certain that reality, or being, or what is, exists necessarily in virtue of its nature, or in other words, in virtue of the fact that it is what is, or again, because what is must be what is and cannot be what is not. Furthermore, we can now also see that my knowledge of my existence cannot be something different from my knowledge of the existence of reality, or what is, because if it were, it would have to be knowledge of the existence of what is not, which contradicts the laws of thought and is therefore impossible. Therefore, my knowledge of my existence and my knowledge of the necessary existence of reality are not only equally certain foundations for philosophy, but must be, "in some way" (AT VII 45), different expressions of the same foundation, which is known to me by a simple and immediate intuition, which involves in itself my intuition of the certainty of reason. That is to say, if I define this being, or thing, of which I am clearly and "immediately aware" (AT VII 160), insofar as I might conceive it distinctly in relation to nothing, or no other, or in other words, as "separated" (AT VIIIA 22) from what is not, or not separated from anything, I then call it 'what is', or 'reality', and I do not thereby distinguish myself or my thinking from any other thing that might exist in reality. Whereas if I instead define this "thinking thing" (AT VII 27) insofar as I might conceive it distinctly in relation to another, or in other words, as separated from another, of which I am not immediately aware, namely the body or bodies I perceive (AT VII 29-34), I then call it 'myself' or 'my mind' and infer that I am a thinking thing that exists in a "greater", or "more complete", "independent" reality, of which I am thinking (AT VII 51).

Therefore we have seen this "unshakable foundation for philosophy" distinguished, defined, and demonstrated with certainty. And thus we have also seen demonstrated, albeit fundamentally, "the true method" of philosophy (TIE36), or "the right method of conducting one's reason in the search for truth" (AT VI 1), by which we distinguish, define, and demonstrate what we are thinking, or rather, what we can clearly and distinctly know of reality, in conformity with the laws of thought (TIE53, TIE104), so that our ideas of reality might conform with reason (TIE31), or "the power of judging well and distinguishing the true from the false" (AT VI 2). Therefore, if someone still asks how we might know an absolutely true and certain philosophy, I reply that we can recognize such a philosophy as we recognize that we are thinking and that what is cannot be what is not; for "affirming and denying is what thinking is" (CM2.12), and affirming that what is must be what is, and denying that what is can be what is not, is what rational thinking is.

IV. An Idol of the Theater

But though we now understand the origin of our certainty of reason and its conclusions, and thereby the foundation of a rational metaphysics, in our immediate and absolute intuition of existence, we still must explain the absolute authority of reason and the "dictates of reason" (E4P18S, E4P67) in our experience. For though we might infer one thing from another with certainty,

> We may forget the arguments in question and later remember simply the conclusions which were deduced from them. The question will then arise as to whether we possess the same firm and immutable conviction concerning these conclusions, when we simply recollect that they were previously deduced from quite evident principles (our ability to call them 'conclusions' presupposes such a recollection). My reply is that the required certainty is indeed possessed by those whose knowledge of God enables them to understand that the intellectual faculty which he gave them cannot but tend toward the truth; but the required certainty is not possessed by others. (AT VII 146)

In other words, we can trust such remembered conclusions only if we know there is a veracious God and not a malicious God that is "deliberately and constantly deceiving us" in our understanding of reason and its conclusions. And therefore, although,

> I have no reason to think there is a deceiving God ... so that any reason for doubt that depends on this supposition is a very slight and, so to speak, metaphysical one, still, in order to refute even this slight reason for doubt ... I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver. (AT VII 36)

But here I depart from what Descartes appears to be claiming; for I cannot be certain of a conclusion of reason merely by thinking I remember that it seemed certain. I can only be certain of a conclusion of reason insofar as I clearly and distinctly understand how it necessarily follows from my immediate intuition 'I am thinking' or 'what is, is'. But still, as we can see from the many doubts raised by Descartes' friends in the

Objections to his *Meditations,* it is possible to imagine that the supposition of an all-powerful malicious deceiver can cast doubt, not only on "those conclusions which can be recalled when we are no longer attending to the arguments by means of which we deduced them", but on any of his previous conclusions; and therefore here too Descartes' argument has been called circular by the objection that each inference in the argument, or each "bit" of the argument, is itself a conclusion, so that the premise from which it was inferred, insofar as it is now remembered, can then be called into doubt, so that, although each inference in the argument might be rationally or intuitively certain, it nevertheless can be doubted insofar as its remembered premise is then doubted.

But addressing this kind of subsequent doubt after we have recognized the certainty of reason, Spinoza explains,

> When we have formed this conception, any reason for doubting it will thereby have been removed. For then wherever we might direct our attention in order to doubt it, we will come upon nothing from which we must not instead infer that it is certain, just as happened concerning our existence. (PPC Prol)

So when I direct my attention to the objection supposing an all-powerful deceiver, I will not come upon anything that does not by itself demonstrate to me that I am certain of reason and its conclusions, because I will recognize that insofar as I understand the objection and its alleged conclusion I'm actually confirming my certainty of reason and its conclusions; so that I'm able to explain, or deduce, "bit by bit",

1. If there could be a god that was deceiving me insofar as I reason, I could not be certain of anything except that I exist.
2. But I am certain that if there could be a god that was deceiving me insofar as I reason, I could not be certain of anything except that I exist.

(I.e. I am certain that if there could be a god that was deceiving me, I could not be certain, that I could not be certain, and so on, of anything except that I exist.)

3. Therefore, there cannot be a god that is deceiving me insofar as I reason.

Note that this demonstration is deduced, not from the fact that I might recognize, clearly and distinctly, that because I am finite my thinking cannot consist in an infinite regress of doubt within doubt (AT V 355), but solely from the fact that I am trying to

doubt, just as Descartes' demonstration, 'I am doubting, therefore I am thinking, therefore I am', is deduced from the fact that he is trying to doubt. For as this demonstration emphasizes, I cannot feign that there might be a god that is deceiving me insofar as I reason, so that I could not be certain of anything except my existence, without being immediately certain of something else besides my existence, namely that I understand the argument and, moreover, that I can recognize that this alleged reason for doubting involves a contradiction insofar as it is alleged. For inasmuch as the argument for doubting the conclusions of reason contains a conclusion of reason in itself, by which my feigned doubt is alleged, it thereby demonstrates in itself, or insofar as I conceive it, that I cannot doubt the conclusions of reason (AT VII 145-46). And thus, I cannot consider any argument alleging that there might be a reason for doubting the conclusions of reason without knowing, not only that the alleged reason for doubting must be in some way fictitious, but moreover, that I am certain of reason and its conclusions because I understand them in the same way that I understand and am certain of my existence. Hence I need not determine what the nature of Descartes' "God" might be, or even whether it exists, in order to know whether it might be deceiving me insofar as I reason; for I know independently, yet with absolute certainty, through my immediate and absolute certainty of my existence, that whatever this God might be, whether it exists or not, or whether or not it is deceiving me in any other way, it cannot be deceiving me insofar as I understand reason. And so we have seen, clearly and distinctly, without needing to consider the nature of God, that, "Those who deny they have a capacity for sound reason cannot claim to prove their assertions by reason" (TTP5).

V. End of the Story

Therefore, we have seen the fundamental propositions, 'I am certain of my existence' and 'Insofar as I understand reason I cannot be deceived even by an all-powerful God', are both known to us with certainty through our clear and immediate intuition of reality and, moreover, that our certainty of reason and its conclusions is founded in this immediate and absolute certainty. Hence we have seen rational metaphysics, or

analysis of our idea of reality against the standard of reason, again established as the "right way of demonstration".

But although I maintain that I have demonstrated this "unshakable foundation" for philosophy with certainty, I acknowledge that my arguments will not persuade everyone; for although,

> These truths are clearly perceived, still, because of preconceived opinions, not all of them are clearly perceived by everyone. (AT VIIIA 24)

Therefore I do not expect my demonstrations, or any demonstrations, however certain or adequate, to overthrow at once anyone's habitual way of thinking (AT VII 22, E4P17S). I expect instead that someone who is determined to doubt will now think of another distinction or another conjecture in order to raise yet another doubt. Therefore, I acknowledge that I have not anticipated herein every imaginable objection; for such objections are, strictly speaking, infinitely divisible and must be at least as various as the ways that someone might be confused. But having demonstrated that reason is as certain as one's knowledge of one's existence, and having also refuted the objection that insofar as we understand reason we might be deceived by a malicious god, we have thereby,

> disposed of the most serious doubt, which arose from our ignorance about whether our nature might not be such as to make us go wrong even in matters which seemed to us utterly evident. And indeed, this argument easily demolishes any other reason for doubting. (AT VIIIA 16)

Therefore, "I am not obliged to meet every objection that someone might dream up" (E2P49S), but only the principal and "most serious" kinds of objections, all of which I have considered and exposed as fictitious.

But still, never giving up, our friend the skeptic will now hurriedly object that certainty alone does not entail reality or truth; for he will say that, although we are certain that we exist, and are certain that insofar as we understand reason we are not deceived, we still might be absolutely deceived. But this is nothing but the same argument we have already considered, repeated again but this time without any definite cause posited; and once again I cannot consider the argument without knowing immediately that I do exist and do understand reason. For no matter what the skeptic argues, even

if he asserts his absolute doubt without making any argument for it, he is actually saying he's certain he can't be certain, which is a contradiction that I can immediately recognize as a contradiction, thereby again affirming my certainty of reason. And thus, "in the end, he can only remain silent, lest he assume anything that tastes of truth" (TIE47). And so Descartes, having heard enough of "this kind of story", promptly and rightly dismisses the objection; for as he has shown, though he can say it in words, as he can say anything in words, insofar as he conceives the objection in relation to his knowledge of his existence, he can "neither believe in it nor have even the slightest suspicion of it" (AT VII 146).

Appendix 3: Outline of the Argument

Chapter I. God, Divine Attributes, and Modes

1.0 God, or being, necessarily exists.
Corollary 1: God is the only substance in reality, or nature.
Corollary 2: God, or being, is not an abstraction but absolutely concrete.
Corollary 3: God, or reality, is absolutely infinite.
Corollary 4: God is the cause of everything conceivable.

1.1 God, or reality, consists in an infinity of divine attributes.
Corollary: An attribute must be conceived as infinite in its substance.

1.2 God, or being, generates in itself, that is, each attribute generates in itself, an infinity of properties, or modes of itself, both infinite and finite.
Corollary 1: Insofar as each attribute is identical with God, or substance, its modes are identical with the modes of substance.
Corollary 2: The modes of each attribute must be conceived through the attribute, that is, not through any other.
Corollary 3: The order and connection of modes is the same in every attribute.

1.3 From each mode generated in a substance, whether infinite or finite, there follow a finite, or indefinite, number of properties, or modifications.
Corollary: Each finite mode of a substance is accidentally modified by an indefinite number of external causes.

Chapter II. The One and the Many

2.0 A substance, that is, absolutely infinite substance or an attribute, must be conceived as indivisible.

Corollary 1: A substance, namely God or an attribute of God, must be conceived as simple and perfect.

Corollary 2: Each mode of a substance, whether finite or infinite, can be conceived inadequately as infinitely divisible.

2.1 An attribute cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to God.

Corollary 1: An attribute can be conceived as distinct, that is, as really distinct, in relation to another attribute.

Corollary 2: An attribute can be conceived as distinct neither in relation to one other attribute nor in relation to any other definite number of other attributes; that is, it can be conceived as distinct only in relation to all the other attributes.

2.2 An infinite mode cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to its substance, that is, in relation to its attribute or in relation to God.

Corollary: An infinite mode can be conceived as a distinct entity, that is, as modally distinct, only in abstraction, or in other words, in relation to the other infinite modes.

2.3 A finite mode cannot be conceived as a distinct entity in relation to its substance, that is, in relation to its attribute or in relation to God.

Corollary: A finite mode can be conceived as a distinct entity, that is, as modally distinct, only in abstraction, or in other words, in relation to its world, or the other finite modes.

Chapter III. Mind and Body

3.0 God, or being, is the absolutely infinite divine intellect.

Corollary 1: The divine intellect is not an object of conception, but the absolute subject of conception.

Corollary 2: Being conceives itself.

Corollary 3: The divine intellect has an absolute power of conception; that is, it is absolutely free of perception.

Corollary 4: Being, or substance, cannot be perceived.

Corollary 5: The object conceived by the divine intellect is the whole of creation, or in other words, the divisible universe.

3.1 An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as an infinite divine intellect.

Corollary 1: An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as conceiving itself.

Corollary 2: An attribute conceived as a distinct entity is necessarily conceived as perceiving the other attributes.

Corollary 3: An attribute conceived as a distinct entity must be conceived as conceiving quantity as constituting the essence of the other attributes.

3.2 The object conceived by an attribute is the divisible universe, or whole creation, conceived through the attribute, which Spinoza calls the immediate infinite mode of the attribute.

Corollary 1: Insofar as an attribute conceives its immediate infinite mode, it necessarily perceives the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Corollary 2: The immediate infinite mode of an attribute conceives in itself indefinitely many mediate infinite modes, to infinity.

Corollary 3: Insofar as the immediate infinite mode of an attribute conceives its mediate infinite modes, it necessarily perceives the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

3.3 Each finite mode of a substance must be conceived as constituting a mode of intellectual activity, or self-conception.

Corollary: Each finite mode of an attribute must be conceived as perceiving the corresponding modes in the other attributes.

Chapter IV. Eternity, Duration, and Time

4.0 God, or being, is eternal; or rather, God is eternity.

Corollary: Being belongs to no genus; its essence and existence must be conceived as absolutely infinite and self-generating.

4.1 Each attribute, insofar as it is conceived as distinct, must necessarily be conceived as eternal.

Corollary: Neither eternity nor any eternal thing is in duration or time; instead, the duration of each particular mode in each substance is in eternity.

4.2 Each infinite mode, insofar as it is considered as following from the existence of a substance, that is, from God or from an attribute, whether immediately or mediately, must necessarily be conceived as eternal.

Corollary: Each infinite mode, insofar as it is considered as existing, not as it follows from a substance, but through its essence alone, is understood not as eternal but as sempiternal, or always existing.

4.3 The duration of a finite mode depends on the order and connection of modes in eternity, and can be conceived in relation to the durations of the other finite modes as constituting a mode of time.

Chapter V. The Real, the Rational, and the Actual

5.0 The activity of a finite mode of being, conceived in relation to being, is the real essence, or real self, of the mode, as it exists in eternity.

Corollary: Conception of the real essence, or real self, of a finite mode does not in any way involve perception.

5.1 The activity of a finite mode of an attribute, conceived in relation to the attribute, is the formal essence of the mode, which is eternal in the attribute.

Corollary: Conception of the formal essence of a finite mode does not involve distinct perception of the formal essence of the corresponding mode in any other attribute; that is, it involves perception of such modes only insofar as it involves perception of the other attributes as an infinite and indivisible object.

5.2 The activity of a finite mode, conceived in relation to the infinite modes in its substance, is that which I call the rational essence, or rational self, of the mode, which participates in infinite, or sempiternal, existence.

Corollary 1: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance is conceived in relation to the infinite modes in the substance, that is, as a part of the infinite modes, it must be

conceived as having an infinity of properties in common with the other modes in the substance.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode of an attribute is conceived in relation to the infinite modes in the attribute, or insofar as its rational essence is conceived, that which corresponds to the mode in the other attributes must thereby be perceived insofar as it is modified by the infinite modes in those attributes.

5.3 The activity of a finite mode, conceived as a distinct thing in relation to its world, or the other finite modes, is the actual essence, or individual self, of the mode, which has a finite, or limited, duration.

Corollary 1: Conception of a finite mode of an attribute as a distinct entity, that is, conception of it in relation to its world, necessarily involves modally distinct perception of that which corresponds to it in the other attributes.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance is conceived as a distinct thing in relation to its world, its activity must be conceived as constituting an endeavor to continue in existence.

Chapter VI. Opinion, Reason, and Intuition

6.0 Knowledge, or conception, of an effect depends on and involves knowledge of its cause.

6.1 A finite mode of a substance has partial knowledge of the things it conceives through their partial, or inadequate, cause.

Corollary 1: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, in relation to its world, it has partial knowledge of its modifications.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a mode of time and a changing temporal relation between itself and the thing.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode of thought distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a three-dimensional place containing itself and the thing.

Corollary 4: Insofar as a finite mode imagines, or distinguishes, anything finite in its world, it necessarily conceives it as belonging to a particular genus.

Corollary 5: Insofar as a finite mode conceives its accidental modifications, or opinions and images, it has partial knowledge of the ways they accidentally modify each other.

6.2 A finite mode has adequate knowledge of any properties it conceives that are present and the same in an effect and its cause.

Corollary 1: A finite mode of a substance has adequate knowledge of the infinite modes, or common properties, in the substance.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives an infinite mode of the substance through an adequate cause, it knows it is true always and everywhere.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it has adequate but imperfect knowledge of itself and its properties.

Corollary 4: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it has adequate but imperfect knowledge of its accidental modifications and their causes.

6.3 A finite mode has adequate knowledge of the things it conceives through their adequate cause.

Corollary 1: A finite mode has adequate but indistinct knowledge of its own properties.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, i.e. in relation to its attribute or God, it has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of itself.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its substance, it has adequate and perfect but indistinct knowledge of its accidental modifications and their causes.

Chapter VII. Passion, Happiness, and Beatitude

7.0 The power of an effect depends on and involves the power of its cause.

7.1 Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, in relation to its world, it knows and suffers indefinite duration, or mortality.

Corollary 1: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself as a distinct thing in relation to its world, it necessarily suffers passions of joy and sorrow.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself as a distinct thing, it necessarily endeavors to imagine whatever it loves or hopes, and thereby whatever might seem to exclude that which it hates or fears.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode distinguishes anything finite in its world, it necessarily imagines a mode of vanity through which it compares itself, or its own power, to the power of the other thing, and thereby enjoys pride or suffers dejection.

7.2 Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it knows and participates in infinite, or sempiternal, existence.

Corollary 1: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it knows and participates in infinite and sempiternal enjoyment, or happiness.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives itself in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it necessarily enjoys self-contentment.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode of a substance conceives any of its passions in relation to a distinct and adequate idea of an infinite mode of the substance, it necessarily enjoys happiness and rational self-contentment.

7.3 Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, or substance, it knows and enjoys self-causation, or eternal existence.

Corollary 1: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to its attribute, it necessarily enjoys eternal bliss, or beatitude.

Corollary 2: Insofar as a finite mode conceives any of its modifications in relation to its attribute or substance, it necessarily enjoys beatitude.

Corollary 3: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, or being, it knows and enjoys self-generation, or eternity.

Corollary 4: Insofar as a finite mode conceives itself in relation to God, it necessarily enjoys absolutely infinite beatitude, or absolute bliss.

Appendix 4: Summary of Revisions

In this appendix, I have listed the most important errors I've found in Spinoza's *Ethics* and how I've revised them. Since Spinoza follows the rationalist method, he is always close to the truth. But as his friends who edited and published his *Opera Posthuma* note, "The writings contained in this book are for the most part unfinished, and have been very little reviewed, polished, or corrected by the author." As Descartes explains in *Rules for Direction of the Mind,* we have the ability when comparing two ideas to recognize relations of identity, difference, or contradiction between them. But this is only possible if we do compare them and if we compare only two rather than several ideas at once. Therefore, when someone is writing a chain of rationalist definitions and demonstrations like Spinoza's *Ethics,* the only way they can recognize whether they have, for example, defined the same thing twice but with different names, or whether anything they've said contradicts anything else they've said, is to compare every idea one by one with every other idea. This is a lengthy task, even with the electronic aids to writing available today. I consider it lucky that Spinoza completed the chain of arguments in *Ethics*, instead of spending too much time polishing some of the arguments to complete them all. So I have revised some details of some of his arguments, and I have summarized in this appendix how I've revised them.

1. Spinoza had to assert as axioms that for every effect there must be a cause and that knowledge of the effect depends on knowledge of the cause, because he demonstrates E1P1–20 not strictly in the order of real causes, but in a partly confused order, which seems arranged to emphasize Spinoza's disagreements with Descartes' metaphysics. For neither the axioms nor Spinoza's demonstrations of the properties of an abstract substance (P1-10) are necessary to demonstrate that absolutely infinite substance necessarily exists and is the cause of all things and, therefore, that for every effect, a cause that explains its essence and existence does exist, from which the axioms and properties follow.

2. Spinoza's definition of absolutely infinite substance, or God, as "a substance consisting in an infinity of infinite and eternal attributes" (E1D6) is true but inadequate. An adequate definition is 'that which exists in itself, and is conceived through itself, in relation to no other', or in other words, a substance that is conceived absolutely independently of any other. This definition explains the essence of substance not

through its attributes or through its property that it is absolutely infinite but through itself, and immediately affirms its existence as reality, or being.

3. Spinoza frequently refers to God by the traditional term "uncreated", which strictly speaking is inadequate. In *Short Treatise,* he explains correctly that "to create a thing is to posit both its essence and its existence"; and therefore, in the same way he says God is not uncaused but self-caused, Spinoza should say God is not uncreated but "self-created", or most strictly, "self-creating".

4. Spinoza explains somewhat confusedly in E1D2, "a thing is called finite in its own genus if it can be limited by another thing of the same nature", when he means a thing is called finite if it can be conceived as limited by another of the same substance. Similarly, in E1D6 he refers to an attribute as infinite "in its own genus", when he means it's infinite in its substance. It seems clear he said it those ways because he wasn't sure whether an attribute is a substance.

5. Spinoza's definition of an attribute as "that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of a substance" (E1D4) is inadequate, inasmuch as it explains only one property of an attribute but not its essence. An adequate definition is 'that which exists in itself, and is conceived through itself, in relation to another', or 'substance, insofar as a substance can be conceived in relation to another'. This definition explains the essence of an attribute, such as thought, which we conceive in relation to extension, and immediately affirms both its existence in one's experience and, furthermore, the existence of every conceivable attribute in absolutely unlimited substance.

6. Spinoza's explanation of extension as an attribute of substance is also inadequate. Thought is an attribute of substance, but extension is all the other attributes. Since each attribute must be conceived through itself, thought conceives itself but cannot conceive extension and only perceives it; and therefore, it conceives quantity as constituting the essence of extension, i.e. as an object extending an absolute limit to its conception infinitely, and thereby extending dimensions infinitely.

7. So when Spinoza says, "God is an extended thing" (E2P2), he should say, "God is an extending thing", as he says correctly, "God is a thinking thing" (E2P1). For God

cannot be conceived adequately as passively extended but must be conceived as actively extending.

8. Spinoza also sometimes refers to extension in ways that seem to agree more with common-sense materialism than with his theory of the attributes. He sometimes calls thought "objective reality" and extension "formal reality". He sometimes contrasts ideas versus "things" when he means ideas versus bodies. He says similarly in *Emendation of the Intellect,* "A circle is one thing, the idea of a circle is another", when he means the extended figure of a circle is one thing and the idea of a circle is another; and he even says, "It is above all necessary for us always to deduce our ideas from physical things, that is, from real beings", when he means we must always deduce our ideas from adequate causes in the real ontological order of causes. I think these kinds of errors are natural, or as expected. Almost all the errors Spinoza found and corrected in Descartes' metaphysics were common-sense errors; and likewise, most of the errors I've found in Spinoza's metaphysics are also common-sense errors, but with the difference that Spinoza often explains a thing correctly or close to correctly on one page where it's his main concern, but also refers to the same thing in a partly false common-sense way on other pages, probably due to insufficient review and revision.

9. Spinoza explains the absolutely infinite intellect of God, or substance, more or less adequately as "the essence of God" and "cause of all things" in part of E1P17S, but he explains it inadequately and often falsely everywhere else. Conception is neither a mode of thought nor uniquely the essence of thought. For a substance is that which is conceived through itself; and therefore conception, or rather self-conception, is the essence and power of substance and each of its attributes, which conceive, and thereby cause and determine, themselves and all the things, or modes, in them.

10. A mode of thought, i.e. an idea, or mind, such as a man, is therefore a mode of self-conception. That is, the man conceives himself and, thereby, perceives the mode of extension corresponding to him, namely his body, and he conceives a mode of quantity as constituting the essence of his body. So an idea, such as his mind, and the "idea of the idea" are the same thing; and his conception of his mind and its ideas and his perception of his body and its motions are the same thing. Spinoza's explanations of these points in E2P21 are confused and partly false, but close to the truth.

11. In E1P32 Spinoza considers God's freedom of will; but he defines will inadequately as necessarily determinate, so that, even though "God acts from the laws of his nature alone, and is compelled by no one" (E1P17), and therefore "is a free cause" (E1P17C2), nevertheless, "God does not act from freedom of will" (E1P32C). Spinoza should say instead, as he did in E1P17S, that God's will is identical with God's essence and power, and as he said in *Metaphysical Thoughts,* that "God acts from absolute freedom of will" (CM1/2).

12. Spinoza explains correctly that God creates all things, or everything conceivable, in the only possible order all at once in eternity; that "time is a product of the imagination" (E2P44S); and that teleology, or the idea that God or anything else acts for an end, or future purpose, is therefore imaginary; and he explains further how "this doctrine concerning the end inverts nature" by regarding as a cause what is really an effect (E1A). But he frequently follows Descartes in calling God an "efficient cause" even though Descartes had acknowledged in reply to his friends' objections that what he really meant was "another kind of cause analogous to an efficient cause" (AT VII 109); and Spinoza also sometimes says similarly that things "have been determined" by God when he should say they "are determined" by God; and lastly, he sometimes tries to explain finite things in a partly true but inadequate common-sense temporal order instead of the adequate and timeless rational order. These are minor errors; but they give the impression that there is one universal time and one universal past, which too are imaginary and false.

13. Spinoza similarly appears to be imagining universal time and a universal present in E2P8S, where he struggles to explain "the ideas of non-existing individual things" and says they "do not exist except insofar as the infinite idea of God exists". For even though Spinoza did not conceive these things as actually existing in his particular time and place, since they do exist in God, or eternity, they must necessarily exist in their own times and places.

14. Spinoza also sometimes confuses fictions, such as a winged horse, with contradictions, such as a square circle, and refers to both as impossible (CM1.3) and non-existent (E2P17S). But as he explains correctly elsewhere, a fiction does exist in his mind, whereas a contradiction can neither exist nor be conceived except as a word or combination of words.

15. Spinoza frequently explains that an individual finite thing, such as a man, is "a part of nature, which cannot be conceived adequately through itself alone independently of the other individual parts" (E3P3S, E4P2, E4A1), which is true but inadequate. Nature, or substance, in itself, is absolutely indivisible, simple, and perfect, and cannot be conceived adequately as a whole divisible into parts. But we conceive nature not only adequately but also, and simultaneously, inadequately as infinitely divisible into parts, or modes of itself, both infinite and finite.

16. Spinoza's definition of reason in *Ethics,* Part 2 as "ideas which are common to all things and are equally true in the whole and parts" (E2P38) is true but inadequate. The principles of reason, or "common notions", are the same things as the infinite modes of thought he deduced adequately in Part 1 as the infinitely many infinite properties that follow from the essence of thought, and therefore adequately explain the infinite properties of nature. The adequate definition identifies the adequate and proximate cause of the common notions and is therefore more useful for deducing the properties of reason and how they affect us.

17. Spinoza's definitions of opinion and intuition are also true but inadequate. Intuition is "perfect knowledge" of a thing insofar as it is conceived through its adequate cause, which is its substance. That is, intuition is immediate and concrete conception of a simple, indivisible, and eternal substance, namely conception of God, or being, in relation to no other or conception of thought in relation to extension and, thereby, concrete and perfect but indistinct conception of the things in them. Spinoza demonstrates the indivisibility of substance in Ethics, Part 1; but he doesn't refer to it in Parts 2 or 5 except vaguely as "the form of eternity" (E5P22).

18. Lastly, opinion is inadequate, or "partial and confused" (E2P59C), conception of a finite idea, such as a man's mind or any of his ideas, insofar as it can be conceived in abstraction as a distinct thing not in relation to its substance but in relation to its world, or the other finite ideas, and thereby conception of its duration in relation to their durations as forming a mode of time; and imagination is the corresponding perception of distinct finite bodies, or motions of bodies, and their durations.

19. In E2P23 Spinoza says, "The mind does not know itself except insofar as it perceives ideas of affections of the body", and his demonstration of this proposition shows that by "ideas of affections of the body" he means the imagination. This contradicts

"I am thinking, therefore I am" and also contradicts Spinoza's own explanation that an idea and an idea of the idea are the same thing; for the nature of conception is self-conception, and hence the mind conceives and knows itself both insofar as it imagines and insofar as it understands. Spinoza should say the mind does not know itself "as a distinct individual thing" except insofar as it imagines affections of the body.

20. Spinoza's definitions of freedom as absolute freedom, and bondage as anything less than absolute freedom, are inadequate inasmuch as they can't explain partial freedom. By an adequate definition of freedom we are wholly free both insofar as we cause and determine our own properties and insofar as we participate in causing and determining the common properties of nature; and we are partly free insofar as we partly cause and determine our accidental modifications, i.e. opinions, images, and passions of joy and sorrow, but we are partly bound insofar as they are partly caused and determined by external things.

21. Therefore, any time Spinoza says a free man does this but an impassioned, or "ignorant", man does that, he should say "insofar as a man is free" and "insofar as a man is impassioned". And similarly, throughout *Ethics,* Spinoza frequently forgets to say "insofar as" or "to the extent that"; but everything is substance insofar as this or that. For another example, where he says a passion ceases to be a passion "as soon as" we understand it, he should say "insofar as" we understand it.

22. Spinoza says in E4P47, "The emotion of hope … cannot be good in itself"; but this contradicts E4P41, "Joy in itself is not bad, but good", because Spinoza has defined hope correctly as a kind of joy (E3P18S2). He argues that because we vacillate between hope and fear there can be no hope without fear; but it doesn't follow that hope isn't good in itself any more than it follows that fear isn't bad in itself. Spinoza should say hope is good in itself but can be excessive or partly false, the same way he says joy, pleasure, love, and desire are good in themselves but can be excessive.

23. But although he has shown correctly that there can be no hope without fear and no fear without hope, Spinoza then defines confidence as hope from which all cause of fear has been removed, and despair as fear from which all cause of hope has been removed. These contradictions can be corrected by defining confidence as extreme hope and despair as extreme fear; but these definitions depend on opinions of how

much hope or fear is extreme and are therefore not clear and distinct but vague; and therefore, Spinoza's distinctions between hope and confidence and between fear and despair are rhetorical rather than rational.

24. Spinoza uses the term 'human nature' in two ways. He usually means infinite properties of nature that are true and the same in all finite things including men. But sometimes he means finite properties that are true only in a finite genus called 'human'; and although he often seems to recognize that distinct finite genera, or "species", are inadequate and confused imaginary ideas like all distinct finite ideas, he sometimes errs in a common-sense way by affirming the genus as an adequate idea, usually in a political context (E4P18S, E4P35C1). In his *Politics,* Spinoza acknowledges that his political theories are inferred "not from the teachings of reason, but from the common nature, or condition, of men" (TP1); yet there too he sometimes refers to his theories about finite genera as "sound reason" and claims he has deduced them with certainty. These errors can be partly emended by adding "seems" or "appears" to acknowledge the inadequacy. For example, "The rational principle of seeking one's own advantage [seems] to teach the necessity of allying ourselves with other men, but not with other animals, whose nature [appears] different than human nature" (E4P37S1). He also errs similarly, again usually in a political context, regarding other general ideas, such as 'man' and 'woman', 'city' and 'citizen', 'the learned' and 'the multitude', and 'philosopher' and 'fool'.

25. On the other hand, Spinoza errs in an almost opposite but also more or less common-sense way when he sometimes suggests that only particular finite things really exist and that finite genera, including the genus 'man', are merely "beings of reason", which are conceived in human minds but otherwise "can be called a mere nothing" (KV2.4, CM1.1, Ep19); and he says similarly, "the whole is only a being of reason" (KV1.2) and "nature creates individuals, not nations" (TTP17). But every genus can be conceived as a particular thing within a greater genus, to infinity, and every particular thing can be conceived as a genus of its parts, also to infinity. For a genus is actually an idea of a particular mode, or infinitely divisible whole, conceived inadequately as consisting of certain individuals, or particulars, within it.

26. Spinoza's definitions of pride and dejection as over-esteem and under-esteem of oneself are inadequate and, strictly speaking, false. An adequate definition of pride is 'enjoyment, insofar as one imagines one's power as strong compared to the power of

another'; and dejection is the suffering opposite to pride. Most of the properties Spinoza deduces from his definitions of pride and dejection are true, but many other important properties of pride and dejection can be deduced from the adequate definitions.

27. In *Ethics,* Parts 3 and 4, Spinoza disparages humility as the sorrow involved in dejection, which arises in the imagination and "is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason" (E4P53). But many authors write of a humility that does arise from reason; and likewise, in his earlier *Short Treatise,* Spinoza had followed Descartes in distinguishing "guilty humility", or "humility as a vice", which arises in the imagination, from "true humility", or "humility as a virtue", which arises in the understanding (KV2.8, AT XI 447). He still acknowledges this distinction and the virtuous kind of humility in *Ethics* when he says, "if we suppose that a man conceives his lack of power because he understands something more powerful than himself, by the knowledge of which he determines his power of acting, then we conceive nothing but that the man understands himself distinctly, or that his power of acting is aided"; but Spinoza does not call this rational virtue humility or assign it any name. Therefore, by true or rational humility I do not mean a kind of dejection or sorrow, but rational understanding of one's true relations with nature and the other things in nature insofar as we share an infinity of rational properties with them, or in other words, the same thing as rational self-contentment, or happiness (E4P53D).

28. Spinoza says in E4A32, "We will bear patiently with whatever happens that goes against our own advantage if we know we have done our duty and that if our power was insufficient to avoid those things, it is because we are but a part of the whole of nature, whose order we follow." I think it's unclear why he mentions knowing we have "done our duty", because he has already demonstrated that we can emend our passions of repentance and dejection through rational understanding the same way we can emend our other passions; and he has already demonstrated abundantly that morality and moral duty are imaginary, and that happiness, or rational contentment, is not the reward of virtue but virtue itself, or the power by which we emend our passions.

29. Spinoza deduces the virtues, or rational emotions, of generosity, gratitude, and mercy inadequately and confusedly from his political theory, or sentiment, that "nothing is more useful to a man than man" (E4P18S), in conjunction with the

rational principle, that "hatred is increased by reciprocal hatred, but can be destroyed by love" (E3P43), instead of deducing them adequately from their proximate cause as properties of happiness, or love of all things. And although he nevertheless correctly denies that these emotions involve "the nature of a negotiation or inducement" (E4P71S), his demonstrations of them do not adequately explain the unmixed enjoyment they involve and limit their objects to the citizens and allies of a political state (E4P37S2), or at most to only humans (E4P45S).

30. Spinoza seems passionate in E4P72, "A free man always acts honestly and never deceptively, even to save himself from imminent death. For if reason could urge dishonesty, it would do so for all men and would urge them to ally and have common laws only with deceptive intent, and in effect to have no laws in common at all." This contradicts E4P59, "Any act that can be determined by a passive emotion can also be determined by reason without a passive emotion", and even contradicts E4P18S, "The basis of virtue is the endeavor to preserve one's own being", and E4P22, "No virtue can be conceived as prior to this endeavor", and is similar to arguing that a medicine or surgery can never be good for anyone unless it's always good for everyone. Spinoza also makes similar arguments for absolute obedience to the laws of a political state, which contradict reason in similar ways (E4P73, TTP20, TP3). It's adequate, and enough in my opinion, to demonstrate how reason and intuition of reality move us to love of all things as they are, but also to prudence, mercy, courtesy, and generosity, and how these rational emotions move us to honest and legal speech and deeds, almost always.

31. In *Ethics,* Part 5, Spinoza explains how intuitive knowledge involves "an intellectual love of God" and that this love constitutes the mind's highest good, or beatitude. But he says in E5P20, "The greater the number of men we imagine to be joined to God by this love, the more it is encouraged". This contradicts E5P28, in which Spinoza explains correctly that an endeavor to know things by intuition cannot arise from imagination, but only from reason. Spinoza does say correctly in E5P20 that "this love toward God cannot be tainted by any emotion of envy or jealousy"; but he should say likewise that this love toward God depends on God alone and cannot be affected in any way by anything external or imaginary.

32. Spinoza says similarly in E5P36, "The mind's intellectual love of God is part of the infinite love by which God loves himself" and "God's love of men and the mind's

intellectual love of God are one and the same", which strictly speaking are inadequate and confused. God is absolutely indivisible; and therefore, God's love cannot be distinguished from God or be in any way conceived as a whole divisible into parts. Spinoza should say the mind's intuitive love of God is identical with God and identical with God's absolutely infinite love of all things.

33. In E5P23, Spinoza says, "The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal", which is confused and partly false. As he explains correctly in P29–30, the mind is eternal in thought, the body is eternal in extension, and both exist absolutely as one in God, or eternity, "which cannot be defined in relation to duration or time" or any particular time and place. It's possible that by the mind "remaining without the body" Spinoza was intentionally following the way Descartes had described the immortality of the mind; but I think it's likely that he's also referring confusedly to his intuition of his real self in God and the absolute power of its conception, which is absolutely free of perception of itself or any other, and constitutes absolutely perfect beatitude, or absolute bliss. In other words, what Spinoza actually demonstrates is not that the mind remains after the body, but that "we feel and experience that we are eternal".