Substance and Its Modes

H. F. Hallett

"CAUSE OF ITSELF"

1. Causation as Action

The conception of causation is fundamental in the philosophy of Spinoza; but it is causation conceived as action, and not as the mere regular sequence of inactive events. For by "action" here is meant not change of motion or rest, of content or quality, among spatio-temporal objects, nor of mode or content among mental ideas; on the contrary, mere uniform temporal change is essentially the ideal limit of the privation of action. This at the least was established by Hume. By "action" is signified the distinction in unity of "potency" and its "actuality." For to say that something is "actual" is to imply that it is the determinate actuality of some potency-in-act. Agency involves both a power of acting and the expression of that power in something enacted, a doing and a deed, and in action par excellence that which is enacted is the exhaustive expression of the potency, without inhibition or frustration, by which agency may otherwise be reduced to durational effort more or less effective. Action is thus originally and essentially eternal, and becomes durational only by limitation and modification. Mere uniform temporal sequence can be styled "causality" only by way of paradox—lucus a non lucendo.

Spinoza's philosophical intention, therefore, is to derive all things from a primordial infinite power or indeterminate potency self-actualized in an infinite and exhaustively determinate eternal universe; and it is thus that he conceives that "infinite beings follow in infinite ways from the divine nature," i.e. from the self-actualizing creative potency-in-act. The further derivation of the durational world of common experience and science, composed of things that in their order and status are imperfectly active, or conative, thus becomes an essential problem, the solution of which constitutes the

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1. E., I, xvi.

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chief value of Spinoza's theory—affording as it does the clue to that reversal of human privation that constitutes the essential character of morality.

It follows that all interpretations of the doctrine of Spinoza that fail to take due note of its activism, and interpret causation in terms of the confessedly impotent categories of posittivic theory are thereby hamstrung from the start, and can only proceed to further and more mischievous misunderstandings which seem to involve him in fallacies so futile and obvious as to lie beyond the possible stupidity of the merest tiro.

Part 1 of the Ethics is chiefly devoted to the clarification of the principles governing the nature and existence of the eternal self-actualizing potency, and to the deduction of the formal characteristics of this primordial agent. The essential nature of this being is laid down in the first definition: "By cause of itself I understand that the essence of which involves existence." Such a being is wholly independent of the operation or existence of what is other than itself, and is thus real sans phrase. That alone is primordially real that realizes itself as potency-in-act, subject to no alien contingency.

This primordial being is thus at once both cause and effect, and critics unable to divest themselves of the common notion of "cause" have often poured scorn upon the conception. Martineau, for example, claims that in the phrase causa sui the causa cancels the sui, and the sui cancels the causa, and Pollock that the definition "leaves causation wholly out of account" and "implies that the use of the word cause in this sense is really inappropriate." Whether the common use of the term "cause" as implying temporal production or conditioning is in any degree defensible, and if so how, and in what degree, need not now be canvassed; suffice it to emphasize once more that it is anachronistic as attributed to Spinoza. For him causation is the actualization of potency, not the mere sequence of passive "events," or even the relation of "sign" and "thing signified," but rather what Berkeley distinguished as "real causality," involving real power to generate or produce. Essentially it is not that the cause has the power, but that it is the power, and if that power is absolute its actuality (or effect) is, with it, self-existent.


1. Substance and Mode. Formal definitions of these terms are given at the beginning of Part 1 of the Ethics, and there is therefore no valid excuse to be offered by those who carelessly substitute other uses of them derived from alien sources. Substance does not stand for "matter" either in its commonsense or 's Lockian interpretation. It is not a supposed underlying somewh in which qualities inher e, but "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself: that is, that the conception of which does not require the conception of anything other from which it must be formed." It is self-existent and self-manifest being, self-actualizing and self-certifying being or potency-in-act. The definition of Mode of Substance at once contrasts it with Substance while maintaining their asymmetrical relation: "By Mode I understand the affectiones of Substance, or that which is in another, through which also it is conceived." Here the interpretation to be placed on the term "affectio," and what it means to be "in another," and to be conceived "through another" must be considered.

"In another" is evidently used by way of contrast with the "in itself" of the definition of substance. Whereas substance is self-existent and self-manifest, what is modal depends for its existence on what transcends, or lies beyond, its own proper nature, and can be conceived only as so related. But this does not mean (as has too often been supposed), at least not primarily and essentially, dependence on extrinsic co-ordinate modes (e.g. on things spatio-temporally other) as things are supposed to depend on their "natural causes"—a man on his parents, or a tree on the soil and atmosphere, for existence or sustenance. The mode's original "other" is substance itself as the potency-in-act of which the mode is the actual being thence derived. It is in this sense that Spinoza speaks of certain "immediate" and "mediate" infinite and eternal modes of substance (e.g.)

4. E., I, Def. 3.
5. E., I, Def. 5.
"infinite intellect," eternal "motion and rest," and the idea and "make of the whole universe"), which are the primordial and generically perfect actualizations of divine potency; and here there can be no dependence on extrinsic co-ordinate modes. With the finite modes this dependence on substance entails a derived dependence on other finite modes, however, and these function as the proximate others of the finite mode under consideration. It is this derived dependence that remains in evidence in the spatio-temporal order which, as we shall see, privatively expresses the eternal order of actualities.

Originally, then, a mode is "in another" because it is a mode of substance which, because the relation of mode and substance is asymmetrical, is for it "other." Yet substance and mode are not symmetrically and mutually other, for the mode is the actuality of the potency-in-act which is substance: it is an affectio of substance. But this, again, does not mean that substance is "affected," or acted upon, by something other than itself, but that it takes a nature by way of self-expression. The meaning lies nearer to our use of the term "affect" when we say that a man "affects the aristocrat" than when we say that he is "affected by the climate"—though there is, of course, no suggestion of pretence: substance actualizes and manifests itself in the mode—it is the active cause, and the mode its enacted effect. Self-actualizing and self-manifesting substance is thus essentially real and intelligible as "cause of itself," i.e. as creating its own actuality, exhaustively and eternally. The primordial Real is substance as infinite indeterminate potency eternally actualized as exhaustively determinate mode, and is thus self-existent, self-manifest, a soule sul.

Finally, it is of first importance to remember that just as the "substance" of Spinoza must not be confused with the "substances" of other philosophies or of common sense, so also his "mode" must not be identified with the individual things of temporal human experience. Many, if not most, expositors and critics of Spinoza have suffered shipwreck on this rock. The sense and manner in which such things are "modes" will, I hope, become clear as we proceed; but here, and in all strictness universally, "mode" must be taken as pied de la lettre of the formal definition: as contrasted with, yet essentially related to, substance. Modes derive their existence from the creative action that is substance; substance realizes itself in the creation of modes, for there is no action without deed. Its existence is necessary by reason of its essence as free action creatively enacting its own expression. For it "essence" and "existence," though distinct, are identical.

2. Creator and Creature. Substance as cause is thus absolutely free action or creation: it is not a "thing" but self-realizing and self-manifesting agency. Modes as effects of that agency are created beings actualizing the potency of their cause. The notion, sometime entertained, that Spinoza's substance is a totum of which its mode are the parts is too jejunum to merit refutation. But again, in using the terms "creator" and "creature," with their long association with theology, popular and otherwise (though I do not suppose that the apologists of intellectual merit are likely to fall into these errors), we must not be led to think of the modes or created beings as precipitated "out of nothing" to constitute a world existentially divorced from its creator (though deriving its essence from the exercise of his will). We are concerned, not with magic, but with metaphysics. Creative substance did not precede the created modal world in time and produce it by a dated fiat of its ungrounded "will." The otherness of the creator is not existential, for the creator exists only as creating. Creation is eternal, and no temporal being is fully 'created.'

The emergence of time, and its relation to eternity belong to a later stage of our analysis.

It was, perhaps, because of the danger of misinterpretation by minds ill-trained in theology that Spinoza almost entirely excluded from the Ethics this terminology which he had not hesitated to adopt and define in his earlier works, the Cogitata Metaphysica and the Short Treatise. But I do not think that this indicates any radical change in his view. Nor is the exclusion complete. 1

I have said that creation is an eternal action, and that therefore created things are eternal. This implies that durational beings are not, as such, "creatures" in the full sense. It will be well, therefore, to postpone further discussion of this mode of expression until the mode of egression of such beings comes to be considered.

3. "Natura naturans" and "Natura naturata." Spinoza also expounds the primordial nature of the Real by the use of the medieval conceptions thus expressed. The significance of the terms "Natura naturans" and "Natura naturata" may be traced as far back as the

great Greek philosophers: but here it may suffice to say that begin-
ning at least with Plato the distinction makes inchoate appearance
in the Aristotelian discrimination of the "unmoved mover" and that
which is moved." This was utilized by Augustine, and developed by
Scotus Eriugena into a distinction and identification of God and the
world. "Nature" as creative potency-in act is God—Nature as creat-
ing a nature for itself: Nature "naturating itself"; Nature regarded as
a determinate totality of determinate being—as having received a na-
ture—is the world or Nature "natured." This mode of expression and
thought was further developed by the Arabian philosopher Aver-
roës, and it reappeared in the thought of the Renaissance philoso-
pher Giordano Bruno. Whether it reached Spinoza from this source,
or from earlier or intermediate sources, Jewish or otherwise, we have
no certain knowledge. Spinoza expressly defines his use of the terms
in E., I, xxix, S.: "By Nature naturans we must understand that
which is in itself and is conceived through itself, or those attributes
of substance which express eternal and infinite essence, that is, God
in so far as he is considered as a free cause. By Nature naturata I
understand all that follows from the necessity of God's nature, or of
any one of God's attributes, that is, all the modes of the attributes
of God in so far as they are considered as things which are in God,
and which without God can neither be nor be conceived." This defi-
nitely identifies the distinction with that of Substance and Mode as
the integral termint of creation. Nature, the primordial real, is a
unity of agency and deed, and is thus asymmetrically bipolar: an
infinite indeterminate potency-in act it is Nature naturans: as actus,
i.e. the exhaustively determinate actuality, of this potency it is Nature
naturata. Genetically God is prior to the world; ontologically they
are identical as indeterminately infinite and infinitely determinate.
It is in this sense that Spinoza speaks of "God or Nature"—for
though in all strictness God is Nature naturans, the identity of this
with Nature naturata validates the phrase. But, of course, Nature
naturata is not to be identified with the durational world of com-
mon experience—the "common order of nature," which is temporal,
multiplex, and divided—it is the eternal "make of the whole uni-
verse," infinite, one, and indivisible, of which the durational world is
but a privation. The common objections to the identification of God
and Nature thus collapse, since the durational world with its mani-
fold imperfections is not, by Spinoza, regarded as being incorrigibly
divine or fully created.

II. Substance and Attribute

We are thus led next to a consideration of the nature of the At-
tributes of Substance, their interrelation, and status with respect to
"God or Nature." Spinoza's formal definition of "Attribute" indi-
cates clearly enough that the term is not to be taken in the vulgar
sense of a characteristic or quality related to Substance as, e.g., so-
brity is related to Peter, or redness to a rose: "By attribute I un-
stand that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence." The attributes of Substance, then, are the essence of Substance as apprehended, and truly, by intellect: they do not inhere in it, but constitute its essence. This is further emphasized by Spinoza in Epistola ix: "By substance I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself. I mean the same by attribute except that it is called "attribute" with respect to intellect which attributes such and such a nature to substance." It is equally important, however, not to place an illegitimate emphasis on the relation with intellect as many expositors have done in the influence of idealistic developments from which Spinoza was entirely free. No Kantian or idealistic significance is to be attached to Spinoza's words: intellect does not necessarily condemn itself to phenomenalism by merely imputing the Attributes to Substance that as a "thing-in-itself" is devoid of them. Nor on the other hand, is the Real limited by intellect whether human or divine. What intellect perceives it perceives truly, for that is the nature of intellect: imagination and its modes are privation of intellect. Yet human intellect, circumscribed as it is in its range of objects (though essentially self-transcendent), though it suffers no privation such as to lead it to error, is nevertheless imperfect and, as Spinoza says, differs from infinite intellect "as the Dog in the heavens differs from the barking animal." The Attributes of Substance are thus neither qualities or characteristics of Substance nor its phenomenal appearances due to the relativity of human intellect. The Attribute is the Substance under the determining scrutiny of intellect. In the letter from which I have already quoted, Spinoza offered his correspondent two examples to illustrate the kind of distinction he had in mind: (1) the third patriarch, Israel, was also called Jacob (i.e. supplanter) because he seized his brother's heel; again (2) a plane surface is one that reflects all rays of light without any other change—it is called "white" in relation to a man observing it. What both examples bring home is evidently the notion of "respect": what distinguishes an Attribute from Substance is that it is the same but in a different respect; and we know from the definition of "Attribute" that this respect is respect to intellect. Now intellect is not extrinsic to Nature, like a spectator at the games, but is involved in it. Nor is it as such substantial (for substance is indeterminate). It is therefore a mode or actualization of Substance. Thus the respect by which an Attribute is distinguished from Substance is intrinsic—not like that of Jacob to Isaac, or the plane surface to the observer; and the Attribute is Substance with respect to one of its own actualizations. Substance, we have seen, is infinite and eternal potency-in-exec, and as such absolutely indeterminate; its actualization consists in its exhaustive determination. But what in itself a absolutely indeterminate must, with respect to its determinate actualizations be a determining agency, and thus reflectively determines. As actualizing the determinate its indeterminacy is specified, i.e. intellect as an actual determination of Substance perceives the essence of Substance as a potency-in-exec whence flow the specific determinations involved in or essential to intellect. Thus human intellect perceives Substance as infinite and eternal thinking potency-in-exec and as infinite and eternal "extension" or physical potency-in-exec.

This is the root of the distinction both of the Attributes and of Substance and Attributes. Though Substance in itself is absolutely indeterminate, with respect to its determinate actualizations it is generically determinate—"generically," because as infinite and eternal only the universal properties of finite modes can be unconditionally imputed to Substance. Why, then, it may be asked, does Spinoza single out intellect as the referent by which Attributes are distinguished from Substance? The answer is simple enough: because the purpose of philosophy is to make Nature intelligible, so that this respect to intellect must be, for it, central.

Further, though human intellect thus perceives Substance as thinking and physical potency-in-exec, in so far as these potencies are reflectively determinate the nature of Substance in itself cannot be confined to these Attributes. An absolutely indeterminate potency cannot be the source merely of determinate psychical and physical actuality, for thus it would not be indeterminate but psycho-physical potency-in-exec. Its absolute indeterminacy necessitates the inference to infinite Attributes; for only the infinitely determinate can exhaustively actualize the absolutely indeterminate.

The conceived (and truly conceived) distinctions of the infinite Attributes of Substance is thus with respect to the actualization of one of them, viz. Thought. Substance as such suffers no such distinction, nevertheless these distinctions are valid since from its very nature as potency-in-exec Substance exists only as self-actualizing—as

9. E., I, Def. 4.
10. My italics.
11. E., I, xvii. S.
producing infinite things "in infinite ways." It may be objected that it is paradoxical to say that Substance is both absolutely indeterminate and also "consists of infinite Attributes"—and indeed it would be so if the nature of Substance provided no "logical room" for this disparity, if, for example, Substance were a "thing" and not an agent. The apparent contradiction is "dialectical" or self-resolved in the conception of creative agency.

For philosophy, then, i.e. for intellect, the primordial Real or Substance actively functioning as creator consists of infinite Attributes "each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence." This is "God or Nature."

"God or Nature"

In the foregoing account of Substance, its Modes, and its Attributes, I have trespassed somewhat beyond the account given by Spinoza himself in the Definitions and first ten Propositions of Part I of the Ethics. In these he is primarily concerned with the conceptions alone, without reference to their precise application to the primordial and consequent Real. It is only in Proposition xi that he turns explicitly to metaphysical assertion, and identifies the Real with "Substance consisting of infinite Attributes each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence"; and we have to wait until Proposition xvi before learning that the Modes of this Substance are "infinite being flowing in infinite ways" from the necessity of its nature.

Reality, we have seen, means agency, not mere objective givenness, and in agency we discern potency-in-act and actuality—or, in other words, essence and existence.

1. Essence or Potency-in-Act

"God or Nature," Spinoza repeatedly affirms, is "infinite, one, and indivisible." It will be convenient to consider these essential properties in the reverse order:

1. Indivisible. "Substance absolutely infinite is indivisible." The infinity of the Attributes of Substance does not entail multiplicity of essences. This follows from the nature of an Attribute, which

12. E. I, xiii.
is but the actuality of Thought as an Attribute epistemically united with Extension alone in determinate “experience.” "If intellect pertains to the divine nature it cannot, like ours, follow the things which are its objects (as many suppose), nor can it be simultaneous in in nature with them, since God is prior to all things in causality, but on the contrary, the truth and formal essence of things is what it is because as such it exists by way of knowledge in God's intellect. Therefore the intellect of God, in so far as it is conceived as constituting his essence" (i.e. as potency-in-act) "is in truth the cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence."12 But this is not a peculiarity of Thought, for mutatis mutandis the same may be asserted of all the Attributes which in Substance are indivisible.14

2. Unique. God, or Substance consisting of infinite Attributes, is not one among many but beside it no substance can be or be conceived.18 This follows from the definition of God as "Substance consisting of infinite Attributes": for thus all Attributes are attributed to it, and substances with the same attribute are not discernible or distinct.19 Spinoza takes occasion in both E, I, xiv, C 2 and x v, 1 to deal with the conventional view (entertained by Descartes) that extended substance is created, and additional to the creative Substance or God, pointing out that the arguments adduced in favour of this arise from the misconstruing of the nature of extended substance. He allows that God is not "corpooreal" in the sense of possessing a "body" determined in length, breadth and depth. Such a conception of Extension, whether taken to be a substance or an Attribute, is erroneous: all "bodies" are but its finite modes or actualizations: Extension as such is extensional potency-in-act.17 But

Substance and Its Modes

the being so, and all potency being proper to "God or Nature," Extension, though substantial, can be no substance distinct from the infinite creative Substance.18

A word is perhaps required concerning Spinoza's distinction of "unity" or "singleness" as applied to "God or Nature" and its "universality"—the former description being regarded by him as "very improper." "A thing can only be said to be one or single in respect of its existence and not of its essence: for we do not conceive things under numbers until they have been brought under a common genus. . . . Hence it is clear that nothing can be called one or single unless some other thing has been conceived which agrees with it." Thus, the universality of "God or Nature" follows from its indeterminate infinity as essence or potency-in-act which excludes the possibility of another.

3. Infinite. In his Letter on the Nature of the Infinite20 Spinoza distinguishes between "infinite by nature or definition," "limitless," and "innumerable." Now Substance, the primordial potency-in-act, is by nature indivisible, and hence its infinity cannot mean limitless multiplicity of parts. Again, since it is unique its infinity cannot mean the indefinite remoteness of extrinsic limits, or, indeed, the mere absence of limits. Its infinity (in spite of the negative suggestion of the term itself) is "by nature or definition"; and this has application not only to its nature as "substance" (for "every substance is necessarily infinite"),21 but also to its special nature as "consisting of infinite Attributes each of which expresses . . . infinite essence."22 The Attributes are infinite in number only with respect to the intellect by which they are distinguished. Substance is infinite as potency-in-act, potency being, as such, by nature indeterminate, i.e. involving no negation, either intrinsic (for it is indivisible) or extrinsic (for it is unique). It is only when Substance is conceived as modally actual that the infinity of "God or Nature" can be interpreted as limitless or innumerable, and that a "part" of Natura naturata (such

13. E, I, xvii, S.
14. Here we have confined attention to Substance, or God as Natura naturata, but it may be added that no ground for the imputation of divisibility to this can be drawn from the multiplicity inherent in Natura naturata, of the finite modes of Substance, to be considered in the next chapter; for even here the multiplicity is fully integral when we consider "the whole order of nature." Natura naturata as it actualizes Natura naturans, is "infinite, unique, and indivisible." When each individual part focalizes the whole which is thus immanent in each Natura naturans is not an aggregate of parts but a macrocosm of microcosms to infinity.
17. The alternative interpretation of Extension as empty three-dimensional space is, of course, equally improper.
18. It must be admitted that the Cartesian phrase "extended Substance" is misleading and, indeed, paradoxical. The comparable phrase, "thinking Substance" is more correct. And the same applies to the Spinozistic phrases "res cogitans" and "res cognitans."
22. E, I, xlv.
as a man) can be regarded as "Deus quatenus finitus est,"28 and the Attributes which it expresses as numerable, e.g. Thought and Extension. And even so the finiteness of the "part," and the numerability of the Attributes involved, are not absolute, but must be qualified by essential relation with a complement, and by the limited numerability of the Attributes, respectively.

Thus, Substance, "God," or Natura naturans, is infinite by nature or definition, and can in no wise be conceived as finite (though we may attempt so to imagine it). But Natura naturata, abstractedly conceived is infinite in virtue of its cause, viz. Natura naturans, and can be divided into parts, and viewed as an indefinitely great assemblage of such parts. Yet this is to conceive it as merely "given," as "actual" but not "enacted," after the fashion of the empiricists. For Natura naturata is only properly conceived as eternally flowing from the primordial potency-in-act; and as so conceived, it, too, is infinite by nature or definition. And so again, its finite "parts" are not mere sectors of the "whole," but exist only in relation with their complement, and thus as "microcosms" or "finite-infinities." This is a topic to which we must presently return.

II. Existence or Actuality

"God or Nature" exists or is actual as Natura naturata exhaustively and determinately realizing the infinite, indeterminate potency-in-act that is Natura naturans. This self-actualization is neither a mere possibility, nor is it contingent, but necessary. Thus the actual world is the only possible world.24

1. Possibility, Contingency, and Necessity. Spinoza had had conversations with Leibniz, and it is conceivable and perhaps even probable that E., i, xxxi, was directly aimed at the Leibnizian conception of infinite possible worlds in the mind of God, from which he chose the best for creation. The idea is anthropomorphic, interpreting creation as a sort of artistic production ex nihilo. It fails by reason of the

23. Cf. E., ii, xi, c. As difficulties have been raised by some commentators concerning this doctrine of the relation of man and God (cf. H. Barker, "Note on the Second Part of Spinoza's Ethics," Mind, N.S., xlvi, pp. 437 et passim) it may be well to say here that Spinoza does not equate the human mind as determinately extant with "Deus quatenus hominum mens est essentiam constitutum," but only as thinking adequately.

24. E., i, xxxi.

paradoxical nature of the being which must be imputed to the uncreated possible worlds which are at once "ideally" actual and also merely possible. For nothing can be said to be merely possible if "possible" is distinguished from "contingent," that being contingent that is known to issue from a cause the existence of which remains in doubt.28 Now all that exists or is actual is the actuality of potency-in-act original or derived, and it is thus that actual existence is necessary though not extrinsically compelled. Necessity, rightly understood, is true freedom or potency-in-act. This is not to deny that durational things are authentically contingent in so far as the occurrence of durational causes cannot be certainly foretold by durational minds. But, as we shall see, durational things are privations of eternal beings, and their contingency is concomitant with their privativity. As referred to this or that finite "part" of Natura naturata they may be authentically contingent, but as referred to God they are certainly necessary.

Now, when we consider "God or Nature" as causa sui no such distinction of certain necessity and authentic contingency can be entertained, much less any notion of its being merely possible; for Natura naturata is the very exhaustively determinate actuality of the infinite indeterminate primordial potency-in-act that is Natura naturans. Because that potency is infinite, unique and indivisible, its actuality is perfect and necessary. For a "potency" not "in-act" is no potency at all.

2. Proofs of the Existence of God. Those who thus far have followed the development of Spinoza's doctrine will notice with no surprise that he concludes the real existence of God in a laconic inference occupying but three lines of the text: "If it be denied, conceive that God does not exist. Then his essence does not involve existence; which is absurd."28 That he also deigns to add two or three other proofs, a priori or a posteriori in form, implies no recogni-
tion of dissatisfaction with this essential proof, which indeed is involved in all of them as condicio sine qua non.

The first additional proof proceeds from the principle that what exists or is actual is so by reason of a cause or potency-in-act, and what does not exist fails to exist by reason of the opposition of some cause or potency-in-act. This cause of existence or non-existence must lie either in the nature of the thing itself or beyond it: in its nature when it is necessary or impossible; beyond it when it is contingent. That for which there is nothing, intrinsic or extrinsic, that can prevent existence, exists necessarily (the main proof); thus "God or Nature," which is "absolutely infinite and consummately perfect" to exist.

The second additional proof is a posteri or in form, proceeding from the existence of "ourselves." This existence implies a "power to exist" possessed by such finite beings; and if God did not exist the power of these beings to exist would exceed that of a being absolutely infinite; which is absurd. Thus either nothing exists or God exists necessarily.

But as he says in the Scholium that follows: "In this last demonstration I wished to prove the existence of God a posteriori, not because it does not follow a priori from the same premises, but in order that the proof might be more easily understood." He then gives the a priori form of this a posteriori proof (forming a third additional proof): To be able to exist is a potency, and it follows that the greater the potency the greater the ability to exist. Now "God or Nature" is defined as absolutely infinite in potency, and therefore exists necessarily. Here the point is, of course, that power to exist is not an extrinsic power imputed to God but God's very essence from which existence or actuality flows.

It needs little acuity of perception to recognize the equivalence or dependence of all these proofs upon the same principle, viz. that expressed in the main proof, commonly called the "ontological proof." I say "equivalence with" or "dependence upon," for a distinction may be drawn according as the proofs are, in Cartesian phrase, "analytic" or "synthetic" in method. The "ontological proof" is, of course, as such "synthetic," proceeding from essence to existence, from potency-in-act to actuality; the additional proofs, especially the a posteriori one, involve "analytic" procedure from existences, taken to be authentic, by the emendation of essences to an actuality certified by perfect essence or potency-in-act. But the extension of imperfect essences taken as authentically actual itself proceeds only in the light of the "ontological principle" of the dependence of actuality or existence upon potency or essence.

This "analytic" form of proof, though allied with that which Kant oddly styled the "cosmological proof," and rejected, must carefully be distinguished from it. It does not argue from existences "contingent" in the sense of caused wholly extrinsically, and thus fortuitous, to a being necessarily existent as the ground of such being taken as authentic or "given." To be wholly dependent on extrinsic potency is to be nothing at all; every authentic existent must in part at least actualize its own potency-in-act, and the argument runs that dependence on extrinsic potency is a measure of finiteness and imperfection not suffered by "God or Nature." Nor can it be validly supposed that the authentic existence of anything (which the proof assumes as starting point) can be merely hypothetical—depending on an infinite regression of causes, all hypothetical. It is not (as Spinoza points out in Epistola xii) that such a regression is impossible, but that the authentic existence of any part of the series requires a passage beyond hypothesis, i.e. to a being dependent on no extrinsic cause, the existence of which actualizes its own intrinsic potency-in-act. If anything exists, a fortiori self-dependent being exists.

The "ontological proof," properly so called, is the "synthetic" form of the argument, which moves, not from imperfect to perfect being, but from perfect essence to necessary existence, from infinite indeterminate potency-in-act to exhaustively determinate actuality or existence. For the divine essence is not the mere conception of God to which existence must be superadded, but the infinite potency-in-act which necessarily actualizes itself.

The "ontological proof" has often been subjected to destructive criticism—sometimes validly, when it has been advanced in eccentric form. Kant is often said to have given it its final quietus in his celebrated figure of the "hundred thalers." Real existence, he argued, is not a "predicate" which by mere predication precipitates a concept into the real world. To think of a hundred thalers as existing is not the same as to add them to one's bank balance. Similarly, we can have no assurance of the real existence of God from merely thinking of him as existing. What is truly astonishing is that a thinker of Kant's unquestionable acuity and authority should have supposed
that such a refutation has any impact on the genuine ontological proof. Even Descartes had realized that the mere thought of existence is no ground for its certain attribution, and that the nerve of the argument lies in the principle that "in the concept or idea of everything that is clearly and distinctly conceived" existence is "contained," existence possible or necessary, such a concept or idea being "true." And Hegel ridiculed the suggestion that God can rightly be conceived as in this matter comparable with "every wretched form of existence." What is at the root of the general dissatisfaction with the ontological proof is a false opinion about the nature ascribable to God, and derivatively about the natures of all authentic existents, viz. that "reality" means mere objective "givenness" and not agency—existence being related to essence as actually to potency-in-act. The actuality of Kant's hundred thealers stems from extrinsic potency-in-act, whereas that of God from infinite intrinsic potency-in-act. Thus the one is contingent on the actuality of the other, the other is necessary.

III. Essence and Existence

Finally, the relations and distinction of essence and existence in "God or Nature," i.e. of the infinite indeterminate primordial potency-in-act and its infinitely determinate enactment or actuality, serve to determine Spinoza's account of the divine causality as free and as immanent, and being both free and immanent, as eternal. With "God or Nature" essence and existence are at once identical and distinct as the indeterminate is identical with and distinct from its exhaustive determinations—a complex relation which is generally expressed by Spinoza in the form: "The essence of God involves existence."

1. Identical: Causality and Freedom. Because the actuality of the divine potency-in-act is its exhaustively determinate expression, it follows that the divine action or causality is self-originated and in accordance with its own laws, unencumbered and uninhibited. "God alone is a free cause; for God alone exists and acts from the necessity alone of his own nature." The unique necessity of his creation action is identical with perfect or absolute freedom, for God necessarily creates all that his infinite potency involves. To suppose that God would be more free if he could "bring it about that those things that follow from his nature should not be" is to suppose that he would be more perfect if he lacked a potency which is his (for a potency not "in-act" is no potency)—a palpable absurdity. To suppose, again, that God's "freedom" is elective is to deny his omnipotence. For election entails inhibition of potency, i.e. its negation. For the divine nature altogether transcends that ofitational man who can be conceived as perfecting himself by the exercise of elective freedom, thus offsetting the privation concomitant with durationality. With "God or Nature," not to create all within his power is not to increase, but to limit, perfection.

2. Distinct: Causality and Immanence. Again, because the divine actuality, i.e. all the beings created by the divine potency-in-act, is exhaustively determinate while that potency is absolutely indeterminate, it follows that the distinction of creator and creature must be so maintained as to define their relation as causal, yet without succession from the identity of power and act. It is thus that the causality of God must be conceived as immanent in all actual beings, and not as transcendent or agency terminating in some alien actuality. Divine causality is causality par excellence, and all relations that can in any sense or degree be called "causal" are framed on its analogy. Causality, according to Spinoza, is not a temporal relation, not such as was destructively analysed by Hume and defended by Kant; it consists not in regularity of temporal sequence but in agency immanent in deed. Empirical transcendent causes, in so far as they are authentic, possess something of this real power, though in a privative and derivative form (a point obscurely expounded even by Kant), but so far as they are transcendent, so that the effect lies beyond the cause, they are evidently devoid of it. The causality of God suffers no such defect, and his effects, therefore, are integral with their cause, which is immanent in them. The two poles of divine creation, Natura naturans and Natura naturata are indiscernible, though not co-ordinate, transcendent, or alternative. Natura naturata is dependent upon and subordinate to Natura naturans, which in turn necessarily actualizes itself as Natura naturata.  

3. Eternal. It follows that "God or Nature" is eternal. Here we must recall the definition of "eternity": it is "existence itself so far as it is conceived as following necessarily from the essence of the thing"—and Spinoza adds the Explanation that "it cannot be explicated by duration or time, not even if this be conceived as without beginning or end." Eternity is not duration "from eternity to eternity" (though in time it is always available). But neither is "timelessness," but a form of existence transcending duration. He speaks of it as an "infinite existence," as distinct from duration which is a form of existence conceived as indefinite continuance a actual being. Durational existence involves conatus operating against opposing powers; eternal existence is action, free and creative. For action par excellence is freedom, but as qualified by opposing agency is constricted to endeavour. And this is the field of elective freedom, but eternity of free necessity. Thus the existence of "God or Nature" is no struggling continuance through time, but eternal "enjoyment." Nor can the nature of this "infinite existence" be apprehended on any analogy of transition in time, though we make some rough approach to apprehension in the contemplation of our naїve experience of "acting" that defines what we appropriately call the "specious present" (for the "present" is the "moment" of action), and inadequately express as the permutation of the future by the past within a small tract of time. Yet this is but a "rough approach" because our "action" remains durational endeavour rather than creativity or free necessity. It is in pure thought alone that we have experience of eternity, in rational intellecution or in intellectual intuition; for "demonstrations are the eyes of the mind by which it sees and observes things"—and by "demonstrations," as we shall see in due course, Spinoza does not mean timeless formal syllogisms but the real self-generation of concepts. Indeed, in intellectual intellecution alone, because it is love rather than perception of objects, community rather than contemplation, is eternal life "enjoyed"; rational intellecution apprehends things only "sub quadem specie aeternitatis."

31. E., I, xix.
32. E., I, Def. 8.
33. C. m., II, 1.
34. E., II, Def. 5.
35. See H. F. Hallett, Benedict de Spinoza (University of London: Adam
Press, 1957), ch. IV.
36. E., V, 23, S.

Substance and Its Modes

The existence of "God or Nature" is the eternal enjoyment of creativit, uncompelled and uninhibited.

THE MODES OF SUBSTANCE

The modal actuality of the divine potency-in-act, or Substance, as it follows thence is infinite and eternal, and like it unique and indivisible. But unlike it, it is exhaustively determinate: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinite beings in infinite ways"—yet all so as to form a unique and indivisible universe. It follows that Natura naturata is itself eternal, and contains nothing that is not eternal. For the divine potency-in-act is uninhibited and can be actualized in no durational being, whether durational as a whole or durational in its parts. Nor can an eternal whole be conceived as the integration of durational parts.

Spinoza distinguishes modes which are infinite, constituting the whole of nature, and modes which are finite parts of nature; and since these raise difficulties of different kinds we shall do well to give them separate consideration.

1. "Infinite and Eternal Modes"

Natura naturata is evidently an infinite and eternal mode of Substance or Natura naturans of which it is the exhaustive actuality; but a more precise delineation requires consideration of the nature of Substance as "consisting of infinite Attributes"—for though these are only intellectually discernible, philosophy in which we are engaged is an intellectual discipline. It is in the light of the distinctions of the Attributes that Spinoza draws a further distinction between "immediate" and "mediate" infinite and eternal modes of Substance. For when we consider Substance as thinking potency-in-act (i.e. the Attribute of Thought), its immediate actuality is that which Thought as such accomplishes, viz. understanding (intelllectus); and it is as such that understanding is an infinite and eternal mode of Substance and finds expression as the exhaustive idea of thinking Nature (infinite idea Dei), which thus becomes the mediate infinite and eternal mode of Substance qua Thought. So again, when we consider Substance as extensional potency-in-act (i.e. the Attribute of Extension), we shall have to consider the other infinite and eternal mode of Substance qua Substance. For this is the actual mode of Substance, and it is the mediate infinite and eternal mode of Substance qua Substance.
II. Determination and Individuality

Next, we must turn to the nature and status of the finite modes of Substance which, as I have said, must be distinguished from finite, durational beings, empirical or scientific—being necessarily eternal as pertaining to the actuality of Substance. Potency *qua* potency is indeterminate; its actuality *qua* actuality is determinate; potency-in-being is determination. It follows that an infinite potency is actualized as an infinitely determinate, involving every kind and range of existence yet remaining unique and indivisible.

38. "Motion and rest" as the immediate actuality of extensional potency in actuality is thus not to be identified, or confused, with mere spatio-temporal passage and stillness. But neither is the phrase a portmanteau expression for motions recognized as being essentially relative to conventional axes, and thus only determinately determinate. Descartes had defined the "proper motion" of a body as "transference from the vicinity of contiguous bodies taken to be at rest" (Principles of Philosophy II, 24–26) and claimed that this is neither spatially absolute nor relative merely to conventional axes, but a mode of the mobile body —its mode (let us say) of "attachment" to whatsoever body may be contiguous with it; its intrinsic restlessness. Similarly, its "proper rest" must be its presence with respect to whatsoever body may be contiguous with it; its intrinsic inertia. A body's "proper motion and rest" remains unchanged through all vicissitudes, while the body itself remains identical, though its speed and direction of motion are subject to variation under impact. It is thus a short step from this account to the view of "motion and rest" as modes of physical agency rather than passive spatio-temporal transference and stillness, absolute or conventional. And if this conception is delimiting, "motion and rest" as the immediate infinite and eternal mode of Substance *qua* Extension must be conceived as the actuality of extensional potency-in-being inseparably issuing from them.

39. This phrase, naively translated as "the face of the whole universe," has usually been taken as referring to the spatio-temporal world of experience, the "visible universe," i.e. what Spinoza calls "the common order of nature." This is certainly an error, and the translation of "facies" by "fashion or make" (facio) is to be recommended. Extensional *Natura naturata* is not imaginationally quantitative and temporal, but infinite and eternal. The phrase is used in Ep., 54.

We have seen already that this is the source of the distinctions of the infinite Attributes of Substance in the reflective modal perspective of "intellect." But the infinite determination of actual Nature is not to be limited to the generic distinctions of the Attributes: it is exclusively determinate. "From the necessity of the divine nature infinite beings must follow in infinite ways, i.e. everything that can be conceived by infinite intellect;" 40 or as it is expressed even more vaguely in the Appendix to Part I of the Ethics: To God "material uses are not lacking for the creation of everything, from the highest to the very lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, . . . the uses of his nature were so ample that they sufficed for the production of everything conceivable by infinite intellect." Not only is "God or Nature" actual in infinite sorts of existence, cognitive, extensional, "Xian," but also in infinite grades or ranges under each generic head, from the infinite immediate and mediate modes down to the very least spark of near-being, through all degrees of finiteness. Yet in each the primordial potency-in-action is expressed in appropriate form, and in the whole is undivided. In the phrase of Bruno, it is "wholly in the whole, and wholly in every part of the whole." 41

It has often been claimed that a whole of parts must be divisible, and that if Nature is truly indivisible finite individuals can have no place in it. Spinoza must thus be either atheist or acensist. This curious error arises from the interpretation of "being" as "thing" rather than as "agent." For the individuality of "things" rests on exhaustion, whereas that of "agents" is enriched by mutuality, and in and by it constituted. The manner of this constitution will become clear as we proceed.

*Natura naturata*, the actuality of Substantial potency-in-action is thus infinitely individuated, yet without division: it is an Individual of individuals to infinity. Here I must again enter a caveat against the common assumption that the finite modes of Substance are to be simply identified with the finite individuals of durational beings that come into being, endure, and pass away serially and contemporaneously "from eternity to eternity." For eternal *Natura naturata* can be no integration of such a stream of durational beings, nor these its differentiated parts. Thus, the problem that has gravelled so many of Spinoza's expositors and critics, as to how an eternal causality

40. E. I, xvi.
41. De la causa, principio et uno, Dial. II.
can, without self-limitation in the creator (which Spinoza denies, a
entailing imperfection), give birth to durational effects, does not
arise. The finite modes that are subordinate individuals in Natura
naturata are themselves eternal as its constituents. Durational finite
conatiors are still far ahead in our exposition—though it must be al-
lowed that Spinoza’s own exposition in the Ethics, with its moralis-
bias, does not sufficiently emphasize the essential gap. Here we are
concerned with the eternal individuation of the mediate infinite and
eternal mode of Substance, which must be conceived as an eternal
macrocosm constituted hierarchically of microcosms to infinity, all of
which are eternal as thus embedded.

Further, this individuation of the Individual is not subdivision or
section, for thus Natura naturata would not be “infinite, unique, and
indivisible” but indefinite, multiplex, and aggregate. Nor would in
parts be actualizations of Substance, or analogues of Nature. Thus
our problem is set: the mediate infinite and eternal mode of Sub-
stance is the exhaustive actuality of the infinite, indeterminate
potency-in-act, fully determinate and individual; also it is consti-
tuted of infinite finite beings of all grades of perfection, each in its
own measure actualizing the divine potency: under what schema is
such a set of relations intelligible?

III. Macrocosm and Microcosms

It must be admitted that Spinoza presents no formal unified account
of the relations holding between Natura naturata and its finite
“parts.” Nor are suggestive terms such as “macrocosm” and “micro-
cosm” much in evidence to yield a clue. Formal expression being
lacking, his views must be sought out, and with a “speculative eye.”
Nor are the reasons for this laches far to seek: Spinoza is sometimes
represented as among the purest of metaphysicians, for whom hu-
mans values are only of secondary importance, but in fact his ethical in-
terests are far too prominent to allow of such a characterization—though
he is certainly a metaphysical moralist. Thus the Ethics contains
much discussion of the nature, status, and moral relations of du-
rational “man,” but all too little of “man” as eternal creatum—and
little mainly, though far from exclusively to the perceptive reader, in
the latter portion of Part V where, consequently, it has often seemed
to the impercipient to be a superimposed and largely alien mystical

But indeed, the nature of “man” as perfect finite creatum (i.e. “as referred to God”) lies, as we shall see, at the very
root of Spinoza’s ethical doctrine, and he would have done better
so have given distinct consideration to “man’s” eternal nature, not as
a mere “eternal part” of the mind, but as its essential nature, and
formally related the eternal natures of finite modes in general to the
“infinite, unique, and indivisible” nature of the divine actuality, pass-
ing thence to its variant immanence in the private nature of dura-
national beings. Even his moral doctrine might thus have been more
acceptable to plain men.

But though we may regret Spinoza’s “moralism,” we are not left
wholly without guidance in our search for his metaphysical sche-
ma. With the moralism there is very naturally coupled a one-sided
emphasis on the human mind (and Spinoza expressly excludes from
the Ethics the discussion of physical nature as such—beyond what is
advanced in the physical Lemmata of Part II, and which concerns
the nature and degrees of physical individuality, rather than the mode
of integration of those degrees). It is therefore to the mental nature
of “man” (and his physical nature only as it is epistemologically in-
volved in this), and its relation to “God or Nature,” that we have to
look for the most promising clues. The human mind, he affirms, is the
idea of the human body “and nothing else”; yet also it can have
adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God; and
these propositions plainly imply that the nature of God is in-
volved in human nature, and can be sought from it by some valid
metaphysical procedure. “God or Nature” is immanent in human
nature.

But further, though the human mind is the idea of the human body,
yet it can only know its nature, and even that it exists, in so
far as it is “affected” by other bodies; and the natures and exis-
tence of those other bodies are known by the mind only in so far as
they “affect” its body. From these propositions it follows that
man’s idea of the world of bodies is the idea of the “affections” of his
own body by all those other bodies; so that man’s knowledge of

42. E. II, xxi.
43. E. II, xiii.
44. E. II, xlvii.
45. E. II, xix. For “affectio” see above, p. 134.
46. E. II, xvi.
nature depends on the capacity of his body to be "affected" by its complement in nature, and the resulting idea is inadequate in so far as it confuses the natures of the body and its bodily complement. Yet this confusion results only in so far as the body and its bodily complement are different in nature—not wholly different (for thus the body could not be "affected" by its complement). In so far as they have "common properties" there can be no confusion; but in so far as their natures differ confusion is inevitable. Thus the inadequacy of man's idea of nature is remediable, not by any process of analysing these confused "affections" (for ex hypothesi, in separation neither body nor complement can be perceived by the mind), but only by the resolution of the differences in a full community of body and bodily complement in the "facies totius universi": "he who possesses a body adapted to many things, possesses a mind in the greater part of which is eternal." 40

It is thus full community of each finite being, up to the limits of its finiteness, with infinite Natura naturata that constitutes its eternal nature as creatum, and the eternal relation of the finite and the infinite is to be conceived, not as the resolution or absorption of the individual in a totum on the analogy of mere objective "things"—man is no "bubble of the foam" of Deity—but as congruent reciprocity on the analogy of co-operating agents. The finite creatum is an eternal agent or finite individualization of the eternal actuality of the divine agency—an active microcosm of the infinite active macrocosm, which is the hierarchical integration of infinite such microcosmic agents, each of which is framed on the analogy of the whole. Yet because the macrocosm is infinite, and the microcosm only finite, the latter can only be framed on the analogy of the former, and the microcosm is an actualization of divine potency, not in so far as this is infinite and indeterminate, but only in so far as it is also actualized and self-determined in another finite agent—which has reference to a third, and so to infinity. 41

Let this brief sketch suffice to indicate the relations of finite and

47. E., II, xxxviii, xxxix.
49. E., V, xxxvi.
50. See E., II, Lem. 7, S.
Consider next the relation between the "part" of $M_n$ that corresponds with $M_{n-1}$ (viz. $M_{n-1}m_{n-1}$), and the "part" of $M_{n-1}$ that corresponds with $M_n$ (viz. $M_{n-1}m_n$). Though these are evidently distinct (being "parts" of individual agents of different grades of perfection) they are, within their diverse scopes, in active agreement; for as "parts" of $M_n$ and $M_{n-1}$ analogous with $M_{n-1}$ and $M_n$ respectively, they share a common nature or "property." They are differentiated actualizations of an identical potency-in-act—and thus constitute nodes in the community of Natura. This may be symbolically illustrated if we abstract $M_n$ (say) and its relatives in other "parts" of $N$ in our general picture, so as to indicate how it subsists by active community with its complement in Natura naturata. Thus:


Each "part," therefore, of $N$ is the actuality of a grade of divine potency-in-act, so that it stands in community with all other "parts" similarly defined. By this community alone, as an agent and no mere "thing," it maintains, and not loses by merger, its individual being. And the "texture" of Natura naturata may thus be symbolized as an infinite "web" or "lattice" of which the infinite finite agents are the "nodes" operating so as to form the indivisible integrity of the "whole." Thus, let $m_{n-1}^1$ stand for the community or coaptitude of $M_{n-1}$ and $M_{n-2}$, then we have:

52. It has often been urged against Spinoza that the integrity of eternal Natura leaves no room for finite individuality, all finite modes being merged, without distinction, in the infinite whole. This is the inevitable result of the common failure to take due account of his explicit activism. Coapt agents, in proportion to their coaptitude, maintain their individuality, which is constituted by their community. Natura is not a "thing," and its "parts" are not sectors of a thing, but microcosms which, as finite expressions of the macrocosm, live by community with their congruent complement in the macrocosm. Thus, their integrity enhances, not destroys, their individuality.

We have thus in Natura infinite hierarchical individuation of the perfect Individual—a macrocosm of microcosms to infinity. With Spinoza I have called the microcosms "parts" of Natura naturata (as indeed, they are), yet each is nothing save as embedded in the whole which is undivided. When, therefore, we call the "parts" finite (and I speak of the eternal "parts") this does not deny to them all finitude of infinity. For each in perfect community with its congruent complement in Natura naturata, in its degree expresses the infinite substantial potency-in-act; it is the actuality, not of God in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he is considered as being "affected" by its complement.

Such, then, is the constitution of Natura naturata as it eternally actualizes the primordial potency-in-act, Natura naturans: "infinite, unique, and indivisible," yet exhaustively differentiated in hierarchical order "from highest to lowest." It is this that forms the subject-matter of Part I of the Ethics, and the early propositions of Part II. It is to this also that Spinoza returns in the later propositions of Part V. Any failure to note that in these portions of his exposition Spinoza is dealing with eternal individuals in their constitutive community as they issue from the eternal potency or Substance, can produce nothing but confusion and futile misinterpretation. Part II is mainly concerned with the sources and status of the human mind as durational, Part V with its emendation towards eternity, and Parts

53. See H. F. Hallett, op. cit., p. 48, note*.
54. E., II, ix.
III and IV with its privative and impotent nature as unmended. Thus, he begins with eternal creation, passes to durational "emanation," and thence to that recovery of eternal life that completes the "dialectic of finite creation."

IV. Modes and Attributes

There remains the problem of the contraction in the finite mode from the infinity of Attributes in the macrocosm to the duality of the Attributes under which "man," e.g., our typical finite individual, finds himself. For "man" is a mode of Thought and Extension exclusively. This is a topic upon which Spinoza has far too little to say, though about which he is most pregnantly laconic. It has generally been assumed that the duality of human nature as animated body or embodied mind was for Spinoza a mere empirical datum, the infinity of the Attributes of Substance being the result of purely speculative "principle-riding." It is true, of course, that man's knowledge of his own nature as psychophysical is empirical, and not deduced from the nature of Substance, but his limitation to two Attributes, of which he is a duality in unity, is no mere datum but issues from the very nature and status of the Attributes which, as we have seen, are relative to "intellect." In Substance the Attributes are identical; in the perspective of intellect they are absolutely diverse, and each must be conceived through itself as constituting the perceived essence of Substance. This being so, it follows that the modes of Substance which, for intellect, are discernible as determinations of diverse Attributes, are, as flowing from their substantial source, not separated under these Attributes but united; so that, e.g., man as mind and man as body are one man, not two living in miraculous harmony. If, now, it is thought that each mode of Substance should by intellect be discernible as a determination of all the infinite Attributes of Substance, and that therefore man cannot be limited to two Attributes, the error arises from failure to take due account of the nature and status of the Attributes. We are fortunate in having Spinoza's own answer to this problem (raised by his very acute correspondent von Tschirnhaus): how does it come about that though each mode is expressed in infinite Attributes, the mode that is the human being knows only two of these—Thought as expressed in his mind, and Extension as expressed in his body. Spinoza's reply is brief and pointed: "Although each thing is expressed in infinite ways in the infinite intellect of God, yet the infinite ideas by which it is expressed cannot constitute one and the same mind of a singular thing, but an infinite of minds: seeing that each of these infinite ideas has no connexity with the others." Thus, (1) because the Attributes are wholly diverse in the perspective of intellect (a mode of one of them), one and the same mind must be united with not more than one other expression—since the remaining expressions cannot be intellectually incorporated; and (2) because the Attributes are relative to intellect there can be no mind that is not united with some other expression—for the mind knows itself only in the act of knowing something other than itself. For mind is not a "thing" to which knowledge is superadded, but a knowing agent, and it must first be engaged in knowing something if it is to exist or be actual, and hence knowable. Nay, when the mind knows itself as knowing the body, it knows itself, not as a separate being, but as united with the body; and the union of mind and body is, from the standpoint of mind, epistemically. And this is the modal expression of the identity of the Attributes in Substance, and their relativity to intellect.

It has often been claimed that in the system of Spinoza the Attribute of Thought is given a place pre-eminent among the infinite Attributes, in that it corresponds with all of them, and not, like the others, with each other. This is an objection that is hardly to be met by what has already been said about the union of minds with modes of other Attributes. Yet this pre-eminence of the Attribute of Thought is not to be wondered at in view of the relativity of the Attributes to intellect (which is a mode of Thought), and for philosophy (a human intellectual discipline) it is but an expression of the distinction of truth and reality. Here there is no idealistic evading of the paradox that though knowledge is of the real, the real transcends knowledge. But this intellectual pre-eminence of Thought fords no ground for an assertion of its real pre-eminence. In Substance the Attributes are indiscernible, and the distinction of union with all and with each other disappears. It is thus that the divine "intellect," the actuality of substantial Thought (which is not other than substantial Extension,

55. E., II, xii, and C. and S.
56. E., I, x.
57. Ep., 65.
substantial X, etc.) "resembles ours in nothing but in name. There could be no further likeness than that between the Dog in the heavens and the barking animal. . . . If intellect pertains to the divine nature it cannot, like our intellect, follow, nor be simultaneous with, the things that are its objects . . . but, on the contrary, the truth and real essence of things is what it is because as such it exists by way of knowledge in God's intellect."

59. E., I, xxvii, 5. The scope of this book precludes a fuller discussion of the difficulties inherent in Spinoza's doctrine of the infinite Attributes of Substance, and of the restriction of human nature to two only of them, for in view of his laconic treatment of them any such discussion must place a greater reliance on rational speculation than is desirable in such an introduction. Nevertheless, for the sake of the more advanced, or more apt, reader, I will add the following remarks by way of clue.

The Attributes are distinct for intellect, but not in Substance itself, i.e., they form no infinite collection, but are discernible without falsification through the nature of modal intellect. Thus, on the one hand, to each true mode of Thought there is united a mode of Substance involving every Attribute, and on the other hand, since the Attributes, with their modes, are wholly distinct, and cannot be united to form a single systematic whole, to each true mode of Thought a mode of one Attribute only can be united. Addicts of "the Yea and Nay of Elea" are apt to take this as constituting an irreconcilable contradiction. But this is to overlook the substantial, non-collective, unity of the Attributes, and, in particular, to misrepresent the manner in which such a unity must receive modal expression. The human intellect, e.g., is united with "the body and nothing else," i.e., with a mode of Extension alone, and this is the manner in which the indeterminate unity of Substance is modally expressed in human nature. This modal union of Thought and Extension is thus in its way an expression of all the infinite Attributes, though a positive determination of two only. For determination is negation, the Attributes forming no collection, but the nature of each must be conceived, not as contrary to all others, but as their inversion; its determination is their negation. A rough analogy may be helpful to some readers (but must be used with great discretion): when white light falls on a thing that we perceive as red, the thing absorbs all the constituents of the white light except the red, which it reflects. The thing, therefore, is characterised, in one way or another, by all the constituents—its redness being a determination of whiteness involving, and made possible by, the absorption of the other constituents. In so far as white light is not a mere collection of coloured constituents, each colour may be regarded as the inverse of the remainder or complement. The analogy, of course, halts, but we may say that each Attribute of Substance is intellectually discernible from all others because its determinate nature is the inverse of the remainder. Now Thought is, for intellect, other than Extension, but it is not its inverse, for their union has a determinate character which is the inverse of a remainder. Thus a being uniting a mode of Thought with a mode of some Attribute other than Extension, could not be called a "man," though it might express the same substantial potency under variant inversion, and therefore determination. For