Spinoza: Practical Philosophy

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Chapter Four

INDEX OF THE MAIN CONCEPTS OF THE *ETHICS*

ABSOLUTE.—1. Qualifies substance as constituted by all the attributes, while each attribute is only infinite in its kind. Of course infinite in a kind does not at all imply a privation of the other kinds, nor even an opposition with respect to them, but only a real distinction that does not prevent all these infinite forms from referring to the same, ontologically unary Being (*Ethics,* I, def. 6 and exp.). The absolute is precisely the nature of this being, whereas the infinite is only a property of each "kind" or of each of the attributes. Spinozism in its entirety can be seen as a movement beyond the infinitely perfect as a property, towards the absolutely infinite as Nature. Its "displacement" of the ontological proof consists in this movement.

2. Qualifies the powers of God, an absolute power of existing and acting, an absolute power of thinking and comprehending (I, 11, schol.: *infinitam absolute potentiam existendi;* I, 31, dem.: *absolutam cogitationem*). Hence there appear to be two halves of the absolute, or rather two powers of the absolute, which are equal and are not to be confused with the two attributes that we know. Concerning the equality of these two powers, *Ethics,* II, 7, cor.

ABSTRACTIONS.—What is essential is the difference in nature that Spinoza establishes between abstract concepts and common notions (II, 40, schol. 1). A common notion is the idea of something in common between two or more bodies that agree with each other, i.e., that compound their respective relations

according to laws, and affect one another in keeping with this intrinsic agreement or composition. Thus a common notion expresses our capacity for being affected and is explained by our power of comprehending. On the contrary, an abstract idea arises when our capacity for being affected is exceeded and we are content with imagining instead of comprehending: we no longer seek to understand the relations that enter into composition; we only retain an extrinsic *sign*, a variable perceptible characteristic that strikes our imagination, and that we set up as an essential trait while disregarding the others (man as an animal of erect stature, or as an animal that laughs, that speaks, a rational animal, a featherless biped, etc.). For the unity of composition, the composition of intelligible relations, for the internal structures (*fabrica*), we substitute a crude attribution of perceptible similarities and differences, and we establish continuities, discontinuities, and arbitrary analogies in Nature.

In a sense, abstraction presupposes fiction, since it consists in explaining things by means of images (and in substituting, for the internal nature of bodies, the effect of those bodies on our own). In another sense, fiction presupposes abstraction, because it is itself composed of abstracts that change into one another according to an order of association or even external transformation (*Treatise on the Intellect*, 62–64: "If we should say that men changed into beasts, that is said very generally . . . "). We will see how the inadequate idea combines the abstract and the fictitious.

The fictitious abstracts are of different types. First, there are the *classes, species*, and *kinds*, defined by a variable perceptible characteristic that is determined as specific or generic (the dog, a barking animal, etc.). Now, rejecting this way of defining by kind and specific difference, Spinoza suggests a completely different way, linked to the common notions: beings will be defined by their *capacity for being affected*, by the affections of which they are capable, the excitations to which they react, those by which they are unaffected, and those which exceed their capacity and make them ill or cause them to die. In this way, one will obtain a classification of beings by their power; one will see which beings

agree with which others, and which do not agree with one another, as well as who can serve as food for whom, who is social with whom, and according to what relations. A man, a horse, and a dog; or, more to the point, a philosopher and a drunkard, a hunting dog and a watchdog, a racehorse and a plow horse—are distinguished from one another by their capacity for being affected, and first of all by the way in which they fulfill and satisfy their life, *vita illa qua unumquodque est contentum* (*Ethics*, III, 57). Hence there are types that are more or less general, that do not have the same criteria at all as the abstract ideas of kind and species. Even the attributes are not specific differences that would determine substance as kind; nor are they themselves kinds, although each one is called infinite in its kind (but "kind" here only indicates a form of necessary existence that constitutes for substance an infinite capacity for being affected, the modes of the attribute being the affections themselves).

Second, there is *number.* Number is the correlate of the abstract ideas, since things are counted as members of classes, kinds, and species. In this sense, number is an "aid to the imagination" (*Letter XII,* to Meyer). Number is itself an abstract insofar as it applies to the existing modes "considered in the abstract," apart from the way in which they follow from substance and relate to one another. On the contrary, the concrete view of Nature discovers the infinite everywhere, whereas nothing is infinite by reason of the number of its parts—neither substance, of which an infinity of attributes is immediately affirmed without going through 2, 3, 4 . . . (*Letter LXIV,* to Schuller), nor the existing mode, which has an infinity of parts—but it is not because of their number that there is an infinity of them (*Letter LXXI,* to Tschirnhaus). Hence not only does the numerical distinction not apply to substance—the real distinction between attributes is never numerical—but it does not even adequately apply to modes, because the numerical distinction expresses the nature of the mode and of the modal distinction only abstractly and only for the imagination.

Third, there are the *transcendentals.* Here it is no longer a question of specific or generic characteristics by which one es-

tablishes external differences between beings, but of a concept of Being or concepts coextensive with Being, to which one grants a transcendental value and which one counterposes to nothingness (being/nonbeing, unity/plurality, true/false, good/evil, order/disorder, beauty/ugliness, perfection/imperfection . . .). One presents as a transcendent value that which only has an immanent sense, and one defines by an absolute opposition that which only has a relative opposition: thus Good and Evil are abstracts of good and bad, which are said concerning a definite existing mode and which qualify the latter's affections according to the direction of the variations of its power of acting (*Ethics,* IV, preface).

The *geometric beings* pose a special problem. Their figure belongs to the abstracts, or beings of reason, in every sense: it is defined by a specific property; it is an object of measure, measure being an aid of the same sort as number; and above all, it involves a non-being (*Letter L,* to Jelles). However, we can assign an adequate cause to geometric beings, whereas the other beings of reason imply ignorance of the true causes. We can in fact replace the specific definition of a figure (e.g., the circle as a locus of points equidistant from one and the same point called the center) by a genetic definition (the circle as a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other movable, *Treatise on the Intellect,* 95–96; or the sphere as a figure described by the rotation of a semicircle, *idem,* 72). Doubtless this still involves a fiction, in keeping with the relation of the abstract and the fictitious. For no circle or sphere is engendered in this way by Nature; no singular essence is assigned thereby; and the concept of a line, or a semicircle, does not in any way contain the motion that is ascribed to it. Whence the expression: *fingo ad libitum causam* (*idem,* 72). Yet, even when real things are produced in the same way as the ideas that represent them, this is not what makes the ideas true, since their truth does not depend on the object but on the autonomous power of thinking (*idem,* 72). So the fictitious cause of the geometric being can be a good starting point, provided we use it to discover our power of comprehending, as a springboard for reaching the power of God (God deter-

determining the movement of the line or the semicircle). For with the idea of God all fictions and abstractions cease, and ideas follow from it in their order just as real singular things are produced in theirs (*idem*, 73, 75, 76). This is why the geometric notions are *fictions capable of conjuring away the abstract to which they relate, and capable of conjuring themselves away.* Consequently they are closer to the common notions than to the abstracts; they imply, in the *Treatise on the Intellect*, a foreshadowing of what the common notions will be in the *Ethics*. We will see, in fact, how the latter maintain a complex relationship with the imagination; and in any case, the geometric method will preserve its full meaning and extension.

ACT. Cf. Power.

ACTION. Cf. Affections.

ADEQUATE -INADEQUATE. Cf. Idea.

AFFECTIONS, AFFECTS.—1. The affections (*affectio*) are the modes themselves. The modes are the affections of substance or of its attributes (*Ethics*, I, 25, cor.; I, 30, dem.). These affections are necessarily active, since they are explained by the nature of God as adequate cause, and God cannot be acted upon.

2. At a second level, the affections designate that which happens to the mode, the modifications of the mode, the effects of other modes on it. These affections are therefore images or corporeal traces first of all (*Ethics*, II, post. 5; II, 17, schol.; III, post. 2); and their *ideas* involve both the nature of the affected body and that of the affecting external body (II, 16). "The affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present in us, we shall call images of things . . . And when the mind regards bodies in this way, we shall say that it imagines."

3. But these image affections or ideas form a certain state (*constitutio*) of the affected body and mind, which implies more or less perfection than the preceding state. Therefore, from one state to another, from one image or idea to another, there are transitions, passages that are experienced, durations through which we pass to a greater or a lesser perfection. Furthermore,

these states, these affections, images or ideas are not separable from the duration that attaches them to the preceding state and makes them tend towards the next state. These continual durations or variations of perfection are called "affects," or feelings (*affectus*).

It has been remarked that as a general rule the affection (*affectio*) is said directly of the body, while the affect (*affectus*) refers to the mind. But the real difference does not reside there. It is between the body's affection and idea, which involves the nature of the external body, and the affect, which involves an increase or decrease of the power of acting, for the body and the mind alike. The *affectio* refers to a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body, whereas the *affectus* refers to the passage from one state to another, taking into account the correlative variation of the affecting bodies. Hence there is a difference in nature between the *image affections* or *ideas* and the *feeling affects*, although the feeling affects may be presented as a particular type of ideas or affections: "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained. . . . " (III, def. 3); "An affect that is called a passion of the mind is a confused idea, by which the mind affirms of its body, or of some part of it, a greater or lesser force of existing than before. . . . " (III, gen. def. of the affects). It is certain that the affect implies an image or idea, and follows from the latter as from its cause (II, ax. 3). But it is not confined to the image or idea; it is of another nature, being purely transitive, and not indicative or representative, since it is experienced in a lived duration that involves the difference between two states. This is why Spinoza shows that the affect is not a *comparison of ideas*, and thereby rejects any intellectualist interpretation: "When I say a greater or lesser force of existing than before, I do not understand that the mind compares its body's present constitution with a past constitution, but that the idea which constitutes the form of the affect affirms of the body something which really involves more or less of reality than before." (III, gen. def.).

An existing mode is defined by a certain capacity for being af-

fected (III, post. 1 and 2). When it encounters another mode, it can happen that this other mode is "good" for it, that is, enters into composition with it, or on the contrary decomposes it and is "bad" for it. In the first case, the existing mode passes to a greater perfection; in the second case, to a lesser perfection. Accordingly, it will be said that its power of acting or force of existing increases or diminishes, since the power of the other mode is added to it, or on the contrary is withdrawn from it, immobilizing and restraining it (IV, 18 dem.). The passage to a greater perfection, or the increase of the power of acting, is called an affect, or feeling, of *joy;* the passage to a lesser perfection or the diminution of the power of acting is called *sadness.* Thus the power of acting varies according to external causes for the same capacity for being affected. The feeling affect (joy or sadness) follows from the image affection or idea that it presupposes (the idea of the body that agrees with ours or does not agree); and when the affect comes back upon the idea from which it follows, the joy becomes *love,* and the sadness, *hatred.* In this way the different series of affections and affects continually fulfill, but under variable conditions, the capacity for being affected (III, 56).

So long as our feelings or affects spring from the external encounter with other modes of existence, they are explained by the nature of the affecting body and by the necessarily inadequate idea of that body, a confused image involved in our state. Such affects are *passions,* since we are not their adequate cause (III, def. 2). Even the affects based on joy, which are defined by an increase of the power of acting, are passions: joy is still a passion "insofar as a man's power of acting is not increased to the point where he conceives himself and his actions adequately" (IV, 59, dem.). Even though our power of acting has increased materially, we will remain passive, separated from our power, so long as we are not formally in control of it. That is why, from the standpoint of the affects, the basic distinction between *two sorts of passions,* sad passions and joyful passions, prepares for a very different distinction, between *passions and actions.* An idea of *affectio* always gives rise to affects. But if the idea is adequate instead of being a confused image, if it directly expresses the essence of the

affecting body instead of involving it indirectly in our state, if it is the idea of an internal *affectio*, or of a self-affection that evinces the internal agreement of our essence, other essences, and the essence of God (third kind of knowledge), then the affects that arise from it are themselves actions (III, 1). Not only must these affects or feelings be joys or loves (III, 58 and 59), they must be quite special joys and loves since they are no longer defined by an increase of our perfection or power of acting but by the full, formal possession of that power or perfection. The word *blessedness* should be reserved for these active joys: they appear to conquer and extend themselves within duration, like the passive joys, but in fact they are eternal and are no longer explained by duration; they no longer imply transitions and passages, but express themselves and one another in an eternal mode, together with the adequate ideas from which they issue (V, 31– 33).

AFFIRMATION. Cf. Negation.

ANALOGY. Cf. Eminence.

APPETITE. Cf. Power.

ATTRIBUTE.—"What the intellect perceives of substance, as constituting its essence" (*Ethics*, I, def. 4). The attributes are not ways of seeing pertaining to the intellect, because the Spinozist intellect perceives only what is; they are not emanations either, because there is no superiority, no eminence of substance over the attributes, nor of one attribute over another. Each attribute "expresses" a certain essence (I, 10, schol. 1). If the attribute necessarily relates to the intellect, this is not because it resides in the intellect, but because it is expressive and because what it expresses necessarily implies an intellect that "perceives" it. The essence that is expressed is an unlimited, infinite quality. The expressive attribute relates essence to substance and it is this immanent relation that the intellect grasps. All the essences, distinct in the attributes, are as one in substance, to which they are related by the attributes.

Each attribute is "conceived through itself and in itself" (*Letter II*, to Oldenburg). The attributes are distinct in reality: no at-

tribute needs another, or anything pertaining to another, in order to be conceived. Hence they express substantial qualities that are absolutely simple. Consequently, it has to be said that a substance corresponds to each attribute *qualitatively or formally* (not numerically). A purely qualitative formal multiplicity, defined in the first eight propositions of the *Ethics*, makes it possible to identify a substance for each attribute. The real distinction between attributes is a formal distinction between ultimate substantial "quiddities."

We know only two attributes and yet we know there is an infinity of them. We know only two because we can only conceive as infinite those qualities that we involve in our essence: thought and extension, inasmuch as we are mind and body (II, 1 and 2). But we know that there is an infinity of attributes because God has an absolutely infinite power of existing, which cannot be exhausted either by thought or by extension.

The attributes are strictly the same to the extent that they constitute the essence of substance and to the extent that they are involved in, and contain, the essences of mode. For example, it is in *the same form* that bodies imply extension and that extension is an attribute of divine substance. In this sense, God does not possess the perfections implied by the "creatures" in a form different from that which these perfections have in the creatures themselves: thus Spinoza radically rejects the notions of eminence, equivocity, and even analogy (notions according to which God would possess the perfections in another form, a superior form . . .). The Spinozan immanence is therefore no less opposed to emanation than to creation. And *immanence* signifies first of all the *univocity of the attributes:* the same attributes are affirmed of the substance they compose and of the modes they contain (the first figure of univocity, the two others being that of cause and that of the necessary).

AUTOMATON. Cf. Method.

BEINGS OF REASON, OF IMAGINATION. Cf. Abstractions.

BLESSEDNESS. Cf. Affections.

CAPACITY. Cf. Power.

CAUSE.—"By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence; or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing" (*Ethics*, I, def. 1). Spinoza has a reason for beginning the *Ethics* with a definition of cause of itself. Traditionally, the notion of cause of itself was employed with many precautions, by *analogy* with efficient causality (cause of a distinct effect), hence in a merely derivative sense; cause of itself would thus mean "as if by a cause." Spinoza overturns this tradition, making cause of itself the archetype of all causality, its originative and exhaustive meaning.

There is an efficient causality nevertheless: that in which the effect is different from the cause, where either the essence and existence of the effect differ from the essence and existence of the cause, or the effect, itself having an existence different from its own essence, refers to something different as its cause of existence. Thus God is the cause of all things; and every existing finite thing refers to another finite thing as to the cause that makes it exist and act. Differing in essence and in existence, the cause and the effect appear to have nothing in common (I, 17 schol.; *Letter LXIV*, to Schuller). And yet, in another sense, they do have something in common: the attribute, in which the effect is produced and by which the cause acts (*Letter IV*, to Oldenburg; *Letter LXIV*, to Schuller); *but* the attribute, which constitutes the essence of God as cause, does not constitute the essence of the effect; it is only involved by this essence (II, 10).

That God produces through the same attributes that constitute his essence implies that God is the cause of all things *in the same sense* that he is the cause of himself (I, 25, schol.). He produces in the same way that he exists. Hence the univocity of the attributes—in that they are said, in one and the same sense, of the substance whose essence they constitute, and of the products that involve them in *their* essence—extends into a univocity of the cause, in that "efficient cause" is said in the same sense as "cause of itself." In this way, Spinoza overturns tradition doubly since efficient cause is no longer the first

meaning of cause, and since cause of itself is no longer said with a meaning different from efficient cause, but efficient cause is said with the same meaning as cause of itself.

A finite existing thing refers to another finite existing thing as its cause. But it will not be said that a finite thing is subject to a dual, horizontal and vertical, causality, the first being constituted by the indefinite series of other things, and the second by God. For at each term of the series one is referred to God as to that which determines the cause to have its effect (*Ethics*, I, 26). Thus God is never a remote cause, but is reached from the first term of the regression. And only God is a cause; there is only one sense and one modality for all the figures of causality, although these figures are themselves various (cause of itself, efficient cause of infinite things, efficient cause of finite things in relation to one another). Understood in its one sense and its single modality, the cause is essentially *immanent;* that is, it remains in itself in order to produce (as against the *transitive* cause), just as the effect remains in itself (as against the *emanative* cause).

CITY. Cf. Society.

COMMON NOTIONS.—The common notions (*Ethics*, II, 37–40) are so named not because they are common to all minds, but primarily because they represent something common to bodies, either to all bodies (extension, motion and rest) or to some bodies (at least two, mine and another). In this sense, common notions are not at all *abstract* ideas but *general* ideas (*Theological-Political Treatise*, chap. 7).

Each existing body is characterized by a certain relation of motion and rest. When the relations corresponding to two bodies adapt themselves to one another, the two bodies form a composite body having a greater power, a whole present in its parts (e.g., chyle and lymph as parts of the blood, cf. *Letter XXXII*, to Oldenburg). In short, a common notion is the representation of a composition between two or more bodies, and a unity of this composition. Its meaning is more biological than mathematical; it expresses the relations of agreement or composition between existing bodies. It is only secondarily that common notions are

common to minds—more or less so, since they are common only to minds whose bodies are affected by the composition and the unity of composition in question.

All bodies, even those that do not agree with one another (for example, a poison and the body that is poisoned), have something in common: extension, motion and rest. This is because they all compound with one another from the viewpoint of the mediate infinite mode. But it is never *through* what they have in common that they disagree (IV, 30). In any case, by considering the most general common notions, one sees from within where an agreement ends and a disagreement begins, one sees the level at which "differences and oppositions" (II, 29, schol.) are formed.

Common notions are necessarily adequate ideas; indeed, representing a unity of composition, they are in the part and the whole alike, and can only be conceived adequately (II, 38 and 39). But the whole problem is in knowing how we manage to *form* them. From this point of view the importance of the greater or lesser generality of the common notion becomes apparent. For in several places Spinoza writes as if we went from the more general to the less general (*Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 7; *Ethics,* II, 38 and 39). But there we are dealing with an order of application, where we start from the most general notions in order to understand from within, the appearance of disagreements at less general levels. So the common notions are assumed to be already given. Their order of formation is a different matter altogether. For when we encounter a body that agrees with ours, we experience an affect or feeling of joy-passion, although we do not yet adequately know what it has in common with us. Sadness, which arises from our encounter with a body that does not agree with ours, never induces us to form a common notion; but joy-passion, as an increase of the power of acting and of comprehending, does bring this about: it is an occasional cause of the common notion. This is why Reason is defined in two ways, which show that man is not *born* rational but also how he becomes rational. Reason is: 1. an effort to select and organize good encounters, that is, encounters of modes that enter into

composition with ours and inspire us with joyful passions (feelings that *agree* with reason); 2. the perception and comprehension of the common notions, that is, of the relations that enter into this composition, from which one deduces other relations (reasoning) and on the basis of which one experiences new feelings, active ones this time (feelings that *are born* of reason).

Spinoza explains the order of formation or the genesis of the common notions at the beginning of Part IV, in contrast to Part II, which confined itself to the order of their logical application: 1. "As long as we are not dominated by affects contrary to our nature . . . ," affects of sadness, we have the power of forming common notions (cf. V, 10, which explicitly invokes the common notions as well as the preceding propositions). *The first common notions are therefore the least general ones,* those that represent something in common between my body and another that affects me with joy-passion; 2. From these first common notions, affects of joy follow in turn; they are not passions but rather active joys that join the first passions and then take their place; 3. These first common notions and the active affects that depend on them give us the force to form common notions that are more general, expressing what there is in common *even* between our body and bodies that do not agree with ours, that are contrary to it, or affect it with sadness; 4. And from these new common notions, new affects of active joy follow, overtaking the sadnesses and replacing the passions born of sadness.

The importance of the theory of common notions must be evaluated from several viewpoints: 1. The theory does not appear before the *Ethics;* it transforms the entire Spinozan conception of Reason, and defines the status of the second kind of knowledge; 2. It answers the fundamental question: How do we manage to form adequate ideas, and in what order, given that the natural conditions of our perception condemn us to have only inadequate ideas? 3. It brings about a thorough recasting of Spinozism. Whereas the *Treatise on the Intellect* only reached the adequate starting from geometric ideas still permeated with fiction, the common notions form a mathematics of the real or the concrete which rids the geometric method of

the fictions and abstractions that limited its exercise.

The common notions are generalities in the sense that they are only concerned with the existing modes, without constituting any part of the latter's singular essence (II, 37). But they are not at all fictitious or abstract; they represent the composition of real relations between existing modes or individuals. Whereas geometry only captured relations *in abstracto*, the common notions enable us to apprehend them as they are, that is, as they are necessarily embodied in living beings, with the variable and concrete terms between which they are established. In this sense, the common notions are more biological than mathematical, forming a natural geometry that allows us to comprehend the unity of composition of all of Nature and the modes of variation of that unity.

The central status of the common notions is clearly indicated by the expression "second kind of knowledge," between the first and the third. But the kinds are related in two very different, non-symmetrical ways. The relation of the second with the third kind appears in the following form: being adequate ideas, i.e., ideas that are in us as they are in God (II, 38 and 39), the common notions necessarily give us the idea of God (II, 45, 46, and 47). The idea of God *is valid* even for the most general notion, since it expresses what there is in common between all the existing modes; namely, that they are in God and are produced by God (II, 45, schol.; and especially V, 36, schol., which recognizes that the entire *Ethics* is written from the viewpoint of the common notions, including the propositions of Part V concerning the third kind). The idea of God serving as a common notion is even the object of a feeling and a religion peculiar to the second kind (V, 14–20). But the idea of God is not *in itself* a common notion, and Spinoza explicitly distinguishes it from the common notions (II, 47). This is precisely because it comprehends the essence of God, and serves as a common notion only in relation to the composition of the existing modes. Thus, when the common notions lead us necessarily to the idea of God, they carry us to a point where everything changes over, and where the third kind will reveal to us the correlation of the essence of God and the

singular essences of real beings, with a new meaning of the idea of God and new feelings that go to make up this third kind (V, 21–37). Hence there is no break between the second and the third kind, but a passage from one side to the other of the idea of God (V, 28); we go beyond Reason as a faculty of the common notions or a system of eternal truths concerning existence, and enter into the *intuitive intellect* as a system of essential truths (sometimes called *consciousness,* since it is only here that ideas are redoubled and reflected in us as they are in God, giving us the experience of being eternal).

As for the relation of the second kind with the first, it is manifested in the following way, despite the break between them: insofar as they apply solely to existing bodies, the common notions have to do with things that can be imagined (indeed, this is why the idea of God is not in itself a common notion, II, 47, schol.). They represent compositions of relations. Now, these relations characterize bodies insofar as they combine with and affect one another, each one leaving "images" in the other, the corresponding ideas being imaginations. Of course the common notions are not themselves images or imaginations, since they attain an internal comprehension of the reasons for agreement (II, 29, schol.). But they have a dual relation with the imagination. First, an extrinsic relation, for the imagination or the idea of an affection of the body is not an adequate idea, but when it expresses the effect on us of a body that agrees with ours, it makes possible the formation of the common notion that comprehends the agreement adequately from within. Second, an intrinsic relation, for the imagination apprehends as external effects of bodies on one another that which the common notion explains through the internal constitutive relations. So there is a necessary harmony between the properties of the imagination and those of the common notion, such that the latter depends on the properties of the former (V, 5–9).

COMPREHEND. Cf. Explain, Mind, Power.

CONATUS. Cf. Power.

CONSCIOUSNESS.—The idea's property of duplicating itself,

of redoubling to infinity: the idea of the idea. Every idea represents something that exists in an attribute (objective reality of the idea); but it is itself something that exists in the attribute of thought (form or formal reality of the idea); so it is the object of another idea that represents it, etc. (*Ethics,* II, 21). Hence the three characteristics of consciousness: 1. *Reflection:* consciousness is not the moral property of a subject but the physical property of the idea; it is not the reflection of the mind on the idea but the reflection of the idea in the mind (*Treatise on the Intellect*); 2. *Derivation:* consciousness is secondary in relation to the idea of which it is the consciousness, and is worth only what the primary idea is worth. This is why Spinoza says that there is no need to know that one knows in order to know (*idem,* 35) but that one cannot know without knowing that one knows (*Ethics,* II, 21 and 43); 3. *Correlation:* the relation of consciousness to the idea of which it is the consciousness is the same as the relation of the idea to the object of which it is the knowledge (II, 21). Spinoza does say, however, that between the idea and the idea of the idea there is only a distinction of reason (IV, 8; V, 3); the explanation is that both are included in the same attribute of thought, but refer nonetheless to two different powers, a power of existing and a power of thinking, in the same way as the object of the idea and the idea.

Consciousness is completely immersed in the unconscious. That is: 1. We are conscious only of the ideas that we have, under the conditions in which we have them. All the ideas that God has essentially elude us insofar as he does not just constitute our minds but bears an infinity of other ideas; thus we are not conscious of the ideas that compose our souls, nor even of ourselves and our duration; we are only conscious of the ideas that express the effect of external bodies on our own, ideas of affections (II, 9 *et seq.*); 2. Ideas are not the only modes of thinking; the *conatus* and its various determinations or affects are also in the mind as modes of thinking. Now, we are conscious of them only to the extent that the ideas of affections determine the *conatus* precisely. Then the resulting affect enjoys in turn the property of reflecting back on itself, in the same way as the idea that

determines it (IV, 8). This is why Spinoza defines desire as the *conatus* having become conscious, the *cause* of this consciousness being the affection (III, def. of desire).

Consciousness, being therefore naturally a consciousness of the inadequate ideas we have, ideas that are mutilated and truncated, is the seat of two basic illusions: 1. *The psychological illusion of freedom:* considering only effects whose causes it is essentially ignorant of, consciousness can believe itself free, attributing to the mind an imaginary power over the body, although it does not even know what a body can do in terms of the causes that actually move it to act (III, 2 schol.; V, preface); 2. *The theological illusion of finality:* grasping the *conatus* or appetite only in the form of affects determined by the ideas of affections, consciousness can believe that these ideas of affections, insofar as they express the effects of external bodies on our own, are truly primary, are true final causes, and that, even in the domains where we are not free, a provident God has arranged everything according to relations of means-end; thus, the desire appears to be secondary in relation to the idea of the thing judged good (I, appendix).

Precisely because consciousness is the idea's reflection and is worth only what the primary idea is worth, conscious realization has no power by itself. And yet, since falsity as such has no *form*, the inadequate idea does not reflect back on itself without manifesting what is positive in it: it is false that the sun is two hundred feet away, but it is true that I see the sun as being two hundred feet away (II, schol.). It is this positive kernel of the inadequate idea in consciousness that can serve as a regulative principle for a knowledge of the unconscious, that is, for an inquiry concerning what a body can do, for a determination of causes and for the forming of common notions. So once we have attained adequate ideas, we connect effects to their true causes, and consciousness, having become a reflection of adequate ideas, is capable of overcoming its illusions, forming clear and distinct ideas of the affections and affects it experiences (V, 4). Or rather, it overlays the passive affects with active affects that follow from the common notion and are distinguished from the passive affects only by

their cause, hence by a distinction of reason (V, 3 *et seq.*). This is the goal of the second kind of knowledge. And the object of the third is to become conscious of the idea of God, of oneself, and of other things; that is, to make these ideas reflect themselves in us just as they are in God (*sui et Dei et rerum conscius*, V, 42 schol.).

DEATH. Cf. Duration, Existence, Good-Bad, Negation, Power.

DEFINITION, DEMONSTRATION.—Definition is the statement of the distinctive mark of a thing considered in itself (and not in relation to other things). Furthermore, the distinction stated must be a distinction of essence, internal to the thing defined. In this sense, Spinoza reformulates the dichotomy of nominal definitions/real definitions: *Treatise on the Intellect*, 95–97. Nominal definitions are those that use abstracts (kind and specific difference: man is a rational animal), or *propria* (God, an infinitely perfect being), or a property (the circle, a locus of points equidistant from one and the same point). Hence they abstract a determination that is still extrinsic. Real definitions, on the contrary, are genetic: they state the cause of the thing, or its genetic elements. An especially striking example is developed by Spinoza (*Ethics*, III): the nominal definition of desire ("appetite together with the consciousness of it") becomes real if one adds "the cause of this consciousness" (i.e., the affections). This causal or genetic character of real definition applies not only to things that are produced (such as the circle, the movement of a line of which one end remains fixed) but to God himself (God, a being constituted by an infinity of attributes). Indeed, God is amenable to a genetic definition in that he is the cause of himself, in the full sense of the word cause, and his attributes are true formal causes.

A real definition can be *a priori*, therefore. But there are also real definitions *a posteriori;* they are those that define an existing thing, an animal, for example, or man, by what its body is capable of (its power, its capacity for being affected). This can be known only from experience, although the power in question is the essence itself, insofar as it experiences affections. Moreover, real definitions can be conceived even for certain beings of rea-

son. For example, a geometric figure is indeed an abstract, according to a simple nominal definition, but it is also the abstract idea of a "common notion" that can be apprehended through its cause and according to a real definition. (Thus the two preceding definitions of the circle, nominal and real.)

Demonstration is the necessary consequence of the definition. It consists at least in deducing a property of the thing defined. But so long as the definitions are nominal, only a single property can be deduced from each definition; in order to demonstrate others, it is necessary to bring in other objects, other points of view, and to place the thing defined in relation with external things (*Letters LXXXII* and *LXXXIII*). In this sense the demonstration remains a movement that is external to the thing. But when the definition is real, the demonstration is capable of deducing all the properties of the thing, at the same time that it becomes a perception; that is, it captures a movement that is internal to the thing. In this way, demonstration connects up with the definition, independently of an external point of view. It is the thing that "explains itself" in the intellect, and not the intellect that explains the thing.

DESIRE. Cf. Consciousness, Power

DETERMINATION. Cf. Negation.

DURATION.—The continuation of existence from a beginning onward. Duration is said of the existing mode. It involves a beginning but not an end. In reality, when the mode comes to exist through the action of an efficient cause, it is no longer simply comprehended in the attribute, but it continues to exist (*Ethics*, II, 8), or rather tends to do so; that is, it tends to persevere in existing. And its very essence is then determined as a tendency to persevere (III, 5). Now, neither the essence of the thing nor the efficient cause that posits its existence can assign an end to its duration (II, explication of def. 5). This is why duration by itself is an "indefinite continuation of existing." The end of a duration, which is to say, death, comes from the encounter of the existing mode with another mode that decomposes its relation (III, 8; IV, 39). Hence death and birth are in no way symmetrical. So

long as the mode exists, the duration is made up of the lived transitions that define its affects, constant passages to greater or lesser perfections, continual variations of the existing mode's power of acting. Duration contrasts with eternity because eternity has no beginning and is said of that which possesses a full, unvarying power of acting. Eternity is neither an indefinite duration nor something that begins after duration, but it coexists with duration, just as two parts of ourselves that differ in nature coexist, the part that involves the existence of the body and the part that expresses its essence (V, 20, schol. *et seq.*).

EMINENCE.—If a triangle could speak, it would say that God is *eminently* triangular (*Letter LVI*, to Boxel). What Spinoza finds wrong with the notion of eminence is its claiming to save the specificity of God while defining him in anthropological or even anthropomorphic terms. People attribute to God features borrowed from human consciousness (these features are not even adequate to man as he is); and, in order to provide for God's essence, they merely raise these features to infinity, or say that God possesses them in an infinitely perfect form that we do not comprehend. Thus we attribute to God an infinite justice and an infinite charity; an infinite legislative understanding and an infinite creative will; or even an infinite voice and infinite hands and feet. In this respect, Spinoza does not make any distinction between equivocity and analogy, denouncing them both with equal force: it matters little whether God possesses these traits in a sense *different from* or *proportional to* ours, since in either case the univocity of the attributes goes unrecognized.

Now, this univocity is the keystone of Spinoza's entire philosophy. Precisely because the attributes exist in the same form in God, of whose existence they constitute the essence, and in the modes that involve them in *their* essence, there is nothing in common between the essence of God and the essence of the modes, and yet there are forms that are absolutely identical, notions that are absolutely common to God and the modes. The univocity of the attributes is the only means of radically distinguishing the essence and existence of substance from the essence and existence of the modes, while preserving the absolute

unity of Being. Eminence, and along with it, equivocity and analogy are doubly wrong in claiming to see something in common between God and created beings where there is nothing in common (confusion of essences) and in denying the common forms where they do exist (illusion of transcendent forms); they fracture Being and confuse the essences at the same time. The language of eminence is anthropomorphic because it confuses the modal essence with that of substance; extrinsic because it is modeled on consciousness and it confuses the essences with the *propria;* and imaginary because it is the language of equivocal signs and not of univocal expressions.

ENCOUNTER (OCCURSUS). Cf. Affections, Good, Nature, Necessary, Power.

ERROR. Cf. Idea.

ESSENCE. — "Necessarily constitutes the essence of a thing . . . , what the thing can neither be nor be conceived without, *and vice versa, what can neither be nor be conceived without the thing*" (*Ethics*, II, 10, schol.). Every essence is therefore the essence of something with which it has a relation of reciprocity. This rule of reciprocity, added to the traditional definition of essence, has three consequences:

1. There are not several substances of the same attribute (for the attribute conceived at the same time as one of these substances could be conceived without the others);

2. There is a radical distinction of essence between substance and the modes (for, while the modes can neither be nor be conceived without substance, conversely substance can very well be and be conceived without the modes; thus the univocity of the attributes, which are affirmed, in the same form, of substance and of the modes, does not entail any confusion of essence, since the attributes constitute the essence of substance, but do not constitute that of the modes, which merely involve the attributes; indeed, for Spinoza the univocity of the attributes is the only means of guaranteeing this distinction of essence);

3. The nonexisting modes are not possibilities in the intellect of God (for the ideas of modes that do not exist are comprehend-

ed in the idea of God in the same way that the essences of these modes are contained in God's attributes [II, 8]; now, every essence being the essence of something, the nonexisting modes are themselves real and actual beings, the idea of which is therefore necessarily given in the infinite intellect).

If the essence of substance involves existence, this is owing to its property of being the cause of itself. This is demonstrated first for each substance qualified by attribute (I, 7), then for substance constituted by an infinity of attributes (I, 11), depending on whether the essence is referred to the attribute that expresses it or to substance expressing itself in all the attributes. The attributes do not express the essence, therefore, without expressing the existence that it necessarily involves (I, 20). The attributes are so many forces of existing and acting, while essence is an absolutely infinite power of existing and acting.

But what of the modal essences that do not involve existence and are contained in the attributes? What do they consist of? Each essence is a part of God's power insofar as the latter is explained by the modal essence (IV, 4. dem.). Spinoza always conceived the modal essences as singular, starting with the *Short Treatise.* Hence the texts of the *Short Treatise* that seem to deny the distinction of essences (II, chap. 20, n. 3; app. II, 1) actually only deny their extrinsic distinction, which would imply existence in duration and the possession of extensive parts. The modal essences are simple and eternal. But they nevertheless have, with respect to the attribute and to each other, another type of distinction that is purely intrinsic. The essences are neither logical possibilities nor geometric structures; they are parts of power, that is, degrees of physical intensity. They have no parts but are themselves parts, parts of power, like intensive quantities that are composed of smaller quantities. They are all compatible with one another without limit, because all are included in the production of each one, but each one corresponds to a specific degree of power different from all the others.

ETERNITY.—The character of existence insofar as it is involved by essence (*Ethics,* I, def. 8). Existence is therefore an "eternal truth" just as essence itself is eternal, and is distin-

guished from essence only by a distinction of reason. Eternity thus contrasts with duration—even indefinite duration—which qualifies the existence of the mode insofar as the latter is not involved by essence.

The essence of the mode possesses a certain form of eternity nevertheless, *species aeternitatis.* This is because the essence of a mode has a necessary existence that is peculiar to it, although it does not exist through itself, but by virtue of God as its cause. So not only is the immediate infinite mode eternal, but also each singular essence that is a part agreeing with all the others without limit. As for the mediate infinite mode, which governs existences in duration, it is itself eternal to the extent that rules of composition and decomposition together form a system of eternal truths; and each of the relations that correspond to these rules is an eternal truth. This is why Spinoza says that the mind is eternal insofar as it conceives the singular essence of a body under the form of eternity, but also insofar as it conceives existing things by means of common notions, that is, according to eternal relations that determine their composition and their decomposition in existence (V, 29, dem.: *et praeter haec duo nihil aliud ad mentis essentiam pertinet*).

The difference in nature between eternal existence and existence that endures (even indefinitely) remains nevertheless. For duration is expressed only insofar as the existing modes realize relations according to which they come to be and cease to be, enter into composition with and decompose one another. But these very relations, and *a fortiori* the modal essences, are eternal and not durative. This is why the eternity of a singular essence is not an object of memory, presentiment, or revelation; it is strictly the object of an actual experience (V, 23, schol.). It corresponds to the actual existence of a part of the mind, its intensive part that constitutes the singular essence and its characteristic relation, whereas duration affects the mind in the intensive parts that temporarily pertain to it under this same characteristic relation (cf. the differentiation of two kinds of parts, V, 38, 39, 40).

In the expression *species aeternitatis, species* always refers to a concept or a knowledge. It is always an idea that expresses the

essence of a particular body, or the truth of things, *sub species aeternitatis.* It is not that the essences or the truths are not in themselves eternal; but being eternal through their cause and not through themselves, they have that eternity which derives from the cause through which they must necessarily be conceived. Therefore *species* signifies form and idea, form and conception, indissolubly.

EXISTENCE.—By virtue of the cause of itself, the existence of substance is involved in essence, so that essence is an absolutely infinite power of existing. Between essence and existence, then, there is only a distinction of reason, insofar as one distinguishes the thing affirmed from its affirmation.

But the modal essences do not involve existence, and the finite existing mode refers to another finite existing mode that determines it (*Ethics,* I, 24 and 28). This is not to say that essence is really distinguished from existence: it can be so distinguished only modally. As concerns the finite mode, to exist is: 1. to have external causes that exist themselves; 2. actually to have an infinity of extensive parts which are determined by outside causes to enter precisely under the relation of motion and rest that characterizes that mode; 3. to endure, to tend to persevere, that is, to keep these parts under the characteristic relation, so long as other external causes do not determine them to be subsumed by other relations (death, IV, 39). The existence of the mode is therefore its very essence in that it is not only contained in the attribute but it endures and possesses an infinity of extensive parts; it is an *extrinsic modal reality* (II, 8, cor. and schol.). Not only does the body have such intensive parts, so does the mind, being composed of ideas (II, 15).

But the modal essence also has an existence that is peculiar to it, as such, independently of the existence of the corresponding mode. Moreover, it is in this sense that the nonexisting mode is not just a logical possibility but is an intensive part or a degree endowed with a physical reality. All the more reason why this distinction between the essence and *its own* existence is not real, but only modal: it signifies that the essence exists necessarily, but that it necessarily exists by virtue of its cause (God) and as con-

tained in the attribute; it is an *intrinsic modal reality* (I, 24, cor. and 25, dem.; V, 22, dem.)

EXPLAIN-IMPLY (EXPLICARE, IMPLICARE)—Explain is a "strong" term in Spinoza. It does not signify an operation of the intellect external to the thing, but an operation of the thing internal to the intellect. Even demonstrations are said to be "eyes" of the mind, meaning that they perceive a movement that is in the thing. Explication is always a self-explication, a development, an unfolding, a dynamism: the thing *explains itself.* Substance is explained in the attributes, the attributes explain substance; and they in turn are explained in the modes, the modes explain the attributes. And implication is not at all the opposite of explication: that which explains thereby implies, that which develops involves. Everything in Nature is a product of the coexistence of these two movements; Nature is the common order of explications and implications.

There is but a single case in which explain and imply are dissociated. It is the case of the inadequate idea. The inadequate idea implies our power of comprehending, but it is not explained by it; it involves the nature of an external thing, but does not explain it (*Ethics,* II, 18 schol.). This is because the inadequate idea always has to do with a mixture of things, and only retains the effect of one body on another; it lacks a "comprehension" that would be concerned with causes.

As a matter of fact, comprehending is the internal reason that accounts for the two movements, explaining and implying. Substance comprehends (comprises) all the attributes, and the attributes comprehend (contain) all the modes. Comprehension is what founds the identity of explication and implication. Spinoza thus rediscovers a whole tradition of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which defined God through "complicatio": God complicates all things, while each thing explains and implies God.

It remains to be said that comprehension, explication, and implication also designate operations of the intellect. This is their *objective meaning.* The intellect "comprehends" the attributes and the modes (I, 30; II, 4); the adequate idea comprehends the

nature of the thing. But in fact the objective meaning follows from the *formal meaning:* "What is contained objectively in the intellect must necessarily be in nature" (I, 30; II, 7, cor.). To comprehend is always to grasp something that exists necessarily. Comprehending, according to Spinoza, is the opposite of conceiving something as possible. God does not conceive possibilities; he comprehends *himself* necessarily in the same way that he exists; he produces things in the same way that he comprehends himself; and he produces the form in which he comprehends himself and all things (ideas). In this sense all things are explications and implications of God, both formally and objectively.

FALSE. Cf. Idea.

FEELINGS. Cf. Affections, Affects.

FICTIONS. Cf. Abstractions.

FINALITY. Cf. Consciousness.

FREEDOM—The whole effort of the *Ethics* is aimed at breaking the traditional link between freedom and will—whether freedom is conceived as the ability of a will to choose or even create (freedom of indifference), or as the ability to adjust oneself to a model and to carry the model into effect (enlightened freedom). When one conceives God's freedom in this way, as that of a tyrant or a legislator, one ties it to physical contingency, or to logical possibility. One thus attributes inconstancy to God's power, since he could have created something else instead—or worse still, powerlessness, since his power is limited by models of possibility. Further, one grants existence to abstractions, such as nothingness in the case of creation *ex nihilo,* or the Good and the Better in the case of enlightened freedom (*Ethics,* I, 17, schol.: 33, schol. 2). Spinoza holds that freedom is never a property of the will: "will cannot be called a free cause"; the will, whether finite or infinite, is always a mode that is determined by a different cause, even if this cause is the nature of God under the attribute of thought (I, 32). On the one hand, ideas are themselves modes, and the idea of God is only an infinite mode according to which God comprehends his own nature and all that follows

from it, without ever conceiving possibilities; on the other hand, volitions are modes involved in ideas, which are identical with the affirmation or negation that follow from the idea itself, without there ever being anything contingent in these acts (II, 49). Hence neither the intellect nor the will pertain to the nature or essence of God and are not free causes. Necessity being the only modality of all that is, the only cause that can be called free is one "that exists through the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined by itself alone to act." Thus God, who is constituted by an infinity of attributes, is the cause of all things in the same sense that he is the cause of himself. God is free because everything follows necessarily from his essence, without his conceiving possibilities or contingencies. What defines freedom is an "interior" and a "self" determined by necessity. One is never free through one's will and through that on which it patterns itself, but through one's essence and through that which follows from it.

Can it ever be said in this sense that a mode is free, since it always refers to something else? Freedom is a fundamental illusion of consciousness to the extent that the latter is blind to causes, imagines possibilities and contingencies, and believes in the willful action of the mind on the body (I, app.; II, 35, schol.; V, pref.). In the case of modes, it is even less possible to link freedom to the will than it is in the case of substance. In return, modes have an essence, that is, a degree of power. When a mode manages to form adequate ideas, these ideas are either common notions that express its internal agreement with other existing modes (second kind of knowledge), or the idea of its own essence that necessarily agrees internally with the essence of God and all the other essences (third kind). Active affects or feelings follow necessarily from these adequate ideas, in such a way that they are explained by the mode's own power (III, def. 1 and 2). The existing mode is then said to be free; thus, man is not born free, but becomes free or frees himself, and Part IV of the *Ethics* draws the portrait of this free or strong man (IV, 54, etc.). Man, the most powerful of the finite modes, is free when he comes into possession of his power of acting, that is, when his *conatus* is

determined by adequate ideas from which active affects follow, affects that are explained by his own essence. Freedom is always linked to essence and to what follows from it, not to will and to what governs it.

GEOMETRIC BEINGS. Cf. Abstractions, Common Notions, Method.

GOOD-BAD.—Good and bad are doubly relative, and are said in relation to one another, and both in relation to an existing mode. They are the two senses of the variation of the power of acting: the decrease of this power (sadness) is bad; its increase (joy) is good (*Ethics*, IV, 41). Objectively, then, everything that increases or enhances our power of acting is good, and that which diminishes or restrains it is bad; and we only know good and bad through the feeling of joy or sadness of which we are conscious (IV, 8). Since the power of acting is what opens the capacity for being affected to the greatest number of things, a thing is good "which so disposes the body that it can be affected in a greater number of ways" (IV, 38); or which preserves the relation of motion and rest that characterizes the body (IV, 39). In all these senses, what is good is what is useful, what is bad is what is harmful (IV, def. 1 and 2). But it is important to note the originality of this Spinozist conception of the useful and the harmful.

Good and bad thus express the encounters between existing modes ("the common order of nature," extrinsic determinations or fortuitous encounters, *fortuito occursi*, II, 29, cor. and schol.). Doubtless all relations of motion and rest agree with one another in the mediate infinite mode; but a body can induce the parts of my body to enter into a new relation that is not directly or immediately compatible with my characteristic relation: this is what occurs in death (IV, 39). Although inevitable and necessary, death is always the result of an extrinsic fortuitous encounter, an encounter with a body that decomposes my relation. The divine prohibition against eating of the fruit of the tree is only the revelation to Adam that the fruit is "bad"; i.e., it will decompose Adam's relation: "just as he also reveals to us through the

natural intellect that a poison is deadly to us" (*Letter XIX,* to Blyenbergh, and *Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 4). All evil comes down to badness, and everything that is bad belongs to the category that includes poison, indigestion, intoxication. Even the evil that I do (bad = malicious) consists only in the fact that I join the image of an action to the image of an object that cannot bear this action without losing its constitutive relation (IV, 59, schol.).

Therefore everything that is bad is measured by a decrease of the power of acting (sadness-hatred); everything that is good, by an increase of this same power (joy-love). Whence Spinoza's all-out struggle, his radical denunciation of all the passions based on sadness, which places him in the great lineage that goes from Epicurus to Nietzsche. It is a disgrace to seek the internal essence of man in his bad extrinsic encounters. Everything that involves sadness serves tyranny and oppression. Everything that involves sadness must be denounced as bad, as something that separates us from our power of acting: not only remorse and guilt, not only meditation on death (IV, 67), but even hope, even security, which signify powerlessness (IV, 47).

Although there are relations that compound in every encounter, and all relations compound without limit in the mediate infinite mode, this does not mean that we shall say that all is well and good. What is good is any increase of the power of acting. From this viewpoint, the formal possession of this power of acting, and of knowing, appears as the *summum bonum;* it is in this sense that reason, instead of remaining at the mercy of chance encounters, endeavors to join us to things and beings whose relations compound directly with our own. Thus reason seeks the sovereign good or "our own advantage," *proprium utile,* which is common to all men (IV, 24–28). But once we have attained the formal possession of our power of acting, the expressions *bonum, summum bonum,* too imbued with finalist illusions, disappear to make way for the language of pure potency or virtue ("the first foundation," and not the ultimate end), in the third kind of knowledge. This is why Spinoza says: "If men were born free, they would form no concept of good and bad, so long as they re-

mained free" (IV, 68). Precisely because the good is said in relation to an existing mode, and in relation to a variable and not-yet-possessed power of acting, the good cannot be totalized. If one hypostatizes the good and the bad as Good and Evil, one makes this Good into a reason for being and acting; one falls into all the finalist illusions; one misrepresents both the necessity of divine production and our way of participating in the full divine power. This is why Spinoza stands fundamentally apart from all the theses of his time, according to which Evil is nothing, and the Good causes one to be and to act. The Good, like Evil, is meaningless. They are beings of reason or imagination that depend entirely on social signs, on the repressive system of rewards and punishments.

IDEA.—A mode of thinking, primary in relation to the other modes of thinking, while being different from them (*Ethics*, II, ax. 3). Love presupposes the idea, however confused, of the thing loved. This is because the idea represents a thing or a state of things, whereas feeling (affect, *affectus*) involves the passage to a greater or lesser perfection corresponding to the variation of states. So there is at the same time a primacy of the idea over feeling and a difference in nature between the two.

The idea is representative. But we have to distinguish the idea that we are (the mind as idea of the body) from the ideas that we have. The idea that we are is in God; God possesses it adequately, not just insofar as he constitutes us, but in that he is affected with an infinity of different ideas (ideas of the other essences that all agree with ours, and of the other existences that are causes of ours without limit). Therefore we do not have this idea immediately. The only ideas we have under the natural conditions of our perception are the ideas that represent *what happens* to our body, the effect of another body on ours, that is, a mixing of both bodies. They are necessarily inadequate (II, 11, 12, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27 . . .).

Such ideas are images. Or rather, images are the corporeal affections themselves (*affectio*), the traces of an external body on our body. Our ideas are therefore ideas of images or affections that represent a state of things, that is, by which we affirm the

presence of the external body so long as our body remains affected in this way (II, 17): 1. Such ideas are *signs;* they are not *explained* by our essence or power, but *indicate* our actual state and our incapacity to rid ourselves of a trace; they do not *express* the essence of the external body but *indicate* the presence of this body and its effect on us (II, 16). Insofar as it has ideas, the mind is said to *imagine* (II, 17); 2. These ideas are connected with one another according to an order that is first of all that of memory or habit; if the body has been affected by two bodies at the same time, the trace of one prompts the mind to recollect the other (II, 18). This order of memory is also that of extrinsic fortuitous encounters between bodies (II, 29). And the less constancy the encounters have, the more equivocal the signs will be (II, 44). This is why, insofar as our affections mix together diverse and variable bodies, the imagination forms pure fictions, like that of the winged horse; and insofar as it overlooks differences between outwardly similar bodies, it forms abstractions, like those of species and kinds (II, 40 and 49).

Adequate ideas are altogether different. They are true ideas, which are in us as they are in God. They are not representative of states of things or of what happens to us, but of what we are and of what things are. They form a systematic set having three summits: the idea of ourselves, the idea of God, and the idea of other things (third kind of knowledge). 1. These adequate ideas are *explained* by our essence or power, as a power of knowing and comprehending (formal cause). They *express* another idea as cause, and the idea of God as determining this cause (material cause); 2. They cannot be separated, therefore, from an autonomous connection of ideas in the attribute of thought. This connection, or *concatenatio,* which unites form and material, is an order of the intellect that constitutes the mind as a *spiritual automaton.*

We may note that while the idea is representative, its representativeness (objective being) does not explain anything about its nature: on the contrary, the latter follows from the internal properties of the idea (II, def. 4). When Spinoza says "adequate," he has in mind something very different from the Carte-

sian "clear and distinct," although he continues to use these words. The form of the idea is not sought in a psychological consciousness but in a logical power that surpasses consciousness; the material of the idea is not sought in a representative content but in an expressive content, an epistemological material through which the idea refers to other ideas and to the idea of God. Logical power and epistemological content, explication and expression, formal cause and material cause are joined in the autonomy of the attribute of thought and the automatism of the mind that thinks. The adequate idea represents something truthfully, represents the order and connection of things, only because it develops the order of its form and the automatic connections of its material in the attribute of thought.

One sees, then, what is lacking in the inadequate idea and the imagination. The inadequate idea is like a consequence without its premises (II, 28, dem.). It is separated from, deprived of its two—formal and material—premises, since it is not formally explained by our power of comprehending, does not materially express its own cause, and remains attached to an order of fortuitous encounters instead of attaining the concatenation of ideas. It is in this sense that the false has no form and does not consist of anything positive (II, 33). And yet there is something positive in the inadequate idea: when I see the sun two hundred feet away, this perception, this affection does represent the effect of the sun on me, although the affection is separated from the causes that explain it (II, 35; IV, 1). What is positive in the inadequate idea must be defined in the following way: it *involves* the lowest degree of our power of understanding, without being *explained* by it, and *indicates* its own cause without *expressing* it (II, 17 schol.). "The mind does not err from the fact that it imagines, but only insofar as it is considered to lack an idea that excludes the existence of those things that it imagines to be present to it. For if the mind, while it imagined nonexistent things as present to it, at the same time knew that those things did not exist, it would, of course, attribute this power of imagining to a virtue of its nature, not to a vice" (II, 17, schol.).

The whole problem is therefore: How do we manage to have,

to form adequate ideas, since our natural condition determines us to have only inadequate ideas? We have defined the adequate idea without having the least idea of how we can attain it. The answer will be given by the production of *common notions;* and even here Spinoza begins by defining what the common notions are (Part II), before showing how we can produce them (Part V). We have considered the problem above (cf. Common Notions). But an idea, whether adequate or inadequate, is always followed by feelings-affects (*affectus*) that result from it as from their cause, although they are of a different nature. Inadequate and adequate thus describe an idea first of all, but they also describe a cause (III, def. 1). Since the adequate idea is explained by our power of comprehending, we do not have an adequate idea without being ourselves the adequate cause of the feelings that result, and that consequently are active (III, def. 2). On the contrary, insofar as we have inadequate ideas, we are the inadequate cause of our feelings, which are passions (III, 1 and 2).

IMAGE, IMAGINATION. Cf. Affections, Common Notions, Idea.

IMMANENCE. Cf. Attribute, Cause, Eminence, Nature.

INDIVIDUAL.—This term sometimes designates the unity of an idea in the attribute of thought and its object in a determinate attribute (*Ethics*, II, 21, schol.). But more generally, it designates the complex organization of the existing mode in any attribute.

1. The mode has a singular essence, which is a degree of power or an intensive part, a *pars aeterna* (V, 40), each essence being utterly simple and agreeing with all the others. 2. This essence is expressed in a characteristic relation, which is itself an eternal truth concerning existence (for example, a certain relation of motion and rest in extension). 3. The mode passes into existence when its relation actually subsumes an infinity of extensive parts. These parts are determined to enter into the characteristic relation, or to realize it, through the operation of an external determinism. The mode ceases to exist when its parts are determined from without to enter into a different relation, which is not com-

patible with the former one. Duration is said, then, not of the relations themselves, but of the way in which actual parts are subsumed under this or that relation. And the degrees of power, which all agree with one another insofar as they constitute the essences of modes, necessarily come into conflict in existence inasmuch as the extensive parts that pertain to one degree under a certain relation can be conquered by another under a new relation (IV, ax. and V, 37, schol.).

An individual is thus always composed of an infinity of extensive parts, insofar as they pertain to a singular essence of mode, under a characteristic relation (II, after 13). These parts (*corpora simplicissima*) are not themselves individuals; there is no essence of each one, they are defined solely by their exterior determinism, and they always exist as infinities; but they always constitute an existing individual to the extent that an infinity of them enters into this or that relation characterizing this or that essence of mode; they constitute the infinitely varied modal material of existence. These infinite sets are those which the letter to Meyer defines as greater or lesser, and as relating to something limited. Indeed, given two existing modes, if one has a degree of power double that of the other, it will have under its relation an infinity of parts two times greater than the other under its relation, and can even treat the other as one of its parts. To be sure, when two modes encounter one another in existence, it can happen that one destroys the other, or on the contrary helps it preserve itself, depending on whether the characteristic relations of the two modes decompose each other or compound with one another directly. But there are always, in every encounter, *some* relations existing as eternal truths. So that, according to this order, Nature in its entirety is conceived as an Individual that composes all relations and possesses all the sets of intensive parts with their different degrees.

As a modal process, individuation is always quantitative, according to Spinoza. But there are two very different individuations: that of essence, defined by the singularity of each degree of power as a simple *intensive part*, indivisible and eternal; and that of existence, defined by the divisible set of *extensive parts*

that temporarily actualize the eternal relation of motion and rest in which the modal essence is expressed. (Concerning these two kinds of "parts" in the mind, cf. V).

INFINITE.—*Letter XII* to Meyer distinguishes three infinites:

1. That which is unlimited by nature (either infinite in its kind as is each attribute, or absolutely infinite as is substance). This infinite forms part of the properties of a Being involving necessary existence, together with eternity, simplicity, and indivisibility: "For, if the nature of this being were limited, and conceived as limited, that nature would beyond the said limits be conceived as nonexistent" (*Letter XXXV*);

2. That which is unlimited by virtue of its cause. Here Spinoza is referring to the immediate infinite modes in which the attributes are expressed absolutely. And doubtless these modes are indivisible; yet they have an actual infinity of parts, all of which agree with and are indissociable from one another: thus the modal essences contained in the attribute (each essence is an intensive part or a degree). It is for this reason that, if we consider one of these essences abstractly, apart from the others and from the substance that produces them, we apprehend it as limited, external to the others. Moreover, since the essence does not determine the existence and duration of the mode, we apprehend duration as something which may be more or less, and existence as being composed of more or fewer parts; we apprehend them abstractly as divisible quantities;

3. That which cannot be equal to any number, although it is more or less large and comprises a maximum and a minimum (the example of the sum of inequalities of distance between two nonconcentric circles, in the letter to Meyer). This infinite refers to the finite existing modes and to the mediate infinite modes which they compose under certain relations. Indeed, each modal essence as a degree of power comprises a maximum and a minimum; and insofar as the mode exists, an infinity of extensive parts (*corpora simplicissima*) pertain to it under the relation that corresponds to its essence. This infinite is not defined by the number of its parts, since the latter always exist as an infinity that exceeds any number; and it can be more or less large,

since to an essence whose degree of power is double that of another there corresponds an infinity of extensive parts two times greater. This variable infinite is that of the existing modes, and the infinite set of all these sets, together with the characteristic relations, constitutes the mediate infinite mode. But when we conceive the essence of a mode abstractly, we also conceive its existence abstractly, measuring it, counting it, and making it depend on an arbitrarily determined number of parts (cf. #2).

Hence there is no indefinite that is not abstractly conceived. Every infinite is actual.

INTELLECT (INFINITE INTELLECT, IDEA OF GOD).— The intellect, whether infinite or finite, is only a mode of the attribute of thought (*Ethics*, I, 31). In this sense, it does not constitute the essence of God any more than does will. Those who ascribe intellect and will to God's essence conceive God according to anthropological or even anthropomorphic predicates. As a result, they can save the distinction between essences only by invoking a divine intellect that surpasses our own, has a pre-eminent status compared to ours, and is related to ours through simple analogy. In this way, one falls into all the confusions of an equivocal language (as with the word *dog* which designates both a heavenly constellation and a barking animal, I, 17, schol.).

The *Ethics* conducts a twofold critique of a divine intellect which would be that of a legislator, containing models or possibilities according to which God would rule creation, and of a divine will which would be that of a prince or tyrant, creating *ex nihilo* (I, 17, schol.; 33, schol. 2). These are the two great misunderstandings that distort both the notion of necessity and the notion of freedom.

The true status of the infinite intellect is captured in the following three propositions: 1. God produces with the same necessity by which he understands *himself.* 2. God understands all that he produces. 3. God produces the form in which he understands himself and understands all things. These three propositions show, each in its own way, that the possible does not exist, that all that is possible is necessary (God does not conceive contingencies in his intellect, but 1. merely understands everything that

follows from his nature or his own essence; 2. necessarily understands everything that follows from his essence; 3. necessarily produces this understanding of himself and of things). It should be pointed out, however, that the necessity invoked by these three propositions is not the same in each case, and that the status of the intellect seems to vary.

According to the first, God produces as he understands himself and as he exists (II, 3, schol.). The necessity for God to understand himself appears to be not just based on the necessity of existing but equal to it. Hence the idea of God comprehends substance and the attributes, and produces an infinity of ideas just as substance produces an infinity of things in the attributes (II, 4). And there corresponds to the idea of God a power of thinking equal to that of existing and acting (II, 7). How does one reconcile these characteristics with the purely modal being of the infinite intellect? The answer is in the condition that the power of the idea of God must be understood *objectively*: "Whatever follows formally from God's infinite nature follows objectively in God from his idea in the same order and with the same connection" (*idem,* II, 7, cor.). So to the extent that it represents the attributes and the modes, the idea of God has a power equal to that which it represents. But this "objective" power would remain virtual, would not be actualized, contrary to all the requirements of Spinozism, if the idea of God and all the other ideas that follow from it were not themselves *formed*—that is, if they did not have their own formal being. Now, this formal being of the idea can only be a mode of the attribute of thought. Indeed, this is how the idea of God and the infinite intellect are distinguished terminologically from one another; the idea of God is the idea in its objective being, and the infinite intellect is the same idea considered in its formal being. The two aspects are inseparable; one cannot dissociate the first aspect from the second except by making the power of comprehending an unactualized power.

In the first place, this complex status of the idea of God as infinite intellect is what explains that the idea of God has as much unity or substance as God himself, but is capable of imparting

this unity to the modes themselves—hence the central role of II, 4. Secondly, this complex status accounts for the attribute of thought, as we will see when we consider the relations of the mind and the body.

Furthermore, our intellect is explained as an integral part of the divine intellect (II, 11, cor.; 43 schol.). Indeed, the fact that the infinite intellect is a mode explains the adequation of our intellect to the infinite intellect. Of course we do not know everything pertaining to God; we only know the attributes that are involved in our being. But all that we know of God is absolutely adequate, and an adequate idea is in us as it is in God. The idea that we have of God himself—that is, what we know of him—is therefore the idea that God has of himself (V, 36). So the absolutely adequate character of our knowledge is not just based in a negative way on the "devalorization" of the infinite intellect, reduced to the condition of a mode; the positive basis is in the univocity of the attributes which have only one form in the substance whose essence they constitute and in the modes that imply them, so that our intellect and the infinite intellect may be modes, but they nonetheless objectively comprehend the corresponding attributes as they are formally. This is why the idea of God will play a fundamental role in adequate knowledge, being considered first according to a use that we make of it, in connection with the common notions (second kind of knowledge), then according to its own being insofar as we are a part of it (third kind).

JOY-SADNESS. Cf. Affections, Good, Power.

KNOWLEDGE (KINDS OF—). Knowledge is not the operation of a subject but the affirmation of the idea in the mind: "It is never we who affirm or deny something of a thing; it is the thing itself that affirms or denies something of itself in us" (*Short Treatise,* II, 16, 5). Spinoza rejects any analysis of knowledge that would distinguish two elements, intellect and will. Knowledge is a self-affirmation of the idea, an "explication" or development of the idea, in the same sense that an essence is explained through its properties or that a cause is explained through its

effects (*Ethics*, I, ax. 4; I, 17). Conceived in this way, knowledge as an affirmation of the idea is distinguished: 1. from consciousness as a reduplication of the idea; 2. from affects as determinations of the *conatus* by ideas.

But the kinds of knowledge are modes of existence, because knowing embraces the types of consciousness and the types of affects that correspond to it, so that the whole capacity for being affected is filled. Spinoza's exposition of the kinds of knowledge varies considerably from one work to another, but this is chiefly because the central role of the common notions is not established until the *Ethics*. In the definitive formulation (II, 40, schol. 2) the first kind is defined above all by equivocal *signs*, that is, by indicative signs that involve an inadequate knowledge of things, and imperative signs that involve an inadequate knowledge of laws. This first kind expresses the natural conditions of our existence insofar as we do not have adequate ideas. It is constituted by the linking together of inadequate ideas and of the affects-passions that result from them.

The second kind is defined by the common notions, that is, by the composition of relations, the effort of reason to organize the encounters between existing modes according to relations that agree with one another, and either the *surpassing* or the *replacement* of passive affects by active affects that follow from the common notions themselves. But the common notions, without being abstracts, are still general ideas that do not apply to the existing modes; it is in this sense that they do not give us knowledge of the singular essence. It pertains to the third kind of knowledge to reveal the essences: the attribute is then no longer grasped as a common (i.e., general) notion applicable to all the existing modes, but as a (univocal) form common to the substance whose essence it constitutes and to the essences of mode that it contains as singular essences (V, 36 schol.). The figure corresponding to the third kind is a triangle that joins together the adequate ideas of ourselves, of God, and of other things.

The break is between the first and the second kinds, since adequate ideas and active affects begin with the second (II, 41 and 42). From the second to the third there is a difference in nature,

but the third has a *causa fiendi* in the second (V, 28). It is the idea of God that enables us to go from the one to the other. Actually, the idea of God pertains in a sense to the second kind, being linked to the common notions; but, not being itself a common notion, since it comprehends the essence of God, it forces us, given this new perspective, to pass to the third kind which concerns the essence of God, our singular essence, and all the singular essences of other things. It is true that when we say the second kind is a *causa fiendi* of the third, this expression should be understood more in an occasional sense than an actual sense, because the third kind does not occur, strictly speaking, but is eternal and is found as eternally given (V, 31 schol. and 33 schol.).

Moreover, between the first kind and the second, despite the break there is still a certain occasional relation that explains the possibility of the leap from one to the other. On the one hand, when we encounter bodies that agree with ours, we do not yet have the adequate idea of these other bodies or of ourselves, but we experience joyful passions (an increase of our power of acting) which still pertain to the first kind but lead us to form the adequate idea of what is common to these bodies and our own. On the other hand, the common notion in itself has complex harmonies with the confused images of the first kind, and relies on certain characteristics of the imagination. These two points constitute basic arguments in the theory of the *common notions.*

LAW. Cf. Sign, Society.

LOVE-HATRED. Cf. Affections.

METHOD.—1. The aim is not to make something known to us, but to make us understand our power of knowing. It is a matter of becoming conscious of this power: a reflexive knowledge, or an idea of the idea. But since the idea of the idea is worth what the first idea is worth, this *prise de conscience* assumes that we first have a true idea of some kind. It matters little which idea; it can be an idea that involves a fiction, such as that of a geometric being. It will enable us to understand our power of knowing all the better, without reference to a real object. The method thus

takes its starting point from geometry. Already in the *Treatise on the Intellect*, as we have seen with regard to the theory of abstraction, one begins with a geometric idea, even though this idea is imbued with fiction and does not represent anything in Nature. In the *Ethics* the theory of common notions makes possible an even more rigorous assignment of the starting point: one begins with substances, each one of which is qualified by an attribute; these substances are used as common notions and are analogous to geometric beings, but with no fiction involved. In any case, the true idea taken as a starting point is reflected in an idea of the idea that makes us understand our power of knowing. This is the formal aspect of the method.

2. But the true idea, related to our power of knowing, at the same time discovers its own inner content, which is not its representative content. At the same time that it is formally explained by our power of knowing, it materially expresses its own cause (whether this cause is a formal cause as cause of itself, or an efficient cause). The true idea, insofar as it expresses its cause, becomes an adequate idea and gives us a genetic definition. Thus in the *Treatise on the Intellect*, the geometric being is amenable to a *causal or genetic definition* from which all its properties follow at once; and in the *Ethics* one goes from ideas of substances, each qualified by an attribute, to the idea of a single substance possessing all the attributes (I, 9 and 10), as cause of itself (I, 11) and from which all properties follow (I, 16). The procedure is regressive, therefore, since it goes from knowledge of the thing to knowledge of the cause. But it is synthetic, since one does not just determine a property of the cause in terms of a known property of the effect, but one reaches an essence as the genetic reason for all the knowable properties. The method did not start from the idea of God, but it arrives there "as quickly as possible," according to this second aspect. One arrives at the idea of God, either as being the very cause insofar as it is the cause of itself (in the case of the *Ethics*), or as being what determines the cause to produce its effect (in the case of the *Treatise on the Intellect*);

3. As soon as one arrives at the idea of God, everything

changes. For, even from the viewpoint of the *Treatise on the Intellect*, all fictions are left behind, and what was still regressive in the synthetic method gives way to a progressive deduction in which all ideas connect with one another starting from the idea of God. From the viewpoint of the *Ethics*, the idea of God is closely linked to the common notions, to a use of the common notion, but is not itself a common notion; the common notion is capable of doing away with all generalities, carrying us from the essence of God to the essences of things as real singular beings. This connection of ideas does not derive from their representative order, or from the order of what they represent; on the contrary, they represent things as they are only because they connect according to their own autonomous order. The third aspect of the method, its progressive-synthetic character, combines the other two, the reflexive-formal aspect and the expressive-material aspect; the ideas connect with one another starting from the idea of God, insofar as they express their own cause and are explained by our power of comprehending. This is why the mind is said to be "like a spiritual automaton," since by unfolding the autonomous order of its own ideas it unfolds the order of the things represented (*Treatise on the Intellect*, 85).

The geometric method, as Spinoza conceives it, is perfectly suited to the first two aspects above: in the *Treatise on the Intellect*, by virtue of the special fictive character of the geometric beings and their amenability to a genetic definition; in the *Ethics*, by virtue of the deep affinity of the common notions with the geometric beings themselves. And the *Ethics* explicitly acknowledges that its entire method, from the beginning to Part V, 21, proceeds geometrically because it is based on the second kind of knowledge, i.e., on the common notions (cf. V, 36, schol.). But the problem is this: What happens at the third stage, when we cease using the idea of God as a common notion, when we go from the essence of God to the singular essences of real beings, that is, when we reach the third kind of knowledge? The true problem of the scope of the geometric method is not posed simply by the difference between geometric beings and real beings, but by the difference, at the level of real beings, between

knowledge of the second kind and knowledge of the third kind. Now the two famous texts that liken demonstrations to "eyes of the mind" bear precisely on the third kind, in a domain of experience and vision where the common notions are surpassed (*Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 13, and *Ethics,* V, 23, schol.). It must be concluded, then, that Spinoza's general method does not assign a merely propaedeutic value to the geometric procedure, but, at the end of its movement, and through its original formal and material interpretation, imparts to the geometric method sufficient force to go beyond its ordinary limits, ridding it of the fictions and even the generalities that accompany its restricted use (*Letter LXXXIII,* to Tschirnhaus).

MIND AND BODY (PARALLELISM).—The word *soul* is not employed in the *Ethics* except in rare polemical instances. Spinoza replaces it with the word *mind (mens).* Soul is too burdened with theological prejudices and does not account: 1. for the true nature of the mind, which consists in being an idea, and the idea of something; 2. for the true relation with the body, which is precisely the object of this idea; 3. for real eternity insofar as it differs in nature from pseudo-immortality; 4. for the pluralist composition of the mind, as a composite idea that possesses as many parts as faculties.

The body is a mode of extension; the mind, a mode of thinking. Since the individual has an essence, the individual mind is constituted first of all by what is primary in the modes of thinking, that is, by an idea (*Ethics,* II, ax. 3 and prop. 11). The mind is therefore the idea *of* the corresponding body. Not that the idea is defined by its representative power; but the idea that we are is to thought and to other ideas what the body that we are is to extension and to other bodies. There is an automatism of thinking (*Treatise on the Intellect,* 85), just as there is a mechanism of the body capable of astonishing us (*Ethics,* III, 2, schol.). Each thing is at once body and mind, thing and idea; it is in this sense that all individuals are *animata* (II, 13, schol.). The representative power of the idea simply follows from this correspondence.

The same is true of the ideas that we have, and not just of the idea that we are. For we do not have the idea that we are, at least

not immediately: it is in God insofar as he is affected with an infinity of different ideas (II, 11, cor.). What we have is the idea of that which *happens* to our body, the idea of our body's affections, and it is only through such ideas that we know immediately our body and others, our mind and others (II, 12–31). So there is a correspondence between the affections of the body and the ideas of the mind, a correspondence by which these ideas represent these affections.

What explains this system of correspondence? What must be ruled out is any real action between the body and the mind, since they depend on two different attributes, each attribute being conceived through itself (III, 2, dem.; V, pref.). The body and the mind—what happens to one and what happens to the other respectively—are therefore autonomous. But there is nevertheless a correspondence between the two, because God, as a single substance possessing all the attributes, does not produce anything without producing it in each attribute according to one and the same order (II, 7, schol.). So there is one and the same order in thought and in extension, one and the same order of bodies and minds. But the originality of Spinoza's doctrine is not defined by this correspondence without real causality, nor even by this identity of order. Indeed, similar tenets are common among the Cartesians; one can deny real causality between the body and the mind and still maintain an ideal or occasional causality; one can affirm an ideal correspondence between the two, according to which, as tradition has it, a passion of the soul corresponds to an action of the body, and vice versa; one can affirm an identity of order between the two without their having the same "dignity" or perfection; for example, Leibniz coins the word *parallelism* to describe his own system without real causality, where the series of the body and the series of the mind are modeled rather on the asymptote and on projection. What accounts for the originality of the Spinozist doctrine then? Why is it that the word *parallelism*, which does not come from Spinoza, suits him perfectly nevertheless?

The answer lies in the fact that there is not just an identity "of order" between bodies and minds, between the phenomena of

the body and the phenomena of the mind (*isomorphism*). There is also an identity of "connection" between the two series (*isonomy or equivalence*), that is, an equal valence, an equality of principle, between extension and thought, and between what occurs in one and in the other. In terms of the Spinozan critique of all eminence, of all transcendence and equivocity, no attribute is superior to another, none is reserved for the creator, none is relegated to the created beings and to their imperfection. Thus, the series of the body and the series of the mind present not only the same order but the same chain of connections under equal principles. Finally, there is an identity of being (*isology*) in that the same thing, the same modification is produced in the attribute of thought under the mode of a mind, and in the attribute of extension under the mode of a body. The practical consequence of this is immediate: contrary to the traditional moral view, all that is action in the body is also action in the mind, and all that is passion in the mind is also passion in the body (III, 2, schol.: "The order of actions and passions of our body is, by nature, at one with the order of actions and passions of the mind").

It should be noted that the parallelism of the mind and the body is the first case of a general *epistemological parallelism* between the idea and its object. This is why Spinoza invokes the axiom according to which the knowledge of an effect involves the knowledge of its cause (I, ax. 4; II, 7, dem.). More exactly, it is demonstrated that to every idea there corresponds something (since nothing could be known without a cause that brings it into being) and to each thing there corresponds an idea (since God forms an idea of his essence and of all that follows from it). But this parallelism between an idea and its object only implies the correspondence, the equivalence, and the identity between a mode of thinking and a different mode considered under a specific attribute (in our case, extension as the only other attribute that we know: thus the mind is the idea of the body, and of nothing else). Now, on the contrary, the result of the demonstration of parallelism (II, 7, schol.) amounts to an *ontological parallelism* between modes under all the attributes, modes that differ only in their attribute. According to the first parallelism, an idea in

thought and its object in a different attribute form one and the same "individual" (II, 21, schol.); according to the second, modes under all the attributes form one and the same modification. The disparity between the two is pointed out by Tschirnhaus (*Letter LXV*): whereas a single mode under each attribute expresses the substantial modification, in thought there are several modes or ideas, one of which expresses the mode corresponding to attribute A, another the mode corresponding to attribute B . . . "Why does the mind, which represents a certain modification, the same modification being expressed not only in extension but in infinite other ways, perceive the modification only as expressed through extension, that is, the human body, and not as expressed through any other attribute?"

This *multiplication* of ideas is a privilege in *extension.* But this is not the only privilege of the attribute of thought. A second privilege, in *repetition,* consists in the *redoubling* of the idea that constitutes consciousness: the idea that represents an object has a formal being itself under the attribute of thought, and is therefore the object of another idea that represents it, to infinity. Further, a third privilege, in *comprehension,* consists in the power which the idea has to represent substance itself and its attributes, although the idea is only a mode of this substance under the attribute of thought.

These privileges of the attribute of thought are based on the complex status of the idea of God or the infinite intellect. The idea of God objectively comprehends substance and the attributes, but must be formed as a mode under the attribute of thought. Consequently, as many ideas must be formed as there are of formally distinct attributes. And each idea, in its own formal being, must in turn be objectively comprehended by another idea. But these privileges do not disrupt the parallelism; on the contrary, they are an integral part of it. For the ontological parallelism (one modification for all the modes that differ in attribute) is founded on the equality of all the attributes as forms of essences and forces of existence (including thought). The epistemological parallelism is founded on an entirely different equality, that of two powers, the formal power of existing (con-

ditioned by all the attributes) and the objective power of thinking (conditioned only by the power of thought). And what founds the passage from the epistemological parallelism to the ontological parallelism is again the idea of God, because it alone authorizes the transfer of unity from substance to the modes (II, 4). The final formula of parallelism is therefore: one and the same *modification* is expressed by one mode under each attribute, each mode forming an *individual* together with the idea that represents it under the attribute of thought. The real privileges of the attribute of thought in parallelism should not be confused with the apparent breaks. The latter are of two kinds: 1. in the case of the existing mode, the way in which the body is taken as a controlling model for the study of the mind (II, 13, schol.; III, 2, schol.); 2. in the case of the modal essence, the way in which the mind is taken as an exclusive model, to the point of saying that it is "without relation to the body" (V, 20, schol.). It should be noted first of all that, the mind being a highly composite idea (II, 15), these breaks do not concern the same parts. The model of the body is valid for the mind as an idea that involves the existing body, hence for all perishable parts of the mind that are grouped under the name of imagination (V, 20, schol., 21, 39, 40), that is, for the ideas of affections that we have. The model of pure mind, on the contrary, is valid for the mind as an idea that expresses the essence of the body, hence for the eternal part of mind called the intellect, that is, for the idea that we are, considered in its internal relationship with the idea of God and the ideas of other things. Understood in this way, the breaks are only apparent. For, in the first case, it is not at all a matter of giving a privilege to the body over the mind; it is a matter of acquiring a knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover, in parallel fashion, powers of the mind that escape consciousness. Thus instead of merely invoking consciousness and concluding hastily in favor of the alleged power of the "soul" over the body, one will engage in a comparison of powers that leads us to discover more in the body than we know, and hence more in the mind than we are conscious of (II, 13, schol.). Nor, in the second case, is it a matter of giving a privi-

lege to the mind over the body: there is a singular essence of this or that body, just as there is of the mind (V, 22). True, this essence appears only insofar as it is expressed by the idea that constitutes the essence of the mind (the idea that we are). But there is no idealism in this; Spinoza only wants to make clear, in keeping with the axiom of epistemological parallelism, that the essences of modes have a cause through which they must be conceived; hence there is an idea that expresses the essence of the body and that makes us conceive this essence through its cause (V, 22 and 30).

MODE.—"The affections of a substance; that is, that which is in something else and is conceived through something else" (*Ethics*, I, def. 5). Constitutes the second term of the alternative of that which is: being in itself (substance), being in something else (I, ax. 1).

One of the essential points of Spinozism is in its identification of the ontological relationship of substances and modes with the epistemological relationship of essences and properties and the physical relationship of cause and effect. The cause and effect relationship is inseparable from an immanence through which the cause remains in itself in order to produce. Conversely, the relationship between essence and properties is inseparable from a dynamism through which properties exist as infinities, are not inferred by the intellect *explaining* substance without being produced by substance *explaining itself* or expressing itself in the intellect, and, finally, enjoy an essence through which they are inferred. The two aspects coincide in that the modes differ from substance in existence and in essence, and yet are produced in those same attributes that constitute the essence of substance. That God produces "an infinity of things in an infinity of modes" (*Ethics*, I, 16) means that effects are indeed things, that is, real beings which have an essence and existence of their own, but do not exist and have no being apart from the attributes in which they are produced. In this way, there is a univocity of Being (attributes), although that which is (of which Being is affirmed) is not at all the same (substance or modes).

Spinoza repeatedly underscores the irreducibility of the modes to mere fictions, or beings of reason. This is because the modes have a specificity that requires original principles (for example, the unity of diversity in the mode, *Letter XXXII*, to Oldenburg). And the specificity of the mode has to do less with its finitude than with the type of infinite that corresponds to it.

The *immediate infinite mode* (infinite intellect in the case of thought, motion and rest in the case of extension) is infinite by its cause and not by nature. This infinite comprises an infinity of actual parts inseparable from one another (for example, ideas of essences as parts of the idea of God, or intellects as parts of the infinite intellect; essences of bodies as elementary forces). As concerns extension, the *mediate infinite mode* is the *facies totius universi*, that is, all the relations of motion and rest that govern the determinations of the modes as existing; and no doubt, as concerns thought, the ideal relations governing the determinations of ideas as ideas of existing modes. Thus a finite mode cannot be separated: 1. by its essence, from the infinity of other essences that all agree with one another in the immediate infinite mode; 2. by its existence, from the infinity of other existing modes that are causes of it under different relations implied in the mediate infinite mode; 3. or finally, from the infinity of extensive parts that each existing mode actually possesses under its own relation.

NATURE.—*Natura naturans* (as substance and cause) and *Natura naturata* (as effect and mode) are interconnected through a mutual immanence: on one hand, the cause remains in itself in order to produce; on the other hand, the effect or product remains in the cause (*Ethics*, I, 29, schol.). This dual condition enables us to speak of Nature in general, without any other specification. Naturalism in this case is what satisfies the three forms of univocity: the univocity of attributes, where the attributes in the same form constitute the essence of God as naturing nature and contain the essences of modes as natured nature; the univocity of the cause, where the cause of all things is affirmed of God as the genesis of natured nature, in the same sense that he is the cause of himself, as the genealogy of naturing nature;

the univocity of modality, where necessity qualifies both the order of natured nature and the organization of naturing nature.

As for the idea of an order of natured nature, one must distinguish between several meanings: 1. the correspondence between things in the different attributes; 2. the connection of things in each attribute (immediate infinite mode, mediate infinite mode, finite modes); 3. the internal agreement of all the essences of modes with one another, as parts of the divine power; 4. the composition of relations that characterize the existing modes according to their essence, a composition that is realized according to eternal laws (a mode existing under its relation compounds with certain others; however, its relation can also be decomposed by others—so this still involves an internal order, but an order of agreements and disagreements between existences, *Ethics*, II, 29, schol.; V, 18, schol.); 5. the external encounters between existing modes, which take place one upon the other, without regard to the order of composition of relations (in this case we are dealing with an extrinsic order, that of the inadequate: the order of encounters, the "common order of Nature," which is said to be "fortuitous" since it does not follow the rational order of relations that enter into composition, but which is necessary nonetheless since it obeys the laws of an external determinism operating proximately; cf. II, 29, cor. and II, 36, according to which there is an order of the inadequate).

NECESSARY.—The Necessary is the only modality of what is; all that is is necessary, either through itself or through its cause. Necessity is thus the third figure of the univocal (univocity of modality, after the univocity of the attributes and the univocity of the cause).

What is necessary is: 1. the existence of substance insofar as it is involved by its essence; 2. the production by substance of an infinity of modes, insofar as "cause of all things" is affirmed in the same sense as cause of itself; 3. the infinite modes, insofar as they are produced in the attribute considered in its absolute nature or modified with an infinite modification (they are necessary by virtue of their cause); 4. the essences of finite modes, which all agree with one another and form the actual infinity of

the constituent parts of the mediate infinite mode (relational necessity); 5. the compositions of existence according to the relations of motion and rest in the modes; 6. the purely extrinsic encounters between existing modes, or rather between the extensive parts that pertain to them under the preceding relations and the determinations that follow therefrom for each one: birth, death, affections (proximate necessity).

The categories of possible and contingent are illusions, but illusions based on the organization of the finite existing mode. For the mode's essence does not determine its existence; thus, if we only consider the essence of the mode, its existence is neither posited nor excluded, and the mode is apprehended as contingent (*Ethics*, IV, def. 3). And even if we consider extrinsic causes or determinations that make the mode exist (cf. #6), we still only apprehend it as possible in that we do not know if these determinations are themselves determined to act. In any case, existence is necessarily determined, both from the standpoint of relations as eternal truths or laws and from the standpoint of extrinsic determinations or particular causes (#5 and #6): so contingency and possibility only express our ignorance. Spinoza's critique has two culminating points: nothing is possible in Nature; that is, the essences of nonexisting modes are not models or possibilities in a divine legislative intellect; there is nothing contingent in Nature; that is, existences are not produced through the action of a divine will which, in the manner of a prince, could have chosen a different world and different laws.

NEGATION.—The Spinozan theory of negation (negation's radical elimination, its status as an abstraction and a fiction) is based on the difference between *distinction*, always positive, and negative *determination:* all determination is negation (*Letter L*, to Jelles).

1. The attributes are really distinct; that is, the nature of each one must be conceived without any reference to another. Each one is infinite in its kind or nature, and cannot be limited or determined by something of the same nature. One cannot even say that the attributes are defined by their opposition to one another: the logic of real distinction defines each nature in itself,

through its independent positive essence. Every nature is positive, hence unlimited and undetermined in its kind, so that it exists of necessity (*Letter XXXVI*, to Hudde). Corresponding to positivity as infinite essence there is affirmation as necessary existence (*Ethics*, I, 7 and 8). That is why all the attributes, which are really distinct precisely by virtue of their distinction without opposition, are at the same time affirmed of one and the same substance whose essence and existence they express (I, 10, schol. 1 and 19). The attributes are both the positive forms of the essence of substance and the affirmative forms of its existence. The logic of real distinction is a logic of coessential positivities and coexistent affirmations.

2. In return, the finite is clearly limited and determined: limited in its nature by something else of the same nature; determined in its existence by something which denies its existence in such and such a place or at such and such a moment. The Spinozan expression *modo certo et determinatio* means precisely: in a limited and determined mode. The existing finite mode is limited in its essence and determined in its existence. The limitation concerns its essence, and the determination, its existence: the two figures of the negative. But all this is true only abstractly, that is, when one considers the mode in itself, apart from what causes it to be, in essence and in existence.

For the essence of the mode is a degree of power. This degree in itself does not signify a limit or bound, an opposition to other degrees, but an intrinsic positive distinction such that all the essences or degrees fit together and form an infinite set by virtue of their common cause. As for the existing mode, it is true that it is determined to exist and to act, that it opposes other modes, and that it passes to greater or lesser perfections. But (1) to say that it is determined to exist is to say that an infinity of parts is determined from without to enter into the relation that characterizes its essence. These extrinsic parts pertain then to its essence but do not constitute it; this essence lacks nothing when the mode does not yet exist or no longer exists (IV, end of the preface). Insofar as it exists, it affirms its existence through all its parts: its existence is therefore a new type of distinction, an ex-

trinsic distinction by which the essence is affirmed in duration (III, 7); (2) the existing mode opposes other modes that threaten to destroy its parts; it is affected by other, harmful or beneficial modes. And depending on the affections of its parts, it augments its power of acting or passes to a lesser perfection (joy and sadness). But at each moment it has as much perfection or power of acting as it can have in terms of the affections that it experiences. So its existence does not cease to be an affirmation, varying only according to its qualified affections (which always involve something positive); the existing mode always affirms a force of existing (*vis existendi*, gen. def. of the affects).

The existence of the modes is a system of variable affirmations, and the essence of the modes, a system of multiple positivities. The Spinozan principle asserts that negation is nothing, because absolutely nothing ever lacks anything. Negation is a being of reason, or rather of comparison, which results from our grouping together all sorts of distinct beings so as to refer them to one and the same fictitious ideal, in the name of which we say that one or another of them falls short of the ideal (*Letter XIX*, to Blyenbergh). It makes as much sense to say that a stone is not a man, a dog is not a circle, or a circle is not a sphere. No nature lacks that which constitutes another nature or that which pertains to another nature. Thus an attribute does not lack the nature of another attribute, being as perfect as it can be in terms of what constitutes its essence; and even an existing mode, compared to itself insofar as it passes to a lesser perfection (for example, going blind, or becoming sad and hateful), is always as perfect as it can be in terms of the affections that now pertain to its essence. The comparison of a being with itself is not any more justified than the comparison with something else (*Letter XXI*, to Blyenbergh). In short, every privation is a negation, and negation is nothing. In order to eliminate the negative, it suffices to reintegrate each thing into the type of infinite that corresponds to it (it is false that the infinite as such does not support distinction).

The argument according to which negation is nothing (nothingness having no properties) is common in so-called pre-Kant-

ian philosophy. But Spinoza gives it a profoundly original meaning and recasts it completely by turning it back against the hypothesis of creation, and by showing how nonbeing or nothingness is never included in the nature of something. "To say that the nature of the thing required this limitation . . . is to say nothing. For the nature of the thing cannot require anything unless it exists" (*Short Treatise*, I, chap. 2, 5, n. 2). Practically, the negative is eliminated through Spinoza's radical critique of all the passions that derive from sadness.

NUMBER. Cf. Abstractions.

OBEY. Cf. Sign, Society.

ORDER. Cf. Nature.

PASSION. Cf. Affections.

POSSIBLE. Cf. Intellect, Necessary.

POWER.—One of the basic points of the *Ethics* consists in denying that God has any power (*potestas*) analogous to that of a tyrant, or even an enlightened prince. God is not will, not even a will enlightened by a legislative intellect. God does not conceive possibilities in his intellect, which he would realize through his will. The divine intellect is only a mode through which God comprehends nothing other than his own essence and what follows from it; his will is only a mode according to which all consequences follow from his essence or from that which he comprehends. So he has no *potestas* but only a *potentia* identical to his essence. Through this power, God is also the cause of all things that follow from his essence, and the cause of himself, that is, of his existence as it is involved by his essence (*Ethics*, I, 34).

All *potentia* is act, active and actual. The identity of power and action is explained by the following: all power is inseparable from a capacity for being affected, and this capacity for being affected is constantly and necessarily filled by affections that realize it. The word *potestas* has a legitimate use here: "Whatever is in God's power (*in potestate*) must be so comprehended by his es-

sence that it necessarily follows from it" (I, 35). In other words: to *potentia* as essence there corresponds a *potestas* as a capacity for being affected, which capacity is filled by the affections or modes that God produces necessarily, God being unable to undergo action but being the active cause of these affections.

Divine power is twofold: an absolute power of existing, which entails a power of producing all things; an absolute power of thinking, hence of self-comprehension, which entails the power of comprehending all that is produced. The two powers are like two halves of the Absolute. They should not be confused with the two infinite attributes that we know; it is obvious that the attribute of extension does not exhaust the power of existing, but that the latter is an unconditioned totality which possesses *a priori* all the attributes as *formal* conditions. As for the attribute of thought, it forms part of these formal conditions that relate to the power of existing, since all ideas have a formal being through which they exist in that attribute. It is true that the attribute of thought has another aspect: by itself it is the entire *objective* condition which the absolute power of thinking possesses *a priori* as an unconditioned totality. We have seen how this theory, far from being inconsistent with parallelism, was an essential component of it. The important thing is not to confuse the strict equality of the attributes relative to the power of acting, and the strict equality of the two powers relative to absolute essence.

The essence of the mode in turn is a degree of power, a part of the divine power, i.e., an intensive part or a degree of intensity: "Man's power, insofar as it is explained through his actual essence, is part of the infinite power of God or Nature" (IV, 4). When the mode passes into existence, an infinity of extensive parts are determined from without to come under the relation corresponding to its essence or its degree of power. Then and only then, this essence is itself determined as *conatus* or appetite (*Ethics*, III, 7). It tends in fact to persevere in existing. Precisely because the modal essence is not a possibility, because it is a physical reality that lacks nothing, it does not tend to pass into existence; but it tends to persevere in existing, once the mode is

determined to exist, that is, to subsume under its relation an infinity of extensive parts. To persevere is to endure; hence the *conatus* involves an indefinite duration (III, 8).

Just as the capacity for being affected (*potestas*) corresponds to the essence of God as power (*potentia*), an ability (*aptus*) to be affected corresponds to the essence of the existing mode as a degree of power (*conatus*). This is why the *conatus*, in a second determination, is a tendency to maintain and maximize the ability to be affected (IV, 38). Concerning this notion of ability, cf. *Ethics*, II, 13, schol.; III, post. 1 and 2; V, 39. The difference consists in this: in the case of substance, the capacity for being affected is necessarily filled by active affections, since substance produces them (the modes themselves). In the case of the existing mode, its ability to be affected is also realized at every moment, but first by affections (*affectio*) and affects (*affectus*) that do not have the mode as their adequate cause, that are produced in it by other existing modes; these affections and affects are therefore imaginations and passions. The feelings-affects (*affectus*) are exactly the figures taken by the *conatus* when it is determined to do this or that, by an affection (*affectio*) that occurs to it. These affections that determine the *conatus* are a cause of consciousness: the *conatus* having become conscious of itself under this or that affect is called desire, desire always being a desire for something (III, def. of desire).

One sees why, from the moment the mode exists, its essence as a degree of power is determined as a *conatus*, that is, an effort or tendency. Not a tendency to pass into existence, but to maintain and affirm existence. This does not mean that power ceases to be actual; but so long as we consider the pure essences of mode, all of them agree with one another as intensive parts of the divine power. The same is not true of the existing modes; insofar as extensive parts belong to each one under the relation that corresponds to its essence or degree of power, an existing mode can always induce the parts of another to come under a new relation. The existing mode whose relation is thus decomposed can weaken as a result, and even die (IV, 39). In this case, the duration that it enveloped as an indefinite duration is terminated

from without. Here everything is a struggle of powers therefore; the existing modes do not necessarily agree with one another. "There is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger. Whatever one is given, there is another more powerful by which the first can be destroyed" (IV, ax). "This axiom concerns singular things insofar as they are considered in relation to a certain time and place" (V, 37, schol.). If death is inevitable, this is not at all because death is internal to the existing mode; on the contrary, it is because the existing mode is necessarily open to the exterior, because it necessarily experiences passions, because it necessarily encounters other existing modes capable of endangering one of its vital relations, because the extensive parts belonging to it under its complex relation do not cease to be determined and affected from without. But just as the essence of the mode had no tendency to pass into existence, it loses nothing by losing existence, since it only loses the extensive parts that did not constitute the essence itself. "No singular thing can be called more perfect for having persevered in existing for a longer time, for the duration of things cannot be determined from their essence" (IV, pref.).

Thus, if the essence of the mode as a degree of power is only an effort or *conatus* as soon as the mode comes to exist, this is because the powers that necessarily agree in the element of essence (as intensive parts) no longer agree in the element of existence (insofar as extensive parts pertain provisionally to each power). The actual essence can only be determined in existence as an effort then, that is, a comparison with other powers that can always overcome it (IV, 3 and 5). We have to distinguish between two cases in this regard: either the existing mode encounters other existing modes that agree with it and bring their relation into composition with its relation (for example, in very different ways, a food, a loved being, an ally); or the existing mode encounters others that do not agree with it and tend to decompose it, to destroy it (a poison, a hated being, an enemy). In the first case, the existing mode's ability to be affected is fulfilled by joyful feelings-affects, affects based on joy and love; in the other case, by sad feelings-affects, based on sadness and ha-

tred. The ability to be affected is necessarily realized in every case, according to the given affections (ideas of the objects encountered). Even illness is a fulfillment in this sense. But the major difference between the two cases is the following: in sadness our power as a *conatus* serves entirely to invest the painful trace and to repel or destroy the object which is its cause. Our power is immobilized, and can no longer do anything but react. In joy, on the contrary, our power expands, compounds with the power of the other, and unites with the loved object (IV, 18). This is why, even when one assumes the capacity for being affected to be constant, some of our power diminishes or is restrained by affections of sadness, increases or is enhanced by affections of joy. It can be said that joy augments our *power of acting* and sadness diminishes it. And the *conatus* is the effort to experience joy, to increase the power of acting, to imagine and find that which is a cause of joy, which maintains and furthers this cause; and also an effort to avert sadness, to imagine and find that which destroys the cause of sadness (III, 12, 13, etc.). Indeed, the feeling-affect is the *conatus* itself insofar as it is determined to do this or that by a given idea of affection. The mode's power of acting (Spinoza sometimes says *force of existing*, gen. def. of the affects) is thus subject to considerable variations so long as the mode exists, although it essence remains the same and its ability to be affected is assumed to be constant. This is because joy, and what follows from it, fulfills the ability to be affected in such a way that the power of acting or force of existing increases relatively; the reverse is true of sadness. So the *conatus* is an effort to augment the power of acting or to experience joyful passions (third determination, III, 28).

But the constancy of the ability to be affected is only relative and is contained within certain limits. Obviously, the same individual does not have the same capacity for being affected as a child, an adult, and as an old person, or in good health and bad (IV, 39, schol.; V, 39, schol.). The effort to increase the power of acting cannot be separated therefore from an effort to carry the power of acting to a maximum (V, 39). We see no difficulty in reconciling the various definitions of the *conatus:* mechanical

(preserve, maintain, persevere); dynamic (increase, promote); apparently dialectical (oppose that which opposes, deny that which denies). For everything depends on and derives from an affirmative conception of essence: the degree of power as an affirmation of essence in God; the *conatus* as an affirmation of essence in existence; the relation of motion and rest or the capacity for being affected as a maximum position and a minimum position; the variations of the power of acting or force of existing within these positive limits.

In any case, the *conatus* defines the *right* of the existing mode. All that I am determined *to do* in order to continue existing (destroy what doesn't agree with me, what harms me, preserve what is useful to me or suits me) *by means of* given affections (ideas of objects), *under* determinate affects (joy and sadness, love and hate . . .)—all this is my natural right. This right is strictly identical with my power and is independent of any order of ends, of any consideration of duties, since the *conatus* is the first foundation, the *primum movens*, the efficient and not the final cause. This right is not opposed "either to struggles, to hatreds, to anger, to trickery, or to absolutely anything the appetite counsels" (*Theological-Political Treatise*, chap. 16; *Political Treatise*, chap. 2, 8). The rational man and the foolish man differ in their affections and their affects but both strive to persevere in existing according to these affections and affects; from this standpoint, their only difference is one of power.

The *conatus*, like any state of power, is always active. But the difference lies in the conditions under which the action is realized. One can conceive an existing mode that strives to persevere in existing—in accordance with its natural right—while remaining at the risk of its chance encounters with other modes, at the mercy of affections and affects which determine it from without: it strives to increase its power of acting, that is, to experience joyful passions, if only by destroying that which threatens it (III, 13, 20, 23, 26). But, apart from the fact that these joys of destruction are poisoned by the sadness and hatred in which they originate (III, 47), the accidental nature of the encounters means that we always risk encountering something more power-

ful that will destroy us (*Theological- Political Treatise,* chap. 16; *Political Treatise,* chap. 2) and that, even in the most favorable instances, we will encounter other modes under their discordant and hostile aspects (IV, 32, 33, 34). This is why it matters little that the effort to persevere, to increase the power of acting, to experience joyful passions, to maximize the capacity for being affected, is always satisfied; it will succeed only to the extent that man strives to organize his encounters, that is, among the other modes, to encounter those which agree with his nature and enter into composition with him, and to encounter them under the very aspects in which they agree and accord with him. Now, this effort is that of the City, and, more profoundly, that of Reason. Reason leads man not only to increase his power of acting, which still belongs to the domain of passion, but to take formal possession of this power and to experience active joys that follow from the adequate ideas that Reason forms. The *conatus* as a successful effort, or the power of acting as a possessed power (even if death puts an end to it), are called Virtue. This is why virtue is nothing other than the *conatus,* nothing other than power, as an efficient cause, under the conditions of realization that enable it to be possessed by the one who exercises it (IV, def. 8; IV, 18, schol.; IV, 20; IV, 37, schol. 1). And the adequate expression of the *conatus* is the effort to persevere in existing and to act under the guidance of Reason (IV, 24), that is, to acquire that which leads to knowledge, to adequate ideas and active feelings (IV, 26, 27, 35; V, 38).

Just as the absolute power of God is twofold—a power of existing and producing, and a power of thinking and comprehending—the power of the mode as degree is twofold: the ability to be affected, which is affirmed in relation to the existing mode, and particularly in relation to the body; and the power of perceiving and imagining, which is affirmed in relation to the mode considered in the attribute of thought, hence in relation to the mind. "In proportion as a body is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of doing many things at once" (II, 13, schol.). But, as we have seen, the ability

to be affected relates to a power of acting that varies materially within the limits of this ability, and is not yet formally possessed. Similarly, the power of perceiving or imagining relates to a power of knowing or comprehending which it involves but does not yet formally express. This is why the power of imagining is still not a virtue (II, 17, schol.), nor even the ability to be affected. It is when, through the effort of Reason, the perceptions or ideas become adequate, and the affects active, it is when we ourselves become causes of our own affects and masters of our adequate perceptions, that our body gains access to the power of acting, and our mind to the power of comprehending, which is its way of acting. "In proportion as the actions of a body depend more on itself alone, and as other bodies concur with it less in acting, so its mind is more capable of understanding distinctly" (II, 13, schol.). This effort pervades the second kind of knowledge and reaches completion in the third, when the ability to be affected only has a minimum of passive affects and the power of perceiving has a minimum of imaginations destined to perish (V, 39 and 40). The power of the mode then comprehends itself as an intensive part or a degree of the absolute power of God, all degrees being congruent in God, and this congruence implying no confusion, since the parts are only modal and the power of God remains substantially indivisible. A mode's power is a part of God's power, but this is insofar as God's essence is explained by the mode's essence (IV, 4). The entire *Ethics* presents itself as a theory of power, in opposition to morality as a theory of obligations.

PROPHET. Cf. Sign.

PROPRIA.—Are distinguished both from essence and from what follows from essence (properties, consequences, or effects). A proprium is not an essence, because it does not constitute any part of a thing and does not enable us to know anything concerning the thing; but it is inseparable from the essence, it is a modality of the essence itself. And a proprium is not to be confused with that which follows from the essence, for what follows from the latter is a product having an essence

of its own, either in the logical sense of a property, or in the physical sense of an effect.

Spinoza distinguishes between three sorts of propria of God (*Short Treatise,* I, chap. 2–7): in the first sense of modalities of the divine essence, the propria are affirmed of all the attributes (cause of itself, infinite, eternal, necessary . . .) or of a specific attribute (omniscient, omnipresent); in a second sense the propria qualify God in reference to his products (cause of all things); and in a third sense they only designate extrinsic determinations that indicate the way in which we imagine him, failing to comprehend his nature, and that serve as rules of conduct and principles of obedience (justice, charity . . .).

Ignorance of God's essence, that is, of his nature, has been constant, and the reason is that people have confused it with the propria, disregarding the difference in nature between the propria and the attributes. This is theology's basic error, which has compromised the whole of philosophy. Thus, almost all revealed theology confines itself to propria of the third type, remaining completely ignorant of the true attributes or the essence of God (*Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 2). And rational theology does little better, being content with attaining the second and third types: e.g., when it defines the nature of God by the infinitely perfect. This general confusion pervades the whole language of eminences and analogies, where God is endowed with anthropological and anthropomorphic properties, elevated to the infinite.

REASON. Cf. Common Notions.

RIGHT. Cf. Power, Society.

SIGN.—In one sense, a sign is always the idea of an effect apprehended under conditions that separate it from its causes. Thus the effect of a body on ours is not apprehended relative to the essence of our body and the essence of the external body, but in terms of a momentary state of our variable constitution and a simple presence of the thing whose nature we do not know (*Ethics,* II, 17). Such signs are *indicative:* they are *effects of mixture.* They indicate the state of our body primarily, and the

presence of the external body secondarily. These indications form the basis of an entire order of conventional signs (language), which is already characterized by its equivocity, that is, by the variability of the associative chains into which the indications enter (II, 18, schol.).

In another sense, the sign is the cause itself, but apprehended under such conditions that one does not comprehend its nature, nor its relation to the effect. For example, God reveals to Adam that the fruit will poison him because it will act on his body by decomposing its relation; but because Adam has a weak understanding he interprets the effect as a punishment, and the cause as a moral law, that is, as a final cause operating through commandment and prohibition (*Letter XIX,* to Blyenbergh). Adam thinks that God has shown him a sign. In this way, morality compromises our whole conception of law, or rather moral law distorts the right conception of causes and eternal truths (the order of composition and decomposition of relations). The word law is itself compromised by its moral origin (*Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 4) to such a degree that one sees it as a limit on power instead of as a rule of development: one only has to misunderstand an eternal truth, i.e., a composition of relations, in order to interpret it as an imperative. Hence these secondary signs are *imperative* signs, or *effects of revelation;* they have no other meaning than to make us obey. And the most serious error of theology consists precisely in its having disregarded and hidden the difference in nature between obeying and knowing, in having caused us to take principles of obedience for models of knowledge.

In a third sense, the sign is what gives an external guarantee to this denatured idea of causes or this mystification of laws. For the cause interpreted as a moral law needs an extrinsic guarantee that authenticates the interpretation and the pseudorevelation. Here too, these signs vary with each individual; each prophet requires signs adapted to his opinions and his temperament, in order to be certain that the commands and prohibitions that he imagines come from God (*Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 2). Such signs are *interpretive* and are *effects of*

superstition. The unity of all signs consists in this: they form an essentially equivocal language of imagination which stands in contrast to the natural language of philosophy, composed of univocal expressions. Thus, whenever a problem of signs is raised, Spinoza replies: such signs do not exist (*Treatise on the Intellect,* 36; *Ethics,* I, 10, schol. 1). It is characteristic of inadequate ideas to be signs that call for interpretations by the imagination, and not *expressions* amenable to *explications* by the lively intellect (concerning the opposition of explicative expressions and indicative signs, cf. II, 17, schol. and 18, schol.).

SOCIETY.—The civil state in which a group of men compound their respective powers so as to form a more powerful whole. This state counteracts the weakness and powerlessness of the state of nature, in which each individual always risks encountering a superior force capable of destroying him. The civil or social state resembles the state of reason, and yet it only resembles it, prepares for it, or takes its place (*Ethics,* IV, 35, schol.; 54, schol.; 73; *Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 16). For, in the state of reason, the composition of men is realized according to a combination of intrinsic relations, and determined by common notions and the active feelings that follow from them (in particular, freedom, firmness, generosity, *pietas* and *religio* of the second kind). In the civil state, the composition of men or the formation of the whole is realized according to an extrinsic order, determined by passive feelings of hope and fear (fear of remaining in the state of nature, hope of emerging from it, *Theological-Political Treatise,* chap. 16, *Political Treatise,* chap. 2, 15, chap. 6, 1). In the state of reason, law is an eternal truth, that is, a natural guide for the full development of the power of each individual. In the civil state, law restrains or limits the individual's power, commands and prohibits, all the more since the power of the whole surpasses that of the individual (*Political Treatise,* chap. 3, 2). It is a "moral" law that is concerned only with obedience and matters of obedience, that determines good and evil, the just and the unjust, rewards and punishments (*Ethics,* IV, 37, schol. 2).

However, like the state of reason, the civil state preserves

natural right. And it does so in two ways: first, because the whole that is formed by the composition of powers defines itself by its natural right (*Letter L*, to Jelles); second, what becomes common in the civil state is not the total power as an object of a positive "common notion" that would presuppose Reason, it is only affections or passions that determine all men as members of the community. In this case, since we are in a constituted society, it is a matter of the hope of receiving rewards and the fear of undergoing punishments (second kind of hope and fear). But these common affections determine the natural right or the *conatus* of each individual, they do not suppress it; each one strives to persevere in existence, but in consideration or in terms of these common affections (*Political Treatise*, chap. 3.).

Consequently, one understands why the state of society according to Spinoza is based on a *contract* that presents two phases: 1. Men must give up their power for the benefit of the Whole which they form by this very renunciation (the surrender bears exactly on this point: men agree to let themselves be "determined" by common affections of hope and fear); 2. This power of the whole thus formed (*absolutum imperium*) is transferred to a state, be it monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic (democracy being closest to the *absolutum imperium* and tending to substitute the love of freedom, as an affection of Reason, for the affections-passions of fear, hope, and even security, cf. *Theological-Political Treatise*, chap. 16).

SPECIES AND KINDS. Cf. Abstractions.

SUBSTANCE.—"What is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e., that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed" (*Ethics*, I, def. 3). By adding to the classic definition "what is conceived through itself," Spinoza rules out the possibility of a plurality of substances having the same attribute; indeed these substances would then have something in common through which they could be comprehended by one another. This is why the first eight propositions of the *Ethics* are devoted to

showing that there are not several substances per attribute: a numerical distinction is never a real distinction.

That there is only one substance per attribute already suffices to confer unicity, self-causality, infinity, and necessary existence on each qualified substance. But this multiplicity of substances with different attributes should be understood in a purely qualitative way: a qualitative multiplicity or a formal-real distinction, to which the term "several" applies inadequately. In this sense, the first eight propositions are not hypothetical but preserve their truth throughout the *Ethics.*

In return, from the standpoint of being, there is only one substance for all the attributes (and, here again, the term "one" is not adequate). For, if a numerical distinction is never real, conversely a real distinction is never numerical. Hence the really (formally) distinct attributes are affirmed of an absolutely singular substance which possesses them all and enjoys *a fortiori* the properties of self-causality, infinity, and necessary existence. The infinite essences, which are formally distinguished in the attributes that express them, merge ontologically in the substance to which the attributes refer them (I, 10, schol. 1). The formal-real distinction of the attributes does not contradict the absolute ontological unity of substance; on the contrary, it constitutes that unity.

THINKING. Cf. Idea, Method, Mind, Power.

TRANSCENDENTALS. Cf. Abstractions.

TRUE. Cf. Idea, Method.

USEFUL-HARMFUL. Cf. Good- Bad.

VIRTUE. Cf. Power.