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THE INTEGRITY OF ETHIC:
SPINOZA'S INTUITIVE SCIENCE

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By

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ABSTRACT

The essence of Spinoza's system is to be found in its very unity. This is found in the reflection of the unity of God in the structure of his Ethic. As a result of this, how one goes about reading the Ethic is directly responsible for one's ability to piece the whole of the system together. The main problem with commentators' positions, for example, lies in just such an inability.

The position taken in this thesis is essentially a proposal for how to read the Ethic and how one can tie the whole together in any analysis. I begin with a discussion of unity and the structure of the Ethic as revealed by this unity. I then proceed to discuss Spinoza's conception of the path to a life of reason; a discussion which culminates in a presentation of his Ethic in Scientia Intuitiva, and his notion of Immortality. I take these last two positions as standards of one's ability to tie the Ethic together and reveal its inherent integrity. This, then, leads to a discussion of commentators' views and a display of their limitations in revealing the integrity of Spinoza's thoughts.

This thesis marks the first step of the study of Spinoza. One must grasp the fundamental integrity of his thoughts before one can

proceed to a defense or criticism of his position. It is not, therefore, a topical analysis of his system, but a proposal which encompasses what I feel to be the essentials of his total position. By working from this whole of the Ethic to this particular proposal I hope to be able to reveal, by example if necessary, the fundamental integrity of God and of Spinoza's system.

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I am an expression

Of what I knew myself to be

An instant ago.

I am a modification of God

Chapter One: Part One

This dissertation is an attempt to elucidate the integrity of Spinoza's Ethic (see pg. 118, Chapter three). This task is most difficult, primarily due to the nature of the philosophy itself. It is not purely a system dedicated to solving or discussing various philosophical problems. The Ethic was written and conceived with the aim of pointing the way to a life of reason. One of the main difficulties with this philosophy is that if Spinoza's system is true, it is almost impossible for a reader to accept and understand it well, without a large sense of personal involvement. This is to say, that insofar as each man is a mode of Nature (which is to say that we at least give Spinoza the benefit of the doubt on first reading), it is impossible that a reader can come to have an adequate idea of what Spinoza means with regard to Nature naturing, without personally experiencing this idea. Briefly, what I mean by this claim, is that for Spinoza, Nature naturing is God conceiving of Himself through His modes (the sense of this is as the absolute dynamics of God - a point to be explicated in Chapters two and three). Now, insofar as God conceives of Himself through a particular mode, we refer to the mode's essence. Spinoza states, in Ethic I, Prop. XV, Ethic II. Prop. XLVII,

and Ethic V, Prop. XXX, that every human is part of God, is conceived through God, and has an adequate idea of this conception. But, this adequate idea is of the essence of a mode. Insofar as a reader is a mode, he necessarily has an adequate idea of his own essence. Hence, to adequately understand Spinoza, a reader's mind must be brought to this adequate idea. It is in this way that Spinoza's philosophy is extremely personal.

However, I must now consider that if Spinoza's philosophy is true, and one must be so affected to understand the Ethic well, does this not create a circularity with regard to an analysis of this philosophy? That is to say, that if a reader's mind is in fact brought to this adequate idea which is his own essence, how can he possibly deny the truth of Spinoza's system. But, more than this, if this understanding is required to be able to speak knowledgably about Spinoza, it would seem that one must find the Ethic to be true.

The main reason for this personalization of Spinoza, which I believe is required to understand him well, is that Spinoza understood that it is the nature of reason that we should conceive with fortitude. That is, and this will be explained in greater detail in chapter three, Spinoza speaks of active emotions such as strength of mind and generosity as being united to the intellect when one conducts one's affairs with reason. To state this in primitive terms, I could say that Spinoza was a man of reason who conceived the Ethic with his

heart as well as his mind. For this reason, it is the nature of the philosophy that it should be read the same way.

This brings me to the main purposes of this dissertation - in this regard there are three main aims which I hope to accomplish:

- 1) To relate my experiences with Spinoza's Ethic, however personal a task this might be,
- 2) To endeavor to tie the Ethic together to reveal its inherent integrity, and
- 3) To reveal the personal nature of his philosophy for anyone who understands him well, by being Spinozistic according to my own nature insofar as I have been affected by Spinoza.

It will be the case that my primary thesis will amount to a proposal for how to read the Ethic in such a way as to be able to understand him best. I am aware that this involves a personal experience with regard to the Ethic and that I too am caught in Spinoza's circularity. (If it is the reader's nature to allow for a personalization of the Ethic, then you should be most sympathetic to my proposal. However, it must be noted that one's own nature in this task cannot be considered in isolation of Spinoza's insofar as he has constructed the Ethic. It is this aspect of my proposal that I consider to be the most interesting.)

In particular, my main intention will be to demonstrate implicitly by example, as well as explicitly how to tie the Ethic together. This will have the most profound affect on how one should go about analysing the Ethic. In this regard, I shall endeavor to make some

general remarks about systems, and then proceed to a discussion of the Ethic as a system.

To approach a system such that one examines any of its parts in isolation from the whole is what I shall refer to as Composite Thinking. This refers to a book on Locke's Theory of Knowledge by James Gibson.¹ In this work Gibson refers to a "theory of composites" to explain Locke's approach. Basically the theory is as follows: The whole is composed of simples such that no simples are modified within the context of the whole. To examine the whole, all that is required is that the whole be dismantled to its constituent simples, examine those simples, and then show how to reconstruct the whole. Since no simples are ever modified in the process, nothing genuinely new can ever emerge. This, Gibson maintains, was the approach of examining systems (eg. systematic philosophies and metaphysical issues) up to and including Locke's time.

Spinoza was more sophisticated than this. There is much doubt that this approach will reveal the essential nature of his system. For example, if the Ethic is systematic, then to remove any of its parts by cutting it up (figuratively or otherwise) would be to remove those parts from the contexts of the whole, causing those parts to lose much of their significance.

If I were to say that a reading of the Ethic brought one pleasure, accompanied with the idea of the Ethic as an external cause, then you

would feel love for Spinoza by his own definition. Indeed, if your mind was brought to a stand in this reading you would feel a sense of wonder at his philosophy. And if these were to be combined as per the nature of their admiration you would be most devoted to understanding his philosophy. This seems to best describe the feeling that encompasses much of the thoughts of Spinoza's Ethic. Now if a philosopher was so affirmed from his reading of the Ethic and felt a considerable emotion for Spinoza, and then endeavored to understand the Ethic by studying this work proposition by proposition so as to reconstruct the Ethic from its founding principles; and then felt that they had not really pieced the whole thing together, he would inevitably feel a sense of frustration and loss. This would persist if the memory of the affirmation remained in the reader's mind, and lurked behind a reluctant acceptance of a composite analysis.

It is my opinion that there are two reasons for this kind of frustration towards Spinoza. The purpose of this part of this dissertation is to expose these two reasons, and to proceed to reconcile them with a more adequate account of the correct approach to the Ethic.

The first reason has to do with the feeling of the unity of the Ethic. In this regard there is some background required. In his Ethic, Spinoza defines three realms of understanding: Imaginatio, Ratio, and Scientia Intuitiva. Imaginatio is inadequate, consisting of fragmented ideas and is the lowest form of understanding. Next is

Ratio which is composed of the possession of adequate and common ideas about the properties of things. The third and highest form of understanding is Scientia Intuitiva which refers to the possession of adequate ideas of the essence of things and the attributes of Nature.

It is not the place of this chapter to expound these realms (this will be done later), but to discuss our feelings of understanding the Ethic. In this regard I am referring to the pleasure that occurs upon reading the Ethic. This pleasure can, in Spinoza's own terms, be defined as follows: if the pleasure brings the reader to adequate ideas of the properties of the Ethic, then his understanding is that of Ratio; and if the pleasure brings the reader to an adequate idea of the essence of the Ethic, then his understanding is that of Scientia Intuitiva. Note that the latter understanding is the most adequate that a reader could attain. Indeed this would refer to what may be colloquially expressed as an intuitive comprehension of the very nature of the Ethic, and this would be the highest understanding that a reader could have of Spinoza's philosophy. At present, I shall consider this intuition to be a comprehension of the whole of the Ethic as a system of philosophy. That is, a comprehension of the whole as prior to an understanding of specific parts.

If we now consider this understanding, which is the result of an affirmation, to account for personal feelings for Spinoza, we can proceed to the second reason for the frustration that results from a

composite analysis of the Ethic.

To proceed, in an analysis, from the parts to the whole, as per the nature of composite thinking, is to attempt to predict the behavior or nature of the whole, from an examination of its parts taken separately. However, since to obtain the highest understanding of the Ethic is to understand it intuitively in the sense of comprehending the whole of the system, we must evaluate this as a method for analysing the Ethic. In this regard, I suggest that the appropriate method is to proceed from an understanding of the whole of Spinoza's system, to an understanding of its parts. This is also to say that the behavior of the whole of the system cannot be predicted by an examination of the behavior or nature of its parts taken separately. There is more to the Ethic than the combination of various propositions. For example, the nature of a system should be as the nature of a triangle, and reveal that the sum of its angles is equivalent to two right angles. This is what I shall call the essence of the Geometric method. Again, for example, it is only because we understand the whole of a triangle - such as that it has 6 parts, 3 sides, and 3 angles and their inherent relationships - that given any three parts, say one angle and two sides, we can proceed to calculate the remaining parts. By the same token, it is only by gaining an understanding of the whole of the Ethic and some of its propositions that we can adequately proceed to examine the remaining aspects of it. The comprehension of the whole always precedes the

understanding of its parts, and this, then, never violates the integrity of the system.

I shall now consider this approach again by way of an analogy to reveal some fundamental aspects of a truly coherent system, and how this approach does not violate a system's integrity. The example I have chosen is from engineering - specifically a wire (bicycle) wheel. (See Fuller, pp. 353-356) This wheel is constructed of three main parts, a hub, spokes, and a rim. I will examine its strength and integrity in terms of primary compression and secondary tension, and then vice versa.

The first way of considering the wheel is as follows: As pressure is applied to any part of the rim, the spoke is compressed into the hub. The hub is held in place by the compression balance that is the result of the remaining spokes. As a result the wheel does not collapse. Any tension that is created in the process is secondary to the compression of the parts of the wheel. This represents a normal view of the strength and integrity of a wire wheel. Its major flaws are: 1) no one or two spokes are strong enough to withstand any considerable pressure, 2) this does not reveal the fundamental integrity of the wheel, and 3) this is not how a wire wheel is constructed.

The wheel is constructed such that tension is primary and compression is secondary. That is, tension is applied to the spokes relative to the rim such that each spoke pulls the hub out towards the rim.

As equal tension is applied to each spoke, the hub remains centred. Now, when any pressure is applied to the rim we find that any compression that cannot be absorbed by the tension of that particular spoke is distributed equally to all of the remaining spokes. The wheel functions as a fully integrated and unified system.

The first method of describing the wheel serves to explicate the nature of composite thinking. No parts of the wheel are modified within the context of the wheel as a whole, and very little tension emerges as novel within the system. The second description is an example of what I shall call Synergetic Thinking. This term comes from R. Buckminster Fuller's work *Synergetics*.² I have chosen this man's work for this example because he, better than any other thinker with which I am familiar, best seems to understand the nature of true geometric-systematic thinking. For me it was Fuller who best corroborated the correct understanding of the method of examining a proper system. Also, it was Fuller who showed me how to reveal the integral nature of a system. This revelation was complemented only by my already intuitive and comprehensive understanding of Spinoza's Ethic. The clarifications that I have received from Fuller's thoughts have for the most part remained essentially practical. Specifically, "Synergy means behaviour of integral aggregate, whole systems unpredicted by behaviours of any of their components or subassemblies of their components taken separately from the whole." (Fuller, pg. 3) Hence, we

find that the second example of the wire wheel displays synergy. In physics and engineering, Fuller speaks of primary tension vs. primary compression. With regard to the Ethic, I shall speak of synergy vs. composition. With this in mind, I find that the Ethic is synergetic in nature. One cannot properly examine the metaphysics in isolation of its epistemology, nor can one properly examine these in isolation from his Ethic. This principle applies to each proposition and scholia in the Ethic.

I find that Spinoza's system functions as a fully unified and integral whole. Also, that this integrity is the very essence of his Ethic. This does, of course, require on the basis of my explanation of Scientia Intuitiva, that an adequate understanding of this, as the essence of the Ethic, is of the nature of an intuition. This is to say, that a most adequate understanding of the very essence of Spinoza's thoughts would reveal the unity of his Ethic, and this is, by his own definition, of the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. However, before I proceed to examine the integrity of Spinoza's system, I would first like to expand on my proposed method of analysing the Ethic.

As already intimated, the correct procedure would be to proceed from the whole to the parts. That is, from the Ethic as a whole to the propositions as parts. As Fuller states, "The principle of Synergetic advantage states that macro \rightarrow micro does not equal micro \rightarrow macro. Synergetic advantage is only to be effected by macro \rightarrow micro

procedures. Synergetic advantage procedures are irreversible.

Micro \rightarrow macro procedures are inherently frustrated. "³

How does synergetic thinking resolve these difficulties?

First of all, it never violates the unity and integrity of the system.

It always respects that the nature of the system is similar to that of the triangle example. The "macro \rightarrow micro" procedure presents an alternative to the methods of approaching Spinoza's Ethic. Spinoza himself refers to this method in chapter seven of his Theological Treatise. On page 104, for example, he comments that, "As in the examination of natural phenomena we first try to investigate what is most universal and common to all nature and then we proceed to what is less universal. " Again, with regard to studying the scriptures he states, "From a proper knowledge of this universal doctrine . . . we must proceed to doctrines less universal, but which, . . . flow from the universal doctrine like rivulets from a source. "⁴ Furthermore, since one proceeds from the whole to the parts, one is able to accept and utilize the intuition of the whole of the system that accompanies a most adequate understanding of it. For example, when someone examines one or two propositions of the Ethic, he is applying "intellectual pressure" to Spinoza's system. If, as before (eg. with composite thinking and the first example of the wire wheel) the propositions are examined in isolation from the whole and a contradiction is revealed, it could be thought that Spinoza could not get

out of his difficulties without creating more problems elsewhere in his system. As a result of this, it could be considered that in the light of this pressure the system tends to collapse as confused thinking. That is, the system does not cohere according to expectations. Yet a reader who wondered at this philosophy would probably feel that Spinoza could not have been so blind to have missed all of the problems which they seem to have found. For example, if through composite thinking, one is unable to tie the whole of the Ethic together, or an examination of several propositions considered in isolation constitutes an apparent contradiction, one might conclude that the Ethic does not tie together, or that the whole attempts to sustain contradictions. However, one's faith in his coherence of thought would still lurk in the background of the analyses, and would be the source of much frustration.

Synergetic thinking resolves the frustration in two fundamental ways. First, however, I ask that the reader grant me the unity of Spinoza's system for a moment. I will mention that it is the nature of this unity to establish a tension between the various parts of his system as per example 2 of the wire wheel. This will be seen as characteristic of the nature of unity as revealed by the example of the triangle. Basically, unity is complex. It is both singular and plural by nature. This seeming paradox is the source of the tension in the Ethic, but it is also the resolution of those tensions. As such, the Ethic functions with the maximum cohesion and integrity which is

possible for a unified whole. For example, there may be many apparent paradoxes within the Ethic, but no contradictions. When intellectual pressure is applied to any one or two propositions, that pressure is absorbed by and distributed throughout the whole of the system, such that the system remains intact. Synergetic thinking, then, does two things: 1) it acknowledges the unity of the system and approaches that system such that it never violates its integrity as per synergetic advantage, and 2) it allows the system to resolve its paradoxes and apparent inconsistencies in the very unity which is its nature. How Spinoza accomplishes this will be revealed as a primary aim of this dissertation.

One problem which results from this approach is that one must be able to piece the Ethic together as a coherent whole before one can adequately criticise or defend Spinoza's position. This should be apparent considering that one must be able to grasp the whole prior to any analysis of the system. The actual task of defending Spinoza is as complex as his philosophy. His reasons for any of his propositions lie in the very integrity of the system insofar as the reader has an adequate idea of the whole. This shows us that the complexity of the Ethic can function as a barrier to defending Spinoza. This is one reason why we must proceed with synergetic thinking in our study of the Ethic. It also serves to be a reason for my being Spinozistic in this work. To tie the whole of the Spinoza's philosophy with any

method conducive to the nature of a reader is fundamental to any defense of this system. As such, my task will be to complete the first part of this enterprise. That is, I shall endeavor to tie the Ethic together by example and discussion, however tedious and Spinozistic this may prove to be. The explanation of Spinoza's moves can only be accomplished if one proceeds from the whole. Since Spinoza himself supports this method, I cannot avoid being Spinozistic in my analysis. Furthermore, I should also note that since Spinoza was very precise in his terminology, I shall employ his terminology throughout my thesis to avoid distorting his terms any more than may have occurred in the translation which I am using.

The explanation of Spinoza's moves can only be accomplished within the complexity of the whole. This is an effect of synergy. To work from the whole into the many interrelated parts to explain a given proposition is as difficult a task as explicating the complexity of the system. In fact, once one fully comprehends the whole of the Ethic it should be apparent that one could conceivably work from the whole to any one proposition, and thereby, display its relation to every other proposition. This is the nature of this particular system as I understand it through my intuitive and synergetic experiences. To do this in descriptive terms for every proposition and Scholium in the Ethic, would constitute the best explanation and defense of Spinoza. But since this would surely constitute an impossible task, I shall

refer the reader to my proposal for reading the Ethic. It is my opinion, that at this point, it should be sufficient to actually or implicitly tie the Ethic together to reveal its fundamental integrity. Since this task is itself somewhat exhaustive, I shall not actually proceed to a defense of Spinoza, but I will leave the reader to test my proposal and proceed to a defense or criticism as he feels best. Before I begin my discussion of the Ethic, though, I shall first describe the unity of Nature, and then of the Ethic.

My first question in this matter is, if you analyse a system without any comprehension of the whole of that system, how could one ever establish a coherent context into which the parts could fit, such as to render the completed product a system? Indeed, how would one ever know that the system was completed? It seems to me that this approach raises a fundamental problem with regard to systems in general. If a system functions as a fully unified and integral whole, how could such an analysis ever proceed without violating the very integrity of the System?

This brings me to my first proposal for studying the Ethic. Since Spinoza conceived the Ethic with fortitude, that is to say, not only with intellect but also with emotion, it must be read in a similar fashion. To read Spinoza in this way is to allow for an intuitive grasp of the whole of his system. I shall now endeavor to explicate what I mean by this, first in terms of emotivation, and then in terms of an

approach which is more adequate than composite thinking.

The ability to comprehend the whole of Spinoza's thoughts is the main advantage of synergetic thinking. To my knowledge only one of Spinoza's commentators follows this approach, and that is Errol E. Harris in Salvation From Despair: A Reappraisal of Spinoza's Philosophy. While Harris does not specify this as his approach, it is clear that his comprehension of Spinoza is much more cogent than that of other commentators such as Wolfson or Hampshire. Whenever a particularly damaging blow to Spinoza is considered - as revealed by other commentators - Harris resolves Spinoza's difficulties by referring to the sense of the integrity of his thoughts and absorbing the conflict into the system to reveal that the difficulties were not really problems for Spinoza. As a result of this, I feel that of all the commentators on Spinoza with which I am familiar, Harris presents the most coherent, least frustrating, and correct analysis of the Ethic. I will, therefore, refer mainly to his commentary, and leave the others to my discussion of problems in the last chapter.

Although Harris does not identify the unity of Spinoza's system as complex, in the manner that I have described, he does identify the unity and refers to it throughout his work. Since much of the necessity of this is revealed in later chapters of my thesis, I will now establish the unity of God as corroborated by Harris, then attempt to relate the unity of the Ethic itself.

The unity is first established by Spinoza in Ethic I, Prop. V, and in Ethic I, Prop. IV; corroll. Here it is learned that God is one. That is, "There cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same nature or attributes." These two propositions identify God as one. Harris understands this as follows, "What Spinoza is in effect maintaining is that blank, undifferentiated unity is incompatible with infinity. The blank unity of which some critics complain simply would not be God. In two places, Spinoza asserts that to say that God is one, is really only a manner of speaking because what is one is one of many, or one of a class (even if the class has only one member). But God is not a class concept and is not one of many. When we say that there is one God only we are not counting, but merely denying that there can be anything other than God. The proper description is that God is the whole, beyond which there is nothing and within which everything. The principle of differentiation, therefore, of God's "unity" is His very infinity, His necessary all-inclusiveness. There can be no whole which is not diversified."⁵

This, then, reveals the fundamental unity of substance and its attributes that characterizes the very nature of God. Again, "Spinoza's conception of substance is of a single system of inter-related modes so interlocked that each is determined by the rest and by the ordered structure of the whole."⁶

This is again emphasised by Harris on page 77 of his book on

the section on the nature of the material world, "In his very brief, yet significant discussion of the nature of physical bodies, Spinoza describes a hierarchy, or a series continuously increasing in degree of complexity. The simplest bodies are distinguished from one another only by their state of motion, but any contiguous group, which transmit to one another a constant proportion of motion and rest, may be regarded as a single individual; and a group of such groups, on similar conditions, constitutes a more complex unity. The series continues indefinitely until the physical universe is seen as one single whole governed by a principle of organization which determines the proportion of motion and rest transmitted from one to another of its internally distinguishable parts."⁷

It will be revealed in the next chapter why I think this whole is not to be considered as composite, but rather as synergetic in its dynamics. This will prove to be one of the keys to the comprehension of how Spinoza maintains the unity of his thoughts. For the moment, I wish to reveal how one comprehends the unity of the Ethic through intuitions, and how the complexity of Spinoza's system is understood in this unity. Harris acknowledges that the ordered structure of the parts and the whole reveals the interlocking nature of God, I now maintain that the same applies to the Ethic itself.

It is to be emphasised that no proposition of the Ethic can be considered in isolation from the whole. With this principle in mind

I shall endeavor to reveal the unity of the Ethic through two examples. As I have stated, the metaphysics cannot be considered in isolation of the epistemology, and that these two cannot be considered in isolation from the Ethic. This, it will be found, is intimately bound to one's understanding of the dynamics of God as both the creator and the created. (I shall discuss this particular aspect of God more completely in the last part of chapter two.) Since I have already intimated the personal nature of this understanding insofar as God conceives of Himself through this or that mode I can now exemplify where this ties together. We find that Ethic I, Prop. XV; Ethic II, Prop. XLVII; Ethic IV, Prop. IV; and Ethic V, Prop. XXX all state the unity of God in the various contexts that reflect the unity of Spinoza's metaphysics, epistemology and Ethic. Furthermore, these exemplify how we come to know God, ourselves, and find the path to a life of reason. All of this is not exclusive of how we are ourselves affected by what Spinoza says.

The second example refers to modes and modifications. Particularly, I wish to speak of modifications as part of the eternal dynamics of God insofar as any modification actively modifies God. This is to be seen as another way of stating that an individual is an actual modification of God. This also ties together with God's dynamics insofar as we refer to the essence of any given mode.

I realize that these two examples do not really reflect a clear

statement of the unity of the Ethic. This is primarily a result of my Spinozistic approach. I should like to mention that with regard to this work, there is much which cannot be properly contextualized until the reader has, at least, read as far as chapter four, part one. In particular, it will be found that much of what I say cannot be easily understood until I can discuss the nature of Scientia Intuitiva and the relevance of Proposition XXX of Ethic V. As such, I ask that the reader reserve judgment on the value of my proposal until then.

Chapter One: Part Two

Spinoza's Ethic is much like a jig-saw puzzle. Without some idea of what the final picture looks like, no piecing together of any parts can be easily accomplished. However, we find that by proceeding from the whole to the parts, we are always sure of what kind of piece we need, what shape it must be, and how it fits into the total picture. To forget the whole in favour of one of its aspects is like assembling the puzzle without knowing what the final picture should look like when we are finished. But Spinoza's formulation is such that no one answer can be given to any philosophical question without due consideration of the implications of his answers to other problems. For example, Spinoza's discussion of the existence of a single substance cannot be answered independently of his discussion of modes and affects and how a rational man can discover this by overcoming his passions. Hence, we find one fundamental difficulty with Spinoza's system: it is so fully integrated that its complexity cannot be completely grasped in a purely intellectual way. Something else is required. This something else brings us back to man's nature insofar as Spinoza wrote the Ethic as he did, and the nature of the reader to comprehend the whole of it. We find that it is the nature of reason to conceive with fortitude, but now we find that to have an adequate idea of the essence of the Ethic is to go beyond Ratio to Scientia Intuitiva. Furthermore, it must be the nature

of the reader to be affected such that Spinoza can bring you to this realm of understanding. We will find (chapter three, part three and chapter four, part one) that this is a capability that is common to all men, since we all have an adequate idea of God. It is for this reason that how we read the Ethic affects our understanding of it. This will be more clear after one has reviewed the whole of my thesis.

Since much of our method of analysing Spinoza will be determined by how we go about reading him, I must exemplify this approach. If we seek only the logic of his system, we cannot grasp his Ethic. If we seek only an intellectual analysis, we cannot grasp his complexity. My solution to this problem is simple. We must allow ourselves to gain a feel for the complexity of his system as a whole, before we begin to analyse its parts or its logic. This is to say, in Spinozistic terms, that we must learn to turn off our passive intellect and allow Spinoza to activate our minds. This refers directly to the path to a life of reason as a summary of chapter three. This requires that we read the Ethic in a single sitting. My reasons for this are personal and I shall relate them as such.

I was introduced to the Ethic about three years ago in an undergraduate course on Leibniz and Spinoza. At the beginning of the section of the course on Spinoza, the instructor mentioned that Spinoza is one of the most complex thinkers in Western Philosophy. After introducing and defining some of Spinoza's major terms, we were left to the reading of the Ethic. For some reason I felt that I could conquer this complexity

if I let Spinoza guide me through his thoughts. With this in mind, I psyched myself up for attaining a profound understanding of Spinoza. I wished to comprehend the "philosopher's philosopher". With this sense of excitement I began to read the Ethic. My plan was to read the Ethic in a single afternoon so that I could spend time reviewing it later to piece together an understanding of the work. My intention was to make preparations for my paper in my course as quickly as possible. By getting the initial reading out of the way, I hoped to have more time to figure Spinoza out. And so, with eager anticipation I began to read. Briefly, the experience is as follows. At the end of part one I seemed to have grasped that there is only one God, that this is Nature, and that this is all that exists. By the end of part two I was able to recognize the logical rigor of Spinoza's formulation, but other than this I was hopelessly confused. I almost put the book down at this point, but my ambition and curiosity pressed me to persevere. Now a strange thing began to happen. As Spinoza proceeded to explain and define the nature of the emotions, I found myself less concerned with the logical analysis of his philosophy, and more captivated by his insights. Gradually, my analysis seemed to give way to a feel for what Spinoza was saying. By the time I got to the end of part three, at the definitions of the emotions, I experienced more of an empathy for his definitions than any logic could convey. As I proceeded to part four, my ideas (in the sense of a rational intellectual understanding) seemed to merge

with my empathy in such a way that I began to feel that I was indeed understanding him. This encouraged me to press on to part five and discover how to escape the bondage to passion. I felt my understanding grow until Proposition XXX of this part. At this proposition my mind came to a stand, and all that I had read of the Ethic seemed to flash before my eyes and fall into place. I found in retrospect that the experience was of an extremely short duration, although it seemed to last forever while I was experiencing it. From this perspective I completed my reading and then summarized the major points into 34 statements. These will appear in the next chapter.

This experience revealed two things to me: 1) I seemed to comprehend the whole of the Ethic as a single system in all of its complexity, and 2) my comprehension came not from my intellectual understanding of what I'd read, but from my feel for it. These two revelations taught me that Spinoza's Ethic functions as a fully integrated system. When I began reading the commentators on Spinoza, I was shocked that they had abandoned their feel for his integrity in favour of their intellectual analyses. Furthermore, I understood that this very method of analysis violated the integrity of the system they were analysing.

Hence, I came to discover that Spinoza's Ethic functions as a unified whole and that it must be considered as such if one truly wishes to comprehend it. While this remains essentially a feel for the

integrity of Spinoza's thoughts, I find that this feeling is required to compliment any intellectual analysis of this system. As Spinoza thought from the nature of God to His parts and felt the complexity of Nature, so too does the Ethic reflect this integrity. Further, this feeling is explained by Spinoza in his epistemology. (I will discuss this in chapter three.)

The format of this dissertation is simple: I will discuss God's unity as per Spinoza's metaphysics, and then I will examine this unity in his epistemology. In so doing, I shall reveal the fundamental nature of his Ethic and the system which expounds it. In this task I shall attempt to convey to the reader the necessity of the integrity of intellect and emotion insofar as one complements the other in a genuine and comprehensive understanding of the Ethic. I shall conclude with a brief discussion of Spinoza's Ethic and his notion of immortality.

I wish it to be known at this time that one of my main intentions is to reveal Spinoza by being Spinozistic in my approach. As such, some sections may be just as unreadable as a reader may find Spinoza. I ask that the reader persevere to the end of chapter four, part one before passing judgment since it is here that I can actually provide an improved account of how one can tie the Ethic together and understand it as coherent system. While I understand that in being Spinozistic I am, to some extent at least, seeking a reader to be Spinozistic with me, I need not depend on this as much as Spinoza. It is hoped, then, that any feeling a reader

may grasp by endeavoring to be Spinozistic with me, will be conducive to improving his understanding of the Ethic.

*All that is ... "Ours" ...
It is not Fate.
It is not Destiny.
It is an unfolding.*

Chapter Two: Part One

This section will deal with Spinoza's concept of Unity. For this, it is vital to recognize the Oneness of God. This Oneness is to be considered as complex. This then, refers to Nature as singular in the sense of a unity. It must then be observed, that Oneness or singularity in this sense is complex, meaning a minimum of twoness. It is in this sense that Spinoza presents his metaphysics. As such, he begins with God is one. This is the most important point to the nature of God. "Unity" is itself a very peculiar notion. It involves both singularity and plurality, yet this seeming paradox is resolved in the very nature of the term. It is because of this nature of unity that we require a minimum of twoness to describe it. There are two aspects of unity; the aspect of its singularity, and the aspect of its plurality. This is made use of by Spinoza in a fundamental way. God's nature is two-fold. This is stated with regard to the absolutes of Spinoza's system such as substance and eternity, and the relatives of God as expressed through the attributes and modes of substance. All of these concepts, however paradoxical they may appear, are resolved in the

dual aspects of unity. The absolutes refer to the oneness or singularity aspect of the unity of God, and the relatives refer to the complex or plurality aspect of the unity of God. This distinction is fundamental and it represents the key to much of the Ethic.

God or Nature, must be considered in the sense of the unity of Substance and its attributes. It is often thought that God is identical with Substance,¹ and while this is true, it is only true provided that the reader can comprehend the unity of Substance and attributes. That is to say, Nature is singular as a result of the unity of Substance and attributes. This complexity of the unity of God, or of God's uniqueness or Oneness, is reflected with a minimum of two. The concept of unity implies singularity, but it is singular or "one" only as a result of the combining of at least two things. In the case of Spinoza's Nature, this is the result of the combining of Substance and attributes. It is only in this very precise way that we can identify God with Substance. The recognition of the complexity of the unity involved also provides the key of further analysing Spinoza's system. This is done in FIG. #1.

In this chart we can see the twoness which represents the fundamental integrity of the system. God is one, in the sense of a unity which involves a minimum of two - Substance and attributes. Attributes also display unity. It can be seen that all the various aspects of Spinoza's system must be regarded as maintaining the

integrity of God. As such, we must accredit the concept of unity to all of the "parts" of the Ethic.

It can now be observed, that attributes must also maintain this sense of unity, and as such, must also be described with a minimum of twoness. Attributes, although infinite in number, can only be described with a minimum of two - thought and extension. That is, as unity is complex we refer to the oneness of God as absolute, but only insofar as God is one in the sense of unity. To describe the nature of this unity we must also refer to the plurality aspect of the unity of God. The description of this plurality requires a minimum of two concepts. Spinoza refers to the attributes of God in this context.

These two attributes are all that men know as the attributes of substance insofar as men are conceived through God through the attributes of thought and extension. It is here that we can begin to understand the nature of the modifications of God insofar as God is the unity of substance and attributes. We can consider that there are two concepts of the modifications of the attributes of substance - infinite and finite modes. It is primarily due the modifications of the attributes of God that we can speak of parts. In this regard there are only "parts" in the sense that some mode is limited by some other mode. Infinite modes can be considered as modes which are not limited, which is to say that they are unlimited modifications

of the attributes of substance. Finite modes are, then, limited modifications of the attributes of substance. These modes also display unity and can also be subdivided into two - indefinite, and definite modes. It is with regard to finite modes that objects in the ordinary sense of the term, are described. Men, for example, are finite modes that are conceived under the attributes of thought and extension.

I do not feel that I can overemphasise that the concept of oneness as a unity as the key to Spinoza's system. As such we can now examine the exact context into which we must consider FIG. #1. As I have stated, there is no "part" of the Ethic that can be construed as really being independent of the whole. Thus, when we speak of the nature of the attributes of substance, we must always keep in mind that these attributes are a unity and display the fundamental Oneness of Nature. The same must hold for the modifications of the attributes of substance. Whether infinite or finite, all modes display the integrity of God. It is this sense that we can refer to the modes as modifications of substance and of God. There is absolutely no sense of modes existing independently of the whole of Nature, or even of each other. A definite mode is a finite mode that is, by definition, limited by another mode. We may consider that this mode is limited in a definite way. Also, an indefinite mode is a finite mode that is also limited, but in an indefinite way. Since all modes are necessarily in God, and are united in the sense of being part of the oneness of

Nature, we can now establish that all is one with God insofar as God is uniquely.

God or Nature: Oneness or unity

Substance

Attribute: Thought and Extension

Infinite:
1) modes
2) duration

Finite:
1) modes
2) duration

Indefinite:
1) modes
2) duration

Definite:
1) modes
2) duration

FIG. #1

The next two topics of discussion are Time and Perception. I feel that these two topics are especially interconnected, and so I will attempt to deal with each separately and then show how they inter-accommodate each other. First I will deal with Time.

Time is referred to as duration in the Ethic. This is a concept that can be derived from FIG. #1. Duration is not an attribute of God as in extension. Time is divided into two basic terms, eternity and

duration. Eternity is to be conceived of as beyond time, as only applies to God. In this context, Eternity is time as referring to Nature as a whole. It does not involve Duration or passage. It is God in His absolute infinitude.² Eternity, then, is to be understood as absolute in the sense that it refers to the singularity or oneness aspect of the unity of God. "Duration is the indefinite continuation of existence" (pg. 30) (Ethics II, Part V). Duration on the the other hand, is to be understood as a relative term insofar as it refers to the plurality aspect of the unity of God.

First, the form of duration occurs under the modifications or the attributes of substance. As such there are two forms of duration, infinite, and finite. Infinite duration refers to durations that are not limited by other modes. That is to say, that infinite modes are not limited by any other modes under the attributes of thought and/or extension, and continue to be modes of God for a duration which is also unlimited.

The second form of duration is with respect to finite modes. Finite modes are modes that are limited by other modes within the attributes of thought and extension. This is to say, finite modes are limited, and so their duration is also limited. Like finite modes, durations of this form can be conceived of in two ways - indefinite and definite. Indefinite durations are with respect to indefinite modes and are conceived of as durations which are limited, but

which are limited in an indefinite way. Definite durations are with respect to definite modes, and are limited in a definite way. The passage of time occurs with respect to perception, but I will say here that it involves the succession of indefinite and definite durations.

Actually the exact nature of eternity and duration are revealed in the concepts of Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata. I will discuss these two terms at greater length below, but for now it is important to reveal the nature of determination and causality which are inherent in God. Briefly, Natura Naturans refers to "the creative dynamics of God", and Natura Naturata refers to that which follows from God's dynamics. Again, Natura Naturans is an absolute concept, and Natura Naturata is a relative concept. In this light we can now observe that eternity does not imply an unchanging* whole, but rather, refers to the absolute dynamics of God in His oneness.** It is only insofar as we refer to the relativity of God through the complex of his attributes and modes that we should think of duration. This distinction should also apply to the nature of determinism and causality in

*Actually God is conserved insofar as nothing can be added or removed. I refer to this as the conservation of God. But this does not mean that God is an unchanging whole. The interreactions between the modifications of God (in reference to the plurality aspect of the unity of God) are the relating dynamics of God. This is referred to as Nature naturing in an absolute context (see chapter three, part three).

**See chapter three, part three.

Nature. We normally think of causality as a relative term and as such think of determination as necessary causation. But this relative causality will not properly account for the absolute integrity of God's dynamics in the sense of the oneness of God. Harris answers this problem from an examination of the nature of Spinoza's teleology. Harris's discussion of Spinoza's teleology is most adequate and so I will not dwell on it here. I feel, however, that its application to the concepts of determination and causality are most illuminating with respect to the nature of eternity. I quote, "Teleological process, therefore, from one point of view is action neither a tergo nor a fronte, for it requires an entirely new conception of causality, not as a linear determination of successive events each by its immediate predecessor, but as reticular mutual determination of events in systematic relation, each fixed and defined by, as well as defining, all the rest, in accordance with a governing principle of structure that integrates the whole."³

We can understand then, that God as one, in the sense of absolute, is dynamic, and any relative concepts which are applied to him, such as time or causality, can only be applied in the sense of the complexity of God as per Natura Naturata. Harris states this in the next few sentences as follows, "From another point of view, it is determination both a tergo and a fronte, for the causal influence is reciprocal among the parts because the governing principle of

order is universal to the whole, so that when the system is generated in time, what comes earlier is as intimately related to what is subsequently to emerge as it is to what has previously been realized. The end as potential, is already present at the beginning, and equally each phase of its realization is determined by the prior process. Throughout, and at each stage, the principle of organization of the whole structure is the imminent cause of the entire process. "⁴

The topic of perception is a most complex one in the Ethic. To properly understand this topic, one must keep in mind that there are no strict dualities for Spinoza. This again refers to the integrity of Nature with respect to the unity of God. A man or observer is to be understood as a finite mode within Nature. We can, therefore, say that the body is a finite mode as conceived under the attribute of extension, and the mind is a finite mode as conceived under the attribute of thought. (See Ethic II, Props. XI, XII, XIII, XV, and XVI for the definition of and nature (essence) of the human mind.) For the purposes of this dissertation, I will refer to the "mind-body" to emphasize that there is no real separation between the mind and the body.⁵ This is, of course, to say that we are really speaking of one mode of Nature, but one mode that can be considered in two different ways. This might be analogous to considering the mind and the body to be as two sides of the same coin. In this regard we can note that anything which we may want to regard as affecting the coin affects

the whole coin, that is, affects both sides simultaneously. As such, any affections to the body, are affections to the mind. It is only in this way that we can proceed to understand perception. Since the mind is defined as the idea of the body,⁶ and therefore, functions as a unified whole, any affects to the body are affects to the mind. The notion of a mind-body, while somewhat superficial, does help to remind the reader to keep the integrity of the human mode intact.

It can be stated that for Spinoza, perception is the modifications of our bodies which are also (simultaneously) modifications of our minds⁷ such that the object in question is an image in our mind. We can regard the object being perceived to be another finite mode under the attribute of extension, which causes the modifications to our mind-bodies such that an image is made known in the mind (the image is here to be regarded as an idea in the mind insofar as the mind is modified by the object being perceived). I feel that there is a need to point out some controversy regarding perception in the Rationalist framework, especially with regard to Spinoza. It is clear from the above that Spinoza holds a copy theory of perception, but this is a theory that I feel is not well understood, and has gone unnoticed in Spinoza for the most part. I will, therefore, spend some time on this area.

The Copy theory of perception has many extremes, from the notion that our mind contains simple and exact copies of the world to

a full-fledged representational theory of perception such as the Leibniz-Russell theory.⁸ (See Diagram) They each vary in the degree of abstraction that perception can cause with respect to what can be known to us through perception. With regard to Spinoza, it is quite important that we realize that he probably held a more radical theory of perception than most commentators would ascribe to him. By this, I mean that at the very least I would say that Spinoza held a representational theory and may even hold it to the extreme view as the one propounded by the Leibniz-Russell model.⁹ (Ethic II, Prop. XIV, XVI, XVIII and XIX. Note body here refers to Robinson's R-body.) While I feel that this must be the case, I will also note here that the extremity of his views probably do not affect the purpose of the Ethic, except insofar as one gains an adequate idea of the nature of Imaginatio. As such, I wish only to make it understood that perception cannot be treated in any other form than that of a strict representational view. Furthermore, it is important to keep this in mind since perception falls under the lowest form of the understanding along with the senses, and hence reveals the inadequate nature of any understanding derived from this method (Ethic II, Prop. XIX). It could be noted that our understanding of finite modes insofar as they are made known to us through the modifications of our mind-bodies, are only inadequate representations that fail to reveal their being, or their essence. They remain as fragmented ideas in the mind as will be seen at greater

length later on.

In Definition III of Part 2, Spinoza distinguishes between perception and conception. In this regard, we find that in perception, the mind is passive, while in conception the mind is active. Again, I must point out that there cannot be a strict duality between passivity and activity. Passion and action must also maintain the integrity of Nature insofar as they are within the unity of God. Images and ideas are, to some extent different insofar as images can be considered as a lower class of ideas. By this I mean, that images and ideas are to some extent distinct. Actually, ideas proper involve all the contents of the mind (conceptions), but here Spinoza distinguishes between ideas that are the result of the passivity of the Mind, and those ideas that are the result of the activity of the mind. Thus, in his pursuit of this topic in Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Schol. , he speaks of perception as the passive occurrence of the images of things, and of words as passive conventions. (I will deal with language in Chapter three, Part two.)

Images are passive and do not involve the conception of ideas. Again, however, perception as passive is not exclusive of the activity of the mind. This can be understood in the following manner. When I perceive an object, the occurrence of the image is passive since the object acts on my senses in some way (causes modifications to my mind-body) to form an image. However, I can actively choose to perceive a particular object, and even actively decide on the intensity

of my observation. I do, in some sense, act on the object as it acts on me. My mind is not purely passive with regard to any object. This is the sense in which passivity is not exclusive of activity insofar as perception is concerned. Later, I will refer to the integrity of passion and action with regard to any mode in any attribute. In the meantime, I will say that while perception is primarily passive, it is not completely independent of action, and that some action is involved with this process. (See Chapter three, Part three.)

Also I would like to clarify my earlier remark about the distinction between images and ideas. It is in the sense of the interaccommodation of passivity and activity that Spinoza understands ideas as being more than just images or words. These two kinds of ideas are primarily passive, and must be conceived of these terms. Ideas proper, reflect the integrity of the mind-body, and cannot be conceived of in these terms. They are modes of thinking, which is to say, they are finite modifications of the infinite attributes of substance, but as conceived under the attribute of thought.

Duration:

Spinoza defines duration as, "The indefinite continuance of existing". (Def'n V, part 2). He uses "indefinite continuance of existing" because a particular mode of Nature is not determined to exist through being itself, but is rather, determined by what efficient

cause does not take it's being away.

The concept of time and duration are intricately connected to the Realm of Imaginatio. In Axiom V of Part 2 Spinoza states, "We can feel and perceive no particular things, save bodies and modes of thought". In the light of the notions of Unity, perception and understanding (Imaginatio), we can see that what Spinoza attributes to duration is the result of inadequate ideas about relations between bodies. By this I mean, that Spinoza invokes a concept of duration that is an illusion relative to God. If we conceived adequately of all of Nature, all notions of duration and time would cease to be in our minds.¹⁰ It is only our inadequate conception of Nature that provides us with a conception of duration and of time.¹¹

The main force of Spinoza's arguments on duration occur at Prop's XXX and XXXI of Part 2. Here he stresses that since the mind is the idea of the body, and the body itself does not exist by virtue of its own essence, we can only have an inadequate idea of its duration. It is here that Spinoza refers to the concept of causality and of causal chains. To adequately describe what Spinoza is attempting to do in these propositions, I will refer back to the concept of unity and then show how to derive duration.

In a fully integrated universe there can be no mode or thing that can be exclusive of the whole. As such, Nature must be completely self determined. By this I mean that there can be no part of the whole

that is not determined by the whole, and does not contribute to determining the nature of the whole. As such, no concepts of causal chains are required to account for determinism.¹² It is not the case that as Nature changes it changes with respect to an infinite chain of events as per some notion of absolute time. In other words, it is not the case that one can apply a notion of linear passage (future-present-past) to God or Nature. The determinism of God is self-determinism (by the definition of God). But, this is eternity, since no concept of passage need be used to describe the whole. God is all there is, and cannot be determined by anything other than Himself. The problem with time, is that it involves passage or change, but with respect to something. This is to say, that the concept of passage is meaningless without some point or frame of reference. This is illustrated with modern physics that does employ the use of frames of reference to describe the flow of time or change. For Spinoza, however, God's change can only refer to Himself. The question that must be asked is; is it meaningful to speak of passage with respect to God's change with respect to Himself? If I refer to modern physics, I would find that such a notion is ambiguous, since it is the internal nature of the reference frame itself that is changing with respect to the whole, and also it is the whole reference frame that is changing with respect to its internal nature which is absurd. I can, therefore, only say that God is dynamic, but not in any sense

of a specific flow of events or of the passage of time. If we keep this in mind, we can make sense of the distinction between eternity and duration. Eternity is God's dynamics, but without any concept of a passage of time, or even of a specific chain of changes.

This last point is most important, since it provides the very basis of the issue of Duration. For God, there is no specific chain of events or causes. One cannot examine Nature that way. It is only due to our inadequate knowledge of God that we attribute these concepts to Him.

One way of examining this, is to deal with the perspective of perception. As noted, perception is the result of the modifications of the mind-body, which is an image in the mind. We can use this notion of copies to illustrate that we do not perceive all of Nature at once. Rather, we perceive Nature in a series of what appear to be relatively distinct events. (This can be stated as to say that our perceptual images are inadequate and fragmented ideas of Nature.) This series provides us with the notion that we perceive parts of Nature naturing in a specific order, as say, a scenario. The events in question are imprecise, hence refer to the indefinite durations of finite modes. Of course, where the durations are precise and measurable, we understand definite durations of finite modes. It is the understanding of this scenario which is the result of a chain of inadequate and fragmented ideas of duration, that gives us our experience of the

passage of time. Again, however, we must refer to God's dynamics insofar as He conceives of Himself through this or that mode. The actual integrity of God, insofar as God is a unity is fully revealed through His modifications insofar as one has an adequate idea of the essence of things.

Realms of Understanding:

Spinoza divides the Understanding into three realms, Imaginatio, Ratio, and Scientia Intuitiva. The first realm refers to the fragmented and inadequate ideas that occupy the mind through such faculties as perception, sensation and language. The main characteristic of the realm is that no comprehension (understanding of the whole) is required or to be found. The next higher realm is Ratio, and refers to ideas which are less inadequate and fragmented than those of Imaginatio. Simply stated, these ideas can be considered to be abstract mediating ideas. By this, I mean that these ideas are ideas which when connected, provide some sort of comprehension relative to the whole. Examples of these ideas are those of mathematics. Scientia Intuitiva refers to single immediate comprehensive ideas. These ideas are the understanding of the whole of Nature.

With regard to the concepts of time, perception and unity, these realms play a precise role. As already noted, perception involves sensations and so belongs to the realm of Imaginatio. As such, we

can again note that the images of the world are inadequate and fragmented representations of the world. These ideas or images display a lack of any comprehension of the whole. That is, we can perceive tables and chairs as distinct objects. The reason that these ideas must be regarded as fragmented is that since we can perceive discrete objects, we cannot understand the unity of Nature. The key to unity with regard to the realms of understanding is through the increase in comprehension as one progresses through the realms towards *Scientia Intuitiva*. Thus, as one moves from *Imaginatio* to *Ratio* to *Scientia Intuitiva*, one gains a more adequate and less fragmented understanding (comprehension) of God. One moves from perception and sensation as the source of understanding to abstract mediating ideas, and finally to single comprehensive ideas.

With regard to time, the realms play a similar role. The passage of time occurs in the realm of *Imaginatio* since the progression of discrete durations requires the succession of fragmented and inadequate ideas. God is eternal, and is beyond the imaginative ideas of indefinite and definite durations. We find, then, that the ideas of *Ratio* and the ideas of *Scientia Intuitiva* are eternal. This, of course, reflects the increase of comprehension that transpires with the passage into each realm. In the next chapter I will probe more deeply into the realms of the understanding with reference to the unity of God. For the moment, however, I wish only to reveal the essential

characteristics of each realm.

Structure:

Before I proceed to a discussion of the main concepts of the Ethic (as reflected in 34 statements), I would like to describe the structure of the Ethic as outlined in FIG. #2 (pg. 49). As I have already indicated, the key to Spinoza's system is found in the concept of unity. This refers to the comprehension of the interconnectedness of Nature, insofar as God is one. That is, one experiences a single immediate idea, which is the understanding of the whole of Nature, as the unity of God in all His interconnections. It is from this single idea that the Ethic flows.¹³ It should be noted, that while all men can (have the capabilities) come to understand the unity of Nature, we each experience this comprehension with respect to our own unique viewpoints. For this reason Scientia Intuitiva carries with it an enormous density of detail some of which can vary from person to person. There are some aspects of the detail inherent in Scientia Intuitiva that are common to all men. I have chosen, for the sake of convenience, to specify these as intuitions to indicate that they are ideas that are included in this realm of understanding. For the moment it should be noted that these are intended only to explicate and reveal the structure of the Ethic.

For this purpose I have divided Scientia Intuitiva into two

intuitions: the structure of Nature (God), which I refer to as epistemological metaphysics, and the intuition of the Ethic which can, for the moment, be thought of as "right living". The latter intuition is the point of the book and is, so to speak, an emergent from the understanding of the nature of God. The actual structure of the book is directed at the integrity of the epistemology and metaphysics with the Ethic to reveal the nature of God. It is through this understanding that Spinoza brings the reader to Scientia Intuitiva and the understanding of the Ethic. FIG. #2 shows these intuitions as part of Scientia Intuitiva, and the structure of the book insofar as the reader is able to fit the parts of the system into place. Hence, it should be observed that my distinction between epistemological metaphysics and the Ethic is artificial and only for demonstration purposes.

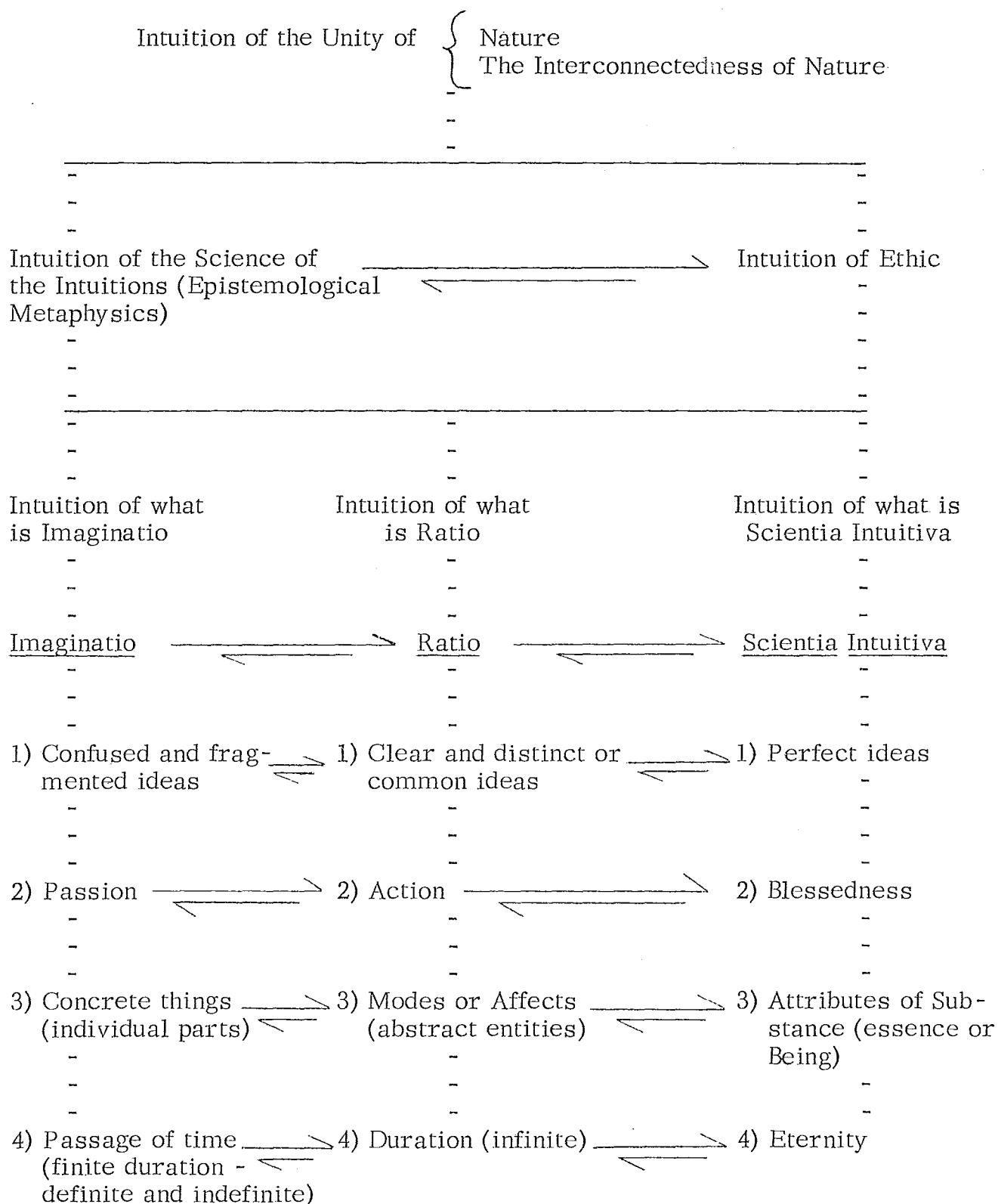
The intuition of the science of the intuitions, or of epistemological metaphysics, is what I feel to encompass the main structure of the book. As is appropriate, Spinoza divides this intuition according to the realms of the understanding. It follows from the understanding of Nature that we should also comprehend our own understanding. This I have described as the intuition of each realm insofar as we comprehend what each realm is, and the nature of their respective contents. Thus, in the comprehension of the unity of God we also comprehend the levels of the understanding, as indicated by the realms, in terms of the relative increases in adequacy of their understanding.

By this I mean that we intuitively understand the nature of Imaginatio, Ratio, and Scientia Intuitiva. It is with this understanding that we can analyse the structure of the book. While I may frequently refer to concepts within each of these realms, there are, I believe, four basic constituents of these realms. These are: levels of the comprehension of ideas, dynamics (passivity and activity), comprehension of parts, and concepts involving time or eternity.

We comprehend that Imaginatio is the understanding which involves inadequate and fragmented ideas insofar as the mind is passive. This includes such things as concrete things (perceptions and sensations), passions, and the passage of time. We comprehend Ratio as those ideas which are less inadequate and fragmented than those of Imaginatio, and are ideas common to all men insofar as the mind is active. These include abstract mediating ideas and infinite durations. Scientia Intuitiva are those ideas which are perfect insofar as the mind is blessed. These include the understanding of the attributes of substance (the essence or being of modes), and of eternity.

The other major intuition is that of the Ethic. This intuition is the comprehension of the unity of self with God. That is to say, I am one with all of Nature, and the understanding of the unity and harmony of all with regard to my place within God is perfectly understood. Ethic, properly understood, can only occur in the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. As the understanding grows, the mind becomes less subject

to passion, more active, and more perfect. This is the passage through the realms of the understanding to Scientia Intuitiva, and the comprehension of the harmony and integrity of God. It is, therefore, only through the improvement of the understanding of the nature of God through the increase of the comprehension of the unity and integrity of the whole of Nature, that we can come to understand the Ethic.



The Intuition of Ethic is a unity with that of Metaphysics. It is achieved through the progression from Imaginatio to Scientia Intuitiva. This is signified with the symbol (\longleftrightarrow).

FIG. #2

Chapter Two: Part Two

Having presented some general remarks concerning the structure of the Ethic, I would now like to proceed with an account of some of the major concepts that constitute the work. I have chosen to accomplish this task through the use of 34 statements which are intended to reveal the nature of the terminology and formulation that comprise the book. It is not intended that these statements apply all of the major concepts that Spinoza presents, or that they represent the total integrity of the Ethic. It is by way of this summary that I should attempt to reveal those aspects of Spinoza's system. I have attempted, for the sake of simplicity, to utilize only those concepts that I feel are necessary to comprehend the Ethic, and those concepts to which I will refer throughout this dissertation. Note that in this endeavor I shall begin with absolute concepts, then to the relatives and back to the adequate idea of things insofar as God conceives of things through a particular human mode.

I God, or Nature is the unity of Substance and Attributes. God is one. There is one Substance as conceived under an infinity of Attributes.

II Extension is an Attribute of Nature, and can be considered as all spacial relations insofar as things are themselves extended.

III A body or individual thing is a Mode or affect of the Attributes of God (such as Extension) insofar as it endures under indefinite or definite duration.

IV The Mind is the idea of the body, or parts of it, as conceived under the Attribute of Thought.

V Being pertains to that which exists, or the idea or thing from which all behaviour can be deduced.

VI Modifications (modes) and Affections (affects) of the Mind, and Emotions are one and the same thing.

VII Ideas of external bodies are really of the constitution of our brains, or - the modifications or affections of our imaginations.

VIII For every idea of a body (image), or of an affection of the Mind, we also have an idea of those ideas, images and affections. This idea of an idea is commonly referred to as Memory.

IX Perception is passive: As the body is modified or affected by an external cause, so too is the Mind modified, or affected or adapted. Thus we perceive not only things, but also changes or modifications of our ideas (images). Perception, then, is the modifications of the mind-body insofar as one is affected by some external cause.

X The essence of the mind is the only idea from which all behaviour can be deduced. This is a clear and distinct or adequate idea, and is the power of the Mind insofar as Being perseveres (in its existence). (This latter concept refers only to actions.)

XI The Will and the Intellect are the same.¹⁴ They are consciousness of thing persevering (in its existence), insofar as the Will is the Mind in motion and the Intellect is the Mind at rest. When consciousness of this effort is related to both the Mind and the Body, it is called appetite. Desire is an appetite which is conscious of itself, or a self-conscious appetite.

XII An Affection of the Mind is a modification of the Mind, and is represented as a fragmented idea in the Mind, and serves to be the power of the Being of the Mind. An Affection is the power or volition of the Being to motivate or instigate any action, or be motivated by any passion. That is to say, that an affect is a fragmented idea in the Mind, by which the Mind endeavours to gain a clear and distinct idea of its Body or parts of it. This increase in the power of the essence, or the exercise of the Intellect (Will) to move from an inadequate idea to a less inadequate or adequate idea is called an increase in the affections.

This might be better understood by way of an analogy. If we consider the essence to be the power of the Mind insofar as Being perseveres, to be analogous to an electron in an excited state, there are two possibilities that can occur. Either energy can be removed or dissipated from the atom to cause the electron to move to a lower energy state, or energy can be added to the atom to cause the electron to move to a higher energy state. If we then consider the relative difference between the energy states of the electron to be analogous to

the degree of order or perfection of the Mind (the number and order of clear and distinct ideas), then it can be noted that since Being is in an excited state, so to speak, order and perfection can be added or removed to increase or decrease respectively, the degree of perfection of the Mind. This is the power of Being insofar as it refers to the affections. Thus, the essence of the Mind is a clear and distinct idea and is the power of the Mind, and the affections are confused ideas and are the power of Being.

XIII An increase of the affections is called an affirmation and occurs when the mind moves (see XI) from an inadequate or fragmented idea to an adequate or clear idea. When the Mind moves from an adequate or clear idea to an inadequate or fragmented idea, this is a decrease in the affections and is called a denial or negation.

XIV Since God and Nature are one and the same thing and are perfect, the Mind insofar as it has understanding of its Body and itself contains inadequate or fragmented ideas and affections, and also adequate or clear ideas and affections, of which the latter are of greater perfection. The Mind always seeks to affirm its affections and thereby achieve a greater perfection.

XV Time is defined as duration. Eternity is beyond duration and applies only to God. Modes can be either infinite or finite and carry with them a corresponding duration (that is, infinite or finite duration respectively). Finite modes can be further divided into

indefinite and definite modes, again with corresponding durations.

This is to say, that finite modes exist for either an indefinite duration or a definite duration. What we normally refer to as the passage of time is a succession of ideas of duration. This succession occurs only with indefinite and/or definite durations insofar as the Mind has inadequate or fragmented ideas and affections of its Body and of God.

XVI If a cause is not necessary or efficient or accidental, then it is contingent.

XVII The realm of individual things which are represented to us through the senses in a confused or fragmented manner (see Chapter three, Part three), and signs of things through the ideas of which we imagine things, is the understanding called Imaginatio, or opinion, and is the lowest form of understanding.

XVIII When we possess adequate or clear ideas of those notions or properties that are common to all men (by this I mean ideas which are public), this understanding belongs to the realm of Ratio. This realm of understanding is more adequate and less fragmented than Imaginatio.

XIX The realm of understanding called Scientia Intuitiva is the understanding from an adequate idea of the Being of God, to an adequate understanding of the essence of things. This is the highest form of the understanding.

XX Contingent cause occurs only in Imaginatio.

XXI Necessary cause occurs in the realm of Ratio.

XXII The ideas of Ratio are of infinite duration. This is to say, that if we can obtain a perfect idea of infinite duration, we can, insofar as we are rational creatures and are part of Nature, declare this idea to be a form of eternity.

XXIII The Mind is subject to the passions in proportion to the number of inadequate or fragmented ideas it has, and it acts in proportion to the number of adequate or clear ideas which it has.

XXIV For the purpose of explicating the nature of the emotions I will list four of Spinoza's definitions:

- 1) Joy is an increase in perfection (of the Mind).
- 2) Sorrow is a decrease in perfection (of the Mind).
- 3) Love is joy accompanied with the idea of an external cause.
- 4) Hate is sorrow accompanied with the idea of an external cause.

XXV The greater the perfection of the Mind, the more freedom and power doth the Mind possess to act and be less subject to the passions. Blessedness is the greatest perfection that the Mind can achieve, and is the greatest freedom that the Mind could attain.

XXVI There is no single individual thing in Nature that is not subject to another stronger thing by which the former may be destroyed, or at least limited, by the latter.

XXVII Men differ by nature according to the relative number of adequate and inadequate ideas that each Mind contains, and by the order

of those ideas according to the relative powers of each intellect. For example, each Mind has a different power to act and be less subject to the passions according to the number of adequate ideas in each Mind, but each Mind can be perfect in differing respects. This is to say, that the adequate ideas that determine the degree of perfection of each Mind, may not be same ideas. The only place for a common nature among men, is by those men who live according to the dictates of Ratio, since this realm of understanding is, by definition, adequate ideas of those notions or properties that are common to all men (which is to say, those ideas that are public).

XXVIII Since the Mind can never be completely free of the passions so long as the Body shall live,¹⁵ the Mind will always contain the realm of Imaginatio. Therefore, the Mind cannot achieve complete perfection or freedom until death.

XXIX The order of the intellect is governed by the laws of Ratio and the order of adequate and clear ideas in the Mind, insofar as the Mind's power to act is determined by man's nature.

XXX The power of the intellect is the virtue to act in proportion to the number of adequate ideas of affects in the Mind. This power is to arrange the affects such that the Mind may never be subject to passions, but only to actions. This power of the intellect is the motion of the intellect to remove the external cause of an affect, insofar as that external cause is an inadequate idea, and to replace it with the Mind's

conception of an adequate idea of its cause, according to the number of, and degree of adequate and clear ideas in the Mind. This action of the Mind is called the Will, and serves to increase the perfection of the Mind.

XXXI Prop. XX - part 5, Scholia:

The power of the Mind over the affects is as such:

- 1) In the Mind's own understanding of its affects.
- 2) In the ability of the mind to separate an affect from an external cause which we imagine confusedly (see my XXX).
- 3) With respect to the passage of time (succession of durations), emotions referring to things which we understand, surpass those emotions referring to things which we conceive with inadequate and fragmented ideas.
- 4) To increase the number of causes by which an affect can be related to the common properties of things or of Nature. This is to say, that the greater the number of causes that can be common to all things (public), the greater the Mind's power over the affect.
- 5) In the order in which the Mind can arrange its affects and connect them one with another. This refers to the ability of the Mind to increase its perfection by increasing the relative order of the affects.

XXXII Prop. XXX - part 5:

The Mind, insofar as it knows itself and the Body under the form of

eternity, necessarily has an understanding of God (understands what is Nature), and understands that it is in God (understands the unity of Nature and that it is one with Nature), and is conceived through Him (understands how it interconnects with Nature as a whole).

This is to say, that I am "one with the universe" or "one with God". This is the most perfect of ideas that the Mind can contain.

XXXIII Since the idea in Prop. XXX of part 5 is perfect, it is the most adequate and clearest idea of God, and is eternal. Furthermore, this idea must be contained by all modes that have Minds (regardless of whether or not they are aware of it), in order for them to be able to interreact with other modes in Nature (as opposed to being purely passive, as would be a mode without a Mind, such as a rock). It can be said that this one idea is common to all Minds, human or otherwise. Since it is this one idea that is common to all Minds, it can be said to be the essence of the attribute of thought, insofar as it is God's idea of Himself which conceives the attribute of thought.

Specifically, this is God's idea of the Being of an individual (human) Body, insofar as it is a modification of Nature as conceived under the form of eternity.

XXXIV From statements XXXII and XXXIII, I can conclude that the Mind cannot be completely destroyed with the Body, but this one idea must remain. It is this idea that is most perfect, and provides the means of stating that one can be completely free after death (as is implied by

my statement XXVIII). (See Chapter four, Part one for a fuller discussion of Spinoza's doctrine of immortality.)

Chapter Two: Part Three

The Structure and Concepts in Relation to the Whole

Statement XXXII is the crux of Spinoza's and my formulation. Here he states that we are aware of our place in Nature, and that we need only to recognize this understanding to become blessed. Proposition XXX of the fifth part of the Ethic is the claim that we comprehend the unity of God and our own part as an interconnection within that whole. As I have indicated, it is the recognition of this unity that is the major feature of the Ethic. As such, I shall work back from this statement to explicate the terms and concepts which are utilized and explained in these statements. I will assume only that the reader understands the nature of the unity of God, insofar as unity is complex, and that the epistemological-metaphysics is intended to establish an understanding of this unity, and that the intuition of the Ethic is eminent in the reader's mind. I will also maintain my past policy of referring to the self as a mind-body to assist the reader in remembering the unity of the self is a finite mode as conceived under the attributes of thought and extension.

In FIG. #2 I have explicated four areas of terms that are essential to piecing the Ethic together. These include generally; concepts of ideas, dynamics, parts, and time. From these areas, the chart categorizes the basics of Spinoza's system. For my present

purposes I shall begin by further reducing these areas to two. I shall include dynamics with time, and ideas with parts. This is accomplished by Spinoza under the terms Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata. These concepts are described by Spinoza in Ethic I, XXIX - Scholia. as follows, "...I think it is plain that by Natura Naturans we are to understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, or those attributes of substance which express eternal and infinite essence, that is to say,¹⁶ God insofar as He is considered as a free cause. But by Natura Naturata I understand everything which follows from the necessity of the nature of God, or of any one of God's attributes, that is to say, all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and which without God can neither be nor can be conceived."¹⁷

Harris describes the distinction in terms of God's creativity. Natura Naturans, "...is God conceived as free cause, as active, or as creative potency - "Nature naturing," nature producing, issuing as the existing universe. The created or elaborated system of the universe he calls Natura Naturata, "Nature natured,"..."¹⁸

The creative dynamics of God is expressed by the attributes insofar as God's reality or perfection, or power (all these are the same), is exercised. Once it is seen that only one substance exists¹⁹ all else is seen as the attributes of substance and the modes of its actual existence.²⁰ The modes are described as concretely universal.

Harris refers to modes as a system which is, "actual and individual, as well, in its kind, as universal or all-embracing.,"²¹

Modes are the system of nature which follow from the creative potency of God. The actual concrete world, so to speak, of things and affects to which the intellect must be referred as per Ethic I, Prop. XXXI.

We find in all this, that the unity of God is the unity of His dynamics and the system which follows. This is, in my terms, God's creative dynamics which is considered as synergetic rather than composite, and the system of "parts" which follows from this. Hence we will find that Natura Naturans is only adequately conceived in the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. It involves such concepts as free cause, blessedness, and eternity. That is, it involves all of the absolutes which reflect the oneness aspect of the unity of God. Natura Naturata is what follows from the creative dynamics of God and includes all the concepts to which the intellect is referred. (It is important to note that the intellect is somewhat passive in Imaginatio and active under Ratio - this being called will. As such, it is only under the two lower realms of understanding that the mind is referred only to Natura Naturata. I will discuss this at greater length below.) The list of concepts which follows from God's dynamics is longer and includes all of the relatives of the Ethic insofar as they refer to the plurality aspect of the unity of God. This includes most of the

concepts of the Ethic and of my summary. These are: individual things, percepts, memories, ideas, modes (modifications), affects (affections), intellect, will, relative causes (such as contingent and necessary), effects, passions, relative actions (between things), and durations. Again, all of the concepts which are regarded as absolute fall under Natura Naturans, and all of the concepts which are regarded as relative either to the whole or to any of its constituent parts fall under Natura Naturata.

Thus, from God's unity we can describe the complexity of the universe. To proceed from God's unity requires that we begin by noting the unity of substance and attributes, and then the unity of the attributes and modes. At each level (eg. attributes to modes to finite modes), less comprehension of the singularity aspect of the unity of God is required. We find that we are increasingly referring to the plurality aspect of God's unity insofar as our notions reflect a greater relativity. Our understanding is referred mostly to finite modes in one or the other attribute. This is to say that the more we break the plurality of God down to its constituents, the less apparent is that unity, and the more divided God appears to be. Divisions of God are, however, inappropriate because divisions violate unity. It is, therefore, more accurate to refer to distinctions rather than to divisions. In this respect we must note that the act of making distinctions is the verb 'to individuate'. An individual is a

distinct entity. In this way it is evident that individuality is not to be regarded as something which is separate from the whole in the sense of "divided off", but rather, refers only to distinctions between aspects of that whole. Thus, attributes do not divide substance, but merely provide distinctions with which we can explicate the unity of God. The same applies to modes. Modes do not divide substance or its attributes, they merely provide distinctions which are the complexity of God. In this way Spinoza can maintain the oneness of God, and still account for the infinite plurality of Nature.

Certain distinctions are made for this purpose. Under the attribute of extension, for example, modes are distinguished as infinite or finite; the former being unlimited by another mode, and the latter being limited by another mode. These both involve corresponding durations respectively. Finite modes are further distinguished as either indefinite or definite, again with corresponding durations respectively. It is here that we distinguish between things which are infinite, and things which are indefinite and definite. We can, therefore, speak of bodies or things as extended objects in the normal sense of such terms (eg. tables, chairs, etc.).

The attribute of thought has similar distinctions. Distinctions between indefinite and definite modes are conceived of as perceptions and imaginations. That is, things or ideas which are considered as distinct are finite modes of either attribute. As such, it is these

things that the mind is referred to in *Imaginatio* where the mind is most passive, and the distinctions are most apparent. This represents the greatest breakdown of the plurality aspect of the unity of God into concepts which are purely relative to each other and to Nature as a whole. Since this is the least coherent form of God's dynamics it is what follows from Natura Naturans, as perceived insofar as a mode is passive.

For example, I am a finite mode as conceived under the attributes of thought and extension. As I am conceived as more or less distinct from other modes and from God I am more or less passive. This refers to the epistemology of Spinoza's system. The more distinctions that are made, the less one participates in the creative dynamics of God. As such, the less one comprehends the oneness aspect of the unity of God, and is referred to the plurality aspect of the unity of God, the more one must be referred to that which follows from God's creative dynamics. This can be reworded as; the more one individuates, the more one is removed from the creative dynamics of God, and the more the intellect is referred to Natura Naturata. As stated, this is directly proportional to the degree of individuation which is conceived by the understanding. Also, since, as the intellect individuates more and is proportionally removed from the dynamics of God, so too does it participate less in those creative dynamics. It is here that we find that passivity occurs.

The less the understanding participates in Natura Naturans, the more passive must it be with respect to Nature and its modes of existence. An understanding which comprehends Nature as a unified whole in all its singularity (as well as its complexity) participates completely and integrally in Nature.

As has been stated, the world of things is merely the world of distinctions of the attributes and modes of substance and of God insofar as they follow from God in the sense of Natura Naturata. We have also seen that these follow from the creative dynamics of God in the sense of Natura Naturans, which involves all of those notions which are to be considered as absolute. It is from here that I shall begin my discussion of my 34 points or statements.

God has absolute being and is eternal insofar as His nature is that of Natura Naturans. This is, for Spinoza, the notion of a free cause. Thus, Statements I and V serve to reflect God in His absolute being. These are to be Regarded with respect to Natura Naturans. This is God's nature issuing forth as all of existence. From these two statements all the rest follow as Natura Naturata. These concepts are relative to God, and to other distinctions of God's nature. The first of these are the attributes and modes as they have been described above. Here I refer the reader to Statements II, III, and VI. Of course, statement VI can only be comprehended in the light of Statement IV which defines the mind as a distinction from the body. (I

remind the reader that distinctions are not divisions and that throughout the Ethic unity is preserved.)

When we examine a distinct mode such as a human mind-body, and the distinctness is emphasised (ie. the individuality is stressed), one is most removed from the creative dynamics of Nature, and so the mind can only conceive of other modes insofar as it is passive. This follows necessarily from the nature of God, in His unity. As such, it is said that the particular mode is affected. In the case of the human mode, this is seen as a mind-body distinction in Statements VII, VIII, and IX. Here we find that the mind-body is affected (as it is passive to such affects), which results in certain effects. The first is the notion of memory, and the second is perception. The nature of these affects are described in Statements XII and XVII. The latter refers to the realm of Imaginatio. In the context of Statement XVII we can note that the degree of individuation is reflected in the number and order of fragmented ideas which the mind contains. It can be said here that as a mind gains in comprehension, that is, has less fragmented ideas, or understands the oneness of God, or individuates less, it is closer to understanding the unity of Nature; is more perfect, and is, therefore, less subject to passion.

This brings us to the realm of Ratio which is defined in Statement XVIII. Again I will note here that the increased perfection of this realm includes bringing the understanding closer to the creative

of the unity of God. We can now speak of the essence of a thing in the sense of that which exists as a mode, or the idea or thing from which the behavior of that particular mode can be deduced. In this way we can refer to the being of God and the essence of things insofar as the former refers to Natura Naturans and the latter to Natura Naturata. Notice that since the intellect must be referred to Natura Naturata it can only at best refer to the essence of things. (While the distinction that I am proposing serves my present purposes, it is somewhat problematic. I shall, however, not correct these difficulties or even consider them until chapter three of this dissertation.)

With the distinction between being and essence in mind the relation between Statements X and XII is readily determinable. As any (individual) mind is a finite mode as conceived under the attribute of thought, it partakes in being insofar as God is a thinking thing. The essence of the (individual) mind is a clear and distinct idea of its body as per Statement IV. As being perseveres, so too is this dynamics followed by the idea of the body, or the mind's essence. The power or perfection of the essence is the potential to be affirmed or negated either passively or actively. The affection is the power of being insofar as God is a thinking thing. This is expressed most vividly in Statement XXXIII. Here we find that God conceiving of Himself through a particular mode is the essence of that mode. The affects are the power of being. Note that in any mode there is a sense of God's oneness in

the sense of the absolute which is an integral part of the very existence of that mode.

Since Statements X, XII, XXIII, XXVII, and XXIX clearly indicate that the understanding can become bound to passion as per my Statement XXVI, we find that this is the source of human frailty. Spinoza discovered four ways in which the understanding could overcome passion, and these are summarized in Statement XXXI. Of course, these powers are only feasible once one grasps the perseverance of being of a mind from which the power of the mind is derived. This is expressed in Statements X, XII, and XXX. Harris refers to the perseverance of the intellect as the conatus; "This conatus, or effort, to preserve itself is nothing more or less than the actual essence of the thing endeavoring to persist, and in as much as activity originating from the actual essence of a thing is action (as opposed to passion), the conatus is always the endeavor of the thing to increase its own power of action." ²² (In terms of the distinction that I have made between being and essence, the second use of essence in this quote is more akin to what I propose as being.)

The conatus is the key to overcoming passion and this is the key to blessedness. This is explained in Statements XXIV and XXV where I give examples of passions and indicate how perfection and the increased power of the mind are the key to freedom. This passage to blessedness occurs when the power of being is increased. The

nature of this power is described in Statement XIII. The effort or conatus with respect to Spinoza's epistemology is reflected in Statement XIV. It should be noted in this regard that freedom for Spinoza does not signify a freedom from determination. It refers to freedom from passion. It is in this sense that blessedness is the greatest freedom. Statements XVI, XX, and XXI serve to point out the significance of this claim. I here refer the reader to Statement XV and the section on duration where causation and determination are discussed. We find that no mode is ever free from determination, but is only subject to it in proportion to its fragmented understanding of Nature. Briefly I should say that the more the understanding participates in the creative dynamics of God, the more freedom from passion it does attain. This might be reworded to signify that as the understanding refers only to Natura Naturata as the plurality aspect of the unity of God, it is determined to be subject to passion. But, as the understanding participates in the singularity aspect of the unity of God, it is freed from passion. In a sense, freedom signifies a freedom from the relatives of Nature and a participation in the absolutes.

This participation in the creative dynamics of God (as much as is possible for a finite mode) brings the understanding through Ratio to the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. This is expressed in Statements XV and XXII, where the relation between the increased action of the mind in Ratio is seen in the light of the relativity of durations.

Here we come to understand the nature of causation and determinism in durational relative concepts insofar as a man of reason may comprehend his partial participation in the absolutes of Nature. The conatus is the effort to persevere this quest for freedom and blessedness through a greater understanding of the unity of God and the essence of things. This includes a comprehension of the absolutes of God and of the perspectives of the relatives of God in their relation to each other and the whole. This is revealed in Statement XIX.

Since a human mind-body is a finite mode of the attributes of substance, there are necessarily some limitations to be placed on the intuitive capabilities and the degree of blessedness that can be attained. These limitations are noted in Statements XXVI and XXVIII. Together they limit the perfection or power of any modification of the attributes of substance.

All of the concepts which appear to reveal paradoxes in the Ethic are resolved in the unity of God. This is noted in Statements I, V, XXXII, and XXXIII. In Statements I and V we find that God is one in the manner that I have indicated above. In Statement XXXIII we note the being of a mode as pertains to God.

Statement XXXII is the perfect idea of the being of a mode as expressed in the bottom of Statement XXXIII. This is the claim that all modes are in fact one with God, whether their respective understandings acknowledge it or not. Furthermore, we find that the

discovery of this idea is the purest of intuitions, and is the greatest freedom the mind can attain. We also find, that since this idea is the essence of the mind, this idea stands beyond any limitations imposed by the finiteness of the mode. Hence Statement XXXIV pinpoints the truth of our very humanity.

In these statements I have attempted to explicate, by example, the integrity of Spinoza's system. There are few statements that do not reveal an intricate network of thoughts. There is no statement which can stand in isolation in a meaningful way, and each statement finds its significance only within the context of the whole. I do not, of course, expect that this mini-summary and commentary of the Ethic is comparable to Spinoza or Harris, but I do feel that I have grasped the essential concepts that reveal the integral complexity of Spinoza's philosophy. A complexity which is of the same order and nature as the complexity of unity. Furthermore, while I understand that this section is somewhat tedious to read, I think its importance is two-fold: 1) It allows me to tie important concepts together in such a way as to display, by example, the complexity of the system with which we are dealing. (For example, if one were to compare the complexity of my 34 statements and my discussion to the actual Ethic, one should quickly come to appreciate that Composite thinking would be even more inadequate and difficult to follow.) 2) It helps me to establish the integrity of Spinoza's concepts through his metaphysics,

epistemology, and Ethic as understood through Scientia Intuitiva.

For example, the ability to relate concepts through such terms as Nature naturing and Nature natured is a most cohering enterprise.

I can now proceed to reveal the path to a life of reason to explain how it is man's nature, insofar as he is intuitive, to conceive of God revealed as Spinoza's system.

*I am one with all that is.
This I call peace of mind.
But how shall I come to know this?*

Chapter Three: Part One

The general aim of Spinoza is to bring the reader to an understanding of the Ethic through a formalized epistemological-metaphysics which reveals the unity of God or Nature, and the integrity of the self with God. The nature of the system with which we are dealing presents the same degree of integrity as the world it describes. That the Ethic is true is difficult to explain. Once one intuits the whole of the system it is most difficult to distinguish one's intuiting understanding of Nature, from one's understanding of the Ethic. This is to say, that Nature or God, and man's place in God, is most adequately explained by Spinoza. In fact, his philosophy seems to be an almost perfect expression of one's own intuition of Nature as experienced through the Ethic. The Ethic is itself a coherent whole which must be understood as such before any of its contents can be properly analysed. As I intimated in chapter one, it is my thesis that Spinoza wrote the Ethic in such a way as to bring the reader to such comprehension. Spinoza's method in this regard, is to bring the reader through the realms of the understanding to the experience of *Scientia Intuitiva*. I shall, at this point, refer

to the passage through Imaginatio, Ratio, and Scientia Intuitiva to be likened to that of a man's passage towards enlightenment. I shall use this last term in the context of spiritual advancement that is expounded primarily by Oriental Mystics, and such schools of thought as Zen Bhuddism and Hinduism. There will be one important difference between this notion of enlightenment, and the passage to this state that is illustrated by the Ethic: I am, to a large extent, using enlightenment as synonymous with the realm of Scientia Intuitiva, however, there is a subtle distinction to be made between these two concepts with regard to reading the Ethic. Enlightenment is a mental state that reveals the integrity of Nature as does Scientia Intuitiva, but I would not claim that reading the Ethic will bring one to this exact state. According to Zen thinkers, either one is enlightened, or one is not. There is no such thing as a middle state of growth towards enlightenment. Scientia Intuitiva holds a similar position over Imaginatio and Ratio. (I shall discuss this at greater lengths below.) At present though, I am concerned with the format of the book with regard to Spinoza's aim of bringing the reader to the understanding of the Ethic. In this section, I shall make the distinction that while reading the Ethic will not bring one to an enlightened state, it will, at the very least, bring one to an insight into what it is to be enlightened. This is to say, that while reading the Ethic will provide some intuitive understanding of the nature of God (insofar as one comprehends that Ethic is only possible in an enlightened state),

it will not actually leave the reader in such a state that he will conduct his life as would an enlightened man. I believe that while Spinoza intended to describe the Ethic as well as can be done with language, his major purpose in writing the Ethic was to provide an understanding of the nature of the path to a rational life, not to directly transform the reader into a spiritually advanced person.

This consideration of Spinoza's purpose stems primarily from my intuitive grasp of his system. During my intuition I recall thinking that I couldn't tell if my understanding was of the world as it is, or of the world as Spinoza conceived of it. While this distinction didn't seem to matter at the time, it does reveal the actual nature of the insight that reading the Ethic brings. This has special application to the distinction between enlightenment and the intuition with regard to the reading of the work. Spinoza was an enlightened man, and he reveals this in the very nature of his Ethic. But to intuit Spinoza's world is not quite the same as intuiting the world itself. We each occupy a unique perspective within Nature. To intuit one's unity with God from this unique perspective is to understand God, and one's own place within that whole. This is to comprehend one's own being. Hence I understand that there is a subtle distinction between the experience of a direct unity with God, and the understanding of this unity as conceived by another. The former is a state of enlightenment, and the latter can only be regarded as an insight into the nature of enlightenment. Actually I would say that I did not

become enlightened by reading the Ethic, but my conatus was set in motion. (This will be explained below.)

As a result of my experiences with Spinoza, it is my judgment that the Ethic should be read in a single sitting if the reader is to fully grasp the transition through the realms of the understanding. To read the Ethic in this way is not unlike an act of meditation. (I again use this term in the context of Oriental thought.) This refers to an act of focusing the mind in such a way as to produce a trance-like state. I shall explain this process briefly.¹

Basically, meditation is an exercise whereby one tries to empty the mind of all thoughts. In this regard, it is a process that empties the mind of all thoughts that occupy and distract the understanding from experiencing the true nature of reality. That is, it is believed that the mind is very much aware of the integrity of Nature, but that we do not normally experience this understanding because our minds are cluttered with thoughts that distract us from this fundamental experience. The process is quite simple. One centres one's attention on a single idea which is usually a meaningless sound or phrase such as "om", or "What is the sound of one hand clapping?". In this way the mind focuses on a single idea which is fragmented, and remains unconnected to any other ideas in the mind. (It is for this reason that the thoughts are considered to be meaningless.) The principle is, that the mind's attention will wander from this focal point, which is to say that the activity of the mind

to attend to this thought is interrupted and fragmented. Soon the mind becomes tired of being occupied with stray thoughts and so simply stops this interrupting activity. This then, allows the mind to focus on the single thought without interruption, or movement. (This is what we normally mean by intense concentration.) It is said that in this state the mind is one-pointed.

Soon the mind grows tired of this thought, and so it too is gone, leaving the mind completely empty of all of its contents. At this stage it is said that one's awareness is greatest (most intense), since it is not covered or hidden by ideas. It is in this stage that Oriental mystics claim to experience the profound realities of Nature. It is through this practice that they come to understand the unity of all things and their oneness with God.

To read the Ethic correctly is to adopt a similar mental attitude. Spinoza has constructed the work to bring the reader to a profound understanding of the unity or oneness of God. He accomplishes this by bringing the reader through the realms of the understanding in the following way. He begins parts I and II with a barage of metaphysical concepts. It is here that his method is most difficult to follow. He begins stating the nature of God, as he understands Him, from his intuitive viewpoint. He states the nature of God about as well as can be stated in words. However, it has been mentioned that language is of the realm of Imaginatio. It is, then, found that Spinoza plunges the reader into a

idea of his own essence. It is in this way that one stops interrupting itself. I could say that one's mind stops being passive to such interruptions insofar as it is active as per Nature naturing. In this regard I am not identifying Spinoza's method with a "trance" per se, but to the effortless action which for Spinoza is called "will". The actual transition from passion to action does, however, involve a shift from sensible and concrete imaginings (such as perceptions and sensations) to more abstract conceptions. It is only in the sense that one no longer imagines in the normal sense of *Imaginatio* that we may refer to this conceiving as different in the sense, perhaps, of what we may choose to call a "trance".

Spinoza now begins to probe into the nature of this affection. He spends his time in part III on the nature of the passions. Since the mind is filled with too much chaos to properly analyse this new information, one is left to feel one's way through. In this way, Spinoza affects an empathy or feel for his work. His definitions of emotions and their nature are probably more felt than intellectually grasped. With the reader captivated thus, Spinoza begins to reveal our bondage to passions. The feeling for his philosophy is central to the reader's comprehension of their own human frailties. But Spinoza does not leave the reader wallowing in his passions, he points the way to Ratio and salvation. The essential feeling for his thoughts is the key to the intuitive grasp of the whole of his system, for after all, what is an intuition but comprehension

felt.

The method that I have just outlined is not as bizarre as it first appears once we grasp the unity of Spinoza's thoughts. We have found that inadequate and fragmented ideas, which are of the realm of Imaginatio, are the result of emphasising the plurality of Nature by individuating. We have also seen that this renders the understanding to be fragmented from the dynamics and oneness of God, and refers the intellect only to Nature natured. Hence we found that an imaginative understanding does not abide in Nature naturing. It was in this, that the passivity of the mind was revealed. It was also found that the conatus could bring the mind to a less fragmented understanding of Nature, thereby rendering the mind to be active rather than passive. Here the understanding begins to enter into Ratio. But what better way for Spinoza to proceed than to inspire a life of reason by stimulating the conatus? That is, Spinoza knew that most of mankind is bound to passion in Imaginatio. His method serves to bring an understanding to the reader of their very effort preserve their being. The feeling of which I have spoken is nothing other than the conatus of the reader; the effort to comprehend. The question which must now be answered is, what is this conatus, and how does it bring us to the comprehension of the unity of God? This is the main topic of this chapter, and its answer is my present concern. I shall here only speak briefly of this answer.

In the realm of Imaginatio the mind is subject to passion insofar

as the understanding participates only in Nature natured as opposed to Nature naturing. Nevertheless, Nature continues naturing, issuing forth in its existence. The more one's understanding participates (abides) in this naturing, the more active is one's mind (in a relative sense). Behind all of the inadequate and fragmented ideas, all modes continue to be modifications of substance in its existence. To actualize this, even for a moment, will reveal an activity of the mind that was before unnoticed; the activity of the essence of the mind, persevering in its existence as Nature issuing forth through this or that particular mode. This is the Conatus, and its culmination is in the understanding of the essence of things as per the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. Let us now embark upon a description of this passage as revealed by the Ethic.

Chapter Three: Part Two

The Nature of Imaginatio and Ratio,
and the Rise to Scientia Intuitiva

Imaginatio is characterized by ideas which are inadequate and fragmented.² It is the lowest realm of the understanding. It involves all those ideas which display individuality and participate only in Nature as natured. Insofar as the mind understands little or nothing of Nature naturing, there is no real action to the mind, and it remains passive to the dynamics of God and its relative surroundings. Here we shall find all the passions (insofar as the mind is passive), perceptions, sensations, and language. There is no comprehension of unity in this realm. All dynamics are merely affections insofar as a particular mode is affected by another mode or affect. Here we find the root of all human frailty - passions.

Before I expound on our bondage to passions and the nature of Ratio, I would first like to discuss perception and unity in Imaginatio. With regard to perception, it will be recalled that I spoke of the mind as passive, but not as exclusively passive. To distinguish between perception and will, a subtle point must be made regarding the activity of perception. It has been said that whether we understand it or not,^{3*}

*Actually, we do understand it.

we are all one with God, and participate** fully and integrally with His dynamics. This was briefly stated with regard to our participation in Nature naturing. This activity is dynamic in the sense of the integrity of God, but this is not like the "activity" of perception. The activity of perception is both the focusing on certain percepts, and the degree or intensity of our perceptual examination. This requires that we individuate the object to try to isolate our percept. That is, the activity of perception is that of individuating, not the dynamics of Nature naturing. This "activity" is not the result of the mind in motion, it is the activity of being affected insofar as the mind is at rest. That is, it is activity insofar as the mind is passive. Only a participation in Nature naturing can refer to action insofar as the mind is in motion. This latter action bespeaks of increased comprehension and integrity, not of tendency towards individuation. It is here that language plays a role. Language is a form of communication of "bits" of information expressed with certain sounds and forms. That is, the communication of information about individual things and events.

The act of speaking is one of specifying individual things or events and transmitting or communicating that information to another. While this view of language is somewhat primitive and riddled with

**Spinoza's word is "abide" (Ethic, V, Prop. XL, Corol.). I use it here to refer to "active acquiescence" or "participation" with God. This will be clarified below.

technical and philosophical problems, it does serve to allow me to reveal the discreteness of the forms of language. I do not intend to reveal a full-fledged philosophy of language since Spinoza merely touches on this aspect of human endeavors.⁴ However, I do wish to stress the individuating activity of this aspect of *Imaginatio* as a further example of the nature of this realm. Words and thoughts of this type (it is often said that we think with words) are ideas which are fragmented and inadequate. The importance of this is best comprehended with regard to the nature of *Ratio* and *Scientia Intuitiva*. As these realms are of a more adequate and less fragmented understanding of God, we shall find that we cannot communicate this understanding with language. That is, we cannot express an adequate and unfragmented understanding with inadequate and fragmented ideas as tools for communication. For example, we cannot really communicate our intuitions in a "normal" verbal form of communication.⁵

Individuation and fragmentation, at the expense of comprehension and unity, mark the fundamental characteristics of *Imaginatio*.⁶ Insofar as distinctions are stressed as per the increased participation in the plurality aspect of the unity of God as Nature natured, even the various aspects of this or that mode are conceived of as distinct. Hence we find that causes are always external to the individual,⁷ and affections of the mind display little integrity.⁸ This is most prevalent with regard to emotions and the intellect. Insofar as the mind is passive,

the intellect is conceived of as distinct from the emotions. Even the mind appears distinct from the body to a truly inadequate and fragmented understanding. This is reflected in the very passivity of the mind.

In Imaginatio one is affected,⁹ one never affects. This can be seen more clearly, I think, with a brief example. The mind never acts, it only reacts.¹⁰ People bound to passion never act with reason and adequate understanding, they only react with passion. The cause of any movement is always external and inadequately perceived, never internal and adequately conceived (I use perceived in the first case to emphasise the passivity of the mind).¹¹ This sense of reaction is roughly akin to a programmed response. An external cause affects a man in a particular way (according to the degree and order of his adequate ideas),¹² and the response is initiated much like a reflex or computer response. I could say that in this sense, the "activity" of Imaginatio is the response to a particular external cause insofar as the mind is affected. Figuratively, I could speak of someone or some thing pushing the right button or pinching the right nerve and the reaction is imminent. The individual has no real control over these affections.¹³ He has neither the adequate understanding, nor the comprehension to realize that all that affects him determines his responses, and all of these causes are external to him. His behavior is totally determined by his environment. He hasn't the understanding of himself or of his surroundings¹⁴ to adequately prevent these affects, however negative,

or to control those affects which may affirm him. Furthermore, the act of individuating leads such a man to believe that he participates in, and controls his world, with will and intelligence.¹⁵ The very act of individuating determines a man to consider his autonomy as absolute. In his inadequate understanding he conceives of his activity of individuating as the primary motion of Nature. Any "will" that a man can muster is really an attempt to affirm his individuality. We find, however, that in God, this is really a negation which further bonds him to his passions.¹⁶ He fails to comprehend that his intellect is as much determined by his environment as are his emotions. The activity of individuating is both misleading, in the sense of enhancing the illusion of individuality and will, and condemning.

The ideas of Ratio are more adequate and less fragmented than the ideas of Imaginatio.¹⁷ There is a much greater comprehension of Nature in this realm. This may be explicated with the notion that where the ideas of Imaginatio are essentially local to the thinker (insofar as he is affected), since they lack the comprehension of the whole, the ideas of Ratio are more comprehensive, hence less "local". But they are not really universal ideas in the sense of a full comprehension of God either. They are abstract (as opposed to universal or local) mediating ideas which are linked together to reveal comprehensive chains of thought.¹⁸ Examples of such ideas are mathematics and music. The chief characterization of Ratio is the activity of the mind.¹⁹

This activity is not the activity of individuating, but is the result of an increased participation of the understanding in Nature naturing. This activity is God conceiving of Himself through this or that particular mode. This is the essence of a thing, (see chapter three, part three, and chapter four, part one) which is to say this is the conatus insofar as a given mode endeavors to preserve its being. As such, the understanding is less in need of individuality and gains an increased comprehension of the interrelationships between things and the whole of Nature.²⁰ This activity is more of a cohering action than the individuation of Imaginatio. This cohesion is best reflected in the increased understanding of a man's own nature.²¹ The best example of this is expressed in the unity of the intellect and the emotions insofar as the mind is in motion. This is most easily seen with two examples.

The emotion which is ascribed to the mind in motion, that is to a mind that thinks, is fortitude, which Spinoza divides into strength of mind and generosity. (Ethic III, Prop. LIX, Schol.). These include such emotions as temperance, presence of mind in danger, sobriety, moderation, and mercy. This provides us with the opportunity for some discussion of the notion of discipline. Our normal ideal of a well disciplined person is one who acts with reason, fortitude and courtesy. But if we examine how people go about disciplining others we find the marks of Imaginatio. The typical form of discipline in practice is like military discipline. Someone barks orders, and the appropriate

responses are immediate. That is, one reacts, according to normal or acceptable programs, to people of authority. Here we see; first the number of humans that are bound to their passions, and second that the key to true discipline lies in the path to Ratio. Only in this path could one attain the adequate understanding to overcome one's reactions and act with strength of mind and generosity. This path is, further, the conatus or effort to persevere in one's existence. I shall discuss this path in greater detail in a moment. For the moment, I wish to exemplify the nature of Ratio.

The second example is music. I intend that this example should reveal the unity of the intellect and the emotions. Music, insofar as notes or sounds are mediating and abstract, serves to reveal the nature of comprehension in Ratio. It should be observed that while music is a highly ordered sequence of sounds, not all sequences of sound, however ordered, represent music. It seems that there is something more to music than ordered sounds. This I shall call a melody. This term is extremely difficult to understand, but it represents the essence of music. Likewise, it seems that Ratio is more than just a highly ordered complex of adequate ideas. There seems to be melodious quality to Ratio which is essential yet undefinable. This I shall call God. Music is truly a form of synergetic thought, but it is also highly emotivating. The progression of sounds is, to me, a most logical and precise formulation. Yet, the emotion which is engendered is most profound. In

fact, the logic and the emotion are inseparable. I conceive of music as knowledge felt or emotivated understanding. This might be revealed more explicitly if we consider the act of composing. To construct a progression of sounds in a highly organized pattern to present a comprehensive and emotivated "picture" or melody, reveals the essence of Ratio. The same kind of description is often given by mathematicians when describing their work. The unity of the intellect and the emotions insofar as the mind is in motion is Ratio, in the sense of being characteristic of an increased participation in the singularity aspect of the unity of God. It could be said that in Ratio the mind is in motion such that one conceives with fortitude.

The best way to expose the nature of Ratio is to reveal the path to a life of reason. This is characterized by an increasingly adequate understanding of one's own nature as part of the increased participation in Nature naturing.²² This is best comprehended if we keep in mind that all modes of Nature are one with God and participate in Nature naturing as well as in Nature natured,²³ whether their understanding adequately conceives of this or not. The rise to Ratio and Scientia Intuitiva does not really actualize an increased participation in Nature naturing, it only reveals this aspect of Nature to a mind whose understanding is inadequate and fragmented.

The basic principle of the understanding is that we know of pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, simply by experience.²⁴ That is, we

understand any experience to be an affirmation (pleasure), or a negation (pain), in the process of experience. We do not reflect on our experiences to find them joyous or not, they simply are pleasurable or painful. In this sense we might conceive of understanding for Spinoza, to be roughly equivalent to our concept of consciousness or awareness. We can, then, note that to understand is to experience in a general sense. To conceive of understanding in this way allows Spinoza the ability to describe the nature of experience insofar as the mind is active or passive. We can proceed to describe the realms of the understanding according to the passivity or activity of our respective minds.

Again we begin with *Imaginatio*, the realm which is characterized by the most inadequate and fragmented understanding of God.²⁵ And, again, the realm which displays little or no comprehension of God insofar as its ideas include sensations, perceptions, and language, and other ideas which do not require such comprehension.²⁶ In this regard we must emphasize that in this realm the mind conceives of things as individual entities, or as exclusive of the whole of Nature.

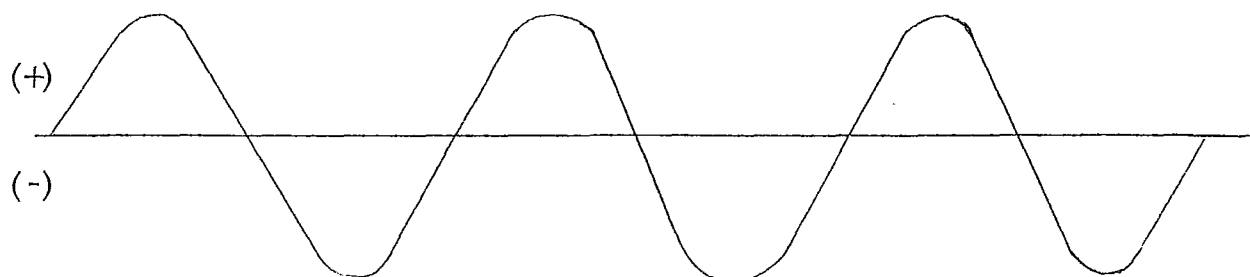


FIG. #3

FIG. #3 represents the flux of the mind in Imaginatio. The point of the graph is to illustrate that the mind can experience Nature with pleasure (+) or pain (-). This figure serves to indicate how the mind bounces from one extreme to the other. That is, experiences are either affirmative (pleasurable) or filled with negation (pain). The centre line serves to indicate a mind which acquiesces perfectly with God in all of His eternal, infinite, and absolute dynamics, that is, one who lives in perfect harmony with God. The thing to note, is that most experiences in Imaginatio are extreme in nature. There is very little harmony with God. We shall use the graph the following way to indicate the nature of Imaginatio. When the graph reads very high or positive or pleasurable, we find that some affects may occur that are slightly negative or only slightly affirmative. But, the person is too high to feel these affects. This does not mean that he is unaffected, only that he has no adequate understanding of these affects. The same applies when the person is negated. This could be worded to say that when someone is depressed, some affirmation could occur, but the person would be too pained to understand this affect. As such, he remains pained, or at least, without any understanding of why he feels pleasure. But this is to say that the person's understanding is lacking in any knowledge of not only what affects him and how, but that he is affected. Such a person is missing much of Nature and his own affections. Spinoza would say that he has a privation of understanding.²⁷ That is,

there is much of Nature that his understanding is missing, hence his understanding is lacking. In this sense it is found that such a person necessarily has an inadequate understanding of God. That he misses much, fragments him from the actual dynamics of Nature. Such a person could only have an imaginative understanding of God.

In the realm of Imaginatio the mind is passive, hence no action can be taken to avoid the situation depicted in FIG. #3. Even though the mind is affected within the dynamics of God, the person remains oblivious to the integrity of God.²⁸ With such privation there is no real chance that such a person could function with the integrity that is characteristic of the Ethic. Such a person is subject to be affected by his environment in such a way that he has no understanding of it. He is determined to reaction by his situation. That is, he is subject to passion insofar as his mind is passive. He is affected by the modifications of Nature in such a way that he could not understand even his own nature.

The key to this discussion is that both the intellect and the emotions are passive, but passive in a determined way.²⁹ Since, in the realm of Imaginatio one has no understanding of acting in harmony with God, one is totally determined to be modified according to the actual modes of Nature with respect to his mind-body. This can again be seen as a way of reflecting on the notion that one merely reacts as one is modified or affected. The reaction can occur with either the intellect

or the emotions since both are passive. As stated, one can always feel that one is free to act within one's situation because he can always reflect on his autonomy. However, it must be emphasized that there is no sense of freedom in Imaginatio.

Since one is determined to react according to the modifications of Nature, it is evident that those who are in Imaginatio are little more than just machines. Someone pushes the right button or says the right thing and a desired reaction is affected. The success of Behavior Modification might well prove to be a reasonable example of the process and its success in dealing with the majority of people. This is to be subject to passion. The understanding in this realm is so inadequate and fragmented that one couldn't even really understand that one is purely passive to anything which can affect him. Again, this simply asserts our bondage to passion.

For example, suppose I were to strike the person in FIG. #3. His first reaction might be to strike me back. But if this is what he does, his reaction is not self determined or thought out, but is determined by me. That is, I am the cause of his striking me.³⁰ If I am a figure of authority he is likely to regret striking me back. The point is, that unless a person has the understanding to determine his own actions, then any activity of which he is a part, is only a reaction determined by causes which are external to him. In this sense he cannot be responsible for his reactions,³¹ since he is determined to react by

those around him. Again, this is what Spinoza means when he says that one is subject to passions. The person who is subject to passions is one who understands so little of his affects that he cannot comprehend the nature of things to avoid being determined to react by them. Such a person has only an inadequate and fragmented understanding, and it could be said that he understands too little of the nature of things and himself to comprehend the integrity of Nature or the harmony of God.

There is one saving grace that can bring someone out of *Imaginatio* and onto a path of reason. This is the understanding that one necessarily has with regard to affirmations and negations. One already understands pleasure and pain.³² We require only one insight into this to capture this understanding and bring the mind from passion to action. This is the insight that we are not really free, and that we are determined to react according to our affections. This insight is really of the nature of God, insofar as we recognize that we are part of Nature and not distinct from it at all.³³ This is the conception of an adequate idea of our own essence which is God conceiving of Himself through a particular mode. Later I shall explicate this idea more completely, but for the moment I wish to reveal the nature of this idea as the conatus. Basically, this idea refers to the dynamics of Nature, insofar as it is recognized that Nature natures whether we understand it adequately or not. (I here refer the reader to the first paragraph of

chapter four, part one for a more enlightening account of the nature of this realization.) Actually, this is not a novel insight, but rather, one that stems from the desire to seek that which is pleasurable,³⁴ and avoid that which is painful.³⁵ The difficulty in Imaginatio, in actualizing this desire, is that one is only reacting, and so to actively seek pleasure and avoid pain is not possible. If, in the midst of the inadequate ideas of Imaginatio, one discovers this one adequate idea, then one has the start of the path to action, freedom, and reason.

As a man in FIG. #3 experiences Nature, he may come to find a subtle understanding of himself. He understands that which is an affirmation, and that which is a negation. Even though he understands little of his affections, he does indeed understand pleasure and pain. As a result of this understanding he will seek that which is pleasurable, and seek to avoid that which is painful.³⁶ This understanding, is the first adequate idea which represents the first step towards Ratio.³⁷ Such a person will soon comprehend that there is much that he does not adequately understand, and that he is determined to reaction by Nature, not by his own will. He is not free in his autonomy. He will seek to understand adequately, that which was missed, in an effort to improve his understanding.³⁸ He will find that he can no longer remain in ignorance or subject to passion if he truly wishes to actively seek pleasure and avoid pain. Thus, we find that with this simple understanding of pleasure and pain, the imaginative man seeks to be

truly free from his passions, and has the initial adequate idea to begin.³⁹

If this man now uses this understanding to actively avoid pain, he will find that it is necessary that he understand adequately, as far as is possible, all that affects him.⁴⁰ When he is negated, and some affirmation occurs, he will seek to adequately understand the affect to avoid the continued pain of his negation. As he is modified, he will come to understand more of the nature of his passions. Proportionally, as his understanding becomes more adequate and comprehensive, he will become less subject to passion,⁴¹ he will individuate less, and become more subject to action. His mind has been so set in motion. This is the same as saying that he comes to understand his own nature and his affects within Nature. That is, he comes to understand adequately all that affects him, and with the improvement of his understanding, he gains comprehension of his own nature and of God. This effort to preserve his being, is the effort of persisting in the growth of his adequate understanding, and is nothing other than the conatus.⁴² The illustration of FIG. #4 serves to indicate that as one enters Ratio one has a more perfect understanding of God, and participates more in Nature as naturing. He is less extreme in his affections for he has an active control over his affects. He acquiesces in the dynamics of God and displays a greater unity of his own nature, as well as a greater integrity with God.

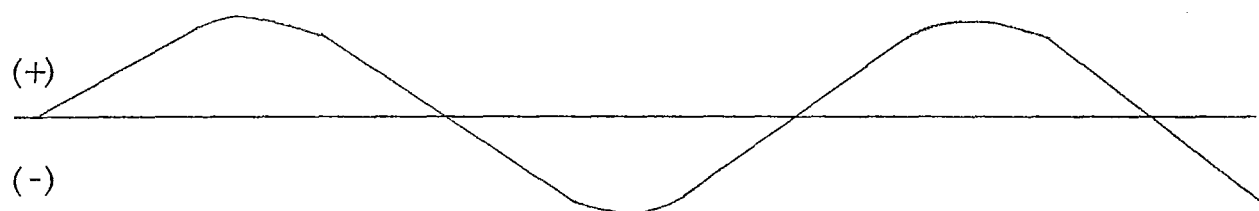


FIG. #4

The actual adequate idea which stands at the beginning of the path to a life of reason, is the result of the actual participation of a mode⁴³ with Nature naturing that has occurred whether one has adequately understood it or not. For the moment, I shall reveal that this is the actual essence of the mind insofar as a mode is one with God in all His unity. The man who understands his bondage to passion recognizes that to seek pleasure of affirmations requires that he preserve his being. That is, the conatus is revealed as the adequate understanding of the nature of affirmation.⁴⁴ To this adequate idea, the mind can attach other ideas to improve the adequacy of his mind.⁴⁵ This can only occur with an adequate understanding of one's own nature. A man must come to understand the nature of his reactions. Insofar as he can be negated by some external cause, he understands that by adequately understanding the cause he can adequately understand the affect,⁴⁶ that is to say, his reaction. Only with this improved understanding of the nature of the affects, can a mind actively remove an external cause of a negation,

which is inadequately conceived, and replace it with an adequate idea which would lead to an affirmation.⁴⁷ This can be exemplified as follows: An external cause affects a negation. An hour later the mind comes to understand that it was merely affected insofar as the understanding was inadequate. The pain could have been avoided if some action had been taken, action that resulted from an adequate understanding of the cause. The next time the mind is affected by a similar external cause, it may begin to recognize the nature of the reaction in a shorter duration, say half an hour later. Again, a more adequate understanding of the nature of the affect reveals that action would have avoided the pain. Each time a similar external cause affects that mind, it would take a shorter duration to recognize the nature of the adequate action which should have been taken to avoid the pain. Eventually, the person will be confronted with that external cause, but will act with an adequate understanding and so be unaffected negatively. Spinoza describes this in Ethic V, Prop. XX, Schol. This action is further strengthened with the increased integrity of adequate ideas which increases the number of causes by which an affect can be related to the common properties of things or of Nature, and the order of the affects that can be arranged by an understanding which participates more in the dynamics and integrity of Nature.⁴⁸

As we enter into the realm of Ratio, we find that the basic difference to that of Imaginatio is the integrity of the self, (Spinoza does

not use the word "self" as such, but he does refer to understanding one's own nature. It is in this restricted sense that I speak of the self.) As the mind moves to action, we can say that the understanding displays a greater integrity. That is, in *Imaginatio* ideas are inadequate and fragmented, and this can be seen with regard to the disunity of the intellect from the emotions. Any activity, is one of individuating. As a result, we find that in *Imaginatio* the intellect often stands opposed to the emotions. This is one of the fundamental disunities of *Imaginatio*. The condition remains as such until the mind is brought to action, as per an increased participation of the understanding in Nature naturing. Much of the key to understanding the nature of Ratio is to comprehend that the intellect is united to the emotions insofar as the mind is in motion. This, in unity with the conatus, is a most adequate description of the will. * Through the unity of self, one comprehends one's own nature, and finds true will.

The main point to this approach, is that as long as the mind is passive, it remains fragmented insofar as the intellect and the emotions are distinct, and one's understanding of Nature is fragmented and inadequate. This is the same as saying that one fails to act in harmony with Nature, because one understands too little of God's integrity. One

*Actually, will is the conatus as applies to the mind alone (*Ethic* III, Prop. IX, Schol.). When I speak of a unity of intellect and emotion as will, I mean "to conceive with fortitude".

simply does not comprehend enough of God to will right living. With the attainment of Ratio, one's understanding is more adequate, and the mind is active such as to reveal the integrity of the self. Once this is achieved, it can be understood that to act in harmony with one's own nature is only aided by acting in harmony with other men's nature's insofar as they are men of reason.⁴⁹

The path to Scientia Intuitiva is to move from the comprehension of the unity of self, to the comprehension of the unity of God. That is, one transcends the state of acting in harmony with one's self, to acting in harmony with all of Nature. This is illustrated in FIG. #5:

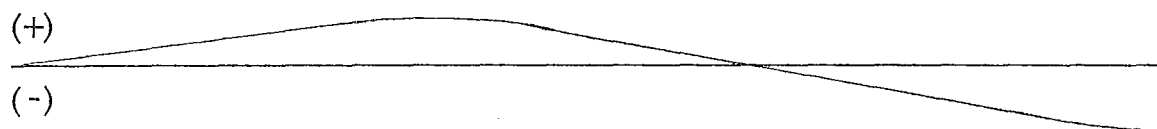


FIG. #5

This serves to reveal that one adequately understands as much as is humanly possible to understand with respect to the affections of the attributes of substance, and insofar as one comprehends the integrity of the modifications of God. One's mind is not affected with passion, nor does one act with a partial understanding of God. In Scientia Intuitiva, one acquiesces in the essence of God, insofar as one adequately understands the being of things.⁵⁰

In the above examples we can see that the mind has indeed

grown out of pure passivity, to the ability to act. One gains a will with the improvement of the understanding. In Ratio, one no longer reacts to an external cause, but acts with adequate understanding and increased integrity. This is the increased participation of the understanding with Nature naturing. This is the nature of the transition from Imaginatio to Ratio. In time, one will find that they are able to act in most situations, and are no longer like programmed machines. One is disciplined according to the ideal, not the imaginative. One acts in harmony with most men, and responds most adequately to other men of reason. The disunity of the intellect and the emotions is resolved since you are no longer subject to passion. With the unity of the intellect and the emotions, insofar as the mind is active, and the will, one's actions are in complete harmony with one's own nature as a modification of God.

The transition between Ratio and Scientia Intuitiva is much more difficult to explain. It involves the understanding that the harmony of one's own nature is the same as the harmony of all of Nature. This can be stated briefly in the following manner: in Ratio one finds an integrity of one's self, and in Scientia Intuitiva, one finds the integrity of God. I shall attempt to explicate this further by way of demonstration and discussion.

We found that in Ratio one is not subject to passion. As a result one is not determined to react to affections, but rather, one acts insofar as one's understanding participates in Nature naturing. In Ratio, there

is a sense in which one affects others rather than simply being affected. There is a sense in which one actively determines the situation. This would seem to be especially true where others are only of the realm of *Imaginatio*. This lends to the understanding that one is free to exercise one's will. This view is also mistaken. Spinoza is quite clear that any mode can be affected (passively) by some other stronger affection.⁵¹ It seems, then, that one is not purely active in *Ratio*. The mistake with regard to freedom in *Ratio* is similar to the mistake made in *Imaginatio*. In the latter realm one feels free from the illusion of individuality. In the former realm, one is active, and so feels free to be undetermined by external causes. In *Scientia Intuitiva*, one comprehends the unity of passion and action, and is both passive and active insofar as one lives in harmony with God.

In *Ratio*, one acts as an affect rather than being affected, or so it seems. But this action does not require that one comprehend the nature of God. One's understanding is still inadequate and fragmented. There is a unity of self, but one is still fragmented from the unity with God. There is some sense in which one conceives of themselves as distinct from God. It is this reduced notion of relative individuality that confines one to *Ratio*. Since one is not united to God, one remains distinct from Nature and the other modes of God. There is still a sense of individuality. For example, one has reached a stage of understanding where you are no longer determined to react as you are

affected. You act to affect. You can continue to act in this manner until you encounter some other mode which is stronger, and can affect you in such a way that you could not act with reason and understanding. As long as you can exercise your will, you should appear to be free. This is to be conceived of in the sense that you have an improved understanding of Nature, insofar as you have adequate ideas which are common to all men. It is not the case that you should act in such a way as to abuse your fellow man. You are free from passions in that sense. However, it is not the case that you can be conceived of as a cause of other men's actions. You are not the cause of all things. You remain merely one affect within the whole. Also, even though your understanding is more adequate than your imaginative counterparts, you have not yet attained the most adequate understanding which a mind can have. Your understanding only partially participates in Nature naturing. As such, there is much of the dynamics of God that is beyond your understanding. You are not completely free from all passions. You are still affected by the whole of Nature. You must still persevere in your being. The effort to be one with God is still affecting your understanding. This is the realization that is required to transcend to *Scientia Intuitiva*. The transition from *Ratio* to *Scientia Intuitiva* is not the smooth ongoing path like the one that is found in the transition from *Imaginatio* to *Ratio*. You soon come to understand that you are only one part of the whole and that

you must seek God's integrity to be most free from your passions. You must come to adequately understand not just your own nature, but all of Nature.

The experience of the unity with God can only occur in a single comprehensive idea. It is a sort of quantum leap from the adequate understanding of one's own nature, to a most adequate idea of God in all His absolute, eternal infinity. With this idea, one becomes one with God insofar as one lives in harmony with all of Nature (as far as is humanly possible). Such a person no longer reacts or acts, but lives with the greatest integrity with Nature. It is in this understanding that one finds the unity of all things in God, and of the dynamics which resolves the dichotomy of passion and action. If it is said that I am one with God, then I am an integral part of God's determining nature. To understand adequately my actual participation in Nature naturing insofar as God is one, is the understanding of the Ethic. I shall now examine *Scientia Intuitiva* and the Ethic in greater detail.

Chapter Three: Part Three

On the Nature of Scientia Intuitiva

The ideas of the realm of Scientia Intuitiva are the most adequate that a mind can contain. They are unfragmented and perfect.⁵² Unlike the ideas of Ratio, the ideas of Scientia Intuitiva are single, comprehensive, and immediate. But more than this, they reveal a participation with Nature naturing as much as is humanly possible. I would now like to discuss this realm in detail.

To truly explain the nature of this realm requires again that I proceed from the whole of the Ethic to this part. The complexity of unity is displayed in the singular all-encompassing dynamics of Nature naturing, and as the plural relative system of Nature natured. This was revealed in chapter two. I must now emphasise the nature of substance as it exists, and this requires a more detailed examination of the nature of the attributes of substance, and particularly of the modes and affects.

We normally tend to think of attributes in a tangible sense, such as qualities or properties as they refer to substance, and modes as concrete in the sense of the actual things of the world. This view is correct, but not quite accurate. Attributes are not tangible in this sense of properties. Rather, they should be regarded as the powers of substance and not the actual modes of its existence. The latter are

referred to as such. It is for this reason, for example, that once Spinoza has established the existence of only one substance, he can say that nothing else exists except its attributes and modes.⁵³ It is in this sense, that there are an infinite number of attributes of substance as well as the infinite modes of its existence. Let us now examine modes in this new light.

In chapter 2, statement VI, I declare that mode (modifications) and affects (affections) are one and the same. But the question arises as to how this can be. The usual notion of a mode is as a thing or object in the world, such as an individual human or table or chair. This best describes the thinghood of modes insofar as the intellect is referred to Nature natured. But what of modes as Nature naturing? Here we come to realize that "things" are transitory in Nature, and so should be regarded as much as events as things. The eventhood of the actual modes of substance are best referred to as modifications to depict the activity of Nature issuing forth through this or that aspect of itself. Affects display a tangibility similar to that of modes, and so also best refer to Nature natured. Likewise their eventhood insofar as Nature natures is best described as affections.

It should be observed that modifications are not absolute, and so are not purely of Natura Naturans as are substance and eternity. They are still transitory, and so are basically relative. However, their very eventhood reveals Nature naturing insofar as God is one.

It is here that the actual nature of God's oneness is revealed. We recall that unity is complex and that Natura Naturans displays the absolute dynamics of God in the sense of the singularity aspect of the unity of God, and that Natura Naturata displays the relatives which follow from God's nature insofar as the plurality aspect of the unity of God is revealed. We must now acknowledge that this apparent distinction is resolved in the very nature of unity. God is both Nature naturing and Nature natured. God is in this sense much like the Tao of Zen philosophy. God/It, "...does not create things; rather (He) it grows or individuates into them".^{54,55} How this is revealed to the understanding lies in the unity of God as displayed in his modes and affects.

In chapter two, I distinguished between being as absolute in the sense of Nature naturing, and essence as relative in the sense of Nature natured. We can now note the unity of the two to resolve the distinction. To discover the essence of a thing is to discover the being of an event.⁵⁶ As thinghood and eventhood are distinctions resolved by the unity of God, so too is the distinction between being and essence. How then, does the understanding of the essence of a thing - as per Spinoza's definition of the realm of Scientia Intuitiva - reveal the comprehension and integrity of God? I shall answer this question by way of an example and comments.

If we accept a purely representational view of perception (as

is possible for Spinoza), such as the Leibniz-Russell theory, we can note a philosophical distinction between the "world of our percepts" and the "world that lies beyond our images and is independent of them". (This refers to the notion that images are not actual objects and are spatially located inside our heads, and not where the objects themselves are located in physical space.) In our perceptual world we understand images as distinct entities as per the nature of *Imaginatio*. That is, we perceive people and tables as distinct individual objects in the world. When we refer to the actual object which is beyond and independent of our perception of it, we have a tendency to ascribe the same distinctness to the object as exists with our percept. We refer to the actual object as a thing-in-itself. But, in Spinoza's Nature, all is one in the sense of unity. Technically, nothing exists in-itself except God. What, then, is a real or actual object?⁵⁷

If we project our understanding beyond our perceptual world to the actual object, we would in fact discover, that it does not exist in-itself. It is merely an interconnection within the whole. But this is not enough to describe the nature of such understanding. As the understanding passes from *Imaginatio* through to *Scientia Intuitiva*, we find an increased participation in Nature naturing - the dynamics of the whole. The "thing-in-itself" is not just an interconnection in the sense of thinghood, it is also an event within God. It is a

modification of the actual existence issuing forth. Hence we find that in the unity of Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata, the essence refers not just to its relative thinghood, but also as its actual being as an event in Nature. This can be revealed to the understanding only as long as it participates in the actual eventhood; that is to say, as it participates in Nature naturing.

As God conceives of Himself through a particular modification, its being is established, and the essence of the mode is that which follows. The unity of God ensures that the essence of the thing is the being of the event.

Hence the understanding is brought to the unity of God through the adequate understanding of the essence of things. Since the actual participation in Nature naturing reveals the oneness aspect of the unity of God, the singularity of being and essence is revealed immediately and comprehensively in all of Nature's infinite plurality. The understanding is so affected.

Chapter Three: Part Four

On the Nature of the Ethic

As the understanding passes from Imaginatio through to Scientia Intuitiva, and one truly comes to comprehend the essence of things, a unity with God is achieved. This unity of the self with Nature is nothing other than the essence of man. This is adequately understood in Scientia Intuitiva. Hence, as the understanding becomes more perfect (less fragmented and more adequate), an enlightened man becomes one with God, and as God conceives of Himself through that particular mode, so too does that man conceive of himself. Insofar as is humanly possible, such a man participates in the unity of God as Nature naturing and as Nature natured. Such is the absolute nature of the unity of passion and action in which the man acquiesces. All distinctions between passion and action are resolved in the unity of God, and so too does his understanding participate in that unity as long as he is unaffected by some other stronger affect. In this way the integrity of his understanding is perfect and blessed, and this is virtue itself.⁵⁸

Virtue is power, and this is blessedness. We delight in blessedness and are able to restrain our lusts.⁵⁹ This is virtue as power. With this freedom from passion (as much as is humanly possible), a man conducts his life as the fully integrated modification of God that he is. This conduct is not the action of individuating as per Imaginatio,

nor is it the partial participation in Nature naturing as per Ratio. Furthermore, it is not just a total participation in Nature naturing. It is the understanding participating with God insofar as He is Nature naturing and Nature natured. It is the integrity of being and essence. It is the integrity of modification and mode. To participate in Nature in this way is the actual meaning of integrity.

The acquiescence with the nature of God in all of His unity is the Ethic which is Spinoza's goal. This is understood adequately only in Scientia Intuitiva, in the understanding of one's own essence. I shall leave the discussion of the latter of these until the next chapter, and discuss now the true nature of a man of integrity.

For Spinoza, there are only two ways to conduct your life: a life of reason, or a life of Imaginatio. The latter represents the vast majority of people. The Ethic is devoted to outlining the path to a life of reason. It is known that as one's ideas become more adequate and less fragmented, the mind is less subject to passion. The increased participation in Nature naturing brings the mind to action, and also brings a greater integrity of one's own nature. The unity of the intellect and the emotions, insofar as the mind is in motion, is one such example of this increased integrity. But that a man should act with an increased integrity in a moral sense is also revealed. This is expressed in Ethic IV, Prop. XXXV and its two corollaries. Here we find that what is most useful to rational men, is other rational men.

In this way the integrity of man in his actions is established insofar as the greatest advantage to each man and to all men is found in the virtue of such integrity. This is the integrity which is characteristic of will, strength of mind, and generosity. This bespeaks of the life of a man of Ratio.

In Scientia Intuitiva the full unity of one's own nature and Nature is adequately understood. To always understand the essence of things - that is, to always remain in the realm of Scientia Intuitiva - is not Spinoza's goal per se. As long as we have our bodies, which is to say, as long as the body shall live, we require perception, language, sensation, art, math, and music.⁶⁰ These activities or things are at the base of our very natures as humans. As such, there is always a need for the realms of Imaginatio and Ratio, even to one who is enlightened. These limitations are not removed until death. However, with an adequate understanding of one's own nature, a different attitude is acquired with regard to these realms. For an enlightened man, Imaginatio and Ratio are not really limitations. There is, for example, a certain survival value in them. To be able to sense and perceive and communicate is an important aspect of human nature. In this regard, we find that the truly enlightened man does not regard these realms of lower understanding just as limitations, but as an essential part of man's own nature insofar as God conceives of Himself through this or that particular mode. It is man's nature that he should never

have an adequate idea of his own body, that is, have a perfect mind. But to try to overcome this as a limitation would be more than futile, it would be to fight against the nature of God and His integrity.

We find, then, that an enlightened man perceives, senses, speaks, and does all of the human things that we all do. His virtue is over his affects. This is as follows: In *Imaginatio* a man is primarily passive, and so has not the virtue over his affects. As he passes into *Ratio*, we find that increased understanding and more adequate and less fragmented ideas give him virtue and integrity insofar as he has the will to overcome his passions. In *Scientia Intuitiva* this virtue is paramount. Let us examine first a man who is bound to passion, and then the virtue of a man of reason and intuition.

Spinoza discovered that a man who is affected by his surroundings insofar as he is passive merely reacts to his environment. In his political and religious views, Spinoza also discovered that there are two founding principles of religion and the state. These are the rules which are conducive to justice and charity. That is, rules which, when committed to memory, and followed as much as possible by as many people as possible, will give a reasonable resemblance to a rational society.⁶¹ Such a society would not hinder the rational life of those who choose it, and may bring more people to this way of life. I do not wish to spend too much time on this, but there is one important point to be made. If a man who is bound to passion always

endeavors as much as possible to react according to the rules which are conducive to justice and charity, he has some power over his affects. He remains affected, but his reactions display some virtue.

The stronger an external cause may be, the more easily a man may be subject to its affects or destroyed by it.⁶² Insofar as a man is not destroyed, he is surely subject to such forces. We find that the power of an external cause to affect a man directly, hinders him from action in proportion to the degree and order of adequate ideas of his mind.⁶³ That is, a man of reason may act as long as he is not overpowered by some external cause. If this man be sufficiently overpowered, he may be affected in such a way as to cause a reaction which is a denial. That is, this affect may be a negation to his power of action. But, this would also be a negation of his integrity. If such a man is so negated, there must be some threshold before which he will react according to those rules which are conducive to justice and charity, and beyond which he will simply react with absolutely no virtue. This "threshold" is determined by the degree and order of the adequate ideas of his mind, that is, by his degree of virtue and integrity.⁶⁴

Hence, we can say that the more virtue a man may possess, the stronger the external cause must be to affect the man with pure negation. That is, an enlightened man, so overpowered, would not acquiesce in Nature's dynamics to his full capabilities, but he might still be relied on to act with reason. If he still be overpowered, he should react according to those rules which are conducive to justice

and charity. If the external cause is still overpowering, I believe that such a man might well be destroyed. But enough of this, for this is still not sufficient to describe the Ethic.

A man who adequately understands the essence of a thing participates as much as is possible in the dynamics and unity of God. In this participation we find that his affections are not only with regard to Nature as natured, but also with regard to Nature naturing. This is his virtue and integrity. With this in mind, we might now see that a man who is bound to passion in *Imaginatio* acts to individuate, which is to say, that he fights against the unity of God. A man of *Ratio* participates more in Nature naturing than the person bound to passion, but insofar as he remains distinct from Nature, and acts as such, he too fights against God's nature. Only a man who is free from passion in *Scientia Intuitiva* does not fight against God's nature. In this sense he acquiesces in the dynamics and unity of God. He both determines and is determined⁶⁵ according to God's unity. This gives an enlightened man an added virtue over his affects. Insofar as he adequately understands the essence of things and his own being with regard to an immensely strong external cause, he acquiesces in the ways of Nature. It is for this reason that the increase of adequate understanding brings a man to overcome all emotions, even the emotion of fear, and the fear of death. Spinoza states, "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life."⁶⁶

Fully tied up with this line of reasoning are Spinoza's concepts of good and evil. Harris does a superlative job in explaining these notions, and so I shall not dwell on them here. I shall add that good and evil are relative terms, and so are of Natura Naturata. With increased virtue and integrity, these notions lose their significance. In this we find that Spinoza dwells on good and evil to describe the degrees of virtue, the nature of a behavior which is conducive to justice and charity, and to reveal the affects which can negate it. In this endeavor, Spinoza finds that understanding God is the highest good (which can negate evil) and the highest love which a man can attain.⁶⁷ These are the characteristics of blessedness, and the Ethic which Spinoza expounds.

I might add, briefly, that I can make a subtle distinction between morality and the Ethic which may assist the reader in comprehending my analysis. Insofar as there are rules which are conducive to justice and charity, we speak of morality. Insofar as we speak of God we speak of the Ethic. As such, there can be many moralities, but God is one, and therefore, there is only one Ethic. In an ideal society all morality would give way to the Ethic, except where some external cause would affect a man beyond his power of acquiescence and action. The integrity of all men with God and themselves would be supreme, and we would all surely be blessed.

*Returning is the motion of Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The ten thousand things are born of being.
Being is born of not being.
Lao Tzu*

Chapter Four: Part One

Ethic V, Prop. XXX, and the Nature of Immortality

The essence of God is change.¹ This is most confused to those whose understanding is bound to passion in Imaginatio. Their intellect is referred to Nature natures. In this sense, they understand only the modes of substance's existence, the things of Nature. Hence, in their inadequacies and fragmentations they seek to ascribe permanence to Nature. They erect structures which are based in and reflect that permanence. Their social structures, religions, political ideologies, and belief structures all wallow in the guise of permanence. This is the root of all these contrivances. Those of Imaginatio are always amazed, indeed bewildered, at finding that Nature natures. Even the laws of science, which are the realm of Ratio are attempts not at the permanence of things, but at the permanence of events. They are the consistencies of Nature issuing forth, as conceived with the limited understanding of those who are of Ratio. Even these people are surprised at finding that Nature natures. Only such a man who participates in God's dynamics to the full extent of his human capabilities, truly

comprehends this fundamental reality.

As humans, we are finite modes, and so are necessarily limited. There is always something in Nature which is stronger, and which may overpower or destroy us.² Ethic IV, Prop. III, further tells us that our conatus is limited and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes. Ethic IV, Prop. IV also tells us that we are part of Nature, and that we can suffer no changes that cannot be understood through our own nature alone. The path to Ratio reveals our own nature, and Scientia Intuitiva reveals Nature, but how can we truly grasp the essence of God as absolute? How can the limitations of our very nature allow us to participate in Nature's dynamics to reveal the eternal integrity of God adequately to our understanding?

"The mind insofar as it knows the self and the body under the form of eternity, necessarily has a knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God, and is conceived through Him."³ This is the answer to the above questions. We will note that Spinoza speaks of "the form of eternity". The definite article reveals much of our own nature. The form of eternity that Spinoza mentions is now. Now, the present moment, is the only form of eternity with which man is familiar. If we examine this moment carefully we will find that now is both indefinite and infinite. This is revealed insofar as the mind's effort to preserve its being is its very essence.⁴ That this effort involves indefinite duration is revealed in Ethic III, Propositions VII and IX. However,

when we intuit, that moment seems an eternity. Thus, we find that the relative duration of the present moment is indefinite - it remains a single moment - and yet, it is infinite in the sense that it seems to be without temporal bounds. The former aspect of now refers to Nature natured, the moment as unfolded. But, the latter aspect of now refers to Nature naturing, as Nature unfolding, issuing forth in its infinity. Of course, such a paradox is only revealed in an intuition, and the unity of God guarantees its resolution. This is also adequately understood as part of any intuition. This is the nature of such single comprehensive adequate ideas of the essence of things. Hence, we come to understand that the infinity of now is the form of eternity of which Spinoza speaks. But, how does this reveal God in Ethic V, Prop. XXX?

As a thing perseveres in its being, this effort is its essence. The unity of God resolves this apparent distinction. Now we find that we necessarily have an adequate understanding of God, know that we are in God, and are conceived through Him. That is, we comprehend that we cannot exist apart from Nature, either in its issuing forth, or that which follows. As a finite mode of substance's existence, I am interconnected within the whole and participate as such. I am conceived through God insofar as God conceives of Himself through this particular mode. Furthermore, insofar as God is issuing forth as a modification, that is, as God grows or individuates into things, this

is my being. Insofar as this conception follows from God's dynamics, and I am a mode, this is my essence. Hence, we again note that a thing perseveres in its being, and this is its essence. This is the essence as adequately comprehended in Scientia Intuitiva. My essence is my conatus insofar as my being is God conceiving of Himself through this particular mode; and I know that I am conceived through God!⁵ Now we comprehend that Ethic V, Prop. XXX, is my essence.⁶ This is the single comprehensive idea that was revealed to me in Scientia Intuitiva.

It is thought, by those whose understanding is inadequate and fragmented, that to discover all of Nature, would be a most novel experience. What Spinoza tells us is that we already know all that we need to comprehend God.⁷ To allow this knowledge to be understood adequately through the improvement of the understanding of our very being, is the key to such comprehension. This brings us to the realm of Scientia Intuitiva. To intuit Ethic V, Prop. XXX, is to comprehend your own essence and to fully and adequately understand your own nature in relation to the whole of God. This idea is your conatus.

If this idea is God conceiving of Himself through a particular mode, then the essence of a man is eternal. But, as long as the body shall live, no man can ever be completely free from passion.⁸ In Scientia Intuitiva, one may comprehend the scope and dynamics of Nature, without apparent temporal bounds, but this is not eternity,

it is only a form of eternity. Our limitations prevent any living human from participating completely in God's eternity until death. This brings us to Spinoza's concept of immortality.

Those of *Imaginatio* seek to ascribe permanence to Nature, and so seek to establish that they themselves (through their souls or inadequately conceived essences) maintain permanence, and so conceive of a life after death. But this renders immortality to be relative to life. No such notion of immortality can truly be understood as eternal. If a man's essence does not participate in eternity it cannot be eternal. Furthermore, such notions of essence cannot bring about a participation with eternity. God is eternal, and insofar as He conceives of Himself through this or that mode, the essence of that mode is eternal. The modifications of substance in its existence may disperse with the dynamics of Nature, but God is conserved. Eternity is not static (as an unchanging whole), but is dynamic as Nature issuing forth.

Modes are relative and transitory, but the essence of a mode is eternal. Hence, it is understood that when a mode is destroyed (or death occurs as in the case of humans) something remains which is eternal.⁹ This something is nothing less than the being of the event, the essence of the thing. Since, in the case of a human, the idea of Ethic V, Prop. XXX, in conjunction with Ethic I, Prop. XV and Ethic III, Prop. VII is his essence, this is what remains and is eternal. This, then, is Spinoza's concept of immortality, as can only be

adequately understood in *Scientia Intuitiva*, as an integral part of the dynamics of Nature and in the unity of God insofar as God is one.

We can now, I hope, piece Spinoza's Ethic together. Since my approach has been essentially Spinozistic, I shall now attempt to go beyond this approach and be more specific about how this can be done. I shall also refer back to my claims in chapter one concerning the role of a reader in this process and why one is prone to be so personal in one's analysis of this philosophy. (Note that in the next part of this chapter I shall refer to the attitude of commentators in this respect.)

The easiest way to tie things together is to describe man's place in God. As God conceives of Himself through me (for example) this is my essence. This is God's nature insofar as everything which is, is in God and is conceived through Him. (Ethic I, Prop. XV) This is also revealed insofar as God conceives of Himself through a particular mode. Now, we have found that God is both the creator (*Natura naturans*) and the created (*Natura naturata*). But the complexity of God's dynamics is more intricate than this. Recall that insofar as I am a modification of God, my essence is my nature. Also recall that with regard to my mind-body this is called appetite, and with regard to the mind only this is called will. Since no man cannot be apart

from Nature and should suffer no changes but those which can be understood by his own nature alone and of which he is the adequate cause, (Ethic IV, Prop. IV) we realize that it is my nature to be either passive - with regard to the number of inadequate ideas in my mind - or active - with regard to the degree and order of adequate ideas in my mind. But this reveals two ways of understanding God, and my place in nature. As God conceives of Himself through this or that particular mode, including me, it is my nature to be affected by some other (external to me) mode that is also conceived through God. Also, insofar as I am a modification of God, I modify some other mode whose nature it is to be affected by me, and so on ad infinitum. However, I can understand God as absolute insofar as I am one with Him as both a modification and a mode of Him and insofar as I am conceived through Him. For example, suppose I were to actually become enlightened by Spinoza's philosophy. There would be two ways of considering my affirmation. I can say that God individuates into things and I am enlightened, or I can say that God individuates into things and Spinoza causes me to be enlightened. However we must now understand that since God is one in the sense of a unity, and is both Nature naturing and Nature natured, it makes no difference which way I conceive of God and my place within Him. Insofar as God is both absolute and relative, so too can I come to understand Him this way. In fact, since I am one with God it is impossible that any

metaphysics, epistemology, and the *Ethic*, but we have seen that these cannot be exclusive of one another. I shall now relate this in more exaggerated terms. For Spinoza, metaphysics, epistemology, and the *Ethic* are not only interrelating philosophical endeavors, they are so completely interrelated that one can consider them together as a single philosophic enterprise. This is why a single comprehensive idea of the whole of the *Ethic* is so fully detailed that it can be utilized as synergetically advantageous. Furthermore, since this understanding follows from our own nature, it is most difficult to dissociate the intuitive grasp of the *Ethic* from an intuitive grasp of Nature itself. This is why I was confused about my own experience as I related on page 77. Even to intuit Nature through Spinoza's eyes reveals the truth of God. God is one, and we are all part of God, and know that we are insofar as we are conceived through Him.

This also serves to explain why I propose that one should read the *Ethic* in a single sitting, and to proceed with any analysis with synergetic thinking. Spinoza constructed the *Ethic* in such a way as to stimulate the reader's conatus, that is to say, to bring the reader to the adequate idea of God which is one's own essence. The reason that I can propose this in the light of my remarks about the nature of each reader, is because any man's nature is not (insofar as he reads Spinoza) exclusive of Spinoza's nature. Furthermore, the adequate idea of God, to which Spinoza refers, is common to all men insofar

as we are all part of God and are conceived through Him. This also applies to my comments that Spinoza is seeking to activate one's passive mind. It was Spinoza's nature to conceive of men in such a way that should a man need to study his philosophy he is not on the path to a life of reason. He who knows how to live need not ask how to live. For a slightly better discussion of the nature of a man insofar as he is a modification of God I shall refer the reader to the Appendix. As for my next task, I shall endeavor to further reveal the integrity of the Ethic, and the personal nature of understanding it, to a discussion of commentators.

Chapter Four: Part Two

Problems

The main problem in Spinoza is not how to become one with God, or how to become ethical, because in an absolute sense we are all of those things. The problem is simply understanding what we are. I have stated that to adequately understand this we must first intuit the whole of Spinoza's system, and then work into the parts. I shall now endeavor to explicate in greater detail this line of reasoning, and thereby, indicate the limitations of some commentators. For this purpose, I shall first expose two ways of conceiving of Spinoza and God, and then refer to Spinoza's attitude as opposed to that of his commentators.

I shall digress on this discussion now to expose the nature of his system and thoughts. The essential feature of Spinoza's system is the oneness or unity of God. For my present purposes I shall refer to this as "cosmic integrity". Now, there are two ways of apprehending this integrity: 1) we can imagine it insofar as our ideas of God are inadequate and fragmented, or 2) we can conceive of it with reason insofar as we have an adequate idea of God. If we now recall, from chapter one, that this idea would constitute the reader's own essence, we find that the Ethic constitutes a very personal philosophy. With this in mind I should now like to refer to some

primitive terms used in chapter one.

Recall that I spoke of the Ethic as being conceived with intellect as well as the heart. In similar terms, I have discussed the nature of the realms of the understanding with regard to intellect and emotions. Hence, we found that the intellect is distinct from the emotions (heart in this context) in Imaginatio where ideas are inadequate and fragmented. However, in Ratio the intellect and the emotions (insofar as the mind is active) are as one. We can now refer back to this Cosmic Integrity insofar as it is imagined or conceived with reason.

Whether or not a reader conceives of God as per Imaginatio or Ratio will prove to be a direct reflection on their understanding of the Ethic. That is, was their mind brought to the adequate idea which we all have of God? Where this does not occur we might find limitations in a reader's understanding. If this reader is a commentator, we should expect that these limitations are carried through the commentary. These limitations might be further exposed if I exaggerate Spinoza's attitude relative to what the commentators would have us believe. Again I shall be metaphorical in this task. Imagine, if you can, the difference between a Western Philosopher at the time of Spinoza, and a Zen monk of the same historical period. We find that the Westerner is much concerned with questions as, "Does God exist?". In fact, we find that throughout this period there was what can only be described as a frenzied debate on metaphysical and Theological issues.

This is to be compared with the Zen monk who, rather than ask such questions, goes down to the stream with a book of poetry, and perhaps some wine, and simply enjoys God.¹⁰

This analogy is intended to show that the "frenzied debates" of Western thinkers left them no time to "enjoy" God. They were too busy imagining God's existence. This attitude clearly marks two kinds of approaches to Spinoza. The first sees Spinoza as a Western philosopher who was caught up in the frenzied debates of his time, and who sought to stress the inadequacies of his conceptions, and the second sees Spinoza as a sage who wrote as he lived, and who sought only to display the integrity of his thoughts through the adequate ideas of Ratio, so that he could adequately point the way to a life of reason. It is this distinction of attitudes that separates my position from such commentators as Wolfson, Hamshire, Bidney, and Hallet. All four of these commentators are, in some way representative of the first attitude.

To cite two examples of this, Mr. Wolfson readily plunges Spinoza into the debates of Mediaeval philosophy, and Mr. Hamshire can speak only of Spinoza's impassive logic. Both thinkers fail to grasp the essential integrity of Spinoza's thoughts. Again, for example, Mr. Wolfson and Mr. Hamshire are able to grasp, to some extent, that Spinoza's metaphysics must be understood integrally with his epistemology, but both fail to grasp that the metaphysics and the epistemology

cannot be adequately discussed in isolation of his Ethic. This latter view is only fully comprehended through the adequate ideas of Ratio. Furthermore, this understanding is only possible if we conceive of Spinoza as a sage, and do not plunge him into the purely imaginative and frenzied debates of his time or ours. His part in these is best seen as a tool, and not as the nature of his philosophy.

I should now like to refer back to my distinction between Composite and Synergetic thinking so that I may further specify the limitations of commentators. In this regard I shall again state that the Ethic is a fully integrated system, and must be studied as such. Hence, I can repeat that the metaphysics is not exclusive of the epistemology, and that these two are not exclusive of the Ethic. Hence I find that if one always employs synergetic advantage, one can always maintain the integrity of these areas, through the adequate ideas of Ratio insofar as one has an adequate idea of the essence of the Ethic. If, however, one employs Composite thinking, one may imagine the Ethic confusedly and be prone to discuss one or two of these areas in isolation. Hence, as such a person proceeds into the Ethic in his reconstruction he should become increasingly inadequate in his ability to tie the pieces together as he proceeds from the metaphysics to the epistemology to the Ethic. It should then, be possible to examine the interrelationships between God, Scientia Intuitiva and the Ethic in Spinoza, as well as his notion of immortality (which is an integral part of the unity of these three)

in the various commentators, and make a judgment on the ability of each thinker to tie the Ethic together. Where they may falter should, then, reveal the source of their respective limitations. For this purpose I have chosen the two most popular commentaries of this century, Mr. Wolfson's and Mr. Hamshire's.

The first person I shall deal with is Mr. Wolfson. I have found his discussion of the Ethic in Scientia Intuitiva and immortality to be prime examples of his limitations. In fact, on the nature of the Ethic in Scientia Intuitiva, Mr. Wolfson says very little. His conception of the nature of virtue is directly related to his position on the nature of reason. Virtue differs from emotion insofar as the former is dependent on free will, and the latter is dependent on causes. "But I have already shown that there is no free will, and that actions, like emotions, are determined by external causes.¹¹ (italics mine) Mr. Wolfson goes on to say that virtue and vice are not really different from the emotions of pleasure and pain. That is, that which is conducive to pleasure - in the special sense that it refers to the preservation of one's own being - is called virtue, and the opposing pain is called vice. "Now, among the external forces which determine action as well as emotions is the power of reason, or that kind of knowledge which I (Spinoza) call the second."¹² Note, however, that in Vol. II, pg. 158, Mr. Wolfson states that it is the nature of adequate ideas that they do not come from any external source, and this describes

the nature of the second and third kinds of knowledge. For Mr. Wolfson, I suppose, the nature of reason is the power of external forces to cause us to act in such a way that we call our conduct virtuous. Reason functions like a "physiological reflex".¹³ Note that throughout this whole discussion there is no mention of the activity or the passivity of the mind. In fact, Mr. Wolfson has claimed that only the first eighteen propositions of Ethic I refer to *Natura naturans*, and all the rest refers to *Natura naturata*.¹⁴ There is, then, no mention of an improved understanding of Nature naturing and man's place within this process. Also, one should note that understanding in *Scientia Intuitiva* refers not to a unity with Nature, but with reference to a "true definition".¹⁵

In the chapter on Love and Immortality where Mr. Wolfson examines Ethic V, the notion of virtue and reason as he finds them are a dominant feature. In this regard we find that the mind is independent of and has control over the body,¹⁶ and there is a reduction of the notion that we should overcome passions with reason. This latter notion is reduced to the concept that we should, according to Spinoza, have faith in God.¹⁷ Moreover, we find that on page 275 of Volume Two, Mr. Wolfson speaks on behalf of Spinoza to say that we can have a personal God insofar as, "you may mean that you behave yourselves towards God as if He were a person like yourselves." For Mr. Wolfson, the purpose of the first twenty propositions of

Ethic V are to prove that this is the case, and not the reverse.¹⁸

There is no real mention of the nature of the path to a life of reason insofar as we come to overcome our passions as per my description of this section.

While Mr. Wolfson identifies Scientia Intuitiva as essential to the intellectual love of God, it is only to prove that one can love God in the same sense that traditional theology would have us believe. That is to say, Spinoza is, "merely applying the common utterances of traditional theology about the God of tradition to his own God".¹⁹

In his whole discussion there is no mention of Nature naturing, of the activity of the mind, or of a direct intuition of one's own nature insofar as God conceives of Himself through this or that human mode. Indeed Mr. Wolfson continually speaks of Spinoza as though he maintained that God was personal and somehow distinct from Nature, a claim that he spent the first nine chapters of his first volume disproving. Throughout all of this there is no mention of how to tie the Ethic together. It is as though he really believes that the Ethic is, "elliptical, fragmentary, disjointed, and oftentimes, if we are to admit the truth to ourselves, enigmatic and unintelligible."²⁰

I wish to severely stress the inconsistencies in Mr. Wolfson's position. By removing the nature of virtue from the context of blessedness, he has reduced Ratio to a term for describing human conduct. It is clear, from what I have said in chapter three, parts one and two,

that this understanding of virtue can only refer to what I have called morality. Virtue in the context of the Ethic is blessedness. (Ethic V, Prop. XLII) This error in Wolfson is only possible insofar as he fails to grasp the coherence of Spinoza's epistemology with his metaphysics and Ethic. A Synergetic approach is clearly more adequate in this regard.

On the notion of immortality Mr. Wolfson's approach leaves him with a seriously impaired position. He conceives as we have seen, of the mind as being somehow distinct from the body. More than this though, we find that the mind is like the physiological functions of the body. He states, "The mind is inseparable from the body; and consequently some of its functions, like imagination and memory, which are dependent upon sensation, must disappear with the disappearance of the body. Still the mind, according to Spinoza, is not merely a physiological function of the body and which must completely disappear with it. This is only true of some of its functions. But in its thinking essence it comes from above, like the acquired intellect in the passage we have quoted from Maimonides; it is a mode of the eternal and infinite attribute of thought. That part of the mind existed from eternity prior to the existence of its particular body, and it remains to eternity even after the death of the body."²¹

Furthermore, this part of the mind which is eternal must leave the attribute of thought to unite with a body, but returns to

unite with the attribute of thought when the body dies; "That something is the thinking essence of the mind which after the death of the body returns to unite itself with the attribute of thought whence it came."²²

Hence we find that for Mr. Wolfson, Spinoza conceived of the mind as distinct from the body, a personalized God, and some notion of a soul which returns to the attribute of thought upon the death of the body. There is no mention made of the activity of the mind, of the role of *Scientia Intuitiva*, or a real discussion of the nature of the *Ethic* insofar as one abides by God through a unity with Him. Also, I should like it to be noted that in *Ethic* V, Prop. XXIII, Schol., Spinoza states that it is not just the mind which is eternal, but the idea which expresses the eternal and infinite essence of the body under the form of eternity as a certain mode of thought which pertains to the essence of the mind. This is clearly understood in conjunction with what I have said about *Ethic* V, Prop. XXX, and the unity of the essence and being of a thing insofar as Nature natures.

Now, I do not wish to be too hard on Mr. Wolfson, because he attempts to remedy some of these clarifications in his discussion of *Ethic* V, Prop. XXX. I wish only to point to his main limitation insofar as he fails to tie the *Ethic* together as a coherent whole. In short, my objections to Mr. Wolfson's commentary are as follows:

- 1) He deals with each section of the *Ethic* as somehow distinct from the rest in spite of his insight into the coherence and complexity of

the whole, 2) He treats everything which Spinoza says in a historical context. Note that while this is not particularly wrong, it is incorrect to establish such limitations in one's approach to Spinoza - particularly in the light of my comments concerning the nature of Spinoza's philosophy - and disregard these limitations as if they were not there. 3) He fails to demonstrate how one ties the Ethic together as a coherent whole. 4) He tends to conceive of Spinoza as a fellow historian of philosophy, thereby plunging him into the purely intellectual debates of his time.

I realize that some of these objections appear vague, however, I wish it to be clear that I do not really object to Mr. Wolfson's commentary insofar as I should criticize as I conceive of it to be riddled with errors, rather I oppose it insofar as I conceive of it as limited to only illuminating the tools which were available to Spinoza. Hence, I consider my criticisms to be statements of Mr. Wolfson's limitations, not his mistakes. In this regard, I should also like to point out my particular frustration with this commentary. I continually find that Mr. Wolfson had all of the necessary insights to write a top notch commentary on Spinoza. However, I am always dismayed to discover that he abandons almost all of his philosophical insights in favour of his historical analysis.

Stuart Hamshire, like Wolfson, has a practical approach to Spinoza, and his commentary is a good one. In fact, I would rate this commentary to second after Harris's. To begin, Mr. Hamshire

provides a most adequate account of the unity of God and the integrity of *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. His comprehension of Spinoza's metaphysics is most adequate, and, even insofar as he comprehends the integrity of the metaphysics and the epistemology. However, Hamshire is limited insofar as he conceives of Spinoza as a purely logical thinker devoid of any emotion. I quote, "The only instrument which he allowed himself, or thought necessary to his purpose, was his own power of logical reasoning; at no point does he appeal to authority or revelation or common consent; nor does he anywhere rely on literary artifice of try to reinforce rational argument by indirect appeals to emotion."²³ Again, "His philosophy is an experiment in impassive rationalism carried to its extreme limits; we are required to think about God and our own desires and passions with exactly the same detachment and clarity as in the study of geometry we think about triangles and circles."²⁴

Here we find that Mr. Hamshire cannot conceive of the Ethic with adequate ideas but imagines it insofar as the intellect is distinct from the emotions as in *Imaginatio*. My position with respect to his commentary is to say that while this overemphasis on Spinoza's logic will be useful and correct up to a point, beyond that point will be something beyond Mr. Hamshire's purely intellectual approach. Specifically, beyond this point will lie the true nature of *Ratio*, the true nature of the *Ethic* in *Scientia Intuitiva*, and the notion of immortality.

Mr. Hamshire can provide, and indeed does provide, an adequate understanding of Spinoza's metaphysics and his epistemology up to a purely imaginative and intellectual description of Ratio, but not beyond. Let us examine this claim more closely. First of all, however, I should like to point out that Mr. Hamshire understands well the integrity of Spinoza's system and even advocates synergetic advantage on page 55 of his commentary. I quote, "It is, I believe, a mistake to look for any one, or even two, propositions or definitions in Part I of the Ethics, which may be taken as logically prior, or as the ultimate premises from which all the others are derived. Secondly, in any such deductive system, containing terms endowed by exact definition with meanings which may be remote from their current meanings, the significance of the initial propositions can be understood only in the light of their logical consequences in the later propositions; one has to travel round the whole circle at least once before one can begin to understand any segment of it."²⁵ However, Mr. Hamshire fails to utilize this insight with respect to the whole of the Ethic so that he falls short of tying the whole system together. For example, on page 46 of his commentary he provides an excellent account of Nature naturans and Natura naturata, and moreover states, "It is equally correct to think of God or Nature as the unique creator (Natura naturans) and of the unique creation (Natura naturata); it is not only correct, but necessary to attach

both of these complimentary meanings to the word, neither being complete, or even possible, as a conception of Nature without the other. "26 Yet, later, he fails to follow his own advice, "Only insofar as we somehow come to understand ourselves and our actual and possible purposes sub specie aeternitatis, that is, as necessary consequences of our situation within Natura naturata, can we lay down moral propositions which are objectively valid. "27 (*italics his*)

Note that there is no reference to Nature naturing. This, in particular, raises a limitation on Mr. Hamshire's position. He conceives of the nature of Ratio without reference to Nature naturing, and as purely mathematical and devoid of emotion. As such, there is no real insight into the essence of a man as he is a part of Nature naturing. We find then that a consistent application of Synergetic advantage overcomes these limitations to the degree that I can conceive of Ratio as a proper unity of intellect and emotions and its epistemological part of the metaphysical and ethical dynamics of Nature naturing. We find, then, that Mr. Hamshire is well able to describe the intellect (Ratio) insofar as we adequately conceive of ideas which are common to all men,²⁸ and he can even refer to an adequate understanding of the nature (essence) of things,²⁹ and therefore, provide an intellectual description of *Scientia Intuitiva*, but, he cannot explain what an essence is, or the profound nature of the intuition of it. I can only suppose that for Mr. Hamshire this would constitute something of an

intellectual exercise par excellence. The ramifications of all this, is that he will be severely limited in describing the nature of the Ethic in Scientia Intuitiva, the nature of the unity of God, and Spinoza's concept of immortality. Furthermore, he will be unable to tie the Ethic together as a coherent system of philosophy. He shall stand removed from the true nature of these things as a man of Ratio is not quite one with God.

To summarize, my opinions on Mr. Hamshire's commentary are as follows: 1) He sees Spinoza as a purely impassive logician. This emphasis on Spinoza's logic provides him with an only rational understanding of the nature of intuitions, as though he were trying to formalize intuitive experiences with logical equations. 2) He fails to adequately conceive of the role of Natura naturans in Spinoza's system, in spite of his insight that this is not adequate. 3) He fails to comprehend the integrity of the Ethic and Spinoza's metaphysics and epistemology.

These limitations are revealed most fully in the chapter on Freedom and Morality. While Mr. Hamshire grasps Spinoza's "calm pessimism"³⁰ he fails to comprehend God. He states of the passage to a life of reason, "We must first understand the causes of our passions; our whole duty and wisdom is to understand fully our own position in Nature and the cause of our imperfections, and, by understanding, to free ourselves from them; man's greatest happiness and peace of mind

comes only from this full philosophical understanding of himself.³¹
 (italics mine) Here we find that the path to a life of reason is to come to adequately understand our own nature. Mr. Hamshire misses his own clue that we come to understand "our position in Nature" - Nature here referring to both Nature naturing, and Nature as natured. This is further emphasized on page 122, "The greater the power of self-maintenance of the particular thing in the face of external causes, the greater reality it has, and the more clearly it can be distinguished as having a definite nature and individuality."³² But what of the unity of all things in God?

The only reference to an intuitive understanding of the whole of Nature is contained in a short section on The Eternal life and the Intellectual Love of God.³³ Mr. Hamshire concludes this section with the confession of a lack of any real understanding of Spinoza's concept of immortality. He supposes that a life of pure reason, "is another kind of existence, utterly different from our ordinary life with its local and temporary attachments, and that it is senseless to speak either of decay or of prolongation in respect of this superior existence, in which all our experience is the enjoyment of eternal truths."³⁴

Where Mr. Hamshire finds a notion of "another kind of existence" is Spinoza is beyond me. Spinoza is quite clear that all that is, is in God and follows by necessity of God's nature. There are no other possibilities and nothing is left out as potential. My analysis

of Hamshire's claim is to say that by analysing Spinoza's metaphysics and epistemology in isolation from his Ethic, he has failed to follow his own insight about how to approach the Ethic. Mr. Hamshire has attempted to predict the nature of immortality for Spinoza on the basis of whole topics of the Ethic discussed in isolation from the whole. By proceeding synergetically as I have done in chapter four, part one, it is clear that an understanding of immortality does not involve "another kind of existence" but is directly related to the adequate idea of one's own essence. In this sense, I am able to explain that, that which is eternal in a human mode is absolute, but insofar as a human mode is relative and finite there are certain limitations on having an adequate idea of what it is that remains. However, when the whole of Spinoza's philosophy is considered we find that we can have an adequate idea that something remains which is eternal, but we are unable to specify what it is.

Hence, I can say that while Mr. Hamshire does not plunge Spinoza into the frenzied debates of his time, he fails to grasp the essential integrity of objective and subjective understanding. It is, to me, because of this that he is unable to really tie the Ethic together as a coherent whole system as he understands it to be.

In this section I have tried to illuminate some of the limitations which I perceive other commentators to have with Spinoza. It has not been my intention to meet these commentators head on and/or dismiss

them for their errors, but rather, to simply reveal some of their limitations. This intention may now be stated in more general terms. I perceive that each of the commentators conceives of Spinoza philosophizing as they themselves approach philosophy. That is, Mr. Wolfson is a historian of philosophy and conceives of Spinoza as a fellow, and Mr. Hamshire is primarily a logician and so conceives of Spinoza as a rigorous objective thinker. This principle, albeit too general, can be extended to include other commentators that I have not chosen to exemplify. For example, Dr. Bidney's prime interest is in Spinoza's psychology, and so he writes of Spinoza as a psychologist. As such, I consider each commentator to be essentially correct in their respective analyses, but only up to a point. Beyond this point, they seem to falter in their efforts to reveal the whole of the Ethic. As for myself, I must confess that as I conceive of myself to be seeking a life of reason, I conceive of Spinoza to be pointing the way. I do not, therefore, maintain that my approach to Spinoza is better than any of the others, for this would be a judgment that only the reader could make. My advantage, if any, is that I can claim that Spinoza was both a historian of philosophy, and a logician. I can also claim that Spinoza was a psychologist, a theologian and much more than all of these. He was a wise man.

Knowing others is wisdom;
Knowing the self is enlightenment.
Mastering others requires force;
Mastering the self needs strength.

He who knows he has enough is rich.
Perseverence is a sign of will power.
He who stays where he is endures.
To die but not to perish is to be eternally present.

Lao Tsu
Tao Te Ching

Appendix
To Tie Things Together

1. God is Nature, and is one.¹
2. The unity of God is complex. Thus, we refer to the absolutes insofar as they relate to the singularity of aspect the unity of God, and to the relatives of Nature insofar as they refer to the plurality aspect of the unity of God. In this way we are able to conceive of Nature naturing as absolute and eternal, and to Nature natured as relative and durational.
3. All that is, is in God and is conceived through Him.² This refers to the Being of all things, and to the understanding that all modes have with respect to God and their essence insofar as they conceive of their own natures under the form of eternity.³
4. Nature naturing is God individuating into things.⁴ This dynamics is eternal, ie. , instantaneous in the sense of spontaneous. That is, the activity of Nature is conceived of as a determining under the attribute of extension and as a deciding under the attribute of thought.⁵ This is to say, that Nature naturing is a determining/deciding activity which is eternal and absolute. That which follows, or that which is determined/decided is called Nature natured.
5. We can conceive of God as either the total of all the relatives of Nature, or as absolute.⁶

6. To conceive of God as absolute requires that one conceive with adequate ideas of the essence of things,⁷ under the form of eternity⁸ and in abideance⁹ with Nature naturing insofar as one is a modification (active) of God, and not just a mode (passive).

7. As God individuates into a mode - ie. , as God conceives of Himself through this or that particular human,¹⁰ - this naturing or unfolding of the individual in God is his essence.¹¹ This is called 'appetite' when one refers to the mind-body, 'desire' when one is conscious of one's appetites, and 'will' when one refers to the mind only.¹² This is to say, that God individuates into a particular mode under that attribute of extension, and the idea which accompanies it under the attribute of thought is the mind. Thus a human mind-body is conceived by God Himself.¹³

8. To adequately understand one's appetites (essence) is to adequately conceive of one's being in God.¹⁴ This refers to the Mind in motion. This is the life of reason. To find this path through the improvement of the understanding is to find the path to the life of reason.

9. To comprehend one's own nature or essence or appetites (these are the same thing)¹⁵ is to overcome one's passions. That is, one's mind is in motion insofar as one is a modification of God.¹⁶

10. This overcoming of the passions requires that one conceive of things/events as necessary,¹⁷ that is under the form of eternity.¹⁸ This is due to the eternal unfolding of God as conceived through the

improved understanding of one's own nature or essence.

11. To intuit one's essence as God conceiving of Himself through you as a particular mode is to discover the unity of self, God, being and essence, Nature naturing and Nature natured. Hence one comprehends that in all endeavors God individuates into things, and this means that you are affected by some external cause, or insofar as God conceives of Himself through you. Again, for example, you may be affirmed insofar as God individuates into you, or insofar as God individuates into things and some other mode affects you with an affirmation according to your relative natures. This particular conception is to be affirmed insofar as God individuates into things and some mode external to yourself causes the affirmation. This is love with the added understanding of that which has followed from God's dynamics. This is the intellectual love of God.¹⁹ Note that between the two kinds of conceiving - God as the proximate cause, and God as an indirect proximate cause (God as conceived of through the relatives of Nature)- there is no difference.

12. To be one with God absolutely, as well as relatively, is the Ethic to which Spinoza refers. This means that one abides by the determining/deciding dynamics of Nature naturing insofar as one is a modification of God, and also one abides by the determinations/decisions which follow as Nature natured where one is a mode of God.²⁰

13. It is man's nature to be a part of God,²¹ and therefore, man can be neither wholly eternal nor absolute (as is God), but only partly

eternal and absolute insofar as one is in God and is conceived through Him. Therefore, upon the death of the mind-body, there is something which remains which is eternal and absolute.²²

Notes - Chapter One

1. Gibson, pg. 47.
2. Fuller, pg. 3.
3. Ibid. , pg. 61.
4. Spinoza, Theologico-Political Treatise, pg. 104.
5. Harris, pg. 64.
6. Ibid. , pg. 124.
7. Ibid. , pg. 77.

Notes - Chapter Two

1. Hamshire, pp. 31 & 32, and Wolfson, Vol. I, pp. 61-121.
2. Ethic I, Def'n 8.
3. Harris, pg. 129.
4. Ibid.
5. Ethic II, Prop. XIII, and Schol.
6. Ethic II, Prop. XII & Prop. XIII, Corol.
7. Ethic II, Prop. XVI & Corol's 1 & 2; and Prop. XVII & Corol.
8. See Robinson for best description - Renascent Rationalism, pp. 30-45. (See diagram, pg. 37.)
9. See Ethic V, Prop. XXIX, Schol.

10. Also see Ethic II, Prop. XLIV, Corol. 2.
11. See above, pg. 31, and Harris, pg. 129.
12. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII, Schol. , and Ethic IV, Prop. IV.
13. Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Corol.
14. Ethic II, Prop. II.
15. Ethic I, Prop. XIV, Corol. 1, and Ethic I, Prop. XVII, Corol. 2.
16. Ethic I, Prop. XXIX, Schol.
17. Harris, pg. 48.
18. Ethic I, Prop. V.
19. Ethic I, Prop. XV, Demonst.
20. Harris, pg. 51.
21. Ibid. , pg. 103.

Notes - Chapter Three

1. I shall use a cross of several basic texts. Since the conglomerate is mine I shall note reference precisely. See Benoit, Bradford Smith, P. Kapleau, and Tomio Hirai.
2. Ethic II, Prop. XL, Corol. 2.
3. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII.
4. Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Schol.
5. See also the nature of ideas Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Schol.
6. Ethic II, Prop. XI, Schol. , and Prop. XXV, and Prop. XXIX, Corol. , and Prop. XIV, and Post 6.

7. Ethic II, Prop. XXIX, Schol. , and Ethic III, Def. II.
8. Ethic IV, Appendix 1.
9. Ethic II, Prop. LXIX, Schol.
10. Ethic II, Prop. XXIX, Corol. and Schol.
11. Ibid.
12. Ethic III, Prop. I, Corol.
13. Ibid.
14. Ethic II, Prop. XXIX, Corol.
15. Ethic III, Prop. II, Schol.
16. Ibid.
17. Ethic II, Prop. XL, Schol. 2.
18. Ibid. , Schol. 2.
19. Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Corol. and Corol. , - Prop. XXIX, Schol. , Ethic III, Prop. VII, Prop. IX, and Schol. , Ethic II, Prop. XLIV, Corol. , and Ethic V, Prop. XXX.
20. Ethic II, Lemma II, Prop. XXXVII, Prop. XXXVIII and Corol. , and Prop. XXXIX.
21. Ethic IV, Prop. IV, and Prop. XXVI.
22. Ethic IV, Prop. IV, and Ethic V, Prop. XL, Corol.
23. Ethic I, Prop. XV.
24. Ethic III, Prop. I, and Prop. XI, and Schol.
25. Ethic II, Prop. XL, Schol. 2.
26. Ethic II, Prop. XLIX, Schol.
27. Ethic II, Prop. XXXV.
28. Ethic IV, Prop. II.

29. Ethic IV, Prop. IV.
30. Ethic IV, Prop. LIX, Schol.
31. Ethic IV, Appendix VI.
32. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII, and Ethic III, Prop. VII, Prop. IX, Schol. ,
and Prop. XI, Schol.
33. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII, and Ethic III, Prop. III, and Ethic V, Prop.
IV, Corol. and Schol.
34. Ethic III, Prop. XII.
35. Ethic III, Prop. XIII.
36. Ethic IV, Prop. XIX.
37. Ethic IV, Prop. XXI.
38. Ethic IV, Prop. XXVI, and see Ethic III, Prop. III, Schol.
39. Ethic IV, Prop. IV, and Schol. , and Ethic II, Prop. XXXIX.
40. Ethic IV, Prop. XXXVIII.
41. Ethic V, Prop. VI, Schol.
42. Ethic III, Prop. VII, Prop. XX, and Prop. XI.
43. Ethic I, Prop. XV.
44. Ethic III, Prop. LIX.
45. Ethic V, Prop. XIV.
46. Ethic I, Axiom IV.
47. Ethic V, Prop. II.
48. Ethic V, Prop. VIII, and Prop. IX.
49. Ethic IV, Prop. XXXV, Corol. 1 and 2.
50. Ethic V, Prop. XL, Corol; Ethic II, Prop. V, Prop. XL, Schol. 2;
and Ethic V, Prop. XXIV.

51. Ethic IV, Axiom
52. Ethic II, Prop. XLVI; and Ethic V, Prop. XXIV.
53. Ethic I, Prop. XV, and Harris, pg. 51.
54. Smullyan, pg. 52.
55. for example, with the mind see Ethic II, Prop. XI, and Corol; Prop. XIII, and Ethic V, Prop. XXII.
56. Ethic III, Prop. VII.
57. Ethic I, Def. I, Prop. XI, and Prop. IV, and Corol.
58. Ethic V, Prop. XLII.
59. Ibid.
60. Ethic V, Prop. XXXIV.
61. Ethic V, Prop. X, Schol.
62. Ethic IV, Axiom.
63. Ethic V, Prop. X.
64. Ethic V, Prop. XLI.
65. See Chapter Two, pg. 31, and Harris, pg. 129.
66. Ethic IV, Prop. LXII.
67. Ethic V, Prop. XVI.

Notes - Chapter Four

1. Ethic II, Prop. VII, Schol.
2. Ethic IV, Axiom.

3. Ethic V, Prop. XXX.
4. Ethic III, Prop. VII.
5. Op. Cit.
6. Ethic V, Prop. XXII.
7. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII.
8. Ethic IV, Prop. IV, Corol.
9. Ethic V, Prop. XXIII.
10. Smullyan, pg. 6.
11. Wolfson, Vol. II, pg. 225.
12. Ibid. , pg. 226.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. , Vol. I, pg. 371.
15. Ibid. Vol. II, pg. 142.
16. Ibid. , pp. 265, 266.
17. Ibid. , pp. 273, 274.
18. Ibid. This proof is accomplished on pg. 283.
19. Ibid. , pg. 283.
20. Ibid. , Vol. I, pp. 6, 7.
21. Ibid. , Vol. II, pp. 291, 292.
22. Ibid. , pg. 293; Also see Harris, pg. 243 for a fuller discussion of this.
23. Hamshire, pg. 11.
24. Ibid. , pg. 26.
25. Ibid. , pg. 55.

26. Ibid. , pg. 46.
27. Ibid. , pg. 115.
28. Ibid. , pp. 94-96.
29. Ibid. , pp. 101-104.
30. Ibid. , pg. 139.
31. Ibid. , pg. 121.
32. Ibid. , pg. 122.
33. Ibid. , pp. 168-176.
34. Ibid. , pg. 176.

Notes - Appendix

1. Ethic I, Def. III & IV; Prop. 's I to XIV; and Prop. XIV, Corol. 1 and 2.
2. Ethic I, Prop. XV.
3. Ethic II, Prop. XLVII; Ethic IV, Prop. IV; Ethic V, Prop. XXX; Also see Ethic II, Prop. XIII with regard to Ethic V, Prop. XXX, Demonst.
4. Ethic I, Prop. XVI.
5. Ethic III, Prop. II, Schol.
6. Ethic II, Prop. XI, Corol.
7. Ethic II, Prop. XL, Schol. 2.
8. Ethic II, Prop. XLIV, Corol. 2; Ethic V, Prop. XXIX.
9. Ethic V, Prop. XL, Corol.

10. Ethic II, Prop. XI, XIII, XX, XLV; Ethic V, Prop. XXII.
11. Ethic II, Prop. XL, and Corol. , and Prop. XIII; Ethic V, Prop. XXII.
12. Ethic III, Prop. XX, Schol.
13. Ethic V, Prop. XXII.
14. Ethic I, Prop. XXIV, and Corol. ; Ethic III, Prop. VII; Ethic IV, Prop. XXIV; Ethic V, Prop. XXIX, and XXX.
15. Ethic III, Prop. IX, Schol. ; Ethic IV, Prop. XXXII, and Prop. XXIV.
16. Ethic II, Prop. XXVIII, Schol.
17. Ethic V, Prop. VI and Prop. XXIX.
18. Ethic V, Prop. XXX.
19. Ethic V, Prop. XXVI and Corol. and Schol.
20. Ethic V, Prop. XL, Corol.
21. Ethic IV, Prop. IX.
22. Ethic V, Prop. XXIII.

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