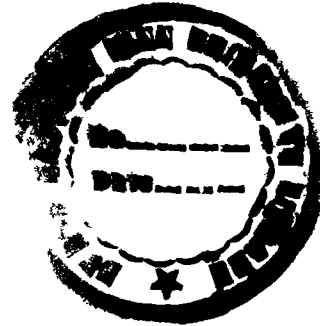


SPINOZA'S THEORY OF SUBSTANCE



BY

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Submitted

**in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in
Philosophy of North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.**

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Declaration

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I *Ms. Supriya Mohapatra*, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to any body else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Philosophy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deep sense of gratitude to my teacher Dr. N. Malla, Professor of Philosophy, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong for his able guidance, constant inspiration and encouragement throughout the period of this study. I am grateful to Professor Sujata Miri, Head, Department of Philosophy for providing necessary facilities and support. I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable suggestions and advice received from all the teachers of the Department of Philosophy, NEHU at different stages of this study.

I would like to mention specially the encouragement and support that I have received from each of my family members during the course of this study.

Shillong
20 April, 2000

(Supriya Mohapatra)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Spinoza is one of the most difficult of all the great philosophers to understand at first reading. In order to understand his philosophy, some general introduction to his methods and style is a pre-requisite. He is also one of the greatest metaphysicians who has tried to construct a coherent account of the universe and of man's place within it. His philosophy embraces the whole range of the traditional problems of philosophy, including the problems of a creator and his creation, the relation of mind and body, the freedom of the will, the nature and limits of the human knowledge, and also the problems of moral and political philosophy. Almost all the main themes of philosophical speculation are found in his work¹.

Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza was born in 1632 in Amsterdam as a son of Jewish Marrano immigrants from Portugal. He was forced to leave from the Synagogue i.e. (building used by Jews for religious worship and teaching) for his unorthodoxy in 1656 and he had few ties with his Jewish neighbours. After being excommunicated, he changed his name from "Baruch" (blessed) to its Latin equivalent "Benedict" and lived his life of remaining two decades quietly as a tutor and lens grinder in and near Leiden and the Hague. While earning his livelihood, he learnt Latin in the school of Fransiscus van Den Eden.

Spinoza's moral ideal was to become a 'free man'. For him, human mind and body are identical still he believed that human mind can achieve a kind of eternity that transcends the death of the body. For Marxist, he was the forerunner of historical materialism and for Hegelians as the precursor of absolute idealism. He maintains that the human beings are basically selfish in nature and for his own sake he valued others. He believed that the state can do whatever it can but still he believes in democracy and freedom of speech. For him, religion is a grave danger to peace and stability of the state; yet he carefully interpreted the scriptures and believed in freedom and tolerance of religion.

From Van den Enden, a physician, he gained knowledge of physical science and at that time he studied Descartes. In 1663 he published under his own name *Descartes' "Principles of Philosophy"* (*Renati Descartes Principiorum Philosophiae, Pars I et II, More Geometric demonstratae*), and anonymously in 1670 the *Theological-Political Treatise (Tractatus Theologico-Politicus)*. After his death, *Opera Posthuma* - containing in Latin his main work the *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order (Ethica, Ordine Geometrico demonstrata)*, the *Correspondence (Epistulae)*, the unfinished *Political Treatise (Tractatus Politicus)*, and *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect (Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione)* and a *Compendium of Hebrew Grammar (Compendium Grammatices Lingnae Hebraeae)* - was published by his friends. An early forerunner of the *Ethics*, in Dutch and entitled *short Treatise on*

God, Man and His Well-Being (Korte Verhandeling Van God, de Mensch en des zelfs Welstand) was discovered and published in the 19th Century.

During his early twenties, he came out from Judaism and never returned to Christian sect. After his death, a short treatise on rainbow was printed and that was his only contribution to the Science. In the year 1663 Spinoza was compelled by his friends to publish “The Principles of Cartesianism Geometrically Demonstrated”. In the same year he was removed from Rhijnsburg to Voorburg and in 1670 to Hague and there he lived till his death in 1677.

His reputation spread not only in his country but outside. In the year 1670, *The Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was published and it produced a strong controversy. In the year 1673, Spinoza refused the post of professorship of Philosophy at Heidelberg offered by the Elector palatine Charles Lewis, because for him it would interfere with his original work. In the subsequent year when *Ethics* was finished and he was on the way to publish them, afterwards changed his mind because that might create controversies and because he wanted to live peacefully because of his ill health.

Spinoza was looking like a Portuguese Jew; his way of living was simple and very decent in his behaviour. He could control and balance his passion. He led a disciplined life, had not attached to any sect, he was not an atheist in practical life

rather from his biography it is known that he made people believe in God, to obey elders.

Most of his time he spent by talking on different matters with the people, making observation with a microscope but most of the time of the day he spent in learning and in doing hard mental works in his room. He even concentrated on his work continuously for two - three days, without going outside. So good behaviour he had that nobody knew that his end would come suddenly and quietly and lastly on Feb, 1677, he took his last breath after suffering 20 years from a serious disease.

The new physics of Descartes played an important role in Spinoza's process of enlightenment. The Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect was one of the early works of Spinoza. It can be explained as being very close to Spinoza's personal experiences and the beginning of his new philosophy, his new point of view - the unity of mind with the whole of nature².

Juan de Prado, a Spanish medical doctor, who had settled in Amsterdam, had relation with Spinoza. Both confessed the Law of Moses, and the Synagogue had expelled and excommunicated them in the year 1658 since they had turned atheists. They had said to the witness that they had observed the law of the Jews, but that they had changed their opinion because it seemed to them that the law was not true and that there is no God except in a philosophical sense. But Spinoza opposed De Prado's

rejection of the immortality of the soul because he had the early insight into mind's eternity expressed in *Treatise on the Emendation of the intellect*.

Spinoza in Amsterdam belonged to a group of radical Cartesians. Descartes' philosophies had influenced scholars and were discussed in universities and intellectual level³. Borch writes in his journal that in Amsterdam there were certain atheists who are principally Cartesians like van den Enden. They do not preach atheism openly, because they often speak about God but by God they understand nothing else than this universe⁴.

Short Treatise was written after the *Treatise on the Emendation of the intellect* in the year 1661-62⁵. *Short Treatise* was destined for private use in the circle of friends. This short treatise was not written in geometrical form but systematically composed, as a provisional presentation of the material that later would be geometrically deduced in the *Ethics*.

Van den Enden was considered as proto-Spinoza, the genius behind Spinoza. The works of Van den Enden contains a theory which is the same as the one worked out by Spinoza in his *Theological-Pol-Treatise* and *Pol-Treatise*. The full-fledged determinism, the distinction between three kinds of knowledge, human passivity, the *Conatus* theory, the intellectual love of God and so on are proven deductively by Spinoza in his *Ethics*. Spinoza's intention to contribute as much as possible to the

formation of society may be interpreted as an echo of Van den Enden's main interest⁶. Spinoza made Cartesian philosophy the touch stone of all knowledge. Spinoza as a scientist investigates nature in all its aspects. In his short treatise, *God, Man and His Well Being*, he mentions about the laws of human nature which he studied for some years. For him all things are modes or modifications. For Descartes, everything is caused by something else in the same attribute and this is also valid for human behaviour. His philosophy is not far away from 'natural science' rather it had intimate connection with 'natural science'. Spinoza was involved in empirical science without neglecting the mathematical methods⁷.

The 1663 edition of Spinoza's *Descartes Principles of Philosophy* was introduced by Meyer. Descartes' principles, contained a mathematical method written in analytical order which needs to be analysed geometrically. His *Theological Political Treatise* and his *Compendium to Hebrew Grammar*, an unfinished work were written at the request of some of his friends. Spinoza's view was that the scientific analysis of the Hebrew language was very important for the interpretation of the scriptures. Spinoza had spent his valuable time in the analysis and description of the linguistic structures of the Hebrew and composed a new grammar in his own style⁸.

From his childhood he was busy working in linguistics and literature most of his time was spent in research of the nature of things and in ordering them for the understanding of the common people. Spinoza was also a man of science. He had

special interest in optics. He himself prepared many microscopes and telescopes which were highly praised by scientists of his day.

Spinoza was solely involved in the practice of science which raised criticisms by the minister of the Reformed Church⁹. Having discovered that Spinoza had identified God with nature which was a threat against the theologians, so the latter declared a halt to his natural science. Spinoza decided to stop his work and publication of Dutch translation thereby freeing himself from wrath of others. His intention was always the wellbeing of the state and he knew that it would be impossible without the freedom of speech, opinion, thought and publication. Therefore, he started writing a treatise concerning the scripture. He intended to do so because of the:

1. prejudices of the theologians consisting of false interpretations and political misuse of scriptures,
2. to defend himself against the condemnation as an atheist, and
3. to defend freedom of science, thought, opinions, publication and discussions.

The *Theological Pol-Treatise* was published in 1670 but the work proved to be useless as it neither helped to lessen the influence of theological prejudices nor gave any freedom to the enlightened people. It did not help Spinoza in publication and reception of his philosophy. It rather worsen the situation by a series of dangerous refutations and defamations¹⁰. The rejection of the *Theological Political Treatise* by the ministers of the reformed church, became a success for publisher Rieuwertsz. His

shop was a centre of free thinkers' discussions where the views were exchanged between radical Cartesians and Spinozists. The death of Adrian Koerbagh made Spinoza careful about the publication of the book which he postponed.

Spinoza's fame began to spread and his ideas were accepted all through Europe. So the court of Hidelberg invited him for a professorship in the newly founded academy of monarch Karl Ludwig which he refused because he needed freedom of philosophising¹¹. Another reason was that he did not want to take any responsibility which was an obstacle to freedom to promote science and a scientist must be completely independent and for Spinoza, one's freedom is restricted when one is paid for one's work.

Spinoza was very good towards others. It was not his attitude to laugh at others or to criticise or to consider them worthless. He wrote that it was his principle,

To try not to laugh at human actions neither to mourn
about them or to detest them, but to understand them¹².

He does not tell that he always succeeded, but he never forgot to follow his principles. He sometimes failed and confessed¹³. Spinoza's conduct sometimes surprised others: how could an atheist behave so virtuously ?

During the life and government of Jan de Witt, the Supreme Court of Holland tried to prohibit the printing and spreading of *Theological Political Treatise*. In July of 1674, the court of Holland published a “placcaet” against some harmful books among which was the *Theological Political Treatise*. He must have been disappointed. In the text of the announcement, his book was declared as one of the sacrilegious and soul-destructive ones, full of unfounded and dangerous propositions and horrors to the disadvantage of true religion and church service. Severe punishment was charged on the printing, publishing and selling of those books.

The spreading of *Ethics* would have had bad consequences, might posed problem to his life. He refused to give permission to entrust his writings to Leibniz because his master van den Enden was arrested and sentenced to death. He was hanged on December 6th, 1674. His writings were burned a day later.

In spite of Spinoza’s fear and warning Tschirnhaus revealed many secrets to Leibniz which were presented by Spinoza for private use. When Spinoza had finished five parts of his *Ethics*, he had gone to his Amsterdam friend in order to publish them but because the situation was not favourable, his friends warned him not to publish them. Then he decided to postpone the publication.

Tschirnhaus credits Spinoza with a kind of Pythagoreanism, which implies that souls transmigrate from one form of matter to another. It is likely that this transmigration

theory originated from Spinoza himself. Ultimately, he felt himself insecure, lonely as he had no link with his relatives and friends some of who had died and some had been treated cruelly until death like Koerbagh, Jan de Witt of Franciscus Van den Enden. In the last part of his *Ethics*, he had written

That death is less harmful to us, the greater the minds clear and distinct Knowledge, and hence, the more the mind loves God ¹⁴.

He died of phthisis or consumption at the age of 44 after suffering for many years. His interest in the wellbeing of the state was so strong and deeply inherited in his mind that in his last part of his life he wanted to contribute something to it. Then he began his new *Political Treatise*, a political architecture in which he presented different types of government or political societies (Monarchies, Aristocracies, Democracies) in order to make them stable and secure for their citizens.

The work about the nature of motion and in what way the differences in matter could be deduced *a priori* was in his programme which remained unfinished due to his untimely death. Spinoza had not finished many of his works like - the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* (part -3), the *Political Treatise*, the *Compendium of Hebrew Grammar*. Only *Theological - Political Treatise* and the *Ethics* were completed. Spinoza did not have enough time to accomplish all the things he wished ¹⁵. He lived much though not long. He died on 23rd Feb, 1677 and his dead body was buried in 25th Feb in the New Church.

He enjoyed much respect among the intelligent and highly placed persons. He will live in the memory and the practice of the true scientists in the words of J.M. Lucas¹⁶. It is evident in the works of Spinoza's friend Tschirnhaus, who devoted his life to mathematics and medicine. He was very concerned about the real meaning of Spinoza's propositions. The Spinozistic propositions and principles are supported and used by him. For him, human mind can be cured of its errors by the 'science of nature'.

Opera Posthuma were published in 1677, in the year of Spinoza's death. It did not contain the name of the author or publisher¹⁷. It contained *Ethics*, the *Correspondence* and the *Political Treatise*, and the unfinished treatise on the *Emendation of the Intellect* which was Spinoza's earliest works. It contains the programme of his *Ethics*. On 25th June 1678 the office of Holland officially declared the trading, selling, printing, publishing and translating of Spinoza's *Opera Posthuma*. The prohibition was no longer valid but it needs to be understood in its real meaning and one should realise what Spinoza wanted to be.

With this much of biographical note let us discuss the concept of substance. Spinoza defines it:

Substance is that which is in itself and is conceived through itself. It can be conceived independently without any thing else¹⁸.

To conceive is not to imagine because imagination is very lower grade of knowledge. For Spinoza, to think is to exist. The essences are the attributes which are also infinite and are conceived through itself, characterised as infinite, indivisible, unique, free, eternal, and substance is the *causa sui*.

The term 'substance' evokes many philosophical problems. It is one of the most confusing terms in philosophy. The term had its origin in Greek philosophy particularly in the philosophy of Aristotle. In *Metaphysics*, substances are defined as the subject of predication. Substances are those which remain unchanged through all changes.

In *Categories*, Aristotle's view is somehow different. Aristotle in this connection defines substances as the "subject of predication which cannot be predicated of something else"¹⁹. This definition of substance makes a division between things and its properties. Aristotle used the Greek word *ousia* to denote substance which means 'property'. Before Aristotle, this word was also used for the Greek word *physis* which means either the origin of a thing, its natural structure, or constitution, the stuff, out of which things are made.

It is necessary to give a brief historical account of the concept of substance at this stage. Aristotle's account of substance has been the most influential and important but his account of substance is obscure and inconsistent. In *Categories*, he gives a

clear cut meaning to it. Substance in the primary and most definite sense of the word is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject, for instance the individual man or horse. Primary substances are particulars. The word 'substance' has a connection with "being" but Aristotle uses the word with an article which implies a particular kind of being or a concrete individual thing.

What Aristotle means by substance is a 'basic particular'; it is one of the categories out of nine, an ultimate kind of being. Substances as a category has a status and importance over and above other categories. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle suggests that the essences or natures are substances and they are more substantial which have more qualities. Primary substance are more substantial than secondary substance and species is more substantial than the genus. This implies that it is a matter of degree and nothing else other than that.

In *Categories*, Aristotle's objective is to make a clearcut distinction between substance as proper and independently existing, and substances as comprising of qualities and relations.

Aristotle introduced a third kind of substance which is capable of existing independently and does not need others for its existence. That which cannot exist independently and that which are predicated of subjects are not substances. This implies a contrast between substance on the one hand and qualities and relations on

the other. 'Virtuous', 'larger than', 'greater than', 'red', 'sweet' etc. cannot exist separately without any relation. That is why, they are not substances.

Critics of Aristotle point out that though substances cannot exist independently yet qualities can. They therefore, cite some example of qualities without substance that is, the blueness of the sky, or the red after images floating in the visual field. Aristotle argues that substance is that which can exist independently and so it is the concrete individual thing.

The fourth conception of substance is that it comprises of contrary qualities and it is the most distinctive mark of substance. For Aristotle, substance is the centre of change and there is a substratum that lies beneath the qualities and supports all the qualities.

The final conception of substance for Aristotle is that it is a logical subject that which is not asserted of a subject but of which everything else is asserted. And in this sense, it is linked with the notion of substratum.

Thus, the concept of substance has acquired different forms in different places in Aristotle's writings. He gave importance to all of them in different places. But his favourite sense of substance was substance as essence. The six senses of substance have created a lot of debate in the history of philosophy.

Atomists

Ancient atomism was founded by Leucippus, and Democritus and was developed by Epicurus. But in the writings of Lucretius we find that the real and basic elements of nature are the atoms and everything is made up of atoms. These are fundamental and unchangeable and exist independently. The atomic theory is silent on the problem of substance and attribute.

Descartes

Descartes was a seventeenth century philosopher. In that century philosophy was revived and gained a new face which was in medieval ages mixed with theological or religious frameworks. In Descartes' system, the notion of substance and attribute are associated with the conscious self and the problems of substance with personal identity. Descartes argued that a real attribute cannot be an attribute of nothing. What he means is that we know the attributes directly. Attributes are attributes of something and that something is a substance and we have the idea of that something indirectly, through inference.

Relative and finite substances do not need anything except God for their existence. Substances have essential attributes. Mind and body are relative substances - where thought constitutes the essence of mind and extension constitute the essence of body so that thought and extension are essential attributes.



There can be no extension without body. Extension has no limits and body has no centre for the centre is a mathematical point. We can reach at these points from the analysis of the extension as the essential attribute of body. What is true of body is not true of mind. So thought is inextended, free, active, immaterial. Since both are the negation of each other, so body is without soul and soul is immaterial. They are essential attributes because mind without thought is impossible to conceive and vice versa. So there are three types of substances in Descartes' view. Mind (thinking sub) body (extended substance) and God. Mind and body are relative substances because they depend on God and have a lower graded of substantiality than God. For Descartes, substances have attributes and attributes are what makes the substances meaningful and what gives identity to substances.

Spinoza

Spinoza was a student and follower of Descartes philosophy. In many of his writings he followed Descartes' methods and he was one who developed his philosophy and made it consistent. Following Descartes' view of substance as "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself", Spinoza argued that there can be only one substance and that is God which is the nature or the universe. So for him, substance, God, nature are one and the same. He was always against religious orthodoxy and saw the things in scientific way instead of blindly following religious dogmatism.

In Spinoza's view, everything in this universe has cause. Their existence depends on their cause so they are not completely independent although some are more independent than others. But in the case of the universe it is one and it exists in itself and conceived through itself and does not depend on anything for its existence. So for Spinoza, it is the only substance.

Leibniz

Leibniz a rationalist philosopher made substance the most important theme in his philosophical work. For him, Body and Mind are not two substances but two attributes of the same substance. According to Leibniz, matter is resistance and resistance means activity. So behind matter there is activity or active force. What seems inactive is in reality an intense action, an effort. That effort is not Descartes' mathematical or mechanical notion but a metaphysical notion. The metaphysical notion is Force. For Leibniz, this force forms the essence of matter. There is action everywhere. No body without movement no substance without effort. Force is immaterial. As it forms the essence of matter, so matter is immaterial in its essence. Force is inextended and therefore indivisible and simple, indestructible. Where there is action there is force and there is action in everything. As there are many things, so there are multiple centres of Force. Forces are monads and each monad is independent of other monads, acting in itself and depending on itself only. Each monad represents a different world, has no windows, each expressing the universe. Among the monads, there are hierarchies where the perfect monad is the soul and

less perfect monads are body. Leibniz's monads are centre of change and subjects of predicates.

Locke, Berkeley, Hume

Locke was an empiricist. For him, each particular idea is derived from experience. At birth, a child's mind is empty, devoid of any idea. It is like an empty tablet, a blank paper (*Tabula Rasa*) Experience or sensation is the source of knowledge of external objects and reflection is our knowledge of internal facts.

There are two kinds of ideas, simple and complex. Simple ideas are formed by two ways viz., sensation and reflection. Complex ideas are formed out of simple ideas in various ways.

For Locke, substance is an obscure thing which cannot be said to exist without qualities. We have no distinct idea of substractum without qualities. In actuality, our knowledge does not go beyond the simple ideas and if it goes beyond it at a certain point, that point would be "we know not what". This criticism was supported by Berkeley and Hume. For Hume, ideas are the things themselves. Hume opposed the dogmatic idealism and the dogmatic spiritualism. As he was a Skeptic he extended the skepticism of Locke and Berkeley in respect of material and spiritual substance.

Kant

Kant transformed the notion of substance. Substances are not the feature of the objective world rather unity and permanence of substance are features and they are represented by human understanding. For Kant, the contents of our ideas are furnished by the senses, and form by reason. Sensations are transformed into ideas through reason. According to Kant, there are two elements - *a priori* and *a posteriori* that are form and matter respectively. Space and time are *a priori* elements. We cannot see them independently of their content. All perceptions are due to space and time; Space and time are not objects of perception but modes of perceiving objects. For Kant, substance is not a thing or an entity but a mode, a form of understanding.

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CHAPTER II

CONCEPT OF SUBSTANCE

Benedict Spinoza's aim was systematic knowledge in which everything should follow by the strict necessity of thought from first principles. The function of reason is to rise above the sense perception and to contemplate on things which are by the form of absolute necessity relate to each other. At the end, it seeks to get into the base or ground of all thought and being to know

That idea which represents the origin and sum of nature and so to develop all our ideas from it that it shall appear as the source of all other ideas ¹

Spinoza accepted the science of Mathematics as the purest type of method and tried to construct his system in geometrical order. In geometry, everything is based on the fundamental concept of space or quantity, and they logically follow from certain definitions and axioms. Following Euclid, Spinoza set forth his ideas in a series of axioms, postulates and propositions². According to Spinoza, imagination is the main source of error.

Spinoza introduced a set of definitions of fundamental concepts such as substance, cause, attribute, freedom and necessity. The first part of *Ethics* contains such definitions. The propositions are correlated in such a way that they support each

other and for understanding one of them one needs to understand other propositions. He also explained God or Nature with logically necessary definitions. According to Spinoza, definitions are the only possible and consistent sets of propositions. To explain the world without these definitions would be to involve in contradictions and for that we need to understand all those inter-connected definitions³.

The starting point of Spinoza's system is the idea of "Substance". Spinoza defines it as "that which is in itself and conceived through itself". In other words,

That of which the conception can be formed independently of any other conception⁴.

Substance in his view is that which explains all else but needs no other idea to explain it.

The notion of substance has a continuous history from Aristotle to Descartes. According to Aristotle, the meaning of substance can be understood in two ways. In *Metaphysics*, substances are conceived as items that can be subjects of predication. While changing, they maintain their identity. Aristotle's distinction between matter and form is linked with this notion. While changing, matter only changes without the change of the form. They are highly organised and persist through major changes. Organisms fulfil these conditions.⁵

In *Categories*, Aristotle explains substance in a different way. It is “the subject of predication which cannot be predicated of anything else”. This use of substance includes everything of a thing different from its properties. So a ‘person’ is a substance where his quality ‘honesty’ is not.

Aristotle used the Greek word ‘*ousia*’ for ‘substance’, which means *being*. He often used the word with an article to indicate a particular kind of being, a particular kind of thing. Substance for Aristotle, is one of the categories, one of the ultimate kind of beings. It has more importance than other categories and they are what primarily exist e.g. this man, this horse, etc. ⁶

Substances are causally self-sufficient and indestructible. Descartes’ dualism remained unresolved until he pointed to another act of power. God and world, mind and matter, in Descartes’ view are independent entities. They are so defined that one is the total negation of the other. The two entities are conceived as substances, which are reciprocally exclusive. So they can never be united or brought into any real relation to each other. If this situation ever occurs, then mind ceases to be mind and matter as matter, that mind should become extended and matter a thing. Body and soul are independent substances united through the external and unintelligible force. His dualism finds a possible solution when he pointed to an absolute or infinite substance where the differences vanished. In that process of solution, two substances are reduced to attributes and the common substance where they are united must be

conceived of as something underlying but different from both. Substance, he tells, is ‘that which so exists that it needs nothing else in order to exist’. Mind and matter become accidents while they resolve into this being. They lose their independence in it. Their distinguishing characteristic does not exist in it. ⁷

The term ‘substance’ had a long journey from Aristotle’s *Categories* to Descartes’ *Principles*. Kneale has pointed out a philosophical connection between the two senses of “Substance”, which figured in the history of the terms development. ⁸

According to Kneale, genuine substance must be causally self-sufficient. In Aristotle’s philosophy, the existence of property depends on its being instantiated – i.e., there cannot be honesty unless someone is honest. There is a relation of dependence from properties to things but not conversely. So one characteristic of genuine substance is that it is not logically dependent on anything else for its existence. For the rationalist, substance must not *causally* depend on anything for its existence – i.e., the thesis of Descartes’ *Principles*. ⁹

There are great differences of thought between Descartes and Spinoza. As a disciple of Descartes, the later merged himself in his philosophy but rejected Descartes’ conclusions because he discovered incoherence in Descartes’ philosophy. He found contradictions in Descartes’ conception of substance, of the relation between thought and extension, of the relation between God and the Created Universe, etc. Descartes’

conclusions were not developed to its full logical extremes, may be due to uncomfortable moral and theological consequences.¹⁰ His conclusions protect the church with its essential doctrines against the new mathematical physics and new method in philosophy. Spinoza made the distinction between intellect and imagination, which Descartes did not, between pure logical thinking and the confused association of ideas, one of the foundations of his systems. He applied the distinction everywhere strictly in his philosophy and accepted its forthcoming results. In his *Ethics*, Spinoza explained that his opinion about God and attributes can never be understood in any figurative sense but can only be understood in a special sense figured in his definitions.¹¹

He argued the unphilosophical men are unable to understand God clearly and the picture, which they have, is the image of sense-experience. They can only form the image from sense experience but God is totally outside the sphere of experience and cannot be properly described by comparing Him with things within our experience. He can only be conceived through pure thought. So Spinoza was a rationalist in a proper sense of the term. All the problems are solved as intellectual problems, as if they were the theorems in Geometry. He wrote the early expositions in geometrical method for that reason.¹²

Spinoza's philosophy is rationalism in its extreme form; we are required to think of God with clarity and precision as in the study of geometry we think about triangles

and circles. His philosophy is not a development of Cartesianism or does not follow any other philosophy. His philosophy reflects double sided history which is his originality. To some, he appears as a man believing in God for whom every natural phenomenon is the revelation of the power of God and to some others, as a materialist and determinist who denies all significance to morality and religion. ¹³

The distinction between substance and its attributes was made in order to make the logical difference between subject and what we say about that subject and also for the reason to unfold the mysteries about change and identity. The subject always possesses various qualities at different times but itself remains intact through changes as an identifiable subject with its qualities inhering in it.

The concept of substance, which is central to Spinoza's *Metaphysics*, is attached historically to the conception of scientific knowledge as the discovery of the essential nature of various kinds of entity existing in the universe; this conception of scientific knowledge is contained in the Aristotelian logic in which things are defined and classified by different essential qualities or attributes. ¹⁴

Spinoza's metaphysics intended to solve two difficult problems:

(I) Are there material substances? It poses a problem because if a substance is material then it is extended and each extended thing is composed of parts and if a thing is composed of parts then it is not a substance at all. So it follows that if there

are substances, then they cannot be material. Though the world is made up of matter yet it is not basic and if it is basic then it is not matter.

In the first case, philosophers have ignored the possibility that extended things might be made up of physical points and extension of familiar matter results from each point exerting force throughout a region. The second point is true if impact mechanism (bodies affecting one another only through impact) is accepted in physics.

(II) Facts about the world in its mental aspect have some connection with facts about its material aspect and it is not a mere chance that they correlate with each other. Physical injury results in pain. This is the case everywhere and it happens in all cases. Why this is so and the answer to the question is causal interaction. Sensory states are caused by the environment, pain is caused by injury, and bodily movements are caused by desires. But Spinoza's argument is that causal connection implies that there are causal links. According to Spinoza, all connections are conceptual. Spinoza's view is that the mental and material realms are not separate entities and they do not interact. According to Spinoza, there is systematic relation, and it is not causal¹⁵.

These problems are solved in the following arguments of Spinoza about substance, attributes and modes. Substance as the subject of predication – For Leibniz,

substances are simple. If a substance is not simple, then it cannot be the subject of predication and therefore that is not substance. In aggregation, the ingredients of aggregation are not substances. Therefore ordinary physical things are not substances and therefore not subjects of predication. In the example of army which Leibniz cites, 'essence' means 'a number of men interrelated in a certain way.' If each soldier is represented in the form of a_1 and the army is represented in the form of F, then it would take the form as $F(a_1, a_2, a_3 \dots a_n)$. From this sequence there is no reference to the army:

What constitutes the essence of an entity through aggregation is only a state of being of its constituent entities; for example, what constitutes the essence of an army is only a state of being of the constituent men.¹⁶

The reality of aggregation depends on its parts and the parts are interconnected in certain ways – depending upon the type of aggregation and for Leibniz no aggregate is a substance as it is a composition and therefore cannot be made subject of predication. For Leibniz, substance is that which is not predicable of something else. It is a true unity, 'not a modality or state' as for some philosophers. Here Leibniz's arguments holds good. If an army is not a property or relation it can be conceived without any reference to it. But to conceive an army to be existing, is to conceive that some soldiers are related to each other by the chains of command. According to Leibniz, whatever has parts and is spatial is not substance. So, for Leibniz physical things are not substances.¹⁷ Spinoza used substance in Leibnizian sense. So, it is

necessary to discuss Leibniz in this context. For Spinoza, that which is not substance is either property or state or mode of substance.¹⁸

The concept of plurality of substance had its origin in seventeenth century philosophy. Substances exist temporally and have certain attributes, which are essential in nature. This view was rejected by Spinoza for various reasons, and on account of various difficulties that arose out of it. One of the difficulties in conceiving plurality of substance is that if there are multiplicity of substances with essential attributes then they must interact with each other. If they do interact with each other then change in one must produce change in another. This view will lead to a multitude of substances, which are causally related with each other but which act according to their own nature. But if they are interrelated or causally related with each other then we can not explain the event with the help of their own nature. There may be some other substance, which may produce change in them. But the conception of interaction introduces the notion of cause but substances from their very nature initiate changes in them. For Spinoza, cause is that which explains the existence or qualities of the effect. But the word 'explain' bears a different meaning. It means logical connection with each other.

Following Euclidean method, one can get an idea of substance possessing attributes and undergoing modifications – as the attributes or modifications are the logical consequence of other attributes. As substances modify from within, so no other

outside cause is required for its change; no causal interaction is there for its modification. The attributes and modifications are accidental which are the consequences of outside cause and the substance can be called as the “cause of itself” or (*Causa sui*), whose attributes and modifications are the outcome of its own essential nature and they are necessary. This single substance must be identified with the universe conceived as a whole. ¹⁹

As a pantheistic monist, Spinoza argues that there is no dualism between God and the world; we need not to go beyond the immediate present to seek for a *being* outside of it. God moves and lives in nature; the whole of it, the entire universe is God. Nature or God is its own cause and is self-sufficient. ²⁰ The all inclusive totality he therefore called “God or Nature” (*Deus Sive Natura*).

The plurality of substance involves contradiction because it contains some steps, which fall outside the domain of substance. The definition of substance does not contain any distinction between accidental and necessary attributes of a substance. So the notion of plurality of substance goes in opposition to the definition of substance of Spinoza.

I understand substance to be that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, the conception of which can be formed independently of the conception of another thing. ²¹

In *Ethics*, Spinoza offers a number of definitions in the manner of Euclidean axioms relating to substance, attributes and modes. He rejects the possibility of plurality of substances because pluralism may lead to interactionism.

According to Spinoza, from proposition IV, two or more things are distinguished from one another either by difference of the attributes of the substance or by difference of their modifications. If they have common attributes or modifications, then there cannot be two different substances but one substance. Several things may be distinguished from one another except the substance.

There cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same nature or attribute.²²

Two separate substances cannot share the same attributes. If there be several substances, they must be distinguished by their attribute or by their modifications. There cannot be more than one substance having identical attribute. Substance is prior to its modifications. There cannot be more than one substance – which means, there cannot be several substances, but one substance only.²³

Proposition V of *Ethics* states that two substances cannot share the same attribute. The only way to distinguish two substances is by noting differences in their attributes or differences in their modes. Suppose two substances have the same attributes, but different modifications; there are two universes, both are three-dimensional but one had trees and the other does not, Spinoza argues that these differences in

modifications are not relevant. A substance has its own identity before it undergoes modifications. The universe is what it is before it happens to have trees or not. Thus, the only property which distinguish one substance from other are the broad attributes, not modes. If two universes have the same attributes, then they are the same universes.²⁴

If we conceive of two substances like those of Descartes, then it needs to be explained why there are two (not more, not less). If there are two substances they might be causally explained. Every effect must have some cause; therefore there must be some cause of two substances and that will contradict the very definition of substance as the 'cause of itself'. So there can be only one substance and nothing can exist outside and independently of that very substance. Everything is inherent in the single substance and this substance is identified with Nature conceived as an intelligible whole. It is the face of the whole universe according to Spinoza, which consists of infinite number of attributes and modes, which are also infinite in nature. To say that something is infinite is that nothing exists outside to affect or modify it. Only finite things are modified or affected. If it were finite then there could be something outside it, which would restrict its boundary. In that case, it could not be single or unique.²⁵ We can understand all other ideas by means of it but the reverse is not possible.

We cannot reach the knowledge of the nature of substance directly. So in the light of Spinoza's theory of knowledge, we can come to the answer indirectly. We can understand the world only by developing all our ideas from the idea which represents the origin and source of nature; and the idea which constitutes the "origin of nature".

Spinoza defines substance as:

A being, single, infinite, which is the totality of being,
and beyond which there is no being. ²⁶

Substance does not need to rest on any other. It is self-proved, because it is beyond doubt. All finite existences could be said to evolve from this conception of substance. All transitions to the finite world must lie in the very nature of substance. Substance includes everything within it. It is the unity of all things, but there are differences in it also. First it differentiates itself into 'infinite attributes', then into 'infinite modes' then at last into 'finite modes'. World is meaningless without them. Nothing is real, independent of or in the absence of substance and everything gains life within its sphere. All thinking things, all objects of thought, have their existence in the vital pulse of the universal life. ²⁷

According to Spinoza, true or adequate knowledge comes from *the idea of the whole* and all other ideas have meaning and reality in the idea of the whole only. All individual things and thoughts can be understood in the light of the totality of being. No individual thing or being has separate, independent existence, which the ordinary observation considers them to be. No object in nature can be construed as a single

isolated thing. Each object has existence in relation to other things and ultimately to the whole system of being. We are sometimes biased in favour of ordinary observation, which superficially conveys to us that things exist separately, apart from each other, side by side with other things. The senses seem to tell us that things have absolute existence. But if we look at them from a deeper level, penetrating into their real nature, their outward substantiality vanishes; we perceive them to be linked with each other by the inner bond of causal relation. Each individual thing forms a series of causal relation as cause and effect with others. But its place, form, functions, activities are considered not from its self but from the point of view with other things and ultimately with the whole universe of being. Not even an atom of matter is excluded from the series of this chain. To understand the nature of the single material substance we not only have to consider its immediate environment, but the causes and conditions, which have created that environment and so on *ad infinitum*. And the same principle can be applied to human beings. Each individual being thinks himself independent; but our whole life is involved in relation to that of others and who surround us or precede us and so on *ad infinitum*. Rightly viewed, each individual is only a transition point in a movement of thought that goes back through the interminable past and onwards through the interminable future. So, no individual thing or being has any independent and self-determined existence. They are in some way or other related to others of past, future and present in a chain of causal series. So they are in no way independent entities. Thus, the substantial reality of individual existence vanishes because it is not the cause of itself. We can apply the

term “Substance” only to the whole, the totality of all things, which includes everything and determines them. That whole is the only individual, the only being which is “in itself and is conceived through itself.”²⁸

In one of his letters, Spinoza writes:

All bodies are surrounded by other bodies, and reciprocally determine and are determined by them to exist and act in a fixed and definite way. Hence, it follows that every body, in so far as it exists under a certain definite modification, ought to be considered as merely a part of the whole universe, which agrees with its whole, and thereby is in intimate union with all the other parts; and since the nature of the universe is not limited, but absolutely infinite, it is clear that by this nature, with its infinite powers, the parts are modified in an infinite number of ways, and compelled to pass through an infinity of variations. Moreover, when *I think of the universe as a substance*, I conceive of a yet closer union of each part with the whole; for, as I have elsewhere shown, it is the nature of substance to be infinite, and therefore each single part belongs to the nature of corporeal substance, so that apart therefrom it can neither exist nor be conceived. And as to the human mind, I conceive of it also as a part of nature, as having in it an infinite power of thinking, which, as infinite, contains in it the idea of all nature, and whose thoughts run parallel with existence.²⁹

By “Substance”, therefore, we have to understand the idea of the totality of being or the universe as a whole. Proposition VIII of Spinoza’s *Ethics* states the nature of substance that “Every substance is necessarily infinite”. Its nature involves its existence because it cannot be produced by anything external, as it is self-caused. It does not exist as finite, for it would then be limited by some thing else of the same

kind and then there would be two substances with identical attributes, which is absurd. It therefore exists as infinite. All finite existence involves a partial negation and infinite existence is the absolute affirmation of the nature. So its infinitude is necessary and so there exists only one substance, which exists necessarily and absolutely. It is not only *causa sui* but also *causa omnium rerum* and this substance is identified with Universe. That is only one substance of the identical nature. That is identified with “God or Nature”. That substance is absolutely infinite as well as indivisible. If it could be divided, then there would be several absolute substances or they would lose their absoluteness. When divided, it is absurd. So no extended substance is divisible. Any part of substance would be termed as finite substance, which involves contradiction. All these criteria inhere in the idea of God or God fulfils all the criteria of substance. Besides God, no substance can be granted or conceived. As God is absolutely infinite, he has infinite attributes that expresses the essence of substance. God exists necessarily. If there were any substance besides God to be granted, then that substance would have those attributes which are ascribed to God. Thus, two substances with the same attribute would exist, which is absurd. So besides God no substance can be granted. God is one, that is, only one substance can be granted in the universe.³⁰ God’s existence necessarily follows from his nature. Whatever is, is in God.

God by definition is the being who possesses infinite attributes. The orthodox theology uses the word 'God' and ascribes the definition to him. Therefore, the single substance identified with nature as a whole, is identified with God. Spinoza's identification of God with Nature hurts the sentiments of theologians who designated him as a pantheist. *Deus Sive Natura*³¹, the inevitable name of the unique, infinite and all-inclusive substance.³² From the necessity of divine nature, infinite number of things follow in an infinite number of ways. The divine nature has absolutely infinite attributes (*Ethics*, Definition VI), each of which expresses infinite essence after its kind. Those infinite numbers of things fall within the sphere of infinite intellect (*Ethics*, Pt. I, Proposition XVI). Without God nothing can ever be conceived. All the things are in God. Nothing exists outside God – whereby he can be restricted. He acts solely by the laws of his own nature and nothing can compel him to act in any manner. There can be no cause, which moves him to act. He is the sole free cause because he exists by the sole necessity of his divine nature (*Ethics*, Proposition XI and XIV) and acts necessarily.³³ All things are predetermined by God, not through his free will or absolute fiat, but from his very nature.

Spinoza's identification of God with Nature conceived to be the outcome of exact definition and rigorous logic.³⁴ If all things are part of God, then the three – dimensional universe itself is also a part of God. This means that, God has a body. However, Spinoza criticizes those who anthropomorphize the nature of God's body by maintaining that it is finite, and even susceptible to having emotions (given the

fact that human emotions are the result of a human body). But this imagination hinders our reason to think that it is the logical necessity to identify God with nature. When we think logically and distinguish God from all images and descriptions as a person, that logic must lead us to recognize that God and Nature are indistinguishable and are the same thing. Spinoza harshly rejects the limitations on God's physical nature. He presents two traditional criticisms of the view that God has a body. First, there are absurdities involved when we consider quantity to be infinite. For example, one foot has twelve times the infinite number of points that an inch does. Second, God is active, and divided matter is passive. The two are thus incompatible. In response, Spinoza argues that the key error in all these arguments is the assumption that extended substance is composed of parts. Instead, he maintains that the notion of extended substance must be drawn from the more foundational notion of infinite quality, and infinite quality cannot be measured.³⁵

There are some distinctions based on imagination, relating to God and Nature. God is viewed as the creator and nature as His creation. God is imagined as the artificer and Nature, including all the creatures as his creation. According to Spinoza, this is a misconception about God. It treats God as a super human being with will and purpose. Will is only a particular way of thinking. It may be pointed out in this connection that no volition can exist, nor conditioned to act, unless conditioned by some cause other than itself. Further, the second cause also has to be conditioned by a third cause and so on *ad infinitum*. Whether finite or infinite 'will' exists and it has

a cause by which it acts. So it cannot be called a free but a necessary or constrained cause. It follows that God does not act according to the freedom of the will. Will and intellect stand in the same relation to the nature of God as do motion and rest. God cannot be said to act from the freedom of will, from where many results may follow. 'Will' no more is contained in the nature of God. It stands in the same relation to God, as motion and rest. They follow from the necessity of the divine nature and are conditioned to exist and act in a particular manner. Theologians and metaphysicians involve themselves in contradictions by imagining God on the model of human analogy having will and purpose and as a creator.

There are other reasons in favour of choice of this world as the best of all possible worlds. 'Things could not have been brought into being by God in any manner or in any order different from that which has in fact obtained' ³⁶. As all things exist and act in a particular way through the necessity of divine nature, so if things would have been conditioned to act in different way, the order of nature would have been different, totally different from what it is now and there would also have been a different nature of God and that would have existed and consequently there would have been more than one God which is according to Proposition XIV, is absurd. Therefore things could not have been brought into being by God in any other manner. God's will cannot be different from God's perfection. All the decrees of God have been ratified from all eternity by God himself. If it were otherwise, would be convicted of imperfection or change.

The popular traditional Christian idea of God as the creator is a fiction of imagination for Spinoza. If we logically analyze, then there would be only one self-dependent substance, the ultimate subject. The attributes and modifications can be explained by its nature; so that substance must be necessarily infinite and must be identified with Nature as a whole. If it were not identified with Nature, then there would exist something other than itself and there could not be any cause of its existence other than itself. So it would be self-caused, a substance. So there would be another substance, which is impossible and absurd. So the unique, self-determining and all-inclusive substance is Nature. The notion of a creator distinct from its creation is a contradiction in term as involving the conception of two substances, one the cause of the other which is absurd. If the possibility of a creator distinct from his creation is denied, then God or Nature is conceived as the same, self-creating, depending on nothing for its existence. The power of God is the same as his essence (*Ethics*, Pt. I, Proposition XXXIV) 'Things could not have been produced in any manner or order other than that in which they were produced' (*Ethics*, Pt. I, Proposition XXXIII). The denial of the possibility of a transcended creator leads to the following: There is no will or choice involved in the creation of Universe. The power of God is the same as his essence. This means that everything that is created by God in the universe can be construed as following from the essential and eternal attributes and modes of God's essence. The created universe is the necessary expression of God's essential nature.

If God is thought to be distinguished from Nature, then God cannot be infinite and all-powerful because there is something which limits God's power and perfection; therefore God cannot be infinite or perfect, for there are some attributes of Nature which God does not possess. Finite and imperfect God is a contradiction in terms.

Spinoza rejected the traditional theological distinction between creator and creation. From Proposition XVIII (Part. I of *Ethics*), it is proved that God is the indwelling, immanent and not the transient cause of all things. All things are in God and conceived through God. Besides God, there can be no substance and therefore nothing is external to God.³⁷ If God is conceived to set the universe in motion by an act of creation, then he would be described as its transient cause, but this idea involves self-contradiction. Spinoza rejected the idea of God who sets the universe in motion because that act of God might occur at a certain time and will cease; therefore God's activity as eternal cause will also cease. Spinoza's conception of eternal is opposed to the idea of 'occurring and ceasing'. There is no fixed time which we can trace back as the act of creation occurring. This will make the act of creation as an event within the temporal order of natural events, which would hamper its eternality. There is no need to refer to God for the changes occurring in the universe.

It was a kind of belief during those days that God is the transient cause, the prime mover, who has his own laws of motion and who has set the universe in motion. The mystics also do not agree with the views of Spinoza. In other words, the Spinozistic view that God is Nature and Nature is God did not find favour either with the theologians or with the mystics. God or Nature is said to be free in the following sense:

That thing is said to be free which exists by mere necessity of its own nature and is determined in its actions by itself alone.³⁸

This definition is applicable only to God or Nature. Nothing satisfies this definition other than God or Nature.

Except substance, everything is less than its nature and is affected by causes and its existence cannot be explained by its essence, whereas God or Nature has the opposite characteristic. God's essence and existence are equivalent.³⁹ Both imply each other. God is the cause of Himself and essence of his existence. He is self-creating. God or Nature needs nothing for their existence. His essential attributes express His existence. Only God is self-creating and needs nothing nor is conditioned by anything else for its existence. Rather, all other things except God or Nature, are conditioned by God and all other things are finite whereas, God or Nature is infinite and nothing besides it is infinite. That which is finite has a conditioned existence, cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of

God.⁴⁰ Substance and modes make up the sum total of existence. Modes or finite things are a kind of modification, which are finite and conditioned by some causes which are in turn conditioned by another cause and so on so forth *ad infinitum*. Everything is in God and depends on God, without Him they cannot be conceived. God or Nature is only absolutely free. This argument implies the proposition:

In the nature of things nothing contingent is admitted,
but all things are determined by the necessity of divine
nature to exist and act in a certain way.⁴¹

Everything is 'determined' within Nature. Everything that exists in nature must be directly or indirectly deducible from the Nature or God, so they are determined and therefore intelligible. All things are inherent in the necessity of divine nature, nothing is outside. Everything in the universe that exists is determined and nothing is contingent. Spinoza's conclusion is so strong that one cannot avoid it. There is no way except to accept it, otherwise one would find oneself bound within various contradictions. The basic proposition is so self-evident that its avoidance means lack of clear thinking and not attending to necessary definitions. Our ignorance of the laws of nature and our commonsense beliefs create so much prejudice in us that we cannot understand the universe in its whole.

According to Spinoza, God or Nature is a free and originating cause, and the only free, because the only self-creating cause. 'Free' here must not be understood in humanistic implication of the word 'free'. Spinoza in his metaphysics made clear of

the meanings of certain words, to prevent certain misunderstandings, when applied to God. He made it clear in his philosophy that no term, when applied to God can possibly bear the meaning which it has when applied to human beings.⁴² Generally, when we treat human action as free, 'free' does imply voluntary which does not necessarily follow. If we apply this meaning analogously to God's action, confusion always follows from the word 'free'. But it is meaningless and wrong to think of God, acting either voluntarily or involuntarily; or acting and creating freely because He acts necessarily:

Things could not have been produced by God in any manner or order other than that in which they were produced.⁴³

God or Nature is free in the sense being self-determined. But when we use the word 'free' for human actions, this means that they are the result of indetermined or arbitrary choice.

When Nature is conceived as free and self-creating, we think of Nature as *Natura Naturans*, in the words of Spinoza. Here Nature is active as a creator, creating herself and delegating its powers to the infinite attributes and various modes of these attributes. Throughout Spinoza's philosophy Nature is conceived of as manifesting in two very different ways, having two different aspects, even if it is one. In its active aspect, it is a creator what is *Natura Naturans*. In another aspect, it is conceived in its passive way. Here Nature in its passive capacity is *Natura Naturata*. Everything in

the universe is deducible from the essential and eternal attributes and modes. So “the power of God (to produce) is the same as his essence”.⁴⁴ The created universe (*Natura Naturata*) is the necessary expression of God’s essential nature. Nature here represents itself as creation. Both these concepts about God are equally important. Nature as the unique creator and as the unique creation both are equally important to think of and both these concepts have equally important meaning in understanding of Nature. They are not only correct concepts of nature but are also complementary to each other.

According to Spinoza, the actual world is one of the possible worlds. The actual world is the only possible world. It is the only possible world because it logically and necessarily follows from the nature of God and no choice or will is involved in creation. This doctrine of essential identity of the creator and his creation though seems mystical and unscientific, yet leads logically to the conclusion that everything belongs to a single intelligible, causal system. Everything which exists in this universe is intelligible to a being having complete knowledge of the whole order of Nature. Only the complete knowledge of God helps us in understanding Nature.

Those who conceived God as a transcendent creator distinct from his creation were in dilemma. Either God is conceived as *absolutely* free to create the world he chooses, in which case our knowledge about the world which is static and immutable, may vary from time to time because the freedom of God to choose the

best possible world may vary from time to time. So the immutable essences in Nature on which the possibility of our secure, adequate and unique knowledge is based, must be rejected. Then, the attributes on which things of Nature are based, cannot be discovered by logical analysis, whereby there would remain no distinction between logically necessary and contingent. Such a distinction would have no value and there would remain no true or false or legitimate knowledge about the laws and events of nature. All knowledge would be based on God's arbitrary will and there would not have any *a priori* insight into logical necessities. Alternatively, if God is not absolutely free to create any world consisting of his arbitrary choice of properties, but free only to choose the best of all logically possible worlds; his choice would be based on what was logically best possible. To preserve god's freedom in the creation of the world and for a rational explanation of the order of Nature, one can say that he had sufficient reason for choosing to create the actual, logically possible world. To reconcile the demands between orthodox theology and claims of rationalistic science, Leibniz made this compromise. God created the world by his free will but his creation can be understood by the exercise of reason. The principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason were the guides to choose the existing world.

This pantheistic doctrine is the expression of a unified science that helps to explain every natural change and event within a single system of causes. This type of theory has always attracted the attention of the theoreticians. In the seventeenth century it

was known as the *a priori* science about the creation and structure of the universe which now in this century can be regarded as *a priori* thesis about the structure of the language of science.

Spinoza's *Ethics* was written in such a way that every proposition has some link with the other. No proposition is logically prior than the other. To understand his theory one has to travel around the whole circle at least once before one begins to understand. All the propositions are logically dependent upon one another.

His conception of the unity of Nature is a thesis about scientific optimism and an invitation to rational inquiry, and not an appeal to mystical or imaginary intuition. Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz applied the so-called mathematical or geometrical method which was accepted as the model during 17th century as the method in philosophy. Descartes initiated this method, Spinoza followed it and pushed it to its logical ends. Though Leibniz made use of the mathematical method, yet reached different conclusion because he redefined the concept of substance.

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CHAPTER III

ATTRIBUTE

Spinoza conceives substance as thing in thing/property distinction. Substance has logical independence. In contrast, modes are properties of things and are 'in something else' and 'is conceived through' something else. From these concepts, it may be deduced that modes are in other items and conceptually depend on them. But every predicable item is not a mode. The absolutely basic and irreducible properties are called "attributes". An attribute for Spinoza is *a basic way of being*. According to Spinoza:

Each particular attribute of the one substance must be conceived through itself¹.

It is the 'most general property'. Descartes says:

There is always one principal property of substance which constitutes its nature and essence and on which all the others depend.² God or substance consisting of infinite attributes each of which expresses the eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists³.

Spinoza's definition of attribute is:

By 'attribute' I mean that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance⁴.

In other words, it is not the essence itself of the substance, but that essence relatively to our intelligence.⁵ Each attribute of the one substance must be conceived through itself.⁶

Though there are infinite number of attributes we know only two of them i.e., 'extension' and 'thought' through our intellect. This can be understood from the definition which spinoza offers, i.e., "The more reality or being a thing has, the greater the number of its attributes".⁷ Thus according to spinoza, the reality or being of a thing can be measured by the number of its attributes. Those things are more real whose number of attributes are more.

Each attribute, being the attributes of the infinite and absolute substance expresses necessary, infinite and eternal nature. Spinoza in one of his letters wrote,

By attribute I understand the same thing, only that it is called attribute with reference to the understanding *attributing* a certain nature to substance.⁸

Further, in Letter 9, Spinoza explained attribute as:

I understand the same by attribute [as I do by substance], except that it is called attribute with respect to the intellect, which attributes such and such a nature to substance.⁹

Spinoza often uses language of psychology to make logical or conceptual points. According to him, substance differs from attribute only by the difference between a substantival and adjectival presentation of the very same content.

In Letter 9 Spinoza maintains,

I mean by 'attribute' the same as I mean by 'substance' except for a difference in logical form: we use the

concept of substance to think of what has the attribute, and we use the concept of attribute to think of what the substance has; but it is the same conceptual content in each case.¹⁰

In *Ethics*, Spinoza states that there is only a difference of logical form and not of content between the concepts of 'substance' and 'attribute'. Occasionally he goes too far by implying that attributes are substances. One can yield to the view through argument : if substance X has attribute A, then A is the essence of X; if A is the essence of X then X is conceived through A; a substance is conceived only through itself; and so if substance X has attribute A, then $X = A$ ¹¹. Doubts arise in this assumption. So, there must be something wrong. Spinoza clearly holds that there are at least two attributes but only one substance.

Spinoza sometimes gives the impression that he did not distinguish substance from attributes; he uses the phrase 'substance, or what is the same thing, their attributes, and makes certain attribution to 'God or all of God's attributes'¹². Some scholars have tried to reconcile this apparent contradiction by supposing that Spinoza was using a notion of 'relative identity'. Spinoza is supposed to hold that thought and extension are substances and attributes at the same time. But there is no independent and clear evidence of Spinoza's holding the implausible relative identity thesis.

Curley's view seems to explain more clearly what Spinoza wanted to explain. His view is that 'Spinoza identifies substance with the totality of its attributes'¹³ which

seems to be proved by his definition of “God” as “a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes”. But as it is not clear what Spinoza means by the expression ‘consisting’, so the gap remains there.

Curley wants to do justice by treating attributes as *thing – like* and so he supposes that for Spinoza, a substance ‘consists’ of numerous *thing – like* items which are its attributes. But the only sense we can attach to it is that the substance is an aggregate, a collection with members or a complex with parts. But Curley would not have attributed to Spinoza any such view of substance. He has not given a complete interpretation. All the expressions that he has used are exaggerated expressions of his view. The difference between substance and attribute are formal rather than content-based. In the Letter 9, Spinoza himself speaks of ‘attributing’ attributes to a substance and in the same letter he also seems clearly to imply that a substance and an attribute are ‘one and the same thing’. In all these cases, the textual evidences are apparently contradictory forcing one to take some passages more literally than others.¹⁴

Spinoza argues that God has ‘infinite attributes’. He often takes infinity to imply totality. Infinite things may bear the meaning ‘all logically possible things’. There is also evidence in Spinoza’s explanation of his definition of ‘God’, where he equates ‘infinite attributes’ with ‘everything which expresses an essence and involves no negation’. Spinoza takes ‘infinite’ to entail ‘all’. He says that incompleteness entails

finiteness, and so by contraposition, infinity entails totality, the whole and nothing is omitted. When Spinoza says that God has infinite attributes, he means that only God exists in every possible way. The concept of 'infinite attributes' that Spinoza uses in defining 'God' is least arbitrary, because it is best supported by theological doctrine. There was a strong tradition during that century to treat God as an entity with the most possible reality which is proved in the definition – that the more real a thing is the more attributes it has. So God has every attribute, that it, exists in every basic way in which something can exist. But it does not imply how many basic ways there are. So God involves totality or supremacy. Spinoza had reasons for holding that every basic way of being must be instantiated by the actual world. That which is not instantiated is not an attribute at all, since an attribute is a basic way in accord with which things happen. Even if he does not give reasons why there are more than two attributes still he holds that there are other attributes too. For him, though the universe exists in every possible basic way, we only know thought and extension. So Spinoza argues that thought and extension are the only possible basic ways of being¹⁵

According to Spinoza, God's essential nature being infinite, there are infinite ways in which He can be conceived by the intellect, and therefore there must be infinite attributes. Each attribute, being the essential nature of God or substance, is itself infinite; if it were not infinite, it could not be an expression of the essential nature of God. God possesses all positive attributes and is perfect, because any finite list of

attributes cannot be said to be the only attributes which God possesses. To say this would be to make God the subject of a simple negative proposition. That there are infinite attributes is proved from the interpretation given above of attributes though only two are known to human intellect. All these attributes are thought of constituting the predicates of the subject substance who is God or Nature. By attributing something to God is to attribute some quality to God. So each proposition which applies to God is either necessarily true or self-contradictory. We cannot attribute any negative proposition to God or Nature. All the positive attributes are applied to God. God possesses all the attributes and nothing is outside the nature of substance. The attributes are infinite in number and therefore any finite number of attributes are only some of the attributes, not all the attributes of God. Any finite number of attributes does not make the complete list. Any incomplete list of attributes cannot apprehend the true nature of God. We may describe God's power and activity in any manner, but it can never exhaust God's power. In other words, we can never say that God cannot be conceived in any other way. Because God is all inclusive and infinite; it therefore exhausts all positive attributes in it. By attaching a limited number of attributes, we would thereby limit the power and perfection of God.

Although we can not explain God in any language which limits its perfection, still we find that Nature itself consists of things in totality, which are extended in space as well as mental events or thoughts. Extension and thought are the all-pervasive

characteristics of the self-creating Universe as it presents itself to the limited human intellect. The Universe can be conceived either as a system of extended bodies, an infinite spatial system, or as a system of thought; both conceptions of the Universe are complete in themselves. Though Universe is a combination of these two systems, but they cannot be reduced to each other. Thought cannot be conceived as the modification of extension and extension can never be conceived as the modification of thought. ¹⁶

Though the differences in the absolute unity cannot be logically reached, yet everything shows the element of difference. The differentiation of substance into attributes is empirically proved, according to Spinoza. Substance does not determine the attributes but the differences are determined *by us*.¹⁷ The attribute doctrine of Spinoza is important because it explains and solves some of the problems of natural philosophy. This doctrine can best be understood with reference to Descartes who made the distinction between thought and extension.

‘Physical’ and ‘mental’ are generally understood as bodies and minds. Descartes’ main intention was to set the limit and scope of mathematical science which concerns itself with properties of bodies in space. Nature was conceived as consisting of things having extension as described in mathematical physics and ‘thought’ was never used to describe anything in nature. In Descartes’ philosophy, extension and thought are two self contained and independent realities. Physical

objects are ordinarily equated with extension; those which have some place in space, whereas thought does not occupy any space and spatial relation is not applicable to it. Mind is not inside the head and thoughts, like any brain cell does not occupy any space. 'Within the world of thought Descartes conceived human mind as 'a created thinking substance' (*substantial cogitans creata*); an individual mind is a 'thinking thing' (*ens cogitans*)'.¹⁸ Ordinarily speaking, the distinction between Extension and Thought implies the distinction between physical and mental. Physical objects occupy space and the mental does not possess any spatial property at all. For Descartes, extended things have spatial properties and extension means the whole actual system of space and spatial relations which constitutes the physical world. Descartes philosophy made a contribution to analytical geometry and his conception of physical world as extension was meant to construct a new physical science in geometrical terms. All the objects including their properties, qualities and the changes occurring in them nature were all explained in mathematical terms. Change in properties were expressed as change of configuration in the extended world. Qualitative difference of our sensation are to be replaced by the quantitative changes in science.

This type of physical science expressed in geometrical terms is inoperative in the mental realm. The world of thought is different from the extended world and therefore the geometrical terms cannot describe and conceive what is happening in the mental world. It is a very different, separate and unique compartment of reality

which cannot be explained in mathematical terms. So, the Universe or Nature conceived to be consisting of two very different and exclusive compartments of reality which do not overlap because the two worlds can never mutually explain each other from their own point of view which are separate. Descartes viewed them as two substances or quasi-substances. So, for Descartes, the world of thought and the world of extension are two substances, as all the characteristics of substance are applicable to them. The changes in the extended world can be explained only by the laws governing them. There is no necessary connection between the two worlds, which can be known through the exercise of reason. It is a fact that changes in extended world correspond to the change in mental world, but we cannot deduce such change as the necessary consequence of the mental change. So, according to Descartes, connection between the two realms remains impenetrable to our reason.

Descartes visualised two substances, i.e. matter and mind, and this view, in subsequent period gave rise to certain insurmountable difficulties. Spinoza tried to solve these difficulties by converting these independent substances into two attributes of an all inclusive substance.

A person is the combination of body and mind. The two entities are related to each other in causal relation according to one view because bodily events cause mental events, and mental events cause bodily changes and so on. Sometime bodily parts move to fulfill certain wish and sometime injury in body causes painful sensation. So

the two-substance doctrine, of Thought and Extended world, find it difficult to explain, how the two independent and self-contained systems are causally related? Both are so related that one cannot be explained without reference to the other. Any change or modification in one can be explained only with reference to the modification in the other. But as substances, Thought and Extension can never be causally related, which is logically impossible to conceive, because substance is self-caused who has no cause outside it. So, change in one world cannot be the cause of change in another world. Descartes somehow conceived it as a mystery which is unintelligible to human reason. Malebranche explained it not in terms of causal relation but in terms of divine interventions on occasions. God is required to fill the gap which reason cannot. He has to intervene in order to maintain the order of natural events.¹⁹ But Spinoza, truly as a rationalist, rejected all divine mysteries and interventions in his metaphysics. He therefore, maintains that there are two pervasive features of the Universe as it presents itself to our mind. The Universe as a system of extended or spatial things and the Universe as a system of ideas or thought, must be interpreted as two aspects of a single reality; they are not to be conceived as two distinction substances. They are two attributes of a single substance, according to Spinoza.

Thus, according to Spinoza, Nature is conceived simultaneously as a system of extended things and thinking or animated things. So, everything which exists in space is in someway, also animated and *Vice Versa*. Mind and Body are the same

order of causes, conceived under two different attributes of a single substance. Both are the same substance conceived under two attributes – ‘whether we think of Nature under the attribute of Extension or under the attribute of Thought or under any other attributes whatever, we shall discover one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes’.²⁰ For Spinoza, human beings and other individual things are special cases of general identity of connection of causes in Nature.

According to Hampshire, the idea of God contains everything of the extended world and the world of thought. This was the main theme in Spinoza’s philosophy, which was misinterpreted because of a simple equation of thought and extension with the mental and physical. According to Spinoza, there is no extended thing of which there is no idea and there can be no idea which is not the idea of extended things. Both the ideas and extended things belong to all-inclusive substance - Nature. The power and perfection of body and mind are the same. Below human beings, come animals who have less power and perfection and the idea of animal body does not constitute mind. The difference is due to the degree of complication in structure and organisation. To Spinoza, the ideas and the objects of ideas, their *ideata* correspond and coincide with each other. Descartes put himself in difficulty by treating extension and thought as two different substances. Had he treated substance or God as unique in character, he could have overcome the complications. Mind and Body are not two orders but two infinite attributes which prove to be complete in all respects. This proves that real is rational, or, in Spinoza’s terminology - *ideata* and ideas coincide. Descartes’

philosophy separates ideas from the extended world and to guarantee that thoughts correspond to reality, he appealed to a transcendent God. But before it is proved that our thoughts correspond to reality and therefore before it is proved that real knowledge is accessible to us, we must first prove that God exists and is not a deceiver. If we can prove the existence of God, we can be certain that clear and distinct ideas are true. However, if we cannot guarantee that clear and distinct ideas are true, we cannot prove that God exists. So, to prove the existence of God it is necessary to prove that the clear and distinct ideas are true and *vice-versa*. Spinoza is logically entitled to take it for granted that our thought and judgements reflect the order of physical events or things. For Spinoza, the degree of reality of idea or knowledge corresponds to the *ideatum*. He argues that the Universe contains in it the hierarchy of ideas and its corresponding hierarchy of things. The finite and perishing things have most confused and inadequate ideas, and infinite and eternal order has the most clear and adequate ideas. They correspond to each other. So, the degrees of rationality and the degrees of reality cohere everywhere. The more the reality, the greater the degree of rationality. If one's purity of understanding rises above, one can be near to God and can realise the nature of being. But no human mind can ever reflect the whole order of nature and attain absolutely perfect knowledge. Mind or idea decides the proportion of reality the body has as a natural object and ideas are formed by the position of natural objects. They are complementary to each other. There is a corresponding relationship between the degree of reality of natural objects and the ideas of those objects. This is the paradox of degrees of animation. Even if

certain things in this universe can be said to have no mind but all things are more or less animated. This statement implies that for every extended thing there is an idea of that thing. Spinoza treats the union of mind and body which constitutes a person, a special case of the coincidence of ideas and their *ideata*.²¹ The Cartesian dualism creates an impression that mental development is independent of physical development.

Spinoza attaches 'infinite attributes' to the conception of 'infinite substance'. 'Substance' or 'God' consists of 'infinite attributes' and each attribute expresses infinite essence. But the question arises: what is the reason of this differentiation between the absolute substance and the indivisible unity? Spinoza's answer to this question is that there is no logical division in the nature of substance. Substance is the unity of different elements but logically it is an indivisible unity. Without any proof, Spinoza asserts that substance has different essential elements which are its attributes and those elements are necessary to designate it as a substance.

Spinoza reached at the ultimate unity of knowing and being through regressive movement by removing the limits of finite things. The difference between the finite and the infinite is the difference of their limit. Numbers and measures are the fictitious limitations of the imagination by which infinite substances divided into parts. By false abstraction only we can break up space into parts. Space is one and continuous and not made up of separate parts. "Figure" therefore, is "nothing

positive".²² All the finite bodies have their existence only by falsely abstracting limits. So, every limitation is negation or non-existence; they only seem to be positive existences, but are not really positive. By negating negation, one can reach at the real or affirmative being. By eliminating the fictitious limits, one can get the real, the absolutely indeterminate, the Being. One can get the differences by introducing the non-entity. A determined absolute would be a partly non-existing absolute. For this reason, Spinoza is far from ascribing any attribute to his absolute substance. To do so;

...would be to conceive under the category of non-existence that whose definition affirms existence²³

Though Spinoza argues that substance is the negation of all determinations, yet he also passes from negation to affirmation of all determinations. The blank entity gets filled up with various determined existences. The absolute unity which contains no difference within it becomes identified with the unity which contains all differences. By introducing the number and measure in the absolute substance, thought seems to divide the substance. Substance - the purely indeterminate whole consists of infinite attributes modified infinitely. Spinoza adopted this transformation of his logic because he was aware of the consequences. Spinoza rejected all determinations from the nature of substance, but at the same time very carefully introduced an element of determination in it. Our thought makes it possible to form a theory with opposite elements where the rejected or excluded elements make their presence felt secretly. Substance affirms nothing in particular, but avoids all negation. Universals have no

value without the particulars. When particular vanishes, universal also vanishes from the thought. Unity is meaningless without diversity, as whole without parts or cause without effect is. Spinoza did not deny the reality of particular existence of the finite world *apart from* their unity. The particulars are meaningless independent of the universal but gain their reality only in reference to the universal. Though particulars have no reality independent of the universals, yet Spinoza did not assert the reality of the abstract universals. The substance realises itself in and through accidents.

Now the question is: how can we explain the ever changing forms of multiplicity with the help of changeless, motionless absolute. Spinoza explains this by arguing that the differences are not differences in the substance itself but in substance *in relation to the finite intelligence which contemplates it*. He argues:

By attribute I understand that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence.²⁴

Only the understanding attributes a certain nature to substance which is not there in the substance itself.

Thus to attribute certain nature to God, is not to affect the absolute indeterminate unity of the divine nature. The absolute nature of God lies beyond all the conceptions formed of Him by finite intelligence. The finite intelligence sees things that arise from its own nature. It cannot see things otherwise than itself. Therefore, according to Spinoza, as man is a modification of thought and extension, he knows God under

these two attributes only. Man's finite intelligence cannot grasp the infinite nature of God.

A being absolutely infinite, therefore, is necessarily defined as a being which consists of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses a certain essence eternal and infinite.²⁵

To the finite minds, God is conceived under these two attributes but to an infinite understanding it appears in infinite number of ways.

If attributes are thought of as the predicates of substance, then it does not limit the infiniteness of substance. Spinoza therefore suggested a solution to avoid the problem, that attributes express nothing negative but positive, expresses infinite essences. So being infinite in itself, it possesses no limitation.

All finite things are bounded by others of the same kind. But in the infinite, all finite distinctions disappear and there remains only distinctions which are infinite, which is unbounded and unlimited. Those infinite attributes are of different kinds. Mental objects can never be limited by extended ones and *vice versa*. Ideas do not occupy space. Attributes are unlimited in their own sphere. They do not affect the infinitude of each other or of the substance. It is no limitation of infinite extension that it cannot think, and of infinite thought that it is not extended. So, infinite diversity of attributes is unlimited in their own sphere. Substance is not made up of thought, extension and other attributes. Its nature is not that it is the combination of infinite attributes. If

anything is a combination or aggregation of various qualities, then each of them must be less than the whole, and would express a limitation. But substance is not the totality of its attribute. According to Spinoza, each attribute expresses the same infinite reality and the whole of that reality. Each attribute is a perfect whole of an aspect and therefore any change or annihilation does not affect other attributes; they would remain the same as before. Attributes are independent, parallel, and equivalent manifestations of the same infinite whole. As they are complementary, parallel and independent whole, they can never meet each other. They have independent reality and express the whole of reality from their nature. Each attribute contains the same content of reality or being of substance. Spinoza argues that “each attribute of the one substance must be conceived through itself”.²⁶ He again argues that:

It is obvious that though two attributes are conceived as distinct that is, the one without the aid of the other, yet we cannot therefore conclude that they constitute two different entities or substances. For it is of the nature of substance that each of its attributes is conceived through itself (since all the attributes which it has existed simultaneously in it), nor could one be produced by another; but each expresses the reality or being of substance. It is therefore by no means absurd to ascribe a plurality of attributes to one substance²⁷.

Thus, Spinoza combines both the notions of absolute indeterminate unity with multiplicity of attributes without affecting the absolute unity of substance. The attributes are not different in kind, though they are infinite in their own way, Their expressions are the same but they seem to be different because of the way we look at them. Difference in kind is only the difference of one aspect. Spinoza at once adjusts

the two views together and it was possible for him to do that because the diversity is purely subjective. He made it possible to reconcile the diversity of attributes with absolute self-identical unity of substance.

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CHAPTER IV

MODE

The doctrine of attribute, though legitimately deduced, still it can explain only the region of infinite and leaves the world of finite things unexplained. So in his doctrine of 'Modes', Spinoza wanted to explain the gap between the infinite region and the finite world. Thus, the doctrine of 'Modes' is the next step in the process to find in substance the first principle of all things. Attributes along with substance have the characteristics of being conceived through itself. They depend on their own being for their existence. They are infinite in nature. So they do not point to anything beyond their own nature; they contain no element of self-differentiations by which it might explain finite world through its own nature. So, the attributes, like the substances, are pure self-identical unities. It is impossible to prove the finite world through the infinite, self-identical unities. Even if the infinite is supposed as the medium through which the colourless unity of substance is revealed, still one cannot prove.

It is in Spinoza's doctrine of 'Modes' and of their relation to substance that we find the explanation of the existence of the finite world, and of its relation to the infinite.

Spinoza maintains:

By mode, I understand, affections of substance, or that which is in another, through which also it is conceived¹. Modes can neither exist nor be conceived without substance; therefore they can exist only in the divine nature, and can be conceived only through it². Besides substance and modes nothing exists, and

modes are nothing but the affections of the attributes of God”³.

Finite modes are identified with individual things, thus he maintains:

They are nothing but affections of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain definite manner⁴.

All finite things are dependent on and are derived from God, the ultimate substance who alone is self-existent. The being of finite things are not in themselves. They exist in others being; they are in God. Again, they are not self caused but the cause of their existence is in another being,

The modes of the divine nature follows therefrom necessarily and not contingently, and that, whether we consider the divine nature absolutely, or as determined to act in a certain manner. Further, God is the cause of these modes not only in so far as they simply exist, but in so far as they are considered as determined to any action⁵.

In the above passages modes are related to God in a way which is expressed as “following from God” and “caused by God”. God as the cause of the modes has two fold character viz., that of the divine nature “considered absolutely”, and that of the divine nature “in so far as it is determined to act in a certain manner”. This distinction can best be understood through Spinoza’s argument. That which is finite and has a determinate existence cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God; for whatever follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God is infinite and eternal. It must therefore follow from God or from some attribute

of God, in so far as He is considered as affected by some mode, or in so far as He is modified by a modification which is finite and has a determined existence. This mode again must in turn be determined by another which also is finite, and this last again by another, and *ad infinitum* ⁶.

So, finite things considered as the modes of God are not produced by the absolute nature of God rather the nature of God is modified by the endless series of finite modes. This connection of causes appears throughout whole of Spinoza's metaphysics which solved many difficulties involved in the relation between purely indeterminate God to the world of finite things existing in space and time. Everything which exists in this universe is to be conceived as a 'modification' of the unique, all-inclusive substance. Everything which exists is the expression of two infinite attributes that is thought and extension. A mode exists in something else, through which it must be conceived.⁷ That means it exists solely in God, and solely through God it can be conceived. God is not only the cause of things coming into existence, but also of their continuance in existence, that is, God is the cause of the being of things. Finite things cannot be produced by the absolute nature of substance but follows from attributes which are modified. Substance and modes make up the sum total of existence, while modes are the modifications of the attributes of God. Finite things alone can follow from the modification of attributes. Thus, it follows from Spinoza's arguments that, he divides modes into finite and infinite.

Spinoza argues that if modes are regarded as qualities of substance then the infinite modes of extension must be the feature of the extended world exemplified in everything. Curley argues that infinite modes are causal features of the world, and a statement attributing such a mode to the world would be a basic causal law. In his view, a finite mode is caused by another finite mode and it finally is caused by an infinite mode. So an infinite mode is the cause and that is the causal law. These infinite modes depend on the substance. Finite modes depend on it because they are causally at its mercy. According to Spinoza, body and mind are one and the same thing. In other words, the mode of extension and the idea of it 'are one and the same thing'. To say that my body is a mode implies that it is an 'affection' state or quality of the extended substance. Each mode is the mode under all the attributes. Our body is constituted with the combination of extended and thinking beings. The modes are trans-attributes which means that they are combinable with thought and extension and with other attributes if there is any. In the doctrine of mode, Spinoza argues that there is a correspondence between mode of extension and that of thought. The mode of extension is identical with the mode of thought. For example, the triangle and the idea of the triangle are one and the same thing, which is explained through different attributes. Any thought-extension complex is one mode, which can be explained through the attribute of thought or extension. That is why one can find one and the same order and connection of causes. But this view conflicts with Spinoza's thesis that there is no causal flow from one attribute to other. His view is that to explain physical behaviour we should appeal to biology and not to psychology. This conflict

arises from two views of Spinoza that what happens in the body does not cause what happens to mind and *vice versa*. On the other hand:

A mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways. The object of the idea constituting a human mind is a human body.⁸

These two views entail that mind is body which is an absurd argument. This difficulty is solved by Spinoza with the argument that modes are not accessible to intellect in isolation, and can be thought only in combination with some attribute.⁹

The word “mode” is used for anything, which is a state of substance. These modes are graded in hierarchy in an order of logical dependence from the immediate infinite and eternal ones as the necessary and universal features of the universe to the finite modes which are mediate, limited, perishable and temporary differentiations of Nature. The infinite eternal modes are the cause of the finite and perishable modes. The finite modes can be explained through the infinite ones and therefore they are dependent on the modes of higher order for their existence. Spinoza in his doctrine of “mode” explains the finite, limited things which exist in the universe. His doctrine of attribute leaves us in the infinite region which have no connection with the finite world. The theory of substance and attribute does not explain beyond its infinite nature, which are divisible, and finite. The attribute-doctrine like the substance-doctrine is also unable to explain how the finite comes out of the infinite.

Spinoza argues that finite particulars are 'Modes'. The Latin word for 'mode' *modus*, means a way that something can be, or be done, or be the case. But the nearest equivalent is 'way'. 'Way' is used in non-technical context. What Spinoza is saying is that ordinary particular things are ways the reality is. Spinoza argues: 'By mode I understand the states of a substance' and then there is:

Particular things are nothing but states of God's attributes, or modes through which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way¹⁰.

It would be no less accurate if one put it:

Particular things are nothing but states of God's attributes or ways in which God's attributes are expressed, determinately and in detail.¹¹

This view has been denied by one of the best Spinoza commentators. Curley writes that the distinction between substance and mode in Cartesian metaphysics is the distinction between independent and dependent being, and a distinction between subject and predicate. But for Spinoza, this distinction is improper and the two distinctions do not coincide because what is the subject of predication is not an independent entity. Spinoza does not intend to say that the relation of particular thing to God is like the relation of predicate to subject. Rather he says that particular extended things in relation to the one extended substance is like the 'relation of a predicate to the subject'.¹² According to Bennet Curley's thesis is radical and improbable. So to explain definite 'mode' in terms of 'state' is improper. It deprives 'mode' of half the meaning.

According to Curley, it is a vague interpretation of Spinoza's term 'mode' at its face value that finite particulars have a property-to-thing relation to the Universe.

Spinoza's modes are, *prima facie*, of the wrong logical type to be related to substance in the same way Descartes modes are related to substance, for they are particular things, not qualities. And it is difficult to know what it would mean to say that particular things inhere in substance. When qualities are said to inhere in substance, this may be viewed as a way of saying that they are predicated of it. What it would mean to say that one thing is predicated of another is a mystery that needs solving¹³.

In Spinoza's doctrine of "mode" and their relation with substance, one must find the explanation of finite in relation to the infinite. Spinoza argues:

By mode I understand affections of substance or that which is in another, through which also it is conceived.¹⁴ Modes can neither exist nor be conceived without substance therefore they can exist only in the divine nature, and can be conceived only through it.¹⁵

Finite modes are identified with individual things and it is said that:

Modes are nothing but affections of the attributes of God or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain and definite manner.¹⁶

The finite things are dependent on and derived from Him. According to Spinoza, therefore, the being of modes, as they are dependent, are not conceived through itself but conceived through other, which means through God. They are in God and conceived through Him only.

In Spinoza's account, individual things are conceived to have two types of existence. One is bound in the series of cause of something or effect of something and which exists in time and space. In other type, it is conceived as true and real. They are eternal and their ideas are in the essence of God.

The relation of absolute, infinite substance to its modes is expressed in the way that modes are 'following from' or 'caused by' God. To say that all things exist in God, and that modes or finite things have no existence independent of the infinite substance, is not sufficient to explain the relation of mode to substance. According to Spinoza, that which is finite and has a determined existence cannot be produced by the infinite nature of any attribute of God. That which is produced by the infinite attribute of God must be infinite and eternal. So finite existence follows from God in so far as He is modified by a modification, which is also finite and has a determined existence. For Spinoza, modes are the things that "exist only in God, and only through God can be conceived", if substance is a principle and if modes are the expression of a finite world which does not vanish but constitutes a necessary and permanent moment in the unity of the infinite, the view is not pantheism.

In relation to substance the finite things appear as the creation of imagination. But when analysed by the intellect, their fictitious, illusory nature vanishes and the thing or reality that remains with them are the only being in the universe, the God or the

Infinite Substance. Substance can be truly contemplated if we leave out the fictitious differences which modes introduced to substance.

Compared to absolute nature, absolute, finite things have no existence or have no reality but they have divine origin. But how does Spinoza prove that modes are conceived through the divine nature and follow necessarily from it if only the infinite can follow from the infinite, the finite can follow only from the finite. No infinite is in the fate of the finite. The answer is that though finites cannot be produced by the absolute nature of God or of any other attributes of God, yet they follow from God as He is modified by a modification which is finite and has a determined existence. This proposition assumes the fact which has been already denied viz., the individual finite things can be derived from God. The absolute nature admits of no modification but finite things follows from God, who is modified by finite things.

Spinoza's reasoning is not that finite things follow from God but he affirms that finite things do not follow from individual finite things but from the unbroken series of finite things which is relatively infinite in nature. But according to Spinoza, infinite cannot be reached merely by addition or aggregation of the infinite series of finite. The reverse is also impossible.

The relation of God to the world is expressed in terms of the category of *causality* - "God is the efficient cause of all things that can fall under an infinite intellect".¹⁷

Causal relation is not the relation between finite and infinite. In causal relation, effect is one which, though dependent on the cause, actually emerges out of it into an existence of its own. The application of this category to the relation of God and the world would seem to give to finite things a reality which is not illusory, and which is not absorbed in that infinite substance. The category of causality will express the limitation or non-reality of the infinite substance because causality is the category of the finite. In causal relation, the cause loses its existence in the effect. In other words, in effect, it realises its being, which is contradictory to the nature of substance and its attributes. By the addition of the finite things we cannot reach the absolute infinite - that infinite from which finite cannot be derived according to Spinoza. Beyond the substance, there is nothing real. Substance and its affections constitute the totality of existence and is infinite absolutely. Infinite cannot be the cause of finite. Thereby infinite vanishes in finite and it can never be possible. So category of causality is inapplicable to the relation between the infinite and the finite world.

Quite similarly impossible is to derive the manifold world of finite intelligence from purely infinite and indeterminate thought. It is the form of all ideas, it always remains one and without any diversity in it. It is the blank, pure thought. It contains no actual existence of finite thoughts. It is the treasure of all finite intelligence's existing in the world. But the infinite intelligence can never be unconscious of the content of it, otherwise it would embrace all distinctions which is contradictory to its nature. Spinoza considered the infinite thought to be the productive source of the

actual world of ideas and intellect, though it remains one with itself. Spinoza introduces the element of self-determination into thought in the name of “infinite mode”. According to Spinoza ‘intellect’ is ‘absolutely infinite’ but not ‘absolute thought’. It is a certain mode of thinking. So ‘intellect’ is not *natura naturans*, but it is *natura naturata*. This means that Spinoza thought that the finite realm of thought can be derived necessarily from the divine nature without disturbing the absolutely perfect, which is absolutely indeterminate. The ‘infinite intellect’ knows everything that is contained in ‘infinite thought’. Intellect is the immediate mode of thought. Though it is finite still it is designated as ‘absolutely infinite’ because it knows and can explain everything that are inhibited in ‘infinite thought’. Though the ‘absolutely infinite’ contains infinite number of determinations, they are self-determinations. Though it is the productive source of all ideas, it is intensely and unceasingly active, yet like rest of extension, its activity is a motion which never moves. Intellect is infinite because it knows no limit, its activity spreads everywhere and knows everything that falls within its sphere. Spinoza’s aim is to introduce into his system what he had excluded from his idea of God – viz., the principle of self consciousness or of thought as an active, self-determining principle which remains one with itself, in all its determinations.

There is another way to connect the finite world with infinite. This can be done by reverse order, by raising the finite world into quasi infinitude. According to Spinoza, only infinite can follow from the infinite and finite from finite. Finite can never be

produced by the absolute nature of God. So, in Spinoza's system the finite world can never be conceived as necessary derivation from the first principle of his system, the absolute nature of God or an attribute of God. But Spinoza attempted to connect them by planting the finite world in the infinite world. He attempted to do it by the second degree of infinite modes 'modes which follow from the attributes already modified', which are the 'form of the whole universe'. By giving it a kind of infinitude and unchangeableness, Spinoza finds it possible to connect the totality of things with the absolute nature of God. This infinitude and unchangeableness cannot be applied to the individual things, the parts with which the totality is composed of. The 'form of the whole universe', though varies in infinite ways, though its constituent parts are determined by other finite parts, and may be conceived to be endlessly diversified in their particular movements, yet taken as a whole, or as a composite individual, it remains the same. Taken individually they are changing and finite and determined, but taken as a whole, they are permanent, unchanging and infinite. Nothing is there to determine them. The totality of things can be conceived under any attribute whether under the attribute of extension or under the infinite mode of motion as the aggregate of material things or under the attribute of thought as the sum of all ideas conceived under the infinite mode of intellect.

After all these discussions, the attempt to connect the infinite or absolute nature of God with the finite world by the conception of 'infinite modes' goes in vain. By the endless additions of finites, it is impossible to reach the real infinite whole. The

totality can be no nearer than any one of the finite things. An attempt to sum the finites can only give the false infinite of indefinite number.

There is another way to get the real infinitude in the multiplicity of finite things. A living organism is a unity which is not the sum of its parts, but something more than the parts. So, in this way, one may conceive the form of the whole universe as an infinite organic whole, each infinite part of which is instinct with the universal life, every part of which lives in and through the rest of the parts, all of together constitute a corporate unity in which the whole lives in parts and the parts live in the whole. Though Spinoza aimed at a view of the universe in which all finite things should be seen to follow from the absolute nature of God, yet there is no such argument for organic coherence between the finite individualities and infinite substance. So his 'infinite mode' cannot make up the gap between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*. His 'infinite mode' still belongs to the region of *natura naturata*.

So the gap between finite and infinite remains there. Still the inherence of God in the created things is more important to mention. God is the cause of the existence of things as well as the cause of their duration of existence. He is the cause of the being of the things. God is the efficient cause of the existence and the essence of the things. The things are conditioned to act in a certain way by a finite thing which is also conditioned to act in that particular way and *ad infinitum*. But there must be a limit which must not have any cause and that first cause is God who is not conditioned by

any finite cause or any other cause but He is the cause of all finite and conditioned things but not the cause in any temporal and spatial sense. But from infinite a finite cannot follow. So, it is conditioned by God, not produced or caused by God. God is the proximate cause of those things which are immediately produced by him. In this sense, all things are proximate to him because all things depend upon Him for their existence. As God exists necessarily not contingently, so the modes also exist necessarily. There is nothing contingent.

As intellect is a certain mode of thought not the absolute thought, so also will, desire, love are certain modes of absolute thought and they are conceived not through themselves but by the attribute of God. The modes of absolute thought are passive in character. 'Will' is not conditioned to act but there are causes of will which prompt it to act in a certain direction. Will is conditioned to act in some direction. It is also conditioned to exist. So, will cannot be free. In that way God acts not according to the free will.

The modes of the attribute of thought and attribute of extension exist and are conditioned by God and exist in the same relation to God. Will does not belong to God. It belongs to nature. All the modes follow from the necessity of the divine nature. Things are contingent in the sense that existence involves doubt because we have lack of knowledge to know the order of causes. As existence of things does not involve their essence, they are not necessary and they are not also impossible

because their existence does not contradict their definition. So, as it is not necessary and not impossible, it is contingent and is possible.

God's will cannot be different from his perfection. His intellect, his will, his essence are identical with his perfection. Perfection and imperfection do not belong to things. Things which are there and which cause them what they are now (may be good or bad, perfect or imperfect), all depend on God. The order of things depends on the perfection of God.

From the essence of God it follows that he is the cause of himself and cause of all the things. This power is identical with his essence, by which all things act and by which he also acts. Things which necessarily exist are essentially in the power of God, which follow from his essence. The essence or nature of God involved in things which are the effect, follows from the cause, that is God's power. Everything is pre-determined by God through his infinite power or essential nature.

According to Spinoza, therefore, "God is not the transient but the immanent cause of the world".¹⁸ He exists within the effects as he is the cause of himself and of its effects. He is not creating the effects and existing outside the effect. Yet as its cause, though it loses in effect, still it is independent.

Substance determines itself to modes. Derivation of modes is reversed process of abstraction. Modes are fictitious disintegration of substance. Infinite is conscious in the finite beings. In Spinoza's system, modes are not the creation of imagination which are presented to us, rather they have some existence even if they are resolved into the substance. So, in Spinoza's system finite world also has some reality.

Finite things are not distinct from God but are involved in the infinite and eternal character of the substance. The finite is partially negative and positive in character.

The true individuality is not lost in finite things, for:

Every idea of an individual thing actually existing necessarily involve the idea of the eternal and infinite essence of God, for the force by which each individual thing perseveres in its own existence follows from the eternal necessity of the divine nature. ¹⁹

Of finite things which are contained in God, involve the eternal and infinite essence of God, then the finitude comes to a halt. Their individuality remains intact. The eternal and infinite essence pertains to the finite. Reason always explains the things in themselves, things that are necessary in character. The transient, the contingent things of time and space disappear. Only that remains what are necessary and eternal in nature. The affirmative elements, which make the individuality of finite things have their existence in infinite and they are known through the infinite.

Each individual being struggles to persevere their being. They have an inherent impulse in them to survive. This impulse in finite things raises itself from the surface of time to eternity to exist in the process of destruction and this endeavour is the “actual essence of thing itself”.

Furthermore, the perseverance of self-sustenance in finite things is the expression of the absolute nature of God and is therefore the eternal essence of God. The impulse to survive its own being has its origin in the absolute nature of God. Though the cause of finite things is only the finite thing and that of infinite, the infinite things, still the struggle to preserve own being comes from the absolute nature of God because the aim of every individual thing is to be united in the absolute nature in God. The finite individual things are the modes which express the attributes of God in a certain manner.

There are two views regarding modes. The first is identified with the non-being of finite things. No real existence assigned to modes apart from God and its existence in God implies its non-existence as it is perishable. On the other hand, mode for Spinoza is self-affirmative, positive, having inherent and essential individuality.

The first sense implies the indeterminate existence and the second implies the self-determining infinite. The first sense implies that the world is nothing and God is everything and the second view implies that the world expresses the different aspects

of the nature of God or God's nature is inherent in the finite world without losing its indivisible nature. God is the being whose nature is expressed in every individual finite things without losing its identity. Rather, His nature is inherent in everything. The two views of the nature of God conflict with each other.

Even if Spinoza's attempt to explain the relation of finite with infinite cover many conceptions and ideas, he did not miss the opportunity to bridge the gap. But his conception of "Infinite Modes" may be regarded as a great step to bridge the gap. "Infinite Modes" seems to imply a notion which has a connecting link between the two different worlds. "Infinite modes", have existence in infinite world whereas "modes" have existence in finite world. So, the concept 'infinite modes' is the combination of both the worlds, finite and infinite. For Spinoza, modes differ from attributes in the manner that modes are the attributes modified by a modification. Attributes are infinite and conceived through themselves, where as the modes of attributes are infinite but are conceived through the attributes. For attributes- 'Extension' and 'Thought' there are respective modes. 'Motion' and 'Rest' and absolutely 'infinite intellect' belong to the first grade of modes. The forms of the universe which remain the same through change and which varies in infinite ways belong to the second grade of mode. All the things or beings come in between substance and modes. Nothing remains outside that boundary. But infinite mode is that which contains neither the features of both- it is not finite, not infinite, not in itself not in another, but it includes both.

'Infinite modes', involves contradiction. Infinity and finitude are reciprocally exclusive. According to Spinoza, infinite mode is a conception like Son of God, or a work or effect immediately created by God, created from all eternity, and continuing unchangeably to all eternity. This conception inheres in the element of activity and self-determination which are absent in absolute substance and attributes. The first type of modification is "immediate modification" of attributes and the latter type is the 'face of the universe' - the only example which Spinoza offered, for the modification of the attribute which is already modified.

The infinite contains in it the finitude in the conception of 'infinite modes'. The infinite finds in its essence the conception of finite world. It realises in it the finite individualities. This principle of activity and self-development Spinoza introduced in the conception of infinite modes. Spinoza's notion of extension is different from that of Descartes. For Descartes' followers extension refers to inert mass, from which it is impossible to prove the existence of bodies. It can be resumed to motion only by a more powerful external cause. For Descartes, that which sets it in motion is only God.

Matter cannot be explained by extension as Descartes defined it, but can be explained by an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence. The attribute of extension contains in itself the element of motion. For Spinoza, extension or

matter is not a passive powerless quantity, rather, it acquires motion and rest within it, which are immediate infinite mode of extension. Motion and rest combinedly form the infinite mode, whereas of thought the immediate infinite mode is 'infinite intellect'. Motion is caused in itself and does not require any outside mover; so also rest is infinitely motionless and inactive, unchangeable. So, in infinite mode of extension, self-determination and activity are the elements present in it. The quantity of motion and rest will be always the same. It is an intrinsic characteristic of extended world. All the things are constituted of some proportion of motion and rest. Being the extended bodies, the proportions within them are changing constantly. According to Spinoza, the proportion of motion and rest are constant in the whole system. The proportion may vary with difference in quality of things. In some spatial body it may be more and in some, it may be less.

Spinoza attributed something he calls 'motion and rest' to the extended world. If this is accepted, he cannot mean by 'motion' and 'rest' what is ordinarily understood. Only things in space can move; and according to Spinoza, there are no occupants but only space, its different regions altering in orderly ways.

'Movement' in Spinoza has different meanings from that of ordinary meaning.

According to Hallett:

A genuinely indivisible whole, which does not itself move, cannot 'contain' movement in the sense of change of place in time. These facts were perfectly

clear to Spinoza. If extended substance expresses itself in infinite and eternal motion and rest, it follows that these must be given another significance than that of motion and rest as [we ordinarily understand them] ²⁰.

Spinoza uses the phrase 'motion and rest' in a different manner. He described that there are bodies, things in space, and he is talking about their motion and rest-thus he uses the term in their ordinary senses.

He mentions two different roles of 'motion and rest'. The first sense is available in Spinoza's theory of organism where he mentions that in the complex individual structure, the same individual persists as long as its parts 'preserve towards one another the same proportion of motion and rest'. Biological theories hold this notion, according to Spinoza. Every change in the world can be counted in terms of 'motion and rest'. But the world is something different. It is other than 'movement of matter'. The depth of this assumption is reflected in the conception of 'motion and rest'. In one level, it is an 'immediate infinite mode of God' which is an aspect of reality that follows immediately from the reality being extended. It has special meanings but Spinoza uses it in ordinary sense. Spinoza's thesis faces difficulty because it implies that all qualitative varieties are moving while its immediate surrounding is not moving and this implies that there are qualitative varieties beneath the movement and not the variety resulting from the movement. So, movement cannot be the source of different finite things. For Spinoza, motion and rest are the main source of qualitative variety.

Individual complex bodies are divisible into very small parts where they are distinguished from each other solely by motion and rest.

Bodies are distinguished from one another by reason of motion and rest, speed and slowness, and not by reason of their substance.²¹

Descartes explained the qualitative variety of matter. According to him, there is only one matter in the whole universe. All the properties which we clearly perceive in it may be reduced to the one, viz., that it can be divided and moved according to its parts, and that it is capable of all the various dispositions which we observe, can arise from the motion of its parts. All the diversity which is found in the forms of matter depends on movement.²²

Descartes' idea of one extended substance has parts which can be 'moved'. A world consisting of an infinite quantity of matter occupying infinite space and matter is movable. Motion in parts enables the properties to inhere in different things in different proportion. For Spinoza, extended things necessarily inhibit motion. Spinoza introduced the concept of 'Motion-and-rest' as 'energy'. This means that the physical world is a self-contained and all-inclusive system of interaction where energy is distributed among bodies but it always remains constant.

It also implies that the transmission of energy is the cause of change in qualities and different shapes of physical bodies. Energy in any case does not come from outside source. So the physical world is perfect within itself, - a source of its own duration. Physical things are constituted of force and energy. So motion and rest are the basic features of the physical world. This view is less metaphysical but more a physical theory. Change in motion and rest in elementary particles is the cause of change of quality in physical bodies. Spinoza explained all changes of quality as the effect of changes in quantity. All the changes are due to exchange of energy among elementary particles. So for him only the primary or measurable properties of things are real. How much complex a body may be, energy always remains constant even if the parts of it change. So according to Spinoza:

We may, if we go on *ad infinitum*, conceive the whole of Nature as one individual, the parts of which change in infinite ways, without any change of the whole individual²³.

Spinoza calls the highest order individual “the face of the whole Universe.” Spinoza gave it the title of a mediate infinite and eternal mode under the attribute of extension. It is mediate because it is logically dependent upon the immediate mode of motion-and-rest, which is logically prior to the feature of extension. It is ‘infinite and ‘eternal’, because the Nature as a whole remains self-identical. Nature is conceived as a spatial system. So motion-and-rest are its necessary features.

Finite bodies are sub-systems within the total system. They are finite in the sense that they are limited by the objects within the system. Finite things cannot be eternal because the proportion of motion-and- rest changes in the process of transmission of energy to its parts which constitutes changes in the universe. The internal cohesion depends on the relative constancy of balance of motion-and-rest, even though the finite things are affected in many ways. According to Spinoza, the more complex particular things contain more configuration and are also affected in a greater variety of ways and can affect other things in a wide range in the environment. Human bodies are the most complex system so are 'more excellent and contain more reality'. To contain more reality means to acquire more power than other less real things. Human mind is also 'more excellent and contains more reality'. Human mind and body reflect wider range of causes in the universe. The differences between finite bodies are measured by the degree of complexity. In the higher-order systems, which consist of configurations within configurations through many levels, the relative cohesion, or tendency to self-maintenance is more noticeable in spite of internal change.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Spinoza is the central thinker of the seventeenth century. In him, all lines of thought converge: mysticism and naturalism, theoretical and practical interest. He tried to effect a reconciliation among these opposing trends. While the majority of thinkers know of no other way in which to bind together the different strands of thought, the greatness of Spinoza's thought lies in that he relied entirely upon the harmony founded in the innermost nature of the thoughts themselves. In his work the diversity and the individuality of phenomena find full recognition. For Spinoza, his work was the satisfaction of an urgent personal need for clearness and self-comprehension and through it he gained that steadfast cheerfulness of mind which is won by soaring above the unrest and darkness of this present life to the understanding of the eternal laws.

Spinoza's parents, Spanish Jews had found a refuge from the Inquisition at Amsterdam. The gifted boy Benedict Spinoza received his first education at the Jewish Academy where he was initiated into the doctrine of the Talmud and of medieval Jewish philosophy. Thus was laid the foundation of an essential side of his thought, i.e. of the endeavour to assert and maintain the thought of God as the one infinite being, as He is presented in Judaism. This oriental and mystical tendency forms the basis of all his thought and gives it a definite direction towards one single

point by which it is distinguished. He very soon began to doubt the Mosaic theology. This aroused the suspicion of the Jewish theologians. Consequently, he held himself aloof from the synagogue. Spinoza also devoted himself to the study of Physics. It is probable that among the authors whom he studied Giordano Bruno was one of the most important. Spinoza found in Bruno, a philosophical conception which enabled him to unite those religious ideas which he considered essential with a scientific understanding of nature. Bruno's doctrine of the infinitude and divinity of nature made it possible for Spinoza to bind closely together the concept of God and the concept of nature. The influence of the philosophy of the renaissance is clearly visible on Spinoza.

Spinoza was considered as a heretic by his fellow being and was solemnly expelled from the Jewish congregation. He gained his livelihood by polishing optical glasses, a skill which he owed to his rabbinical education as every young Rabbi is obliged to learn a trade. He was considered as an atheist and materialist. Henry More characterises Spinoza as an unclean and foul atheist. Caricaturing Spinoza, More says : stone, mine, lead, dung, are God, for all these things are matter.

Descartes forms the point of departure for Spinoza. Spinoza read Descartes but he was very critical of the latter. A Cartesian Spinoza never was; but he learnt much from Descartes and made use of several of his ideas. To a certain extent, he even employed his terminology. Like Descartes, Spinoza was convinced that geometrico-

mathematical method is not only the method of knowledge in general but of philosophy in particular. Spinoza shares this view of knowledge and philosophy in common with two other famous rationalists like Descartes and Leibniz. Spinoza accepts the Cartesian definition of substance. In fact, he agrees with Descartes that “independent existence” is the only criterion of substance but does not accept the details of substance and attribute given by the latter. Spinoza points out that if substance is to be judged in terms of independent existence, there can be only one substance. If there are more than one, then the question of relating them with one another arises. If they are related, then their independence is lost. Therefore, Spinoza argues that on the criterion of independent existence, there can be only one substance. The Cartesian view that mind (thought) and matter (extension) are two independent and distinct substances is not acceptable to Spinoza. Spinoza’s argument is that if there are more than one substance, they will limit each other and thereby will cease to be independent. In other words, they would cease to be substances. According to Spinoza, the substance is also causally independent. That is to say, it is its own cause. It is the *causa sui*. It is not only the cause of itself but also the cause of everything else. In this sense, it is the cause of everything but is not caused by anything else at all. We wish to point out that the concepts of ‘self-caused’ and ‘*causa sui*’ are not free from logical flaws.

The concept of cause presupposes a distinction between cause and effect. In other words, the category of causality proceeds on the assumption that the same thing

cannot be regarded both as the cause and effect of itself. As for example, 'A' cannot be regarded both as the cause and effect of 'A'. Though Spinoza accepted the category of causality yet he could not free himself from accepting terminal causes. But the category of causality cannot go with the concept of first cause or *causa sui*. We wish to point out that Spinoza confused between cause and reason. As a result, he treated cause also as a kind of reason. Further, preoccupation with geometry, mathematics and mathematical method compelled Spinoza to think in terms of 'first principles', 'self evident truths' and 'major premise'. This shows the influence of both Aristotle and Descartes on him. Spinoza could have accepted the view that there is a plurality of independent substances. But this would militate against his thesis that there is only one cause of the universe and it is identical with itself. That is to say, at this stage, there is no difference between cause and effect. Spinoza uses the terms Nature, God, Substance and Universe for this. We wish to point out that the urge in Spinoza to see everything as one makes him say this.

Spinoza uses the terms God, Substance and Nature in most unconventional way. Not only that he uses these terms interchangeably but he uses them in such a way that they set a fresh trend. 'God' for example, is used in almost all religions as a creator. There is no difference between God & Nature according to Spinoza. This is a kind of redefinition of these important concepts that Spinoza is offering. Some scholars on this ground have characterised Spinoza's philosophy as pantheism. God is not the creator of the world, He is not transcendent to it; He is immanent in it.

The primary question before Spinoza was how to explain the multiplicity of the world with the help of indeterminate substance. He tried to solve the problem by introducing concepts like attributes, modes, and certain other related concepts. Descartes made a distinction between created and uncreated substance. God for Descartes is the uncreated substance whereas thought and extension though created yet are independent substances. This classification created problems which Descartes could not solve satisfactorily. There were three entities, God, matter and mind and they were to be reconciled with each other. Descartes and after him the Cartesians failed to find out a solution. Spinoza was very much aware of the problem.

He redefined the concept of substance including mind (thought) and matter (extension). In other words, the key concepts of philosophy like God, substance, Nature, Mind, Matter and the universe and a host of others which were playing predominant role in theory building since the days of Plato and Aristotle, underwent a drastic revision in the hands of Spinoza. God or substance possesses infinite number of attributes but human intellect knows only two of them:- Mind (thought) and Matter (extension). Conversion of Cartesian substances to attributes does not solve the problem. Controversy continues to be there relating to the status of attributes. Are the attributes there in the substance or they are creation of human intellect ? if we accept the first alternative it leads to objectivism consequently the indeterminate substance becomes determinate and all determinations are negations.

If we accept the second alternative it leads to subjectivism and consequently to acosmism. Acosmism is a doctrine according to which the phenomenal world is not the reality. Reality is absolutely different from the phenomenal world. But it has been pointed out by some scholars that Spinoza cannot be accused of acosmism. To free Spinoza from this charge scholars have resorted to pantheism. That is to say that substance or God is everything and everything is God or substance. We wish to point out that the introduction of the concept of 'pantheism' does not help much. Spinoza wanted to revise the concept of substance but the revision could not take care of everything in the system. In other words, the revision in its turn gave rise to certain jarring notes. The acosmistic interpretation of Spinozistic substance and God can be compared with *Nirguna Brahman* of Samkara. But samkara explains the phenomenal world with the help of the concept of Maya. In Spinoza there is no such concept and he is not able to find out a satisfactory solution. Spinoza introduces the concepts *natura naturata* (nature as begotten) and *natura naturans* (nature as it begets) to explain the phenomenal world and its relation to God or substance. In furtherance of his argument Spinoza introduces two other notions such as *sub specie aeternitatis* (an aspect of eternity) and *sub specie temporis* (an aspect of temporality) to explain the relationship of the phenomenal world with God or substance. In this respect Spinoza comes very close to Samkara. *Sub specie aeternitatis* and *sub specie temporis* come very close to the concepts of Pāramārthika and Vyāvahārika. The introduction of attributes and modes creates problem for Spinoza. *Sub specie aeternitatis* and *sub specie temporis* do not help Spinoza to solve the problem.



Spinoza gives a detailed description of attributes and modes in order to present a clear picture of his system. Though God possesses infinite number of attributes yet human intellect knows only two, i.e., thought and extension. He does not give any reason or argument as to why human intellect knows only these two. But the possible answers we suggest is that matter and mind are the two conventional categories in terms of which we have been describing our experience. To say this is not to discover any hidden feature of reality but to describe our conceptual structure. Spinoza is very careful in describing the nature of attributes. According to him, substance is absolutely infinite whereas attributes are relatively infinite. Neither extension nor thought is absolutely infinite, for alongside of extension there is thought and alongside of thought there is extension. It seems difficult to reconcile the theory of substance with the theory of attributes. Spinoza's God seems to be both an unqualified being and an infinitely qualified being.

Spinoza introduced the concept of mode to account for concrete objects in the world. He regards modes as modifications of attributes or substance. The modes of extension are motion and rest and those of thought are intellect and will. Thus, movement, intellect and will, i.e. the entire relative world (*natura naturata*) are modes or modifications of substance, or, what amounts to the same, of its attributes. Movement, intellect, and will, the physical universe and the mental universe, have neither beginning nor end. Each one of the infinite modes constitutes an infinite

series of finite modes. Movement, i.e., infinitely modified extension produces the infinitude of finite modes which we call bodies. Intellect and will, becoming infinitely diversified, produce particular and finite minds, intellects and wills.

Bodies and minds are neither relative substances, which would be a contradiction in terms, nor infinite modes but changing modes or modifications of the cosmical substance or, what amounts to the same, of its attributes.

The question can be raised : How much reality do modes possess in Spinoza's system? A mode is inconceivable without a subject or a substance that is modified. But the substance is unchangeable, it cannot be modified; hence the mode is nothing; movement, change, the cosmic process, particular beings, individuals, bodies, souls, the whole of derived nature have no real existence. We wish to point out in this connection that all these contradictions emerge because Spinoza wants to revise the basic concepts without sufficient care.

Spinoza has been regarded as a rationalist. A rationalist is one who regards reason and not experience as the ultimate source of knowledge. Reason in this sense does not stand for a special faculty of mind. Rationalism is a theory of knowledge according to which knowledge is obtained from certain self-evident truths or definitions : Spinoza like other rationalists, took Euclidean geometry as the model of knowledge. As the theorems follow from definitions, so all knowledge, according to

the rationalists, must follow from self-evident propositions or definitions. But the type of knowledge that follows from definitions is bound to be vacuous in nature. Seen in this light, Spinozistic metaphysics turns out to be empty of content. For Spinoza, truth and validity of our knowledge do not depend upon any external characteristic, not upon agreement with something beyond itself. It is the clearness and distinctness, which gives us the certainty of truth.

In line with his arguments for substance and attributes, Spinoza maintains that free man is one who has clear understanding of everything. In fact, freedom goes with understanding and knowledge. In this respect, Spinoza argues that it is the intellectual love of God that brings freedom to man. The intellectual love of God becomes the source of eternal happiness. The difference between God and the soul, or substance and mode, is obliterated; the loved object becomes the loving subject. The intellectual love of man towards God is identical with the love of God towards himself. This sentiment differs essentially from the love of God of positive religions. In religions love of God ends up in worship but there is no place of worship in the Spinozistic system.

Though Spinoza calls God the cause of the universe, he takes the word "cause" in a very different sense. His idea of cause is identical with the notion of substance; his conception of effect, with that of accident mode and modification. God is the cause of the universe as the apple is the cause of its red colour, as milk is the cause of

whiteness etc. God is not the transcendent but immanent cause of the world. God is neither the temporal creator of the world, as dualism and Christianity conceive him, nor even its father, as cabalistic and gnostic speculation assume; He is the universe itself. The words 'God' and 'universe' designate one and the same thing. Seen in this light, it can be said that Spinoza is neither an acosmist nor an atheist but a cosmotheist and pantheist. His cosmos is God himself and his God the cosmical substance. Spinozistic metaphysics, as compared with Cartesianism has the merit of having realised that thought and extension do not stand for two opposite substances. Their consubstantiality anticipates the concrete spiritualism of Leibniz. The assertion that one and the same substance may be both the subject of thought and the subject of extension is neither materialism nor idealism. Of Spinoza, Hegel says that his philosophy is a lion's den to which all the footprints of animals lead but nothing comes back. Hegel's remark pertains to the unsatisfactory explanation that Spinoza offers about the relationship between God and the phenomenal world. The Spinozistic substance is all consuming and all devouring. Spinoza does not offer any satisfactory explanation as to how attributes and modes are related to substance or God.

We have already pointed out that Spinoza is a revisionary metaphysician (to use the words of P.F. Strawson). He wanted to revise the basic concepts in terms of which we think about the world. He was not satisfied with the Cartesian definition of substance. So he redefined it. But the redefinition instead of solving problems

created further problems. Leibniz was not satisfied with the criterion of independent existence in terms of which both Descartes and Spinoza defined substance. Instead, he redefined it in terms of independent action. The Leibnizian redefinition of substance gave rise to monadology. The Leibnizian substance is not passive but self-active. The passive immanent substance became self-active.

Spinoza not only redefined the concepts of substance, God and Nature but he redefined the concepts of knowledge, morality and politics in its light. But revisionary metaphysics presents an alternative picture of the universe but does not give any description of it. In other words, a picture is different from description. A metaphysical picture caters to the emotional and spiritual needs and aspirations of the philosopher but it is neither better nor worse than the alternative one.

Bertrand Russell and Stuart Hampshire point out that the subject-predicate logic was responsible for substance-attribute metaphysics. In fact, according to these thinkers it is Aristotle who enforced the subject-predicate logic in European philosophy. Both Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz were greatly influenced by the Aristotelian logic. Though Leibniz recognised the importance of relational propositions yet his reverence towards Aristotle made him accept the predominance of subject-predicate form of proposition. Moreover, convention was created both in ancient and medieval philosophy to reduce all other propositions including relational ones to subject-predicate form of proposition. Spinoza was no exception to it. Subject represents the

substantive and the predicates represent attributes. Further, it was argued that the subject and correspondingly the substantive is independent and the predicates (correspondingly attributes and modes) are dependent on the substantive. If this is the case at the level of logic, at the level of metaphysics the phenomenal world can be regarded as the adjective or attribute of the substantive.

Ramanujacharya, the Visistadvaidya thinker maintained some such position. According to him, God is the only substantive and the entire world is an adjective (or visesana) of the Brahman. The relationship between Brahman and the world is inseparable. Leibniz by accepting the subject-predicate logic argued that both the actual and the possible are contained in the monad. Spinoza's theory of substance and God resemble the concepts of Brahman and the world of Ramanuja. But Ramanuja explained the relationship between Brahman and the world by redefining the concept of Maya but Spinoza faces a lot of difficulty in this regard.

The controversy relating to subject predicate logic is still alive in 20th century Anglo-American philosophy. In other words, it is not dead. Spinoza like Leibniz made it as the central point of his philosophy. One way of looking at it is to treat the subject primary and the predicates secondary. This in consequence gives rise to monistic metaphysics of Spinoza's sort. Another way of looking at it is to treat both subject and predicates as grammatical categories and not to look for their counterpart in the actual world. If we accept the subject-predicate thesis along with 'internal relation',

then all relations become necessary and determinism has to be a fact of life and the so called freedom of the individual turns out to be mere illusion and the relationship between cause and effect becomes necessary.

Like all great metaphysical systems, Spinozistic metaphysics is neither true nor false about the world. It does not give any description of the world of things and events because it is a different language game altogether. It evokes emotions and moulds attitudes. In short, Spinozism has been a great attitude moulder.

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