

**SPINOZA AND THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS: A STUDY AND
RESEARCH GUIDE**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This investigatory bibliographic project on Spinoza and the problem of universals draws four principal conclusions. (1) Spinoza is a realist concerning universals. Indeed, Spinoza endorses a radical form of realism known as universalism, the doctrine according to which every ontologically authentic entity is a universal. (2) Spinoza is a realist concerning universal species natures. He holds that a given species nature (such as human nature) is wholly instantiated in each species member. (3) Spinoza combines Aristotelian and Platonic realism. On the one hand, he holds that no universal is ontologically anterior to the one substance God. On the other hand, he holds that all universals with instantiations in the realm of modes are eternal forms ontologically anterior to those instantiations. (4) Spinoza's pejorative remarks against universals are compatible with his realism. Such remarks are aimed merely at universals apprehendable by sense perception rather than pure intellect.

DEDICATION

To my life companion, Alesha Istvan

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NOMENCLATURE

All Spinoza citations are from *Spinoza Opera*, Gebhardt's Latin critical edition. The citations use the following format: abbreviated work title followed by part, chapter, and section (when applicable), and then *Opera* volume number, page number, and line number (when applicable). The title abbreviations are standard: *Letters and Replies* (Ep); *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (TdIE); *Short Treatise* (KV); *Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts* (CM); *Theological-Political Treatise* (TTP); *Political Treatise* (TP); *Hebrew Grammar* (HG); *Descartes's Principles of Philosophy* (DPP). So, for example, "CM 2.7 I/263/5" is part 2, chapter 7 of the *Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts*, which is volume 1, page 263, line 5 of the *Opera*. Following standard practice, citations from the *Ethics* refer to the formal apparatus of the *Ethics* itself followed by the volume number, page number, and line number of *Opera* (when needed). The first Arabic numeral indicates the *part* of the book and the following letter abbreviations indicate the *type* of passage: "a" for *axiom*; "app" for *appendix*; "c" for *corollary*, "d" for *definition* (when it comes right after the part numeral) or *demonstration* (for most, but not all, of the other positions); "p" for *proposition*; "pref" for *preface*; "s" for *scholium*; "exp" for *explication*. Hence "3p59sd4exp" is the explication of the fourth definition of the scholium to the fifty-ninth proposition of *Ethics* part three. With exception to the occasional modification of my own, translations are from Curley's *The Complete Works of Spinoza* (vol. 1). For letters 29-84, TP, TTP, and HG I refer to Shirley's translation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
NOMENCLATURE	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER I (PART 1. OVERVIEW): INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Preface	1
1.2 Background and guiding aim	7
1.3 Roadmap	23
CHAPTER II (PART 1. OVERVIEW): REALIST-ANTIREALIST POSITIONS	27
2.1 Introductory remarks	27
2.2 Antirealism	31
2.3 Realism	41
2.4 Concluding remarks	47
CHAPTER III (PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES	53
3.1 Introductory remarks	53
3.2 Core argument	54
3.3 Objections and replies	69
3.4 Concluding remarks	77
CHAPTER IV (PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S BUNDLE ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES	80
4.1 Introductory remarks	80
4.2 Core argument	81

4.3 Mapping onto Suárez's Taxonomy of Distinctions.....	89
4.4 Objections and replies	102
4.5 Concluding remarks	132
CHAPTER V (PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S BUNDLE REALIST ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES	134
5.1 Introductory remarks	134
5.2 Case 1	135
5.3 Case 2	139
5.4 Case 3	144
5.5 Case 4	148
5.6 Case 5	162
5.7 Concluding remarks	184
CHAPTER VI (PART 3. MODES): SPINOZA'S REALIST ANALYSIS OF MODES HAVING PROPERTIES IN COMMON.....	187
6.1 Introductory remarks	187
6.2 Victory does not come so easy	188
6.3 1p17s	201
6.4 1p8s2	227
6.5 2p10s	232
6.6 2p39.....	235
6.7 Concluding remarks	259
CHAPTER VII (PART 3. MODES): SPINOZA'S REALIST ANALYSIS OF MODE PROPERTIES AND OF MODES IN GENERAL.....	260
7.1 Introductory remarks	260
7.2 All properties of modes are universals	261
7.3 Modes are properties	265
7.4 Modes are universals	268
7.5 Objection and reply 1	270
7.6 Objection and reply 2	275
7.7 Concluding remarks	286
CHAPTER VIII (PART 4. SPECIES): SPINOZA'S REALIST BRAND OF SPECIES REALISM.....	295
8.1 Introductory remarks	295
8.2 There are universal species essences.....	299
8.3 Concluding remarks	315

CHAPTER IX (PART 4. SPECIES): THE UNIVERSAL SPECIES FORM OF HUMAN.....	318
9.1 Introductory remarks	318
9.2 Form of human under Extension.....	320
9.3 Form of human under Thought	337
9.4 Concluding remarks	345
CHAPTER X (PART 5. CONCLUSIONS): ARISTOTELIAN AND PLATONIC REALISM COMBINED IN SPINOZA’S ONTOLOGY	350
10.1 Introductory remarks	350
10.2 The combination.....	353
10.3 Objection and reply 1	361
10.4 A “transcendent” form for each detail.....	373
10.5 Objection and reply 2	378
10.6 Summarizing the discussion so far	398
10.7 Spinoza’s Platonism further restricted	402
10.8 Concluding remarks	407
CHAPTER XI (PART 5. CONCLUSIONS): THE CONSISTENCY OF SPINOZA’S REALISM.....	411
11.1 Introductory remarks	411
11.2 Resolving the tension: the passages	416
11.3 Resolving the tension: objections and replies	442
11.4 Concluding remarks	464
BIBLIOGRAPHY	468
APPENDIX A: EARLY MODERN ANTIREALISM	642
A.1 Introductory remarks.....	642
A.2 Nonconstituent antirealism	642
A.3 Constituent antirealism	657
A.4 Concluding remarks	662
APPENDIX B: EARLY MODERN REALISM	663
B.1 Introductory remarks.....	663
B.2 Immanent realism.....	663
B.3 Transcendent realism	667
B.4 Concluding remarks	677

APPENDIX C: THE USES AND DANGERS OF IMAGINATIVE UNIVERSALS	678
C.1 Introductory remarks	678
C.2 Uses of imaginative universals	678
C.3 Dangers of imaginative universals.....	681
C.4 Two points to think about.....	686
C.5 Concluding remarks.....	688
APPENDIX D: LITERATURE CONCERNING SPINOZA AND THE STATUS OF UNIVERSALS	689
D.1 Introductory remarks	689
D.2 Spinoza on universals.....	689
D.3 Sampling of sustained discussions	690
D.4 Sampling of antirealist-leaning literature	690
D.5 Sampling of realist-leaning literature	692
D.6 Sampling of contradictory-leaning literature.....	693
D.7 Works not listed above	693
D.8 Suggestions for locating additional sources	700

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.—Views on Universals	48
Figure 2.—Latent Rectangles.....	359

CHAPTER I

(PART 1. OVERVIEW): INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

Methane molecules, mailboxes, humans, the six volumes of Gibbon's history of Rome, Japanese temples, and all such beings of nature are but the necessary and immanent expressions of God: the one and only substantial individual, the one and only self-caused and self-explained being that is not itself an element of anything else. Such is the grand vision of Baruch or Benedictus Spinoza (1632-1677), the 17th century philosopher whose thought still informs not only contemporary philosophy, but also such divergent fields of inquiry as ecology, neurophysiology, and sociology.¹ Even though the ultimate goal of Spinoza's work is to guide humans to the true blessedness found in a life led not by emotion and superstition but "by reason alone" (4p68d; see 2pref; TTP 4.4), it is that provocative and perhaps, as Bayle and Leibniz saw it, "monstrous" and "most evil" vision of God and our relationship to him that receives the

¹ Spinoza went through a period in the 18th century where he was, as his admirer Lessing described him, "a dead dog" (see Yovel 1989, 188). In the 19th and 20th centuries Spinoza started to receive his due attention. We have, for example, Hegel declaring that being a Spinozist is a necessary condition for being a philosopher (see Della Rocca 2008, 288), Nietzsche declaring his joy to have found a precursor in Spinoza (see Della Rocca 2008, 296), and Einstein declaring himself a believer in the God of his "master": Spinoza (see Paty 1986). Spinoza appears to have a strong relevance for 21st century thinkers as well. Spinoza is the implicit touchstone for the recent bloom of arguments for and against monism in contemporary analytic philosophy (see R. Cameron 2010; Schaffer 2010; Sider 2007; Trogdon 2009; Horgan and Matjaž 2008; Rea 2001). French Marxists are also starting to find Spinoza's thought to be more amenable to Marx than to Hegel. In general, now that contemporary philosophy has seemed to eschew the "linguistic turn" in metaphysics (the turn according to which metaphysicians could only be said to be engaging in conceptual analysis), rationalist orientations towards metaphysics, such as that we find in Spinoza, are more accepted. Regarding Spinoza's influence on, or at least relevance to, other fields of inquiry besides philosophy, see De Jonge 2004; Breiger 2011; Damásio 2003; Naess 1993. For an important article on Spinoza's relevance for today, see Sharp 2005b.

most critical and inspiratory attention.² Even though Spinoza in fact believed himself to have accomplished his ultimate goal by the culmination of his systematic masterpiece the *Ethics*, many students have remained at the base camp of his thought to puzzle over its claims concerning the fundamental nature of reality and its arguments in defense of those claims. Like so many students before me, most of whom have seen the summit only by means of the flyby, I have remained at base camp. My project here is base camp work.

However much intrinsic interest in the metaphysical ideas of Spinoza may alone warrant our continued endeavors, those of us down here provide an important service for trekkers facing their own challenges in the heights. Explained in terms of methodology,

² Bayle 1991, 296-297; Leibniz 1965 IV 508-509.—These sorts of vituperative remarks against Spinoza and his philosophy were common from the time of his official excommunication (where Jewish leaders publicly announced that his teachings were “horrendous” and that his actions were “monstrous”: Nadler 1999, 120) to well over a hundred years after his death. We see much talk of Spinoza’s “leud opinions” (Grew 1701, first line of Preface) and “evil thoughts” (Bachstrophm 1736, 145ff.; Deyling 1708-1715, 1.2, 1.67, 2.3, 2.23, 2.366); Spinoza’s wretched and “knaveish God” (Argens 1736-1737, 1.323; Meier 1748, 102ff.; Malebranche 1688, Dialogue 9; Dippel 1729, 82ff.); “the disgusting blemishes of Spinozism” (Gottsched 1738, title page); Spinoza as a “dirty author” of obscurities (Buonafede 1745, 273-277) and “plainly pestilential pamphlets” (Dürr and Thomasius 1672, Thomasias’s dedicatory note; Thomasius 1701, 96f.; Morhof 1708, 1.51-79); Spinoza as an “insane” teacher (Wagner 1747, part 2) of “horrific blasphemy” (Batelier 1673) and “bestiality” (Berns 1697, 428); Spinoza’s philosophy as nothing but “unintelligible galimatias” (François 1752, 275ff.), “monstrous in its principles,” and “horrible in its consequences (Bernis 1753, vii; Chaudon 1769, 162); Spinoza himself as one of the “most cursed villains” (Bontekoe 1678; see Pollock 1966, 375), an “imposter” (Kortholt 1680, 140-224), a “rotten man” (Salden 1684, 18; Malebranche 1690, 145-149), an “abominable monster avoiding the light” (Dürr and Thomasius 1672, title page; Massillon 1802, 3.42f.) whose reprobate face is to be burned in hell (Weislinger 1738, 942-945; see Colerus 1733, caption under the Spinoza portrait); Spinoza as a soul-corrupting “scourge of the Bible” (Mayer 1693, 418ff.) and who is literally in league with the “the devil” (see Bamberger 2003, 17n39, 41-42 #10) as can in fact be *proven* (Helvetius 1680). Pierre Daniel Huet takes the venomous remarks a step further. Spinoza, according to the good bishop, is an “insane and evil man, who deserves to be covered with chains and whipped with a rod” (see Stewart 2006, 104-105). Several others threaten violence against Spinoza. Dippel, for example, says that Spinoza “should justly be disciplined, not with words, but with blows” (see Bell 1984, 10-11). Favorable reactions to Spinoza in this period were rare. Only a few said good things about his philosophy (see Geulincx 1675, xxiv; Cuffeler 1684, 1.103, 1.120-127, 1.222-256). Most simply said that his philosophy was horrible, but that he as a person was upstanding (Hornius and Bekker 1685, 38f.).

Spinoza derives his positions on all areas of philosophy from his core metaphysical positions. Explained in terms of philosophical content, the peace and happiness found in a life arranged by reason involves, according to Spinoza, understanding the fundamental nature of reality (which is, of course, the typifying concern of metaphysics) (see TdIE 39 II/16/11-20; 2p49s II/132/4, 5p42s; Ep. 21 IV/127/34-35). In particular, the peace and happiness that comes from perfecting the intellect requires understanding—through “philosophical reasoning alone and pure thought” (TTP 4.5)—the deterministic order of which we are embedded and the Absolute Godhead from which that order emanates (4p28d and Ep. 75). Spinoza puts the point well in the appendix to Part 4 of the *Ethics*.

[I]t is especially useful to perfect, as far as we can, our intellect or reason. In this one thing consists man’s highest happiness or blessedness. . . . [P]erfecting the intellect is nothing but understanding God, his attributes, and his actions, which follow from the necessity of his nature. So the ultimate end of the man who is led by reason, that is, his highest desire, by which he strives to moderate all the others, is that by which he is led to conceive adequately both himself and all things which can fall under his understanding. (4app4 II/267/1-14)

Several of Spinoza’s metaphysical claims, moreover, have obvious ethical insinuations: there is no personal God, no ultimate purpose or overarching plan; humans are on a continuum with all things of nature, controlled by the same forces governing carbon atoms and nebulae; everything that happens is guaranteed to happen from eternity and could happen in no other way; the mind and body are merely two formalities of one and the same thing; and so on (1app, 2p7s, 4pref). These claims, furthermore, have direct relevance to Spinoza’s ultimate goal: to explain how humans can live in true (albeit never absolute: 4p4-4p4c) freedom from the “sadness, despair, envy, fright, and other evil passions” that have us in the “real hell” of “bondage” (KV 2.18.6 I/88/1-4; 4pref);

to explain how humans can remain collected and efficacious while undergoing the potentially debilitating ups and downs of “fortune” (4pref); to explain how humans can be delivered into beatitude from bitterness, regret, and the varieties of struggle against finitude (see Ep. 21; 5p42s).

At the heart of all base-camp debates concerning the metaphysical underpinnings of Spinoza’s theory of beatitude is the attempt to figure out where Spinoza stands on the most enduring of philosophical problems: the problem of universals. The central problem of the problem of universals is whether there are universals. A universal, to provide its core characterization throughout the history of philosophy,³ is a *qualitas* entity—property, nature, essence, type, quality—that is in principle disposed to be undivided in many.⁴ In the (boilerplate) words of Bartholomäeus Keckermann, the principal direct influence on Spinoza’s understanding of universals, a universal is that

³ See the following, for example. Aristotle (*De Interpretatione* 7 17a39-40; *Metaphysics* Z 13 1038b, *Metaphysics* Z 15, 1040a27-b30 in light of 1040a9-17; *Posterior Analytics* 100a7), Suárez (MD 6.4.2, MD 6.4.6, MD 6.4.12, MD 6.4.13), Fonseca (1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006), Eustachius a Sancto Paulo (see Gilson 1912, 306-308), Keckermann (1602, 46-48, 68; see Di Vona 1960, 157), Bonaventure (1882, 2.18.1.3; see King 1994, 151), Burgersdijck (1697, 1.1.3), Ockham (see Spade 1999, 111), Peter of Spain (1990, 17), Buridan (2001, 105), Plotinus (Adamson 2013), Al Farabi (see Ravitski 2009, 197-198), Porphyry (1992, 58n94 and 82; see Adamson 2013, 345-350), Walter Burley (see Brown 1974), Aquinas (see Gilson 1912, 78), Boethius (1906, 217, 219), Ordo of Tournai (see Erismann 2011, 77n7; Resnick 1997, 369ff), Gersonides (see Rudavski 1994, 84; Goodman 1992, 261; Nadler 2001a, 55; for Gersonides’s influence on Spinoza see Rudavsky 2011; Klein 2003c; Nadler 2001b, ch. 4-5), Petrus Olai (see Andrews 1993), Scotus (Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 37; see Spade 1994, 65-66).

⁴ A sufficient indicator of such a disposition, say of individual o’s property Fness, is that if in addition to there was a distinct individual p with Fness too and o and p were indiscernible in Fness, the Fness in each would be strictly one and the same, literally undivided, in both. In contemporary metaphysics, some may separate global and non-global versions of this claim. For example, Fness might still be counted as a universal even though the Fness of individual A in possible world 1 is indiscernible but nonidentical to the Fness in individual B in possible world 2. Fness might still be counted as such if its disposition to be one and undivided in many remains in, say, the domain of a single possible world.—These sorts of finer distinctions about the domain in which the universal has its characteristic disposition does not really apply to my discussion here and I see no historical examples of these finer distinctions.

which is apt to be one in many (“[*unum*] *aptum est multis inesse*”).⁵ To say that a universal is apt to be one in many is to say, at minimum, that it does not itself impose a restriction on the number of individuals instantiating it (see 1p8s2 II/50-II/51 in light of 2p49s). As an entity apt to be one and the same in many (*per identitatem* rather than *per similitudinem*), a universal is unique in that, as Keckermann further explains in line with Suárez, only it can provide the tightest possible unity among a multitude—a unity tighter than the tightest of extrinsic attachments among things even in the most perfect operational harmony, a unity tighter in fact than the unity of inherent exact similarity.⁶ As an entity disposed to remain one and undivided in many (rather than divided up or portioned out in many),⁷ a universal provides the unity of strict equality in diversity or, as Leibniz describes the unique service of the universal, the unity of “identity in variety.”⁸ To give Spinoza’s own explicit gloss on the concept of the universal (a gloss reflecting these core facts as much as it adheres to Aristotle’s own description at *De Interpretatione* 7 17a39-40), a universal is that which is said *wholly* and *equally* of each thing of which it is said (2p49s II/134/8-10, 4p4d II/213/15-19) such that it “must be in each” individual of which it is said, “the same in all” individuals to which it pertains, just as the essence of man is “[NS: wholly and equally [in] each individual man]”

⁵ Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68; see Freudenthal 1899, entry 106; Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120; Van De Ven 2014, 13.

⁶ See Suárez MD 5.2.8, MD 6.1.12-15, MD 6.2.1-2, MD 6.2.13, MD 6.5.3, MD 6.6.5, MD 6.6.12, MD 6.7.2; see Burns 1914, 82; Ross 1962, 743.

⁷ See *Meno* 77a. Socrates tells Meno: “tell me what virtue is as a universal. And stop making one [(the singular)] into many [(the plural)] as the joke goes when someone breaks something. Leave virtue whole and sound, not broken up into a number of pieces.”

⁸ Leibniz 1860, 172 and 161; Leibniz A VI, 3, 122.14-17; Leibniz G II 256; De Careil 1854, cv; Mahnke 1925, Intro.2n11. See also Brown 1988, 588 in light of 571n1; Fullerton 1899, 27; Rojek 2008, 369.

(2p49s, II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18; see TdIE 76; TP 3.18). In short, a universal is the sort of entity that, even when in many individuals, is wholly and equally in each of those individuals.

There are numerous problems constituting the problem of universals other than merely whether there are universals. Here are the big ones. Are there such entities as properties, whether they be universals or not? Are properties required to serve as the ontological ground for correct predications? Or is it that what makes it correct to characterize individual *o* (say, a rock) as *F* (say, extended) is simply the ontologically structureless individual *o* itself and so not some inner property of *o*? If there are no universals, how are we to account for similarities between things? Based on what, in other words, is there unity among those things considered tokens of the same type if there are no universals? If there are universals, do they exist merely as instantiated, that is, merely as they present themselves through individuals? Or do universals exist even without instantiation, even independent of the individuals into whose being they undividedly enter? If there are universals, are there nonuniversals in addition? What is the relationship between properties, whether universal or not, and those individuals said to possess them? Do the properties of an individual inhere in a substratum, some underlying propertyless stuff? Or is it that individuals are nothing but their properties? If there are properties at all, is there one for each possible meaningful predicate or should one's ontology of properties be more sparse? By what means, in effect, can we tell what true properties there are if there are any at all? Do we consult language? Physics? Pure reason? How best are we to think of properties? As powers? As ways? As concrete (like

a hole or an event)? As abstract (like a number or a class)? How are the items in one's ontology individuated, especially those said to agree property-wise? By bare particular bearer or, in other words, by substratum? By spatial position? By history? By other properties? By just being nonuniversal or, in other words, by just being particular?

My intention is to offer an introductory account of Spinoza's positions on these fundamental problems. Manfred Walther announced in 1981 that book-length attention to the topic of Spinoza and the problem of universals was "one of the most urgent tasks" for commentators specializing in the metaphysical aspects of Spinoza's vision.⁹ It has been over thirty years. My project is the first to answer this call. It brings out the sources for Spinoza's thinking about universals. It defends a controversial interpretation concerning Spinoza and the status of universals. It reconciles Spinoza's apparent rejection of universals with what a growing number of commentators in the English-speaking world are taking to be his endorsement of universals. It shows how Spinoza's various positions relating to the problem of universals are informed by and are pertinent to other key areas of debate in Spinoza scholarship. It even provides a page-specific listing of over 1200 sources that have considered the topic of Spinoza and universals (see Appendix D).

1.2 Background and guiding aim

Considering Spinoza's succinct—some would say, cryptic—writing-style, and considering as well his typical unwillingness to respond to confused correspondents with much more than simply "attend more closely to such and such passage of my work," it is

⁹ Walther 1981, 285.

perhaps little surprise that so many conflicting doctrines have been drawn from his philosophy throughout the centuries: materialism, idealism; atheism, pantheism, panentheism; cold rationalism, God-intoxicated mysticism.¹⁰ Figuring out whether Spinoza is a realist or an antirealist concerning universals has been especially difficult. For those who have studied Spinoza's views on necessity and possibility, the following remark by Mason is telling in this regard. "Spinoza's position on the nature of universals is almost as hard to discern as his position on modality."¹¹

On the one hand, Spinoza voices what could be considered antirealist sentiments, sentiments to the effect that there are no universals and thus no chance for strict sameness in true otherness, literal identity among individuated items. He suggests, for example, that imagination leads us astray when it has us believe that corresponding to notions such as *horse* there is a selfsame property, say *horseness*, wholly present in all and only horses (2p40s1, 2p49s; see KV 2.16.4 I/82/5ff). He even seems to say (Ep. 19 IV/92) that, because infinite intellect has only true ideas, infinite intellect does not know that which universals are for him: abstractions (TdIE 19.3, TdIE 76-77, TdIE 93, and TdIE 99-100; 2p49s II/135/23; see 4p62s II/257/28). This suggests, as Spinoza elsewhere explicitly states, that universals are figments of the imagination—indeed, that “they are nothing” (KV 1.6 I/43/7-8, KV 1.10 I/50, KV 2.16.3a I/81/18-19, KV 2.16.4 I/82/5ff; CM 1.1 I/235/10-30; CM 2.7 I/263/5-9; 1app, 2p49s, II/135/22-23, 4pref II/207; Ep. 2 IV/19/10-20).

¹⁰ Garrett 1996, 1-2.

¹¹ Mason 2007, 29.

Such remarks have led to large agreement that Spinoza is, as Pollock says, “the downright enemy of . . . universals.”¹² For some commentators, Spinoza is no less “pitiless” in his onslaught than Hobbes,¹³ the man whom Leibniz dubbed a “super-nominalist” (*plusquam Nominalis*) for his apparent endorsement of predicate nominalism, the extreme view that a thing’s being characterized as F (round, extended, red, or so on) is parasitic upon there being a linguistic predicate “F.”¹⁴ In line with a host of other commentators,¹⁵ Montag in fact holds that Spinoza is a more virulent antirealist than Hobbes, tolerating no suggestion of a one undivided in many.

[I]t is Spinoza not Hobbes who is the more consistent nominalist. . . . While [Hobbes] argues in *Leviathan* that there is “nothing in the world Universal but names” . . . Hobbes’s individuals . . . are all exactly alike; each is motivated by “a perpetual and restlesse desire of Power after power” that can (and necessarily will) be subdued by the more primary fear of death and the means reason prescribes to avoid such a fate. Thus, the singularity of individuals is only apparent: Hobbes, despite his expressed contempt for the language of the “School,” is led to posit a universal essence of man of which every individual is the bearer. . . . [But] to conceive of the individual [in the way that Spinoza does] as a composite entity formed out of “the encounter of singular beings” is to abolish a general essence of humankind [or any other kind] . . . and to replace [them] with absolutely singular essences whose desires, fears and behaviors, even under identical conditions, are subject to infinite variation.¹⁶

To be sure, not all who regard Spinoza as a “thoroughgoing nominalist”¹⁷ think that he is as radical as Hobbes has been said to be. Motivated by passages where

¹² Pollock 1966, 141.

¹³ Pollock 1966, 356. See Hampshire 1951, 116-117; Kolakowski 2004, 19, 32, 34, 42; Milbank 2006, 200.

¹⁴ Leibniz AA VI ii, 428.

¹⁵ See De Deugd 1966, 34; Feibleman 1954b, 118; Klein 2003b, 195-196, 204, 211-212, 214n10.

¹⁶ Montag 1999, 68-69. See APPENDIX D for a sampling of those who seem at least to lean toward seeing Spinoza as an antirealist concerning universals.

¹⁷ Rorty 1996, 41; Bernstein 2012, 212; N. A. 1897, 420; Iverach 1904, 158; Caird 1888, 32; Feuer 1958, 272n47; Pollock 1966, 137.

Spinoza says that things can agree not only “in name” but “in reality” (CM 1.1 I/234/6-7), several proponents of the antirealist interpretation are open to the view that things can be *objectively* similar—indeed, even to the “maximal” degree¹⁸—in Spinoza’s world.¹⁹ They insist, however, that Spinoza understands similarity-talk in the manner of the antirealist rather than the realist. That is to say, Spinoza’s frequent talk of agreement (*convenientia*) and similarity (*similitudo*) between items (or of items sharing properties or having natures in common) is to be understood as involving no level of “strict identity,” “or indeed any relation stronger than [mere] similarity,” between those items.²⁰ As Rice puts it, and as Barbone and Adler second, in Spinoza’s world “‘x has something in common with y’ = def ‘x is similar to y’”;²¹ identity is but “a matter of degree.”²² Hübner and Newlands agree.

[T]his language of “agreement” was also standardly used by medieval and early modern nominalists . . . to pick out mere *similarities* that an intellect would recognize among particular things. On this . . . non-realist construal of “agreement”, to say that certain particulars “agree in nature” is just to say that they resemble one another. . . . [I]t is this non-realist construal of “agreement” as a cognized similarity that puts us on the right track in interpreting Spinoza’s metaphysics.²³

[Suárez] claims, “there is merely something in this [particular nature] to which something is similar in the other nature; however, this is not real unity but similarity.” . . . In other words, objective similarities [rather than identities] among particulars are that which, in things, ground the content of universal concepts. . . . As we will see, this sort of resemblance-based conceptualism is the position that Spinoza adopts as well. . . . Spinoza . . . uses “agreement” in a thinner sense that does not require literal sharing or multiple instantiation. . . . In short, some of the particular aspects of singular things more exactly resemble aspects of other things,

¹⁸ Hübner forthcoming-a.

¹⁹ See Huan 1914, 248-249; Hübner 2014, 128; Hübner forthcoming-a; Klever 1993, 65; Matheron 1969, 182; Newlands forthcoming-a; Picton 1907, 51; Rice 1991, 299-301; Rice 1994, 22; Schoen 1977, 539.

²⁰ Rice 1991, 301.

²¹ Rice 1991, 299; Barbone 1997, 26n62, 60, 84, 146, 150, 159; Barbone, Rice, and Adler 1995, 206n196.

²² Rice 1975, 210.

²³ Hübner forthcoming-a.

and collections of such similar aspects of things are the basis of universal concepts. . . . In contemporary metaphysics, admitting that the content of universals rests [merely] on objective similarities . . . commits Spinoza to a *nominalist* position. . . . [Spinoza does seem] to admit that things have “common” or shared properties. [But] I claimed in section 1 that the sense of “common” here is consistent with his resemblance nominalism.²⁴

On the other hand, and despite the widespread presumption that “nominalism is a feature common to all the important philosophies of the seventeenth century” (as is evident in “their common refusal to attribute the value of real essence to general concepts”),²⁵ Spinoza seems to voice realist sentiments. Even though “[i]t is largely accepted among Spinoza-scholars that Spinoza [in particular] adhered to some sort of ‘nominalism,’”²⁶ Spinoza asserts that some things in the universe can have a property in common—indeed, a property *equally in each* of those things (2p37-2p39d). In general, Spinoza seems to construe property-agreement in the manner of the realist: genuine property-agreement between things would mean that those things are literally identical in terms of that property—one and the same property wholly present in each (see 1p5d). Even though “[i]t is commonly assumed that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing nominalist,”²⁷ Spinoza also suggests that it is possible for two beings to be strictly identical in essence, such that when the essence of *one* is destroyed *both* beings are destroyed (1p17s, II/63/18-24; see also 1p8s2 II/51/13-14 and 2p10s). Indeed, throughout his works Spinoza refers to “universal human nature” (TTP 4.6) and “human nature in general” (TP 11.2; Ep. 34; 1p8s2) and what can be derived from that nature “as it really is” (TP

²⁴ Newlands forthcoming-a.

²⁵ Bloch and Reiss 1973, 48; see Feibleman 1954b, 118..

²⁶ Naess 1981, 124. See, however, Glouberman 1979, 6.

²⁷ Powell 1906, 90n1. See, however, Glouberman 1979, 6.

1.4) and eternal truths inscribed in that nature (TTP 16.6) (see TTP 1.2, TTP 1.18, TTP 3.3, TTP 3.5, TTP 4.1, TTP 4.6, TTP 4.9, TTP 5.1, TTP 5.7, TTP 5.8, TTP 7.1, TTP 12.11, TTP 16.5, TTP 16.6, TTP 17.1, TTP 19.4, TTP 20.11, TTP 20.14, TTP 1n3; TdIE 13, TdIE 25, TdIE 58, TdIE 108; TP 1.1, TP 1.4, TP 2.5, TP 2.6, TP 2.7, TP 2.8, TP 3.8, TP 3.18, TP 3.22, TP 4.4, TP 6.3, TP 7.2, TP 7.4, TP 9.3, TP 11.2; Ep. 21, Ep. 23, Ep. 30, Ep. 34, Ep. 52, Ep. 73; KV 2pref). In the *Ethics* alone Spinoza refers to “the nature of man,” “human nature,” and “the essence of man” close to 100 times (see 1p8s2, 1p17s, 3pref, 3d2, 3p9s, 3p32s, 3p42s, 3p51s, 3p57s, 3def 1e and 29e of the affects, 4pref, 4d4, 4d8, 4p2, 4p3, 4p5, 4p15, 4p17s, 4p18, 4p18s, 4p19, 4p20, 4p21, 4p23, 4p29, 4p30, 4p31, 4p33, 4p35, 4p36s, 4p37s1, 4p59, 4p61, 4p64, 4p68s, 4app1,2,6,7, 5p4s, 5p39), and sometimes with explicit reference to its difference from the essence of other biological species (see 3p57s).

Such remarks do not merely explain why the St. Andrews Philosophy faculty found it worthwhile to ask graduate students to criticize the popular “statement that Spinoza was a thoroughgoing Nominalist,” which they did on the Logic and Metaphysics portion of an 1897 comprehensive exam.²⁸ Such remarks have actually led several commentators—relatively few, at least in the English-speaking world²⁹—to read Spinoza as an endorser of universals, those entities with the “promiscuous”³⁰ and

²⁸ N. A. 1897, 420.

²⁹ I say merely that the view that Spinoza is a realist is marginal from *my perspective in the English-speaking world*. In my research I have noticed other commentators, at different times and locations, saying the exact opposite. In his introduction to Petrus van Balen’s *De verbetering der gedachten*, M. J. Van Den Hoven announces, for example, “Spinoza wordt over het algemeen niet als nominalist gezien”: “Spinoza is generally not regarded as a nominalist” (Van Den Hoven 1998, 33).

³⁰ Campbell 1990, 53.

“scandalous”³¹ aptitude to manifest themselves equally in many at the same time (see 1p8s2, 2p49s II/134/8-10, II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18, 4p4d II/213/15-19). In fact, just as Montag holds that Spinoza is more antirealist than the extreme antirealist Hobbes, Haserot follows Fullerton³² and Powell,³³ as well as Engels and Lenin,³⁴ in claiming not only that Spinoza’s antirealism was merely “skin deep”³⁵ and that Spinoza—“the last great realist,”³⁶ “the last word on medieval realism”³⁷—was “at heart as thorough a realist as any philosopher of the Middle Ages,”³⁸ but also that Spinoza’s realism embodies an extreme historical form: that of Platonism.³⁹

[In Spinoza’s ontology] we not only have *universalia in re* but *universalia ante rem*, not only universal form in things but form subsisting without actually existent exemplifications. . . . A more clear-cut expression of *Platonism* would be difficult to find. . . . (1) [E]ssences [of finite individuals] are eternal; (2) several individuals can agree in the same essence; (3) if the essence is removed the individuals are removed (the individuals are dependent on the essence and without it are impossible); (4) if the individuals are removed the essence is not affected. . . . Three further items only are requisite to make Spinoza’s Platonism complete [and clearly Spinoza endorses these items]: (i) the essences are not dependent on mind; (2) they are not perceived or known by the senses; (3) they are the objects of all real knowledge. . . . An essence . . . may have being and yet not have any . . . exemplification. Essences are eternal and hence independent . . . of their objects.⁴⁰

[If Spinoza were a nominalist, then e]very mode would be particular, unique, separate, and discontinuous in respect to other things. It might bear similarities to, but it could have nothing in common with, other modes. There could be no one nature in many things. But, as is well known, the modes are inconceivable without common properties, which are not only in the whole but in the part.⁴¹

³¹ Campbell 1997, 125.

³² Fullerton 1894, 252; Fullerton 1899, 33.

³³ Powell 1906, 90n1, 150n1, 318n1.

³⁴ Lenin 1936, 276, 291, 327; see Kline 1952, 43.

³⁵ Fullerton 1894, 218.

³⁶ Allbutt 1901, 36.

³⁷ Windelband 1901, 410.

³⁸ Fullerton 1894, 220; Fullerton 1899, 33.

³⁹ Fullerton 1894, 244.

⁴⁰ Haserot 1950, 479-482.

⁴¹ Haserot 1950, 485.

[One may attempt] to deny that common properties are universals; but this is scarcely intelligible. The one thing that the nominalist rejects is the notion of common properties.⁴²

We are thus once more in the presence of the one in the many, the common form in the multitude of instances, continuity within differentiation.⁴³

Nominalism, in short, would be the *reductio ad absurdum* of his philosophy. . . . Spinoza did not complete the details of his ontology or of his epistemology. If he had, the question of nominalism in his thought could scarcely have arisen. . . . The philosopher to whom he is closest both in his method and in his ontology is Plato. Certain features of Platonism he would not have accepted, e.g., Plato's cosmology, but so far as the eternity and immutability of the elements of rational universality are concerned, the two philosophers are one.⁴⁴

Rabenort sums up the point.

With reference to the distinctions between nominalism and realism Spinoza was a scholastic of the scholastics. *Universalia anti rem, in re* and *post re* all have their places in his system, according as things are in God, or in the finite world of cause and effect, or in the human mind.⁴⁵

Might we have here, then, a case of Spinoza contradicting himself (as has been said about Hobbes too on the very same matter: see APPENDIX A)? Several commentators suggest as much (see APPENDIX D), perhaps keeping in mind that it is hard enough to achieve “constancy and unity of thought” throughout “a single work produced in a comparatively short time” (let alone throughout “various works . . . produced over many years” by such an expansive mind as Spinoza's).⁴⁶ Schoen does not draw out the implication that Taylor does, which is that the pluralism entailed by

⁴² Haserot 1950, 470.

⁴³ Haserot 1950, 486.

⁴⁴ Haserot 1950, 492.

⁴⁵ Rabenort 1911, 17. See APPENDIX D for a sampling of those who seem at least to lean toward seeing Spinoza as a realist concerning universals.

⁴⁶ Deigh 1996, 35n6.

Spinoza's antirealism undermines the monism entailed by Spinoza's realism.⁴⁷ But in the spirit of Martineau before him, who claims that "Spinoza unconsciously retains the realism which he professes to renounce,"⁴⁸ and in agreement with Hubberling and Suscovich, who suggest that Spinoza grants universal properties with one hand and takes them away with the other,⁴⁹ Schoen insinuates that such a tension is present in Spinoza's system.

Since each finite extended mode is [for Spinoza] particular, completely unique, such modes cannot share a common property though they resemble one another. . . . [And yet t]here seem to be [for Spinoza] certain features of things which are common to all things. . . . Spinoza goes on to claim that any idea of such common features must be clear and distinct. . . . [So it seems] that there exist certain properties which are identical in all finite modes. Such an admission appears to put Spinoza's purported stance against the objective reality of universals in serious jeopardy. . . . [I]t is not clear how Spinoza can reject a realistic interpretation of universals. . . . Spinoza's distaste for realism remains in jeopardy since . . . the origin of common notions lies in the fact that things have common properties.⁵⁰

Bernardete is doubtful that the inconsistency can be resolved.

How explain the fact that in Spinoza's organon these terms [(namely, *ens*, *res*, *aliquid*)] are said in E II, P40 to signify ideas that are in the highest degree confused . . . ? One would expect any rationalist and indeed any philosopher of any persuasion whatever who has characterized the transcendentals in such opprobrious terms to shun them like the plague at least in his more formal discussions, and yet Spinoza does not hesitate to define . . . God as an *ens*. [Is] Spinoza . . . writing in some fit of absences of mind[? . . . How are we] to reconcile the destructive burden of E II, P40 with the methodologically constructive import of E II, P38, where it is said that whatever is common to everything (part as well as whole) cannot but be adequately conceived[?] But surely it is *ens* above all that is common to everything. . . . If the term *ens* signifies an idea that is confused to the highest degree one would not suppose that it could equally signify or denote what can only be adequately and never inadequately conceived.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Taylor 1972a, 190-191.

⁴⁸ Martineau 1882, 150n2.

⁴⁹ Hubberling 1964, 82; Suscovich 1983, 126.

⁵⁰ Schoen 1977, 539-546.

⁵¹ Bernardete 1980, 70.

Powell is explicit that the inconsistency cannot be resolved.

It is commonly assumed that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing nominalist. This view of him has become traditional, and is accepted without examination even by careful writers. . . . It is to be hoped that the traditional habit of referring to Spinoza as a consistent Nominalist will soon be corrected. . . . Nominalism of course constitutes the basis of Spinoza's argument [at certain points]. But he is not, as is generally assumed, a consistent nominalist.⁵²

Ueberweg is explicit as well.

We are landed at once in a crude realism (in the medieval sense of the term), the scientific legitimacy of which is simply presupposed, but not demonstrated, by Spinoza. The counter-arguments of Nominalism are nowhere confuted by Spinoza, who, on the contrary, admits their justice in theory, while he indicates the contrary by his practice.⁵³

And here we have MacKinnon.

Spinoza, in spite of his avowed conceptualism, has treated substance and its attributes as real, not conceptual universals. . . . Not only so, but at the heart of his nominalistic treatment of other universals there has been the assertion of likeness and difference as real distinctions on the basis of which the entities of reason have been constructed by the intellect. For Spinoza . . . the genera and species according to which objects are classified have their foundation in a realistically conceived universal of likeness in things themselves.⁵⁴

Martineau now.

He commits the further inconsistency of finding an "essence" in *singular things* (see, e.g., Eth. V. xxxvi schol., *ipsa essential rei cuiusque singularis*): and indeed he could plant it nowhere else, his nominalism leaving him no *classes* or *types* of being to serve as its owners. But "essence" is a word wholly relative to classification [for Spinoza (according to his nominalism)], and cannot survive the pulverization of natural groups into individuals. It means the defining qualities *of a Kind*, by possession of which a single object becomes entitled to the name and fellowship of its members. If nature has no classes, neither has it "essences:" and in large resort to this term and its conception Spinoza unconsciously retains the realism which he professes to renounce. . . . [Spinoza's talk, for example, of "agreement" between two things is] a phraseology which implies something identical between the two. . . .

⁵² Powell 1906, 90n1, 150n1, 318n1.

⁵³ Ueberweg 1909, 67.

⁵⁴ MacKinnon 1924, 358-359.

[T]he essence [in question] is therefore treated by Spinoza as a reality in the world, irrespective of the operations of thought. . . . No language can be more at variance with the Nominalism which (not without adequate *loca probantia*) is habitually ascribed to him.⁵⁵

Bidney now.

Spinoza's conception of the basis of agreement and disagreement in human nature is historically related to the medieval controversy of realists and nominalists. The scholastic controversy concerning the status of universals involved the problem as to the basis of agreement and diversity among individuals. . . . In Spinoza we find both the realistic and nominalistic tendency. Although he professes the nominalistic theory in his epistemology (2-40 schol.), his metaphysics and Stoic theory of the passions led him to maintain a realistic conception of universals. . . . The problem of human agreement and conflict troubled Spinoza greatly and he found it necessary to utilize both the realistic and nominalistic traditions to account for the facts. Here as elsewhere he developed both alternatives without realizing their mutual incompatibility. At times he found an essential agreement and community among things and then regarded all individual differences as accidental. At other times, he emphasized the essential diversity of particular things and despaired of finding any basis of agreement.⁵⁶

Caird now.

Thus the system of Spinoza contains elements which resist any attempt to classify him either as a pantheist or an atheist, a naturalist or supernaturalist, a nominalist or a realist. As he approaches the problem with which he deals from different sides, the opposite tendencies by which his mind is governed seem to receive alternate expression; but to the last they remain side by side, with no apparent consciousness of their disharmony, and with no attempt to mediate between them.⁵⁷

Taylor now.

Unhappily, Spinoza's monism—a relic of the decadence of scholasticism—requires him to deny that there *is* any “nature of man.” . . . Indeed, if the nominalism he professes, for example in his correspondence with Blyenbergh, is to be taken strictly, since the *nature* of any two men are [then] radically discrepant, the pleasures which two *men* derive from gratification of the “same appetite” should also be different in kind, though this has, of course, to be conveniently forgotten when he is constructing a general psychology and an ethics. The denial [of the claim] that a “common nature

⁵⁵ Martineau 1882, 150n2, 111.

⁵⁶ Bidney 1940, 146-147.

⁵⁷ Caird 1888, 4-5; see also Caird 1902, 156-157.

of man” is more than an empty name really removes Spinozism [even] *further* than orthodox Christianity from the [pantheistic] thought of *εν και παν* [(one and also all). . . . Thus] Spinoza, whatever he may be, is no consistent Monist or “Pantheist.”⁵⁸

Laerke now, reporting Savan’s assessment of Spinoza (with which Laerke does not agree).

[C]ontradictions and difficulties occur so frequently. . . . Spinoza rejects the notion of Being (*Ens*) as a confused “transcendental notion” in *E* IIp40s1, but he also employs this term ubiquitously in his own philosophy, most importantly in the definition of God as a “being absolutely infinite” (*ens absolute infinitum*). To take another similar example, in *E* IIp40s1, Spinoza rejects the “universal” notion of “man,” but still speaks of a “human nature in general” (*natura humana in genere*) and a “true definition of man” (*vera hominis definitio*) in *E* Ip8s2.⁵⁹

Friend and Feibleman now.

Abstractly stated, nominalism asserts that universals are fictions. . . . Spinoza tried hard to base his position on that of Descartes and yet clear himself of nominalism. This he seems to have in large measure done, and indeed the main implications of his doctrine are realistic. Nevertheless he was unable to free himself altogether from nominalistic influences. [The trace of nominalism seen in Spinoza’s philosophy] seems to contradict Spinoza’s general realistic attitude. . . . This accounts somewhat for the difficulties which have been encountered in the critical understanding of Spinoza. Spinoza’s doctrine is realistic. . . . But he neither started a realistic school nor did he see the problem of the opposition of his doctrine to [his] nominalism.⁶⁰

Finally, Feibleman alone.

[Haserot argues that] Spinoza did not believe these things [that nominalists do]. Therefore he was no nominalist. Was Spinoza as consistent as all that? Is any philosopher? Granted the ideal of consistency, we are not entitled to use it as a standard; for little thinkers are apt to show much more consistency than big ones. Perhaps the less you have on your mind, the more highly you are able to organize it. . . . [Haserot argues that n]ominalists do not affirm universals. Spinoza affirms universals. Therefore Spinoza was no nominalist. Not, that is, if we can first show that the man was consistent. But was he? It seems to me that there is some ground . . . for asserting that so far as Spinoza is concerned, the issue of realism versus nominalism is at least unclear. . . . [T]hat he was not clearly either [realist or

⁵⁸ Taylor 1972b, 293n3; Taylor 1972a, 191n4; Taylor 1972a, 190.

⁵⁹ Laerke 2014, 522-525.

⁶⁰ Friend and Feibleman 1936, 11, 31-32.

nominalist] . . . is the [view] that I claim emerges from the conflicting evidence of his writings. The over-all conviction is that he was realistically bent but that he struggled helplessly and in the end hopelessly in the toils of nominalistic presuppositions which were handed to him unconsciously by the implicit dominant ontology of the cultural date and place at which he lived and thought. . . . [In the end, Spinoza thus cannot help but have] a philosophy of absolute nominalism [where all essence is unreal and . . . [t]he only kind of real existence is confined to the actual particulars.⁶¹

The interpretation that Spinoza is contradictory on the matter may be tempting for more reasons than just the relevant passages. Even many of those who admire Spinoza say that he contradicts himself all over the place, characterized as he is moreso by depth, thoughtfulness, and insight than logical thinking. Gottsched, one of the early commentators set out to expose all the contradictions in Spinoza's thought, jokes in fact that a proper definition of Spinoza must include the attributes *being obscure* and *being inconsistent*.⁶² But there are other related options besides that of regarding Spinoza's thought on the matter as contradictory (or, if something different, unclear due to conflicting evidence). For instance, Spinoza's seemingly irreconcilable views on universals might represent different *stages* in his thought. Or Spinoza might be guilty of *duplicity* in some way (secret doctrines and the like), perhaps to avoid persecution of some sort (as Strauss in fact thinks explains much of the ambiguous language in the TTP)⁶³ or perhaps simply because Spinoza's works, as Helvetius thinks to be literally provable, are written by the devil (who of course is renowned for duplicity).⁶⁴ These

⁶¹ Feibleman 1951b, 386-389; Feibleman 1954b, 118; see Feibleman 1951a, 54-55; According to Fullerton, however, the deeper presuppositions handed down to Spinoza were that of realism (Fullerton 1899, 25).

⁶² Gottsched 1738, E2.1. Thus Gottsched later asks "Who understands his words?" (F.2)

⁶³ Strauss 1952.

⁶⁴ Helvetius 1680.

options, especially the latter, have little support in the literature. One might say, although at a stretch, that there is a flicker of the former option—the “stage option”—in the following remarks from Bennett. These remarks might suggest that Spinoza, as he matured, moved away from the rejection of universals prevalent in his earlier works.

Spinoza’s parsimony . . . is not purely a result of his naturalism. He *likes* to work with exiguous raw materials, that being part of what I mean in calling him a concept minimalist. The tiny stock of basic concepts in the *Ethics* reflects Spinoza’s intellectual temperament as well as his naturalistic programme. . . . It also has a basis in a doctrine of his which is sometimes wrongly called nominalism. He writes at times as though he were a nominalist, allowing only existence to particulars. In the *Metaphysical Thoughts* he writes that “Universals do not exist . . .” and echoes of this linger in his mature work.⁶⁵

My own view is that Spinoza, in the *Ethics* and even across his body of works, is *consistent* on the issue whether there are universals. In effect, I think that those commentators who have concluded that Spinoza’s thought is contradictory or unclear or varied or duplicitous on the matter have not put in enough work, for good reasons or not, to see how Spinoza’s thoughts about universals harmonize.⁶⁶

But is Spinoza a realist concerning universals, as is typical of rationalist-oriented philosophers? Or is he an antirealist, as is typical of empiricist-oriented philosophers?⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Bennett 1984, 38-39.

⁶⁶ The presence of seemingly irreconcilable aspects of a thinker’s vision is best handled, according to the methodology that I try to follow in this project (see Daniel 2013a, 40), when it is regarded as an occasion for gaining insight into that vision, an occasion in particular for coming to see how that vision is resourceful enough to explain away apparent tensions. Such an orientation towards, in effect, charity and reconciliation has opened me up to seeing the harmony of Spinoza views on universals and, moreover, to accommodating the various insights motivating the competing interpretations.

⁶⁷ See Aaron 1952; Ashley 2006, 23; Bidney 1940, 379; Crockett 1949, 79; Jaspers 1966, 2.112; Derrida 1981, 666; Lewis 1976, 32; Rivelaygue 1987, 492; Čapek 1962, 292; Hamlyn 2006, 294; Scruton 1995, 19; Garrigou-Lagrange 1936, 74; Glouberman 1979, 6; Ueberweg 1909, 11; Papay 1963, 169-170; Pomata 2011, 58; William 1966, 223; Armstrong 1997, 15; Armstrong 1989: 76; Hegel 2010, sect. 316; Mander 2008, 18; Rahman 1952, 41ff; Haserot 1950, 471; Cudworth 1829, 404; Hunt 1866, 148; Burns 1914, 78, 93; Murthy 1995, 49; Stern 2007, 144; Turner 1830, 511; Ruja 1938, 282-283; Russell 1945; Harris 1973, 25, 61; Hampshire 1951, ch. 3; Howie 2002, 126; Mander 2012, 1010; Jordan 1963, ch. 24; Bryskett 1606,

As is clear from the above references to the secondary literature, support for both Spinoza's "nominalism and realism have been drawn with astonishing legerdemain from the demonstrations of the *Ethics*."⁶⁸ As such, the answer "has yet to be decisively established."⁶⁹ I think, however, that the answer can be decisively established. Spinoza is a realist concerning universals.

To be sure, Spinoza's negative remarks about universals, together with the apparent antirealist fervor of his time, have encouraged many commentators to lean towards regarding Spinoza as someone for whom, as Suárez describes the position of antirealism, "agreement" or "sameness" or "resemblance" or "similarity" between diverse things—even if objective as well as absolutely perfect—can never be grounded

124; Thiel 1998, 222; Thilly 1914, 254, 513; Weiss 1961, 164; Schütze 1923, 32. The intimate bond that empiricism and antirealism have traditionally shared, which we see when Antisthenes tells Plato "I can see the horse, Plato, but not horseness" (see Armstrong 1989, 6), is clear in the following passage by 17th century Portuguese philosopher Francisco Sanches. The main point Sanches brings out is that sense perception, which is apparently the source of all knowledge here, sees only particulars. In this case, philosophers who base everything on sense experience will find universal terms to be lacking an empirical referent.

You say that there is no science of individuals, because they are infinite. But species are either nothing or something imagined. Only individuals exist, only they can be perceived, it is only of them that knowledge can be gained, snatched from them. If it is not so, show me your universals in nature. You will show them to me in the particulars themselves. Yet in those particulars I do not see any universal—they are all particulars. (see Pomata 2011, 58)

Here is one more passage, this time from Ueberweg (concerning Nizolius).

Nizolius maintained the nominalistic doctrines that only individual things are real substances, that species and genera are only subjective conceptions by means of which several objects are considered together, and *that all knowledge must proceed from sensation, which alone has immediate certainty.* (my emphasis Ueberweg 1909, 11)

Thilly and Weiss seem right to say the following, then.

We may, therefore, classify Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Leibniz, and Wolff as rationalists; Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume as empiricists. The rationalists are the descendants of Plato, Aristotle, and the schoolmen in their general theory of knowledge; the empiricists are the continuers of the nominalistic traditions. (Thilly 1914, 254)

The opposition between rationalism and nominalism is so old as to seem part of the substance of civilization. (Weiss 1961, 164)

⁶⁸ McKeon 1928b, 4.

⁶⁹ Miller 2003, 276n17.

in strict identity between those things.⁷⁰ Recent efforts have been made to support such a reading by underscoring not only passages condemning universals, but also passages suggesting that, for Spinoza, any talk of individuals agreeing in nature or having a property in common is to be analyzed as nothing more than talk of individuals being *similar*.⁷¹ Some have even added that it would not be “charitable” to saddle a great dead thinker, such as Spinoza, with such an unpalatable and theoretically problematic position as that agreements between individuals could ever amount to strict identity between those individuals.⁷² For to permit strict identity in otherness, so the argument unfolds, is to permit entities apt to be one and the same in many. And as Boethius, Henry More, Locke, Nizolius, and numerous others have pointed out,⁷³ to permit such entities apt to be wholly present more than once over is to permit the following sorts of absurdities: that something can be wholly outside itself and that something might move farther away from or closer to itself.⁷⁴

Realism concerning universals may very well fall victim to such theoretical problems. That question is for another place, however. My interpretation best honors the constraints of *Spinoza’s* vision. My interpretation best honors the constraints of Spinoza’s vision even as it incorporates the insights of the most dogged and clever articulations of the competing positions. My interpretation reconciles those strands in

⁷⁰ See MD 5.2.8, MD 6.1.12-15, MD 6.2.13; see Garrigou-Lagrange 1936, 39-40n1; Gentile 1922, 70; Ross 1962. In Suárez’s case, it is grounded in similarity or resemblance between things (see MD 5.1.4; 6.4.2).

⁷¹ See especially the following: Huan 1914, 248-249; Hübner 2014, 128; Hübner forthcoming-a; Klever 1993, 65; Matheron 1969, 182; Newlands forthcoming-a; Rice 1991, 299-301; Rice 1994, 22.

⁷² See Melamed 2012b, 379n53; 2013 104n55.

⁷³ Boethius 1901, 1.10.161ff; More 1987, 27.12; Locke 1959, 2.27.1; Nizolius 1956, I:90/I:8.

⁷⁴ See Conee and Sider 2005, 160-161; Pasnau 2011, 342.

Spinoza's thought leading some to describe Spinoza as a realist and those strands leading others to describe him as an antirealist. My interpretation, then, is charitable in the true sense of the term—a sense that has little to do with whether the view being attributed is palatable to the interpreter's sensibilities or passes the interpreter's standards as to what is or is not theoretically problematic.⁷⁵

1.3 Roadmap

My goal is not merely to defend the interpretation that Spinoza is a consistent realist concerning universals. Across the eleven chapters of my five-part project, I aim to specify the details of Spinoza's brand of realism while engaging those central questions of his philosophy enmeshed in the discussion. To avoid getting bogged down in details, the following roadmap of discussions to come will emphasize the part divisions more so than the chapter divisions. A more detailed overview of each chapter can be found in the concluding remarks of each chapter. In the concluding remarks to the final chapter, I summarize the entire project in a different way from what we see directly below.

Chapter II, which follows this introduction and concludes Part 1, describes the general difference between realism and antirealism concerning universals and it presents a taxonomy of their fundamental forms. When taken together with APPENDIX A and APPENDIX B (where I discuss a variety of early modern representatives of these positions), Part 1 will be of particular interest to those engaged in the contemporary realist-antirealist debates regarding the status of universals as well as to those concerned with understanding how figures in history stand regarding the status of universals.

⁷⁵ See Daniel 2013b, 47.

In Part 2 I defend the view that Spinozistic attributes are universals. My argument unfolds in two steps. First, I argue that the attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic and thus that Spinoza endorses what I call (in line with recent literature in the metaphysics of properties) a constituent analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter III). Such a conclusion rules out the interpretation that Spinoza endorses any nonconstituent form of antirealism, that is, any form of antirealism that rejects the reality of the *qualitas* category altogether (and thus the reality of candidate universals: properties, natures, essences, forms, and the like). Second, and after specifying that Spinoza endorses a *bundle* constituent analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter IV), I argue that attributes are universals rather than nonuniversals (Chapter V). Such a conclusion rules out the interpretation that Spinoza endorses any form of antirealism that accepts properties, natures, and the like but regards them as nonuniversals. The complete but still broadly stated thesis of Part 2 is that Spinoza's one substance, God, is a universal that is itself nothing but its universal attributes. Part 2 will be of interest not only to those who care about these specific matters, but also to those who care about Spinoza's views regarding the substance-attribute relationship, the attribute-attribute relationship, the parallel modes relationship, the compatibility of divine simplicity and indivisibility with distinct attributes, real versus conceptual distinction, parallelism, and dialetheism.

In Part 3 I defend the interpretation that modes are universals. My argument unfolds in two steps. First, I argue that the passages where Spinoza seems to allow individuals to instantiate one and the same *qualitas* cannot be given antirealist-friendly

explanations (Chapter VI). Second, I argue that every property of a mode is a universal and that every mode itself is a universal (Chapter VII). When the results of Part 2 and Part 3 are combined, the ultimate result is that Spinoza endorses a rare form of realism sometimes known as universalism (or what we might call “univocal realism”): the doctrine that everything in reality is a universal and is nothing but a universal. Part 3 will be of interest not only to those who care about these specific matters, but also to those who care about Spinoza’s views regarding the mode-substance relationship and acosmism.

In Part 4 I discuss Spinoza’s views on the status of species natures. First, I argue that there are such natures in his ontology and that these natures are one and the same in each species member (Chapter VIII). Second, after explaining how, for Spinoza, true species divisions are a matter not of Linnaean look but of structural power, I indicate what the structural power is that all and only humans instantiate—first that power under the attribute of Extension and then that power under the attribute of Thought (Chapter IX). Part 4 will be of interest not only to those who care about these specific matters, but also to those who care about Spinoza’s views regarding treatment of nonhumans and objective good and evil.

Part 5 is where I wrap up loose threads. First, I argue that Spinoza combines Aristotelian and Platonic realism (Chapter X). On the one hand, he holds that no universal is transcendent to the one substance. That is the Aristotelian aspect. On the other hand, he holds that each attribute and each eternal form inscribed in the absolute nature of each attribute is ontologically anterior to its exemplification in the realm of

modes. That is the Platonic aspect. Second, I argue that Spinoza's pejorative remarks against universals are compatible with his realism (Chapter XI). His pejorative remarks are aimed merely at universals not apprehendable by pure intellect. Part 5 will be of interest not only to those who care about these specific matters, but also to those who care about Spinoza's views regarding necessitarianism, the cause and explanation of the infinite chain of finite modes, whether the absolute nature of God is sufficient for his finite modes, immortality of the soul, plenitude, eternalism, the compatibility of the causal similarity and dissimilarity principles when it comes to the effects of God's absolute nature, and empiricist attacks on rationalist universals.

CHAPTER II

(PART 1. OVERVIEW): REALIST-ANTIREALIST POSITIONS

2.1 Introductory remarks

The debate between believers in universals (realists) and deniers of universals (antirealists), which Coleridge describes as “one of the greatest and most important that ever occupied the human mind,”⁷⁶ has continued since at least the time of Plato.⁷⁷ It reached such a peak of intensity in the period between the renewal of the monastic schools under Charlemagne and the Renaissance that, so Erasmus insinuates in his 1501 *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, “spitting” and “fisticuffs” often replaced words of disagreement.⁷⁸ The question of how to explain the apparent similarities between diverse entities (events, powers, substances, inner determinations of a thing, or so on) is what motives the debate.⁷⁹ Here is Suárez on the matter.

[If] some basis is given in things for the abstraction or universal conception which the intellect produces . . . of what kind is this basis? For in this is the point of controversy.⁸⁰

Realists are those who allow objective agreement between items to be explained in terms of *strict identity*, literal oneness, between those items: one and the same form, nature, way, suchness, property, or so on wholly present—“at home with itself,” as Hegel puts it—in each.⁸¹ In holding that objective similarity among individuals is

⁷⁶ Coleridge 1853, 300.

⁷⁷ See Parmenides 130e-133b.

⁷⁸ See Armstrong 1989, 6; Chakrabarti 2006; MacKinnon 1924, 345.

⁷⁹ See Bolton 1998, 178; Loux 2006, Ch. 1.

⁸⁰ Suárez MD 6.2.5.

⁸¹ Hegel 1991, 240; see Bolton 1998, 179; Loux 2006, Ch. 1.

grounded in strict identity, realists welcome into their ontology the sort of entities that are, as Suárez describes universals, apt to remain one and undivided even if in many.⁸²

Antirealists, on the other hand, do not allow objective agreement between diverse items (if they allow any such agreement at all) to be explained in terms of strict identity between those items. Antirealists find absurd the notion of literal oneness in diversity and thus the notion of anything—the so called “One”—having the “disposition” or “aptitude” (as Suárez,⁸³ Fonseca,⁸⁴ Eustachius a Sancto Paulo,⁸⁵ and Keckermann⁸⁶ put it) to be wholly and undividedly present “in the Many.” How can anything, so goes the antirealist complaint, “communicate” itself “beyond” itself in undivided fashion as the One of the realist is supposed to?⁸⁷ For antirealists, then, the limit case of agreement between things is inherent exact similarity, never strict identity.⁸⁸ Here is Suárez on the matter.

For there is nothing both one and in fact undivided in reality in this and in that human nature [(as the realists say)]; but there is merely in this, something to which something is *similar* in that other nature. Yet this is not real unity, but *similarity*. In this sense only, several things can be said to be of the same nature a parte rei, that is, of similar nature: for this [“]identity[”], since it is said to obtain among distinct things, cannot be anything in reality other than a similarity.⁸⁹

The nature is not common with respect to a reality but with respect to a notion or a basic similarity.⁹⁰

⁸² Suárez MD 6.1.12, MD 6.2.11, MD 6.4.6; see Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 3; Fullerton 1899, 27, 32; Rodríguez-Pereyra 2000; Rodríguez-Pereyra 2002; Kuhlmann 2010, 137-138; Kemp Smith 1927, 145; MacDonald and Malcolm 1998, 273-274.

⁸³ Suárez MD 6.4.2, MD 6.4.6, MD 6.4.12, MD 6.4.13.

⁸⁴ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

⁸⁵ See Gilson 1912, 306-308.

⁸⁶ Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68; see Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120.

⁸⁷ This is the figurative way that Aquinas, Agricola, and Suárez articulate the realist view. See Gilson 1912, 78; Nauta 2012b, 206-207; Russell 1945; Suárez MD 6.2.11, MD 6.2.15.

⁸⁸ Denkel 1989, 37.

⁸⁹ My emphasis, Suárez MD 6.2.13.

⁹⁰ Suárez MD 6.1.15.

There is in things a certain similarity in their formal unities, on which the community which the intellect can attribute to such a nature as conceived by it, is based; this similarity is not properly unity since it does not imply the undividedness of the entities on which it is based but merely implies their agreement.⁹¹

Scotus summarizes the antirealist position well.

An actual universal is that which . . . can itself, one and the same thing, be directly ascribed to each individual [exemplifying it]. . . by a predication saying “this is this.” [But, as the antirealist says, n]othing . . . in reality is such that . . . it can be said of each instance that “each is it.”⁹²

To put the fundamental division between realism and antirealism in different terms, whereas the realist holds that *not* everything in reality is particular, the antirealist holds that everything in reality *is* particular. A particular is a nonuniversal. A nonuniversal is that which lacks, even in principle, the aptitude to be one and the same, undivided, in many.⁹³ Following Ockham, who points out that “*numerical difference* is the essence of the particular” (since otherwise the “particular” *in itself* would be a universal),⁹⁴ particulars are, in effect, those entities whose indiscernibility “is not sufficient for identity”⁹⁵ and thus whose distinction from each other is “irreducibly primitive.”⁹⁶ 20th century antirealist D. C. Williams puts it as follows.

Particular entities are those which do not conform to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which is that identity of kind entails identity of case; that is, particulars are entities which may be exactly similar and yet not only distinct but discrete.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Suárez MD 6.1.12.

⁹² Scotus Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 37; see Spade 1994, 65-66.

⁹³ Suárez MD 6.1.12, MD 6.4.6, MD 6.4.12, MD 6.4.13.

⁹⁴ Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Robinson 2014; Spade 1994, 171; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233.

⁹⁵ Campbell 1990, 44.

⁹⁶ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9.

⁹⁷ Williams 1986, 3.

21st century antirealist Douglas Ehring echoes the same stock understanding.

Exact similarity is sufficient for identity for universals. Inherently exactly similar universals are identical no matter how they are related spatially or causally (or temporally). . . . [But] particulars do not satisfy this same identity condition.⁹⁸

In the end, because antirealists hold that everything in reality is nonuniversal and nothing but nonuniversal, “nominalists” can “see no identity in the world at all,”⁹⁹ no “real unity.”¹⁰⁰

Although antirealists are united in their rejection of universals and realists are united in their admittance of universals, each side can take various approaches to account for the apparent agreements that might exist between items. In this chapter, I will outline these fundamental ways. First, we will look at the two fundamental forms of antirealism: those that deny and those that accept the ontological authenticity of properties (nonconstituent and constituent antirealism, respectively). Second, we will look at the two fundamental forms of realism: those that deny and those that accept that universals exist merely as instantiated in subjects of predication (transcendent and immanent realism, respectively). If the reader is already familiar with these ways (or simply wants to get straight to the discussion of Spinoza and the status of universals), then simply consult the taxonomic chart at the end of this chapter.

⁹⁸ Ehring 2004, 229-230.

⁹⁹ Rojek 2008, 369.

¹⁰⁰ Suárez MD 6.1.12, MD 6.2.13; see MacDonald and Malcolm 1998, 273-274; Ross 1962; South 2002, 786; Haserot 1950, 470.

2.2 Antirealism

As is clear both in itself as well as when looking over the history of the problem of universals, there are two main strategies for rejecting the reality of universals.¹⁰¹ The more typical strategy, and perhaps especially in the early modern period where warnings against reification of abstractions abound,¹⁰² is to deny that there are any forms, qualities, essences, natures, and the like (properties, in short).¹⁰³ The efficacy of this strategy, this strategy of rejecting the *qualitas* category altogether, is clear. Since candidate universals are properties, there are no universals if there are no properties. Another strategy, present throughout history but not with the dominance that it enjoys today, has been to allow that there are properties but to maintain that these properties are nonuniversal. The efficacy of this strategy is clear as well. Since candidate universals are properties, there are no universals if properties are nonuniversal.

It is helpful to explore these two strategies in further detail. Doing so shows the resourcefulness of the antirealist position. This is important for my project. In subsequent chapters I argue that Spinoza is not an antirealist concerning universals. I do not want to limit myself, as previous realist interpreters have, to rejecting the interpretation of Spinoza endorsing merely certain versions of antirealism. Commentators have complained in the past that realist interpreters show merely that Spinoza does not endorse certain forms of antirealism, those conventionalist forms that

¹⁰¹ Ockham employs, at different times, both strategies. See Cross 2010; Loux 2006, 63, 73, 83n21; Mertz 1996, ch. 4; Burns 1914; Gerson 2004; Panaccio 2004; Panaccio 2008. For more on the history of the problem of universals, see Cerrato 2008, 21-74 and De Libera 1999.

¹⁰² See Bolton 1998.

¹⁰³ See Campbell 2008; Kolakowski 2004, 19.

are, at least some say, easy to show that he does not endorse. Rice, one of the most forceful antirealist interpreters of Spinoza, makes this especially clear in his criticism of Steinberg.

Steinberg argues that a nominalistic reading of 4p30 would invalidate the demonstration thereof. Her argument in fact takes nominalism as conventionalism; so that, without a real objective underlying and identical nature, the similarity predicated of all humans would rest upon an arbitrary convention. Her claim is certainly not true for [other] versions of nominalism. . . . [O]ne can be a nominalist and still argue that claims about similarity are not merely verbal [and yet not grounded in a real objective underlying and identical nature].¹⁰⁴

2.2.1 Nonconstituent antirealism

The first antirealist strategy mentioned above, the strategy that rejects the reality of properties, is sometimes called “nonconstituent antirealism” in contemporary metaphysics.¹⁰⁵ Nonconstituent antirealism takes individuals to be the only sorts of entities possible, where by “individual” it is meant a nonproperty item subject to being characterized, and takes these individuals to be particulars, where by “particular” it is meant nonuniversal. Nonconstituent antirealism, in other words, denies that individuals in themselves have any properties—any ontological structure, any intrinsic determinations—and construes individuals as nonuniversals, those items that are not apt to be one and the same in many.

¹⁰⁴ Rice 1991, 302-303; see Feibleman 1951b, 387.

¹⁰⁵ See Van Inwagen 2011. The label is fitting when one considers that “constituent” is short for *ontological* (as opposed to mereological) constituent and that properties are ontological constituents of things. For according to this first strategy there are no properties or essences or forms or so on, and so the various sorts of items in reality—apples, planets, substances—are not going to have, despite talk that might be construed otherwise, such ontological constituents.

Nonconstituent antirealism, although the orthodox historical form of antirealism, is regarded as an “extreme” position in the contemporary literature.¹⁰⁶ For when people say that it is correct to characterize *o* as *F*, they typically mean that *o* has some property serving as the truthmaker, the ontological ground, for that correct characterization. But nonconstituent antirealism, in rejecting the property category altogether, denies that there are any properties of individual *o* serving as the truthmakers for the correct characterizations of *o* and as the respects in which *o* might differ or agree with other individuals.¹⁰⁷

There are only two possible nonconstituent antirealist analyses of an entity’s being characterized: the relational nonconstituent antirealist analysis and the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis. Each is not only an obvious conceptual possibility, but in fact a practiced option in Spinoza’s time.¹⁰⁸ I will now discuss these two fundamental versions of nonconstituent antirealism, laying out their popular historical forms in the process so as to breathe life into them.

2.2.1.1 The relational form

Relational nonconstituent antirealism, well represented in the history of philosophy,¹⁰⁹ holds that an individual’s being characterized amounts merely to that

¹⁰⁶ Loux 1978, 6-7; Loux 2006.

¹⁰⁷ See Mellor and Oliver 1997, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Both relational and nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism are expressed throughout the history of philosophy, according to critics. At least germinal forms of all these positions can be found in Ockham alone. Some expressions of relational antirealism might be found in the Stoics and Epicureans (see Bronowski 2013), Protagoras and Gorgias (see Bonazzi 2013), Porphyry (see Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 5), Roscelin, and Ockham (see Loux 2006, 63). Expression of nonrelational nominalism can be found perhaps in the Stoics and Epicureans and Porphyry (see Bronowski 2013; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 5) as well as in Ockham (see Cross 2010; Loux 2006, 83n21), and perhaps Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* 1/q85/a1-a2).

¹⁰⁹ See Bonazzi 2013; Bronowski 2013; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013; Loux 2006, 63.

individual's being in relation to some other individual. For example, according to a subjectivist form of relational nonconstituent antirealism called "predicate nominalism" (or sometimes "terminism"), this apple is round if and only if it falls under the predicate 'round,' such that there is nothing like roundness that the round apple has and if there were no predicate term 'round' the apple would not in fact be round. Generally put, o's being F is parasitic upon the predicate term "F" such that in itself, outside of relation to the predicate term "F," it is not correct to characterize o as F.¹¹⁰

It is popular and quite easy to think that antirealism designates merely predicate nominalism.¹¹¹ First, the terms "nominalism" and "antirealism" are used interchangeably. Second, the term "nominalism" stems from the Latin "*nomen*," meaning *name*. Third, predicate nominalism is the view that o is F means nothing more than that o is in a *falling under* relation to predicate "F," a mere name. Nevertheless, and even within merely the *relational* framework, there are various other antirealist solutions, of both a subjectivist and objectivist variety, to the problem of apparent identity in diversity.

Subjectivist relational antirealism analyzes individual o's being characterized in terms of o's relation to a system of classifications made by thinking beings. I have discussed predicate nominalism, the form according to which a universal designates nothing but the physical occurrence of a name or, to use Roscelin's way of putting it (at

¹¹⁰ Searle might be said to defend such a view, as the following remarks suggest (1969, 105-120).

Insofar as the nominalist is claiming that the existence of [individuals] depends on facts in the world and the existence of universals merely on the meaning of words, he is quite correct. . . . [U]niversals are parasitic upon predicate expressions.

¹¹¹ See Mckeon 1929, 208-58; Delahunty 1985, 117.

least according to Anselm) and the way favored by the certain brand of predicate nominalism known as vocalism or vocal nominalism, a mere puff of sound (*flatus vocis*). Concept nominalism, another popular form of antirealism (sometimes called “conceptualism” and seen at points in Abelard),¹¹² gives the following analysis of o’s being F: o’s being F just means that o falls under the mental entity—the idea, the concept, or so on—*F*; o is F, in other words, if and only if o is subsumed under the concept *F*.¹¹³ So the general form of explanation that these two forms of antirealism provide for why o and p agree in attribute F is that o and p simply have been corralled under some entity, a predicate term or a concept. The reason for the modifier “subjectivist” should be clear: things are said to fall under a certain general predicate—say, ‘is horse’—or under a certain concept—*horse*—merely due to the whim of the classifying mind, not in virtue of the natures of the things themselves.¹¹⁴ These forms of antirealism are, of course, particular species of *conventionalist* antirealism, according to which o’s being F just means that a certain classifying agents agree that o is F.

Although the objectivist forms of relational antirealism agree with the subjectivist forms on the fact that o’s being F is not a matter of some property of o, objectivist forms do not follow the subjectivist forms in holding that o’s being F is merely a function of the classifying mind. The three most popular forms of objectivist relational antirealism are class nominalism, mereological nominalism, and resemblance

¹¹² See Russell 1945.

¹¹³ As Frege explains: “I call the concepts under which an object falls its properties” (Beaney 1997, 189).

¹¹⁴ As Armstrong puts it, these are views according to which properties are “created by the classifying mind: shadows cast on things by our predicates and concepts” (Armstrong 1989, 78). As Scruton puts it, these are views according to which “there is no independent reality to the idea of ‘blue’ [or of ‘square’ or so on]: the only fact of the matter here is that we classify things under [such] label[s]” (1995, 18).

nominalism. For class nominalism, o's being F really only means that o is a member of the class of F things. For mereological nominalism, o's being F really only means that o is a bit of the heap of F things. For resemblance nominalism, o's being F really only means that o resembles some paradigm F thing. As is clear, the general form of explanation that objectivist relational antirealism provides for why o and c agree in attribute F is that o and c find themselves, independent of the classifying mind, in relation to some entity—a nonuniversal, of course (such as a class)—that exists independent of the classifying mind.

Despite their differences, all the analyses of relational nonconstituent antirealism have the following reductive form: to say that o is F is merely to say that o has a relation to some other individual x, such that (1) there is nothing like Fness that an F thing like o has (which is why it is a *nonconstituent* form of antirealism) and (2) outside of a relation to other individuals it is not correct to characterize an F thing like o as F (which is why it is a *relational* form of antirealism). Here is how a relational nonconstituent antirealist understands attribute agreement between two individuals without having to say, as the realist is allowed to, that those two individuals are identical at least in some respect: o and p are F just means that o and p are in relation to some other individual x (the predicate “F” in the case of predicate nominalism). Their being the “same” in that both are F entails no inherent identity between them in any respect. And here is how a relational nonconstituent antirealist translates statements, such as “triangle is a shape,” that seem to make reference to properties. We might see this translation process as unfolding in two steps. The statement “triangle is a shape” first gets translated as

“triangle individuals are shaped individuals” and, in accordance with the relational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of what it means to say that an individual is characterized, that statement then gets translated as “individuals in relation to individual x are individuals in relation to individual y.” In terms specifically of predicate nominalism, then, here would be the ultimate translation: “individuals that fall under the predicate ‘triangle’ are individuals that fall under the predicate ‘shape.’”

2.2.1.2 The nonrelational form

As with the relational form of nonconstituent antirealism, the nonrelational form is well represented in the history of philosophy.¹¹⁵ And as with relational nonconstituent antirealism, nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism (1) denies that individuals, nonproperty items subject to being characterized, intrinsically have any properties and (2) construes individuals as nonuniversals. To be sure, both forms of nonconstituent antirealism in effect view individuals in themselves as ontologically unstructured simples. However, nonrelational (or austere) nonconstituent antirealism refuses to give an account of what it means to say that a particular individual is characterized in a certain way, other than simply saying that it is characterized in that way.¹¹⁶ The truthmaker, the ontological ground, for the correct attribution of F to individual o is nothing more and nothing less than the ontologically unstructured individual that is o.¹¹⁷ So whereas relational nonconstituent antirealism holds that the resources for explaining what it means to say that propertyless individual o is F cannot just be o itself (but must be o as

¹¹⁵ See Bronowski 2013; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013; Cross 2010; Loux 2006, 83n21; Aquinas *Summa Theologica* 1/q85/a1-a2.

¹¹⁶ Recent defenders of this view include Devitt 1980 and Parsons 1999.

¹¹⁷ See Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 12.

related to other individuals), nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism refuses to expand their explanatory resources beyond individual *o*. Since the only resource that they have for explaining the individual is the individual itself, when asked how it is that *o* is *F* even though *o* fails to have property *Fness* (or any property whatsoever), the best that they can do is point to *o*. The best that they can do is point to *o* and then, as the quip against them goes, stick their head in the sand, which is why they are sometimes called “ostrich nominalists”)

In effect, nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism offers a thin “analysis” of an individual’s being characterized: *o* is *F* just means that *o* is *F*—nothing more than that can be said. More precisely, nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism says that *o* is *F* if and only if *o* is *F*, such that (1) there is nothing like *Fness* that an *F* thing like *o* has (which is why it is a *nonconstituent* form of antirealism) and (2) even outside of relation to other individuals it is correct to characterize an *F* thing like *o* as *F* (which is why it is a *nonrelational* form of antirealism). Here is how a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist understands attribute agreement between individuals without having to say, as the realist does, that those individuals are identical at least in some respect: *o* and *p* are *F* just means that *o* and *p* are *F*, and that is the end of the story. Their being the “same” in that both are *F* entails no inherent oneness between them. And here is how a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist translates a statement such as “triangle is a shape” so as to obviate the misconception that it is referring to properties: “triangle individuals are shaped individuals.”

2.2.2 Constituent antirealism

Called “trope theory” or “moderate nominalism” in recent literature, constituent antirealism holds that there really are properties; individuals really do have properties, where by “individual” here it is meant either a property or a nonproperty item that is nonuniversal.¹¹⁸ So in contrast to relational nonconstituent antirealism, constituent antirealism does not hold that o’s being F is parasitic upon o’s being in relation to some other nonproperty individual. And in contrast to nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism, constituent antirealism does not hold that o’s being F simply means nothing more than that o is F. Instead, constituent antirealism holds that o’s being F is to be analyzed as o’s having property Fness. Unlike the other antirealist views discussed above, then, an F thing possesses Fness on constituent antirealism: o is F if and only if o has Fness. According to trope theory, the nonconstituent construal of individuals provided by the other forms of antirealism does not give the requisite ontological structure to individuals. Charactered individuals are layer-cakes, not blobs.

Although trope theory is a form of antirealism well represented in the history of philosophy,¹¹⁹ it is more common to understand antirealism as simply “the rejection of

¹¹⁸ It is most popular among contemporary trope theorists to hold that individuals are nothing but bundles of properties rather than something in excess to properties in which properties inhere. Since a sum is of the same logical type as its elements, such bundle views hold that individuals are property items. For examples of such trope bundle views, see the following: Heil 2003, 140; Robb 2005.

¹¹⁹ Trope antirealism, which is a view that Boyle (1991, 21-22) and Armstrong (1989, 17) have suggested may be found in Aristotle (see *Categories* 1a26-28; but see Mariani 2013; Galluzzo 2013) and is a view that Martin (2008, 507n3) and Buckels (2013) find in Plato, is growing in popularity today. Stout (1923), Williams (1966) Campbell (1990), Bacon (1995), and Maurin (2002) are its most famous proponents. A “common intellectual currency” according to Williams (1966, 106), this so-called “moderate” form of antirealism is represented not only among ancients, medievals, late moderns, and contemporaries (see Bronowski 2013; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 5; Marenbon 1997, 114, 122-123, 197, 201; Martin 1992, 110-126; Panaccio 2008; see Mertz 1996), but apparently even among early moderns (see Mertz 1996, ch. 4; Loux 2006, 73; Hakkarainen 2012, 55-66; Moltmann 2003, 456; 2013, 47-48; Simons 1994; Buckels 2013; Williams 1966, 107; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; Bennett 1994, 15; Bennett 2001, I.145; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Callaghan 2001; Mackenzie 1922; Milbank 2006, 202n17; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Yovel 1989, 162-163; Yovel 1990b, 164; Heil 2006a, 11,

properties (attributes, characters, features, qualities—the name doesn't matter)."¹²⁰ After all, the homogenous blob view of an individual is more economical than the layer-cake view and, as Leibniz says, antirealists are those who privilege economy.¹²¹ It is crucial to realize, then, how trope theory, even though it follows realism in endorsing the reality of properties, is nevertheless a form of antirealism.

What makes trope theory antirealist even though it welcomes properties is that it regards properties as nonuniversals. As Stout describes the view in his 1921 address to the British Academy, “a character characterising a concrete thing or individual is as particular as the thing or individual which it characterizes.”¹²² So according to this form of antirealism, o's being F just means that o has a *nonuniversal* property Fness.

As particulars or nonuniversals and thus with their distinctness being “irreducibly primitive,”¹²³ even if the Fness of entity 1 is inherently exactly similar to the Fness of entity 2, we will not be dealing with one and the same Fness. Even so, just as much as nonconstituent antirealists have no trouble saying that o and p are the *same* in that both are F (and even that o and p have the *same property* Fness), trope theorists

86; Heil 2008, 20). Indeed, it is getting quite fashionable in more recent years to describe Spinoza as a trope theorist (see Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; Bennett 1994, 15; Bennett 2001, I.145; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Williams 1966, 107; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Newlands 2015, 255-272; Newlands forthcoming-a). I highlight the point that trope theory may be represented among *early moderns* because, according to Bolton at least (see 1998, 183-186), the only form of antirealism that was a reasonable candidate for an early modern thinker was *nonconstituent* antirealism. Nonconstituent antirealism was the only reasonable possibility because, so Bolton explains, the view that subjects of predication lack any true inner determinations (which is the view Bolton says was endorsed by Descartes and popularized by the *Port-Royale Logic* of Arnauld and Nicole) had become so entrenched that everyone just assumed it from the start (Bolton 1998, 185-186). If Bolton is right, then it would be *historically* more appropriate to call trope theory “extreme antirealism” in contrast to its label today: “moderate antirealism.”

¹²⁰ Callaghan 2001, 37; see Cross 2005, 109; Bennett 1984, 39 and 302.

¹²¹ See Leibniz A VI.ii 427-428.

¹²² See Mackenzie 1922, 191.

¹²³ Levin 2002, 133; see Mellor and Oliver 1997, 169-170.

have no trouble saying that o and p have the *same* property Fness. They have to get along in the world and that is how people tend to speak. But just as we must understand that o and p do not really have property Fness if we are to honor the vision of nonconstituent antirealism, we must understand that o and p have the same property merely in the sense that two soldiers of a given troop have the same uniform (rather than in the sense that two brothers have the same father) if we are to honor the vision of trope theory.¹²⁴

* * *

If one is not a realist concerning universal properties, then one must fall within one of the above three antirealist categories holding universals to ‘exist,’ to use the Latin tag from Ammonius,¹²⁵ merely *post rem*. Properties are the candidate universals. So an antirealist either accepts these entities and yet holds that they are nonuniversals (constituent antirealism), or an antirealist rejects these entities (nonconstituent antirealism) and thus explains o’s being F either as a matter of nonproperty individual o’s being in relation to some other nonproperty individual (*relational* nonconstituent antirealism) or as a matter of o’s being simply what it is (*nonrelational* nonconstituent antirealism).

2.3 Realism

Realism concerning universals allows in principle for identity in diversity, at least in hypothetical scenarios of diversity, and holds that this identity cannot be

¹²⁴ To express the point in the words of Suárez, their so-called “identity cannot be anything in reality other than a similarity” (Suárez MD 6.2.13). See Maurin 2002, 17, 20-2; Ehring 2011, 30-45.

¹²⁵ Ammonius 1891, 41, 26, 28.

analyzed away into some form other than “what logicians and philosophers mean by the identity sign ‘=’.”¹²⁶ That is why another popular name for realism is “identity theory.”¹²⁷ Since I want to show not only that Spinoza can endorse no form of antirealism concerning universals, but also what form of realism that he does endorse, I will describe the two main forms of realism: nonrelational or “immanent” realism, commonly associated with Aristotle, and relational or “transcendent” realism, commonly associated with Plato.¹²⁸

Both the immanent and transcendent forms of realism give the following analysis of o’s being F (where o is construed as either a property or a nonproperty). To say that o is F is to say that o has some ontologically authentic property that is a universal. For the sake of ease, we can call this property Fness. But that can be misleading (and this same warning applies in the case of trope theory too, by the way). Plato apparently thought, at least at times,¹²⁹ that there is a property corresponding to every meaningful predicate, in which case we can discover what true properties there are merely by consulting our language.¹³⁰ In the *Republic*, Plato’s Socrates suggests such a position in the following words to Glaucon.

¹²⁶ Armstrong 1997, 14. As I mean to flag with my clause “at least in hypothetical scenarios of diversity,” one can be a realist and still hold that each universal property, nature, essence, and the like has only one instance (to the effect that there is no identity in diversity). As we will see in Chapter V, one would be a realist even with such an ontology if the following were the case: if, even per impossibile, there were another individual with an Fness exactly similar to the Fness of the individual that actually exists, the Fness in both would be one and the same.

¹²⁷ See Butcharov 1966; Lemos 1988; Jordan 1963, ch. 24.

¹²⁸ See Resnick 1997, 359.

¹²⁹ See *Phaedo* 78e; *Republic* 596a; *Timaeus* 52a; *Parmenides* 13; although see *Statesman* 262c10-e3; Gerson 2004; Sedley 2013.

¹³⁰ See Armstrong 1978, xiii-xiv; 1989, 78-79; Brandt 1957, 529; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 8; Plato *Sophist* 259e5. Commentators often say this about Plato. In the *Parmenides*, however, Socrates says that while there is the form of the just, he denies that there is a form of, for example, hair.

Do you want us to begin our examination, then, by adopting our usual procedure? As you know, we customarily hypothesize a single form in connection with each of the many things to which we apply the same name.¹³¹

To be a realist, however, one need not think that there is a property corresponding to every meaningful predicate; one need not search for, as T. H. Green once complained against traditional realists, “the universal simply in the meaning of a name.”¹³² Reading off ontology from meaningful predicates, which is fueled by the say-is fallacy that a mode of predicating (*modus praedicandi*) entails a mode of being (*modus essendi*),¹³³ is not required for being a realist. Despite the impression one might get from looking at medieval realists, one can be a realist and still hold that predicates provide no sure counsel as to what properties there are.¹³⁴

How do the immanent and transcendent forms differ? On immanent realism, which in the contemporary literature is most famously defended by Armstrong, the existence of a universal property requires at least one individual (besides just itself) possessing it.¹³⁵ As Ammonius puts it,¹³⁶ the *eidos* exists *in re* as opposed to *ante rem*.¹³⁷ Squareness, for example, subsists only in square individuals; squareness is not *prior to* things.¹³⁸ So on this form of realism, which is sometimes called “moderate realism,”¹³⁹ “o is F” just means that o has universal Fness and without F individuals (besides Fness

¹³¹ Plato *Republic*, 596a6-7.

¹³² Green 1888, 60.

¹³³ See Goclenius 1980, 26.

¹³⁴ See Oppy 2003; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 2.

¹³⁵ Anselm of Canterbury gives a particular statement of the view in his famous phrase: *natura subsistit in personis* (nature subsists in persons) (Anselm 1946, 165).

¹³⁶ Ammonius 1891, 41, 26, 28.

¹³⁷ See Alexander of Aphrodisias 1892, 90; Anselm of Canterbury 1946, 165.

¹³⁸ Bennett 1984, 56.

¹³⁹ Burns 1914, 77; Fullerton 1894, 227; Leff 1958, 104.

itself, if it counts as an F individual) there would be no Fness. Fness is that which is apt to present itself wholly through each F individual, but Fness cannot subsist without some F thing “or other,” as Boyle describes the view, serving as its “subject of inhesion.”¹⁴⁰ Explicitly following Al-Farabi¹⁴¹ and in line with his own contemporary Gersonides,¹⁴² the 14th Century Portuguese Jewish philosopher David ben Yom Tov ibn Bilia puts the view directly: universals require individuals in order to exist.¹⁴³

On the other hand, with transcendent realism, which in the contemporary literature is most famously defended by Moreland, the existence of a universal does not depend on any posterior individual instantiating it; the eidos exists *ante rem*, anterior to the individuals for which it provides the character—anterior to the individuals, as Gassendi puts it, that “receive” it.¹⁴⁴ In other words, the property does not exist merely as instantiated; squareness does not subsist merely in square individuals (besides squareness itself, if squareness itself counts as a square individual).¹⁴⁵ So on this form of realism, which is sometimes called “extreme realism,”¹⁴⁶ “o is F” just means that o has universal Fness but the existence of Fness does not require F individuals (besides Fness itself, if Fness does itself count as an F individual). Fness is that which is apt to exhibit itself wholly through each F individual, but Fness can subsist without any such F things.

¹⁴⁰ Boyle 1991, 21.

¹⁴¹ See Ravitski 2009, 197-198.

¹⁴² See Goodman 1992, 261; Rudavski 1994, 84; Rudavsky 2011; Nadler 2001a, 55.

¹⁴³ See Rosenberg 1996, 68.

¹⁴⁴ See AT VII 319-321; see 1658, 480.

¹⁴⁵ Squareness does not subsist merely in square individuals unless we say that squareness itself counts as an individual that is square. But even if we do say this, it would still follow that squareness would not depend on any “posterior” individual instantiating it or, as the schoolmen sometimes say, it would not depend on its “inferiors” (see Gilson 1912, 306-308).

¹⁴⁶ Fullerton 1894, 227; Leff 1958, 104.

* * *

Since on transcendent realism the entity that confers the F character on individual o is ontologically independent from o, and since the character-conferring Platonic Forms are almost unanimously seen as ontologically independent from the individuals instantiating them,¹⁴⁷ transcendent realism is frequently described as a *Platonic* realism.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it is important to understand that one might endorse a Platonic analysis of an individual's being characterized, that is, one might utilize ontologically independent (transcendent, as they say) Platonic Forms, and yet still be *antirealist* concerning universals. Peirce, for instance, interpreted Berkeley to be an antirealist and yet a Platonist.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, a major debate among scholars of Plato's metaphysics is whether Plato himself understood his Forms to be universal or particular, that is, whether they are the sorts of things apt to enter undividedly into the being of multiple individuals. Those moments when Plato suggests that the F Form presents itself in or through F things are moments where the Forms appear to be construed as *universals*.¹⁵⁰ Those moments when Plato suggests that the F Form is more like a perfect specimen of emulation that does not enter into anything are moments where the Forms appear to be construed as *particulars*.¹⁵¹ Fine, Harte, and Adamollo¹⁵² are some recent commentators who argue that Forms are the sorts of things that can enter wholly into

¹⁴⁷ See Penner 1987, 192.

¹⁴⁸ See Bennett 1984, 56.

¹⁴⁹ See Anderson and Groff 1998.

¹⁵⁰ Plato *Republic* 596a6-7.

¹⁵¹ Plato *Timaeus* 52a1-3; *Phaedo* 102d6-8; *Parmenides* 129a1-4, 130b3-4; see Burns 1914, 85.

¹⁵² Fine 1993; Harte 2011, 208ff; Adamollo 2013.

multiple individuals. Geach,¹⁵³ on the other hand, argues that forms are mere exemplary particulars that serve as paradigms for individuals like fire trucks and cats to imitate and that merely in a figurative way enter the being of these individuals.

Although Geach's antirealist reading of Plato does not appear to be the dominant view, there are some telling passages in Plato that do indeed suggest that Platonic Forms—those uniform, eternal, and immutable things that are themselves by themselves¹⁵⁴—are particulars. The following from *Parmenides* 133c3-6 is a good example.

“I think you, Socrates, and anyone else who posits that there is for each thing some being, itself by itself, would agree, to begin with, that none of those beings is in us.”
“Yes—how could it still be itself by itself?” replied Socrates.

If Platonic forms are particulars (whether concrete objects like cars and stars, as Grabowski holds,¹⁵⁵ or tropes like triangularity and redness),¹⁵⁶ then the Platonic analysis of an individual's being characterized is *not* a version of realism concerning universals. For a Platonic Form, so understood, would not be *unum aptum inesse multis* but rather something more like *unum aptum repraesentari a multis*. And if one still insisted on saying that a Platonic Form, even so understood, is *aptum inesse multis*, in order to avoid mistaking it for a universal it must be stated that it is not *aptum inesse multis per identitatem* or, as Fonseca puts it *per modum identitatis*, but rather *per similitudinem*.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Geach 1956.

¹⁵⁴ See Plato *Phaedo* 78d and 100b; *Sophist* 248b9-c8; *Timaeus* 51d-52a; *Republic* 479a1-3, e7-8, 484b4; *Symposium* 210e-211b.

¹⁵⁵ Grabowski 2008; see Hart 1983, 33.

¹⁵⁶ See Fine 2011, 15.

¹⁵⁷ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Castelli 2013; Madeira 2006, 58n196.

There are in fact several versions of the Platonic analysis of an individual's being characterized that belong in the antirealist categories outlined above. If *o* is construed as an ontologically unstructured "blob" and its being characterized as *F* is analyzed as its being in a relation to the ontologically independent Platonic Form *F* (where the relation is usually described, following Plato's own lead, as one of *imitation*), then the version of Platonism at hand is just another version of relational nonconstituent antirealism. If individual *o* is construed as an ontologically structured "layer-cake" and its being characterized as *F* is analyzed as its having an *F*ness trope that is itself an imitation or form-copy of the Platonic Form *F*,¹⁵⁸ then we just have a version of constituent antirealism that incorporates nonuniversal Platonic Forms.

2.4 Concluding remarks

2.4.1 Chapter II

In this chapter, I have described the general difference between realism and antirealism concerning universals and I have laid out their basic forms. Antirealists are those who reject universals, properties apt to be one and the same, undivided, in many. Realists are those who do not reject universals. Traditional antirealists hold that subjects of predication, construed as nonproperties, do not have any properties (nonconstituent antirealism). Of these "classical" antirealists, whose numbers have apparently dwindled so much today that they are said to form an "endangered species," there are those who analyze *o*'s being *F* as *o*'s being in relation to some other nonproperty individual (relational nonconstituent antirealism) and there are those who analyze *o*'s being *F* as

¹⁵⁸ Buckels (2013) has defended this view of Plato recently. See also Martin 2008, 507n3.

simply o's being F (nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism).¹⁵⁹ There are also those antirealists who analyze o's being F as o's having nonuniversal property Fness (constituent antirealism). Realists, on the other hand, analyze o's being F as o's having universal property Fness. Fness either subsists independent of F individuals (besides itself) (transcendent realism) or does not (immanent realism). There are early modern representatives for these various realist and antirealist options, as I explain in APPENDICES A and B. The following chart (see Figure 1) lays out these divisions.

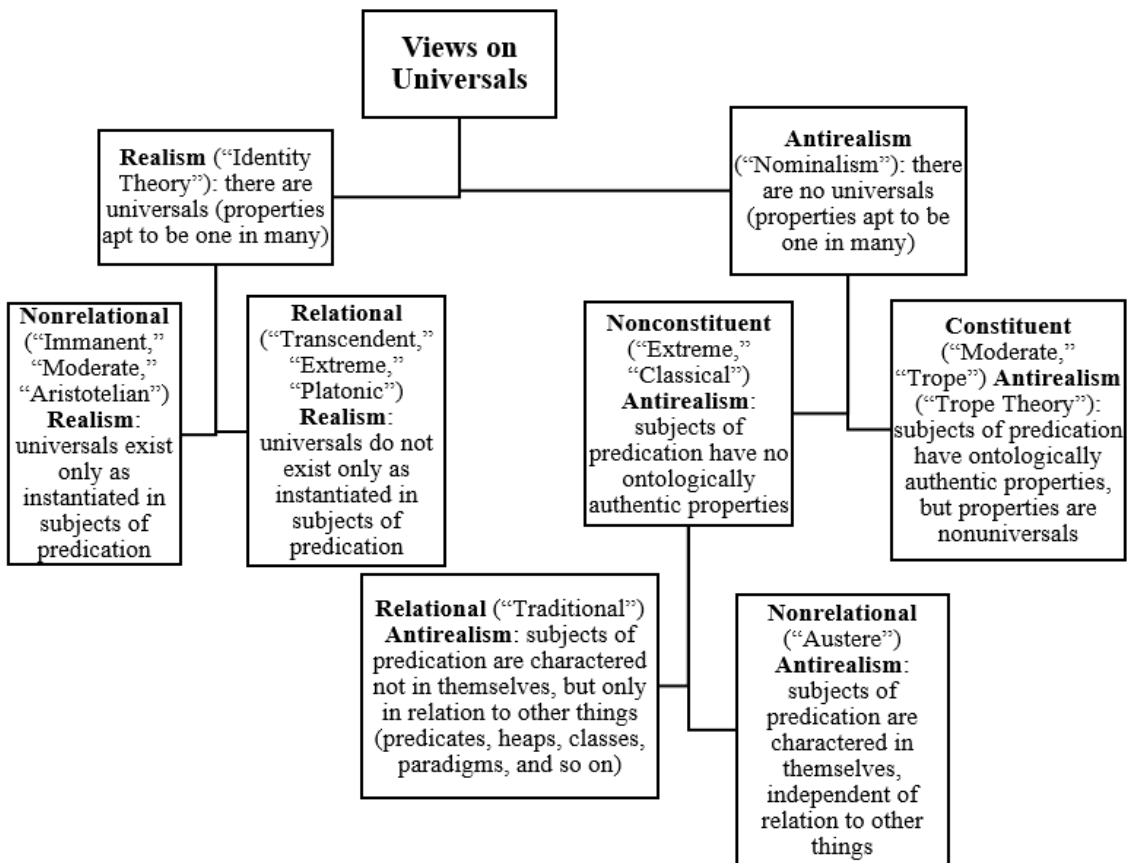


Figure 1.—Views on Universals

¹⁵⁹ Campbell 2008; see Kolakowski 2004, 19

2.4.2 Conceptualism

Now we are prepared to move on to the status of universals in Spinoza's ontology, first in regards to substances (Part 2) and then in regards to modes (Part 3) and then specifically in regards to human nature (Part 4) and finally in regards to whether Spinozistic universals are immanent or transcendent (Part 5). Before moving on, however, there is one last clarification to be made. Historians of philosophy will be aware of the position known as conceptualism. Although conceptualism is sometimes packaged as a middle path between realism and nominalism,¹⁶⁰ it does not fall outside of the parameters that I have laid out in this chapter. That should perhaps go without saying. Nevertheless, I will briefly explain why before moving on.

Conceptualism is the view, expressed in a generic way, that any identity among the members of a diversity is merely in the mind. Either this means that there is *nothing* that has the disposition for being wholly present in multiple entities at one and the same time, or else it means that that which has the disposition can only be mental. In the second case, we are just dealing with realism. According to this "mentalistic" brand of realism, only mental items can exemplify universals; the only universals that are real, to perhaps state it more accurately, are mental properties.¹⁶¹ The first case is the more common way of taking it, especially in the early modern period.¹⁶² But here we are just dealing with antirealism (and thus the worldview that there can be no level of strict identity whatsoever among many things): "C'est la doctrine appelée," so it says in *La*

¹⁶⁰ See Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 14; Gerson 2004.

¹⁶¹ See Fullerton 1899, 31.

¹⁶² Berthelot et al. 1886-1902a, 1190; Parkinson 1993, 406, 435; Swoyer and Francesco 2011; Pasnau 2011, 342.

grande encyclopédie, “conceptualisme, mais qui ne diffère pas en realite du nominalisme.”¹⁶³ Such a view will be classified as what is now called “concept nominalism.” Concept nominalism, as I explained above, is a relational form of nonconstituent antirealism that analyzes an individual’s being characterized in the following way: *o* is *F* just means that *o* falls under the concept *F* (such that there is nothing like *Fness* that an *F* thing has and *o* would not be *F* without the existence of the concept *F*). As Henry More articulates this view, for example, “universals, they are not things, but rather notions we apply in contemplating things”; the only universality is the representative power of the mind.¹⁶⁴ In the words of Keckermann, one of Spinoza’s biggest influences on his thinking about universals, conceptualists are those for whom “universals are mere concepts, and there is nothing universal in things and nothing universal beyond the minds of men.”¹⁶⁵ Whichever way we go, the common or the uncommon way,¹⁶⁶ conceptualism is obviously not itself a third alternative between realism and antirealism.

¹⁶³ Berthelot et al. 1886-1902a, 1190.

¹⁶⁴ See Pasnau 2011, 342.

¹⁶⁵ “universalia sint meri conceptus, & quod extra cogitationes hominis nihil sit in rerum universalitate universale” (Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68; see Freudenthal 1899, entry 106; Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120; Van de Ven 2014, 13).

¹⁶⁶ Perhaps because he was a bit fed up either about the difficulty of pinning conceptualism down to one or the other above options or about the tendency of conceptualists to waver between these options, Maimonides does present a flippant third option in his influential *Guide for the Perplexed*, a Hebrew translation of which Spinoza kept in his library (Freudenthal 1899, entry 127) and likely studied before he ever turned to gentile philosophers (Nadler 1999, 138; Di Vona 1960, 189n51; Harvey 1981). That third option is to regard universals as “neither existent nor non-existent.” Maimonides found this option repugnant not simply because he himself apparently endorses realism concerning universals (see Altmann 1952, 299), but because it violates the principle of contradiction (Maimonides 1910, I.51).—Note that Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel is often considered to have been a major influence on Spinoza (Nadler 1999, 93; Curley 1993, 128) and Menasseh seemed to have known Maimonides, as well as Aristotle and Aquinas and Scotus, very well (see Åkerman 1990, 154; Idel 1989, 208-209; Roth 1975, 87-89). Spinoza likely engaged personally with Manasseh (Nadler 1999, 99-100). Spinoza “certainly read *El Conciliador*

But why, one may wonder, do we sometimes see the medievals describe conceptualism as a third option between realism and nominalism? We have two options concerning those who describe conceptualism as such a *tertium quid*. According to option 1, those who describe conceptualism as a *tertium quid* construe conceptualism in the uncommon way (as described above) and construe realism as the view merely that there are *nonmentalistic* universals. According to option 2, those who describe conceptualism as a *tertium quid* construe conceptualism in the common way (as described above) and construe nominalism merely as *predicate* or *name* nominalism. Conceptualism would obviously count as a genuine third option in either case.

Saying which option was really endorsed is not important here. But given the literal meaning of the term “nominalism” (see my discussion above: *nomen*—name), and indeed given the often repeated nominalist slogan that, in Hobbes’s words, there is “nothing in the world Universall but Names,”¹⁶⁷ and also given the lack of evidence that realism was ever construed so narrowly as the view merely that there are *nonmentalistic* universals, the natural interpretation is that option 2 was endorsed. Those who construed conceptualism as a *tertium quid* were thinking of nominalism not as antirealism in general, but rather simply as *predicate* or *name* nominalism (universals are nothing but *names*). This is the natural reading of Keckermann’s saying, on the one hand, that nominalists are those “who contend that universals are nothing except mere words, mere names” and his saying, on the other hand, that conceptualists are those for

closely” (Nadler 1999, 100, 270). In this work, which attempts to explain away biblical inconsistencies, Menasseh discusses Maimonides’s views in detail.

¹⁶⁷ *Leviathan* 4.6.

whom “universals are mere concepts.”¹⁶⁸ In this case, conceptualism (universals are nothing but *concepts*) was, trivially, a genuine third option even while being squarely an antirealist view.

¹⁶⁸ Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68; see Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120.

CHAPTER III

(PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES

3.1 Introductory remarks

Part 2 of this project is concerned with showing that Spinoza endorses a bundle realist analysis of substances having attributes. First, I argue that Spinoza gives a constituent analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter III). Second, I argue that Spinoza gives, in particular, a bundle constituent analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter IV). Third, I argue that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter V).

Here in the first chapter of Part 2 I am concerned, in effect, with defending the view that attributes of Spinozistic substances are real, objective, ontologically authentic.¹⁶⁹ I approach my goal through two avenues. The positive avenue shows that the constituent interpretation is right, that is, that the attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. The negative avenue shows that the nonconstituent analysis—the only other possibility—conflicts with Spinoza's system. By the end of this chapter, then, it will be clear that Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes only if Spinoza endorses a trope analysis.

¹⁶⁹ Several commentators appear to hold the attributes to be inauthentic. See Hegel 2010, 87, 472-473; Wolfson 1934, 142ff; see Adler 1989; Gupta and Wilcox 1983; Newlands 2015, 255-272 and Newlands forthcoming-a; Matson 1990, 87; Carriero 2005, 127-131; Woolhouse 1993, 49.

3.2 Core argument

Here are seven reasons why attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. Here are seven reasons, in other words, why Spinoza endorses a constituent analysis of substances having attributes.¹⁷⁰

3.2.1 Attributes are mind-independent

1p4d states that the attributes of a substance exist outside the intellect.

There is nothing outside the intellect through which a number of things can be distinguished from one another except substances, or what is the same (by 1d4), their attributes, and their affections.

That attributes exist outside the intellect suffices to make the point that attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. First, this is the historical and philosophical implication of saying that attributes exist outside the intellect. Second, Spinoza frequently describes things as existing outside the intellect (*extra intellectum*) in order to indicate that they are real, ontologically authentic (Ep. 9 IV/43/21-30; CM 1.1 I/235/10-13, CM 1.2 I/238/20ff, CM 1.6 I/245/25). Indeed, in Letter 4 Spinoza links the phrase “exists in reality” (*detur realiter*) and the phrase “outside the intellect” (*extra intellectum*) with *sive*, the gold-standard for synonymy in Spinoza’s language.

Consider another argument as well. God is defined as a substance consisting of all the attributes (1d6). The definition of God here at 1d6 is a true definition (Ep. 2). A true definition “explicates a thing as it is outside the intellect” (Ep. 9). For reasons that I explained above, a true definition thus explicates a thing as it exists in reality (see Ep. 4). Therefore, the attributes of God exist in reality; they are ontologically authentic.

¹⁷⁰ See Haserot 1953; Gueroult 1968, 441-447; Melamed 2013d.

3.2.2 To deny the authenticity of attributes is to deny the authenticity of substances

Consider 1p4d again.

There is nothing outside the intellect through which a number of things can be distinguished from one another except [(1)] substances, or what is the same (by 1d4), their attributes, and [(2)] their affections.

1p4d makes it clear that to deny the authenticity of attributes is to deny the authenticity of substances. After all, a substance just is its attributes, an identification indicated in 1p4d and many other passages to be discussed in the next chapter (1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d; Ep. 9 IV/45; DPP 1p7s; KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13). Since modes, the affections of substances, depend on substances (1d5), and since there are no other authentic things in Spinoza's ontology besides substances and modes (1d3 and 1d5 in light of 1a1), Spinoza would have an empty ontology if he denied the authenticity of substances. Therefore, he cannot be denying the authenticity of that which substances are nothing but: attributes.

3.2.3 True properties of an attribute are true of nature in itself

Spinoza draws an important distinction while discussing the attribute of Extension in Letter 6. On the one hand, there are the true, ontologically authentic, properties of Extension: "mechanical affections" such as mobility and extendedness picked out by "pure notions" that "explain Nature as it is in itself." On the other hand, there are the false properties of Extension: those picked out by "ordinary usage notions" that explain nature "not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception" (Ep. 6 IV/25/1-5, Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15). The mechanical affectations are modes of no other

attribute than Extension (see 2p6d). They are not the modes, for example, of the only other attribute that humans can know: Thought.

[S]o long as things are considered as modes of thinking, we must explain the order of the whole of nature, or the connection of causes, through the attribute of Thought alone. And insofar as they are considered as modes of Extension, the order of the whole of nature must be explained through the attribute of Extension alone. I understand the same concerning the other attributes. (2p7s)

So if there were no attribute of Extension, the mechanical affectations would not explain nature as it is in itself. But since the mechanical affectations do explain nature as it is in itself, there must be an attribute of Extension.—The same reasoning applies in the case of each of the other attributes.

3.2.4 Each attribute is self-sufficient

It seems undeniable that attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. After all, each attribute is self-sufficient.¹⁷¹ That is to say, each attribute is in itself (1p29s; Ep. 2 IV/7/25-29), conceived through itself (1p29s; 1p10s; Ep. 2, IV/7/25-29, Ep. 8 IV/41; KV 1.7 I/47/1-3, KV 1.8 I/47/20-25), and thus (by 1a4) self-caused (Ep. 10 IV/47/15-16; 1p20d in light of 1d8 and 1d1, 1p10s, 1p29s; KV 1.2 I/32/27ff; KV 1.7 I/47/1-3, KV app2 I/119/15-20).

Here is the evidence for the claim that each attribute is *in itself*. First, at 1p29s Spinoza says that “by *Natura naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, or the attributes of substance.” Second, Spinoza tells Oldenburg the following.

[B]y attribute I mean everything, which is conceived through itself and in itself, so that the conception of it does not involve the conception of anything else. For

¹⁷¹ See Curley 1988, 30; Klever 1989, 330, 347-348; Van Bunge 2012, 17-34.

instance, extension is conceived through itself and in itself, but motion is not. The latter is conceived through something else, for the conception of it implies extension. (Ep. 2)

Third, that each attribute is in itself is implied by several of the other things that I will point out in the course of showing that each attribute is self-sufficient below. Let me provide one example. In a few moments I will show that each attribute is self-caused. That each attribute is self-caused entails that each attribute is in itself. According to Spinoza, to say that a thing is in itself is to say that it is self-caused, and vice versa. This is clear in that Spinoza links *being in itself* and *being self-caused* with *sive*, the gold-standard for synonymy in his language: “if the thing is in itself, or [*sive*], as is commonly said, self-caused then it will . . .” (TdIE 92).

Here is the evidence for the claim that each attribute is *conceived through itself*.¹⁷² In addition to the above two passages (1p29s and Ep. 2), which state not only that each attribute is in itself but also that each attribute is conceived through itself, consider also 1p10 and 1p10s.

Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself. (1p10)

For it is of the nature of a substance that each of its attributes is conceived through itself. (1p10s)

Or consider what Spinoza says in the *Short Treatise*.

[A]ttributes exist through themselves, [and] they are also known [(that is, conceived)] through themselves (KV 1.7 I/47/1-3; see also KV 1.8 I/47/20-25).

We can clearly and distinctly understand one [attribute of God] without an other [attribute of God] (KV 1.2 I/23/16)

¹⁷² See Curley 1969, 15-18; Garrett 1990, 107n24.

Or consider the quote in Letter 8 from an earlier version of Spinoza's *Ethics*.

[I]t is of the nature of substance that all its attributes—each one individually—are conceived through themselves. (Ep. 8 IV/41)

Here is one case for the claim that each attribute is *self-caused*.¹⁷³ In addition to the fact that Spinoza explicitly says that “attributes exist through themselves” (KV 1.7 I/47/1-3) and that “all the attributes . . . depend on no other cause [but themselves]” (KV 1.2 I/32/29-30), consider the following. As I established above, each attribute is in itself and conceived through itself. That each attribute is in itself and conceived through itself entails, given Spinoza's 1a4, that each must be self-caused. 1a4 is the Aristotelian principle¹⁷⁴ that the knowledge or idea of the effect involves the knowledge or idea of the cause (see 1a4 in light of 2p7d; Ep. 72; TdIE 92). If a given attribute were caused by an other (that is, were the effect of an other), then it would depend on that other and knowledge of it would involve knowledge of that other (1a4; see 1p6c). But each attribute does not depend on anything other than itself (each attribute is in itself), and the knowledge of a given attribute does not depend on the knowledge of anything else other than that attribute itself (each attribute is conceived through itself). Hence each attribute is not caused by an other.¹⁷⁵ Spinoza corroborates this at 1p10s, where he says that since an attribute is conceived through itself it “could not be produced by another.”

For it is in the nature of a substance that each of its attributes is conceived through itself, since all the attributes it has have always been in it together, and one could not be produced by another.

¹⁷³ Parchment rejects the interpretation that attributes are self-caused (Parchment 1996b, 56, 62, 64).

¹⁷⁴ See Leavitt 1991a, 205-206.

¹⁷⁵ See Della Rocca 2003b, 218; Della Rocca 1996, 10-11, 175n29, 205n20.

But does the fact that each attribute fails to be caused by another mean that each is self-caused? Yes. As Spinoza suggests in 1p7d, that which is not produced by another must produce itself.

A substance of one attribute [and so simply that one attribute (by 1p4d, 1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d; Ep. 9 IV/45; DPP 1p7s; KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13)] . . . cannot be produced by anything else (by 1p6c); therefore it will be the cause of itself, that is, (by 1d1) its essence necessarily involves existence, or it pertains to its nature to exist, q.e.d. (1p8d to 1p7d)

That which another does not produce must produce itself because the cause of something can be only itself or some other; something cannot just pop up from nothing (1a2, 1p7d, 1p8s2, 1p11d2; 1p16; 1p18).¹⁷⁶ Hence, as Spinoza sees it anyway, each attribute is self-caused (see 1p7d).

Spinoza corroborates this finding in the TdIE. Here he says that what is in itself is what is not only conceived through itself but also self-caused (and that what is not in itself is caused by another through which it is also conceived).

That is, if the thing is in itself, or, as is commonly said, self-caused, then it will have to be understood solely through its essence; if the thing is not in itself and needs a cause for its existence, then it must be understood through its proximate cause. (TdIE 92)

Since each attribute is in itself (as was shown above), it follows that each attribute is self-caused.

Here is another case for the claim that each attribute is *self-caused*. Letter 10 says that the nature of each attribute involves existence, that there is in fact no difference between its nature and its existence: “the existence of the attributes does not differ from

¹⁷⁶ See Della Rocca 2002.

their essence” (IV/47/15-16; see also KV app2 I/119/15-20, KV 1.2 I/32/27ff). At 1d1 Spinoza defines that which is self-caused as that whose nature or essence involves existence. Therefore, each attribute is self-caused.

Here is a final case for the claim that each attribute is *self-caused*. Spinoza says that each attribute is eternal (1p10s, 1p11, 1p19, 1p19d, 1p20d, 1p21, 1p21d, 1p23d, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p31d, 1p32d, 2p1d, 2p45d, 2p46, 2p46d, 2p47, 2p47d, 2p47s, 4p36s, 5p30d; TdIE 101, TdIE 102, TdIE 103, TdIE 105; Ep. 21 IV/133; Ep. 36; Ep. 83). 1p19d, for instance, reads as follows (my emphasis).

[E]ach of the attributes must involve eternity, and so, they are *all* eternal.

By the definition of “eternity” at 1d8, and as Spinoza himself notes in 1p20d, the fact that each of the *attributes* are eternal entails, in light of each’s being in itself and conceived through itself, that each expresses existence, that is, that the nature of each involves existence.¹⁷⁷ That each attribute exists by its own nature means, by the very definition of what it is to be self-caused for Spinoza (1d1), that it is self-caused.

Since each attribute—necessarily existing and immutable (by 1p11, 1p20c, and 1p21s II/66/5-6)—is in itself, conceived through itself, and self-caused, it follows that each attribute is self-sufficient (and thus that the attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic). As all the above evidence suggests, that each attribute is self-sufficient is not something that Spinoza failed to recognize. The following quote brings this into relief.

¹⁷⁷ I italicize “attributes” because 1d8 and 1p20d seem to close off the possibility that any eternal item of the realm of modes is self-caused. This makes sense since *all* modes are other-caused.

If we suppose that something which is indeterminate and perfect only in its own kind [(that is, is merely an individual attribute: see 1d2, 1d6exp, 1p16d, 1p28s; Ep. 2 IV/7-IV/8; Ep. 4, Ep. 56)] exists by its own sufficiency, then we must also grant the existence of a being which is absolutely indeterminate and perfect. This being I shall call God. For example, if we are willing to maintain that Extension and Thought (which can each be perfect in its own kind, that is, in a definite kind of being) exist by their own sufficiency, we shall have to admit the existence of God who is absolutely perfect, that is, the existence of a being who is absolutely indeterminate. (Ep. 36)

To be sure, in this passage Spinoza merely says *if* Extension and Thought are self-sufficient, then such and such. In context, however, it is clear that Spinoza endorses the antecedent. Spinoza uses the fact that there is a given self-sufficient attribute, such as Thought, that is infinite merely in its own kind as evidence for the conclusion that there is a self-sufficient being, God, that is infinite in *all* kinds.

3.2.5 Infallible intellect perceives God to be constituted by attributes

The following family of arguments, a family united by its reliance on the premise that intellect does not err for Spinoza, makes it clear that attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic.

Case 1.—

Infinite intellect finds that God has—indeed, consists of—attributes (2p4d in light of 1d6).

Infinite intellect comprehends nothing but God’s attributes and affections. (2p4d)

By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, of which each one . . . (1d6)

One stark example is at 2p7s. Further qualifying his 1d4 claim that an attribute is “what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence,” at 2p7s Spinoza characterizes an attribute as “whatever can be perceived by an *infinite* intellect as

constituting an essence of substance” (my emphasis; see 2p44d).¹⁷⁸ That *infinite* intellect perceives attributes as constituting God’s nature, and thus God in himself or considered truly (1p5d, 1p11s II/54/25-26, 1p20; CM 1.2 I/238/25ff), is significant. The perception of infinite intellect—the eternal son of God, that is, God’s eternal wisdom (Ep. 73)—cannot be mistaken (see 2p43s, 2p44d in light of 4app4; CM 2.8; Ep. 12, Ep. 64; KV 1.9.3; KV 2.22.4a).¹⁷⁹

This explains what we said in the first part, namely, that the infinite intellect must exist in Nature from all eternity, and why we called it the son of God. For since God has existed from eternity, so also must his Idea in the thinking thing, that is, exist in itself from eternity; *this Idea agrees objectively with him*. (my emphasis KV 2.22.4a)

As for the Intellect in the thinking thing, this too is a Son, product or immediate creature of God, also created by him from all eternity, and remaining immutable from all eternity. *Its sole property is to understand everything clearly and distinctly at all times*. (my emphasis KV 1.9.3)

Since whatever is in the infinite intellect must be matched exactly in the reality outside the intellect (KV app1p4), the attributes really do constitute God.¹⁸⁰ The attributes of Spinoza’s God are, in effect, ontologically authentic. That they must be ontologically authentic is driven home by the following. For Spinoza, to constitute (*constituere*) is at once to occupy (*occupare*) (5p39) and to beget-institute-make (*creare*) (TTP 17n37). Obviously, that which is not ontologically authentic cannot occupy-beget-institute-make anything.

¹⁷⁸ Those commentators who hold that the intellect perceiving attributes as constituting God must be *finite* since by 2d3exp perception is *passive* are, therefore, mistaken (see Kessler 1971a, 637).

¹⁷⁹ See Della Rocca 1996, 157.

¹⁸⁰ See Wolf 1966, 59.

Case 2.—

The fact that *infinite* intellect perceives God as constituted by attributes is telling for the view that God really is constituted by attributes (and thus that the attributes of God are ontologically authentic). As it turns out, however, the fact that *infinite* intellect perceives God as constituted by attributes is not essential to the case. The following argument shows why.

Any intellect—*infinite or not*—contains a true idea of God insofar as it perceives God as having attributes (1p30d in light of 1d6).¹⁸¹

A true idea must agree with its object, that is (as is known through itself), what is contained objectively in the intellect must necessarily be in nature. . . . Therefore, actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, must comprehend God's attributes.
(1p30d)

In effect, and as Spinoza says in the *Short Treatise*, “the idea of infinite attributes in the perfect being is no fiction” (KV 1.1 I/17/34-35). Now, a true idea, an idea that is no fiction, is an idea that “shows us the thing as it is in itself” (CM 1.6 I/246/27-30). It is an idea that must “agree with its object” (1a6, 1p30d, 2p32d; Ep. 64), correspond with that object as that object is “in itself” (2p44c2d; Ep. 12 IV/56/10-15). Since reality is thus isomorphic with a true idea (CM 1.6 I/246/27-30; 1a6, 1p30d, 2p32d, 2p44c2d; Ep. 12 IV/56/10-15, Ep. 64), if it is a true idea that ontologically authentic entity x has so and so attributes, then those attributes are really there, ontologically authentic. Since it is a true idea that God has attributes (1p30d in light of 1d6; KV 1.1 I/17/34-35), the attributes of Spinoza's God are ontologically authentic.

¹⁸¹ See Mark 1992, 68-69.

Case 3.—

If there is any doubt about the fact that the intellect's perception of God as being constituted by attributes requires that God in itself really be constituted by attributes (and thus that its attributes are authentic), consider the following argument.

To attend to something by means of the intellect is to attend to it as it is in itself (Ep. 12 IV/56/10ff; 2p44d in light of 4app4; TdIE 101).

The properties of the intellect which I have chiefly noted and clearly understand are as follows: 1. That it involves certainty; that is, it knows that things are in reality as they are contained in the intellect in the form of thought. (TdIE 108)

Intellect perceives God as being constituted by attributes (1p30d and 2p4d in light of 1d6, 2p7s, and 2p44d). Indeed, intellect understands the attributes of God to be really distinct (really distinct merely in the sense that each is utterly self-sufficient) (1p10s; KV 1.2 I/23/16; Ep. 8; see Chapter IV). Since “things are in reality as they are contained in the intellect” (TdIE 108.1; see TdIE 101; Ep. 12 IV/56/10ff; 2p44d in light of 4app4), and since in the intellect God is constituted by really distinct attributes (1p30d and 2p4d in light of 1d6, 1p10s, 2p7s, 2p44d, KV 1.2 I/23/16, and Ep. 8), God really is constituted by attributes. The attributes of God are ontologically authentic, therefore.

Case 4.—

Several fresh angles can be used to make the case for the claim that attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. Consider the following argument, for example.

First, reason is equivalent to intellect for Spinoza: “it is especially useful to perfect our intellect, or reason, as far as we can” (4app4). Second, “It is in the nature of

reason to perceive things truly, namely, as they are in themselves” (2p44d). Third, an attribute is “what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence” (1d4); an attribute is “whatever can be perceived by an infinite intellect as constituting the essence of substance” (2p7s). Fourth, God is “a substance consisting of infinite attributes, *each* of which . . .” (my emphasis 1d6). Therefore, God is constituted by ontologically authentic attributes.

Spinoza held this view even early on, as is evident when we look at Spinoza’s letters from the period of 1661-1663. First, a “true definition” explains a thing as it is in itself, independent of the classifying mind (Ep. 9 IV/43/29-30; 1p8s2 II/50). Indeed, for Spinoza, as with Aristotle, a true definition of a thing is just the essence of the thing (DPP 2p15s I/203/18; 1p8s2 II/50, 1p8s2 II/51/16). Second, a “Being consisting of infinite attributes, *each* of which is infinite or supremely perfect in its own kind” is a “true definition of God” (my emphasis Ep. 2 IV/7-IV/8). Therefore, God does consist of real attributes, attributes that are ontologically authentic.

3.2.6 Spinoza says that God is constituted by attributes

First, and in accordance with what we would expect from what I just pointed out, Spinoza explicitly says that God is “a being that consists of infinite attributes” (1p10s; see 1p4d, 1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d; Ep. 9 IV/45; Ep. 70).

Second, Spinoza says that if intellect and will were (as common people mistakenly believe) true attributes of God, then intellect and will “would constitute God’s essence” (1p17s2 II/62-II/63). The implication is that the *genuine philosophical*

attributes (Thought, Extension, and so on) do constitute God's essence. That this is the right implication is clear when Spinoza explicitly says the following.

[T]he same attributes of God that explain his eternal essence (by 1d4) at the same time explain his eternal existence; that is, that which constitutes the essence of God [(namely, each attribute)] at the same time constitutes his existence. (1p20d)

Third, Spinoza says that the attributes *pertain* to God (1p15s1 II/57/18-27, 1p19d II/64/15-20, 2p7s II/90/4-5; Ep. 36). This is significant because, as 2p10 makes clear by linking the phrases "*pertinet*" (pertains to) and "*constituit*" (constitutes) with the term *sive*, to pertain to (*pertinere*) is, for Spinoza, to constitute (*constituere*) and thus, as I pointed out above, to occupy (*occupare*) (5p39) and to beget-institute-make (*creare*) (TTP 17n37).

In conclusion, God is a being that is truly constituted by the divine attributes: Extension, Thought, and so on. God really does consist, in other words, of those "fixed and eternal things" (TdIE 100),¹⁸² those self-sufficient "creatures" (Ep. 6 IV/36) that are the "first elements of the whole of nature" (TdIE 75) and that remain really distinct despite belonging to one being (1p10s; KV 1.2 I/23/16; Ep. 8; see Chapter IV). The attributes of God, "those attributes which [together] we ourselves concede to be the substance" God, must therefore be ontologically authentic for Spinoza (KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13).

3.2.7 Spinoza rejects the nonconstituent analysis of substances having attributes

Either one endorses a constituent analysis of substances having attributes, in which case substances do really have entities that are attributes, or one endorses a

¹⁸² See Melamed 2013d, 11n16; Nadler 2006, 93-94; but see Della Rocca 1996, 187n16.

nonconstituent analysis, in which case substances do not really have entities that are attributes. These are the only options. There are two basic forms of nonconstituent analysis: the relational form and the nonrelational form. These are the only options (see Chapter II). Spinoza rejects them both. Earlier points already imply such a rejection. Nevertheless, I will make the rejection explicit, one by one.

Let us first see why Spinoza rejects the relational nonconstituent analysis of substances being characterized. Let us, for example, see why Spinoza rejects the relational nonconstituent analysis of God's being extended. In himself, that is, considered truly, that is, independent of any relation, God is extended (2p2 in light of 1d3, 1p5d, and KV 1.2 I/27/11-17). According to the relational nonconstituent analysis, however, to say that God is extended is merely to say that God is in relation to something else—is a member of a class, falls under some predicate, resembles some archetype, or so on. According to the relational view, in other words, God is extended if and only if God is in relation to some other entity. Therefore, Spinoza rejects the relational view.

Let us now see why Spinoza rejects the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis of substances being characterized. Let us, for example, see why Spinoza rejects the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis of God's being extended. In himself, that is, considered truly, that is, independent of any relation, God is extended (2p2 in light of 1d3, 1p5d, and KV 1.2 I/27/11-17). Whereas this fact alone suffices to rule out the relational analysis, it does not suffice to rule out the nonrelational analysis. According to the nonrelational analysis, to say that God is extended is merely to say that God is extended. No reference must be made to God's relation to some other entity. According

to the nonrelational analysis, in other words, God is extended if and only if God is extended. But although the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis is compatible with God's being extended in himself, it is incompatible with God's really having some ontological attribute (Extension or Extendedness), some *qualitas* entity serving as the truthmaker for its being correctly characterized as extended. For on the nonrelational analysis, God is ontologically attributeless. As I have argued above from multiple angles, however, God does have ontological attributes. Infallible intellect, for example, sees God as being constituted by not only conceptually (Ep. 8; KV 1.2 I/23/16) but also really (1p10s) distinct attributes. This is significant, of course. Reality must match what the infallible intellect sees. So that is the end of the story.

Why is that the end of the story? The infallible intellect's true idea of God's having multifarious distinct attributes is an idea that is itself made up of multifarious distinct ideas. After all, "it is of the nature of substance that all of its attributes—each one individually—are conceived through themselves" (Ep. 8 IV/41). Since a true idea is isomorphic with reality for Spinoza, the plurality of the true idea must be matched in the ideatum of that idea. Therefore, God in himself really must have ontological attributes, which is something that the nonrelational nonconstituent interpretation—in rejecting the category of attribute altogether—denies. Spinoza realizes that God in himself has ontological attributes. After all, he describes the attributes that constitute God's essence as "creatures" (Ep. 6 IV/36), "fixed and eternal things" (TdIE 100),¹⁸³ "first elements of the whole of nature" (TdIE 75).

¹⁸³ See Melamed 2013d, 11n16; Nadler 2006, 93-94; but see Della Rocca 1996, 187n16.

The nonrelational nonconstituent analysis of things having properties is utterly foreign to Spinoza's way of thinking. The following brings this into stark relief. Things have true definitions for Spinoza (see 1d6 in light of Ep. 2). A true definition refers to a thing as it is outside the intellect (Ep. 9), that is, as it "exists in reality" (Ep. 4). Since a true definition, moreover, refers only to properties of a thing (in particular, its essential properties) (1p8s2), things really do have ontological properties. That is precisely what the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis denies.

3.3 Objections and replies

3.3.1 Objection 1: why the psychological locutions when talking about attributes?

Perhaps the most cited reason why Spinoza does not include attributes in his ontology is this. Spinoza defines an attribute as what *the intellect perceives* as constituting the essence of substance.

By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence. (1d4)

Why would one take this as evidence that attributes are not ontologically authentic for Spinoza? The idea is this. To *perceive* that x possesses Fness does not necessarily mean that x actually does possess Fness. x *could*, no doubt. But it also could *not*. If Spinoza were talking about what x really does possess, then he would have trimmed away the misleading talk about what *the intellect perceives*. Such talk, by the way, happens elsewhere. Spinoza tells us at Letter 9, for example, that the *intellect* attributes the attributes to substance.

Relatedly, the English term "as" in the above translation of Spinoza's 1d4 is, in Latin, "*tanquam*." "*Tanquam*" can also be translated as "as if." 1d4's talk of "what the

intellect perceives” indicates, at least for some, that the “as if” rendering is appropriate here, suggesting that what the intellect perceives is merely apparent and not in fact true.¹⁸⁴

3.3.2 Reply to objection 1

First, “as if” itself might be ambiguous enough not to rule out the interpretation that the attributes are ontologically authentic even were it the right rendering of “*tanquam*.” I quote Haserot on the matter.

It is to be noted that “as if” is itself ambiguous. It may mean (1) “as if, and maybe in fact,” or (2) “as if, though not in fact.” If I say, “I perceive this line as if constituting the diameter of a circle,” the “as if” can mean “as if, and maybe in fact” or “as if, and also in fact.” If I say, “I perceive this polygon as if constituting a circle,” the “as if” means “as if, though not in fact.” According to the context, the “if” in the term “as if” implies either uncertainty as to the factual character of the predication or certainty as to its counterfactual character. But the term “as if,” in the manner here used, must mean the latter, i.e., “as if, though not in fact.” Otherwise the conditional “if” would have no determinant bearing on the interpretations of the definition, and the expression “as if” would be indistinguishable in meaning from “as.”¹⁸⁵

Second, only in three or so of the thirty seven times Spinoza uses the term “*tanquam*” in the *Ethics* is it arguable that it has the doubt-bearing connotation of “as if”

¹⁸⁴ Motivated by these two points, Schwegler offers the following rejection of the view that attributes are true constituents of God.

[The attributes] are determinations in which substance takes the form for the subjective apprehension of understanding; or for behoof of understanding all is once for all divided into thought and extension. And this is the conception of Spinoza. An attribute is for him what understanding perceives in substance as constitutive of its nature. The two attributes are therefore determinations, which express the nature of substance in these precise forms, *only for perception*. . . . The attributes [thus] explain not what substance really is; and in its regard consequently appear contingent. (my emphasis Schwegler 1909, xviii-xix)

¹⁸⁵ Haserot 1953, 500n2. Parchment offers a reason why the “as if” rendering of *tanquam* is not only compatible with but also appropriate for the objectivist interpretation of the attributes (see 1996, 66). His idea is something like this. Since God has many attributes, it must be that an attribute is what intellect perceives as if constituting the essence of substance (1d4). For no one attribute really does constitute the essence of God.—The problem with this, though, is that the definition of attribute at 1d4 is supposed to apply to single-attribute substances as well. Here, then, Parchment’s explanation for rendering *tanquam* “as if” does not apply.

(see 1p33s2, 2p49s, 5p31s). And it is clear by the next three points (in addition to the points I raised in the previous section) that the correct translation of “*tanquam*” in the official definition of “attribute” at 1d4 must be “as” (“as” in the sense understood by those interpreters who raise the *tanquam*-worry in doubt that the attributes are ontologically authentic).

Third, the intellect, whether infinite or finite, is a mode of no other attribute but Thought (see 1p31d and 2p7s; Ep. 9). Hence the reality of the attribute of Thought appears to be the condition of the possibility for the intellect, such that if the intellect exists so thereby must the attribute. If this is thought to be compatible with the view that attributes are not authentic, then consider that, for Spinoza, “no created things have the power to form an attribute” (KV 1.2 I/32/31).

Fourth, consideration of 1p19d, KV 1.2, and 3p6d indicate that Spinoza regards the attributes as authentic at 1d4. At 1p19d Spinoza says that each attribute pertains to the essence of the substance of which it is an attribute. At KV 1.2 Spinoza says “all the attributes, which depend on no other cause, and whose definition requires no genus, belong to God’s essence” (I/32/29-30). At 3p6d Spinoza describes the attributes as *powers* of God. In effect, each attribute, which depends on no other cause than itself and falls under no category more general than it, is a self-sufficient power essential to God.

Fifth, and once again, the intellect perceives God as being constituted by attributes, and what the intellect perceives of something is true of that something (1p30d and 2p4d in light of 1d6; 1a6, 2p44c2d; Ep. 12, IV/56/10-15, Ep. 64; TdIE 108). Since what the intellect perceives is adequate and true, those who suppose that the reference to

the intellect in the definition of attribute undermines the ontological authenticity of the attributes are mistaking the intellect, which is infallible, for the imagination, which is fallible (see Ep. 2).¹⁸⁶ The Kantian interpretation, as it were, of Spinozistic substances having attributes thus cannot stand.

An important question arises at this point, however. Since saying that attributes are what intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance amounts to the same thing as saying simply that attributes constitute the essence of substance, why does not Spinoza just say that attributes constitute the nature of substance in his official definition of attribute? Would not that be clearer and more economical than saying that the attributes are *what the intellect perceives* as constituting the essence of substance? According to Bennett, my interpretation in effect must bite a significant bullet: that Spinoza's definition of attributes is "pointlessly, vexatiously long-winded, dragging in 'intellect' for no good reason"?¹⁸⁷ Bennett says that no one who endorses my interpretation has ever provided a good reason for why Spinoza includes the phrase "what the intellect perceives." Perhaps he is right. I do not know the literature well enough to say for sure. What I do know for sure is that there is a straightforward good reason for the inclusion. When one steps back from the words for a moment and considers the way of thinking, the vision, reflected in Spinoza's body of works, that reason becomes clear. Indeed, it becomes clear why Spinoza feels the *need*, finds it *crucial*, to insert the phrase "what the intellect perceives." Far from being sloppy or

¹⁸⁶ See Mark 1992, 69.

¹⁸⁷ Bennett 1981, sect. 8.

long-winded, by adding that phrase Spinoza is trying to be unequivocal about the fact that the attributes under discussion in the *Ethics* are ontologically authentic attributes of substances.

At 1d4 Spinoza is notifying the reader that here in the *Ethics*, and unlike other works such as the TTP, he is using the term “attribute” solely in its *strict* sense. What is it to use the term “attribute” in its strict sense for Spinoza? It is to refer to those attributes that actually pertain to the nature of God, God as “it is considered in itself alone” (CM 1.6 I/248/31). It is to refer to these ontologically authentic attributes and not as well those “commonly ascribed to God” (KV 1.7 I/44/29) (wisdom, compassion, justice, and so on), which are projected by the “limited understanding of the common people” (TTP 4.11; see CM 1.6 I/248/28-I/249/2) and which portray “god as a man: now angry, now merciful, now longing for the future, now seized by jealousy and suspicion, indeed even deceived by the devil” (Ep. 19 IV/93). Deeply acquainted with the tendency for humans to project their own attributes onto the Godhead (Ep. 56; 1app II/82), Spinoza devotes great effort, both inside and outside of the *Ethics*, to distinguish true from false attributes, and the mark of the true attribute is that the intellect, pure thought, perceives it (TTP 4.5). Spinoza is frequently busy exposing how perceiving the divine otherwise than through the intellect leads us astray. And so the prophets, as Spinoza points out in the TTP, find the divine nature to have the attributes of Justice and Love, “those attributes of God that men *may* emulate by a sound rationale of life” (my emphasis, TTP 13.8). As intellectual knowledge of God reveals, however, the prophets are mistaken. “Intellectual knowledge of God” considers “His nature as it is in itself, a

nature which men *cannot* emulate by a certain rationale of living” (my emphasis, TTP 13.8). So unlike in the TTP, for example, where Spinoza uses the term “attribute” in the “vulgar” manner or “human fashion” (Ep. 19 IV/92-IV/93), at the start of the *Ethics* Spinoza is indicating that in *this* work he is speaking of *true* attributes, attributes in the philosophical sense (rather than of, in Roth’s terminology, “imaginative attributes”).¹⁸⁸ By speaking of true attributes, attributes in the philosophical sense, Spinoza is thus cutting away from discussion the sorts of attributes that the prophets—not seeing God through intellect, but through revelation—said applied to God: legislator, judge, just, loving, and other such “extrinsic notions” (4p37s2; TTP 13.8; Ep. 19 IV/93; Ep. 21 IV/127/25-35). That Spinoza would limit himself to attributes in the strict and philosophical sense in the *Ethics* is understandable. The *Ethics* is intended to be a work consisting in philosophical reasoning and pure thought.

Here is the take-home point, then. Spinoza characterizes attributes as what the *intellect* perceives of God in order to make it clear that he is talking about “God as God—that is, absolutely, ascribing no *human* attributes to him” (my emphasis Ep. 21 IV/127/24; see Ep. 56). The presence of the phrase “what the intellect perceives” closes off all other interpretative options than that the *intellectually* perceived attributes of God (Extension and Thought)—that is, “the *proper* attributes of God through which we come to know him in himself” (as opposed to how he is by “extrinsic denomination” or “in respect to his actions”)—are ontologically authentic (my emphases KV 1.2.28-29).

3.3.3 Objection 2: Spinoza says that there is nothing but substances and modes

¹⁸⁸ Roth 1963, 118-119.

I have argued that the presence of psychological locutions surrounding talk of the attributes is not merely *compatible with* the interpretation according to which Spinoza welcomes attributes into his ontology, but is actually *in service of* such an interpretation. Another concern for my interpretation remains, nevertheless.

How can attributes be ontologically authentic features of substances when, as Spinoza himself states, there is nothing but *substances* (those things that depend on no other thing and can be conceived independent of any other thing) and *modes* (non-fundamental but necessary properties that depend on other things in terms of which such properties must be understood: see Chapter VII)?¹⁸⁹

Whatever is is either in itself or in another, that is, outside the intellect there is nothing except substances and their affections. (1p4d)

For in nature there is nothing except substances and their affections. (1p6c)

But except for substances and modes there is nothing. (1p15d)

Since substances and modes exhaust the possibility of things that can exist (1p4d, 1p6c, 1p15d, 1p28d), there seems to be no place in Spinoza's ontology for attributes. For this reason Eisenberg feels entitled to cite simply 1p4d as proof that, for Spinoza, "the attributes exist only in the intellect."¹⁹⁰

3.3.4 Reply to objection 2

If Spinoza's system demands that there is no place for ontologically authentic attributes of substances, then his system is contradictory. For attributes of substances are ontologically authentic. So for all those interested in learning about Spinoza's vision,

¹⁸⁹ Deveaux 2007, 40.

¹⁹⁰ Eisenberg 1990, 2.

rather than interested in merely finding ways to reject that vision, the question becomes how Spinoza's claim that there is nothing but substances and modes in his ontology is compatible with the ontological authenticity of the attributes.

The explanation is not hard-won. In the very sentence following his claim at 1p4d that there are only substances and modes, Spinoza makes it clear that substances are nothing but their attributes. Spinoza says this many times afterwards in the *Ethics* (see 1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d) as well as throughout several other works (Ep. 9 IV/45; DPP 1p7s; KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13). I will discuss these passages in the next chapter. For now it is enough to focus on 1p4d. Here is the full passage, not just the part that makes it seem as if Spinoza leaves no room for attributes in his ontology.

Whatever is is either in itself or in another, that is, outside the intellect there is nothing except substances and their affections. Therefore, there is nothing outside the intellect through which a number of things can be distinguished from one another except [(1)] substances, or what is the same, their attributes, and [(2)] their affections. (1p4d)

Surely one of the reasons for Spinoza saying that substances are just their attributes right after he claims that there are only substances and modes in his ontology is to obviate the potential misreading of the claim that there are only substances and modes in his ontology, the misreading according to which attributes are not ontologically authentic.

Think about it this way. The basis for Spinoza's conclusion that there are only substances and modes is the following two points. (1) Each thing is either in itself and understood through itself or else in another and understood through another (1a1). (2) Substances are defined as being the former (1d3) whereas modes are defined as being

the latter (1d5). Now, I have already pointed out that attributes for Spinoza are also in themselves and understood through themselves. There is only one explanation, then, for why Spinoza does not list attributes as part of his ontology in that *first* sentence of 1p4d. The explanation is that he identifies attributes—although not without a key qualification—with the items explicitly in his ontology that are in themselves and understood through themselves: substances (substances understood in their “absolute natures” (see 1p21-23), that is, substances as they are ontologically prior to their modes: see 1p21-1p23 in light of 1p1). More specifically, and here is the key qualification that we will explore in the next chapter, a substance just is the totality of its attributes. In the second sentence Spinoza explicitly states the identity of substances and their attributes, explaining that outside of the intellect there is nothing but substances, *or what is the same*, their attributes (1p4d; see 1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d; Ep. 9 IV/45).

3.4 Concluding remarks

I have argued that Spinoza endorses a constituent analysis of substances having attributes. I have also explained why what has often been regarded as inimical to my interpretation is not in fact inimical. In effect, Spinoza endorses a constituent analysis of substances having attributes and he appears to be guilty of no obvious inconsistency in so doing.

In light of these findings, the range of options that Spinoza has for endorsing an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes has been significantly narrowed. If Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes, then he cannot

be endorsing either the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis or the relational nonconstituent analysis. If Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes, then he must be endorsing a constituent antirealist analysis, that is, he must be endorsing the view that attributes are particularized natures, tropes, rather than universals.

At least according to the widespread belief that nonconstituent antirealism has been the more usual form of antirealism throughout the history of philosophy (and especially in the period with which I am concerned), many will regard this as a strong sign that Spinoza is not going to endorse an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes. Indeed, and reflecting the dominant mindset according to which the possibility that properties are tropes tends to be overlooked, several commentators hold that the debate over whether the attributes are real or not, and the debate as to whether Spinoza gives a realist or antirealist analysis of substances having attributes, perfectly overlap. Haserot implies this in the following comment, for example.

The nominalist interpretation of Spinoza demands the subjectivity of the attributes. Without such an assumption its case is lost.¹⁹¹

Antirealism denies, Haserot seems to be saying, the reality of properties, natures and the like. Hence the debate over whether the attributes are real or not, and the debate as to whether Spinoza gives a realist or antirealist analysis of substances having attributes, is the same debate, as far as Haserot is concerned.

¹⁹¹ Haserot 1950, 484; see Wolfson 1934, 142-156; Wolfson 1937b, 310-311.

To be sure, it is wrong to say that antirealism denies the reality of properties. To say this is to neglect the constituent form of antirealism: trope theory. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that many would regard, in effect, proof of the ontological authenticity of the attributes as proof of the fact that attributes are universals. This way one gets an accurate understanding of the true impact that this chapter has within the live community of participants in the debate as to whether Spinoza is a realist or antirealist concerning universals.

CHAPTER IV

(PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S BUNDLE ANALYSIS

OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES

4.1 Introductory remarks

In the previous chapter, I argued that Spinoza endorses a constituent analysis of substances having attributes, an interpretation simply according to which attributes of substances are real, objective, ontologically authentic. In the chapter now at hand, I argue that Spinoza endorses a bundle interpretation of substances having attributes, an interpretation simply according to which a substance is nothing but its attributes. Since the bundle interpretation is a species of constituent interpretation, this chapter also serves as evidence for the thesis of the previous chapter (one might want to note).

In addition to arguing that substances for Spinoza are nothing but their attributes, I will explain—on Spinozistic terms, of course—how such an interpretation is compatible with several Spinozistic positions that may appear to disallow it. For instance, I will explain how the bundle interpretation is compatible with the simplicity, indivisibility, unity, and nonderivativeness of the one and only substance in Spinoza's ontology: God. I will also explain how the bundle interpretation is compatible with God's being conceived through himself, with God's being conceived through merely one of his attributes, and with the sameness of the attributes. By the end of this chapter, then, it will be clear that Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes only if he endorses a trope bundle analysis.

4.2 Core argument

4.2.1 Introduction

There are two main brands of constituent interpretation of substances having attributes. There are two basic ways, in other words, to conceive of the relation between a substance and its ontological attributes. On the bundle interpretation,¹⁹² a substance is nothing but, nothing in excess to, its attributes, in which case talk of substance *x* is merely compendious talk of all the attributes of *x* (whether there be many attributes or even just one).¹⁹³ On the anti-bundle interpretation, a substance is not nothing but its attributes; a substance has some attributeless something in excess to—even if inseparable from—its attributes. The most historically popular form of the anti-bundle interpretation is known as the substratum interpretation. On the substratum interpretation, standing “beneath” or “behind” or “at the back of” a substance’s attributes, and also in support of those attributes, is an attributeless something—a substratum—that has an identity all its own.¹⁹⁴

For reasons that I will now make explicit, and in contrast to what several commentators hold,¹⁹⁵ Spinoza endorses a bundle interpretation of substances having attributes. For Spinoza, substances considered truly, that is, as ontologically anterior to their modes (see 1p5d), are nothing in excess to their attributes, nothing but the

¹⁹² We arguably find such a view in Descartes, Porphyry, and Plotinus. See Adamson 2013, 335; Barnes 2003, 151-154; Chiaradonna 2000; Descartes *Principles of Philosophy* 1/63; Spinoza DPP 1p7s 1/63/5.

¹⁹³ See Moreland 2001, 57-58.

¹⁹⁴ Loux 2006, 84.

¹⁹⁵ Bennett 1984, 64; Deveaux 2007, 122n10; Di Poppa 2009, 924, 925, 925n15; Parchment 1996b 55n4; Shein 2009b, 511-512.

“totality” or “sum” of their attributes.¹⁹⁶ In the two subsections that follow, I will lay out the two central reasons in support of this view: Spinoza says as much and his system demands as much.¹⁹⁷ The reader should note that—unless flagged otherwise—I follow Spinoza’s use of the term “substance” (especially in early parts of the *Ethics*) as shorthand for “substance considered truly.” Again, *substance considered truly* is substance considered merely as it is in its most fundamental sense—ontologically prior to, and so stripped of, the only other things in Spinoza’s ontology: modes (see 1p5d).

4.2.2 Spinoza says that substances are just their attributes

Spinoza explicitly says that substances are nothing but their attributes (see 1d6, 1p4d, 1p10s, 1p14c2 in light of 1p4d-1p6c-1p15d-1p28d, 1p19, 1p20c2, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1p30d; Ep. 9 IV/45; DPP 1p7s; KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13). Here are eight passages to that effect.

1. There is nothing outside the intellect through which a number of things can be distinguished from one another except [(1)] substances, or *what is the same* (by 1d4), their attributes, and [(2)] their affections. (my emphasis 1p4d)
2. By *God* I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a *substance* consisting of an infinity of attributes. . . . God, that is, all the attributes of God, are eternal. (my emphasis 1d6- 1p19)
3. By *God* I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a *substance* consisting of an infinity of attributes. . . . God, that is, all the attributes of God, are immutable. (my emphasis 1d6-1p20c2)
4. By *Natura Naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself [(substance, by 1d3)], that is, the attributes of substance. (1p29s)

¹⁹⁶ Curley 1969, 16-17, 91.

¹⁹⁷ In Chapter V I show that this view is a key premise in fact for Spinoza’s argument for substance monism.

5. But in Nature (by 1p14c1) there is only one substance, namely, God [(a substance constituted by all the attributes)], and there are no other affections other than those which are in God (by 1p15) and can neither be nor be conceived without God (by 1p15). Therefore, an actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, must comprehend God's attributes and God's affections, and nothing else. (1p30d)

6. [T]he attributes [of substance are that] which we ourselves concede to be [te] substance. (KV 2pref4 I/53/10-13)

7. It follows, second, that an extended thing and a thinking thing are either attributes of God, or (by 1a1) affections of God's attributes. . . . But except for substances and modes there is nothing (by 1a1). (1p14c2 and 1p15d)

8. For there is nothing except substance and its modes (by 1a1, 1d3, and 1d5) and modes [of substances (see 1d3)] are (by 1p25c) nothing but affections of God's attributes. (1p28d II/69/19-20)

Quotes 2-4 are quite poignant when one considers that Spinoza uses the term “*sive*” to link *God* (a *substance* consisting of all the attributes) with *the totality of God's attributes*.

Deus sive omnia Dei attributa sunt aeterna. (1p19)

Deum sive omnia Dei attributa esse immutabilia. (1p20c2)

Per Naturam naturantem nobis intelligendum est id, quod in se est et per se concipitur, sive substantiae attributa. (1p29s)

As noted earlier, “*sive*” is a term that Spinoza uses to indicate identity. As with the term “*seu*,” “or” is the standard translation of “*sive*.” Nevertheless, in order to bring out the strict equivalence between God and the totality of God's attributes, I use “that is” as opposed to “or” here.—Spinoza uses “*sive*” to identify a substance with the totality of a substance's attributes outside of the *Ethics* too. When discussing single-attribute substances with De Vries, for example, Spinoza says “substance *sive* attribute” (Ep. 9 IV/46).

Quote 1 really drives home the identification of substance with all of its attributes. Not only does Spinoza use his gold-standard word for identity, “*sive*,” to link the term “substances” with the phrase “their attributes.” Next to the “*sive*” he adds “*quod idem est*,” which means “what is the same.” This addition, although overkill for those already in the know about the role that “*sive*” plays, is a flag meant to make unequivocal the following sentiment: “I am not just speaking loosely and popularly here; a substance is—literally—nothing but its attributes.”

Quote 7 is subtle, but poignant. When Spinoza says, at 1p14c2, that what is, say, extended is either the attribute of Extension or a mode of Extension he cites 1a1, the axiom that what exists is either in itself or in another. As 1p15d makes explicit, 1a1 amounts to the claim (in light of the definitions of substance and mode: 1d3 and 1d5) that there is nothing but substances and modes. Hence 1p14c2, when taken in light of 1p15d, makes it clear that Spinoza finds that a substance just is its attributes. Indeed, Spinoza uses 1a1 several times as justification (in light of 1d3 and 1d5) for the claim that there are only substances and modes. He does for example at 1p4d, 1p6c, and 1p28d. By using 1a1 at 1p14c2 to claim, in effect, that the only options for what exists are *attributes* or their modes, Spinoza makes it clear that a substance just is its attributes.¹⁹⁸

Quote 5 is powerful as well. Even the infinite intellect’s true, clear and distinct, and absolutely complete idea of God is of nothing more than every one of God’s modes

¹⁹⁸ At KV 1.2 I/29/20-23 Spinoza does talk about a substance *supporting* its attributes. But this is often construed as a “mistranslation from the Latin original or a copyist’s omission” (Curley 1985, 75n8). And even if it is correct, I assume that the sense of *support* in question is compatible with substances being the totality of their attributes.

and every one—not merely some (Ep. 56, Ep. 32; 1d6 in light of 1d2)—of God’s attributes (of which there is an infinite number).¹⁹⁹ That the infinite intellect’s *complete* idea of God refers *only* to attributes and modes means that there is nothing else to God than these. Hence there is nothing else to God *considered truly*, that is, stripped of its modes (1p5d), than attributes. God considered truly, that is to say, is nothing but an infinite number of attributes.—If there were something in excess to the attributes when it comes to God considered truly (a substratum in which those attributes inhere, say), then the infinite intellect’s complete idea of God considered truly would have to refer as well to that something in excess. Since the infinite intellect’s complete idea of God considered truly does not refer to anything in excess to the attributes, there is nothing in excess to the attributes when it comes to God considered truly.

The above interpretation of Quote 5 is corroborated by different means in Quote 5 itself. Quote 5 says that since there is only (a) God and (b) God’s modes, it follows that infinite intellect can comprehend nothing but (c) God’s attributes and (d) God’s modes. It is obvious that a equals c, just as b equals d. The strict equality is what allows Spinoza to infer that infinite intellect—which comprehends absolutely everything—can comprehend nothing but God’s attributes and God’s modes from the mere claim that

¹⁹⁹ Spinoza holds there to be an infinite number of attributes, not just Thought and Extension. Not only is Spinoza always careful to leave open the possibility for attributes in addition to Thought and Extension (see Ep. 64), he also is convinced that there are more attributes than these two. In the *Short Treatise* he writes, “[W]e find in ourselves something which openly indicates to us not only that there are more [attributes besides Thought and Extension], but also that there are infinite perfect attributes which must pertain to this perfect being before it can be called perfect” (KV 1.1 I/17/35-43). Indeed, in the *Short Treatise* he suggests that someday humans might come to know other attributes of God (KV 1.7 I/44/25-26). Spinoza also says in Letter 56 that we do not know “the greater part of God’s attributes” (Ep. 56 IV/261/13).

there is only God and God's modes. If there were not this strict equality, then the inference would be illicit.—The same parallel, by the way, between (a) substance and (b) substance's modes, on the one hand, and (c) substance's attributes and (d) substance's modes, on the other hand, appears in several places throughout Spinoza's corpus. We see it, for example, in Quote 7 and 8.

4.2.3 Spinoza's system demands that substances are just their attributes

If a substance were not merely the totality of its attributes, then a substance would have something in excess to the totality of its attributes; it would not be exhausted by its attributes. It is clear, however, that a substance does not have something in excess to the totality of its attributes; a substance is exhausted by its attributes. That is why Spinoza says that the only knowledge possible (which is in fact knowledge of everything) is knowledge of either the attributes or the modes of the one and only true substance (God) (1p30d; see Ep. 56), and thus that the only knowledge of God *considered truly* is of God's attributes (see 1p30d in light of 1p5d). That is also why Spinoza says, and indeed requires, that things are ontologically individuated only by difference in modes or difference in attributes, and not as well by a difference in some-things beyond their attributes and their modes—their substrata, say (1p4d). If there were these extra some-things that things had for Spinoza, then things could be ontologically individuated not only in terms of attribute or mode but as well in terms of these extra some-things. Indeed, Spinoza argues in 1p5d that, since modes cannot individuate substances, if two substances are not ontologically individuated in terms of attribute, then they are numerically identical. Surely he would have known not to say this if he

accepted that there were attributeless some-things that could numerically differentiate substances (substances considered truly, remember: see Section 4.2.1). It is clear, therefore, that a Spinozistic substance is nothing but the totality of its attributes.

Look at it this way. According to Spinoza, a substance is intelligible only through its attributes; the intellect's comprehension of a substance is nothing but its comprehension of the attributes (1p30d; Ep. 56; see DPP 1p6s).²⁰⁰ Since the intellect's comprehension of a substance is nothing but its comprehension of the attributes (1p30d; Ep. 56; see DPP 1p6s), if substance had something over and above its attributes, that is, if substance were not exhausted by the totality of its attributes, then there would be something about substance that would evade any intellect—some natureless core to substance, if you will, that is incomprehensible, ineffable (as is the interpretation of Spinoza's God that Zacharius Grapo defends early in the 18th Century).²⁰¹ But adequate knowledge of God is possible for Spinoza (2p47, 2p47s). Infinite intellect has complete knowledge of reality. Therefore, substance is not something over and above its attributes; it is exhausted by the totality of its attributes.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Ep. 56 suggests, in a subtle way, that knowing God is nothing but knowing God's attributes.

Here it should also be observed that I do not claim to have complete knowledge of God, but that I do understand *some* of his attributes—not indeed all of them, or the greater part—and it is certain that my ignorance of very many attributes does not prevent me from having knowledge of some of them. Notice that Spinoza analyzes his lack of complete knowledge of God as his ignorance of many of God's attributes. This suggests that knowing God is nothing but knowing God's attributes.

²⁰¹ Grapo 1719, 1.62f.

²⁰² For more on the substance-attribute relation in Spinoza see the following. Allison 1987; Aquila 1983; Bowman 1967; Cover 1999; Crane and Sandler 2005; Della Rocca 2002; Deveaux 2007; Eisenberg 1990; Garrett 1990; Glauser 1998; Jarrett 2007; Kulstad 1996; Lin 2006b; Lucash 1982; Nadler 2006; Okrent 2000; Parchment 1996b; Parchment 2008; Schliesser 2011; Sprigge 2001; Steinberg 1986; Teo 1968; Thomas 1989; Thomas 1998a; Thomas 1998b.

Here is another reason why Spinoza's system is committed to the view that a substance is nothing but the totality of its attributes. If a substance were not exhausted by the totality of its attributes (if it had some attribute-free substratum, say), then the attributes would be in, attached to, something that does not belong to the same ontological category as them. But the attributes of God are in themselves—indeed, they are utterly self-sufficient (see Chapter III). It is inappropriate, then, to say that the attributes are in, attached to, something that does not belong to the same ontological category as them.

Spinoza does say that the attributes are *in* God, no doubt (KV 1.1 I/17/34-35). We need not regard this as in tension with the fact that attributes are in themselves and indeed self-sufficient, though (see Section 4 below). For, on the view that substances are nothing but their attributes, any given attribute does not inhere in something of a different ontological category. An attribute is simply part of a package of other attributes. An attribute is *in* God only in the sense that it belongs to a cluster of attributes over and above which God is nothing. An attribute *inheres* in God, to use Russell's example, merely in the sense that a given letter inheres in the alphabet.²⁰³ There would be contradiction only if what the attributes are in is of another ontological category than the category of the attributes (the "*qualitas* category"), such as would be the something in excess to all attributes. But what the attributes are in is not of another ontological

²⁰³ Russell 2008, 59.

category. As D. C. Williams explains, “everybody agrees that a sum is of the same type with its [logical] terms.”²⁰⁴

Here is one last thing to consider. The attributes constitute God’s essence. Infinite intellect perceives this to be the case, and so it must be the case (see Chapter III). God considered truly is identical with his essence (1p5d; 1p11s II/54/25-26; 1p20). This alone shows the correctness of the bundle interpretation. But to drive the point home, consider this as well. For Spinoza, to constitute is synonymous with to beget-institute-make (see Chapter III). Thus all the attributes jointly beget-institute-make God. The only way for this to be compatible with the nonderivativeness of God, which is something that Spinoza holds to be true (as we will see in further detail later in this chapter), is that God is simply all the attributes.

4.3 Mapping onto Suárez’s Taxonomy of Distinctions

4.3.1 Introduction

I have argued that Spinoza endorses a bundle analysis of substances having attributes. Considered truly, that is, in its absolute nature, that is, as ontologically prior to its modes, God is, in effect, nothing more than the totality of an infinite number of attributes. Before discussing the chief objections to my interpretation, I want to explain how Spinozistic substances relate to their attributes, as well as how attributes of the same substance relate to each other, in terms of Suárez’s famous taxonomy of distinctions. This will provide a helpful resource as I respond to objections in the next section.

²⁰⁴ Williams 1966, 81.

4.3.2 God is merely rationally distinct from the totality of its attributes

A substance is nothing more than the totality of its attributes. There is, in effect, no unqualified and inaccessible *res* beneath the *cogitans* in the case of, for example, a thinking substance. It follows, therefore, that there is a mere *distinction of reason* between a substance and its attributes (where A and B differ merely by a distinction of reason only if A is strictly identical to B).²⁰⁵ The distinction between a substance and the totality of its attributes is merely mental, in other words.

Nothing more than this needs to be said when it comes to describing how Spinozistic substances relate to their attributes in terms of Suárez's taxonomy of distinctions. However, it would be informative to explain why Spinoza feels the need to express the same thing in two different ways: with substance speak, on the one hand, and with attribute speak, on the other. Why does Spinoza not simply pick one side or the other of the God-sive-all-the-attributes equation in order to avoid confusion?

First, note that Spinoza makes these sorts of equivalence claims all over the place. And it is not alien to his way of philosophizing for him to use one side of an

²⁰⁵ See Wolf 1966, 59.—There are two sorts of conceptual distinctions, that is, two sorts of distinctions of reason: that of reasoning reason (*distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*) and that of the reasoned reason (*distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*) (see Chambers 1728; Moreland 2001, 57-58; Suárez MD 7.1.4). The first arises merely from the temporal unfolding of a thought process, as in when we refer to Spinoza twice, once as subject and once as object, in thinking to ourselves “Spinoza is Spinoza” (see Leibniz *New Essays* 4.2.1). Spinoza's distinction from himself in this way is by no means secured by Spinoza himself, and Suárez tells us generally that this first distinction of reason is not secured by the thing under consideration. The second sort of distinction of reason, although secured by or rooted in the thing under consideration, arises nevertheless merely from an inadequate conception of the thing. The common example, although not one agreed by all as a viable example, is the distinction between the mercy of the Christian God and the justice of the Christian God. Since this God is simple, it is commonly said that there must be merely a distinction of reason, of the second sort, between justice and mercy.

equation in some circumstances and the other side in other circumstances. We see this especially in the case of Spinoza's most famous equivalence claim: God *sive* Nature.

Second, in Letter 9 Spinoza explains why he has two names—"substance" and "totality of attributes"—for the same thing. When we refer to a thing as a substance, we are stressing the fact that it is a *thing* or, perhaps more appropriate for Spinoza, a *being* (*ens*) (see 1d6, 1p10s, 1p11s, 1p14d, 4p28; Ep. 36)—a thing-being that is causally independent, constant through change, and ontologically prior to its affections. When we refer to the same thing as a totality of attributes, we are stressing the fact that the thing in question is nothing but the most fundamental determinable natures (of which all affections of that nature are determinate expressions). Far from trying to be confusing with his moving back and forth between both sides of the equation, Spinoza is trying to be clear.

The following considerations especially highlight that *clarity* is what motivates Spinoza to avoid going exclusively with one side or the other of the equation. Attributes have traditionally been considered dependent beings. By flipping back and forth (*substance* here, *all the attributes* there), Spinoza is indicating that he does not ascribe to such a view. The attributes in question are in themselves, conceived through themselves, self-caused, and so are in no way dependent beings. On the other hand, substances have traditionally been regarded as beings that are in themselves attributeless, that are in some way in excess to their attributes.²⁰⁶ Even Descartes at times suggests, and is indeed frequently thought to hold, that a substance is at its core an attributeless something—a

²⁰⁶ See Fullerton 1899, 50.

substratum—undergirding its attributes²⁰⁷ (although this does not seem to be his official view²⁰⁸). By flipping back and forth (*substance* here, *all the attributes* there), Spinoza is indicating that he does not ascribe to such a view. To distinguish a substance from its attributes is nothing more than to distinguish mentally and such a distinction, like all mere mental distinctions, reflects an inadequate conception of the thing.

In general summary, then, what Daniel describes as being the case with Berkeley goes equally for Spinoza.

As is obvious from his published work as well, he is not at all reluctant to appropriate the vocabulary of substance, even as he dispenses with the traditional understanding of substance as a . . . substratum.²⁰⁹

4.3.3 Attributes of God are formally distinct

It is clear how we are to understand the relation between a Spinozistic substance and its attributes in terms of Suárez's taxonomy of distinctions. A substance is merely conceptually distinct from the totality of its attributes. But how are we to understand the relation between the attributes of a given substance in terms of Suárez's taxonomy?

There cannot be a mere conceptual distinction between the attributes of a multiple-attribute substance such as God (who is the only true substance in Spinoza's ontology). To affirm that there is a mere conceptual distinction between the attributes of God is to affirm that there is not an ontological plurality of attributes. To affirm that there is not an ontological plurality of attributes is to affirm what I have argued to be false (see Chapter III). Remember, an intellect's conception of God's being constituted

²⁰⁷ See "Conversation with Burman" 25: "In addition to the attribute which specifies the substance, one must think of the substance itself which is the substrate of that attribute."

²⁰⁸ See *Principles of Philosophy* 1/63; see DPP 1p7s I/63/5.

²⁰⁹ Daniel 2013a, 28; see Daniel 2010.

by a plurality of attributes is an adequate conception, one that matches reality. But if, in addition to the mere mental distinction between a substance and the totality of its attributes, there were a mere mental distinction between the attributes themselves, that conception would be inadequate; that conception would not match reality. The infinite intellect would be perceiving plurality where there is none. That cannot be. There are several corroborating checks to this interpretation, of course (see Chapter III). One that stands out is that each attribute is individually self-sufficient and utterly isolated from any other attribute.

There also cannot be a modal distinction between the attributes of God. A modal distinction is a distinction between an entity and its mode. If A is the entity and B is its mode, then A and B are not identical and B is dependent on A whereas A is not dependent on B.²¹⁰ A given attribute is not a mode or affection of any other attribute and each attribute is self-sufficient, requiring the aid of nothing else to exist or to be conceived. Therefore, the distinction between the attributes of God cannot be modal.

There also cannot be a real distinction (in the following sense, at least) between the attributes of God. Things really distinct are, according to Suárez, capable of existing without the other.²¹¹ That is to say, things really distinct are mutually separable.²¹² In Spinoza's words, "of things which are really distinct from one another, one can be, and

²¹⁰ See Chambers 1728; Cross 2010; Moreland 2001, 58.

²¹¹ See Chambers 1728; Hoffman 2002, 67n10; Moreland 2001, 57; Rozemond 2011.

²¹² Adams 1987, 17; Glauser 2002, 423-424. According to Adams, it was a widely held assumption among medievals that real distinction goes hand in hand with separability, understood as the logical possibility of separate existence (Adams 1987, 17). Both Suárez and Descartes appear to share this assumption. For them, if A and B are really distinct, they are mutually separable (see Glauser 2002, 423-424 and *Principles* 1.60). As Suárez puts the point, "this is usually called a distinction between thing and thing [*res*]." (Suárez MD 7.1.1). Real distinction is therefore reciprocal for Suárez and Descartes.

remain in its condition, without the other” (1p15s II/59/14-16; see DPP1d10 I/151/3-4; CM 2.5 I/259/7-8). The very fact that each eternal and immutable attribute of God, the substance constituted by all the attributes, is individually self-sufficient—self-caused, conceived through itself, and in itself—guarantees that no one attribute can exist without the others. Therefore, the attributes of God cannot be really distinct.

One might wonder at this point whether I have contradicted myself. Whereas here I say that the attributes are not really distinct, in the previous chapter I noted how, for Spinoza, the attributes are really distinct. The contradiction is merely apparent, though. As I will now explain, there are two senses of real distinction at play. According to one, the attributes are really distinct. According to the other, the attributes are not really distinct.

In line with the fact that each attribute is self-caused, conceived through itself, and in itself, there is indeed a sense in which each attribute of God *is* really distinct from each other attribute of God.²¹³ What sense is that? It is the sense in which no one attribute depends on any other attribute. It is the sense in which the conception of one attribute of God in no way involves or invokes a conception of any other attribute of God (1p10s; KV 1.2 I/23/16; Ep. 8), in which case each can exist without the help of any other (CM 2.5). It is the sense that allows Spinoza in fact to claim that the divine attributes *are* really distinct (1p10s),²¹⁴ in which case “each can be conceived, and

²¹³ Several commentators apparently hold it to be the case that the attributes are really distinct. See Bennett 1984, 147; Charlton 1981, 526; Deleuze 1992, 79-80; Della Rocca 1996, 157, 167; Deveaux 2007, 106; Nadler 2006, 130; Parchment 1996b, 57-59, 62; Curley 1993, 128.

²¹⁴ Technically, Spinoza claims here at 1p10s that the attributes of God are *conceived to be* really distinct, not that they *are* really distinct. But we know that what the *intellect* conceives to be the case is the case (see Delahunty 1985, 120). Della Rocca makes the point well.

consequently can exist, without the help of the other” (CM 2.5). Indeed, the real distinction between the attributes is precisely what makes it the case that the infinite number of attributes do not contradict one another even when each is an element of one and the same being. The real distinction between the attributes is thus precisely what provides an answer to Leibniz’s complaint that Spinoza says nothing to assure us that the infinitely many attributes predicated of his God are compatible with each other. The real distinction between the attributes provides an answer to Leibniz’s complaint, in effect, that Spinoza says nothing to prove that a substance with all the attributes, God, is even possible. Deleuze makes the point well.²¹⁵

Because attributes are really distinct, irreducible one to the others, ultimate in their respective forms or in their kinds, because each is conceived through itself, they cannot contradict one another. They are necessarily compatible, and the substance they form is possible. . . . In the attributes we reach prime and substantial elements. . . . The irreducibility of the attributes not only proves, but constitutes the nonimpossibility of God. . . . There cannot be contradiction except between terms of which one, at least, is not conceived through itself. [But we do not have that here. For each attribute is conceived through itself and not through any other attribute (or anything else, of course).]²¹⁶

How are we to describe the sense of real distinction according to which the attributes of God are really distinct? Leibniz sometimes suggests that there is a real distinction between A and B if and only if each is independent-in-being from the other,

Spinoza does, after all, insist that the attributes are conceived to be really distinct (1p10s). Such a conception is certainly, for Spinoza, one that the infinite intellect has, for in 2p7s Spinoza speaks of the infinite intellect perceiving attributes as constituting the essence of substance. . . . [T]he conceptions of an infinite intellect must all be true. Thus, in conceiving the attributes as distinct, the infinite intellect is conceiving them truly. (Della Rocca 1996, 157)

²¹⁵ Deleuze 1992, 77, 79-80.

²¹⁶ As Deleuze (1992, 78) points out in line with Donagan (1988, 79), Leibniz ought to accept this explanation—the explanation that, merely because each attribute is self-sufficient and thus really distinct (in the weak sense), all the attributes are compatible. After all, Leibniz himself appeals to the real distinction of perfections in order to explain their compatibility.

that is, if and only if “neither stands in need of the other for its own *esse*.”²¹⁷ Not only does Spinoza himself utter like-sounding formulae as well, it is precisely the independence-in-being of each attribute that has Spinoza claim the attributes of God to be really distinct from one another other. I will call the following characterizations of the real distinction “weak real distinction” or “real distinction by mere independence of being” or “real distinction by mere existing without the help of the other.”

[R]eally distinct (that is, one may be conceived without the aid of the other). (1p10s)

[B]ecause they are necessarily distinct from one another in reality, then necessarily each of them can also exist through itself without the help of the others. (CM 2.5)

This distinction is recognized from the fact that each of the two can be conceived, and consequently can exist, without the help of the other. (CM 2.5)

When I said above that the attributes of God are *not* really distinct, I did not mean in the “weak” sense just stated, the sense in which real distinction between A and B is understood as A and B being merely independent in being from one another (existing without the help of the other). I meant instead that each attribute is incapable of existing while the other attributes do not. Such an understanding of real distinction is evident in CM 2.5 as well, but more poignant in the following two places. I will call this characterization “strong real distinction” or, in line with the description of real distinction with which I opened this discussion, “real distinction by being able to exist without each other existing” or “real distinction by being able to exist while the other does not” (or perhaps “real distinction by mutual separability”).

[O]f things which are really distinct from one another, one can be, and remain in its condition, without the other. (1p15s II/59/14-16)

²¹⁷ Leibniz 1965 IV 25.23; see McCullough 1996, 65.

Two substances are said to be really distinct when each of them can exist without the other. (DPP1d10 I/151/3-4)

Once again, the divine attributes are incapable of existing without each other existing precisely because, in addition to the fact that a being with all the attributes (God) must exist, the self-sufficiency of each attribute guarantees that each one exists, such that there is no real possibility that any one of them exists without the others. It is according to this sense of real distinction, strong real distinction (real distinction by being able to exist without each other), that the attributes of God fail to be really distinct.

In order to root this discussion in history, we might ask for an answer to the following. How might *Suárez*, who at least appears to think of real distinction merely in the strong sense, categorize the distinction between the self-sufficient attributes of Spinoza's God? How might Suárez, in effect, categorize a distinction that is at once a real distinction in the weak (or mere-existing-without-the-help-of-the-other) sense (since each of the attributes of God are self-sufficient) and yet not a real distinction in the strong (or able-to-exist-without-the-others-existing) sense (since each of the attributes—being self-caused and constituting the same being—necessarily come together as a package)?

One final relevant distinction remains: the formal distinction. Although often suspicious about this distinction as marking out something that the other three distinctions cannot,²¹⁸ Suárez does appear to utilize it himself on occasion.²¹⁹ More

²¹⁸ See Cherniakov 2002, 86; Deleuze 1992, 65.

²¹⁹ See Bac 2010, 234n76.

important for my purpose here is to note that Suárez, like Scotus before him, is unequivocal about the formal distinction being a middle way between the real distinction (in the strong sense) and the mere mental distinction. Here are the words of Suárez concerning how formally distinct entities are neither really distinct, that is, able to exist without the others existing, nor merely mentally distinct, that is, one and the same in reality despite the difference suggested by the classifying mind.

[T]here is [said to be] in things prior to intellectual activity a certain actual distinction, which accordingly is greater than a mental distinction but still not so great as the real distinction.²²⁰

Elements formally distinct are genuinely, objectively, extramentally distinct (unlike mere mental distinctions). That is, their difference holds prior to any action of the classifying mind. On the other hand, elements formally distinct are inseparable in reality (unlike real distinctions in the *strong* sense) and yet do not depend on each other (unlike modal distinctions).²²¹ So long as they are inseparable, items can be formally distinct even if each is self-caused, in itself, and conceived through itself. The mark of the formal distinction, the only relevant distinction left that allows for extramental plurality, is inseparability—necessary togetherness—despite objective difference of such a grade that they do not depend on each other (the one is not ontologically prior to the other and the other is not ontologically prior to the one).

So if we are going to employ Suárez's taxonomy of distinctions in order to help us understand the distinction between the attributes of Spinoza's God, then it seems best

²²⁰ Suárez MD 7.1.13.

²²¹ See Adams 1987, 24; Armstrong 1978, 109-110; Cross 2010; King 2003, 23.

to describe the attributes of God as formally distinct.²²² This positioning in Suárez’s taxonomy best honors four important facts. First, it honors the fact that Spinoza’s God is nothing but a totality of attributes, all of which—“each one individually,” Spinoza makes it clear (Ep. 8 IV/41)—are self-sufficient and thus really distinct in the weak sense, the mere-independence-in-being or mere-existing-without-the-help-of-the-other sense. Second, it honors the fact that the attributes of God necessarily come together as a package and thus are *not* really distinct in the strong sense, the able-to-exist-without-the-others-existing or the able-to-exist-while-the-others-do-not sense. Third, it is standard, historically, to classify as *formally distinct* those objectively distinct properties of God that are (a) inseparable from one another (in each’s being essential to God) and that are (b) on ontological even-footing with one another.²²³ Fourth, it explains why Spinoza says on some occasions that the attributes are *not* really distinct (CM 2.5 I/259) and on other occasions that they *are* really distinct (1p10s),²²⁴ which itself parallels the fact that philosophers sometimes describe the formal distinction as a sort of real distinction and sometimes not.²²⁵

In what amounts to alluring additional evidence, compare what Spinoza says at 1p10s with what Scotus says about the formal distinction. First Spinoza.

[A]lthough two attributes may be conceived to be really distinct (that is, one may be conceived [and consequently can exist (CM 2.5)] without the aid of the other), we still cannot infer from that that they constitute two beings, or two different substances. For . . . all the attributes . . . have always been in [God] together. (1p10s)

²²² See Carriero 1994; Deleuze 1992; Manzini 2008; Schmidt 2009b; Waller 2009.

²²³ Cross 2010.

²²⁴ See Delahunty 1985, 119.

²²⁵ See Deleuze 1992, 63-67; Noone 1999.

The following, which concerns Scotus on the formal distinction between divine justice and divine mercy, is quoted by Caterus in his objections against Descartes. Caterus's point here is that even if, as Descartes says, the soul and body can be conceived apart from each other, that does not necessary entail that they are separable, that one is able to exist while the other does not.

[Divine mercy and divine justice] are distinct prior to any operation of the intellect, so that one is not the same as the other. Yet it does not follow that because justice and mercy can be conceived apart from one another that they can therefore exist apart.²²⁶

It is quite telling to observe that (1) Scotus is here describing the *formal* distinction, as Caterus acknowledges, and that (2) Spinoza and Scotus are making essentially the same point: just because God is composed of a real plurality of attributes on ontologically even-footing, that does not mean that one attribute can exist while not together with the other attributes.

In the end, then, I take it that what Copleston describes about Scotus's radical decision to regard the divine attributes of justice and mercy as formally distinct, rather than merely mentally distinct or really distinct (in the strong sense), holds true in the case of how Spinoza, in line with Crescas,²²⁷ understands the relation between the attributes of God.

[The formal distinction is a distinction that is] less than the real distinction and more objective than a [mental] distinction. A real distinction [(in the strong sense)] obtains between two things which are . . . separable [in the sense that once can exist without the others]. . . . A purely mental distinction signifies a distinction made by the mind when there is no corresponding objective distinction in the thing itself. . . . A formal distinction obtains when . . . two or more *formalitates* . . . are objectively distinct,

²²⁶ AT VII 100.

²²⁷ See Deleuze 1992, 359n28.

but which are inseparable from one another. . . . For instance, Scotus asserted a formal distinction between the divine attributes. Mercy and justice are formally distinct, though the divine justice and the divine mercy are inseparable. . . . Why did Scotus assert the existence of this formal distinction. . . ? The ultimate reason was, of course, that he thought the distinction to be not only warranted, but also demanded by the nature of knowledge and the nature of the object of knowledge. Knowledge is the apprehension of being, and if the mind is forced, so to speak, to recognize distinctions in the object, that is, if it does not simply construct actively a distinction in the object, but finds the recognition of a distinction imposed on it, the distinction cannot be simply a mental distinction, and the foundation of the distinction in the mind must be an objective distinction in the object. On the other hand, there are cases when the foundation of the distinction cannot be the existence of distinct separable factors in the object [(as in the case of factors really distinct (in the strong sense))]. It is necessary to find room for a distinction which is less than a real distinction [(in the strong sense)] . . . but which at the same time is founded on an objective distinction in the object, a distinction which can be only between different, but not separable formalities of one and the same object.²²⁸

²²⁸ Copleston 1950, 508-509. There is an important piece of apparent counterevidence to my claim that the attributes of Spinoza's God are formally distinct. In his reflections on the philosophy of Descartes Spinoza notes that the attributes of God are rationally distinct (CM 2.5 I/259).

What do I have to say in response? Well, when Spinoza says that God's attributes are merely mentally distinct in this passage he means simply that they are *not really distinct*. And on the assumption that his thought is logically consistent across his works, by "really distinct" he must mean in the *strong* sense that we see stated especially at 1p15s and DPP 1d10.

[T]he distinctions we make between the attributes of God are only distinctions of reason—the attributes are not really distinguished from one another (CM 2.5 I/259).

This is a broad construal of the distinction of reason, typical among Descartes and his followers (see Bac 2010, 234; Deleuze 1992, 65; Descartes AT IV 349; Descartes AT VIIIA 62). It is so broad that it encompasses the Scotian formal distinction, such that mere inseparability of diverse items counts as their being conceptually distinct. After all, things formally distinct are *not* really distinct in the strong sense; one is not capable of existing without the other existing. Hence Spinoza can maintain that the attributes are formally distinct and, committing no inconsistency, assert, as he does in the *Short Treatise* and following Descartes (see AT IX 94-95), that "[t]hings which are different are distinguished either really or modally" (KV app1a2; CM 1.6 I/248).

So again, when Spinoza says that God's attributes are merely mentally distinct in the CM passage he means simply that they are *not really distinct in the strong sense*. This negative characterization of what Spinoza means when he says that God's attributes are merely mentally distinct suffices for my purposes, but there is also a reasonable *positive* characterization of what he means. When Spinoza says that God's attributes are merely mentally distinct in this passage he positively means, so it seems most reasonable to conclude, that it is only in the mind that each attribute can be considered as if not necessarily part of the rest of the package of other attributes.

4.4 Objections and replies

4.4.1 Simple and indivisible, but a bundle nonetheless

One might raise the following objection to the bundle interpretation of Spinozistic substances having attributes, the interpretation according to which Spinozistic substances—considered truly, remember—are nothing but their attributes. If God is nothing but its attributes, then God is not simple and indivisible. But God is simple and indivisible (1p12-1p13c, 1app; Ep. 35; KV 1.2 I/24/10ff; CM 2.5).²²⁹ Therefore, it is not the case that God is nothing more than his attributes.²³⁰

As it turns out, however, God's simplicity and indivisibility is compatible with God's being nothing but a bundle of many self-sufficient attributes—compatible, at least as far as Spinoza is concerned. Here is the quick and simple explanation (see 1p14, 1p10s, 1d6, 1d11 plus 1p15s II/59/14-16; DPP 1d10 I/151/3-4; CM 2.5 I/259/5-8). A substance for Spinoza is simple and indivisible so long as none of its attributes is able to exist without the others. Since the attributes are individually self-sufficient and thus really distinct (in the weak sense), and since these attributes necessarily pertain to God, no attribute of God is able to exist without the others. God, therefore, is simple and indivisible despite being nothing but the bundle of many individually self-sufficient and thus really distinct attributes. This is what Deleuze means, I think, when he says that,

²²⁹ See Delahunty 1985, 118; Di Poppa 2009, 924n12; McCann 2005, 44.

²³⁰ Bennett, Wolfson, Parchment, and others would likely raise such an objection. See Bennett 1984, 64; Wolfson 1934, 146-157; Parchment 1996b, 55, 65; see Deveaux 2007, 28, 30, 55-56, 105-106, 122n10; Di Poppa 2009, 924, 925, 925n15; Glouberman 1979a, 398; Melamed 2009, 73-74; Basile 2012, 35.

paradoxical as it may sound, it is precisely the “real distinction between attributes that excludes all division of substance.”²³¹

Here are the details for this basic explanation.

(Premise 1) The attributes of God are inseparable, that is, each is incapable of existing without the others existing.

Here is the evidence for this first premise. There can be only one substance: God (1p14). God is constituted by every possible attribute (1p10s in light of 1d6 and 1d11). Each of these attributes are self-sufficient (see Chapter III). Therefore, it cannot be that one of them exists while the others do not. Curley describes the view well.

[Since] the existence of each of the attributes is necessary, then it is not possible that one of them should exist without the others. For if we said it was possible that one should exist without the others, that would imply that it was possible for the others not to exist. And that *isn't* really possible, not if each of the others exists in itself and is conceived through itself. The very self-sufficiency of each of the attributes, the fact that it is true of each of them that it does not need the others in order to exist, implies that there is no real possibility that at any time any one of them does exist without the others. . . . Paraphrasing what Spinoza says in 1p10s, all the attributes of substance have always been in it together. Since each of them, considered separately, exists in itself and is conceived through itself, they always *had* to be in it together.²³²

(Premise 2) If each attribute of God is incapable of existing without the others existing, then that to which each belongs is simple (and thus I assume indivisible). The inability of the attributes to exist without each other, in other words, is sufficient for that to which they belong being simple (and indivisible).

Here is the evidence for the second premise. It comes in two steps. (a) If each attribute of God is incapable of existing without the others existing, then there is not a

²³¹ Deleuze 1992, 80.

²³² Curley 1988, 30.

real distinction (in the strong sense) between the attributes. That claim-a is true for Spinoza is guaranteed by Spinoza's belief in the following claim (see, for example, 1p15s II/59/14-16; DPP 1d10 I/151/3-4; CM 2.5 I/259/7-8), which is simply the contrapositive of claim-a: if there is a real distinction (in the strong sense) between items, then each item is able to exist without the other existing.

[O]f things which are really distinct from one another, one can be, and remain in its condition, without the other. (1p15s II/59/14-16)²³³

(b) For Spinoza, if each attribute of God is not really distinct (in the strong sense), then that to which each belongs is simple (and thus I assume indivisible).

[T]he attributes are not really distinguished from one another. . . . So we conclude that God is a most simple being. (CM 2.5 I/259/5-8)

From claim-a and claim-b, premise 2 follows by hypothetical syllogism.

(Conclusion) From premises 1 and 2 it follows that a substance is simple and indivisible even though it is nothing but a totality of self-sufficient attributes.—Even though God is nothing but attributes that are indeed really distinct (in the weak sense), the necessary coextensiveness of the attributes guarantees, according to Spinoza, that God is nevertheless simple and indivisible.²³⁴

²³³ The idea that things being inseparable is sufficient for their not being really distinct (in the strong sense) is, by the way, true of Scotus (see Copleston 1950, 508-509; Cross 1999; Cross 2010). Cross puts the point well.

[R]eal separability is necessary and sufficient for real distinction. More precisely, two objects *x* and *y* are inseparable if and only if, both, it is not possible for *x* to exist without *y*, and it is not possible for *y* to exist without *x*; conversely, two objects *x* and *y* are separable if and only if at least one of *x* and *y* can exist without the other. (Cross 1999, 149)

²³⁴ The following should—but in my experience does not—go without saying. However absurd the notion that simplicity is compatible with inner plurality may seem to *you* (see Plato *Parmenides* 129b-c) that is no argument against the interpretation that *Spinoza* holds it (see Donagan 1973a, 177; Mark 1992, 56). Sober, by the way, can find in Spinoza, if I am right in my interpretation here, a historical precedent for his view that it is possible for necessarily coextensive properties to be distinct (Sober 1982, 183-189). Indeed, Sober says that the distinctness of certain coextensive properties is indicated when those properties have

4.4.2 United, but a bundle nonetheless

We have seen that God, despite being nothing but its distinct attributes, is simple in that no one of its attributes can exist while the others do not. But to say that God is simple in this necessary-coextensiveness sense, one may argue, is not satisfying. As Hudde brings up in his conversation with Spinoza (see Ep. 34-36), how is it that the attributes of God are *unified* when each is self-sufficient?²³⁵ Smith puts the point well.

Accounting for the unity of Spinoza's God—a being that, on anyone's view, is constituted by really distinct attributes—is recognised as a problem by almost every interpreter of Spinoza.²³⁶

Spinoza has various explanations for the unity of a being that is nothing but its many self-caused attributes. The above explanation for the simplicity of a being that is nothing but its many self-caused attributes is one. Here is another.

(Premise 1) Even though God is nothing but the totality of its self-sufficient attributes, God is *one* substance as opposed to a collection of *many* substances called “one substance” merely in name.

Here is why. It is not absurd to attribute many attributes to *one* substance. *One* substance can have many attributes. For, in line with the Aristotelian principle stated at *Categories* 10 (13b15-19),²³⁷ the more reality that *one* substance has, the more attributes that it must have (1p9 and 1p10s); “the more it is Something, the more attributes it must have” (KV 1.2 I/19/14-15). Now, “God” is the name we give to *one* being that has the

different causal effects. This is relevant in the case of Spinoza, of course. For Extension, unlike Thought, does not produce ideas, for example.

²³⁵ This is considered “a very difficult problem” in the Spinoza literature (Wilson 1999b, 166; see Klever 1989, 330, 347-348).

²³⁶ Smith 2014, 672-673; see Van Bunge 2012, 23.

²³⁷ Peña 1985, 69ff.

most reality. Thus the *one* being we call “God” must have a maximal amount of attributes.

[A]lthough nature has different attributes, it is nevertheless only one unique Being of which all these attributes are predicated. (KV 2.20.4)

(Premise 2) God cannot be divided (1p12-1p13).

Here is why. As Spinoza suggests at 1p12d, if we can divide God, then the components into which it could be divided would either retain the nature of God or not (see 1p12d). If they do retain the nature of God, then many substances could be formed from one. But to say that many substances could be formed from one is absurd since substances cannot produce each other (see 1p6). If the components do not retain the nature of God, then that means that God ceases to be after the division. But to say that God ceases to be is absurd since God necessarily exists (see 1p11).

These two points guarantee that the attributes are “fundamentally tied,” as it were. Even though God is a totality of *self-sufficient* attributes, these attributes as they are in God cannot be divided from one another. Unable to be divided from one another, the attributes are united. Since God is nothing but all the attributes, God is thus united. Inseparable and on ontological even-footing, the attributes are merely formally distinct. That is significant because, historically, it is the formal distinction that allows for unity even in the case of an authentic plurality of ontologically even-footed attributes. Deleuze seems right, therefore, to say the following.

It is formal distinction that provides an absolutely coherent concept of the unity of substance and the plurality of attributes.²³⁸

²³⁸ Deleuze 1992, 66.

In the end, the unity of Spinoza's God poses no threat to my view that Spinoza's God is nothing but its many genuinely distinct attributes.²³⁹ To ask Spinoza for a more satisfactory account of how God can be united when God is nothing but its many individually self-sufficient attributes is, perhaps, to ask too much from Spinoza. Spinoza himself essentially pieces together the same account that I just gave as to why each attribute is unified in one single being (God) (despite the fact each attribute is self-sufficient and really distinct from any other attribute).

The reasons why we have said that all these attributes which are in Nature are only one, single being, and by no means different ones (though we can clearly and distinctly understand one without an other), are as follows: 1. Because we have already found previously that there must be an infinite and perfect being, by which nothing else can be understood but a being of which all in all must be predicated. For of a being which has some essence, attributes must be predicated, and the more essence one ascribes to it, the more attributes one must also ascribe to it. . . . 2. Because of the unity which we see everywhere in nature. . . . 3. Because, as we have already seen, one substance cannot produce another, and if a substance does not exist, it is impossible for it to begin to exist. (KV 1.2 I/23-I/24)

The following perhaps also should be noted, nevertheless. Once we see, as we eventually will, that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing realist concerning universals, we might have an additional Spinozistic resource for explaining the unity of Spinoza's God—explaining it in a “penetrative” way, similar to what we find in Henry of Ghent: the divine essence is a universal wholly present in each member of the trinity.²⁴⁰ The general point would go something like this.

²³⁹ “The tension between holding onto the objectivity of the attributes, on the one hand, and maintaining the unity of the substance, on the other, manifests itself in the literature in several much discussed debates” (Shein 2009b, 511-512).

²⁴⁰ See Williams 2012, 140, 145, 147.

There is something that each really distinct attribute has in common. That something we might call “power” or “being” or “reality.” Spinoza understands what it means for things to have something in common in the manner of the realist. That is to say, when items really do have something in common for Spinoza, one and the same something is wholly present in each of those items. Therefore, power-reality-being—indeed, infinite power-reality-being—is wholly (and so undividedly and univocally) present in each attribute. In effect, power-reality-being—and any other “neutral property” between the attributes, for that matter—unifies the really distinct attributes in the strongest sense, a sense that only realism concerning universals can allow: strict identity in variety.

Realism has been attractive to various figures throughout the history of philosophy precisely because of the unique unifying role that universals can play: allowing distinct things to be literally identical in some respect. For example, church fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa embraced realism so that they would be able to say, among other things, that the divine nature is literally one and the same, wholly and undividedly present, in each member of the trinity. Jaspers puts the point well in describing Anselm’s thinking on the matter.

In Anselm’s dogmatic attacks on Roscellinus . . . the rejection of nominalistic thinking plays an essential role. If a thinker declares . . . the three persons, God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to be [nonuniversals], he is thinking like a nominalist and has three Gods. But if the universal, God, is Himself reality, then God is one, and the three persons are forms of the one: this idea is “realist,” because it upholds the reality of the universals. Church dogma seems to demand “realist” thinking. Anyone, says Anselm, who fails to understand that several people are, as to

species, *one* man, will surely not be able to understand that in the most mysterious of beings the three persons . . . are nevertheless only *one* God.²⁴¹

4.4.3 Nonderivative, but a bundle nonetheless

Someone might raise the following related worry. If God is the totality of its self-sufficient attributes, then Spinoza's system must be contradictory. For Spinoza denies that God is a sum of parts in his 1663 work on Descartes. Spinoza's rationale is this. Since parts are ontologically prior to their wholes, since wholes depend on their parts, to say that God has parts is to say something absurd: that God depends on entities ontologically prior to him, and thus that God is derivative.²⁴²

God is not a composite thing. . . . Because it is self-evident that component parts are prior at least by nature to the composite whole, then of necessity those substances from whose coalescence and union God is composed will be prior to God by nature. (CM 2.5)

Spinoza seconds the rationale in a 1666 letter to Hudde.

It is simple, and not composed of parts. For in respect of their nature and our knowledge of them component parts would have to be prior to that which they compose. In the case of that which is eternal by its own nature, this cannot be so. (Ep. 35)

Spinoza holds this to be true of Descartes as well.

If God were composed of parts, the parts would have to be at least prior in nature to God. . . . But that is absurd. (DPP 1p17d)

An easy fix to the problem is to say that Spinoza changed his mind by the time of the completion of the *Ethics* in 1675. I am not one to pull the shift-in-thought card so quickly, however (as this can easily become an impediment to deeper investigation if not

²⁴¹ Jaspers 1966, 2.112.

²⁴² Several commentators regard the bundle interpretation as a nonstarter on grounds that it makes Spinoza's God "derivative." See Deveaux 2007, 55; Di Poppa 2009, 924; Basile 2012, 35.

used with care). And as it turns out, there seems to be a less drastic solution at my disposal. Since the attributes of God are fundamentally tied in God, they are always already united in a bundle-package, the bundle-package of attributes that is God. Since each attribute of God is self-sufficient, one attribute exists only if all the others exist (but where this does not mean that each attribute requires the help of the other attributes in order to exist, or that any attribute has a causal influence on the being of the other attributes). The existence of any one implies the existence of all the others in the sense that “p implies q” means *merely* that it is not possible for p to be true and q not to be true. Therefore, God—the whole package of attributes—is, so we are entitled to say, implied by any one of its attributes. In that sense, no attribute is ontologically prior to God even though God is the totality of the attributes.

We might conclude, then, that Spinoza had some *other* sort of composition in mind in, say, the CM passage. What other sort of composition could that be? The CM passage, recall, rejects a composite of the sort where the elements of God each deserve to be called “substances.” But since a substance just is the totality of the attributes, only the whole nature of a given substance deserves to be called “substance.” The composite view that Spinoza eschews in CM rejects the idea that only the *totality* of God’s attributes deserves to be called “substance.” However, to reject this sort of composite is not to reject a composite where the elements of God do *not* each deserve to be called “substances.”

Let me put this another way, in terms of earlier discussion. We know that there is a “composite view” compatible with simplicity (see previous sections). And we know

that there is a composite view that is incompatible with simplicity. Consider what Spinoza says in the following.

If God were composed of parts, the parts would have to be at least prior in nature to God. . . . But that is absurd. Therefore, he is an entirely *simple* being. (my emphasis DPP 1p17d)

It should be said, then, that the composite view rejected at CM 2.5 is not the sort compatible with simplicity. When Spinoza claims here that parts must be prior to the whole and in effect that the whole derives from the parts, he is discussing only *really distinct* parts. Since the attributes are, as I argued above, really distinct *in the weak sense* (the mere existing-without-the-help-of-the-others sense) presumably he is discussing, more specifically, parts that are really distinct *in the strong sense* (the being-able-to-exist-without-the-others-existing sense). There are various ways that things can be distinct from each other, as we saw. There are, in parallel, various ways that parts can constitute the whole. As Spinoza makes clear when he calls the parts with which he is dealing “substances,” Spinoza is rejecting only one sort of composite conception of God: that conception where the parts are really distinct *in the strong sense*. So if we are going to insist on calling attributes “parts” and God “a whole,” then we must be careful not to read the part-whole relation in question as the one that Spinoza shoots down: the one where the parts are really distinct in the strong sense. Since God is nothing but the totality of its many attributes, to do so would be to ensnare Spinoza in contradiction: Spinoza at once rejects the view that God is a totality of parts and accepts the view that God is a totality of parts. Instead we must keep in mind that the attribute-“parts” constitute the whole in the way that merely *formally distinct* “parts” constitute “the

whole.” That is, attributes constitute God in the way that mere formalities constitute God. Spinoza does not reject *that* sort of part-whole relationship, the sort of relationship between a substance and its fundamental formalities.²⁴³

In the end, there is no tension between God’s being nothing but the complete package of individual self-sufficient attributes and his being nonderivative, his being ontologically prior to all else. In effect, the nonderivativeness of Spinoza’s God poses no threat to my view that Spinoza’s God is nothing but its attributes. The attributes are the most fundamental and God just is the attributes.

To say that the nonderivativeness of God is compatible with the bundle interpretation is, upon consideration, perhaps to understate the case. It would perhaps be most accurate to say, in addition, that the nonderivativeness of God *demand*s the bundle interpretation. Since the attributes truly do constitute God (as I argued earlier), and since “to constitute” is, for Spinoza, not simply “to make up” but also “to beget” (as I pointed out earlier), the attributes of God beget God. The only way for the attributes to beget God without God’s being derivative is if God is exhausted by the attributes. For in this case, to say that the attributes beget God is nothing more than to say that God begets himself.

4.4.4 Conceived through itself, but a bundle nonetheless

Here is another related problem that one might raise. Understanding a substance requires understanding each of its attributes (see 1p30d). Now, a multiple-attribute

²⁴³ I gather that a similar solution will work in the case of the equally vexing issue of how to reconcile Spinoza’s claim that parts are ontologically prior than their wholes and his claim that finite modes are parts of infinite modes: see Ep. 32; 2p11c, 4p4d.

substance is not strictly identical to each of its attributes individually. Thus we seemingly would have to say that this substance must be understood through something that it is not, through some other, insofar as it must be understood through *one* of its attributes. But to say that a substance must be understood through some other is in violation of the definition of substance: a substance is that which is understood through itself (1d3). So either the bundle interpretation is false or Spinoza's system is contradictory on the matter.

The strategy for responding to this objection will be the same as that for explaining how the bundle interpretation is compatible with God's simplicity. There a violation of 1d3 only if a substance must be understood through an other that is really distinct from that substance *in the strong sense*. When Spinoza says that a substance is not understood through an other, he means that it is not understood through something really distinct from that substance *in the strong sense*. Since a substance is the sum of its attributes, and since the attributes are really distinct in the weak sense but not as well in the strong sense (in which case they are formally distinct), a particular attribute is not something that is *other* to substance in any way that contradicts Spinoza's position that a substance is conceived through itself.

4.4.5 We can know God by knowing just one of his attributes

Here is another related objection to the view that God is the sum of his many attributes. Spinoza suggests that the conception of more than one attribute is not required for the conception of God (2p1s): "we can conceive of an infinite Being by attending to thought alone." But if God is the sum of his many attributes, then the conception of God

does indeed require the conception of more than one attribute. It follows, therefore, that either (a) the bundle interpretation is false or (b) Spinoza's system is contradictory on the matter.²⁴⁴

Here is my response. First, the a-disjunct of the conclusion is out right away. For I have already explained that God, in his absolute nature, must be the nothing but the collection of divine attributes for Spinoza. Second, if the attributes were really distinct in the strong sense, then to conceive of one attribute on the bundle interpretation would not be to conceive of God. But since the attributes of God are really distinct merely in the weak sense, since they are merely formally distinct, it is in fact true to say that to conceive of merely one attribute is to conceive of God even on the bundle interpretation (2p1s). It is just not true to say, of course, that to conceive of merely one attribute is to conceive of God *in his completeness*. And as Spinoza makes clear to Boxel in 1674, we never want to say that to conceive of merely one attribute is to conceive of God in his completeness (1d6 in light of 1d2; Ep. 32, Ep. 56).

Here it should also be observed that I do not claim to have *complete* knowledge of God, but that I do understand *some* of his attributes—not indeed all of them, or the greater part—and it is certain that my ignorance of very many attributes does not prevent me from having knowledge of some of them. (my emphasis Ep. 56)

²⁴⁴ Deveaux makes such a case against the bundle interpretation of Spinoza.

Spinoza claims in 2p1s that we can conceive an infinite being (God) through only one attribute. This conflicts with the view of God . . . as the collection of attributes. It seems that on this view the de re idea of God would be the idea of the collection of attributes (since the collection of attributes is identical with God). . . . [T]he interpretation . . . of God as the collection of attributes is not viable since, according to 2p1s, the conception of more than one attribute is not necessary for the conception of God. Hence . . . God cannot be the collection of attributes. (Deveaux 2007, 135n18 and 136n22)

4.4.6 God's attributes are supposed to be the same

One might raise the following problem. Spinoza says that God's attribute of Thought and God's attribute of Extension are the same (2p1s, 2p7s). Indeed, the suggestion is that all the attributes are the same. This rules out the view that God is the totality of *many* self-sufficient attributes. So either (a) the bundle interpretation is false or (b) Spinoza's system is contradictory on the matter.

Here is my response. First, in the passages cited Spinoza says that thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same. He does not explicitly say that Thought and Extension are one and the same. These passages, then, may just amount to the relatively innocuous claim that the substance that is extended is the very same substance that is thinking.

Second, and in addition to the fact that the a-disjunct of the conclusion has already been ruled out, it should be noted that there not being a plurality of ontological attributes would not be enough to rule out all bundle interpretations. After all, to say that a single-attribute substance is nothing but its one attribute is still to endorse a bundle interpretation. One has a bundle interpretation of substances having attributes if and only if there is nothing of substance in excess to its attributes (whether one or many). I should perhaps point out as well that the culminating point of Part 2 of my project would not be altered much if God were really only one ontological attribute (or one nature not constituted by many ontological attributes). For by the end of Part 2 it would still be the case that Spinoza endorses a bundle realist interpretation of God.—I say all this merely as a matter of clarification, however. For, as I have argued, God is in actual fact nothing

but his *many*—indeed, *infinitely* many—ontological attributes. Therefore, I must offer a different response to the above objection. In particular, I must explain how God’s being a bundle of *many* ontological attributes is compatible with each of those attributes being the same.

In order to explain the compatibility all I need to do is use the essential strategy that I have been using in response to the previous objections. In essence, all I need to do is point out that the attributes are merely formally distinct.—Spinoza is entitled to say that God’s attribute of Thought and God’s attribute of Extension are the same without contradicting his commitment to God’s being nothing but his many attributes. The attributes of God, such as Thought and Extension, are the same merely in the way that formally distinct things are the same: they are inseparable, they are unable to exist while the others do not exist. Cross puts the point well when it comes to Scotus.

Scotus’s criterion for real identity is real inseparability. In fact, real inseparability (such that the real separation of two or more realities is logically impossible) is necessary and sufficient for real identity. . . . [T]wo really identical but formally distinct realities will [thus] be something like distinct essential (i.e., inseparable) properties of a thing.²⁴⁵

“The attributes or properties [or qualities] of substance” (DPP 1p7s I/161/2 in light of DPP 1d5 I/150/14-16; see Ep. 56),²⁴⁶ such as Thought and Extension, are (in Scotus’s

²⁴⁵ Cross 1999, 149. There should be no worry about the fact that Cross is talking about properties here whereas Spinoza is talking about attributes. Properties, attributes, natures, essences are all *qualitates*. Spinoza does draw a difference between these terms, especially that between essences and properties. But for most of my project, what I am concerned with is the fact that all these are *qualitates*. Now, if the reader wants something more specific to relate properties and attributes, realize that Spinoza equates them on several occasions (DPP 1p7s I/161/2; Ep. 56)

²⁴⁶ See Giancotti Boscherini 1970, 893; Descartes’s CSM 2.114: “Whatever we perceive” means “any property, quality, or attribute of which we have a real idea.” Also *Principles* 1.53: “principal property” or “principal attribute” is one “which constitutes . . . [a substance’s] nature and essence, and to which all its other properties are referred.”

terms) the “formalities” or “realities” or “formal aspects” or “real aspects” or “thinglets” of God—objectively different but inseparable and on ontological even-footing.²⁴⁷

Since Spinoza is committed to a true plurality of attributes that are really distinct (in the weak sense) (1p10s), and since he is thus committed to the fact that any mode of one attribute is really distinct (in the weak sense) from any mode of another attribute (2p6d in light of 1p10s) (as in fact he is rather explicit about: 5pref II/280; KV 2.16 I/81/39, KV 2.16 I/82/17, KV 2.20.3 in light of 1a5, KV app2.8; TdIE 33, TdIE 34, TdIE 58, TdIE 68, TdIE 74), this is the strongest sort of sameness that he is entitled to. It is just enough sameness that, as I explained above, we do not violate 1d3 when we say that God, a plurality of attributes, must be conceived through one of his attributes. Yet it is just enough sameness that simplicity is preserved. It is just enough sameness that Spinoza is able to say some of the following sorts of things even as he holds that God is nothing but the totality of attributes that are really distinct (in the weak sense). (1) We can conceive God when we conceive of a given attribute (2p1s). (2) Thought and Extension are one and the same substance (2p7s). (3) Circle A and the idea of circle A are one and the same thing (2p7s) (2p21s, 2p7s; KV 2.20.3c2opening). Let me explain, one by one, how Spinoza is entitled to say these three things.

First, why is Spinoza entitled to say that we conceive God by apprehending Thought alone, even as he holds that God is nothing but the totality of attributes that are really distinct (in the weak sense)? Because any one attribute in the package of attributes that is God cannot be an element of any other package. That is why Spinoza can hold, at

²⁴⁷ See Adams 1987, 24; King 2003, 23.

the very same time without contradicting himself, that to conceive of any one attribute of God is *not* to conceive of God in his entirety (Ep. 56; see 1d6 in light of 1d2; Ep. 32).

Second, why is Spinoza entitled to say that Thought and Extension are one and the same substance, even as he holds that God is nothing but the totality of attributes that are really distinct (in the weak sense) and even as he holds that the attributes are different enough that to conceive of one is not to conceive of God in his *entirety*? Because these attributes are inseparable elements of one and the same substance: God, the only substance there is—and one that is nothing but the sum of inseparable attributes (attributes that cannot exist without each other existing).

[W]e must recall here what we showed [NS: in the First Part], namely, that [each attribute] pertains to one substance only, and consequently that the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance. (2p7; see my arguments above)

Thought and Extension are formalities of the same substance. So whether referring to this attribute or some other attribute, we are referring to one and the same *substance*: God, the sum of all formally distinct attributes.

Third, why is Spinoza entitled to say that the corporeal circle A and the idea of corporeal circle A are “one and the same thing,” even as he holds that God is nothing but the totality of attributes that are really distinct (in the weak sense) and so even as he holds that corporeal circle A and the idea of corporeal circle A are really distinct (in the weak sense)? Because corporeal circle A and the idea of corporeal circle A are inseparable elements of one and the same “Individual”: Circle A, the sum of all parallel inseparable modes—corporeal circle A and the idea of corporeal circle A and so on (2p21s, 2p7s; KV 2.20.3c2opening). The idea of corporeal circle A and corporeal circle

A are formalities of one and the same thing, which is why Spinoza says that “a mode of Extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same *thing* but expressed in *two modes*” (my emphasis 2p7s).²⁴⁸ So whether referring to the mode of Extension that is corporeal circle A or the mode of Thought that is the idea of corporeal circle A, we are referring to one and the same “Individual” or sum of formally distinct parallel modes, modes that include: corporeal circle A, ideational circle A, and so on.²⁴⁹

We would not have it any other way.²⁵⁰ After all, and regarding merely the last point, Spinoza holds at the same time that “there is no comparison between the power, or forces, of the [idea of the circle] and those of the [corporeal circle]” (5pref II/280/14-16). There is no comparison because those two modes, being of two “really distinct” and incommensurable attributes (1p10s), have “nothing in common” (KV 2.20.3). Those two modes have nothing in common to such a strict extent that one “differs *infinitely* from the other” (my emphasis KV 2.20.3). Hence we are entitled to say, for Spinoza, that “a circle is one thing and an idea of the circle another” thing (TdIE 33)—another thing that is “really distinct” (KV app2.8; KV app1p4d) and in fact “altogether different” (see TdIE 33 and TdIE 34) and between which, again, “there is no comparison” (5pref; see 3p59s and 2p35d in light of 4p1s). Moreover, throughout his works Spinoza suggests

²⁴⁸ As Della Rocca himself admits, to claim that Spinoza is asserting in this quote that the mind and the body are strictly identical in their entirety is to bite at least a small bullet: we must agree that “Spinoza could not possibly be more misleading here” (1996, 120).

²⁴⁹ I take it that Robinson has the same general idea.

[E]ach modification of the divine substance, according to the infinite multiplicity of that substance’s attributes, is expressed in infinitely many ways: in attribute A through mode Ma, in attribute B through mode Mb, and so on. And all of these modes (Ma, Mb...) are one and the same mode, not because they are essentially identical... but rather because they express the same modification of the divine substance, and occupy the same place in the causal chains. (Robinson 1928, 276)

²⁵⁰ See Marshall 2009.

that just as God is a collection of attributes, a collection of parallel modes across all the attributes *together* make one, as Spinoza likes to say, “Individual.” Consider just two passages, for example.

The object of the idea constituting [or, more precisely, simply is (see 2p26d)] the human Mind is the Body. . . . From this it follows that man *consists of* a Mind *and* a Body. (my emphasis 2p13-2p13c; see 2p19d, 4p18s II/223, 4app30)

[T]he soul, being an Idea of this body, is so united with it, that it and this body, so constituted *together make a whole*. (my emphasis KV 2.19.9)

Spinoza emphasizes this point again and again. First, he says that the attribute of Thought alone is the cause of the mind and that the attribute of Extension alone is the cause of the body. And yet at the end of 2p7s he says that there is an individual whose cause is God considered as the *full* collection of the attributes rather than just one.²⁵¹ It follows that the “whole” “individual” (KV 2.19.9 and 2p13-2p13c) in question at 2p7s is the collection of parallel modes across all the attributes. There is the same relationship between parallel modes as there are between parallel attributes, each complete collection being a whole thing for Spinoza. This is just one of many indications throughout my project of Spinoza’s celebrated univocity.²⁵²

Some may want to overlook the claim that the attributes are really distinct on grounds that they are merely described as *conceived* to be really distinct (1p10s). But, as I already explained, that reference to “conceived to be” has no efficacy against my interpretation because, after all, the *infallible intellect* is doing the conceiving. Some

²⁵¹ See Gueroult 1974, 87.

²⁵² This also indicates that the following remarks are off base.

[W]hat accounts for one of the most fundamental features of Spinoza’s metaphysical system, namely the unity of the modes of different attributes, is rendered unknowable in principle on the objectivist interpretation. (Shein 2009b, 512)

may want to write off Spinoza's explicit remarks about how the corporeal circle and the idea of the corporeal circle, or the mind and the body, are really distinct (2p6d in light of 1a5 and 5pref II/280; KV 2.16 I/81/39, KV 2.16 I/82/17, KV 2.20.3c2opening, KV app2.8, KV 2/20; TdIE 33, TdIE 58, TdIE 68, TdIE 74) as just the underdeveloped claims of a thinker at a low point of immaturity.

[Nevertheless,] the object [of an idea] has nothing of thought, and is *really distinct* from the soul [(that is, the Idea)]. (my emphasis KV app2.8)

The true essence of an object is something which is really distinct from the idea of that object. (KV app1p4d)

Some may want to write off those passages where the “union” of the corporeal circle and the idea of the corporeal circle, or the mind and the body, is analyzed simply as their being really distinct parallel modes “that cannot exist without [each] other” (KV 2.20.3 I/97/25-30, KV app2.8; TdIE 21; 2p21d) as just the over-green remarks of a thinker in his early phase.

The soul . . . has *nothing in common* with the body. . . . [In fact, the one] differs *infinitely* from the other. . . . Between the Idea [(the soul)] and the object [(the body)] there must necessarily be a union[, though], [merely] because the one cannot exist without the other [(see 2p21d)]. For there is no thing of which there is not an Idea in the thinking thing, and no idea can exist unless the thing also exists. Further, the object cannot be changed unless the Idea is also changed, and vice versa, so that no third thing is necessary here which would produce the union of soul and body. (KV 2.20.3)²⁵³

If the object changes or is destroyed, the Idea itself also changes or is destroyed in the same degree; and [merely] in this its union with the object consists. . . . [For] the object has nothing of thought, and is really distinct from the soul [(that is, the idea of it)] (KV app2.8)

²⁵³ Spinoza speaks in these passages of the mind acting on this body. Some may take this as a sign that these passages are not to be trusted as the considered mature view of Spinoza. But Léon explains away this appearance of true causality here in such passages (see Léon 1907, 200).

To reject these passages as, if you will, anomalous-by-immaturity would be a mistake, however. First, and recall from earlier, even in the *Ethics* Spinoza analyzes the union of mind and body simply as their being parallel modes that cannot exist without the other existing since (a) one is the idea and one is the ideatum and (b) for *every* object there is an idea.

The Mind is united to the Body [merely] from the fact that the Body is the object of the Mind. . . [In effect,] the idea of the Body and the Body, that is, the Mind and the Body, are one and the same Individual. (2p21-2p21s)

This is what we would expect since Spinoza indicates that, just as God is a collection of attributes, a collection of parallel modes across all the attributes together make one “whole” “Individual” (2p13-2p13c and KV 2.19.9; see 2p19d, 4p18s II/223, 4app30). Second, the “mature” thesis of the real distinction between the *attributes* (1p10s) spells—for the “mature” Spinoza—a real distinction between a mode of one attribute and a mode of an other attribute (2p6d in light of 1p10s; see 1a5 plus KV 2.20.3). Third, simply consider Spinoza’s following claims: (a) “man consists [*constare*] of a mind and a body” (2p13c), (b) “the human mind is united [*unitam*] to the body” (2p13s II/96/21-22), and (c) there is a “union [*unionem*] of mind and body” (2p13s II/96/22).²⁵⁴ The natural understanding of what Spinoza is saying here, even bracketing off earlier points, is that the mind and the body are nonidentical elements that make up one “whole” “Individual”: a human being. That this is the right understanding in the case of Spinoza is clear in light of the earlier points (now unbracketed). That this is the right understanding in the case of Spinoza is also clear, or at least suggested, by how

²⁵⁴ See Marshall 2009, 913.

Spinoza elsewhere uses the key terms of a, b, and c: “*constare*,” “*unio*,” and “*unire*.” Regarding first the notion of *consisting*, recall that Spinoza characterizes God as “a substance consisting [(*constantem*)] of an infinity of attributes” (1d6). As I have argued, the attributes of God are not identical; they are really distinct (in the weak sense) and together make up, constitute, God. Regarding now the notion of *union*, Spinoza tells us that a composite body is a “union” (*unionem*) of *various* bodies; it is a whole “Individual” composed of *nonidentical* corporeal modes (2p13s II/100/1-5). Especially telling here is that Spinoza also describes the Cartesian view of the mind-body relationship, which Spinoza knows not to be a relationship of identity, as one where there is merely a “union” (*unionem*) of mind and body (5pref II/279-II/280).

Even if it were reasonable to write off the aforementioned claims as anomalous-by-immaturity, my interpretation would still be preferred. After all, my interpretation reconciles *all* the works. It requires no appeal to shifts in thought and stages of development,²⁵⁵ or to the notion that Spinoza was being misleading in certain passages. My interpretation sees no tension between, for example, passages 1 and 2, on the one hand, and passages 3 and 4, on the other hand.

1. [A] circle existing in Nature and the idea of the existing circle, which is also in God, are one and the same thing, which is explained through different attributes. (2p7s)

²⁵⁵ Claims of shifts in thought, stages in the thinker’s development, are to be expected and are no doubt reasonable. Such claims are as expected and as reasonable as claims of contradiction in a thinker’s thought. As Deigh puts it, it is hard enough to achieve “constancy and unity of thought” over the course of “a single work produced in a comparatively short time” let alone over the course of “various works . . . produced over many years” (Deigh 1996, 35n6). Nevertheless, appeals to shifts in thought are, just like admissions of contradiction, last resort options in my view. They are especially last resort in circumstances where the thinker eschews contradiction and does not himself think there were any such stages of development. “I assume that as long as we do not have a clear indication of changes in Spinoza’s thought, it should be taken to be continuous” (Melamed 2000, 11n17).

2. [T]he Mind and Body are one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of Thought, now under the attribute of Extension. (3p2s)

3. A true idea . . . is something [altogether] different from its object. For a circle is one thing and an idea of the circle another—the idea of the circle is not something which has a circumference and a center, as a circle does. Nor is an idea of the body the body itself. And since it is something different from its object, it will also be something intelligible through itself. . . . Peter, for example, is something real; but a true idea of Peter is an objective essence of Peter, and something real in itself, and *altogether* different from Peter himself. . . . From this it is evident that to understand the essence of Peter, it is not necessary to understand an idea of Peter. (my emphasis TdIE 33-34)

4. The soul . . . has *nothing in common* with the body. . . . [In fact, the one] differs *infinitely* from the other. . . . [T]he object [(that is, the body)] has nothing of thought, and is *really distinct* from the soul. (my emphasis KV 2.20.3 and KV app2.8; see 5pref II/280/14-16)

To attribute to Spinoza a stronger sort of sameness than the sort on my interpretation could only be to say that the attributes, rather than being objectively distinct but inseparable formalities of one and the same substance, are strictly identical—strictly identical such that there is no ontological attribute-plurality. But to deny ontological attribute-plurality is, on top of being wrong, to generate tensions that Spinoza otherwise would not face.

One of the most famous of these tensions, and one that several commentators suggest to be irresolvable,²⁵⁶ is how Thought and Extension can be the same when Thought, although on ontological even-footing with the other attributes, is more replete with modes than any other attribute. “[T]he attribute of Thought is given a much wider scope,” as Tschirnhaus was the first to suggest, because for each mode of Thought there

²⁵⁶ See Joachim 1901, 136-137; Thomas 1999.

is a mode of Thought that refers to that mode of Thought (ideas of ideas: see 2p7 and 2p21s) and because there is a mode of Thought for every mode not only of Extension but also for every other mode of the infinite number of attributes (see 2p7 and Ep. 70).²⁵⁷ Spinoza's comments in the KV indicate that Tschirnhaus was guilty of no misreading in finding Spinoza's God to be "lopsided" in this way.

And since, as a matter of fact, Nature or God is one being of which infinite attributes are predicated, and which contains in itself all the essences of created things, it necessarily follows that of all this there is produced in Thought an infinite Idea, which comprehends objectively the whole of Nature just as it is realiter. (KV app2.4 I/117/25-30; see KV 2pref I/51)

[T]he modes of all the infinite attributes . . . have a soul [(that is, an idea)] just as much as those of extension do. (KV app2.9)

And here are Spinoza's words from the *Ethics*, which indicate the same.

In God there is necessarily an idea, both of his essence and of everything that necessarily follows from his essence. (2p3)

Since the view that thought has a wider scope than any one of the other attributes of God was an acknowledged part of Spinoza's vision from the time of the *Short Treatise* (see KV app2.4 I/117/25-30, KV app2.9 I/119/10-14; see TdIE 99) to the time of the *Ethics* (see 2p3 and 2p7), it would be strange—even independent of all my arguments to the effect that God is bundle of self-sufficient attributes really distinct in the weak (but not strong) sense—to saddle Spinoza with any stronger sort of identity between the attributes than that which obtains between formalities of one substance. With enough cleverness, and perhaps utilization of findings from contemporary

²⁵⁷ For more discussion of this issue, see the following. Alexander 1921; Hegel 1995, 257-258; Della Rocca 1993; Friedman 1983; Hallett 1930, 54; Harris 1995a; Harris 1973; Kulstad 2002; Laerke 2011; Marshall 2009; Thomas 1999; Noone 1969; Rice 1999; Rice 1990b; Schmaltz 1997; Sen 1966; Shein 2009a; Steinberg 1986; Thomas 1994; Wise 1982; Wurtz 1981.

philosophy, one can perhaps dodge this problem without accepting my interpretation. But, as far as I can see, my interpretation, which reconciles the full range of Spinoza's works, is independently right and is, in light of how steeped Spinoza was in the Scotian way of thinking,²⁵⁸ in harmony with Spinoza's mindset and epoch.

It is understandable that some commentators would read Spinoza's talk of the divine attributes being the same as talk of their being strictly identical. After all, the term "same" has a range of meanings (especially in Spinoza's case²⁵⁹) and strict identity is one of them—perhaps one of the more usual (at least in philosophical contexts). Moreover, Spinoza's language sometimes suggests as much. For example, his claim at 2p7s that Extension and Thought are "*one and the same* substance" might be taken as entailing the denial of my claim that Thought and Extension are really distinct, really distinct in the weak (but not strong) sense (my emphasis). However, and even bracketing off my arguments to the effect that the plurality of God's attributes is objective, such innocence threatens to transform into something more negative. Such innocence threatens to transform into something more negative when these very commentators turn around and say that, in light of such strict identity, Spinoza makes a *fatal* admission by allowing that Thought is more replete with modes than any other attribute (or that modes of one attribute are insusceptible to influence by modes of another attribute or so on).

²⁵⁸ See Deleuze 1992, 359n28. Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel is often considered to have been a major influence on Spinoza (Nadler 1999, 93; Curley 1993, 128) and Menasseh seemed to have known Scotus, as well as Aristotle and Aquinas, very well (see Åkerman 1990, 154; Idel 1989, 208-209; Roth 1975, 87-89). Spinoza likely engaged personally with Manasseh (Nadler 1999, 99-100). Spinoza "certainly read El Conciliador closely" (Nadler 1999, 100, 270). In this work, which attempts to explain away biblical inconsistencies, Menasseh discusses Scotus's views in detail.

²⁵⁹ See Copleston 1960, 210.

Turning around and saying this is like saying that Leibniz, who holds that Caesar crossed the Rubicon *freely*, made a *fatal* admission by holding that in the remote past before Caesar's birth it was *predetermined* that Caesar would cross the Rubicon. Just as the apparent discrepancy between Caesar's freedom and Caesar's being determined from the remote past ought to be regarded as an occasion for going back and seeing if Leibniz understands freedom in some weaker sense than that of the incompatibilist, the apparent discrepancy between the sameness of the attributes and the fact that Thought is the most replete of the attributes ought to be regarded as an occasion for going back and seeing if Spinoza understands the attributes to be the same in some weaker sense than that of strict identity. And just as it turns out that Leibniz understands freedom in a weaker sense than that of the incompatibilist, it turns out that Spinoza understands the attributes to be the same in a weaker sense than that of strict identity. For Leibniz, Caesar freely crossed the Rubicon merely because it had been predetermined that he would *chose* to do so.²⁶⁰ For Spinoza, the divine attributes are the same merely in the sense that they are formally distinct. That is to say, they are the same merely in the sense that, although they are ontologically different and on ontological even-footing, one cannot exist without the others existing (which is why it is true in some sense—albeit a sense that must be compatible with each attribute's being self-sufficient—to say that any one is a necessary and sufficient condition for the others).²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ See *Theodicy* 34, 45; *Animadversions on Descartes's Principles of Philosophy*, art. 39.

²⁶¹ See Delahunty 1985, 121.

4.4.7 A bundle, but not of substances

One may raise the following worry. It has been argued that each distinct attribute of God is self-sufficient: in itself, conceived through itself, and self-caused. Each attribute, therefore, meets the definition of substance (1d3). In this case, the bundle interpretation, according to which God is the totality of attributes, is committed to the view that God as the totality of *substances*.²⁶² There are two related problems with this. First, such a conclusion entails a “radical revision in our understanding of Spinoza” in that, according to that conclusion, “Spinoza is not really a substance monist.”²⁶³ Second, and more importantly, Spinoza explicitly denies that each of God’s attributes is its own substance.

From these propositions it is evident that although two attributes may be conceived to be really distinct (that is, one may be conceived [and consequently can exist (CM 2.5)] without the aid of the other), we can still not infer from that that they constitute two beings, or two different substances. (1p10s; see Ep. 8)

Here is my response. From 1d3 alone, plucked from the vision of the entire *Ethics*, we might be enticed to say that each self-sufficient attribute is a substance such that God is the totality of substances. But the correct vantage point is from the whole. And what we learn as the argument of the *Ethics* unfolds is that, in the case of God, what deserves the title of substance is the totality of the attributes. The totality deserves the title because the attributes all come together in one package of inseparable elements. A substance, as Spinoza tells us many times over throughout his body of works, is *all* its attributes. That is the full detail of what he means by “substance.” So when Spinoza

²⁶² See Deveaux 2007, 56-57.

²⁶³ Lin 2006a, 6.

talks about a single-attribute substance, he is saying that the attribute in question is a substance. And when he talks about a multiple-attribute substance, he is saying that the many *together* are the substance (but not each one individually).²⁶⁴

1d3 does not state that a substance is *all* its attributes, to be sure. But that detail is brought out in the course of the unfolding of Spinoza's argument. Just as we must attend to the whole picture to see why there are not many substances (even though early on in the *Ethics* the reality of multiple substances is assumed), we must attend to the whole picture to see why Spinoza would not call one of God's attributes a substance.

The *Short Treatise* does present an apparent problem for the view that I just expressed, however. Perhaps motivating De Volder, Wittichius, Gueroult, and Loeb's interpretation that Spinoza's God is the totality of an infinite number of *substances* (such that 1p14, the proposition that God is the only substance, should be understood as meaning that "God is the only substance *that is not a constituent of a substance*"),²⁶⁵ Spinoza does suggest that each attribute is in fact a substance.

Every attribute, or substance, is by its nature infinite, and supremely perfect in its kind. (KV app1p3)

As a last resort, I could always say that this was one of Spinoza's immature expressions. Perhaps that is the case. In the context of the passage, however, I see no

²⁶⁴ Each single attribute of God would thus be its own substance "if the nature of God did not involve them all in itself, and make their separation impossible" (Gueroult 1968, 161). This is indeed why Gueroult feels entitled to say that God, as the totality of an infinite number of attributes, is the sum of an infinite number of *substances*. I do not express the point that way. But the difference between us is perhaps simply a difference in expression. Gueroult's expression reflects a bottom-up point of view, so to say. Mine reflects a top-down point of view.

²⁶⁵ See Lin 2006a, 5; Van Bunge 2012, 27; Wittichius 1695, 65-66; Gueroult 1968, 161; Loeb 1981, 160-166.

reason why it should not simply be assumed that when Spinoza is considering attributes here he is thinking of them on their own, rather than together and inseparable as they are in the case of God. In other words, I see no reason why we should not simply assume that Spinoza is thinking of single-attribute substances here, as he does for example in the early movement of the *Ethics* Part 1: “A substance of one attribute . . .” (1p7d). That is an understatement, in fact. For when we turn to the KV appendix from which the threatening passage is taken, we are confronted with what is obviously a draft of the early movement of the *Ethics* Part 1, where multiple substances—of any number of attributes—are in play.²⁶⁶ The first proposition of the appendix mirrors 1p5. The second mirrors 1p6. The third mirrors 1p8. The fourth mirrors 1p7. In the end, then, we do not need to conclude, to use the words of Wittichius, that since “God . . . is a substance constituted by infinite attributes, God is a substance consisting of infinite substances.”²⁶⁷

4.4.7 In God, but still self-sufficient

Here is a worry that might come to mind even to those who know little about Spinoza’s thought. God is the totality of self-sufficient attributes. Each self-sufficient attribute is in God the way that an element of a grouping is in that grouping. The grouping itself deserves the title God. Since it is right to say that any given element of a grouping is *in* that grouping, it is right to say that any given attribute of God is in God. It turns out, however, that an attribute cannot be in God. For that which is in another is dependent on that other and is not self-caused (see TdIE 92).

²⁶⁶ For these reasons I do not like the phrase “substantial interpretation of Spinozistic attributes” that Lin (2006a, 5; 2006b, 148) uses to describe the bundle interpretation that I endorse along with Curley (1969, 16-17, 91), Donagan (1988, 88-89), Gueroult (1968), Loeb (1981, 160-166), and Wolf (1966, 59).

²⁶⁷ Wittichius 1695, 66.

The response to this should be clear. An attribute is not in God in the sense that what is not in itself is in God, that is (by 1a1 and 1d5; see 1p4d and 1p6c), in the way that a mode is in God. Moreover, God—or the complete grouping of attributes—is not other to a given attribute in such a way that an attribute’s being *in* God amounts to its being in *another* in the sense meant in 1a1, that is (and in light of 1d5: see 1p4d and 1p6c), in the sense in which a mode is in another. God is not the totality of its modes for Spinoza. God is ontologically prior to its modes (see TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35). God is not, however, ontologically prior to a given attribute. God just is the totality of its attributes. The in-relation in question when we say that a given attribute is in God is not the in-relation in question when we say that a mode is in God. A mode’s being in God is its being in something ontologically prior. An attribute’s being in God is its being in something that is *not* ontologically prior. That is the key to seeing why an attribute’s being in God does not contradict the self-sufficiency of each attribute. That is the key to avoid letting the fact that Spinoza will say that attributes are in God confuse one into thinking that the being-in in question in such a remark is the being-in in question at 1a1.

4.4.8 Had by a Bundle

Let me ease us out of the discussion by addressing the following worry.²⁶⁸ Spinoza describes God as a *substance* that *has* attributes or that attributes *belong to*. This is a clear violation of bundle theory. So either (a) the bundle interpretation is false or (b) Spinoza’s system is contradictory on the matter.

²⁶⁸ See Odegard 1975, 62

The a-disjunct has already been ruled out. So the question is simply whether Spinoza's system is contradictory on the matter. The same charge of inconsistency has been raised against Hume, who says that ideas *belong to* the mind or that the mind *has* ideas even though he understands the mind to be a bundle of ideas.²⁶⁹ The response to the charge of inconsistency should be obvious (in the case of both Spinoza and Hume).²⁷⁰ Bundle theorists are allowed to talk about substances having attributes and the like. One must understand, however, that the substance has an attribute not in the way that an underlying substratum has a property inhering in it, but rather in the way that a collection of properties has a property as an element.

4.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have argued that Spinoza endorses a bundle analysis of substances having attributes. He says that substances are just their attributes and his system demands that substances are just their attributes. I have also argued that this particular constituent analysis harmonizes with various Spinozistic positions that might seem to be in tension with it: God's simplicity and indivisibility, the "sameness" of God's attributes, God's being conceived through itself, the unity of parallel modes of different attributes, and so on.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ For more info, see Della Rocca 1996, 181n64; Pike 1967.

²⁷⁰ See Della Rocca 1996, 42; Parkinson 1954, 103.

²⁷¹ According to Deveaux, since the claim that substances are nothing but their principal attributes is so bold, it is expected that Spinoza would have been more explicit about his being committed to such a view. Deveaux in sinuates, in fact, that the mere boldness of the view alone is some sort of grounds for not attributing it to Spinoza.

It seems that if Spinoza had been making this strong claim (i.e., that God is identical with the bundle or collection of distinct attributes) then he would have been more explicit and forward about his stance. Indeed, it would have been philosophically bold for Spinoza to suggest that a thing can be identified with its . . . attributes. (Deveaux 2007, 122n10)

Since Spinoza has a bundle conception of substances having attributes, if Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes, then he must be endorsing specifically a trope bundle analysis, which is the common form that the trope view takes nowadays (even though many thinkers throughout history have entertained the trope *substratum* view).

But does Spinoza regard attributes as tropes, nonuniversal natures? It is to this, and related questions, that I turn in the next chapter.

This seems wrong for various reasons. First of all, the notion that the unpalatableness of a claim amounts to some sort of reason for not thinking it to be true of another is, on my view, bad when learning the thoughts of another is the goal. Second, I do not think the claim is as bold as it is made out to be. Descartes seems to have held the view, for example. The view has various other precedents throughout the history of philosophy, such as in Porphyry and Plotinus (Adamson 2013, 335; Barnes 2003, 151-154; Chiaradonna 2000). Third, Spinoza was explicit that substances are nothing but the totality of their attributes. The demand that he be more explicit is unreasonable. It would be reasonable only if he knew the degree to which he would be misunderstood. But he could not have known the degree to which he would be misunderstood.

CHAPTER V

(PART 2. SUBSTANCE): SPINOZA'S BUNDLE REALIST

ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANCES HAVING ATTRIBUTES

5.1 Introductory remarks

Part 2 of this project is concerned with showing that Spinoza endorses a bundle realist analysis of substances having attributes. I have completed two of three main steps in my argument. First, I have argued that the attributes of Spinozistic substances are ontologically authentic. In this case, Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes only if he endorses a trope analysis (that is, a constituent antirealist analysis). Second, I have argued that Spinozistic substances—considered truly, remember—are nothing but the totality of their objectively many attributes. In this case, (1) Spinoza endorses a realist analysis of substances having attributes only if he endorses a bundle-of-universals analysis and (2) Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis only if he endorses a bundle-of-tropes analysis. Here now in the final chapter of Part 2, I argue that the attributes of Spinozistic substances are universals (universal natures) rather than tropes (nonuniversal natures).²⁷² In this case, Spinoza endorses a bundle-of-universals analysis instead of a bundle-of-tropes analysis.

Making this final step is important not merely in that it completes what I set out to show. As I mentioned in the concluding remarks of Chapter III, interpreters of Spinoza tend to assume that the falsity of the nonconstituent interpretation, the

²⁷² My argument thus runs against what has recently been argued by Halla Kim (2008).

interpretation according to which attributes of substances are not ontologically authentic, entails the falsity of the antirealist interpretation. Consider the words of Wolfson.

[I]f universals have no reality at all, then . . . definitions are purely nominal, and the essence of the subject defined is in reality simple. The problem of essential attributes is thus a problem of universals, the controversy between realism and nominalism.²⁷³

And consider the words of Haserot.

The problem of the status of universals has thus direct relevance to any general interpretation of Spinoza. For to hold that Spinoza is a nominalist is not compatible with the premise that the attributes have real as compared to mental existence. . . . The nominalist interpretation of Spinoza demands the subjectivity of the attributes. Without such an assumption its case is lost.²⁷⁴

The assumption expressed by both Wolfson and Haserot, however commonsensical it may be, is problematic. To hold that the falsity of the nonconstituent interpretation means the falsity of the antirealist interpretation, to hold that the ontological authenticity of attributes means the ontological authenticity of universals, is to disregard the longstanding option that attributes are tropes. My final step is important, then, in that it does consider the trope option.

5.2 Case 1

Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis only if he regards attributes as tropes, nonuniversal natures. That this is true is guaranteed by the previous chapters of Part 2. But does Spinoza regard them as tropes? It seems clear that he does not. Consider the following argument.

²⁷³ Wolfson 1934, 148; see Wolfson 1937b, 310-311.

²⁷⁴ Haserot 1950, 470-484.

(Premise 1) If attribute Fness is a trope, then if there are two distinct F substances, the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other even when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.

(Premise 2) It is not the case that if there are two distinct F substances, then the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other even when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.

(Conclusion) Therefore, it is not the case that attribute Fness is a trope.

What justifies premise 1? Why, in other words, is the following true? If attribute Fness is a trope, then if there are two distinct F substances, the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other even when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.—According to trope theory, to say that two distinct substances agree in attribute or have an attribute in common is to say that the attribute of the one resembles but is nonidentical to the attribute of the other. Their nonidentity is a given precisely because they are tropes. Tropes are nonuniversals *by their nature*; they are particulars *in themselves*, not as a result of any external factor. For if they were particularized—nonuniversalized—by something external, then they would just be universals in themselves. That they are particulars in themselves is significant for seeing why premise 1 holds. As Ockham says, “*numerical difference* is the essence of the particular.”²⁷⁵ Because numerical difference is the essence of, and so “built into,” particulars,²⁷⁶ and because tropes are particulars, “[t]ropes,” as Armstrong explains, “are

²⁷⁵ Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Robinson 2014; Spade 1994, 171; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233.

²⁷⁶ Robinson 2014.

not identical across different [individuals], as universals are.”²⁷⁷ Hence, and in the words of Pickavance, “[u]niversals but not particulars are identical if indiscernible.”²⁷⁸ As Doug Ehring puts it, “with universals, but not tropes, inherent exact similarity is sufficient for identity.”²⁷⁹ Tropes, then, are entities whose indiscernibility, in the words of Campbell, “is not sufficient for identity”²⁸⁰ and thus whose distinction from each other is, so Levin says, “irreducibly primitive.”²⁸¹

Of course, since the principle of sufficient reason is to be honored in Spinoza’s system (see 1a2, 1p7d, 1p8s2, 1p11d2; 1p16; 1p18),²⁸² such talk of primitive distinction is to be understood (lest we outright beg the question against the trope interpretation) in the *welcomed* sense of primitiveness. That is to say, it is to be understood as meaning that their distinction from each other is due to nothing but *themselves alone*. It is to be understood as meaning this rather than that their distinction from each other is guaranteed by some brute fiat that has no answer as to *why*. In effect, their distinction from one another is to be understood as primitive in the sense of *self-grounded* rather than *true-but-ungrounded*.²⁸³

What justifies premise 2? How is it certain, in other words, that Spinoza believes the following? It is not the case that if there are two distinct F substances, then the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other even when the Fness in the one is

²⁷⁷ Armstrong 1989, 114.

²⁷⁸ Pickavance 2008, 148.

²⁷⁹ Ehring 2004, 229-230.

²⁸⁰ Campbell 1990, 44.

²⁸¹ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9.

²⁸² See Della Rocca 2002; Della Rocca 2003a.

²⁸³ See Istvan 2011, 171ff; Rosen 2010, 115-117; Schaffer 2010, 37; Young 1974, 184.

indiscernible from the Fness in the other.—According to Spinoza, since the Fness in the one substance would be perfectly similar, absolutely indiscernible, from the Fness in the other substance (see 1p5d), the Fness in the one would have to be strictly identical to the Fness in the other (1p4 plus 1p5d).²⁸⁴ How so? Spinoza tells us how so at 1p5d. Since the Fness of the one and the Fness of the other are not discernible from each other (as the trope theorist will grant), and since any *mode* dissimilarity between the Fness of the one and the Fness of the other fails to make them dissimilar (as Spinoza demands: 1p5d), they must therefore be identical (by 1p4). If the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other, then as far as Spinoza is concerned the concept of each should be different somehow; the Fness in the one should be discernible from the Fness in the other; there must be some “legitimate” explanation for their nonidentity. Thus, for Spinoza, it is not the case that if there are two distinct F substances, then the Fness in the one is nonidentical to the Fness in the other even when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other. Indeed, on the assumption that there are two distinct F substances for Spinoza, it is necessarily the case that the Fness in the one is strictly identical to the Fness in the other when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.

Such is the basic argument against the view that attributes are nonuniversals for Spinoza. Here it is in more relaxed terms. Spinoza says that if we assume that there are two substances indiscernible in terms of attribute Fness (but discernible in terms of mode) (1p5d II/48/10), then the Fness in one would be strictly identical to the Fness in

²⁸⁴ See Della Rocca 2008, 196; Steinberg 1984, 309.

the other. The Fness in the one would be strictly identical to the Fness in the other because, so at least Spinoza thinks it enough to point out, the Fness in the one would be indiscernible from the Fness in the other (1p5d II/48/13-15). Trope theory, however, necessarily denies that the indiscernibility of the two substances in terms of Fness entails the identity of the two substances in terms of Fness. If there are two distinct F substances on trope theory, then the Fness attribute in one is nonidentical to the Fness attribute in the other. Therefore, it is not the case that Fness is a trope, a nonuniversal nature.

5.3 Case 2

If Spinoza endorses a trope-theoretical analysis of a substance's having an attribute, then he cannot advocate his all-important 1p5 view that numerically distinct substances indistinguishable in terms of attribute are truly identical (see 1p5d). Trope theory denies the truth of this thesis. As even antirealist interpreters of Spinoza sometimes realize,²⁸⁵ to say that qualitative indiscernibility between supposedly distinct substances entails their numerical identity is precisely to deny trope theory. Consider what Melamed says, for example.

[One] conflict between Spinoza's view and trope theory is the issue of the possibility of perfectly similar tropes, which Spinoza, following his endorsement of the Identity of Indiscernibles (E1p4), would be pressed to reject.²⁸⁶

Before taking a closer look at how the constituent antirealist analysis of substances having attributes undermines 1p5d (Spinoza's official proof for the thesis

²⁸⁵ See Melamed 2009, 74n182; Melamed 2013d, 56n186.

²⁸⁶ Melamed 2009, 74n182.

that there cannot be two or more substances of the same attribute²⁸⁷), here is a rendition of 1p5d.²⁸⁸

Assume that there are numerically different substances, s1 and s2, of the same nature or attribute (II/48/10). For example, assume that there are two distinct F substances. Things can be numerically different only if they are different in terms of modes or in terms of attributes (1p4 in light of 1p5d). (Mode difference and attribute difference are the only candidate grounds for numerical distinction because whatever is is either in itself or in another (1a1), that is, whatever is is either a substance (1d3) or a mode (1d4), and a substance is the totality of its attributes (Chapter IV).) Since s1 and s2 are both of the same nature or attribute, the explanation for their numerical difference can only be that they have different modes. The problem is that even the most drastic difference in mere modes cannot ground the numerical difference between substances. For substances are prior in nature to modes (TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35), as is clear by the asymmetrical dependence relation between substances and modes: modes depend on substances whereas substances do not depend on modes (see 1d3 and 1d5).²⁸⁹ Since substances are numerically

²⁸⁷ As Spinoza puts it in the *Short Treatise*, what can be said of one substance cannot be said of another substance (KV app1p1d I/115).

²⁸⁸ If there were two or more distinct substances, they would have to be distinguished from one another either by a difference in their attributes, or by a difference in their affections (by 1p4). If only by a difference in their attributes, then it will be conceded that there is only one of the same attribute. But if by a difference in their affections, then since a substance is prior in nature to its affections (by 1p1), if the affections are put to one side and [the substance] is considered in itself, that is (by 1d3 and 1a6), considered truly, one cannot be conceived to be distinguished from another, that is (by 1p4), there cannot be many, but only one [of the same nature *or* attribute]. (1p5d)

²⁸⁹ This being the case, we must bracket off the modes in order to consider a substance as it truly is (1d3 and 1a6). This claim that we must bracket off modes when considering substance in its truth is another aspect of 1p5d that is commonly attacked (see, for example, Bennett 1984, 67). Perhaps Spinoza's idea is this. If we cannot bracket off modes, then modes are somehow essential to the being of a substance. In that

different only if they have different attributes (1p4 in light of 1p5d and 1p1), the opening assumption—that s1 and s2 are of the same nature or attribute—is absurd.

Therefore, there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute.²⁹⁰

Here now is a closer look at how the constituent antirealist analysis of substances having attributes undermines Spinoza's 1p5d. By granting (a) that there are numerically nonidentical substances (s1 and s2) that are indistinguishable in terms of attribute (which Spinoza does at 1p5d II/48/10), and by granting (b) that Spinoza endorses a trope analysis of substances having attributes, we are granting that substances s1 and s2 have attributes that are indistinguishable and yet nonidentical. The problem is clear right away. For Spinoza, there is numerical difference between substances only if there is qualitative difference between them (dissimilarity of the diverse: the contrapositive rendering of the identity of indiscernibles) (1p4 in light of 1p5d). If he thought that indiscernible "attributes or properties [or qualities]" (DPP 1p7s I/161/2 in light of DPP 1d5 I/150/14-16; see Ep. 56)²⁹¹ were nonidentical, then he would be barred from saying that s1 and s2 are the same substances. Spinoza does not endorse the trope analysis.

case, understanding a substance requires understanding its modes. Clearly, each mode of a substance is not identical to substance. Indeed, even the heap of all modes of a substance is not identical to that substance. Hence, if understanding substance requires understanding its modes, then understanding a substance requires understanding some other, which Spinoza denies (1d3). For a good explication of this sort of defense for why it is correct to bracket off modes in order to conceive of a substance in its truth, see Lin 2004, 140. For an additional explanation of why modes need to be bracketed off when considering a substance truly, see Nadler 2006, 62-63. Notice also that Spinoza's pushing modes to the side puts him at odds with Hegel. Hegel thinks that what individuates the multiple instantiations of a given substantial universal such as human is the properties inhering in those instances (see Stern 2007, 132).

²⁹⁰ For Plato's similar argument concerning why there cannot be two forms of the same nature, such as two forms for Bed, see *Republic* 597c.

²⁹¹ See Giancotti Boscherini 1970, 893.

What Spinoza does is take attributes to be universals, and thus identical in all purported instances.²⁹² That is a key assumption in his showing the absurdity of granting, at 1p5d, that there are numerically nonidentical substances indistinguishable in terms of attribute.²⁹³ That, in other words, is what allows his posited *many* to be “turned” (*versus*) into “one” (*unus*), in accord with the meaning of the Latin term for “universal” (“uni-versus”)²⁹⁴ and in accord with Socrates’s claim that the universal is friend to singular and foe to the plural.²⁹⁵ Thus Fullerton, at least insinuating that he takes 1p5d as evidence that the attributes are universals, writes the following.

But a careful reading of the “Ethics,” sets it, in my opinion, beyond all question that “the fixed and eternal things” [(that is, the attributes)²⁹⁶] are universals. . . . Of this there is so much evidence that it is a little difficult to know what passages to choose in illustration of the fact. To prove that there cannot be in the universe two or more substances of the same nature, or with the same attribute, Spinoza argues as follows [at 1p5d: (Fullerton then gives the proof)]. . . . One gets by this mode of procedure [at 1p5d], not a “particular affirmative essence”. . . . One gets a true universal.²⁹⁷

If substance [(that is, its nature)] is . . . a universal, it is of course absurd to speak of several substances [of the same nature]. We cannot keep things separate from each other when we have left them nothing but their common core.²⁹⁸

To be sure, finding Spinoza’s 1p5d conclusion (that an attribute of a substance cannot be had by many substances) to contradict the thesis that attributes are universals, several

²⁹² See Hoffheimer 1985, 237-238. Universals are identical in all purported instances barring certain strange maneuvers that certain realists might make, such as saying that the Fness of o is not identical with the inherently exactly similar Fness of p since o and p are, say, in different possible worlds.

²⁹³ There are other assumptions, yes—such as that this x’s having different modes than that x plays no role in securing the distinctness of x and x (1p1). But that is not important for me to bring up here. I purposely avoided getting into the details of 1p5.

²⁹⁴ See Lewis and Short 1990, “universus.”

²⁹⁵ See Plato *Meno* 77a.

²⁹⁶ See TdIE 100-10; Melamed 2013b, 11n16; Nadler 2006, 93-94; but see Della Rocca 1996, 187n16.

²⁹⁷ Fullerton 1899, 39.

²⁹⁸ Fullerton 1894, 237.

commentators see 1p5d as definitive proof that Spinozistic attributes are in fact nonuniversals.²⁹⁹ Basile writes as follows, for example.

[T]o be a universal is to be something that can be had by many. Clearly, such an interpretation [where the attributes are universals] would make Spinoza's No-Shared-Attributes-Thesis [(that is, the conclusion of 1p5d)] entirely unintelligible.³⁰⁰

Far from being definitive proof that Spinozistic attributes are nonuniversals, however, upon consideration it is clear that 1p5d operates on the very assumption that attributes are universals.

Look at it this way. Spinoza would be holding that attributes are self-particularized if he were regarding attributes as nonuniversals. In other words, if attributes are tropes, particularized natures, for Spinoza, then they must be particular due to nothing but themselves. First, all true particulars are, as Ockham says, particular through themselves.³⁰¹ If attributes were particularized by something else, that is, if their particularity-makers were beyond or other to them, then they would be in themselves nonparticulars, that is, universals, and so not tropes.³⁰² Second, if attributes were particularized by something else, they would have to be understood through an other, which Spinoza denies is the case with attributes (see 1p10). Third, there is nothing else in Spinoza's ontology besides modes that can serve as the particularity-maker of attributes anyway, and Spinoza says that modes cannot play such a role (1p1 in light 1p5d). Thus, if Spinoza were a trope theorist and he posited (as he is willing to do at

²⁹⁹ See Hübner forthcoming-a; Kessler 1971b, 110, 146.

³⁰⁰ Basile 2012, 32.

³⁰¹ Scotus *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 6, n. 105-107; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Spade 1994, 171; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233.

³⁰² See Istvan 2011.

1p5d) two exactly similar attributes, then he would be barred from ever collapsing them into one. He would be barred because each would be self-particularized. As self-particularized, their distinction would be unassailable on mere grounds of indiscernibility.³⁰³

I take it that many commentators implicitly agree with what I am saying here.

Consider Lin's statement about 1p5 and its rationale.

Spinoza believes that no two substances can share an attribute. This is because if they did, it would not be possible to distinguish them, and so their nonidentity would be a brute fact, which is ruled out by Spinoza's metaphysical rationalism.³⁰⁴

As I already pointed out, and in contrast to what MacLeod and Rubenstein seem to think,³⁰⁵ the nonidentity need *not* be a brute fact in the *bad* sense—the sense that violates explanatory rationalism.³⁰⁶ For if *Spinozistic* attributes were *tropes*, they would be nonidentical not by some external fiat, but by their own natures. Their nonidentity would be *self-grounded* rather than true-but-*ungrounded*. (To say otherwise, in fact, is to say that they are, in themselves, universals). The fact that Lin assumes the nonidentity would be a brute fact in the *bad* sense, the sense that violates Spinoza's "metaphysical rationalism," shows that he is assuming the attributes to be universals.³⁰⁷

5.4 Case 3

That Spinoza is committed to a realist analysis of substances having attributes should be clear. "Nominalists, and this includes most empiricists, must say no" to the

³⁰³ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9.

³⁰⁴ Lin 2006b, 3; see Flage 1989, 150.

³⁰⁵ MacLeod and Rubenstein 2005.

³⁰⁶ See Istvan 2011, 171ff; Rosen 2010, 115-117; Schaffer 2010, 37; Young 1974, 184.

³⁰⁷ See also Flage 1989, 150; Melamed 2012c, 215.

question whether the sameness between “different objects having the *same* property, being of the *same* kind, and so on” can be “strict identity.”³⁰⁸ Spinoza, on the contrary, says yes. And yet the notion that Spinozistic attributes are nonuniversals is entrenched even among those interpreters that grant their ontological authenticity. For the sake of the argument, then, I will now highlight some additional anti-Spinozistic results that follow from the assumption that attributes are tropes.

One worry for the trope interpretation is what contemporary metaphysicians have called “the swapping problem.” Such worries raised by realists have repeated throughout the history of philosophy. Part 4 Section 8 of Edwards’s *Freedom of the Will* is a shining example from the early modern period (see APPENDIX A). Here is Armstrong’s now canonical statement of the problem.

Suppose . . . we are dealing with property tropes, and that the two tropes involved, P’ and P’’, resemble exactly. Since the two tropes are wholly distinct particulars, it appears to make sense that instead of *a* having P’ and *b* having P’’, the two tropes should have been swapped. [It is surely a mark against trope theory that it tolerates such an empty possibility.]³⁰⁹

For a more concrete picture as to what is going on here, consider (as Edwards does) two spheres having exactly similar but nonidentical roundness tropes. Armstrong, like Edwards before him, is saying that trope theory tolerates an empty possibility: that no discernible change in the reality whatsoever would result from the swapping of each roundness.

³⁰⁸ Armstrong 1997, 15.

³⁰⁹ Armstrong 1989, 132.

If Spinoza regards attributes as tropes, then there seems to be no sufficient explanation for why perfectly resembling attributes of supposedly distinct substances are nonidentical (for why, in short, this Fness is not that Fness). There would be no way to tell apart the pre-swapped state of affairs from the state of affairs where the Fness tropes have been swapped. Since the swapped and non-swapped versions could not be told apart even by the most powerful mind, there seems no explanation for denying the identity of the purportedly two Fness attributes.³¹⁰ This would suggest to Spinoza, and all thoroughgoing explanatory rationalists, that there is no reason to keep saying that there are two: this Fness and that Fness. Saying that there are Fnesses, rather than just Fness, would violate the explanatory rationalism that Spinoza appears to accept (1a2, 1p7d, 1p8s2, 1p11d2, 1p16, 1p18).³¹¹ This sort of issue does not arise when one considers attributes to be universals. The supposed substances would have one and the same Fness.

To be sure, and as Armstrong does not fail to admit, the empty possibility of swapping is not necessarily decisive against trope theory in general. Without a proof for the fact that such swapping is impossible, trope theory could just bite this unattractive bullet. But while such an empty possibility may be nothing more than a tolerable flaw for a trope theorist today, Spinoza would reject the entire view based on that one flaw alone.

³¹⁰ See Edwards 1969, 227-228.

³¹¹ See Della Rocca 2002; Della Rocca 2003a. Leibniz, who explicitly advocates the principle of sufficient reason, at least thinks this way. For a good discussion of this, see Rescher 1979, 51.

Spinoza would also face a problem in 1p14d, the official proof for substance monism, if he accepts that attributes are tropes. Here is a brief rendition of 1p14d.

A substance with all the attributes, God, necessarily exists (1p11). Any proposed other substance must have at least one attribute (1d4). Substances cannot have any attribute in common (1p5). It follows, therefore, that there can be only one substance: God.

What problem would Spinoza face in 1p14d if he accepts that attributes are tropes? Assume that Spinoza accepts the trope view. On this assumption, when Spinoza grants that, say, a single-attribute substance exists in addition to God, he would thereby be granting that there is an attribute not identical to any that God has. To be sure, this attribute will be indiscernible from one of God's. However, on the trope view there is nothing absurd with saying that this indiscernibility does not mean identity. Why would it be a problem to say that the substance posited in addition to God has an attribute that God does not have? Because God is the substance with *all* the attributes. So the unfortunate consequence of Spinoza accepting the trope view is that when he grants, at 1p14d, that there is another substance in addition to God he is saying that the being with all the attributes does not have all the attributes.

There is only one way to avoid the repugnant consequence of saying that the being with all the attributes possible does not have all the attributes possible. That way is simply to maintain that, since God has all the attributes possible, we are unable to assume, even for *reductio*, that there is another substance in addition to God. We are

unable to assume that there is another substance because as soon as we assume that there is another substance we get an attribute distinct from any of the ones that God has.

Not only is this tactic ad hoc and absurd,³¹² Spinoza does not permit it. He *does* grant, he *does* assume, that there is another substance in addition to God for the sake of his reductio.

5.5 Case 4

It is clear that Spinoza cannot endorse any antirealist analysis of God's having attributes. But do we really have to say, positively, that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of God's having attributes? How can we when there is only *one* of each attribute and, indeed, necessarily so?

The cold response is this. If Spinoza does not give an antirealist analysis of God's having attributes, then he must give a realist analysis. If the attributes are not particulars, then they must be universals. A particular is a nonuniversal. The domain of the universal and the domain of the nonuniversal are exhaustive and mutually exclusive: there is no overlap between them and their union comprises all possible elements.

Do I need to say anything else than this? If I take my cue from Spinoza, whose golden maneuver is the indirect proof, then the answer is no. But can I add anything that will make us more comfortable with saying positively that the attributes are universals even though there can be only one instantiation of each attribute? I think so.

Consider the following argument for the view that Spinoza is a *bundle realist* when it comes to substances having attributes. That is to say, consider the following

³¹² See Edwards 1969, 227-228.

argument for the view that Spinoza endorses the following positions: (a) each substance is nothing but its attributes and (b) the attributes of a substance are universals.

(Premise 1) If Spinoza rules out—categorically, and under all circumstances—the reality of multiple distinct substances exactly similar in attributes *merely based on their being exactly similar in attributes*, then he must be endorsing the following positions (in addition, of course, to the position that modes do not play any role in grounding the numerical distinction of substances): (a) each substance is nothing but its attributes; (b) the attributes of a substance are universals.

Here is why endorsing position-a is necessary for the antecedent of premise 1. If substances are not just their attributes (the only *qualitas* entities there are at the level of substances *considered truly*), then what that is going to mean in Spinoza’s historical context (just as much as in ours) is that each substance at its core is a substratum: a bare particular in which its attributes inhere.³¹³ Since substrata are particulars, the substratum that each substance is at its core is necessarily numerically distinct from any other substratum.³¹⁴ Substrata, therefore, prevent substances from collapsing into one; they are guarantors of numerical distinctness between substances.³¹⁵ Russell, who perhaps gleaned from Spinoza dissatisfaction with the view of substances as substrata in which properties inhere,³¹⁶ rejects the substrata view for this reason.³¹⁷ The substrata view allows something that Russell (like Spinoza) apparently finds repugnant: that two

³¹³ See Melamed 2009, 74.

³¹⁴ See Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Spade 1994, 171.

³¹⁵ McTaggart 1927, ch. 5 and ch.10 of vol. 1.

³¹⁶ See Blackwell 1985.

³¹⁷ See Russell 1940, ch. 6.

substances may have all their properties in common and yet still be two.³¹⁸ So each substance for Spinoza, as we already in fact know (see Chapter IV), must be exhausted by its attributes.

Here now is why endorsing position-b—namely, that attributes are universals—is necessary for the antecedent of premise 1. If attributes were not universals, that is, if they were particulars, then each substance would have its own attribute numerically distinct from any other attribute of any other substance, numerically distinct even if exactly similar—as numerically distinct as the two pennies before me. Since, in the words of Ockham, “*numerical difference* is the essence of the particular,”³¹⁹ particulars are those entities whose distinction from each other is unassailable on mere grounds of indiscernibility³²⁰ such that even indiscernibility “is not sufficient for identity.”³²¹ As Melamed seems on the verge of noticing,³²² such particularized attributes, therefore, prevent substances from collapsing into one. Since they are particulars, they are guarantors of numerical distinctness between substances. D. C. Williams makes the point as follows.

Particular entities are those which do not conform to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which is that identity of kind entails identity of case; that is, particulars are entities which may be exactly similar and yet not only distinct but discrete.³²³

Ehring nicely reiterates the point.

³¹⁸ See Bradley 1986; Russell 2008.

³¹⁹ See Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Robinson 2014; Spade 1994, 171.

³²⁰ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215, 233; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9.

³²¹ Campbell 1990, 44.

³²² Melamed 2009, 74n182.

³²³ Williams 1986, 3.

Universals, but not particulars, satisfy this principle [(the principle of the identity of indiscernibles)]. . . . Exact similarity is sufficient for identity for universals. Inherently exactly similar universals are identical no matter how they are related spatially or causally (or temporally). . . . [But] particulars do not satisfy this same identity condition. . . . [F]or universals, but not tropes, inherent exact similarity is sufficient for identity, and there is no other grounding for tropes to possess such an unrestricted capacity.³²⁴

Nolan suggests that attributes must not be particulars for Spinoza for this very reason. Nolan suggests this in a quick side-comment while pointing out that, because a Cartesian substance is nothing but its attributes,³²⁵ Descartes is entitled to a plurality of substances only if attributes are particulars, tropes, rather than universals.

Descartes's theory of universals is a corollary to his theory of attributes. . . . Attributes . . . are not universals . . . ; they are always particular. . . . An attribute [for Descartes] cannot be something that many things share [as in the case with universals] because, if it were, then all substances which shared it would be identical. If substance A is identical with the attribute [Fness (as on the bundle view)] and substance B is identical with [Fness] then, by the transitivity of identity, A and B are also identical. *Spinoza would approve of this result* but Descartes would not. For Descartes, all substances are really distinct, meaning, at the very least, that they are nonidentical.³²⁶

Jarrett seems to be making the same point in the following passage.

I turn now to what might be taken to be a logical objection to Descartes's thesis that there could be more than one thinking substance, or more than one extended substance. . . . The objection is that for there to be more than one, say, thinking substance, there would have to be at least two substances that have the same attribute. . . . Descartes's answer to this objection seems to me to be clear. It is that it is false that for there to be two or more thinking substances there would have to be at least two substances with the same attribute. It is just that there would have to be (besides the substances) two attributes, each of which is thought of by means of the same general concept—viz., the concept of thought. That is, Descartes will hold that my essence, which is describable as 'thinking,' is numerically distinct from your essence, which is also describable as 'thinking.' Here we seem to have a difference between Descartes and Spinoza.³²⁷

³²⁴ Ehring 2004, 229-231.

³²⁵ See *Principles of Philosophy* 1/63.

³²⁶ My emphasis Nolan 1998, 170-171.

³²⁷ Jarrett 1981, 356.

Whitehead also seems to hold that Spinoza's construal of attributes as universals is what enabled him to move from substance pluralism to substance monism. Spinoza's view that entities can be "described by universals" is, according to Whitehead, what allows him to collapse many substances into one.

An actual entity cannot be described, even inadequately, by universals. . . . The contrary opinion led to the collapse of Descartes's many substances into Spinoza's one substance.³²⁸

Such understanding, although not applied directly to Spinoza, is reflected as well in the following claim by 20th century trope theorist Stout about how substance monism is a natural corollary of realism concerning universals (plus, so some say, a few more premises).

[T]he doctrine that qualities and relations are universals, leads naturally, if not inevitably, to the denial of an ultimate plurality of substances.³²⁹

As is clear in his dictionary entry on Abelard, Bayle certainly agrees that realism concerning universals is what allows Spinoza to arrive at the view that there can be only one substance. In that entry Bayle describes how Abelard convinced his teacher, William of Champeaux, to renounce realism. Clearing Champeaux's mind of realism in effect amounted, so Bayle writes, to clearing Champeaux's mind of "disguis'd Spinozism." In a footnote following this remark, Bayle expounds upon the link between realism and Spinozism. Here is what Bayle writes.

[As Abelard correctly notes, the believer in universals is one who says that] "the same thing exists essentially and wholly in every one of its individuals, among which there is no difference as to essence, but only a variety arising from a number

³²⁸ Whitehead 1978, 48.

³²⁹ See Mackenzie 1922, 191.

of accidents.” The Scotists, with their *universale formale à parte rei*, or their *unitas formalis à parte rei*, are not wide of this notion. Now I say, that Spinozism is only carrying this doctrine further: for, according to the followers of Scotus, universal natures are indivisibly the same in every one of their individuals: the human nature of Peter is indivisibly the same with the human nature of Paul. Upon what foundation do they say this? Why, because the same attribute of man, which is applicable to Peter, agrees with Paul. This is the very fallacy of Spinozism. The attribute, say they, does not differ from the substance, of which it is predicated: therefore, wherever the same attribute is found, there is the same substance; and consequently, since the same attribute is found in all substances, there can possibly be but one substance. There is, then, but one substance in the universe; and all the variety we see in the world is but different modifications of one and the same substance.³³⁰

In crystalized form, and bringing out what is most relevant to me here, Bayle is saying this. Realists hold that the same thing exists wholly in every one of its individuals, which are individuated by nothing but their accidents. Spinoza holds this too. But Spinoza also holds (1) that substances are just their attributes and (2) that modes—the “accidents”—*cannot* individuate substances (being that modes are ontologically posterior to substances). In light of his realism plus his endorsement of these two additional points, Spinoza finds there to be nothing left to individuate substances. Spinoza concludes, therefore, that there is only one substance.³³¹

The understanding that realism opens the door to substance monism is widespread throughout the history of philosophy. We see it clearly enough in the above

³³⁰ Bayle 1991, entry on “Abelard”; see as well Vadet 1976, 39n2. Jolivet attempts to respond to Bayle on Spinoza’s behalf by noting that what Bayle says cannot be right since Spinoza, according to 2p40s1, was an antirealist.

Abélard, écrit-[Bayle], “disputa contre lui avec tant de force touchant la nature des Universaux, qu’il l’obligea de renoncer à son sentiment, qui était dans le fond un spinozisme non développé”; mais nous voyons Spinoza énoncer sur la question des universaux une théorie clairement nominaliste (voir Ethique, II, prop. 40, scolie 1). . . Il y a là de quoi laisser en leur lieu les essences supra-historiques du nominalisme et du réalisme. (Jolivet 1992, 112)

³³¹ It should also be noted that Bayle’s argument here, which he makes in his earlier Sedan *Theses* of 1680 as well (Bayle 1727 4.134), incorporates a rather stock medieval argument used by antirealists to argue that realism is absurd (Mori 2014, 88).

passage from Bayle (as well as in the remarks from Nolan, Jarrett, Whitehead, and Stout). We see it from Abelard to David of Dinant to Leibniz to Mendelssohn to Maret to Bradley to De Wulf.³³² Monism appears to be, De Wulf explains, “the logical and necessary consequence of extreme realism.”³³³ As Maret puts it, from realism to the denial of substance pluralism and the affirmation, in particular, of “Pantheism there is but one step.”³³⁴ Presumably, that “one step” is what Bayle, in the above quote, says that it is: (1) *affirm that substances are nothing but their universal attributes* (“[t]he attribute, say they, does not differ from the substance”) and (2) *affirm that modes cannot individuate substances* (variety cannot arise “from a number of accidents”). It is beside the point here, but I would add that there is at least one more step: *find some way of overcoming the following grounds for how monism can be resisted even when substances are nothing but their universal attributes and modes cannot individuate substances.*—An attribute of one substance is always going to be *inexactly* similar to an attribute of a supposed other substance. This is true even if the attribute of the one is called by the same name as the attribute of the other and even if the difference between the attribute of the one and the attribute of the other is infinitesimal and imperceptible. The Extension of substance₁, for example, is not exactly similar to the Extension of substance₂ just as, and to use Leibniz’s famous example in his answer to Clarke’s Third

³³² Bayle 1991, entry on “Spinoza” note A; Bayle 1991, entry on “Abelard” note; Liberatore 1889; Leibniz 1981, 2.27; Copleston 1960, 290-291; Gottlieb 2003, 189; Gottlieb 2011, 101; Christian Brothers 1893, 97; Hunt 1866, 147-148; Steinhart 2004, 64; Stern 2007, 134ff; Mackenzie 1922, 191; Turner 1830, 495n19, 512; Burns 1914, 79, 82, 91, 96; M. Cameron 2010; Haeckel 1894; Hobhouse 1918, 62; Taylor 1972a, 190-191; Plumtre 1878, 299-300; Jolivet 1992, 112; Allbutt 1901, 35-36; Windelband 1901, 408-410; Coffey 1917, 303-304; De Wulf 1952, 154; Whitehead 1978, 48.

³³³ De Wulf 1952, 154.

³³⁴ See Hunt 1866, 147-148.

Reply, this drop of milk here is never exactly similar to any other drop of milk (perhaps in *any* respect).³³⁵

(Premise 2) Spinoza does rule out—categorically, and under all circumstances—the reality of multiple distinct substances exactly similar in intrinsic attributes *merely based on their being exactly similar in attributes* (see 1p4-1p5d, 1p14d).

Premise 1 and premise 2 together entail that Spinoza endorses (a) the view each substance is nothing but its attributes and (b) the view that the attributes of a substance are universals. In contemporary lingo, from premise 1 and premise 2 it follows that Spinoza must be endorsing a bundle-of-universals analysis of substances having attributes. This makes sense, of course. We already have independent proof that Spinoza endorses bundle realism (Chapter IV plus earlier portions of Chapter V).

It is often considered a bad thing nowadays to be told that you endorse bundle realism. Why would such a diagnosis lead to despair? Well, bundle realism entails, as is the consensus anyway, a view that many regard as too ridiculous even to be considered: that indiscernibility entails identity (the principle of the identity of indiscernibles).³³⁶

Beebe, Effingham, and Goff put the problem nicely.

There is a significant difficulty facing the bundle theorist who takes properties to be universals. This is because the conjunction of bundle theory and realism about universals entails that two distinct objects cannot have all the same properties. If object x is just a bundle of its properties, [and if] object y is just a bundle of its properties, and the properties of x are numerically identical to the properties of y

³³⁵ But see Leibniz's "Logical-Metaphysical Principles" (1689?). Here he indicates that in certain respects things can be exactly similar, just never in their entireties (Leibniz 2006, 49-50; see also Russell 2008, 59). Some commentators hold that Berkeley is committed to the exactly-similar-in-no-respect view, the view that things can be inherently exactly similar in no respect (Muehlmann 1992, 49). Other commentators argue that this is not the case, saying instead that Berkeley merely endorses what Leibniz does in the "Logical-Metaphysical Principles" (see McKim 1997).

³³⁶ See Armstrong 1978, 91; Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2004, 72.

(being [that they are] universals), it follows that x is numerically identical to y. However, it seems eminently possible for there to be two distinct objects with all the same properties. [Hence bundle realism is faced with a major problem, one that many regard as devastating: they are committed to the view that indiscernibility entails identity.]³³⁷

Here is Armstrong now.

If the bundle-of-universals view is correct, then it follows that two different things cannot have exactly the same properties, where properties are universals. For given this theory, they would be exactly the same thing. However, against the Bundle theory, it seems possible that two things should have exactly the same properties, that is, be exactly alike [and still be two]. . . . What I have just said is recognized to be an important argument against the bundle-of-universals analysis. . . . [For if individuals] are just bundles of universals, then different [individuals] must contain at least one different universal [lest they be one and the same].³³⁸

In the face of such a problem many renounce their bundle realism and, depending on whether they are more wedded to the bundle conception of substances or the realist conception of attributes, either go with a bundle antirealist view or a substratum realist view. Both options, of course, stave off the above problem. For numerical difference is, in Robinson's words now instead of Ockham's, "built into the identity" of both tropes and substrata (since both are particulars, that is, nonuniversals).³³⁹

Those not frightened out of their bundle realism by the realization that it seems to entail such a despised principle, tend nevertheless to develop strategies to be able to keep their bundle realism without having to keep the principle.³⁴⁰ One might say, for

³³⁷ Beebe, Effingham, and Goff 2011, 23.

³³⁸ Armstrong 1989, 64-66.

³³⁹ Robinson 2014.

³⁴⁰ Here is a common move made to show that bundle realism is compatible with distinct but indiscernible bundle individuals (see Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2004). (1) For all bundle realism says, each individual is entirely constituted by its universals. This entails merely that individuals with all their properties in common have the same constituents. It does not entail that these two individuals are numerically identical.

example, that there are still *many* bundle substances but it is just that these are multiple *instantiations* of one and the same bundle substance.

Whether this and related strategies are viable is not my question here. My question is: would Spinoza despair? Would he renounce either of the two positions that make up bundle realism? Would he undertake any strategies for keeping his bundle realism without the despised principle? Of course not. He would welcome the result with open arms. He is in the business of collapsing substances into one. Indeed, he subscribes to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles (see 1p4-1p5d; KV app1p4c I/116/25ff)³⁴¹ and he employs it to carry out his business against substance pluralism.

What further brings out Spinoza's distance from us today regarding the identity of indiscernibles, and what further drives home the point that he must be regarding the attributes as universals, is the realization that Spinoza does not just employ any old version of the principle. He employs the most leprous version, the version according to which different substances must have different *intrinsic* attributes in order not to be one and the same, the version according to which difference in external denominations—

It would entail that the two are numerically identical only if we add an additional premise, one that says: bundle individuals with all their constituents in common must be numerically identical. Thus all the bundle realist would need to do in order to avoid accepting the identity of indiscernibles is to reject this additional controversial premise. (2) The bundle realist should then tell the following positive story about how bundle individuals can be distinct despite being indiscernible. When we posit two bundle individuals with all their properties in common, we are positing two instances of one and the same bundle, and these instances are not identical to each other.

³⁴¹ Della Rocca 1996, 131-132; Della Rocca 2008; Hubbeling 1977, 65-67. Consider the following case that Spinoza makes in the *Short Treatise* for the identity of God and Nature. Spinoza takes it for granted that because God and Nature are exactly similar, or in his words “agree exactly,” they are identical.

Nature is known through itself, and not through any other thing. It consists of infinite attributes, each of which is infinite and perfect in its kind. Existence belongs to its essence, so that outside it there is no essence or being. Hence it agrees exactly with the essence of God, who alone is magnificent and blessed. (KV app1p4c I/116/25ff)

however drastic—do not alone suffice for grounding the numerical distinction between two purported substances. Why so many laugh at such a view and reject it as a nonstarter is because it seems that substances can be nonidentical even if they have all of their intrinsic properties in common. Indeed, substances can be nonidentical, so many hold, even if they have all their intrinsic properties *and* all their nonintrinsic properties in common. It seems obvious to many people, then, that substances would be nonidentical if they had only their intrinsic properties in common but not as well their relational ones. Hence the laughter.

As the saying goes: one philosopher's modus tollens is another philosopher's modus ponens. And thus philosopher x, who represents the contemporary sensibility, argues as follows.

(Premise 1) If bundle realism is true, then there cannot be indiscernible substances in principle.

(Premise 2) There can be indiscernible substances in principle.

(Conclusion) Therefore, bundle realism is false.

Spinoza, on the other hand, argues as follows.

(Premise 1) If bundle realism is true, then there cannot be indiscernible substances even in principle.

(Premise 2) Bundle realism is true.

(Conclusion) Therefore, there cannot be indiscernible substances even in principle.

As I see it, then, the following remarks from Hawley are true of Spinoza.

One reason for advocating a PII is that it is a consequence of some other metaphysical view. For example . . . a PII for [substances] follows from the identification of [substances] with bundles of universals.³⁴²

I believe that, for Spinoza, the identity of indiscernibles is a consequence of his bundle realism. The bundle aspect is stated throughout the *Ethics*, and the realist aspect is just a fundamental assumption going in—defensible, if need be, on grounds of the principle of sufficient reason.

Let me put all this in terms more colloquial. As the saying goes: one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. And what is a sickening result of bundle realism for most is a divine (and quite literally so) result for Spinoza. Spinoza cherishes the indiscernibility-implies-identity outcome of endorsing bundle realism. That result is a key aid to his goal of showing there to be only one substance. Were Spinoza to take away any one of the two elements that make up bundle realism (say, for instance, the realism part), he would be precluded from having his conclusion that there is, in his words, but “one, unique, universal” substance (KV 1.2 I/24/nf).³⁴³

Upon examination of the 1p4-1p5d block, it is clear that Spinoza uses bundle realism to say that intrinsically indiscernible substances are identical and thus that there cannot be substances with the same attributes. When Spinoza gives his proof for the identity of indiscernible substances at 1p4d he explicitly expresses his commitment to the view that each substance is nothing over and above its attributes. To be sure, he does not explicitly state his realism the way that he does his bundle view of substance. But

³⁴² Hawley 2009.

³⁴³ If Spinoza did take the odd view that substrata are universals rather than particulars, then technically he would not be so precluded. But (1) that is a far off chance in itself, (2) Spinoza holds to a bundle view anyway, and (3) it is irrelevant at any rate to my concern here.

this is because Spinoza shares a bias that is widespread among realists, and is indeed the bias of the majority of participants in the realist-antirealist debates throughout the centuries. Your run of the mill realist is never going to think to question that attributes, properties, essences, and the like are universals. If your run of the mill realist considers antirealism at all, he is going to construe antirealism as simply the view that there are no attributes, properties, essences, and the like: nonconstituent antirealism.³⁴⁴ Spinoza is a run of the mill realist in this sense. Like so many realists whose circuits start smoking when they hear someone admit the reality of properties and yet proclaim to be one who admits no universals, Spinoza's programming does not allow him to fathom the notion that properties are particulars. That properties are universals is a background assumption that is so background, and so basic, that it is for Spinoza unnecessary to state even as an axiom.³⁴⁵ Thus I agree with the following words of Ueberweg, although not necessarily with the criticism of Spinoza contained therein.

We are landed at once in a crude realism (in the medieval sense of the term), the scientific legitimacy of which is simply *presupposed*, but not demonstrated, by Spinoza.³⁴⁶

Perhaps it is better to put it as Fullerton does.³⁴⁷

We hear a good deal of Spinoza's nominalism. . . . [But] he was *at heart* as thorough a realist as any philosopher of the Middle Ages.

³⁴⁴ See Delahunty 1985, 117. Many people, when they hear of the trope option, conclude that they do not understand how it is an antirealist theory when, after all, a trope is just an instances of a universal. But tropes are not instances of universals.

³⁴⁵ See Kolakowski 2004, 19.

³⁴⁶ My emphasis Ueberweg 1909, 67.

³⁴⁷ My emphasis Fullerton 1894, 200.

Here is a more relaxed way to think about all of this. As Ockham never let his realist opponents forget, a problem that especially nags realists (but does not much nag antirealists) is how to account for individuation between things—how to account for why this thing is *this* thing and not some other, possibly qualitatively indiscernible, thing.³⁴⁸ Thiel puts the point well.

Individuation presented itself as a problem to those philosophers who adopted a realist position on the ontological status of universals. . . . Individuality was not a problem at all for any version of nominalism. . . . [According to nominalist/conceptualist doctrine (most famously in Ockham, 1285-1349), there are no real universals . . . but only individuals; therefore there arises no question as to what brings about individuality within a kind: everything that exists is individual by itself and essentially. . . . To say that individuality belongs to beings “immediately and per se” is, obviously, to adopt a nominalist position. . . . The[] denial of real universal forms meant that individuation at least did not present itself as a genuine problem to [nominalists]. . . . [T]he basic nominalist (or conceptualist) assumption [is] that everything that exists is individual by itself and that a search for a principle of individuation is superfluous.³⁴⁹

Realism poses a problem as to how to account for individuation, of course, since it is the view that allows for strict identity between things.³⁵⁰ Realism poses a problem because, to put it in the colorful way that Socrates does in the *Meno*,³⁵¹ the universal is friend to the singular and enemy to the plural. Levin articulates the individuation problem faced by realists in terms more exact.

[U]niversals . . . have numerically identical instantiations. . . . It follows that, given realism, a proper solution to the individuation problem requires some other ontological machinery.³⁵²

³⁴⁸ See Berthelot et al. 1886-1902b, 202;

³⁴⁹ Thiel 1998, 213, 215, 233.

³⁵⁰ See Cross 2010; Des Chene 1996, 368; Levin 2002, 134; South 2002, 807-808.

³⁵¹ Plato *Meno* 77a.

³⁵² Levin 2002, 134.

Some realists posit properties peculiar to each member of a multiplicity. Some posit substrata. Some say that, even though properties are universals, no two properties can ever be exactly similar (however similar they seem). Some endorse the admittedly ad hoc solution of saying that, although most properties are universals, each item will have one trope securing the individuation of that item. Some say that indiscernibility does not entail identity across possible worlds, such that there would at least be individuation between substances in different possible worlds even when those are exactly similar and nothing but their universals. And so on. Spinoza, however, uses the problem nagging realism to his advantage. He says that there is no other machinery to individuate substances. This paves the way for his denial of substance pluralism.

5.6 Case 5

Some will perhaps want more explanation for how Spinoza can be endorsing a realist analysis of substances having attributes when there is necessarily only one of each attribute.³⁵³ How is an attribute a universal, that which is apt to be one in many, when it is *impossible* for an attribute to be exemplified by more than one substance, that is, when each attribute is one of a kind? Since an attribute cannot be particular, that is, nonuniversal, for reasons already explained, and since it cannot be—so at least one might think—a universal, that is, a nonparticular, due to the necessity of its having only one instantiation, must we say that the divine attributes are both universal and nonuniversal and thus neither universal nor nonuniversal?

³⁵³ See Hübner forthcoming-a; Kessler 1971b, 110, 146; Basile 2012, 32.

Both and neither-nor is of course the magic formula of deconstruction in the technical sense of that term, that is, in the way that having Bart Simpson on your tie deconstructs your tie: a formal garb undermining its own formalness, thus leaving it *sous rature* (under erasure).³⁵⁴ Hence to say that the divine attributes are both universals and nonuniversals and so neither universals nor nonuniversals is to say, as one might find insinuated in the works of Macherey, Montag, and Melamed among others,³⁵⁵ that Spinoza's God deconstructs or undoes the universal-particular binary.³⁵⁶ To say that the divine attributes are both universals and nonuniversals and so neither universals nor nonuniversals is to say, in other words, that the leakiness of the mutually exclusive and exhaustive dichotomy of universal and nonuniversal would be revealed when applied to Spinoza's God.³⁵⁷

As Derrida famously holds, rigorous and open-minded pursuit of the correct interpretation of a text's position on x will ultimately lead to a point where it becomes clear that the text contradicts itself on the matter and where such self-betrayal, such self-undermining, is irresolvable. This is the point, of course, where those anxious for stability and coherence are inspired to begin—so it is common to find the

³⁵⁴ See Kearney 1998, 65.

³⁵⁵ Macherey 1997b; Macherey 2011; Montag 1998b, vii; Melamed 2009, 75; see Cushman 1919, 113; Goetschel 2013, esp. 161-162; Hartshorne 1932, 458; Klercke 2005, 218; McMurtrie 2011, 98-99, 109, 218-219; Savan 1958, 216; Scruton 1986, 47; Sutcliffe 2007, 420-421, 427-428, 430, 431; Wartofsky 1977, 460, 467, 468-469.

³⁵⁶ Consider Melamed's words, for example.

Since for Spinoza there is only one ultimate subject of predication (i.e., God), one may wonder whether the distinction between particular and universal properties has any real place in such a theory.

The distinction between universals and particular properties is . . . a distinction between repeatable and unrepeatable properties. (Melamed 2009, 75; Melamed 2013d, 58)

³⁵⁷ See Sutcliffe 2007, 420-421, 427-428, 430, 431.

deconstructionist say—their panicked and self-deceptive spin-doctoring to cover over the contradiction that they found. Might we have reached such a point?

Aside from the fact that Derrida himself holds that the universal-nonuniversal binary leaks³⁵⁸ (which will carry force on its own in some circles), someone taking the deconstruction interpretation might find hope in the following facts about Spinoza.

First, in the spirit of Plotinus who says that the One is, on the one hand, ineffable (in that it is beyond all definition)³⁵⁹ and yet, on the other hand, effable (in that it is the “perfect”³⁶⁰ “source of all things,” a “unity” “precedent to all being”³⁶¹), and in the spirit of Eckhart who says that God has being and yet does not have being,³⁶² Spinoza himself makes various aporetic-sounding comments that to some might indicate that he too views the divine nature as embracing contradiction in its unlimitedness. Spinoza says, for instance, that God is one and unique (1p8s2, 1p14d-1p14c1, 1p20d, 1p28d, 1p29s, 1app II/77/21-22, 2p1d, 2p1s, 2p7s; TP 7.5; TdIE 76; DPP 1p11d; KV 1.2 I/24/nf; KV 1.2 I/29/20ff, KV 2.22 I/101/20; KV app1; CM 1.3 I/241/5-6; CM 1.6 I/246/5ff, CM 2.2 I/253, CM 2.7, CM 2.9 I/267, CM 2.10 I/272; Ep.12, Ep.83; TTP 2.14, TTP 7.6, TTP 14.10, TTP 15.2) and that God is not one and unique (Ep. 50; CM 1.6).

Second, and as Macherey likes to point out, for Spinoza “determination is negation” (see Ep. 50) or, as Plotinus puts it, “limitation.”³⁶³ In line with Hegel and Lenin, who thought that this phrase was of “enormous importance” to understanding

³⁵⁸ See Derrida 1997.

³⁵⁹ Plotinus *Enneads* 5.5.6; see Curley 1993, 128.

³⁶⁰ Plotinus *Enneads* 5.2.1.

³⁶¹ Plotinus *Enneads* 6.9.3.

³⁶² See Smart 1967, 450.

³⁶³ Plotinus *Enneads* 5.5.6.

Spinoza,³⁶⁴ Schwegler describes this “incidental expression” as “the fundamental idea of the entire system.”³⁶⁵ Now, and so one might argue, since to say that an attribute is one or the other (universal or nonuniversal) is to *determine* it in one way or the other, to say that an attribute is one or the other is to attribute *negation* to God and thus “a defect of existence, a relative non-being.”³⁶⁶ The problem is clear. It is a manifest repugnancy to attribute negation to the divine essence, which in Letter 32 Spinoza in fact explicitly describes as *indeterminate*. As Caird puts it, because for Spinoza “determination is negation,” that is, because for Spinoza “affirmation is impossible without negation,” and because God can involve no negation, God must be “a purely affirmative being” and thus the “indeterminate” “unity of all things,” even opposites.³⁶⁷

Third, and relatedly, belief in the One Godhead from which everything else follows is what motivates Plotinus, Eruigena, Eckhart, Cusanus, Hegel, and other philosophers in the Neoplatonist tradition, a tradition with which Spinoza was familiar,³⁶⁸ to endorse dialetheism. More exactly, belief in the One Godhead from which everything else follows is what motivates their view that the law of contradiction breaks down when it comes to the divine nature.³⁶⁹ The idea is that for everything to result from some ultimate reality that is one and simple, this One must have contradictory properties. Thus Plotinus makes the following comment.

³⁶⁴ Lenin 1964, IX 67; see Chakrabarti 1975, 371 and 380n20; Deborin 1952, 109; Kline 1952, 32; Luppold 1935, 74.

³⁶⁵ Schwegler 1909, xvi.

³⁶⁶ Schwegler 1909, xvi-xvii.

³⁶⁷ Caird 1902, 157.

³⁶⁸ See Curley 1993, 128.

³⁶⁹ See Priest 2007, 3.2.

The One is all things and not one of them; the source of all things is not all things and yet is all things.³⁷⁰

The First must be without form, and, if without form, then it is no Being; being must have some definition and therefore be limited; but the First cannot be thought of as having definition and limit, for thus it would not be the Source, but the particular item indicated by the definition assigned to it. If all things belong to the produced, which of them can be thought of as the supreme? Not included among them, this can be described only as transcending them: but they are Being and the Beings; it therefore transcends Being.³⁷¹

And thus Cusanus says the following.

[I]n no way do [distinctions] exist in the absolute maximum [that is the One]. The absolute maximum . . . is all things, and while being all, is none of them; in other words, it is at once the maximum and the minimum of being.³⁷²

Since Spinoza believes, in line with these thinkers, that the One Godhead is the sufficient source—the ultimate buckstopping arche—of all things, and since the view that the One has a contradictory nature is precisely “driven by the view of the One as the ground of all things that are,”³⁷³ it is by no means far-fetched to suggest that Spinoza believes the same: that the divine nature welcomes contradiction at its heart (and is thereby some sort of “unity of opposites”).

As it turns out, these points should not give much hope to those who endorse the deconstruction-dialetheism line. Regarding the first point, Spinoza’s claim that God is one and unique and that God is not one and unique is not a genuine deconstruction. Spinoza’s claim has the *look* of a deconstruction, no doubt. But as with the claim, often cited as a paradigm example of deconstruction,³⁷⁴ that ghosts are present *and* nonpresent

³⁷⁰ Plotinus *Enneads* 5.2.1.

³⁷¹ Plotinus *Enneads* 5.5.6.

³⁷² Cusanus 1954, 1.3.

³⁷³ Priest 2007, 3.2.

³⁷⁴ See Cixous 2000; Dubreuil, L. 2006; Prendergast 2005.

and thus *neither* present *nor* nonpresent, it is a fake deconstruction. The sense in which the ghost of Patrick Swayze *is* wrapped around me from behind at the pottery wheel right now (“Unchained Melody” playing in the background and all) is not the same sense in which the ghost of Patrick Swayze *is not* wrapped around me from behind at the pottery wheel right now. Likewise, the sense in which God *is* one and unique for Spinoza is not the same sense in which God *is not* one and unique for Spinoza.³⁷⁵ To be sure, in each case the same statement is being both affirmed and denied. Nevertheless, in each case the sense of the statement when that statement is being affirmed is *different* from the sense of the statement when that statement is being denied. That difference makes all the difference. God *is* one—in the sense that there can be no others of the same nature as God; there are not many Gods. God *is not* one—in the sense that there

³⁷⁵ See Geach 1971, 21-23; Laerke 2008, 671-678. In a June 2nd 1674 letter to Jarig Jelles Spinoza says that even though there are not many Gods it is improper to say that there is one God. When we go back to Spinoza’s CM 1.6, which is the passage in question in his discussion with Jelles at Letter 50, notice that Spinoza claims merely that “perhaps” he can prove that it is improper to call God unique and one, one and alone. The hesitation indicated by the “perhaps” is not that he has doubts whether he can achieve such a proof. Rather, it is because, while there is no doubt a respect in which it is improper to call God one and unique, there is also a respect in which it is right to call God one and unique (as is evident by Spinoza’s incessant continuance to do so throughout his works and by his own claim at the very CM passage in question that there is a “respect” in which God is one and unique: CM 1.6 I/246/2; see Gueroult 1968, 156-158). For Spinoza it is not proper to call God one or unique because there are no others that have the same nature of God against which to say that God is one and unique. From the perspective according to which we refer to others of like nature to x when we say that x is one and unique, it is improper to call God one and unique. At the same time, however, it is proper to call him one and unique. It is proper to call him one and unique simply in virtue of the fact that there can be no others of the same nature as God. Thus Spinoza can say the following a few chapters later in the very same passage under discussion in the letter.

So we can now conclude that he exists as one alone; for if more than one God existed, it would follow that a most perfect being has imperfection, which is absurd. (CM 2.2 I/253)

And he can say the following to Meyer.

But if we have attend to [substance] as it is in the intellect, and [thereby] perceive the thing as it is in itself, which is very difficult, then we find it to be infinite, indivisible, and unique [(that is, one alone)]. (Ep. 12 IV/56/10ff)

And he can say the following to Tschirnhaus.

Simply from the fact that I define God as an Entity to whose essence existence belongs, I infer several properties of him, such as that he necessarily exists, that he is one alone, immutable, infinite. (Ep. 83)

are no others that have the same nature of God against which to say that God is one (among many of the same kind). Therefore, we should not do to Spinoza what Plato and Aristotle have been said to have done to Heraclitus³⁷⁶: say that he denies the principle of contradiction, that he is a believer in dialethias, merely in response to Heraclitean sayings such as the road up is the road down.³⁷⁷

Here is why the second point should not give hope to those who endorse the deconstruction-dialetheism line. Spinoza does say that determination is negation and that to attribute negation to the divine essence is absurd. But when Spinoza by implication says that we should attribute no determination to the divine essence, and when he says positively that the divine essence is indeterminate, we should not take this to mean that we are entitled to describe the divine essence as both A and not-A “in the same respect,”³⁷⁸ as is required for a genuine deconstruction. There are two main reasons why.

First, when Spinoza says that God in his absolute nature is indeterminate, he means simply that it is the sum of all possible self-sufficient attributes. In describing God as indeterminate, he is saying that God is not reducible just to one principal attribute such as Extension, which is infinite merely in its *own* kind (and not as well in *all* kinds) (see 1d2, 1p16d; Ep. 2 IV/7-IV/8; Ep. 4, Ep. 56). In describing God as

³⁷⁶ See Barnes 1982, ch. 4; Graham 2011.

³⁷⁷ Heraclitus Fragment 69; see also the “rivers fragment” 49a. Assuming that Plato and Aristotle really do read it this way (which seems strange since Plato himself knows that opposites can be predicated of x so long as the opposites are not predicated of x *in the same respect*: see *Republic* 436c5-437a2), it seems that Plato and Aristotle take too literally what is just a provocative way to lure in the reader, lure in the reader to then figure out how such a paradoxical *sounding* statement actually makes sense and is not a genuine contradiction of A and not-A. The road up is the road down, but the sense in which the road is up is not the same sense in which that very road is down. The reader must figure out what the different senses are. That is the whole point. That is the exercise. It allows the reader to be active in his attainment of insight, rather than a passive receptacle into which the truth is deposited.

³⁷⁸ Plato *Republic* 436b; Aristotle *Metaphysics* G 1005b-1006a.

indeterminate, he is saying simply that God is *all* the principal attributes and thus is absolutely infinite, that is, infinite in all kinds (see 1d6exp, 1p28s; Ep. 2). As is clear from the following quotation from Letter 32 (the God-is-indeterminate passage), we are by no means entitled to infer that Spinoza is saying that God, as indeterminate, is both A and not-A in the same respect.

If we suppose that something which is indeterminate and perfect only in its own kind exists by its own sufficiency, then we must also grant the existence of a being which is absolutely indeterminate and perfect. This being I shall call God. For example, if we are willing to maintain that Extension and Thought (which can each be perfect in its own kind, that is, in a definite kind of being) exist by their own sufficiency, we shall have to admit the existence of God who is absolutely perfect, that is, the existence of a being who is absolutely indeterminate. (Ep. 36)

Second, Spinoza seems to be the archenemy of dialetheism.³⁷⁹ Such is indicated in general by his choice to present his views in the deductive style of Euclid's *Elements* and in particular by his claim that what is true cannot contradict what is true (Ep. 21 IV/126/30, see Ep. 56). Moreover, Spinoza states that God's nature can involve no contradiction. This is why not only the second point, but also the third point as well (about how there are reasons to think that Spinoza fits in the tradition of Neoplatonists who welcome contradiction into the divine nature), should not give too much hope to the deconstruction-dialetheism interpretation. Just look at Spinoza's second proof for God at 1p11d. There Spinoza denies that something about God's nature could ever prevent God from existing. For to say that something about God's nature could ever prevent God from existing is to say that God's nature involves a contradiction. But "it is absurd,"

³⁷⁹ At worst he is a close second to the archenemy of dialetheism: Avicenna. Avicenna famously makes the following comments in his commentary on Aristotle's *Topics* I.11.105a4-5.

Anyone who denies the law of non-contradiction should be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten is not the same as not to be beaten, and to be burned is not the same as not to be burned.

Spinoza insists, to think that the nature of an “absolutely infinite and supremely perfect Being” involves a contradiction. Its perfection guarantees that it is not contradictory.

* * *

The central question remains, however. How is an attribute a universal, that which is apt to be one in many, when it is impossible for an attribute to be exemplified by more than one substance? It is clear that each attribute of God is a unique instantiation. Since an attribute is in itself, conceived through itself, and self-caused, it cannot have a cause external to itself. Spinoza says, however, that “whatever is of such a nature that there can be many individuals [of that nature] must, to exist, have an external cause to exist” (1p8s2 II/51/12-14; see Ep. 34). How, then, is an attribute a universal? As if the question could not become more urgent, consider the following remarks by Adamson.

[T]he whole point of a universal is to explain similar features in more than one object. If there is only one [F object], it seems otiose to posit a universal [Fness]. A universal is, after all, a one over many—not a one over one.³⁸⁰

Adamson’s words here, however, are just a provocative set up for him to explain that, despite what those unaware of the problem of universals and its history may be led to believe, a property’s being instantiated only once does not necessarily rule out its being a universal; unique instantiation, that is, does not necessarily make an attribute a trope. The universal property is that which is in principle disposed or apt to be one in many (to use the boilerplate language of such philosophers as Aristotle, Suárez, Fonseca, Eustachius a Sancto Paulo, Keckermann, Bonaventure, Burgersdijck, Ockham,

³⁸⁰ Adamson 2013, 329-330.

Peter of Spain, and Buridan among others).³⁸¹ The particularized property or trope, on the other hand, has *no* disposition or aptitude to be one in many. Hence if Fness is a trope and if there is another F substance assumed to be distinct from this F substance, there will not be one and the same Fness in each. But just because the universal is that which in principle is disposed or apt to be one in many, that does not mean that a universal must *actually* be in many lest it collapse into a particular, a nonuniversal. Such a point has been recognized by various historical figures with a competency in the debates concerning the problem of universals.³⁸²

Here on the matter is Alexander of Aphrodisias, who follows Aristotle in holding that definitions are of the universal.

Definitions are not of [things] that are common as common, but of those which happen to be common in the case of each nature. For even if there were only one human being in existence the account of “human being” would be the same. For this is not the account of it because it is present in many [individuals], but because it is in accordance with a nature of this sort that a human being is a human being, whether there are several sharing in this nature or not.³⁸³

Here now is Fonseca.

The universal is . . . *apt by its own nature as to be in many items*; . . . it is . . . *some single nature apt to be predicated of many, or truly may be said of them*. . . . [For example,] the ratio of animal is one and the same in Alexander and in Bucephalus, and equally the name and ratio of man in Socrates, Plato, and Alcibiades. . . . It is not

³⁸¹ Aristotle (*De Interpretatione* 7 17a39-40; *Metaphysics* Z 13 1038b, *Metaphysics* Z 15, 1040a27-b30 in light of 1040a9-17; *Posterior Analytics* 100a7), Suárez (MD 6.4.2, MD 6.4.6, MD 6.4.12, MD 6.4.13), Fonseca (1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006), Eustachius a Sancto Paulo (see Gilson 1912, 306-308), Keckermann (1602, 46-48, 68; see Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120), Bonaventure (1882, 2.18.1.3; see King 1994, 151), Burgersdijck (1697, 1.1.3), Ockham (see Spade 1999, 111), Peter of Spain (1990, 17), Buridan (2001, 105).

³⁸² See the following, for example. Aristotle (*De Interpretatione* 7 17a39-40; *Metaphysics* Z 13 1038b, *Metaphysics* Z 15, 1040a27-b30 in light of 1040a9-17; *Posterior Analytics* 100a7), Boethius (1906, 217, 219), Ordo of Tournai (see Erismann 2011, 77n7; Resnick 1997, 369ff), Gersonides (see Rudavski 1994, 84; Goodman 1992, 261; Nadler 2001a, 55; for Gersonides’s influence on Spinoza see Rudavsky 2011; Klein 2003c; Nadler 2001b, ch. 4-5), Petrus Olai (see Andrews 1993), Burley (see Brown 1974).

³⁸³ Alexander 1992, 1.3.8.12-17.

merely said by the philosophers, whatever the universal is, that *it is actually* in several items, but that it is *apt* to be in many items, for it may actually be [merely] in one individual. But if it has the aptitude to be in many items . . . it must be thought as universal.³⁸⁴

A universal, as Spinoza himself indicates, need not actually apply to many, be present through many, to be what it is. It need only be the sort of thing that no particular is. It need only be the sort of thing that is, as Spinoza puts it, said and exemplified equally, whether it be of infinitely many, finitely many, or *even just one*; the sort of thing that is one undivided when in many (4p4d II/213/15-19, 2p49s II/134/8-10, 2p49s II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18; TdIE 76). That might in fact be one of the reasons why Spinoza feels entitled to describe God, in line with Malebranche and Norris,³⁸⁵ as a “universal being” even though God is necessarily “unique” (KV 1.2 I/24/nf; TP 2.22).³⁸⁶

So the fact that there are not many instantiations of an attribute does not necessarily rule out an attribute’s status as a universal. Indeed, and what is most relevant to the case at hand with Spinoza, even the fact that it is *impossible* for there to be more than one instantiation does not necessarily rule out an attribute’s status as a universal. It may be that, in the words of Swoyer and Francesco, “at least in typical cases” it is possible for the universal to be instantiated many times over, but there are exceptions, such as “properties that can only be exemplified by a single thing.”³⁸⁷ A universal is that which is apt to be wholly one in many, meaning at minimum, and as Fonseca

³⁸⁴ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

³⁸⁵ See Mander 2008, 38.

³⁸⁶ See Fullerton 1899, 45; Mackinnon 1924, 354; Wolfson 1934, 152-153.

³⁸⁷ Swoyer and Francesco 2011; see also Rosen, Byrne, Cohen, and Shiffrin 2015, 1114 (entry on “Particulars and Universals”): “A universal is an item that is (typically) capable of being repeated or multiply instantiated.”

explains,³⁸⁸ that it does not in itself impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals with that nature (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95). A sufficient indication of Fness's aptness to be one in many is that if there were—even *per impossibile*—another distinct F substance in addition to this F substance, then there would be one and the same Fness in each. The universal property even with *necessarily* one instance (phoenixness for Boethius and Porphyry and sunness for Aristotle and Alexander) is still a universal, then, because it is the sort of thing with the disposition to be wholly repeated, a disposition apparent when put in certain counterfactual scenarios—even impossible ones.³⁸⁹ For example, even though for Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias it is impossible, both physically and metaphysically, for there to be another sun, sunness is still a universal. Sunness is still a universal because, and as is evident by the fact that a definition (which is of the universal) is always in principle applicable to many individuals, were there another sun it would instantiate one and the same sunness nature undivided in each.³⁹⁰

Here are Aristotle's words.

[I]f something else of this sort comes to be, clearly it will be sun; the definition (*logos*) is therefore common [(*koinon*) nevertheless].³⁹¹

[D]efinition is of the universal . . . since particulars cannot be defined.³⁹²

[T]he universal is something common (*koinon*).³⁹³

³⁸⁸ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

³⁸⁹ See Alexander of Aphrodisias 1992, 1.3.8; Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 15, 1040a27-b4 in light of 1040a9-17; see Adamson 2013, 337; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 18; Scaltsas 1994, 92-93; Erismann 2011, 77n7; Resnick 1997, 362; Sirkel 2010, 103-104; Swoyer and Francesco 2011.

³⁹⁰ See Adamson 2013, 338-339; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 18; Sirkel 2010, 103-104.

³⁹¹ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 1040b.

³⁹² Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 1036a28-29 and 1040a8.

³⁹³ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 13 1038b.

This is what we would expect, at least from one perspective. For, according to Aristotle, (1) knowledge and definition is always of the universal³⁹⁴ and yet (2) the sun, which is necessarily one of a kind, is a possible object of knowledge and definition. Some might take Aristotle's demand that knowledge be of the universal, on the one hand, and that the sun is knowable even though it is necessarily unique, on the other hand, as an indication that Aristotle's system is contradictory on the matter.³⁹⁵ But the key to dispelling this tension is seeing that sunness is universal even though it has only one instance.

Porphyry seconds this view of Aristotle and Alexander (and others such as Simplicius) in his discussion of phoenixness, which like sunness is a universal that necessarily has, as the common tale goes, only one instantiation.

Q. You also gave the species as predicated of several enumerable things. Does this hold in general?

A. No, only for the most part. The bird species phoenix is not said to belong to several things.³⁹⁶

In Proclus's commentary on Porphyry, we see that Porphyry held the same concerning sunness, which again is a universal with only one instance (or as Simplicius, in his own commentary on Porphyry, describes it, a universal that—despite its in-principle aptitude to be one and undivided in many—is “allocated” merely once over).³⁹⁷

So why, [Porphyry] asks, are there not also many suns and moons? . . . Because, he replies, monadicity is proper to imperishable things just as to the cosmos . . . whereas plurality [is proper] to perishable things. [I]f it were not the case that many

³⁹⁴ *Metaphysics* M 10 1087a10-11; B 6 1003a15-17; see *Posterior Analytics* A 8, A 24 86a29, A 31 87b29-38, B 12 97b28-31); *Metaphysics* A 1 981a12-28.

³⁹⁵ See Brakas 1988, 108; Leszl 1972, 294.

³⁹⁶ Porphyry 1992, 58n94 and 82; see Adamson 2013, 345.

³⁹⁷ See Adamson 2013, 347.

participated the same *logos*, and there was just one [of them], the species [to *eidos*] would cease to exist once that [individual] perished.³⁹⁸

Adamson nicely describes Aristotle's view on the unique instantiation of certain universals like sunness and how their *necessarily* having only one instance does not thereby make them nonuniversals.

[I]n the case of something like the sun, the universal appears to collapse into the particular. But Aristotle resists this, by arguing that any definition of the sun . . . could [at least] in principle apply to other [individuals] with the same features. The fact that there are no other such [individuals] does not prevent the definition from being "common" (*koinos*). . . . An analogy may be helpful: imagine a government's passing a law which is in principle generally applicable, but in fact affects only one person. The lawmakers need not even have known how many citizens would be affected. If the law turns out to apply only to one citizen, this might seem unjust. But it could still be a law, not a mere *ad hoc* stipulation about how the one affected citizen is to be treated—and this precisely because it would apply to other citizens if their circumstances changed to bring them under the law's remit. However, in the present case things are a bit more difficult. Aristotle is committed not just to the uniqueness of the sun, but to the necessary uniqueness of the sun. The sun is eternal, and it is eternally the case that there are no other suns. Since Aristotle notoriously holds that eternal truths are necessary truths, the thought experiment he entertains here is in fact an impossible counterfactual. For he is claiming that if other objects like the sun were to exist, then the definition of the universal "sun" would apply to them; but it is impossible for there to be other objects like the sun.³⁹⁹

There is, then, a litmus test, as it were, for the universal's characteristic aptitude to be one in many. First you posit, even if *per impossibile*, an F substance that is distinct

³⁹⁸ Proclus 2008, I.440; see Adamson 2013, 349-350.

³⁹⁹ Adamson 2013, 337-338. I do not want to get too bogged down in the history of the issue of unique instantiation, but the following consideration concerning the difference between Aristotle and Alexander, on the one hand, and Plotinus and Porphyry, on the other hand, has some relevance to what I am now explaining about Spinoza. Aristotle and Alexander take it to be the *ideal* case for universals to have many instantiations, that is, to be *actually* in common among many. Plotinus and Porphyry, in contrast, take one of a kind instantiation—especially that of necessary one of a kind instantiation—to be the ideal case. The multiple instantiation seen widely throughout the sublunary realm indicates imperfection for them. The most perfect universals are those instantiated only once, as in the case of heavenly bodies like the sun (Adamson 2013; Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 18). This latter view has its roots in Plato, for whom it is allowed that the forms, which are often considered to be universals, need not be instantiated many times over in order to be. Certain forms, despite being universals, might have just their one "instantiation" in the eternal heaven, which of course is the place of perfection.

from this F substance. Next you ask yourself whether there is one and the same Fness in each rather than a numerically distinct Fness in each. If there is one and the same Fness in each, then the Fness of the substance with which you started out is a universal.⁴⁰⁰

When we look to Spinoza's moves at 1p5d and 1p14d, it is clear that he holds that if there were, *per impossibile*, another F substance besides God, then the Fness in both God and the other substance would be one and the same (see also 2p49s II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18, 4p4d II/213/15-19). According to the standard story passed down from Aristotle throughout the centuries, holding this is enough to be giving a realist analysis of God's having Fness. Lest we welcome dialethias of the sort where a nonuniversal is a universal, there is good reason why this is the standard story. That Spinoza holds this, then, corroborates my case against the interpretation that Spinoza gives an antirealist analysis of substances having attributes. It is a direct version of the *reductio* argument that I have presented through several "takes." Now, moreover, we have an account of what it means to say that Spinoza positively gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes. That is to say, now we understand how an attribute is a universal even though it is impossible for an attribute to be exemplified by more than one substance.

⁴⁰⁰ But see Yukio 1992, 66; Resnick 1997, 365.—That is the beauty of *per impossibile* reasoning: it uses a hyper-idealized scenario to elucidate something about the real state of affairs (Rescher 2005, 133). Thus we have, for example, François Fénelon appealing to it in the *Maxims of the Saints* as a test of genuine disinterested love: "the person who disinterestedly loves God does so even if he should somehow know (*per impossibile*) that he is to be eternally damned" (Riley 1996, 145).

* * *

It may seem strange, no doubt, to say that x has a certain aptitude for being G when it is impossible that x ever could be G. But we might recall Spinoza's frequent talk of the aptitude that finite things have in themselves. Spinoza frequently discusses how a body is apt to act and suffer actions, and how it is able to be affected in many ways, given its intrinsic structure (2p13s, 3post1)—a structure that is a positivity rather than a Saussurean-Nagarjuna negativity since a thing is what it “is and can do, *not what it is not and cannot do*” (3p54; see TdIE 101; 1p8s2). A thing “*insofar as it is in itself*” (3p6), that is, considering the laws of its nature alone (see 1d7, 3p2s, 3p56d, 4d8, 4p2d, 4p18s, 4p19, 4p24, 4p35, 4p37s2; CM 2.4 I/256), may be apt to do a great number of things. Indeed, a thing's excellence is directly proportional to the number of activities for which, given its intrinsic structure, it is apt (5p39; see 1p35); the greater number of things it is able to do “insofar as it is in itself” the more excellent it is “insofar as it is in itself.” Nevertheless, when considered as imbedded in “the common order of nature” (2p29s, 2p30d, 4p4c), that is, when understood in the context of the grand scheme of things (1d7, 1p28, 3p56d; Ep. 58), many of the activities that a thing's positive structure permits, that is, many of the things for which something is intrinsically apt, will never get the chance, as it were, to be put on display. That impossibility does not mean, however, that x is not really apt for those things. For if, by an impossible supposition,

things—the common order of nature—had been otherwise, different aptitudes of x might very well be on display.⁴⁰¹

Someone might argue that in the very process of making the preceding remarks I have inadvertently resuscitated the deconstruction reading. For unlike *finite* things, which because of circumstances that pertain external to them are not allowed to act upon certain of their intrinsic aptitudes, in the case of an *attribute* there is *nothing* external imposing any constraint. Thus the grounds for the impossibility of an attribute's being instantiated in more than one substance is *internal* to the attribute. In this case, an attribute is not apt to be one in many. That is to say, it is a nonuniversal. So it is perhaps best to say, so one might conclude, that Spinoza reaches a conclusion that contradicts the very ontology subtending that conclusion—or, to put it in the less censorious way that I once used to in my first years of thinking about this problem, that Spinoza climbs the ladder of realism only to throw it aside (and thus embrace antirealism) once he reached up to his goal of substance monism.

However appealing such a ladder-view may sound, I eventually abandoned it for the reason that attributes cannot be nonuniversals even when the goal of substance monism has been reached. For even from this height it is still the case that if there were another substance with the same attribute, there would be, according to Spinoza, one and the same attribute in each (which is precisely what the view that says that attributes are nonuniversals denies). What, then, could be my response to the above objection that I

⁴⁰¹ See Appuhn 1964, 3:31, 59-60; Deleuze 1992, 93, 363n26; Della Rocca 2012, 57; Gueroult 1968, 387-389; Gueroult 1974, 43-44, 49-50; Matheron 1969, 50; Viljanen 2011, 63, 81, 148.

have inadvertently resuscitated the deconstruction reading? In line with Spinoza's two approaches to establishing that there cannot be two or more substances of the same attribute (1p5 and 1p8s2), I can take two approaches in my response.

Here is the first. An attribute's aptitude to be one in many is involved in its being impossible for that attribute to be instantiated in more than one substance. The impossibility of an attribute's being instantiated in more than one substance is guaranteed by this aptitude plus other bedrock facts. One such fact is that an attribute is prior in nature to its modes, in which case the distinction between two substances of the same attributes could not be grounded in their mode differences (however radical those mode differences) (see 1p5d). Another such fact is that substances are not in any way in excess to the totality of their attributes, in which case the distinction between two substances of the same attributes could not be grounded in their having different substrata. The impossibility of an attribute's being instantiated in more than one substance, then, does not entail that a given attribute is not apt to be one in many.

Here is the second avenue for response. An attribute is a nature (1p5). A nature in itself does not impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals with that nature: considered in abstraction, it could be instantiated infinitely many times or twenty times—and yes, even just one time (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; TdIE 95). As Fonseca explains,⁴⁰² this is just what a universal's characteristic aptness to be one in many amounts to. Nonuniversal properties, however, do impose such a restriction. According to Spinoza, only a cause external to a given nature can explain why there are multiple instantiations

⁴⁰² Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

of that nature, that is, why there are *many* individuals of one and the same nature (1p8s2 II/51). It is precisely because each self-sufficient attribute cannot be influenced by anything external to itself that there cannot be multiple instantiations of that attribute. *Lack* of external cause makes the multiple instantiation impossible. *Lack*. Not the nature of the attribute itself. For it remains true that an attribute in itself, like all natures for Spinoza, does not impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals with that nature, which in fact is just what a universal's characteristic aptness to be one in many amounts to. A given attribute is not instantiated in more than one substance because there is nothing beyond that substance to explain it being instantiated in more than one substance.

These last comments provide me with an opportunity to be frank about something. I do not merely think that the divine attributes are universals for Spinoza. That is an important conclusion and is what at minimum I want to show here in this chapter. But I think that an even stronger conclusion should be drawn. In light of Spinoza's historically-standard and sufficiently broad construal of universals as that which is said equally whether of one or many (that which is apt to be one in many), I take it that Spinoza actually understands—at least at some level to be brought out into full awareness given the right occasion—that each attribute is a universal.

(Premise 1) An attribute is a nature for Spinoza (see 1p5, 1p8s2).

(Premise 2) A nature in itself, as Spinoza says, does not impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals with that nature (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95).

(That a universal does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that

nature is the key motivation for Aristotle's claim that "definition is of the universal,"⁴⁰³ the other motivations being two views that Spinoza explicitly endorses at 1p8s2: (a) that the definition of a thing refers to the nature of a thing and (b) that the nature of a thing imposes no restriction on the number of individuals with that nature.)

(Premise 3) That which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many individuals, which is precisely Spinoza's construal of a universal at 2p49s, is that which does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals that instantiate it.—This is rather clear in itself. It is also entailed by the fact that (1) that which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many is a nature (2p49s) and (2) a nature does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95).

(Conclusion) Spinoza therefore construes each nature and thus each attribute as a universal.

These considerations aside, one may insist, as Schwegler does, that since determination is negation, "positive designations," such as universal or particular, "would only reduce substance to something finite" or—less hyperbolically stated—something less than *absolutely* infinite.⁴⁰⁴ I already expressed that there are bounds to how far we should take Spinoza's infamous dictum. Substance is absolute and you do not want to limit it in any *possible* way, no doubt. But you also do not want to police

⁴⁰³ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 1036a28-29 and 1040a8.

⁴⁰⁴ Schwegler 1909, xvii; see Klercke 2005, 218.

against limitation so hard that you welcome contradiction within the divine nature.⁴⁰⁵

Perhaps this is why Spinoza merely says (see Ep. 50) “determination is negation” (*determinatio negatio est*) and not “all determination is negation” (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), as Hegel—apparently himself a committed dialetheist⁴⁰⁶—transformed the slogan in his 1816 review of Jacobi’s *Werke*.⁴⁰⁷

Perhaps I am wrong about this. Perhaps I am guilty of diluting Spinoza’s true radicality. In light of the multifarious case that I have built, I do not see how. But even if I am wrong in all my attempts to undermine the deconstruction-dialetheism interpretation, my case at least for the fact that the attributes are universals seems to hold regardless. For if the divine attributes are both universal and nonuniversal (and perhaps thereby neither universal nor nonuniversal⁴⁰⁸), it is still true that the attributes are

⁴⁰⁵ See Deborin 1952, 109; Della Rocca 2002; Lin 2006a, sect. 6; Luppol 1935, 74.

⁴⁰⁶ See Priest 2007, 3.4.

⁴⁰⁷ Despite wrongly attributing the term “omnis” to Spinoza, Deborin makes the point well that we should not take the slogan as so encompassing that the divine nature has mutually incompatible characteristics.

Spinoza’s well-known proposition, “omnis determinatio est negatio” . . . is usually interpreted in the sense that every definition (logical determination) is a negation. But this does not correspond to the actual meaning which Spinoza put into this proposition. (Deborin 1952, 109)

Hegel himself did not interpret the phrase so broadly that it could welcome contradiction into the divine nature of Spinoza’s God, at least as far as the universal-nonuniversal dichotomy is concerned. In Hegel’s view, in fact, the phrase entails that only God in his universal absolute nature exists, such that individuals like me are illusory, and there is no indication that Hegel also thinks that this view entails that the nature in question is at the same time nonuniversal.

With regard to the determinate, Spinoza established this thesis: *omnis determinatio est negatio* [all determination is negation]. Hence, only the non-particularized or the universal is. It alone is what is substantial and therefore truly actual. As a singular thing, the soul or the mind is something limited. It is by negation that a singular thing is. (Hegel 1995, 3.154)

⁴⁰⁸ Note that according to the Buddhist principle of *catuskoti*, there are four possibilities for a statement: true, false, both true and false, and neither true nor false. There seems to be no implication here that if a statement is both true and false that it is thereby neither true nor false.

universal. (It is just that they are also nonuniversal, and so perhaps thereby neither universal nor nonuniversal.)⁴⁰⁹

Now, if we attend to the thought of Nagarjuna in *Mulamadhyamakakarika* (*The Middle Verse Stanzas*), we see that there is not only the traditional Buddhist four possibilities regarding a statement (true, false, both true and false, and neither true nor false), but indeed a *fifth* option: *ineffability*, which is when none of the four other options applies. Hard as it is to keep apart from the deconstruction-dialethia option, that may very well be the case. Those who understand Spinoza's God to be "formless," which is how Conz and Grapo among others seem to see things,⁴¹⁰ insinuate such an interpretation. Cushman and Wolfson do more than insinuate, as the following remarks make clear.

Spinoza's God is the most abstract unity which it is possible to conceive. . . . [T]o define him is to limit Him. . . . The barrenness of this logical conception, its absolute emptiness and abstractness, makes all description of it impossible.⁴¹¹

The God or substance of Spinoza, like the God of medieval rationalists, is unknowable in his essence.⁴¹²

But even if we go with this ineffability option, then I should still be right. After all, the usual practice of those who say that the divine nature is ineffable, indescribable, indefinable, is to go ahead and make descriptions of that nature, all sorts of descriptions

⁴⁰⁹ That is one reason why the deconstruction interpretation has so much charm, at least for those like myself oriented towards reconciliation: everyone is right. And there are other reasons as well. The deconstruction interpretation would bring Spinoza closer, for example, to Plotinus, with whom he already has a lot in common (denial of creation ex nihilo, endorsement of degrees of reality, acceptance of necessitarianism, belief in the Absolute One that is the source of everything).

⁴¹⁰ Conz 1787, 64; Grapo 1719, 1.62f.; Windelband 1901, 408-410.

⁴¹¹ Cushman 1919, 113.

⁴¹² Wolfson 1923, 165.

that they believe are right. Cushman himself, for example, proceeds to describe Spinoza's God as "a bloodless entity, an absolute logical necessity and the most abstract universal."⁴¹³ If this is the usual practice, then I should still be allowed to say that the divine nature is a universal. I would still be right because to describe the divine nature as a universal is, in Spinoza's case, to describe it rightly. Nevertheless, I think that, in addition to Spinoza's commitment (a) to each statement's being one of either true or false and (b) to the view that the divine nature is completely understood and definable, my arguments suffice for ruling out the ineffability option. But we all have our blind spots.

5.7 Concluding remarks

Rice, perhaps the most vocal living proponent of the antirealist interpretation of Spinoza, states that the only evidence for Spinoza's being a realist is to be found in merely a few scattered remarks on human nature.⁴¹⁴ From what I have argued here in Chapter V from several angles and in multiple passes, which is that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes, Rice is mistaken. Human nature pertains to the realm of modes and I have not yet even entered into discussion about realism when it comes to the modes. That discussion will come in Part 3.

Considering the entirety of Part 2, we know the following about Spinoza's God. God is nothing but the totality of its self-sufficient universal attributes, attributes that are merely formally distinct from one another. That God is a bundle of its attributes, which

⁴¹³ Cushman 1919, 113.

⁴¹⁴ Rice 1991, 293.

was the central point of Chapter IV, holds even though God is simple and indivisible. That the attributes are universals (and indeed that Spinoza at some level understands this), which was the central point of Chapter V, holds even though it is impossible for an attribute to be instantiated in more than one substance.

Since God is the sum of its attributes, and since “a sum is of the same type with its [logical] terms,”⁴¹⁵ God itself is a universal. This is one reason why Spinoza is right to call his God a “universal being” (KV 1.2 I/24/nf; TP 2.22).⁴¹⁶ And this is why Mackinnon is right, more right than she may even know, to make the following observation.

Substance, in Spinoza’s usage, corresponds accurately to the Supreme Universal, as conceived by the medieval realist.⁴¹⁷

God, so we might say in accordance with contemporary terminology, is therefore a special sort of “structural universal,” where a structural universal is a property that is the compresence of its component properties, properties that “come together” or “join” (*competunt*) (see 1p9; see Chapter IX).⁴¹⁸ In particular, God is the structural universal that is the compresence or, in Joachim’s words, “togetherness”⁴¹⁹ of its attributes, attributes that are inseparable despite being objectively different and on ontological even-footing. I call the structural universal that is God “special” because, as a result of

⁴¹⁵ Williams 1966, 81.

⁴¹⁶ See Fullerton 1899, 45; Mackinnon 1924, 354; Wolfson 1934, 152-153.

⁴¹⁷ Mackinnon 1924, 354.

⁴¹⁸ As is well known, saying that God is, in effect, a nature is frequently rejected in the literature. Woolhouse puts the point forcefully.

It would not, however, be quite correct to say that Spinoza’s extended substance or God actually is a nature or essence. It is rather . . . that it is what supports natures or essences, or where they are located. (1993, 49)

⁴¹⁹ Joachim 1901, 104.

its attributes being in effect merely formally distinct, God's having "components" is compatible with his simplicity unlike, and as I will explain in detail in Part 3, the usual sorts of structural universals discussed in the contemporary analytic literature on properties: structural universals like *methane*.

CHAPTER VI

(PART 3. MODES): SPINOZA'S REALIST ANALYSIS OF

MODES HAVING PROPERTIES IN COMMON

6.1 Introductory remarks

Part 2 of this project concerned the status of universals at the level of substances. There I argued that Spinoza endorses a bundle-of-universals analysis of substances having attributes. Part 3 now enters into the domain of modes, the realm of *natura naturata* (see 1p29s).⁴²⁰ Della Rocca describes the central debate of Part 3 in easy to understand terms.

One debate about the status of modes is whether they are to be seen as universals or as particulars. An example will help bring out this distinction. When we say that a table[-mode] is round, we are calling attention to a mode of the table[-mode]. But is this [roundness] mode something that not only this particular table has, but also any number of other things may also have? [In different words, would the roundness of this table and the roundness of some other individual] be numerically distinct even if they are intrinsically exactly alike[, as for example the trope theorist says? Or would they be strictly identical, as the realist says?]

The common view is that Spinoza rejects every universal property whatsoever at the level of modes, even those that would seem to be entailed by his frequent talk of modes having properties in common and modes agreeing in essence. I see things otherwise.

⁴²⁰ Della Rocca 2008, 60. Some readers may not be content with my characterization of the realm of modes as the realm of *natura naturata* since modes themselves have causal efficacy. I agree that modes do have causal efficacy and are thus in some sense not just natured (*naturata*) but naturing (*naturans*). I simply follow (a) the orthodox view and (b) what Spinoza, in fact, unequivocally says (1p29s II/71/5-17, 1p31, 1p31d; Ep. 9 IV/45/31-33; KV 1.8, KV 1.9.1). Despite all this evidence, one may still disagree with my easy identification of modes with *natura naturata*. In particular, one may want to say that considering modes as *natura naturata* is just a special way of considering modes, as is indicated by Spinoza's phrase "insofar as they are considered" in 1p29s. If one insists that I am wrong (despite the evidence to the contrary, see Woolhouse 1993, 49-50), then simply replace my talk of "the realm of *natura naturata*" with "the realm of modes."

Chapter VI, the first chapter of Part 3, argues that Spinoza endorses a realist analysis of modes having properties in common. This is indicated especially by the following passages: 1p17s, 1p8s2, 2p10s, 2p37-2p40, 4p30. Chapter VII, the final chapter of Part 3, argues that Spinoza endorses a realist analysis of modes having *any property whatsoever*. Indeed, it argues that Spinoza regards each mode as a universal.

6.2 Victory does not come so easy

One might be enticed to reject the antirealist interpretation of Spinoza in light of the fact that Spinoza repeatedly suggests the reality of objective kind divisions in nature (see 1p8s2, 1p17s, 3pref, 3d2, 3p9s, 3p32s, 3p42s, 3p51s, 3p57s, 3def 1e and 29e of the affects, 4pref, 4d4, 4d8, 4p2, 4p3, 4p5, 4p15, 4p17s, 4p18, 4p18s, 4p19, 4p20, 4p21, 4p23, 4p29, 4p30, 4p31, 4p33, 4p35, 4p36s, 4p37s1, 4p59, 4p61, 4p64, 4p68s, 4app1,2,6,7, 5p4s, 5p39). It is presumed, albeit mistakenly (and by many realist and antirealist interpreters alike), that there can be objective kind divisions in nature, say between one biological species and another, only if there is literally one and the same thing in common between all and only members of each kind. Many in fact simply define realism as the view that allows for the possibility of objective kind divisions⁴²¹ and saddle antirealism with the view, which some see in Gorgias and Hobbes, that such divisions are arbitrary (see APPENDIX A).⁴²²

It is well known that the objects we encounter can be grouped or classified in many distinct ways. In fact, they are classified in different cultures in ways significantly non-isomorphic to one another. The nominalist takes this as evidence that classification is an essentially arbitrary device, imposed by its human beings upon

⁴²¹ See MacDonald 2009, 60.

⁴²² See Bonazzi 2013; Geisler 1999, entry on “Nominalism.”

the world so as to enable them better to satisfy the particular and varying purposes of their interaction with it.⁴²³

[N]ominalism opposes realism, which is the thesis that the signification of a word is defined in relation to an extramental universal or some other sort of metaphysically existing anchor.⁴²⁴

Some commentators find it puzzling that Spinoza can suggest the reality of objective kind divisions, and can talk all the time about individuals having features in common, agreeing in essence, sharing the same property, and so on, when he is supposed to be an antirealist concerning universals.⁴²⁵ Haserot, for example, suggests that the antirealist reading of Spinoza is a nonstarter given Spinoza's repeated endorsement of common properties.

[T]o hold that Spinoza is a nominalist . . . is to deny that [his] common properties [(see, for example, 2p7-2p39)] are universals; but this is scarcely intelligible. The one thing that the nominalist rejects is the notion of common properties.⁴²⁶

The same thought is found in Fullerton, the other major realist interpreter of Spinoza.

If the objects to be classed really have something in common, then that which they have in common is a universal element.⁴²⁷

Indeed, even Spinoza's mere talk of individuals being *similar* in nature—similar not just “in name” but “in reality” (CM 1.1 I/234/6-7)—may incite one to regard Spinoza as a realist. For in Spinoza's time, just as much as in ours, it is not strange to find realism described as simply the view that items can agree or be similar in nature.⁴²⁸ Since realists understand similarity between individuals as involving at least some core

⁴²³ Fales 1990, 155.

⁴²⁴ Hull 2007, 202-203.

⁴²⁵ See Braicovich 2008, 136n77, 138-139; Curley 1985, 454n21; Di Vona 1960, 160-161; Haserot 1950.

⁴²⁶ Haserot 1950, 470.

⁴²⁷ Fullerton 1894, 231; Fullerton 1899, 31.

⁴²⁸ See Hobhouse 1918, 50; Ross 1962, 738.

of strict identity between those individuals, the unstated assumption in such formulations of realism is, of course, (1) that the core of similarity between individuals is indiscernibility—exact similarity—between individuals and (2) that indiscernibility implies identity. The unstated assumption is, in short, what the antirealist regards as an abomination: that when multiple things agree, or are similar, they are strictly identical in the respects in which they are similar.

It is understandable, for various other related reasons, that one would take Spinoza's talk of objective kind divisions, properties shared by multiple individuals, perfect agreement in nature among many, general essences in common between members of a diversity, and the like as indicating endorsement of realism. For one, Spinoza himself at one point describes the belief in universals as the belief according to which individuals are allowed to agree or be similar in nature (KV 1.6 I/43). Second, antirealism often gets reduced merely into its *nonconstituent* forms, such that any admission of things having ontologically authentic properties at all is taken to be an admission of realism.⁴²⁹ This is why realism is frequently described simply as the view that there are natures or properties. The assumption is (and one that Muehlmann takes to be evident in the thought of Berkeley, for example)⁴³⁰ that Fness is a property, nature, or the like only if it is apt to be one in many. The assumption is, in different words, that it makes no sense to regard properties, natures, and the like as anything else but universals (which begs the question, of course, against the constituent form—the trope form—of

⁴²⁹ See Muehlmann 1992, 49; Parkinson 1974, 28; Haserot 1950, 470-484; Wolfson 1934, 148; Wolfson 1937b, 310-311.

⁴³⁰ Muehlmann 1992, 49.

antirealism).⁴³¹ Third, and more specifically, antirealism often gets reduced merely to its *subjectivist* nonconstituent forms (particularly that of its archetypical and father form: predicate nominalism), such that any admission of *objective* similarity, agreements, likenesses, kinds, and so on is taken to be an admission of realism.⁴³² Fourth, universals—entities apt to be one in many—are sometimes simply described as common properties or general natures,⁴³³ such that any admission of common properties or general natures is taken to be an admission of realism. Thus we find Hansen and Connee describing antirealism as the view that items cannot share any *common* nature.⁴³⁴ Thus we find Aristotle, Hobbes, and Bradley understanding the universal as that which is apt to be held in *common*.⁴³⁵ Thus we find early modern commentators such as Bolton describing the problem of universals as concerned with the question as to how it makes sense to say that something can be *common* to many.⁴³⁶ And so on.

In contrast to what some interpreters of Spinoza think, however, we cannot just assume that Spinoza is sincere about there being *genuine* kind divisions, *objective* sharing of common properties, *agreement* not only in name but also *in reality*, and the

⁴³¹ See Callaghan 2001, 37; Cross 2005, 109; Bennett 1984, 39 and 302; Geisler 1999, entries on “Nominalism” and “Plato’s Metaphysics.”

⁴³² See Anderson and Groff 1998, 177; Burns 1914, 78; Connee and Sider 2005, 177; Fales 1990, 155; MacDonald 2009, 60.

⁴³³ Wallace 1981, 36; Thiel 2011; Jordan 1963, ch. 24; Swoyer and Francesco 2011; see Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* I, 3 644a 26-28; *Metaphysics* VII, 13, 1038b 8-12; *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 6, 1096a 23-29; Keckermann 1602; Fonseca 1591; Di Bella 2005, 38; Reid 1850, 5.3

⁴³⁴ Hansen 1985, 106; Connee and Sider 2005, 177.

⁴³⁵ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1038b 10-11; Hobbes 1994a, ch. 5.6; Bradley 1927, 171.

⁴³⁶ Bolton 1998, 178.

like only if he is committed to realism (identity-theory). As both Rice⁴³⁷ and Jordan⁴³⁸ point out against those interpreters under the mistaken impression that Spinoza is an antirealist only if he disallows objective similarity in nature, there is room to say that a thinker can be sincere about individuals agreeing entirely in essence, having properties in common, sharing the same nature, and so on without being committed to an ontology involving universals. Suárez makes this very point. Although some “speak otherwise,” Suárez says, the antirealist need not eschew the possibility of these individuals over here having other individuals objectively “like them.”⁴³⁹ Each member of a given kind division does not have to be *identical* in some respect to belong to a certain division in

⁴³⁷ Rice makes this especially clear in his criticism of Steinberg.

Steinberg argues that a nominalistic reading of 4p30 would invalidate the demonstration thereof. Her argument in fact takes nominalism as conventionalism; so that, without a real objective underlying and identical nature, the similarity predicated of all humans would rest upon an arbitrary convention. Her claim is certainly not true for [other] versions of nominalism. . . . [O]ne can be a nominalist and still argue that claims about similarity are not merely verbal [and yet not grounded in a real objective underlying and identical nature]. (Rice 1991, 303; see Feibleman 1951b, 387)

⁴³⁸ Jordan suggests that those who take a realist reading of Spinoza have been motivated to do so by the mistaken assumption that antirealism disallows objective similarities or agreements.

It cannot be denied that the nominalism of Hobbes, Spinoza, Helvetius, Feuerbach, and of all pre-Marxian materialist thinkers constituted an integral part of the materialist conceptual framework. . . . It is true that a nominalist denies that a general word is a proper name for what is called ‘common property’ or, more generally, ‘common character’ [(understood in the realist’s sense)], for unlike an Aristotelian realist he does not believe that things have common, i.e. *identical* characters. But he does not deny that things can be grouped together or classified according to their *similarity* or *resemblance*. The nominalist asserts that similarities are empirically given and that he does not need the universal of similarity in order to be able to recognize a resemblance when he observes it. When a predicate ‘ ϕ ’ is ascribed to two or more objects, we do not say the *same* thing but *similar* things about them; this also applies to the sentences, in which the predicate ‘ ϕ ’ occurs. Consequently, he is not committed to the view that similarity is a ‘true universal’, which cannot be dispensed with—this is Bertrand Russell’s opinion—or that things have a common property [(understood in the realist’s sense)], something that[,] being the *same*[,] is simultaneously here and there. According to his logic, the Identity theory [(that is, realism concerning universals)] is self-contradictory. A nominalist would insist that no property can belong to two different individuals and that every property is a particular property of one and only one individual. The fact that properties are as much particular as individuals is not incompatible with their being *similar* as a matter of fact. (my emphasis Jordan 1963, ch. 24)

⁴³⁹ Suárez MD 6.5.3.

truth. *Similarity, resemblance, agreement* between individuals as they are in themselves need not involve any *strict identity* between those individuals.

We cannot simply assume that each of the items that Spinoza describes as agreeing—even *perfectly*—in nature or as having the same property need to be one and the same in any respect whatsoever. Without any additional facts to say otherwise, it could just be, and in accordance with for example the *trope* account,⁴⁴⁰ that each member of a given kind division is not identical in any respect. Without any additional facts to say otherwise, it could just be that each of the individuals said to share a property, or said to have a common nature, or so on merely have distinct—even if inherently indiscernible—properties, natures, or so on.⁴⁴¹ As Suárez, perhaps one of Spinoza’s “most important medieval source[s],”⁴⁴² articulates the worldview of those antirealists who allow for objective similarity in the first place, there is simply similarity all the way down; the repugnant strict identities of the realist are forever analyzed away into nothing more innocuous than mere similarities.⁴⁴³

For there is nothing both one and in fact undivided in reality in this and in that human nature [(as the realists say)]; but there is merely in this, something to which something is *similar* in that other nature. Yet this is not real unity, but *similarity*. In this sense only, several things can be said to be of the same nature *a parte rei*, that is, of similar nature: for this [“]identity[”], since it is said to obtain among distinct things, cannot be anything in reality other than a similarity.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ See Keinänen forthcoming.

⁴⁴¹ See Locke 1959, 3.3.12; Ockham *Ordinatio* 1.2.6.

⁴⁴² Lennon 2005, 27. See Doyle 1998, 194-195; Gracia 1998, 461.

⁴⁴³ One thing should be kept in mind, if I am to speak strictly. Odd as it may sound, and unusual no doubt as it is, one can be a realist and hold that between things in the actual world there really is no level of identity. Each universal property, for example, could be such that there is only one instance of it. But it would still be a universal in light of the litmus test described in Chapter V.

⁴⁴⁴ My emphasis Suárez MD 6.2.13.

The nature is not common with respect to a reality but with respect to a notion or a basic similarity.⁴⁴⁵

There is in things a certain similarity in their formal unities, on which the community which the intellect can attribute to such a nature as conceived by it, is based; this similarity is not properly unity since it does not imply the undividedness of the entities on which it is based but merely implies their agreement.⁴⁴⁶

[“Universals”] are grounded in the things themselves, not insofar as the nature has any universality in the things, but insofar as there is in the individuals themselves agreement and similarity in essence and its properties.⁴⁴⁷

Once the possibility of similarity-all-the-way-down is admitted, it becomes clear that realist interpreters of Spinoza are not entitled to claim, to use just one example from Haserot,⁴⁴⁸ that only realism can justify Spinoza’s belief in certain facts that, given human nature, necessarily apply to all and only humans. It is not true that only realism can justify Spinoza’s claim that there are certain facts that necessarily apply to all and only humans. Certain facts could necessarily apply to all and only humans merely insofar as each human has its own distinct but intrinsically indiscernible nature, as the trope interpretation permits.

So for all we know going into the matter, mere exact resemblances, not the identities of the realist, could serve to ground Spinoza’s claims of objective kind divisions, shared properties, perfect agreement in nature, and the like. This is perfectly acceptable to the antirealist. After all, the antirealist, in Haserot’s words, is one who “denies any one in the many, any single form in a plurality of instances.”⁴⁴⁹ Denying any

⁴⁴⁵ Suárez MD 6.1.15; see also MD 6.2.1.

⁴⁴⁶ Suárez MD 6.1.12.

⁴⁴⁷ Suárez MD 6.5.3.

⁴⁴⁸ Haserot 1950, 489n27.

⁴⁴⁹ Haserot 1950, 484.

one in many, any single form in a plurality of instances, is perfectly compatible with welcoming objective similarity, so long as that similarity goes all the way down such that at no level is there strict identity.⁴⁵⁰ Hübner, one of the most recent commentators to grapple with the issue of Spinoza and the status of universals, puts the point well.

[T]his language of “agreement” was also standardly used by medieval and early modern nominalists . . . to pick out mere *similarities* that an intellect would recognize among particular things. On this . . . non-realist construal of “agreement”, to say that certain particulars “agree in nature” is just to say that they resemble one another.⁴⁵¹

Hübner herself finds Spinoza to hold this “non-realist” construal of agreement. On her view, to say in Spinoza’s world that items have a property in common, or belong to the same kind, or share an essence, or agree in nature, or so on is to say that those items merely exactly resemble, or resemble to a “maximal” degree.⁴⁵² In line with all antirealist interpreters who allow that, for Spinoza, there is objective similarity and commonality at all (let alone *perfect* or *exact* similarity and commonality), Hübner thus appears to agree with Rice’s interpretation of what it means, in Spinoza’s world, for one thing to be similar to or have something in common with another thing. According to Rice, in Spinoza’s antirealist world “‘x has something in common with y’ = def ‘x is similar to y.’”⁴⁵³ According to Rice, “[t]here is nothing whatsoever in [Spinoza’s system] to suggest that strict identity, or indeed any relation stronger than similarity . . . , is in Spinoza’s mind” when it comes to talk of sameness, commonalities, and

⁴⁵⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange 1936, 39-40n1.

⁴⁵¹ Hübner forthcoming-a; see Hübner 2014, 128.

⁴⁵² Hübner forthcoming-a; see Hübner 2014, 128.

⁴⁵³ Rice 1991, 299.

agreements between multiple individuals.⁴⁵⁴ According to Rice, identity for Spinoza is always but “a matter of degree.”⁴⁵⁵ Hübner is explicit on the matter as well.

On this . . . non-realist construal of “agreement”, to say that certain particulars “agree in nature” is just to say that they resemble one another. . . . [I]t is this non-realist construal of “agreement” as a cognized similarity that puts us on the right track in interpreting Spinoza’s metaphysics.⁴⁵⁶

Newlands, another recent commentator grappling with the issue of Spinoza and the status of universals, has the same sort of understanding about how talk of agreement and sharing and commonality need not be regarded as based in what the realist holds it to be based in: identity. And just as with those commentators who explain away realist-friendly passages in Hobbes by saying that Hobbes is talking about mere similarity between things,⁴⁵⁷ Newlands agrees, along with Rice, Hübner, and others,⁴⁵⁸ that Spinoza’s talk of agreement, sharing, commonality and the like should be understood in the antirealist-friendly way of mere similarity or resemblance.

[Suárez] claims, “there is merely something in this [particular nature] to which something is similar in the other nature; however, this is not real unity but similarity.” . . . In other words, objective similarities [rather than identities] among particulars are that which, in things, ground the content of universal concepts. . . . As we will see, this sort of resemblance-based conceptualism is the position that Spinoza adopts as well. . . . Spinoza . . . uses “agreement” in a thinner sense that does not require literal sharing or multiple instantiation. . . . In short, some of the particular aspects of singular things more exactly resemble aspects of other things, and collections of such similar aspects or things are the basis of universal concepts. . . . In contemporary metaphysics, admitting that the content of universals rests [merely] on objective similarities . . . commits Spinoza to a *nominalist* position. . . . [Spinoza does seem] to admit that things have “common” or shared properties. [But]

⁴⁵⁴ Rice 1991, 301.

⁴⁵⁵ Rice 1975, 210; see Barbone 1997, 26n62, 60, 84, 146, 150, 159.

⁴⁵⁶ Hübner forthcoming-a.

⁴⁵⁷ See Hull 2007, 221n23.

⁴⁵⁸ See Barbone, Rice, and Adler 1995, 206n196; Klever 1993, 65; Matheron 1969, 182.

I claimed in section 1 that the sense of “common” here is consistent with his resemblance nominalism.⁴⁵⁹

Realism often promotes itself as the only view that can allow for genuine unity and systematicity in nature. Since Spinoza is widely accepted as believing in such unity and systematicity, it is not uncommon for many realist interpreters to suggest that Spinoza’s realism is so obvious that it is a waste even to engage antirealist interpreters. Nevertheless, the sheer number of antirealist interpreters warrants engagement. Besides, and as we have seen, there are ways for the antirealist to allow for unity and systematicity in nature. The sort of unity and systematicity will be deflated, less intense. It will not be what Suárez describes as “real unity.” For only realism allows for such “real unity”;⁴⁶⁰ only universal natures, as Swoyer and Francesco explain, are true “unifiers.”⁴⁶¹ But even though the unity and systematicity of the antirealist world is that which involves no strict identity, just similarity (at best, exact similarity), that does not mean that unity and systematicity of “some sort” is ruled out in that world. After all, even if all individuals are *absolutely* nonidentical in every respect, as must be the case in the antirealist world, it is hard not to regard individuals that are nevertheless inherently exactly similar in some respects as being knit, unified, in those respects.

Understanding talk of objective agreement—indeed even *perfect* objective agreement—among things as they are in themselves as but mere *resemblance* or mere *similarity* has long been considered a viable option in the history of philosophy. Wolff,

⁴⁵⁹ Newlands forthcoming-a.

⁴⁶⁰ Suárez MD 6.1.12, MD 6.2.13; see MacDonald and Malcolm 1998, 273-274; Ross 1962; South 2002, 786; Haserot 1950, 470.

⁴⁶¹ Swoyer and Francesco 2011; see Ruja 1938, 282.

for example, says that universals “are what individuals have in common.” He quickly adds, however, that such universalities, such commonalities, are to be understood in the *antirealist* sense: they are nothing but “*similarities* found among individuals.”⁴⁶² We find the same thing in Suárez, as we already saw. In one moment he says that “those natures which we call universal or common are real and truly exist in things themselves.”⁴⁶³ On its own, such a line may have us thinking that Suárez is a realist. But we must remember that, for Suárez, this universality or commonality is to be understood (so at least it seems) as nothing more than similarity.⁴⁶⁴ The same is true of Ockham. Against his “opponents,” and Scotus is whom he has in mind, Ockham denies “that when things really are alike . . . they are alike in one thing.”⁴⁶⁵

Spinoza was aware of this option too, this option of understanding objective agreement among things as they are in themselves as but mere *resemblance* or *similarity*. Not only are such thoughts part of Spinoza’s cultural substance (as Hegel would put it), but Spinoza in particular owned the *Logica Vetust et Nova*.⁴⁶⁶ Here Johannes Clauberg explains that, although a universal is what is common in many, commonality or universality should be understood in the *antirealist* sense, that is, as nothing but similarity—similarity involving no strict identity at any level.⁴⁶⁷ For these reasons, even when Spinoza talks about, and indeed accepts, “*universal* human nature” (my emphasis TTP 4.6) and “human nature *in general*” (my emphasis TP 11.2; Ep. 34;

⁴⁶² My emphasis Wolff 1983, 132-133; see Schönfeld 1998.

⁴⁶³ Suárez MD 6.2.1.

⁴⁶⁴ See Gilson 1952, 101, 106; Peccorini 1974, 654-655.

⁴⁶⁵ See Burns 1914, 90.

⁴⁶⁶ See Servaas van Rooijen 1888, 188; Freudenthal 1899, entry 127.

⁴⁶⁷ Clauberg 1683, 76-77, 351-352, 401; see Di Vona 1960, 158; Lagrée 1989; Robinson 1932, 457.

1p8s2) (see TTP 1.2, TTP 1.18, TTP 3.3, TTP 3.5, TTP 4.1, TTP 4.6, TTP 4.9, TTP 5.1, TTP 5.7, TTP 5.8, TTP 7.1, TTP 12.11, TTP 16.5, TTP 16.6, TTP 17.1, TTP 19.4, TTP 20.11, TTP 20.14, TTP 1n3; TdIE 13, TdIE 25, TdIE 58, TdIE 108; TP 1.1, TP 1.4, TP 2.5, TP 2.6, TP 2.7, TP 2.8, TP 3.8, TP 3.18, TP 3.22, TP 4.4, TP 6.3, TP 7.2, TP 7.4, TP 9.3, TP 11.2; Ep. 21, Ep. 23, Ep. 30, Ep. 34, Ep. 52, Ep. 73; KV 2pref), we are not entitled simply to assume that he sees the world as a realist, one who analyzes similarities in terms of strict identity. For these reasons, even when Spinoza makes reference to the “universal essence of lines” (DPP 2p15s) or to “corporeal nature in general” (Extension, which he explicitly classifies along with geometrical shapes as a universal: DPP 1prol I/142/33-34), we are not entitled simply to assume that he rejects seeing the world as an antirealist, one who must explain away all suggestions of strict identity.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ These points go overlooked not only among some interpreters of Spinoza but also among students of several thinkers throughout the history of philosophy. Leibniz is a prime example. Whether or not Leibniz really was a realist concerning universals (see APPENDIX A), one is not entitled to say that Leibniz is a realist just because he believes in objective kinds and agreements in the world. But this seems to be what, for example, Smith thinks (2011). Finding that for Leibniz there are true objective kind-divisions, Smith concludes that Leibniz must be a realist, that he must presuppose “a universal kind-membership inhering in the individual biological entities themselves.” As Smith sees it, belief in objective kind-divisions “requires at least the view that there are *universalia in rebus* in the sense often attributed to Aristotle” (2011, 236). Although I tend to agree with the conclusion that Leibniz was a realist, Smith’s argument as stands needs more premises, especially in light of the fact that Leibniz himself suggests, through Theophilus, that kind divisions can be based in mere resemblances (*New Essays* 3.3).

Scotus is another good example. Like Spinoza, Scotus talks all over the place about things having common natures. Humans have a common nature. Triangles have a common nature. This has led a preponderance of commentators—including Ockham (see Burns 1914, 90), Leibniz (see Leibniz A VI.i.16.§17), Coleridge (Coleridge 1853, 300), and Peirce (Anderson and Groff 1998, 166)—to conclude that Scotus is at least an immanent realist concerning universals: universals are realities merely *in* individuals (rather than *prior to* individuals), to use the medieval way of putting it (see Berthelot et. al. 1886-1902a, 1190; Boler 1963; Burns 1914, 77; Fullerton 1894, 235; Mertz 1996, 127; Pini 2005; Wallace 1981, 19; Williams 2013; Wolter 1962; Zerffi 1877, 142). If the case is won that easily (which would be quite a slap in the face to the antirealist interpretation of Spinoza that has remained so orthodox and has been sustained by such a great horde), then I could bring much of this chapter to completion simply by noting Spinoza’s incessant talk of common properties and natures. Nevertheless, and as in the case of Spinoza, even though Scotus does hold that things share common natures, that alone is not sufficient for

My sensitivity to the fact that Spinoza's repeated talk of perfect agreement between things, shared natures, common properties, and so on does not itself entail that he is a realist affords me the chance to make a case for Spinoza's realism that is, in the spirit of my earlier discussion concerning substances having attributes (see Part 2), more definitive than what is found in other realist commentators. It affords me the opportunity to make a case for Spinoza's realism that is convincing to those antirealist interpreters (such as Rice, Newlands, and Hübner) sensitive to the fact that Spinoza's talk of items having features in common, agreeing entirely in nature—indeed, even his talk of items sharing a *universal* nature (see TTP 4.6)—need not entail his commitment to realism.⁴⁶⁹

The question, then, is in what sense do things—in my case in this chapter, *modes*—share common properties, agree entirely in some respects, and so on. In the

making him a realist. There is strong evidence, in fact, that Scotus is not a realist. On some occasions he appears to hold that individuals sharing a common nature each have, in truth, merely *similar* natures. In effect, he would seem to have us paraphrase his talk of things sharing a common nature into talk of their having at best inherently indiscernible but nevertheless numerically distinct natures.

An actual universal is that which . . . can itself, one and the same thing, be directly ascribed to each individual [exemplifying it] . . . by a predication saying “this is this”. . . . Nothing . . . in reality is such that . . . it can be said of each instance that “each is it.” (see Scotus Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 37; Spade 1994, 65-66)

Thacker makes the point well.

In Scotus' terms, the common nature between A and B always points to 'less than numerical' unity between them. (Thacker 2010, 140; see Thilly 1914, 162)

To be sure, Leibniz may very well be right that Scotus is a realist. It may be, as Leibniz says, that Scotian common natures in themselves are not particular, but simply are individuated by some extra ingredient, in which case they are in themselves universals (see Cover and O'Leary-Hawthorne 1999, 34). I am inclined to agree. After all, Scotus also endorses the view that we should not multiply entities beyond necessity (Scotus 1997, 108), and the realist position would seem to honor that more so than the only other antirealist option remaining for someone who allows for natures, essences, properties and the like into their ontology: the trope position (See Thornburn 1918). But as far as I am concerned here, perhaps Leibniz was wrong, as McCullough as well has claimed (McCullough 1996, 52-56). Perhaps natures for Scotus themselves are particulars, tropes.

⁴⁶⁹ Some antirealist interpreters do assume that talk of items having features in common, agreeing entirely in nature, would entail a commitment to realism concerning universals. Thus Barbone, for instance, goes through pains to explain away Spinoza's talk at 4p68s of Adam and Eve's perfect agreement in nature in order to keep Spinoza a consistent antirealist (Barbone 2002, 101).

realist sense, which involves some level of strict identity? Or in the antirealist sense, which rejects any level of strict identity?⁴⁷⁰

6.3 1p17s

6.3.1 Core case

1p17s seems to settle the matter. A passage in this scholium provides powerful evidence that Spinoza thinks like a realist when it comes to modes having properties in common. Having already proven substance monism (1p14) and that everything is in God (1p15), in which case when we are talking about individuals like men we are necessarily talking about modes of God, in 1p17s Spinoza welcomes what no antirealist can welcome: the possibility of strict identity between two individuals.

[Two men] can agree entirely[, that is, coincide absolutely (*prorsus convenire*),] according to their essence. But in [their manner of] existing they must differ. And for that reason, if the existence of one perishes, the other's existence will not thereby perish. But if the essence of one could be destroyed, and become false, the other's essence would also be destroyed. (1p17s II/63/18-24)

In this passage Spinoza appears to admit not only that there are essences that things have (thus ruling out any form of nonconstituent antirealism), but also that there are essences disposed to be instantiated in many (thus ruling out any form of constituent antirealism and, in fact, accepting realism). Spinoza regards these two men as

⁴⁷⁰ In the *Short Treatise* Spinoza appears to reject realism for the reason that it says that items can “agree” in nature (KV 1.6 I/43, KV 1.10 I/49/20ff). The problems that he raises at KV 1.6 I/43/9-15, problems with saying that things can agree in nature, he regards as positioning him away from realism. This would suggest that when Spinoza does admit that things agree in nature, which he does all over the place in his mature work, that he admits universals. There are other places where Spinoza is comfortable with saying that things that agree in some respect are identical in some respect. In Letter 12a Spinoza says that the proposition that the “son of god is the father himself, follows very clearly from this axiom, things which agree with a third thing agree with one another.” Still Spinoza elsewhere uses “agree” to indicate similarity (see CM 1.6 I/246/1) and, in general, this sort of evidence will not convince antirealist interpreters. They could just say, for example, that Spinoza realized in his mature work that things could agree in nature in the *trope* way and not the *realist* way.

numerically identical in respect to their essence, meaning that there is a universal manifested through each of them. In the words of Fullerton, “this essence is a universal; it is the essence of each man in no exclusive sense.”⁴⁷¹

I do not claim that the essence in question in 1p17s is a universal merely because I see Spinoza talking here about multiple items “agreeing entirely” or “coinciding absolutely” in nature. Such talk does insinuate realism generally in the history of philosophy and, more specifically, in light of several passages from Spinoza’s works (see KV 1.6 I/43, KV 1.10 I/49/20ff; CM 1.6 I/246/1). But I aim to honor what I said in the previous warning section: I will not beg the question against the antirealist interpretation by simply assuming—however sober of an assumption it may be—that Spinoza understands perfect agreement in the manner of the realist.

What allows me to know that Spinoza is thinking of perfect agreement in the manner of the realist in 1p17s, is that Spinoza’s very claims in the passage require, so at least it seems, that he takes the perfect agreement in essence between the two men to be that of strict identity. The telltale sign of this is that when the essence of the one man is destroyed, the essence of the other is destroyed.⁴⁷² The destruction of the essence of the one amounts to the destruction of the essence of the other only if, so at least it appears anyway, the essence in question is one and the same in each. If the essence of man1 and the essence of man2 were anything less than strictly identical (say, merely exactly

⁴⁷¹ Fullerton 1899, 59.

⁴⁷² Compare this statement of Spinoza’s with Taylor’s claim that Spinoza is an antirealist (and thus, he says, not a true pantheist) since the essences of two things are always completely different (1972a, 190n4).

similar), then the destruction of the essence of the one would apparently *not* amount to the destruction of the essence of the other.

An interesting historical point, and one that drives home the fact that we do have a universal on our hands in 1p17s, is that Ockham uses almost the same example to show, what he at least sees as, the absurdity of universals. An omnipotent being such as God, Ockham says, should be able to eradicate one man without thereby eradicating all other men—a targeted strike, if you will. But assume, Ockham continues, that in each man there is one and the same essence—one and the same essence in the manner of realism (that is, *per identitatem* rather than *per similitudinem*). On this assumption, all men would perish were God to destroy merely one man. All men would be destroyed if God were to destroy just one man because, so Ockham reasons, to destroy one man is to destroy the *whole* of that man and the essence in question is entirely present in that man, in which case the essence must be destroyed along with the whole. Realism in general is thus absurd, Ockham concludes. For, in principle at least, it allows scenarios where God cannot do what it is absurd to say that he cannot do: destroy simply one member of a kind without destroying the rest of the members. Here is the Ockham passage in question.

[On the supposition that humanity is a universal] it would follow that God would not be able to annihilate one individual substance without destroying the other individuals of the same kind. For, if he were to annihilate one individual, he would destroy the whole that is essentially that individual and, consequently, he would destroy the universal that is in it and in others of the same essence. Other things of the same essence would not remain, for they could not continue to exist without the universal that constitutes a part of them.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷³ Ockham *Opera Philosophica* I, 51.

Whether Spinoza can successfully face such a challenge is not, for my purposes here, what is important about this Ockham passage. What is important is that here Ockham corroborates my claim that the essence referred to in 1p17s is a universal. Since Ockham clearly has no axe to grind on the debate as to whether Spinoza is a realist or an antirealist, and since he is at the same time a major authority for the debate, I take this as powerful corroboration for an already well-supported claim.

Whether Ockham's argument against realism is right is irrelevant for my task. My task is simply to argue that Spinoza is a realist concerning universals when it comes to the level of modes. I want to be as definitive as possible. Most of the realist commentators who come across 1p17s assume, with good reason, that there is no debate about whether we are dealing with a one in many here.⁴⁷⁴ Under normal circumstances I would agree. Nevertheless, with Spinoza's own pejorative remarks against universals and the apparent orthodoxy of the interpretation that he is an "uncompromising nominalist,"⁴⁷⁵ I have the space here to open up to the ingenuity of the antirealist interpreter. And as we will see, a clever enough antirealist interpreter may be able to complicate matters enough that the realist interpretation of the passage is at least no longer the obvious answer.

6.3.2 Nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism and 1p17s

Might Spinoza be endorsing a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of these men having essence E in 1p17s? On a literal reading of the passage, the

⁴⁷⁴ See, for example, Martin 2008, 495.

⁴⁷⁵ Eisenberg 1971, 184.

nonrelational nonconstituent analysis is out. Spinoza not only refers to an entity that nonrelational nonconstituent antirealists eschew, namely, an essence, but distinguishes—as he does in various places (1p24-1p25; CM 1.2 I/239/25ff)—essence from existence. By distinguishing essence from existence, Spinoza draws a wedge between individuals and their essences that no nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist is allowed to draw. Drawing such a wedge is not allowed, of course, because nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism reduces properties, essences, and the like to the ontologically unstructured blob individuals said to have them. Moreover, Spinoza does not endorse a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of *substances* having attributes. That matters here because it is quite unheard of for someone to switch up their analysis (from one where properties are allowed to one where properties are not allowed) depending on the sort of individuals under discussion.

Nevertheless, certain passages in Spinoza’s body of works may provide some hope for the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist interpretation. Mirroring Hobbes’s claim that “white is therefore the name of a body subsisting per se, not of a color [had by that body],”⁴⁷⁶ in the CM Spinoza suggests the following analysis of an individual’s being characterized: o is F just means that o is F (not that there is some property in o serving as the ground for predicating “F” of o).

If you go on to ask what is truth other than a true idea, ask also what is whiteness other than a white body. For the relationship is the same in both cases. (CM 1.6)

⁴⁷⁶ Hobbes *Opera Philosophica* 3.528.

In Letter 2 we find the same sentiment.

The will differs from this or that volition in the same way as whiteness differs from this or that white thing. . . . [That is, there is no difference. After all,] the will is only a being of reason and ought not in any way to be called a cause. (Ep. 2 IV/9/10-20)

Consider also the following passage from the *Short Treatise* (keeping in mind, however, that the consensus among scholars is that Spinoza did not write it).⁴⁷⁷

[G]ood and evil, say, Peter's goodness and Judas's evil, have no definitions apart from the [individual] essence[s] of Judas and Peter, for these [essences] alone [are] in Nature, and without them [the goodness of Peter and the evil of Judas] cannot be defined. (KV 1.10 I/50)⁴⁷⁸

These passages may not give too much hope after a more encompassing look at Spinoza's writings. Spinoza also says the following in the DPP: to say that it is true to predicate F of o in itself is to say that o contains property Fness (DPP 1d9; see 3p55c2d).⁴⁷⁹ One may say that the CM passage trumps this one because in the CM

⁴⁷⁷ See Curley 1985, 93n1.

⁴⁷⁸ Notice the similarity of these passages with the one quoted in APPENDIX A from Leibniz, a passage that inspires such commentators as Mates (Mates 1986, 171ff) to read Leibniz as an austere antirealist.

Up to now I see no other way of avoiding these difficulties than by considering abstracta . . . as abbreviated ways of talking—so that when I use the name *heat* it is not required that I should be making mention of some vague subject but rather that I should be saying that something is hot—and to that extent I am a nominalist, at least provisionally. . . . There is no need to raise the issue whether there are various realities in a substance that are the fundamentals [(read: truthmakers)] of its various predicates. (Leibniz 1948, 547)

⁴⁷⁹ See Melamed 2009, 65n147. To say that it is correct to characterize o in itself as F is, as Spinoza suggests at DPP 1d9 (see DPP 1p5d; 3p55c2d), to say that the nature of o contains something grounding that correct characterization. Such a view directly contravenes the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis, whose whole shtick is to deny that there is any objective plurality in the individual grounding the plurality of correct characterizations.

When we say that something is contained in the nature or conception of some thing, that is the same as saying that it is true of that thing, that is, can be truly affirmed of it. (DPP 1d9)

Now, commentators have puzzled over what is being defined here at DPP 1d9 since, unlike in the case of the other definitions (with exception to 1d10), there is an italicized term indicating what term is being defined (see Curley 1985, 240n17; Shirley 2002, 128n22). But in line with my default methodological assumption that whatever I see from an author is intentional and there for a reason, my default assumption when reading DPP 1d9 is that the lack of italics is intentional. Indeed, it is a definition straight from Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*. Spinoza merely adds the term "truly" to make clear that what is being discussed is *correct* or *true* characterization/predication. In Descartes's work there is no italics either. The lack of italics in both works suggests that the equation, which is indicated by the phrase

Spinoza presents his own view while here in the DPP passage he presents Descartes's view, not his "truly own" (Ep. 13 IV/64). But Spinoza gives no indication that this specific Cartesian view is misguided. Moreover, I see no reason to say he does not endorse it. Indeed, given what we saw at the level of substances having attributes, and given the literal reading of 1p17s, there is positive reason to conclude that he does endorse it. We will in fact see additional positive evidence in a few paragraphs.

I might attempt reconciliation of the two passages in the following way. In the DPP passage Spinoza is talking about predications that are *true* of the individual *in itself*. But in the CM passage, as well as in Letter 2 and the *Short Treatise* passages, he is talking about a predication that is not true of the individual in itself. Whiteness, as Spinoza well knows, is a property born of the interaction of the individual said to be white and our bodies. Whiteness is not true of the body in itself. The same can be said for the sort of goodness that Spinoza discusses in the *Short Treatise* passage. These passages thus fall outside of the purview of my discussion. I am dealing with *correct* characterizations of the individual as it is *in itself*. The question is whether Spinoza gives a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of individuals having intrinsic properties.

Perhaps I am wrong about this reconciliation strategy. Nevertheless, and however much passages such as the one from CM might inspire one to regard Spinoza as a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist, a rather definitive case against the

"the same as saying," runs in *both* directions such that the following two points obtain. (1) To say that o contains property Fness is to say that it is true to predicate F of o in itself. (2) To say it is true to predicate F of o in itself is to say that o contains property Fness.

nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist reading of 1p17s can be made. The nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist bars essences from his ontology. For the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist, then, these men do not really have some ontologically authentic essence E. These men are ontologically unstructured blobs. In 1p17s Spinoza says, recall, that the destruction of man1's essence guarantees the destruction of man2's essence. But what does it mean to destroy man1's essence on the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist view? In light of the fact that, on the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist view, what grounds the correct predication of essence E to man1 is simply the ontologically unstructured blob individual that is man1 himself, it could mean one of two things. It could mean that man1 is no longer characterized as E and yet still somehow remains. Or it could mean that man1 is destroyed, deleted. Since we are talking about an essence, which is to be paraphrased by the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist as merely an essential *predication*, presumably the latter is the case. Either way, it is clear that the nonrelational nonconstituent interpretation of 1p17s fails. Let me explain why.

If Spinoza is endorsing a nonrelational nonconstituent analysis of these men having E, then when he says that the destruction of man1's essence guarantees the destruction of man2's essence, he means that man1's being deleted (or, to give the other option, man1's no longer being characterized as E) guarantees man2's being deleted (or man2's no longer being characterized as E). The problem is clear. As the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist would agree, surely man1's being deleted (or simply no longer

being characterized as E) does not guarantee man2's being deleted (or simply no longer being characterized as E).

In order to preserve the nonrelational nonconstituent interpretation, one might try to import into 1p17s other factual assumptions making it such that man1's being deleted (or his no longer being characterized as E) guarantees man2's being deleted (or his no longer being characterized as E). There are several problems with this. First, why did Spinoza neglect to disclose such assumptions? The answer is that he meant what he literally said: the two men have strictly the same essence, which explains why the destruction of the essence of the one is the destruction of the essence of the other. Second, and most importantly, the passage itself illustrates that man1's being deleted (or his no longer being characterized as E) does not guarantee man2's being deleted (or his no longer being characterized as E), thus ruling out the possibility for one to finagle with the passage in such a way as to prevent it from going against the nonrelational nonconstituent interpretation. Spinoza says that when man1 is deleted (and thus is no longer characterized as E), man2 does *not* get deleted (and thus is presumably still characterized as E).

In general, there is good reason to say that Spinoza *altogether* rejects the understanding of entities being characterized provided by nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism. Consider Armstrong's famous argument against nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism.⁴⁸⁰ Things act causally, Armstrong says, in virtue of their properties. The object depresses the scale pan in virtue of its mass, not in virtue of its,

⁴⁸⁰ Armstrong 1989, 50.

say, shape or electrical charge. But according to the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis of an entity's being characterized, where entities are in themselves homogenous blobs, "mass and charge are lost inside the single seamless particularized nature." When asked for an explanation as to why object o pushed down the scale pan in this exact way, the most exact the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist can get is to say that it is because object o is object o. To be sure, just as the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist is entitled to predicate mass x of object o, the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist is entitled to say that o pushed the scale pan down in such and such a way because of its having mass x. But remember, the truthmaker for this correct predication is the propertyless blob that is o itself. Thus when nonrelational nonconstituent antirealists say that o pushed the scale pan down in such and such a way because of its having mass x, they do not mean that o pushed the scale pan down in such and such a way in virtue of some property that o has. What is meant is simply that o pushed the scale pan down in such and such a way in virtue of the fact that o, a propertyless entity, is o.

Now I bring this up because Spinoza, like Armstrong, does seem to think that the causal powers of individuals derive from actual properties that they have. In the course of giving Oldenburg an account of a certain chemical reaction, Spinoza says the following to that very effect.

Since the particles are of unequal thickness. . . , they first bent the rigid walls of the passages like a bow and then broke them. (Ep. 6)

The case is even more explicit at 2p39d.

Let A be that which is common to, and peculiar to, the human body and certain external bodies. . . . Let it be posited now that the human body is affected by an external body through what it has in common with it, that is, by A; the idea of this affection will involve *property* A (by 2p16), and so (by 2p7c) the idea of this affection, insofar as it involves *property* A, will be adequate in God insofar as he is affected with the idea of the human body, that is (by 2p13), insofar as he constitutes the nature of the human mind. (my emphasis 2p39d)

In the first example, and to use Lin's words, Spinoza "clearly says that the particles bent and broke the walls of the passages in virtue of their thickness."⁴⁸¹ In the second passage, and to use Lin's words, "it is clear that A is a property of an external body, and that the external body causally interacts with the human body in virtue of possessing A."⁴⁸² Hence I conclude, and to use Lin's words, that Spinoza "explains the causal powers of things by reference to their properties."⁴⁸³ If this is right, then the nonrelational nonconstituent understanding of entities being characterized has no place in Spinoza's thought.⁴⁸⁴

In both cases, to be sure, Spinoza could just be speaking loosely. It could be that, in truth, he really does endorse a nonrelational nonconstituent view of entities being characterized. But this is a stretch, especially when it comes to the second example. Here we have Spinoza isolating a common property in both bodies (common in the realist sense, as we will see later) and saying that one causally interacts with the other *via* that common property. Even a loosely speaking nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist would not say such a thing. For on the nonrelational nonconstituent view we cannot

⁴⁸¹ Lin 2006c, 330.

⁴⁸² Lin 2006c, 331.

⁴⁸³ Lin 2006c, 331.

⁴⁸⁴ Lin 2006c, 331.

single out a “layer” in the ontological structure of two individuals and say that one impacts the other via that layer. Individuals have no layers, no ontological structure, on the nonrelational nonconstituent view. The point is brought into stark relief when one also takes into consideration the following points. (1) Spinoza says that things have “properties or intrinsic denominations” (see 2d4, 3p6, 4p37s1, 5p5d, 5p20s, 5p39s; Ep. 19 IV/89, Ep. 20 IV/99, Ep. 83; TdIE 57; KV 1.5 I/40/5-24; KV 2.26 I/110/13-16; CM 2.12 I/277/19-30). (2) Spinoza holds that a substance’s attributes are ontologically authentic (see Chapter III and Chapter IV). (3) Modes of substances are ontologically authentic *properties* of substances (see Chapter VII).

6.3.3 Relational nonconstituent antirealism and 1p17s

Could it be that Spinoza is endorsing a *relational* nonconstituent analysis of the men at 1p17s having essence E?⁴⁸⁵ Recall that for the relational nonconstituent antirealist, these men are ontologically unstructured simples that thus do not really have some ontologically authentic essence E. Unlike in the case of nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism, however, the men—in themselves—are *not* the truthmakers for their being characterized as E. Their being in relation to some other entities makes it true to predicate E of them: man1’s having E just means that man1 stands in some relation to some other entity. On a literal reading of 1p17s, then, the relational nonconstituent reading seems to be out. Spinoza gives no indication here that man1’s having essence E is a relational fact. That is to say, Spinoza gives no indication that

⁴⁸⁵ The following commentators seem to endorse a relational nonconstituent antirealist interpretation of Spinoza (and of a subjectivist variety): Gooch 2010, 293n12; Negri 1991, 86-89; Negri 1999, 120-121.

man1's having essence E is merely to say that man1 resembles some paradigm, falls under some predicate, belongs to some heap, or so on.

Let me make the case more definitive. In 1p17s Spinoza says that the destruction of man1's essence guarantees the destruction of man2's essence. What does it mean to destroy man1's essence on the relational nonconstituent view? In light of the fact that, according to the relational nonconstituent view, what grounds the correct predication of essence E to man1 is the fact that the ontologically unstructured blob individual that is man1 himself is in relation to some other entity, it could be understood in one of two ways. It could be understood simply as that man1 is longer in an E-conferring relation to some other entity. Call this "option A." Or it could be understood as the deletion of whatever the essence gets analyzed into on the relational nonconstituent analysis: the predicate 'E' under which all E individuals fall, in the case of predicate nominalism; the class of all E individuals, in the case of class nominalism; or so on. Call this "option B."

I take it that the more appropriate reading would be option B. After all, 1p17s talks of the essence's getting destroyed, but the former option, option A, does not technically say that the "essence" gets destroyed. It says simply that man1 no longer has E and thus is no longer in the relationship that makes it true to say that he has E. Option B, on the other hand, does say that the "essence" gets destroyed. Although I think that this option is more in tune with 1p17s and is harder for the realist interpreter to dispel than option A, I will start by ruling out the option A version of the relational nonconstituent reading of 1p17s.

On the option A version of the relational nonconstituent reading of 1p17s the destruction of man1's essence means simply that man1 is no longer in an E-conferring relation to some other entity. So if Spinoza is endorsing an option A version of the relational nonconstituent analysis of these men having E, then when he says that the destruction of man1's essence guarantees the destruction of man2's essence, he would mean that man1's no longer being in an E-conferring relation to some other entity guarantees man2's no longer being in an E-conferring relation to some other entity. The problem is clear. As the relational nonconstituent analyst would agree, surely man1's no longer being in an E-conferring relation to some other entity does not guarantee man2's no longer being in an E-conferring relation to some other entity. (Just because metal1 no longer falls under the predicate "F" does not mean that metal2 no longer does.)

In order to preserve the option A variety of the relational nonconstituent interpretation one might try to import into 1p17s other factual assumptions, making it such that man1's no longer being in E-conferring relation to some other entity guarantees man2's no longer being in E-conferring relation to some other entity. However, and as if any relational nonconstituent interpretation were not already a stretch since Spinoza gives no indication here that man1's having essence E means merely that man1 is in some sort of relation to another individual, Spinoza rules out any such finagling. He says that when man1 perishes and thus is no longer in the E-conferring relationship, man2 does not perish and thus is presumably still in the E-conferring relationship. One might say that man1's having E just means that man1 is in relation to man2 and that man2's having E just means that man2 is in relation to man1, in which

case when one man perishes it is indeed the case that the other is no longer characterized as E. This possibility is unlikely since Spinoza did not tell the reader that the men were in such a relation with each other.

Now, on the option B version of the relational nonconstituent reading of 1p17s the destruction of man1's essence means simply the deletion of whatever the essence gets analyzed into on the relational nonconstituent antirealist analysis (such as the predicate 'E,' in the case of predicate nominalism). For the sake of specificity, let us take a class nominalist approach (of the option B variety, of course). In effect, let us paraphrase Spinoza's talk in 1p17s of men having one and the same essence E as meaning nothing more than that these ontologically unstructured men belong to the class of E individuals. In this case, when Spinoza talks about the destruction of the essence of man1 he is talking about the deletion of the class of E individuals.

Notice the advantage that the option B version of the relational nonconstituent reading enjoys over the option A version. In 1p17s Spinoza says that the destruction of man1's essence guarantees the destruction of man2's essence. According to the option A version, the destruction of man1's essence does not entail the destruction of man2's essence—well, at least without clever finagling of the passage. According to the option B version, however, the destruction of man1's essence *does* entail the destruction of man2's essence. On the option B version, destruction of man1's essence is paraphrased as the destruction of the class of E individuals; the class of E individuals is the ersatz essence. Since the class of E individuals is man2's "essence" as well, it follows that the destruction of man1's "essence" is the destruction of man2's "essence."

What can I say against this improved argument for the relational nonconstituent antirealist interpretation? Consider the following points.

First, and in contrast to any form of relational nonconstituent antirealism, Spinoza holds that things like men or candles have ways or natures or inner determinations or “properties or intrinsic denominations” (in themselves and so not in relation to other things) (see 2d4, 3p6, 4p37s1, 5p5d, 5p20s, 5p39s; Ep. 19 IV/89, Ep. 20 IV/99, Ep. 83; TdIE 57; KV 1.5 I/40/5-24; KV 2.26 I/110/13-16; CM 2.12 I/277/19-30). In fact, when Tschirnhaus says that from any given individual more than one property can be inferred only insofar as that individual is in relation to other things (Ep. 82), Spinoza replies that, while such a view may hold true with some very simple individuals, it does not hold in the case of most individuals. It does not hold in the case of most individuals because most individuals have *many* properties *in themselves* (Ep. 83). Now, there is no indication that the essence in question in 1p17s is not supposed to be true of the men in themselves rather than as they are in relation to other things. Since it seems true of the men in themselves, and thus not insofar as they are in relation to other things, any relational analysis—and so including the class nominalist analysis—seems to be out.

Second, Spinoza distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. The extrinsic characteristics of o is a matter of o’s being in relation to other things (CM 2.2, CM 2.3; HG 8; Ep. 8). The intrinsic characteristics of o is a matter of o’s being what it is in itself, outside of any relation to other things (see 2d4, 3p6, 4p37s1, 5p5d, 5p20s, 5p39s; Ep. 8, Ep. 19 IV/89, Ep. 20 IV/99, Ep. 83; TdIE 57; KV 1.5 I/40/5-24; KV 2.26

I/110/13-16; CM 2.12 I/277/19-30). There is no indication that the essence in question in 1p17s is not supposed to be intrinsic to the men in themselves. Indeed, it seems true of the men in themselves (and thus not insofar as they are in relation to other things). For (1) essences are typically construed as true of the thing in itself and (2) Spinoza makes clear that each thing that exists, whether substance or mode, is a positivity—has a positive nature, a nature on its own (see Section 5.6). Any relational nonconstituent analysis—and so including the class nominalist analysis—seems to be out.

Third, Spinoza thinks that things are causally efficacious in virtue of their properties. Object *o* pushes the scale pan down in this way because of its property *having mass x*. On the relational nonconstituent analysis of what it is to have mass *x*, the other individuals that *o* must be related to in order to be said to have mass *x* must be relevant to *o*'s causal interaction. On the class analysis, for example, the whole class of individuals with mass *x* should be relevant to *o*'s acting in virtue of having mass *x*.⁴⁸⁶ Spinoza gives no indication, however, that such is the case. Therefore, the relational nonconstituent analysis—and so including the class nominalist analysis—seems to be out.

Fourth, Spinoza would find the direction of explanation offered by the relational nonconstituent antirealist to be backwards in the case of individuals having intrinsic properties. On the relational nonconstituent view, *o* is intrinsically *F* in virtue of the fact that *o* is related to other individuals: such as that it resembles *F* individuals or that it belongs to the heap of *F* individuals. Spinoza, on the contrary, seems to hold that *o* is

⁴⁸⁶ See Armstrong 1989, 28-29.

related to other things (such as resembles F entities) in virtue of the fact that o is intrinsically F, whether that be understood as o's having Fness (as in the case of realism or trope theory) or as o's being an ontologically unstructured simple that is itself the truthmaker for its being correctly characterized as F (as in the case of the nonrelational nonconstituent view). The relational nonconstituent analysis seems to be out, then.

6.3.4 Constituent antirealism and 1p17s

Could it be that Spinoza is endorsing a trope analysis of the men at 1p17s having essence E?⁴⁸⁷ That is to say, and to use one of D. C. Williams's famous examples, could it be that the two men of 1p17s have the same essence merely in the sense that two soldiers marching along with a given troop have the same concrete uniform: similar, but not literally identical? The trope analysis is preferable to the nonrelational nonconstituent analysis and relational nonconstituent analysis in one major regard: the trope analysis grants that there actually are such entities as essences. That there are at least such entities as essences is the natural reading of 1p17s (especially in light of the fact that all modes are properties: see Chapter VII). Although the trope reading has a clear advantage over the other two readings in that it sticks close to 1p17s and does not require cartwheeling paraphrases of Spinoza's words, it is easy to see why the trope reading fails as well.

⁴⁸⁷ That Spinoza endorses a trope analysis of modes being characterized is currently in vogue. We see this interpretation endorsed to some extent by the following commentators. D. C. Williams 1966, 107; Eisenberg 1971, 184; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; Bennett 1994, 15; Bennett 2001, I.145 (but see 1984, 94); Moltmann 2003, 456; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Newlands 2015, 255-272; Newlands forthcoming-a; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Yovel 1989, 162-163; Yovel 1990b, 164; Heil 2006a, 11, 86; Heil 2008, 20; see Basile 2012, 32.

To be sure, Spinoza does employ locutions that perhaps may give the trope interpreter some hope. For instance, he does not say that the men are *identical* or *one and the same* according to their essence. Rather, he says merely that they “agree entirely according to their essence.” The realist can play a similar superficial game, though. For instance, the realist could point out that Spinoza uses the singular “essence” here rather than the plural “essences.” That is significant because the plural “essences” would be expected if Spinoza were construing the essence of man1 and the essence of man2 as tropes and thus as numerically nonidentical despite agreeing entirely.

But here is what shuts down all hope for the trope reading. If Spinoza had a trope understanding of essences, natures, properties, and the like, then the essence of man1 would be nonidentical to the essence of man2 despite the fact that they are inherently exactly alike. But if the essence of the one is nonidentical to the essence of the other, the destruction of the essence of the one would not entail the destruction of the essence of the other. The problem is clear. Spinoza is unequivocal about the fact that the destruction of man1’s essence does entail the destruction of man2’s essence. One and the same essence is wholly manifested through both man1 and man2, then. That seems to be the only way that the destruction of man1’s essence amounts to the destruction of man2’s essence.

One might argue, nevertheless, that there is a powerful Spinozistic reason—a reason requiring no commitment to realism—why the destruction of man1’s essence

entails the destruction of man2's essence.⁴⁸⁸ For Spinoza, the essence of man1 is, as with all things that follow from the absolute nature of God, a property of God (see Chapter VII and Chapter X). Indeed, it is a property of God that, although not essential or fundamental like an attribute, is nevertheless necessary for God to have. In other words, the essence of man1 is, as with all beings of *natura naturata*, one of God's *propria*: non-fundamental and non-defining, but nevertheless necessary, properties of God.⁴⁸⁹ However, if the essence of man1 is a *proprium* of God, then to destroy the essence of man1 would be to destroy God. If God is destroyed, then the essence of man2 is thereby destroyed. We have a clear-cut answer, therefore, as to why the destruction of man1's essence amounts to the destruction of man2's essence. Importantly, this answer involves, so at least it would appear, no commitment to the realist's sickening and absurd allowance of strict identity in variety. The essence of man1 can be a trope and the essence of man2 can be a distinct trope without any violation of 1p17s.

My first instinct is to respond in the following way. Spinoza says nothing here in 1p17s to indicate that this was his explanation for why when man1's essence is destroyed so as well is man2's. There is no talk whatsoever of God's being destroyed.

The weight that such a response carries, and it does carry some, is admittedly not definitive. It could be noted that Spinoza did not feel the need to indicate that this was his explanation since he had just, at 1p16 and 1p16d, described all beings of *natura naturata* as God's *propria*: nonfundamental but necessary properties of God. It cannot

⁴⁸⁸ The following has its basis in Huenemann's commentary to my work at the 2013 APA Central division meeting.

⁴⁸⁹ See Pasnau 2011, 485n24 and 551; Cross 2010.

be denied—problematic for other Spinozistic views or not—that all beings of *natura naturata* are indeed God’s *propria*, as in fact I argue in detail in Chapter VII.⁴⁹⁰ So I think that my first instinctual response will not carry great weight. For perhaps Spinoza intends his readers to have that fact in mind.

Several problems nevertheless remain for the objection.

First, the notion of indiscernible but nonidentical properties conflicts with Spinoza’s apparent endorsement of the identity of indiscernibles (see 1p4-1p5d).⁴⁹¹

Second, and to give a more controversial reason (one that I bring up mainly because of the interesting puzzle it raises), the *propria* status of modes apparently must be compatible, strange as this may sound, with the fact that destruction of one would not in fact entail the destruction of God. In the *Short Treatise*, Spinoza says that the destruction of a mode of God (say, the essence of a man under Thought or the essence of a man under Extension, to use Spinoza’s examples), does not entail the destruction of the attribute of the mode in question (KV app2 I/117/1-10). An attribute’s ontological independence from modes is corroborated in 1p5d of the *Ethics*. Here Spinoza says that a difference in modes between two substances has no efficacy to ground the numerical distinctness of those two substances. Indeed, Spinoza tells us that when we consider a substance as it is in itself and truly, that is, in terms of its absolute nature, we can simply “push the modes to the side” (1p5d, see 1p1, 1p8s2 II/49/28). Hence my admission that

⁴⁹⁰ See Bayle 1991; Bennett 1984, 92ff; Bennett 1996b, 67; Carriero 1995; Della Rocca 2008, 61ff; Melamed 2013d; Nadler 2006, 73ff; Viljanen 2009, 56.

⁴⁹¹ Della Rocca 2008, 47-48, 87, 100-101, 134, 196-197.

modes are indeed God's *propria* need not amount to an admission that destruction of a mode would entail the destruction of God, however strange that no doubt sounds.

Third, and most definitively, the objector's explanation for what is going on in 1p17s is ruled out by the following fact. Spinoza says that when the existence of man1 is destroyed, the existence of the other is *not* destroyed. If Spinoza were indeed giving the suggested explanation, then the destruction of man1's existence *would* entail the destruction of God and thereby the destruction of man2's existence. After all, the existence of a man is just as much a proprium of God as the essence of a man.

6.3.5 1p17s to be stricken from the record?

I have argued that in 1p17s Spinoza is talking about an essence wholly manifesting through two individuals.⁴⁹² For the sake of the argument, however, I will permit the possibility that this passage should be discounted as evidence. Although none of them entirely moves me, here are four reasons why we might be suspicious about counting 1p17s as evidence for the realist interpretation.

First, in 1p17s Spinoza is talking about one and the same essence wholly present through two men. 2d2, however, seems to rule out the possibility of multiple instantiations of an essence or, according to the stronger way that it is sometimes read, the possibility of multiple instantiations of anything that *pertains* or *belongs* to an essence.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² Rice thinks that he successfully explains away 1p17s by noting that in this passage Spinoza says merely that two objects *can* instantiate the same property, not that they actually do (1991, 300). This does not explain away 1p17s. For if there is an essence that can manifest through multiple men, then that essence is a universal (even though it fails to manifest through multiple men).

⁴⁹³ See Della Rocca 186n1, 188n25.

[T]o the essence of a thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is necessarily posited and which, being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken away; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and *which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing*. (my emphasis 2d2)

2d2 is the main reason why Spinoza scholars, to use Martin's words, "are all but universally agreed that Spinoza understands the essences of modes . . . as being unique to their mode."⁴⁹⁴ As Melamed puts it, "Spinoza's definition of essence (E2d2) does not allow essences to be shared by more than one [being]."⁴⁹⁵ Being a fundamental definition, 2d2 does arguably take precedence over the 1p17s passage. And 2p37s corroborates the point (even as it inclines us at the same time, for other reasons to be discussed later in this chapter, to a realist interpretation of Spinoza). Here Spinoza says that what is common to many individuals cannot constitute the essence of those things.⁴⁹⁶

Second, 3p6 says that every individual strives to preserve itself. Such striving is the power by which an individual acts (3p7d)—a power that, I cannot restrain myself from highlighting, Spinoza describes as "universal," "inherent in each [individual]" (TP 3.18). Spinoza makes it clear that this striving is nothing but the actual essence of the individual (3p7). Since in some sense I strive to preserve *myself* rather than any other individual, since I have my own individuated power to act, it would follow that my actual essence is somehow individuated from the actual essence of anything else.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ Martin 2008, 489-490.

⁴⁹⁵ Melamed 2011a, 43.

⁴⁹⁶ See Busse 2009, 33.

⁴⁹⁷ See Della Rocca 2004, 133-134; Garber 2004, 189; Steinberg 1987, 190n6.

Third, in a comment to her Italian translation of *Ethics*, Giancotti Boscherini⁴⁹⁸ follows Koyré⁴⁹⁹ in suggesting that Spinoza is not speaking in his own voice, only rhetorically, on various matters in 1p17s. That is how, for example, she explains away the apparent tension, originally pointed out by Tschirnhaus (Ep. 63 IV/275), between the following two Spinozistic principles when it comes to God as cause of his effects: Letter 4's causal similarity principle, a principle according to which the effect has in common with the cause what it receives from the cause (see also 1a5 plus 1p3, 4pref II/208/5-6, 5a2; KV 2.24 I/104/25-29, KV app1a5 I/114/15; TTP 4 III/58/19-20), and 1p17s's causal dissimilarity principle, a principle according to which the effect differs from the cause precisely in what it receives from the cause (see Chapter X).⁵⁰⁰ Giancotti Boscherini says that Spinoza was appealing to the dissimilarity principle not because he believed it but in order to illustrate the extreme position, and one that many take Spinoza personally to deny, that the intellect of God is *entirely other* to the intellect of man. Since Spinoza brings up the issue of men sharing an essence as an example of the dissimilarity principle that, according to Giancotti Boscherini, he did not really believe, perhaps the men sharing an essence should itself be suspected as not being Spinoza's true view.⁵⁰¹ The take home point would be this. 1p17s is largely a reductio against the view that God in his absolute nature has intellect. The common essence passage is one of the unacceptable results of this false view that God has intellect. Man having a

⁴⁹⁸ Giancotti Boscherini 1988.

⁴⁹⁹ Koyré 1950.

⁵⁰⁰ See the following few commentators who have mentioned this pressing tension in Spinoza's thought: Di Poppa 2006, 273ff; Rivaud 1906, 128-130; Schmaltz 2000, 86; Curley 1985, 427n51; Deleuze 1992, 48, 356n11, 356n12; Gueroult 1968, 286-295; Giancotti Boscherini 1988; Lachièze-Rey 1950, 156-159.

⁵⁰¹ See also Manning 2012, n8.

common essence is, for Spinoza, one of the absurd consequences of the view that God has intellect.

Fourth, the defender of the antirealist interpretation could always stress how the 1p17s passage is just some passing remark buried in a scholium. This is significant because scholia, lacking the formal geometrical trappings of other areas, are presumably where Spinoza permits himself to speak comparatively loosely, unencumbered by that “cumbersome Geometric order” where clarity is a first and foremost priority (4p18s and TTP 7.17). So the idea would be that, since Spinoza is supposed to be an antirealist, we should disregard the realist 1p17s passage.

I am one who finds it incumbent on the commentator to make every effort to see how all the words of an author harmonize (from scholia to propositions, from letters and notes to published works).⁵⁰² So my default assumption—at least when I bracket off Giancotti Boscherini’s line of reasoning, which I do not find convincing anyway (see Chapter X)—is that Spinoza must just be thinking of essence in a different way in those passages that apparently conflict with 1p17s.⁵⁰³ Only the most uncharitable interpreters would hold up 1p17s and 2d2 next to each other and declare: contradiction! This is especially the case in light of the following fact. Contrary to what several Spinoza scholars seem to think,⁵⁰⁴ an individual’s having its own peculiar essence is, as Aristotle among so many others have maintained⁵⁰⁵ (and as is simply true by the light of reason), compatible with that individual instantiating one and the same essence as some other

⁵⁰² See Daniel 2013a, 40.

⁵⁰³ See Della Rocca 1996, 87, 187n13; Della Rocca 2004; Jaquet 2005, 85.

⁵⁰⁴ Martineau 1882, 150n2, 111; Rice 1991, 300n39; Hampshire 1988, 108; see Melamed 2013d, 58n194.

⁵⁰⁵ See Aristotle *Metaphysics*, 1003a14-14 and 1035b28ff.

individual.⁵⁰⁶ On the one hand, Peter and Paul could have one and the same “human nature in general,” to use Spinoza’s words (1p8s2 II/51/5), that is, an essence exclusive of the peculiarities about each (the peculiarities grounding their actually being two). That would be the sort of essence in discussion at 1p17s (see TP 2.2). On the other hand, each could have his own peculiar essence, an essence constituted by the *totality* of his features and so including the ones peculiar to him as well as the ones that he has in common with the other man. That sounds more like what Spinoza calls the “actual essence” at 3p7. After all, the actual essence of an individual is just the sum of its power (3p7d) and, since everything in Spinoza’s ontology has power or efficacy (1p36, 1p36d), the conception of its total power must involve the conception of the totality of its features. So I would say that the essences had by multiple individuals are the *non-singularizing* essences, if you will, of those individuals. And I would say that the essences that uniquely pick out one individual from all the rest are the *singularizing* essences, if you will, of those individuals. 2d2 would concern the singularizing essences whereas 1p17s (and certain passages that I will bring up in this chapter) concern non-singularizing essences.

In the end, I find the above reasons for striking 1p17s from the record to be weak. But if only for the sake of the argument, I will strike the passage from the record (at least temporarily).

⁵⁰⁶ See Della Rocca 2008, 95; Soyarslan 2013.

6.4 1p8s2

Does Spinoza speak as he does in 1p17s anywhere else? We saw that he speaks like this at the level of substances (see Chapter V). But does Spinoza speak like this, like a realist, anywhere else at the level of *modes*? At 1p8s2 he does.⁵⁰⁷

[T]he definition of the triangle expresses nothing but the simple nature of the triangle, but not any certain number of triangles. . . . [I]t follows that if, in nature, a certain number of individuals [of a certain nature] exists, there must be a cause why those individuals, and why neither more nor fewer, exist. For example, if 20 men exist in nature (to make the matter clearer, I assume that they exist at the same time, and that no others previously existed in nature), it will not be enough (i.e., to give a reason why 20 men exist) to show the cause of human nature in general [that each of them has]; but it will be necessary in addition to show the cause why not more and not fewer than 20 exist. . . . For that reason it is to be inferred absolutely that whatever is of such a nature that there can be many individuals [of that nature] must, to exist, have an external cause to exist. (1p8s2 II/50/27-II/51/14)

Freely and unflinchingly entertaining the notion of one and the same nature's being wholly present in multiple individuals, this passage has as much force as 1p17s. Thus Fullerton feels entitled to claim that 1p8s2 "puts beyond all doubt the fact that Spinoza's essences are universals."⁵⁰⁸

To be sure, there is "room" for the antirealist interpreter to insist that Spinoza is just speaking loosely and popularly here when he talks about a general triangle nature or a general human nature.⁵⁰⁹ The antirealist interpreter could just insist that, for Spinoza, each of these humans have a nature indiscernible from, but nevertheless nonidentical to, the nature of any other of these men. The same could be said, of course, for the triangles. We would then have a trope situation on our hands.

⁵⁰⁷ See Haserot 1950, 479; Fullerton 1894, 247; Ramond 1995, 249.

⁵⁰⁸ Fullerton 1899, 47.

⁵⁰⁹ See Melamed 2013d, 58n194.

I think that this trope option is a major stretch even looking at 1p8s2 alone. Spinoza never refers here to triangle natures plural or human natures plural. Almost mirroring Aristotle's claim that "definition is of the universal,"⁵¹⁰ Spinoza is explicit about "the true definition man" referring to human nature—*singular*: in his words, "human nature in general."⁵¹¹ This is by no means definitive, but it is telling. So at least would be the thought of Calcagnini. Embodying the spirit of Socrates at passage 77a of the *Meno* (where the kinship of universal and singular is asserted), Calcagnini complains that since Cicero is a realist he should have entitled his book *On Duties* (*De officiis*) in the singular: *On Duty* (*De officio*). But again, one could insist that 1p8s2 is simply loose "scholia" speak, the compendia loquendi of a committed trope theorist (as no doubt Nizolius would remind Calcagnini: see APPENDIX A). One could point out, moreover, that a trope theorist has no problem with generic definitions, such as the one suggested at 1p8s2 of triangle nature or human nature. It just has to be understood that if two triangles each meet that definition, that does not mean that they are in truth one and the same in regards to the nature that each of them has.

Might there be "room" for an extreme antirealist reading too, that of nonconstituent antirealism? I do not think so. One by one, I will show why the following forms of nonconstituent antirealism fail: the subjectivist relational form, the nonrelational form, and the objectivist relational form.

⁵¹⁰ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1036a28, 1039b27-30, 1040a6-9.

⁵¹¹ See Harvey 1663, I. II. iv. 25.

Might the subjectivist relational nonconstituent form work here? Spinoza says that the cause for the existence of each of these humans “cannot be human nature itself, since the true *definition* of man does not involve the number 20” (my emphasis). One may emphasize the term “definition” here in order to suggest that, according to Spinoza, the general human nature in question is but a man-made convention. In this case, Spinoza would be giving a *subjectivist* relational nonconstituent analysis of these humans having nature N: these humans having nature N means nothing more than that the classifying mind has roped them all together under definition D. The problem is, Spinoza makes it clear in this passage that he is talking about a *true* definition. Contrary to a mere stipulative definition,⁵¹² a *true* definition—as Spinoza says in the very passage at hand, as well as in the closely paralleling Letter 34 to Huygens—corresponds to nothing “except the nature of the thing defined.” A true or “perfect” definition is, as Spinoza says at TdIE 95, a linguistic expression of the “inmost essence of the thing” defined.

What about the nonrelational form of nonconstituent antirealism? That will not work either. According to nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism, there is no ontologically authentic nature that an individual has. There is just the individual said to have the nature. But Spinoza says that the nature of an individual itself does not express any certain number of individuals. That means even *one*. The “nature” of an individual on the nonrelational nonconstituent reading would have to indicate a certain number of items: one item—one triangle, one man.

⁵¹² See Hart 1983, 15; Nadler 2006, ch. 2.

What about the *objectivist* relational nonconstituent form? That will not work either. When Spinoza is talking about the natures of *things* in 1p8s2, he is not just talking about the natures of humans and triangles. He means for his discussion of the natures of things to apply to the natures of substances as well. Indeed, the main purpose of 1p8s2 is to give an additional proof for 1p5, the proposition that there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature. Thus Spinoza concludes by saying that since the nature of substance involves existence, and since the nature of a thing alone does not suffice to ensure that there be a certain number of items with that nature, it follows that there can be only one substance of the same nature. What is the relevance of the fact that Spinoza's talk of the nature of *things* in 1p8s2 applies to the nature of substances? Well, according to relational nonconstituent forms of antirealism, to say that an individual has nature F is merely to say that it is in a relation to some other individual: it belongs to the heap of F individuals, it belongs to the class of F individuals, it resembles paradigm F individuals, or so on. This surely cannot work to account for the natures of *substances*, then. Substances have the natures that they have in themselves, not in virtue of being in relation to other entities. Hence there is no room for a relational nonconstituent antirealist reading of 1p8s2. If we are going to give a relational nonconstituent analysis (say, a class analysis) of a triangle's having nature N, then we would have to do the same for substance. This would mean analyzing substance's being the way it is in terms of its being a member of some class or in relation to some other entity. That violates Spinoza's view that a substance alone suffices for its own being.

For all that I have said so far, the only permitted antirealist gloss of this passage, however much suspension of belief it involves, is that of constituent antirealism (trope theory). But in light of the fact that was just brought out—namely, that 1p8s2 is supposed to give us another proof for 1p5—it is clear that the trope interpretation is out as well. Since 1p8s2 is supposed to be an additional proof for 1p5, when Spinoza assumes at 1p8s2 that there are a number of triangles or a number of humans with the same nature he must be understanding the term “same” in the way of the realist rather than in the way of the trope theorist. Since 1p8s2 is supposed to be an additional proof for 1p5, when Spinoza assumes at 1p8s2 that there are a number of triangles or a number of humans with the same nature he must be assuming that *one and the same* nature is in each of the many triangles and that *one and the same nature* is in each of the many men.

How can I be so sure about this? As I argued in Chapter V, when Spinoza regards substances as sharing the same attribute he understands the term “same” in the way of the realist rather than in the way of the trope theorist. That is to say, he assumes that one and the same attribute Fness is in each of the many F substances. Since triangles sharing a nature in 1p8s2 is explicitly an analogy for substances sharing an attribute, it follows that Spinoza must be speaking literally when he is speaking about a general triangle nature that all triangles instantiate. Namely, he must be construing the triangle nature in the sense of the realist, and so as identical in all instances, rather than in the sense of the trope theorist, and so nonidentical in all—to express the point loosely—“instances.”

6.5 2p10s

2p10s is another place where Spinoza welcomes universals at the mode-level. In this scholium Spinoza offers an alternative proof for 2p10, the proposition that “the being of a substance does not pertain to the essence of man, or [(*sive*)] substance does not constitute the form of man.”⁵¹³

This proposition is also demonstrated from 1p5, viz. that there are not two substances of the same nature. Since a number of men can exist, what constitutes the form of man is not the being of substance.

2p10s seems to be definitive evidence of the realist interpretation, especially when I bring to bear the understanding of 1p5 gained in Part 2. If the being of substance pertained to the essence of human, that is, if substance constituted the form of human, then there would be two or more substances of the same essence. How is it that, for Spinoza, the antecedent is sufficient for the consequent? There are two facts to consider. The first is stated in the scholium: multiple humans exist. The second is that the essence or form of human is universal. How do I know that, for Spinoza here, the essence or form of human is universal? Assume that the essence of human is not universal here. At best, then, the essence in each human would be perfectly resembling, exactly similar, inherently indiscernible and yet still nonidentical. But in this case even if the being of substance pertained to the essence of human, it would be false to conclude, as Spinoza himself does, that there would be two or more substances of the *same* essence. There

⁵¹³ It is open for one to supply an indefinite article before “man.” As Appuhn remarks, it is tempting to do so given Spinoza’s presumed antirealism (see Curley 1985, 454n21). Nevertheless, the *Nagelate Schriften* uses a definite article (“de”) before “man” here. This is significant because, in Dutch, the definite article is typically for a noun that can refer to many. Even more significantly, the scholium makes it clear, for reasons that I go into, that Spinoza is talking about a nature that is common among men.

would be numerically distinct but indiscernible substances for each of the numerically distinct but indiscernible essences. These substances would thus not be the same in the realist sense of “same” operative in 1p5: “same” in the sense of strictly identical rather than merely inherently exactly similar.

Let me put it another way. Substance, Spinoza tells us at 2p10, does not constitute the form of human. If it did constitute the form of human, then that would entail, so Spinoza says at 2p10s, something absurd: that there are several substances with the same form, which is in violation of 1p5. Why would this absurd result follow if substance did in fact constitute the form of human? Because there are several humans with the same essence. But is the term “same” here to be understood in the manner of the realist or in the manner of the antirealist? The following point is crucial. As I argued in my case for the view that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes in Chapter V, to say that there are two substances of the *same* attribute is to say that there are two substances of *one and the same attribute undivided*. Sameness of attribute/form, in other words, is understood in the realist sense. Hence Spinoza is admitting, here in 2p10s, that the form of human is strictly identical, literally one and the same, in the case of each man.

* * *

Of course, the collection of passages that I have gathered so far in support of the realist interpretation are all inside scholia. For the insistent antirealist interpreter my selection thus might not carry much weight. For scholia, as I said above, are places where Spinoza permits himself to speak more loosely. Now, I doubt that Spinoza is

speaking so loosely in these passages that he is an antirealist in truth. 2p10s especially makes me doubtful. Spinoza presents it as an alternative proof for 2p10. So even if Spinoza was willing to speak loosely in other scholia, he is apparently not doing so at 2p10s. For this is intended to be a demonstration of an official proposition. The same reasoning goes as well for 1p8s2, which is intended to be a demonstration for 1p5, another official proposition.

But for the sake of the argument, and against my default inclination (which is to consider all the materials of a philosopher: unfinished works, letters, marginalia, notebooks, and so on),⁵¹⁴ I will strike from the record—at least temporarily—all evidence from passages that seem to fall outside the rigorous geometrical mode of argument. In effect, I will strike all evidence from scholia, prefaces, appendices, and so on. Along with 1p17s, 1p8s2, and 2p10s, then, I will discount other realist-suggestive passages from areas where Spinoza may be permitting himself to speak more loosely (see 4p18s II/223/5-6, 4app7). Despite Spinoza's proofreading the *Ethics* throughout a period spanning almost 15 years, I will regard these as passages where the realist mode

⁵¹⁴ Daniel shares my default inclination and expresses the point well when it comes to Berkeley.

Furthermore, where his unpublished remarks *seem* to conflict with his published ones, I think it is incumbent on the commentator to make every effort to show how Berkeley's published works might be interpreted as consistent with his unpublished ones. That is a tall order, but at least it avoids strategies . . . that make Berkeley's texts (when taken together) sound indecisive, contradictory, or duplicitous. In sum, I simply refuse to adopt the ultimately unverifiable practice of assuming that seemingly irreconcilable texts are most properly handled by concluding that they are based on different doctrines. . . . [A]s a conscientious historian of philosophy, I make judgments only about the texts that are available to me. Such a stance does not give me the luxury of canonizing some of Berkeley's texts (because they fit my interpretations) and ignoring or marginalizing others. Instead, in keeping with my default strategy for reading any philosopher, I accept all of his comments. (Daniel 2013a, 40)

of expression has made an unwanted intrusion that Spinoza would have caught and excised were he not letting his guard down in these areas for loose speaking.

6.6 2p39

6.6.1 Core argument

I will restrict the question even further, then. Are there passages, inside the *Ethics* but *outside of scholia* (and other noncentral areas), where Spinoza welcomes universals at the level of modes? Yes. Turn to 2p39.

If something is common to, and peculiar to, the human body and certain external bodies by which the human body is usually affected, and is equally in the part and in the whole of each of them, this idea [that is, the idea of that something] will also be adequate in the mind.

Here Spinoza is talking about something shared by a given human body and only a certain number of other bodies besides that human body. This is a break from the previous two propositions (2p37 and 2p38) where Spinoza is talking about what is common to *all* bodies, what is equally in the each body.

In none of these cases, so one might insist, can we just assume that what is in common between such bodies—what is, in fact, equally in each of them—is a universal, let alone a property. But that would be an unreasonable stretch. First, that which is common between these bodies *is* a property. (a) “Proprium,” which Curley translates as “peculiar” in 2p39, has the connotation of property. (b) There is no other option than that the item in common between the bodies is a property since that item must be a mode (1p4 in light of 1d5) and modes are properties (Chapter VII). (c) In 2p39d Spinoza in fact calls that item a “property.” Second, the item in common between the bodies, the item that we now know to be a *property*, *is* a universal. (a) Such a conclusion is likely in

light of what I have already argued in Part 2. For one does not switch, especially without warning, from a realist to an antirealist understanding of a property's being in common among many depending on what many is under discussion. (b) The standard interpretation of multiple individuals having a property in common—indeed, a property equally in the part and equally in the whole of each, as Spinoza tells us—is that they instantiate a universal. (c) Spinoza's talk in 2p39 (and in passages right before it) of a property equally in many meets, almost verbatim, Spinoza's characterization of universals at 2p49s (which is itself the boilerplate characterization that we find from Aristotle onward): a universal is that which is said wholly and equally whether it be of one or several individuals (2p49s II/134/8-10, 4p4d II/213/15-19) such that it “must be in each” individual of which it is said, “the same in all” individuals to which it pertains, just as the essence of human is “[NS: wholly and equally [in] each individual man]” (2p49s, II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18; see TdIE 76; TP 3.18).

Let us start afresh, however, by turning now to 2p39d.

Let A be that which is common to, and peculiar to, the human body and certain external bodies, which is *equally in the human body and in the same external bodies*, and finally, which is *equally in the part of each external body and in the whole*. There will be an adequate idea of A in God (by 2p7c), *both* insofar as he has the idea of the human body, and insofar as he has ideas of the posited external bodies. (my emphasis 2p39d)

Is property A a universal? The literal reading seems to be that property A is indeed.

Although it is one of those properties that Spinoza mentions as not being universal *in scope*, that is, as not being common to *every* body (TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20),⁵¹⁵ Spinoza

⁵¹⁵ These properties common among some but not all bodies are more specific expressions, if you will, of motion and rest. Hampshire is wrong, by the way, to say the common properties are what every body

says that it is *equally* in the human body and, say, the five other bodies external to that human body. He also says that the property is equally in the part and the whole of each of the external bodies involved. In circumstances where it is not considered so radical of a notion that Spinoza welcomes universals into his ontology, there would be little question as to whether the property A of 2p39d is a universal (especially in light of Spinoza's own mirroring characterization of a universal at 2p49s and 4p4d).

It is hard to conceive of how someone might resist the reading that Spinoza is committing himself to realism here. That is why Di Vona, Haserot, and the rest of the major realist interpreters feel that they need proceed no further at this point.⁵¹⁶ That is why, after presenting such passages as 2p39d, they more or less insinuate that the great horde of scholars who keep reinscribing the antirealist interpretation must not have an adequate grasp of the realist-antirealist controversy.⁵¹⁷ That is why they more or less

possesses (1970, 95; see Aaron 1952, 89; Marshall 2015, n12). First, the correlate *ideas* must have common properties too (these common properties being the common notions themselves) by parallelism. Second, there are cases where only two bodies have a common property (2p39, 2p40s1 II/120/19-20). So in Spinoza's system there is a range from those properties with the widest scope, that is, those properties common to all bodies (or what Plato calls "the greatest kinds" [(*megista genē*)], such as "motion and rest [(*kinesis* and *stasis*)]": *Sophist* 248b9-c8 (see TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20; 1p21-1p23, 3pref II/138/12-18; TdIE 101 II/37/5-7 in light of 2p37-2p38), to those properties common only to two (see 2p39, 2p39c; Ep. 32; TTP 7.6). Several commentators have noticed this (Deleuze 1988, 54; 1992, 276; see De Dijn 1996, 227; Duffy 2006, 164-165; Gueroult 1974, 345-347; Sharp 2011c, 97-98; Steinberg 2009, 152n22). Consider Spinoza's 2p39c remark to the effect that finite minds can differ in the amount and sorts of common notions that they have and likewise that finite bodies can differ on the amount and sorts of common properties that they have. As is evident from such a remark (especially in light of Spinoza's commitment to plenitude: see Chapter X), there is a complete range of common notions and correlate common properties. The range extends from what is present in the most encompassing of multiplicities (everything) to what is present in the least encompassing of multiplicities ("at least two" beings: Deleuze 1988, 54). Here is Spinoza at TTP 7.6.

Now in examining natural phenomena we first of all try to discover those features that are most universal and common to the whole of nature, to wit, motion-and-rest and the laws and rule governing them which Nature always observes and through which she constantly acts; and then we advance gradually from these to other less universal features. (TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20)

⁵¹⁶ Di Vona 1960, 161; Haserot 1950, 470.

⁵¹⁷ Dunin-Borkowski 1935, 83-88; see Di Vona 1960, 153.

insinuate that this horde must not even understand what universals are (perhaps due to the academic equivalent of backwoods isolation-inbreeding). That is why they more or less insinuate that this horde must be overcome by some knee-jerk reaction of “no-evil-no” when they hear the term “universal,” and—in some sort of stupor—let flood into their minds associated terms laden with negative connotations (terms such as “abstraction”).⁵¹⁸ Indeed, even Stout, who says that it is possible to find an affinity to trope theory in the thought of Spinoza, concedes in a footnote that the passages from 2p37 to 2p39 undermine that reading.⁵¹⁹

In fairness to the antirealist interpreter, however, I should first point out that most of the reinscription is done by commentators who mention Spinoza’s “thoroughgoing antirealism” as an aside to their main point. A brief scan through the works that I have listed as leaning towards an antirealist interpretation of Spinoza will show this to be the case. To be sure, Spinoza never declares himself an antirealist. But since Spinoza’s “thoroughgoing antirealism” has been taken for granted for so long (perhaps we have a sort of wozle effect here?), I imagine that these commentators reinscribe this fact as part of the understandable process of laying down for the reader a platform of accepted truths about Spinoza based on which they can offer the novel points that they are making. Surrounding one’s novel points with conservative legomena brings one’s novel points into better relief, not to mention makes the reader—in particular, those experts doing the judging—less suspicious: the politics of publication.

⁵¹⁸ It does seem, though, that abstraction, at least of a certain sort, is bad for Spinoza (see Ep. 12 I/56-57; TdIE 75, TdIE 93, TdIE 99).

⁵¹⁹ Stout 1936, 9.

Second, and more importantly, there is healthy debate to be had even when it comes to such passages as 2p39d, despite what most realist commentators will allow. My hope in entertaining this debate is to bring on board to my way of seeing things the most dogged and clever antirealist interpreters of Spinoza.

6.6.2 Is property A a trope?

If Spinoza endorses an antirealist analysis of those 2p39d bodies having property A, then what antirealist analysis does he endorse? A nonconstituent form or a constituent form? Since he is talking about *properties* here, I am going to proceed as if he means to say what he literally says and so holds that the bodies in question at 2p39d really do have ontologically authentic properties. Contrary to the more painstaking way that I have been proceeding, then, I will not consider the standard form of antirealism (nonconstituent antirealism) as an interpretive option here.⁵²⁰ I will entertain merely the possibility that Spinoza is giving a *constituent* antirealist (that is, a trope) analysis of a body's being characterized as A, which is the most popular antirealist interpretation in the Spinoza literature.⁵²¹

Right from the start it appears that Spinoza cannot be endorsing the constituent antirealist analysis here. Let property A be a trope. To say that A is in each body is,

⁵²⁰ To be sure, it could always be said that Spinoza intends such property talk not to be taken seriously (and is in favor of either a nonrelational nonconstituent or relational nonconstituent analysis). Nevertheless, I argued in the discussion of 1p17s that Spinoza seems to reject both the nonrelational nonconstituent and relational nonconstituent analyses of modes being characterized. Moreover, all the items that are being dealt with—bodies and their properties—are themselves properties for Spinoza, as I argue in detail in Chapter VII (see 1p16d; Della Rocca 2008, 61ff).

⁵²¹ See D. C. Williams 1966, 107; Eisenberg 1971, 184; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; ; Bennett 1994, 15; Bennett 2001, I.145 (but see 1984, 94); Moltmann 2003, 456; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Newlands 2015, 255-272; Newlands forthcoming-a; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Yovel 1989, 162-163; Yovel 1990b, 164; Heil 2006a, 11, 86; Heil 2008, 20; see Basile 2012, 32.

according to the trope-theoretical paraphrase, to say that each A (the one in the human body and the five other ones in the five other bodies) is at best merely exactly similar to each other A. The fact that Spinoza is speaking about *the* property and not *those* properties, as would be expected were he endorsing a trope analysis, is already a mark against the trope interpretation.

But perhaps we should heed Nizolius's warning slogan: however much kinship there is between the universal and the singular, and however much incongruity there is with the universal and the plural,⁵²² we are not entitled to conclude that thinker x is a realist just from x's use of the singular expression. Perhaps the singular expression should be regarded as the mere *compendium loquendi* of a committed antirealist, as both Jolley and Mates argue to be the case with Leibniz (see APPENDIX A).⁵²³

Even when such stretches are granted, however, powerful evidence against the trope reading of 2p39d remains. Notice that since these A properties are, by supposition, nonidentical, knowing the A in, say, body3 does not suffice for knowing the A in body5. Spinoza, however, denies this. He says that God has an adequate idea of A just by knowing any *one* of these bodies alone. Spinoza is thus taking, so at least it appears, the realist line that if x has a property Fness that perfectly resembles, that is, is inherently exactly similar to, property Gness, then that means that Fness is Gness and thus that x possesses Gness.

⁵²² See Plato *Meno* 77a; Harvey 1663, I. II. iv. 25.

⁵²³ Jolley 1990, 135; Mates 1986, 246.

One may insist on the trope reading even in the face of such a point, however. It might be argued that, since each of the six bodies has an indiscernible A property, it is trivially true that one will have an idea of property A just by knowing one of these bodies—say, body3. The reason is this. Since the A in body3 is inherently indiscernible from the A in, say, body1, one has an adequate idea of the A in body1 just by having an adequate idea of the A in body3.

To this I repeat (and perhaps partially just to rile Nizolius up) that Spinoza only talks about *one* idea of property A (2p39). If Spinoza is a trope theorist, then it is reasonable to expect that he would have been more careful in his expression here. He would have been careful to say that there will be an adequate idea of *each* A in God, as opposed to saying that there will be one adequate idea of A. Terminology and linguistic expression might not commit one to a certain ontology, but they do at least insinuate.

Consider the following point as well. We saw back in 1p5 and 1p5d that two substances having the same attribute means, for Spinoza, having an *identical* attribute, one and the same attribute. That is, at least as I see it, the ordinary way to understand “same” in 1p5. However, I did not want to beg the question against the trope interpretation, whose whole shtick it is to deny that being the same in attribute means being strictly identical in attribute. Remember, according to trope theory, and to use a famous example from D. C. Williams, individuals x and y have the “same” attribute or have an attribute “in common” in the sense that two soldiers of a troop have the same uniform, not in the sense in which two brothers have the same father (as realism holds). Not wanting to beg the question against the trope interpretation, I had to establish that

Spinoza was using the term “same” in the “ordinary” sense rather than just assuming it from the start.

That Spinoza holds that being the same in attribute means being strictly identical (as opposed to merely exactly similar) in attribute is important for my case against the trope interpretation of 2p39d. Indeed, it is the basis for the following powerful argument against the trope interpretation. By not being the same in attribute, Spinoza means being different in attribute (1p6d). By being different in attribute Spinoza means not having an attribute in common (1p2). By transitivity (see Ep. 12a), therefore, by not being the same in attribute, Spinoza means not having an attribute in common.⁵²⁴ Since by being the same in attribute Spinoza means being identical in attribute (as I have shown in Chapter V), by not being the same in attribute Spinoza means not being identical in attribute. Since by not being the same in attribute Spinoza means not being identical in attribute, and since (as I just said) by not being the same in attribute Spinoza means not having an attribute in common, it follows that by not being identical in attribute Spinoza means not having an attribute in common. On the reasonable assumption that what goes for attributes goes for properties in general (and so for properties of modes as well), which is more than reasonable (especially in light of Spinoza’s use of these terms

⁵²⁴ Some have endorsed an interpretation, rejected by Bennett (1984, 64) and somewhat enticing for Jarrett (2007, 56) and Cover (1999, 111-112), that Spinoza endorses the transitivity-denying notion of “relative identity” (a view found in Locke and now commonly associated with Geach). I think that Schmidt nips that possibility in the bud, however.

Perhaps it might be surmised that Spinoza in fact does not reject the Principle of Indiscernibility of Identicals but only abandons the transitivity of identity. Spinoza, however, accepts the latter explicitly—at least at the time he wrote the *Metaphysical Thoughts*: “As to my saying that the Son of God is the Father himself, I think it follows clearly from this axiom, namely, that things which agree with a third thing agree with one another.” (Schmidt 2009b, 93n42)
See Letter 12a for the passage that Schmidt has in mind.

interchangeably: DPP 1p7s I/161/2; Ep. 56), it follows that not being identical in property means not having a property in common. Therefore, if Spinoza endorses the trope analysis here in 2p39d, in which case the bodies are not identical in terms of A, then that just means that the bodies in question do not have property A in common. The problem is clear. Such an understanding of the bodies in question is unequivocally contrary to what Spinoza in fact says at 2p39d: “Let A be that which is *common* to . . . the human body and certain external bodies” (my emphasis).

Consider the problem this way. At 1a5 Spinoza says that when things have nothing in common with each other the concept of the one does not involve the concept of the other. On the supposition that A really exists and realism is false, that is, on the supposition that the A in one body is not identical to the A in another body, the property A in body3 and the property A in body5 have nothing in common (for reasons just explained). By 1a5, then, the concept A of body3 does not involve the property A of body5. At 2p39d, however, Spinoza says that to have the concept of A in body3 is to have the concept A of body5. Therefore, the supposition that the A in the one body is not identical to the A in the other body is absurd. It must be that the A in the one body is identical to the A in the other body. A, in other words, must be a universal for Spinoza.

Since Spinoza here in 2p39d describes A as that which is truly in *common* between multiple bodies, this is perhaps what we would expect anyway. Spinoza understands that the universal is in many *per identitatem* rather than *per similitudinem* (see 2p49s, 4p4d II/213/15-19, 3pref II/138/12-18) and he frequently and rather explicitly equates *what is universal to many* with *what is common to many* (TTP 6.10-11

III/88/15-16; TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20). He even uses the gold standard equals sign, *sive*, on occasion when making this equation of “universal or common” (2p49s II/134/6; TTP 4.6 III/61/16-17) and he makes it clear that he understands being “one and the same” in many, “inherent” in and exemplified by each, as being “universal” (3pref II/138/12-18; TP 3.18; TdIE 76). So in stark contrast to trope theory (and antirealism in general, in fact), it follows that Spinoza understands what is common among many to be strictly identical among many.

There are numerous checks internal to Spinoza’s system indicating that he understands talk of what is common among many in the manner of the realist, that is, that he regards what is common among many to be strictly identical among many.⁵²⁵ Consider just one stark case.

4p30 claims that nothing is evil to me in respect to what it has in common with me. To assume otherwise, Spinoza claims, would be to assume something absurd: that whatever is in common would be opposed to itself, self-undermining or self-contradicting. On what grounds does this follow? According to Spinoza, that which is evil to me is that which is harmful or destructive to me (see 4p8d). Hence if a thing is harmful or destructive to me in respect to something we have in common, that something must be harmful or destructive to itself, which is absurd. So Spinoza is implicitly asserting—implicitly, of course, at a degree just shy of explicitly—that what is common to me and something else is literally one and the same thing. Thus he feels entitled to make the bold claim that “insofar as a thing agrees with our nature, it cannot

⁵²⁵ See Steinberg 1984, 309.

be evil” (4p31d). We see the same sort of reasoning, and further indication that Spinoza does analyze commonality and agreement in terms of identity (in the spirit of the realist), at 4p31, which claims that everything is good to me in respect to what it has in common with me.

* * *

The case is settled, in my view. But let us consider the case afresh so as to convince even the most dogged and clever of antirealist interpreters. Examine the full demonstration for 2p39.

Let A be that which is common to, and peculiar to, the human body and certain external bodies, which is equally in the human body and in the same external bodies, and finally, which is equally in the part of each external body and in the whole. There will be an adequate idea of A in God (by 2p7c), both insofar as he has the idea of the human body, and insofar as he has ideas of the posited external bodies. Let it be posited now that the human body is affected by an external body through what it has in common with it, that is, by A; the idea of this affection will involve property A (by 2p16), and so (by 2p7c) the idea of this affection, insofar as it involves property A, will be adequate in God insofar as he is affected with the idea of the human body, that is (by 2p13), insofar as he constitutes the nature of the human mind. And so (by 2p11c), this idea is also adequate in the human mind, q.e.d. (2p39d)

Watch how this demonstration fails if we assume that Spinoza endorses a trope analysis of these bodies having property A. Assume that the A in my body and the A pervading the whole of body2 are nonidentical properties (respectively, A1 and A2), as in the case of the trope interpretation. Let body2 impact my body in some way through the property that we have “in common.”⁵²⁶ The affection in my body that results from

⁵²⁶ I put “in common” in quotes because, as we saw above, if Spinoza endorses the trope analysis here in 2p39d, in which case the bodies are not identical in terms of A, then that just means that the bodies in question do not have property A in common. But let us just bracket off that consideration right now.

the impact is due to the relevant properties of my body (one of which Spinoza assumes in 2p39s is going to be A1) plus the relevant properties of body2, which Spinoza seems to assume in 2p39d is only A2 (see 2p16d). By parallelism (2p7), the idea of this affection consists of the idea of the relevant nature of my body, that relevant nature being at least in part A1, plus the idea of the relevant nature of the other body2, that relevant nature being just (at least let us assume) A2 (2p16). Since A1 and A2 are nonidentical properties (according to our trope assumption), by parallelism the idea of A1 and the idea of A2 are nonidentical, in which case the idea of A2, unlike the idea of A1, is not in my mind—my mind being, for Spinoza, the complex idea of nothing more than my body (2p13d). It follows that my mind does not alone contain the complete idea of this affection; it is missing the idea of A2. That is to say, the idea in my mind of the affection is inadequate, partial (2p11c). This contradicts what Spinoza concludes in 2p39d, which is that the idea of this affection is in fact adequate in my mind. The trope analysis of the bodies in question having property A is out, then.⁵²⁷

One might insist that, even on the trope reading, to have an adequate idea of the A in my body is to have an adequate idea of the As in the other bodies. The basic idea is this. Since the A in body3 is *indiscernible* from the A in, say, body1, I have an adequate idea of the A in body1 just by having an adequate idea of the A in body3.

⁵²⁷ My conclusion that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of modes having properties seems to contradict the findings of various scholars. Various scholars hold that these properties, along with the modes that have them, are to be tropes (D. C. Williams 1966, 107; Eisenberg 1971, 184; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; ; Bennett 1994, 15; Bennett 2001, I.145 (but see 1984, 94); Moltmann 2003, 456; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Newlands 2015, 255-272; Newlands forthcoming-a; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Yovel 1989, 162-163; Yovel 1990b, 164; Heil 2006a, 11, 86; Heil 2008, 20; see Basile 2012, 32).

Here is the problem with such a response. It may very well make good sense to say that I have an adequate idea of the A in body1 just by having an adequate idea of the A in body3. After all, body3's A is inherently exactly similar to body1's A. However, that does not change the fact that such an explanation for why I have an adequate idea of the A in body1 just by having an adequate idea of the A in body3 deviates from *Spinoza's* explanation. As we saw above, *his* explanation is that body3's A is *one and the same* as body1's A.

For the sake of the argument, however, I will grant the point to my opponent. Perhaps it might be said that, in light of the fact that Spinoza is a “thoroughgoing antirealist,” Spinoza *ought* to be giving the trope-friendly explanation for why I have an adequate idea of the A in body1 just by having an adequate idea of the A in body3. I do not know what sort of weight such a point is supposed to carry (especially when its premise, that Spinoza is a “thoroughgoing antirealist,” is precisely the issue at question and one that, in my view, has already been settled). But so be it. Now I want to move on to highlighting a few stark anti-Spinozistic results that follow from the trope interpretation of 2p39d.

First, recall that if a property is a particular, that is, a nonuniversal, then it must be particular due to nothing but itself. All true particulars are, as Ockham says, particular through themselves.⁵²⁸ If a property was particularized by something else, that is, if its particularity-maker were beyond or other to itself, then it in itself would be a

⁵²⁸ Ockham *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 6, n. 105-107; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Spade 1994, 171.

nonparticular, that is, a universal, and so not a trope.⁵²⁹ As a particular in itself, a trope is numerically different from everything else, even something exactly similar. As Ockham says, “*numerical difference* is the essence of the particular,”⁵³⁰ in which case a trope’s distinction from any other candidate entity would be unassailable on mere grounds of indiscernibility.⁵³¹

In light of the very fact that tropes are particulars in themselves, several infamous problems facing trope theory come into relief. These problems are devastating as far as Spinoza is concerned.

One of the problems is that of swapping. We looked at the swapping problem in the case of attributes (see Chapter V). The same problem appears in case of the various A tropes in question at the level of modes on the trope reading of 2p39d. Since the A of body1 and the nonidentical A of body2 are inherently indiscernible, one could be swapped for the other without there being any objectively discernible change, without there being a way to tell apart the pre-swapped state of affairs from the state of affairs where the A tropes have been swapped. Since the swapped and pre-swapped versions could not be told apart even by the most powerful mind, there seems to be no sufficient explanation for denying the strict identity of the purportedly two A properties. This I think would suggest to Spinoza, and all thoroughgoing explanatory rationalists, that there is no reason to keep saying that there are two, this A and that A. Saying that there are *many* As, rather than just A, would violate the explanatory rationalism that Spinoza

⁵²⁹ See Istvan 2011.

⁵³⁰ See Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Robinson 2014; Spade 1994, 171.

⁵³¹ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9.

appears to accept (1a2, 1p7d, 1p8s2, 1p11d2; 1p16; 1p18).⁵³² This sort of issue does not arise, of course, when one considers property A to be a universal. The distinct bodies would have one and the same A property.

Another problem, which we have yet to consider, is known as “piling.” Here is Armstrong’s description of the piling problem.

It seems clear that the very same [individual] cannot instantiate a property more than once. To say that a is F *and* that a is F is simply to say [(by the equivalence rule called “redundancy”)] that a is F. Given the Identity view of properties, [that is, the realist view of properties,] this is immediately explicable. For a [trope theorist (of a bundle-persuasion)], however, an ordinary concrete [individual] is a collection of [tropes]. Why should not this collection contain two [tropes] which resemble exactly? But this will be equivalent to saying that the concrete [individual] has the same property twice over. The [trope theorist] can only meet this difficulty by introducing an ad hoc principle forbidding exactly resembling [tropes] to be [properties] of the same concrete [individual].⁵³³

Because tropes are particular in themselves (and thus not subject to the identity of indiscernibles), there are no grounds for distinguishing the situation where body1 has one million exactly similar A properties from the situation where body1 has merely one A property.

Now, the fact that trope theory tolerates such an empty possibility is, according to Armstrong, “not decisive” against trope theory. The trope theorist might just bite the piling bullet or come up with an ad hoc principle forbidding piling—a principle such as that tropes are subject to the identity of indiscernibles in those cases where they pertain to one and the same individual.

⁵³² See Della Rocca 2002; Della Rocca 2003a. Leibniz, the thinker that explicitly advocates the principle of sufficient reason, at least thinks this way. For a good discussion of this, see Rescher 1979, 51.

⁵³³ Armstrong 1978, 86.

The fact that trope theory tolerates piling is rather decisive against the interpretation that *Spinoza* thinks of attributes as tropes, however. Such a commitment would be in violation of a principle, the so-called “Eleatic Principle,” that Spinoza endorses: that whatever exists must be causally efficacious (1p36, 1p36d) such that, and as the Eleatic Stranger says in Plato’s *Sophist*, “the definition of being is simply power.”⁵³⁴ Moreover, there is, relatedly, a violation of explanatory rationalism. For if there is no discernible difference between body1’s having one million A properties and body1’s having just one A property, then on what grounds can we even say that there are one million rather than just one? Might Spinoza have been willing to posit an ad hoc principle forbidding piling? I do not think so. Perhaps Spinoza does sometimes make ad hoc maneuvers. But it seems at least that he does not intend to.⁵³⁵ Furthermore, there is no indication that he feels the need to posit the ad hoc principle in the case at hand. There is no indication precisely because he has no need. He has no need because property A in 2p39d is a universal.

One might insist that Spinoza simply did not consider such theoretical problems and thus did not see how his antirealist view, particularly that of trope theory, is in tension with his other beliefs. But realize that I can always just bring out the following trump card. Simply by the identity of indiscernibles (1p4), the A1 property and the A2 property would have to be identical for Spinoza.

⁵³⁴ Plato *Sophist*, 247e.

⁵³⁵ See Della Rocca 2008, 42, 66.

Now, one might say, in response, that Spinoza may have slipped from his strict advocacy of the identity of indiscernibles here at 2p39d or that, and as Lin suggests might be the case, Spinoza's identity of indiscernibles is not unqualified, not global, but instead may apply only at the level of substances.⁵³⁶ Such seemingly ad hoc maneuvers are all major stretches, though. And concerning specifically Lin's suggestion, I agree with the following remark from Della Rocca.

Although in 1p4 and the surrounding passages Spinoza is primarily interested in the issue of the identity and distinctness of substances, the general term "thing" (*res*) in 1p4 and its demonstration shows that his claim would apply to modes as well as substances.⁵³⁷

Spinoza does not permit exception clauses in the case of the laws of nature. As Spinoza makes it clear in the preface to Part 3 of the *Ethics*, the laws of nature are immutable and, "always and everywhere the same," apply across all domains. This is just another indication of Spinoza's being the prince of univocity. I see no reason why such a view would not apply to all explanatory principles. If so, then the identity of indiscernibles would apply across all domains.

* * *

Above I have been assuming that on the trope interpretation of 2p39d the following is the case. When Spinoza says that property A is common to body1, body2, body3, body4, body5, and body6, he means that each body has its own A property nonidentical to the A properties of the other bodies despite being indiscernible from those other A properties. Perhaps the trope case would be more resilient if something

⁵³⁶ See Lin 2013.

⁵³⁷ Della Rocca 1996, 198n46.

“else” was assumed—something similar to certain antirealist interpretations of Plato’s forms: that to say that each of the bodies in 2p39d have property A in common is simply to say that A is spread across them (sort of like spilled soda across two conjoined tables). In other words, perhaps the trope case would be more resilient if we took it to be saying that different portions of A—a scattered property, if you will—are in each body. Unfortunately, the trope-as-scattered-property maneuver, although having the apparent benefit of giving a trope-friendly explanation for the fact that Spinoza talks merely about *one* A property rather than *many* A properties, cannot save the trope interpretation of 2p39d. Seeing why will add a new angle to my case.

If the trope interpreter tries to make what each of the bodies in 2p39d have in common just be scattered portions of one property, then there are only two possibilities. (1) These pieces of the one property are strictly identical (at least at some core level).⁵³⁸ (2) These pieces are not strictly identical (at any level). If (1), which is the natural answer since Spinoza says that one single property A is *equally* in each of the bodies in question, then this is just strict identity across diversity and thus realism. If (2), then there is no inherent connection, just a congeries, an aggregate of parts, in which case A is nothing but a disunited heap of pieces called “one” simply by convention or perhaps some sort of operational unity.⁵³⁹

Is option 2 viable for Spinoza? No. Reality as an unconnected multiplicity of individuals strictly identical in no respect is of course the right (and beautiful) picture for

⁵³⁸ This is how Copleston seems to understand Leibniz’s talk of diffused properties (1960, 300).

⁵³⁹ See Fullerton 1894, 222, 224-225; Taylor 1972a, 190.

the antirealist.⁵⁴⁰ Understanding this quite well and believing Spinoza to be an antirealist, Klever, Schütze, and Eisenberg appear to draw the conclusion that an attribute like Extension is just, as Eisenberg puts it, “the totality of all bodies,” such that the infinite power of Extension is nothing but the power of all modes of Extension taken together.⁵⁴¹ According to Bennett, scholars who take Spinoza’s pejorative remarks against universals too seriously are prone to draw such a conclusion, a conclusion where what is in truth “the universal extension” gets reduced merely to “the extended realm.”⁵⁴² Scholars who take Spinoza’s pejorative remarks against universals too seriously are prone, in effect, to draw a conclusion where what is a universal, which is by no means an aggregate (as Plato reminds us through Socrates),⁵⁴³ gets broken up into “an unending aggregate of discontinuous particulars.”⁵⁴⁴ Such a conclusion about Spinozistic attributes is, so I am inclined to agree with Hallett, “too jejune to merit refutation.”⁵⁴⁵ After all, the attributes are univocally involved in each of the modes (1p18, 2p1d, 2p13sl2d; TdIE 101) to which they are ontologically prior (TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35). Thus the attributes are, as Fullerton explains, to be understood as universals rather than as heaps.

It seems to me sufficiently clear that Spinoza treated [Extension and the other attributes] rather as universals than as aggregates [of their modes].⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁰ See Bonazzi 2013.

⁵⁴¹ Eisenberg 1990, 15n12; Klever 1990, 95; Schütze 1923, 41; see Naess 1975, 62-63; Wild 1930, xxvii-xxviii. John Harris suggests a similar interpretation in 1698, claiming that, for Spinoza, “the Deity is the whole Mass of Beings or of Matter in the Universe” (1698, 31).

⁵⁴² Bennett 1984, 39; see Matson 1990, 87; Naess 1975, 62-63; Wolfson 1921, 110.

⁵⁴³ Plato *Meno* 77a.

⁵⁴⁴ Haserot, 1950, 492.

⁵⁴⁵ Hallett 1957, 13.

⁵⁴⁶ Fullerton 1894, 224.

Now, one passage in the TTP may very well insinuate the heap view.

The universal power of the whole of nature is nothing but the power of all individual things taken together. (TTP 16.2)

But since Spinoza also holds that Extension in its absolute nature—that is, considered truly—is prior to all modes and so is not just the sum of all of its modes (TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35), this passage ought to be regarded as endorsing something compatible with that fact. So I would say, to give at least a preliminary stab at reconciliation, that by “nature” in this TTP passage, Spinoza is referring merely to the entire realm of *natura naturata*, the realm of modes.

It is easy to see that my earlier arguments against the trope interpretation of 2p39d apply equally in the case of the option 2 understanding of the claim that each of the bodies have in common merely portions of one property, trope A. And as I just suggested, an unwanted result would follow from taking this view and applying it to the most universal of properties of bodies, extendedness, such that each body was a piece of the one extendedness trope (as understood in the option 2 way). The realm of *natura naturata* under the attribute of Extension would be a congeries through and through—a mere heap of bodies at no level identical.⁵⁴⁷ Spinoza denies this, however. Extendedness is equally in all bodies (see 2p38c) in the same sense in which the property A of 2p39d is equally in all of the five bodies in question. What sense is that? If my various arguments above are right, then in the realist sense.

⁵⁴⁷ A. E. Taylor has this in mind, I think, when he explains that because Spinoza is an antirealist, and thus holds that there is no inherent unity among things (this lust has nothing in common with that lust, and the like), Spinoza cannot be a real pantheist (1972a, 190).

According to Mahnke, Leibniz agrees that extendedness for Spinoza is in each body in the manner of the realist.⁵⁴⁸ Mahnke notes in fact that Leibniz, wanting to distance himself from Spinoza's "universalistic monism" where there is one being in every being, will sometimes stress the antirealist position⁵⁴⁹ (as seen, for instance, in his letters to De Volder) that the universe is a mere aggregate of pluralities "united," not "really" in the sense described by Suárez,⁵⁵⁰ but "only from spirit."⁵⁵¹ Woolhouse summarizes Leibniz's reading of Spinoza on the matter.

Locating him by reference to the medieval philosopher Averroës [who was a pantheistic realist concerning universals⁵⁵²], and by reference to the seventeenth-century Quietists who saw individual minds as drops in the ocean of a universal spirit, Leibniz says that Spinoza is "not far from the doctrine of a single universal spirit."⁵⁵³

Moses Mendelssohn also reads Spinoza in this way. Indeed, Mendelssohn claims that realism concerning universals, which allows there to be strict identity and thus true unity among a diversity of things, is precisely what poisons Spinoza into regarding the realm of *natura naturata* as something with greater unity than that of simply a heap of isolated things merely more or less similar all the way down. And based on this observation, "Mendelssohn argues that it was Spinoza's mistaken belief in the reality of universals that led him to his monism."⁵⁵⁴ Here are the words of Gottlieb on the matter.

Mendelssohn's argument is also directed against the all-is-one side of Spinozism. Mendelssohn claims that Spinoza's conceiving the totality of finite particular as

⁵⁴⁸ Mahnke 1925, Intro.2n11.

⁵⁴⁹ See Mates 1986, ch. 10.

⁵⁵⁰ Suárez MD 6.2.13; see Ross 1962, 743-744.

⁵⁵¹ Leibniz 1965, II 256; although compare Leibniz 1965 III 429ff and *Monadology* 40 and 47.

⁵⁵² See Christian Brothers 1893, 97; Thiel 1998, 214, 231.

⁵⁵³ Woolhouse 1993, 155. The part of the quote from Leibniz can be found at 1969, 554. For similar sentiments, see also *New Essays* 59 and *Theodicy* 77-80. See Thiel 1998, 214, 260n171.

⁵⁵⁴ Gottlieb 2003, 189.

[inherently united] is grounded in his mistaken belief in the reality of universals. . . . For Spinoza, substance grounds the systematicity and uniformity of the universe, specifically the infinite attributes of extension and thought of which all finite particulars including all human beings are modes. Mendelssohn agrees with Spinoza that reason demands that the universe be regarded as an intelligible whole and that the systematicity and uniformity of nature are what render it intelligible. But for Mendelssohn, Spinoza's mistake is his assuming that the finite [individuals] compose a real unity, a continuous whole. . . . In reality, according to Mendelssohn, finite [individuals] only compose an aggregate, that is, a discontinuous whole consisting of discrete parts. . . . The only unity among these finite [individuals] is ideal—infinite extension and thought are mere entia rationis. As Mendelssohn puts it, "Without thinking beings, the world of bodies would be no world, it would compose no whole. Rather, at most it would consist of isolated unities."⁵⁵⁵

Although I do not draw the ultimate conclusion that Caird does, which is that Spinoza's philosophy is contradictory on the status of universals, Caird is for the above reasons right to note that Spinoza's commitment to real unity in nature is an anti-antirealist commitment.

Even if . . . Spinoza meant nothing more than the scientific conception of the unity and uniformity of nature, the supposition would be fatal to the assertion of his "thorough-going nominalism." Nominalism regards individual substances as the only realities, and nature as, at most, a name for the collection or aggregate of such substances.⁵⁵⁶

* * *

What goes for attributes does in fact go for properties of modes. Not being identical in property means not having a property in common. I have argued this point from numerous angles. There is no other analysis left but the realist one, which again makes sense in light of the following facts. (1) For multiple entities to be identical in some respect is for them to have a universal (2p49s, 4p4d II/213/15-19). (2) For multiple entities to have a common property is, for Spinoza, to be identical in some respect (as I

⁵⁵⁵ Gottlieb 2011, 101.

⁵⁵⁶ Caird 1888, 32-33.

have argued against several commentators⁵⁵⁷). (3) For Spinoza the term “common” and “universal” are interchangeable (TTP 4.6 III/61/16-17, TTP 6.10-11 III/88/15-16, TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20). In the end, then, it seems indubitable that Spinoza allows that properties of modes can be identical, as opposed to—at best—merely exactly similar.

When we drop the unnatural notion that Spinoza is giving a trope analysis of the 2p39d bodies having property A and make the trope interpreter’s “A1,” “A2,” and so on strictly identical, then the idea in my mind of the affection in question at 2p39d is in fact adequate. Here is why. The affection in my body that results from my body’s encounter with body2 is due to the relevant nature of my body—that relevant nature being property A (and perhaps some other properties)—plus the relevant nature of body 2—that relevant nature being (let us just assume Spinoza is saying here) nothing but property A. By parallelism, the idea of this affection consists of the idea of the relevant nature of my body—that relevant nature being property A (and perhaps some other properties)—plus the idea of the relevant nature of body 2—that relevant nature being (let us just assume Spinoza is saying here) nothing but property A. Since A is a universal, the A of my body is identical with the A of body2. Since, by parallelism, the idea of A is a universal, the idea of the A of my body is identical with the idea of the A of body2.⁵⁵⁸ Therefore, the

⁵⁵⁷ See Huan 1914, 248-249; Hübner 2014, 128; Newlands forthcoming-a; Rice 1991, 299; Rice 1994, 22; Schoen 1977, 539.

⁵⁵⁸ That an idea can be a universal contradicts what many commentators say. See, for example, Koistinen 2009a, 173-174. I take it that Lin agrees with my position here and with my general claims in this section.

Everything exemplifies the common properties, so every encounter ‘arouses and invigorates’ the common notions. Common notions are adequate ideas. (Lin 2009, 277)

I take it that Bennett agrees as well.

[Spinoza] usually pays little attention to particulars as distinct from the natures they instantiate. He seems always to pick them out descriptively as ‘the thing which has nature N’, rather than indexically as ‘that one’ or ‘the one in front of *me now*’. . . . This, by the way, shows how perfectly wrong it is to

idea of the nature of my body fully contains the idea of the affection in question. Since my mind is the complex idea of nothing more than my body, it follows that my mind alone contains the complete idea of this affection. That is to say, the idea in my mind of the affection is adequate, complete (2p11c). There really is no other way to make 2p39d work than to take Spinoza's words at face value and accept that property A is a universal.⁵⁵⁹

This makes perfect sense with the *Ethics* at large. In contrast to what some commentators may believe,⁵⁶⁰ Spinoza holds that the ideas in correlation with the common properties discussed in 2p38-2p40 are “universal notions” that are *adequate* (2p40s2, II/122/1-14), apprehended as they are by reason, an unwavering source of true ideas (2p40s2; Ep. 2). That they are adequate is significant because this entails that they are necessarily “absolute,” “perfect,” and “true” (2p34, 2p40s2, 2p41, 2p44; TTP 4.6, TTP 6.6), that is, that they correlate with how things really are (1a6), in which case there can be no doubt that there is a universal—property A—under Extension corresponding to it.⁵⁶¹ Spinoza is saying, then, that the adequate ideas discussed in 2p38-2p40 correlate with *true* universals.⁵⁶²

call Spinoza a nominalist, if this means that he rejected universal items in favour of particulars. (Bennett 1984, 302)

⁵⁵⁹ The same argument can be made for the A described in 2p38, which is equally in the part and the whole of all bodies. So for those who feel, as some do, that 2p39 is a deviant text, just take what I have said and apply it to 2p38. For why someone may think 2p39 is an outlying passage, see LeBuffe 2010a, 219.

⁵⁶⁰ See Goetschel 2004, 40-41; Hull 2005, 19; Matson 1990, 87.

⁵⁶¹ See Copleston 1960, 232.

⁵⁶² See Gueroult 1974, 387.

6.7 Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have compiled a wide array of passages indicating that Spinoza welcomes universals into his ontology at the level of *natura naturata*: 1p17s, 1p8s2, 2p10s, 2p37-2p40, 4p30. Second, I have blocked several strategies for giving these passages antirealist-friendly renderings. The 2p37-2p40 group of passages, with its discussion of adequately conceived properties equally in many individuals, plus all of the other passages (which freely admit multiple instantiation of forms and natures), amount to powerful evidence that Spinoza welcomes universals.

There does not appear to be any way to get rid of the realism of these passages without getting rid of the passages themselves. And I see no way that these passages are not to be taken as a serious part of Spinoza's system. Therefore, if Spinoza is indeed an antirealist (as is commonly said and as certain of his remarks may indicate), it must be that his thought is contradictory on the matter. As I argue in Chapter XI, however, Spinoza is not contradictory on the matter. But before I get to that point, I will explain in the next chapter that, for Spinoza, every property of a given mode is a universal and indeed that every mode itself is a universal.

CHAPTER VII

(PART 3. MODES): SPINOZA'S REALIST ANALYSIS OF MODE PROPERTIES AND OF MODES IN GENERAL

7.1 Introductory remarks

In the previous chapter, Chapter VI, I argued that Spinoza welcomes universals into his ontology at the level of modes. A clear marker of his allowance of universals at the level of modes is the prevalence of cases where one property is wholly instantiated by many modes, such that the various individuals with that property are literally identical in respect to that property.

In the chapter now at hand I defend three additional points. First, I argue that, for Spinoza, all ontologically authentic properties of modes, not just those actually shared by two or more modes, are universals. Second, I argue that, for Spinoza, all ontologically authentic modes, including you and this truck, are properties. Third, I argue that, for Spinoza, all ontologically authentic modes, including you and this truck, are universals.

After establishing the above three points I respond to two important objections. The first is that no modes—neither those discussed in this chapter, Chapter VII, nor those discussed in the previous chapter, Chapter VI—can be universals since (1) a universal is that which has the aptitude to be wholly present, not merely in multiple *modes* of one substance, but in multiple *substances* and (2) there is only *one* substance: God. The second is that no modes can be universals because, as at least the acosmist

reading of Spinoza claims, there is no such realm of modes; the realm of modes is not ontologically authentic.

7.2 All properties of modes are universals

Is it that *all* properties of modes, even if instantiated merely once, are universals? Or is it that just those properties of modes actually shared by many modes are universals? The former is correct. Spinoza endorses a wholesale realist analysis of modes having properties, such that even if the property of a given mode is instantiated merely once it is nevertheless a universal. The reasons why this is the right answer are perhaps already clear from the discussion about substances and their attributes in Chapter V. Let me lay out the case, in barebones fashion, so that no backtracking is essentially required.

There are two background points that one should keep in mind before I argue that even a property possessed by merely one mode is a universal for Spinoza. First, one needs to avoid the snare of confusing the notion of a property's being universal in the colloquial sense, that is, its having a sort of general extent or wide-ranging scope, with the notion of a property's being *a* universal in the philosophical sense, that which is apt to be one in many (a nature that does not itself guarantee that there be a certain number of instantiations of that nature). Even if we held such a confusion, it could not be denied that Spinoza welcomes universals into his ontology. Again, the 2p37-2p40 block plus all of the other passages discussed in Chapter VI require as much. Nevertheless, Spinoza's realism concerning universals stands out in greater relief once we shed the confusion. Second, a universal property is not merely that which actually has many instances. A

property can be a universal even if it is only instantiated once over. A property *Fness* is a universal even if it is instantiated once over so long as it is the sort of property *apt* to be one in many. As I discussed in Chapter V, the sufficient indication of such an aptitude is that if in addition to *F* individual *o* there were a different *F* individual *p*, the *Fness* in each would be strictly one and the same, literally undivided, in both. If there is a property instantiated merely once and it is *not* apt to be one in many, then that just means that it is a particularized property or, as it is known in contemporary literature, a trope.

Now that I have made these background points, I will explain how, for Spinoza, even if the property of a given mode is instantiated merely once it is a universal. There are two arguments that I want to consider for this view.

Here is the first argument. Since Spinoza has a realist analysis of substances having attributes (Chapter V) as well as of modes having common properties (Chapter VI), it would be odd for him to switch to thinking in terms of an antirealist when it comes to properties had by only one mode. Typically, and as is evident by the fact that the debate between realists and property-welcoming antirealists is described as simply whether properties are universals or nonuniversals, if one admits that there are properties and construes even one property as a universal, then that just means that one construes properties *in general* as the realist does: as universals. We know that Spinoza allows for properties in his ontology. Indeed, we know there to be many cases where a property of a given mode is instantiated multiple times over in the way of the realist, meaning that all the modes with the property are strictly identical in terms of that property. In light of

the fact that the debate is whether properties are universals or not, it would be odd to find one saying (especially prior to the contemporary period), “Oh well these properties over here are universals but those properties over there are not.” It does not work like that. The debate concerns how one construes the nature of properties. Are they universal or not?

To see the force of this first argument, consider the following. How did realists get by throughout the centuries holding that properties are universals in the face of properties with only one instance? They got by like Aristotle. As will be recalled from Chapter V, for Aristotle sunness is a universal even though it is *necessarily* the case that there is only one sun. It is a universal, according to Aristotle, because were there another sun, sunness would be multiply instantiated, which indicates that sunness is shareable in principle and thus a universal. It is a universal because it is said, to use Spinoza’s characterization of universals, equally whether of one or many or infinitely many individuals (2p49s II/134/8-10, 4p4d II/213/15-19), such that it “must be in each” individual of which it is said, “the same in all” individuals to which it pertains (2p49s II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18; see TdIE 76; TP 3.18).⁵⁶³ Likewise, realist church fathers did not deny the universal status of those certain properties that necessarily have only one instance—one instance, say, because God pledges not to let those properties be shared by many creatures.⁵⁶⁴ For realist church fathers, such properties that never will be

⁵⁶³ The hypothetical statement “even if John knew (*per impossibile*) that he was going to be eternally damned by God, he would love God regardless” shows the nature of John, namely, that he has a disinterested love for God (see Riley 1996, 145). Likewise, the hypothetical statement “even if there were another sun, that other sun would have one and the same sunness property of the real sun” shows the nature of sunness, namely, that it is a universal.

⁵⁶⁴ See Zachhuber 2013.

shared (in the realist sense), that are necessarily such that they will not be held in common (in the realist sense), are in themselves, in principle, shareable. Take away God's pledge and add in some other favorable circumstances and they would be shared. So since it is definitive that, for Spinoza, *some* properties are universals, namely, those that are in fact actually multiply instantiated, it would be quite strange for him to switch his view of the nature of properties when it comes to those with only one instantiation.

Here now is the second, and more definitive, argument for the claim that even a property instantiated by merely one mode is, for Spinoza, a universal: that which is in principle shareable, apt to be one in many—that which all by itself imposes no restriction on the number of instantiations it may have. If in addition to F mode o there were a different F mode p and o and p were indiscernible in terms of Fness, then the Fness in each must be the very same Fness for Spinoza (the indiscernibility of o and p in terms of Fness implying, for Spinoza, their numerical identity in terms of Fness: see 1p4-1p5d).⁵⁶⁵ Even if Fness is instantiated only once, then, it is a universal.

To say that the Fness of mode o is not a universal is to say that it is a trope. To say that it is a trope is to say the following: if in addition to F mode o there were an objectively different F mode p and o and p were inherently indiscernible in terms of Fness, then the Fness in each would *not* be the very same Fness. Spinoza does not regard the Fness of mode o as a trope. Remember, tropes are *nonuniversal* properties; they are “abstract *particulars*.” As Ockham says, “*numerical difference* is the essence of the

⁵⁶⁵ Della Rocca 2008, 47-48, 87, 100-101, 134, 196-197.

particular.”⁵⁶⁶ Because numerical difference is the essence of, and so “built into,” particulars,⁵⁶⁷ and because tropes are particulars, “[t]ropes,” as Armstrong explains, “are not identical across different [individuals], as universals are.”⁵⁶⁸ Hence, and in the words of Pickavance, “[u]niversals but not particulars are identical if indiscernible.”⁵⁶⁹ Tropes, in effect, are those entities whose indiscernibility “is not sufficient for identity”⁵⁷⁰ and thus whose distinction from one another is “irreducibly primitive” and thus unassailable on mere grounds of indiscernibility.⁵⁷¹

I take it to be clear, then, that Spinoza endorses a wholesale realist analysis of modes being characterized. To say that a mode has a property or a nature or a form is to say, for Spinoza, that a mode instantiates a universal, that which is apt to be one in many, that which is of such a disposition that it is said equally whether of one or several individuals.

7.3 Modes are properties

Are modes properties, according to Spinoza? Even though modes are usually construed as properties, there has been some debate about this in Spinoza scholarship. After all, it seems strange and unpalatable, as Curley explains, to regard concrete individuals as chairs and humans as properties.⁵⁷² In line with the majority of commentators, however, I think that Spinozistic modes—the nonfundamental effects of

⁵⁶⁶ Burns 1914, 88, 99; see Cross 2010; Edwards 1969, 228; Robinson 2014; Spade 1994, 171.

⁵⁶⁷ Robinson 2014.

⁵⁶⁸ Armstrong 1989, 114.

⁵⁶⁹ Pickavance 2008, 148.

⁵⁷⁰ Campbell 1990, 44.

⁵⁷¹ Levin 2002, 133; see Pickavance 2008, 148; Maurin 2002, 17; Thiel 1998, 213-215; Thiel 2011, 21; Stout 1936, 9; Williams 1986, 3; Ehring 2004, 229-231.

⁵⁷² See Curley 1969, 18, 37.

God (1p16, 1p15d, 1p24, 1p26; Ep. 43) that are “in” God (1d5)—are properties. Here are three items of support.⁵⁷³

(Reason 1) Spinoza characterizes items like me as modes. The Latin term here, *modus*, means *way*. Spinoza himself explicitly equates “*modus*” and “*via*” (“way”) (5pref). The ways of a thing are the properties of a thing. That is true as much now⁵⁷⁴ as it was then.⁵⁷⁵ Modes or properties are ways of being. If Spinoza did not mean that I am a way that God is or, better put in light of the participial nature of modes, that I am a waying of God (see HG ch.5 and HG ch.33), then presumably he would not have used this term “mode” (and presumably so many readers would not have been so outraged by his view that, as Mosheim puts it early in the 18th Century, “rabbits, dogs, mosquitos are *modi* of God”).⁵⁷⁶ “Mode” is a term that Descartes himself uses to refer to the properties of an individual. As Bayle points out, modes have always been understood to denote properties or qualities.⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, Spinoza himself characterizes modes as affections (see 1d5, 1p25c). The Latin term here, *affectio*, means *condition or quality or property*.⁵⁷⁸

(Reason 2) At 1p28d Spinoza says that any given finite mode must follow from that attribute merely *insofar as* that attribute is expressed as some other mode (see Chapter X). The Latin term “*quatenus*” is key here. It means *insofar as* or *to the extent*

⁵⁷³ See Bayle 1991; Bennett 1984, 92ff; Bennett 1996b, 67; Carriero 1995; Della Rocca 2008, 61ff; Lin 2006b, 6-8, 9n12; Melamed 2006; Melamed 2013d; Nadler 2006, 73ff; Viljanen 2009, 56; Whitehead 1978, 6-7.

⁵⁷⁴ See Armstrong 1989, 96.

⁵⁷⁵ See Bayle 1991, 332.

⁵⁷⁶ Mosheim 1734-1736, 2.174ff.

⁵⁷⁷ Bayle 1991, 331.

⁵⁷⁸ See Johnson 1967, 92-93 (entry on “affection”). Now, it is true that Spinoza calls modes “things” (see 1p15d, for example). Some may like to use the term “thing” to refer to nonproperties, but the term “thing” is in itself open enough to refer to anything.

that. Spinoza is, in effect, describing finite modes of attribute x as x expressed in a determinate way. He does so frequently (see 2p9 and 4p4d). The most natural way to take such talk of modes of x being x expressed in a certain way is that these modes are properties of x.

(Reason 3) Spinoza all but directly says that modes of God are God's properties (1p16d; see TTP 4). Spinoza offers simply the following as proof for his 1p16d claim that everything conceivable follows from God's nature: the greater a thing is the greater number of *properties* that follow from its nature. According to 1p16d, then, modes are properties of God.—If there is any doubt about my reading of 1p16d here, then consider the following. (1) 1p16d describes modes as the effects of God. (2) For Spinoza, knowledge of an *effect* through its cause is nothing other than the knowledge of the *property* of that cause (TTP 4.4 III/60/11). Therefore, modes of God are, as the effects of God, the properties of God. (The properties that are modes are in fact a specific sort of property on the tripartite scholastic scheme. They are not *accidental* properties of God, that is, those properties that result from God's nature plus the nature of anything else. They are not *fundamental defining* properties of God, that is, those properties that make up the bedrock essence of God: namely, the attributes. They are, rather, the *propria* of God, that is, those properties that fail to be fundamental to God and to define God but, nevertheless, are necessary to God.)⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁹ See Garrett 2002, 156n24; Melamed 2009, 67-69; Pasnau 2011, 485n24 and 551.

7.4 Modes are universals

7.4.1 Modes are universals in Spinoza's system

The same basic argument used to show that, for Spinoza, properties of modes are universals can be used to show that modes, which are simply properties for Spinoza (as we saw in the last section), are universals.—Note that a more powerful version of the following argument is to be found at the end of Section 6.

(Premise 1) If mode Fness is a nonuniversal, then if there are two distinct F modes, the Fness mode in the one is nonidentical to the Fness mode in the other even when the Fness mode in the one is indiscernible from the Fness mode in the other.⁵⁸⁰

(Premise 2) According to Spinoza, it is not the case that if there are two distinct F modes, then the Fness mode in the one is nonidentical to the Fness mode in the other even when the Fness mode in the one is indiscernible from the Fness mode in the other. (Indeed, if there are two distinct F modes, it is necessarily the case that the Fness mode in the one is strictly identical to the Fness mode in the other when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.) (1p4-1p5d)

(Conclusion) Therefore, it is not the case that mode Fness is a nonuniversal.

I take it to be clear, then, that Spinoza endorses a realist analysis of modes in general. Modes are properties. Properties are either nonuniversals (tropes) or universals. A universal is that which is disposed to be wholly one in many, meaning at minimum,

⁵⁸⁰ This is true unless (1) we are dealing with modes of the same substance and (2) the trope theorist simply stipulates, as a brute fact, that that indiscernibility implies identity in the case where modes of the same substance are indiscernible in terms of property. This does not seem reasonable option in Spinozaland, where such brute facts do not fly.

and as Fonseca explains,⁵⁸¹ that it does not in itself impose a restriction on the number of individuals that instantiate it (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95). A sufficient indication of mode Fness's disposition to be one in many is that if there were—even *per impossibile*—another distinct F mode in addition to this F mode, then there would be one and the same Fness in each.

7.4.2 Spinoza knows that modes are universals

In light of Spinoza's historically-standard and sufficiently broad construal of universals as that which is said equally whether of one or many, I take it that Spinoza actually understands—at least at some level to be brought out given the right occasion—that each mode, actually common to several modes or not, is a universal. This is for the same general reason, which I offered in Chapter V, why I take it that Spinoza actually understands each attribute to be a universal.

(Premise 1) A mode is a property and is thus a nature.

(Premise 2) A nature in itself, as Spinoza explicitly says, does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature: considered in abstraction, it could be instantiated infinitely many times or twenty times—and yes, even just one time (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95). (As Fonseca explains,⁵⁸² this is just what a universal's characteristic aptness to be one in many amounts to. Nonuniversal properties, on the other hand, do impose such a restriction. That a universal does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature is also the key

⁵⁸¹ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

⁵⁸² Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

motivation for Aristotle's claim that "definition is of the universal,"⁵⁸³ the other motivations being two views that Spinoza explicitly endorses at 1p8s2: (a) that the definition of a thing refers to the nature of a thing and (b) that the nature of a thing imposes no restriction on the number of individuals with that nature.)

(Premise 3) That which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many individuals (Spinoza's construal of a universal at 2p49s) is that which does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals that instantiate it.—This is rather clear in itself. It is also entailed by the following facts, taken together. (1) That which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many is a nature (2p49s). (2) A nature does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95).

(Conclusion) Spinoza therefore construes each nature and thus each mode as a universal.

7.5 Objection and reply 1

7.5.1 Objection 1: the universal is apt to be one in many *substances*

Consider the following objection to my view that modes are universals for Spinoza.—Commentators have debated about whether in such cases as 2p39, 1p8s2, 2p10s, 1p17s, 4p30, and the like we really have an example of strict identity in diversity. Haserot, the famous realist interpreter of Spinoza, says yes. Rice, the famous antirealist interpreter, says no. Such discussion may distract us from the fact that even if in these passages multiple modes each have one and the same property, that still would not mean

⁵⁸³ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 1036a28-29 and 1040a8.

that the property is a universal. A universal is not *simply* that which is apt to be one in many. A universal is that which is apt to be one in many *substances*. In order to show that a property of a mode is a universal, then, one must show that it is apt to be one and the same in more than one substance. Since there is necessarily only one substance, it is not clear how this can be established.

7.5.2 Reply

I can make several responses to this objection. Here is one. In most typical cases, the realist-antirealist debate concerns whether properties are apt to be one and the same in many substances. This is because in most cases the debate takes place among substance pluralists. Nevertheless, there has never been a demand that multiple instantiation of a property within diverse components of *one* substance is not enough to call that property “a universal.” A universal is that which is apt to be wholly present in many things—things construed in the broadest sense: creatures, agents, doings, legs, modes, parts of a whole, and so on.⁵⁸⁴ If there is truly a diversity of some sort (which there appears to be since Spinoza talks about *many* modes of the one substance), and if there is something apt to be wholly present through more than one member of that diversity, then we have a universal.⁵⁸⁵ Whiteness, to use the common “Aristotelian” example, is multiply instantiated merely insofar as it is wholly present in two fingers of one hand, two parts of one finger, or so on.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ See Kemp Smith 1927, 145.

⁵⁸⁵ See Melamed 2013d, 58.

⁵⁸⁶ See Adamson 2013, 335; Des Chene 1996; Des Chene 2000, 176.

Think about it this way. Many church fathers, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Anselm, passionately defended a realist theory of universals so that they would be able to say, among other things, that the divine nature is literally one and the same in each member of the trinity.⁵⁸⁷ Jaspers puts the point well in describing Anselm's thinking on the matter.

In Anselm's dogmatic attacks on Roscellinus . . . the rejection of nominalistic thinking plays an essential role. If a thinker declares . . . the three persons, God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to be [nonuniversals], he is thinking like a nominalist and has three Gods. But if the universal, God, is Himself reality, then God is one, and the three persons are forms of the one: this idea is "realist," because it upholds the reality of the universals. Church dogma seems to demand "realist" thinking. Anyone, says Anselm, who fails to understand that several people are, as to species, *one* man, will surely not be able to understand that in the most mysterious of beings the three persons . . . are nevertheless only *one* God.⁵⁸⁸

Now, according to orthodoxy each member of the trinity is not its own substance. There is only one substance with three hypostases distinct merely in virtue of peculiar personal properties. That is why the 1092 Council of Soissons condemned Roscelin's view (which was obviously a function of his pronounced antirealism) that each member was its own substance in no respect one and the same as any other members.⁵⁸⁹ The point here is that the divine nature on the orthodox view counts as universal, wholly and undividedly present in each member of the trinity, even though it is one and the same merely in multiple *non*-substances: the hypostases of God.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ See Geisler 1999, entries on "Nominalism" and "Evaluation of Plato's Views"; Jaspers 1966, 2.112.

⁵⁸⁸ Jaspers 1966, 2.112.

⁵⁸⁹ Thilly 1914, 167-169.

⁵⁹⁰ See Giaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 19-20; Geisler 1999, entries on "Nominalism" and "Evaluation of Plato's Views"; Zachhuber 2013.

That I am on the right track here is suggested by the fact that when Spinoza makes his pejorative remarks against universals (remarks that I will discuss in Chapter XI), he never pulls the there-is-only-one-substance card. He does not say, that is, that because there is only one substance there cannot be properties apt to be strictly identical in many. When he rejects those universals formed through abstraction from sensorial images (see 2p40s1), it is not on grounds that there is only one substance (such that there is no chance for, say, redness, to be instantiated by many substances). Because he disputes universals like redness on grounds other than that there is just one substance, the suggestion is that he agrees that multiple instantiation among many modes of the *one* substance would indicate a universal. It would make sense that he would not restrict realist-level multiple instantiation to multiple instantiation across substances. After all, he freely admits that “things that are finite and have determinate existence” (2d7), such as this tree mode or the mode that is my body, have properties inhering in them (see 2p13d, 2p22d, 2p38d, 2p39s, 3p52s). Indeed, he is more than comfortable with referring to a finite mode, such as my body, as a “subject” of predication (see 3p5, 5a1; Ep. 23). This is significant because the realist-antirealist debate concerns whether there are such entities apt to be one and the same in many subjects of predication. If one and the same property is in multiple subjects of predication, then we know that we have a universal on our hands. There is no need to demand that the subjects of predication in question be substances. (Even if that demand were in place, however, there would still be a debate about whether Spinoza allows that properties of modes are apt to be one in many *modes*. Indeed, that is what the debate *has* concerned. Thus we see Haserot and others

(including me) arguing that properties of modes are indeed apt to be one in many *modes* while Rice and others argue that properties of modes are not so apt.)

There is another angle from which to respond to the objection. Because attributes are universals, as I explained in Chapter V, its modes are universals in the robust sense for which the objector was looking. When Spinoza supposes that there are two substances of the same attribute, he is supposing that there are two substances identical in attribute, not merely inherently exactly similar. If we have a case where the two supposed substances identical in terms of attribute have exactly similar modes, then these modes would be identical, not merely inherently exactly similar. Modes of the one substance are in this case inter-substance universals. To see, in effect, that mode F_{ness} is a universal even according to the unreasonably restrictive demand that a property is a universal only if it is apt to be one and the same in many substances, simply replace all talk of “distinct F *modes*” in the above Section 5 argument with “distinct F *substances*.”

(Premise 1) If mode F_{ness} is a nonuniversal, then if there are two distinct F substances, the F_{ness} mode in the one is nonidentical to the F_{ness} mode in the other even when the F_{ness} mode in the one is indiscernible from the F_{ness} mode in the other.

(Premise 2) According to Spinoza, it is not the case that if there are two distinct F substances, then the F_{ness} mode in the one is nonidentical to the F_{ness} mode in the other even when the F_{ness} mode in the one is indiscernible from the F_{ness} mode in the other. (Indeed, if there are two distinct F modes, it is necessarily the case that the

Fness mode in the one is strictly identical to the Fness mode in the other when the Fness in the one is indiscernible from the Fness in the other.) (1p4-1p5d)

(Conclusion) Therefore, it is not the case that mode Fness is a nonuniversal.

7.6 Objection and reply 2

7.6.1 Objection 2: acosmism

The condition of the possibility for Spinoza giving a realist analysis of modes is that there really are modes. However, many commentators (most famously Jacobi, Maimon, and Hegel)⁵⁹¹ hold that Spinoza is an acosmist. Taken in the strictest sense, this means that the realm of modes, the realm of *natura naturata*, lacks any degree of reality for Spinoza.⁵⁹² Echoing Maimon, who holds that “Spinozism denies the existence of the *world* . . . [and thus] should be called ‘acosmism,’”⁵⁹³ Hegel describes Spinoza’s monolithic One as a “dark shapeless abyss . . . in which all determinate content is swallowed up as radically null and void.”⁵⁹⁴ All Spinoza’s talk about diversification is, according to Hegel, merely talk about an illusion: “No truth at all is ascribed to finite things or the world as a whole in [Spinoza’s] philosophy”;⁵⁹⁵ “Spinoza . . . renounce[s] all that is determinate. . . , restrict[ing] himself to the One, giving heed to this alone.”⁵⁹⁶ Here is what Hegel has to say in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

⁵⁹¹ Jacobi 1994, 220-221; Maimon 1984, 217; Hegel 1991, 10, 97, 226-227; Hegel 1995, 1.244, 1.376-378, 1.432, 3.280-281, 3.288, 3.257-258.

⁵⁹² See Caird 1888, 20-25; Della Rocca 2008, 289-290, 314; Franks 2005, 10, 95, 170; Lewes 1866, 398; Lloyd 1994, 5-7; Melamed 2004, 79-80; Melamed 2010; Melamed 2012a; Melamed 2012c; Melamed 2013d, ch. 2; Mukhopadhyaya 1950; Parkinson 1955; Saw 1951, 81; Schmitz 1980, 229-243; Shilkarski 1914.

⁵⁹³ Maimon 1984, 217.

⁵⁹⁴ Hegel 1991, 227. Hegel’s remark here is quite similar, notice, to his famous remark that the Schellingian Absolute is the night in which all cows are black.

⁵⁹⁵ Hegel 1991, 227.

⁵⁹⁶ Hegel 1995, 3.257-258.

For Spinoza the absolute is substance, and no being is ascribed to the finite; his position is therefore monotheism and acosmism. So strictly is there only God, that there is no world at all. . . . [T]he finite has no genuine actuality.⁵⁹⁷

Here now is what Hegel has to say in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

Spinozism might really just as well or even better have been termed Acosmicism, since according to its teaching it is not to the world, finite existence, the universe, that reality and permanency are to be ascribed, but rather to God alone as the substantial. Spinoza maintains that there is no such thing as what is known as the world; it is merely a form of God, and in and for itself it is nothing. The world has no true reality, and all this that we know as the world has been cast in to the abyss of the one identity. There is therefore no such thing as finite reality, it has no truth whatever; according to Spinoza what is, is God, and God alone.⁵⁹⁸

What could be Hegel's reason for thinking that Spinoza is an acosmist? Now is not the time to get into an extended discussion of the matter. One thing is that Hegel views Spinoza as committed to the view that (1) all determination is negation, (2) finite beings are determinations and thus negations of the one, and (3) mere negations cannot be considered to have independent existence.⁵⁹⁹ Hegel suggests that since modes do not have independent existence they do not have reality. What warrants his jump from the dependence that modes have on God to their having no reality is perhaps that Hegel assumes the following three views. (1) The realm of modes ultimately follows from the simple absolute nature of God. (2) Diversification cannot follow from what is simple. (3) The following principle (which I call the "*Entäusserung* principle" and seems to underlie point 2) is true: if x follows in its entire being from a simple entity A (without the help of anything beyond A), then x can be nothing else but A (in A's entirety).

⁵⁹⁷ Hegel 1984, 1.432.

⁵⁹⁸ Hegel 1995, 3.281.

⁵⁹⁹ Hegel 2010, 472-473.

I am not going to discuss whether Hegel is right about the commitment of Spinoza's system to acosmism. But if I am right about the fact that a key motivation for Hegel's conclusion is that diversity cannot follow solely from what is simple, then the reader will note that my explanation in Chapter IV about how Spinoza's conception of a simple being allows for ontological structure might undercut this motivation. Even though I am quickly passing by this point, it is no small point. For throughout the history of philosophy people have puzzled over how that which is simple can give rise to a realm of plurality.

7.6.2 Spinoza does not intend for his system to be acosmist

What is important for my purposes here is simply to note that Spinoza does not intend for his system to be acosmistic. He does think that modes have less reality (that is, power) than God. But he does not think that there are not really any modes. Here are some key reasons why, for Spinoza, there really are modes and, as such, a true diversity of modes.⁶⁰⁰

(Reason 1) 1p16d says that it should be plain to any person that 1p16, the proposition that infinitely many modes follows from God's essence, is true "provided he attends to the fact that the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing a number of properties *that really do follow* necessarily from it" (my emphasis). Spinoza is saying here that the "innumerable" number of modes that follow from God are no illusion (KV 2pref I/51/11).

⁶⁰⁰ See Della Rocca 2008, 289-290; Hart 1983, 8; Melamed 2010; Melamed 2012c; Melamed 2013d, ch. 2; Parkinson 1955.

(Reason 2) Spinoza says that there are many modes of God—indeed, a maximal number that, as we just saw, really do follow from God (1p16 and 1p16d). A maximal number of modes follow from God because God is absolutely infinite (see 1d6). According to what Melamed appropriately dubs “Spinoza’s principle of sufficient effect,”⁶⁰¹ everything that exists must be causally efficacious, must produce effects, must express itself (1p36, 1p36d). God is no exception.

[W]e have shown in 1p34 that God’s power is nothing except God’s active essence. And so it is impossible for us to conceive that God does not act as it is to conceive that he does not exist. (2p3s)

Indeed, since God is absolutely infinite, God must express itself in all ways possible (see 1p16 and 1p16d). As an expression of God’s power, the realm of modes is a *real* consequence of God. Schwegler puts the point well.

The finite individual exists, indeed, because the unlimited productive power of substance must give birth to an infinite variety of particular forms.⁶⁰²

To affirm that modes have no degree of reality would be to say that God does not really actively express himself in those ways that are modes. But, again, God must express himself in all ways (1p16 and 1p16d).

(Reason 3) Spinoza distinguishes between the mere virtual configurations of an attribute harbored within the absolute nature of that attribute, on the one hand, and those configurations as they come about in actual fact, on the other (2p8; CM 1.3 I/241; see Chapter X). As I explain in Chapter X, even a finite mode, such as my body, is contained in germ form within the absolute nature of the attribute of Extension. When

⁶⁰¹ Melamed 2012c, 219n34.

⁶⁰² Schwegler 1909, xxii.

the laws of nature and antecedent conditions are just right, my body gets actualized. If modes are supposed to be illusory, it seems strange that Spinoza would bother to make such a distinction.

(Reason 4) Spinoza distinguishes between true modes of the attribute of Extension, “mechanical affectations” such as mobility and extendedness that “explain Nature as it is in itself,” and false modes of Extension, those that explain nature “not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception” (see Ep. 6). If modes are supposed to be illusory, it seems strange that Spinoza would make such a distinction between the modes true of Extension and those not.

(Reason 5) Spinoza suggests that each mode only *incompletely* or *partially* expresses the absolute nature of God (1p25c). Why would he say this if he were endorsing acosmism? Instead of saying that any given finite mode only *partially* expresses the absolute nature of God, he should have affirmed one of the following disjuncts if he were endorsing acosmism. Either each finite mode expresses *nothing* about the absolute nature of God (because it is a mere illusion) or—and following the language of the *Enttäusserung* principle—that each finite mode expresses the *entire* reality of the absolute nature of God (this being the only other apparent meaning to the acosmist claim that finite modes have no reality).

(Reason 6) Spinoza discusses the realm of varied modes in extensive detail. Why would he do so if that realm were an illusion? All his work describing the intricate parallelism between ideas and things (2p7). All his insistence on the fact that “God is the cause, not only of the existence of this or that human Body, but also of its essence”

(5p22d). All his warnings to the effect that we need the sort of definition of God that will allow us to extract *every* mode of God (Ep. 60). All his advice on how humans can construct a healthy society and attain beatitude. All his apparent presumption that there are beings to heed his advice.—All of it is no doubt compatible with Spinoza thinking that modes are illusory. Strange, but compatible. Nevertheless, we would expect Spinoza at least to flag that what he is describing is a mere illusion. He flags the fact that everything is utterly necessitated from eternity even though he sets out to give us the tools to improve ourselves. Why does he not as well flag that the realm of *natura naturata* is not real?⁶⁰³

(Reason 7) Spinoza provides a proof for God’s existence that depends on actually existing finite things—things like me (see 1p11d). Assume that an absolutely infinite being, God, does not exist. If only finite beings exist, then finite beings have a power that God lacks: the power of existence, the ability to exist. Since it is absurd to say that finite beings have a power that God lacks, it follows either that nothing exists or that an absolutely infinite being exists. It is obvious that finite beings exist. (It is a Cartesian certainty that I exist, for example.) It cannot be that nothing exists, then. Therefore, we know that God, an absolutely infinite being, exists.⁶⁰⁴ Spinoza’s so-called

⁶⁰³ In fairness, Ep. 12 might very well be one place where Spinoza does flag the point that the realm of *natura naturata* is in some sense an illusion. Here he suggests that division and distinction are products of the imagination.

If we attend to quantity as it is in the imagination, which is what we do most often and most easily, we find it to be divisible, finite, composed of parts, and one of many. But if we attend to it as it is in the intellect, and perceive the thing as it is in itself, which is very difficult, then we find it to be infinite, indivisible and unique.

⁶⁰⁴ Let me put the proof in different terms. If an infinite being did not exist, it follows that even those things in existence that lack power, finite beings, are more powerful than an infinite being (because “the greatest imperfection of all is not being” (KV 1.4 I/37/25) and at least such existing finite beings would

“a posteriori” proof for the existence of God here indicates his belief that even finite modes have at least some degree of reality, contrary to the strict acosmist interpretation.

(Reason 8) In several places Spinoza suggests that the more we learn about finite things of nature the more we learn about God (see TTP 4.4, TTP 6.7; CM 1.2 I/239; 5p24).

[S]ince the knowledge of an effect through its cause is nothing other than the knowledge of the property of that cause, the greater our knowledge of natural things, the more perfect is our knowledge of God’s essence, which is the cause of all things. (TTP 4.4 III/60/11-12).

[K]nowing that all things are determined and ordained by God and that the workings of Nature follow from God’s essence, while the laws of Nature are God’s eternal decrees and volitions, we must unreservedly conclude that we get to know God and God’s will all the better as we gain better knowledge of natural phenomena and understand more clearly how they depend on their first cause, and how they operate in accordance with Nature’s eternal laws. (TTP 6.7)

Presumably Spinoza would not say such things if natural things like planets and buildings were illusory.

(Reason 9) Spinoza says that infinite intellect perceives God as having a plurality of modes (1p30d and 2p4d). That *infinite* intellect perceives God as having a plurality of modes is significant because the perception of infinite intellect cannot be mistaken. Indeed, Spinoza explicitly says that *any* intellect—*infinite or not*—contains a true idea of God insofar as it perceives God as having a plurality of modes (1p30d and 2p4d; Ep. 12). Since to attend to something by means of the intellect is to attend to it as it is in itself (Ep. 12 IV/56/10ff; TdIE 108), and since intellect perceives God as having a

not have *that* imperfection. From the existence of finite things, therefore, we know that it is absurd to say that an infinite being does not exist. See Ewald 1790, 72-73.

plurality of modes (1p30d and 2p4d in light of 1d6), Spinoza thus holds that God's having a plurality of modes is no illusion.

(Reason 10) That the modes are real, that modes or affections are in no way a function of the classifying mind, is corroborated at 1p4d. “[O]utside the intellect there is nothing but substances and their affections.” That modes exist outside the intellect is significant, of course, because Spinoza describes things as outside the intellect in order to indicate that they are really real (Ep. 9 IV/43/21-30; CM 1.1 I/235/10-13, CM 1.2 I/238/20ff, CM 1.6 I/245/25). Indeed, in Letter 4 Spinoza links the phrase “exists in reality” (*detur realiter*) and the phrase “outside the intellect” (*extra intellectum*) with *sive*, the gold-standard for synonymy in Spinoza's language.—As an affection of God, I may just be an ephemeral implication, if you will, of deep eternal forces—a mere *shadow* of the one ultimately real being, as Edelmann puts it.⁶⁰⁵ I may just be, in the words of Melamed, a “weak individual” or, in the words of Huenemann, a “dust devil.” But I am real, nevertheless.

7.6.3 There being no part to God need not spell acosmism

One might raise the following argument in favor of the acosmist reading at this point. (1) There is an objective diversity of modes only if there are parts of substance. (2) According to Spinoza, there are no parts of substance (1p12-1p13). Therefore, there is not an objective diversity of modes.

At 1p12, however, Spinoza is saying that substance *in itself* cannot be divided into parts. Substance in itself cannot be divided into parts, that is, there are no

⁶⁰⁵ Edelmann 1743, 360f.

substantial parts to it, because, as Spinoza explains at 1p12d, either these parts would be themselves substances or not. Both of these options—that these parts are substances or that these parts are not substances—are absurd for Spinoza. If each is a substance, then several substances would be the effect of one substance. This is absurd for Spinoza because (by 1d3) a true conception of a substance does not require the conception of anything else and if a substance were the effect of something else, then (by 1a4) the conception of it would require a conception of that something else. If, on the other hand, each part into which a substance has been divided is not a substance, then since these parts are substantial the original substance would have been disassembled into pieces that have no ontological link to each other and the original substance would thereby be destroyed. The imagination is to blame for thinking that substance can be divided into substantial parts, that is, parts that can exist on their own (1p15s II/59/25-26). The intellect, on the other hand, sees that the parts of a substance are mere modes; the intellect, which is always right, sees that the true parts of a substance are distinct merely in the way that modes are distinct (1p15s II/59/34).

So there is room to say that there are “parts” of substance for Spinoza. Spinoza himself is rather explicit about that fact: there is a “real division of matter into indefinite particles” (CM 1.3 I/244). It is just that, unlike the *substantial* parts that Spinoza is discussing in 1p12 and 1p12d, the modes are modal parts. Each is entirely dependent on the attribute of which it is a mode. As dependent entirely on the attribute of which it is a mode, it cannot be a substance (by 1d5) and so (by 1a1 plus 1d3, in light of 1p4d) must be a mode. The reality of these modal parts into which substance is divided does not

entail the aforementioned absurdities that result from substantial divisions of substance because each of these parts has the same fundamental essence: the attribute of which they are modes.

Spinoza illustrates this with an example where water serves as the analogue for the essence in question. Water no doubt can be divided into parts. One part is the body of water that is North America's Lake Superior and another part is the body of water that is Scotland's Loch Ness. But one and the same water essence is multiply instantiated in these multiple bodies; water is "everywhere the same" (1p15s II/59/33). So although the divisions are not illusory, they do not divide substance either into other substances or into parts that have no inherent ontological unity.

Notice, by the way, that rather organically we have seen yet another illustration of Spinoza's realist way of thinking here.⁶⁰⁶ For it is precisely the attribute's being a universal that grounds its indivisibility. A universal, after all, is precisely that which is "*indivisa in multi*."⁶⁰⁷ Indeed, the water passage brings to mind Aristotle's claim that Callias and Socrates are distinct individuals, "but the same in form, for their form is indivisible."⁶⁰⁸ It brings to mind Aristotle's claim that "these individuals possess one common specific form"⁶⁰⁹—a form that is a universal since that "that which is common to many things is a universal."⁶¹⁰ Descartes famously refuses to attribute corporeality, corporeal nature, to God since that which is corporeal has "many imperfections, such as

⁶⁰⁶ See Fullerton 1899, 40-41.

⁶⁰⁷ Di Vona 1960, 153; see 147.

⁶⁰⁸ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 8 1034a508.

⁶⁰⁹ Aristotle *On the Parts of Animals* 644a24-25.

⁶¹⁰ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1038b11-12; *On the Parts of Animals* 644a26-28.

divisibility into parts.”⁶¹¹ Spinoza avoids the problem by holding true to the conception of corporeal nature as a *universal*, which he in fact explicitly calls—on Descartes’s behalf—a universal (perhaps having overlooked (1) Descartes’s apparent rejection of corporeal nature as a universal at AT V 221 and (2) Descartes’s conception of corporeal nature as being divisible) (DPP 1prol I/142/33-34).

What I think leads some commentators toward the acosmist interpretation is that Spinoza thinks that substance is not divisible into substantial parts (see 1p15s). But just because substance is not divisible into substantial parts does not mean that there is not an objective diversity of what we may call “parts.” True, matter for example is “everywhere the same” for Spinoza. Bodies are the same substantially, that is, they are the same qua the substance on which they depend (1p15s, 2p13lemma1). As Spinoza makes it clear, however, matter does truly take on different “shapes” or, put in the terms in the “Physical Digression” between 2p13 and 2p14,⁶¹² “Bodies are distinguished from one another by reason of motion and rest, speed and slowness, and not by reason of substance” (2p13slemma1). In this case, Spinoza feels that he is allowed to talk about a “number” of them (2p13slemma4, 2p13slemma5, 2p13slemma7s) or about them engaged in “change” (2p13slemma4d) or about them affecting one another, such as when a body in motion stays in motion until it is stopped by another (2p13lemma3c). What is not allowed is talking about a diversity of *substantially* distinct modes or, what is the same, modes that can exist on their own.

⁶¹¹ See Descartes AT VII 138.

⁶¹² See Lachterman 1977. Lachterman was the first to label the section of Spinoza’s *Ethics* between 2p13 and 2p14 “the physical digression.”

7.6.4 Even if the acosmist interpretation is right . . .

All that being said, even if the acosmist reading is right and the realm of modes is, as Hegel says, a mere phenomenon, then my thesis that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of modes would still be true in some sense. What sense is that? It would be true at the merely phenomenal level. Surely there is debate to be had at the merely phenomenal level about whether the properties of modes are apt to be one and the same in many. The mere fact that we recategorize the realm of modes as mere phenomenon does not erase all of the debate on the matter. Just as everything continues as before when we realize that there is no material world for Berkeley, everything goes on as before when we realize that the realm of modes is the realm of illusion. So even though the realm of modes is, in truth, no such land of illusion for Spinoza, at least a version my thesis—namely, that Spinoza thinks and acts as a realist—would still go through even if it were. It is just that my thesis would have to be seen as applying merely to a phenomenal domain.

7.7 Concluding remarks

7.7.1 Chapter VII

In this chapter I set out to accomplish four main goals. First, I argued that every property of a mode is a universal in Spinoza's ontology. Second, I argued that every mode is a property in Spinoza's ontology. Third, I argued that every mode is a universal in Spinoza's ontology (and indeed that Spinoza understands this fact). Fourth, and in response to two important objections to the effect that Spinoza does not welcome any universals whatsoever at the level of modes, I argued that there being only one substance

does not undermine the fact that modes are universals and I argued that the acosmist interpretation of Spinoza is false.

7.7.2 Universalism

Considering the work done back in Part 2 to show that Spinoza endorses a realist conception of substances having attributes, and considering the work done here in Part 3 to show that modes are universals in Spinoza's ontology, the path was detailed and long. With so many commentators thinking that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing antirealist, perhaps I may be pardoned for my persistence. My plea is perhaps best made with the words of Fullerton, who asks to be pardoned for the same.

I hope that I [have] not dwell[ed] upon [the evidence for Spinoza's realism] at too great length; but since it seems to be possible for some, who have devoted a good deal of attention to the Spinozistic philosophy, quite to overlook the fact that Spinoza is a realist, I may be pardoned for not passing lightly over this part of my subject. It is not surprising that those who thus misunderstand Spinoza should find the reasonings contained in the "Ethics" obscure.⁶¹³

I would add perhaps just one more detail to the plea. The antirealist interpretation of Spinoza has more resources than previous realist interpretations have acknowledged. In order to make my argument convincing to the most dogged and clever of antirealist interpreters (which is called for in light of how entrenched the antirealist interpretation is), I had to bring such resources out. That required detailed work.

That Spinoza understands both attributes and modes to be universals, which is the conclusion we get when we combine Part 2 and Part 3 of this project, is perhaps not so strange considering the following two facts. First, the antirealist worldview,

⁶¹³ Fullerton 1899, 41.

according to which the only possible unity between even exactly similar things is extrinsic, seems at odds with a substance monism ontology (the way for which has traditionally been seen as opened by the realist worldview).⁶¹⁴ Second, Spinoza seems to be opposed to the empiricist doctrine, “natural[ly] associate[d]” with antirealism concerning universals, that “reason . . . is subordinate to and dependent upon the senses (upon empirical inquiry).”⁶¹⁵ In general, and as the following remarks from Thilly and Weiss make clear, it makes sense that Spinoza, an arch-rationalist, would be a realist.

We may, therefore, classify Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Leibniz, and Wolff as rationalists; Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume as empiricists. The rationalists are the descendants of Plato, Aristotle, and the schoolmen in their general theory of knowledge; the empiricists are the continuers of the nominalistic traditions. (Thilly 1914, 254)

The opposition between rationalism and nominalism is so old as to seem part of the substance of civilization. (Weiss 1961, 164)

Now, when we bring together the results of Parts 2 and Parts 3, thereby recognizing that Spinozistic attributes and modes are universals, an interesting fact about Spinoza’s ontology comes into relief. The interesting fact is not simply that, as Fullerton writes, “Spinoza was at heart a thorough realist; he thought like a realist, he felt like a

⁶¹⁴ Bayle 1991, entry on “Spinoza” note A; Bayle 1991, entry on “Abelard” note; Liberatore 1889; Leibniz 1981, 2.27; Copleston 1960, 290-291; Gottlieb 2003, 189; Gottlieb 2011, 101; Christian Brothers 1893, 97; Hunt 1866, 147-148; Steinhart 2004, 64; Stern 2007, 134ff; Mackenzie 1922, 191; Turner 1830, 495n19, 512; Burns 1914, 79, 82, 91, 96; M. Cameron 2010; Haeckel 1894; Hobhouse 1918, 62; Taylor 1972a, 190-191; Plumtre 1878, 299-300; Jolivet 1992, 112; Allbutt 1901, 35-36; Windelband 1901, 408-410; Coffey 1917, 303-304; De Wulf 1952, 154; Whitehead 1978, 48.

⁶¹⁵ Scruton 1995, 19; see Aaron 1952; Ashley 2006, 23; Bidney 1940, 379; Crockett 1949, 79; Jaspers 1966, 2.112; Derrida 1981, 666; Lewis 1976, 32; Rivelaygue 1987, 492; Čapek 1962, 292; Garrigou-Lagrange 1936, 74; Glouberman 1979, 6; Hamlyn 2006, 294; Ueberweg 1909, 11; Papay 1963, 169-170; Pomata 2011, 58; William 1966, 223; Armstrong 1997, 15; Armstrong 1989: 76; Hegel 2010, sect. 316; Mander 2008, 18; Rahman 1952, 41ff; Haserot 1950, 471; Cudworth 1829, 404; Hunt 1866, 148; Burns 1914, 78, 93; Murthy 1995, 49; Stern 2007, 144; Turner 1830, 511; Russell 1945; Harris 1973, 25, 61; Hampshire 1951, ch. 3; Howie 2002, 126; Mander 2012, 1010; Jordan 1963, ch. 24; Bryskett 1606, 124; Thiel 1998, 222; Thilly 1914, 254, 513; Weiss 1961, 164; Schütze 1923, 32.

realist, he wrote like a realist.”⁶¹⁶ The interesting fact is that Spinoza’s ontology is the *polar opposite* of the antirealist’s ontology. This is not merely to say that Spinoza’s ontology is *realist*. It is to say that Spinoza’s ontology is *universalist*.

Whereas antirealism is the doctrine that everything in reality is a nonuniversal and nothing but a nonuniversal, realism is simply the doctrine that there are universals. Realism, then, allows that there could be nonuniversals as well. Indeed, most realists today hold that in addition to properties, which they of course conceive as universals, there are also bare particulars—substances conceived as substrata—in which those properties inhere. This is a two-category form of realism, one category being substance and the other category being property (a category that we may simply call “*qualitas*”). The mirror opposite of antirealism is the one-category form of realism known as universalism, the one category being property—property construed as universal, of course. According to this doctrine, which we find in late Russell⁶¹⁷ as well as in Hochberg, Ayer, and Castañeda⁶¹⁸ and which Russell attributes to Leibniz,⁶¹⁹ everything in reality is a universal and is nothing but a universal.

As Brunschvicg seems on the verge of realizing about Spinoza,⁶²⁰ everything in Spinoza’s ontology is a universal. Modes are universals and even God is a universal (since God is but the sum of its attributes, the attributes are universals, and a sum is of the same type with its elements). With exception to the fact that he regards Spinoza’s

⁶¹⁶ Fullerton 1899, 33.

⁶¹⁷ Russell 1940, ch. 6; 1948, 2.3, 4.8; Russell 1959, ch. 9.

⁶¹⁸ See Loux 2006, 91-92.

⁶¹⁹ Russell 1948; Russell 2008, 59; see Armstrong 1978, 90.

⁶²⁰ Brunschvicg 1951, 97; see Di Vona 1960, 176.

God as a nonuniversal, Bennett puts the point well back in the 1980s (although he would later shift his view).

This, by the way, shows how perfectly wrong it is to call Spinoza a nominalist, if this means that he rejected universal items in favour of particulars. . . . Usually he makes room for nothing but universal items—natures or essences—and has no particulars except for the grand all-encompassing one, God or nature.⁶²¹

Simply considering how Spinoza is commonly perceived, it is not strange to find that Spinoza has a neat and economical one-category ontology.⁶²² Spinoza is supposed to be the reductionist prince of univocity, after all.⁶²³ Unlike with Aristotle, for whom being is said in many ways, Spinoza is supposed to be following Scotus in holding that “Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said.”⁶²⁴

It is also perhaps not so strange to find that Spinoza’s one category is that of *qualitas*—that, as we might say, *Sein ist Sosein*: being is qualit(ativ)ty; being is suchness. First, recognize the following general point that Melamed makes.

[It is commonly held that there are] two well-distinguished and mutually irreducible categories . . . [:] properties and things. Although such a distinction is present in our colloquial talk, it was thoroughly undermined by the philosophers of the early modern period, and is further challenged in contemporary discussions of the metaphysics of properties.⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ Bennett 1984, 302.

⁶²² To be sure, to say that everything is a quality is itself a strange view: buses and planets, not to mention persons, are mere properties. Some commentators do suggest that—for the sake of charity—we resist attributing strange views to great dead philosophers (see Koistinen 2009b, 151; see Melamed 2012, 379n53; Melamed 2013d 104n55). I have little time, however, for such ab-use of the principle of charity and its domesticating consequence of cutting off a text’s ability to unsettle and challenge us (see Melamed 2013a). Only were “all things equal” at the (endlessly deferred) “end of the day” would I reject an interpretation in favor of one that is more palatable to my sensibilities.

⁶²³ See Deleuze 1988, 63; Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 49, 59-60; Gerson 2004, 208n72.

⁶²⁴ Deleuze 1994, 36. Della Rocca hints at the general sentiment as well.

Spinoza’s rationalism engenders a drive for unification. Because sharp breaks in reality are, for him, inexplicable and unintelligible, Spinoza’s commitment to the principle of sufficient reason . . . dictates a rejection of such breaks. (2012, 49)

⁶²⁵ Melamed 2009, 71.

Second, Spinoza equates property, quality, and attribute: “*proprietas, sive qualitas, sive attributum*” (DPP 1d5 I/150/14-16; see DPP 1p7s I/161/2; Ep. 56).⁶²⁶ This is significant, of course, since (a) there is nothing but substances and modes in Spinoza’s ontology (1p4d), (b) substances are nothing but attributes (see Chapter IV), and (c) attributes and modes are properties (see Chapter VII and DPP 1p7s I/161/2 in light of DPP 1d5 I/150/14-16). Third, attend to the following reasoning. There is traditionally a close parallel between substratum and qualities, on the one hand, and doer and doing, on the other. Qualities are to the substratum in which they are said to inhere what doings are to the doer that is said to be behind them.⁶²⁷ Now, Spinoza is often thought to hold that there is no nondoing doer behind deeds. He is thought to hold, in other words, that if there is something behind a doing in the first place, then that something is a doing itself.⁶²⁸ It would make sense, then, that Spinoza would have the same attitude in the paralleling case of the substratum-quality distinction (which I have provided rigorous evidence for in Part 2 and Part 3): if there is something behind a *qualitas* in the first place, then it is itself a *qualitas*. As Nietzsche puts it, “A thing = its qualities.”⁶²⁹

Indeed, I bring these two associated points together, that is, the cutting away of any nondoing doer and the cutting away of any non*qualitas* substratum. Namely, and especially in light of Spinoza’s remarks to the effect that *qualitas* has a participial nature (HG ch.5 and HG ch.33), I hold that for Spinoza qualities are forces—doings (just as

⁶²⁶ See Giancotti Boscherini 1970, 893.

⁶²⁷ See Gemes 2001, 340; Nietzsche 1967, sections 484, 485, 531, 542, 561; Nietzsche 1998, section 5.3.

⁶²⁸ See Della Rocca 2008, 298.

⁶²⁹ Nietzsche 2003, 73.

they are in Thomism, at least on one interpretation of Thomism).⁶³⁰ Following Nietzsche, who glimpses the same fact about Spinoza as well⁶³¹ (and seems to embrace a similar view himself⁶³²), Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty hold that nature and property are to be understood in the active sense: essence (*wesen*) is to be understood as *essencing* (*wesung*).⁶³³ Spinoza agrees. On the one hand, Spinoza tells us that the thing that strives is nothing but its striving. Indeed, as with Nietzsche, Spinoza mocks those who posit a “thing itself” in excess of its striving (CM 1.6 I/248). In contrast to a tradition that regards properties and the like as inert,⁶³⁴ for Spinoza power and essence and nature and kind and form differ merely “in name” (1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 3p7, 4d8, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 64). “God’s power,” Spinoza says, “is his essence” (1p34). In effect, for Spinoza *Stoff ist Kraft*: substance is power. Notice as well that instead of saying that substance is a thing (*res*), Spinoza almost always refers to substance as a being (*ens*) (see 1d6, 1p10s, 1p11s, 1p14d, 4p28; Ep. 36). This is significant because “being” carries the connotation of acting, doing—expressing. Look what he tells Hudde, in fact.

Since the nature of God does not consist in a certain kind of being [(*ens*)], but in being [(*ens*)] that is absolutely unlimited, his nature requires everything that perfectly expresses being. (Ep. 36)

⁶³⁰ See Schmidt 2009b, 86n22. Perhaps this goes some way towards answering Plantinga’s famous worry about those who believe that God is merely a nature or essence, which Plantinga holds to be a natural correlate to the view that God is simple. Here is his worry. If God is merely a nature, then (1) he is not a person (since mere *qualitas* has no personality) and (2) he could not have created the world (since mere *qualitas* cannot create anything) (Plantinga 1980, 47). Spinoza has no problem with point 1. But if he construes *qualitas* as active, as Plato seems to (*Phaedo* 96; *Republic* 6.508), then he would have a problem with point 2.

⁶³¹ See Della Rocca 2008, 296-298.

⁶³² Nietzsche 1967, section 561; Nietzsche 1998, section 5.3; see Nehamas 1985, ch. 3—especially 85-86.

⁶³³ See Merleau-Ponty 1968, 115, 174; see Gosvig Olesen 2013, 128; Richir 1987, 68-69, 86-87, 95, 100-102.

⁶³⁴ See Feibleman 1982, ch. 4.1.

Suárez makes this distinction as well, noting that *res* is *ens* understood as a noun rather than the participle *ens*.⁶³⁵ On the other hand, Spinoza's ontology is populated by nothing but qualities (see Part 2 and Part 3). To say, then, that Spinoza has a one-category ontology of *qualitas* is to say that there is nothing but *wayings*, if you will, in his ontology.

What is perhaps less expected is that the one category in question is specifically the category of the *universal*. Spinoza is supposed to be a thoroughgoing antirealist, after all. Nevertheless, Spinoza's very mode of thinking is that of a realist. When things agree in nature or have a property in common or whatever, they are identical in terms of that essence or property or whatever. Moreover, a diversified realm of *nonuniversals* would be discontinuous heap of utterly isolated entities. Not even two hypothetically inherently similar entities would be identical at any level in such an antirealist world. This does not sound right for Spinoza.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁵ See Suárez MD 3.2.4.

⁶³⁶ To be sure, one might say, as Melamed does, that it would not be "charitable" to saddle a great dead philosopher, such as Spinoza, with such an unpalatable and theoretically strange position as that something can be *equally* and *undividedly* present in multiple individuals at once. Such a view permits that, if there are two F things, Fness can move closer to or farther away from itself, or can be spinning (insofar as apple1 is spinning) and not spinning (insofar as apple2 is not spinning) (Melamed 2012, 379n53; Melamed 2013d 104n55). But especially in light of the following facts, that counts for little (if at all). (1) Ab-using the principle of charity to make a thinker's view more palatable view for you cuts off the thinker's ability to challenge us (see Melamed 2013a). (2) The evidence that Spinoza is a realist is overwhelming. (3) Such claims of strangeness and absurdity seem to be mere intuition pumps. (4) Realism is widely endorsed throughout the history of philosophy. (5) Many of the strange aspects of universals can be explained away.—Fness *insofar as it is over here in this apple* is spinning whereas Fness *insofar as it is over there* is not spinning. With his frequent talk of God "insofar as" Spinoza should be open to this. Also we might just say, as Donagan famously does, that the strange puzzles that seem to arise in the case of universals are merely a function of the fact that we are not honoring the fact that they are universals; we are treating them as particulars.

What is even less expected is that Spinoza at some level *understands* that he has a one-category ontology of universals. First, he never advertises his univocal realism, his universalism, by name. Second, he makes several pejorative remarks against universals. Nevertheless, the evidence is there. And, as I explain in Chapter XI, not only does his realism harmonize with his pejorative remarks against universals, there are also good reasons why he does not explicitly advertise his universalism.

CHAPTER VIII

(PART 4. SPECIES): SPINOZA'S REALIST BRAND OF

SPECIES REALISM

8.1 Introductory remarks

We have seen that Spinoza is committed to the mirror opposite of antirealism, namely, universalism (and indeed one of a verbal or active sort): every authentic entity in Spinoza's ontology is a *universal waying* or a *universaling*, if you will. Moving now to Part 4, I will turn to a discussion of the universal species essence of human in Spinoza's ontology: whether there is such an essence (which I think there is) (Chapter VIII) and what that essence is (Chapter IX). Such discussions will provide me with the opportunity to answer certain questions that may have come to mind throughout the unfolding of Part 3, such as what exactly the form of human is or—in what amounts to a major “mystery”⁶³⁷—what properties such as property A in 2p39d could be.

Does each human instantiate one and the same form in virtue of which it belongs to its own species, a species objectively distinct from, say, that of a horse? Although here in Chapter VIII I will argue that the answer is yes, the work that I have done so far to show that Spinoza is a realist does not itself entail that he welcomes into his ontology universal species essences such as that of humanity. However much realism—indeed, universalism in the case of Spinoza—fits naturally with endorsement of universal species essences such as humanity, one can be a realist—indeed, even a universalist—and yet not hold that there is an ontologically authentic humanity essence instantiated

⁶³⁷ Steinberg 2009, 152n22.

equally by all humans. There are two main reasons why it could be that a realist—indeed, even a universalist—such as Spinoza might still reject the reality of something like the form of human multiply instantiated in all and only humans.

(Reason 1) It could be that there is no form of human, no humanity essence, in the first place. A realist need not hold that there is a property for every meaningful predicate. Even talk about human nature by realist *x* need not entail that, for realist *x*, there is such a thing as a human nature. Such talk need not entail that, for *x*, there is such a thing as a human nature any more than *x*'s talk of color properties need entail that, for *x*, there actually are such properties. Without a human nature to begin with, then, it obviously cannot be the case that there is a universal human nature numerically identical in all and only humans.

(Reason 2) Even if human nature is ontologically authentic, and it is true that each human has human nature, it could be that, by necessity, there is absolutely no similarity—at any level—between the human nature of one human and the human nature of another human. Of course, we know from previous chapters that the denial of the possibility of inherent exact resemblance is not, despite what some think, necessarily a denial of realism.⁶³⁸ We also know from the previous chapters that even each of these perfectly dissimilar human natures will be universals for Spinoza, as the following points make this clear: (1) if there were another creature *p* with an exactly similar human nature as that of creature *o*, then *o* and *p* would have one and the same human nature; (2) each nature meets Spinoza's definition of universal (1p8s2 in light of 2p49s). But the

⁶³⁸ See Muehlmann 1992, 49.

fact that each of these human natures is a universal is compatible with its being the case—odd as it no doubt sounds—that there is *perfect dissimilarity* between the human natures of each human, such that no two humans are one and the same in respect to their human nature. It is odd, of course, because it would be incredibly misleading for anyone—and especially a realist—to rope all humans in under the same label “human nature” even though the “human nature” in each individual is on no level intrinsically similar to the “human nature” of any other.

Rice, the most forceful of recent antirealist interpreters of Spinoza, nicely puts the general point. Even if Spinoza is a realist, that does not mean, so Rice explains, that there is a human nature instantiated by every human and that is peculiar to humans.

[I]f there are no general natures at all [as the nominalist says], then there is no general human nature. . . . [But] even if Spinoza were a not . . . a nominalist, the claim that there exist some general or universal natures or essence would hardly entail that human nature [(a nature strictly identical in all and only humans)] were one of them.⁶³⁹

The question of Chapter VIII, then, is whether each human instantiates something that serves as the respect in which each human is a human (however dissimilar any given human may be from any other human). Is there, in other words, some human nature strictly identical in all and only humans and in virtue of which a human is human? The majority view is *no*. The majority view is *no* even though throughout his works Spinoza will refer to “universal human nature” (TTP 4.6) and “human nature in general” (TP 11.2; Ep. 34; 1p8s2) and what can be derived from that nature “as it really is” (TP 1.4) and eternal truths inscribed in that nature (TTP 16.6) (see

⁶³⁹ Rice 1991, 293.

TTP 1.2, TTP 1.18, TTP 3.3, TTP 3.5, TTP 4.1, TTP 4.6, TTP 4.9, TTP 5.1, TTP 5.7, TTP 5.8, TTP 7.1, TTP 12.11, TTP 16.5, TTP 16.6, TTP 17.1, TTP 19.4, TTP 20.11, TTP 20.14, TTP 1n3; TdIE 13, TdIE 25, TdIE 58, TdIE 108; TP 1.1, TP 1.4, TP 2.5, TP 2.6, TP 2.7, TP 2.8, TP 3.8, TP 3.18, TP 3.22, TP 4.4, TP 6.3, TP 7.2, TP 7.4, TP 9.3, TP 11.2; Ep. 21, Ep. 23, Ep. 30, Ep. 34, Ep. 52, Ep. 73; KV 2pref). For Rice and other commentators, Spinoza's talk about how *each* human is unique “preclude[s] talk about an underlying human nature”⁶⁴⁰ or any realist sort of commonality among beings herded by the classifying mind under a species label.⁶⁴¹ Picton puts the point well.

Spinoza was so far a “Nominalist” that he would not tolerate any idea of species except such as results from the compound image formed by the mind when trying to recall a group or series of individuals having marked points of resemblance, too numerous to be retained separately in the memory.⁶⁴²

Montag agrees. Indeed, even though in the *Ethics* alone Spinoza refers to “the nature of man,” “human nature,” and “the essence of man” close to 100 times (see 1p8s2, 1p17s, 3pref, 3d2, 3p9s, 3p32s, 3p42s, 3p51s, 3p57s, 3def 1e and 29e of the affects, 4pref, 4d4, 4d8, 4p2, 4p3, 4p5, 4p15, 4p17s, 4p18, 4p18s, 4p19, 4p20, 4p21, 4p23, 4p29, 4p30, 4p31, 4p33, 4p35, 4p36s, 4p37s1, 4p59, 4p61, 4p64, 4p68s, 4app1,2,6,7, 5p4s, 5p39), and sometimes with reference to its difference from the essence of other species (see, for example, 3p57s), Montag adds that Spinoza so radically “abolish[es the] general essence of humankind” that humans, in his world, are not “all exactly alike” even merely in some respect in virtue of which they are human.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴⁰ Rice 1985, 23.

⁶⁴¹ See Balibar 1998, 108.

⁶⁴² Picton 1907, 51.

⁶⁴³ Montag 1999, 68-69; see Dobbs-Weinstein 1999a, 82. Many of the mentions of human nature that I cited from the *Ethics* are of “our nature” or “man’s nature” and refer apparently to striving. On the

In contrast to these commentators, and other notables such as Naess and Strawser,⁶⁴⁴ I will argue that when Spinoza says that he is talking about “universal human nature” (TTP 4.6) he means it and he is entitled to it. Namely, he means (1) that there is human nature (thus closing off the above named “Reason 1”), (2) that there is one and the same human nature in all and only humans (thus closing off “Reason 2”), and (3) that he is entitled to such a view in light of all his other positions. Spinoza does welcome universal species essences such as humanity (or human nature or the form of human) instantiated equally by every human and in virtue of which all humans are literally identical. He does endorse the view that each human instantiates one and the same form in virtue of which it is human.

8.2 There are universal species essences

Unlike Descartes and Malebranche, who were motivated to deny that brutes feel pain (perhaps because God’s allowance of nonhuman animal suffering could not be justified, as in the case of humans, on grounds of character improvement),⁶⁴⁵ Spinoza holds that brutes are sentient to greater or lesser degrees (3p57s). Indeed, even rocks and toasters—all things—have minds for Spinoza (2p13s).⁶⁴⁶

assumption that striving can refer merely to the peculiar essence of a being rather than a species essence, one may take many of these passages as not referring to our species essence. One thing to note for the time being, though, is that if there is a species essence it must, like apparently all things in Spinoza’s ontology, strive. The species striving will be one component of a given human’s striving. So even if many of these passages refer to striving, that does not mean that they can refer only to a being’s peculiar essence, the essence-slash-striving that individuates it from everything else.

⁶⁴⁴ Naess 1993; Strawser 2011.

⁶⁴⁵ See Jolley 2000, 41-42.

⁶⁴⁶ As the story goes, in fact, when Fontenelle tried to defend a pregnant dog that Malebranche had kicked in the gut, Malebranche said, “Don’t you know that it does not feel?” (see Coren 1995, 66)

Despite the fact that he places the human on a single continuum with all other things (denying that the human is a “dominion within a dominion”: 3pref II/137/11), and despite the fact that he specifically recognizes the pain and suffering of brutes, Spinoza is quick to say that we have no ethical obligation to brutes. Indeed, and purely based on the fact that such animals do not have the form or essence or definition or power of the human⁶⁴⁷ (that is, that they do not partake of human nature), Spinoza says that we can do with them as we please.

[T]he law against killing animals is based more on empty superstition and unmanly compassion than sound reason. The rational principle of seeking our own advantage teaches us the necessity of joining with men, but not with the lower animals, or with things whose nature is different from human nature. We have the same right against them that they have against us. . . . Not that I deny that the lower animals have sensations. But I do deny that we are therefore not permitted to consider our own advantage, use them at our pleasure, and treat them as is most convenient for us. For they do not agree in nature with us, and their affects are different in nature from human affects. (4p37s1)

The statement is straightforward. We are permitted to treat a horse in whatever way we please because horses partake of a nature, equine nature, that is different from our nature, human nature. On the other hand, we are not permitted to do whatever we want to humans, on grounds that humans have the same nature.

One may insist that Spinoza gets carried away in this passage, drawing a conclusion to which his premises just do not entitle him: that there are authentic species differences and that members of one species can use members of other species how it

⁶⁴⁷ These terms are used interchangeably: 1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 2p10, 2p13s14-17, 3p7, 3p56d, 3p57d, 4pref II/208/26, 4d8, 4p19d, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 12 IV/53/3-5, Ep. 54; Ep. 64.

sees fit based fundamentally on those differences. But Spinoza seconds this same view again at 4app26.⁶⁴⁸

Apart from men we know no singular thing in nature whose Mind we can enjoy, and which we can join to ourselves in friendship, or some kind of association. And so whatever there is apart from men in nature, the principle of seeking our own advantage does not demand that we preserve it. Instead, it teaches us to preserve or destroy it according to its use, or adapt it to our use in any way whatever.

Now, we may try to explain the fact that humans can do with brutes as they please on grounds that humans and brutes cannot *communicate* with each other to the requisite degree to form a social contract. This is what Hobbes suggests.⁶⁴⁹ And in order to preserve the consistency of Spinoza's antirealism concerning universals, this is also how Melamed explains what is going on in these passages from Spinoza.⁶⁵⁰ Spinoza never explicitly mentions that lack of communication is at issue, however. He simply says that, for all that we know right now, humans are the only beings that we can associate with in friendship (4app26). But even if lack of communication explains why we can do whatever we want to brutes (which makes sense on the assumption that friendship requires communication), the inability to communicate must be seen, as the 4p37s1 passage suggests, as a function of a more fundamental fact: that the members of the one group partake of a different nature than the members of the other group. In other words, if it is insisted that inability to communicate provides the explanation, then that inability to communicate must be understood as being a function of the difference in

⁶⁴⁸ We find this same sort of view in Kant (2006, 15).

⁶⁴⁹ See Grey 2013, 369.

⁶⁵⁰ Melamed 2011b, 163-164. Here is Melamed's full reasoning. Humans have more power than brutes. In principle, the one with more power should use the one with less power as a friend. However, friendship requires communication and we cannot communicate with animals. Since we cannot therefore use animals as friends, we can use them however we please.

species natures: human nature versus equine nature, the form of human versus the form of horse.⁶⁵¹

* * *

It would take me too far afield to investigate in full detail right now how the difference between brute and human nature, on the one hand, and the sameness in nature between humans, on the other hand, gives us license to do what we want to brutes but not to other humans. My business is simply to establish that Spinoza endorses universal species natures, particularly universal human nature. Nevertheless, I will pause for the moment and give at least a loose rationale for Spinoza's claim that we are permitted to treat brutes whatever way we wish but not so permitted to treat fellow humans as we wish.⁶⁵²

First, something is absolutely good (or useful: 4d1) for an individual if and only if that something agrees in nature with that individual (4p31c in light of 4p31 and 4p31d).—4p31 and 4p31d give us explicitly that if something agrees in nature with us, then it is absolutely good for us. 4p31c, which claims that the more something is good/useful to us the more it agrees with our nature, suggests that if something is absolutely good for us, then that something agrees in nature with us. Hence something is absolutely good for us if and only if that something agrees in nature with us.

Second, it is absolutely good (or useful) for an individual to act from its nature, which in the case of humans is to be guided by reason (a certain form of reason: see

⁶⁵¹ For the most recent discussion of this matter, see Grey 2013.

⁶⁵² See Grey 2013.

Chapter IX).—Spinoza says that virtue is a function of nothing else than the striving by which each individual perseveres in its being (4p20d). Virtue, in other words, is nothing but acting in accordance with one’s own nature (4p18s II/222/24-25). The striving by which each individual perseveres in its being is nothing but the nature of a being (3p7). Reason has humans strive for understanding (4p26). Whatever leads to understanding is “certainly good” (4p27), that is, is certainly useful (4d1).⁶⁵³

Third, an individual is guided by reason to promote the good of another individual (that is, to promote what is useful for another individual) if and only if the good of the other is absolutely good for the one.—Spinoza says that reason demands that an individual seek its own advantage and pursue what is really useful to it and to preserve his own being (4p18s II/222/18-22). Indeed, Spinoza says that the striving to preserve one’s own being is the one and only basis for virtue (4p22c).

Fourth, humans agree in nature if and only if they are guided by reason (4p35, 4p35d).—4p35d says, “Hence, insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason,

⁶⁵³ For more on Spinoza talking about what is indubitably good (or evil), see 4p15d, 4p18s, 4p35, 4p50d, 4p66s, 4p70d; TTP 4.6, TTP 5.16; TP 2.8; KV 2.14.1; TdIE 1 II/5; Della Rocca 2008, 182; Frankena 1977. Note that Spinoza uses reason in a more open and a more narrow sense. Reason in the more open sense is simply adequate knowledge (4app4). Reason in the more narrow sense is universal knowledge, or as Spinoza calls it, the second form of knowledge (2p40s2, 5p36s). Universal knowledge, that is, the second form of knowledge, is adequate knowledge. There is another form of adequate knowledge as well: intuition (2p40s2). Intuition, or as Spinoza calls it the third form of knowledge, “arises from” reason construed as the second form of knowledge (5p28). Reason in the more open sense, although it must involve reason construed as the second form of knowledge since knowledge of the third kind depends on it, may refer to the second form of knowledge or the third form of knowledge. Reason in either the broad or narrow sense is certain, adequate, and self-reflexive (2p40-43). Jaquet argues (2005, 87) that the *true* knowledge of good and evil, which Spinoza describes as “universal” and “true” (4p62s II/257/27-28) seems to be—as Spinoza himself suggests (4p26, 4p35, 4p50d; TTP 4.6, TTP 5.16; TP 2.8; KV 2.14.1)—the indubitable knowledge of the *second* kind. For, as Jaquet says, the second form of knowledge seems to be the only sort of universal knowledge (Jaquet 2005, 87). There is something to all this. But since everything is a universal in Spinoza’s ontology, every adequate form of knowledge, even the third kind, must be understood as grasping universals.

they must always agree among themselves.” This gives us: if humans are guided by reason, then they agree in nature. 4p35 says, “*Only* insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason, must they always agree in nature” (my emphasis). This gives us: humans agree in nature only if they are guided by reason. In other words, if humans agree in nature, then they are guided by reason. Bringing these two statements together we get: humans agree in nature if and only if they are guided by reason.

Fifth, humans and brutes do not agree in nature (3p57s).

Sixth, humans are absolutely good for each other (that is, useful to each other) if and only if they are guided by reason.—Something is absolutely good for an individual if and only if that something agrees in nature with that individual (point 1). Humans agree in nature if and only if they are guided by reason (point 4).

Seventh, each human is guided by reason to have other humans be guided by reason; in effect, reason guides each human to promote the good of other humans.—An individual is guided by reason to promote the good of another individual if and only if the good of the other is absolutely good for the one (point 3). It is absolutely good for each individual to be guided by reason (point 2) and humans are absolutely good for each other if and only if they are guided by reason (point 6).

Eighth, humans and brutes are not absolutely good for each other (that is, they are not absolutely useful to each other), in which case the good of the one is not absolutely the good of the other (that is, what is useful to one is not absolutely useful to the other).—Something agrees in nature with an individual if and only if that something

is absolutely good for that individual (point 1). Humans and brutes do not agree in nature (point 5).

Ninth, reason does not guide humans to promote the good of brutes.—An individual is guided by reason to promote what is good for another individual if and only if the good of the other is absolutely good for the one (point 3). But the good of the brute is not absolutely the good of the human (point 8).

In the end, then, we have the basic rationale for the following two claims: (1) reason demands that I promote the good of my fellow humans (namely, that I strive to promote their rationality); (2) I am permitted to treat animals as I see fit. Reason demands that I better my situation, that is, that I “seek [my] own advantage” and “what is really useful to me” (4p18s). I better my situation by promoting the good of those individuals whose good is absolutely useful to me. The only individuals whose good is absolutely useful to me are the individuals in my own species, and that good is to be guided by reason. There is, therefore, a prescription to promote the good of humans: the greater the rationality of humans the more useful they are to me (which of course makes some sense). However, reason makes no such prescription when it comes to other species. What is good for other species is not absolutely good for me. (In some cases it might be that increasing the power and perfection of a member of another species by promoting what that member finds useful would make it more of a threat, would enable it to “diminish or restrain our power of acting” more effectively: 4p30d.) Thus reason makes no demands as to how I should treat brutes. The door is thus left open for me to treat them as I like.

* * *

Now, one might be inclined to think, following Rice, that Spinoza has momentarily slipped from his thoroughgoing antirealism with the 4p37s1 claim that, because animals are not of our species, we can treat animals as we wish.⁶⁵⁴ In order to save his interpretation of Spinoza as a consistent antirealist, Rice writes the passage off as representing a “blind spot” in Spinoza’s thinking and just as an “offhand” scholia remark not to be given much if any weight in the debate.⁶⁵⁵

Contrary to what Rice thinks, however, the mere fact that Spinoza admits species divisions—even the mere fact that we are permitted to do whatever we want to members of other species but not so permitted when it comes to members of our own species—does not itself guarantee that Spinoza would be willing to welcome any universal species essence that remains one and undivided in all individuals said to instantiate that essence. Even considered in light of the many references throughout Spinoza’s writings to human nature and how that nature is different from the natures of other biological entities, 4p37s1 is compatible with an antirealist interpretation—compatible at least when we attend merely to the words and not the framework from which they are spoken: the realist framework (see Part 2 and Part 3). For all these passages tell us (and thus so long as we continue to bracket off what we already know from earlier chapters), natures

⁶⁵⁴ Rice 1991, 302.

⁶⁵⁵ Rice 1991, 302; see also Matheron 1969, 182-183. Rice would presumably have us, in effect, recall Spinoza’s own allusion to Terence’s *Heauton Timorumenos* at Letter 13, where he explains that Descartes and Bacon’s mechanistic attacks on substantial forms were successful, even if they might have slipped up here and there in the process.

[I]f they nevertheless erred in some things, they were men, and I think nothing human was alien to them. (IV/67/10-12)

in Spinoza's ontology could just be tropes. If they were tropes, then that would seem to be good enough to get us the same conclusion. Each human's having a human nature that is merely exactly similar in each human, but dissimilar to the nature of any brute, permits us to treat brutes however we want, on the one hand, but not treat humans however we want, on the other hand. What would change if we said that among the twenty humans we suppose to exist there is not one and the same nature in each but instead twenty indiscernible but nonidentical natures? Since my fellow human would be exactly similar to me in nature, the concept of human nature would be the same without its being the case that each human has one and the same nature; conceptual univocity would not spell ontological univocity, if you will. Since my fellow human would be exactly similar to me in nature, it would presumably still be the case that my promoting a human's advantage (namely, striving to promote a human's rationality) would amount to promoting my own advantage. Since we agree perfectly in our human nature (where by "agree" I mean in the trope sense at the moment), surely that would not stop it from being the case that the more humans are rational the more they are useful to me.

All that being said, when we put this passage back into the context of the rest of the *Ethics*, and thus bring to bear on it what I have already shown in earlier chapters, then the antirealist account is quite a stretch. Instead of twenty human natures for each of the twenty humans, there is one and the same nature in each. If individuals are indiscernible in some respect, then they are identical in that respect. That is how Spinoza thinks about things (see Part 2 and Part 3). And look at it this way. For Spinoza, an isomorphism obtains between ideas and that to which they refer. If the concept of human

is going to be univocal, then we would expect that each human would have one and the same nature. We would not expect that each human has a human nature that, however indiscernible it is from the human nature of his fellow human, is not ontologically identical to the human nature of his fellow human.

Now, perhaps 4p37s1 alone fails to prove that human *nature* is universal in the sense of one and the same in each and every human (not just *two* humans, as in the case of 1p17s). Indeed, perhaps 4p37s1 alone fails to prove even that, and as antirealist interpreters tend to deny,⁶⁵⁶ the concept of human nature is univocal for Spinoza. But, again, that human nature is universal is implied by what I have shown in earlier chapters. Spinoza's framework is realist. He operates in realist terms. It would be strange for him to switch up his framework, and how he operates, when he comes to the topic of human nature and the like.

There are positive checks internal to Spinoza's system suggesting that no switch up did in fact occur when he came to discuss human nature. Consider the following poignant statement at 4p35d, a statement that Spinoza believes to be entailed by the four following facts: (1) humans are contrary to one another insofar as they are governed by various passions (4p33); (2) humans are active only insofar as they are led by reason (3p3) and thus that what follows from human nature construed as reason must be understood through reason alone (3d2); (3) knowledge of the second kind, namely, reason, must be true and thus what stands forth to reason as good or evil must truly be

⁶⁵⁶ See Montag 1999, 68-69; Rice 1991, 301.

good or evil (2p41); (4) everyone necessarily wants what is good and is repelled by what is evil (my emphasis, 4p19).

Insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason, they must do only those things that are good *for human nature*, and hence, *for each man*, i.e. (by 4p31c), those things that agree with the nature of each man. (my emphasis 4p35d)

It is not just that Spinoza talks about human nature *singular* rather than human natures *plural* here. Almost completely ruling out the option that such singularizing of the nature is to be understood merely as the loose speak or shorthand of an antirealist, Spinoza makes it clear that to do good for *human nature* is to do good for *each* human. For the antirealist who admits natures into his ontology, to do good for human nature would not be to do good for each human. This is because, on such an antirealist view, each human has his or her own human nature that is nonidentical to the nature of any other human. Hence it would seem that Spinoza's ethical theory is unintelligible if he does not endorse a universal human nature.⁶⁵⁷ In Stephensen's view, Spinoza's 4p35d statement, and the rationale that he gives for it, thus require that we ascribe to Spinoza a belief in a universal human nature.

Spinoza's argument simply cannot be understood otherwise. For after having stated in no uncertain terms that whatever we do through reason "is to be understood . . . through . . . human nature alone . . .", and that we necessarily do what we have determined with certainty through reason to be good . . ., Spinoza concludes that whatever we do when acting under the guidance of reason must be good for human nature *in general*. We know Spinoza means that such actions will be good for human nature understood as a *universal*—i.e., as an essence that constitutes the core of what it is to *be* human; a defining characteristic or set of characteristics which all humans "have in common" simply *qua* human—because he infers from the fact that such

⁶⁵⁷ See Fullerton 1899, 65.

actions will necessarily be good for “human nature” that they will “therefore (*consequenter*)” be good for each individual human being.⁶⁵⁸

Notice that I say merely that 4p35d “almost” completely rules out that it is just the loose speak of an antirealist. Notice that I say merely that “it would *seem*” that Spinoza’s ethical theory is unintelligible if he does not endorse a universal human nature. As I am willing to admit for the moment (and even though I think that Stephensen and others are right in principle), there is a “possible” antirealist interpretation to be given even still. Spinoza could just mean that to do good for human nature is to do good for each human because, being that the nature of each human is indiscernible (even though nonidentical), what would be good for one human would in fact be good for any human (contrary to what was just said). The what-is-good-for-a-human formula would apply universally, in other words, because the human natures of each human, although not identical to one another, are objectively indiscernible from each other.

To be sure, this would violate Spinoza’s identity of indiscernibles. But one may insist say that Spinoza had slipped from his strict adherence to this principle or that, as Lin suggests might be the case, Spinoza’s identity of indiscernibles is not unqualified, not global, but instead may apply only at the level of substances.⁶⁵⁹ Nevertheless, and

⁶⁵⁸ Stephensen 2010, 101. Now, those who resist the importance of human nature to Spinoza’s ethical theory may still find “each” to be in their favor. The good for a mind is good for all minds whatever; but given my physical similarity and cognitive similarity to others, I can help them. Mutual dependence in a society further suggests that it is good for us to help one another. In effect, 4p35d may be said to justify itself by a combination merely of resemblance and social contract.

⁶⁵⁹ Lin 2013.

even though for the sake of convincing power I will not rest my whole case on it, I agree with the following remark from Della Rocca.

Although in 1p4 and the surrounding passages Spinoza is primarily interested in the issue of the identity and distinctness of substances, the general term “thing” (res) in 1p4 and its demonstration shows that his claim would apply to modes as well as substances.⁶⁶⁰

There is, however, direct proof that Spinoza endorses a human nature that is one and the same in each human. This proof rules out for good any (of the false) hope that I have allowed above about how Spinoza might be rejecting—in clandestine fashion—the notion of universal species natures that are one in the same in each species member to which they pertain. It also, by the way, suggests quite strongly that Spinoza’s identity of indiscernibles does in fact generalize to all cases, as Della Rocca would have it.

Let us turn once again to 2p10s. In this scholium Spinoza offers an alternative proof for 2p10: “The being of a substance does not pertain to the essence of man, or substance does not constitute the form of man.”

This proposition is also demonstrated from 1p5, viz. that there are not two substances of the same nature. Since a number of men can exist, what constitutes the form of man is not the being of substance.

This passage implies that each human shares one and the same essence, not merely indiscernible but nonidentical essences. To assume otherwise would be to prevent the proof from getting off the ground. Given the understanding of 1p5 that has come about from my case for the view that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes (see Chapter V), if each human has a human essence that is nonidentical to the

⁶⁶⁰ Della Rocca 1996, 198n46.

human essence of any other human, then there would be no use in Spinoza citing 1p5 to make his case. For then even on the supposition that the essence of each human is the being of a substance, that would not entail that there would be two or more substances of the same essence (the sense of “same” operative here being that of the realist, as I argued in Chapter V). It would entail that each substance in question would have a different essence.

Let me spell this out. According to Spinoza, substance cannot constitute the form of human. If it did constitute the form of human, then that would entail something in violation of 1p5: that there are several substances with the same form. Why would this absurd result follow if substance did in fact constitute the form of human? Because there *are* several humans with the same essence. The following point is crucial. As I argued in my case for the view that Spinoza gives a realist analysis of substances having attributes (see Chapter V), to say that there are two substances of the same attribute is to say that there are two substances of *one and the same attribute undivided*. Sameness of attribute/form, in other words, is understood in the realist sense, not in the antirealist sense. Hence Spinoza is admitting, here in 2p10s, that the form of human is strictly identical, literally one and the same, in the case of each human. Thus we have a case where, to use Aristotle’s words, there are multiple “individuals the same in species,”⁶⁶¹ that is, multiple individuals that “possess one common specific form” in virtue of which

⁶⁶¹ Aristotle *On the Generation of Animals* 730bb35.

they belong to a given species.⁶⁶² Because “that which is common to many things is a universal,”⁶⁶³ “‘man’ is a universal.”⁶⁶⁴

Hence when Spinoza says that “Nothing can agree more with the nature of any thing than other individuals of the same species” (4app9), or when he says that beings can share “one and the same nature, agreeing always in all things” (KV 2.26.8 I/112), we should understand this agreement to be the agreement of identity theory (realism) and not as Balibar understands it:⁶⁶⁵ namely, some figurative expression of intense extrinsic attachment or operational harmony. Hence when Spinoza rejects the polygenism of, for example, Giordano Bruno and asserts instead, and “categorically,” that there is but one “human race,” not many “different species of men,” we should regard him as saying that all humans are literally identical insofar as they are human (TTP 3.5; see 1app II/79/30ff). Hence when Spinoza talks of “our nature” (and the context makes it clear that he is referring to a *group* of beings) we must understand (unless told otherwise by Spinoza himself) that such a nature is shared by all humans in the manner of realism.⁶⁶⁶ Hence when Spinoza says that the essential form of human is reason—well, at least some unstated form of reason (see Chapter IX)—and that the greatest good common to all humans has its source in or is deduced from that essential form (4p36s), we should regard him as holding the form of human to be a universal species essence. Hence when Spinoza says, as Bosanquet does centuries later, that

⁶⁶² Aristotle *On the Parts of Animals* 644a24-25.

⁶⁶³ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1038b11-12.

⁶⁶⁴ Aristotle *Categories* 17a40-b1.

⁶⁶⁵ Balibar 1985, 389.

⁶⁶⁶ Pace Sharp 2011a, 54.

individuals agreeing in nature cannot be opposed in respects in which they are alike, we should understand him as holding that to say otherwise is, as Bosanquet puts it, to say that nature A can be “at variance with itself” (which is in fact what Spinoza does say: 4p30).⁶⁶⁷ Hence when Spinoza says, in line with his claim at Letter 27 that ethics must be based on metaphysics, that *true* knowledge of good and evil is based on *human nature*, the laws of mankind (TTP 1.2, TTP 3.5), we should understand him to be saying—although not exclusively—that such knowledge is based on *universal* human nature, a universal species form that is embodied by each and every human in an undivided and univocal way. This is of course what we would expect given the fact that Spinoza himself describes such knowledge as “universal” and yet “true” (4p62s II/257/27-28) and thus must be—as Spinoza himself suggests (4p26, 4p35, 4p50d; TTP 4.6, 5.16; TP 2.8; KV 2.14.1)—apprehendable by infallible reason rather than merely by dubious sense perception, as I discuss in Chapter XI.⁶⁶⁸

The typical realist interpreter would formerly just assume that in the following passage Spinoza was committing himself to realism, and would laugh at any reading to the contrary, thus shutting down proper communication with the typical antirealist opponent who, in like fashion, would typically refuse to take such a passage seriously.

Since the natural divine law is inferred from the consideration of *human nature* alone, it is certain that *we can conceive it in Adam as much as in any other man*. . . . [T]he divine law which makes men truly happy and teaches the true life, is *universal* to all men. We also deduced that law from *human nature* in such a way that it must be deemed innate to the human mind and, so to speak, inscribed upon it. (my emphasis TTP 4.6-5.1)

⁶⁶⁷ Bosanquet 2001, 169.

⁶⁶⁸ See Jaquet 2005, 87.

Such talk, when considered in isolation, can be given an antirealist gloss by those with the skills to do so. In particular, the human nature referred to need not be seen as a universal. As commentators such as Newlands, Hübner, and Rice hold to be the case with Spinoza, talk about sameness in nature should be paraphrased into talk of similarity in nature. But now we know—and not merely as a conclusion lacking premises, but in the fullest truth (see 2p28d)—that this nature must be a universal nature, a form common (in the realist’s sense of “common”) between all humans.

8.3 Concluding remarks

I take it to be clear that Spinoza welcomes universal species essences into his ontology. Specifically, I have argued that Spinoza regards there to be one and the same essence instantiated by all and only humans—a universal form of human, if you will. This conclusion, namely, that there is strict identity among all humans serving as the respect in which they are all human, was perhaps to be expected from the outset, especially in light of my previous chapters. Let me briefly explain why.

First, throughout his works Spinoza will refer to “universal human nature” (TTP 4.6) and “human nature in general” (TP 11.2; Ep. 34; 1p8s2) and what can be derived from that nature “as it really is” (TP 1.4) and eternal truths inscribed in that nature (TTP 16.6) (see TTP 1.2, TTP 1.18, TTP 3.3, TTP 3.5, TTP 4.1, TTP 4.6, TTP 4.9, TTP 5.1, TTP 5.7, TTP 5.8, TTP 7.1, TTP 12.11, TTP 16.5, TTP 16.6, TTP 17.1, TTP 19.4, TTP 20.11, TTP 20.14, TTP 1n3; TdIE 13, TdIE 25, TdIE 58, TdIE 108; TP 1.1, TP 1.4, TP 2.5, TP 2.6, TP 2.7, TP 2.8, TP 3.8, TP 3.18, TP 3.22, TP 4.4, TP 6.3, TP 7.2, TP 7.4, TP 9.3, TP 11.2; Ep. 21, Ep. 23, Ep. 30, Ep. 34, Ep. 52, Ep. 73; KV 2pref). In the *Ethics*

alone Spinoza refers to “the nature of man,” “human nature,” and “the essence of man” close to 100 times (see 1p8s2, 1p17s, 3pref, 3d2, 3p9s, 3p32s, 3p42s, 3p51s, 3p57s, 3def 1e and 29e of the affects, 4pref, 4d4, 4d8, 4p2, 4p3, 4p5, 4p15, 4p17s, 4p18, 4p18s, 4p19, 4p20, 4p21, 4p23, 4p29, 4p30, 4p31, 4p33, 4p35, 4p36s, 4p37s1, 4p59, 4p61, 4p64, 4p68s, 4app1,2,6,7, 5p4s, 5p39). With all these references it would be quite odd for Spinoza to believe, in truth, that there is no such thing as a *human nature* (universal or not).

Second, we know that all ontologically authentic natures must be *universals* for Spinoza (see Part 2 and Part 3). Since there really is a human nature, it follows that human nature must be a universal. In effect, Spinoza is not being duplicitous when he says that there is a “*universal human nature*” (my emphasis TTP 4.6).

Third, it is logically possible that the *universal human nature* in each human is perfectly dissimilar in each human. It is logically possible that the *universal human nature* in each human is perfectly dissimilar in each human such that, even though human nature is universal (in the sense that each human has a human nature that is *a universal*), there is no human nature one and the same in each human. Logically possible as it is, however, that is an unreasonable view to attribute to Spinoza. First, it would be incredibly misleading for anyone—and especially a realist—to describe all humans as having “human nature” when the “human nature” in each human is on no level intrinsically similar to the “human nature” of any other human. If Spinoza held such an exotic view (exotic for both his time and ours), it is reasonable to expect that he would have flagged that for his reader to avoid confusion. Second, Spinoza cites the universal

human nature as grounds for holding that there are some things good “for each man” (4p35d). Such claims seem to preclude the exotic view that the universal human nature in *this* human is perfectly dissimilar to the universal human nature in *that* human. Third, Spinoza explicitly admits that humans can agree—indeed, *perfectly*—in human nature (4p68s; see also 1p17s), thus ruling out the possibility of the exotic view that the “human nature” in each human is on no level intrinsically similar to the “human nature” of any other human.

CHAPTER IX

(PART 4. SPECIES): THE UNIVERSAL SPECIES FORM OF HUMAN

9.1 Introductory remarks

9.1.1 Overview

Does Spinoza welcome into his ontology universal species essences instantiated by all and only members of those species? As we know from the previous chapter, the answer is yes. Now it would be helpful to come to understand more about these universal species essences. On what basis, for example, is one species marked off from another? What exactly are species essences? What are they under Extension? What are they under Thought? Does Spinoza have anything interesting and consistent to say about such essences? I think he does, at least a little. I will devote particular attention to the universal form of human when I address these questions here in Chapter IX. I will discuss the form of the human under both Extension and Thought.

9.1.2 Species divisions as power divisions

Before I take on the task of bringing into relief what exactly human nature, the form of human, is under Extension and under Thought, I will first explain the basis of species individuation in Spinoza's ontology. Those who have only an acquaintance with Spinoza's thought can probably guess the right answer. For Spinoza, power and essence and nature and kind and form differ merely "in name" (1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 3p7, 4d8, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 64). Hence, for Spinoza, things agree in nature or kind or essence or form insofar

as they agree in power, and they fail to agree in nature or kind or essence or form insofar as they fail to agree in power (see 3p7, 4p32d, 4p34s; CM 2.12 I/280). Since “things that are said to agree in nature are understood to agree in power” (4p32d), the true divisions of nature, the true joints of reality, are a matter of differences in power for Spinoza (see Ep. 64). The more x agrees in nature with other things (that is, the more genuine properties x has in common with others and in turn the more notions x has in common with others and in turn the greater number of others are good for and useful to x), the more efficacious x is (that is, the more x is capable of generating active affects) (2p39-2p39c; see 4p31-4p31c, 4p32).

Unlike with the Linnaean method of species classification, then, for Spinoza things are not to be classified merely in virtue of their variable perceptual characteristics and thus on the effects that they have on the classifier’s sensorial apparatus. Rather, and as Goethe found so refreshing about Spinoza in comparison with Linnaeus,⁶⁶⁹ they are to be classified on the basis of the nature or form or structure that they have in themselves and so, and in accordance with Leibniz’s equation of form and force,⁶⁷⁰ on the basis of their power to express themselves.⁶⁷¹

Is there anything more specific and informative Spinoza can say, though? In general, Spinoza is content with simply saying that the basis of true species division is difference in structural power, rather than difference in look or appearance (which is the proper focus of the imagination). That said, in the case of one species, the human

⁶⁶⁹ See Amrine 2011, 37.

⁶⁷⁰ See Leibniz *On Nature in Itself*, 6.

⁶⁷¹ See Amrine 2011, 37; Deleuze 1988, 45; Viljanen 2007.

species, Spinoza does have more information to provide than simply that all humans belong to the same kind in virtue of their common structural capacity to generate affects.

9.2 Form of human under Extension

9.2.1 Ontologically authentic properties

In several contexts, most notably that of *Ethics* Part 4, it seems that Spinoza understands an individual's "nature or essence or form," which are terms that Spinoza (like Suárez) uses interchangeably (1p16d, 1p36d, 2p10, 2p13sl4-17, 3p56d, 3p57d, 4pref II/208/26, 4d8, 4p19d, 4p33d, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 12 IV/53/3-5, Ep. 54),⁶⁷² to be a matter of what properties it has.⁶⁷³ More generally, it seems that, for Spinoza, individuals agree to the extent that they instantiate the same properties (where by "same" it should now be safe to say "same in the manner of the realist"). In order to understand what universal species in Spinoza's ontology are, then, it is helpful to come to understand, as a sort of primer at least, what sorts of properties Spinoza welcomes into his ontology.

It is perhaps easier to talk about this when it comes to the attribute of Extension. Like Galileo,⁶⁷⁴ Spinoza talks about "mechanical affectations" (see Ep. 6 IV/25/3).⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷² See Suárez MD 15.11.3.

⁶⁷³ See Kisner 2009, 553.

⁶⁷⁴ See Galileo 1890-1909 VI, 348, line 8 and 34. For Spinoza's relation to Galileo, consult the special issue on Spinoza and Galileo in *Intellectual History Review* 23.1.

⁶⁷⁵ Early in his philosophical development, Spinoza read Delmedigo's *Sefer Elim*. Delmedigo, a pupil of Galileo in Padua, wrote *Sefer Elim*, a work that discusses various aspects of Galileo's thought: his scientific theories, his inventions, his observations, and so on (see Buyse 2008; Nadler 1999; Rudavsky 2001; Adler 2013). Spinoza was also in contact with Christiaan Huygens, who was well versed in the details of Galileo's thought. And in Letter 26 we see Spinoza reporting findings related to Galileo. Although Spinoza does not mention Galileo by name in his works, he was sure to be acquainted with Galileo's thought. Spinoza was fascinated by astronomy (see Ep. 32), as is clear by the large collection of astronomy textbooks in his library (including Kepler's *Eclogae chronicae*).

Mechanical affections, as with the ideational correlates that pick them out (“pure notions”: Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15), are properties that “explain Nature as it is in itself” rather than “explain Nature, not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception.” These mechanical modes (or, as we might call them in the language of Boyle and Locke, primary properties) include extendedness, mobility, and the “laws”—that is, patterns, forms, ratios, powers (see Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15 and 4p39d in light of TTP 1.1 and TTP 16)—deriving or blooming from them. These mechanical modes are the properties that remain, to use Galileo’s colorful way of expressing the idea, after one takes away the nose that smells and is tickled, the tongue that tastes and is burned, and so on.⁶⁷⁶ On the other hand, the properties apprehended merely through sense perception and, as Galileo puts it, “are nothing but names” outside the living animal⁶⁷⁷ include “visible, invisible, hot, cold . . . and also fluid and solid” (Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15).

Hume once said that the mark of the new science, as well as of the new philosophy to which he belonged, was its “removal of sounds, colours, heat, cold, and other sensible qualities, from the rank of continued independent existences,” a stripping away process that leaves behind “the only real ones”: those that cannot be stripped away.⁶⁷⁸ It is evident that Spinoza fits into that tradition and, indeed, that he is cognizant of that fact.⁶⁷⁹

Spinoza is nevertheless unique in that general tradition. First, he does not seem to agree with Galileo, Locke, and Hume about the list of what properties remain after the

⁶⁷⁶ Galileo 2008, 187.

⁶⁷⁷ Galileo 2008, 187.

⁶⁷⁸ Hume *Treatise* 1.4.4.5.

⁶⁷⁹ See Buyse 2008; Buyse 2013.

stripping away process, even those that most of these philosophers agree on: shape, number, and so on.⁶⁸⁰ Number is the best example. Galileo says, for instance, “if one takes away ears, tongues, and noses, there indeed remain the shapes, numbers, and motions.”⁶⁸¹ Given Spinoza’s remarks in Letter 12, however, it does not seem that he would agree about number. Second, and unlike others who have stripped away the sensible properties, Spinoza holds (in line with Descartes)⁶⁸² that extendedness and mobility are the most fundamental properties from which all the other independently existing primary properties are derived. So, for example, unlike what one gets from a cursory glance at Galileo or Locke or Hume,⁶⁸³ with Spinoza we do not find figure listed on a par with extendedness and mobility. Although figure seems to count, for Spinoza, as a mechanical affectation and thus as existing independent of the classifying mind (Ep. 6 IV/25; TdIE 72 II/27/28; but see Ep. 50 and Ep. 83), it is seen as in some sense a function of mobility and extendedness. Thus in Letter 6 Spinoza criticizes Boyle’s list of the most basic properties that bodies have as too broad.

For Spinoza there are various sorts of “primary” properties or, as they were sometimes called, “geometrical qualities” deriving from the basics of extendedness and mobility.⁶⁸⁴ There are, in other words, various specified patterns or forms in some way arising from these geometrico-kinematic fundamentals. I cannot attempt a full listing

⁶⁸⁰ There were debates at the time concerning what the definitive list of primary properties are (see Adler 1996). Discrepancy is evident even among the few authors that I have mentioned. For example, whereas Hume lists gravity as a primary property (see *Treatise* 1.4.4.5), Galileo does not (see Koyré 1966, 239ff).

⁶⁸¹ Galileo 2008, 187.

⁶⁸² Descartes AT V 269; Descartes AT VII 440.

⁶⁸³ Galileo 2005, 284-285; 1890-1909 VI, 347-348; Galileo 2008, 187; Locke 1959, 2.8.9; Hume *Treatise* 1.4.4.5.

⁶⁸⁴ See Jammer 1997.

since Spinoza himself never completed such a listing or explained the process in detail, but here are the major ones that stand out after looking at his works.⁶⁸⁵ Related to one aspect of mobility, motion, there is *momentum* and there is *speed* (DPP 2p21, I/208/20ff). Related to the other aspect of mobility, namely, rest (which can be construed as a *positive* force of motion-resistance: DPP 2p11s),⁶⁸⁶ we seem to get the following: *inertial mass* (DPP 2p22note), *hardness* (construed as resistance to deforming motions) (2p1 I/186/25), and perhaps—but only perhaps (see Ep. 50 and Ep. 83)—*figure* or *shape* (which seems required for motion-resistance) (Ep. 6 IV/25; TdIE 72, II/27/28).⁶⁸⁷

9.2.2 Species essence as certain components in a certain pattern

With this talk of properties resulting from the most fundamental properties (extendedness and mobility), it is a good time to refocus on the central issue: what exactly universal species essences are. Considering now only species under Extension, we will have such species as mobile bodies, which are bodies that each have one and the same property *mobility* present through them. This is going to be a sort of universal species essence had by all members of the species of mobile individuals.

Let us look at the more usual species. One of great interest is the human species. The human species is the most discussed species in the Spinoza literature. That the

⁶⁸⁵ See Adler 1996.

⁶⁸⁶ See Buyse 2013.

⁶⁸⁷ There could be more for Spinoza. He does mention brittleness (Ep. 6, IV/18/5ff). But he seems noncommittal on the matter, finding it sufficient to say that his arguments and his physical theory holds even “*if* there is anything else” besides those properties explained merely in terms of motion and rest (my emphasis, 3p2). The reader should note, by the way, that at Letter 83 Spinoza insinuates that figure or shape is a fiction.

human species would be the central focus is understandable.⁶⁸⁸ Spinoza's goal, after all, is to lay out a path to blessedness, and humans are his target audience. For most of the discussion, I will focus primarily on the human species as well. For the time being, however, I will consider that species merely under Extension. In effect, when discussing the human species I will limit myself, for the time being, to discussing the species *human body*, that is, the universal form of the human body.

As we have seen especially from our discussion of 2p10s, and as is insinuated throughout Spinoza's works, Spinoza holds that each human body has one and the same form. How are we to understand the human form, though? It is safe to say that the form of the human is the nature or essence of the human.⁶⁸⁹ But is there anything more specific we can say than this?

When we turn, for example, to 4p39 and 3p39d, we get some assistance. Breaking from the traditional appeal to the "Substantial Forms and [Sensible] Qualities . . . received in the Schools" (Ep. 11 IV/48/25ff),⁶⁹⁰ Spinoza holds that the true form of the human body is a certain fixed ratio of *motion and rest* that the component bodies of a human have in relation to each other. Spinoza holds, in other words, that the true form of

⁶⁸⁸ For discussion of human essence in Spinoza, see especially the following: Ansaldi 2001, 742-745; Bartuschat 1992; Busse 2009; Collins 1984; D. Garret 1994; De Cuzzani 2002; De Dijn 1978, 28-31; Della Rocca 2008, 179-182; Dufour-Kowalska 1973, 195-216; Jaquet 2005, 85; Jarrett 2002, 161-160; Laerke 2009; Lermond 1988, 64-68; Lloyd 1994; Malinowski-Charles 2004; Matheron 1969; Matheron 1978; Miller 2005, 164-170; Ramond 1995, 100; Ramond 1999a, 84-91; Rousset 1985; Sangiacomo 2011; Sangiacomo 2013; Sévérac 1996, 108-109; 2005, 188; Suhamy 2010; Temkine 1994, 439-446; Viljanen 2011; Vinciguerra 2009; Wilson 1999b; Garber 1994; Zac 1972a, 47-66.

⁶⁸⁹ See Grey 2013, 385n13.

⁶⁹⁰ These are the words of Oldenburg writing to Spinoza on behalf of Boyle.

the human body is a certain fixed pattern or law according to which a human's parts communicate their *motions* to one another.

But what constitutes the form of the human Body consists in this, that its Parts communicate their motions to one another in a certain fixed proportion. Therefore, things which bring it about that the Parts of the human Body preserve the same proportion of motion and rest to one another, preserve the human Body's form. (4p39d)

The human body, then, is nothing but a certain proportion of motion and rest. (KV app2.14)

There are several key differences, according to Spinoza, between the authentic forms and the "occult" forms of the schoolmen (see 5pref II/279/20-25). Spinoza's forms are merely a function of the properties that pertain to things as they are in themselves (extendedness and mobility, in the case of bodies), not of those properties that "explain Nature, not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception" (Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15). Spinoza's forms, accountable purely in terms of the most fundamental primary properties of extendedness and mobility (in the case of the extended realm), are absolute. They are not relative to perceivers. The schoolmen, according to Spinoza, were too quick to welcome as real properties of things what were merely the effects that things have on our constitutions (see 2p40s). The schoolmen thus counted *redness* as a real property along with *badness* and *hotness* as well as the *tickling nature* of feathers (to use Galileo's example in *The Assayer*) and the *dormitive nature* of opium (to use Molière's example in *The Imaginary Invalid*). They were too quick to regard the species and unities revealed through sense perception as real, welcoming for example something like *risability* as the essential feature shared by all humans and thus

serving as the ontological ground for a unified human species distinct from any other species (see 2p40s2).

Not only are the schoolmen forms ontology-bloating and false, according to Spinoza. They are also uninformative, if not downright circular. As Spinoza believed Descartes to have adequately demonstrated, schoolman forms make the world inscrutable (Ep. 6 IV/25/1ff).⁶⁹¹ To use the stock illustration, it is said that opium incites sleep because it has a dormitive quality. But dormitive quality just means sleep-inciting. And thus we have the uninformative explanation that opium incites sleep because opium incites sleep. Regarding the point that the schoolmen forms make the world inscrutable, substantial forms are not subject to reductive analysis the way that Spinoza's forms are. There is just this mysterious dormitive property, opium has it, and that is that.⁶⁹²

Descartes sums these two points up in a 1642 letter to Regius.

[Substantial forms] were introduced by philosophers solely to account for the proper actions of natural things, of which they were supposed to be the principles and bases. . . . But no natural action at all can be explained by these substantial forms, since their defenders admit that they are occult and that they do not understand them themselves. If they say that some action proceeds from a substantial form, it is as if they said that it proceeds from something they do not understand, which explains nothing.⁶⁹³

The Spinozistic forms that a body takes on, however, are all amenable to analysis in terms of its constituents and the connections between those constituents. Descartes puts the point well in the same letter to Regius.

⁶⁹¹ See Descartes AT III 506.

⁶⁹² See Rozemond 1998.

⁶⁹³ Descartes AT III 506.

Essential forms explained in *our* fashion, on the other hand, give manifest and mathematical reasons for natural actions, as can be seen with regard to the form of common salt in my *Meteorology*.⁶⁹⁴

The forms that Spinoza endorses are mechanistic and analyzable. Similar to what Descartes was getting at in the *Principles*⁶⁹⁵ as well as in the letter to Regius quoted in part above,⁶⁹⁶ the forms that Spinoza endorses are understood as the patterns resulting from the motion and rest of component bodies.⁶⁹⁷ In effect, Spinoza's forms are to be understood in dynamic terms, that is, in terms of "force or power" (4pref II/208-II/209, 4p3, 4p5, 4p18d, 4p60d, 5pref II/280/10-15). We see the same sort of view in Hobbes as well, who insists that the simple natures referred to in *De Corpore* 7 (natures such as *motion*) are the only true natures (despite what our senses would have us think) (see APPENDIX A). Hobbes puts the point well in *Elements of Law*.

Whatsoever accidents or qualities our senses make us think there be in the world, they are not there, but are seemings and apparitions only. The things that really are in the world without us, are those motions by which seemings are caused. And this is the great deception of sense.⁶⁹⁸

As un-scholastic as the Spinozistic forms may be, however, they do retain some traditional features. The main one is this. It is the pattern or configuration or form exhibited, rather than the specific token bodies that are the components of the pattern, that makes a human be a human—that makes it, in Locke's terms, "what it is."⁶⁹⁹ Thus Spinoza holds the following two points. On the one hand, token bodies can be swapped

⁶⁹⁴ My emphasis, Descartes AT III 506.

⁶⁹⁵ Descartes AT VIIIa 52-53.

⁶⁹⁶ Descartes AT III 500-508; see Carriero 2009, 292-295; Hattab 2009.

⁶⁹⁷ See Grey 2013; Shea 1991.

⁶⁹⁸ Hobbes *Elements of Law* 2.10.

⁶⁹⁹ Locke 1959, 3.3.15; see Busse 2009; Grey 2013.

out for others of the same type (or the human can grow, shrink, change direction, and so on) without destroying the nature or form or essence or power of the human.⁷⁰⁰ On the other hand, a human would objectively no longer be human were it to take on a ratio, pattern, configuration, essence, nature, or form different from that characteristic of its distinct species. That is, a human would be destroyed as a human were its components to fail to “communicate their motions to one another in [that] certain fixed manner” that makes a human (2p24d); a human would be destroyed as a human were its parts to “acquire a different proportion of motion and rest to one another” than the human-making proportion (4p39s; see KV 2pref I/52, KV app2.2).

But can anything more be said about the form of the human than that it is a certain fixed pattern or configuration (one and the same in each human and prerequisite for being human) according to which the parts of the body communicate their motions to one another in a certain fixed manner? We saw that besides the most fundamental and general primary corporeal properties (extendedness and mobility) there are other primary properties—themselves laws or patterns or ratios or forms or powers—deriving from them (see Ep. 6 IV/28/10-15 and 4p39d in light of TTP 1.1 and TTP 16). So we could say, in effect, that the human form under Extension is a specific fixed pattern or arrangement of primary properties. To use Spinoza’s way of putting it in his description of the cohesion of bodies that make up blood in Letter 32 as well as in the first definition of 2p13s in the *Ethics*, the human form under Extension is a certain fixed manner in

⁷⁰⁰ See Lin 2005, 262; Viljanen 2011, 166-167. By the way, nature, form, essence, definition, power and the like are used interchangeably: 1p16d, 1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 2p10, 2p13sl4-17, 3p7, 3p56d, 3p57d, 4pref II/208/26, 4d8, 4p19d, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 12 IV/53/3-5, Ep. 54, Ep. 64.

which primary properties adapt themselves so as to be mutually compatible, so as to “conspire together for power” (as Nietzsche might put it).⁷⁰¹

There is room for a bit more information. Each complex body is made up ultimately of the “simplest bodies” that are themselves characterized exhaustively in terms of the most fundamental primary properties (2p13sa2’, 2p13slemma7d). The ratio or form of a simple body is the mutual relation of the primary properties that make it up (see 2p13sa1’). The ratio of a complex body is the mutual relations of its component bodies and thus of the mutual relations between groups of mutually compatible primary qualities (first definition of 2p13s). The human body, since it is a complex body (first postulate of 2p13s), will be exhaustively characterized ultimately by the mutual relations between groups of mutually related primary properties. So the form or ratio of the human under Extension is the certain fixed manner in which mutually compatible groupings of primary properties adapt themselves so as to be mutually compatible with each other. Each of us are humans because the interacting primary property components of each of us exhibit one and the same pattern.⁷⁰²

Spinoza is always busy discussing the difference between human nature as it is falsely conceived (see 2p40s1) and human nature as it is in itself. This mechanized and dynamized understanding of human form or nature, which Boyle as well describes as “an Aggregate or Convention” of primary qualities,⁷⁰³ is what Spinoza means when he speaks of “human nature as it really is” (TP 1.4). All species, in fact, are going to be

⁷⁰¹ Nietzsche 1967, sect. 636.

⁷⁰² See Garrett 2009, 285-292; Grey 2013.

⁷⁰³ Boyle 1991, 39-40.

analyzable in this way. Members of a species are denominated by the pattern resulting from the concurrence of primary properties, as they apparently were for Cartesians like Rohault.⁷⁰⁴ Here are Boyle's words on the mechanistic explanation of species, an explanation that Spinoza agrees with in general.⁷⁰⁵

[A]n aggregate or convention of qualities is enough to make the portion of matter it is found in what it is, and denominate it of this or that determinate sort of bodies. . . . [Hence s]uch a convention . . . is sufficient to perform the offices that are necessarily required in what men call a form, since it makes the body such as it is, making it appertain to this or that determinate species of bodies, and discriminating it from all other species of bodies whatsoever. . . . This convention of [qualities of a body] . . . is . . . called its form . . . or an essential modification—a modification, because it is indeed but a determinate manner of existence of the matter, and yet an essential modification, because [the concurrent qualities] . . . are essentially necessary to the

⁷⁰⁴ Rohault 1671, 58.

⁷⁰⁵ As noted by Oldenburg, the intermediary between Boyle and Spinoza in their correspondence, Spinoza and Boyle were in agreement in general on the mechanistic explanation of species (Ep. 16), namely, and in Spinoza words, on the fact that “all the variations of bodies happen according to the Laws of Mechanics” (Ep. 13 IV/67/1-2). This is made clear, in general, by the fact that Spinoza refuses to engage those topics on which he fundamentally disagrees with Boyle, such as the possibility of a vacuum (see Buyse 2013). The main problem that Spinoza has with Boyle's attempts to replace the schoolmen forms with mechanistic forms is simply that, as far as Spinoza is concerned, Descartes and Bacon have already shown as much (Ep. 13 IV/67/5-9).

When Spinoza makes these negative comments, he is particularly focusing on Boyle's experiment showing that potassium nitrate could be “reintegrated,” or as we might say today “resynthesized,” after being broken down. Spinoza was familiar with the experiment prior to Boyle. J. R. Glauber (1604-1670), whose lab Spinoza most likely visited (Nadler 1999), originally performed the experiment. The experiment worked as follows. Using red-hot coals, the potassium nitrate was divided into potassium carbonate and nitric acid. Then the nitric acid was re-added to potassium carbonate and, as a result, potassium nitrate was resynthesized at roughly equal weight. Boyle thereby concluded, against the schoolmen, that the form of potassium nitrate was a function of the manner in which its constituents harmonized with each other.

Here is some background on the Boyle-Spinoza interaction (Ep. 6, Ep. 11, Ep. 13, Ep. 16), for which Henry Oldenburg served as intermediary (see Buyse 2013). In 1661 Oldenburg visited Spinoza in Rijnsburg and they stayed in correspondence almost every year until 1675. Early in their correspondence Oldenburg sent Spinoza a Latin version of Boyle's *Certain Physiological Essays*, prior to its publication. In the package was a letter requesting that Spinoza state his reactions to Boyle's scientific experiments. This was by no means an odd request. Spinoza had written scientific essays (“On the Rainbow” and “On the Calculation of Chances”). Moreover, the letter he received from the medical doctor Cornelius Bontekoe (1647-1685) suggested that Spinoza tutored students from the University of Leyden in science (see Israel 2007). And this was corroborated in a recently discovered letter by Nicolas Steno (1638-1686) (see Totaro 2000).

For more on the Boyle-Spinoza correspondence, see the following: Buyse 2008; Buyse 2013; Crommelin 1939; Daudin 1949; Hall and Hall 1964; Yakira 1988; Clericuzio 1990; Clericuzio 2000; Gabbey 2004; Macherey 1995; Sangiacomo 2013.

particular body, which, without those [qualities], would not be a body of that denomination, as a metal or a stone, but of some other.⁷⁰⁶

Spinoza does not simply make the theoretical claim that the universal species forms under Extension are patterns resulting from component objective properties. He consistently applies that theory when he gives various accounts of species. Spinoza discusses, for example the formation of potassium nitrate (see Ep. 6). The formation of potassium nitrate is a function of potassium carbonate's being added to nitric acid. As Spinoza sees it, the group of objective properties that compose nitric acid move in such a way relative to each other that they constitute the liquid that is nitric acid. When the group of objective properties that compose potassium carbonate is added to the nitric acid such motion is impeded, thus resulting in a solid (potassium nitrate). Just as there is a mechanical explanation of the formation of the solidity of the potassium nitrate, the full explanation for everything about the potassium nitrate, all its functions, are going to be explained in similar fashion: in general, the manner in which groupings of primary properties relate to each other.

9.2.3 The human form as a structural universal

This is perhaps all that I need to say for my purposes here. Since Spinoza himself does not give us much more to work with on the matter, it is pretty much all that I can say. However, I will point out that the above mechanistic-style understanding of the form or pattern or nature or essence identical in each human, an understanding embodied in Spinoza's claim that "in matter there is nothing but mechanical structures [(*texturas*)]

⁷⁰⁶ Italics removed Boyle 1991, 39-52.

and their operations” (CM 2.6 I/259/30-33), sounds like what is called in contemporary metaphysics a “structural universal.” Taking a cue in fact from Spinoza’s own talk of “the structure of the human Body” throughout his body of works (1app II/81/11, 3p2s II/143/8; CM 2.12 I/276/9-10), and from Spinoza’s claim that the function of a body—everything that it can do—is fully explained by its structure (its *textura* or *fabrica*) or nature (2p14d, 3p2s II/142/8-9, 4p59s II/255/18; CM 2.6 I/259/30-33), and from talk in the secondary literature about human bodies being for Spinoza “structures of activity,”⁷⁰⁷ and simply from Spinoza’s frequent reference to structure (*textura* or *fabrica*) (CM 2.7 I/262/15; TdIE 69; 1app II/79/29, 1app II/81/13; TTP 2.13 III/36, TTP 12.10 III/165, TTP 16.9 III/194, TTP 19.21 III/238; TP 7.26), it seems that for Spinoza complex things like humans belong to one and the same species in virtue of instantiating one and the same structural universal, where a structural universal is the pattern or ratio resulting from the mutual interaction of its constituent properties.

Being methane is the common contemporary example of a structural universal. An individual molecule is methane if and only if it instantiates the structural universal *being methane*. That individual molecule instantiates the structural universal *being methane* if and only if its proper parts instantiate the right universals and are arranged in the right manner. Bigelow and Pargetter describe these sorts of universals well.

Structural universals are referred to by predicates such as ‘being methane’ or ‘methane’. Methane molecules consist of a carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms bonded in a particular configuration. Methane molecules instantiate the universal methane. So methane is intrinsically related to three other universals: being hydrogen, being carbon and being bonded. . . . Necessarily, something instantiates

⁷⁰⁷ Busse 2009; Merçon 2007, 53; see Berleant 1982, 188; Duchesneau 1974, 554-555; Sportelli 1992, 255-279; Viljanen 2011, 164-165.

methane if and only if it is divisible into five spatial parts *c*, *h*₁, *h*₂, *h*₃, *h*₄ such that *c* instantiates carbon, each of the *h*'s instantiates hydrogen, and each of the *c*-*h* pairs instantiates bonded, and none of the *h*-*h* pairs instantiates bonded.⁷⁰⁸

Being a human, on such a view, would therefore be a matter of a body's proper parts instantiating the right primary universals and being arranged in the right way. This sounds pretty much the same as what we already said about what it is to be a human for Spinoza. And this is clear by Matheron's recapitulation of Spinoza's characterization of individuality.

Spinoza's definition of individuality, in effect, has two terms: first, the number and nature of composite elements, on the other hand, the law [or manner] according to which they communicate to each other their movements.⁷⁰⁹

When Spinoza says, therefore, that a horse as horse would be destroyed were its form or structure or ratio to change to that of a human or insect (4pref II/208/25ff, 4p39s) and yet would not be altered from its horse species form if its proper parts were swapped out for others of the same form or type (2p13s14-15, 2p24d), we should understand him to be saying (so far as we are dealing with the extended realm) nothing more occult or less naturalistic than that a methane molecule is destroyed when it loses a certain arrangement of its parts.

As it turns out, it is not just that Spinoza's mechanistic-style understanding of the universal form of the human body sounds very much like a structural universal. There seems to be no other option. In order to see this, there are two points that need to be brought into relief.

⁷⁰⁸ Bigelow and Pargetter 1989, 1.

⁷⁰⁹ My translation Matheron 1969, 273.

First, realize that modes, and so including the human body, are properties for Spinoza. This is a view that I defended in Chapter VII. It is the natural implication considering how Spinoza offers simply the following as proof for his 1p16d claim that everything conceivable follows from God's nature: the greater a thing is the greater number of properties follow from its nature.

Second, the human body is not the property that it is simply by having such and such properties as components. Its component properties must be related in just the right way so as to "produce the least possible opposition," "so as to harmonize with each other in a certain way" resulting in the formation of the property that is the body (see Ep. 32). Spinoza is clear about this. Even if the "stuff" that was once the human body is still there intact, and even if blood circulation and other functions persist, the human body is no more, according to Spinoza, "when its parts . . . acquire a different proportion of motion and rest to one another" than that proportion required for humanity (4p39s). Just as with methaneness (which is what blooms, if you will, from the proper arrangement and proportion of component properties and is thus a structural property), or just as with blood (which Spinoza himself describes as the structure that arises when "particles of lymph, chyle, etc. are so mutually adapted in respect of magnitude and figure that they clearly agree among themselves and all together constitute one fluid": Ep. 32), the human body is itself a structural property.

What is special about Spinoza's view compared to that of contemporary advocates of structural universals is that, for Spinoza, each structural universal is itself a component in a higher order structural universal, just as the structural universal *being*

carbon is a component of the structural universal *being methane*. In Spinoza's world, there are structural universals all the way up until we get to the corporeal world-all. As Spinoza explains to Oldenburg, the corporeal world-all is the ultra-complex body whose ratio or form is to be analyzed ultimately in terms of the mutual relation between every group of mutually related primary qualities (just as any corporeal thing—such as blood—is to be analyzed).

Now all the bodies in Nature can and should be conceived in the same way as we have here conceived the blood; for all bodies are surrounded by others and are reciprocally determined to exist and to act in a fixed and determinate way, the same ratio of motion to rest being preserved in them taken all together, that is, in the universe as a whole. Hence it follows that every body, insofar as it exists as modified in a definite way, must be considered as a part of the whole universe, and as agreeing with the whole and cohering with the other parts. (Ep. 32 IV/127/16ff)

Spinoza makes the same claim, in effect, at TTP 16.2 and in Letter 64 to Tschirnhaus and Schuller. At TTP 16.2 Spinoza says that there is a grand individual that is nothing but the concord of all bodies taken together. At Letter 64 Spinoza describes this grand individual as the face of the extended universe. For further assistance as to what he means by “face of the universe,” he directs Tschirnhaus and Schuller to the scholium of the 7th lemma of 2p13s. This scholium explains that each body is a composite of smaller bodies. It also explains that each body can preserve the pattern that it is through various internal changes, so long as its component bodies maintain the pattern of motion and rest among themselves. Finally, it explains that we can keep proceeding upwards, through larger and larger composite individuals, until we reach the material universe itself as a composite super-individual (2p13sLemma7s II/101/16-II/102/19).

Deleuze provides a nice summary of what I have said about how each mode is itself a structural universal and about how each finite structural universal is itself a component of a grander structural universal all the way up to the infinite individual that Spinoza calls “the face of the universe” (merely the *face*, of course, because the attribute of which the face is a grand mode is ontologically anterior to all of its modes).

The attempt to define genera and species through [sensible] difference first appears in Aristotelian biology; and those sensible differences vary considerably in nature when different animals are in question. Against this tradition Spinoza proposes a grand principle: to consider structures, rather than sensible forms or functions. But what is the meaning of “structure”? It is a system of relations between the parts of a body[, parts that are properties like all other modes]. . . . The form and function of an organ in a given animal depend solely on the relations between its organic parts, that is, between fixed anatomical components. In the limit Nature as a whole is a single Animal in which the relations between the parts vary.⁷¹⁰

That there is one grand sempiternal structural universal composed of lesser structural universals does not mean that each of these lesser universals are fixed in place. Spinoza explains that the infinite grand universal permits all sorts of change of its component parts without itself losing its form.⁷¹¹ The grand universal is what it is at those moments where it has as a component, say, the structural universal that is the well-functioning society of humans (which requires, for instance, that the component humans are similar enough that they are able to accommodate themselves to each other: see 4app12). And the grand universal still is what it is at those moments (say, prior to the formation of the first galaxies) when there is no such structural universal. This is what makes the face of the universe special compared to its component finite structural

⁷¹⁰ Deleuze 1990, 278.

⁷¹¹ See Della Rocca 1996, 180n53.

universals. The finite structural universals are susceptible to destruction by certain changes in component parts. *Methaneness* requires, for example, carbon. Without the carbon, the methane pattern cannot be.

9.3 Form of human under Thought

I was able to tease out some general facts about the universal form of human under the attribute of Extension. That form is constituted by a collection of properties communicating their motions to each other in just the right way, just the right pattern to make for a human. But what exactly is the human-making pattern? Although confident that there is such a pattern, Spinoza himself does not provide a detailed answer.⁷¹² Let us now turn to the attribute of Thought in hope to shed more light on the mysterious form of human.

As I brought out in Chapter VIII's discussion of 4p37s1, Spinoza suggests that the form of human under the attribute of Thought is (some unstated form of) rationality or reason.⁷¹³ Recall his 4p36s claim that the essential form of human is (some unstated form of) reason and that the greatest good common to all humans has its source in that essential form. He tells us at 4p35, moreover, that only insofar as humans are guided by reason are their natures one and the same. That Spinoza regards (some unstated form of) rationality as the form of human is corroborated throughout his works. He tells us at TTP 20.6 that "free use of reason" is proper to man. And look what Spinoza says about what makes "human life" special at TP 5.5.

⁷¹² For this sort of reason Ramond throws up his hands, concluding that we can merely say *that* there is a universal species form of human Spinoza, not *what* it is (Ramond 1995).

⁷¹³ Several commentators have notice this. Jaquet 2005, 85; Miller 2005, 164, 167n30, 170; Stephensen 2010; Zac 1972a, 47, 54, 56.

[It is] characterized not just by the circulation of the blood and other features common to all animals, but above all by reason, the true virtue and life of the mind.

4p35d provides further evidence that the form of human under Thought is, at least “above all” (see TP 5.5), (some unstated form of) rationality or reason.⁷¹⁴

[M]en are active [that is, they act] only insofar as they live under the guidance of reason (by 3p3). Thus, whatever follows from human nature, insofar as it is defined by reason, must be understood through human nature alone (by 3d2). (4p35d)

Here it seems quite clear that, for Spinoza, the universal nature of the human species is (some unstated form of) reason. First, the only case where an individual is active regarding what occurs internally or externally to it is when it is the adequate cause of that occurrence, that is, when that occurrence follows solely from the nature of that individual at the given moment at hand (such that the individual provides a full explanation for the occurrence and thus we can fully understand the occurrence merely by fully understanding the individual in question). In other words, an individual is active in those cases where what it brings about is guaranteed by the nature of that individual alone, without the involvement of any forces beyond the nature in question (see 3d2). Second, only in cases where a human is guided by reason is he active in what he does, an adequate cause of what he does. That is, only in cases where his action is completely explained by reason is what he does solely an expression of him (as opposed to him plus forces external to his nature) (see 3p3). From these two points it follows (as Spinoza agrees: see 4p35d and 4p59d) that the species nature of human is (some unstated form

⁷¹⁴ See Bennett 1984, 302-304, 309ff; Della Rocca 2008, 192ff; Jarrett 2002, 161-162.

of) reason. The equation of human nature with (some unstated form of) reason is explicit in Spinoza's later rewording as to what these two points—3d2 and 3p3—entail.

Acting from reason is nothing but doing those things which follow from the necessity of *our* nature, considered in itself alone. (my emphasis 4p59d)

So for Spinoza all humans agree in human nature insofar as they have (a certain unstated form of) reason (see 4p36s). This is clear as well when we attend to Spinoza's discussion about human virtue throughout Part 4 of the *Ethics*.⁷¹⁵ At 4d8 Spinoza claims that virtue or, in other words, power is the very essence of human.

By virtue and power I understand the same thing. . . . [V]irtue, insofar as it is related to man, is the very essence, or nature, of man, insofar as he has the power of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone.

Spinoza is saying here that what a human does springs from his virtue or his nature when that human is the adequate cause of what he does. After all, for a human to bring about certain things that can be understood solely through his nature is for him to be the adequate cause of those things, as I explained above in the discussion of 4p35d. As I also explained in the discussion of 4p35d, only in cases where a human's action completely springs from reason, or his nature as a human, is he the adequate cause of what he does (see 3p3). 4d8 plus 4p35d, then, suggest that virtue, power, reason, and the nature of human are one and the same. We see once again, therefore, that (some unstated form of) reason is the nature of human.

That this is the right reading is guaranteed from many directions at once. First, Spinoza corroborates the equation of virtue, power, reason, and the nature of human in

⁷¹⁵ See Della Rocca 2008, 181-185, 324n2; Dufour-Kowalska 1973, 206ff; LeBuffe 2010a, 22-23, 36, 170.

explicit terms at 4p52d. Here he says that the truth of the claim that “man’s true power of acting, or virtue, is reason itself” follows solely from 3p3. 3p3, as we saw, is the claim that only in cases where a human’s action completely springs from reason, or his species nature as human, is he the adequate cause of what he does. Second, note simply that since virtue or power is identical to reason itself (according to 4p52d and others places, such as 4app3), and since virtue or power is the “very essence, or nature, of man” (4d8), it follows that (some unstated form of) reason is the very essence or nature of human.

Here is one final case for the view that some unstated form of reason is the essential form of human in Spinoza’s system. The impetus is found in the following comment from LeBuffe.

The best accounts of consciousness in Spinoza suggest that all singular things in nature will have [at least] a rudimentary kind of consciousness, because they will each have some degree of power and complexity. The mere possession of consciousness, however, need not amount to the kinds of desires . . . that characterize human experience.⁷¹⁶

What desires are peculiar to humans? One that LeBuffe suggests is the desire for the attainment of knowledge and control of the passions. Instead of going down a list, though, we can make our way to a deeper answer if we ask what the source of the desires distinctive of humans as a species is. Assuming that LeBuffe is right about his tentative suggestion that the desire to better oneself by gaining knowledge is a desire peculiar to humans, we should ask why humans have this desire. If it is indeed peculiar to humans, then the general answer must be that it stems from the peculiar species

⁷¹⁶ LeBuffe 2010a, 172.

essence of humans. What is that species essence? (Some unstated form of) reason. That would be the best working hypothesis. When I say that it would be the best working hypothesis, though, I am not in any way appealing to the fact that I have already argued that the species essence of human is (some unstated form of) reason. I am bracketing such proof off right now since I am in the midst of an independent proof. That the species essence is (some unstated form of) reason is the best working hypothesis because from what else besides reason could such a desire to gain *knowledge* arise? Only that which deserves the name “reason” could set such an end for knowledge.

Let us check whether I am right. At 4p61 and 4p61d Spinoza tells us that whatever distinctive human desires there may be are going to stem from the human species essence construed as (some unstated form of) reason. Here Spinoza is concerned with showing that desires that are a function of reason are never excessive. Before we get to direct discussion of desires stemming from reason, though, I want to say a few words on what makes a desire excessive for Spinoza. A desire is excessive when it pertains not to the whole individual but only to one element of the individual (see 4p44s). If the end of a desire is in the interests merely of one part of the individual, if the desire promotes the wellbeing of merely one aspect of the whole, then it is excessive. A good example of a desire that can be excessive is titillation. It is possible that one or several of my parts can be titillated more than others can (4p43). My desire for such sorts of titillation is excessive because it is indifferent to my interests as a whole, and thus to the ratio or form that is me as a whole. Cheerfulness, on the other hand, is a good example of a desire that cannot be excessive. With cheerfulness “all the parts of the

body are equally affected,” and thus my desire for cheerfulness is in the interests of the ratio or form of me as a whole (4p42d).

Here now is the key.

And so a desire that arises from reason, i.e. (by 3p3), that is generated in us insofar as we act, is the very essence, or nature, of man, insofar as it is conceived to be determined to doing those things that are conceived adequately through man’s essence alone (by 3d2). (4p61d)

The identity between reason and essence is imbedded in this passage; it just needs to be brought to light. A desire that arises from reason is a desire that is caused by reason. A desire that is caused by reason is a desire that is conceived through reason. A desire that is conceived through reason is a desire to do those things that are conceived through reason. Since Spinoza is saying in the passage that a desire arising from reason is a desire to do those things conceived through the essence of humans, when we make the right substitutions the identity in question is clear: a desire to do those things conceived through reason is a desire to do those things conceived through the essence of humans. (Some unstated form of) reason is, therefore, identified with the essence of humans here.

This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that the rest of the proof would not make sense if the essence of humans or, as Spinoza puts it in the next line, “human nature,” were not identified with (some unstated form of) reason.

So if this desire could be excessive, then human nature, considered in itself alone, could exceed itself. . . . This is a manifest contradiction. Therefore, this Desire cannot be excessive, q.e.d.

Spinoza is saying, in the first line, that if a desire arising from reason could be excessive, then human nature itself could be excessive. What makes this conditional true? Why is it true that the antecedent is sufficient for the consequent? First of all, a desire arising from

reason is a desire arising from human nature. (Once again, we have the crucial equation that I was out to expose. But let us finish with the rest of the proof while the opportunity is here.) Second of all, the only way that a desire arising from human nature could be excessive is if the human nature itself was excessive. Here is why. A desire is excessive relative to the nature from which it follows. Since the desire in question follows from the nature itself, the only source of the excessiveness of the desire is the nature itself and so, in effect, the nature itself must be excessive. Now, to say that human nature could be excessive is absurd. Here is why. To say that human nature is excessive is to say that the essential form of human itself could promote the interests of merely some of the component parts of a human at the expense of others. That would be like saying that the promotion of my *overall* wellbeing can promote the interests of merely one part of myself at the expense of other parts of myself and indeed my whole self. That is a “manifest contradiction” since promotion of my *overall* wellbeing is not my concern for merely one aspect of my being at the expense of the whole.

So it seems clear that the essential feature of all humans is, according to Spinoza, (some unstated form of) reason. But why *some unstated form of* reason? Why not simply reason, which is in fact truer to how Spinoza expresses the point? In contrast to what some commentators hold, every creature—stones and humans alike—have reason for Spinoza (see 2p37-38 plus 2p40s2).⁷¹⁷ Since reason pervades the universe, reason

⁷¹⁷ Here is some background concerning how even a mere stone has reason for Spinoza.

The first thing to note, in order to see that even a mere stone has reason for Spinoza, is that each thing, even a stone, has a mind for Spinoza. The mind of the stone is, put roughly, composed of ideas for each component of the stone body. Now, there are properties that each and every body has in common (2p37-38). The stone will have these common properties and will have ideas of these properties. The idea of any given one of these properties, an idea that Spinoza calls a common notion, has to be adequate in the

without qualification cannot be the essential form of human for Spinoza (however much certain passages, taken on their own, would suggest that it might be). Hence the reason that is the species essence of human must be some form of reason common to humans and only humans. To my understanding Spinoza never specifies what that form of reason is. Lacking any further information, I say that human nature under the attribute of Thought is *some unstated form of reason*.⁷¹⁸

mind that has that idea. To say that an idea is adequate in mind x is to say that mind x conceives it adequately. An idea is adequate in mind x if and only if mind x is able to conceive it without the assistance of anything external to mind x, that is, if and only if mind x's conception of it does not involve anything external to mind x, that is, if and only if mind x alone is sufficient for the idea. In effect, an idea is adequate in mind x when God may be said to have that idea merely insofar as he is mind x (2p11c, 2p34d, 2p38d). If God's being merely mind x was not enough to have that idea, then the idea would not be adequate in mind x; it would involve other factors beyond mind x (2p11c). Now, God has an idea of common property Q merely insofar as he is the mind of a rock because Q is one and the same in all bodies, including the rock, and the mind of the rock is just the idea of the body of the rock (2p13s). Hence the idea of Q, that is, the common notion of common property Q, is adequate in the mind of the rock.

The next thing to note, in order to see that even a stone has reason, is that ideas and cases of knowledge are at least coextensive (1a4 in light of 2p7d; Ep. 72; TdIE 92). Spinoza explicitly counts a stone's adequate conception of common property Q as knowledge of some sort, saying at 5p12d that simply conceiving common property Q counts as adequate understanding.

Things we understand clearly and distinctly are either common properties of things or deduced from them (see the Def. of reason in 2p40s2).

Indeed, at 2p43d Spinoza makes the following equation: "an adequate idea, or true knowledge."

The final thing to note, in order to see that even a stone has reason, is that to have adequate knowledge of a common property such as Q is to have the second form of knowledge or reason (2p40s2). Since the stone has adequate knowledge of Q the stone has reason (see 4app4).

Note that commentators do debate the issue as to whether for Spinoza all beings, even mere stones, have at least the second form of knowledge. Matheron holds that merely insofar as a mind has a common notion, it follows that the individual with that mind has reason (Matheron 1978, 180). Sharp, on the other hand, denies this (Sharp 2011c, 97). Here is the crucial bit of text in question at 2p40s2.

[W]e perceive many things and form universal notions . . . from the fact that we have common notions and [so] adequate ideas of the properties of things (see 2p38c, 2p39, 2p39c, and 2p40). This I shall call reason and the second kind of knowledge.

To some, like Matheron, this passage suggests that having common notions, apprehending the true universals, suffices for having reason (see Jaquet 2005: 85; Lermond 1988, 68; Wilson 1999b, 342-347). This I will call reading A, which is the reading I defended above. To others, like Sharp, this passage suggests something more like the following, which I will call reading B: our perception of many things and our forming of notions about things *based on the common notions* is a necessary condition for reason (see Lazzeri 1998). According to this reading, the mere having of common notions would not be enough for reason.

⁷¹⁸ One source of help in specifying the unstated form of reason in question is the form of human under the attribute of Extension. For Spinoza, the essence of the human mind is the idea of the essence of the human body (see 2p10, 2p11, 2p13, 3p11d). As the form of human under Thought, human-making reason must be

9.4 Concluding remarks

9.4.1 Recap

After having indicated generally that, for Spinoza, the basis of true species division is difference in structural power (structural power to general affects, we might say), in this chapter I described the structural power peculiar to humans or, as I tended to call it, the form peculiar to humans. Even though this is highly underdeveloped territory both in Spinoza's corpus and in the secondary literature, here is what I found.

Discussing first the form of human under the attribute of Extension, I found that the form of human is bundle of mechanistic-friendly properties utterly derivable from extendedness and mobility. In other words, the form of human is a certain pattern resulting from the concurrence of primary properties; it is a certain manner in which groupings of primary properties relate to each other. In this way, the species form identical in each human is what contemporary metaphysicians sometimes refer to as a "structural universal," where a structural universal is the pattern or ratio resulting from the mutual interaction of its constituent properties. Just as a certain molecule is methane if and only if it instantiates the structural universal *being methane* (which it does if and only if its components instantiate the right universals arranged in the right manner), a certain mode is human if and only if it instantiates the structural universal *being human*

the ideational correlate to the form of human under Extension (2p7-2p7s). Hence the form of human under Thought, some unstated form of reason, must also refer to, and be isomorphic with, the form of human under Extension, a pattern or manner in which the primary property components of the human body communicate their motions to one another. In general, just as the human body is a dynamic mechanistic structure so too will the human mind be. This is why Spinoza's remark that the human mind is a "spiritual automaton" (TdIE 85), an expression that Leibniz started to make use of in 1695 arguably due to the influence of Spinoza (see Deleuze 1992, 370n33), should not be regarded as merely figurative.

(which it does if and only if its components are the right primary universals arranged in the right manner). I also indicated that just as certain universal components make a human when in the right arrangement, each specific corporeal human—each a universal—is itself a component ultimately of the grand sempiternal structural universal that Spinoza sometimes calls “the face of the universe.” Discussing next the form of human under the attribute of Thought, I argued that, in general, some unstated form of reason is the essential form of human. Since there is perfect isomorphism between ideas and that to which they refer, and since the unstated form of reason is itself an idea that seemingly refers to the form of human under the attribute of Extension, many of the neutral characteristics of the form of human under Extension (being a structural composite, for example) will apparently be true of the form of human under Thought as well.

9.4.2 Peculiar natures too

Before moving on to Part 5, I would like to conclude Part 4 with some comments that perhaps should go without saying. Spinoza discusses the universal species nature of human just as much as he speaks about the peculiar nature of each human. Indeed, many of the above passages that I used to discuss the form common to all humans is applicable to the form peculiar to a given human. (For example, humans in general are active when what they do follows from that unstated form of reason that is the very species essence of human under the attribute of Thought. And *this* human *here* is active when what he does follows from his own *peculiar* reason.) The individual nature of a given human, the form peculiar to a given human, is the nature that uniquely picks out that given human

from everything else (even from the other humans to which that human is literally identical at the species level).

In stressing the fact that humans do not instantiate one and the same human nature, antirealist interpreters have been prone to stress that there is a form or nature unique to each human. We see this for example in Rice and Hampshire.⁷¹⁹ In stressing the fact that humans instantiate one and the same human nature, some realist commentators might be prone to ignore the fact that there is a form or nature unique to each human (although I know of no realist interpreters that do so, or would want to do so). To go to either of these extremes not only is wrong for Spinoza (as we see for example when we compare 1p17s and 2p10s with 2d2), it also lands Spinoza in contradiction.⁷²⁰

3p57s illustrates this quite well.

[T]he affects of the animals which are called irrational . . . differ from men's affects as much as their nature differs from human nature. Both the horse and the man are driven by a lust to procreate; but the one is driven by an equine lust, the other by a human lust.

Here Spinoza is speaking about the difference between universal human nature and universal equine nature. But watch what he says next.

[Given the fact that] the gladness of one [individual] differs in nature from the gladness of the other as much as *the essence of the one differs from the essence of the other* . . . it follows that there is no small difference between the gladness by which a drunk is led and the gladness of a philosopher.

⁷¹⁹ Rice 1991, 300n39; Hampshire 1988, 108.

⁷²⁰ See Stephensen 2010, 137n100.

Antirealist interpreters such as Rice and Hampshire tend to understand the first part of the scholia in terms of the last part. Since the last part is, I will grant, about each individual's having (in line with 2d2) its own peculiar form or essence or nature or power (see also 3p55cd),⁷²¹ these antirealist interpreters thus conclude that in the first part of the scholium Spinoza is not *really* talking about a universal human nature;⁷²² Spinoza, as Melamed says, is just using “loose” language here.⁷²³ That reading is unnatural, just considering the first part of the scholium itself. Moreover, that reading is wrong, given what I have demonstrated about Spinoza's commitment to universal species natures (in particular the universal species nature of human).

Aside from these points, it is also obvious that each individual's having its own peculiar form is compatible with each individual instantiating a form common to many. Such compatibility is frequently denied in the literature. Sometimes this is explicit. We see Martineau claim, for example, that Spinoza “commits the further inconsistency of finding an ‘essence’ in *singular things*.”⁷²⁴ Other times, at least so I sense, it lurks beneath the words of the antirealist interpreter as their prime motivator. But as a quick glance at the Porphyrian tree will indicate, each member of a multiplicity—despite each's having one and the same common essence uniting them—can each have other properties peculiar to themselves that ground their difference from each other and secure the fact that their individual essences are “peculiar” or unique to themselves alone

⁷²¹ Form, nature, power, essence, definition and the like are used interchangeably: 1p16d, 1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 2p10, 2p13s14-17, 3p7, 3p56d, 3p57d, 4pref II/208/26, 4d8, 4p19d, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 12 IV/53/3-5, Ep. 54; Ep. 64.

⁷²² See Stephensen 2010, 61-62; Viljanen 2011, 147.

⁷²³ Melamed 2013d, 58n194.

⁷²⁴ Martineau 1882, 150n2, 111

(3p55cd).⁷²⁵ Contrary to what Melamed says, then, Spinoza is not being “ambivalent” when he speaks of each individual having a peculiar nature even as each individual has natures in common with other individuals.⁷²⁶

To be sure, Spinoza does say, in line with 2d2, that what is common between members of a multiplicity cannot constitute the *essence* of any one of those members (2p37). But in addition to the fact that elsewhere he explicitly denies this, which should trigger our charity sensors to deploy some sort of effort to see how these passages can be reconciled, Spinoza insinuates even in this 2p37 passage that, when he says this, he is talking about the *singularizing* essence, the essence peculiar to the given individual in question. So just as there is a form or essence or nature that individuates humans from other species and whose retention constitutes the persistence of one as a member of the human species, human x has a form or essence or nature or definition or power⁷²⁷ that individuates it from every other human and whose retention constitutes the persistence of human x as human x.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁵ See Della Rocca 2004, 128-134; 2008, 95, 194, 197-198; Di Vona 1960, 176; Leibniz *New Essays* 3.6; Soyarslan 2013; Stephensen 2010, 140.

⁷²⁶ Melamed 2013d, 58n194.

⁷²⁷ These are used interchangeably: 1p16d, 1p17s II/62/15-16, 1p34, 1p36d, 2p10, 2p13sl4-17, 3p7, 3p56d, 3p57d, 4pref II/208/26, 4d8, 4p19d, 4p33d, 4p53d, 4p61d, 5p25d; DPP 1p7s I/163, DPP 2p2s, DPP 2p6s I/191/20-25; Ep. 12 IV/53/3-5, Ep. 54; Ep. 64.

⁷²⁸ See Manning 2012.

CHAPTER X

(PART 5. CONCLUSIONS): ARISTOTELIAN AND PLATONIC

REALISM COMBINED IN SPINOZA'S ONTOLOGY

10.1 Introductory remarks

A major debate among realists concerns uninstantiated universals. On the so-called Platonist or relational form of realism (which is embodied by the early modern philosopher John Norris and perhaps even by Descartes: see APPENDIX B), universals do not exist merely as instantiated in subjects of predication. The reality of universals, on this view, thus does not depend on any individual (besides perhaps themselves) exemplifying them. On the so-called Aristotelian or nonrelational form of realism (which is embodied by one of Spinoza's major influences when it comes to understanding universals, Keckermann,⁷²⁹ as well as in the thought of Eustachius a Sancto Paulo and Ralph Cudworth: see APPENDIX A), universals "do not have any subsistence of their own independent of individuals."⁷³⁰ Instead, universals have reality merely as instantiated in subjects of predication. The question, then, is where Spinoza stands on the issue. Are universals realities *prior to* things, to use the medieval way of expressing Platonic realism? Or are universals realities merely *in* things, to use the medieval way of expressing Aristotelian realism?⁷³¹

Unlike most antirealist interpretations of Spinoza, which simply stress that Spinoza is an antirealist and do not specify which form of antirealism he endorses,

⁷²⁹ See Keckermann 1602, 46-48; Freudenthal 1899, entry 106; Di Vona 1960, 152-163; Cerrato 2008, 119-120; Van De Ven 2014, 13.

⁷³⁰ My translation Di Vona 1960, 157: "non abbiano una sussistenza propria indipendente dagli individui."

⁷³¹ Thilly 1914, 167.

realist interpreters often raise the issue as to whether Spinoza follows the immanent realism of Aristotle or the transcendent realism of Plato. Despite Spinoza's apparent blanket claim against *universalia ante rem* ("universals . . . neither exist nor have any essence beyond that of singular things": CM 2.7 I/263/5-9), it seems more popular among realist interpreters to read Spinoza, the so-called "Plato of all centuries,"⁷³² as siding with Plato on the issue concerning the ontological independence of universals from their instances.⁷³³ Haserot is perhaps the most vocal proponent of that interpretation.

Here we not only have *universalia in re* but *universalia ante rem*, not only universal form in things but form subsisting without actually existent exemplifications. . . . A more clear-cut expression of *Platonism* would be difficult to find. . . . (1) [E]ssences [of finite individuals] are eternal; (2) several individuals can agree in the same essence; (3) if the essence is removed the individuals are removed (the individuals are dependent on the essence and without it are impossible); (4) *if the individuals are removed the essence is not affected*. . . . Three further items only are requisite to make *Spinoza's Platonism* complete [and clearly Spinoza endorses these items]: (i) the essences are not dependent on mind; (2) they are not perceived or known by the senses; (3) they are the objects of all real knowledge. . . . [The point is obvious, then.] *An essence . . . may have being and yet not have any . . . exemplification. Essences are eternal and hence independent . . . of their objects*. The philosopher to whom he is closest both in his method and in his ontology is *Plato*. Certain features of *Platonism* he would not have accepted, e.g., Plato's cosmology, but so far as the eternity and immutability of the elements of rational universality are concerned, *the two philosophers are one*.⁷³⁴

Martin, more recently, has defended a similar interpretation. He says that, for Spinoza, the immanent characteristics of individuals are expressions of characteristics that transcend those individuals and subsist for eternity without needing to be expressed

⁷³² Kalb 1826, iii.

⁷³³ Although see Ritchie 1904, 24. "Yet it is impossible to introduce the Platonic 'idea' into the Spinozistic ontology without producing utter confusion."

⁷³⁴ Haserot 1950, 479-492.

through or anchored to any individuals.⁷³⁵ The connection between Spinoza and Plato cannot be clearer, Martin concludes. For Plato there is, on the one hand, the tallness itself that subsists eternally regardless as to whether there are any tall individuals and, on the other hand, the expression of that tallness in diverse tall individuals.

In this chapter I argue that Spinoza should be seen as combining the Aristotelian and Platonic approaches.⁷³⁶ On the one hand, Spinoza follows Aristotle on the issue concerning substances having properties: no properties are ontologically prior to the one substance, God, that instantiates them. On the other hand, the divine attributes, as well as the universals inscribed in them for eternity, are ontologically prior to their *natura naturata* exemplifications (that is, their exemplifications in the durational realm of modes) just as Platonic forms are ontologically prior to their exemplifications by individuals in the durational realm. I defend this Platonist aspect of Spinoza against several objections that touch upon key puzzles in Spinoza's metaphysics, such as how to reconcile the conflicting evidence concerning whether the absolute nature of God is the sufficient cause of the totality of modes and how to reconcile two apparently conflicting causal principles that Spinoza apparently endorses. At the close of the chapter, I point out a key way in which Spinoza seems to distance himself from the more ordinary

⁷³⁵ Martin 2008; see Waller 2012. The Platonic aspects of Spinoza's ontology are hard for many commentators to deny. Indeed, even some *antirealist* interpreters of Spinoza have interpreted him as a Platonist. Hart, who conceives of Platonic forms as *nonuniversals*, is the best example.

[T]he similarities between the metaphysics of Plato and that of Spinoza are too significant to be dismissed as mere happenstance. The "fit" of Platonic Forms to Spinoza's attributes and infinite modes, and the coincidence of relations between Forms and particulars with the relation between . . . infinite modes and finite modes, is remarkable. . . . I believe that Spinoza's metaphysics can properly be interpreted as Platonic in its intent, unity, and intelligibility. (Hart 1983, 80-81)

⁷³⁶ See Amrine 2013, 255-256.

version of Platonic realism. Even though the attributes and the universals eternally inscribed in them are ontologically prior to their *natura naturata* instances, none of these universals (contrary to what Plato himself seems to believe and what the usual Platonic realist believes) fail to be instantiated.

10.2 The combination

When it comes to substances having modes, it is clear that Spinoza endorses Aristotelian realism. Each mode-level property exists only in its indwelling state, only insofar as it is instantiated by a substance. In other words, there would be no modes if there were no substances in which they were instantiated; modes have reality only as exemplified by substances. In the Aristotelian spirit, then, there are no mode-level natures free-floating in some realm beyond nature; all mode-level properties—in effect, all *modes*—are anchored, if you will.⁷³⁷ To say otherwise would be to posit a realm above and beyond substances that confers character onto substances. Spinoza rejects such a scenario. It is in this sense right for Gebhardt to claim the following.

Plato and Spinoza's meet in *absolute conceptual realism*. . . . [But] Spinoza's ideas are not transcendental essences, being immanent in particular things.⁷³⁸

The same is true, albeit in some weak sense, with attributes.⁷³⁹ The attributes exist only as attributes of God. There is no realm of attributes separate from and anterior to God in which God participates. Now, it is somewhat misleading to say that the attributes *inhere* in God (see Chapter IV). God is nothing but the attributes. There is no

⁷³⁷ See Di Vona 2013.

⁷³⁸ Gebhardt 1921, 208.

⁷³⁹ See Presutti 2014, 209.

core of God in excess to the attributes and in which the attributes inhere. Here, then, is where we start to see the transition from Aristotelianism to Platonism. For, on the one hand, the attributes together compose one substance, God, and are thus *in* God in some weak sense—the sense in which an element of a collection is in a collection (see Chapter IV). If we want to talk about this sense of *being in* as “instantiation,” then the Aristotelian aspect comes to the fore. After all, the attributes do not exist unexemplified, uninstantiated. On the other hand, as self-sufficient, eternal, and anterior to their exemplifications by modes, the attributes are like Plato’s self-sufficient and eternal forms.⁷⁴⁰ It is just that, for Spinoza, the attributes together constitute one substance: God.

Despite frequent talk about the “misinterpretation of Spinoza as a Platonist,”⁷⁴¹ and despite the fact that some believe—overlooking such figures as Norris and apparently Descartes (see APPENDIX B)—that “Platonism was a non-contender in the seventeenth century,”⁷⁴² when we are considering the relation between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* a version of Platonic realism comes into stark relief. The attributes and the universals eternally inscribed in them are ontologically anterior to their *natura naturata* exemplifications just as Platonic forms are ontologically anterior to their exemplifications by individuals in the durational realm. Since the attributes themselves and the properties inscribed in them for eternity are ontologically prior to their *natura*

⁷⁴⁰ See Moravcsik 1973, 160.

⁷⁴¹ Barbone 1993, 392, 385, 387n4; see Klein 2003, 28; MacKinnon 1924, 358; Rice 1991, 294n18; Stephensen 2010.

⁷⁴² LoLordo 2011, 657.

naturata exemplifications, Gebhardt's above claim that Spinoza rejects transcendent essences and properties should be qualified.

Let us look at the attribute of Extension for an example of such a Platonic universal.⁷⁴³ From an attribute alone follows—we might say: emanates—all the finite individuals of that attribute (Ep. 43).⁷⁴⁴ And this is of course true of Extension. Unlike what Deleuze⁷⁴⁵ and Gerson⁷⁴⁶ find to be the case with Plotinus (namely, that the One has nothing strictly in common with what emanates from it), and in contrast to Gassendi's disgust at the idea that the cause and the effect are identical in respect to whatever the cause has given to the effect (a realist belief that he feels has infected Descartes's thought),⁷⁴⁷ for Spinoza all finite individuals that follow from Extension have extendedness, and not in any mere analogical form.⁷⁴⁸ Haserot puts the point well.

[T]he modes of an attribute are modes of that attribute because they possess the attribute in common as a common nature.⁷⁴⁹

Since we have seen that Spinoza regards the attributes as ontologically authentic (see Chapter III and Chapter IV), and since we have seen that Spinoza is a realist concerning

⁷⁴³ See Fullerton 1894, 239; Watt 1972, 186-187.

⁷⁴⁴ Spinoza explicitly speaks of things "emanating" and "flowing" from God. See 1p17s; Ep. 43; KV 1.3.2; KV 2.26.8; Viljanen 2011, 37n11.

⁷⁴⁵ Deleuze 1992, 172, 376n6; see Murthy 1995, 56n1.

⁷⁴⁶ Gerson 1994, 208n72.

⁷⁴⁷ See Descartes VII 288-289.

⁷⁴⁸ Note that my claim that extendedness is a universal does not simply amount to the claim that the attribute of Extension is what Bradley calls the "concrete universal." As Bradley sees it (at least at times), a concrete universal is merely a subject of predication that is a one over the many properties that it has (see Stern 2007). However, to be one over one's many properties is not technically enough to be a universal (see Kemp Smith 1927, 145; Wilson 1969, 156n1). I claim that extendedness is a universal in that each individuated thing under Extension has extendedness. So we might still call Extension a concrete universal as that phrase has been described by Collingwood, for example. Collingwood says that an individual is universal if it is one and the same throughout its internal diversity (1924, 220-221; see Allison 1986; Delahunty 1985, 86; Harris 1973, 24, 27; Harris 1977, 207; Harris 1995b, 9-18, 36, 207; Parkinson 1974, 37; Rojek 2008, 375; Shmueli 1970, 177-178, 187-188).

⁷⁴⁹ Haserot 1950, 485.

universals (see Part 2 and Part 3), there should be no question about whether there really is such an entity as Extension and whether it is one and the same Extension in each extended thing. Indeed, Spinoza is rather explicit about that fact. This is why he can say, for example, that an idea of a given body A, whether of that *whole* body or the merest *part* of that body, necessarily involves the attribute of which that body is a mode: Extension (2p45 and 2p46d). The idea of body A necessarily involves Extension because extension is “common to all [bodies], and is equally in the part and in the whole” of them (2p46d).

So that was the realism part. But what about the Platonist part? Since Extension is more than the heap of all extended modes, Extension does not subsist merely insofar as they subsist. To be sure, Extension needs to express itself as all these individuals (1p16), in which case it cannot exist without being exemplified by extended modes. But that is not to say, however much it may sound like saying, that Extension exists only in extended modes. Extension is something ontologically prior to its modes and not, contrary to what some seem to think,⁷⁵⁰ nothing but its modes (KV 1.8 I/47/20ff). In Spinoza’s words, “extension is without and prior to all modes” (KV 1.2 I/25/35; see TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10). This is why Spinoza can say, as he does at 1p5d, that a true conception of an attribute is not affected by bracketing its modes from consideration, pushing them to this side (see 1p1, 1p8s2 II/49/28). Given *natura naturans*’s ontological anteriority to *natura naturata*, given its not “needing anything other than itself” to produce everything (KV 1.8 I/47/24), it follows that, and in contrast to what some

⁷⁵⁰ Naess 1975, 62-63.

commentators say,⁷⁵¹ Extension is a Platonic form relative to the modes in which it is multiply realized.

Let us look at the matter another way. Let us look at the matter by considering a different property: mobility or, in Spinoza's terms, motion and rest (1p32c2)—one of the properties that Spinoza, following Plato at *Sophist* 254b10-c1,⁷⁵² describes as all-pervading (see 2p37-2p38c in light of 2p13lemma2d). Mobility does not subsist merely in modes that exemplify mobility. Mobility subsists independent of bodies that are mobile. Its existence, in effect, is not limited to what Garrett calls “*local* motion-and-rest.”⁷⁵³ The attribute of Extension, all by itself, suffices to bring about mobility, unlike the case with Extension in Descartes's philosophy (see Ep. 81 and Ep. 83).⁷⁵⁴ Just as each body is an effect of Extension so too is its mobility. But if the mobility of each body is the effect of the absolute nature of Extension, then mobility must subsist in the absolute nature of Extension.

How so? Well, for Spinoza a cause cannot give what it does not itself have; “no cause can produce more than it contains in itself” (KV 2.24 I/104/25-29; see 1p3 and 1a5; Ep. 4; KV app1a5 I/114/15). To give the contrapositive wording of 1p3, x can be the cause of y only if x and y have something in common. In the words of John Norris, “nothing can communicate what it has not” (see APPENDIX B).⁷⁵⁵ “A stone,” to use Descartes's own example for the axiom that there is nothing in the effect which is not in

⁷⁵¹ See Rice 1985; Rice 1991; Rice 1994; Murthy 1995, 49, 53, 55.

⁷⁵² See Reeve 1985, 57.

⁷⁵³ Garrett 1994, 82.

⁷⁵⁴ Della Rocca 1999, Della Rocca 2003b, 225; Viljanen 2011, 76n71.

⁷⁵⁵ Norris 1689, 44; see Norris 1974, 1:27, 2:503.

the cause, “cannot begin to exist unless it is produced by something which contains . . . everything to be found in the stone.”⁷⁵⁶ Spinoza describes this causal similarity principle in Letter 4.

If two things have nothing in common with one another, one cannot be the cause of the other, for since there would be nothing in the effect which it had in common with the cause, whatever the effect had [due to the transfer], it would have from nothing. (Ep. 4 IV/14/9-12).

Here is how he puts it in the *Short Treatise*.

That which has not in itself something of another thing, can also not be a cause of the existence of such another thing. (KV app1a5 I/114/15)

Consider also the following related remarks from the *Ethics*.

The power of an effect is defined by the power of its cause, insofar as its essence is explained or defined by the essence of its cause. (5a2)

[N]othing belongs to the nature of anything except what follows from the necessity of the nature of the efficient cause. (4pref II/208/5-6)

Since Extension is ontologically “without and prior to” its effects (KV 1.2 I/25/35; see TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10), it follows that mobility does not exist solely as exemplified in mobile modes, solely as it is in the being of such modes. Transcending such “local” mobility is that “underlying force” of mobility that is ontologically prior to its manifestations.⁷⁵⁷ (The same goes for any other genuine property, even the properties that Spinoza discusses in 2p39 as being common to but a few finite individuals (at least two)—indeed, even properties that only one individual has (or the one individual itself, for that matter), as will become clear in due course.)

⁷⁵⁶ Descartes AT VII 41.

⁷⁵⁷ Garrett 1994, 82.

Spinoza has a somewhat helpful example to illustrate how a property like mobility does not exist solely as exemplified in mobile modes. The following picture (Figure 2) will help us understand the example.

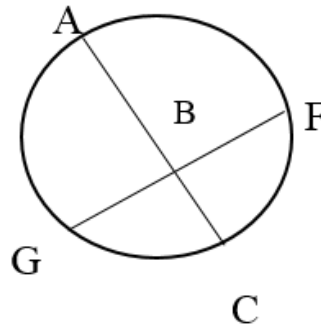


Figure 2.—Latent Rectangles

Let line segments AC and FG intersect anywhere in a circle. Call that point of intersection “B.” As Euclid has proven, if you form a rectangle with base AB and height BC, you will have a figure that is equal in area to a rectangle formed with base BG and height BF. Put generally, then, “the circle is of such a nature that the rectangles formed from the segments of all the straight lines intersecting in it are equal to one another” (2p8). Hence it follows that “in a circle there are contained infinitely many rectangles that are equal to one another” (2p8s). Now, each of these rectangles exist in some sense. In what sense? Well, “merely insofar as the circle exists” (2p8s). And yet it makes perfect sense to say, “Let only two of these be brought about.” But what other sort of existence would these two have, were they brought about, that the other infinitely many existing rectangles would not have? A durational existence. They were brought about as

actual durational creatures, in some sense more tangible than those that exist merely insofar as the circle exists.

The circle in this illustration is a rough stand-in for an attribute in its absolute nature, that is, for an attribute as it is ontologically prior to *natura naturata* (see TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35). The two durational rectangles are the rough stand-ins for properties insofar as they have entered the being of durational entities; that is, they are stand-ins for properties as exemplified by durational modes. The infinite other rectangles that exist merely insofar as the circle exists are the rough stand-ins for properties as ontologically prior to entering the being of durational entities; that is, they are the stand-ins for properties prior to exemplification.

From this illustration, it is clear that even prior to (or perhaps better: without regard to) instantiation by durational entities they are still *something*—still an expression of the attribute to which they pertain—for Spinoza.⁷⁵⁸ It is just that they are “contained,” in the language of Spinoza (2p8, 5p29s; KV 1.2 I/28/20, KV 2pref1, KV app1p4d, KV app2.10; DPP 1p7s I/163; CM 1.2 I/237/20-30, CM 1.2 I/239/1-5; TTP 4.8; see Ep. 42), or “enveloped” and “enfolded,” in the language of Cusanus,⁷⁵⁹ merely in the absolute nature of the attribute. They are, we might say in the language of Cudworth, the virtual powers of the fundamental spermatic force that is the absolute nature of the attribute: “the spermatic or plastic power doth virtually contain within itself, the forms of all.”⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁸ See Deleuze 1992, 382n24.

⁷⁵⁹ Cusanus 1954, 77; Cusanus 1981, 94.

⁷⁶⁰ Cudworth 1731, 135.

Now, the relationship between the actual rectangles (of which we supposed two) and what we might call, following Cudworth and Suárez and Aquinas,⁷⁶¹ the “virtual” rectangle (of which there are infinite) has been notoriously difficult to get straight.⁷⁶² But we might say, by very loose analogy, that the difference is like that between the muscle man curling the 5lb dumbbell for which his power is sufficient and merely his power to lift that dumbbell exactly as he does. It is the difference between the saint’s actual good deed x, which is an expression of his charitable nature, and his charitable nature’s potency to do x.—The main reason why the analogy is loose, of course, is that the dumbbell is outside of the muscleman and the situation that provides the occasion for the charitable activity is outside of the saint, neither the dumbbell nor that situation flowing from the nature with the specific powers in question.⁷⁶³ With Spinoza’s God that is clearly not the case.

10.3 Objection and reply 1

10.3.1 Objection 1: the causal dissimilarity principle’s threat to the Platonic reading

One might argue that we still have merely immanent realism even when it comes to modes being characterized. One might argue, to put it more specifically, that the

⁷⁶¹ Cudworth 1731, 135, 217-218, 257; Suárez MD 29.3, MD 30.1; Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q54.

⁷⁶² See Bennett 1984, 358; Curley 1969, 138-140; Curley 1988, 84-85; Della Rocca 1996, 134 and 191n4; Donagan 1973b, 194-197; Donagan 1988, 58-59.

⁷⁶³ Another debate is whether the virtual essences are infinite or finite. Martin (2008) says infinite and Gueroult (1974, 102-117, 547) says finite. One thing is for sure. These eternal and immutable essences are determinate: they each specify a determinate way that an attribute can express itself. This is all, by the way, that Gueroult means when he calls them finite. This is for good reason, of course, because Spinoza seems to think that finite and determinate go hand in hand (see 1p28 and 1p28d). Martin says they are not finite because, unlike the finite items described in 1p28, the causal explanation for them as they are in the absolute nature of the attribute is not expressible in terms of resulting from earlier states of the world. Since the two commentators in question simply have different analyses of finitude, there is hope for reconciliation.

determinate essence as it is contained in germ, or virtually, in the absolute spermatic nature of the attribute is not the essence that gets multiply instantiated. There is a difference between the virtual and the actual, so one might say. The *actual* determinate essence is what gets multiply instantiated, and this actual essence exists only in its exemplifications by actual modes. On this view, all the properties that, say, I have in common with certain other bodies would not be exemplifications of any “vertically” transcending property, even in the weak sense of transcendence operative in the Platonic realist interpretation of *Spinoza*. Although we would still have realism since each body in question would be identical in terms of the property in question, the realism would be Aristotelian: the property in question subsisting only as instantiated in the durational realm of modes.

The objection might further unfold as follows. That there can be no identity between the virtual essence, that is, the Platonic form, and the actual essence is independently corroborated by Spinoza’s 1p17s causal dissimilarity principle: “what is caused differs from what caused it precisely in what it has from the cause” (1p17s II/63/17-18). According to this principle, and in the words of Schmaltz, “an effect differs from its cause with respect to what it receives from that cause.”⁷⁶⁴ Since the absolute nature is the cause of all things, in both their essence and existence (see 1p25 and 1p17s II/63), from this principle it follows that everything caused by the absolute nature of the attribute must differ in every way from that absolute nature. Therefore, it cannot be that

⁷⁶⁴ Schmaltz 2000, 86; see Di Poppa 2006, 273ff; Rivaud 1906, 128-130; Curley 1985, 427n51; Della Rocca 2001; Gueroult 1968, 286-295; Giancotti Boscherini 1988; Abraham 1977, 38.

the essence contained in the absolute nature is what is instantiated in modes. There can be nothing in common, in fact, between the cause and the effect. Hence we have yet another argument from Spinoza, and it is likely the most powerful, against an anthropomorphic God.⁷⁶⁵

Since God explains both the being of all things and the quality of their being, since God is the cause of the essence and existence of each thing, God must differ in every respect from each of his effects. Spinoza puts the point well.

So the thing [(say, God)] that is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of some effect [(say, me)], must differ from such an effect, both as to its essence and its existence. (1p17s)

10.3.2 Reply to objection 1

Several responses could be made to the above case in order to save the Platonic realist reading. First, the following points should be noted. (1) The only place that Spinoza mentions the causal dissimilarity principle is 1p17s. (2) Spinoza, as I pointed out above, explicitly endorses the causal similarity principle, which is that the cause has in common with the effect whatever it gives to the effect. In this case, whatever follows from the eternal absolute nature of an attribute must be had by that eternal absolute nature (see 1a5 plus 1p3, 4pref II/208/5-6, 5a2; KV 2.24 I/104/25-29, KV app1a5

⁷⁶⁵ For a poignant statement of Spinoza's rejection of anthropomorphic conceptions of God, consider his following remarks to Boxel.

Further, when you say that you do not see what sort of God I have if I deny in him the actions of seeing, hearing, attending, willing, etc., and that he possesses those faculties in an eminent degree, I suspect that you believe there is no greater perfection than can be explicated by the afore-mentioned attributes. I am not surprised, for I believe that a triangle, if it could speak, would likewise say that God is eminently triangular, and a circle that God's nature is eminently circular. In this way, each would ascribe to God its own attributes, assuming itself to be like God and regarding all else as ill-formed. (Ep. 56)

I/114/15; TTP 4 III/58/19-20; Ep. 4).⁷⁶⁶ Tschirnhaus recognizes this as well. The assumption, so Tschirnhaus argues, that an effect of the absolute nature of God has nothing in common with the absolute nature of God (which apparently would be the case according to the 1p17s causal dissimilarity principle) contradicts the very fact that it is the effect of the absolute nature of God. For according to the causal similarity principle stated in such places as 1p3, the effect has in common with the cause whatever it receives from the effect (Ep. 63).⁷⁶⁷

From these points, one might insist that the 1p17s principle is anomalous. Or, as Giacotti Boscherini claims in her Italian translation of the *Ethics*,⁷⁶⁸ one might insist that the 1p17s principle is merely stated in order to illustrate the extreme position, and one that Spinoza personally denies, that the intellect of God (if we say that God has an intellect) would have nothing in common with the intellect of man.⁷⁶⁹

As much as it helps my reading here, I do not have much confidence in this general strategy. In 1p17s Spinoza gives no indication, as far as I can see, that the causal dissimilarity principle, which he uses as a premise to show that the intellect of God (if we say that he has an intellect) would have nothing in common with the intellect of human, fails to be something to which he subscribes. There is indication that Spinoza is somewhat uncomfortable with the idea of saying that God has an intellect, yes. But Spinoza is willing to assume this common view in order to show that, even if it is true, it

⁷⁶⁶ See Zellner 1985.

⁷⁶⁷ Schmaltz says that the causal principle of 1p3 and the causal principle of 1p17s seem to conflict (2000, 87). Curley has noted this as well: “This passage is extremely puzzling, since it seem to contradict [1a]5” (1985, 427n51). Gueroult also addresses this issue (1968, 286-295).

⁷⁶⁸ Giacotti Boscherini 1988.

⁷⁶⁹ See Della Rocca 1996, 181n55.

would still be that there is no more commonality between the intellect of God and the intellect of human than, to use his own example, that between a dog constellation and a biological dog (1p17s II/63/4).⁷⁷⁰

Second, the following argument could be made in light of Spinoza's response to Tschirnhaus's objection. First let us recall the objection. According to the causal dissimilarity principle, an effect of the absolute nature of God has nothing in common with the absolute nature of God. But according to the causal similarity principle, this would mean that this effect of the absolute nature of God is not the effect of the absolute nature of God.

Next let us hear Spinoza's own response to Tschirnhaus's charge of contradiction. Indicating that he does not see any contradiction between the dissimilarity and similarity principles, Spinoza offers the following response.

I pass on to the second question, which asks whether, when both their essence and existence are different, one thing can be produced from another, seeing that things that differ thus from one another *appear* to have nothing in common. I reply that, since all particular things, *except those that are produced by like things*, differ from their causes both in essence and in existence, I see no difficulty here. (my emphasis Ep. 64)

Now, one might emphasize the words that I have emphasized in order to indicate that, as far as Spinoza is concerned, it could very well be that in the cause and effect relation between God and *natura naturata* there *is* something in common. According to this reading, which does indeed seem permitted, Spinoza is saying: "Yes, of course, a

⁷⁷⁰ See Koyré 1950.—It may be relevant to note that the claim that the divine intellect of God and the human intellect have nothing in common holds only on the false assumption that intellect pertains to the divine nature.

cause and effect that have nothing in common will differ in both essence and existence.” But this does not mean, however, that he actually thinks that God and his effects can have nothing in common. And, indeed, once we bring to bear on this passage the more entrenched and thoroughly defended causal similarity principle (1a5 plus 1p3, 4pref II/208/5-6, 5a2; KV 2.24 I/104/25-29, KV app1a5 I/114/15; TTP 4 III/58/19-20; Ep. 4), it seems clear that, for Spinoza, with God and his effects there must be commonality. God actually has whatever the effect has.

While I agree that the above is a viable reading of Letter 64, I am not comfortable with saying that the issue at hand is now resolved. The problem with this solution is that this does not change the fact that, at *1p17s*, Spinoza seems to be saying that an effect of the eternal God can have *nothing* in common with the eternal God. This solution, like the previous one, has Spinoza making a claim in 1p17s that he does not really endorse. Although Giancotti Boscherini has given some support to this view, nothing in 1p17s suggests that Spinoza does not truly endorse the causal dissimilarity principle in his argument to prove the following conditional: if God has an intellect, then that intellect will have nothing in common with the intellect of man. I think we need a solution that honors the following facts. (1) There seems to be no substantial indication that Spinoza rejects the causal dissimilarity principle. (2) “Spinoza is himself taken aback,” as Deleuze says, “that his correspondents should be taken aback” concerning his advocacy of both the causal similarity principle of 1p3d and the causal dissimilarity principle at 1p17s.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁷¹ Deleuze, 1992, 48.

Third, and to give a response that honors those two facts, there seems to be a way to reconcile, or at last start to reconcile, the apparent tension that arises between Spinoza's official causal similarity principle and his 1p17s causal principle without saying in either case that Spinoza is not speaking in his own voice or is not making a genuine endorsement. The *Nagelate Schriften* version of the *Ethics* provides an important qualification on the 1p17s claim that the effect must differ from the cause in what it receives from the cause. Usually I do not put as much stock in the additions found in the Dutch translation as Gebhardt does. After all, the extra notes incorporated into the Dutch translation are most likely clarifications made, not by Spinoza, but by his circle of friends.⁷⁷² Nevertheless, I agree that consultation of the *Nagelate Schriften* version can sometimes provide good guidance. Now, in the *Nagelate Schriften* version, and right after the statement of the causal principle in question—namely, “what is caused differs from its cause precisely in what it has from the cause”—we get: “for that reason it is called the effect of such a cause.” The suggestion, then, is that if the effect did not differ from the cause, it would not make sense to call it an effect; it would be the same as the cause and so not worthy of a different title suggesting individuation from the effect. In this case, perhaps all that Spinoza is committing himself to with his so-called “dissimilarity principle of causation” in the case of God and his effects is that between God and his effects there will be individuation.

This is compatible with the virtual essence contained in the absolute nature of an attribute being identical with each of its exemplifications such that we have univocity. It

⁷⁷² See Akkerman 1980, 151; Thijssen-Schoute 1954, 10; Viljanen 2011, 23n36.

is just that there will be individuation between the essence as it is merely imbedded or inscribed in the absolute nature of the attribute and as it is exemplified in duration.

Clearly there is individuation: there is *x merely as imbedded in the absolute nature of the attribute* and *x as it is in duration*. There is no doubt some individuating difference, then, between the virtual and the actual. As indicated by the muscleman and saint examples, the virtual is the mere potency and the actual is the expression of that potency. Notice even here that we still have the *same* potency, the *same* pattern, in both cases. We can apply this solution, where we see the cause as the potency and the effect as the expression of that potency, generally. God in his absolute nature is the potency and the all of his effects are the expressions of that *one and the same* potency.

I cannot go into much detail about the conflict between Spinoza's two causal principles when it comes to the absolute nature of God and the effects of that nature—an issue described by Curley, along with several of Spinoza's correspondents, as “extremely puzzling.”⁷⁷³ The reason why it is especially puzzling is that what makes the effect different from the cause must itself be contained in the cause as well, in which case what makes the effect different from the cause must be had by the cause (such that there is nothing that makes the effect different from the cause). The effect must be contained in the cause, the absolute nature of God, for the following reasons, of course. (1) The absolute nature of God causes everything. (2) The causal similarity principle demands that literally *everything* about the effect be contained in the cause. Now, since what makes the effect different from the cause (the absolute nature of God) must be had

⁷⁷³ Curley 1985, 427n51.

by the cause (the absolute nature of God), there would seem to be a contradiction: what is different about the effect is not different about the effect.

But as I see it, and here is my preliminary stab at reconciliation, the effect is automatically individuated from the cause precisely by being the effect, an expression, of the cause. Strange as it may sound, what is different about the effect is not something *contained in* the cause even though it *comes from* the cause. To say that it comes from the cause and yet is not contained in the cause is not to violate the causal commonality principle. Nor is it so utter a blatant contradiction. For it only comes from the cause as an *automatic byproduct* of the fact that the cause is expressing itself. Even stranger as it may sound, this is not to appeal to a brute fact. That the effect is different is just what must be the case if something is really the effect of the cause. It is not as if the cause “set out” on bringing about what is different about the effect. In bringing about the effect, there is automatically a difference about the effect. And since the cause is sufficient for the effect, the cause is sufficient for what makes the effect different from the cause but in a way that is compatible with the causal similarity principle (thus honoring Spinoza’s strict rationalism and his commitment to the causal similarity principle).

However unsatisfactory it might be for now, I believe that my basic solution for how to reconcile Spinoza’s two causal principles is best. On the one hand, it allows Spinoza to keep the causal dissimilarity principle, which he appears to be endorsing at 1p17s. On the other hand, it allows Spinoza to keep his official causal similarity principle, which he endorses all over the place. Generally, that there are both principles in play makes sense if there really is a plurality of effects of the absolute nature of God

that are not mere illusions (which is what I argued in Chapter VII). For even though, as the causal similarity principle emphasizes, the absolute nature cause must have something in common with the effect in order to bring it about, the effect must be in some way different than the absolute nature cause, as the causal dissimilarity principle emphasizes—indeed, and according to my interpretation, as the causal dissimilarity principle *merely* emphasizes. If there were no difference, then there would be no plurality.⁷⁷⁴ And yet if there were *no* identity (as is implied when the causal dissimilarity principle is taken in too strong of a sense), an absolute wedge would arise between *natura naturans*, the power by which all things are produced (see 1p29s and KV 1.8), and *natura naturata*, the totality of things produced (1p29 and KV 1.9).

Such a bifurcation would be too radical for Spinoza to accept.⁷⁷⁵ The lacuna between the absolute nature of God and a mode would be *absolute*; the absolute nature of God and a given mode would have nothing in common. After all, the absolute nature of God—all by itself—gives rise to a mode and thus, on an interpretation of the causal dissimilarity principle that is too strong (namely, on an interpretation of the causal dissimilarity principle that is left unchecked by the causal similarity principle), nothing about the mode could be in common with God. Such an extreme lacuna might be okay for some. Indeed, one of the principles of Thomism is *De Deo et creaturis nil univoce praedicatur*, the principle that Scotus found to be destructive to philosophy.⁷⁷⁶ However,

⁷⁷⁴ On this basis, my gut tells me that those inclined to the acosmist readings of Spinoza might be overlooking the 1p17s causal principle as I have described it.

⁷⁷⁵ But see Ep. 54; Van Ruler 2009. It is precisely because Spinoza would not accept such a bifurcation that Deleuze and Mark warn that we should not think of Spinoza as a Plotinian (Deleuze 1992, 172, 376n6; Mark 1975, 281; see Murthy 1995, 56n1).

⁷⁷⁶ Scotus *Lect.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1-2; see Deleuze 1992, 360n10; Mark 1975, 280; Pini 2010.

for Spinoza, who is supposed to be following Scotus in endorsing the univocity of being, the extreme lacunae between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* would entail all sorts of troubles.

The main trouble would be a violation of explanatory rationalism, for reasons that Descartes indicates in the Third Meditation. A mode's having absolutely nothing in common with God would mean that that mode is the result, the product, of nothing. Recall Spinoza's own response to Oldenburg's claim that God has nothing in common with created things.

If two things have nothing in common with one another, one cannot be the cause of the other, for since there would be nothing in the effect which it had in common with the cause, whatever the effect had [due to the transfer], it would have from nothing. . . . [Therefore,] I have maintained the complete opposite [of your interpretation] (Ep. 4 IV/14/9-15).

Since Oldenburg's interpretation is that "God has nothing formally in common with created things," when Spinoza says that he endorses the *complete opposite* view he presumably means that God has *everything* formally in common with created things. That he means this makes good sense. The causal similarity principle, which Spinoza cherishes, guarantees that God has everything formally in common with created things (see also KV 1.2 I/30/20-30). So although some commentators believe that there is utter incommensurability between a given finite mode and its attribute (as indeed a certain reading of the causal *dissimilarity* principle suggests),⁷⁷⁷ it seems that this cannot be.

Of course, now the task will be to reconcile what I just concluded with Spinoza's 1674 remark to Boxel.

⁷⁷⁷ See Schütze 1923, 41.

This I do know, between the finite and the infinite there is no relation, so that the difference between God and the greatest and most excellent created thing is no other than that between God and the least created thing. (Ep. 54)

As at least a preliminary gesture towards reconciliation, I will say this. The phrase “there is no relation” is, in Latin, “*nullam esse proportionem.*” The term “*proportionem*” can be translated in a variety of ways: “proportion,” “symmetry,” “relation,” “analogy.” “Relation” and “analogy” would suggest, more so than the others, an absolute gulf—utter incommensurability—between the absolute nature of God and finite modes. If only in light of the fact that Spinoza is supposed to be, along with Scotus, the prince of univocity, these translations are not to be preferred. When we also consider (1) that these finite modes are supposed to be caused by God, as Spinoza says in the next lines, and (2) that Spinoza endorses the causal similarity principle, we have more reason to use some other translation. The following remark by Spinoza captures that reason.

God’s true perfection is that he gives all things their essence, from the least to the greatest; or to put it better, he has everything perfect *in himself*. (my emphasis KV 1.6 I/43)

Now, notice that when Spinoza is talking about the difference between God and his creatures in Letter 54, he specifically is focusing on the fact that the former is *infinite* and the latter is *finite*. Taking this passage simply as a statement of the difference between infinite and finite makes what Spinoza is saying not only rather innocuous in itself, but also to my conclusion about the commonality between God and his creatures. Just because God and God’s creatures do not compare in *magnitude* does not mean that there cannot be commonality between them. For these reasons, in translating

“*proportionem*” I am more inclined towards either the English cognate “proportion” or simply “symmetry.”⁷⁷⁸

10.4 A “transcendent” form for each detail

Once we do see that everything under a given attribute flows from or, as Spinoza puts it, is “communicated” by the absolute nature of that attribute (Ep. 21 IV/127/24-25), we seem forced to regard a given specific nature as it is “contained in” that ultimate spermatic power as the same nature that manifests in *natura naturata* (see 1a4, 1a5, 1p3).⁷⁷⁹ For once again a cause cannot communicate what it does not have, which is why Spinoza believes, in line with Suárez,⁷⁸⁰ that we can learn about the cause by examining what was given as or to the effect (see TTP 4.4, TTP 6.7; CM 1.2 I/239; 5p24).

[K]nowing that all things are determined and ordained by God and that the workings of Nature follow from God’s essence, while the laws of Nature are God’s eternal decrees and volitions, we must unreservedly conclude that we get to know God and God’s will all the better as we gain better knowledge of natural phenomena and understand more clearly how they depend on their first cause, and how they operate in accordance with Nature’s eternal laws. (TTP 6.7)

To be sure, “[i]t is possible to proceed from the idea of an attribute to the ideas of the essences of finite things.”⁷⁸¹ Our minds are so limited, however, that in many cases we learn what eternal essences there are contained in the absolute nature of a given attribute only by first seeing the exemplifications of those essences (see CM 1.2 I/239).

⁷⁷⁸ Unfortunately, the original version of the letter was written in Dutch and it is not certain that the Latin version present in the *Opera Postuma* was in fact written by Spinoza.

⁷⁷⁹ Bergson appears to make the same observation about Spinoza’s ontology as well (see Daniel 2010, 235).

⁷⁸⁰ Suárez MD 30.1.

⁷⁸¹ Viljanen 2011, 24.

Spinoza is rather explicit about the fact that we are dealing with one and the same essence, whether we are talking about the essence as inscribed for eternity in the absolute nature of its attribute or as exemplified. The essence of the human mind that we find embedded in the absolute nature of Thought is the same essence to which we attribute duration while it is the correlate to the essence of the enduring body (see 5p23d). The same *it* that is eternal we attribute duration to while it is instantiated in time. This is evident by the fact that Spinoza does not use different subject-referring terms when he refers to the essence in eternity and the correlating essence in the durational realm. This is evident, in other words, by his following manner of speaking: *x* insofar as it is eternal and *x* insofar as it is enduring (see 5p23d). Thus the sort of Platonism we have on our hands is not of an antirealist variety (where a given eternal essence is construed as a model imitated more or less perfectly by the individuals said to participate in it, such that there really is no identity across diversity). Instead we have a realist Platonism. The character-conferring essence is wholly present and expressed through each of the individuals that “participate” in it.⁷⁸²

So we have seen that, for Spinoza, all the forms or ratios instantiated by things are contained in the absolute nature of the attribute in question (see 5p22d; TTP 4.8; CM 1.2 1/238/10-11, CM 1.2 1/239/13-19; KV app2 I/119/17-19), a view similar to what we see in Suárez.⁷⁸³ Such a view is guaranteed by the fact that each thing is entailed by the absolute nature of its attribute. As contained in the absolute nature of the attribute, all

⁷⁸² See Deleuze 1992, 181.

⁷⁸³ Suárez MD 30.1; see Sangiacomo 2013,

these forms are eternal or atemporal (CM 1.3 I/243/11-14; see HG ch. 5, HG ch. 33)⁷⁸⁴: humanity, just as much as mobility, “has been from all eternity, and will remain to all eternity, immutable” (KV 1.9 I/48/11-13; CM 1.2 I/239/10-19; 1p21). Fullerton seems to have been on to this.⁷⁸⁵ And he rightly notes that we should be keeping these ideas in mind when we are reading Part 5 of the *Ethics*, where a discussion about immortality comes to the fore.

Fullerton calls the Spinozistic immortality of a human “cheap,” however. He says that it is not to be confused with immortality in the normal sense.⁷⁸⁶ For what is eternal, according to Fullerton’s reading of Spinoza, is simply the *general* form of human (which I have understood to be a certain pattern exhibited by each and every human) and the immortality of such an impersonal form does not give *me* much consolation. But there is one important thing that should be noted in contrast to some commentators⁷⁸⁷ and at least in *partial* alignment with others.⁷⁸⁸ Nothing in Spinoza’s system seems to stop the forms from being highly specific, personalized to each singular item.

That is an understatement, in fact. If I really am different from my son, then I will have my own individualized form. Lest we say that the absolute nature of an attribute is not sufficient for all of its modes, that specific form must be harbored, in

⁷⁸⁴ See Donagan 1973b; Lin 2006c, 341.

⁷⁸⁵ Fullerton 1894, 257.

⁷⁸⁶ Fullerton 1894, 257; see Saw 1951, 129.

⁷⁸⁷ See Bennett 1984, 357-363; Curley 1988, 83-86; Martin 2008, 493; Morrison 1994; Nadler 2001b, 94ff; Nadler 2006, 269; Yovel 1989.

⁷⁸⁸ See Donagan 1973b, 241-258; Kneale 1973, 227-240; Koistinen 2009b, 160ff; Rudavsky 2000, 181 and 186; Scribano 2012; Wolfson 1934, 289-311.

germ form, within the absolute nature of the attribute in the way that an innate idea is harbored, in germ form, within the mind. In other words, and to use Leibniz's colorful way to explain innateness,⁷⁸⁹ the absolute nature of the attribute must be so "veined" that it contains that form virtually just as we might say that a block of marble is so veined that it contains the sculpture of Hercules virtually. To say otherwise is to say that the absolute nature of the attribute is not sufficient for this highly specific form. It is to say that other factors outside of the absolute nature of the attribute are needed. That is impossible for Spinoza. So since that form must be harbored in the absolute nature of the attribute under consideration, which thus allows Spinoza to say that "we existed before the body" (5p23s), I do have immortality in way that is less foreign to the traditional view than Fullerton makes it out to seem (however foreign that immortality may remain).

Perhaps recognition of this fact might have assuaged, at least somewhat, Blyenbergh's shock at the notion, which we see stated by Spinoza at 2p15d, that the mind is just as much a composite as the body. Blyenbergh thinks that the composite view of the mind entails that the mind would not survive the death of the body (Ep. 24). What Blyenbergh does not recognize is that even the singularizing essence of the soul, the mind, dwells in the absolute nature of Thought, inscribed there for eternity just as the form of the body too is so inscribed in the absolute nature of Extension.⁷⁹⁰ The expectation, however, is that Blyenbergh will be equally shocked to find that, for

⁷⁸⁹ See Leibniz *New Essays*, preface.

⁷⁹⁰ See Deleuze 1992, 380n3; Koistinen 2009b, 160ff; Scribano 2012.

Spinoza, eternal as well is the unique form of this specific *rock* (which is nothing but the sum of the following: the form of its mind, the form of its body, the form of its . . .).

It is not just that Spinoza's system demands, especially in consideration of his causal similarity principle, that every specific form expressible by a given attribute is contained "virtually" in that attribute.⁷⁹¹ There are numerous passages where Spinoza says as much. We already saw this at 2p8, for example. Spinoza is even more explicit in the CM. Here he tells us that the essences of all modes, even "nonexistent" ones, are contained in the absolute nature of the attribute of which they are modes (see CM 1.2 1/238/10-11, CM 1.2 1/239/10-19).

[T]he essences of nonexistent modes are comprehended in their substances [and are] in their substances. (CM 1.2 I/239/12-14)

Consider these remarks in the TTP as well.

[T]he nature of the triangle is contained in the divine nature from all eternity. . . .
[T]he nature of the triangle is thus contained in the divine nature by the necessity of the divine nature alone. (TTP 4.8)

Now these remarks from DPP.

God is the cause or creator of all things (corollary 1) and . . . the cause must contain in itself all the perfections of the effect (axiom 8), as everyone can readily see. (DPP 1p12c2d)

And these from the KV.

Nature or God . . . contains in itself all the essences of created things. (KV app2.4)

[A]ll the essences of things we see which, when they did not previously exist, were contained in extension. (KV app1p4d)

⁷⁹¹ See Deleuze 1992, 177.

[T]he essence of each of the modes is contained in the attributes. . . . But it should be noted in addition that these modes, [even] when considered as not really existing, are nevertheless equally contained in their attributes. (KV app2.10-11)

Back now to the *Ethics*, at 5p22 Spinoza says that there is an eternal and immutable essence for each individual, including “this” and “that human Body.”⁷⁹² This explains why Spinoza can claim that the essence of each thing is an eternal truth at 1d8exp and can make the following related remark in the TP.

Any natural thing can be adequately conceived, whether it actually exists or not. Therefore, just as the coming into existence of natural things cannot be concluded from their definition, so neither can their perseverance in existing; for their ideal essence is the same after they have begun to exist as it was before they existed. (my emphasis TP 2.2)

Spinoza can thus speak of an individualized eternal essence for the son—indeed, one in which the father at least partially participates (since the son comes from the father and nothing in the effect was not first in the cause).

The father so loves his son that he and his beloved son are, as it were, one and the same. . . . [Thus] the soul of the father must likewise participate in the ideal essence of his son[, not simply in the idea essence of himself]. (Ep. 17)

10.5 Objection and reply 2

10.5.1 Objection 2: the absolute nature of an attribute is insufficient for its finite modes

One may raise the following problem at this point. The conclusion being defended is that inscribed in the absolute nature of a given attribute (and let us simply speak about the attribute of Extension and its modes from here on) are the forms of each

⁷⁹² See Alquié 2003, 381. I am aware that Spinoza devotes most attention to how the *mind* remains eternal, and how it is specifically the intellectual achievements of the mind—the intellect, the set of adequate ideas—that remains eternal (see 5p38s, 5p40c). Since he is forced to admit the highly specified form of immortality that I just described, one might just say for the time being that in these Part 5 passages Spinoza has in mind a different sense of immortality than the one I am talking about, which we might call the 2p8-2p8s sense of immortality.

and every mode in its singularity, and so even the specific form unique to *you*. The central reason provided for this conclusion is that all things falling under Extension are ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of Extension.⁷⁹³ It follows, then, that the conclusion would be undermined if it is the case that *not* everything falling under Extension is ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of Extension. There are strong reasons to believe that, for Spinoza, not everything falling under Extension is ultimately

⁷⁹³ Some points of clarification.—When I say that a mode is or is not ultimately entailed by *x*, I mean (as perhaps goes without saying) that a mode—in its completeness, in its being entirely what it is—is or is not ultimately entailed by *x*. So say that mode *y* is ultimately entailed by *x*. I am saying, in this case, that *x* only if *y*; that is, if *x*, then *y*. Technically, I do not need the term “ultimately.” But with it I make clear that when I say that *x* is sufficient for *y*, I am not limiting myself to saying that there can be no intermediate steps between *x* and *y*. It could be that *x* is sufficient for *y* in the sense that *x* is sufficient for *q* and *q* is sufficient for *y*. Now, in addition to the term “ultimately” I also have an inclination to add the term “completely,” as in: *y* ultimately and *completely* follows from *x*. Unfortunately, adding the term “completely” has proven to cause more confusion than clarification. So unlike the term “ultimately,” I will not use it in the formal discussion above. Nevertheless, it might be helpful to understand why I have this inclination. The issue in this discussion is whether finite modes ultimately (and completely) follow from the absolute nature of God. I like to think of the terms “ultimately” and “completely” working together here as follows. The *ultimate* cause of a given finite mode is the absolute nature of God. So through however many intermediate steps there may be between a finite mode back (not temporally in this case but ontologically) to the absolute nature, that absolute nature is the ultimate cause: the buck stops at the absolute nature; there is no cause further back (on the vertical, that is, ontologically) than that nature. Now, I am inclined to add in the term “completely” to indicate that this ultimate cause (this ultimate cause that is the absolute nature) all by itself, that is, without the help of anything thing else *on the same ontological level* (and also without the help of randomness), is enough for the finite mode in question. I need to make this clear because of how people sometimes speak. It is typical for one to say, for example, that striking the match was sufficient for fire to appear. The absolute nature of God is not sufficient for its finite modes in this way (in this loose sense of being sufficient). In order for the fire in question to appear it is not, technically, enough simply that the match be struck. There needs to be oxygen and various other factors in place as well. To say, however, that absolute nature of God is sufficient for a given mode is to say that the absolute nature *completely*, that is, without the help of any other factor on the same ultimate ontological level, produces that finite mode. Why, then, do I scrap the term “completely”? Some uncharitable and/or narrow-sighted readers have taken my claim that the absolute nature of God *completely* produces a given finite mode *o* as ruling out the possibility that *o* was produced by temporally previous finite modes. But according to how I see the term “completely” operating here, my claim that the absolute nature of God *completely* produces a given finite mode *o* is compatible with the possibility that *o* was produced by temporally previous finite modes. For example, it could be that *o* is overdetermined, having a sufficient explanation on the vertical-ontological order (a sufficient explanation ultimately in the absolute nature of God) and having a sufficient explanation on the horizontal-temporal order (a sufficient explanation in past states of the world). Or it could be that there are two ways to look at how *o* is caused: horizontally, that is in terms of past modes, or vertically, that is, in terms ultimately of the absolute nature of God.

entailed by the absolute nature of Extension. That is, and as several commentators have argued,⁷⁹⁴ there is reason to think that the absolute nature of Extension is not sufficient for everything falling under Extension.

Consider finite bodies. Spinoza denies that finite bodies like you ultimately follow—that is, either directly or indirectly—from the absolute nature of Extension. His reason is that, since whatever ultimately follows from the absolute nature of an attribute must be infinite and eternal (1p21-1p23), finite and durational bodies would not be finite and durational (they would be infinite and eternal) if they did ultimately follow from, that is, if they did have their sufficient source in, the absolute nature of their attribute: Extension (1p28 and 1p28d, 1p21-23, 2p30d, 4p4d; KV 1.2 I/34). No finite mode, for Spinoza, is ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of its attribute. Instead, each finite mode is entailed by previous finite modes *ad infinitum*.

Every singular thing, or anything which is finite and has a determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause, which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause also can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another, which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and so on, to infinity. . . . [W]hat is finite and has determinate existence could not have been produced by the absolute nature of an attribute of God [or by anything that has been produced by the absolute nature of an attribute of God (see 1p21-1p23)]. (1p28-1p28d)

Leibniz reads these passages the same way. This is evident by the objection he raises against them. His objection is mainly that finite individuals are in truth sufficiently explained by the “vertical” or emanative causal order, not merely—and as he

⁷⁹⁴ See Curley 1969, 101-118; Curley 1988, 48-50; Curley and Walski 1999. See also Dea 2008, 603-628; Donagan 1973, 241-258; Friedman 1986, 371-401; Fullerton 1894, 254; Miller 2001, 779-814.

thinks Spinoza believes—by the “horizontal” chain of previous world states and their laws.

[O]ne particular thing is not [merely] determined by another in an infinite progression [as it is for Spinoza] for in that case things would always remain indeterminate, no matter how far you carry the progression. All particular things are rather determined by God.⁷⁹⁵

In several places Spinoza seems to corroborate the view that finite things do not ultimately follow from the absolute nature of their attribute (2p30d, 4p4d; KV 1.2 I/34).⁷⁹⁶ At KV 1.2, for example, Spinoza suggests that, besides the attribute itself, finite modes are needed to bring about a given finite mode. The attribute in its absolute nature does, Spinoza makes clear here, “cause” each of its finite modes, but simply in the sense that the attribute in its absolute nature is a condition *required* for each of its finite modes to be. The attribute is thus merely a *grounding* or *necessary* condition; it merely makes a finite mode *capable* of existence. The attribute in its absolute nature is not a sufficient condition, so Spinoza might be taken to suggest. Finite modes are needed in addition for any one of its finite modes to come about.

[A]lthough in order that a [finite] thing may exist there is required a special modification and a thing beside the attributes of God, for all that, God does not cease to be able to produce a thing immediately. For, of the necessary things which are required to bring things into existence, some are there in order that they should produce the thing, and others in order that the thing should be capable of being produced. (KV 1.2 I/34)

⁷⁹⁵ Leibniz A VI, iv, 1774-75. In his 1678 *De corporum concursu*, Leibniz notes: “the entire effect is equipollent to the full cause, or they have the same power. . . . Note that, in metaphysical rigor, the preceding state of the world or some other machine is not the cause of the following [state], but God [is this cause], although the preceding state is a sure indication that the following will occur (Leibniz 1994, 145-146).

⁷⁹⁶ At 2p30d, to give one of the stranger examples, Spinoza says that our body’s duration, and so (by CM 1.4 I/244/20-21) its total existence, is not determined by (or even dependent on) God’s absolute nature.

Curley summarizes Spinoza's point here as follows.

[A]though the finite modes are produced by other finite modes, and do not follow from the absolute nature of God, they do still depend on him [and are—merely in that sense—caused by him].⁷⁹⁷

It seems definitive, therefore, that if every unique form, even the form of *you* specifically, is inscribed in the absolute nature of the attribute of which you are a mode, then it cannot be for the reason repeatedly cited: that everything, even finite and determinate you, ultimately follows from the absolute nature of God.

10.5.2 Reply to objection 2

First, it is arguable that even if the absolute nature of an attribute is insufficient for some of its modes, the mere fact that those modes are capable of taking shape on it suggests that those modes are, nevertheless, contained in germ form in that absolute nature. To put it metaphorically, there is still some sense in the idea that the block of marble from which the statue of Hercules was carved contained that statue in virtual form even though an outside force was required, in addition to the marble itself, to bring it about.

Second, in contrast to the above objection I think that everything, even finite and determinate me, follows from the absolute nature of the relevant attribute for Spinoza. As I will now explain, Spinoza's system is committed to such a view. I will argue, moreover, that such a commitment does not in truth conflict with the passages suggesting that the absolute nature of an attribute does not ultimately entail the finite modes of that attribute.

⁷⁹⁷ Curley 1985, 433n59.

As we saw, 1p28 and 1p28d (in light of 1p21-1p23) suggest, apparently in line with a few other passages (such as the KV one just discussed), that no finite mode is ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of its attribute. This is puzzling in the larger context of Part 1 of the *Ethics*. On several occasions Spinoza claims that everything—and so even each *finite* individual—ultimately follows from the *absolute nature* of its attribute (see 1p17s, 1p25s, 1p29, 1app II/77; KV 1.3.2, KV 1.4.8; KV 1.6.3 I/41/23, CM 1.3 I/243; Ep. 12, Ep. 21, Ep. 43, Ep. 81, Ep. 83).

This is definitive in the following passage from the Appendix to Part 1.

[A]ll things have been predetermined [(*praedeterminata*)] by God . . . from God's *absolute nature*, or infinite power. (my emphases, 1app II/77)

Notice here that Spinoza cites God's *absolute nature* as the cause of its finite modes. Here he does not mean, by the way, that the absolute nature is a cause in the mere sense of a grounding or necessary condition. After all, he explicitly says that each mode has been *predetermined*, literally fixed beforehand, by that absolute nature. A mere necessary condition for x does not predetermine x. Only a sufficient condition for x can predetermine x.

We see something very close to this in the TTP, where Spinoza says that the eternal decree of God has predetermined all things.

The eternal decree of God, by which he has predetermined all things. (TTP 16.20 III/199/18)

The key is noting not only that the eternal decree predetermines *all* things, but also that the eternal decree must ultimately follow from the *absolute nature* of God. The eternal decree must ultimately follow from the absolute nature of God either in that it is one of

the infinite-eternal modes that ultimately follow from the absolute nature of God or in that it is the absolute nature of God itself.

Another passage, from earlier in Part 1 of the *Ethics*, is equally definitive. That it is equally definitive is clear so long as we attend to the fact that its phrase “God’s supreme power” (*summa Dei potentia*) is but a stylistic variant of “God’s absolute nature” (*absoluta Dei natura*). That the one is a stylistic variant of the other makes sense in itself and is in fact guaranteed by the following equations when taken together (as premises): (a) God’s supreme power equals (*sive*) God’s infinite nature (1p17s II/62/15-16); (b) nature equals (*sive*) power (5p25d); (c) God’s infinite power equals (*sive*) God’s absolute nature (1app II/77).

From God’s supreme power . . . all things have necessarily flowed . . . by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles. (1p17s2)

The following passage is definitive as well, as comes into relief when we tease out the implications.

God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called cause of himself. (1p25s)

This quote says that God causes each thing—even me—in the same sense in which God causes himself. In other words, each thing follows from God in the same sense in which God follows from himself. God follows from himself in what sense? By his absolute nature and thus by absolute necessity. Because God follows from himself by his absolute nature, each thing—even me—follows from God’s absolute nature.

In light of these passages (and further considerations to come), I take it that the following passages report the same idea, even though in them we see no *explicit* reference to God's *absolute* nature.

[A]ll things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature. (my emphasis 1p29)

[A]ll things emanate from God by an inevitable necessity. (Ep. 43)

That every finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute is corroborated with equal definitiveness in Spinoza's following remark to Blyenbergh. That this remark is equally definitive is clear so long as we attend to the fact that its phrase "the power of a *supremely perfect* Being and its immutable decree" is but a stylistic variant of the phrase "God's absolute nature."

Meanwhile I recognize something which gives me the greatest satisfaction and peace of mind: that all things come to pass as they do by the power of a *supremely perfect* Being and by its immutable decree. (Ep. 21)

Consider now Spinoza's conversation with Tschirnhaus (Ep. 81-83).

Disambiguating what is meant by his claim that "everything depends on one single cause" (KV 1.6.3 I/41/23),⁷⁹⁸ here Spinoza explains to the incredulous Tschirnhaus how all bodies—even finite ones—are deducible from the absolute nature of Extension. Spinoza says that this follows from the fact that *true* Extension, unlike *Cartesian* Extension, is fundamentally dynamic, intrinsically containing motion and rest (see Ep. 64). Spinoza admits that the variety of bodies cannot be demonstrated *a priori* from the Cartesian conception of Extension as an inert mass. However, he suggests that it is

⁷⁹⁸ See Koistinen 2003, 290-291.

precisely because motion is an inherent feature of Extension—Extension as he himself understands it—that all bodies can be deduced from its absolute nature.

[F]rom Extension as conceived by Descartes, to wit, an inert mass, it is not only difficult, as you say, but quite impossible to demonstrate the existence of bodies. For matter at rest, as far as in it lies, will continue to be at rest, and will not be set in motion except by a more powerful external cause. For this reason I have not hesitated on a previous occasion to affirm that Descartes's principles of natural things are of no service, not to say quite wrong. (Spinoza Ep. 81)

You mention Descartes's view, by which he maintains that he cannot deduce th[e] variety [of bodies] from Extension in any other way than by supposing that this was an effect produced in Extension by motion started by God [(a being external to Extension)]. . . . [K]nowing well that you entertain a different view, I seek from you an answer [as to how all bodies follow from Extension]. . . . [M]y particular reasons for making this request are as follows. In mathematics I have always observed that from anything considered in itself—that is, from the definition of anything—we are able to deduce at least one property; but if we wish to deduce more properties, we have to relate the thing defined to other things. . . . This seems to be at variance to some extent with Proposition 16 of the *Ethics*[, the proposition that infinitely many modes follows from God's essence, and whose demonstration is as follows: “the intellect infers from the given definition of anything a number of properties *that really do follow* necessarily from it” and the thing in question here is God, that which is absolutely infinite]. . . . In consequence, I fail to see how from an Attribute considered only by itself, for example, Extension, an infinite variety of bodies can arise. (Tschirnhaus Ep. 82)

With regard to your question as to whether the variety of things can be demonstrated a priori solely from the conception of [Cartesian] Extension [as an inert mass (see Letter 81)],⁷⁹⁹ I think I have already made it quite clear that this is impossible. That is why Descartes is wrong in defining matter through Extension; it must necessarily be explicated through an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence. . . . As to what you add, that from the definition of anything, considered in itself, we can deduce only one property, this may hold good in the case of the most simple things, or in the case of mental constructs (*entia rationis*), in which I include figures, but not in the case of real things. Simply from the fact that I define God as an Entity to whose essence existence belongs, I infer several properties of him. (Spinoza Ep. 83)

⁷⁹⁹ See Bell 1984, 121-122.

Consider Letter 12 as well. Here Spinoza describes two versions of the cosmological argument: the version found in the ancients (and which Spinoza accepts), and the version that “recent peripatetics” falsely attribute to the ancients (and which Spinoza rejects). As the recent peripatetics see the cosmological argument, there must be a first cause—God—since an actual endless sequence of causes into the past is absurd. As the ancients see it, however, what is absurd is not the reality of an actual endless sequence of causes, but rather that the members of this sequence fail to be determined by that which exists by its own nature: God. Here is the passage.

[T]he more recent Peripatetics have . . . misunderstood the demonstration by which the Ancients tried to prove God’s existence. . . . [T]he force of this argument does not lie in the impossibility of there being an actual infinite or an infinite regress of causes, but only in the supposition that things which do not exist necessarily by their own nature[, which none of the members of that infinite causal sequence do,] are not *determined* [*determinari*] to exist by a thing which does necessarily exist by its own nature. (my emphasis Ep. 12)

What is most important to notice here is that Spinoza speaks of that which exists by its own nature, which can be nothing else than God in his absolute nature, as *determining* each member of the infinite sequence. God in his absolute nature is, therefore, not a mere grounding cause, a mere necessary condition, for each member of the sequence. After all, a mere grounding cause, a mere necessary condition, for x does not determine x. God in his absolute nature is, rather, the complete cause, the sufficient condition, for each member.⁸⁰⁰

⁸⁰⁰ Could it be that I am taking too many liberties with the term “*determinari*?” Perhaps. After all, “*determinare*” (the active infinite form) can mean *to set boundaries upon*, or *to resolve*. Nevertheless, Shirley provides a good explanation why the term “*determinare*,” in Spinoza’s thought, “is never used in the sense of to decide, resolve, and so forth. It is always used in the sense that gives rise to the philosophical term ‘determinism’” (Shirley 1992, 25-26).

In addition to these points, notice also that if no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute, then that requires the presence of chance in Spinoza's system.⁸⁰¹ Such a consequence is repugnant to a thoroughgoing explanatory rationalist like Spinoza. After all, Spinoza holds that each thing, whether it exists or not, requires an explanation for why it exists or not. For Spinoza, there must be an answer to every question of why (including why not) (1a2, 1p7d2, 1p8s2, 1p11d2, 1p16, 1p17s2, 1p18, 1p29, 1p33, 1p33s1, 1app, 2p44c2d; Ep. 54, Ep. 75).

For each thing there must be assigned a cause, or reason, as much for its existence as for its nonexistence. For example, if a triangle exists, there must be a reason or cause why it exists; but if it does not exist, there must also be a reason or cause which prevents it from existing, or which takes its existence away. (1p11d2)

But why exactly is it the case that if no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute, then that requires the presence of chance in Spinoza's system? It might not seem so obvious at first why the presence of chance, and thus the violation of Spinoza's thoroughgoing explanatory rationalism, would indeed result. After all, the sum of all finite modes of an attribute at a given time t_n will be entailed by the sum of all finite modes at t_{n-1} .⁸⁰² Anything that happens in the infinite chain of these sums of finite modes at each moment (sums that, for the sake of brevity, I will call "world states") is guaranteed by the past to play out exactly as it does. Since any one of

⁸⁰¹ See Huenemann 1999, 227.

⁸⁰² To be more precise (but at the expense of needlessly complicating matters) we should say that the sum of all finite modes of an attribute at a given time t_n will be fully entailed, fully explained, by the sum of all finite modes at t_{n-1} *plus* the absolute nature of the attribute in question. We have to say that the absolute nature of the attribute makes a contribution because, after all, the absolute nature of the attribute is, trivially, necessary for any finite mode. The absolute nature makes more specific contributions than just this, we can say as well. For the infinite-eternal modes, which do uncontroversially ultimately follow from the absolute nature of their attributes, make contributions. In the literature, the contributions made by infinite-eternal modes are frequently described as the contributions of universal laws of nature: see 3preface II/138/12-18; TTP 4.1 III/57, TTP 6.3 III/82-83).

the world states entails all the following world states, there is in effect complete determinism.⁸⁰³ In light of the complete determinism of the horizontal-temporal order, there might seem to be no violation of explanatory rationalism even on the reading of 1p28 and 1p28d in question: the admittedly natural reading that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute.

But here is why the presence of chance, and thus the violation of Spinoza's thoroughgoing explanatory rationalism, would result if no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. Assume that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. Consider now the entire chain of world states itself, the entire sequence that extends into both the infinite past and the infinite future and where the posterior states are utterly determined by the prior. What is the full explanation for the infinite chain of world states *as a whole*, a chain that I will call "alpha"? What completely explains why alpha as a whole obtains rather than some other infinite chain?⁸⁰⁴ The explanation cannot be that alpha is self-caused. As a chain of modes, alpha is dependent on the absolute nature of its attribute. The explanation also cannot be that finite modes beyond alpha make it necessary that alpha (rather than some other chain) obtains. As the *total* chain of finite modes of a given attribute, there are no

⁸⁰³ Curley and Walski 1999, 243.

⁸⁰⁴ Bennett asks this question (1984, 117-118) as Leibniz no doubt would as well. As Leibniz explains in his Fifth Letter to Clarke, it may very well be true that the occurrence of finite individual *x* is entailed by the previous world state *G*, such that we have the hypothetical proposition "if *G*, then *x*." But, as Leibniz asks, what about the entire chain of world states? "We must," Leibniz says, "distinguish between an absolute and a hypothetical necessity." As Leibniz puts it in *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*, in order to explain the ultimate origin of "the chain of states or series of things, the aggregate of which constitutes the world," we must move from "hypothetical necessity, which determined the posterior states of the world by the prior, to something which is absolute or metaphysical necessity." That which has absolute or metaphysical necessity is, Leibniz says in the *Monadology*, "outside the sequence or series of this detail of contingents, however infinite it may be" (37-39).

finite modes beyond alpha that could play such a role. (Any finite modes beyond alpha would belong to a different attribute and there can be no interaction between attributes: 1p10s, 2p5, 2p5d.⁸⁰⁵) The only other option that remains as to what provides the full explanation for alpha (and thus for why alpha rather than some other infinite series obtains) is that alpha ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute.⁸⁰⁶ Now, if alpha ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute, then each of the finite modes that make it up must ultimately follow from the absolute nature of its attribute. For if x-y-z as a package ultimately follows from the absolute nature, then it is trivial that any given member of that package (say, y) ultimately follows from the absolute nature. We are assuming, however, that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. According to our assumption, then, it cannot be the case that alpha ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. Therefore, we are compelled to say that alpha exists without a full explanation—and thus that chance is implicated in the existence of alpha—if indeed no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute.⁸⁰⁷ In other words, and to summarize the discussion,

⁸⁰⁵ See Garrett 1999, 121; Della Rocca 2008, 54-58, 97-103.

⁸⁰⁶ The only other option, in other words, is that either alpha immediately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute or that alpha, by immediately following from an infinite-eternal mode, mediately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute.

⁸⁰⁷ Curley 1969, 105; Curley 1988, 49. That one is compelled to take alpha as lacking an adequate cause is admitted even by Curley himself. Curley clings to the reading of 1p28 in question as the key premise to his denial of the view that Spinoza is a strict necessitarian, one who holds that all things—even finite modes—have the same degree of necessity as the absolute nature of the attributes themselves.

The issue as to whether alpha has a full explanation, which can mean only that it is fully explained by the absolute nature of the attribute in question, is of central concern in the interpretive debate as to whether Spinoza is a strict or moderate necessitarian or, in other words, whether he is a necessitarian or simply a determinist. On the strict necessitarian (or simply necessitarian) reading, which has as its key piece of evidence Spinoza's repeated claim that everything flows entirely from the absolute nature of God, everything—even each finite mode—is as necessary as God in his absolute nature: namely, absolutely necessary. On the moderate necessitarian (or simply determinist) reading, which has as its key piece of evidence 1p28 and 1p28d, not everything is absolutely necessary. The attributes themselves, and the

the violation of Spinoza's explanatory rationalism would result from the assumption that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. For if alpha (the entire sequence of finite modes) has a full cause, then the absolute nature of alpha's attribute provides that cause. But if the absolute nature of alpha's attribute provides that cause, then it is not the case that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute.

For my purposes here, all I need to say is that Spinoza explicitly admits and is compelled to admit that everything, even finite modes, flow ultimately from the absolute nature of the attribute of which they are modes. Again, and in light of the fact that for

infinite-eternal modes that Spinoza describes in 1p21, 1p22, and 1p23 as ultimately emanating entirely from the absolute nature of their attributes, are absolutely necessary. However, on this view, finite modes do not have absolute necessity, but some lesser necessity (in the literature called "hypothetical necessity"), since each of their existences is at least partially a function of previous finite modes *ad infinitum*. Since there is an infinite regress of causes at the level of finite modes (no causal dead-end or dead-start), since there is no buck-stopping arche (only ever an arche that stems from some previous arche), no finite mode is ultimately fully explained by what fully explains itself and thus no finite mode can have the absolute necessity of that which fully explains itself (only the ungrounded necessity, or the necessity of the endlessly deferred buckstopping arche). On this view, then, alpha does not have a full explanation.

The following commentators lean toward the strict necessitarian reading, which in my view is the right position (for reasons that will become evident). Carriero 1991; Deleuze 1988, 93-94; Della Rocca 1996, 95-96; Della Rocca 2008, 69-78; D. Garrett 1999, 103-130; Griffin 2008, 71-93; Hampshire 1951; Huenemann 1999, 224-240; Koistinen 1998, 66; Koistinen 2003, 283-310; Lovejoy 1964, 151-157; Nadler 2006, 84-121; Newlands 2007; Sartre 1956, 148; Steinberg 1981, 35-68; Viljanen 2008, 412-437.

Here is a list of those who lean toward the moderate necessitarian interpretation. Curley 1969, 101-118; Curley 1988, 48-50; Curley and Walski 1999; Dea 2008, 603-628; Donagan 1973, 241-258; Friedman 1986, 371-401; Fullerton 1894, 254; Miller 2001, 779-814.

Here is a listing of those who seem to hold that Spinoza is contradictory on the matter, that is, that he endorses strict necessitarianism and its denial and so, in effect, that he thinks alpha is entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute in question and that it is not so entailed. Bennett 1984, 111-124; Jarrett 1978, 55-56; Matson 1977, 76-83.—It should be noted, however, that every commentator who defends the moderate necessitarian reading must in truth be saying that Spinoza is contradictory on the matter as to whether alpha is entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute. For it is clear that everything must be entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute. Spinoza's system entails as much and Spinoza explicitly admits as much. So to be arguing, as the moderate necessitarians do, that alpha is not entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute in question is to be arguing that Spinoza is inconsistent.

Delahunty (1985, 155-165) is the only prominent commentator, of which I am aware, that explicitly endorses the main remaining option: that a definitive decision cannot be made either way. For more on this issue, see the following. Bussotii and Tapp 2009; Hart 1983; Leibniz 1969; Newlands 2010; Phemister 2006; Schmaltz 1997; Willis 1870, xxi.

Spinoza a cause cannot communicate what it does not itself contain, this supports my view that the forms of all things—from those that are common to multiple finite individuals to those that uniquely pick out finite individuals—are virtually contained in the absolute nature of their attributes. In effect, I could leave the apparent tension unresolved. For if all I need to support my view is to show that Spinoza endorses A, then it is no matter that he also endorses not-A. Nevertheless, since the apparent fact that Spinoza endorses not-A gives one leverage equally to deny my claim, and since I am in the business of learning about Spinoza rather than winning against some opponent, and since I can dispel that tension that has puzzled commentators anyway, I will explain now how Spinoza is consistently committed to A.

The evidence in favor of the interpretation that, for Spinoza, every finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute is stronger than the evidence in favor of the interpretation that, for Spinoza, no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. What especially tips the scale, in my view, is that the interpretation according to which no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute results in a violation of the explanatory rationalism, and the rejection of chance, that is so foundational to Spinoza's vision (1a2, 1p7d2, 1p8s2, 1p11d2, 1p16, 1p17s2, 1p18, 1p29, 1p33, 1p33s1, 1app, 2p44c2d; Ep. 54, Ep. 75). As I see it, then, the evidence for the interpretation that the absolute nature of an attribute is

insufficient for its finite modes must be explained away if there is to be any resolution of the tension.⁸⁰⁸

Now, it might be said that I cannot put much weight on the fact that alpha would lack a sufficient explanation if no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. On what grounds? Well, according to some commentators,⁸⁰⁹ Spinoza fails to consider the full explanation for alpha as a whole. That Spinoza “overlook[s] the hard question about the entire series” is evident, Bennett says, by the fact that Spinoza writes “as though our ability to answer the why question about any particular [finite mode in the series] is enough [to explain the entire series and thus] to meet the demands of explanatory rationalism.”⁸¹⁰

It does not seem, however, that Spinoza failed to consider the full explanation for alpha as a whole. There is at least one case where Spinoza is rather unequivocally discussing alpha as a whole and saying, in fact, that alpha as a whole does ultimately follow from the absolute nature of its attribute.⁸¹¹ I will discuss the passage in question before I move on to my suggestion for resolution of the apparent tension. That passage itself, in fact, provides an important clue as to how the tension is to be resolved.

⁸⁰⁸ And of course we should try to resolve the tension. After all, Spinoza asserts that each thing follows ultimately from the absolute nature of its attribute in close vicinity to those passages where he is supposed to be denying this.

⁸⁰⁹ Bennett 1984, 117-119; Curley 1988, 151n61.

⁸¹⁰ Bennett 1984, 117-118.

⁸¹¹ There are other, although less definitive, places as well. At TTP 3.3 and TTP 6.6 Spinoza describes the order of nature, alpha, as eternal and fixed. Alpha could be eternal and fixed only if it ultimately followed from the absolute nature of its attribute. Indeed, at TTP 3.3 and TTP 16.20 we see Spinoza say that the common order of nature, alpha, was predetermined and preordained by God’s nature. At 1p33d Spinoza also suggests that if alpha was different God’s absolute nature would be different. That implies that alpha ultimately follows from God’s absolute nature.

The passage that I have in mind is Letter 64. Here Spinoza supplies Tschirnhaus and Schuller with some examples of those modes that, as described in 1p21-1p23, ultimately follow from the absolute nature of their attribute. When he comes to those modes that follow ultimately but not immediately from the absolute nature of their attributes (those modes known in the literature as *mediate* infinite-eternal modes), Spinoza tells us that the one under Extension (that is, the mediate infinite-eternal mode following ultimately from the absolute nature of Extension) is the face of the entire universe. For further assistance as to what he means, he directs his correspondent to the scholium of the 7th lemma of 2p13s. In this lemma, Spinoza explains that each body is a composite of smaller bodies and that each body can preserve its identity and individuality through various internal changes if and only if its component bodies maintain the proper pattern of motion and rest among themselves. Spinoza then says that we can keep proceeding upwards, through larger and larger composite individuals, until we reach the material universe itself as a composite super-individual (2p13slemma7s, II/101-102). So the suggestion is that the super-individual, which is presumably made up of all finite modes of Extension as they are related across time, is what Spinoza means by the face of the universe and thus the mediate infinite-eternal mode under Extension. The mediate infinite-eternal mode under Extension thus would amount to alpha under Extension. Since all infinite-eternal modes, whether immediate (1p21) or mediate (1p22), ultimately follow from the absolute nature of the given attribute, Spinoza is

presumably saying that alpha ultimately follows ultimately from the absolute nature of the given attribute.⁸¹² Here are the key passages in question.

I should like to have examples of those things immediately produced by God, and of those things produced by the mediation of some infinite modification. (Schuller Ep. 63)

[T]he examples you ask for of the first kind are: in the case of thought, absolutely infinite intellect; in the case of extension, motion and rest. An example of the second kind is the face of the whole universe, which, although varying in infinite ways, yet remains always the same. See Scholium to Lemma 7 preceding Prop. 14, 11. (Spinoza Ep. 64)

So far we have conceived an individual which is composed of [the simplest bodies, that is,] bodies which are distinguished from one another only by motion and rest, speed and slowness. . . . But if we should now conceive of another, composed of a number of Individuals of a different nature, we shall find that it can be affected in a great many other ways, and still preserve its nature. . . . But if we should further conceive of a third kind of Individual, composed [NS: of many individuals] of this second kind, we shall find that it can be affected in many other ways, without any change of its form. And if we proceed in this way to infinity, we shall easily conceive that the whole of nature is one Individual whose parts, i.e., *all bodies*, vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole Individual. (2p13lemma7s)

Some may say that the face of the universe is not all bodies, but simply laws of nature or perhaps the pattern of motion and rest of the super individual in question. But

⁸¹² It should be noted that Curley, not wanting to budge on the view that the absolute nature of an attribute is not a sufficient cause of any finite mode, interprets Spinoza's remarks to Tschirnhaus here in a way that would not conflict with the view that the absolute nature of an attribute is not a sufficient cause of any finite mode. Curley, I believe, is wrong. That everything has as its sufficient cause the absolute nature of its attribute is corroborated from just too many directions. Nevertheless, I will quote Curley in full.

First, the phrase "the face of the whole universe" need not refer to [the sum of all finite modes of a given attribute] but [merely] to those features of that [super composite] individual which enable it to retain its identity through change. . . . Second, if we do interpret "the face of the whole universe" as referring to that [super sum of finite modes], then we make trouble for ourselves elsewhere. The mediate infinite mode of the attribute of extension is supposed to follow from the absolute nature of the attribute of extension. . . . If the mediate infinite mode of extension follows in that way from the attribute of Extension, and if we identify the mediate infinite mode of extension with the totality of finite things, then the totality of finite things follows from the attribute of extension. I do not see how the totality of finite things can follow from the attribute of extension without its being the case that individual finite things also follow from the attribute of extension. . . . Unless [one] is prepared to attribute a grand inconsistency to Spinoza, [one] ought not to identify the mediate infinite mode with the totality of finite things. (Curley 1993, 131-132)

Spinoza is talking about *all bodies*. He is talking about an individual, a super-individual, whose components include all bodies. One may say that Spinoza is talking about all bodies *at a given time*. But Spinoza does not say that. Also, Spinoza tends to speak from the perspective of the eternal. And so when he says all bodies, the default is to regard him as saying all bodies *ever*: “all bodies” is, literally, *all* bodies—and so across all time. The notion of temporality is indeed explicit in the very passage at hand. Spinoza describes the super-individual as being the same even as its parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways across *infinite time*. Thus the very context of the passage indicates that Spinoza is talking about all bodies across all time. Moreover, if the face was simply all bodies at a given time, that would mean that there are infinite faces over all time—one face for each slice of time. But not only does Spinoza merely talk about the *face* of the universe *singular*, the absolute nature of God produces what it produces from eternity, that is, in an eternal instant rather than at each time slice throughout sempiternity. Lastly, even if there were these infinite faces, alpha would be the sum of these faces. And since each of these faces would follow from the absolute nature of Extension, so too then would alpha. This is all that I need here.

So I say once again, the evidence for the interpretation that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute should be explained away if the tension in question is to be dissolved. For stronger evidence is to be found in favor of the interpretation that every finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. 1p28 and 1p28d, in light of 1p21-1p23, is the main evidence for the

interpretation that no finite mode ultimately follows from the absolute nature of its attribute. That is where I will focus my attention, then.

When we look at 1p28 and 1p28d in *isolation* from the rest of Spinoza's writings, the natural reading, and the one that Leibniz takes, is that Spinoza denies that the absolute nature of an attribute is the ultimate sufficient cause for each finite mode. However, in light of all the evidence to effect that everything ultimately follows from the absolute nature (such that the absolute nature is not merely necessary but also sufficient for everything), it seems that 1p28 must be read in a more restricted sense. Taking a cue especially from Spinoza's endorsement of the fact that the *whole package* of finite modes (alpha) ultimately follows from the absolute nature (as we just saw when looking at Ep. 64 and lemma7s), and taking a cue in general from the fact that Spinoza often stresses how finite modes are inextricably imbedded, "interconnected" (TTP 3.3), within "the common order of nature as a whole" (alpha) (2p29s, 2p30d, 4p4d, 4p4c, 4p57s; Ep. 12 IV/54/10-15; TdIE 40, TdIE 55, TdIE 65, TdIE 75; CM 1.3 I/241/30ff, CM 2.9 I/266), I find it most reasonable to read 1p28 and 1p28d as denying, not that the absolute nature ultimately produces each finite mode, but merely that the absolute nature ultimately produces each finite mode *one by one*, in piece-by-piece fashion. Spinoza must mean simply that the absolute nature of an attribute does not produce finite modes individually, in isolation from every other member of the package—piecemeal. He must mean that, since the absolute nature produces the entire package of finite modes, any given finite mode necessarily comes together with all the others and it is thus misguided, in some sense, to single one out as if that one all on its own followed from the absolute

nature. Since the absolute nature of God produces any given finite mode in the sense that it produces the whole package of finite modes, 1p28d's claim that "what is finite . . . could not have been produced by the absolute nature of an attribute of God" is not to be seen as rejecting the claim that *the absolute nature of God produces any given finite mode in the sense that it produces the whole package of finite modes*. 1p28d is rejecting something else. 1p28d is rejecting the sort of scenario where what is finite is produced by the absolute nature of God and yet does not necessarily come together with every other finite mode across all time.

10.6 Summarizing the discussion so far

For the sake of the thoroughness of my central argument, I had to travel down several side paths. Let me summarize the main discussion, then. Spinoza is not a Platonist in the robust sense that all individuals, even substances, receive their character from universals that are ontologically prior to them. Each universal exists only as exemplified by a substance. In this sense Spinoza sides with Aristotle in the debate concerning the ontological independence of universals from their instances.⁸¹³

Nevertheless, the Platonic analysis of modes having properties is in play within the confines of God. Every form that is ever instantiated in the durational realm of modes—not just the general, say, human body form, but even the form of "this" human

⁸¹³ And this shows us, against what commentators like Rice (1991, 294n18), Barbone (1993, 385 and 387n4), MacKinnon (1924, 358), and Klein (2003, 28) seem to believe, that being a Platonist is not required in order for Spinoza—or anyone for that matter—to be a realist. This misconception frequently appears. It sometimes motivates the view that Aristotle, not being a Platonist, must be an antirealist (see Gerson 2004).

body and the different form of “that” human body (5p22)—is contained in the absolute nature of its attribute. Hence Spinoza says the following in the *Short Treatise*.

The essence of things are from all eternity, and unto all eternity shall remain immutable. (KV 1.1 I/15/15-16)

In a note Spinoza makes it clear that the “truly eternal and immutable” essences in question are not limited to determinable or indefinite essences, but to determinate or definite ones that fully capture each individual in its singularity (KV 1.1a; see 2d2). As we saw, every form ever instantiated is contained in the absolute nature of the attribute under which it get instantiated. The following facts, taken together, guarantee this. (1) The absolute nature of the attribute itself, without the help of anything beyond it, produces everything. (2) Something cannot communicate what is not already contained virtually within it.

Any natural thing can be adequately conceived, whether it actually exists or not. Therefore, just as the coming into existence of natural things cannot be concluded from their definition, so neither can their perseverance in existing; for their ideal essence is the same after they have begun to exist as it was before they existed. (my emphasis TP 2.2)

Considered in their virtual state within that absolute nature, these forms subsist just as does the absolute nature of the attribute itself: ontologically prior to its exemplifications (see TTP 4.8; 1p1, 1p5d, 1p10; KV 1.2 I/25/35). They are there and ready to be, as Spinoza himself says, “participated” in (the more perfect beings participating in more, and the less perfect beings participating in less) (Ep. 17, Ep. 19; 3def 3e of affects, 4p45s, 4app31; TTP 1.2, TTP 14.7; KV 2.26.8 I/112/1-2). It is for this reason that

Haserot is right to conclude that Spinoza's ontology contains "*universalia ante rem*" or properties that have being independent of their exemplifications.⁸¹⁴

That there is this immanent-to-God form of Platonism in play is important to recognize. Recognizing it allows us to see how Spinoza's view that there is nothing beyond God is compatible with his often-repeated claim that a true idea, that which corresponds with its object (1a6), can nevertheless refer to an essence whose exemplifications "never existed, and never will exist" (TdIE 69; TP 2.2). Echoing Descartes's endorsement of "immutable and eternal" forms subsisting in the divine nature and ontologically anterior to their exemplifications (see APPENDIX B),⁸¹⁵ Spinoza tells us that "the essences of nonexisting modes" subsist for eternity in the absolute nature of their attribute without any *natura naturata* instantiation (CM 1.2 1/239/13-19; KV 1.1.8 I/17/15-21; TTP 4.8; TdIE 72).

[A]ll the essences of things we see which, when they did not previously exist, were contained in extension. (KV app1p4d)

[T]he essence of each of the modes is contained in the attributes. . . . But it should be noted in addition that these modes, [even] when considered as not really existing, are nevertheless equally contained in their attributes. (KV app2.10-11)

⁸¹⁴ Haserot 1950, 479-492. Spinoza did not own any of Plato's works. Nevertheless, surely Plato's ideas were in the air. Those ideas, to be precise, are found in Maimonides, Aquinas, and others that Spinoza did know. Moreover, Spinoza did own the Spanish translation of the influential *Dialogues on Love* by neoplatonist Judah Abrabanel (aka Leone Ebreo). In these dialogues Abrabanel also suggests, by the way, that the true universals are grasped only by intellect (see Gebhardt 1921; Hughes 2014). Spinoza is of course critical in the few places he does mention Plato, but I agree with Kristeller. According to Kristeller, when Spinoza says that Plato, along with Socrates and Aristotle, carry little weight for him, we should understand Spinoza as meaning "that he does not recognize the authority of the three ancient philosophers when it is opposed to reason" (1984, 7).

For commentators who provide good discussion of Spinoza's link to Platonism, see the following: Ayers 2007; Brochard 1966, 693; Brunschvicg 1923; Burger 1860; Curley 1969, 156; Ferrière 1899, 68; Fraenkel 2006; Gebhardt 1921; Hart 1983; Hayes 1957; Kristeller 1984; Love 1948; Nussbaum 1994; Schaarschmidt 1845; Thilo 1893; Vater 1980, 134-143; Wiehl, R. 2012; Zulawski 1899, 59.

⁸¹⁵ Descartes AT VII 64-65; AT VII 380; see Garrett 2009, 287; Viljanen 2011, 12.

And since the absolute nature of the attributes are eternal, “the essences of the modes contained in those attributes” (KV app2.4), “whether the [modes] exist or not,” will not involve “duration” or temporal “existence” (1p24c). Thus, and to use Spinoza’s own example, when the sculptor conceives the statue yet to be sculpted, the form to which he attends does not exist merely in his mind but in the absolute nature of Extension. And when the sculptor brings the statue about through his efforts, the form in question becomes exemplified in the durational realm (CM 1.2 I/239/25ff).

There is no question of Spinoza needing some third realm, or heaven independent of God, to contain the eternal and immutable Platonic forms.⁸¹⁶ The absolute natures of the attributes provide such a service. Spinoza is cognizant of this fact. Hence he says the following regarding the essence of a given thing.

[I]t depends on the divine essence alone, in which all things are contained. So in this sense we agree with those [(Platonists, such as Augustine)⁸¹⁷] who say that the essences of things are eternal. (CM I/239/2-5)

The essences of each thing are eternal for Spinoza. In that he agrees with the Platonists. And he can—quite literally—*substantiate* that claim. He does not need to posit some ad hoc heaven in which those these essences can dwell. All the essences dwell with the absolute nature of their attributes, inscribed for eternity therein just as innate idea, before it ever even becomes expressed, is inscribed in the mind.

⁸¹⁶ Some have suggested that such a third realm is needed in the case of Descartes, “the founder of modern Platonism” (Kenny 1970, 692-693; see Kenny 2009, ch. 7; Wilson 1978, 171).

⁸¹⁷ See Fullerton 1899, 91-93.

10.7 Spinoza's Platonism further restricted

My citing Spinoza's talk of essences that never will be exemplified may lead to misinterpretation. My considered view is not that, for Spinoza, there are properties that, although of the sort instantiable by modes, fail to be instantiated by modes. My considered view is not that, for Spinoza, there are modes inscribed for eternity in the absolute nature of their attributes and yet never, through the entire course of sempiternity, achieve instantiation in the durational realm of modes.

Spinoza's talk of mode essences existing regardless as to whether they are instantiated may suggest such a view, no doubt. In the contemporary metaphysics literature the debate as to whether universals exist merely as their instantiations or are, instead, somehow anterior to the individuals that they character is sometimes described simply as the debate as to whether there are uninstantiated universals.⁸¹⁸ The description of the debate as concerning whether there are uninstantiated universals is ambiguous. It slurs over the possibility, rare as it may be, of an ontology where, on the one hand, all the properties are instantiated but where, on the other hand, the properties do not exist merely as instantiated. Both issues are central to the debate between Aristotelian and Platonic realism.⁸¹⁹ Since the Aristotelian holds, in regards to the latter issue, that properties exist merely as exemplified, the Aristotelian thereby holds, in regards to the former issue, that all properties are instantiated. While Plato himself seems to deny that properties exist merely as exemplified and to deny as well that all properties are

⁸¹⁸ See Gerson 2004 n12.

⁸¹⁹ See Landesman 1971, 15, Moreland 2001, Wolterstorff 1970b, 263-281.

instantiated, the denial that properties exist merely as instantiated does not entail the denial that all properties are instantiated, however understandable it is to couple these two positions together.

How does Spinoza stand on the issue? Spinoza does refer to essences or principles whose exemplifications “never will exist” (TdIE 69). And as with Fullerton,⁸²⁰ Haserot insinuates, at least at one point, that for Spinoza, whose “method” and “ontology” he understands to be through and through Platonist,⁸²¹ there are properties that fail to be instantiated by modes even though they are of the sort that can be instantiated by modes: “An essence . . . may have being and yet not have any . . . exemplification.”⁸²²

Nevertheless, it turns out that, despite some evidence to the contrary, no essence of the sort instantiable by a mode ever fails to be instantiated by a mode in Spinoza’s mature metaphysical system (as Ostens was right to point out to Velthuysen as being one of Spinoza’s views: Ep. 42). In this case, Spinoza’s already qualified Platonism must therefore be qualified still further yet.—And by the way, the fact that every eternal form gets instantiated does not mean that we should regard the above TdIE 69 passage as anomalous. The larger context indicates that Spinoza is not uttering the claim that some forms may never get instantiated from his considered position about how God, as I will explain in a moment, must actually bring every form about. Spinoza’s point here is simply that even were the form not to be instantiated, the idea of it would still be there.

⁸²⁰ Fullerton 1894, 252.

⁸²¹ Haserot 1950, 492.

⁸²² Haserot 1950, 482.

Not only would it be excessive and disruptive for him to explain, “Well, technically, it cannot really be, given the nature of God, that certain forms do not ever get instantiated.” It also makes rhetorical sense why he would speak of forms never to be instantiated. His point here is that we can have a true idea even of the form prior to its instantiation. What better way to drive such a point home than by saying that this would be the case even if the form were never to be instantiated?

Now, here is one Spinozistic argument to the effect that all forms harbored in the absolute nature of an attribute must achieve exemplification. First, since each attribute is utterly self-sufficient and windowless (see Chapter III), completely insusceptible to increase or diminution by the activity of anything else (KV app1a3, KV app1a4), any fully caused expression of an attribute (every such expression is fully caused, of course) must be ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute. Second, since everything about the effect must be contained in the cause (see 1a5 plus 1p3; Ep. 4; KV 2.24 I/104/25-29, KV app1a5 I/114/15), and since any expression of an attribute must be ultimately entailed by the absolute nature of the attribute, any expression of an attribute must be contained in germ form in the absolute nature of the attribute. Third, since God has an idea of everything (including the absolute nature of a given attribute), and since everything contained in the absolute nature of a given attribute subsists prior to being realized in the durational order (2p3 and 2p8), God has an idea of each expression contained in germ form in the absolute nature of a given attribute. Fourth, since everything of which God has an idea must be brought into the full actuality of existence lest we say that God is not all-powerful (1p16, 1p16d, 1p17s II/62), everything

contained in germ form in the absolute nature of a given attribute must be brought into the full actuality of existence. Lovejoy puts the conclusion quite well.

[T]he range of conceivable diversity of kinds of living things is exhaustively exemplified . . . [and] no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled.⁸²³

The conclusion that all the Platonic forms imbedded for eternity in the absolute nature of a given attribute must be realized at some point or other is not simply demanded by Spinoza's system. It is a conclusion that Spinoza explicitly endorses. He endorses it from the early years of the *Short Treatise* to the mature years of the *Ethics*.

Let us look at a relevant passage from the *Ethics*. At 1p17s Spinoza enters into debate with those who maintain that not everything falling under the divine intellect is brought into existence. His opponents say that God does not realize all that is contained in his understanding for the following reason.

If he had created all the things in his intellect (they say), then he would have been able to create nothing more, which they believe to be incompatible with God's omnipotence. (1p17s II/62/10-12)

Against this (perhaps Lurianic) doctrine of divine self-limitation Spinoza argues that the contrary is the case.

[It is] my opponents [who] seem to deny God's omnipotence. For they are forced to confess that God understands infinitely many creatable things, which nevertheless he will never be able to create. For otherwise, if he created everything he understood he would (according to them) exhaust his omnipotence and render himself imperfect. Therefore, to maintain that God is perfect, they are driven to maintain at the same time that he cannot bring about everything to which his power extends. I do not see what could be feigned which would be more absurd than this or more contrary to God's omnipotence. (1p17s)

⁸²³ Lovejoy 1964, 52.

When we turn to a similar passage in the *Short Treatise*, we see Spinoza rather explicit about how (1) all forms are transcendent in the mitigated sense that I have already explained and how (2) each one of those forms inscribed in the absolute nature of God must be realized lest we attribute imperfection to God.

But now the dispute arises again as to whether God can omit to do all that is in his Idea . . . and whether such an omission would be a perfection in him. We say that since everything that happens is done by God, it must be predetermined by him. Otherwise he would be changeable, and that would be a great imperfection in him. And since this predetermination by him must be from eternity, and since in eternity there is neither before nor after, it follows inevitably from this that God was not able before to predetermine things in a way different from that in which they are now determined from eternity. . . . Furthermore, if God should omit to do something, then that must result either from a cause in him or none. If the former, then it is necessary that he must omit doing it. If the latter, then it is necessary that he must not omit doing it. This is clear in itself. Again, in a created thing it is a perfection to exist and to have been produced by God, for the greatest imperfection of all is not being; and because God wills the salvation and perfection of everything, if God willed that this thing did not exist, the salvation and perfection of the thing would consist in not existing. This is self-contradictory. So we deny that God can omit to do what he does. Some consider this a slander and belittling of God. But such talk comes from a misconception of what true freedom consists in. For it is not at all what they think it is, namely, the ability to do or to omit to do something good or evil. True freedom is nothing but [being] the first cause, which is not in any way constrained or necessitated by anything else, and which through its perfection alone is the cause of all perfection. So if God could omit to do this, he would not be perfect. For the ability to omit doing some good, or bringing about some perfection in what he produces can only be through defect. (KV 1.4 I/37/5-I/36/6)

It is not merely that with Spinoza every universal must exist as exemplified at some moment or other. There is strong evidence that Spinoza endorses not only plenitude, the view that all possible forms of existence become expressed (1p16, 1p17s, 1app), but eternalism,⁸²⁴ the view that everything past present and future equally exists

⁸²⁴ Bennett 1984, 193-194, 207-211; Hardin 1978, 130-131; Joachim 1901, 121; Hampshire 1951; Waller 2010; Savan 1994, 7; Cockburn 1994, chap. 2; Parchment 2000, 362-366; Dugdale 2001, 289-294

(1p44c2 and 5p29s in light of the fact that everything follows from the absolute nature of God and, indeed, that alpha—the total sequence of world states—is, as I have argued above, an infinite-*eternal* mode).⁸²⁵ In light of what we might thus call Spinoza’s “static plenitude,”⁸²⁶ it seems true to say that, for Spinoza, each universal exists as exemplified. I cannot explore Spinoza’s eternalism further here, but this further stresses how the Platonist reading of Spinoza must be qualified. For even though any given divine attribute is “prior to,” and thus in some sense “without,” modes (KV 1.2 I/25/35) that, in Haserot’s words, “possess the attribute in common as a common nature,” Spinoza’s plenitude and eternalism drives home the point home that “the modes cannot escape their attributes *nor the attributes their modes*.”⁸²⁷

10.8 Concluding remarks

In this chapter I argued that Spinoza should be seen as an important figure in the tradition of those, such as Bernard of Chartres,⁸²⁸ who serve to unite Aristotle and Plato. On the one hand, Spinoza follows Aristotle on the issue concerning substances having properties: no properties are unanchored, if you will, to the one substance, God, that instantiates them. On the other hand, the attributes, as well as the universals inscribed in

⁸²⁵ Sider 2001, 16.

⁸²⁶ Bidney 1996, 42.

⁸²⁷ My emphasis Haserot 1950, 485. I might point out another way that Spinoza is similar to Plato. Although arguably it is the case that both Aristotle and Plato agreed as well that experience merely provides the occasion for awakening the intellect’s innate vision into universality (see Suárez too: MD 6.5.1, 6.9.8, 6.9.21), this innatist view is more commonly associated with Plato. Such is reflected in the following words of McKeon.

Here again there is opportunity for disagreement between the Platonist and the Aristotelian, the former holding that all knowledge is derived directly in some fashion from universal ideas innate in the soul, the latter that the intellect works over the data of sensation and abstracts its general ideas. (McKeon 1928a, 140)

⁸²⁸ See Turner 1830, 511n71.

them for eternity, are ontologically prior to their durational exemplifications just as Plato's forms are ontologically prior to their durational exemplifications.

I did not argue merely that Spinoza allows for universals that are ontologically prior to their *natura naturata* exemplifications and that remain one and the same, strictly identical, in each of its *natura naturata* exemplifications. I argued that *everything* in the realm of *natura naturata* is an exemplification of an ontologically prior universal inscribed in the absolute nature of God. As I read Spinoza, then, there is a form for each mode, a form harbored virtually in the ultimate spermatoc arche: the absolute nature of the attribute of which the mode in question is a mode. One important implication of this view is that everything in the realm of *natura naturata* enjoys immortality, not merely mobility, biological species essences, the human mind, or so on. In this sense Spinoza does endorse a sort of personal immortality. It is not the immortality of a heaven where each is rewarded according to his own labor (at least not as that famous slogan tends to be understood).⁸²⁹ Nevertheless, it is not as cheap of a sense of immortality that some interpreters have claimed it to be.

In defending the view that there is a sort of Platonic realism at play in Spinoza's metaphysics (albeit within the confines of God and where no universals transcending God are invoked), I addressed two objections. The first was that there is no strict identity between, say, a universal form inscribed for eternity in the absolute nature of its attribute and that form's purported *natura naturata* exemplification. A key motivation for this objection was Spinoza's causal dissimilarity principle, according to which the effect

⁸²⁹ 1 Corinthians 3:8; Revelation 22:12.

differs from the cause precisely in whatever the effect has from the cause. For since the absolute nature of God is the full cause of *natura naturata*, there can be no commonality between the absolute nature of God and *natura naturata* on the causal dissimilarity principle, and thus it cannot be that any universal form at the level of the absolute nature of God is instantiated in the realm of *natura naturata*. In order to defend my Platonic reading I pointed out that Spinoza also endorses the causal similarity principle, according to which the cause has in common with the effect whatever it gives to the effect. Since the causal similarity principle enjoys more of an official status, and since the causal dissimilarity principle is stated merely in one scholium where several commentators insist that Spinoza is not speaking in his own voice, I pointed out that for the sake of my discussion I need only say that Spinoza endorses the causal similarity principle. Nevertheless, and especially in light of the fact that there seems to be no substantial reason for claiming that the causal dissimilarity principle is anomalous, I made a preliminary case for reconciling the conflict between these two causal principles (the conflict that arises when the cause is the absolute nature of God).

A central reason for my concluding that everything in the realm of *natura naturata*, the realm of modes, is an exemplification of an eternal form harbored in the absolute nature of God is that the absolute nature of God ultimately entails everything. Hence the second objection that I faced, although perhaps doing so was not required, was the competing evidence suggesting that finite modes are not entailed, even ultimately, by the absolute nature of God. I argued that the evidence for both views—(1) that the absolute nature of God ultimately entails everything and (2) that the absolute

nature of God does not ultimately entail everything—can be reconciled. The key to reconciliation is to read the passages antagonistic to my view, that is, those passages where Spinoza seems to reject the idea that finite modes ultimately follow from the absolute nature of their attribute, as passages where Spinoza is merely stating that the absolute nature of an attribute does not ultimately produce its finite modes *in one by one, piecemeal, fashion*. The absolute nature of God ultimately produces the infinite horizontal chain of finite modes all together, in one block if you will.

For all the work I have done to show the affinity between Spinoza and Plato, at the end of the chapter I argued that Spinoza's Platonic realism is different from Plato and most Platonic realists in one important way. Unlike Plato and most Platonic realists, Spinoza holds that *all* the eternal forms get instantiated in the realm of *natura naturata*. No form fails to become exemplified in *natura naturata* over the span of sempiternity.

CHAPTER XI

(PART 5. CONCLUSIONS): THE CONSISTENCY OF SPINOZA'S REALISM

11.1 Introductory remarks

We have seen various things concerning Spinoza and the status of universals. One of the most radical is that Spinoza not only has a one-category—*Sein ist Sosein*—ontology, but has a one-category ontology of *universals*. How can it be that Spinoza, the man whose antirealism is supposed to be more virulent than even that of Hobbes, welcomes *only* universals into his ontology? Should we just conclude, along with several commentators (see APPENDIX D), that Spinoza is contradictory on the matter?

We are landed at once in a crude realism (in the medieval sense of the term), the scientific legitimacy of which is simply presupposed, but not demonstrated, by Spinoza. The counter-arguments of Nominalism are nowhere confuted by Spinoza, who, on the contrary, admits their justice in theory, while he indicates the contrary by his practice.⁸³⁰

He commits the further inconsistency of finding an “essence” in *singular things* (see, e.g., Eth. V. xxxvi schol., *ipsa essential rei cujusque singularis*): and indeed he could plant it nowhere else, his nominalism leaving him no *classes* or *types* of being to serve as its owners. But “essence” is a word wholly relative to classification [for Spinoza (according to his nominalism)], and cannot survive the pulverization of natural groups into individuals. It means the defining qualities *of a Kind*, by possession of which a single object becomes entitled to the name and fellowship of its members. If nature has no classes, neither has it “essences:” and in large resort to this term and its conception Spinoza unconsciously retains the realism which he professes to renounce. . . . [Spinoza’s talk, for example, of “agreement” between two things is] a phraseology which implies something identical between the two. . . . [T]he essence [in question] is therefore treated by Spinoza as a reality in the world, irrespective of the operations of thought. . . . No language can be more at variance with the Nominalism which (not without adequate *loca probantia*) is habitually ascribed to him.⁸³¹

⁸³⁰ Ueberweg 1909, 67.

⁸³¹ Martineau 1882, 150n2, 111

Unhappily, Spinoza's monism—a relic of the decadence of scholasticism—requires him to deny that there *is* any “nature of man.” . . . Indeed, if the nominalism he professes, for example in his correspondence with Blyenbergh, is to be taken strictly, since the *nature* of any two men are [then] radically discrepant, the pleasures which two *men* derive from gratification of the “same appetite” should also be different in kind, though this has, of course, to be conveniently forgotten when he is constructing a general psychology and an ethics. The denial [of the claim] that a “common nature of man” is more than an empty name really removes Spinozism [even] *further* than orthodox Christianity from the [pantheistic] thought of *εν και παν* [(one and also all)]. . . . Thus] Spinoza, whatever he may be, is no consistent Monist or “Pantheist.”⁸³²

Since each finite extended mode is [for Spinoza] particular, completely unique, such modes cannot share a common property though they resemble one another. . . . [And yet t]here seem to be [for Spinoza] certain features of things which are common to all things. . . . Spinoza goes on to claim that any idea of such common features must be clear and distinct. . . . [So it seems] that there exist certain properties which are identical in all finite modes. Such an admission appears to put Spinoza's purported stance against the objective reality of universals in serious jeopardy. . . . [I]f it be allowed that the *ideata* of common notions are properties, it is not clear how Spinoza can reject a realistic interpretation of universals. . . . Spinoza's distaste for realism remains in jeopardy since . . . the origin of common notions lies in the fact that things have common properties.⁸³³

How explain the fact that in Spinoza's organon these terms [(namely, *ens*, *res*, *aliquid*)] are said in E II, P40 to signify ideas that are in the highest degree confused . . . ? One would expect any rationalist and indeed any philosopher of any persuasion whatever who has characterized the transcendentals in such opprobrious terms to shun them like the plague at least in his more formal discussions, and yet Spinoza does not hesitate to define . . . God as an *ens*. [Is] Spinoza . . . writing in some fit of absences of mind[? . . . How are we] to reconcile the destructive burden of E II, P40 with the methodologically constructive import of E II, P38, where it is said that whatever is common to everything (part as well as whole) cannot but be adequately conceived[?] But surely it is *ens* above all that is common to everything. . . . If the term *ens* signifies an idea that is confused to the highest degree one would not suppose that it could equally signify or denote what can only be adequately and never inadequately conceived.⁸³⁴

Spinoza, in spite of his avowed conceptualism, has treated substance and its attributes as real, not conceptual universals. . . . Not only so, but at the heart of his

⁸³² Taylor 1972b, 293n3; Taylor 1972a, 191n4; Taylor 1972a, 190

⁸³³ Schoen 1977, 539-546.

⁸³⁴ Bernardete 1980, 70.

nominalistic treatment of other universals there has been the assertion of likeness and difference as real distinctions on the basis of which the entities of reason have been constructed by the intellect. For Spinoza . . . the genera and species according to which objects are classified have their foundation in a realistically conceived universal of likeness in things themselves.⁸³⁵

It is commonly assumed that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing nominalist. This view of him has become traditional, and is accepted without examination even by careful writers. . . . It is to be hoped that the traditional habit of referring to Spinoza as a consistent Nominalist will soon be corrected. . . . Nominalism of course constitutes the basis of Spinoza's argument [at certain points]. But he is not, as is generally assumed, a consistent nominalist.⁸³⁶

Abstractly stated, nominalism asserts that universals are fictions. . . . Spinoza tried hard to base his position on that of Descartes and yet clear himself of nominalism. This he seems to have in large measure done, and indeed the main implications of his doctrine are realistic. Nevertheless he was unable to free himself altogether from nominalistic influences. [The trace of nominalism seen in Spinoza's philosophy] seems to contradict Spinoza's general realistic attitude. . . . This accounts somewhat for the difficulties which have been encountered in the critical understanding of Spinoza. Spinoza's doctrine is realistic. . . . But he neither started a realistic school nor did he see the problem of the opposition of his doctrine to [his] nominalism.⁸³⁷

[Haserot argues that] Spinoza did not believe these things [that nominalists do]. Therefore he was no nominalist. Was Spinoza as consistent as all that? Is any philosopher? Granted the ideal of consistency, we are not entitled to use it as a standard; for little thinkers are apt to show much more consistency than big ones. Perhaps the less you have on your mind, the more highly you are able to organize it. . . . [Haserot argues that n]ominalists do not affirm universals. Spinoza affirms universals. Therefore Spinoza was no nominalist. Not, that is, if we can first show that the man was consistent. But was he? It seems to me that there is some ground . . . for asserting that so far as Spinoza is concerned, the issue of realism versus nominalism is at least unclear. . . . [T]hat he was not clearly either [realist or nominalist] . . . is the [view] that I claim emerges from the conflicting evidence of his writings. The over-all conviction is that he was realistically bent but that he struggled helplessly and in the end hopelessly in the toils of nominalistic presuppositions which were handed to him unconsciously by the implicit dominant ontology of the cultural date and place at which he lived and thought. . . . [In the end, Spinoza thus cannot help but have] a philosophy of absolute nominalism [where all]

⁸³⁵ MacKinnon 1924, 358-359.

⁸³⁶ Powell 1906, 90n1, 150n1, 318n1.

⁸³⁷ Friend and Feibleman 1936, 11, 31-32.

essence is unreal and . . . [t]he only kind of real existence is confined to the actual particulars.⁸³⁸

[C]ontradictions and difficulties occur so frequently. . . . Spinoza rejects the notion of Being (*Ens*) as a confused “transcendental notion” in *E* IIp40s1, but he also employs this term ubiquitously in his own philosophy, most importantly in the definition of God as a “being absolutely infinite” (*ens absolute infinitum*). To take another similar example, in *E* IIp40s1, Spinoza rejects the “universal” notion of “man,” but still speaks of a “human nature in general” (*natura humana in genere*) and a “true definition of man” (*vera hominis definitio*) in *E* Ip8s2.⁸³⁹

Spinoza’s conception of the basis of agreement and disagreement in human nature is historically related to the medieval controversy of realists and nominalists. The scholastic controversy concerning the status of universals involved the problem as to the basis of agreement and diversity among individuals. . . . In Spinoza we find both the realistic and nominalistic tendency. Although he professes the nominalistic theory in his epistemology (2-40 schol.), his metaphysics and Stoic theory of the passions led him to maintain a realistic conception of universals. . . . The problem of human agreement and conflict troubled Spinoza greatly and he found it necessary to utilize both the realistic and nominalistic traditions to account for the facts. Here as elsewhere he developed both alternatives without realizing their mutual incompatibility. At times he found an essential agreement and community among things and then regarded all individual differences as accidental. At other times, he emphasized the essential diversity of particular things and despaired of finding any basis of agreement.⁸⁴⁰

Thus the system of Spinoza contains elements which resist any attempt to classify him either as a pantheist or an atheist, a naturalist or supernaturalist, a nominalist or a realist. As he approaches the problem with which he deals from different sides, the opposite tendencies by which his mind is governed seem to receive alternate expression; but to the last they remain side by side, with no apparent consciousness of their disharmony, and with no attempt to mediate between them.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ Feibleman 1951b, 386-389; Feibleman 1954b, 118; see Feibleman 1951a, 54-55. According to Fullerton, however, the deeper presuppositions handed down to Spinoza were that of realism (not, as Feibleman says, nominalism). For “the medieval Jewish philosophy was Aristotelianism modified by Platonic conceptions” (Fullerton 1899, 25).

⁸³⁹ Laerke 2014, 522-525. Note that Laerke is reporting the views of another Spinoza commentator.

⁸⁴⁰ Bidney 1940, 146-147.

⁸⁴¹ Caird 1888, 4-5.

It is not in my nature to embrace the conclusion that thinker x is inconsistent without great consideration first. When it comes specifically to Spinoza, I will let the following remarks from Gross speak for me.

It is all too easy to accuse Spinoza of verbal inconsistency. He rejects the theory of the will and the intellect as separate faculties, and also rejects the notion of real universals, but much of his philosophy is expressed in the language of a faculty psychology and a realistic logic. Also much of his *Ethics* sounds teleological, in spite of his rejection of final causes. Here the student of Spinoza should remind himself of C. D. Broad's remark about John Stuart Mill, to the effect that whereas we all learn to criticize him at our mother's knee, it is much more difficult to understand him.⁸⁴²

But how are we to square Spinoza's rejection of universals, which seems to be "not without adequate *loca probantia*,"⁸⁴³ with Spinoza's commitment to realism, which does not seem open to doubt? The answer is that, as I will explain in this chapter, Spinoza's pejorative remarks against universals consistently target only a certain brand of universals: imaginative universals, if you will—"universals of imaginative experience," as Iverach calls them, or "empirical universals," as Haserot calls them.

I want to explain how the main passages where Spinoza criticizes universals are consistent with Spinoza's commitment to realism. Just as I presented my case for Spinoza's realism in a way intended to convince the most dogged advocate of the interpretation that Spinoza is an antirealist, I will present my case for the consistency of Spinoza's realism in a way intended to convince the most dogged advocate of the interpretation that Spinoza is inconsistent on the matter. In this case, I attempt to address *all* the key passages.

⁸⁴² Gross 1940, 388.

⁸⁴³ Martineau 1882, 111.

11.2 Resolving the tension: the passages

11.2.1 1app

The first passage to consider is from the Appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics*.

After men become convinced that everything that happens, happens on their account, they had to judge that which is most important in each thing is what is most useful to them, and to rate as most excellent all those things by which they were most pleased. Hence they had to form these notions, by which they explained the natures of things: *good, evil, order, confusion, warm, cold, beauty, ugliness*. . . . Whatever conduces to health and the worship of God, they have called *good*; but what is contrary to these, *evil*.

And because those who do not understand the nature of things, but only imagine them, affirm nothing concerning the things [in themselves], and [mis]take the imagination for the intellect, they firmly believe, ignorant as they are of things and of their own nature, that there is an order in things. For when things are so disposed that, when they are presented to us through the senses, we can easily imagine them, and so can easily remember them, we say that they are well ordered; but if the opposite is true, we say that they are badly ordered, or confused.

And since those things we can easily imagine are especially pleasing to us, men prefer order to confusion, as if order were in nature anything more than a relation to our imagination. They also say that God has created all things in order, and so, unknowingly attribute imagination to God—unless, perhaps, they mean that God, to provide for human imagination, has disposed all things so that men can very easily imagine them. Nor will it, perhaps, give them pause that infinitely many things are found which far surpass our imagination, and a great many which confuse it on account of its weakness. But enough of this.

The other notions are also nothing but modes of imagining, by which the imagination is variously affected; and yet the ignorant consider them the chief attributes of things, because, as we have already said, they believe all things have been made for their sake, and call the nature of a thing good or evil, sound or rotten and corrupt, as they are affected by it. For example, if the motion the nerves receive from objects presented through the eyes is conducive to health, the objects by which it is caused are called beautiful; those which cause a contrary motion are caused ugly. Those which move the sense through the nose, they call pleasant-smelling or stinking; through the tongue, sweet or bitter, tasty or tasteless; through touch, hard or soft, rough or smooth, etc.; and finally those which move the ears are said to produce noise, sound or harmony. Indeed, there are Philosophers who have persuaded themselves that the motions of the heavens produce harmony.

All of these things show sufficiently that each one has judged things according to the disposition of his brain; or rather, has accepted affections of the imaginations as things. So it is no wonder (to note this, too, in passing) that we find so many controversies to have arisen among men, and that they have finally given rise to

Skepticism. For although human bodies agree in many things, they still differ in very many. And for that reason what seems good to one, seems bad to another; what seems ordered to me, seems confused to another; what seems pleasing to one, seems displeasing to another, and so on. . . . These [facts] show sufficiently that men judge things according to the disposition of their brain, and imagine, rather than understand them. . . .

We see, therefore, that all the notions by which ordinary people are accustomed to explain nature are only modes of imagining, and do not indicate the nature of anything, only the constitution of the imagination. (1app II/81/35-II/83/14)

As this passage indicates, Spinoza rules out those universals—beauty, coldness, hardness, and the like—that are not true to things as they are in themselves, but true merely according to the bodily apparatus of the perceiving subject. Spinoza laughs at the notion that the celestial spheres, for example, each instantiate the property *being harmonious in sound*. Even if the spheres really do produce sounds, claiming that those sounds are harmonious in some way is dependent on the bodily constitution of the perceiving subject. If those spheres produced sounds that shattered our windows and gave us headaches, they would not be called “harmonious,” according to Spinoza.

The same goes with *smoothness*. Just as the hand’s registering all these liquids as cold is partly a reflection of the fact that the hand itself is at such a higher temperature, whether a given surface is smooth or not depends on the disposition of the perceiving body. Bodies in themselves do not instantiate smoothness any more than these feathers, to use Galileo’s famous example in the *Assayer*, instantiate a tickling nature. This is evident by the fact that just as the feather fails to incite a reaction from the nose of the statue, the surface that one hand finds smooth is bumpy to the sensitive hand rubbing it now.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁴ See Galileo 1957, 275.

New scientists such as Galileo and early modern philosophers such as Spinoza want to know what properties really pertain to the world independent of the mind. They want to distinguish such properties from those that reflect the constitution of the perceiving subject's bodily apparatus at the time. Spinoza's business is to warn us against confusing, to use the words of Hobbes, "phantasms of the sentient," that is, the consequents of a perceiver's relation to the object, with the object as it is in itself.⁸⁴⁵ Spinoza's business is to warn us against confusing, to appeal to Hobbes once again, redness, coldness, hardness, and other such "properties of our own bodies,"⁸⁴⁶ that is, other such results of motions on our own sensing apparatuses,⁸⁴⁷ with objects as they are simpliciter. Spinoza takes it to be his business to fight against the tendency of confusing the way things are objectively with how they are for the subject. Spinoza engages in this fight across his works (Ep. 21 IV/128/3-5; 2p16, 2p25, 2p28, 2p35s).⁸⁴⁸ It is understandable that he would. For him, our "highest blessedness" involves understanding nature as it is in itself and the progress of our understanding is hampered when we let ourselves be distracted by fictions (Ep. 21 IV/127/34-35; see TdIE 39 II/16/11-20; 4p28d, 4app4 II/267/1-14, 5p42s; Ep. 75).

Spinoza's rejection of those mind-dependent universals poses no threat to the consistency of Spinoza's realism. Being a realist does not require endorsing the reality of every candidate property. It does not require holding that there really is a property in the mind-independent world for every meaningful predicate. Plato may have believed

⁸⁴⁵ Hobbes *DeCo* 25.10.

⁸⁴⁶ Hobbes *Leviathan* 1.4.17.

⁸⁴⁷ See Malcolm 1994, 37-38.

⁸⁴⁸ See Viljanen 2011, 172n65.

that beauty (*Symposium*), largeness (*Parmenides*), and whiteness (*Meno*) are universals subsisting in the mind-independent world. But that by no means entails that every realist must believe the same, as is evident by those realists who charge fellow realists like Plato for not being rigorous enough in their process of deciding what universals are ontologically authentic. A realist is merely one who welcomes into his ontology entities apt to be one and the same in many and thus welcomes the possibility of strict identity in diversity.

Spinoza is a realist who welcomes into his ontology only those universals that can be apprehended by the intellect, an unwavering source of truth (2p40s2, 2p44). Spinoza rejects those universals that can be apprehended only by the imagination, the only source of error (2p28s, 2p40s2, 2p41d, 5p28d). The question, then, is whether Spinoza rejects all universals in his other pejorative remarks against universals, and not just the universals under discussion in the Appendix to Part 1: the empirical universals of the imagination apprehended by means of abstraction from sensory information. If he does reject all universals in those passages, then Spinoza's system is indeed contradictory on the matter of the status of universals.

11.2.2 2p40s1

The best place to look for the answer to our crucial question is 2p40s1. 2p40s1 is regarded as Spinoza's most official, most powerful, and most informative case against universals.⁸⁴⁹ Why? First, this passage is from the *Ethics*, the work that represents Spinoza's most mature and developed and revised thinking. Second, this passage is

⁸⁴⁹ See Hampshire 1988, 108.

Spinoza's longest sustained overt attack against universals. Third, Spinoza makes explicit in this passage what he means to reject when he rejects universals. For here he tells us not simply *why* universals are to be rejected, but also *how they are generated* in the first place. That Spinoza tells us how they are generated is significant for understanding what he means to reject when he rejects universals. Understanding how something is generated, Spinoza tells us, is crucial for understanding what that something really is (see TdIE 95 and Ep. 60).

[Transcendental] terms arise from the fact that the human Body, being limited, is capable of forming distinctly only a certain number of images at the same time. . . . If that number is exceeded, the images will begin to be confused, and if the number of images the Body is capable of forming distinctly in itself at once is greatly exceeded, they will all be completely confused with one another.

Since this is so, it is evident . . . that the human Mind will be able to imagine distinctly, at the same time, as many bodies as there can be images formed at the same time in its body. But when the images in the body are completely confused, the Mind will imagine all the bodies confusedly, without any distinction, and comprehend them as if under one attribute, namely, under the attribute of Being, Thing, etc. . . .

Those notions they call *Universal*, like Man, Horse, Dog, and the like, have arisen from similar causes, namely, because so many images (e.g., of men) are formed at one time in the human body that they surpass the power of imagining—not entirely, of course, but still to the point where the mind can imagine neither slight differences of the singular [men] (such as the color and size of each one, etc.) nor their determinate number, and imagines distinctly only what they all agree in, insofar as they affect the body. For the body has been affected most [NS: forcefully] by [what is common], since each singular has affected it [by this property]. And [NS: the mind] expresses this by the word *man*, and predicates it of infinitely many singulars. For as we said, it cannot imagine a determinate number of singulars.

But it should be noted that these notions are not formed by all [NS: men] in the same way, but vary from one to another, in accordance with what the body has more often been affected by, and what the mind imagines or recollects more easily. For example, those who have more often regarded men's stature with wonder will understand by the word *man* an animal of erect stature. But those who have been accustomed to consider something else, will form another common image of men—for example, that man is capable of laughter, or a featherless biped, or a rational animal.

And similarly among others—each will form universal images of things according to the disposition of his body. Hence it is not surprising that so many controversies have arisen among the philosophers, who have wished to explain natural things by mere images of things. (2p40s1)

In this passage Spinoza explains why we overlook the differences between items perceived through sensation. Not only is it the case that the differences are often slight (see TdIE 76), but we are impacted by so many images at once—think of all the images of leaves that overwhelm us when we look at the tree—that we lack the power to keep each separate from each other. In order to cope with the barrage of data, the finite mind—able to handle only a limited quantity of impressions⁸⁵⁰—overlooks the individual peculiarities of each leaf as a natural coping mechanism, each leaf-image bleeding into one another.⁸⁵¹ What naturally stands out to the finite mind is what all these items have in common.⁸⁵² Nevertheless, the tapped-into commonality between things, Spinoza is careful to tell us at 2p40s1, is not true of the things in themselves (but merely of those things in relation to the bodily apparatus of the perceiving subject). The perceiving subject, he says, “*imagines* distinctly only what they all agree in, *insofar as they affect the body*” (my emphasis 2p40s1 II/121/19-20).

We have an answer to our question, then. At 2p40s1 Spinoza means to reject those candidate universals that reflect our bodily reactions to the external states of affairs rather than those external states of affairs as they are in themselves. As in the Appendix to Part 1, Spinoza is rejecting what we may call “imaginative universals,”

⁸⁵⁰ See Leibniz *Discourse on Metaphysics* sect. 24; Schelling HKA 1/2, 110G.

⁸⁵¹ See Della Rocca 1996, 59-61; Di Vona 1960, 236; Lord 2011a, 1092; Scribner 2002, 154.

⁸⁵² We see the same sort of thing in Locke. Children, Locke tells us, will form a common idea that “leave[s] out of the complex *Idea* they had of *Peter* and *James*, *Mary* and *Jane*, that which is peculiar to each, and retain only what is common to all” (Locke 1959, 3.2.1-2).

those universals apprehendable merely by means of abstraction from sensory information.⁸⁵³

That Spinoza has the same general target in 2p40s1 that he does in the Appendix to Part 1 (namely, perceiver-dependent properties) is rather obvious. Compare, for example, the next two claims, the first from 1app and the second from 2p40s1, both of which follow a discussion of examples of perceiver-dependent properties confused for properties true of nature as it is in itself.

All of these things show sufficiently that each one has judged things according to the disposition of his brain; or rather, has accepted affections of the imagination as things. So it is no wonder (to note this, too, in passing) that we find so many controversies to have arisen among men. (1app)

[E]ach will form universal images of things according to the disposition of his body. Hence it is not surprising that so many controversies have arisen among the philosophers, who have wished to explain natural things by mere images of things. (2p40s1)

In both passages Spinoza rebukes those who mistake features dependent on the variable bodily constitution of the perceiving subject for features that are actually out there in the world. It is absurd for you and me to debate, as we sometimes find children doing, whether these objects are cold. I say that they agree in coldness because my hand is very hot. I report merely the common effect that those things have on my body. You deny that they agree in coldness because your hand is room temperature. You report merely the common effect that those things have on your body. Bodies have a wide range of variant dispositions at different times and circumstances. Bodies are thus impacted in variant ways. Bodies thus carve up reality in variant ways (1app, 2p17s,

⁸⁵³ See Fullerton 1899, 34; Parkinson 1954, 7.6.

2p18s, 2p40s1, 3p59s II/189/17-20): x, y, and z are weapons for the soldier but farm tools for the peasant (see 2p18s). It is absurd for two people to be going back and forth—“these are the true joints of reality”; “no, *these* are the true joints”—when what they are talking about is not nature as it is in itself (nature as it is for the intellect), but nature as it impacts different bodily dispositions (nature as it is for the imagination).

In both passages. 2p40s1 and 1app, the problem comes when we are led by the only source of false ideas: the imagination (2p28s, 2p40s2, 2p41d, 5p28d). Led by the imagination, we mistake the effects of objects on the perceiving body for what is true of the world independent of the perceiving body (see 2p17s), and thus take the commonality apprehended through bodily sensation as actually obtaining in the world beyond us. It is inappropriate for us to take the agreements abstracted from our sensorial field as actually obtaining among things as they are in themselves. These agreements are, as is the case with all sense-experience, a joint product of the objects *plus* our bodily dispositions—these other objects *together with* (indeed, *amalgamated with*, as the Latin *una* suggests)⁸⁵⁴ our bodily dispositions (2p16, 2p16c2, 2p25, 2p28, 3p27d, 3p32s, 3p56d, 4p1s).⁸⁵⁵ In fact, since our bodies are the sites of the amalgamation, these agreements indicate the natures of our bodies *more so* than the natures of the perceived objects (1app, 2p16c, 2p16c1, 2p16c2, 3p14d, 4p9d, 5p34d). For this reason, these agreements are perhaps better described as the “traces” left on our bodies by those

⁸⁵⁴ See Renz 2010, 229.

⁸⁵⁵ See Della Rocca 1996, 24-29, 47-48, 64-66; Viljanen 2011, 172n65.

objects, or simply the reactions of our bodies when impacted by those objects (CM 1.1 I/234).

So the fatal error, Spinoza is saying at 2p40s1, is mistaking the commonality that is a product of our bodily interaction with things for commonalities true of the things independent of our interactions with them (see Ep. 54).⁸⁵⁶ It is to mistake the impressions that things leave on the perceiving body for positive properties of the things themselves (1app II/82/16-22, 4pref II/208/8-14, 4p73s). It is “the error of confusing our own physiological responses with actual properties of objects,”⁸⁵⁷ such as when we hold, to use examples from the Appendix of Part 1, that each of these rocks instantiate the property *smoothness* or that each of these lions instantiate the property *being terrifying* or that each of these spiders instantiate the property *ugliness*.⁸⁵⁸ Such universals, like all universals apprehendable merely through untrustworthy sense experience, are not “in nature” (KV 1.10 I/49/5; see Ep. 54). Arising “so immediately” by way of an automatic comparison process in which the perceiver-contingent commonality among a field of images stands out (CM 1.1 I/234/32), it can easily go unnoticed that they are “merely our own work”—the product of which depends on the disposition of our bodies at the

⁸⁵⁶ Beauty, most esteemed Sir, is not so much a quality in the perceived object as an effect in him who perceives. If we were more long-sighted or more short-sighted, or if we were differently constituted, the things which we now think beautiful would appear ugly, and the ugly, beautiful. The most beautiful hand, seen through a microscope, would appear repulsive. Some things seen at a distance are beautiful, but when viewed at close range, ugly. So things regarded in themselves, or as related to God, are neither beautiful nor ugly. (Ep. 54)

⁸⁵⁷ Wilson 1999b, 158.

⁸⁵⁸ As is suggested by the 2p40s1 passage, an even worse error is to consider the common traits of objects *relative to the perceiving apparatus* as being not only *true* of those objects themselves, but also *essential* for those objects to be what they are. Thus when the Eleatic Stranger of Plato’s *Statesman* 266e classifies man as a featherless biped, he is making a double offense according to Spinoza: regarding a common property among humans that is a function of a perceiver’s interaction with humans as being true of humans in themselves and also regarding that common property as essential to humans.

time: our interests, concerns, prejudices, speeds, energies, and so on (KV 1.10 I/49/5-6).⁸⁵⁹ But they are our own work. Spinoza summarizes these points in the following comment to Boyle via Oldenburg.

[These universals] explain Nature, not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception, [and thus] ought neither to be counted among the chief kinds, nor to be mixed (not to say confused) with pure notions, which explain Nature as it is in itself. Of the latter kind are motion, rest, and their laws; of the former are visible, invisible, hot, cold, and as I will say at once, also fluid and solid. (Ep. 6 IV/28/10-16)

We have seen, then, that in Spinoza's official rejection of universals at 2p40s1, he sets his sights merely on those fictions abstracted from sense information, those properties—hotness, coldness, fluidity, solidity, redness, sweetness, and so on—merely “related to human sense perception” (Ep. 6 IV/28/12) rather than to “things regarded in themselves” (Ep. 54). Bennett puts the point well.

[2p40s1 is] only an aetiology and a criticism of some [universals]. It is . . . a rejection for theoretical purposes of sense-based universality.⁸⁶⁰

Spinoza does not set his sights on the true universals that, as Galileo describes, would not be “wiped away and annihilated” were the perceiving subject “wiped away and

⁸⁵⁹ Spinoza is thus not urging us here to sharpen our empirical tools so that through the senses we can tap into *true* commonalities in the world. It is precisely the empirical approach that is the problem (2p29s; TdIE 20). To be sure, what the body picks up, that these things (say, leaves) all have this common effect, is correct—correct for the perceiving body at the time in question, when it has this specific disposition (speed, sight ability, focus power, and so on). If we try to improve our empirical skills, sharpen the tools that are our bodies (say, by eating more carrots so that our eyesight improves), we may succeed in these things having different effects on our bodies (see Ep. 54). But we would have played a trick on ourselves if we thought that this allowed us to be more precise in our ontological carvings. All we would have guaranteed, for Spinoza, is that the things in question have different effects on our bodies. And so the problem still remains: we only sensibly perceive these things through the mediation of our bodies, as they affect our bodies—not as they are in themselves. For all sense-experience is a joint product of the perceiver's nature and external causes, in which case it is necessarily confused and inadequate (2p16, 2p25, 2p28; see Viljanen 2011, 172n65).

⁸⁶⁰ Bennett 1984, §11.2.

annihilated”⁸⁶¹ or that Hobbes describes as being “in the world without us.”⁸⁶² Spinoza does not set his sights on the true universals apprehended by the intellect (2p40s2 in light of 5p40c), which for him (in apparent contrast to Francis Bacon) is an unwavering source of adequate and thus true ideas⁸⁶³ (2p40s2, 2p44; Ep. 2, Ep. 60). That is to say, Spinoza does not set his sights on universals like Extension, mobility, and each one of the infinite number of modes that really do come about from them: those properties common to every body, those properties common to a few, and those common to just one.

The telling mark of whether a candidate universal is real independent of the classifying mind is by what means it can be apprehended: if by the intellect (like, for example, property A of 2p39d or the common properties discussed in 2p38 and 2p39), then the candidate universal has reality; if merely through imagination, then it does not.⁸⁶⁴ Imagination sees, as it were, through the body; at the level of imagination, the body is the sole focal point through which the world is accessed. We cannot have adequate understanding of the world through the meditation of our bodies alone. So long as the perceiving subject is “determined externally, from fortuitous encounters with things” (2p29s) that leave images imprinted on us like asteroids on the moon (2p49s II/132/5-6, 3p32s), “the mind has not adequate, but only confused [NS: and mutilated]

⁸⁶¹ Galileo 1957, 274.

⁸⁶² Hobbes *Elements of Law* 2.10.

⁸⁶³ An adequate idea of x is an idea that perfectly matches x in complexity, such that one can deduce all the properties of x merely from examining the adequate idea of x. A true idea of x is an idea that is about x and only x in its entirety, such that it is an idea about x that perfectly agrees with x. All true ideas are adequate and vice versa. In fact, they are just two ways of describing the same thing (see Ep. 60).

⁸⁶⁴ See Bennett 1984, 40; Donagan 1988, 50-52; Goetschel 2004, 42; Gueroult 1968, 413-425, 564-568; Lermond 1988, 51-69; Parkinson 1954, 166-168.

knowledge” (2p29s). Intellect, however, sees from its own internal resources rather than from images, which are nothing more than “ways in which the . . . body is affected by external causes” (3p32s). The intellect sees “by its inborn power” and thus always clearly and distinctly, where “by inborn power I mean that which is not caused in us by external causes” (TdIE 31; see TdIE 32, TdIE 39, TdIE 107-108; 3def 1e of the affects; Ep. 37). The intellect understands the world through mere ratiocination concerning “principles and axioms” innate to the mind (TTP 1.28; 2p29s) rather than through sense experience, which cannot give us access to things in their truth (Ep. 10 IV/47/11-12). “Determined internally” rather than through “the common order of nature” and thus “from encounters with [NS: external] bodies” (2p49s II/132/6 in light of 2p29s), active rather than reactive, the intellect “regards things clearly and distinctly” (2p29s), that is, adequately (Ep. 37; 2p36, 2p40, 5p4s) and thus truly (2p40s2, 2p44; Ep. 2, Ep. 60). “For it is when a thing is perceived by pure thought, without words or images, that it is understood” (TTP 4.10 III/64-III/65).⁸⁶⁵

* * *

Now, presumably what goes for the official rejection of universals at 2p40s1 goes for the unofficial rejections of universals elsewhere: the universals of empirical

⁸⁶⁵ In this regard, we see that Spinoza appears to be even more radical than Hobbes. For Spinoza the criterion for distinguishing authentic from inauthentic universals is whether the candidate universal is apprehendable by the pure thought. In other words, the principle for distinguishing authentic from inauthentic universals is whether the idea of the candidate universal derives from the mind itself and as such is what Leibniz calls an “idea of pure understanding” (Leibniz *New Essays* 2.5) or “intelligence” (Leibniz 2006, 167-170). For Hobbes, on the other hand, the principle for distinguishing authentic from inauthentic universals is, so at least some say, merely whether the candidate universal is detectable by more than one sense (see Adams 2014).

imagination are out, not the universals apprehended by the intellect. In this case, the following remark from Burstein is true.

Spinoza rejected any universal that was merely abstracted from sense experience. He viewed such universals as the truncated results of our inability through imagination to grasp the universal essence of objects. The *Ethics* itself, however, is an expression of Spinoza's vision of the universal as grasped through reason.⁸⁶⁶

Spinoza would then apparently be following in the footsteps of Descartes, who explains that perception of true universals belongs not to the imagination but to the intellect,⁸⁶⁷ which "reach[es] the truth of the matter."⁸⁶⁸

But if my argument for the consistency of Spinoza's realism is to be thorough, I cannot just assume so. The question is whether in the other universals-rejecting passages Spinoza rejects universals altogether or merely the universals of empirical imagination. For the rest of this section, I will argue that Spinoza rejects merely imaginative universals in these other passages.

11.2.3 KV 1.6, KV 2.16, and CM 1.1

When Spinoza suggests at KV 1.6 (I/43/8) and KV 2.16 (I/81/14-20) and CM 1.1 (I/235/10-30) that universals are *nothing*, I take it that he must just have in mind imaginative universals—2p40s1 and 1app universals.

But this objection arises from ignorance, from the fact that men have formed universal ideas, with which they think the particulars must agree in order to be perfect. They maintain, then, that these ideas are in God's intellect, as many of Plato's followers have said, namely, that these universal ideas (such as rational animal, etc.) have been created by God. And though Aristotle's followers say, of course, that these things are not actual [beyond the individuals that have them] . . . nevertheless they very often regard them as things. For they have said clearly that

⁸⁶⁶ Burstein 1998, 222.

⁸⁶⁷ Descartes AT III 66.

⁸⁶⁸ Descartes AT II 138; see AT V 270; AT VI 37; AT VII 34, 53, 139, 205, 266, 358-359; see Shelford 2002, 607-608.

[God's] providence does not extend to particulars, but only to kinds. E.g., God has never exercised his providence over Bucephalus, but only over the whole genus Horse. They say also that God has no knowledge of particular and corruptible things, but only of universals, which in their opinion are incorruptible. But we have rightly regarded this as indicating their ignorance; for all and only the particulars have a cause, not the universals, because they are nothing. (KV 1.6 I/42/25-I/43/8)

Some say: the efficient cause [of the particular willing] is not an Idea, but the Will itself in the man; and the intellect is the cause without which the will can do nothing; therefore, the Will, taken as undetermined, and also the intellect, are not beings of reason, but real beings. But I say: when I consider them attentively, they seem to me to be universals, and I cannot attribute anything real to them. (KV 2.16 I/81/14-20)

In what sense beings of Reason can be called a mere nothing, and in what sense they can be called real Beings.—Nor do they speak less improperly who say that a being of reason is not a mere nothing. For if anyone looks outside the intellect for what is signified by those words, he will find it to be a mere nothing. But if he means the modes of thinking themselves, they are indeed real beings. For when I ask, what is a species, I seek nothing but the nature of that mode of thinking, which is really a being and distinguished from another mode of thinking. Still, these modes of thinking cannot be called ideas, nor can they be said to be true or false, just as love cannot be called true or false, but [only] good or bad. So when Plato said that man is a featherless biped, he erred no more than those who said that man is a rational animal. For Plato was no less aware than anyone else that man is a rational animal. But he referred man to a certain class so that, when he wished to think about man, he would immediately fall into the thought of man by recalling that class, which he could easily remember. Indeed Aristotle erred very seriously if he thought that he had adequately explained the human essence by that definition of his. (CM 1.1 I/235/10-30)

In these passages Spinoza attacks not those universals true of reality in itself, but rather those that merely reflect our need to organize the world according to our dispositions. This is clear especially in the CM 1.1 passage. Here Spinoza discusses people who decide what universals there are according to what will better help them organize their thinking about things. What was most convenient for Plato, for example, was to say that one is a man if and only if one is a featherless biped. Plato thus has a convenient sifting tool when going about the world: you *man*, you *not man*. What is

especially good about this tool for assessing whether something is a man, is that it is based on a stark image. You can actually *picture* a featherless biped and so this helps us remember what is a man and what is not a man better than other, less stimulating and vivacious, measures.

At KV 1.6 Spinoza is attacking both Platonic and Aristotelian universals, that is, universals that subsist for eternity in “God’s intellect” and universals that “are not actual [beyond the individuals that have them].” The fact that Spinoza attacks the two exhaustive conceptions of a universal (transcendent and immanent universals) should not be taken as evidence that Spinoza rejects all universals here. The universals in question are simply imaginative universals. Look at the examples of universals given: the same ones from CM 1.1. At KV 1.6 Spinoza is attacking, more specifically, those imaginative universals considered insusceptible either to generation or to corruption. This further emphasizes that his rejection of universals here is not in tension with his realism. For not only is Spinoza a realist about intellectual (rather than imaginative) universals, there is no requirement that universals, items apt to be ontologically univocal in many, be incorruptible and uncaused.

These three passages, out of all that I will consider, are admittedly the hardest to reconcile with Spinoza’s realism. Here Spinoza’s proclamation that universals are nothing is so final. If it somehow were to be shown that, despite my above points, Spinoza intends a blanket rejection of universals in these passages, then as a last resort I would say that they be handled as Bennett suggests: as the remarks of a young

philosopher yet to come into his settled view of the matter.⁸⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the points I raise in the remainder of this chapter (especially Section 3) amount to strong evidence for the conclusion that Spinoza does not intend a blanket rejection of universals in these passages or anywhere else.

11.2.4 Ep. 56

Spinoza targets both Plato and Aristotle again in Ep. 56.

The authority of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle carries little weight with me. . . . It is not surprising that those who have thought up occult qualities, intentional species, substantial forms and a thousand more bits of nonsense should have devised specters and ghosts, and given credence to old wives' tales. (Ep. 56)

Spinoza's claim here, which is merely that the authority of Plato and Aristotle does not carry much weight for him, does not pose any real threat to the consistency of Spinoza's realism. To be sure, Plato and Aristotle represent the two main realist options. But just because Spinoza does not trust in the authority of these thinkers does not mean that he cannot be a realist. Indeed, he agrees with Plato and Aristotle on numerous matters—Aristotle on 1a4⁸⁷⁰ or Plato on the eternity of forms (CM I/239/2-5), to give just two examples already addressed in this project. Notice, moreover, that the occult qualities and intentional species that Spinoza references in the passage are the sorts of schoolmen entities understood to pass from the external world into the perceiver by way of sense organs. These are merely the 1app and 2p40s1 universals, not the rationalist universals that Spinoza endorses.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁹ Bennett 1984, 38-39.

⁸⁷⁰ See Leavitt 1991a, 205-206.

⁸⁷¹ As Bolton describes it, the "intentional species" of the schoolmen "were abstracted from sense perception" (Bolton 1998, 190; see Hattab 2009).

11.2.5 KV 1.10 and CM 2.7

Although from earlier works, KV 1.10 and CM 2.7 are frequently cited as evidence of Spinoza's entrenched antirealism.

Peter's goodness and Judas's evil have no definitions apart from the [particular] essence[s] of Judas and Peter, for these [essences] alone [are] in nature, and without them [the goodness of Peter and the evil of Judas] cannot be defined. (KV 1.10 I/50)

How he knows singular things and universals.—But in the meantime, we must not pass over the errors of those writers who say that God knows only eternal things, such as the angels, the heavens, etc., which they have feigned to be, by their nature, unsusceptible either to generation or to corruption, but that he knows nothing of this world, except species, inasmuch as they also are not subject to generation or corruption. These writers seem determined to go astray and to contrive the most absurd fantasies. For what is more absurd than to deprive God of the knowledge of singular things, which cannot exist even for a moment without God's concurrence. Then they maintain that God is ignorant of the things that really exist, but fictitiously ascribe to him a knowledge of universals, which neither exist nor have any essence beyond that of singular things. We, on the contrary, attribute a knowledge of singular things to God, and deny him a knowledge of universals, except insofar as he understands human mind. (CM 2.7 I/262/30-I/263/9)

KV 1.10 at best rejects the sorts of universals discussed at the Appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics* (goodness and evilness) and is in the least saying that there is no goodness or evilness without good and evil individuals. Neither option is in tension with Spinoza realism.

At CM 2.7 the latter option is suggested by Spinoza's remark that universals do not exist independent of individuals to which they pertain. In the same passage the former option is suggested by Spinoza's remark that God knows universals only insofar as God knows humans. When Spinoza says that God knows universals only insofar as God knows humans, he must just be talking about those imaginative universals—

coldness, smoothness—that are but traces left on the human perceiver by external objects.

11.2.6 KV 2.16.4 and Ep. 2

At both KV 2.16.4 and Ep. 2 Spinoza attacks the notion that there is something one and the same in each volition. That is to say, in these passages Spinoza rejects the existence of something—something traditionally called “the will”—that some philosophers say is free and others say is not free.

Possibly this will not satisfy some, who are accustomed to occupy themselves more with Beings of Reason than with the particular things which are truly in Nature. In doing this, they consider the Being of reason not as what it is, but as a Real Being. For because man has now this, now that Volition, he forms in his soul a universal mode which he calls the Will, just as he forms the Idea of man from this and that man. And because he does not sufficiently distinguish real beings from beings of reason, it comes about that he considers the beings of reason as things that are truly in Nature, and thus posits himself as a cause of some things. This happens not infrequently in treating the matter of which we speak. For if you ask someone why man wills this or that, the answer is: because he has a Will. But since, as we have said, the Will is only an Idea of this or that volition (and therefore only a mode of thinking, a being of Reason, not a Real Being), nothing can be produced by it. For nothing comes from nothing. So I think that when we have shown that the Will is no thing in Nature, but only a fiction, we do not need to ask whether it is free or not. (KV 2.16.4 I/82/5-I/83/7)

Disregarding the other causes, as being of no importance, I shall show that this cause is a false one, which they themselves would easily have seen, if only they had attended to the fact that the will differs from this or that volition in the same way as whiteness differs from this or that white thing, or humanity differs from this or that man. So it is impossible to conceive that the will is the cause of this or that volition as to conceive that humanity is the cause of Peter and Paul. Since the will, then, is only a being of reason and ought not in any way to be called a cause of this or that volition, since particular volitions cannot be called free (because they require a cause in order to exist) but must be as their causes have determined them to be, and finally since, according to Descartes, the errors themselves are particular volitions, it follows necessarily that the errors (i.e., particular volitions) are not free, but determined by external causes, and not at all by the will. (Ep. 2 IV/9/10-23)

At KV 2.16.4 Spinoza conceives of the universal will as born of the process of apprehending what is common among several volitions experienced by the perceiving subject. Since that which is common and is called “the will” is being *rejected*, surely it is not the *intellect* that is comparing the volitions and extracting the common element among them. Since the will in question is being *rejected*, it can only be the *imagination*, the sole source of error, that engages in such comparing and extracting. In this case, Spinoza rejects merely the universals of empirical imagination abstracted from sensorial information.

When Spinoza rejects the will at Ep. 2, I assume that the same is going on. Indeed, there he explicitly connects the universal will to the universal *whiteness*, which we know Spinoza to regard as one of those imaginative universals discussed at 1app and 2p40s1.

11.2.7 Ep. 19

Ep. 19 corroborates many of the points that I have made above.

So because the will or decision of Adam, considered in itself, was not evil, nor, properly speaking, contrary to God’s will, it follows that god can be its cause—indeed, according to the reasoning you call attention to, he must be—but not insofar as it was evil, for the evil that was in it was only a privation of a more perfect state, which Adam had to lose through act. It is certain that privation is nothing positive, and that it is said only in relation to our intellect, not in relation to god’s intellect. This arises because we express all the singular things of a kind (e.g., all those which have, externally, the shape of man) by one and the same definition, and therefore we judge them all to be equally capable of the highest perfection which we can deduce from such a definition. When we find one whose acts are contrary to that perfection, we judge him to be deprived of it and to be deviating from his nature. We would not do this, if we had not brought him under such a definition and factiously ascribed such a nature to him. But because god does not know things abstractly, and does not make general definitions of that sort, because he does not attribute more essence to things that the divine intellect and power endow them with, and in fact give them, it

follows clearly that that privation can be said only in relation to our intellect, not in relation to god's. (Ep. 19 IV/91/1-IV/92/21)

Spinoza makes it clear in this passage that the universals with which he has a problem are those which are apprehended through a process of abstraction from sensory information. The universal *human* that he suggests needs to be done away with is formed after the mind compares and selectively attends to what is common to “all those things which have, *externally*, the *shape* of man” (my emphasis). As I mentioned earlier, Goethe noticed the same thing about Spinoza and in turn appealed to Spinoza as a resource for rejecting the Linnaean method of sorting beings on the basis of their sensible features.⁸⁷² Spinoza is not rejecting kinds altogether, but merely those kinds formed by the imagination, those based on the features that things have relative to such and such a perceiving apparatus. Notice that Spinoza is careful to say that God does not make “such” general definitions or have general knowledge “of that sort.” I take it that Spinoza is thus indicating that “God does not know things abstractly” in the sense that God does not extract what is common among sensorial data (except, of course, when we are talking about God insofar as he is the human perceiver). Spinoza would not want to say that God does not have any general definitions or knowledge (such as the general definition or knowledge of the circle). The problem is with using sense-based definitions of human and the models of perfection formed in light of such definitions. The problem is not with using one definition for many but with using a *false* definition, a definition that “factitiously ascribe[s] such a nature to [man].” Spinoza is after the *real* nature of

⁸⁷² Amrine 2011, 37.

human, and the model of human that he himself endeavors to set up has the advantage over the other (arbitrary and idiosyncratic) models in that it is based on the real nature of human (TdIE 3-9, TdIE 14).

11.2.8 TdIE 93, 2p49s, and TdIE 99-100

Abstractions are the explicit culprits at TdIE 93, 2p49s, and TdIE 99-100. What is important is that universals are construed as abstractions.

Therefore, so long as we are dealing with the Investigation of things, we must never infer anything from abstractions [such as are universals (see 2p49s II/135/22-23, 4p62s II/257/28; TdIE 57)], and we shall take very great care not to mix up the things that are only in the intellect with those that are real. (TdIE 93)

So the thing to note here, above all, is how easily we are deceived when we confuse universals with singulars, and beings of reason and abstractions with real beings. (2p49s II/135/22-23)

[A]bove all it is necessary for us always to deduce all our ideas . . . from real beings, proceeding, as far as possible, according to the series of causes, from one real being to another real being, in such a way that we do not pass over to abstractions and universals, neither inferring something real from them, nor inferring them from something real. For to do either interferes with the true progress of the intellect. But note that by the series of causes and of real beings I do not here understand the series of singular, changeable things, but only the series of fixed and eternal things. (TdIE 99-100)

At TdIE 93 Spinoza warns that we should not confuse what is mind-dependent with what is mind-independent. This is just more of what we saw with the Appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics* and 2p40s1. When Spinoza speaks of abstractions here, as well as at 2p49s, I see no reason to think that he means anything more than abstractions from sensorial information. Given the fact that he is committed to universals and that his official rejection of universals at 2p40s1 is limited merely to imaginative universals,

there is indeed good reason to think that he means merely abstractions from sensorial information.

That Spinoza does not mean anything more than abstractions from sensorial information is more explicit at TdIE 99-100. Here Spinoza again warns against confusing what is mind-dependent with what is mind-independent. He does not want us to deduce things from “abstractions and universals.” Instead he wants us to deduce things from the attributes and the common properties eternally pervading those attributes. So there is positive reason not to think that Spinoza is rejecting anything more than (1) abstractions from sensorial information and (2) the practice of trying to deduce facts about reality from them. If Spinoza were rejecting all universals, he would have to reject those universals that are mind-independent, such as the attributes and their most common properties.

11.2.9 TdIE 19.3

A close look at TdIE 19.3 reveals not only that this passage poses no threat to the consistency of Spinoza realism, but also that it actually presents strong evidence for his realism.

There is the Perception that we have when the essence of a thing is inferred from another thing, but not adequately. This happens, either when we infer the cause from some effect, or when something is inferred from some universal, which some property always accompanies. (TdIE 19.3)

To be sure, Spinoza describes here a type of inadequate perception in the midst of talking about universals. Nevertheless, Spinoza’s talk of both *inadequate perception* and *universals* in the same swath of text must not lull the reader into thinking that Spinoza rejects universals here. The sort of perception that he describes as inadequate is

the sort that mistakes a proprium of a universal, that is, a nonfundamental but necessary property of a universal, for the nature of that universal. As is clear especially when we look at Spinoza's own note to this passage, Spinoza is saying that when you have a universal, it—like all *real* things—must have effects. His point is that we fail to understand the essence of the universal in question when we merely understand the effects of that universal. The effects may necessarily follow from the universal and as such are inseparable from the universal. Indeed, we might clearly understand these necessary effects. This is precisely what Spinoza is supposing, in fact. Nevertheless, clear understanding of the necessary and inseparable effects of the universal does not suffice for understanding the essence of that universal. That is Spinoza's point here. To be sure, motion always accompanies Extension; motion is an immediate necessary effect of Extension. But motion is not the essence of Extension.⁸⁷³ That is what Spinoza is saying. Clearly the reality of the universal is being upheld, rather than challenged, here. Indeed, and as I just brought out with the example of motion and Extension, with Spinoza's talk of the effects of the universal as the propria of the universal, it is hard not to have in mind the divine attributes as paradigm examples of the universals in question.

11.2.10 TdIE 76

Several other of the passages commonly referred to as places where Spinoza rejects universals actually seem to promote universals. We just saw this at TdIE 19.3. We also saw this earlier with CM 1.1 (I/235/20-30). Here Spinoza says that Aristotle and Plato got the essence of human *wrong*—not that there is no such essence. We saw this as

⁸⁷³ See Sandri 2009, 29-30.

well at 1app. Here, in the midst of rejecting those universals that reflect the disposition of the perceiving brain (rather than the nature of things themselves), Spinoza admits that human bodies do *objectively* agree in many respects (see CM 1.1 I/234/6-7)—agree in the realist sense (as is the natural implication, especially in light of what I have argued in earlier chapters).

Let us now look at TdIE 76 for more of the same.

[Universals] always have a wider extension in the intellect than is really possessed by their particular exemplifications existing in Nature. Again, since there are many things in Nature whose difference is so slight as to be hardly perceptible to the intellect, it can easily come about that they are confused if they are conceived in an abstract way. (TdIE 76)

Here Spinoza talks about properties exemplified multiple times over in the very midst of stating the issue he has with universals. His main issue with universals, in this passage, is merely that people mistakenly think that *more* things instantiate a universal than actually do, their differences sometimes so slight that the mind overlooks them. We see the same sentiment at 1app: “although human bodies agree in many things, they still differ in very many” (II/82-II/83).⁸⁷⁴ So for all this passage tells us, there is in fact strict commonality among things. It is just that we tend to overestimate how many things actually partake of that commonality and thus run the risk of falsifying reality.

11.2.11 4pref

At 4pref we see something similar.

As for what they commonly say—that Nature sometimes fails or sins, and produces imperfect things—I number this among the fictions I treated in the Appendix of Part

⁸⁷⁴ To some extent this seems to anticipate Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* (2001). In the famous sections 65-67, Wittgenstein points out that certain general terms like “game” are applied to a group of things that do not all share one unified feature.

1. Perfection and imperfection, therefore, are only modes of thinking, i.e., notions we are accustomed to feign because we compare individuals of the same species or genus to one another. This is why I said above (2d6 that by reality and perfection I understand the same thing. For we are accustomed to refer all individuals in Nature to one genus, which is called the most general, i.e., to the notion of being, which pertains absolutely to all individuals in nature to this genus, compare them to one another, and find that some have more being, or reality, than others, we say that some are more perfect than others. And insofar as we attribute something to them that involves negation, like a limit, an end, lack of power, etc., we call them imperfect, because they do not affect our Mind as much as those we call perfect, and not because something is lacking in the, which is theirs, or because nature has sinned. For nothing belongs to the nature of anything except what follows from the necessity of the nature of the efficient cause. And whatever follows from the necessity of the nature of the efficient cause happens necessarily. (4pref II/207/1-II/208/6)

Here Spinoza suggests the reality of the grand universal *being* in his explanation of perfection and imperfection. He says that claims of perfection and imperfection are comparative claims about items of the same kind: x is a more perfect baseball player than y; o is a more perfect knife than p. At the most fundamental level, everything is a being. When we say that this being o is perfect in the most fundamental sense, we are comparing it to others of the same kind *being*; we are saying that o has more being than others, where the term “being” here means merely *reality* (1p9, 1p10s; Ep. 9; DPP 1p4sa4) (which itself means perfection: 4pref).

One might say that Spinoza regards the universal *being* as one of the universals to be rejected since at 2p40s1 he explicitly rejects transcendentals such as *Being* (along with Something and Thing), those universals with the greatest generality.⁸⁷⁵ But note that the transcendental Being that Spinoza rejects at 2p40s1 is explicitly said to be an *imaginative* universal. It is a universal born of abstraction from a gathering of *images*.

⁸⁷⁵ See Bernardete 1980, 70; Cerrato 2008, 60n54; Di Vona 1960, 229-242; Di Vona 1977c.

At 4pref, however, Spinoza says that he uses the term “being” to indicate nothing more exotic than *reality*. It would be strange if Spinoza were rejecting, at 2p40s1, the reality of reality. First of all, Spinoza would be appealing to the notion of reality in the very rejection of reality. Second, Spinoza packs the metaphysics of Part 1 with talk of being and thus reality. Third, it is central to Spinoza’s thought that everything has some degree of reality, where God in fact has absolute reality (1d6 in light of 1p9; see KV 1.2 I/19/10-16). Look what he tells Hudde, in fact.

Since the nature of God does not consist in a certain kind of being [(*ens*)], but in being [(*ens*)] that is absolutely unlimited, his nature requires everything that perfectly expresses being. (Ep. 36)

Hence I agree with Laerke on the matter.

[W]hen taking the words in the meaning assigned to them by common usage, words such as “Being” or “Man” signify irremediably confused ideas. But this certainly does not imply that Spinoza . . . is necessarily barred from reemploying the same words “Being” or “Man” in a different meaning where they signify adequate common notions. This is exactly what he does in E Id6 when defining God as a “being absolutely infinite” and in E IIp8s when speaking of the “true definition of man.”⁸⁷⁶

11.2.12 TdIE 55

There is one more passage to consider: TdIE 55.

I must note here in passing that the same difference that exists between the essence of one thing and the essence of another also exists between the actuality or existence of one thing and the actuality or existence of another. So if we wished to conceive the existence of Adam, for example, through existence in general, it would be the same as if, to conceive his essence, we attended to the nature of being, so that in the end we define him by saying that Adam is a being. Therefore, the more generally existence is conceived, the more confusedly also it is conceived, and the more easily can it be ascribed to anything. Conversely, the more particularly it is conceived, then the more clearly it is understood, and the more difficult it is for us, [even] when we

⁸⁷⁶ Laerke 2014, 526.

do not attend to the order of Nature, to ascribe it to anything other than the thing itself. This is worth noting. (TdIE 55).

TdIE 55 states merely that we lose the precise knowledge of the specificity of a given being, such as Adam, the more we understand it according to general categories. Thus the most imprecise understanding of Adam would be that he is a being. Especially in light of what was said about the fact that being is just reality for Spinoza, this passage is quite friendly to a realist interpretation. After all, precisely because every being has being (or reality), it follows that understanding a specific being, such as Adam, merely in terms of being does not distinguish Adam from any other being and is thus a highly confused way of understanding Adam.

Now, in several of the passages discussed above, Spinoza suggests that God knows things in their singularity (CM 2.7 I/262/30-I/263/9; Ep. 19 IV/91/1-IV/92/21; 2p49s II/135/22-23; TdIE 99-100). This in no way threatens to contradict his realism, though (despite what I see and hear over and over again). For at the most he means that God knows each finite thing in its full detail, the full detail that uniquely picks it out (see Ep. 19 IV/92/1). That each thing is unique, which is implied in such a claim, is (for reasons that are obvious and that have been discussed in Chapter VI and Chapter IX) compatible with realism.—Take, for example, Person 1 (A-B-C) and Person 2 (A-G-Y). One and the same universal A is present through Person 1 and Person 2. And yet, out of the two, each person is unique. If you say, however, that A *itself* is not unique because Person 1 has it and Person 2 has it, you are thinking of property A as a trope, rather than a universal. For if A is a universal, then there is only *one* A here. If property A is

conceived as a trope, then there are two exactly similar A's. *That* undermines singularity.⁸⁷⁷

11.3 Resolving the tension: objections and replies

11.3.1 Objection 1

One may argue that Spinoza rejects *all* universals in those passages where he explicitly says that universals are nothing. Here is how such a case might unfold.

Spinoza has an accurate conception of a universal, one in perfect alignment with the fathers of the discussion about universals: Aristotle and Porphyry.⁸⁷⁸ Spinoza's conception is in alignment as well with one of Spinoza's major influences: Scotus,⁸⁷⁹ who says that "an actual universal is that which . . . can itself, one and the same thing, be directly ascribed to each individual [exemplifying it] . . . by a predication saying "this is this."⁸⁸⁰ A universal, so Spinoza tells us under the influence of Keckermann at 2p49s, is that which is said *wholly* and *equally* whether it be of one or several individuals (2p49s II/134/8-10, 4p4d II/213/15-19).⁸⁸¹ A universal is that which "must be in each" individual of which it is said, "the same in all" individuals to which it pertains, just as

⁸⁷⁷ For this reason, Spinoza's belief in singular things poses no threat to the universalist thesis. Indeed, if we go with Spinoza's technical understanding of singular things here, which we should, then such a lack of threat is obvious in itself. For singular things in the technical Spinozistic sense are merely things that are finite and have determinate existence (2d7).

⁸⁷⁸ Aristotle *De Interpretatione* 7, 17a39-40; see Strange 1992, 58n94.

⁸⁷⁹ See Deleuze 1992, 359n28. Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel is often considered to have been a major influence on Spinoza (Nadler 1999, 93). Menasseh seemed to have known Scotus, as well as Aristotle and Aquinas, very well (see Åkerman 1990, 154; Idel 1989, 208-209; Roth 1975, 87-89). Spinoza likely engaged personally with Menasseh (Nadler 1999, 99-100). Spinoza "certainly read *El Conciliador* closely" (Nadler 1999, 100, 270). In this work, which attempts to explain away biblical inconsistencies, Menasseh discusses Scotus's views in detail.

⁸⁸⁰ Scotus Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 37; Spade 1994, 65-66.

⁸⁸¹ Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68; see Freudenthal 1899, entry 106; Di Vona 1960, 157; Cerrato 2008, 119-120.

the essence of human is “[NS: wholly and equally [in] each individual man]” (2p49s II/135/5ff, 3pref II/138/12-18), multiply exemplified by (TdIE 76) and thus “inherent” in each (TP 3.18).⁸⁸² In alignment with what is said about universals not only in Keckermann’s *Systema Logicae*, but also Judah Abrabanel’s third dialogue of his *Dialogues on Love* (both of which Spinoza studied),⁸⁸³ Spinoza understands a universal to be, in short, merely that which is apt to be one and the same in many. We cannot, therefore, dissolve the tension by saying that, because Spinoza did not have an adequate conception of a universal and so was guilty of “not rightly applying names to things” (2p47s), he mistook his rejection of a certain sort of universal for a rejection of all universals. Borkowski suggests that the tension be dissolved this way.⁸⁸⁴ That cannot work, however. Since Spinoza has a true definition of a universal as that which is apt to be one in many, in those places where he rejects universals *without qualification* (such as when he says that “universals . . . are nothing”: KV 1.6 I/42/25-I/43/7-8) he must be rejecting *all* entities apt to be one in many. In effect, he must be rejecting *all* universals,

⁸⁸² It is worth noting that the “same in all” language is found as well in Spinoza’s discussion at 2p37-2p39 of common properties, properties that I have shown to be universals.

⁸⁸³ See Di Vona 1960, 156ff; Cerrato 2008, 119-120; Van De Ven 2014, 13; Nadler 1999, 138 and 368n66.

⁸⁸⁴ See Di Vona 1960, 82-83, 153n102. One can appeal to Spinoza’s ignorance about universals in various ways in order to try to dispel the tension. The one that my objector is here rejecting is that Spinoza only regarded universals as sensorial universals. This is false for reasons already explained and for reasons to come shortly. A less helpful and highly misguided appeal to ignorance that I have seen, at least on rare occasion, is to say that by “universal” Spinoza means merely natural kinds. Some even try to claim that it is only a development of the 20th century that properties are considered universals. This is less helpful because it does not dispel the full tension (for there is still the problem imposed by natural kind universals). This is misguided because Spinoza recognizes that properties are universals, as we will see in detail. For just one example, though, he explicitly says that shape is a universal (DPP Iprol I/142/33; see Ep. 2). Since I am simply dealing with *Spinoza* here, that is all that needs to be said. I need not bother myself to try to defend the misinformed notion that thinking of properties as universals is a 20th century development. Aristotle, of course, famously distinguishes between substantial universals, such as horseness, and nonsubstantial universals, such as redness in his *Categories* and other places (see Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 8; Perin 2007). Plato, for another example, discusses largeness in the *Parmenides* and whiteness in the *Meno*.

not just the imaginative universals of 2p40s1 and 1app. It is no doubt important to devote the effort to explaining away apparent contradiction in a thinker. Nevertheless, no spin-doctoring can save Spinoza here.

Even if one writes off these passages as being so early in Spinoza's development that they fall outside of the jurisdiction of the correct definition of a universal at 2p49s, the problem would still remain. For in the *Ethics* itself—indeed, at 2p49s itself—we find Spinoza making another blanket rejection of universals.

[H]ow easily we are deceived when we confuse universals . . . and beings of reason and abstractions with real beings. (2p49s II/135/22-23)

Recall, moreover, that Spinoza not only describes the notions that refer to the universals of 2p40s1 and 1app as “universal notions” (2p40s2 II/122/3-11), he explicitly describes the notions that refer to the common properties at 2p37-2p39—extendedness, mobility, and so on down the line—as “universal notions” as well (2p40s2 II/122/1-2, 5p12d; see 5p36s).⁸⁸⁵ Indeed, in the Prolegomena to his exposition on Descartes's philosophy he explicitly lists Extension, “corporeal nature in general,” as a universal (DPP 1prol I/142/33-34). Since these are not the imaginative universals of 2p40s1 and 1app, this further emphasizes that Spinoza does not mean to limit himself to rejecting merely the imaginative universals in those places where he rejects universals without qualification. He means to reject them wholesale. It is sometimes said, to be sure, that early moderns in general (and in contrast to ancients, medievals, and contemporaries) did not fully grasp what universals are and what the realist-antirealist debate is all about.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸⁵ See Abraham 1977, 30n2.

⁸⁸⁶ See Newlands forthcoming-a.

Nevertheless, neither an appeal to his *ignorance* as to what a universal is nor an appeal to his *misuse of the term* “universal” (which is his own preferred maneuver for dissolving discrepancies: 2p47s) can save Spinoza from contradiction.

11.3.2 Reply to objection 1

In the quoted passage from 2p49s Spinoza once again connects universals with abstractions. For Spinoza, such talk of abstracting often seems to be construed, as it was for the schoolmen (at least as they were commonly understood), as shorthand for abstracting from sensorial information. I conclude, therefore, that Spinoza must have in mind merely the 2p40s1 universals here—the sensible species of the schoolmen.⁸⁸⁷ Here are the sensible species described by Fonseca himself, an influence on Descartes⁸⁸⁸ and such a prominent scholastic in his time that he was called the Portuguese Aristotle.⁸⁸⁹ Notice the presumption throughout that the abstraction involved is merely abstraction from sensorial information.

Universals are apprehended by us from singular things, in which they exist, through abstraction. . . . Now this abstraction is made when the intellect, with the help of the senses, gradually acquires out of the individual things . . . some species or natural similarities, in which these common natures are represented without any individual differentia. So every faculty of knowing which exists in us abstracts from the things themselves and from certain species or sets its object apart from the objects of other faculties of knowing, e.g., as in the butter simultaneously exist white, sweet, peculiar odor, soft, and other accidents, and also the individual substance of butter itself. Certainly the sense of sight by means of the species of whiteness, which is acquired through the eyes, connects whiteness to sweetness, and to the other things existing in the milk, which remains no less united in this thing itself. And equally the sense of taste abstracts sweetness from the species of sweetness. In like manner the other senses . . . can only abstract certain material and sensible [species] from other

⁸⁸⁷ See Scribano 2009.

⁸⁸⁸ See Ariew 2003, 2, 65; Sasaki 2003, 321ff; Secada 2000.

⁸⁸⁹ See Slattery 1957, 193.

material and sensible [items]. For this reason all species, which are used for knowing, are called sensible species.⁸⁹⁰

I should mention another point in response to the objection. To assume that Spinoza rejects all universals, not merely the universals of empirical imagination, is to saddle Spinoza with a blatant contradiction (conflicting as it would with various conclusions defended in this project). The assumption is that the greats are masters of the fundamental tools of their trade (basic logic). Therefore, my default (and hard-to-shake) assumption is that everything coheres in the case of Spinoza (especially in the case of the *Ethics*, which after 15 years of editing was by no means a first draft—however much it may have been, as Fichte’s son says, a mere “first draft” of Hegel’s philosophy).⁸⁹¹ It is possible, of course, that Spinoza is characterized more so by depth, thoughtfulness, and insight than logical thinking. But surely he is at least *trying* to think logically (and thus deserves the benefit of the doubt). The mere geometrical form of the *Ethics*, its thoroughly mathematical method, testifies to that (however “miserably” some—Gottsched⁸⁹² and various others⁸⁹³ come to mind from the 17th and 18th centuries—find him to employ that method).

There is still more that could be said against the objection. More should be said, in fact, if we are going to see in detail how Spinoza’s seemingly blanket rejection of universals coheres with his realism.

⁸⁹⁰ Fonseca 1591, ch. 4; see Madeira 2006.

⁸⁹¹ Fichte 1832, 40-52.

⁸⁹² Gottsched 1738, E2.1; Gottsched 1741-1744, 4.385.

⁸⁹³ Poiret 1685, special appendix; Gastrell 1708, 16f.; Buffier 1724, 200f.; Ramsey 1730, 111; Formey 1741, 1.29f.; Ramsay 1748, 497-541 (compare this with the first part of the work, which is written in the geometrical form); Voltaire 1770-1771, 4.277-285.

Spinoza does describe the notions that refer to the common properties at 2p37-2p39 as universal notions. For that reason, especially in light of his historically sensitive definition of a universal as merely that which is apt to be one in many, he no doubt regards these properties as universals. Indeed, not only does he often repeat the formula “common *sive* universal” (2p49s, II/134/4-5; TTP 4.6 III/61/16-17, TTP 6.10-11 III/88/15-16, TTP 7.6 III/102) and associate being “inherent” in many with being universal (TP 3.18) and being “one and the same” in many with being universal (3pref II/138/12-18), he also explicitly calls the properties in question universals (TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20). Despite how much is sometimes made of Spinoza’s superficial and historically insensitive understanding of the ancient problems in philosophy,⁸⁹⁴ and despite how much it is said that the early moderns in general lacked a full understanding (an understanding possessed by ancients, medievals, and contemporaries) of what universals are and what the realist antirealist debate is all about,⁸⁹⁵ Spinoza has enough historical understanding to know at least that Extension, “corporeal nature in general,” is something that people count as a universal. He explicitly says as much in the Prolegomena to his exposition of Descartes’s philosophy (DPP 1prol I/142/33-34). And that Spinoza himself agrees that Extension is a universal is implied by the fact that Extension is one of the properties (see 2p37 in light of 2p13s12d) “common to all” bodies and “equally in the part and equally in the whole” of the physical realm (2p46d).

⁸⁹⁴ See Copleston 1960, 210; Melamed 2014, 177, 185.

⁸⁹⁵ See Newlands forthcoming-a.

The key is realizing the following. In the very swath of text where he calls the ideas that refer to the 2p37-2p39 properties “universal notions,” Spinoza draws a division (which we also see in Giambattista Vico, arguably as a result of Spinoza’s influence)⁸⁹⁶ between the authentic universals that pertain to nature as it is in itself (rational universals) and the “childish and frivolous” universals that do not pertain to nature as it is in itself (empirical universals) (Ep. 13 IV/64/30; see Ep. 11 IV/48/27-30). I have already established that, for Spinoza, the 2p37-2p39 universals are true of nature as it is in itself. Spinoza never sets his attacks on the rational universals. Indeed, Spinoza is clear that (1) “Blessedness consists in Love of God” (5p42d) and that (2) “Love of God arises from knowledge of him” (TTP 4.6) and that (3) “Knowledge of God consists in philosophical reasoning alone and pure thought” (TTP 4.5) and that (4) “knowledge of him has to be drawn from universal notions that are certain in themselves” (TTP 4.6). The universal notions in question here are obviously the “good” universal notions, the non-bogus rationalist ones that refer to authentic universals (and indeed are universals themselves, just in the attribute of Thought). As I see it, then, Spinoza is not being misleading on the matter.

That Spinoza is not being misleading on the matter comes into greater relief when we attend to the following facts.

First, Spinoza explains that the rational universals are necessarily true right after making the distinction between the imaginative universals and the rational universals at 2p40s2 (see 2p41s).

⁸⁹⁶ Preus 1989, 72-73, 82-84, 87; Preus 1995, 380n71.

Second, a few lines before he makes the distinction (namely, during his famous attack on imaginative universals at 2p40s1), Spinoza is quick to make clear that he rejects “those notions, which *they* call universals [*notiones illae, quas Universales vocant*]” (my translation). He is quick to make clear, in other words, that he denies the ontological authenticity of those universals that *others*, “they,” have thought to be ontologically authentic.

Third, Spinoza expects it to be obvious to his audience whom exactly he means by “they” here: the schoolmen. Consider the following facts. (1) The scholastic philosophy, entrenched in most centers of 17th Century learning, was the target of those, like Spinoza, who aligned themselves with the self-styled “modern” drive to tear down the scholastic edifice and, as Descartes says, throw off “the yoke of Aristotle.”⁸⁹⁷ So simply given the context of Spinoza’s time period and his alignment against the mainstream philosophy dominated by scholasticism, it is clear whom Spinoza means by “they.” (2) Throughout his works, Spinoza flags when he is using scholastic terminology, or is referring to the scholastics, in the following ways. Often he will use a third person plural conjugation of speaking verbs (as in the case of *vocant*) and will capitalize the object of such verbs (as in the case of *Universales* in 2p40s1). He will also use such phrases as *ut aiunt*, “as they say” (KV 1.2 I/22/23; 1p28s, 2p10s, 3p15s, Ep. 73, Ep. 75; see also 4p50s), and *Philosophi*, “the Philosophers” (KV 1.2.24, KV 1.7.2, KV 2.16 I/81/38; CM 1.1 I/234/8-10, CM 2.10 I/268/14; TP 4.4). (3) By “they” in 2p40s1 Spinoza means, as he in effect shows (II/121/13-35), those for whom universals are

⁸⁹⁷ Gilson 1999, 82.

found out by way of abstraction from sensorial information, those for whom universals are supposed to “pass,” as Leibniz describes the view, “from the organs into the soul.”⁸⁹⁸ As we saw in the earlier Fonseca passage, the universals of the schoolmen are commonly construed in precisely this way: as sensorial universals or, as they are better known, sensible species (see TTP 1.14).⁸⁹⁹ (4) Just a few lines earlier than the 2p40s1 section in question (the section where Spinoza discusses the origin of “universals”), Spinoza discusses the origin of those notions that they call “second notions” and “transcendentals.” Second notions and transcendentals are classic schoolmen terms.⁹⁰⁰— In light of these facts (facts concerning the context of Spinoza’s day and age, the context of Spinoza’s body of works, and the context of the passage itself), it seems clear that by “they” Spinoza means the schoolmen at 2p40s1. That is to say, Spinoza means those philosophers commonly described—especially in light of their supposedly central slogan *nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*⁹⁰¹—as discovering universals by way of selective attention to the data of sensation. Spinoza’s audience, then, is intended to know that he is singling out schoolman universals in his official attack on universals at 2p40s1. Haserot summarizes the point well.

Spinoza took the expressions *notiones Universales* and *termini Transcendentales* from the scholastics. In using these expressions he makes it clear toward whom he is directing his criticism.⁹⁰²

⁸⁹⁸ See Mahnke 1925, 5.21; see Goodman 1992, 261; Aristotle *De Anima* 424a18.

⁸⁹⁹ Pasnau 2011, 549; see Aristotle *De Anima* 424a18; Aristotle Posterior Analytics 100a-100b; Goodman 1992, 261; Boethius *Commentaria in Porphyrium* (PL, LXIV), coll. 85c-86; Bolton 1998, 190; Hattab 2009; Olgiati 1925, 34.

⁹⁰⁰ Gueroult 1974, 364.

⁹⁰¹ Aquinas attributes this slogan to Aristotle. See Goodman 1992, 261; Shelford 2002, 613; see Gassendi’s remarks at AT VII 267.

⁹⁰² Haserot 1950, 478.

It would not surprise me if imperfect translations have contributed to scholars overlooking that Spinoza singles out here what some *others*, some *they*—namely, the scholastics—regard as universals. With exception to a few translations (those by Curley, Gaos, Cohan, Domínguez, Machado, and Sensi stand out),⁹⁰³ many translations of the relative clause in question at 2p40s1 underemphasize or cover over this fact. Some translations do so by using passive or participle forms of the verb “to call” (instead of the present active form that Spinoza himself uses). Boyle, Eliot, Parkinson, Ratner, Gutmann, White, and Stirling, for example, all translate the present active “*vocant*” (“they call”) as if it were the present passive “*vocantur*” (“are called”).⁹⁰⁴ Martinetti does too, translating “*vocant*” as “*si chiamano*” (“are called”): “*nozioni chez si chiamano universali.*”⁹⁰⁵ As if “*vocant*” were the perfect passive participle “*vocatas*,” Shirley, Fullerton, Smith, and Willis give us “called”: notions *called* universal.⁹⁰⁶ Hubka does as well (“*zvané*”).⁹⁰⁷ So does Peña Garcia and Bergua,⁹⁰⁸ who use the past participle “*llamadas*” as opposed to the more appropriate “*llaman*” (“they call”) that we find in Gaos, Cohan, Domínguez, and Machado.⁹⁰⁹ Peri too merely gives us “called” (“*chiamate*”)⁹¹⁰ as opposed to Sensi’s more appropriate “*chiamano*” (“they call”):

⁹⁰³ Curley 1985, 477; Gaos 1983, 107; Cohan 1958, 86; Domínguez 2000, 107; Machado 1977, 91; Sensi 2008, 111. Bennett too, in his modernized version of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, gives the more literal rendering of *vocant* as “they call.”

⁹⁰⁴ Boyle 1948, 67; Eliot 1981, 75; Parkinson 2000, 148; Ratner 1927, 179; Gutmann 1949, 111; White and Stirling 2001, 79. Spinoza uses “*vocantur*” at the beginning of 2p40s1, where it is called for.

⁹⁰⁵ Martinetti 1969, 79. Although “*chiamano*” is active (third person plural), putting “*si*” in front of it makes it passive.

⁹⁰⁶ Shirley 2002, 267; Fullerton 1894, 113; Smith 1876, 102; Willis 1870, 484.

⁹⁰⁷ Hubka 1977, 87.

⁹⁰⁸ Peña Garcia 1975, 156; Bergua 1971, 170.

⁹⁰⁹ Gaos 1983, 107; Cohan 1958, 86; Domínguez 2000, 107; Machado 1977, 91.

⁹¹⁰ Peri 2001, 47.

“*quelle nozioni che chiamano universali.*”⁹¹¹ Millet as well gives us “called” (“*dites*”) as opposed to the more appropriate “they call” (“*disent*”).⁹¹² Lurié gives us “named” (“*appelées*”) as opposed to the more appropriate “they name” (“*appellent*”).⁹¹³ Other translations deemphasize or cover over the *they*-agent (*the schoolmen*) by inserting the indefinite pronoun “one.” Appuhn and Saisset give us “one names” (“*on nomme*”).⁹¹⁴ Lantzenberg, Misrahi, and Boulainvilliers give us “one calls” (“*on appelle*”).⁹¹⁵ So does Van Suchtelen (“*men noemt*”).⁹¹⁶ So does Rasmussen (“*man kalder*”).⁹¹⁷ So do Stern, Auerbach, Von Kirchmann, Baensch, Schmidt, and Bülow (“*man nennt*”).⁹¹⁸ Wolff and Ewald do as well, except that they both use the archaic “one calleth” (“*man nennet*”).⁹¹⁹ The danger in using the generic “one” is that it almost always stands for the writer himself (Spinoza) and everyone else in the target audience (at least everyone who is like the writer): “one would think that she got the hint”; “one cannot survive such temperatures.” Using the passive or participle forms of the verb “to call” poses the same danger. And the problem reaches a greater height in the translations of Elwes and Corso. Both go the extra mile to rule out the option that Spinoza singles out what some *others*—some “they” distant to Spinoza, some select group to which he does not belong—understand by “universals.” Elwes translates “*vocant*” (“they call”) as “we

⁹¹¹ Sensi 2008, 111.

⁹¹² Millet 1970b, 78.

⁹¹³ Lurié 1974, 125.

⁹¹⁴ Appuhn 1977, 201; Saisset 1861, 87.

⁹¹⁵ Lantzenberg 1908, 108; Misrahi 2005, 137; Boulainvilliers 1907, 107.

⁹¹⁶ Van Suchtelen 1915.

⁹¹⁷ Rasmussen 2010, 64.

⁹¹⁸ Stern 1977; Auerbach 1841, 137; Von Kirchmann 1870, 84; Baensch 1905, 80; Schmidt 1812, 128; Bülow 1966, 89.

⁹¹⁹ Wolff 1744, 162; Ewald 1796, 234.

call,” as if “*vocant*” were “*vocamus*.”⁹²⁰ Corso does the same in Spanish, translating “*vocant*” as “*llamamos*.”⁹²¹

To be sure, these translations are all innocent enough, more or less (Elwes and Corso being the less). I understand the choice, for example, to go with the indefinite pronoun: “those notions, which *one* calls universals.” That is what we get, in fact, from the translators of the *Nagelate Schriften*, the contemporaneous Dutch rendition of Spinoza’s *Opera Posthuma: men noemt*.⁹²² Moreover, put yourself in the position of a translator confronted with the passage in question. *Seemingly* out of nowhere, that is, *seemingly* without giving any indication to whom “they” refers, Spinoza goes: “Oh yeah, and those notions, which they call universals, are formed in the same way as second notions and transcendentals.” Many translators, at least at first glance, are going to be like “Huh? *They?*—What *they?* Since this ‘they’ was not made explicit earlier in the text, Spinoza must just be speaking generically, impersonally, indefinitely.” Of course, and as I pointed out above, it does not take much consideration to realize the identity of the group referred to by “they”: the schoolmen. But in favor of those who use the indefinite impersonal “one,” the “one” is still ambiguous enough (at least more ambiguous than the “we”) to allow—at least at a stretch—that Spinoza is singling out what *others* (the schoolmen) call universals. The same goes even for those who use the passive or participle form (and even, at more of a stretch, those who use the first person plural conjugation of “*vocant*”). Perhaps these translators feel, although this is unlikely

⁹²⁰ Elwes 1941, 110; see Runes 1957, 196.

⁹²¹ Corso 1940, 94.

⁹²² [Balling and Glazemaker] 1677, 87.

the case in actual fact, that the context (the macro and micro contexts that I highlighted above) will nudge the reader towards such a reading.

Despite my conciliatory remarks, however, these translators are not entirely off the hook. After all, the same “allowing of context to nudge” could have been accomplished with a stricter translation: “*vocant*” as “they call.” That stricter translation would enjoy not only the advantage of being stricter (at no cost, in my view, to readability), but also the advantage of not so severely resisting the interpretive possibility that Spinoza is singling out what *others* (the schoolmen) call universals.—In the end, one does wonder how great a role all these loose and deceptively innocent translations have played in the continued dominance of the antirealist interpretation of Spinoza, or at least of the interpretation that Spinoza’s thought is contradictory on the matter of universals.

11.3.3 Objection 2

Pointing out (1) that Spinoza distinguishes between sensorial and rationalistic universals and (2) that in certain passages he will explicitly attack what “they”—the schoolmen—regard as universals only makes matters worse for Spinoza. In light of Spinoza’s accurate conception of a universal, he knows that the schoolmen universals are not the only sorts of universals. That is even more reason, therefore, to regard Spinoza’s *unqualified* rejection of universals (in at least three passages) as just that: wholesale rejection of universals.

11.3.4 Reply to objection 2

Such a conclusion saddles Spinoza with blatant contradiction. Hence it is reasonable to assume that Spinoza did not intend a wholesale rejection of universals in those passages where his rejection is not *explicitly* qualified. Moreover, there is a positive explanation why Spinoza did not intend a wholesale rejection of universals in those passages where his rejection of universals is not explicitly qualified. *Even in those passages* he expects his audience to have in mind the sensible species of the schoolmen, the universals of empirical imagination. There are several reasons why.

First, notice that in those passages where Spinoza seems to make a blanket rejection of universals he is either implicitly or explicitly construing them as *abstractions*, which is classic schoolmen speak (see APPENDIX B).⁹²³ At 2p49s (II/135/22-23) the construal is explicit (see also TdIE 93, TdIE 99-100).

Second, given the reign of the schoolmen philosophy from which the early moderns are in large part trying to break, I think Spinoza expects that when his audience hears “universals” they will think, by default (and so not just when flagged like at 2p40s1), of the universals of empirical imagination, the schoolmen sensible species abstracted from sensorial experience.⁹²⁴ In Letter 6 Spinoza comes close to saying just that, in fact. Here Spinoza responds to the following passage from Boyle.

⁹²³ See Scribano 2009.

⁹²⁴ See Scribano 2009. This may be suggested at 4p62s, where imagination, universals, and abstraction seem to be connected.

But we can have only a quite inadequate knowledge of the duration of things (by 2p31), and we determine their times of existing only by the imagination (by 2p44s), which is not equally affected by the image of the present thing and the image of the future one. That is why the true knowledge we have of good and evil is only abstract or universal. (4p62s)

It is manifest enough that [fluidity and firmness (i.e., solidity)] are to be reckoned among the most general affections of the conventions or associations of several particles of matter into bodies of any certain denomination, there being scarce any distinct portion of matter in the world that is not either fluid, or else stable or consistent. (Ep. 6 IV/28/5-10)

Spinoza responds as follows.

I would think that notions derived from popular usage, or which explain Nature, not as it is in itself, but as it is related to human sense perception, ought neither to be counted among the chief kinds, nor to be mixed (not to say confused) with pure notions, which explain Nature as it is in itself. Of the latter kind are motion, rest, and their laws; of the former are visible, invisible, hot, cold, and as I will say at once, also fluid and solid. (Ep. 6 IV/28/10-16)

The chief kinds and pure notions under discussion are obviously universal notions, and Spinoza understands that (see 2p40s2 II/122). What is important to see here is not merely that Spinoza is, once again, distinguishing between imaginative universals and rational universals (important as that fact no doubt is for my claim that Spinoza is consistent in his realism). Notice that Spinoza also admits that when the populace thinks of universal notions what they have in mind are the 2p40s1 and 1app universals: those “related to human sense perception” (Ep. 6 IV/28/12; see also Ep. 56). Spinoza’s belief that when most people hear of universals they have in mind those referring to imaginative universals is a function of his belief in the domination of scholastic philosophy, which again he assumes (like Descartes) to have as its central principle that nothing is in the mind that is not first in the senses.

Now, I say “may” because Spinoza seems to be admitting here that there is *true* knowledge that is abstract or universal. This would suggest that his is not dealing with the sensorial universals here. And it would also suggest that Spinoza permits a positive sort of abstraction.

As I see it, then, even when Spinoza makes his seemingly *blanket* rejection of universals he expects his audience to have in mind the sensible species of the schoolmen: universals of empirical imagination. That is in fact why I lean towards reading the possible tremor of hesitation in Spinoza’s claim at TdIE 101 that the attributes and their most fundamental properties are to be regarded “as” or “as if” (*tanquam*) universals as a remark reflecting not his ignorance of the fact that they *are* universals, but rather his desire not to confuse his audience. Spinoza knows that when his audience hears talk of universals, they will think of those “schoolmen” universals abstracted from sensorial information. Spinoza does not want his audience thinking that he himself endorses such backwards entities.⁹²⁵ Therefore, he says merely that the attributes and their fundamental properties are to be regarded “as” or “as if” universals. Spinoza finds it more important (for reasons of truth, and perhaps also to show allegiance to the new scientist side of progression) to obviate such a possible misconception than to make clear the point—rather academic, as far as his project is concerned—that, technically, the attributes and the common properties he discusses at TdIE are universals. That would open up an entire discussion about labels that Spinoza would much rather avoid.

Indeed, and as I pointed out in earlier chapters, in light of Spinoza’s historically-standard and sufficiently broad construal of universals as that which is said equally whether of one or many and is apt to be one in many, I do not think that Spinoza

⁹²⁵ And we see the same in the case of Descartes, who in admitting essential forms into his ontology feels the need to flag that he endorses “essential forms explained in *our* fashion” rather than in the fashion of the schoolmen (my emphasis AT III 506).

understood merely that the attributes and the modes common to two or more individuals are universals, as in fact he explicitly does (see DPP 1prol I/142/33-34, 2p37 in light of 2p13s12d and 2p46d, on the one hand, and see 2p40s2 II/122 in light of II/12212-14, 2p49s, II/134/4-5; TTP 4.6 III/61/16-17, TTP 6.10-11 III/88/15-16, TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20). I take it that Spinoza understands—at least at some level to be brought out into full awareness given the right occasion—that each mode is a universal and that each attribute is a universal. Here is my argument for such a view.

(Premise 1) Attributes and modes are ontologically authentic natures (Chapter IV, Chapter V, and Chapter VII).

(Premise 2) A nature in itself does not impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals with that nature: considered in abstraction, it could be instantiated infinitely many times or twenty times—and yes, even just one time (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95). (As Fonseca explains,⁹²⁶ this is just what a universal's characteristic aptness to be one in many amounts to. That a universal does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature is also the key motivation for Aristotle's claim that "definition is of the universal,"⁹²⁷ the other motivations being two views that Spinoza explicitly endorses at 1p8s2: (a) that the definition of a thing refers to the nature of a thing and (b) that the nature of a thing imposes no restriction on the number of individuals with that nature.)

⁹²⁶ Fonseca 1591, ch. 1; see Madeira 2006.

⁹²⁷ Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z 1036a28-29 and 1040a8.

(Premise 3) That which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many individuals (Spinoza's construal of a universal at 2p49s) is that which does not impose a restriction on the number of distinct individuals that instantiate it.—This is rather clear in itself. It is also entailed by the fact that (1) that which is said equally of one and also of many and also of infinitely many is a nature (2p49s) and (2) a nature does not impose a restriction on the number of individuals with that nature (1p8s2 II/50-II/51; see TdIE 95).

(Conclusion) Spinoza therefore construes each nature, and thus each attribute and each mode, as a universal.

Why does Spinoza fail to advertise this point? I would say that the point *is* advertised. Spinoza says that natures impose no restriction on the number of things that instantiate them. Thus each nature—and so each attribute and each mode—is a universal according to Spinoza's own (boilerplate) characterization of a universal. Perhaps my standard for what counts as advertised is too low, though. Perhaps the bar as to what counts as advertised should be raised, raised such that one advertises each attribute and each mode to be a universal if and only if one explicitly says just that. In this case, the question would rise again. Why does Spinoza fail to advertise the point? Here, I guess, would be my answer. There was no need for him to connect these dots and make such a point explicit (even perhaps in his own conscious mind). From our contemporary point of view, where it is a big deal whether one welcomes universals in one's ontology, it may seem strange that Spinoza does not connect these dots. Given Spinoza's goal, however, there was not much motivation for him to stop and tell the reader (or even

himself) that technically each mode and each attribute meets the definition of a universal. Indeed, given the narrow conception of universals held by much of the audience in his day (universals = scholastic universals = universals of empirical imagination), bringing that up would threaten to confuse more than help matters. Neither Spinoza nor my interpretation should be faulted for Spinoza knowing and catering to his audience.

Put these points together with the following three facts. (1) Spinoza endorses things in his ontology that meet his historically accurate conception of a universal. (2) Spinoza takes care to clarify that the authentic universals are apprehended by intellect rather imagination. (3) Spinoza explicitly calls the universals that he rejects *entia imaginationis*. Taken together with these three facts, the above points show that Spinoza gives his reader more than enough resources to understand that he does not intend a wholesale rejection of universals, even in those passages where he rejects universals without any explicit qualification. He gives the reader more than enough resources to understand that he is simply distinguishing what he regards as perceiver-projected universals from ontologically authentic universals, explaining why the imaginary ones are imaginary and the real ones are real. That is what is most important to see for my purposes here. The resources are there, in fact, even when Spinoza uses the same term to refer to both a bogus universal and a non-bogus universal. This is especially clear in the case of the terms “being” and “humanity” (and we also see it with “perfection,” “God,” and so on). Laerke explains the point well.

Spinoza rejects the notion of Being (*Ens*) as a confused “transcendental notion” in *E* IIp40s1, but he also employs this term ubiquitously in his own philosophy, most

importantly in the definition of God as a “being absolutely infinite” (*ens absolute infinitum*). To take another similar example, in *E* IIp40s1, Spinoza rejects the “universal” notion of “man,” but still speaks of a “human nature in general” (*natura humana in genere*) and a “true definition of man” (*vera hominis definitio*) in *E* Ip8s2. However, rather than indicating blatant contradictions, such texts suggest that one will have to assign different meanings to the same word in different contexts. . . . To be sure, operating with such equivocations could appear to yield nothing but confusion. But the question is whether Spinoza does not (in most cases at least) provide the reader with some explicit indication as to *which sense* of a word he addresses. I believe he does. With regard to the examples, both relating to *E* IIp40s1, one should pay attention to what Spinoza himself says about the status of the words in question, that is, ‘Being’ and ‘man,’ namely that he is discussing them as they are defined from the third-person perspective as “terms *called* transcendental [*terminis, Trancendentales dicti*]” and as “notions *they call* universal [*notiones illae, quas universales vocant*].” When understood from this third-person perspective, that is, when taking the words in the meaning assigned to them by common usage, words such as ‘Being’ or ‘Man’ signify irremediably confused ideas. But this certainly does not imply that Spinoza from his own first-person perspective is necessarily barred from reemploying the same words ‘Being’ or ‘Man’ in a different meaning where they signify adequate common notions. This is exactly what he does in *E* Id6 when defining God as a “being absolutely infinite” and in *E* IIp8s when speaking of the “true definition of man.”⁹²⁸

In the end, then, Spinoza’s position is not contradictory regarding the status of universals. The resources are there (on the surface, in fact) to see that it is not. Wild puts the point well.

[T]he mind can, through intellectual effort, become cognizant of true universals. . . . It is therefore a great mistake to suppose that Spinoza was a nominalist. It is only *abstract* universals formed by the mere fusion or loss of individual differences that he denies.⁹²⁹

Spinoza, in effect, criticizes the way we commonly go about deciding what the true universals are: using our senses rather than intellect. In this way, Spinoza anticipates the efforts of D. M. Armstrong, who also sets out to criticize his fellow realists (especially

⁹²⁸ Laerke 2014, 525-526.

⁹²⁹ Wild 1930, 1 (Roman numeral 50).

those of the Middle Ages) for trusting too much in sense organs and language as reliable guides to what universals there are. To be sure, Armstrong trusts in physics to tell us what ontologically authentic universals there are⁹³⁰ whereas Spinoza trusts in pure reason making explicit what is innate (see 2p29s). That may or may not be a big disagreement. It may even amount to the same thing. But one similarity is clear. Against a large number of realists throughout the history of philosophy, both Armstrong and Spinoza distrust “the imaginative faculty,” “the medium of words or images,” as a guide to what universals there are (TTP 1.27; see TdIE 88-89; KV 2.16.6 I/83; 2p49s); both distrust the practice of “judg[ing] things from words, not words from things” (CM 1.1 I/235/8-9).⁹³¹ Although not drawing the connection between Spinoza and Armstrong

⁹³⁰ See Armstrong 1989, 87; Armstrong 2010, 19-20. In this way, Armstrong follows V. I. Lenin. Bykhovski describes the view of Lenin, who understood Spinoza to be a realist (Lenin 1936, 276, 291, 327; see Kline 1952, 43), as follows.

Scientific abstraction, the process in which universal concepts are formed . . . is a reflection of objective reality, reflecting it more profoundly, accurately, and completely than mere sensation could do. Abstraction, if it is truly scientific . . . leads us to the depths of objective reality, revealing to thought the essential conformity to law, the internal structure of the material world, which is inaccessible to direct perception. Universal concepts . . . reflect real universals, existing in things themselves. (Bykhovski 1947, 9)

⁹³¹ Compare the following passages from Armstrong and Spinoza. Armstrong first.

Socrates may have been thinking along the following lines. Ordinary names, that is, proper names, have a bearer of the name. If we turn to general terms—words like ‘horse’ . . . that apply to many different things—then we need something that stands to the word in the same general sort of relation that the bearer of the proper name stands to the proper name, there has to be an object that constitutes or corresponds to the meaning of the general word. So there has to be something called horseness. . . . This “argument from meaning” is a very bad argument. . . . The argument depends on the assumption that in every case where a general word has meaning, there is something in the world that constitutes or corresponds to that meaning. (Armstrong 1989, 78-79)

Now Spinoza.

[S]ince words are part of the imagination . . . it is not to be doubted that words, as much as the imagination, can be the cause of many and great errors, unless we are very wary of them. Moreover they are established according to the pleasure and power of understanding of ordinary people, so that they are only signs of things as they are in the imagination, but not as they are in the intellect [and thus in reality]. . . . We affirm and deny many things because the nature of words—not the nature of things—allows us to affirm them. And in our ignorance of this, we easily take something false to be true” (TdIE 88-89)

explicitly, Sprigge summarizes the point well (at least when it comes to universals considered to be *actually* present in many).

Spinoza sometimes seems a nominalist about universals. Certainly he holds that words for types of thing *at the level of ordinary classification* do not point to anything one and the same present in each instance. . . . But it seems that he thought that a deeper scientific understanding of the world would be by way of concepts which express certain basic pervasive structures of reality which figure as universals.⁹³²

11.4 Concluding remarks

11.4.1 Chapter XI

Passages where Spinoza rejects universals should not be regarded as in tension with his realism concerning universals. Spinoza rejects schoolman universals. He does not reject universals apprehended by the intellect, that is, universals true of reality in itself. Spinoza gives his readers enough resources to understand this, even in those passages where he rejects universals without any explicit qualification.

Understanding that, for Spinoza, true universals are those apprehendable by the intellect allows us to see, by the way, how Spinoza avoids the sort of objections that we find early modern empiricists making against universals. The most common objection goes as follows. The idea of a universal would be of something (triangularity) that can be possessed by a wide-range of individuals (various triangles). But it is absurd to think that the mind can frame, that is, have an image of, such a thing. How can there be a picture of, say, triangularity in general?—Spinoza's response here, at least when it comes to authentic universals, will be the same general response that he gives to those

⁹³² Sprigge 1991, 858.

who hold that, because the mind cannot frame an image of God, the mind cannot have an idea of God. It is silly to think that we cannot have an *idea of x* just because we cannot *frame an image of x*, Spinoza says. Therefore, Spinoza concludes, these sensationalist empiricists simply need to be ignored. Indeed, given that they can only deal with *images* and *pictures*, and not as well *concepts* and *notions*, Spinoza even jokes that these “people” be regarded as animals on a lower order than humans.⁹³³

There are some who deny that they have any idea of God, and yet who nevertheless (so *they* say) worship and love him. And though you may put before them a definition of God, and God’s attributes, you will still gain nothing by it, no more than if you labored to teach a man blind from birth the differences between the colors, just as we see them. But unless we should wish to regard them as a new kind of animal, between men and the lower animals, we must not bother too much about their words. How, I ask, can we make the idea of anything known except by propounding its definition and [thereby] explaining its attributes? Since we offer this concerning the idea of God, there is no reason for us to be delayed by the words of men who deny that they have an idea of God merely because they can form no image of him in their brain. (DPP 1p6s)

11.4.2 The project as a whole

Let me now offer a general recap of my overall findings concerning Spinoza and the problem of universals. We can think of my project as involving four central movements.

First, I argued that everything in Spinoza ontology is a universal. That is to say, Spinoza endorses the courageous metaphysical doctrine known as universalism. On the one hand, the attributes are universals and God is the structural universal that is the bundle of these attributes. On the other hand, modes are universals and each composite

⁹³³ Surely such a remark, when put in the context of our discussion of 4p37s1 and related passages in Chapter VIII, has a lot more darkness to it than at first would seem. Having 3p37s1 and related passages in mind, Melamed says that young children and autistic people should think twice before becoming Spinoza’s neighbor (Melamed 2011b, 164). To this list we might add sensationalist empiricists.

entity in the realm of modes is the structural universal that is the bundle of its component modes. Spinoza does not endorse just any old version of universalism, however. Spinoza understands his ontologically authentic universals to be doings. Spinoza's universalism, therefore, deserves to be called something like "verbal universalism" or "active universalism" or "power universalism." To the extent that contemporary philosophers tend to describe those entities that are both properties and doings—wayings, in short—as concrete rather than abstract,⁹³⁴ it is perhaps best to regard all the universals in Spinoza's ontology, and so in effect everything, as concrete rather than abstract (for whatever that is worth). Perhaps, then, we should describe Spinoza's universalism as "concrete (power) universalism."

Second, I argued that Spinoza endorses the reality of species natures. I devoted particular attention to the human species nature. The universal human species nature under the attribute of Extension, which is one and the same for all and only human bodies, is a certain manner in which groupings of mechanistic-friendly properties relate to each other. The universal human species nature under the attribute of Thought, which is one and the same for all and only human minds, is some unstated form of reason.

Third, I argued that Spinoza unites both Aristotelian and Platonic realism. On the one hand, no universal transcends the one substance; each universal exists only as anchored to God. In holding that no universals are ontologically anterior to substance, Spinoza follows the Aristotelian tradition. On the other hand, each attribute and each eternal form inscribed in the absolute nature of an attribute are ontologically anterior to

⁹³⁴ See Schmidt 2009b, 86n22.

all of their modal exemplifications (exemplifications in which these forms remain one and undivided). In holding that there are eternal and immutable forms ontologically prior to their instantiation in the durational realm, Spinoza follows the Platonic tradition (arguably in line with Descartes: see APPENDIX B).⁹³⁵ What we have then is a form of realism where the eternal and immutable forms do not subsist in a heaven independent of God and yet where these eternal forms are ontologically prior to their instantiations in the durational realm.

Fourth, I argued that Spinoza's pejorative remarks against universals, even those remarks that seem on their own to be offering a wholesale rejection of universals, are compatible with his realism. When his words are situated in the proper historical, intertextual, and intratextual context, what comes into relief is the fact that Spinoza rejects the ontological authenticity merely of those universals not apprehendable by pure intellect (those universals of empirical imagination that are both useful and dangerous for our lives: see APPENDIX C). Spinoza is not an antirealist, then. Spinoza is a consistent realist concerning universals.

⁹³⁵ See *Sophist* 248b9-c8; *Timaeus* 51d-52a; *Phaedo* 78d5-6; *Republic* 479a1-3, e7-8, 484b4; *Symposium* 210e-211b.

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APPENDIX A

EARLY MODERN ANTIREALISM

A.1 Introductory remarks

Both nonconstituent and constituent forms of antirealism concerning universals appear to be represented in the early modern period. The following suggestions as to how certain early modern figures stand regarding the taxonomy at hand are by no means my own all-things-considered view. The suggestions are based primarily on *ta legomona* (the things said) about these figures and certain insinuating passages from their works. Indeed, in many cases I make it a point to raise counter evidence for the claim that thinker x fits in such and such a category.

A.2 Nonconstituent antirealism

A.2.1 Two forms

Nonconstituent antirealism denies that there are properties, natures or so on of individual o serving as the truthmakers for the correct characterizations of o. As I explain in Chapter II, there are two main forms of nonconstituent antirealism: a relational form and a nonrelational form. According to the relational form, to say that particular individual o is F is merely to say that o has a relation to some other individual x, such that (1) there is nothing like Fness that an F thing like o has (which is why it is a *nonconstituent* form of antirealism) and (2) outside of relation to other individuals it is not correct to characterize an F thing like o as F (which is why it is a *relational* form of antirealism). According to the nonrelational form, to say that particular individual o is F is merely to say that o is F, such that (1) there is nothing like Fness that an F thing like o

has (which is why it is a *nonconstituent* form of antirealism) and (2) even outside of relation to other individuals it is correct to characterize an F thing like o as F (which is why it is a *nonrelational* form of antirealism). I will consider the early modern representatives of each in turn.

A.2.2 The relational form

A.2.2.1 Hobbes

As for the *subjectivist* relational form of nonconstituent antirealism, that is, the form according to which o is F just means that o is some relation or other to the classifying mind, Hobbes most immediately comes to mind. Hobbes is often cited as the paradigm predicate antirealist of the period, someone who holds that o is F just means that o falls under the predicate “F.”⁹³⁶ Passages such as the following have fueled this interpretation.

[A] common name, as it is the name of several things taken one by one, but not however of all the things together at the same time (as ‘man’ is not the name of human kind but of Peter, John, and the other men separately) is called for that reason universal. So the name “universal” is not the name of some thing existing in *rerum natura*, and not the name of an idea, or some phantasm formed in the soul, but is always the name of some *vox* or name. So that when it is said that an animal, or a rock, or an image, or anything else is a universal, this is not to be understood as meaning that any person, rock, etc. was, is, or could be universal; but only that the words ‘animal,’ ‘rock,’ etc. are universal names, i.e., names common to a number of things; and the concepts in the mind corresponding to them are images or phantasms of individual animals or other things. Hence, in order for us to understand the force of ‘universal,’ there is no need for any faculty other than the imagination, by which we remember that words of that sort have brought into the mind sometimes one thing, sometimes another. (DeCo 2.9)

The universality of *one name* to many things, hath been the cause that men think the *things* themselves are universal; and so seriously contend, that besides Peter and

⁹³⁶ See Hull 2007; Di Vona 1960, 165, 209; Peters 1956, 127; Watkins 1989, 104ff; Whiteside 1988; Leijenhorst 2002, 43; Warren 2009, 262.

John, and all the rest of the men that are, have been, or shall be in the world, there is yet somewhat else that we call *man* (*Elements of Law* 1.5.6)

The inferences in our reasoning tell us nothing at all about the nature of things, but merely tell us about the labels applied to them; that is, all we can infer is whether or not we are combining the names of things in accordance with the arbitrary conventions which we have laid down in respect of their meaning. (AT VII 178)

Especially with the last passage, which is from the 3rd Set of Objections to Descartes's *Meditations*, it seems to some as if Hobbes suggests a subjectivist form of antirealism according to which, as Anne Conway reads Hobbes (at least according to Mary Warnock), reality can "be divided only according to arbitrary categories which language imposes on it."⁹³⁷ In line with minor figures like Cudworth and Arnauld,⁹³⁸ Descartes seems to agree.⁹³⁹ So does Leibniz, who describes Hobbes as a "super-nominalist" insofar as he understands similitudes in nature as themselves being parasitic on the human will.⁹⁴⁰ Watkins follows Leibniz in describing Hobbes as a radical antirealist, one who holds that o and p are both F not due to any inherent likeness or similarity between them, but merely because they both have been roped under the predicate F by the classifying mind.⁹⁴¹ Each on its own and in itself is not F. Each is F only in relation to the classifying mind.

⁹³⁷ See Warren 2009, 262.

⁹³⁸ See Bolton 1998, 202 and 211.

⁹³⁹ See Reply to the 4th objection: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, II:121; AT VII 177-178.

⁹⁴⁰ Hobbes seems to me to be a super-nominalist. For not content like the nominalists, to reduce universals to names, he says that the truth of things itself consists in names and what is more, that it depends on the human will, because truth allegedly depends on the definitions of terms, and definitions depend on the human will. This is the opinion of a man recognized as among the most profound of our century, and as I said, nothing can be more nominalistic than it. Yet it cannot stand. In arithmetic, and in other disciplines as well, truths remain the same even if notations are changed, and it does not matter whether a decimal or a duodecimal number system is used. (AA VI ii 427ff).

⁹⁴¹ Watkins 1989, 103ff.

Other passages from Hobbes, at least when taken on their own, suggest a form of antirealism that allows for objective inherent resemblance between things:

“‘philosopher’ denotes any one of many philosophers *because of the similarity of all of them*” (my emphasis DeCo 2.7).⁹⁴² Other passages suggest a nonrelational nonconstituent approach (which I discuss later), such as when Hobbes says that “white is therefore the name of a body subsisting per se, not of a color [had by that body]” (*Opera Philosophica* 3.528). Other passages even suggest the realist view. In chapter 7 of *De Corpore*, Hobbes says that multiple items can have in common simple natures such as *motion*. At *Elements of Law* 2.10 Hobbes says that these simple natures are to be opposed to bogus natures (such as color, taste, and “whatsoever accidents or qualities our senses make us think there be in the world”). *Leviathan* 4.7 suggests that objects are similar in virtue of sharing one and the same quality: “One universal name is imposed on many things, for their similitude *in some quality*” (my emphasis).⁹⁴³ Indeed, at *De Corpore* 6.4, and quite contrary to the standard view that Hobbes rejects universals, Hobbes says that some universals are “components of every material thing.” Perhaps these passages explain why Hobbes (like Spinoza) never calls himself a nominalist even when so many other early moderns do, including his friend Gassendi.⁹⁴⁴

For these last reasons and more, a rare breed of scholars, perhaps most prominently Wolfgang Hübener, have argued that Hobbes is actually a realist concerning universals.⁹⁴⁵ Others, such as Watkins, have noted that Hobbes sometimes allows that “a

⁹⁴² See Duncan 2013; Bolton 1998, 193-194.

⁹⁴³ See MacKinnon 1924, 348.

⁹⁴⁴ See LoLordo 2006, 39.

⁹⁴⁵ Hübener 1983, 108.

characteristic property . . . may be shared by many individual things” but, unable to explain away Hobbes’s apparent rejection of realism, have concluded that Hobbes is contradictory on the matter.⁹⁴⁶ However, perhaps it should be remembered that, according to Hobbes, we speak of “universals” simply “for the sake of brevity” (DeCo 6.2). Such recollection has not helped in the past, though. For some have taken Hobbes’s very suggestion here, namely, that reference to universals need only be chalked up to a loose and abbreviated manner of speaking, as evidence for his realism.⁹⁴⁷

This is not the place to enter the debate. But I do want to pause here to make a general point concerning the slogan often repeated by the antirealists of the pre-modern and early modern period: universals are *nothing more than names* or, in Hobbes’s words, there is “nothing in the world Universall but Names” (*Leviathan* 4.6).⁹⁴⁸ As Keckermann characterizes nominalism in his *Systema Logicae*, which was apparently the most important resource particularly for *Spinoza*’s own understanding of universals and the realist-antirealist debate,⁹⁴⁹ nominalists are those “who contend that universals are nothing except mere words, mere names” (“*qui contenderunt universalia non esse nisi mera verba, mera nomina, unde & Nominales dicti sunt*”) (Keckermann 1602, 46-48). It is my suspicion that not *everyone* who says that universals are just names intend to commit themselves to a view so extreme as predicate antirealism or, in general, to any of the other subjectivist forms of antirealism. Saying that universals are just names, I think,

⁹⁴⁶ Watkins 1965, 144; see Finn 2013, 104.

⁹⁴⁷ See Laird 1934, 147-149; Scott 1967.

⁹⁴⁸ See Keckermann 1602, 48.

⁹⁴⁹ Di Vona 1960, 156ff; Freudenthal 1899, entry 106; see Miller 2004, 558n10.

is at least on some occasions just a quick way to note one's disbelief in universals (and, if pressed, one would specify some other form of antirealism).

Take Leibniz, for example. In the 1670 *Preface to Nizolius*, Leibniz as well claims that nominalists are those who, among other things, hold “that all things except individual substances are mere names” and thus who “reduce universals to names” (AA VI ii, 427-428). But even though Leibniz makes this remark, he understands that Nizolius himself does not advocate predicate antirealism or indeed any other subjectivist form of antirealism (AA VI ii, 430). The same phenomenon occurs in contemporary writing on the topic. On the one hand, Bolton defines nominalism as “the view that universals are nothing but general concepts or linguistic names” (1998, 183-184). On the other hand, she describes Descartes as endorsing an objectivist form of antirealism. Thus for Leibniz and Bolton, and presumably for others such as Hobbes, saying that there is nothing in the world universal but names is merely a statement of one's antirealism and that statement need not be seen as committing the utterer to predicate antirealism.

A.2.2.2 Nizolius

A nice representative for the objectivist side of relational antirealism would seem to be Marius Nizolius. Nizolius worked hard throughout the 16th century to expose “the stupid opinion of the realists” and to de-ontologize universals without having to resort to the subjectivist line that a thing's being characterized in a certain way has only to do with humans classifying it that way (Nizolius 1956, I:89). Nizolius seems to be either a class antirealist or a mereological antirealist. There is considerable debate on whether the

class or the heap view is correct.⁹⁵⁰ It is clear that Nizolius reduces universals to *multitudines*, just as Boethius appeared to do before him (at least in the case of such biological species universals as *horseness*).⁹⁵¹ What is unclear, and is so in the case of Boethius as well, is whether Nizolius intends “*multitudo*” to mean something more like a mereological heap, in which case o’s being F is to be analyzed as o’s belonging to the heap of F things (and Fness itself is to be analyzed as the heap of all F things), or something more like a class, in which case o’s being F is to be analyzed as o’s belonging to the class of F things (and Fness is to be analyzed as the class of F things).⁹⁵² The following passages are central to the debates. They suggest at least that Nizolius endorses an objectivist form of antirealism, according to which to be a man, to have a human nature, is construed as being either a bit of the great heap of humans or belonging to the class of humans.⁹⁵³ Note that the central term of debate, “*multitudo*,” has been rendered as “collection” here.

When we say that human is a species of animal, and animal is genus of human, both human and animal must be taken not properly but figuratively, standing for all humans, and for all animals; just as if one said: all singular humans, or the entire human genus, or the collection of all singular humans, which is equivalent, is and is contained in the genus or the collection of all singular animals, as a smaller genus in a larger genus, or a minor collection in a larger collection. (Nizolius 1956, I:52-53/I:4)

⁹⁵⁰ See Angelelli 1965; Angelelli 2001; Di Bella 2005, 41n31; Kraye 1993, 39-40; Mates 1986, 21; Nauta 2012a, 40; Ueberweg 1909, 11; Świączkowska 2012, 57.

⁹⁵¹ See Chiaradonna 2013.

⁹⁵² Leibniz seems to take the mereological interpretation. Leibniz edited and wrote a preface to Nizolius’s work in 1670 mainly to highlight for his scholastic-ridiculing contemporaries that there were schoolmen whose thought reflected the sentiments of the early modern period (in which case “Aristotelity,” to use Hobbes phrase at *Leviathan* 4.46.13, should not be dismissed altogether) (AA.VI.ii.430; see Nauta 2012a, 32; Nauta 2012b, 217).

⁹⁵³ Ueberweg (1909, 11), Nauta (2012a, 32), and Barilli (1989, 61) suggest, however, that the sets or heaps to which things belong is a function of the classifying mind. If so, then Nizolius would belong to the subjectivist side on nonconstituent antirealism.

[These] collections must be understood as made of present singulars but also of those that existed previously, and those that will exist afterwards. (Nizolius 1956, I:76/I:7)

It is common among the great men . . . to use the singular number for the plural . . . the part for the whole. Grammarians call this synecdoche. . . [And] that singular number is figurative. . . When one uses the plural number . . . it is not figurative but literal. . . When we say, Man is a rational mortal animal, one man stands for all men. . . In view of all this there is no need of . . . those things which dialecticians and philosophers call universals. . . They have not been brought forth from the nature itself of things but from their false and empty imaginations. (Nizolius 1956, liii-lvi, lxxiii)

A.2.2.3 Descartes

Descartes might be said to be, although not without controversy,⁹⁵⁴ a resemblance antirealist,⁹⁵⁵ someone who holds that o's being F is not analyzed as o's having some property Fness but rather merely as o's suitably resembling other F individuals. At *Principles* 1.59 Descartes suggests at least that multiple items, even if perfectly resembling, never have a common element. Stones, for example, more or less resemble each other, but there is no identity between them; in no respect are they one and the same. What explains their kinship is not some common element in them, but merely their objective resemblance to each other.

Universals arise solely from the fact that we make use of one and the same idea for thinking of all individual items which resemble each other: we apply one and the same term to all the things which are represented by the idea in question, and this is the universal term. (*Principles* 1.59)

⁹⁵⁴ Gassendi sees Descartes as a realist (AT VII 318ff). Keeling does too (1937). Nolan (1998) and Chappell (1997) see him as a concept antirealist.

⁹⁵⁵ See Bolton 1998, 185-186.

It is worth pausing here to note three things.

First, for all this passage says, it could be that Descartes holds that similitude between diverse items is to be explained in terms of similitude between the inner determinations of those things, likeness among their “properties or intrinsic denominations,” to use Spinoza’s expression (2d4). In effect, this passage is compatible with a form of antirealism that does not deny the reality of properties, natures, and the like (a form called “constituent antirealism” or “trope theory”: see Chapter II). Especially in light of Descartes’s comments in a 1645 or 1646 letter to an unnamed correspondent (see AT IV 350), commentators such as Bolton have argued, however, that there is no objective diversity, no intrinsic determinations, inside of the characterized items of Descartes ontology: no properties, essences, forms, or the like.⁹⁵⁶ I am not convinced about this (see AT VII 383).⁹⁵⁷ But here is not the place for such a discussion.

Second, even assuming that Descartes does reject a constituent ontology, Descartes need not be seen as giving, in the above passage under consideration, a resemblance nonconstituent analysis of an individual’s being characterized (or any relational analysis for that matter). Instead of analyzing o’s being F as o’s resembling other F individuals, Descartes could just be analyzing o’s being F as simply o’s being F (as the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist does). To be sure, in this passage Descartes does talk about how *resemblance* between individuals warrants applying the same term to them. But that fact itself does not necessarily entail that he analyzes o’s

⁹⁵⁶ See Bolton 185-186.

⁹⁵⁷ See O’Toole 1997, 109; Rozemond 1998, 108-109; Secada 2000, 243; Levin 2002, 133.

being F as o's resembling F individuals, which is what the resemblance antirealist does. It could just be that o's being F is analyzed merely as o's being F, such that it is correct to characterize o as F independent of any resemblance relation it has to other F individuals. If this is the case, then (in accord with nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism) o and p objectively resemble because o is F and p is F, where (1) o's being F is not analyzed as o's resembling other F individuals but rather simply as o's being F and (2) p's being F is not analyzed in terms of p's resembling other F individuals but rather simply as p's being F—in short, o and p objectively resemble simply because o is o and p is p, where nothing more can be said. Since such a nonrelational antirealist reading of the passage is possible, we are not entitled to conclude that this passage endorses any relational antirealist analysis, let alone that of resemblance antirealism.⁹⁵⁸

Third, just because Descartes is talking about *objective* resemblance between various items does not mean that he is committed to the existence of universals. One may be led to conclude that the passage in question commits Descartes to realism concerning universals, as in fact Gewirth does,⁹⁵⁹ for one especially alluring reason. We tend to assume that resembling things (triangles, say) resemble *in virtue of something identical about them* (the property *triangularity*). That is to say, we tend to assume that

⁹⁵⁸ The same sort of issue might apply in the case of Nizolius, in fact. While Nizolius does appear to reduce universals to classes or heaps of ontologically unstructured individuals and does appear to advocate a nonconstituent ontology, those facts do not necessarily entail that for him o's being F just means that o belongs to the heap of F things (or the class of F things on the other reading of *multitudines*). The ultimate analysis of the fact that o is F might just be for Nizolius, and in line with the nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist view, that o is F. When Nizolius says that the universal Fness is the heap (or class) of F individuals, he would therefore mean that the universal Fness is just the class or else heap of all F individuals, where the ultimate analysis of each's being F is simply that each is F.

⁹⁵⁹ Gewirth 1970, 678. Gewirth's reading of Descartes is rejected by Rozemond (2008, 57).

similar things are similar in some respect and, as is indicated by the fact that we talk about “respect” *singular*, that they are identical in that *one* respect. In general, and unlike what antirealists who permit objective resemblance believe, we tend not to take resemblance as a rock-bottom and inexplicable fact. Instead, we think that item 1 resembles item 2 if and only if item 1 and item 2 are identical in some respect. As Bradley expresses the natural, and realist, sentiment: “similarity is a partial identity.”⁹⁶⁰ However, all forms of antirealism concerning universals say that our intuition that resemblance is grounded in identity is false. Antirealism rules out all strict generic identity.

A.2.2.4 Gassendi

Gassendi’s view on universals is less controversially that of a resemblance antirealist. Against what he sees as Descartes’s commitment not only to universal natures but universal natures that, as in Plato’s metaphysics, exist independent of the subjects of predication said to have them, Gassendi voices the following words that are hard not to read as an endorsement of resemblance antirealism.

[A]lthough man is said to be of such a nature that he cannot exist without being an animal, we should not therefore imagine that such a nature is something which exists anywhere outside of the intellect. All that is meant is that if anything is a man, it must resemble other things to which we apply the same label, ‘man,’ in virtue of their mutual similarity. This similarity, I maintain, belongs to the individual [men], and it is from this that the intellect takes its cue in forming the concept, or idea, or

⁹⁶⁰ Bradley 1893. Here is a related reason why one may be enticed to read the passage from Descartes as endorsing realism. Antirealism is sometimes pigeonholed into its subjectivist relational nonconstituent forms, forms according to which kinship between things is explained simply by their being herded together by the classifying mind. Some people may therefore think that antirealists must be committed to the view that there is no objective resemblance between things and that to admit resemblance is to concede the case to the realist. Of course, lest we unfairly limit the antirealist resources and be untrue to the historical fact that there were antirealists that admit objective resemblance, we must guard against thinking that all antirealists eschew objective resemblance (see Chapter VI; Bolton 1998, 194).

form of a common nature to which everything that will count as a man must conform. (AT VII 320)

In his objections to Descartes, Gassendi consistently upholds such a view. Thus, for example, he criticizes Descartes for giving a realist interpretation of the axiom that “[t]here is nothing in the effect which is not in the cause,” which Descartes famously appeals to in his proof for the existence of God in Meditation 3 (VII 288-289). Instead of holding, as he thinks Descartes does, that the cause and the effect are *identical* in respect to whatever the cause has given to the effect, Gassendi says that the cause and effect do not share anything; they—both propertyless (in light of AT VII 320)—merely *resemble* each other.

Gassendi’s line that a human individual is simply any individual that resembles other human individuals does seem to commit him to the resemblance antirealist view that an individual’s being F is parasitic upon its being in a resemblance relation to other F paradigms. In the next line, however, Gassendi says that the similarity between F individuals is rooted in the F individuals themselves. Such a remark suggests that a given individual is F, for Gassendi, even if there are no other F individuals for it to resemble. If that is the case, then in light of the fact that Gassendi seems to eschew natures, properties, and the like, it might be better to say that he endorses the following sort of antirealism, that of nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism: o’s being F is to be analyzed merely as o’s being F, such that it is correct to characterize o as F independent of any resemblance relation that o has to other F individuals and yet without there being any property (say, Fness) serving as the truthmaker for the correct predication of o as F. If so, then all Gassendi would be committing himself to in this passage is that o and p

objectively resemble simply because o is F and p is F, where (1) o's being F is not analyzed as o's resembling other F individuals but rather simply as o's being F and (2) p's being F is not analyzed in terms of p's resembling other F individuals but rather simply as p's being F—in short, o and p objectively resemble simply in that o is o and p is p, where nothing more can be said. This passage does leave open, therefore, at least some possibility that Gassendi is in truth committed to a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of individuals being characterized. It leaves this possibility open even though a more literal reading would seem to put Gassendi in line with such resemblance antirealists as Carnap and Price,⁹⁶¹ for whom ontologically undifferentiated individual o's being red is to be analyzed merely as o suitably resembling red paradigms (such as tomatoes and stop signs).

A.2.3 The nonrelational form: Leibniz

Mates sees Leibniz as at least bordering on a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist analysis of individuals being characterized. That is to say, Mates sees Leibniz as possibly denying all properties (like the other nonconstituent forms outlined above) and yet refusing to give any account of what it means to say that an object is characterized (other than saying that it is so characterized).⁹⁶² Mates's view is no doubt reasonable. Like Quine, Leibniz does at points appear to refuse any ontological significance to predicates and to be a thinker who would want to paraphrase away any references made to abstracta (paraphrasing, for example, “redness is a color” to something like “red things are colored

⁹⁶¹ See Carnap 1967; Price 1953.

⁹⁶² Mates 1986, 171-173; see Świączkowska 2012, 55.

things”).⁹⁶³ Both Quine and Leibniz, moreover, do not seem to regard o’s being F as meaning that o is in relation to other individuals. It seems that, for them, o is F just means that o is F. Compare the following two passages, the first by Quine and the second by Leibniz. Here is Quine.

One may admit that there are red houses, roses, and sunsets, but deny except as a popular and misleading manner of speaking, that they have anything in common. . . . That the houses and roses and sunsets are all of them red may be taken as ultimate and irreducible. . . . We may say, for example, that some dogs are white and not thereby commit ourselves to recognizing either doghood or whiteness as entities. “Some dogs are white” says that some things that are dogs are white, and in order for this to be true, the things over which the bound variable ‘something’ ranges must include some white dogs, but need not include doghood or whiteness. (Quine 1954, 10-13)

Here now is Leibniz.

Up to now I see no other way of avoiding these difficulties than by considering abstracta . . . as abbreviated ways of talking—so that when I use the name *heat* it is not required that I should be making mention of some vague subject but rather that I should be saying that something is hot—and to that extent I am an nominalist, at least provisionally. . . . There is no need to raise the issue whether there are various realities in a substance that are the fundamentals [(read: truthmakers)] of its various predicates. (Leibniz 1948, 547)

To be sure, it is commonly said (and I am inclined to believe) that items in Leibniz’s ontology do indeed have intrinsic determinations.⁹⁶⁴ Indeed, there are some suggestions that Leibniz is even a realist (especially with his distinction between unreal abstracts and real abstracts and his talk of the multiple instantiation of Christ in

⁹⁶³ See Mates 1986, 174. This is in line with at least one passage we saw from Hobbes (*Opera Philosophica* 3.528). Also we see a similar gesture in Spinoza (CM 1.6; Ep. 2 IV/9/10-20; KV 1.10 I/50; see Chapter VI).

⁹⁶⁴ See Kant A265-266; Rutherford 1995, 184; Pereboom 2011, 95-97; Pereboom 2014; Vásquez 2011, 50; Langton 1998, 77; Griffin 2013, 154; Rutherford 1995, 159.

transubstantiation) (Leibniz A.VI.i.509 §13-15; Leibniz A.VI.vi.310).⁹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the passage above does suggest that Leibniz refuses to grant individuals any internal differentiation that would serve as the ontological ground for correct predications. For not only is he saying that predicates provide no sure instruction as to what properties there really are, and not only is he saying merely that some predicates fail to express properties in the thing, he appears to be saying that *no* predicates express properties.⁹⁶⁶ Of course, it would be too quick to draw such a conclusion merely from Leibniz's words in the above passage. After all, philosophers long before Leibniz have been sensitive to the "distinction," as Cross puts it, "between those predicates that involve some sort of ontological commitment, and those that do not—that is to say, between those that signify some kind of metaphysical constituent of substances, and those that do not."⁹⁶⁷ But if we do follow Mates's well-founded inclination and assume that for Leibniz no predicates, however true they may be of the individual to which they apply, have as their "fundaments," their truthmaking correlates, actual ways or features constituting that individual, then Leibnizian individuals would be, in the contemporary lingo, "blobs" as opposed to "layer-cakes."⁹⁶⁸

Relational nonconstituent antirealists eschew ontological structure as well, of course. So for all this passage tells us, Leibniz might still be open to providing a relational account of what it means to say that an item is characterized: it is a member of

⁹⁶⁵ Świączkowska 2012; see Copleston 1960, 292, 300; Russell 1948; Russell 2008, 59; Smith 2011, 235-236; Castañeda 1982, 152-153; Mercer 2008 and 2012; Mahnke 1925 2.9.

⁹⁶⁶ In a 1645 or 1646 letter to an unnamed correspondent, Descartes seems to say something similar: "in Peter, being a man is nothing other than being Peter" (AT IV 350).

⁹⁶⁷ Cross 2010.

⁹⁶⁸ Armstrong 1989, 38; Moreland 2001, 74.

so and so class, it belongs to such and such heap, it is given this and that name, or so on. In the larger context, however, it seems fairly clear that Leibniz, if he does indeed refuse to grant ontological structure to individuals, would not want to give such a relational analysis. For Leibniz, each substance in itself, outside of relation to anything else, secures its being characterized in all of the ways that it is (A.VI.iv.1540).⁹⁶⁹ Given that Leibniz appears to think that an individual's being the way that it is does not mean that it stands in relations to other individuals, if Leibniz does indeed reject the idea that things have ontological structure, then he would no doubt be a nonrelational nonconstituent antirealist as Mates is inclined to believe: o's being F is just an ultimate and irreducible fact about o that is not to be explained in terms of o's having the inner determination Fness or o's being in some relation to something in some sense objectively different from it.

A.3 Constituent antirealism

A.3.1 A nonstarter?

Some commentators hold that the only form of antirealism that was a reasonable candidate for an early modern thinker to hold was *nonconstituent* antirealism. As Bolton explains it, the view that subjects of predication lack any true inner determinations, the view that Bolton says is endorsed by Descartes and popularized by the *Port-Royale Logic* of Arnauld and Nicole, had become so entrenched that everyone just assumed it from the start.⁹⁷⁰ In spite of Bolton's claims, it has become popular to read various early

⁹⁶⁹ See Paoletti 2013.

⁹⁷⁰ Bolton 1998, 183-186.

modern figures as endorsing constituent antirealism or, as it is more popularly known, trope theory: o's being F just means that o has a nonuniversal property Fness.⁹⁷¹

A.3.2 Descartes

A few commentators, Woolhouse (1993, 18) and Carriero (1995, 256-259) come to mind, hold that Descartes endorses a trope view (1993, 18; see Hannan 2011, 64-65).

Here are the words of Woolhouse (1993, 18).

[Descartes] does not just mean that square shapes cannot be understood except as the shape of extended things. He means also that the square shape of *this* thing, *even if it is qualitatively the same* [that is, exactly similar or indiscernible] as the square shape of *that*, is a [numerically] different mode.

A.3.3 Locke

In the contemporary literature, however, it is more popular to characterize Locke, who was explicit about the fact that “universality belongs not to things themselves” (Locke 1959, 3.2.2), as a representative of trope theory⁹⁷² (although not without controversy⁹⁷³—concept antirealism being the other main contender).⁹⁷⁴ According to the popular view, Locke is an antirealist concerning universals who, in contrast to antirealists of those more usual stripes previously mentioned, does not eschew the reality of properties or inner determinations (although see Locke 1959, 3.3.13-19).⁹⁷⁵ If the

⁹⁷¹ See Mertz 1996, ch. 4; Loux 2006, 73; Hakkarainen 2012, 55-66; Moltmann 2003, 456; 2013, 47-48; Simons 1994; Buckels 2013; Williams 1966, 107; Stout 1936, 9; Seargent 1985, 13; Jarrett 1977, 86; Carriero 1995, 256-259; Bennett 2001, I.145; Melamed 2009, 74-75; Callaghan 2001; Mackenzie 1922; Milbank 2006, 202n17; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Yovel 1989, 162-163.

⁹⁷² See Armstrong 1997, 24-25; Simons 1994; Bolton 1994, 103; Loux 2006, 80; Moltmann 2003, 456; Stern 2011, 144; Stout 1936, 9.

⁹⁷³ See Bennett 1996a.

⁹⁷⁴ See Mander 2008, 191.

⁹⁷⁵ “so the essences of those species are preserved whole and undestroyed, whatever changes happen to any or all of the individuals of those species.” For more on the difficulty in Locke to wed his antirealism with such realist remarks see Jolley 1999, 143-168.

popular view is right, then Locke is necessarily a trope theorist. And if the consensus is right about Locke accepting substrata or bare particulars into his ontology,⁹⁷⁶ then his trope theory would not be the typical bundle version most popular today⁹⁷⁷ and seen perhaps in Epicurus,⁹⁷⁸ but the substratum-inherence version as seen in C. B Martin.⁹⁷⁹ There are a few passages in Locke that suggest trope antirealism, such as when he declares that both substances and qualities are particulars in book 2 chapter 26 section 1 of the *Essay*. Such passages have convinced Bolton. “According to Locke,” she says, “whatever exists is particular, and nothing in a particular is correctly regarded as universal. This goes for qualities, modes, and relations, as well as the individual substances to which they belong.”⁹⁸⁰

If this is the case, then Locke would be like William of Champeaux. Well, Locke would be like Champeaux at least after Champeaux’s student, Peter Abelard, convinced him to renounce realism (especially since that view, according to Abelard and diverse others from Leibniz to Mendelssohn to Bayle to Maret to Bradley to Stout,⁹⁸¹ was a gateway—in the very least—to substance monism⁹⁸² or, as Bayle simply puts it, “Spinozism”) (see Chapter V).⁹⁸³ It is this Abelarded Champeaux who, although refusing to eschew the property *humanity*, holds that different men cannot have one and the same

⁹⁷⁶ See Leibniz *New Essays* 2.23.1.

⁹⁷⁷ See Chiaradonna and Galluzzo 2013, 15.

⁹⁷⁸ See Bronowski 2013.

⁹⁷⁹ See Marenbon 2008, 87n5.

⁹⁸⁰ Bolton 1994, 103.

⁹⁸¹ See Liberatore, 1889; Leibniz 1981, 2.27; Copleston 1960, 290-291; Christian Brothers 1893, 97; Gottlieb 2003, 189; Gottlieb 2011, 101; Hunt 1866, 147-148; Steinhart 2004, 64; Stern 2011, 134ff; Mackenzie 1922, 191.

⁹⁸² Burns 1914, 79, 82, 91, 96; M. Cameron 2010; Haeckel 1894; Hobhouse 1918, 62; Taylor 1972a, 190-191; see Turner 1830, 495n19, 512; Plumptre 1878, 299-300; Jolivet 1992, 112.

⁹⁸³ Bayle 1991, entry on “Abelard.”

humanity. Humanity for Champeaux, so at least it seems from the following passage, is in effect numerically distinct, even if perfectly resembling, in each man.

We say that they are the same in that they are men, “same” pertaining with regard to humanity. Just as one is rational so is the other, just as one is mortal so is the other. But if we wanted to make a *true confession* it is not the *same* humanity in each one, but *similar* humanity. (my emphasis *Sententiae* 236.115-120)

A.3.4 Reid and Boyle

As some commentators are starting to realize,⁹⁸⁴ although there is some debate,⁹⁸⁵ we seem to get a trope sentiment as well from the 18th Century Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid (Reid 1850, 5.3). Referring to two sheets of paper on his desk, Reid gives us the view that Bergmann defends two hundred years later.

[I]f one should say that the whiteness of this sheet [on my desk] is the whiteness of another sheet [on my desk], every man perceives this to be absurd. (Bergmann 1964, 281)

The “selfsame whiteness,” to finish Bergmann’s thought with the words of Robert Boyle, “cannot . . . exist anywhere out of the wall, though many other bodies may have the like degree of whiteness” (Boyle 1991, 21-22).⁹⁸⁶

Since Boyle is representing his own view here, we might want to add him as well to the list of possible early modern representatives of trope theory. There is at least one potential problem with adding him, however. While what Boyle says in the above

⁹⁸⁴ See Laurence and Margolis 2012, 5; Nichols 2002, 77.

⁹⁸⁵ See Wolterstorff 2001, 72.

⁹⁸⁶ In the case of Boyle, however, the following point, which as we will see has great relevance in the case of Spinoza, should be noted. While what Boyle says in the above passage may be true in the case of secondary qualities like whiteness, primary qualities like figure, motion, and texture appear to count as universals for him (Boyle 1991, 34).

passage may be true in the case of secondary qualities like whiteness, primary qualities like figure, motion, and texture appear to count as universals for him (Boyle 1991, 34).

A.3.4 Edwards's hypothetical opponent

A more informative and vibrant articulation of trope theory in the early modern period is to be found in Jonathan Edwards's 1754 *Freedom of the Will*. In Part 4 Section 8 Edwards presents trope theory as a response to his own realism concerning universals.⁹⁸⁷ In contrast to what we just saw from Reid, Edwards himself believes that if there were two indiscernible spheres (one over here and one over there), then the roundness of the one sphere would be numerically identical to the roundness of the other sphere, the redness of the one sphere would be numerically identical to the redness of the other sphere, and so on. On the supposition that the spheres are objectively exactly similar, the only difference between them would be a difference in their, as Edwards puts it, "situations" or "circumstances." Perhaps having in mind Scotus⁹⁸⁸ or Locke,⁹⁸⁹ Edwards then imagines an antirealist opponent responding that, instead of their being one and the same roundness in each sphere, there are nonidentical but exactly similar roundnesses in each sphere. Edwards goes on to argue why such a form of antirealism

⁹⁸⁷ That Edwards's settled view is realism concerning universals is recognized by several commentators. See Gardiner 1901, 126-127; Allen 1889, 307-308; Smith 1999, 1-11. Smith, Stout, and Minkema have this to say on the matter: "Edwards's contention [is] that there are real *kinds* in the world—including *humankind*—as over the main thesis of Nominalism that only individuals exists and that kinds are merely human-made conveniences if not actually fictions" (Smith, Stout, and Minkema 1995, xxviii; see Wainwright 2012).

⁹⁸⁸ See Edwards 1969, 2.10; McClymond and McDermott 2012, 704. Scotus seemed to have allowed natures into his ontology while remaining an antirealist (compare Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 23 with Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 37) and was not only a thinker that dealt with similar thought experiments (Ord., 2.3.1.1, n. 21) but also one that had at least a mediated impact on Edwards (see Edwards 1969, Part 2 Section 10; McClymond and McDermott 2012, 704)

⁹⁸⁹ See Wainwright 2012.

that endorses properties, on the one hand, but maintains that they are particulars, on the other hand, is uneconomical and theoretically absurd. For example, and sounding similar to Leibniz in the Fifth Letter to Clark and in *New Essays* 2.27, what reason, Edwards asks, would God have for creating this roundness versus some other exactly similar roundness? (Edwards 1969, 228) For my purposes here, however, I will give the trope theorist the final word in the following quotation of the passage in question.

[Realist]

By the supposition [that the two sphere are objectively exactly similar], the two spheres are different in no other respect but their place; and therefore in other respects they are the same. Each has the same roundness; it is not a distinct rotundity, in any other respect but its situation. . . .

[Trope Theorist]

[Someone may object as follows:] “there is a difference in another respect, viz. that they are not numerically the same: that it is thus with all the qualities that belong to them: that it is confessed they are in some respects the same; that is, they are both exactly alike; but yet *numerically* they differ. Thus the roundness of one is not the same *numerical*, individual roundness with that of the other.” (Edwards 1969, 226)

A.4 Concluding remarks

In Appendix A I considered, in a rather carefree way, potential earlier modern representatives of the fundamental forms of antirealism. Representing relational nonconstituent antirealism, I considered Hobbes, Nizolius, Descartes, and Gassendi. None of these figures, not even Nizolius and Gassendi, fit into this category without controversy. Representing nonrelational nonconstituent antirealism, I considered Leibniz. Much controversy surrounds this classification. Regarding constituent antirealism, I considered Descartes, Locke, Reid, Boyle, and a hypothetical opponent posited by Edwards. At the very least, the hypothetical opponent posited by Edwards fits into this category without controversy.

APPENDIX B

EARLY MODERN REALISM

B.1 Introductory remarks

It has been said that due to widespread belief in the early modern period that subjects of predication lack any ontological structure, realism concerning universals is simply a nonstarter position for most early modern philosophers.⁹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, both immanent and transcendent forms of realism appear to be represented in the early modern period, as I indicate below. The following suggestions as to how certain early modern figures stand regarding the taxonomy at hand are by no means my own all-things-considered view. The suggestions are based primarily on *ta legomona* (the things said) about these figures and certain insinuating passages from their works. Indeed, on many occasions I make it a point to raise counter evidence for the claim that thinker x fits into such and such a category.

B.2 Immanent realism

B.2.1 Keckermann

Immanent realism holds that o is F just means that o has universal F ness and without F individuals (besides F ness itself, if it counts as an F individual) there would be no F ness. This form of realism was widespread among 16th and 17th century German thinkers.⁹⁹¹ One of the most prominent immanent realists of the period, and whose

⁹⁹⁰ See Bolton 1998, 183 in light of 186; Bloch and Reiss 1973, 48. But see Thiel 2011 and Burns 1914, 95.

⁹⁹¹ See Thiel 2011, 23. In fact, according to Max Wundt, Werner Capella was the only antirealist among the prominent 17th century university professors in Germany (Wundt 1939, 210ff). Wundt may have forgotten Clauberg (see Clauberg 1683, 76-77, 351-352, 40).

Systema Logicae was a major influence on Spinoza’s understanding of universals and the antirealist-realist divide, was Keckermann.⁹⁹² For Keckermann, there really are universals outside of the classifying mind (“*extra conceptus mentis*”), where by “universal” Keckermann means what is traditionally understood by that term and as is reflected in the work of diverse historical figures.⁹⁹³ A universal, as Keckermann sees it, is a feature or way or suchness that “is apt to be [one] in many” (“[unum] aptum est multis inesse”). As apt to be one in many, only a universal can secure the tightest possible unity among a community of many: the unity of strict identity (Keckermann 1602, 46-48, 68). Universals, for Keckermann, exist only in subjects of predication. As Di Vona describes Keckermann’s view, universals “do not have any subsistence of their own independent of individuals.”⁹⁹⁴ Universals subsist, that is, only in their indwelling state.

B.2.2 Boyle and Cudworth

Immanent realism was found outside of Germany as well in the period. “This position of Keckermann concerning the universal,” as Di Vona explains, “is far from alien to the scholastic culture of the time.”⁹⁹⁵ Some have suggested that the corpuscular

⁹⁹² Di Vona 1960, 156ff; Freudenthal 1899, entry 127; see Servaas van Rooijen 1888, 188; Cerrato 2008, 120-121.

⁹⁹³ Aristotle (*Metaphysics* VII, 13, 1038b 8-12; *De interpretatione* 7. 17a37), Al Farabi (see Hammond 1947, 2.2.1), Eustachius a Sancto Paulo (Gilson 1912, 306-309), Pedro da Fonseca (1591, 5), Albertus Magnus (1993, 2.1.5), Rudolph Agricola (See Nauta 2012b), John Wycliffe (1905, 44), Walter Burley (Conti 2013, 181), Aquinas (see Harper 1879, 294; Russell 1945), Suarez (MD 6.4.2).

⁹⁹⁴ “non abbiano una sussistenza propria indipendente dagli individui” (my translation Di Vona 1960, 157).

⁹⁹⁵ “Questa posizione di Keckermann sull’universale è tutt’altro che estranea alla cultura scolastica del tempo” (my translation Di Vona 1960, 157n108)

forms of Robert Boyle should be seen as *universalia in rebus*⁹⁹⁶ and there is some suggestion that Ralph Cudworth, also on the British Isles, is a defender of immanent realism. Although a defender of universals against the attacks of empiricist-oriented philosophers (see Cudworth 1829, 403), and although sometimes assumed to be a believer in transcendent universals given his allegiance with the so-called Cambridge Platonists,⁹⁹⁷ Cudworth does speak of the Platonic doctrine that “the Constituent essences of things could exist apart separately from the Things themselves” as an “absurd Conceit” that “Aristotle frequently, and no less deservedly chastises” (Cudworth 1731, 285).

B.2.3 Eustachius a Sancto Paulo

Back now to the Continent and specifically to one of the manuals studied at the Jesuit college La Flèche during Descartes’s time, a form of immanent realism quite similar to that of Keckermann’s is outlined by Eustachius a Sancto Paulo, the theologian and philosopher remembered primarily for his influence on Descartes.⁹⁹⁸ Against the Platonists, Eustachius denies that universals, those features with the inner disposition to be wholly present in many, are beings that can survive uninstantiated in some Platonic heaven either independent of God or, as Spinoza and the medievals understood the view,

⁹⁹⁶ See Jones 2006, n7. Some attributed immanent realism to Boyle in light of (1) his apparent belief in properties—well, at least shape, motion, texture—and (2) his rejection of the Platonist view that such properties “may *exist separate* from all [individuals]” (Boyle 1991, 21). To say that his corpuscular forms are true universals might be a stretch, however, given his apparent trope view: the “selfsame whiteness,” which Boyle here appears to be using as a specific stand in for all properties (even real ones like shape), “cannot . . . exist anywhere out of the wall, though many other bodies may have the like degree of whiteness” (Boyle 1991, 21-22). But see APPENDIX A.

⁹⁹⁷ See Bolton 1998, 187.

⁹⁹⁸ See Armour 1993; Van De Pitte 1988; Descartes AT III 185, 232-233, 259; Ariew 2003, 65, 98-99; Miller 2004, 558.

in the mind of God (KV 1.6 I/42/25-I/43/8). And yet against the antirealists, Eustachius denies that universals are mere names or constructions of the intellect. According to Eustachius, universals or, as they tend to be called, “common properties” really do exist prior to the operation of any intellect. For him, and unlike the case with Ockham,⁹⁹⁹ the abstraction by which we were able to attend to universals was not a departure from fact, but rather simply a selective focus on facts of a sort other than those of sensation. Here is Eustachius himself on the matter.

Universals are not Platonic Ideas, or certain real forms separated from particular things, those that Plato dreamed up. . . Universals are not merely conceptions of the mind, names or external denominations of things, as the Nominalists—whose leader is Ockham—convince one another. . . [U]niversals are things not names. . . Universals are certain real natures, or true common properties existing in many individuals, from which they themselves are separated not in the thing, but merely in reason. . . [T]hat they are real common properties existing in many individuals, is against the Nominalists. . . [T]hat they are separated from singular things merely in reason, is against the Platonists. . . [U]niversals do not exist separated from their [so-called] inferiors [(that is, from the individuals that instantiate them)], and thus they themselves again are not at all separated from [those individuals]. . . [T]he common opinion seems to have been that things are only universal due to the work of our intellect, that not any thing is or can be said to be universal, except when we have abstracted that from their individuating conditions by means of an operation of the intellect. . . But in truth those who weighed the matter more accurately and according to the principles of metaphysics, declare truly and rightly that the natures and essences of things are universal before every [(that is, prior to or without regard to any)] operation of the intellect. . . [Natures and essences are] apt to be one in many, which is [precisely what it is] to be a universal. (my translation Gilson 1912, 306-308)¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁹⁹ See Burns 1914, 81-82.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Universalia non sunt ideae platonicae, seu formae quaedam reales a rebus particularibus separatae, quas Plato somniavit. . . . Universalia non sunt tantum conceptus animi, voces aut externae rerum denominationes, ut sibi persuadent Nominales, quorum princeps est Ochamus. . . . [U]niversalia sunt res et non voces. . . . Universalia sunt naturae quaedam reales, seu vera entia multis communia, a quibus non re ipsa, sed ratione duntaxat distinguuntur. . . . [E]sse entia realia multis communis, est adversus Nominales. . . . [R]atione duntaxat a rebus singulis distingui, est adversus Platonicos. . . . [U]niversalia non existant separata a suis inferioribus, sicque ab eis re ipsa minime separentur. . . . Communis videtur fuisse . . . sententis, res non nisi intellectus nostri opera esse universales, nec rem ullam esse aut dici posse universalem, nisi cum illam a suis conditionibus individuantibus per operationem intellectus abstraxerimus. . . . At vero qui rem accuratius et juxta metaphysicae principia perpenderunt, rerum naturas*

B.3 Transcendent realism

B.3.1 Descartes

According to Gassendi¹⁰⁰¹ and Pierre Daniel Huet,¹⁰⁰² as well as a handful of contemporary commentators,¹⁰⁰³ Descartes is a representative of transcendent realism, the view according to which *o* is *F* just means that *o* has universal *F*ness but the existence of *F*ness does not require *F* individuals (besides *F*ness itself, if *F*ness does itself count as an *F* individual). Kenny states the view in explicit terms.

Descartes's theory . . . is thoroughly Platonic: indeed he is the founder of modern Platonism. (Kenny 1970, 692-693)

Even though the interpretation of Gassendi and Huet has been debated,¹⁰⁰⁴ and even though some commentators generally claim that "Platonism was a non-contender in the seventeenth century"¹⁰⁰⁵ where "no party denied" the truth of "the view that universals are nothing but general concepts or linguistic names,"¹⁰⁰⁶ there seems to be something to the view that Descartes is a transcendent realist (as Russell, Whitehead, Santayana, and Husserl seem to notice).¹⁰⁰⁷ In the Fifth Meditation, Descartes claims not only that there are real properties existing independent of the mind, but that these

et essentias vere et proprie esse universales citra omnem operationem intellectus asseverant. . . . [E]sse unum aptum inesse in multis, quod est esse universale.

¹⁰⁰¹ See AT VII 319ff.

¹⁰⁰² See Huet 1689.

¹⁰⁰³ Gewirth 1970 and 1971; Kenny 1970, 692ff; Schmaltz 1991; Wilson 1978, 171; Wion 2009, 26.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See Nolan 1997a; Nolan 1998.

¹⁰⁰⁵ LoLordo 2011, 657.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Bolton 1998, 183-184.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See Miller 1950, 239.

properties subsist eternally and regardless of being instantiated by any of the subjects of which they are predicated.

When, for example, I imagine a triangle, *even if perhaps no such figure exists, or has ever existed*, anywhere outside my thought, there is still a determinate nature, or essence, or form of the triangle which is *immutable* and *eternal*, and not invented by me or dependent on my mind. . . [E]ven if I never thought of [the properties of a triangle] at all when I previously imagined the triangle, it follows that they cannot have been invented by me. . . . All these properties are certainly true, since I am clearly aware of them and therefore they are *something*. (AT VII 64-65)

Commenting on this passage in the Fifth Set of Objections, Gassendi makes the same sort of claims against Descartes that we find Aristotle making against Plato: that there can be no uninstantiated universals.¹⁰⁰⁸

[I]t is impossible to grasp how there can be a human nature if no human being exists, or how we can say a rose is a flower when not even one rose exists. . . [I]t is surely inexplicable that there should have been a universal nature before Plato and the others existed. (AT VII 319-320).

Gassendi also worries that Descartes's transcendent realism would contradict God's status as all-impressive everything-maker.

You will say that all that you are proposing is the scholastic point that the natures or essences of things are eternal, . . . that talking of the existence of things is one thing and talking of their existence is another. . . But in that case, since the most important element in things is their essence, does God do anything very impressive when he produces their existence? Is he doing anything more than a tailor does when he tries a suit of clothes on someone? How can people defend the thesis that the essence of man, which is in Plato, say, is eternal and independent of God? (see AT VII 319)¹⁰⁰⁹

In his reply to the objection, Descartes does not back down about properties, at least shape ones, existing independent of the mind, both eternally and independent of any individuals instantiating them. Nevertheless, Descartes does reject Gassendi's

¹⁰⁰⁸ See Fine 1993, 61; Erismann 2011, 75.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Cudworth (1731, 285) also mentions this tailor example.

assumption that these forms are immutable and eternal only if they are independent of God. These eternal and immutable forms, which Descartes insists should not be considered the product of human minds (AT VII 435-435), are themselves produced from eternity by God himself. Replying this way, Descartes thus sides with more of an Augustinian understanding of the Platonic Heaven. According to the Augustinian understanding of the Platonic heaven (an understanding that Descartes knew well),¹⁰¹⁰ the eternal and immutable forms are, as Spinoza puts it, “created by God” and subsist “in God’s intellect” (KV 1.6 I/42/25-I/43/8).¹⁰¹¹

I do not think that the essences of things, and the mathematical truths which we can know concerning them, are independent of God. Nevertheless I do think that they are immutable and eternal, since the will and decree of God willed and decreed that they should be so. Whether you think this is hard or easy to accept, it is enough for me that it is true. (AT VII 380)¹⁰¹²

All this does not necessary imply that these forms are universals for Descartes. Descartes could just be endorsing one of the antirealist forms of Platonism outlined in Chapter II (where, for example, the forms are perfect particulars serving as paradigms for emulation). There is some room for this view. First, realize that Gassendi is talking about universals in the traditional sense: commonalities, identities among diverse items, natures that in principle are apt to be present in multiple items, ways *aptos inesse multis per identitatem*. Thus he stresses that everything is particular, and finds that by stressing this he is opposing Descartes.

[E]verything to be found in Plato is particular. It is true that after seeing the nature of Plato and Socrates, and similar natures of other men, the intellect habitually abstracts

¹⁰¹⁰ See Nadler 2006, 155; Miller 2004, 558n10.

¹⁰¹¹ See Mercer 2008, 227-228.

¹⁰¹² See Schmaltz 1991.

from them some common concept in respect of which they all agree, and which can then be regarded as the universal nature or essence of man. (AT VII 319-320)

Second, notice that in his reply Descartes says that Gassendi's complaints against traditional universals have no sting against him because he views universals in a different way.

The points you go on to make against the universals of the schoolmen do not touch me, since my understanding of universals is not the same as theirs. (AT VII 380)

Descartes is aware of the traditional understanding of universals. It is described in detail by Eustachius in the *Summa Philosophica Quadripartita*, which Descartes told Mersenne in 1640 was “the best book of its kind ever made”—so great, in fact, that Descartes had planned to publish an annotated edition comparing his philosophy with that outlined by Eustachius (AT III 232-233, 259-260). The traditional understanding of universals is also described in detail by Fonseca, who was an influence on Descartes as well.¹⁰¹³ In general, these basic ideas about universals were common knowledge. So perhaps Descartes, in saying that he employs a non-traditional conception of universals, either is committing himself to the Platonic realism rejected by the schoolmen in general and Eustachius in particular or, if we demand that Descartes is an antirealist, is committing himself to one of the antirealist forms of Platonism that I mentioned in Chapter II. If Bolton is right, that individuals really do not have any inner plurality for Descartes (although see AT VII 383), then we would presumably go with the latter option. Hence we would have a Platonic style relational nonconstituent antirealism,

¹⁰¹³ Ariew 2003, 2, 65; Sasaki 2003, 321ff; Secada 2000.

where blob individuals are more or less perfect imitations of the exemplary transcendent Forms.

There is another interesting possibility, however. It is worth looking into especially since it anticipates a similar interpretive possibility of Spinoza that I discuss in Chapter XI. As is suggested by Secada,¹⁰¹⁴ Descartes understood the universals of the schoolmen to be those properties apprehended merely by the senses. So perhaps Descartes thinks that Gassendi's criticisms of schoolmen universals have no efficacy for the reason that the properties that Descartes is saying are real and independent of the classifying mind are apprehended by the clear and distinct vision of the *intellect* and not merely by the senses. Such a reading is bolstered by what Descartes says in a 1640 letter to Regius. Against Regius (see *Physiologia* IIIb), who takes the antirealist line that universals are apprehensions of the imagination, Descartes clarifies that perception of true universals belongs not to the imagination but to the intellect (AT III 66), which "reach[es] the truth of the matter."¹⁰¹⁵

There are costs to this reading, nevertheless. One is that it does not evade Gassendi's objection. Gassendi's objection is against realism concerning universals *in general* and he is always quick to call Descartes out for it (as when he reprimands Descartes for holding that the cause and effect are identical—as opposed to merely resembling—in respect to whatever the cause has given to the effect: AT VII 288-289). Since Gassendi's objection is against realism in general, it would not be sufficient to

¹⁰¹⁴ Secada 2000, 123.

¹⁰¹⁵ Descartes AT II 138; see AT V 270; AT VI 37; AT VII 34, 53, 139, 205, 266, 358-359; see Shelford 2002, 607-608.

protest, as Descartes would be protesting on this interpretation, that “I advocate *this* form of realism concerning universals, not *that* form. One is rationalist, the other empiricist. And that makes all the difference.”

It could be said that perhaps Descartes does not realize that the particular form of realism he would be advocating here (rationalist realism), according to which the only universals allowed are those grasped by the intellect rather than merely through a process of abstraction from sensory information, is a form of realism. But that would be in stark contrast to what Gassendi believed, to what Descartes learned from the Eustachius and others, to the common understanding about what a universal is, and particularly to the fact that universals are not necessarily those items grasped merely through a process of abstraction from sensory information.

To be sure, there is a strong dependence on the senses in Aristotelian philosophy.¹⁰¹⁶ Wet individuals, for example, really do have a wetness property in his world. But Aristotle himself, who draws a sharp distinction between imagination and intellection just as Descartes does at the beginning of the Fourth Meditation,¹⁰¹⁷ repeats that the senses *cannot* grasp universals,¹⁰¹⁸ and so do the teachers of his philosophy throughout the centuries. That is precisely why the rejection of universals is often construed to go hand in hand with sensationalist empiricism. Eustachius makes the point clearly.

¹⁰¹⁶ See Garber 2001.

¹⁰¹⁷ See *De anima* 2.3.

¹⁰¹⁸ See *De Anima* 2.5 417b 20-28.

[U]niversals are declared by Aristotle to be . . . most remote from the senses. . . . [S]cience is not considered to be about particulars, but about universals, so the Aristotelians often teach. (my translation Gilson 1912, 307)¹⁰¹⁹

It should be noted, however, that for Aristotle it seems that the grasping of universals, although done by reason or scientific knowledge and not the senses, has its foundation in the sensation of particulars.¹⁰²⁰ Indeed, the view that there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses is commonly attributed to Aristotle,¹⁰²¹ however much of an exaggeration that most likely is. So there is still room to say that Descartes's view of universals truly does differ from the scholastic conception. Perhaps our understanding of these true universals is innate, as Huet understood Descartes to be saying.¹⁰²² In this case, the only role that experience would perhaps play is providing the favorable occasion, if you will, for drawing our attention to what we already knew: that such and such are the true universals.

Arguably, not only Plato, but also Aristotle as well, agreed that experience merely provides the occasion for awakening the intellect's innate vision into universality.¹⁰²³ But, of course, this innatist view is more commonly associated with Plato. Such is reflected in the following words of McKeon.

Here again there is opportunity for disagreement between the Platonist and the Aristotelian, the former holding that all knowledge is derived directly in some fashion from universal ideas innate in the soul, the latter that the intellect works over the data of sensation and abstracts its general ideas. (McKeon 1928a, 140)

¹⁰¹⁹ *Universalia dicantur ab Aristotele . . . a sensibus remotissima. . . [N]on habetur scientia de particularibus, sed de universalibus, ut saepe docet Aristoteles.*

¹⁰²⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a24-31; *Posterior Analytics* 1.18 and 2.19.

¹⁰²¹ See Goodman 1992, 261; Shelford 2002, 613; Gassendi's remarks at AT VII 267.

¹⁰²² Huet 1689, 92-95.

¹⁰²³ See *De Anima* 417b; *Posterior Analytics* 2.19 100b5-17. "[W]hat actual sensation apprehends is individuals, while what knowledge apprehends is universals, and [the notions of] these are in a sense within the soul itself" (*De Anima* 417b).

We might even take a more conspiratorial interpretation, the seeds for which can be found in Angelelli.¹⁰²⁴ The conspiracy reading goes as follows. Due not only to run-of-the-mill Bloomian anxiety of influence, but also to an overzealous desire to break from a scholastic-humanism tradition that he saw as realist-heavy, Descartes simply refused to regard his rationalist universals as universals. He literally tried to rewrite history, on this view, in order to be endorsing something novel.

The evidence for such a last-resort view is loose and very sketchy, but here it is. It is often said that, with the stark exception of Leibniz, many of the new scientists and early modern philosophers were anxious to disassociate from the past. Descartes is taken as a paradigm example. Not only does he stress how the revolutionary nature of his project tears down the scholastic edifice and throws off “the yoke of Aristotle.”¹⁰²⁵ He also has been said to make explicit attempts to hide connections with scholasticism.¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰²⁴ Angelelli 2001.

¹⁰²⁵ Gilson 1999, 82.

¹⁰²⁶ See Angelelli 2001, 576, 567n2. The evidence that Angelelli cites, however, is weak. Angelelli says that Descartes tells Mersenne to keep quiet about his plans to publish an annotated comparative edition of Eustachius’s treatise so as not to let people know of his connection with scholastics. In truth, however, Descartes wants Mersenne to keep the manual a secret so as to avoid it being attacked before it is even released (AT III 233). Indeed, I see Descartes more so concerned with hiding his deviations from the scholastics (see AT I 416)

B.3.2 Norris

Certain figures on the British Isles during the early modern period fall less controversially into the category of transcendent realism. We see this in the thought of Anne Conway, for example.¹⁰²⁷ Some even say that we see this in Berkeley of *Siris*.¹⁰²⁸

The most thoroughgoing advocate of transcendent realism seems to have been John Norris, the so-called “English Malebranche” who saw himself as carrying the Platonist torch to a greater distance and more self-consciously than Malebranche.¹⁰²⁹ Although Norris believes that things have an ontological structure of at least primary qualities (1974, 2:250), although he believes, in other words, that individuals have “inward” or “constitutive essences” of the sort that Boyle and Galileo favored (1974, 2:267), such constituent properties dwell for eternity, in their state as pure “intelligible essences” in the mind of God, indifferent as to whether they are ever exemplified (1974, 1:232, 1:414). For defending the view that triangularity, circularity, and the like are eternal forms never requiring instantiation in order to be, and that they were in some sense more real than their concretized expressions in the temporal realm (1689, 50), Norris was charged in his own day of uttering “Platonick Gibberish” (1974, 1:ii). But he defended the notion of a Platonic Heaven located in the intellect of God, and in no way independent of God (1974, 1:250), in the following way (a way that, in Chapter X, I

¹⁰²⁷ See Mercer 2012. Conway, however, sometimes voices sentiments suggesting relational nonconstituent antirealism: “species are nothing but individual entities subsumed under one general and common idea of the mind or one common term, as, for instance, man is a species including all individual men” (see Warren 2009, 264).

¹⁰²⁸ See Brown 2008, 249. Nevertheless, others (such as Peirce) say that Berkeley’s Platonism is antirealist (see Anderson and Groff 1998).

¹⁰²⁹ See Brown 2002, 377; Mander 2008, 8, 58-59, 63, 199.

claim to be quite akin to Spinoza) (1974, 1:145). First, things have properties. Second, God creates all things—“from the Worm that creeps upon the Ground, to the Angels of Presence that wait about the Throne”—and thus all of their properties as well (1974, 1:263-264). God, that is, explains both the existences of individuals and the quality of their being (1974, 1:260). Third, as the buckstopping origin and explanation of the properties had by individuals, God must in some sense contain them himself eternally since “nothing can communicate what it has not” (1689, 44; see 1974, 1:27, 2:503). And indeed he must contain even those properties that never get exemplified since he is lacking in nothing and thus “must have all possible degrees of Being in himself” (1974, 1:142-143). Therefore, all the true forms or “patterns” are contained eternally and immutably in God, serving as the sources of character for any individual that comes to be (1974, 1:263).

Now, Norris does say that the “constitutive” properties of concrete individuals more or less fall short of their “intelligible” originals (1689, 47, 50; 1974, 1:12-13), those “Patterns and Exemplars, according to which all things were made” (1974, 1:263-264). Such comments do leave open the possibility, and may even suggest to some, that Norris holds to one of the *antirealist* versions of Platonism described in Chapter II. However, Norris’s understanding of the ideal forms being “communicated”—and, indeed, “undividedly” so—to individuals (1974, 2:438, 2:503; 1697, 195; 1689, 44), and his view that the constitutive forms are not some sort of extra creation in addition to the creation of their eternal versions (1974, 1:260),¹⁰³⁰ suggests a relationship of strict

¹⁰³⁰ See Mander 2008, 54-56.

identity, at least in some core respect, between the form as it is in eternity and as it is in the temporal realm. The forms, although eternal and separable from the individuals that instantiate them, do penetrate individuals for Norris. In effect, when God “paints” according to the archetypes eternally existing in his intellect, these archetypes are communicated, and undividedly so, into the very being of what he paints (see 1974, 2:383).

B.4 Concluding remarks

In Appendix B I considered, in a rather carefree and superficial way, potential earlier modern representatives of the fundamental forms of realism. Representing immanent realism, I considered Keckermann, Boyle, Cudworth, and Eustachius a Sancto Paulo. Keckermann and Eustachius, at least, fit into this category without controversy. Representing transcendent realism, I considered Descartes and Norris. Both seem to fit into this category well. But there is controversy, especially in the case of Descartes.

APPENDIX C

THE USES AND DANGERS OF IMAGINATIVE UNIVERSALS

C.1 Introductory remarks

As is argued in Chapter XI, Spinoza's pejorative remarks against universals are aimed merely at those universals that do not pertain to nature as it is independent of the classifying perceiver: the universals of empirical imagination. Here in APPENDIX C I want to explain how, for Spinoza, such imaginative universals, despite being ontologically inauthentic, can be both beneficial and detrimental to our lives.

C.2 Uses of imaginative universals

Imaginative universals are those apprehended merely by a process of comparing sensory information and abstracting from that information. As we see described in Aquinas¹⁰³¹ and Eustachius,¹⁰³² when confronted with a complex of sense information the perceiving subject selectively attends to what is common among that plurality, thus stripping away the various "individuating conditions by means of an operation of the intellect."¹⁰³³ Although Aquinas and Eustachius claim that the abstraction process is carried out by the *intellect*, Spinoza says that the abstraction process is carried out by the *imagination* (1app II/83; Ep. 12 IV/57). These universals, which are "merely modes of imagining [that] do not indicate the nature of anything, only the constitution of the imagination," thus deserve to be called, according to Spinoza, "beings, not of reason, but of the imagination" (1app II/83). These beings of the imagination do not correspond

¹⁰³¹ Aquinas *Summa Theologica* I.85.

¹⁰³² Gilson 1912, 306-308.

¹⁰³³ Gilson 1912, 306-308.

with reality independent of the perceiving subject. As traces that external objects leave on the body of the perceiving subject, they do not refer to the external object alone, but rather to the external objects plus the body of the perceiving subject. They thus will change as the variable bodily constitution of the perceiving subject changes. For the warm hand the bathroom floor linoleum and the forehead are all cold and are said to instantiate the universal coldness. But for the cold hand the same items are all warm and are thus said to instantiate the universal warmness.

[I]t should be noted that these notions are not formed by all in the same way, but vary from one to another, in accordance with what the body has been more often affected by, and what the mind imagines or recollects more easily. . . . [E]ach will form universal images of things according to the disposition of his body. (2p40s1 II/121/24-234)

It is precisely because these universals are not really in the things but are rather merely properties relative to certain perceivers that they deserve to be called “fictions.” They are not true of things in themselves but rather of things as they are for such and such arbitrary and variable perceiving body.

How can it be that such inauthentic universals are useful to our lives, though? For Spinoza the body is naturally more attuned to noticing similarities rather than differences among its sensory input (2p40s1 II/121/20-21). This is what motivates Spinoza’s claim that you are better able to “retain” comedy x if you read only comedy x, than if you read x along with comedies y, p, and q. For with “several of the same kind, we imagine them all together and they are easily confused” (TdIE 82; 2p18, 2p18s). The greater force that the similarity has for our bodies may trick us into believing that the similarity is really there among the things as they are in themselves.

This is a bad result of the natural comportment of our bodies. But there is a good result as well. Were we highly tuned into the differences, or were we simply not so tuned into the similarities by default, we would be constantly overwhelmed. If we could not ignore the differences between all these leaves, all their subtle differences in size and color, we would be overwhelmed to the point of inaction. So even the imaginative universals, ontologically inauthentic as they are, serve some good. They are a way to cope with a world of things “whose difference is [ever] so slight” (TdIE 76). Spinoza is not necessarily criticizing us for being drawn to the commonalities that we perceive, then. That is just a finite being’s mechanism for coping with an oversaturation of impressions. Without such a coping mechanism, we would crumble into a tormenting state inactivity.

Besides helping us avoid being bombarded by petite perceptions to the point of inactivity, insanity, and perhaps instant death, the false universals “serve to train and strengthen the memory” (CM 1pref I/233), as Hobbes points out as well.¹⁰³⁴ Here are Spinoza’s words on the mnemonic function of these false universals.

That there are certain modes of thinking which help us to retain things more firmly and easily, and when we wish, to recall them to mind or keep them present to mind, is sufficiently established for those who use that well-known rule of memory, by which to retain something very new and imprint it on the memory, we recall something else familiar with it. . . . Similarly, the Philosophers have reduced all natural things to certain classes, to which they recur when anything new presents itself to them. These they call genus, species, etc. (CM 1.1 I/234/1-10; see Ep. 12 IV/56-57)

When Plato said that man is a featherless biped, he erred no more than those who said that man is a rational animal. . . . [H]e referred man to a certain class so that

¹⁰³⁴ See Hobbes *Leviathan* 4.3.

when he wished to think about man, he would immediately fall into the thought of man by recalling that class, which he could easily remember. (CM 1.1 I/235/19-25)

We see here that the imaginative universals help us organize novel sensory input in associative ways so that we are able to call it back up. And from these points about how the imaginative universals can serve as mnemonic devices, it is also clear that a hierarchy can be made among them. Some help us to remember better than others do. Newlands explains the point well.

[S]ome mnemonic devices work better than others. For example, grouping things together by color is a better aid to recollecting particulars than grouping them by distance from the sun.¹⁰³⁵

C.3 Dangers of imaginative universals

Even though universals of empirical imagination can aid our lives, they can also have negative consequences. Spinoza does not let us forget this. Ridding the mind of a belief in bogus universals, Spinoza seems to believe, is required to be a better person (2p49s; TdIE 99) and is required for a better society (2p47). In this section, I will briefly take a closer look at why Spinoza has this sort of view.

Perceiving subject 1 has a body constituted in such and such a way that when confronted with a plurality of humans what sticks out to him is that they are featherless bipeds. Perceiving subject 2 has a body constituted in such and such a way that when confronted with a plurality of humans what sticks out to him is that they are capable of laughter. Let us assume that these people start arguing about what makes for a human. As is easy to imagine, and is in some sense historically true, these people may enter into

¹⁰³⁵ Newlands forthcoming-a.

a disagreement over the nature of humans and, relatedly, who deserves to be called a human and who does not. But as deep and substantive as these debates may seem, according to Spinoza they are not. Such disagreements boil down merely to disagreements in the bodily constitutions of the perceiving subjects in question. Were the subjects to realize that the commonalities between the various individuals in their sensorial field are merely relative to their own peculiar constitutions, they would realize that the fighting is silly: “what they think are errors and absurdities in the other are not” (2p47s II/129).

Hence it is not surprising that so many controversies have arisen among the philosophers, who have wished to explain natural things by mere images of things. (2p40s1 II/121)

As Newlands puts it, “arguments over such definitions is akin to arguments over whether associating faces with colors or with sounds makes it easier to recall people’s names.”¹⁰³⁶ Now, Spinoza’s talk of controversies between *philosophers* may make it sound that the problem is not so bad. But it is easy to imagine, as Newlands rightly points out,¹⁰³⁷ such disputes turning violent.

The sensorial universals pose a related ethical danger. According to perceiver x, all people have a certain common property *Fness* without which they would not be human. And thus those who veer too far from the paradigm universal are called monsters, to use the terminology of Norris (who believes in universals and uses them as such a standard for normalcy).¹⁰³⁸ But this common property is constructed. It is

¹⁰³⁶ Newlands 2015, 270.

¹⁰³⁷ Newlands forthcoming-a.

¹⁰³⁸ Norris 1974, 1: 47-48.

constructed not only in its being relative to the disposition of the perceiving body in question, but also in its being due to a *limited sampling* of people (see KV 2.1.3 I/55). If being *o* does not have this *Fness* (this *Fness* invented by the imagination of a perceiver), then *o* is not counted as a human and thus there is no obligation to treat it in the way that humans deserve to be treated. It is wrong to refuse *o* humane treatment merely because *o* does not have the imaginative fiction that is *Fness*. (Of course, we know that, for Spinoza, if *o* does not have the authentic universal human essence, then it would not be wrong to treat *o* in whatever way we wish: see Chapter VIII.)

These sensorial universals have an even more obvious negative consequence. Since similarities between sensed items stand out so automatically and with such force, those “who do not pay close attention” (CM 1.1 I/234) to this instantaneous process are easily led not only to ignore the rich differences between things, but also to believe that the perception-dependent commonalities are true of nature as it is in itself. What makes it even easier to ignore differences and fall into such misbelief is that we find ourselves, from the very beginning, thrown into a world where such similarities are given *names*—“whiteness” and “coldness”—along with real individuals such as Peter and Paul.

[T]he body has been affected most [NS: forcefully] by this [namely, what is common], since each singular has affected it. (2p40s1 II/121/20-21)

[T]he reason why these modes of thinking are taken for ideas of things is that they arise from the ideas of real beings so immediately that they are quite easily confused with them by those who do not pay very close attention. So these people also give names to them, as if to signify beings existing outside our mind. (CM 1.1 I/234/31-35)

Misunderstanding of the true ontological status of these imaginative universals, the inability to distinguish what properties are there independent of the perceiving

subject from those that are not there, has an especially negative consequence as far as Spinoza is concerned. Thinking that the universals of empirical imagination are found in the world independent of the perceiving subject, which is “something a true philosopher must scrupulously avoid” (KV 2.4 I/60) by trusting in intellect rather than imagination (Ep. 12 IV/57), “interferes with the true progress of the intellect” and our display of love for God (TdIE 99). It interferes with the progress of the intellect and the display of love for God just as much as thinking that a ghost, rather than just the wind, sent the front door flying open just now. To interfere with the true progress of the intellect is no slight matter. There is, for Spinoza, an intrinsic relationship between the quest for knowledge and the quest for the good life. Spinoza holds the highest happiness to involve accurate understanding of reality.

[I]t is especially useful to perfect, as far as we can, our intellect or reason. In this one thing consists man’s highest happiness or blessedness. . . . [P]erfecting the intellect is nothing but understanding God, his attributes, and his actions, which follow from the necessity of his nature. So the ultimate end of the man who is led by reason, that is, his highest desire, by which he strives to moderate all the others, is that by which he is led to conceive adequately both himself and all things which can fall under his understanding. (4app4 II/267/1-14)

The highest blessedness, which “consists in Love of God” (5p42d), requires understanding—through “philosophical reasoning alone and pure thought” (TTP 4.5)—the fatalistic order in which we are embedded and the Absolute Godhead from which that order emanates (4p28d and Ep. 75). Such understanding “has to be drawn from universal notions that are certain in themselves” (TTP 4.6). It is crucial, therefore, to distinguish bogus from non-bogus universals. This is not merely so that we do not get

reality wrong. It is so that we know what universals to attend to in order to achieve knowledge of God.

On a related point, for Spinoza true freedom from the “sadness, despair, fright, and other evil passions” (KV 2.18.6 I/88/1-4) that have us in “bondage” (4pref; see Ep. 21; 5p42s), involves recognizing several things: there is no personal God, no ultimate purpose or overarching plan, and so on. One of these things that humans need to recognize in order to attain a right conception of reality and true happiness is that there is no free will (2p35s, 1p32c1, 2p32s2; Ep. 21, Ep. 58). Spinoza suggests, however, that there would be no problem of free will if we just recognized that the notion of will in discussion is one of those imaginative universals.

[T]here is in the mind no absolute faculty of understanding, desiring, loving, etc. From this it follows that these and similar faculties are either complete fictions or nothing but metaphysical beings or universals, which we are used to forming from [individuals]. So intellect and will are to this or that idea, or to this or that volition as “stoneness” is to this or that stone. (2p48s II/129)

The similarity that a given perceiving subject registers when confronted with various volitions is what becomes named “will.” This name tricks successive generations into thinking that this name actually refers to a real universal independent of the classifying mind: will. Philosophers too, despite the fact they are supposed to be more critical than the population at large, have not been immune to the trick. This is evident by the fact that philosophers throughout the centuries have claimed the will to have causal powers and have wondered whether it is free or not.

For because man has now this, now that volition, he forms in his soul a universal mode which he calls the Will, just as he forms the idea of man from [sensorial perception of] this and that man. And because he does not sufficiently distinguish real beings from beings of reason, it comes about that he considers the beings of

reason as things that are truly in nature, and thus posits himself as a cause of some things. . . . For if you ask someone why man wills this or that, the answer is: because he has a Will. (KV 2.16.4 I/82-I/83).

When we recognize that the commonality perceiving subjects register from a plurality of volitions is not in the world as it is in itself, we will avoid attributing causal powers to such a will. In effect, once we realize that the imaginative commonality called “will” is not in the world independent of perceiving subjects, the free will problem, according to Spinoza, becomes empty.

But since, as we have said, the will is only an idea of this or that volition (and therefore only a mode of thinking, a *being of reason*, and not a *real being*), nothing can be produced by it. *For nothing comes from nothing*. So I think that when we have shown that the Will is no thing in Nature, but only a Fiction, we do not need to ask whether it is free or not. (KV 2.16.4 I/83)

C.4 Two points to think about

Now I say that the universal will in discussion is one of those apprehended merely through abstraction from sensory information, that is, I say it is one of the universals of empirical imagination. Of course, this invites us to wonder about whether there is any notion of the will that the *intellect* apprehends. Some hope is provided by the fact that in the above passages Spinoza rejects humanity as a universal along with will. Since there is a true universal humanity, one and the same humanity present through all and only humans (as I argued in Chapter VIII), in parallel there might be a true universal will for Spinoza as well. We might want to keep that fact in mind. We want to keep that fact in mind especially in light of Spinoza’s tendency to use the same term—“humanity” and “being” were the two explored in Chapter XI—to refer to what

that term indicates for *the imagination* and what that term indicates for *the intellect* (see Laerke 2014, 525-526).

We might want to keep in mind another possibility. The imaginative universals, we said, are those that are not true of the world independent of the perceiving subject, but are rather an indication of how that world affects the variable constitutions of the perceiving subject's body. The point might be merely academic, but notice the following. The commonality that my body at t1 registers from a collection of bodies is a product of my bodily constitution at t1 and those bodies. So what the body picks up, that these things (leaves) all have this common effect, is correct—correct for the perceiving body at the time in question, when it has this specific disposition (speed, sight ability, focus power, and so on). While that commonality is not there in the bodies in themselves, there is something in the world in itself nevertheless: that commonality-for-my-bodily-constitution-at-t1. Perhaps that itself amounts to a mode, as is arguably the direction in which Merleau-Ponty was headed with his baroque ontology of the Flesh and as is suggested in Spinoza's claim that God has knowledge of the so-called imaginative universals "insofar as he understands human minds" (CM 2.7 I/263/8-9). If so, then that relational common property—relational because it a common property relative to my constitution at t1—will be a property completely intrinsic to the attribute of which it is a mode, and like all properties *this property-for-person-x* will be a true universal. We know that it will be a universal because all modes are universals (see Chapter VII) and we know that it will be true because there will be an idea of it, which is significant because "all ideas that are in God agree entirely with their objects, and so

they are all true” (2p32d; see 2p36d). Even though these items that I find at t1 to be good are not good in themselves, they are indeed good for me at t1 (at least we can assume). So there might very well be the real property *their being good for me at t1*.¹⁰³⁹

C.5 Concluding remarks

Here in APPENDIX C I have highlighted certain benefits and dangers that arise from the ontologically inauthentic universals. A central benefit of the sensorial universal is that it keeps us from being overloaded by perceptions and serves as a mnemonic device. A central danger is that it can easily be regarded as true of reality in itself, which can lead to great but pointless disagreements among people failing to recognize that it is not true of reality in itself. Here we have, then, a rather tangible example of the bearing that Spinoza’s metaphysical views has on his ethical views. According to Spinoza, we can keep the benefits and get rid of the dangers so long as we recognize that these universals of empirical imagination are ontologically inauthentic.

¹⁰³⁹ We find this sort of idea insinuated by Eisenberg (Eisenberg 1977, 122-125). In light of the following remarks, it seems that Della Rocca would be open to it.

First, God’s ideas are never confused, they are always adequate. This is because God’s mind is not subject to external causes; God’s mind is always determined internally. In fact, the very same idea that is caused from outside my mind is not caused from outside God’s mind. Thus that idea is confused and inadequate relative to my mind. . . , but unconfused and adequate relative to God’s mind. (Della Rocca 2008, 114)

APPENDIX D

LITERATURE CONCERNING SPINOZA AND THE STATUS OF UNIVERSALS

D.1 Introductory remarks

The following listing of literature concerning Spinoza and the status of universals is a resource that I wish was available when I first started thinking about my project. Here you will find all the important places—books, dissertations, articles, reviews, and so on—where commentators discuss Spinoza’s thoughts on universals (as well as where Spinoza himself discusses universals). Although I have been most attentive to the English literature of the 20th and 21st centuries, my listing extends from the early modern period onward (with special attention to writings in Latin, French, Dutch, German, Italian, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Hebrew, and Japanese).

D.2 Spinoza on universals

The following lists the most important passages where Spinoza seems to discuss universals more or less directly. Items in bold stand out as most important, in virtue of depth of discussion and maturity of Spinoza’s philosophizing.

1app (esp. II/81/35-II/83/14), 1p8s2 II/51/13-14, 2p10s, 2p37-2p39d, **2p40s1-2**, 2p41s, 2p48s, **2p49s**, 3pref (esp. II/138/12-18), 3p46, 3p57s, 4pref II/207, 4p4d II/213/15-19, 4p18s II/223/5-6, 4p30, 4p31, 4p35d, 4p36s, 4p37s1, 4p59d, 4app9, 4app26, 4p62s II/257, 4p68s, 4app7, 5p12d, 5p36s; KV 1.6 I/43/7-8, KV 1.10 I/50, KV 2.16.3a I/81/18-19, KV 2.16.4 I/82/5ff., KV 2.26.8 I/112; DPP 1prol I/142/33-34, DPP 1d9, DPP 2p15s; TTP 1.2, TTP 3.5, TTP 4.6 (esp. III/61/16-17, TTP 5.1, TTP 6.10-11 III/88/15-16, TTP 7.6 III/102/16-20; Ep. 2 IV/19/10-20, Ep. 6 IV/28/10-16, Ep. 11 IV/48/25ff, Ep. 12 IV/56-57, Ep. 13 IV/64/30, Ep. 19 IV/92, Ep. 27, Ep. 34, Ep. 56; TdIE 19.3, TdIE 55, TdIE 76-77, TdIE 93, TdIE 99-100; CM 1pref I/233, CM 1.1 I/234/1-10 and I/235/10-30, CM 1.6, CM 2.7 I/263/5-9; TP 3.18, TP 11.2.

D.3 Sampling of sustained discussions

Sustained discussion on the matter of Spinoza and universals is rare. The following list is a small sampling of some diverse exceptions. Items in bold stand out among these as exceptionally thorough and precise.

Bidney 1940, 146-147, 269-273, 284, 379, 434; Braicovich 2008, 113-140; Busse 2009, esp. 15-26, 29, 49, 72; Cattaneo 2013, 1-123; Ceccarelli 2007, 1-174; Cerrato 2008, 53-59, 60n54, 64n60, 116-122; Dascal 1979, 18-34; **Di Vona 1960, vi, 46-47, 56, 81-83, 119, 140, 145, 152-165**; Dijn 1996, 45, 53-56, 115, 133, 137, 152, 163, 175, 225-228, 233-234; Eichberg 1910, 15-35; **Fullerton 1899, 25-53, 58-77**; Gilead 1986, 80-83, 97-100, 179-181, 254, 258-259, 277, 314, 318, 321, 324, 336, 349, 368-370, 436, 462, 484-486; Gueroult 1968, 328, 413-425, 564-568; Gueroult 1974, 327-390, 432, 547-551, 581-582; **Haserot 1950, 469-492**; Hubbeling 1964, 8, 13-15, 19-30, 37, 47, 67, 82-83, 122, 127-128, 154-156; Hübner forthcoming-a; Kim 2008; Kolakowski 1958, 167-175, 440-453; Kolakowski 2004, 19, 32-34, 40, 42, 71, 77, 115, 121, 180, 124, 231, 296, 301; Leduc 2010, 3-22; LeGrant 2009, esp. ch. 2 and ch. 3; Lermond 1988, 3, 19-21, 51-69, 76n10, 81n25; MacKinnon 1924, 345-359; Martineau 1882, 111, 126-128, 143-144, 150n2, 153, 185; Murthy 1995, 48-56; Newlands forthcoming-a; Peters 1975, 61, 64, 68, 74, 85, 96, 99, 118, 142, 157, 170; Rice 1994, 19-32; Ridi 1991, 19, 22, 24, 26n2, 33, 56, 59, 66, 68n3, 75n4, 76-77, 85, 106, 108n1, 109, 122n3; **Stephenson 2010, esp. 45-149**; Strauss 1960, 188-204; Vold 1888, 45, 116-117, 128, 136-138, 173-177, 307-308, 315, 328, 340-343.

D.4 Sampling of antirealist-leaning literature

The following list is a small sampling of those who seem at least to lean toward seeing Spinoza as an antirealist concerning universals.

Adkins 2009, 42-44, 58-61, 87, 93-97; Akselrod 1952, 88; Althusser 1974, 74; Althusser 1992, 478; Althusser 1997, 10.1-12.3; Arola 2007, 145-146, 150; Balibar 1985, 389; Balibar 1992, 21; Balibar 1998, 108; Balz 1967, 30, 51-67; Barbone 1993, 385; Barbone 1997, 26n62, 60, 84, 146, 150, 159; Barbone 1999, 99; Barbone 2002, 101, 109n21; Barbone, Rice, and Adler 1995, 134n100, 162n119, 206n196; Basile 2012, 32; Bennett 2001, I.145 (although see Bennett 1984, 94); Bernstein 2012, 212; Bloch and Reiss 1973, 48; Boss 1992, 219-224; Bove 2005, n15; Breton 1977, 11, 166; Brochard 1908, 144; Busse 2009, esp. 15-26, 29, 49, 72; Carriero 1995, 256-259; Carriero 2005, 127-131; Crockett 1949, 79; Curley 1969, 28-36; Curley 1973c, 357; Darbon 1946, 7-9; De Deugd 1966, 6, 30-38, 47, 108, 243, 250, 266-268, 275-279; Delbos 1893, 128; Demos 1933, 158; Den Uyl 1980, 25n27; Den Uyl 1983, 70; Den Uyl 2003, 50; Den Uyl 2008, 91; Den Uyl and Rice 1990, 91-

117; De Souza Chaui 1996; Deveaux 2003, 329-338; Donagan 1988, 51-52; Duff 1903, 50-51; Dunin-Borkowski 1935, 83-88, 117, 224, 241, 312, 344, 350, 400; Eichberg 1910, 15-35; Efras 1937, 240; Eisenberg 1971, 184; Feibleman 1954b, 118; Feuer 1958, 272n47; Flage 1989, 147ff; Friedman 1978, esp. 89-90; Funke and Dastur 1980, 325; Gannon 1956, 195; A. Garrett 2012, 66; Garrigou-Lagrange 1936, 76-77n2; Giacotti Boscherini 1978, 85-88; Gilead 1983, 42; Goetschel 2004, 7, 40-42; Goetschel 2013, esp. 142-147, 162, 168, 170, 252n28; Goncalves 1977, 178 and 181; Gooch 2010, 293n12; Goodman 2002, 39, 52, 56, 57; Guigon 2012, 194; Hampshire 1951, 91-95, 116-117, 138; Hampshire 1988, 93; Hampshire 2005, 93-94, 108; Hannan 2011, 64-65; Harris 1975, 254; Hart 1983, 3, 28-29, 33-36, 46-49, 113-114, 117 (see also 48, 124, 133-137); Heil 2006a, 11, 86; Heil 2008, 20; Herreros 1995, 12; Huan 1914, 22-23, 98, 142-143, 248-254; Hubbeling 1964, 8, 13-15, 19-30, 37, 47, 67, 82-83, 122, 127-128, 154-156; Hübner 2014, 127-130; Hübner forthcoming-a; Hull 2005, 19-20; Ilyenkov 1982, 17-18, 20-23; Jolivet 1992, 112; Jordan 1963, ch. 24; Kenny 2006, esp. 32-33, 59, 94-97, 134; Kessler 1971b, 104-105, 110, 146; Koistinen 2009a, 172-174; Kolakowski 1958, ch. 2 and ch. 5.1; Kolakowski 2004, 19, 32-34, 40, 42, 71, 77, 115, 121, 180, 124, 231, 296, 301; Klever 1990, 94; Klever 1991a, 209; Klever 1993, 55-74; Klever 1994, 126; Klever 2010; Klever n. d; Klein 2003a, 160n14; Klein 2003b, 195-196, 204, 211-212, 214n10; Kluz 2012, 60; Kuznetsov 1987, esp. 180-184, 188, 192; Lachterman 1982, 478; Larvor 1992, 20-21; Leduc 2010, 3-22; Lespade 1991, 327; Levy 1989, 180; Licata 2009, esp. 648-649; Malinowski-Charles 2003, 147-149; Marshall 2013, 55n89; Matheron 1969, 72, 121, 122-125, 174-175, 180, 182, 212, 256-257; Matheron 1985, 354; Matson 1990, 87; Maxwell 1986; Maxwell 2002, 12 and 14; McKeon 1928b, 4-5, 46, 62, 211-212, 229-230; McShea 1969, 137 and 141; Melamed 2009, 53, 74-75; Melamed 2011b, 157-158; Melamed 2012b, 378-379, 379n53; Melamed 2013b, 108; Melamed 2013b, 57, 104n55; Milbank 2006, 200; Moltmann 2003, 456; Montag 1999, 65, 68-69; Moreau 1975, 54, 60; Moreau 2006, 35 and 38; Murray 2013, 95n19; Murthy 1995, 48-56; Myers 1935, 249; Naess 1981, 124; Naess 2001, 335, 345; Nassar 2012, esp. 148; Negri 1991, 86-89; Negri 1999, 120-121; Neshar 1979, 35-52; Newlands 2014; Newlands 2015, 255-272; Newlands forthcoming-a; Nielsen 2003, 44, 50n16; Noordegraaf 2011, 275; Nyden-Bullock 2007, 101-104, 121-126; Osier 1987, 325-329; Pabst 2012, 357; Parens 2012, 24, 42-49, 61, 78, 90n43; Peirce 1931-1936, 5.81; Picton 1907, 51; Pollock 1873, 573, 580n; Pollock 1966, 49, 137, 142, 186, 274, 284, 356; Ravven 2002, 193-198, 216; Ravven 2009, 127; Redshaw 2002; Rice 1969, 87-89; Rice 1975, 210; Rice 1978, 188; Rice 1985, 23; Rice 1990a, 281-285; Rice 1990b, 201-211; Rice 1991, 291-303; Rice 1992a, 99, 104-105; Rice 1994, 19-32; Rice 1996a, 36-39; Rice 1996b, 478-481; Rice 2002, 99; Rivaud 1906, 54; Rivaud 1926, sect. 3; Rivaud 1933a, 301-305; Rivaud 1933b, 214, 218-219; Robertson 1896, 294; Rorty 1996, 41, 52n22; Rosenthal 1999; Roth 1954, 25, 49, 122, 184, 225; Ruiz 1981, 50; Savan 1958, 217; Savan 1994, 9, 15, 18; Salinas 1976, 62, 87-103, 149, 192-198, 235-239, 253n556, 278, 294; Saw 1951, 27, 53-54, 163 (but see 76); Scribner 2002, 154; Seargent 1985, 13; Sévérac 2005, 322-327; Schaub 1933, 17; Schmidt 2009b, 89n28; Schütze 1923,

40-41; Shirley 2002, 752n3; Smith 2003, 89-90; D. Steinberg 1984, 318-319 (although see 309 and 315); Stephen 1880, 761; Stout 1936, 9; Strawser 2011; Swiderski 1980, 342, 344-345; Taylor 1972a, 190-191n4; Taylor 1972b, 293n3; Temkine 1994, 438-446; Van Bunge 2012, 93; Verbeek 2007, 261; Verbeek 2009; Viljanen 2010, 30; Walther 1971, 86-99; Ward 2011, 26; Wernham 1953, 78-79; Wienpahl 1977, 506; Williams 1966, 107; Williams 2007, 363; Yovel 1989, 162-163, 233n; Yovel 1990b, 164-165; Yovel 1991, 82-85, 95; Zac 1964, 22; Zac 1972b, 425; Zac 1985, 123.

D.5 Sampling of realist-leaning literature

The following list is a small sampling of those who seem at least to lean toward seeing Spinoza as a realist concerning universals.

Aaron 1952, 92; Aleksandrov 1946, 255-256; Alexander 1921, 31, 60; Allbutt 1901, 35-36; Amrine 2013, 255-256; Bagley 2009, pers. corr.; Bartuschat 2011, 238, 242-246; Bayle 1983, 113-114, 121, 140; Bayle 1991, entry on “Spinoza” and entry on “Abelard” note; Belaief 1971, 69; Bennett 1981, esp. sect. 6; Bennett 1984, 39ff, 302; Berleant 1982, 188; Boodin (see Williams 1933, 105); Bogdanov 1920, 201; Borges 1964, 156; Braicovich 2008, 113-140; Broad 1933a, 159-160, 165; Broad 1933b, 304, 310; Brunschvicg 1920, 317; Brunschvicg 1923, 253-268; Brunschvicg 1951, 30, 96, 122, 156, 162, 292, 295, 299; Burstein 1998, 222; Busolt 1875, esp. 45-48, 145; Bykhovski 1928 in light of Bykhovski 1947, 9; Cahan 1996, 86-90; Campomanes 1981, 111ff, esp. 142, 167, 202, 209, 222-231, 241; Carr 1978, 241-252, esp. 248-249; Camerer 1877, 84-85, 131, 190, 299; Carruth 1890, 299; Chaudhuri 1962, 1-5; Coffey 1917, 303-304; Copleston 1960, 232, 234; Cushman 1919, 113n1, 319, 331; Deleuze 1968, 255-256; Deleuze 1992, 277; Deleuze 1997, 24.5; Dewey 1882, 257; Di Vona 1960, vi, 46-47, 56, 81-83, 119, 140, 145, 152-165; Donagan 1973a, 164-181; Donagan 1988, 51-52; Dravid 1972, 419n57; Eisenberg 1977, 117n8; Elbogen 1898, 31; Ferstler 1975, 425; Feuerbach (see Akselrod 1952, 62); Feuerbach 1833, 374n; Feuerbach 1983, 209-210; Floistad 1978, 45; Forsyth, 1948, 301; Friend and Feibleman 1936, 31-32; Fullerton 1894, 220 and 232; Fullerton 1899, 25-53, 58-77; Fullerton 1999, 89-94, 97-103; Gebhardt 1921, 208; Gilead 1999, 169-174; Goethe (see Amrine 2011, 48n2); Gottlieb 2003, 189-193; Gottlieb 2011, 172n148; Gullan-Whur 1996, 47-48, 48n8; Gunn 1924, 29; Hall 2013; Haserot 1950, 469-492; Hegel 1968, 17:89-90; Hegel 1995, 3.154; Hodgson 1883, 95; Juilett 2001 25-29; Kisner 2008, 764; Kline 1952, 43-44, 187; Kordella 2011, 333-335; Krishnananda 1999, 40-49; Lasbax 1926, 104-106; Leavitt 1991a, 204; LeGrant 2009, esp. ch. 2 and ch. 3; Lenin 1936, 276, 291, 327; Lermond 1988, 3, 19-21, 51-69, 76n10, 81n25; Lèvêque 1923, 83-96; Lloyd 1994, 45, 54, 142-168, 173; Lloyd 1996, 67, 133; MacKinnon 1924, 345-359; Mahnke 1925, Intro.2n11, §18; Marshall 2009; Martin 2008, 497ff; Martineau 1882, 111, 126-128, 143-144, 150n2, 153, 185; Meehan 2009, 55; Mendelssohn (see Gottlieb 2003, 189; Gottlieb 2011,

101); Monaghan 2011, 196; Nordberg 1977, 396; Odegard 1959, 32, 40-41, 49, 122, 145n73; Parkinson 1954, 7.6; Parkinson 1978, 49; Powell 1906, 88-89, 90n1, 150n1, 272n2, 277, 318n1; Préposiet 1977, 140; Presutti 2014, 209-222; Preus 1989, 83, 87; Rabenort 1911, 17; Rackwitz 1884; Ramond 1995, 100, 245-249; Reese 1980, 546; Rixner 1829, 28, 110, 246; Rudas 1933, 575-576; Scruton 1995, 183; Segal 2000, 10-11; Sen 1966, 103-104; Sharp 2009, pers. corr.; Sharp 2011b, 107; Sharp 2011c; Shilkarski 1914, 243, 256; Shmueli 1970, 177-178, 187-188; Sontag 1973, 439; D. Steinberg 1984, 309 and 315 (although see 318-319); D. Steinberg 1987, esp. 190n6; D. Steinberg 2009, 152n22, 155; Soyarslan 2013; Soyarslan 2014, 244; J. Steinberg 2013, 400n46; Stephenson 2010, esp. 45-149; Taine 1904, 257-258; Thilly 1914, 250, 254, 300-302; Tweedale 1982, 41; Tymyanski 1934, 58; Ueberweg 1909, 67 (see vol. 1 section 90); Varyash 1926, 218; Vaught 2008, 228n24; Waller 2012, 107-108 in light of 114n17; Watt 1972, 186-187; Wild 1930, xlix-l; Windelband 1901, 408-410; Wyld 1875, 381-382; Yovel 1994, 98-101; Yovel 1999, 45, 60n6; Yovel 2003, 127; Zulawski 1899, 29n.

D.6 Sampling of contradictory-leaning literature

The following list is a small sampling of those who seem at least to lean toward seeing Spinoza as contradictory on the matter of the status of universals.

Bernardete 1980, 70; Bidney 1940, 146-147, 379; Caird 1888, 4-5; Caird 1902, 156-157; De Deugd 1966, 34; Feibleman 1951, 54-55; Feibleman 1951b, 386-389; Feibleman 1951b, 388; Feibleman 1954b, 118; Friend and Feibleman 1936, 11, 31-32; Grey 2013, 381-382; Hubbeling 1964, 30, 37, 47, 82; Hubbeling 1966, 47-48; MacKinnon 1924, 358-359; Martineau 1882, 150n2; Powell 1906, 90n1, 150n1, 318n1; Ritchie 1904, 24; Savan 1958, 212-225; Schoen 1977, 539-540, 545-546; Stout 1936, 9; Suskovich 1983, 126; Taylor 1972a, 190-191, 191n4; Taylor 1972b, 293n3; Ueberweg 1909, 67.

D.7 Works not listed above

The following is a list of all the literature not mentioned in the above “samples.” Together with Sections D.5 and D.6, this section amounts to a relatively exhaustive catalogue of all the accessible places where commentators discuss Spinoza and universals.

Aalderink 2004, 85, 89, 92n38; Abbott 1966, 17, 158-160, 188-192; Abensur 2003; Abraham 1977, 30-37; Adler 1989; Adler 1999, 211-212; Akal 2002; Akkerman, Hubbeling, and Westerbrink 1977, 454-455, 495; Alanen 2011, 19; Alexander 1923,

42, 59; Alexander 2013, 8; Allison 1975, 76, 110-111; Allison 1987, 115-116; Allison 1992, 55-67; Almog 2014, 57-58; Alquié 1981, 110, 149, 194-196, 217; Altwicker 1971, 8-20, 94, 175, 194-195, 200-204, 239; Alzog 1868, 358; Amann 2000, 147, 205-206, 255; Andler 1895, 103; Andrick 2010, 231-235, 241-244; Ansaldi 2001, 742-745; Apel and Ludz 1976, 236; Appuhn 1926, 258-259; Aquila 1978, esp. 281, 284; Aquila 1983, 161-180; Arican 2004, 91; Arnold 1865, 263; Arréat 1904, 180-182; Asakura 2012; Ashley 2006, 23; Atlan 2011, 90-91, 240; Auerbach 1882, 79; Avenarius 1868, 25, 37; Ayers 1998, 1079; Ayers 2007, 53-54, 55-58, 62-78; Badaloni 1969, 99; Badaloni 1994, 312n10; Bagley 1990, 881; Bain 1868, 414; Balibar 1990, 58-60, 74-75; Balibar 1993, 210-211; Balibar 1994, esp. 29; Balibar 1997, 22-23, 28; Balibar 2006, 6-9; Baltas 2012, 155; Banfi 1969, 198, 214-215, 290, 311; Barbaras 2006, 73; Barbone 1992, 344-345; Barbone 1998, 232; Bartuschat 1977, 34-37; Bartuschat 1990a, 214-215; Bartuschat 1990b, 365; Bartuschat 1991, 24-26; Bartuschat 1992, esp. 114; Bartuschat 1996, 78, 95, 108; Barwirsch 1972, 18-25, 29, 80; Becher 1980, 9, 27; Bellangé 1912, 23-27, 229-230; Bennett 1994, 15; Berkeley 1944, Notebook A 826; Bernard 1934, 183-184; Bernard 1977, xiv, 137-138; Bernard 1995, 40-41; Bernardete 1980, 70-71; Berndtson 1954, 147-151; Bernhardt 1985a, 117n11, 128-129; Bernhardt 1985b, 242n32; Bernstein 1998, see ch. 2; Bernstein 2002, 6; Bernstein 2005, 152; Berrod 1913, 210; Berthelot et al. 1886-1902a, 1189-1191; Berthelot et al. 1886-1902b, 202; Beyssade 1990, 182-184, 186; Bianchi 1997, 387-396; Bianchi Barata Ribeiro 2008, 41-52; Biasutti 1990, 67; Biasutti 1992, 284; Bidney 1936, 579-580; Bidney 1942, 57; Billecoq 1987, 66-67, 72-73, 77-78, 151; Billecoq 1997, 49-50; Bird and Schaeffer 1989; Birx 1977, 80; Blau 1962, 259; Blavatsky 2008, 97; Bleich 2013, 29-30n53; Blom 1993, 326; Blum 1904, 518; Bolduc 2009, 86-89; Bordoli 2007, 338; Bos 2014, 330-331; Boss 1982, 42, 83-85, 324, 311-313, 324; Boss 1987, 88, see 93, 102-103; Bottici 2009, 376-379; Bottici 2012, 596-597, 601-603; Bouganim 2000, 204-205, 210; Boutroux 1929, 4, 68, 162, 215; Bove 1992, 82; Bove 2008, 29-30; Bowles 1999, 99-100; Bandom 1976, 157-158; Bray 2002, 375; Bréhier 1937, 26-29; Brenner-Golomb 2010, 110, 206; Breton 1973, 20; Brightman 1925, 36, 139-140, 152; Bröchner 1857, 78, 103, 97-106; Bruch 1970, 217-219; Brugger 1999, 44; Brunner 1977, 44; Bruno 2000, ch. 3, ch. 4; Brunschvicg 1893, 462; Brunschvicg 1901, 477; Brunschvicg 1904, 779; Brunschvicg 1953, 42, 52, 107-108, 108n169, 158, 232; Bryant 2012; Brykman 2001, 26; Brykman 2010, see 106; Buergler 2007; Bullio 2011, 36-39, 49, 52-53n59, 123n18; Burger 1860; Bwele 1984, 36-37, 48; Caillois, Francès, and Misrahi 1954, 1404n116, 1415n51; Caird 1888, 2-5, 12, 27-34; Caird 1902, 156-157; Camerer 1903, 30, 142; Campos 2012, 25, 40, 74; Camps 1999, 67; Canone and Totaro 2005, 104; Carriero 1991, esp. 77; Carriero 2015, 160-182; Cassirer 1911, 102-125; Castaño Piñam 1954, 12; Chajes 1869, 13; Chakrabarti 1975, 371 and 380n20; Checchia 1919, 11-12; Clemens 1899, 45-50, 69; Clemens 2011, 67-71, 91-92; Clero 1995, 469; Cline n.d.; Cohen 2008, 198-201; Coleridge 1853, 300-302; Colie 1963, 206; Collins 1984, 16, 111-114, 180, 309, 330; Collins 2014, 116-124; Colsenet 1880, 15; Cook 1986, esp. 200; Cook 1988, 416-418; Cook 1998, 116n9; Cook 2007, 79; Copleston 1946, 42-56; Corso 1940, xvi-xvii; Cosenza

1953, 169-194; Cottier 1943, 18-19, 23-25, 67, 76, 94, 155; Courtney 1897, 9; Cramer 1966, 114-119; Cramer 1977, 6; Crane and Sandler 2005, 194; Creighton 1892, 203; Creighton 1900, 423-429; Crippa 1965, 63-64; Cunningham 2002, 63; Curley 1973b, 162; Curley 1973a, 49-51, 57; Dahlbeck 2014, 9, 18, 21-22; Dalos 1959, ix, 31-33, 159; Dascal 1990, 131-133; Dea 2007, 141-157; Dea 2008; DeBrabander 2009, 61-62; De Bruyn 2014, 6; De Careil 1854, xxxiii, lix, lxxxix; De Careil 1862, 96, 122-123, 131, 206; Decker 2008, 488; De Cuzzani 2002; De Dijn 1974, 49; De Dijn 1978, 28-31; Deely 2003, 78; De Graaff 1977, 157; Delbos 1990, 48-61, 202, 400, 410; Delbos 2005, 103-104, 108-110, 140; De La Cámara 1999, 195; Delahunty 1985, 55-62, 85-87, 136; Della Rocca 1996, 38, 87, 90, 133, 187n13; Della Rocca 2008, 95, 179-182; Deleuze 1981, 65-68; Deleuze 1988, 45-48; De Smet 1961, 61; De Souza Chauí 1981, 13, 42-43; Dessauer 1868, 14; Dewing 1903, 109; Di Vona 1975, 95, 102-103; Di Vona 1977a, 49; Di Vona 1977b, 681-706; Di Vona 1977c; Di Vona 2013, 215-225; Dobbs-Weinstein 1999a, 84n35; Dobbs-Weinstein 1999b; Dobbs-Weinstein 2009, 95-111; Dockstader 2009, 146; Domínguez 1988, 310n89, 328n251, 330n265, 346; Domínguez 1990, 231n107, see 279; Domínguez 1992, 46; Domínguez 1996, 272-274; Donovan 2009, 174; Dorter 2014; Ducheyne n.d., n3, Section 4; Dufour-Kowalska 1973, 32, 195-216; Dufrenne 1954, 401-402; Dungan 1999, 457; Dunham 1916, 78; Dunin-Borkowski 1910, 219, 406-407, 436, 496; Düsing 2003, 679; Eklund 2014, 13; Eisenstein 1977, 78, 79-80, 80n4; Eisenstein 1989, 18-20; Eisler 1904, 24, 26; Ellsiepen 2011, 132; Elovaara 1989, 65-66; Elwes 1951, xxvi; Erdmann 1836, xxxii, 66; Erdmann 1897, 86; Eremiev Toro 2008, 53-60; Erhardt 1908, 38, 70-72, 128, 279, 308-309, 372-375, 386, 389, 400, 467; Espinos 2011, 402-403; Espinosa Rubio 2008, 354n2; Evangelista 2012, 225-238; Evangelista 2014, 92-115; Evenden 2012, 170-171, 179n52; Ewald 1790, xxxvi-xxxvii, 36-37 (comment on 1a5); Ewald 1796, 10-12, 240-248 (comment on 2p40s1); Fabro 1968, 134, 139, 217; Falckenberg 1999, 131; Falgueras 1990, 74n81; Federn 1902, 95-98; Feibleman 1946, 116-117; Feibleman 1951a, 54-55; Feibleman 1951b, 386-389; Feibleman 1954a, 346-347; Fernández 2010; Fernández García 1990, 327-328; Feyerabend 1910, 84-86; Findlay 2007, 433; Fischer 1898, 492-493, 496, 503, 556; Fischer 1990, 161; Floistad 1973, 101-127; Floistad 1986, 234, 241; Flügel 1905, 7, 27, 40; Forbes 1993, 83n15, 167, 197; Förster 2009, 212; Fox 1990, 73; Fraisse 1978, 152-166; Freudenthal 1887; Friedmann 1962, 44, 258, 311; Funk 1983, 63-64; Gabbey 2008, 40, 46, 50-57; Gallicet Calvetti 1968, 33n63; Galli n.d., 42, 63, 124, 170; Ganault 1989, 87; Gangle 2007, 150-151; Garratt 2010, 138-139; A. Garrett 1997, 174n250; A. Garrett 2003, 43, 45, 106, 110, 153; D. Garrett 1990, 96-97; D. Garret 1994, 73-101; D. Garrett 2008, 14; D. Garrett 2010, 108, 111; D. Garrett 2014; Garrigou-Lagrange 1939, 110, 118, 132; Garver 2006, 362, 367-369; Garver 2012; Garver 2014, 836, 850n11; Gebhardt 1940, 126; Gebhardt 1965, xxi, 147, 148; Gebhardt 2000, 96-97; Geru [Гepy] 2007, 42-43; Giacotti Boscherini 1970, 769-771, 893, 914, 1003, 1018-1019, 1064, 1073, 1138; Giacotti Boscherini 1977, 190; Giacotti Boscherini 1991, 115; Giannetto 1980, 251-262; Gilead 1990, 457; Ginzburg 1926; Glouberman 1979, 6; Goldschmidt 1955, 591; Gooch 2010, 293n12; Goodheir 1978, 7-11, 13;

Goodman 2001, 388; Goodman 2009, 616; Graeser 1991, 341-344; Gram 1968; Grange 1988; Grene 1973, xi; Grosjean 1907, 223-228; Gross 1940, 388; Grossbaach 1829, 30-32, 38; Grey 2013, 381-382; Grey forthcoming; Gueret, Robinet, Tombeur 1977, 13, 457, 481; Guillemeau 2006, 102-103; Gullan-Whur 2000, 77-78, 132, 162-163, 334n78; Gullan-Whur 2002, n42; Gunning 1903, 44-46, 106, 140; Gupta and Wilcox 1983; Guzzo 1964, 19, 60n125, 84, 179; Habel 2013, 79, 112; Hagemeyer 2012, 153-154; Hallam 1999, 78-79; Hallett 1928, 288-289; Hallett 1930, 15-16, 47, 94-97, 115, 153, 173, 313; Hallett 1935, 368; Hallett 1942a, 151-152; Hallett 1942b, 225-226; Hallett 1957, 71-72; Hamelin 1957, 168; Hamlyn 1967, 19; Hamlyn 2006, 294; Hammacher 1974, 90; Hampe 2011, 253-257; Handing 1989, 221-223; Harris 1973, 23-27, 50-67, 106; Harris 1978, 119ff, 135n6; Harris 1986, 133-135, 145; Harris 1987, 518-519; Harris 1990, 360-362; Harris 1992b, 16; Harris 1995b, 8-18, 27 36, 207, 212; Hartshorne 1932, 458; Hauréau 1850, 1.150; Hausse 1882, 12 in light of 140; Hebler 1850, 41, 47; Hecker 1975, 380, 1227-1228; Heckler 1990, 70; Heil 2006b; Heimbrock 1981, 67, 131, 134, 144; Helfferich 1846, 4, 30, 60, 64-65; Hervet 2011, 95-111, 153, 176-186, 270-273; Hickes 1709, esp. 159; Hicks 1917, 352; Hocking and Mosès 1939, 124; Höfler and Mally 1922, 96; Homan 2012, 38, 88n92, 136, 168; Hong 1989, 221-222, 235-236; Hornäck 2004, 85-86; Hotton 2013, 19; Houle 1997, 431; Howie 2002, 59-60, 64, 124, 138, 189; Hoyack 1966, 100-104; Hubbeling 1966, 47-48; Hubbeling 1986, 222; Hubert 1994, 108, 112, 119; Hübner 2010, 133-134n100, 177n5, 273-274n250; Hübner 2015, 233-236; Hübner forthcoming-b, 33, n87; Huenemann 2002, 218; Hunter 1989; Husson 1953, 118; Hutton 2007; Iofrida 1993, 251-252; Iverach 1904, 158-160, 216; Jacobi 1789, xx-xxii, xxix, xxxiii, 130, 173; Jacobi 1819, 2.193-195, 2.263; Jahāngīrī 1985, see index “nominalism”; James 2012, 147n31; Janet 1896, 497; Jaquet 1997; Jaquet 2005, 85; Jarrett 1977, 86; Jarrett 1978, 39; Jarrett 1981, 356; Jarrett 1990, 174; Jarrett 1991, 466-469, 479-480, 483n12; Jarrett 2002, 161-160; Jarrett 2007, 35-36, 83-84; Jasinowski 1972, 262-263; Jaspers 1966, 2.298, 2.318; Jaspers 1974, 28-29; Javier Espinosa Antón 2008, 36-38; Joachim 1901, 93-97; Joachim 1940, 37; Johansson 2013, 238; Jongeneelen 1996, 17-19, 18n12; Jongeneelen 2001, n10; Kashap 1971, 104, 108; Kashap 1972, xv; Kashap 1987, 83; Keller 1847, 26; Kennington 1980, 298, 310-311; Kim forthcoming; Kisner 2011, 109; Kisser 1990, 336; Kisser 1991, 372; Kisser 1993, 25-28, 39; Kisser 1998, 20, 41-42, 49, 60; Klatzkin 1967, see index “*notiones universales*” (page זש) and also “*universalis*,” “*allegemein*” (pages אה-אז); Klein 2001, 41-50; Klein 2002, 298, 305-306, 316-319; Klever 1986a, 184-185; Klever 1986b, 91, 103, 161, 181, 189; Klever 1988, 189n38; Klever 1989, 328; Klever 1991b, 56, 61-62; Klever 1996, 121, 208, 216-219, 259, 451; Koistinen 1991, 80-81; Koistinen 2009a, 172; Kolakowski 1958, 167-175, 440-453; Koyré 1935, 294; Kramer 1865, esp. 25-26, 39; Krop 1996, 63n19; Krop 2014, 261; Kratz 1871, 9-10; Kym 1875, 395; La Bruyère 1929, 473; Lachterman 1977, 87; Lacroix 1970, 45-46; Laerke 2009; Laerke 2014, 525-526; Laerke 2015, 111-112; Laerke n.d.; Lagneau 1898, 147-148; Lagrée 1990, 473; Lagrée 1992, 28-30; Lagrée 2004, 42-43, 91, 181, 219-220; Lamb 2007, 14; Lampert 1995, ch. 2n6; Landucci 2009, see sect. 7. “Un’etica nell’Etica”; Laporte 1937a,

276; Laporte 1937, 120-121n8, 126n3; Largeault 1971, 139, 178; Latta 1900, 247; Laurendeau 2000, 41-80; Laux 1993, 70, 96, 111; LeBuffe 2010a, 57; Lecrivain 1986, 21; Ledinský 1871, 9, 16, 31; Leibniz 1854, 47; Leibniz 1969, 554 (see also *New Essays* 59 and *Theodicy* 77-80); Lenoir 1916, 867-868; Leslie 1997; Levy 1990, 256; Levy 2000, 4n13, 65n16, 124, 147-148, 241, 295n25, 299; Lin 2005, 265; Lin 2009, 265-267; Loemker 1972, 130, 146; Loewe 1862, 311; Loewe 1966; Loptson 1988, 27-28; Lord 2011a, 1092; Lord 2011b, 96; Love 1948, 14-21; Löwenhardt 1872, 1, 38, 46, 57, 73, 110, 113-114, 128, 139, 298, 379, 398; Lucash 1991, 176-177; Lucash 1993, 311-322; Lucash 1994, 11-29; Lucash 1995, 219-236; Macherey 1990, 212, 217; Macherey 1992, 60, 78, 148, 248; Macherey 1997a, 281-285, 310-311; Macherey 2011, 58; Mack 2010, 7; Mack 2011, 115, 124, 133n48; Maidansky 1999, 277-278; Malinowski-Charles 2004; Manning 2002, 208n33; Marenchin 1987, 23; Marion 1994, 146; Maritain 1937, 1; Maritain 1962, 112; Mark 1977, 22, 29; C. Marshall 2013, 192; E. Marshall 2006, 109-111, 180, 257; E. Marshall 2013, 55n89, 134; T. Marshall 2011, 19-51; Martens 1978, 109; Martin 2007, 39; Martinetti 1987, 157-158; Martinez 1992, 148-149, 153; Masih 1994, 219, 243; Mason 2007, 22, 29; Matheron 1978, 175-185; Matheron 1986, 142; Matheron 1988, 97-108; Matheron 1991a, 23-34; Matheron 1991b, 105-108; Matson 1977, 76; Matsuda 2009; Maurice 1999, 89; Maxwell 1987, 483; McGilvary 1900, 402-403; Mckeon 1928a, 138-142; McKeon 1930, 287-289; McKeon 1983, 37; McMurtrie 2011, 41-42, 98-99, 109, 218-219; McShea 1985, 282-286; McShea 1994, 63-69; S. Melamed 1933, 65-66, 164ff; Y. Melamed 2000, 11-12; Melamed 2013c, 209; Melamed 2015, 277; Mendelssohn 1786, 75; Merrell 1991, 2; Messeri 1990, esp. 146-147, 147n24; Mignini 1981, 144; Mignini 1983, 109, 129; Mignini 2009, 209-224; Milhau 1955, 142n4, Miller 1895, 641; Miller 2004, 572; Miller 2005, 164-170; Millet 1970a, 69-70; Millet 1970b, 77n3, 78n2; Misrahi 1993, 141; Misrahi 2005, 268; Modak 1970, 30; Montag 1998a, 64-73; Montag 1998b, vii; Moody 1965, 95; Moreau 1975, 73, 84, 127, 148, 160; Moreau 1987, 485n37; Moreau 1994, 251-254, 312; Morfino 2002, 146-148; Mori 2014, 104; Morris 1877, 294; Morrison 1989, 359, 364n8; Morrison 1993, 412-413; Morrison 2013; Morvan 2004, 15-15; Müller 1840, 2.519-522; Münter and Köppen 1758, 21-23; Musschenbroek 1748, 29; N. A. 1881, 63-65; N. A. 1897, 420; N. A. 1900, 5; Nabert 1928, 230, 233; Nadler 2001b, 128-130; Nadler 2013, sect. 2.5; Naess 1986, 281; Nails 2005, 57-72; Natanson 1970, 213; Negri 1991, 86-98; Negri 1999, 120-21; Neri 1992, 74-75, 75n11; Neshar 1994, 162-163; Newlands 2012, 44n24; Nicchiarelli 1999, 178-180, 186; Noiré 1900, 222-223, 273, 279; Nørreklit 1973, 190-191; Odegard 1986, 550; Ofman 2003, 39; Ohana 1965, 157, 168; Opitz 1876, 193-204; Otto 1994, 67-68; Pacho-Garcia 1977, 638; Paoletti 2005, 279; Papay 1963, 169-170; Parchment 1996a, ch. 3; Parchment 1996b, 68n20, 70-71n31; Park 2006; Parkinson 1989, 238, 239n91-93; Parkinson 1973, 75-76; Parkinson 1974, 28, 35-37; Parkinson 2000, 334n64-66; Pater 1969, see 173; Peiffer 2014, 10n38, 30, 43, 54-56, 65, 85; Peña Garcia 1974, 20-22, 38, 84, 107; Peña Garcia 1975, 156-157, 157n19; Penglaou 1964, 457; Perelman 1959, 135; Pérez-Espejo 1964, 29-37; Perler 2014, 242-243; Peterman 2012, 96-99, 110-114, 175; Pflugbeil 1902, 18-19; Pichler 1913, 396-397; Pietersma 1988; Piguet 1987, 28,

32, 100, 106, 110; Pillon 1898; Pineda 2012, 74n1; Piro 1994; Piro 2009; Poiret 1715, 83, 127, 197-199, 405, 630, 851; Pollock 1896, 573; Pombo 1990, 163; Préposiet 1967, 87, 95, 106, 187; Pruss 2002, sect. 4; Pucelle 1960, 52; Pulcini 1914, xxi, 5, 24, 68, 75, 83, 88-89, 99, 102, 177, 194; Raesfeld 1858, 11-14; Ramond 1999a, 84-91; Ramond 1999b, 22; Ramond 2007, 39; Rasmussen 2010, 254n64.17, 258-259n74.25, 273n131.27; Ravven 1989, sect. 4; Ravven 2003, 392; Rawes 2012, 76-78; Read 2007, 511; Reale Diliberto 1967, 23, 30n112; Renz 2010; Renz 2015, 297; Rice 1974, 147; Rice 1984, 187, 192, 195-196; Rice 1992b, 220n17; Richter 1898, 19-20, 23; Riley 1904, 305; Ritchie 1904, 24; Rivaud 1926, sect. 3; Robertson 1896, 294n; Robet 1907, 667; Robet 1909, 420; Robinson 1928, 349n; Robinson 1932, 449, 456-457; Röd 1977, 92; Röd 1990, 141; Röd 2002, 249, 253ff; Rodríguez Donís 2008, 74n7; Rojek 2008, 375; Rojo 1976, 215-216; Roşca 1911, 14-16; Rosenthal 1989, 105, 108, 113, 176, 204, 210; Rosenthal 2008, 118, 126; Rosenthal 2013, 119; Rosenthal and Yudin 1967, 428, 457; Ross 1989, 120-148, 227; Rotenstreich 1977, 121, 124, 133; Rottner 1972, 125-133; Rottner 1979, 190-198; Rousset 1968, 48-57, 85, 94n134, 124; Rousset 1985, 133-139; Rousset 1986, 231; Rousset 1999, 20; Rousset 2004, 14; Rossi 1979, 240-246; Rovere 2010, 76-78; Rubin 1868, 15; Ruiz 1972, 66, 98-103, 134; Russell 2008, 64 (see Loux 1976, 27-28; Schoedinger 1992, 116; Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2008, 56); Ryan 2009, Ch. 6n55; Sacksteder 1977a, 144, 151, 153; Sacksteder 1977b, 148, 155; Sacksteder 1985, 401n6; Sacksteder 1991, 75-87; Sahakian 1968, 141-142, 189; Sainz Pezonaga 2008, 133-160; Saisset 1842, xxiv-xxix; Saisset 1862a, esp. 332; Saisset 1862b, 203, 249; Šajkovic 1974, 93-98; Salinas 1991, 190; Sanborn 1939, 234; Sanchez Estop 1988, 232, 234; Sandler 2001, 29; Sandri 2009, 29-33, 65-67, 79, 82, 90, 93; Sangiacomo 2011, 81; Sangiacomo 2013, 3-41; San Juan 2002; Santayana 1948, xix; Santinelli 1990, 396; Santinelli 2012; Saw 1969, see 1-2; Scarbi 2009, 97-99; Schaarschmidt 1845; Schaarschmidt 1850, 66, 79, 83, 183; Scharfstein 1998, 400-401n; Schechter 2014, 83; Schechter 2015, 254; Schewe 1987, 113, 157; Schewe and Engstler 1990, 15; Schliesser forthcoming, sect. 1A, 1An20, 1C; Schlüter 1987, 244-248; Schmidt 1868, 26, 34, 59, 179; Schmidt 2009a, 290-291; Schmidt 2014, sect. 1, sect. 2; Schneider 1981, 219, 222-223; Schnepf 1996, 143, 159-160, 200, 215-216, 247n52; Schoen 1977, 539-540, 545-546; Schopenhauer 1926, 27, 92, 101; Schopenhauer 1966-1968, I.328; Schrader 1985, 4-9; Schuhmann 1987, 49, 65-66; Schuhmann 2004, 60; Schütt 1981, 32, 36-37, 50n73; Schwartz 2007, 11; Schweid 1983, 91-101; Scribano 2008a, 45; Scribano 2008b, 228-229; Scruton 1986, 67; Segond 1900, 664-666; Segond 1930, 114; Selcer 2014, 49; Semarari 1967, 11-12; Sensi 2008, 111n45-46, 125n58; Serra Hunter 1933, 36-37; Sévérac 1996, 108-109; 2005, 188; Sharp 2005a, 64, 82; Sharp 2007, 327; Shein 2006, 135-136; Shmueli 1977, 202, 207-208; Shmueli 1984, 57-64; Siebrand 1984, 219; Sigwart 1842, 150; Sigwart 1866, 24, 40, 48-52, 66, 102, 121; Sigwart and Van Der Linde 1870, xxxvii, xlvi, 102n*; Silverman 2014, 119; Simonsen 1941, see 20; Skeaff 2013, 152, 158; Skulsky 2009, 63-64, 184; Smith 1886, lxxix, 81, 87; Smith 2003, 89-91, 168; Sokolov 1977, 166-167; Sontag 1995, 55-63; Spaier 1930, 415; Spindler 2009, 91; Sprigge 1987, 276; Sprigge 1997, 3-22; Spruit 2014, 185; Stahlberg 12, 68, 115-116,

134; Stamos 2003, 288; Starcke 1921, 44-47; Sterian 1972, 262-265, 281, 291; Stilianou 1994; Stybe 1969, 77; Suchting 2004, 25n50; Suhamy 2001, pas-59; Suhamy 2010; Suskovich 1983, ch.6; Sutcliffe 2007, 420-421, 427-428, 430, 431; Tatián 2001, 118-119; Taylor 1852, 68-69n; Taylor 1946, 97-112; Teixeira 1954; Thayer 1922, 41-42, 56; Thilo 1893, 304-319; Thomas 1840, 80, 87-88, 91-92, 168-169; Thomas 1848, 25; Thomas 1999, 64-67, 105; Timm 1978, 443-462; Tosel 1984, 174-175, 251, 275; Tosel 1990, 324n8; Trendelenburg 1850, 27, 48; Tripathi 1957, 50, 246-247; Troisfontaines 1992, 70; Trouillard 1955, 303; Tsap 2002, ch. 6; Tufts 1900, 560; Turbiglio 1874, 18-20, 115, 139, 141, 145, 233, 271-272, 315; Umphrey 2002, 157n77; Urban 1949, 75; Urtel 1868, esp. 12, 19-20, 33; Van de Pitte and Carraud 1985, 185-186; Vadet 1976, 39n2; Van Bunge 2004; Van Den Hoven 1988, 33ff; Van Der Bend 1968, 9; Van Der Hoeven 1973, 15; Van Der Horst 1933, 54; Van Der Linde 1862, 47, 61; Van Ruler 2009; Vater 1980, 134-143; Vázquez García 1986, 15-17, 23; Verbeek 2002, 82n145, 110-111; Verbeek 2003, 18, 172-173, 204; Verbeek 2009, 256, 263; Verbeek 2014, 206; Verene and Vico 1990, 2-18; Veyne 2010, 51; Viegas 2013, see 79, 96, 231, 235, 241, 292; Viljanen 2007, 404n33; Viljanen 2011, 15-16, 527; Viljanen 2015, 186-187; Vincent 2002, 8-9; Vinciguerra 2002, 100-105; Vinciguerra 2006, 257-258; Vinciguerra 2009, see 8; Vinciguerra 2012, 138; Vinti 1979, 67-69, 68-69n53; Volco 2012, 368-370; Volkelt 1872, 63-65; Von Kirchmann 1871a, 24, 39, 50, 56, 59; Von Kirchmann 1871b, 100; Von Kirchmann 1871c, 3, 14, 71-80, 175; Von Kirchmann 1872, 6, 36; Von Orelli 1843, 101, 127-128, 131; Von Walter 1871, esp. 36; Vuillemin 1984, 320-322, 385-388; Wahl 1931, 347; Walsh 1929, 311; Walshe 1933, 355, 366; Walther 1982, 11; Walther 1990a, 293; Walther 1990b, 109, 118, 129n8; Wand 1971, 532; Ward 2002, 135; Wartofsky 1977, 460, 467, 468-469; Wasser 2007, 50, 59; Watson 1895, 341-342; Weber 1909, 338, 386; Wegener 1873, 17; Wenzel 1907, 52, 100, 113, 118-122, 191, 333, 336-337; Wernham 1952, 188; West 2010, 43; Wetlesen 1979, 60-64, 312; Wetzel 1873, 13-14, 49; White 1999, 192-193; Whittaker 1968, 20, 149; Wiedeburg 1962, 51; Wiehl, R. 2012; Wienpahl 1978, 215; Wienpahl 1979, 79, 105; Weiss 1961, 164; Wilbur 1976a, 2-3; Wilbur 1976b, 75-79; Willis 1870, xxvii; Willmann 1907, 226; Wilson 1999a, 345, 351n30; Wilson 1999b, 114; Wion 2011, 26; Wittichius 1690, esp. preface, A2, A3, 7-12, 31-33, 54, 62, 132-133, 141, 147, 153, 235, 239; Wolf 1963, 197n50; Wolf 1966, 59-60, 377n82; Wolff 1962, #697-#698; Wolfson 1921, 110-112; Wolfson 1923, 170-178; Wolfson 1934, 1.75, 1.148-153, 1.437-438, 2.124-125; Wolfson 1937a, 345; Wolfson 1937b, 310-311; Wolfson 1940, 268-294; Wollenberg 2012, 295; Wolstein 1953, 447; Wood 1990, 225; Woolhouse 1993, 155; Wouter 2003, 632; Yaffe 2012, 429; Yakira 1989, ch. 5; Yakira 1990a, 126-131; Yakira 1990b, 79; Yakira 1992, 310; Yakira 2004, 72; Yovel 1983, 80; Yovel 1990a, 280-281; Zac 1963, 114-115, 127, 257-258; Zac 1972a, 47-66; Zac 1985, 224, 235-236; Ziporyn 2012, 125-140; Zourabichvili 1994, 85-107; Zourabichvili 2002, 35, 97, 161, 192, 202.

D.8 Suggestions for locating additional sources

Here are some suggestions for reaching missed materials or materials that might arise in the future.

(1) Utilize a variety of public and academic search engines. The following list of keywords will be of assistance.

Spinoza, Espinoza, Espinosa, Despinoza, Despinhosa, Spinozy, Spinosa, Shpinozah, Spinoze, universals, antirealism, nominalism, conceptualism, terminism, vocalism, tropes, properties, essences, forms, realism, common notions, universal notions, one over many, one in many, identity theory, immanent realism, transcendent realism, universalia ante res, universalia in rebus, universalia post res, transcendentals, transcendants, transscendentalen, transzendentalien, genus, species, substantial forms, exemplar, Platonism, almindelige forestillinger, universaux, universelles, universalie, universellen, universalien, allgemeinbegriffe, universalbegriffe, gattungsbegriffe, almen, almenbegreber, universeel, universali, universalia, universalier, univerzálie, egyetemesektől, uniwersalia, universais, универсалии, universálií, univerzálj, universales, universalar, evrensel, univerzália, univerzalni, לסרבינוי, nominaliste, nominaux, nominalismo, nominalismus, nominalismi, nominalisme, nominalizmus, nominalismul, номинализм, nominalista, nominalismen, nominalistisch, Спиноза универсалс, Спиноза номинализм, Спиноза номиналист, סזילנימוג

Navigating through the various resources listed on University of Pennsylvania's "Online Books Page" (<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/archives.html>) with patience and with these keywords will likely prove beneficial.

(2) Consult the various detailed bibliographies on Spinoza. Aside from the continually updated record of Spinoza literature since 1663 on the website of the Spinoza Society (see <http://www.spinoza-bibliography.de/>) and the classified bibliographies contained in each volume of the *Studia Spinozana*, which together cover a decent portion of the literature, the following bibliographies might prove useful.

Altwickler 1971, 393-410; Barbone and Rice 1997a; Barbone and Rice 1997b; Boucher and Walther 1999; Bourel 1981, 1-4; Berg 1954; Campana 1978, 208-245;

Curley 1975; De Dijn 1972, 130-139; Deinstag 1986; De Vries 1970, 177-186; De Vries 1972, 227-235; Garoux 1981; Kingma and Offenbergh 1988; Leone 1982, 59-97; Linde 1965; McKenna 1996; McKeon 1928b, 319ff; Otto 1994, 359-438; Nails 1986; Van Bunge and Klever 1996; Oko 1964; Préposiet 1973; Sangiacomo 2010; Santinelli 1983; Schmidt-Biggemann 1977; Walther 1976; Walther 1991; Walther 1994; Wetlesen 1968; Moreau 1994, 559-600; Totok 1981, 232-296; Werf, Siebrand, and Westerveen 1984.

(3) Search through various libraries, especially ones with special collections on Spinoza.

Hebrew Union College Libraries.—Klau Library (esp. Cincinnati); Abramov Library (Jerusalem)

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon.—The special Centre for Documentation on Spinoza includes many dissertations usually difficult to access.

New York Public Library.

Cornell University Library.

Abraham Wolf Collection UCLA.

The National Library of the Netherlands.

University of Chicago Library (esp. Ludwig Rosenberger Collection of Judaica).

Gunma University Library.

Bavarian State Library.—The Munich Digitization Center updates its large collection of 17th, 18th, and 19th Century Spinoza materials.