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Spinoza's Cosmopsychism: The Multifaceted Mind of Nature

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SPINOZA'S COSMOPSYCHISM: THE MULTIFACETED MIND OF NATURE

by

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Abstract

In my thesis, I will argue that while at first glance Spinoza's metaphysical system seems to conflict with itself, providing an explanation of the mind that can be more confusing than helpful, its aspect of panpsychism provides a sort of lifeline for understanding. Not only does Spinoza's particular genre of panpsychism make his metaphysics cogent, but it can also be independently motivated by ideas that are compatible with the more contemporary intuitions in philosophy of mind. I argue that Spinoza is a cosmopsychist, who holds that Nature as a whole has a conscious mind. I will explore the specific nature of this universal mentality, how Spinoza's cosmopsychism relates to other theories of panpsychism, and how his conception of omnipresent mind affects our understanding of consciousness and its place in the world.

Acknowledgements

Spinoza defines the emotion of love [*amor*] as "joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause" (DOE4). He defines joy [*laetitia*] as "the passing of a person from a lesser to a greater perfection" (DOE2). I would like to thank those I love for helping me pass to greater perfection in all my endeavors, and for their patience with my process as I strive to do so with this particular endeavor of the mind. A special thank you to my mom and dad, to whom I owe my mind, body, and the very nature of my being.

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Prefatory Note on Citation and Translation

In this piece, I will be citing Spinoza's *Ethics* from the Kisner and Silverthorne (2018) edition, unless otherwise noted. I will also cite Descartes (whose works Spinoza studied extensively), from the Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (1985) edition of *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Volumes I and II). Commonly, this work is cited as "CSM," followed by the volume and page number of the citation. For example, a passage from page 144 of Volume One:

> I did not think the human mind could possibly distinguish the forms or species of bodies that are on the earth from an infinity of others that might be there if it had been God's will to put them there (CSM I 144).

The scholarship surrounding Spinoza's Ethics utilizes its own unique citation system that does not involve page numbers and also requires an introduction. Its structure is divided into five "Parts [*pars*]," essentially chapters, each of which begins with a list of definitions and "axioms [*axiomata*]." and continues with lists of enumerated Propositions. Each Proposition [*propositio*] is followed by "proof [*demonstratio*]" of it, and sometimes also by notes he calls "corollaries [*corollaria*]" and "scholiums [*scholia*]." He sometimes branches from his main argument with additional strings of axioms and other statements called "lemmas [*lemmata*]" and "postulates [*postulata*]," which are also numbered and sometimes followed by their own proofs, scholiums, corollaries, and definitions. When quoting from the *Ethics*, we refer to these statements by their corresponding letters and numbers in place of page numbers.

Citations for the *Ethics* will first indicate the number of the Part (1 through 5), followed by the abbreviation for the Proposition or other statement and its enumeration. Abbreviations are also used for the Proofs and other notes following any statement. If there are multiple, its number

follows. The abbreviations vary slightly over time among scholars (for instance, d vs. def or L vs. lemma), but I will keep mine consistent with the list provided by Silverthorne and Kisner in their translation (2018), as I will be citing primarily from this edition. Here is their list of abbreviations used in the *Ethics* (2018: ix):

a	axiom
app	appendix
c	corollary
def	definition
DOE	Definition of the Emotions
ex	explanation[1]
L	lemma
p	Proposition
post	postulate
pref	preface
s	scholium

A few examples: The citation for a quote from the second corollary to Proposition 16 of Part Two would be (2p16c2). The second axiom of the second part would be denoted as (2a2). In the unique case that there are multiple strings of the same kind of statement within the same part, as in Part II, they are indicated by an increasing number of primes following their initial and letter. For instance, axiom two from the third set of axioms of part two is cited as (2a2'').

Citations not directly from Descartes or the *Ethics* will be in regular APA style.

[1] Also sometimes called explication, from the Latin *explicatio*.

I. Introduction

For a manuscript intended for the flame by its own author, Spinoza's *Ethics* has been labored over tremendously by the scholars following his time. The *Ethics* is a detailed attempt to construct philosophical system encompassing everything from metaphysics to ethics to philosophy of mind. In a thesis oriented around the very nature of existence itself, Spinoza provides his own metaphysics, upon which he builds a theory of the mind and human nature—and in turn how he believes the most ethical and fulfilling life can be achieved. In this thesis, I will be examining Spinoza's philosophy of mind, primarily discussed in Part II. What we will find about his theory of mind and its relation to his theory of material substance creates certain pronounced tensions and implausibilities, many of which have already been labored over for quite some time. I will indicate six Puzzling Claims in this thesis that are not altogether cogent. I will then utilize a contemporary theory that on the surface may seem unrelated to Spinoza in order to make sense of them.

This theory is Panpsychism, which is the view "that consciousness is fundamental and ubiquitous in nature" (Seager 2020: 1), or that some degree of mentality is present in all things. There is subtle but definitive evidence that Spinoza holds this view, but the degree to which he believes that all things are conscious, or at least "minded," is still debated. In this thesis, I argue that Spinoza is, in fact, a panpsychist, and not only that, but a very special kind of panpsychist. After examining various versions of both historical and contemporary panpsychism, I spell out Spinoza's precise variety, cosmopsychism. Through an exploration of Spinoza's cosmopsychism and the beliefs that lead him to it, I will attempt to make cogent the Six Puzzling Claims presented by his metaphysics.

II. The Foundation: Substance Monism

Because Spinoza lays out his commitments in geometrical order, any study of the *Ethics* requires starting at the beginning. While the central focus of this thesis is not Spinoza's ontological argument, his substance monism is the necessary starting point for the rest of his philosophical system. An understanding of this view is essential to understanding the rest of his thought. We will therefore pause first to get acquainted with it. While the central thesis can be jarring to some, how he gets there is even more confusing if you go through Part I of the *Ethics* in original sequential order, without any idea of what he has in mind. For this reason, I will first present a general reconstruction of his final argument, and then break down the claims upon which he builds it. First, however, we must get acquainted with his idiosyncratic vocabulary.

The *Ethics* starts with a series of definitions and axioms, which more specifically define common terms of the time including "substance" [*substantia*], "attribute" [*attributum*], and "mode" [*modus*] with unique uses within his system. These terms stem from the heavy influence Descartes' ideas had in his early thinking.[1]

Take Descartes' definition of substance:

> By *substance* we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence (CSM I 210).

Cartesians of the time generally accepted substance as a thing being the independent sufficient cause for its own existence, that is, existing independently of any other thing. A substance has *attributes*, which are essential properties that "constitute the nature" of the substance to which they belong (CSM I, 210). Each substance has a principal attribute. For example, Descartes asserts that

[1] Spinoza studied Descartes extensively from an early age and was considered an expert among his peers by his late twenties (Nadler 2006: 14).

a thinking substance has the principal attribute of thought, and a corporeal substance has the principal attribute of being extended, that is, having material existence in physical space (ibid). Every other nonessential feature that exists insofar as it inheres in a substance is called a *mode* (ibid.). Spinoza's metaphysics utilizes the same terms and their general conceptions in ways that are often consistent with his predecessors and peers, but his metaphysics requires a specificity of language that leads him to deviate from the common understanding of specialized terms.

The above vocabulary permeates Spinoza's propositions, and the specific definitions are crucial to the use of his terms. He accepts Descartes' basic conception of substance under which a substance is an individual thing that is genuinely independent of all other things. Substance is also something that must be "in itself and conceived through itself" (1def3). The first part being "in itself" is in keeping with Cartesian tradition. Something qualifies as a substance if it is its own cause and exists independently of anything else. The second half of the definition is Spinoza's unique addition. In being "conceived through itself," a substance does not rely on the concept of any other substance to be understood *clearly and distinctly*,[2] that is to have a complete, accurate and true idea of what a substance is, down to every detail of its causal and structural order. The link between causation and conception is specified in 1a4: "Cognition [*cognitio*] of an effect depends upon cognition of its cause *and involves it*" (italics mine). For Spinoza, something that is ontologically and conceptually independent is self-caused. Something is the cause of itself (*causa sui*) if its "essence involves existence," *or* (*sive*[3]) its "nature cannot be conceived except as

[2] Spinoza bases this concept of a clear and distinct perception on Descartes, whose own system has its definition of clear and distinct perceptions as true understandings through which we derive "infallible knowledge" (Hatfield 2003: 144). For more discussion of Descartes' own characterizations of clear and distinct perceptions and their role in his metaphysics, see Gaukroger 1992: 585-602).

[3] *Sive* translates approximately from Latin as "or," and is used by Spinoza often in his definitions. It seems to function for the phrase "i.e.," or "that is," and sometimes, "to wit." Generally, when he uses the term between two separate descriptions, it means that they must go hand in hand.

existing" (1def1).[4] This means that a substance is an individual thing that must exist by virtue of its own nature, that is, it couldn't possibly not exist, and its only causal ground for existence is itself. Because "it belongs to the nature [or essence] of a substance to exist" (1p7), a substance causes itself in virtue of its own essence.

So, what else comprises the essence of a substance? Its attributes, which are "that which an intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence" (1def4). Attributes are also conceived through themselves (1p10). That is, one can have a complete understanding of one attribute without having any knowledge of any other. Having knowledge of one attribute gives you no insight whatsoever into the nature of another. Attributes comprise a substance's essential nature, and so we can understand a substance by conceiving of it through any one of its attributes. While many philosophers before him assume substance can have only a single (principal) attribute, Spinoza allows for substance to have, in principle, infinitely many. "By God I mean absolutely infinite being, i.e., substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence" (1def6). A substance has various (even infinite) distinct attributes. Bennett (1984) and others have noted that when speaking of infinity, Spinoza does not explicitly mean our contemporary concept of mathematical infinity. He instead "often takes infinity to imply totality" (Bennett 1984: 75). There is still open debate as to how many attributes Spinoza believes there are, but for now it is enough to know that by infinite attributes, he means all possible attributes, or all that there are. Intuitively, it does seem that "all there is" could still be a mathematically finite number.

[4] We will see that many of Spinoza's definitions are two-sided—that is, there is a statement defining something in terms of its existence or being, and then there is a statement defining something in terms of how it is "conceived." His reasons for this will become clear as the thesis progresses.

Every attribute has an infinite set of features of the one Substance conceived through its essence (or contains all possible features that could exist under that attribute). These features are what Spinoza calls modes. Spinoza defines these modes as "that which is in another thing through which it is also conceived" (1def5)—meaning modes are not themselves a substance, but finite features possessed by a substance. A finite thing is something that "can be limited by another thing of the same nature" (1def2). Some of these modes are what we would typically call individual objects in our commonsense understanding, but that is not really what they are. Della Rocca makes the distinction that a substance is "something that has properties but that itself is not a property of anything else" (2008: 42). The "properties," Spinoza's modes, are like Descartes' modes, which depend on the substance of which they are modes for their existence. Of course, he adds the layer of conception to his definition. They can be understood, or as Spinoza would say, conceived, in various ways—that is, through different attributes.

We are now ready for Spinoza's first Proposition: "a substance is prior by nature to its affections [modes]" (1p1).[5] A mode can only be understood through the substance that it is a feature of, and it only exists because of the substance of which it is a mode. This is evident, he claims, from the definitions of "mode" and "substance." A mode can only exist in virtue of the substance which possesses it and can only be understood through the concept of the substance to which it belongs. Because a mode is conceived through the substance it inheres in, it exists *because* of that substance, and is not itself a self-subsistent, self-conceived substance. This is clear by 1a4: "Cognition of an effect [the mode] depends upon cognition of its cause [its substance] and involves it."

[5] Spinoza uses "affection" and "mode" synonymously in his works. I will try my best to always use "mode" to denote this term.

The way he defines substance and its grounds for existence and conception will eventually lead Spinoza to the thesis that there is only one independent substance—the whole of reality. I will give a reconstruction of his main argument that closely echoes Bennett's perspicuous rendering (1984: 70-75). Understanding the proof will take some thorough study, but having an idea of where he's going will be beneficial in trying to understand how he gets there. For a visual aid to his argument, which we will address in detail, see Figure 1 at the end of this section. His theory may be difficult to accept upon initial reading, and indeed, the steps he takes in his argument for substance monism are still held in controversy among contemporary scholars, including Bennett himself.[6] Many have refused to accept the legitimacy of his argument, but my purpose is not to save this specific argument or him from these critics. We need to form an understanding of his basic metaphysical commitments to clearly understand his theory of mind. His general argument for substance monism is thus:[7]

MP1. Two substances cannot share an attribute (1p5)

MP2. A substance with every possible attribute (infinite attributes) must exist (1p11).

MC∴ There can only be one substance (1p14).

He calls this substance "that eternal and infinite being which we call God or [*sive*] nature" (4pref). Recall that he defines God as "substance consisting of infinite attributes" (1def6). We now begin to see why he defines it thusly, and why his idiosyncratic definitions are so essential. Both premises require examination in conjunction with these definitions. I will try my best to remain

[6] For some more in-depth expositions on the Spinoza's argument for substance monism and its pitfalls, see Bennett (1984: Ch. 3 &4), Charlton (1981), Garrett (1979), and Stetter (2021).

[7] Because each premise in this argument requires further deconstruction to be appropriately explained, I will refer to the parts of this argument as Macro-premises (MP) and the Macro-conclusion (MC). Bennett does not use this same distinction in his work.

consistent with his geometrical order as I go through the claims but will deviate slightly for the sake of clarity. We can begin by dissecting the first proposition:

MP1. Two substances cannot share an attribute (1p5).

This can be broken down further:

1-1. An attribute is the essence of substance (1def4).

1-2. The essence of *x* must be unique to *x*, hence not the essence of anything else (2def2).

Spinoza brings this definition into play in Part II of the *Ethics*, though he uses the term freely in Part I. We will apply it here for the sake of understanding.

1-3. If two substances were to share the same essence, their essence would be unique to two distinct things, which is absurd.

∴ MP1 Two substances cannot share an attribute.

We should take a moment for this conclusion, as this is one of the points in his argument that, as we will see, certain scholars are not so fond of. He expresses MP1 while discussing the possibility of identifying one substance as distinct from another. This discussion also relates to the proof of MP2, but before we can break down this next premise we must pause over some details. Spinoza argues that any substance must be distinguished from another substance either through its modes or through its attributes (1p4). If we were to distinguish between substances, it would have to be by either their nonessential features (modes) or by their essential natures (attributes). Upon examination, neither option permits a coherent distinction between different substances (1p5). Since modes are nonessential features of a substance but do not constitute its essence, the substance would maintain its identity without them, and so, a difference in modes would not actually distinguish two substances. For instance, say you have a ball painted red and a ball painted blue. Assuming you wanted to distinguish between them, you may say they are different on the grounds

that one is red, and one is blue. However, the redness and blueness are not essential to either ball's identity. If the red ball were painted green, it would still be the ball it is. Stripping a substance of its modes would not change the identity or essence of the substance, but only its non-essential parts.

Substances can't be differentiated by difference in attribute either (1p5).[8] Recall that for a substance to be finite, it would have to be limited by another substance of the same kind—a second substance that shares its essence with the first (1def2). We can understand this essence as the different attributes which are different ways of conceiving a substance's existence. However, if we consider a substance under one attribute, any feature of substance that we perceive must be understood independently and entirely through one attribute, and no other. Because of this, you cannot use one attribute to limit or explain another, because they are causally and conceptually independent.

While his reasoning in 1p5p probably isn't as effective as he thought, placing it within the larger framework of his metaphysics may help to understand its pull. We can examine the later Propositions that clarify his argument in the process of breaking down his second premise. This second deconstruction is more complex than the first in that it requires two separate premises which must each be further deconstructed.

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[8] "There cannot be two or more substances in the universe with the same nature or attribute," which he follows with 1p5p:

> If there were several distinct substances, they would have to be distinguished from each other either by a difference of attributes or by a difference of affections [modes] (*by the previous proposition*). If they are distinguished only by a difference of attributes, it will be admitted that there is only one substance with the same attribute. But if they are distinguished by a difference of affections, it follows, since a substance is prior by nature to its affections […] it is not possible to conceive it as distinguished from any other substance. That is […] it will not be possible for there to be several substances, but only one.

Many have questioned the overall cogency of Spinoza's argument for substance monism (Bennett (1984), Garrett (1979), and Charlton (1981), to name a few). While commentators question whether Spinoza's argument that two substances could not be differentiated on the basis of their attributes is successful, these questions can only really be answered once his monism is fully examined (Della Rocca 2008: 46-49).

MP2. A substance with every possible attribute (infinite attributes) must exist (1p11).

This can be broken down further:

2-1. Any substance that exists must be infinite (1p8).

2-2. Existing substance necessarily exists in virtue of its essence (1p7)

Spinoza cites a multitude of prior claims as in support of the first of these sub-premises:

2-1a. Substance must be causally and conceptually independent (1def3).

2-1b. For a substance to be finite, it would have to be limited by another substance with the same essence (1def2)

2-1c. The essence of *x* must be unique to *x* and not to anything else (2def2).

2-1d. Therefore, no substance can be limited by a second substance of the same essence.

∴ MP2-1 Any substance that exists must be infinite (1p8).

So far it has been proven that any existing substance must be infinite due to the nature of substance, but we have yet to prove that a substance necessarily exists. This conclusion will factor into the proof of the original second premise, but the other premise in this second proof requires another round of claims:

2-2a. Substance, by definition, must be self-caused and self-conceived (1def3).

2-2b. Something that causes itself must necessarily exist, i.e., its essence involves existence (1def1).

∴ (MP2-2) Existing substance necessarily exists in virtue of its essence (1p7).

By 1p7, "[i]t belongs to the nature of substance to exist," i.e., it is the essence of any existing substance to exist. Furthermore, any substance that exists is necessarily infinite in its essence because "to be infinite is an absolute affirmation of the existence of any nature" (1p8s1). From this, Spinoza believes that any existing substance is necessarily infinite, that is, contains

within it all things that could possibly exist. His ontological requirement for a substance with infinite attributes or essence gives some context to his previous statement about trying to differentiate distinct substance: "If they are distinguished only by a difference of attributes, it will be admitted that there is only one substance with the same attribute" (1p5p). Say we were to have a substance, *a*, with attributes 1 through infinity, and a second substance, *b*, with attributes one through seven. It seems that the second substance could be differentiated from the first on the basis that it lacks some attributes that the other has. This would be impossible because the second substance, in sharing all the attributes it possesses with the first, would have to be conceived through the first substance. Thus, it would be dependent on another substance for its concept and existence. Hence, "substance" *b* would not be a substance because by the definition of substance, one substance relying on another is not possible (1def3). Hence, we have:

2-1. Existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the nature of a substance (1p7).

2-2. Any substance that exists must be infinite (1p8).

∴ (MP2) A substance with every possible attribute (infinite attributes) must exist (1p11).

With this, we have laid out the basis for our original second premise and have a basic understanding of Spinoza's argument for his central doctrine, substance monism. Recall:

MP1. Two substances cannot share an attribute (1p5).

MP2. A substance with every possible attribute (infinite attributes) must exist (1p11).

MC∴ There can only be one substance (1p14).

To bring it all together: if two substances share any essential aspect of their essence (attribute), it is not actually possible to distinguish them from one another (1p8p). Anything sharing even some attributes with a substance containing infinite attributes (which by 1def1 and 1def6 must necessarily exist in virtue of its own essence) would have to be conceived through that

infinitely attributed substance. Therefore, this "other" substance sharing attributes with the first would not actually be an independent thing. The implication from this series of arguments is that there necessarily exists only one substance, God, i.e., Nature that has "eternal and infinite essence" (1p11). Outside of this substance, no other substance can exist (1p14). Any seemingly individual thing that would normally be called an independent substance or object must actually be a mode, or nonessential feature, of substance (1p15). As we have seen, this one substance contains all the attributes that could possibly exist. These attributes are not individual things, though they are conceived through themselves, because they are the essence of a substance. Equally, they are the way that Substance's essence must be understood. They are not distinguishable parts of a substance independent of their whole. The unique nature of attributes and their infinite potentiality is evident through both his definition of substance (1def3), and 1p11: "a substance consisting of infinite attributes[,] each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists." Not only does this infinite substance necessarily exist, but in being infinite it is the only genuinely independent substance that there is. All other things exist in virtue of this all-encompassing substance and inhere within it expressed through its infinite attributes. So, it is everything.

To wit, God is "absolute being, i.e., substance consisting of infinite attributes each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence" (1def6). This is precisely what the single, unlimited substance with all attributes is, too. He uses the term "God" interchangeably with "Nature" to refer to this substance. From now on, I will refer to his God as simply "Substance," or "Nature" (Nadler 2006: 52). I do this to avoid theistic connotations that raise controversies which aren't relevant to the present scope. I will use "Substance" as often as possible for the sake of being precise. At times when Spinoza seems to emphasize the unity of his God as a single coherent entity as opposed to a

mere term for the fundamental ontological being encompassing all features of existence, I will refer to it as "Nature."

We now understand more nuances within Spinoza's substance monism. His one substance, Nature, is unique in kind because it is the only independently existing substance, which exists infinitely and possesses all attributes. This ontological stance is not an easy one to take, and as we will see, comes with many complexities and questions. In the following sections, we will more closely examine what Spinoza means by these "infinite" attributes, and how it can be that all facets of existence are mere features of it. What's more, we will examine how the distinct attributes addressed by Spinoza are related to one another insofar as they comprise Substance's essence. Finally, after addressing the issues that arise from his view of Substance and its attributes and modes, we will turn to other contemporary views in the metaphysics of mind (that are perhaps just as strange) to help make sense of Spinoza's substance monism and its implications for mentality.

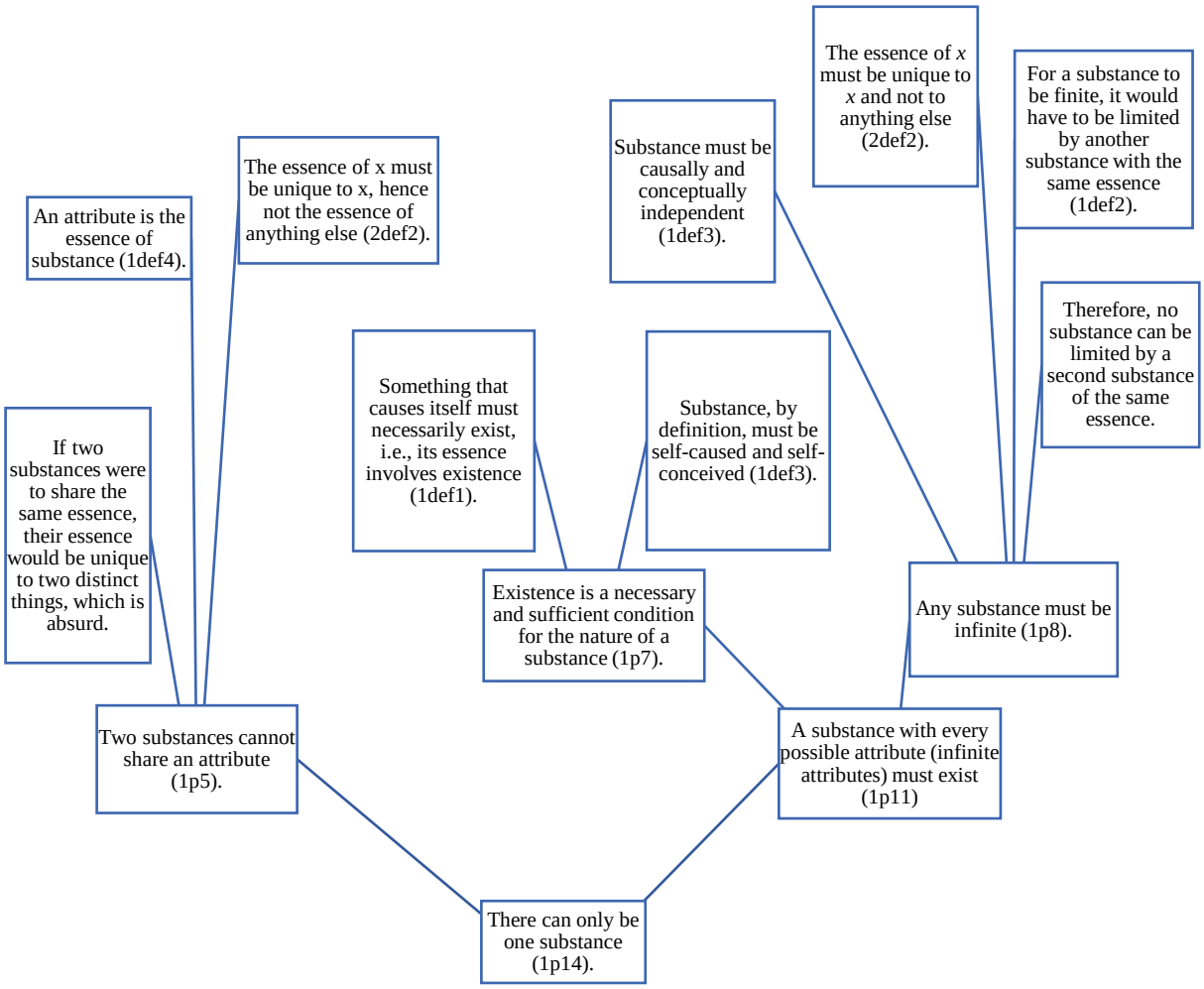
The essence of *x* must be unique to *x* and not to anything else (2def2).
For a substance to be finite, it would have to be limited by another substance with the same essence (1def2).
Substance must be causally and conceptually independent (1def3).
The essence of x must be unique to x, hence not the essence of anything else (2def2).
An attribute is the essence of substance (1def4).
Therefore, no substance can be limited by a second substance of the same essence.
Something that causes itself must necessarily exist, i.e., its essence involves existence (1def1).
Substance, by definition, must be self-caused and self-conceived (1def3).
If two substances were to share the same essence, their essence would be unique to two distinct things, which is absurd.
Existence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the nature of a substance (1p7).
Any substance must be infinite (1p8).
Two substances cannot share an attribute (1p5).
A substance with every possible attribute (infinite attributes) must exist (1p11)
There can only be one substance (1p14).

FIGURE 1

III. Spinoza's Mind and the Mess it Makes

Spinoza's metaphysics is presented geometrically with thorough attention to detail, but it still presents several claims that are difficult to accept upon initial reading. They are difficult both on their own and resulting from the tensions they create when coming together. Instead of shying away from these claims, I will identify them immediately and use them to guide our discussion of Part II of the *Ethics*. Here are six Puzzling Claims:

1) *Substance Monism:* There is a single individual thing that exists, Substance (God *sive* Nature), and it contains infinite, i.e., all possible attributes (1p11).
2) *Essential Attributes:* The two attributes (that we know of), thought and extension, are essential ways in which Substance exists, and they comprise at least part of its infinite essence (1def6, 2p1, 2p2).
3) *Parallelism:* The modes of each attribute parallel one another in a correspondence relation of parallelism, meaning modes of thought are causally and structurally identical to modes of extension, and every extended mode must also have a corresponding mode expressed in the attribute of thought (2p7).
4) *Forbidden Interaction:* Modes of thought and modes of extension do not and cannot causally interact (1a4, 1p10, 3p2).
5) *Ideas Are About Their Bodies:* The idea which comprises the mind is about the specific body to which it corresponds (2p11, 2p13).
6) *Amalgam of Ideas:* Minds are merely a specific amalgam of ideas (2p15).

By the end of this thesis, I will examine how these claims interact, and call upon contemporary philosophy of mind for solutions that would illuminate the cogency of such a puzzling assortment of claims. The first puzzling claim was the focal point of the previous section:

1) *Substance Monism:* There is a single individual thing that exists, Substance (God *sive* Nature), and it contains infinite, i.e., all possible attributes (1p11).

Prima facie, most would have reason to pause over this claim. Taking reality at face value, there definitely seem to be individual things—an uncharacteristically plural phrase Spinoza himself uses throughout his work despite his established commitment to there being only Substance. These apparent "individual things" are just modes or properties. It feels strange to think of bodies and minds as mere properties of something else, let alone one thing that contains *all* features of existence, but this is what Spinoza defends; and to understand the rest of his metaphysical propositions, we must accept.

Even accepting substance monism, to rid ourselves of talk of individual things entirely introduces a linguistic complexity that would be a nightmare to circumvent. A discussion of how Spinoza accounts for these apparent individuals will show how we can still prima facie appropriately describe an individual thing. At times, Spinoza does refer to certain modes as "individuals" [*individui*], though he of course does not believe these individual things are independent substance. Instead, he presents an explanation for how *individui* are composite bodies comprised of other smaller *individui* or finite modes coming together in a specific and determinate relation. We will examine his phrasing of this claim shortly. He calls these composite bodies or finite modes "particular things" [*res singulares*] (1def7), which are themselves *individui*. These are the physical bodies that we normally call individual things. While Spinoza makes it starkly clear that there is only one true independently existing individual thing—Nature itself—we can understand that when he speaks of individuals and particular things it is not in reference to Substance as an independently existing thing, but instead in reference to those finite individuals or

modes of extension (or thought) that are the "moderate-sized dry goods" (Austin 1962: 8) —or minds.

Spinoza has reason for such language, which is justified by his discussion of how finite modes exist within Substance and how they form a *rem singularem*. A body, for Spinoza, is a "mode which expresses the essence of God in a specific and determinate manner insofar as he is considered an extended [physical] thing" (2def1). That is, a body is a finite extended mode. Because all bodies inhere in Substance, they are not different substances, but "are distinguished from each other in respect of motion and rest" (2L1). As he says in his definition for "individual things":

> When a number of bodies of the same or different sizes are restrained by other bodies so that they press upon each other, or if they move with the same or different degrees of speed so that they communicate their movement to each other in some fixed ratio, we will say that these bodies are united with each other, and all of them together compose just one body *or* one individual thing [*unum corpus sive individuum*] which is distinguished from others by this union of bodies (2a2''def).

While Spinoza's definition is centered around modes qua extended substance, Della Rocca provides us with an imputed definition for Spinoza's individual things as such, whether they are extended or not: "[T]he members of the collection […] form an individual because they tend to preserve (and do preserve) a certain feature of the whole collection" (Della Rocca 1996: 39) Whether the collection comprises physical or mental modes, the relation stands. 2def7 supports a definition that is not specific to motion or space: "If several individual things combine in one action so that all of them together are the cause of one effect, I consider them all as to that extent a single particular thing" (2def7). The effect would be the preservation of a feature of the collection; and

the cause, the unique combination of the modes comprising it. This schema applies just as well to modes of thought as it does to modes of extension. Any combination of ideas (modes of thought) can come together to preserve the feature of mindedness, and some are more complex than others.

We have seen that modes are features of Substance expressed through various attributes. These attributes will be the subject of our next claim. We will walk a path from Substance Monism (1) to reach it, as their ontology is intertwined with that of Substance. Spinoza asserts that Substance consists of infinite attributes (1def6), but he only names two: Thought (2p1: "Thought is an attribute of God, *or* [sive] God is a thinking thing") and Extension (2p2: "Extension is an attribute of God, *or* [sive] God is an extended thing"). His reasons for only specifying two out of allegedly infinite attributes are obscure, and the surrounding debate could fill an entirely independent thesis.[1] We will take his cue for now and only focus on the two: Extension and thought. Recall that extension is the attribute of material reality and consists of everything physical. To be extended is to exist in physical space. Moderate (or middle)-sized dry goods are, for Spinoza, extended modes of Substance.[2] Modes of the attribute of thought are ideas. Correspondingly, the attribute of thought is the mental aspect of substance and consists of ideas, which are "conception[s] of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing" (1def3).[3] Under this understanding, ideas are mental features of Substance that are conceived in the mind, though are ultimately modes of Substance. In virtue of its essence, Substance is necessarily both a thinking thing (2p1) and an extended thing (2p2), and any part of reality that limited subjects can

[1] See Spinoza's Letter 64, as well as Bennett (1984) pp. 74-79.
[2] 2p25c: "Particular things are […] modes by which [Substance's] attributes are expressed in a specific and determinate way."
[3] Spinoza doesn't immediately reveal his intention with 1def3, but the mind that is doing the conceiving of all ideas is the mind of Substance (God *sive* Nature). Even though the cryptic vagueness is puzzling, I believe he is right to hold off on this detail, as we will have to discuss it when we are more prepared for such a claim. We will first prepare, then, by examining his other Puzzling Claims.

perceive or understand (including our own ideas) must be a mode conceived through either of these attributes. This leads us to our next claim:

2) *Essential Attributes:* The two attributes (that we know of), thought and extension, are essential ways in which Substance exists, and they comprise at least part of its infinite essence (1def6, 2p1, 2p2).

Spinoza's definition is inspired by Descartes' traditional conception of principal attributes, which makes this claim odd—it allows multiple principal attributes to be the essence of a single substance. Per the Cartesian conception, every substance has one essential attribute—a principal or primary attribute—that defines its essence. An attribute is perceived *clearly and distinctly* as the essence of the thing having it[4]. To wit: "To each substance there belongs one principal attribute; in the case of mind, this is thought, and in the case of body it is extension" (CSM I, 210). For Spinoza, then, a question: How can something have multiple, even infinite of such attributes? Recall that Spinoza believes Substance by nature is necessarily infinite and must possess all attributes and encompass all things (1def6, 1p8, 1p11). Ultimately, the essence of Spinoza's One Substance is its necessary existence, but each attribute is an essential way in which the existence of Substance is expressed and comprises an essential component of that nature[5]. Spinoza speaks of infinite attributes, but only discusses thought and extension, and leaves any other attributes obscure. He closely interrelates the two attributes with the oft cited 2p7: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things". Hence our next claim*:*

3) *Parallelism:* The modes of each attribute parallel one another in a correspondence relation of parallelism, meaning modes of thought are causally and structurally identical to modes

[4] Regarding "clearly and distinctly," see page 3, footnote 2.
[5] 1p7: "It belongs to the nature of a substance to exist" and 1p7s: "its essence necessarily involves its existence."

of extension, and every extended mode must also have a corresponding mode expressed in the attribute of thought (2p7).

Parallelism was never a term that was outright used by Spinoza, but it has been adopted by Spinoza scholars (Melamed 2013b: 641). The exact nature of the correspondence relation is still open for interpretation. Bennett is one other who describes Spinoza's parallelism as a one-to-one "mapping" relation between mental and physical modes in which "the mental realm runs parallel in the finest detail to the physical realm" (1984: 127). This construal is one of the more basic versions of Spinoza's parallelism, which describes his minimal commitment to a structural mapping of the causal order of modes between the attributes of thought and extension. It construes modes conceived under one attribute as distinct from their counterparts conceived under another. They do not interact or affect each other in any way, but they exist parallel to one another.

Della Rocca argues that corresponding modes of thought and extension are *identical* (2008:100). He indicates in 2p7s: "the mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing but expressed in two ways." Della Rocca interprets the implications of this quote thusly:

> It's hard to shake the impression that, in stating his parallelism, Spinoza is invoking separate collections of things that are similarly structured. It's hard, in other words, to dispel the appearance of dualism. Quite right, but the dualism here is not, for Spinoza, a dualism of extended things and thinking things. Rather the dualism is a dualism of *ways of conceiving* or *explaining* the same thing. One and the same thing can be explained in terms of thought, as following from the attribute of thought, and also and separately can be explained in terms of extension, as following from the attribute of extension (ibid: 101-102).

This interpretation is dubbed the "Fregean" reading by Karolina Hübner. It describes "the difference between minds and bodies as fundamentally a difference in conceptualizations or descriptions" (Hübner 2022: 49). In the same way, the Morning Star and the Evening Star in Frege's classic example have different senses, but the same referent (1952: 57). Their concepts are entirely independent of one another—the knowledge of one name is entirely unrelated to the other, and understanding of one does nothing to explain or form a conception of the other. The Morning star and the Evening star truly are both just the planet Venus. It is the same celestial body, conceived sometimes as the Morning Star and others as the Evening Star. In the same way, a mode exists as it is conceived through Substance, understood sometimes through thought and others through extension, though it is one and the same thing, (and only) existing Substance. Under this interpretation, we conceive a mode differently qua body or qua mind or idea. Whether we conceive of it as a mind or a body, it is ultimately numerically self-identical. The attributes through which a mode is conceived are two (or however many) sides of the same coin (mode).[6] These separate understandings of mind and body are two distinct concepts that are referentially opaque—that is, a conception of a mode qua idea and a conception of a mode qua body are conceptions of the same thing, but do not require the conceiver to be aware that each independent conception refers to the same thing, nor is it necessary to have knowledge of one in order to possess knowledge of the other. They are conceptually independent: neither relies on the other for an explanation of its being (Della Rocca 1991: 268).

As Lin observes: "Spinoza is a conceptual dualist but not a metaphysical one" (2019: 36). Hübner herself, who gave the above reading its title, disagrees with its semantic explanation for

[6] It is entirely possible that there are more sides to this coin. It may even be a die with infinitely many sides for infinitely many attributes, but Spinoza does not elaborate on what these other attributes may be or seem to believe that we can conceive them.

parallelism. While no one would say that Spinoza is a metaphysical dualist, Hübner argues that the distinction between attributes is more than merely epistemic or semantic. She accepts that modes expressed under different attributes are still numerically identical (per 2p7s: "one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways"), but argues that the difference in attribute under which they are conceived is actually a difference in the ontological expression of their existence either in thought or nature (Hübner 2022: 57). She illustrates Spinoza's commitment to this dualistic description of reality thusly:

> [F]or Spinoza, "reality" itself comes in two varieties: (1) the "formal" reality things have as produced by substance, and constituting what we might call the realm of nature; and (2) the "objective" reality these same things have as thought of by an unlimited *ens cogitans* [thinking being] (2022: 52).[7]

So, if any mode qua thought has a fundamentally different quality of reality to its existence than a mode qua extension, how is it possible that the two are still identical? The answer lies in the essence of ideas themselves. Hübner argues that Spinoza's distinction between formal and objective reality indicates that he endorses a "Cartesian, and quasi-Aristotelian, model" (ibid: 52) of how ideas represent their objects. She characterizes the Cartesian view of ideas thusly:

> [T]o have an idea of something is for this very thing to exist in thought—no longer with the formal reality it has qua existent in nature (as something intrinsically

[7] These shouldn't be confused with Descartes' definitions of 'formal *being*' as the reality of ideas, and 'objective *being*' as the reality of extended things (Kisner 2018: 252). Spinoza himself uses these terms in the Cartesian sense. Hübner instead uses 'objective *reality*' for ideas and 'formal *reality*' for modes in nature (2022: 52). While mildly confusing, it is a reasonable choice based on Spinoza's diction in 2p7c: "everything that follows formally from the infinite nature of God follows objectively in God from the idea of God in the same order and with the same connection."

physical or mental), but rather with the kind of being or reality that, on this view, characterizes purely mental objects (ibid: 51).

What's more, "in thinking of a thing, the intellect becomes identical with the intelligible 'form' of this thing" (ibid.: 52). Couple this with Spinoza's statement that ideas are *about* their specific bodies (2p11: "The first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human mind is simply the idea of an actually existing particular thing," which he later applies to all ideas with 2p13), and we have Hübner's alternative version of parallelism: "a representational account of Spinozistic mind-body identity" (2022: 58). On this view, the identity relation that a human mind bears to a body is grounded in the aboutness, or intentionality, a mind bears toward its body. The intellect represents a specific body, and in doing so, has a mental structure that is identical to it, which is in line with the Proposition expressing parallelism: "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (2p7). A mind is effectively an idea that specifically represents the particular body to which it corresponds (2p11). In doing so, this idea is a representational object that is identical to its corresponding extended object, only existing as an object of thought, i.e., under *objective* reality. Thus, representation answers the question of how a mode expressed under distinct attributes can still share a common identity (remain "one and the same thing"), though it exists in different ways:

> [F]or Spinoza representation is sufficient for identity: an idea of *x* is itself *x*, existing in the manner of an immanent, purely mental object (that is, to use Spinoza's Scholastic terminology, existing with merely "objective reality"). So, if for Spinoza the human mind is essentially of a body, it also essentially is that body qua objectively real (Hübner 2022: 50).

There is still much to consider here, but because representation is sufficient for identity, and a mind must be *about* a specifically existing body, minds are identical to their bodies in virtue of the fact that they represent them (Hübner 2022: 57). She calls this kind of identity between mind and body, "which obtains in virtue of a representational or intentional relation, 'cognitive identity'" (ibid: 52). Under this reading of parallelism, the existence of modes conceived qua thought or qua extension is qualitatively different, that is, can be ascribed different qualities. A mind thinks, is about a body, and perceives that body, but does not have physical features, or the ability to move whereas a body does. The intentionality of minds distinguishes them qualitatively from the ontological traits of bodies, while at the same time grounding their identity through representation.

One of the distinctive ontological qualities of the mind is its intentionality or aboutness it possesses for its body, made evident in 2p12: "Anything that occurs in the object of the idea that constitutes the human mind must be perceived by the human mind." The representational account has an additional quality involving a necessary sort of intentional perception of the mind toward the body that the Fregean reading does not. The human mind perceives and has awareness of its intentional object, i.e., its body, which Hübner cites as further corroboration for her representational account of Spinoza's parallelism. The other textual evidence she cites in support of her reading over the Fregean one is 2p21: "The idea of the mind is united with the mind in the same way as the mind itself is united with the body." She argues that this union between mind and body is owed to their cognitive identity, which she says Spinoza confirms in 2p21s with his allusion to 2p7: "We showed there that the body and the idea of the body, i.e., (by 2p13) body and mind, are one and the same individual thing." We will revisit this scholium and further discuss its implications for consciousness at a later point, when discussing the Spinozistic mind more in depth. Our current understanding is enough for the present purpose.

There is yet another reading, given by Yitzhak Melamed, that could allow the coexistence of the above readings. He argues that much of the interpretive trouble surrounding the *parallelism* doctrine stems from the fact that there are actually two distinct kinds of parallelism—one evidenced by 2p7, which he deems "Ideas-Things Parallelism," and the other, based on its Scholium, called "Inter-Attributes Parallelism." Both are parallelism relations, but the former specifically describes the relationship of ideas, i.e., modes of thought, with other things. The latter, on the other hand, describes a parallelism among all possible attributes (2013a: 142). This means that if there is in fact, an n^{th} attribute, its modes would also parallel those of thought and extension. While both readings, on their surface, seem to entail "Mind-Body Parallelism," they do so for different reasons. Ideas-Things Parallelism is both a correspondence relation *and* a representational relation (2013b: 641). For Melamed, Ideas-Things Parallelism does not itself entail identity. Instead, an idea corresponds to its mode because it is *about* that mode. Inter-Attributes Parallelism, on the other hand, is not *necessarily* representational. It is an identity relation on account of Spinoza's assertion that "parallel modes in different attributes are 'one and the same thing [*una, eademque est*]'" (ibid.). It seems possible that Hübner's representational account of parallelism is in line with Melamed's Ideas-Things Parallelism, while Della Rocca's Fregean reading is in line with the Inter-Attributes Parallelism, both of which are necessary for a complete understanding of both Spinoza's ontology. We will see later that this multifaceted reading of parallelism will help with the complete scope of Spinoza's metaphysics.

Regardless of the nature of their parallelism relation, modes of separate attributes cannot causally interact. Take what we have just said about 1a4 along with 1p10: "[e]ach attribute of a single substance must be conceived through itself." A mode of a specific attribute can only be

conceived through that attribute, and therefore (per Spinoza), any effect it may experience can only have a cause expressed through that same attribute. This is claim (4):

4) *Forbidden Interaction:* Modes of thought and modes of extension do not and cannot causally interact (1a4, 1p10, 3p2).

Spinoza rejects any sort of causal interaction between modes conceived under different attributes. In equating cognition with its cause, the specific attribute through which a mode's existence is conceived is the only possible way in which any causal interaction the mode is a part of can be conceived. The mode of one attribute cannot cause, or cause changes in, the mode of a second attribute. What's more, knowledge of that mode cannot be involved in forming an understanding of any mode expressed through a different attribute.

> [N]either the ideas of the attributes of [Substance] nor those of particular things recognize objects of ideas themselves *or* [*sive*] things perceived as their efficient cause but [Substance itself] insofar as [it] is a thinking thing (2p5).

An idea is not caused by its physical representa, it is caused by Substance "insofar as [it] is a thinking thing." It is an idea conceived through Substance's attribute of thought. Take for further explanation 2p6, when he stays that "[t]he modes of any attribute have [Substance] as their cause only insofar as [it] is considered under that attribute of which they are modes and not under any other." An idea is caused by Substance, and any effects it perceives are only qua thinking Substance just as extended bodies are caused by Substance, but only qua extended Substance. This means that the power of Substance is expressed through its specific arrangement of its infinite ideas which cause ideas, on the one hand, and infinite physical states which cause other physical states on the other. It is not possible for a physical mode to cause an idea, nor for an idea to cause a physical mode: "The body cannot determine the mind to think, nor can the mind determine the

body to motion or to rest or to anything else" (3p2). The ultimate cause underlying all things lies in the infinite essence of Substance alone, self-sufficient and unconditioned, but only as conceived independently through each attribute.

Even though the mind and the body do not interact, as we have seen with the Parallelism doctrine of Claim (3), they are still one and the same thing. While this claim is not held by *all* defenders of parallelism, it is common, as it is a claim that Spinoza himself makes (2p7s). My thesis does not depend on modes of different attributes being identical, but it is my preferred reading. The conclusion Spinoza arrives at with the aid of his parallelism doctrine is that the human mind is "simply the idea of an actually existing particular thing" (2p11). But not just any particular thing: "The object of the idea that constitutes a human mind is a body, *or* a specific actually existing mode of extension, and nothing else" (2p13). Here is our next puzzling claim, which Hübner's representational reading has somewhat foreshadowed:

5) *Ideas Are About Their Bodies:* The idea which comprises the mind is about the specific body to which it corresponds (2p11, 2p13).

2p13 illustrates that all ideas we have, even the ones we would unquestioningly accept to truly be about stars and planets, must be about states within our own bodies: "The object of the idea that constitutes a human mind is a body, *or* a specific actually existing mode of extension, and nothing else." In his proof of this, he argues that for an idea to be a true representation of an external body, it would have to have adequate knowledge of all its effects. This is not possible for human minds: "We do not sense any particular things [*res singulares*] except bodies and modes of thinking, nor do we perceive them" (2a5). He points to the postulates following 2p13 for clarification, which discuss the nature of the physical components of the human body. He begins:

> The human body is composed of a very large number of individual things (of different natures), and every one of them is highly composite (2post1).

The remaining postulates describe the nature of composite individuals which comprise the human body, how some are mutable, and how they interact with external bodies. While these postulates illuminate the nature of a physical body's existence, there is little here that could provide insight into Spinoza's distinction between sense and perception in 2a5. What he does tell us:

> The human mind is capable of perceiving very many things, and it is more capable of doing so, the more ways its body can be disposed (2p14).

He directly relates the physical ability of a body to interact with other bodies to the ability of the mind to perceive things, and yet, forbids causal interaction between mind and body. Perhaps we could allow this on the basis of their representational identity, but perception is traditionally conceived as an interaction of some kind, and a causal one at that. As we have seen, traditional conceptions are not Spinoza's concern, but we will have to wait until uncovering further nuance befpre this tension can be examined in full.

This claim (4) is made even more strange with the introduction of 2p16: "The idea of any [way] in which the human body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human body and the nature of the external body together." So, all ideas must be about the body they represent, but at the same time, to some degree, involve the nature of external bodies together. Not only is this possible, but it is commonplace. In the subsequent corollaries, he clarifies that the "human mind perceives the nature of *very many bodies together with its own body*" (2p16c1, italics mine), but that "the ideas we have of external bodies indicate the constitution of our own body more than the nature of external bodies" (2p16c2). While our minds and their ideas, it seems, are direct representations of our bodies and how those bodies interact with other bodies, our ideas do

not directly interact with the external bodies themselves. This stance likely stems from what he believes to constitute a human mind in the first place, which is an idea of a human body, "and nothing else" (2p13). "It follows from this that a human being consists of a mind and a body" (2p13c), that is, a human is an individual with a mind that parallels and is about its specific body.

This would seem to reduce our mind to a collection of purely representational mental states about the body and limit our ability to perceive or understand anything outside of our body. However, Spinoza still holds that minds have a diverse variety of mental states. Obviously, we can think about things outside the body—we see stars and planets, name them, and form concepts of them, and this is true for the Spinozan mind as well. It just comes with the caveat that these mental functions all require the context of the body they are about. We can find some help in 2post3: "the individual things that compose the human body, and consequently the human body itself, are affected by external bodies in very many ways." Since the mind has the same arrangement of ideas as the modes of the body (2p7: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things"), it has the same chain of cause and effect expressed through the attribute of thought and represents these effects in its own ideas. Thus, any idea in the mind is genuinely about a state in its corresponding body, which, in being an extended mode, can interact with other modes of extension in a multitude of ways. In this way, the mind primarily has ideas about states which correspond to its body states, which are affected by other bodies. These mental states (ideas) represent the state of affairs of their corresponding physical modes, but somehow only have causal interactions with other modes of thought.

From here, we can see that the mind is comprised of a conglomerate of complex ideas which correspond to the complex modes of the body. If we take Spinoza literally then, the mind is merely the sum of its parts:

6) *Amalgam of Ideas:* Minds are merely a specific amalgam of ideas (2p15).

Recall from the previous claim that the human mind corresponds directly to the body, and nothing else (2p13). The human body is a collection of complex individuals "of different natures" which are all "highly composite" (2post1). The mind, which is composed of ideas that correspond to the body, must be exactly as complex as the body, with its composite physical structure (2p7). Hence, 2p15: "The idea which constitutes the formal being of a human mind is not simple, but composed of very many ideas." Recall that ideas are modes expressed qua thinking Substance. Even though the mind conceives these ideas because it thinks, the composition of the mind itself is simply a conglomerate of its ideas, which parallel the body in their structure. It seems that for Spinoza, at least at first blush, to be a thinking thing simply means to be a composite mode expressed under the attribute of thought.

This metaphoric "pile" of ideas construal of the mind seems to be a sort of bundle theory. Bundle theory is the thesis that "the mind is just a collection of ideas that bear a certain relation to each other" (Della Rocca 1996: 42). Other bundle theorists prefer to discuss the mind in terms of mental states or events, (or in Hume's case, perceptions) as opposed to ideas (ibid.), but the underlying concept remains the same. The mind itself is not its own substance or substratum, but instead merely the collection of all its mental states, which exist as a composite because of their relation to each other. This theory of mind certainly seems in line with Spinoza's definition. Spinoza's human mind is, as Della Rocca puts it, "a loose bundle," because the parts that comprise it are fluid, and can change while the mind itself retains its identity (ibid.). Della Rocca's comparison of Spinoza's theory of mind to the bundle theory of mind, while not perfectly aligned, does provide some insight into Spinoza's conception. If thinking Substance as a whole could be considered a sort of substratum for all the ideas in existence, one may argue that Spinoza is not a

true bundle theorist, but for one, Della Rocca, does not think this argument would ultimately hold, and second, the overall similarities are enough that a comparison can aid in our understanding, while the areas in which they contrast are not of much concern. Spinoza defines the mind in terms of its bundle-like structure, but not in terms of its faculties or ability. The various capacities of a mind are not listed among its essential features, which is a strange and seemingly incomplete approach to defining the mind.

If all that can be said of the constitution of the human mind, considered as an *individui* qua thought attribute, is that it is a collection of ideas about a specific body, perhaps finding some description of its function and traits can give us a better understanding of Spinoza's conception. One qualification Spinoza does make is that the mind perceives the ideas of its body, as well as the ideas of these ideas: "The human mind perceives not only the affections of the body, but also the ideas of these affections" (2p22). He really doesn't elaborate much on this at all, but it is a small detail that seems to imply that for Spinoza, a mind is conscious because it has cognition of the ideas of its body, *as well as* the ideas of its ideas. For instance, I am reading words on a page, I know that I am reading words on a page, and I am aware that I have this knowledge. Or as Spinoza puts it: "and at the same time he knows that he knows what he knows, and so on *ad infinitum*" (2p21). No matter how many higher-order cognitions there are, however, under Spinoza's construal they must ultimately be a part of the bundle of ideas that comprise the mind conceived vie the attribute of thought.

Now that we have covered our sixth and final puzzling claim, we can see that Spinoza's multifaceted substance monism leads to a unique and nuanced understanding of the mind. It describes a sort of dualistic monism in which mind and matter are derived from the same single

all-encompassing Substance. Due to their essential difference in nature, however, they cannot interact. Here are the six core (puzzling) claims regarding the Spinozan mind for review:

1) *Substance Monism:* There is a single individual thing that exists, Substance (God *sive* Nature), and it contains infinite, i.e., all possible attributes (1p11).
2) *Essential Attributes:* The two attributes (that we know of), thought and extension, are essential ways in which Substance exists, and they comprise at least part of its infinite essence (1def6, 2p1, 2p2).
3) *Parallelism:* The attributes of thought and extension hold a correspondence relation of parallelism, meaning modes of thought are causally and structurally identical to modes of extension, and every extended mode must also have a corresponding mode expressed in the attribute of thought (2p7).
4) *Forbidden Interaction:* Modes of thought and modes of extension do not and cannot causally interact (1a4, 1p10, 3p2).
5) *Ideas Are About Their Bodies:* The idea which comprises the mind is about the specific body to which it corresponds (2p11, 2p13, 2p16 and corollaries).
6) *Amalgam of Ideas:* Minds are merely a specific amalgam of ideas (2p15).

These six claims don't fit easily into a single, cogent metaphysics of mind. On their own, they are puzzling to say the least. When combined, we will see that among other things, they lead to a doctrine that has been written off by some as "hippyish" and "stoned" (McGinn 2006: 93). I too have been called these things due to unfamiliarity and mild confoundment, so this thesis is in good company. I will therefore proceed methodically and without reservation to the conclusion that follows inevitably from Spinoza's claims: All of Nature is minded, and the pervasive mentality of Nature grounds the existence of all other minds.

Substance Monism (1) must be accepted as a prerequisite to understanding the rest of the *Ethics*. We have seen his argument for this stance, which appears to meet Spinoza's personal satisfaction, but arguably leaves something to be desired. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive how every possible facet of existence can be contained within a single substance, especially when traditional conceptions of substance and its features ascribe only one essential attribute to any given substance and posit that each substance must be unique because of these essential attributes. Thus, we have the following issues regarding the first claim:

i. A weak argument for substance monism.

ii. The problem of how one substance could possibly contain all facets of existence.

This second issue relates to claim (2), which posits that Substance possesses all attributes (all the essence in existence). For Spinoza, this claim is part of the reason that his Substance Monism claim (1) holds, but it is difficult to see why. Spinoza asks us to accept both claims based on his idiosyncratic definitions and the proofs he derives from them, but as I have said, his arguments could be clearer and more cogent. From claim (2) stems another issue:

i. How can a single substance be conceived as existing in different essential ways?

There is a nuance to this statement, and it relates to our next claim, which is perhaps his most infamous. The Parallelism claim (3), which posits that modes understood through each separate attribute have the same causal and structural order (at the very least). Spinoza says that modes are both "expressed" and "conceived" through attributes, which gives his metaphysics a strangely dualist flavor for such a strictly monistic system. Our issues with (3) are thus:

i. How modes are both "expressed" and "conceived" through attributes.

ii. How it is that seemingly fundamentally different facets of substance have an identical causal and structural arrangement, and how individual modes of attributes of *x* and *y* are still considered "one and the same thing" (2p7s).

It is strange then that these attributes have identical order and structure but cannot interact. Della Rocca and others point out that (4) is a puzzling endorsement by Spinoza, considering his immediate dualist predecessors (e.g., Descartes). Cartesians (including Spinoza, at least regarding mental causation) insisted that the mental and physical were distinctly separate types of things that had very little in common, but still maintained that they could causally interact with each other. Philosophers of the time believed that to some degree "similarity is required for causation" (Lin 2019: 37). Spinoza believed that this similarity was conceptual and that something inhering in an attribute could only be caused by something of the same kind of attribute (*ibid.*). Still, it is odd that the two attributes cannot causally interact, even though they do share the quality of both being essential features of Substance. Our problem with (4) follows:

i. How it is that two things sharing both an ontological and epistemic ground (Substance) cannot possibly interact with or be conceived through each other.

ii. If body and mind cannot causally interact, how does the nature of a body's composition affect its ability to perceive things? (2p14)

Next, the proposal in (5) that all ideas in the mind are about its corresponding body is especially disconcerting and seems to leave other essential mental features unaccounted for. For instance, it seems that my idea that women and men are intellectual equals is an entirely separate entity from my physical body, but of course, to Spinoza, it only seems this way. For him, there is a state of my extended body that corresponds to that idea in my mind, just as there is a corresponding extended mode for every idea. From claim (5) we have many questions.

i. If all ideas must be about their correspondent body, how do we account for ideas that seem to be about things outside the thinker's body?

ii. If ideas are about the body, how do we account for ideas that seem to represent other ideas, or, if there are any, a non-physical *rem singularem*?

iii. How do we make sense of the claim that ideas in the human mind that seem to regard an external mode "involve the nature of the human body and the nature of the external body together" (2p16c1)?

Claim (5) that Ideas Are About Their Bodies flows naturally to our next, which concerns how these ideas exist within the mind. Amalgam of Ideas (6) says that a collection of ideas (about the body, per the previous claim) is what constitutes the mind. This claim seems an impoverished conception of the mind. It is not quite clear how this assertion accounts for consciousness itself, and all the various mental qualities and operations that aren't so obviously related to specific bodily states. Construing the mind as an amalgam of ideas seems to account for representation only upon initial reading and struggles with other issues like consciousness and the computational power of the mind, especially when placed next to other more modern theories of cognitive science regarding what the mind is. Again, this does not include mental faculties and abilities associated with consciousness among the essential features of the mind. Thus, the problem with (6):

i. How does an apparent amalgam or, effectively, a "pile" of ideas, manage to constitute a conscious mind?

These are the tensions of the six puzzling claims on their own, but there are more that arise when trying to consider them as a coherent collection. When we turn to how these claims interact, we are met with further tension. Considering all these claims together, especially (3) through (6), presents probably the most interesting issues of Spinoza's metaphysics, and provides the

motivation for the main purpose of this thesis. Spinoza posits that all physical modes must have a corresponding idea (3), that any idea must be about its body (5), and that any mind is simply the composite of all the ideas about its body (6). Through this series of claims, Spinoza necessarily attributes mentality to all physical things. This implication very quickly makes for a messy mental metaphysics where we would have to explain what the attribute of thought is like for a planet, kidney, or glass of water. The way that these claims come together implies that most, if not all extended modes have minds. Following these claims to their necessary conclusion regarding the mentality of all physical modes leads to a (somewhat) controversial thesis that implies mentality in all things. We will delve into this thesis in later sections. For now, we have reached the tensions involved with the interactions between the Six Puzzling Claims

i. If a mind is just a pile of ideas, and all bodies have correspondent ideas, then it seems all bodies (or at least all composite individuals) must have minds.
ii. If all composite bodies must have minds, how do we account for apparently inanimate objects having consciousness?

These issues bring us to the thesis of panpsychism. While a thesis positing ubiquitous minded entities is not an easy one for many to accept, it follows naturally from Spinoza's metaphysics, and provides us with a possible way to reconcile his mess of puzzling claims. In the next section, we will explore different panpsychist theories and what they say about (non-human, even non-organic) consciousness in the natural world. This will help us answer the lingering questions we have for Spinoza. If everything physical must have some sort of idea connected to it, and certain combinations of ideas are minds, then what exactly constitutes a conscious mind? If ideas inhere in Substance for Spinoza, and ideas combine to compose minds, then which physical bodies qualify as having minds? Is consciousness more prevalent in our universe under Spinoza's

system than we originally thought? Through an exploration of various kinds of panpsychism in the next section, I will attempt to illuminate in what sense Spinoza was a panpsychist, and, by the end of this Thesis, how his particular strand of panpsychism can unify and make sense of his puzzling metaphysics of mind.

IV. Panpsychism: A Gander at the Grander Scheme

Spinoza's thesis of pervasive mentality may bring cogency to his strange set of claims. Spinoza's claim that "whatever we have said about the idea of the human body, we must necessarily say about the idea of any thing" (2p13s) unabashedly hints at panpsychism, especially considering all he has said about the idea of the human body, and, by association, the human mind, up to that point. Exactly what "we" have said about the human mind is that it is an amalgam of ideas that thinks, with the body as its object. Just as the idea of the human body constitutes the human mind (2p11), then the idea of any mode (body) constitutes a mind. Spinoza's parallelism posits that any physical body must have an idea that directly corresponds to its extended form (cf. Claim 3, §III). This parallelism between bodies and ideas means that for Spinoza, every *rem singularem* has a corresponding conglomerate of ideas, i.e., a mind. Combine this with his thesis that thought is an essential attribute of being for Substance (cf. Claim 2, §III,) and, voilà! Spinoza is a *panpsychist*. This is the view "that consciousness is fundamental and ubiquitous in nature" (Seager 2020: 1). Per panpsychism, all things, or all fundamental things, have a mind. Spinoza apparently attributes mind to all material things with the above statement in 2p13s. As we have seen, however, Spinoza has a unique conception of mind. Does this pervasive mentality still, then, segue into consciousness in all material things? Thomas Nagel famously states that if something is conscious, there must be "something it is like" to be that thing (1979: 166). Are the ideas paralleling all physical modes truly conscious? What exactly are Spinoza's various minds "like?" Whatever the details of his panpsychism, his panpsychist stance will be crucial to motivating and resolving the strangeness surrounding the claims discussed previously.

Figure 2 will be a helpful reference for the discussion of the different theories of panpsychism that will lead us to Spinoza's variety:

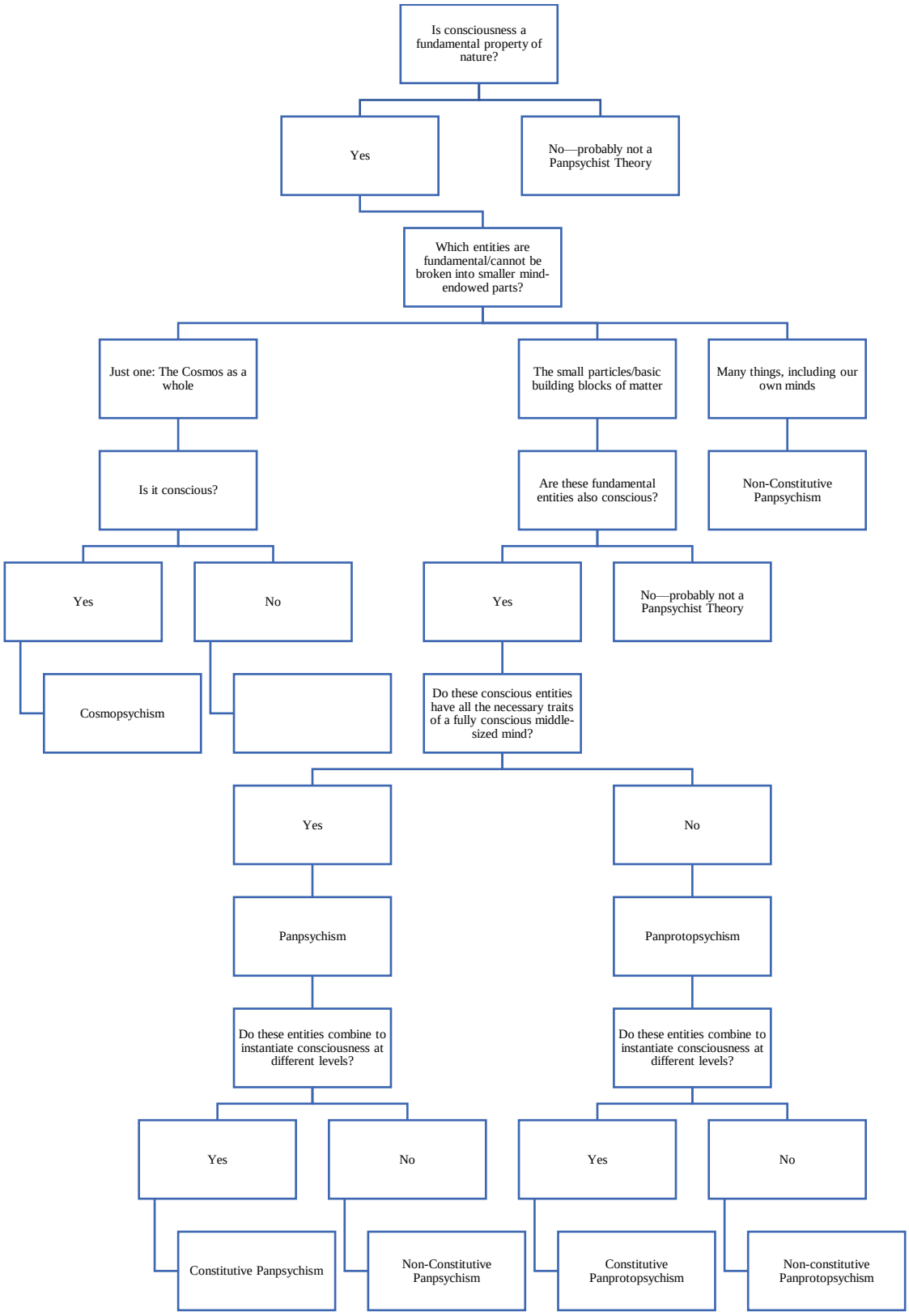
Is consciousness a fundamental property of nature?
Yes
No—probably not a Panpsychist Theory
Which entities are fundamental/cannot be broken into smaller mind-endowed parts?
Just one: The Cosmos as a whole
The small particles/basic building blocks of matter
Many things, including our own minds
Is it conscious?
Are these fundamental entities also conscious?
Non-Constitutive Panpsychism
Yes
No
Yes
No—probably not a Panpsychist Theory
Cosmopsychism
Do these conscious entities have all the necessary traits of a fully conscious middle-sized mind?
Yes
No
Panpsychism
Panprotopsychism
Do these entities combine to instantiate consciousness at different levels?
Do these entities combine to instantiate consciousness at different levels?
Yes
No
Yes
No
Constitutive Panpsychism
Non-Constitutive Panpsychism
Constitutive Panprotopsychism
Non-constitutive Panprotopsychism

FIGURE 2

Broadly put, panpsychism is the theory that fundamental features of reality have some degree of mentality, consciousness, or phenomenal experience, which means that there is some kind of mental quality present in all things. Phenomenal experience is the what-it-is-likeness of consciousness. It is, or possesses, *qualia* (singular *quale*)[1]—the 'felt' quality of experience. Any theory this far-reaching naturally has many variants. Some claim that phenomenal experience is present in all things. Others characterize it as "the thesis that some fundamental physical entities have mental states" (Chalmers 2015: 1). Different variants of panpsychism hold different views on which entities are considered fundamental, to what extent they are conscious, and the quality of their phenomenal experience. Chalmers (2015) discusses several of these versions of panpsychism and panprotopsychism. He differentiates panpsychists based on the degrees of complexity of the phenomenal experience possessed of the minds of entities throughout nature. There are two different kinds of experience that a mind can possess: "macroexperience"—consciousness at the level of humans and other middle-sized organisms—and "microexperience," which pertains to whatever phenomenal conscious experience would be possessed by a fundamental physical entity, e.g., a quark (2015: 7). While macroexperience includes the kind of consciousness we continually experience, and hence, is relatively easy to grasp, "microexperience" is slightly more slippery. Chalmers admits that we are "not in a position to say much about what microexperience is like," but conjectures that it is much simpler than human conscious experience (ibid).

Spinoza, too, posits that all bodies have minds (2p13s), and that these minds vary in complexity according to the complexity and power of action of their corresponding body. The

[1] While Spinoza wrote in Latin, this specific locution is a pervasive contemporary term, and not one of Spinoza's devising.

more complexity or capability a body has, the more powerful its mind is (2p14). Less complex and less capable bodies would still have minds, but they would be simple, composed of fewer ideas, and therefore have less power of thought than the human mind, which "is not simple, but composed of very many ideas" (2p15). This is because "the idea of any individual thing [*individui*] composing a body is necessarily given in God" (2p15p) and the individual thing constituting the human body is "composed of very many highly composite individual things [*individuis*]" (ibid.). The idea of the human body, therefore, is composed of many ideas which correspond to the modes comprising the body. Our perception of the ideas in our mind would be the macroexperience we have. Yet, there are less complex bodies. These consist of fewer composite parts and may have a less powerful mind due to their simpler composition. The most basic building block would have the most basic idea corresponding to it. Even the simplest physical mode—whatever the most basic microphysical particle may be—would have a simple mind corresponding to it. That mind is the idea of its distinct body. There is, at the very least, mental representation going on at every level of complexity for Spinoza. For a mind to know its body is to sense or perceive its representation of it, to the best of its capability.

Spinozistic minds are comprised of ideas which represent the modes comprising body, owing to the doctrine of parallelism, and the minds of which they are a part have perceptions of these ideas of the body (2p22: "The human mind perceives not only the affections of the body, but also the ideas of these affections). For many panpsychists phenomenal experience, as opposed to mental representation, is a defining aspect of consciousness. Different panpsychist theories take different stances on how the phenomena of microexperience and macroexperience are related. Most of these stances invoke some version of the *grounding* relation. A grounding relation is a "non-causal explanatory relation which holds between facts" (Goff 2020: 145, emphasis omitted).

A fact about *x* is grounded in a fact about *y* if *x* exists in virtue of *y*'s existence. An appropriate example: "There is a table at location L *in virtue* of the fact that atoms are arranged table-wise at L" (ibid.).

Constitutive panpsychists hold that microexperiences combine in some way, whether independently or in conjunction with fundamental laws and micro physical particles, to constitute macroexperience (Chalmers 2015: 8). The familiar consciousness found in humans is grounded in facts about micro-level consciousness. These fundamental phenomenal properties combine to instantiate human-level consciousness. There are also *non-constitutive panpsychists*, who deny that macroexperience is grounded in the microexperiences which comprise it. Many of them qualify as *emergent panpsychists* because they hold that our conscious experience emerges from microexperience and/or fundamental physical laws in a manner determined by the laws of nature but is *not* constituted by the smaller units of consciousness themselves (ibid: 8).

C*onstitutive panprotopsychism*, on the other hand, holds that there are smaller units of consciousness that can come together to form middle-sized consciousness. These smaller units are "precursors to consciousness and that can collectively constitute consciousness in larger systems"––that is, they are "proto-conscious" (Chalmers 2015: 2). While lacking phenomenal conscious experience, these entities nevertheless contain phenomenal properties that, when combined correctly, can lead to conscious experience, or minds. The fundamental difference between constitutive panpsychism and its panprotopsychist cousin is that the fundamental mental entities which come together to form our minds are not conscious in the same way we are, but instead proto-conscious. Constitutive panprotopsychism also has many variants.

A particularly interesting panprotopsychist is W.K. Clifford, who is similar to Spinoza in his thesis of "correspondence or parallelism between mind and body" (1878: 61-2). He regards

human consciousness as a "complex of feelings" that each corresponds to complex events in the brain, which are composed of "more elementary actions" (ibid: 64). From here, he reasons "that this correspondence extends to the elements, and that each simple feeling corresponds to a special comparatively simple change of nerve-matter" (ibid). As each complex brain state can be broken down to its fundamental components, so, too, can elements of consciousness be simplified into elementary feelings (ibid). By this reasoning, consciousness is placed on a continuum of complexity from the most complex structured consciousness to the most basic fraction of feeling corresponding to the most basic building block of matter. He calls this fundamental building block "mind-stuff," which can come together to form the "faint beginnings of sentience" (ibid: 64-65). This version of panprotopsychism seems to be constitutive in nature, but Clifford does not determine the exact point at which these precursors to phenomenal experience actually combine to instantiate consciousness. While he acknowledges an "insensible gradation" of consciousness, Clifford stakes out no position on which organisms have a sufficiently complex structure for full-blown conscious experience, as opposed to micro-level qualia that are somehow semi-sentient, perhaps due to a lack of complexity in their physical makeup (ibid: 64).

The task of finding emergence conditions for macro-level consciousness is not necessary for Clifford's purposes nor, I think, for ours. But it does lead us to a rather pressing issue that any constitutive panprotopsychist must address. This is the *combination problem*: how could proto-conscious facets of micro-level experience combine, seemingly without reason or impetus, to form a unified macro-level conscious experience (Chalmers 2015: 21)? William James (1890) is credited with first acknowledging this problem. Before characterizing it, James summarizes one form of a constitutive panprotopsychist argument quite nicely: "If evolution is to work smoothly, consciousness in some shape must have been present at the very origin of things" (ibid.: 92). This

would mean consciousness can be traced all the way back to what he calls "primordial mind-dust" (ibid.). Yet, philosophers who defend this claim run into a problem when asked to explain how these micro-level mental entities, these mind-dust motes, can "sum *themselves* together" to form a new mental entity (ibid: 98). Without a substratum or external cause, it is not possible, and each microexperience "remains, in the sum, what it always was" (ibid.).

Chalmers describes the combination problem in his presentation as the problem of how microexperiences can come together to produce macroexperiences: "it is at least very hard to see how a number of separate experiences had by separated entities could combine to yield a distinct experience had by a composite entity" (Chalmers 2015: 21). It is also perplexing that these microexperiences cannot be experienced by the subject of their resulting macroexperience. I cannot pinpoint the mental experience of specific neurons in my brain, or the specific sensation of the color red isolated from any stimulus. This is problematic according to the combination problem. Since my mind is composed of these micro-experiences, they should still be present, distinct, and able to be felt.

It is not my aim to solve the combination problem, (though Spinoza's metaphysics may later offer us some help). For the time being, we will turn to other panpsychist variants that may be able to avoid the combination problem. They do this by forgoing the bottom-up model of the existence of mind assumed by panprotopsychism. Instead, they describe fundamental aspects of existence, and in turn, consciousness, from the top-down. *Cosmopsychism* is the view that the entirety of nature—the whole cosmos—has some aspect of mentality that explains individual instances of consciousness in nature. William James touches on this view during a discussion of monism:

> For monism the world is no collection, but one great all-inclusive fact outside of which is nothing—nothing is its only alternative. When the monism is idealistic, this all-enveloping fact is represented as an absolute mind that makes the partial facts by thinking them, just as we make objects in a dream by dreaming them, or personages in a story by imagining them. To be, on this scheme, is, on the part of a finite thing, to be an object for the absolute; and on the part of the absolute it is to be the thinker of that assemblage of objects (James 1909 [2004]: 11).

In James' cosmopsychism, or what he calls *monistic idealism*, everything, ideas included, inheres in this "absolute." Yet, he rejects the view—our individual understanding is too far removed from the consciousness of the absolute. Trying to understand the world in this way sows more confusion than clarity (ibid: 12). I fear this rejection may be a mistake, at least for the purpose of understanding Spinoza's monism. Many theories have many problems that need resolving, and his specific qualm with the interpretation of our own experience barring us from understanding the "absolute" or ultimate being in this sense doesn't bar us entirely from conjecture, especially if we have a framework for understanding the structure and nature of the ultimate being whose mind we are trying to describe. Just as a person's pancreas cannot share in their full consciousness, it would be hubris for us to expect humans to fully grasp the sum experience of the cosmos. We may never be able to have a complete idea, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try, if it gives us a cohesive metaphysics.

Yurin Nagasawa and Khai Wager propose what they call *priority cosmopsychism*, which claims that "phenomenality is prevalent because the whole cosmos instantiates phenomenal or protophenomenal properties" (2015: 113). Their cosmopsychism takes inspiration from two views. The first is Goff's panpsychism, under which phenomenal properties are instantiated by all

fundamental physical entities, or "physical ultimates" (ibid: 114). The second is Jonathan Schaffer's *priority monism*: the cosmos is the only basic physical object that exists (ibid: 115). Through this composite view, there is precisely one fundamental consciousness that exists—the "cosmic consciousness" —which grounds all other forms of phenomenality (ibid: 117). All other forms of "ordinary" consciousness derive from this cosmic consciousness. Nagasawa and Wager remain neutral on the exact nature of cosmic consciousness but speculate that it is similar to our consciousness in that it can be broken down into different parts, for example, in the way human visual experience can be broken down into different experiences of color and different spatio-temporal coordinates in their visual perception (ibid: 121).

Itay Shani presents another version of cosmopsychism. This monistic view conceives of the entirety of nature as a single individual that explains the existence of all its parts. The entire cosmos is an "ontological ultimate" which is itself conscious. Reminiscent of James' Leibnizian terminology, he calls this entity "the *absolute*" (2015: 408). Hence, the universe *itself* is a conscious entity. The conscious experience of medium-sized mental entities exists in virtue of facts about the absolute. Shani claims that his panpsychism manages to avoid the combination problem in ways that emergent and constitutive panpsychism both struggle to achieve (2015: 432).

There are a few versions of panpsychism that initially stand out as candidates for Spinoza's kind for their own unique reasons. We must decide which of these similarities is strong enough to warrant adapting to Spinoza's system, and why. In the next section we will more closely examine cosmopsychism and panprotopsychism, to see which of these will provide us with the answers we seek and the least problems for cogency within Spinoza's metaphysics.

V. Spinoza's Panpsychism

Not only does Spinoza hold that mentality pervades Nature, but he holds that all things have minds. He defines a human mind as "the idea of an actually existing particular thing" (2p11). This particular thing is the human body (2p13). The following scholium shows his belief that this applies to all things:

> [W]hatever we have said about the idea of the human body, we must necessarily say about the idea of any thing. But we also cannot deny that ideas differ from each other as objects themselves do, and that one is superior to another and contains more reality according, as the object of one is superior to the object of the other and contains more reality. Accordingly, [to] determine how the human mind differs from other things and how it is superior to them, we must, as we have said, know the nature of its object, i.e., the nature of the human body. […][T]he more capable a body is than other bodies to act or undergo more things at one and the same time, the more capable its mind is than other minds to perceive more things at one and the same time; and the more the actions of a single body depend upon itself alone, and the less other bodies assist in its action, the more capable its mind is to understand distinctly. From this we recognize the superiority of one mind over others; and we also understand the reason why we have no more than a very confused cognition of our body (2p13s).

This is the most cited passage in the Ethics in defense of Spinoza's panpsychism. It is clear that Spinoza believes all things have minds, but the quality of these minds must be very different from that of the human mind, and from each other. There would be incredibly complex minds with multifaceted ideas and incredible powers of perception—say, for instance, the mind that is the

collection of ideas corresponding to a planet—but also incredibly simple minds corresponding to less "capable" bodies, like the mind of a grain of sand. It seems that certain levels of complexity are necessary for certain mental faculties, but Spinoza does not go into these details. Recall that minds are amalgams of ideas about a specific body. It seems unclear whether these minds are still conscious, but this is a more contemporary term that Spinoza does not himself use in the *Ethics*. The closest Spinoza comes to this discussion is his statement about the mind's perception of the ideas of its body. The human mind does not know its body directly but perceives "the ideas of the affections of the body," which is the extent to which it knows its body (2p19p). From this, all minds would have perceptions of the ideas of their bodies, but less complete minds would have more confused perceptions, or perhaps, dim awareness, of the ideas of their bodies. No matter how aware or powerful these "smaller" minds are, they are still, according to Spinoza, minds. At the same time, he posits that all ideas, and by extent, all minds, necessarily exist within what Spinoza calls the "infinite intellect" (2p11c*ff*) of Nature. It seems that this too, is a mind in its own respect, being the total idea of *all* things.

So, which of the panpsychist theories discussed in § IV is consistent with Spinoza's mental metaphysics, if any? There are two varieties that, while initially very different, have pronounced similarity to Spinoza's picture. The first is the panprotopsychism inspired by Clifford—that is, all things have minds of varying complexity based on their composition, and all facts about our consciousness are grounded in facts involving proto-conscious entities at a fundamental micro-level. The other viable contender is cosmopsychism—there are facts about consciousness on the level of the universe as a whole that ground the conscious minds that we possess. The fundamental entity that instantiates all other phenomenal experience, according to this theory, is the universe

itself, “the absolute” (Shani 2015: 408), or the “cosmic consciousness” (Nagasawa & Wager 2015: 116).

While both candidates are tempting in their own ways, it is likely impossible to integrate both into a system consistent with Spinoza’s. If we try to adopt both views on Spinoza’s behalf, we risk an overdetermination. It’s impossible for an entity to be grounded in two separate things when either of the two alone would suffice to ground the entity (for example, a human mind grounded in both its tiny mental parts as well as the cosmic mind). Constitutive panprotopsychism takes a “bottom-up” approach, attributing mental phenomena to the most basic, smallest fundamental entities. These tiny entities combine in some way to instantiate the consciousness we experience (Goff 2020: 144). This seems to fit with Spinoza’s conception of the human mind as a collection of ideas “smaller” than the mind itself: “[t]he idea which constitutes the formal being of a human mind is not simple, but composed of very many ideas” (2p15). Since ideas are modes of the attribute of thought, both they and the minds they comprise have mental properties. He makes an important distinction between minds and ideas. The human mind thinks (2a2: “Human beings think.”), and perceives these ideas, which are about its body (2p12: “Anything that occurs in the object of the idea that constitutes a human mind must be perceived by the human mind.”). Although ideas are modes of thought, Spinoza never describes them as thinking things that perceive. He makes a multitude of claims about the human mind as an idea of the human body, and then, with 2p13s, drastically generalizes his definition of mind: “whatever we have said about the idea of the human body, we must necessarily say about the idea of any thing.” This means that there is a mind for every physical body, each possessing varying degrees of mental complexity (varying degrees of consciousness) that correspond to the complexity of its physical body.

On the other hand, cosmopsychism takes a "top-down" approach to what fundamentally constitutes mental phenomena's constitution, grounding medium-sized mental entities in the cosmic consciousness (Goff 2020: ibid.). This latter approach also seems to align with Spinoza, e.g., when he says, "a human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of [Nature]" (2p11c). Still, just because *x* is composed of *y* does not imply that *x* is sufficient to ground *y*. It is true that the existence of the ideas in the infinite intellect is not grounded in the fact that they compose something, but it is also held by Spinoza that these ideas cannot exist independently of Substance. For him, ideas owe their existence to the fact that there is Substance, which expresses its power by instantiating the existence of all things in each of its attributes. Though both options are appealing, they are not cotenable.

To aid in this choice, we should go back to what is probably Spinoza's most fundamental commitment—his substance monism. The whole universe is the sole individually existing substance, which he calls God *sive* nature. This rules out the compositional approach to minds that the "bottom-up" constitutive micropsychism posits. Spinoza would reject this view on the grounds that it is absurd for smaller mental parts to be the sole ground of the existence of the whole, as it is incoherent for Substance to be composed of individual parts at all (1p13: "Absolutely infinite substance is indivisible."). While there are many ideas in the mind, due to his rejection of individually existing parts in §II, it's highly unlikely (to say the least) that Spinoza would accept that the mind exists in virtue of the ideas it contains. Instead, the mind (like the ideas which comprise it) exists in virtue of its being a mode of Substance—a finite mode expressed under the attribute of thought, or, in other Spinozan words, an idea in the infinite intellect (2p11c) of Substance. He affirms this stance when he claims that an idea of an "actually existing particular thing is a mode of thinking that is particular and distinct from all others" (2p9p), and this idea is

caused by Substance "insofar only as [it] is a thinking thing" (ibid.). The existence of any idea is grounded in the existence of Substance, specifically conceived under the attribute of thought. Similarly, the existence of any idea, and by extension, any mind, is ultimately owed to the fact that "God is a thinking thing" (2p1) that "can think infinite things in infinite ways" (2p3p). In its thinking infinite things in infinite ways, the intellect of Substance is the ground for the existence of all ideas.

Spinoza is very specific about what grounds the existence of ideas. It is Substance, i.e., Nature[1], conceived as a thinking thing, and nothing else. This is evident in 2p5:

> "Neither the ideas of the attributes of God nor those of particular things recognize objects of ideas themselves *or* things perceived as their efficient cause but God himself insofar as he is a thinking thing."

Ideas exist not because of the physical bodies that they are about, but instead because there exists one genuine individual thing, Nature, which, being a thinking thing (2p1), conceives all ideas. If a human mind is an idea in the mind of Nature, then any idea in a human or any other mind must also be a mode of thought in the mind of Nature. These various ideas are all modes of thought in a single, ultimate mind—the "infinite intellect" (2p11c) of Nature. Similarly, cosmopsychist theories like Shani's (2015) describe a conscious universe, an ontological whole whose mind grounds the existence of all other minds within it. As Spinoza puts it, "a human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God" (2p11c). "Infinite intellect" is another term of Spinoza's that suggests cosmopsychism as the better option.

[1] At this point, I will begin to refer to Substance more often as Nature, by which I will still mean Spinoza's one true Substance, God *sive* Nature, which is all of existence. The term "Nature" more organically lends itself to the idea of a conscious entity than "Substance," and I will continue to favor its use as my discussion of panpsychism continues.

Yet, there are serious questions about how cosmopsychism holds up to one of the more unambiguous comments on the divine mind in the *Ethics*. It raises the issue of whether Spinoza believes Nature's infinite intellect is literally a conscious mind, or if the thoughts in the infinite intellect are merely all the ideas in existence, not constituting a conscious whole. For Spinoza to be genuinely cosmopsychist, we would have to prove that when he says that "God is a thinking thing" he means that Substance does have a conscious mind. There is a passage early on in the *Ethics* that makes this daunting. While it is long, it is essential to attend to, so I will quote it in full here and now. It is the latter half of 1p17s:

> If intellect and will do belong to the eternal essence of God, we must certainly mean something different by both these attributes than is commonly understood. For an intellect and a will that constituted the essence of God would have to be totally different from our intellect and will, and would not agree with them in anything but name—no more in fact than the heavenly sign of the dog [i.e., the constellation *Canis Major*] agrees with the barking animal which is the dog. I prove this thus. If the intellect does belong to the divine nature, it will not be able, as out intellect is, to be posterior (as most believe) or simultaneous by nature with what is understood, since God is prior in causality to all things (by 1p16c1). To the contrary truth and the formal essence of things are such precisely thus because they exist as such objectively in the intellect of God. That is why God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived as constituting God's essence, is in truth the cause both of the essence of things and of their existence. This seem to have been noticed also by those who have maintained that the intellect, the will, and the power of God are one and the same thing.

> Since God's intellect is the sole cause (as we have shown) both of the essence and of the existence of things, it must necessarily differ from them both in regard to their essence and to their existence. For the thing caused differs from its cause precisely in what it has from its cause. For example, one human being is the cause of the existence of another human being, but not of his essence; for his essence is an eternal truth. Therefore they can completely agree in their essence: but in their existence they must differ. This is why if the existence of one comes to an end, the existence of the other will not therefore come to an end. But if the essence of one could be taken away and made false, the essence of the other would also be taken away. This is why something that is the cause of both the essence and the existence of an effect must differ from that effect both in respect of essence and in respect of existence. But God's intellect is that cause of both the essence and the existence of our intellect. Therefore, *God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived as constituting the divine essence, differs from our intellect both in respect of essence and in respect of existence, and it cannot agree with it in anything except name* (1p17s, italics mine).

There is a lot here. This proposition seems nothing short of devastating, but appearances are deceiving. Spinoza basically asserts in the above scholium that because Nature's mind is "the sole cause both of the essence and of the existence of things,"[2] it necessarily differs in essence from any other mind in existence by virtue of the fact that it is the *ground* of all other minds. The essence of Nature's intellect is its power of existence as a thinking thing to conceive all things, that is, to

[2] It is interesting that Spinoza does not qualify this statement with Nature's mind being "the sole cause both of the essence and of the existence of [*thinking*] things." I believe it is safe to say, however, that even though at this point in the *Ethics* Spinoza has not yet established his Puzzling Claim (4) of Forbidden Interaction, this clause was still implied.

have ideas about all things. The essence of the human mind is that it is an idea in the mind of Nature that thinks, i.e., has ideas about its specific body. Nature's intellect, as Spinoza says above, is "prior by nature" to all mental modes, and therefore could not have any sort of "posterior" perception of ideas, as it is unique thinking Substance actively creating all ideas. The human mind, on the other hand, has only perceptions of already existing ideas. The human mind is acted on, while Nature's intellect is infinitely acting in that it conceives all ideas in existence and has ideas of all things in existence. This is a very large difference in minds, but nevertheless a difference in mental traits.

However essentially different these minds are, we are still describing differences between *minds*. Spinoza attributes cognitive ability to both the human mind (2a2: "human beings think") and Nature's mind (2p1: "God is a thinking thing"). While he makes it relentlessly clear in the above scholium that the human mind and the intellect of Substance are necessarily essentially different kinds of minds, he does still describe them both as thinking. He asserts that this description bears similarity only in name, but there are, nevertheless, certain functions and structural features that all thinking things share, regardless of how different they are in their essential nature. It is true that the essence of Nature's mind would have to be vastly different from that of a human mind, but this should not exclude the mind of Nature from qualifying as constituting a conscious mind. In short, I believe that Spinoza's argument in 1p17s successfully proves that Nature's mind is of a fundamentally different ontological category than the human mind, but that this does not rule out the possibility for Spinoza of Nature having a unique conscious mind. Further comparison between the two will illustrate how this is so.

Let us first, then, examine the essential features of Spinoza's human mind.

1) The human mind is an idea of its specific body, and that body alone.

A human being is a finite mode of Nature, conceived either through the attribute of extension (the human body) or thought (the human mind). This "mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing but expressed in two ways" (2p7s). Every mind has a corresponding particular body. "[T]he object of the idea that constitutes the human mind is a body […] and nothing else" (2p13). If the human mind is an idea of a specific body, so too is Nature's mind.

Just as Nature's mind—its infinite intellect—is "the totality of all ideas" (Della Rocca 1996: 38), so its corresponding physical body is the totality of all physical modes. For this infinite, all-containing substance to qualify as the cosmopsychist universal mind, it is necessary for us to call this totality a single, unified individual, so that we have a unified mind which grounds the existence of all other thoughts. As Della Rocca puts it, "Spinoza conceives of the physical realm as an all-inclusive extended individual" (1996: 39). To wit, 2L7s: "the whole of nature is one individual thing, whose parts, i.e., all bodies, vary in an infinite number of ways without any change to the whole individual." This is because, as described earlier, a finite body (begrudging individual) is formed by a union of bodies which preserve a certain feature of being. We can thus accept this as well for Nature on the grounds that its infinite intellect is the idea of its infinite specific body, and nothing else, being the only substance that exists. It is safe to consider Nature as having a body. It consists of all things, and as we have seen, a body is "composed of very many highly composite individual things" (2p15p).[3] This is our next point, which serves to elaborate on and qualify the first:

2) The human mind is a composite idea, composed of many other ideas all of which correspond to finite modes.

[3] By individual thing, Spinoza does not mean individual substance, but a finite mode perceived as an individual inhering within the one true Substance, Nature, as discussed in §III.

Or, the human mind is essentially "a certain complex idea made up of very many other ideas" (Della Rocca 1996: 7). Since the mind and the body run precisely parallel to each other, the composite nature of the mind and its ideas is isomorphic to the composite nature of its corresponding body. Just as the body is a finite extended mode of Nature, the human mind is a finite mode conceived under the attribute of thought in the mind of Nature. The parallelism of the human mind and body is intricate and exact, which Della Rocca shows when he describes the idea comprising the human mind:

> This idea is composed of many 'simpler' constituent ideas. Each of these ideas is parallel to a certain part or affection (*affectio*) of the human body, or an event that takes place in the human body. For each such part, affection, or event, the parallel idea is contained within the complex idea that is the human mind (Dell Rocca 1996: 24).

We can easily accept this criterion for Nature's mind as well, though we must keep in mind that Nature's mind is not grounded in its parts. Nature's intellect exists by virtue of the fact that it expresses its necessary and infinite existence through the attribute of thought. Our next criterion also can be easily said of both the human mind and of Nature's mind:

3) It is a thinking thing, which forms ideas.

The human mind, like any mind, is a thinking thing, which conceives ideas. This is evident from 2def3: "By an idea I mean a conception of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing." This applies to Nature as well. 2p1 ("God is a thinking thing") entails that all ideas (i.e., thoughts) in existence are conceived in the mind of Nature. In 2def3, Spinoza calls the mind a thinking thing that is responsible for conceiving ideas. If the mind is a thinking thing that forms

ideas, and Nature's intellect is a thinking thing responsible for the existence of all ideas, then by Spinoza's definition, Nature is the conceiver of all things.

4) The human mind perceives the ideas of its body, along with the ideas of those ideas.

Proof of this can be found in 2p22: "The human mind perceives not only the affections of the body but also the ideas of these affections." Della Rocca also points us to 2a4: "We sense a certain body being affected in many ways." He says of this: "because we feel (*sentimus*) or have some kind of perceptual awareness of our own bodies and their affections, […] the ideas parallel to these affections are in the human mind" (1996: 26). Not only do we perceive the affections of the body, but we also perceive the ideas of these affections (2p22). So, a human mind perceives the ideas of its body and its various states as well as the amalgam of all the ideas corresponding to the body and its states, which serves as a basic criterion for Spinozan consciousness. While Spinoza does not directly discuss consciousness in the way contemporary philosophers do, he seems to come close when discussing ideas of ideas. Human minds are conscious because they are individuals which perceive their ideas, and the ideas of these ideas, which are "in God insofar as he has a cognition *or* idea of the human mind" (2p22p). Spinoza's reasoning seems to imply that this idea of idea structure in the amalgam of ideas that is the mind applies to all things. Take 2p21p:

> We have shown that the mind is united with the body from the fact that the body is an object of the mind (see 2p12 and 2p13). And therefore by the same reasoning the idea of the mind must be united with its object, i.e., with the mind itself, in the same way that the mind itself is united with the body.

So, for every amalgam of ideas that is about a specifically existing body, there is also an idea or [*sive*] cognition of that amalgam which is in the mind of Nature insofar as it is a finite mind (2p23p). Spinoza insists that minds perceive only the ideas of the modes of their body and not the

body itself (to wit, 2p19: “the human mind does not know the human body itself”). This is likely due to his Forbidden Interaction Claim (4) and is in keeping with Ideas-Things Parallelism. What’s more, he posits that this cognition of ideas in the mind is the only self-awareness we have: “The mind does not know itself, except insofar as it perceives ideas of the affections of the body” (2p23). As we have seen, the power of perception that a mind has varies based on its complexity and its ability to have clear and distinct ideas. So while there is still an idea of the mind of a rock, this idea would not have as clear a cognition of itself as a human mind, as it is more passive and has less adequate ideas. Neither mind would have completely adequate ideas—the only mind for which that claim could be made would be the mind of Nature. Here we have more ways in which the human mind differs from the mind of a grain of sand which differs from the mind of Nature itself. Nature has ideas of its body as well as perceptions or cognitions (ideas) of those ideas because it contains the ideas of all the minds in existence. This aids us in understanding how Nature’s mind possesses the next essential feature.

5) The human mind has and is aware of ideas—particular psychological items with intentional content.

Della Rocca reminds us that ideas for Spinoza are particular “psychological items that have content, that are about something” (Della Rocca 1996: 7). We know they have content because Spinoza equates ideas with knowledge, or cognition (2p7p), and includes among them perceptions (2p16c1), affirmations (2p49d), and concepts (2def3), which are all mental states with content (ibid: 8). The aboutness of ideas is another feature the human mind must have in virtue of it being composed of ideas. This feature lines up with the contemporary concept of intentionality. While this quality mental states have of being about something does not necessitate that those mental

states (ideas) themselves be conscious, intentionality is a quality that is possessed by conscious minds and is generally seen as one of their essential features.

It's safe to assume the phenomenal experience of Nature's mind isn't much like ours. Still, because it is a mind, it must be comprised of ideas about its body, which it conceives, and ideas of these ideas, which it also conceives, and so on to infinity. Nature is an individual the same way that any *rem singularem* is (though also of course, in its own unique sense of being the only independently existing Substance), which also must have ideas of its body and ideas of ideas. These ideas are also in Nature, insofar as it has a cognition or idea of its own mind, which, in having adequate cognition of all things, it must. It seems that this chain of ideas of ideas in Nature's intellect can extend to infinity, which would imply an expansive consciousness with levels that human beings with their limited minds cannot fathom. The next point seems to be another that will differ significantly between Nature's mind and the human mind.

6) Its perception of the affections of its body are what give rise to its emotions.[4]

There are also, for Spinoza, "special kinds of ideas" (Della Rocca 1996: 7). Human emotion (*affectus*) is defined as "affections of the body by which the body's power of action is augmented or diminished [...] and at the same time the ideas of these affections" (3def3). The mind can have two different varieties of these ideas. An adequate idea for Spinoza is an "idea which, insofar as it is considered in itself without relation to an object, has all the properties or intrinsic characteristics of a true idea" (2def4). For Spinoza, a true idea is one that agrees with its object (1a6). Spinoza equates inadequate ideas with "mutilated and confused" ones (2p35) and believes that any idea

[4] It could be argued that emotions are not an essential feature of the human mind, as they are affections of the body, and exist only insofar as the human body perseveres in duration and extension. However, insofar as the human mind exists, it corresponds to an existing body. Therefore, emotions are natural products of the nature of the mind. The eternal essence of the human mind that Spinoza asserts remains in God's mind is not subject to the passions arising from affections of the body, but instead only experiences the love of the third kind mentioned, which I will get to shortly. For our purposes for now, we are discussing the human mind as it exists in duration corresponding to the extended human body.

that is without complete understanding of its essence (causes) is an incomplete, and therefore confused one (2p28p). If emotions stem from adequate ideas, they are actions of the mind. If emotions are perceptions of inadequate ideas, they are passions. (3p3: "Actions of the mind arise only from adequate ideas; but passions depend solely upon inadequate ideas.). Actions and passions are both emotions, but the former involves the individual being the adequate cause of the emotion, while the latter involves the individual being acted upon (3def3: "by an emotion I mean an action if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections; if not I mean a passion"). Our emotions are essentially ideas that represent different ways the body can act and be acted on. We are able to experience emotions because our mind perceives our body and its various states or affections, as well as the ideas of our body and its affections.

There is a significant difference here for Nature's intellect. Nature is the cause of all things but cannot itself be acted on. What's more, the only thing which has adequate cognition of all things (and itself, for that matter) is Nature itself (ibid). Because it contains all adequate ideas, it has the total sum power of thought in existence. Spinoza states that "God's power of thought is equal to his actual power of action" (2p7c). Nature's mind contains all ideas in existence and parallels all physical bodies in existence. Since Nature is infinite, all-encompassing, and therefore meets Spinoza's definition of perfection in its totality, it cannot experience the passing to greater or lesser perfection which is the cause of most human emotions (5p17p). Because of this, "God is without passions, and is not affected by any emotion of joy or sadness" (5p17). This could be why Spinoza is so adamant in 1p17s that Nature's mind and the human mind are entirely dissimilar minds.

Spinoza warned us that he held this stance early on: "people who confuse divine nature with human nature readily attribute human emotions to God, especially so long as they remain

ignorant of how emotions are produced in the mind" (1p8s2). That he specifically distinguishes "human" emotions, leaves open the possibility that there are other ideas that could be similar in a sense to human emotions but are not human in nature. Love is one affection he describes. Spinoza believes that Nature feels a special kind of love, but this love does not arise for Nature in the way it does for humans. It does not stem from a body's power being augmented or diminished, but instead the most powerful idea there is, which is the adequate idea of all things. This kind of love is born from what Spinoza calls cognition of the third kind: "[I]ntuitive knowledge [*scientia*] [which] proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things" (2p40s2). The idea is of the order and connection of things and their causes, and it is the perfect or total idea of all networks within each attribute. It is an accurate, complete, and unconfused perception, or idea, of reality conceived by the intellect of Nature.

This cognition of the third kind is special for Spinoza, because "[w]hatever we understand by the third kind of cognition, we find a pleasure in it which is accompanied by the idea of God as its cause." (5p32) He calls this pleasure intellectual love, which is love born of the third kind of cognition only. This "infinite intellectual love" (5p35) is a complete and true understanding of all attributes accompanied by joy instantiated by knowing itself to be the cause of this understanding. Spinoza asserts that "[Only] intellectual love is eternal" (5p34c) and that Nature feels this intellectual love for itself: "God loves himself with infinite intellectual love" (5p35). While humans experience this love because they are being acted on, Nature experiences this love because it has complete knowledge, or contains adequate ideas. Thus, although Nature's intellect does not experience human emotions, it nevertheless has a cognition of its body, an idea of that cognition, and an awareness of that idea. The emotions are different for Nature, but it still has the same

essential feature of mind that is perception and awareness of the ideas of its physical body, and thus has an emotion of its own kind.

Thus, Nature's mind shares its features with those of the conscious human mind. Still, it is necessarily very different from a human mind, and Spinoza agrees (recall both 1p17s and1p8s2). There must be in Nature's mind the idea of total existence, or perfection. Because emotions for Spinoza are generally confused ideas due to their being affections of the body, or bodily states influenced by outside effects, the only emotion that could be attributed to Nature is the aforementioned intellectual love which instead stems from adequate cognition and mental action. Spinoza says: "If joy consists in passing to a greater perfection, blessedness surely must consist in the mind's being endowed with perfection itself." (5p33s). Nature is conscious, and experiences emotions, but only of blessedness, self-love, and its own total perfection.[5]

Although the qualitative consciousness of Nature is entirely different from ours, it is nevertheless in Spinoza's system a distinct individual mind that thinks and has cognition of itself. Therefore, Spinoza is a cosmopsychist.

[5] I believe the closest we could get to understanding this intellectual love/blessedness would be Vedic conceptions of enlightenment and oneness, but that is a topic for another time.

VI. Is a Cosmopsychist Spinoza a Cogent Spinoza?

So, we can accept that Spinoza is a cosmopsychist. But does this allow us to accept his metaphysics as cogent? To find out, we will take a closer look at his original six puzzling claims while keeping in mind his other, similarly interesting belief that an infinite intellect—Nature's mind—is the causal and explanatory ground for all other minds that exist. We will see that his cosmopsychism provides clarity to those claims that don't quite add up upon initial reading. They were (§III):

1) *Substance Monism:* There is a single individual thing that exists, Substance (God *sive* Nature), and it contains infinite, i.e., all possible attributes (1p11).
2) *Essential Attributes:* The two attributes (that we know of), thought and extension, are essential ways in which Substance exists, and they comprise at least part of its infinite essence (1def6, 2p1, 2p2).
3) *Parallelism:* The attributes of thought and extension hold a correspondence relation of parallelism, meaning modes of thought are causally and structurally identical to modes of extension, and every extended mode must also have an identical corresponding mode expressed in the attribute of thought (2p7).
4) *Forbidden Interaction:* Modes of thought and modes of extension do not and cannot causally interact (1p10, 1a4).
5) *Ideas Are About Their Bodies:* The idea which comprises the mind is about the specific body to which it corresponds (2p11, 2p13, 2p16 and corollaries).
6) *Amalgam of Ideas:* Minds are merely a specific amalgam of ideas (2p15).

Claim (1) is the most fundamental claim of Spinoza's metaphysical system, though the apparent distinctness of *res singulares* makes it seem counterintuitive. Recall that Spinoza himself

acknowledges complex individual bodies but defines their existence in a way that does not negate his substance monism (1): there is only one independently existing substance, which is the inherent cause of everything else in existence, including the complex individuals just described. This is Substance (or Nature, or God). These complex individuals are merely its features, the "modes by which [Nature's] attributes are expressed in a specific and determinate way" (1p25c). They depend on Nature to instantiate their existence, which can be understood in various ways (attributes) that all constitute its essence.

We have seen in the previous sections that attributes are essential ways in which a substance can exist. They allow for both the conception and existence of finite modes. Nature does not contain parts that are objects in their own right, but it contains infinitely many modes conceived under infinitely many attributes, and collections of these modes or features of Substance can come together to comprise other composite modes. We can speak of this unified organization as a finite individual in its own sense, but not an independently existing one. This individual is called a body qua conception under the attribute of extension and a mind qua conception under the attribute of thought. This *rem singularem* still inheres in Substance and depends on it to exist. For example, an ocean wave is an individual thing only insofar as the water in that portion of ocean is moving together to create a peak. A wave is its own unified individual so long as its parts interact in a set way with synchronized motion. This relation is involved in Spinoza's conception of an "individual thing [*inidividui*]." He describes it as a collection of modes that are "united with each other" because they "communicate their movement to each other in some fixed ratio" (2a2''def). "Individual thing" is a deceptive term that Spinoza perhaps should have avoided here, but still it helps us account for how certain bodies can be perceived as distinct from others, while still all being features of Nature. The body of an individual thing is not an independent substance. It still

depends on the only Substance for its existence. There is no wave without its ocean, just as there is no physical body without substance conceived qua extension nor idea without substance conceived qua thought. In this way, bodies "are like waves on the oceans of extension and minds are like waves on the oceans of thought" (Lin 2019: 27).

This ocean of thought is itself the infinite intellect of Nature described in §V. This infinite intellect grounds the existence of all ideas in the same way that all waves exist in virtue of the ocean of which they are a part. All the ideas that exist do so qua thinking substance, just as an ocean wave necessarily occurs in the ocean, and nowhere else. It's true, you could mistakenly attribute other causes to the wave—convection currents or other features of the ocean—but in having a finite effect on a finite wave this other influence would be a "transitive cause" (1p18), because it, too, ultimately only exists in virtue of the ocean in which it inheres, and only affects a temporary, non-essential feature of its existence. In this way, the ocean, i.e., Substance is the "immanent cause" of all things (1p18). Seemingly distinct waves can interact and affect each other as "transitive" causes (ibid.), that is, augment or diminish size, shape, speed, etc., within the ocean, but their true cause is ultimately the ocean alone. They would have nothing in which to ground their existence without their ocean, through which they are conceived. In the same way, a mind—a complex idea—inheres in the intellect of Substance and is "a conception of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing" (2def3).

Spinoza's cosmopsychism includes the thesis that our minds are representations of our bodies. Furthermore, these representations are ideas in Nature's mind, which is a thinking thing that conceives of infinite ideas of infinite modes, including having ideas (representations) about other ideas. The essence of Nature and its unique power of conception allows us to understand how Nature is both an independently existing infinite substance and a composite thinking

individual within which many other composite individuals (and their ideas) inhere. Its modes are individual waves, while Nature is the whole ocean, both an entity unto itself and primary cause of all modes within it. But it is not so simple. Our ocean analogy requires a more creative imagination when met with our next claim. Because Nature's existence necessitates infinite essence, its existence is expressed under all attributes, and so our ocean must exist in every possible essential way. There is the ocean conceived qua thinking substance, and there is the ocean conceived qua extended substance possessing the exact same causal and structural order of waves, and there is any ocean under any other attribute that could possibly exist.

These various essential ways in which a substance is perceived by an intellect are its attributes (1def4), which are the focus of Claim (2). I say "perceived" in reference to a human mind, but conceived in the former paragraph in reference to Nature's mind because conception for Spinoza expresses action of the mind, while perception "seems to imply that the mind is being acted on" (2def3). Nature cannot be acted on for reasons already addressed in §III, namely that it possesses all causal power that exists. Nature has total power of action in virtue of its total existence but cannot be acted on. Spinoza proves in §I that there is nothing else of Nature's kind to act on it or limit it because Nature is entirely unique. It is the only individual thing that is self-causing, and therefore whose nature involves infinite and necessary existence. Conversely the human mind, which is conceived through Nature and often acted on, *perceives* attributes as constituting the essence of Substance because its existence has Substance as its immanent cause. This means all ideas are finite expressions (modes), and that minds are *res singulares* conceived by Nature's infinite intellect.

The above grounding relation between Substance and its modes holds for any attribute under which a mode is conceived, in part due to how it is defined. Recall 1def6: "By God I mean

absolutely infinite being, i.e., substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence." In §I, I briefly mentioned the interpretive issue about the number of attributes possessed by Substance stemming from Spinoza's use of infinity. If we take 1def6 literally, we have not just two essential expressions of existence through which modes are to be understood, but infinitely many attributes. We saw in the beginning that it is unclear whether this infinity is literal mathematical infinity or simply intended to mean all attributes there are without limitation. Spinoza could believe there are anywhere from exactly two attributes to a mathematically infinite number of attributes. While it is a compelling interpretive issue, the positions put forth in my thesis do not require taking a definitive stance on its outcome at this time.

Regardless of how many attributes he intends by "infinite attributes," it remains true that Spinoza regards the attributes of thought and extension as the only two that can be thought of by humans. For an infinite intellect, however, it is possible to conceive of all the attributes that there are. Regardless of what Spinoza means by "infinity," having multiple, let alone infinite essential attributes is strange for Spinoza's time. It is perfectly coherent however, within the framework of his metaphysics. This is because substance must have infinite essence, being all-encompassing, and this infinite essence is expressed through its containing and conceiving all the attributes there are, which themselves possess all the modes there are qua that specific attribute and can be characterized as qualitatively different ways of conceiving of Substance. Spinoza reiterates his demonstration that:

> [A]ll that can be grasped by an infinite intellect as constituting the essence of substance belongs wholly to a unique substance only; and consequently that thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same substance, which

is comprehended sometimes under the one and sometimes under the other attribute (2p7s).

In any case, understanding attributes, namely thought and extension, informs our understanding of Nature's essence (existence) as it is expressed through finite modes. Recall the essence of a thing is "something without which the thing cannot be or be conceived, and *vice versa* […]" (2def2). This addition of conception to his definition of a traditionally non-epistemic concept presents an interesting idiosyncrasy. As indicated in (§I), Spinoza consistently provides definitions both in terms of existence and of conception. While not explicitly a part of his parallelism doctrine, his tendency to provide ontological explanations alongside epistemic ones mirrors this doctrine. We will have to fully resolve this issue when we reach the Parallelism doctrine (3), but it is significant now, right along with Spinoza's basic metaphysics. It seems that wherever there is existence, there must also be an intellect with a cognition of said existence.

When using the term "intellect," Spinoza does not automatically mean the infinite intellect of 2p11c that is simply all modes conceived under the thought attribute. He does not mean "absolute thought, but only a particular mode of thinking" (1p31p). This particular mode of thinking could be considered *natura naturans*, a member of one of two categories that Spinoza defines. The first, *natura naturans*:

> [T]hat which is in itself and conceived through itself, *or* such attributes of substance as express eternal and infinite essence, i.e. (*by p14c1 and p17c2* God insofar as he is considered a free cause (2p29s).

The second is *natura naturata*:

> [E]verything that follows from the necessity of God's nature *or* of any of God's attributes, i.e., all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things that are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God (ibid.).

The particular mode of thinking that is the human intellect (the human mind) is *natura naturata* and is only able to have ideas of a limited number of modes and only under two attributes––thought and extension. Substance and its attributes are *natura naturans* and entirely unlimited. This includes the attribute of thought: "There is in God, necessarily, an idea both of his essence and of everything that necessarily follows from his essence" (2p3). Recall also that the essence of Substance is necessary, infinite existence (1p11). The idea of Nature's essence and everything that necessarily follows from it is in its mind, which can think "infinite things in infinite ways" (2p3p) by virtue of its divine nature. To wit:

> Since (by 1def6), the divine nature has absolutely infinite attributes, and each of them also expresses infinite essence in its kind, infinite things in infinite ways (i.e., all things that can fall under an infinite intellect) must necessarily follow from its necessity (1p16p).

This idea in Nature's mind "from which infinite things follow in infinite ways" is necessarily unique (2p4). First, Nature's mind is unique to any other mind in that has infinite ideas of infinite modes conceived under infinite attributes. We can infer:

> [S]olely from the fact that God is a thinking thing (and not from his being the object of his own idea), that he can form an idea of his own essence and of everything [every attribute] that necessarily follows from it (2p5p).

By this claim, the mind of Nature has a complete conception of each of its attributes, which comprise Nature's infinite and eternal, i.e., absolute essence. What's more, its intellect does not

exist in virtue of the fact that it represents its body, but instead because it is a self-conceived, independently existing thing. Nature not only has an infinite and eternal intellect qua *natura naturans*, grounds all other thinking modes, but it also has an all-encompassing mind qua *natura naturata*—that is—a mind that is the idea of all particular things that exist in finite space and time. Thus, Nature's intellect is unlimited, eternal, and the expression of free will qua thought attribute. However, because by intellect, Spinoza means a "particular mode of thinking" (1p31s), the mind of Nature can't just be Substance qua thought attribute, but must be a mind with ideas of only all actually existing things in nature. This mind would be of *natura naturata*, though it would be infinite insofar as it is related to its particular existence, but not eternity. So, there is Nature's infinite intellect (to use the term not in the finite sense that Spinoza means, but the general sense of Substance qua thought), which is *natura naturans*. It grounds all things qua eternally existing thought, including Nature's mind, which is the infinite mind of the moment, that is, a composite representation of all finite things as they presently exist.

While Nature's mind can conceive of infinite modes under infinite attributes, the finite nature of a human being prevents them from forming adequate ideas of other modes, and the only two attributes conceptually available to human minds are thought and extension. The relationship between these two attributes and the modes expressed through them, as well as the relationship between Nature's intellect and existence qua infinite attributes, are both described by are next claim.

The *Parallelism* claim (3) provides further insight into the relationship between the attributes discussed in (2), but only under careful consideration. Of all the puzzling claims, its discussion was treated most extensively in (§III), and we will both revisit and elaborate on it here. Here is the famous Proposition it is traditionally derived from: "The order and connection of ideas

is the same as the order and connection of things" (2p7) This Proposition is the universal basis for Spinoza's much-discussed parallelism. It implies that modes of thought and extension are "causally isomorphic" (Lin 2019: 37) because any mental mode *M* paralleling a physical mode *P* are one and the same thing, just expressed under different attributes. While there are many interpretations of Spinoza's parallelism, we have seen that three provide insight to this claim for our purposes. These three interpretations vary in stance on whether modes of extension really just *are* modes of thought or not, and what it means for the modes engaging in a parallelism relation to be expressed differently under their respective attributes. First, there is the Fregean interpretation, and then, there is Hübner's Intentional construal. Lastly, there is Melamed's reading under which they can possibly coexist and help us understand more about Nature's mind.

The Fregean reading, first offered in full by Della Rocca (1996) describes the idea of a body and the body itself as one and the same mode, sometimes understood as thinking and other times understood as extended—an attribute for each conceptual side of the same ontological coin. Recall, too, that Nature may in its own mind have epistemic access to a die instead of a coin, with infinite sides (the ability to conceive all attributes) but humans are too limited to know any other than thought and extension. Though these other attributes may be infinite, Spinoza leaves his exact reasoning for our inability to conceive them obscure. We (human modes) will use a coin for our mundane purposes. So, for us, there are two sides of this ontological coin, and each side is (at least from our perspective) conceptually independent from the other. Having a conception of a mode qua extension attribute does nothing to inform an understanding of a mode qua thought attribute, even of the two modes hold a parallelism relation.

Conceptual independence for Spinoza goes hand in hand with causal independence. As we have seen, there is substantial evidence that conception and causation are closely related in their

ontological implications for Spinoza. For example, 1a4: "Cognition [*cognitio*] of an effect depends upon cognition of its cause, and involves it." Compare another, more epistemic-oriented translation: "[k]nowledge of an effect depends upon and involves knowledge of its cause" (Bennett 2017), or the Latin (*effectus cognitio a cognitione causæ dependet et eandem involvit*). As is certainly obvious by now Spinoza often discusses existence and conception in close relation to each other. For instance, the first line of the *Ethics*: "By cause of itself [*causa sui*] I mean that whose *essence involves existence* or [*sive*] that whose nature *cannot be conceived except as existing*" (1def1, italics mine), or 1p15: "Whatever exists is in God, and nothing *can exist or be conceived* without God" (Bennett 2017, italics mine) or his definition of substance: "That which is *in itself and is conceived through itself*" (1def3, italics mine).To know an effect, one must know its causes, and if one cannot conceive of modes across attributes, then one cannot conceive a causal relation between attributes.

Though they are connected through parallel formal order and connection of causes, any two modes conceived through different attributes must remain conceptually independent. Della Rocca calls this conceptual closed-offedness between modes conceived under different attributes *referential opacity* (1991: 266). Spinoza's support for what is a both a conceptual and causal barrier between attributes is evident in 2p6d, where he says the modes of each attribute:

> [H]ave God for their cause only insofar as he is considered under the attribute of which they are modes, and not insofar as he is considered under any other.

Modes are caused by substance no matter which attribute they are being conceived through, but whether they are being caused by Nature qua extension or Nature qua thought depends on which attribute the mode is being conceived through. Della Rocca's argument, while not self-proclaimed as Fregean, is dubbed so by Hübner owing to Della Rocca's assertion that "Spinoza's

parallelism is not one between distinct things but between ways of conceiving things […] we might say that Spinoza's parallelism is not ontological but semantical in nature" (Della Rocca 1996: 19). This difference in semantics supports Spinoza's characterization of a body and its idea as "one and the same thing but expressed in different ways" (2p7s).

Recall that Hübner herself does not adopt the Fregean reading. Instead, she says that the difference in "expression" he describes is an ontological one, where modes of extension are physical matter arranged into finite bodies, and the modes of thought which correspond to them are ideas *or* representations in the mind of those parallel physical modes. Returning to Spinoza's discussion of *res singulares*, a mode is considered an individual thing so long as it is a conglomerate of smaller modes maintaining a relation that comprises a complex individual mode (2a2''def). This *rem singularem*, whether conceived as thinking or extended, perseveres in existence so long as the modes which comprise it maintain a consistent relation. In this sense, "[i]t is a matter of one and the same ratio of motion and rest existing in two different ways: formally [physically] and objectively [mentally]" (Hübner 2022: 57). In this way, the mind exists as an idea representing the body with the same form and causal structure—that is—it is structurally and causally isomorphic to its body's ratio of motion and rest, but the idea is not itself an extended thing. Remember that this mind, i.e., composite idea does not exist because of its body, but because of Substance qua thinking thing. They are the same finite, mode, but existing under two distinct ontological categories, i.e., attributes.

Both the above interpretations hold that there is a close correspondence between mind and body, but each grounds these identity relations differently. The Fregean interpretation posits numerical identity between modes conceived under different attributes, and says that they are identical, but differentiated based on the attribute they are being conceived through. The

Intentional interpretation holds that a mode of thought and its physical body are still "one and the same thing," but they differ in the qualitative aspect of how they exist. That is, the mind is a mental representation of its body with an identical form and structure, which, under the "quasi-Aristotelian model" that Hübner accepts for Spinoza, means that the idea of the body effectively *is* the body, but expressing its existence qua thinking substance. A mind parallels the body it is about because it is a representation of that physical body that has an identical structure of modes, but an essentially different nature. It is numerically identical to its body, but its existence is expressed through a different essential feature. Simply put, it exists as an idea instead of a body. Everything about the idea still perfectly parallels its body.

Both positions do a sufficient job of offering their own respective clarifications for Spinoza's parallelism between ideas and bodies, but don't acknowledge another parallelism that we have now seen is equally entrenched in Spinoza's metaphysics. This is the parallelism we ran into while revisiting claim (2)—Nature's mind as a thinking thing has a complete conception of all attributes, i.e., its own all-encompassing essence. This is a parallelism between Nature's mind and all other attributes including, but not limited to, both thought and extension, that must now be examined.

Melamed has provided us with a helpful framework within Spinoza's system from which to start. Recall from §III that Melamed offers an interpretation of Parallelism under which there are two distinct doctrines of Parallelism. One is the "Ideas-Things" Parallelism he argues is evidenced by 2p7: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things." Spinoza does not assert here that these ideas are identical to their corresponding "things," but that there are ideas that represent their things with a causally isomorphic structure. *Things* is of course, an uncomfortably broad term, which seems to refer to not only all modes of all other

attributes, but all modes of thought, the attributes themselves, and even substance itself. The ideas of Nature hold a representational relation with the things to which they correspond and can represent the same mode under infinitely many attributes (2013b: 641). Not only this, but since ideas and minds are also things, there are also representations of those ideas and minds, and ideas of those ideas, and so on and so forth. Melamed indicates the implications of this:

> The causal order of thought-items is supposed to be equal to the causal order of things, which includes all the modes of all the infinitely many attributes. Hence, Thought appears to be infinitely richer than any other attribute (2013b: 652).

This is what Melamed calls the "multifaceted structure of ideas" (ibid: 651). Given that ideas too are things, the ideas in the mind of Nature can have ideas of its ideas, and ideas of those ideas, and so on to infinity. The "Inter-Attributes" Parallelism of 2p7s implies nothing of the sort. It is not representational and doesn't necessarily refer to ideas at all. Inter-attributes Parallelism describes the correspondence relation between modes as complete identity between modes conceived under every attribute (ibid). They are "one and the same thing" (2p7s), simply expressed differently under each attribute. We have seen that the Ideas-Things Parallelism, which closely resembles Hübner's representational reading, and the Inter-Attributes Parallelism, which aligns with the Fregean reading, describe two different kinds of Parallelism relations which must coexist to provide us with an adequate understanding of the relation between attributes. One description is epistemic, and the other ontological, in keeping with the dual approach Spinoza takes to his definitions.

This specific parallelism between Nature's mind and existence itself means that the attribute of thought is much more complex in its modal structure than any other attribute, but still maintains a parallel structure to the rest of existence. Of course, we have already seen that Nature's

intellect is infinite, and that it conceives infinite things in infinitely many ways. Now, however, we are seeing that Nature's mind itself has infinitely many "levels" of ideas, including of its own mind, and conceives all of them. This is supported by more than just the Parallelism doctrine: "[The] idea of the mind is united with the mind in the same way as the mind itself is united with the body" (2p21). Here, it is clearly stated that just as there is an idea about the body, there is an idea about that idea. Recall an interesting detail in its proof that supports Melamed's argument:

> We have shown that the mind is united with the body from the fact that the body is an object of the mind. And therefore by the same reasoning the idea of the mind must be united with its object, i.e., with the mind itself, in the same way as the mind itself is united with the body (2p21p).

The mind has not only a cognition of its body, but a cognition of its mind as well, which is "in God and related to God in the same way as the idea [*sive*] cognition of the body" (2p20p). Nature's mind has a cognition of the human mind, through which the human mind perceives itself because there is an idea of it in the mind of Nature (2p22p). By Spinoza's line of reasoning, this is true not just for the human mind, but for any mind of any *rem singularem*. It cannot be said that this cognition would have a qualitative phenomenal experience resembling ours in any way, but it would still, nevertheless, be a mind with some kind of cognition of its composite idea in the mind of Nature. As we have seen, the ultimate ground of all things in existence is Nature, and the ultimate ground for all minds is Nature's mind.

"God's power of thought is equal to his power of action" (2p7c), that is, Nature is both omniscient and omnipotent. This power of thought and action is infinite—encompassing all thought and action in existence. Nature's power lies not in its ability to affect modes, as these are nonessential features which proceed naturally from Nature's existence. Its power lies in the brute

fact of its existence, being the only truly independent substance and the ontological ultimate through which all other things are instantiated. Thus, Claim (2) does not cause problems for us with its multiple essences, but compliments cosmopsychism, because in conjunction with Melamed's parallelism, it further explains the multifaceted structure of Nature's mind. This explains both the infinite nature of Nature's mind, as well as the important role of the infinite intellect when it comes to conceiving of minds. The infinite intellect of Nature conceives of itself both as thinking and extended, and possibly under any of the infinite attributes which constitute its essence. The power of the infinite intellect to conceive of its essence under any attribute is an essential quality of Substance, and its power of conceiving is the root of all mental modes in existence. Nature is a thinking thing for our cosmopsychist Spinoza, and its power of conception, which is equal to its infinite power of action, is responsible for the various aspects of its essence.

Spinoza's Parallelism is a representation relation, but it cannot allow for causation between the mental and the physical, or vice versa. This is Forbidden Interaction Claim (4). Recall Spinoza's emphasis on the relationship between conception and causation, where one goes hand in hand with the other in any definition, as in 1a4 where cognition of the cause depends upon cognition of its effect. A mode of thought can only be conceived under the attribute of thought, and since knowledge of a mode depends on conceiving of its effect, a mental effect must have a cause that can be conceived through the attribute of thought. A mode of thought first and foremost exists because of Substance, but insofar as it can experience a transitive (intermodal) cause, it must be conceived through its same attribute. The same, of course, goes for extended modes and their causes, which must be conceived through the attribute of extension alone. Finally, it makes sense that something which is numerically identical with itself could not act as an external cause to itself. In this way, the Parallelism doctrine lends some sense to our Forbidden Interaction Claim (4).

The Parallelism doctrine has also prepared us for Claim (5): Ideas are About Their Bodies. This is shown in 2p11: "The first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human mind is simply the idea of an actually existing particular thing," followed on its heels by a description of the essence of a human being, which "consists of specific modes of [Nature's] attributes, namely (by 2a2) modes of thinking" (2p11p). Once again, Spinoza places the primary ontological importance on the mental aspect of Substance. This makes sense here, however, as the essence of a human being (by 2a2 and 2p11p) is that it is a thinking thing. Not only a human mind, but any mind (2p13s) consists of modes of thought which specifically represent their body or material mode first and foremost. Spinoza claims that we cannot have ideas in our minds that are purely about external bodies. This is one of the more puzzling and counterintuitive ones in his metaphysics, but it's there:

> The idea of any [way] in which the human body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human body and the nature of the external body together (2p16).

A mind can't have an idea solely about a body outside of its own, as it is comprised of ideas that represent the physical state of the body it is about (2p7). Per Claim (4), another body cannot act on my mind, but it can act on my body. Any way in which an external body affects the modes of my body, it is represented by an idea in my mind of that affection taking place in my body. This idea includes the nature of the external body to some degree, but primarily represents the affections of my own body. "[T]he ideas that we have of external bodies indicate the constitution of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies" (2p16c2). These ideas are more indicative of my own body's constitution than they are of the nature of the external world.

They are still direct representations of my body, only they include representations of my body as it is being affected by the other extended modes.

What's more, the ideas in our mind that represent our bodies are themselves objects of representation. "The human mind perceives not only the affections of the body but also the ideas of these affections" (2p22). In this way, my conscious perception in which I have an awareness of my intentional states is a result of my mind, which is the idea comprised of all the ideas that represent the ideas representing my body. This is how I perceive the casual affections of both my body and mind.

Imagine, for example, I am watching the sunrise, and I see transient pinks, periwinkles, and flocks of bats, all brightening into day. Though the ideas in my mind are representational, they are not about the sky, clouds, bats, or how light is filtered through the atmosphere. The ideas in my mind show me the sunrise because I have a composite idea comprised of all the ideas representing the affections of my body as they interact with external stimuli. Really, my perception of the sunrise is a perception in my mind of the composite idea representing the group of ideas with a mental structure identical in order and connection to the activity in my eye's photoreceptors, my visual cortex, and so forth. The actual experiential awareness at is my conscious perception lies in my perception of the composite idea that represents all these ideas about my body.

Spinoza allows the human mind to be conscious of itself, but only insofar as its ideas involve the nature of its body (2p23). His reasoning for this is that any idea in the human mind is also an idea in the mind of Nature (2p22p), which is the only mind that has complete knowledge of all things, by virtue of its essence. It has cognitions of every mode conceived under every attribute, including ideas of all human minds, also by virtue of their essence. Human minds have a finite perception of existence limited by their finite bodies. They not only fail to have adequate

ideas of external bodies, but also fail to have adequate ideas of their own. Only Nature can have an adequate idea of all things, as it conceives all ideas, and therefore, all minds that exist. Nature also has adequate cognition of the order and connection of all causes. Its power of conception, per our parallelism claim, is equal to its power of existence, which is infinite. The human mind is, however, a collection comprised of the ideas of the ideas which is finite, a *rem singularem* conceived qua thinking substance. Because it is not comprised of all ideas, it cannot have adequate or complete knowledge, and thus has a limited power of conception.

This prepares us for our final Claim, (6): minds are an amalgam of ideas (2p15). The goal is to understand how Spinoza considers the mind (whether it be Nature's mind, a human mind, or any other) to be both a coherent thinking entity as well as a collection of ideas that somehow come together and stay that way. We have seen at this point that the key to consciousness seems to lie in having an idea or cognition of this particular amalgam, but not of the body itself. Therefore, the amalgam of ideas is itself the mind, but the cognition of that amalgam is akin to the quality of consciousness possessed by the mind. We can see more into the nuance of Spinoza's mysterious brand of consciousness by combining our understanding of the previous claims with his definition of a finite individual. Spinoza considers an extended mode an individual body insofar as its physical modes come together to preserve a specific relation of motion and rest (2L3def). Yet, he does not address how this definition would apply to modes of any attribute other than extension. His Parallelism Claim (3) tempts us with the conclusion that it follows necessarily from his definition of composite bodies that minds too are an amalgam of ideas, all representing their body, with a causal and organizational structure identical to the order and connection of the collection of the body's physical modes. While this is an accurate structural description, the causal grounds for this construal are not appropriate. This approach would not work, as claim (4) forbids causal

explanation between physical and mental phenomena, or any inter-attribute explanation. We must find something else to account for how a pile of ideas constitute a distinct thinking thing, i.e., a mind. Thankfully, we have Della Rocca's attribute-neutral characterization of Spinoza's individual things. He describes a complex individual, conceived under any attribute, as a collection of modes which come together in a way that preserves "a certain feature of the whole collection" (1996: 39). This is in line with Spinoza's definition of particular things:

> By particular things I mean things [i.e., modes] that are finite and have determinate existence, but if several individual things [*individui*] combine in action so that all of them together are the cause of one effect, I consider them all as to that extent a single, particular thing [*rem singularem*] (2def7).

Della Rocca conjectures that this feature that a particular mind preserves could be "affirming the existence of the body" (1996: 38). We could also call the feature that this conglomerate of ideas would preserve "mindedness," "consciousness," or any other term one may posit to be the essential feature of the mind, though Della Rocca's offer is more in line with Spinoza's precise diction. Since the mind is most essentially constituted by the idea of an actually existing particular thing (2p11), perhaps the essential feature that an amalgam of ideas preserves in order to comprise a mind is "aboutness." For instance, all the ideas of the human body combine to instantiate a unified mental entity—the human mind—whose common effect is a single idea that represents—is about—its body. This representation is an affirmation of the existence of the body, which is Della Rocca's proposed feature. A human, which is a particular mode, can (epistemically put) be conceived of in different ways, or (ontologically put) be expressed under different attributes. This reading aligns with both construals and leaves the criteria for which conglomerate ideas could be considered a mind relatively open. So long as the organization of the

pile of ideas is identical to the organization of its complex body, then it seems that a pile of ideas that are about a complex physical individual constitute an acceptable mind in Spinoza's metaphysics, whether that physical individual is a human, a tree, or the whole extended Universe. All minds have ideas that perceive their amalgams, but these perceptions come in varying degrees of adequacy, which correspond to the varying degrees of complexity that each unique *rem singularem* can have. Thus, there is very low-grade—one might even say protoconsciousness, and then there are degrees of complexity of mind extending all the way to the total infinite complexity of Nature.

At this point it has been established that Nature is the ultimate ground for all features of existence, and that Nature's mind grounds all minds in existence. It is true that Nature's absolute power lies in the fact that it is the one independent necessarily existing Substance consisting of "infinite attributes each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence" (1def6). It is also evident that Nature's omnipotence is closely linked to its omniscience. As demonstrated, Nature conceives infinite ideas in its omniscient mind. This ability to conceive of infinite things in infinite ways goes hand in hand with the existence of infinite modes expressed under infinite attributes. Its infinite essence implies that it possesses both infinite action and infinite causal ability. Since it is the one independently existing substance, both infinite and self-causing, its essence necessitates that it must express complete existence. Hence, it contains all the power that there is, and that power is expressed through the modes conceived through the attribute of thought, extension, or some n^{th}, mysterious attribute, as well as through the complete collection of adequate ideas corresponding to the modes conceived under all attributes. Nature's power therefore lies in its infinite essence (and its infinite power to think about its infinite essence). Ideas of these different

attributes are all the various ways that Nature's mind conceives of the essential features of its own existence.

Nature's mind is the complete and adequate idea of all things that exist, which means it is a thinking thing which conceives infinite ideas about infinite modes conceived under infinite attributes. Thus, it has an adequate, i.e., true idea of the entirety of reality. Nature's mind, in possessing all power of existence qua thinking thing, grounds all the ideas, and therefore, all the minds in existence. This is another way Spinoza accepts that Nature's mind is unique: it is the only mind to exist that has an adequate idea of all things as well as an adequate idea of all ideas, including both the human mind and its body (2p19p, 2p20). Nature's is the only mind whose essence includes not only its necessary existence but also the conception of infinite things under infinite essence.

Overall, accepting that Nature is a thinking thing is a necessary qualification for Spinoza's metaphysics. We have seen that as a thinking thing, Nature's mind conceives all other ideas in existence, i.e., has cognitions. Given Spinoza's commitment to entangling conception with causation, and the representational nature of his mental metaphysics, we must accept that mentality is an essential feature of Nature, expressed through its thinking mind. Nature's mind thinks infinite things in infinite ways, which is to say it has an idea of all modes qua all attributes, including the attribute of thought. Its mind has a parallel representational idea of its body (all of extended Substance) and the sum of all other modes conceived under all other respective attributes and has a parallel representational idea of the composite idea that is the amalgam of the aforementioned ideas. Spinoza believes that there can be ideas of ideas extending on to infinity (1p21). Being that Nature is the only thing with infinite power of conception, it is the only mental entity with epistemic access to the infinitely higher order of ideas that do not directly represent the modes of

extension of any other attribute, but only modes of thought that are ideas of ideas and so on to infinity. Nature as a thinking thing adds a layer of intentional order to general existence that reflects itself in the relationship instantiated by modes maintaining their ratio of relation. An organized conglomerate of ideas combines in action to the effect of being a collection of ideas with specific intentional properties that affirm its very existence. In Nature's multifaceted mind, this representation is infinitely layered, all encompassing, and has a conception of all that exists, in every possible way.

VII. Conclusion

For Spinoza, reality is just as much about the knowing as it is the being. He makes this clear in a metaphysics that necessitates not only an ultimate being, but an ultimate mind which grounds all other forms of consciousness through its existence. This mind, Nature's mind, is a thinking thing with its own set of cognitions, perceptions, and unique emotional experience. It does not experience the desires or passions that we as human beings do but is nevertheless a mind with its own set of cognitive functions. Its ability to conceive goes beyond any that a middle-sized mind could possibly fathom, as it cognizes all ideas in existence, and could even possibly understand other essential attributes of Nature that humans do not have epistemic access to. What's more, accepting that Spinoza is a cosmopsychist illuminates some parts of his metaphysics that were previously murky. This cosmopsychist reading of Spinoza leads us to a more cohesive and thorough understanding of his philosophy and opens the door for future comparisons between Spinoza's metaphysics and others that may have before seemed counterintuitive.

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