

Towards an Adverbial Theory of Spinoza's Modes

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0. Introduction

In the demonstration to 1p15, Spinoza says that besides substances and modes there is nothing; i.e. of every existent it is true that it is either a substance or a mode, and given that only one substance exists, it follows that of everything that exists it is true that it is either God or its mode. From the definitions of substance (1d3) and mode (1d5) it follows, or at least Spinoza infers from them, that modes are in a substance and that they are conceived through it. In interpreting Spinoza, it is a hard problem to give a plausible reading of the relation of being in. It seems natural to follow the tradition and interpret the relation of being in as the primitive relation of inherence, so that the relation of a mode to its substance should be identical with the relation that a property has to its bearer. But in Spinoza's substance monism this interpretation meets with difficulties, because it follows that ordinary things, such as rocks and trees, should be modes of the only substance and hence they should be seen as properties of the only substance. However, it is hard to understand how ordinary things can be treated as properties. This difficulty has been nicely presented by Curley (1969, p. 18) in the following famous passage:

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

Curley's problem, then, is that Spinoza's philosophy seems to become somewhat mysterious when it is both hold that:

- (i) Modes inhere in God.
- (ii) Ordinary particular things are modes of God.

Curley's view is that (i) and (ii) are, indeed, irreconcilable even though he seems to hold that inherence in substance is not unintelligible when the inhering items are qualities. What it means to say that whiteness is in some substance is to say that the substance is white. But it seems that when the inhering item is thought to be a particular, such as Churchill, it makes no sense to say that the substance is Churchill, where the 'is' is not that of identity but of predication.¹

Jonathan Bennett (1984) has claimed that the mystery posed by Curley can be solved in a field metaphysical interpretation, even if modes are interpreted as property universals. In the first section, I will present and criticize Bennett's view.

According to Charles Jarrett (1977), John Carriero (1995) and Bennett later view (1996), Curley's mystery can be solved when properties are interpreted as particularized properties. In the second section, I try to show that even these interpretations, in spite of their initial plausibility, do not give an adequate account of the nature modes and of their relation to God.

In the third section, I present a new theory of modes that I call the adverbial theory of modes. The name derives from my contention that considerations into the nature of adverbs and their ontological correlates helps to shed some light on the nature of modes in Spinoza. My treatment of modes as ways evolves from Bennett's ingenious field metaphysical interpretation of Spinoza's basic metaphysics.

1. Bennett and modes as honest universals

Bennett introduces the term 'field metaphysic' to characterize his interpretation of Spinoza's monism about the extended substance. He wants to show that in this metaphysic Curley's mystery can be solved even if modes are interpreted as *honest universals*. For Spinoza extension is an attribute of God, which means that there is only one extended substance. And what Bennett wants to do with his field metaphysical interpretation of the extended substance is to show how bodies can be seen to be properties of that only substance. If Bennett succeeds, he has shown that Curley's problem has a solution in the case of extension. This would, of course, be a major achievement. It is, moreover, Bennett's contention that Spinoza did his metaphysical thinking in terms of extension, which, if true, makes Bennett's treatment of the issue still more plausible, because this suggests that the field metaphysical justification of the traditional interpretation of Spinoza's basic metaphysics of the extended substance can

be generalized to other attributes such as thought. Bennett (1984, p. 94) writes as follows:

As for Spinoza's thesis that all particulars – minds as well as bodies – are modes: I have to suppose that he started with a sound doctrine about the modal nature of extended particulars and then stretched it over to mental ones as well on the strength of a *general* thesis that the extended world is mirrored in detail by the mental world. (...) [Spinoza] had sober reasons for that general thesis, and it is indubitable that he did most of his metaphysical thinking in terms of extension, and was willing to reapply his results to thought without working out the details. So I am not embarrassed by my account's being given purely in terms of extension.

Because Bennett believes that Spinoza identified extended substance with space, he (1984, p. 95) believes that Curley's question is solved in a metaphysics where substantial mention is made only of space.² He also seems to believe that this has been done, if the truth about the extended universe can be expressed in sentences which do not quantify over modes. And in Spinoza's metaphysics this should mean that at the basic level quantifiers are altogether useless, because:

If your ontology says that there is only thing, then quantifiers are useless, because there is no difference between 'The thing is F' and 'Something is F' and 'Everything is F' (Bennett, 1984, p. 96).

Let us, then, take a closer look at Bennett's field metaphysics which he attributes to Spinoza and which, Bennett claims, makes particular things adjectival upon space.

The field metaphysics assumes that space is indivisible. It has to be indivisible because it is a substance and because substances must be indivisible. Because of this indivisibility particular things cannot be seen as parts of space. Rather, as a first approximation, particular things are "thickenings" of space. Bennett (1984, p. 89) clarifies this through an example of Newton. God's creating a mountain to the world can be seen to happen as follows: God makes a mountain shaped region of space such that it has the characteristics that we usually attribute to mountains: it is impenetrable in the sense that other bodies cannot enter. Sound is emitted and light is reflected. It seems, then, that just by modifying space, God can create a mountain. In creating a mountain in

the way described by Newton, God does not need to add another substance to the world. What God needs to do is just to modify the already existing space-substance, and in modifying space, God gives to space properties it did not previously possess. It seems that if mountains really are this kind of "thickenings" of space, then all properties associated with mountains really are properties of regions of space, and, ultimately properties of space.³ The mountain story nicely paves for a view where all bodies can be viewed as regions of space, and where all properties of particular bodies, in fact are properties of *regions of space*. But Bennett points out that it is not wholly satisfying to view particular bodies as regions of space, because seeing them in that way would make movement impossible. In a more developed metaphysics, bodies should be seen as spatially continuous sets of place-times, which Bennett (1984, p. 89) calls strings of place times:

[W]e must associate each object rather with a continuous set of place times, which I call a *string* of them. If there is a string R_1-T_1, R_2-T_2, \dots such that each R_i is qualitatively like the other regions on the string, then that string defines the trajectory of what we call an object in space; and the object is a logical construction out of the string which satisfies those conditions.

In this metaphysics, the claim that a body b has property P at time T means that that element of the string which constitutes b at T is P . Bennett (1984, pp. 89-90) explicates how movement can be explained when objects are seen as strings of place-times with the help of an example where we tend to interpret movement as qualitative variation in space:

When a thaw moves across a countryside, as we say, nothing really moves; there are just progressive changes in which bits of the countryside are frozen and which are melted. Analogously, Spinoza's view is that the movement of things or stuff is deep down, the passing along of something qualitative – a change in which regions are F and which are not, for suitable values of F .

The field metaphysical interpretation elegantly shows how sentences about bodies are translatable into sentences about regions of space. But, as is evident, this cannot be the whole story. If sentences about regions of space cannot be "translated" into sentences about the extended substance, then regions of space appear to be ultimate subjects and,

for that reason, substances. But that would, of course, be against Bennett's contention that Spinoza's monism requires the thesis that ultimately all sentences are translatable into sentences which are only about God.

Bennett considers this problem by using as his example the sentence:

1 The pebble is spherical.

In field metaphysics, this means that there is some universal property G whose presence at a region of space is necessary and sufficient for the existence of the spherical pebble. Thus, in a field metaphysical interpretation 1 says the same as

2 The space contains regions which are G.

Sentence 2 is problematic because it "quantifies over" regions of space. However, Bennett suggests that what 2 says can be said with the help of spatial adverbs without mentioning regions of space:

3 Space is F somewhere.

However, even this is not enough because the translation of 2 by 3 is a translation of a general sentence about regions of space, but in a complete account it should also be shown how to get rid of particular sentences about regions of space. Bennett (1984, pp. 95-96) writes of this as follows:

But we have adverbs for that too, for we can replace 'Region R is F' by 'Space is F there' while pointing to R, or by 'Space is F here' while occupying R. Those adverbs are indexical – i.e., they are tied to *oneself* and to *the present* – but that is no drawback. There are good reasons for thinking that any reference to a particular – as distinct from of the form 'There is an F' where there happens to be only one F – does involve an indexical element, something logically on a par with pointing to the particular and saying 'the thing I am now pointing at'.

However, one may feel that there is a problem in Bennett's attempt to get rid of references to regions of space. If adverbs, such as 'here' and 'there', are needed and they

are to be interpreted in terms of reference to the first person, essential reference is made to the first person. But this means that self-identification is prior to the identification of regions of space. Thus, statements about particular regions of space implicitly, at least, contain reference to the self. This is problematic because it entails that Spinoza was implicitly committed to a sort of Cartesian egocentrism. Bennett speaks of Spinoza's hostility to the 'I-now-viewpoint' but his verdict is that if Spinoza wants to get rid of that, then he cannot explain how singular reference is possible at all.⁴

I will now turn to a problem that is closely related to the problem of singular reference just examined. In his (1984) field metaphysical interpretation, Bennett strongly emphasizes the universality of modes. He wants to see modes as 'honest universals', they are unlike particularized universals which Bennett (1984) believes to be nonsense:

Some philosophers have postulated items – which might be called 'states' or 'modes' – which are at once particular and universal. As well as this box and the property of cubicness which it shares with other things, they have thought, there is the cubicness of this box. It is not the box, but only an aspect of it; but it is an aspect of this box, and is not to be identified with the cubicness of anything else (...) I am glad there is no direct evidence that Spinoza did believe in these particularized universals, for I think they are nonsense. I cannot prove him to be innocent of them; but I am willing to suppose that he was, since I can explain all the texts through an interpretation which allows modes and states to be honest universals.

It seems that this view allows that it is conceivable that a mode of extension should be able to exist in two distinct places at once. Universals are repeatable features and, thus, there is no conceptual reason which would preclude a mode from having several disconnected spatial locations. If modes were instances of universals, then, this kind of problem would not exist. But for Bennett, a finite mode, say Tony Blair, exists just in case the property, possibly a complex one, needed for Tony Blair's existence is exemplified by God. However, it seems that in this interpretation it is not conceptually ruled out that this property is in the universe simultaneously in several places. Another problem is that when modes are seen as universals, there should be no conceptual reason stemming from the nature of an individual mode alone, that it could not have several beginnings and ends to its existence. Maybe the possibility of temporally disconnected existences of one and the same thing does not create a problem that is as

serious as the possibility of simultaneous multiple existence of one individual, but I am afraid that basically these are both conceptual impossibilities that derive from the nature of individuality. If what lies at the core of individuality is tried to capture with the help of universals alone, then the threat is that individuals share the fate of the universals; i.e., it seems that nothing in the individuals themselves can prevent them from having several instances, which, of course, is inconsistent with their status as individuals. If some general metaphysical principles, such as the principle of sufficient reason, prevent the existence of perfectly identical entities, that will not solve the problem. It would still be conceivable that an individual would have several simultaneous disconnected existences, and this goes against the idea of what it is to be an individual.

It seems, then, that in spite of its elegance and of its explanatory power, Bennett's field metaphysical interpretation has problems. However, I believe that it can be further developed to avoid the difficulties it faces in the form presented above.

2. Modes as particularized universals

In the passage just cited, Bennett, while considering Curley's logical type objection, wrote "If Spinoza meant modes and states to be items of that kind [particularized universals], Curley and I would both be wrong. Curley's 'mystery' would have a solution, but not the one I propose for it. I am glad there is no direct evidence that Spinoza did believe in these particularized universals, for I think they are nonsense." However, the interpretations of modes as particularized universals are becoming increasingly popular. The first explicit treatment of Spinoza's modes as particularized universals, I know of, was presented by Charles Jarrett (1977). More recently, Carriero (1995) has claimed that Spinoza's modes must be seen as individual accidents. My earlier (1991) view of modes as particular states of God was also presented in the spirit of particularized universals. Finally, Bennett (1996) himself has rejected his interpretation of modes as honest universals and sees them now as particularized universals.

Both Carriero and Jarrett appeal to the authority of Aristotle in their criticism of Curley. Aristotle makes a distinction between things that are said of a subject and that are in a subject. This distinction reflects, respectively, the distinction between predication and inherence. The snubness of Socrates' nose inheres in that very nose even though it is not predicated of it. Thus, it is not true that inherence should be explicated through predication as Curley suggests, and, moreover, in the Aristotelian tradition it is perfectly admissible that particulars inhere in substances. The snubness of Socrates nose is a

particular in the sense that can inhere only in Socrates's nose – hence the expression particularized universal.

Even though this point is historically very illuminating, it creates, as far as I can see, a philosophical problem about the interpretation of inherence. If the particularized universal is in itself something that is *related* to Socrates's nose, it is puzzling why in order to exist it needs Socrates's nose at all. It might even be claimed as Hector-Neri Castañeda has done that only full-fledged individual can enter into relations. One might suggest as has been done in certain contemporary theories of particularized trope-theories that particularized universals are, in fact, parts of the substances they are said to be in. However, this would be a bold move here, because Spinoza seems to have a very strong view about the simplicity of the substance. Thus, even though Carriero and Jarrett give good grounds for rejecting the view that predication and inherence go hand in hand, it is a bit difficult to see what is the real nature of modal dependence when, first, the dependence should be of such a sort that the individuality of the mode should depend on the substance in which it inheres and, second, the related items are particulars. The moral seems to be that modal dependence cannot be interpreted to be a relation between distinct particulars.

To still press the point a bit: What did Aristotle and the medievals mean by allowing particulars to inhere in a substance? The relation that a particular has to the substance in which it is hard to characterise in positive terms. It can't, for example, be the part-whole relation because that would make the substance dependent on its accidents. But what can it be? In this interpretation of Spinoza, Paavo Nurmi is a particularized universal which exists in the only substance. But why does Paavo Nurmi need such a substance in which to exist? In some sense this talk of particularized universals seems to require the thesis that relations individuate. Paavo Nurmi is some particularized universal which receives its thisness by being related to this substance; in the same way as the whiteness of my pen gets its individuality and identity by being related just to this pen. But how is this supposed to be possible? The philosophical problem behind this seems to be this: modes are for Spinoza incomplete entities. They must be added to something in order to be real. And now the things to which they must be added to or joined to are thought to be substances in which they are said to be in. Thus, being related to a substance is what realises an individual accident. But I do not understand how x's being related in some way to y, can make x the thing it is. It might make better sense to speak of these particularized universals as constituting the things in which they are than to think of them as inhering in those things.⁵It seems to me that

when modes are treated as individual accidents, they are in danger of being viewed as substances. Thus, the introduction of the category of individual accident or particularized universals appears to blur the distinction between mode and substance.⁶ It even may be wrong to treat Spinoza's modes as ontological parasites because that picture just suggests that modes get their fuel from other things, but modes, in receiving their being from the being of other things, are even less than ontological parasites. Thus, if Spinoza blindly followed the Aristotelian tradition, it may be said that he was following an unintelligible or obscure lead. However, I believe that Spinoza tried to improve the traditional view of inherence. It seems to me that Spinoza looked deeper into the nature of modal dependence than was customary in the medieval Aristotelian tradition.

It seems that in Bennett's most recent interpretation of the mode-substance – relationship the problem that can be seen to bother the Aristotelian accounts of Carriero and Jarrett disappears. Bennett (1996, p. 67) writes:

A mode was often thought of not as universal property, but rather as a particular property instance. A blush is a mode: For a face to have a blush on it is just for the face to be red in a certain way; we do not have two things, a face and a blush, standing in a certain relation; rather, we have a single thing, a face, and it is blushing; but there is such an item as *the blush*, it is this *instance of blushingness*. So even if you and I are blushing in exactly the same way, your blush is one item and mine is another: They are qualitylike items, except that they are particular rather than universal.

What, in this passage, suggests that the problem disappears is Bennett's denial that for a face to have a blush on it is not that there exists a relation between a blush and a face. I am not quite certain that I understand this correctly, but it seems to me that what Bennett here means is that for there to be a blush in the face is just that the face exists in a particular way. Nothing more is needed than existence of the face. However, what makes Bennett's idea difficult for me is that he wants to identify a particular blushing with an instance of a general blushing. But an instance of a particular blushing seems to be separate from the thing which houses that instance, and I fail to see why this does not generate a problem about the relation between that instance and the thing in which that instance is.

3. *Modes as ways*

It seems to me that some light on modal dependence in Spinoza can be shed once it is taken seriously that the literal translation of the Latin *modus* is way. Modifications for Spinoza are ways the substance exists, and understanding how a way is related to a substance existing in that way is crucial for understanding the substance mode relationship.

In what seems to be a summary of seventeenth century thinking about accidents as modes, Immanuel Kant is also emphasizing that once accidents are interpreted as modes, i.e. as ways or manners, problems about the nature of the mystical tie between a property and its substratum disappear. Kant says:

Accidents are mere modes <*modi*> of the existence of substance and these cannot be apart from the substance; for they exist as predicates and these cannot be apart from the subject. The ancients therefore said: accidents do not move from a substance into a substance <*accidentia non migrant e substantia in substantiam*> , that would indicate that they had their own existence. (...) Accident is also an existence, but only as inherence, and something really positive must be there (...) With the expression inherence one imagines the substance carrying the accidents, as if they were separate existences, but requiring a basis; however that is simply a sheer misuse of speech; they are simply manners in which things exist (...) They do not exist for themselves and are not merely supported by the substance like a book in a bookcase. (AK 29:769-70; C: 177-8).

It seems that here Kant nicely summarizes how rationalists and he himself thought about the relation between a mode and the substance whose mode it is. Modes are manners a substance exist and it makes no sense to ask how a thing is related to a manner it exists.

However, at first blush it is not quite clear how this way- or manner-talk helps. What has to be faced is the ontology of ways. What kind of entities ways are and why should they better satisfy the constraints of substance-mode-relationship than honest universals or such abstract particulars whose inherence in a substance requires a relation?

What, then, is meant by 'way'? In language, ways are expressed with adverbs of manner. In the sentence

Mary smiled *beautifully*,

'beautifully' is an adverb of manner telling how Mary smiled. In this sentence, 'beautifully' *modifies* the verb 'smiled' by characterizing the manner of Mary's smiling. Adverbs of manner, then, specify the way in what something that is done is done, and they specify that way by modifying the verb. The ontological import of this linguistic characterization of adverbs seems to be that ways are incomplete things that *modify* properties. Ways cannot exist in themselves nor can they be conceived in themselves. It is conceivable what is to run quickly but 'quickly' in itself, as not modifying any predicate, is not conceivable. From the linguistic point of view, adverbs of manner can, then, be seen to be predicate operators which do not have any meaning of their own but which, as added to other predicates, form new predicates. Adverbs do not have any meaning of their own. Adverbs, then, affect the meaning of other predicates without having any independent meaning of their own. Ontologically speaking, adverbs express those things that are incapable of having any independent existence of their own but which, by affecting properties of substances, give birth to new properties. It would be hard to understand how 'beautifully' or 'quickly' by themselves could pick out something having an independent existence. Now, it seems that the intrinsic meaninglessness of adverbs and their failure to express anything that is capable of independent existence quite well reflect the two conditions Spinoza gives in his definition of modes (1d5): modes are ontologically dependent entities in that they have to exist *in* something else and they also are conceptually dependent in that they have to be conceived through something else. To ask how a mode is related to its substance is, then, to pose a senseless question, in the same way as it would be absurd to ask how what is expressed by 'beautifully' is related to somebody who smiles beautifully.

4. Modes and attributes

From the considerations above, it follows that ways (or) manners do not directly modify the substances, but do that via modifying that which is expressed by a predicate. Thus, if the line of thought supposed here bears any plausibility, then Spinoza's modes should modify the attributes. And, in fact, there seems to be rather much textual evidence that Spinoza in fact thinks so.

It seems that this is in agreement with the adverbial interpretation of modes, because the function of the adverbs of manner is just to express the way a predicate is realised. Also, in 1p28d Spinoza commits himself to the view that modes affect God's attributes:

[What is finite and has a determinate existence] had to follow from God or an attribute of God insofar as it is considered to be affected by some mode.

And in this same demonstration he also says that:

[What is finite and has a determinate existence] had to follow from (...) God or an attribute of God insofar as it is considered to be *modified* by a modification which is finite and has a determinate existence.

It seems to that these passages are best explained by taking 'mode' at its face value, i.e. understanding it as signifying a way God's attributes are.

5. Modes and singular things

It might be objected that when modes are treated as ways, they cannot perform all the tasks Spinoza gives to them. For example, modes seem to be causes of other modes and it is not at all clear what it would be for a mere way to be a cause of another way. We say such things as “the way he talks insults her”, and “the way a leopard runs causes admiration”, but it seems to me that such sentences should be seen as elliptical to “his talking in that way (e.g., harshly) insults her” and “a leopard's running in such a way causes admiration”. Otherwise we should treat modes as individuals having their own causal powers, and it seems that for Spinoza all causal activity derives from the attributes – an attribute modified by one mode may have different causal powers from the same attribute modified by a different mode, but all the same it is still the modified attribute which has that causal power. To take a slightly different example: suppose a canon ball is fired to a wrong direction, say northwards instead of the intended southwards, destroying a building. Here the direction modifies the flight of the ball and is no doubt relevant to the damage done, but it is not that “southwards-direction” all by itself causes anything. It is the event of the canon ball's flying southwards that causally contributes to the destruction of the building.

The modes which have causal powers cannot, then, be identified with ways, and it seems evident that for Spinoza modes have causal powers. Ideas are modes of thought and bodies are modes of extension and each idea is a member of causal network of ideas and each body a member of a causal network of bodies. Does this, then, constitute a serious objection against treating modes as ways or ontological correlates of adverbs? I

believe not, and for seeing why, it helps to discuss 1p28. In that proposition, Spinoza asserts that any singular thing is determined to exist and to act by other singular things. And I believe it is safe to say that the determination here is causal determination. The first part of its demonstration, parts of which have already been cited, runs as follows:

Whatever has been determined to exist and produce an effect has been so determined by God (by P26 and P24C). But what is finite and has a determinate existence could not have been produced by the absolute nature of an attribute of God; for whatever follows from the absolute nature of an attribute of God is eternal and infinite (by P21). *It had, therefore, to follow either from God or from an attribute of God insofar as it is considered to be affected by some mode.* For there is nothing except substance and its modes (by A1, D3, and D5) and modes (by P25C) are nothing but affections of God's attributes. But it also could not follow from God, or from an attribute of God, insofar as it is affected by a modification which is eternal and infinite (by P22). *It had, therefore, to follow from, or be determined to exist and produce an effect by God or an attribute of God insofar as it is modified by a modification which is finite and has a determinate existence.* (Emphases added).

The underlined sentences give evidence that according to Spinoza modes do not causally follow directly from other modes, but that the real causal agent, from which singular things follow, is God insofar [qua] as its attribute is modified by a modification; and this is just what is to be expected when modes are treated as ways or ontological correlates of adverbs of manner. It is not “southwards” that causes the destruction of the building, but *the canon ball insofar as it is moving southwards*.

So, for Spinoza, to say, that a singular thing is the cause of a change, means that God insofar as its attribute is modified by a finite modification is the cause of that change. (Moreover, in 2d7 Spinoza gives causal efficacy as a criterion for being a complex singular thing:

By singular things I understand things that are finite and have a determinate existence. And if a number of Individuals so concur in one action that together they are all the cause of one effect, I consider them all, to that extent, as one singular thing.)

So what is the relation between a singular thing and a modification? It seems that a singular thing is a complex of God, and a modified attribute. A singular thing is God qua modified in a certain way, and because modes modify God by modifying his attributes, a singular thing is God qua his attribute being modified in a certain way. Thus, singular things for Spinoza could be called qua-objects.

I believe that Spinoza's singular things can be explicated with the theory of qua-objects that has recently been developed by Kit Fine, who (1982, p. 7) characterizes the theory as follows:

Given any object x and description (property) Φ possessed by x , we shall suppose there is a new object x *qua* Φ or x *under the description* Φ . Thus if x is Socrates and Φ the property of being a philosopher, then the new object is Socrates qua philosopher; while if x is Mrs. Thatcher and Φ the property of being a Prime Minister, then the new object is Mrs. Thatcher qua Prime Minister.

Given such an object x *qua* Φ , we shall call x the *basis* and Φ the *gloss*. The resulting object will be called a *qua object* and the operation by which it is formed is glossing.

Of the relation that holds between the basis of the qua-object to the object qua object itself, Fine says:

One should not identify a qua object with its basis – Socrates qua philosopher with Socrates (...) Rather, the qua object should be regarded as some sort of amalgam of the given object and the property, like the given object but wearing the property on its face (...) On the other hand, in glossing, the property is integral to the resulting object: it is part of the total package. (Manuscript to which Allan Bäck refers in *On Reduplication*).

The identity criterion for qua-objects is that x and y are identical qua-objects just in case x and y consist of the same basis and of the same gloss.

Example of a wave

To get a clearer picture what is going on let us consider the following analogy. Suppose that Spinoza's extended substance consists of watery stuff and that there are waves in it.

A wave in such a substance corresponds to a singular thing and the way the water has to be modified in order to contain that wave corresponds to an item in the category of mode. But the mode and the singular thing are clearly distinct in this case. The wave is the water qua modified in a certain way and the way, needed to modify the water so that it contains the wave, is the mode. The basis here is water and the gloss is the extension (of the water) W-ly modified. The wave is the water qua extension W-ly modified. In this scenario, a wave is a qua-object. For Spinoza, the extended substance is the basis of all extended singular things and the gloss for a certain singular mode *m* is its extension *m*-ly modified, where *m*-ly expresses the way needed for *m* to exist.

However, Spinoza is not very explicit on the distinction between modes and singular things and sometimes even seems to draw no distinction between them. In 1p25c, Spinoza even gives a sort of definition of singular things as modes by saying that they

are nothing but affections of God's attributes, or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way.

What is interesting in this definition is that here, unlike in 1p28, Spinoza uses the important notion of expression. Singular things are said to express the attributes, but he is not saying that the modes identified as singular things affect the attributes as he does in 1p28d, rather singular things here can be interpreted as being the results of being affected by the (thin) modes. And, in fact, this seems to make perfectly good sense and is in accordance with what I have been previously claiming, because the gloss of any singular thing is an attribute modified by a mode. Thus, any singular thing can be conceived to be an entity that results when an attribute is modified in a certain way. Moreover, it is quite understandable that Spinoza here uses the language of expression. Suppose that there are different predicates with the common feature that they all are results of being different modifications of one and the same predicate—say, *speaks* quickly, *speaks* eloquently, *speaks* harshly. Here it would be rather natural to say that all these predicates express speaking, and in the same way different glosses of different singular things can be said to express their attribute.

On the basis of what has been said above, it seems that for Spinoza there is room both for a thin and a thick conception of mode. By a thin conception of mode is meant only the modifier which affects the attribute resulting into the existence of a singular

thing which in its turn is a thick mode, i.e. a qua-object which consists of God and a modified attribute.

6. Field metaphysics and adverbial theory

The interpretation given here owes much to Bennett's field metaphysical interpretation and is intended as an elaboration of it. In this section, Bennett's theory of trans-attribute differentiae will be considered and compared to the corresponding entities in the adverbial theory.

According to Bennett, Spinoza was in his metaphysics committed to trans-attribute differentiae which are properties that are combinable with any of the attributes. Thus, they could be called attribute-neutral properties, or trans-attribute properties as Bennett does. For Bennett, the main reason for introducing these trans-attribute properties is to make sense of Spinoza's identity theory between mental and physical items in 2p7s. According to Bennett, the identity between mind M and Body B means in Spinoza that there is some trans-attribute property F which when added to extension yields B and when added to thought yields M. Bennett (1984, p. 141) writes:

What it takes for an extended world to contain my body is exactly what it takes a thinking world to contain my mind; just as what it takes for a two-dimensional figure to be a circle is exactly what it takes for a three-dimensional figure to be a sphere – namely being bounded by a set of points being equidistant from one point.

Bennett's suggestion is extremely exciting. It does not, of course, follow from his view that mind and body are literally identical because such identity would require the identity of thought and extension. But, as far as I know, Bennett's reconstruction of the identity theory is the best available in the literature.

In spite of its plausibility, I believe there is a difficult problem hidden in it. For Bennett, the transattribute property is *added* to the attributes, and this addition, if I understand him correctly, is what it is for an attribute to be modified by that trans-attribute property. Suppose, now, that there is somebody who sings and while singing begins to walk. In this case, one might say that the property of walking is added to the property of singing in the sense that there is somebody who has both of these properties. However, it seems to me that neither of these properties modifies the other. So the question becomes: what must be added to the fact that that x has properties F

and P to get the result that F modifies P or *vice versa*. In other words, the conjunction of properties is not the same as the fusion of those properties. Thus, I would like to draw a distinction between property modification and property conjunction. It seems to me that property modification can be done in a substance property -ontology where ways are not taken seriously only by allowing second order properties, but I doubt this would be a very spinozistic move.

One may also feel a problem in the following feature in Bennett's theory of trans-attribute properties. For Spinoza mentality and physicality form systems that are conceptually closed. By this is meant here that from mental propositions (knowledge) etc. no physical propositions can be validly inferred. However, suppose now that M is some mental item and B its physical counterpart. According to Bennett, there is a trans-attribute differentia F such that M is Thought and F and B is Extension and F. But from the premises that

1. Reality is extended and F.
2. Reality is thinking.

one can validly infer to

3. Reality is thinking and F.

In other words, the existence of B together with the general fact that thought is an attribute of reality, entail that M exists. And, *prima facie*, this would seem to violate the conceptual closedness of mental and physical realms. Bennett defends his position that these trans-attribute properties are also unabstractable in the sense that no mind, however powerful, can think them in isolation. Thus, these inferences are in principle undrawable. This is ingenious but I am not wholly satisfied by the defense, because it would somehow violate God's omniscience, according to which there is in God an idea of everything that exists.

In adverbial theory, on the contrary, a corresponding inference is not valid. One cannot infer from:

1. Reality extends F-ly.
2. Reality is thinking.

to

3. Reality is thinking F-ly.

That this inference is not formally valid can be seen from the following patently invalid argument which has the same form as the preceding argument:

1'. S sings beautifully.

2'. S walks

Therefore,

3'. S walks beautifully.

It is clear that Bennett's idea of modifiers of attributes being properties of substance is what licences inter-attribute inferences. When modifiers are seen as ontological correlates of adverbs, such inferences cease to be valid.

Let us, then, turn to the question whether trans-attribute properties really do help to make sense of Spinoza's identity theory. For Bennett, as we recall the identity between mind and body means that the trans-attribute property, which together with the attribute of thought results into the existence of a mind M, results into the existence of M's body B when added to the attribute of extension.

But Bennett's view is problematic. It is clear, given Bennett's premises, that if there is a body *Extension+F*, then there is a mind *Thought+F*. However, it seems that it does not follow that this body and mind have to be the mind and the body of one and the same individual. It is conceivable that the trans-attribute property which is responsible for my mind is responsible for the body of someone else. Thus, my mind could be "identical" with the body of someone else, and this, I believe, is intolerable. Bennett's fascinating idea of introducing trans-attribute properties is enough for generating a parallelism: every bodily item must be matched by a mental item and vice versa. But this does not show that the body, which is the object of my mind and which I sense to be affected in many ways (2a4) is the body which is somehow the resultant of extension and the trans-attribute property of the mind. Some additional argument should be given to show that the body which is the object of the mind is, in fact, the body that is the resultant of extension and the trans-attribute property of that very mind. It seems, then, that Bennett (1984, 143) is not right in writing that:

given that reality is (Extended and F) and is Thinking it follows that it is (Thinking and F). And so, for example, if it contains my body it contains my mind.

The first sentence does not, by itself, support the second. One might be tempted to defend Bennett's theory here by arguing that because the mode which, when fused with extension, generates a body that has a definite spatial location, the mind correspondingly generated should share that location, and so no mind, other than the one generated by the same transattribute property as the body, could be united to that body. The problem with this suggestion is, of course, Spinoza's contention that spatial predicates do not apply to mental subjects. In fact, I do not believe that abstract ontological considerations shed much light on Spinoza's identity theory between mind and body.

The Singularity problem and modes as ways

I believe that in this rather literal interpretation of Spinoza's modes the problem of singularity, or the problem of singular reference, can be given a plausible solution. The problem of singularity with which Bennett wrestled and which he finally wanted to solve with property instances is not, in the very beginning, easy to state. The problem seems to have both its epistemological and metaphysical formulations. In its epistemological formulation the problem is:

(E) What makes an idea of a singular thing x , the idea of the singular thing x ?⁷

However, as I understand (E) a correct solution to it requires a prior solution to the metaphysical question:

(M) What makes x , the individual thing it is?

It seems that (M) can be read as expressing the same question as M'

(M') What makes x distinct from all other individual things?

And sufficient answers to this can be given in terms of properties that are unique to x . It is the set of properties that is unique to x that make x the individual thing it is. But (M) leads to a still more difficult general question; i.e., to the problem of the general nature of individuality. This problem can be posed with the help of the following question:

(GM) What makes an individual an individual?

This question cannot be answered with the help of unique sets of properties or with the help of individual essences. In terms of them, (M') can be answered but it seems that full understanding of those answers requires prior understanding of some answer to GM.

But, how, can GM be answered at all? In introducing property instances that are individual Bennett seems to assume that, after all, besides the infinite substance, there has to be items that are individual and that are *related* to God. However, this idea seems to make ontological dependence mysterious. Why do these full-fledged individuals need something in which to exist? It seems that the individualizing factor in an individual cannot be a property which inheres in it, because that would require that the property be somehow related to the individual. And this would, of course, generate an infinite regress. So, the individualizing factor must, as it were, be an individual maker. Now, individual makers can be thought to be ways. Think for a moment that everything is water, not water as consisting of molecules but water as an undivided substance of which it does not necessarily make sense to say that it is something like individual. Think, then that this water somehow begins to contain individuals. This happens so that it gets modified in certain ways. Ways themselves are not individual because of being incapable to independent existence. But after water is modified portions of it can be thought as individual items. It seems, then, that ways can be individual-makers without being full-fledged individual in themselves. And it seems to me that appreciating this fact helps to explain why Spinoza was not forced to view modal dependence as dependence between two complete individuals which seems to generate the absurdity that bothered Bennett in *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*.

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Endnotes

¹ In addition to this ontological mystery, Curley locates other problems in the traditional interpretation of

And one question which, on this interpretation, we ought to ask ourselves is: how can a subject cause itself to have the properties it has? how can the relation of inherence be anything like the relation an effect has to its cause?

Curley refers to three problems which were already pointed out by Pierre Bayle. The first problem is that God should have contradictory properties. If Peter is wise and Jones is not wise then, God the ultimate subject, should be both be wise and not wise. The second problem is the mutability of God. Particular things, come into and go out of existence, which should mean that God gains and loses properties. But gaining and losing properties is just what it is for a substance to change. The third problem is that seeing God as the ultimate subject of all predications entails that God has properties that are unworthy of him and which make God responsible of all evil. From "that puddle is slimy" we could conclude that "God is slimy"; and from "Ray killed King" it should follow that in fact it was God who killed King.

Thus Curley presents five problems in the traditional interpretation of Spinoza where modes are seen as qualities or properties of God: 1. the logical type objection; 2. the problem of a subject causing its own states; 3. the problem of contradictory properties; 4. the problem of properties that are unworthy of God; and 5. the problem of change. However, I believe that these additional problems do not pose a serious threat to the traditional interpretation of Spinoza. See Jarrett (1977), Koistinen (1991) and Carriero (1995).

² Bennett justifies the identification of extended substance with space by 1p15s.

³ Of course, there was no room for a transcendent God in Spinoza's metaphysics. What Newton's story illuminates is just how bodies can be seen as modifications of space.

⁴ Curley (1991) has criticized Bennett's attempt to get rid of particular states in the same way as done here.

⁵ D.C. Williams (*Elements of Being*), for example, believes that these particularized universals, or tropes as he calls them, form the very alphabet of being in being independent items.

⁶ I believe that Descartes can be read as being hostile to the idea of individual accidents when he (*CSM II*, 251) writes follows: "On the contrary, philosophers commonly conceive of accidents in the guise of substances, since they often say that they are 'real'. In fact no reality, i.e. no being apart from a purely modal one, can be attributed to accidents unless it is taken from the idea of a substance." (I have removed the brackets from the first sentence).

⁷ See R.M. Chisholm *The First Person* and Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*.