

on Leibniz has always interested scholars, and Kulstad advances the hypothesis that Leibniz's metaphysical views about how finite things follow from God and his attributes should be understood as comments on the exchanges between Spinoza and Tschirnhaus. Tschirnhaus, who was a friend of both Spinoza's and Leibniz's, informed the latter about the former's views. In particular, Leibniz was moved by the problem presented by the variety of things in the world. Tschirnhaus wanted to know whether one could deduce an infinite variety of things from the attribute of extension alone. Leibniz thought not, but he argued that when the attributes are taken together, variety can be deduced. Another problem is that of other worlds. It seems that Spinoza's views about the unknown attributes led him to postulating things that consist of modifications of thought and of some attribute other than extension. These things would be quite separate from us and could be seen as composing other worlds. Kulstad shows how that view arises in Spinoza and how Leibniz toyed with the idea before rejecting it.

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Note

1. In this introduction, all Spinoza references, unless indicated otherwise, are from Edwin Curley's *C I*. For a complete list of abbreviations, see the Abbreviations in the front of this book.

I

SPINOZA'S SUBSTANCE MONISM

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Certain of Spinoza's basic principles enable him, in often surprising ways, to argue validly for the claim that there is only one substance. I argue this point here primarily by explaining how Spinoza's denial of conceptual or explanatory relations between different attributes (such as thought and extension) obviates—in ways that have not been adequately appreciated—certain important challenges that face his argument for monism. This conceptual barrier between the attributes is introduced in a claim the import of which is not immediately evident: "Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself" (*ipio*).¹ One of my aims is to go some distance toward unpacking the meaning of this proposition.

My focus will not, however, be exclusively on this conceptual separation. To prepare the way for my account of this divide, I will first spend some time on a different kind of restriction Spinoza places on conceptual or explanatory relations. This is Spinoza's view that each substance is conceptually prior to its modes (*ip1*). By explaining how the conceptual priority of substance over its modes validates a crucial step in Spinoza's argument for monism, I will be in a position to reveal one of the ways in which the conceptual barrier between the attributes is also importantly at work in that argument.²

1. An Overview of Spinoza's Position

I begin with a rather brief sketch of the meaning of Spinoza's claim of substance monism and of his argument for it.³ I also introduce certain other metaphysical claims of Spinoza's that will be relevant later in this chapter.

For Spinoza, a substance is that which is in itself and is conceived through itself (*id3*). My focus, for now, is on the notion of being conceived through itself, instead of on the notion of being in itself.⁴ According to Spinoza, *x* is conceived through *y* if and only if *x* is explained by, or in terms of, *y*. This is evident from the second half

of 2p7s, where Spinoza says that when we perceive effects through their causes, we are explaining the order of nature or the connection of causes. Spinoza sometimes uses *perceives* and *conceives* interchangeably,⁵ so that, for him, when we conceive effects through their causes, we are explaining the order of nature. This suggests that Spinoza regards claims about conceiving one thing through another as claims about the explanation of one thing by another. Further evidence for the equation of conception and explanation comes from 1a5: "Things that have nothing in common with one another also cannot be understood through one another, or the concept of one does not involve the concept of the other." Here Spinoza treats as equivalent the notion of conceiving a thing and the notion of understanding a thing or rendering it intelligible (the Latin word here is *intelligi*). Thus he seems to treat conceiving a thing as explaining that thing. Even further evidence for the equivalence is that Spinoza moves freely from the assertion that substance is conceived under a certain attribute (1p10s) to the assertion that substance is explained by that attribute (1p14d, 2p5). Spinoza also holds that x is conceived through y if and only if x is caused by y.⁶ Given these equivalences, we can conclude that when Spinoza says that a substance is self-conceived, he implies that the substance is somehow self-explanatory: in order to explain why a given substance exists, one does not need to appeal to anything else besides that substance. He is also committed to the assertion that each substance is self-caused — a conclusion that Spinoza explicitly draws in 1p7d.

For Spinoza, a substance must be conceived under one or more attributes (1p10s), each of which somehow constitutes its essence (1d4). Spinoza mentions thought and extension as examples of attributes (2p1 and 2p2), yet he holds that there is actually an infinity of attributes. Human beings are aware only of thought and extension.⁷ It is important to note that the fact that, for Spinoza, a substance is conceived under an attribute does not imply that it is conceived through something *else*. This is, I believe, due to the fact that the attributes are so intimately related to the substance that they constitute its essence. I should emphasize, though, that I do not investigate in detail here the difficult problem of precisely what Spinoza means by saying that each attribute constitutes the essence (or an essence?) of the substance and why he qualifies this by saying, famously, that an attribute is what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence (1d4).⁸ Although my claims about Spinoza's substance monism in this chapter do rely heavily on some of Spinoza's views about substance and about attributes, they do not turn on any particular solution to the problem just raised concerning the relation between a substance and its attributes.

The way in which a substance is conceived through itself and is independent of other things is to be contrasted with the way in which nonsubstances are conceived through and dependent on something else. Spinoza makes clear that such dependent beings depend, ultimately, on an independent being; that is, on a substance,⁹ and he calls these dependent beings *modes* of the substance (1r5).

For Spinoza, the modes of a substance depend on that substance by depending on its attributes. Thus the modes that depend on or are conceived through the attribute of thought are called modes of thought and similarly for modes that depend on extension, and so forth. My body and its states are examples of modes of extension, for Spinoza; my mind and its ideas are examples of modes of thought. Here,

also, I do not take up a number of major issues. In particular, I do not characterize the ways in which modes depend on a particular attribute. Further, I do not get embroiled in the controversy over whether modes are to be understood as somehow predicated of the substance or merely dependent on the substance without being predicated of the substance. These are debates for another occasion.¹⁰

Let us return to Spinoza's substance monism, the claim that there is only one substance and that it has all the attributes: thought, extension, and so on. Since Spinoza defines God as the substance of all attributes (1d6), he holds that the unique substance is God (1p14).

Spinoza argues for his monism along the following lines: The first step is 1p5: "In nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute." On the assumption that, say, thought and extension are attributes, Spinoza's employment of this claim indicates that he sees it as entailing that there is at most one thinking substance, one extended substance, and so on.

The second step is 1p7: "It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist." For Spinoza, since a substance is conceived through itself, it is, as I showed, independent of everything else. Nothing therefore can prevent it from existing. That is why, for Spinoza, each substance by its very nature exists. This entails that if a substance is possible, it is actual and, indeed, necessary.¹¹

The third step is 1p11: "God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists." One of the ways Spinoza demonstrates this claim is simply by applying 1p7 to God, in particular. Since God is, by definition, a substance, and since each substance exists necessarily, it follows that God exists necessarily (1p11d).

We are now in a position to reach the claim of substance monism: since God has all the attributes, for another substance besides God to exist, that substance would have to share attributes with God. But since, for Spinoza, substances cannot share attributes and since God does exist, Spinoza concludes that no substance except God exists (1p14).

To begin to understand and evaluate this argument, I focus first on two challenges to Spinoza's demonstration of 1p5, the claim that substances cannot share attributes.¹² The demonstration relies on 1p4: "Two or more distinct things are distinguished from one another either by a difference in the attributes of the substances or by a difference in their affections."¹³ This entails that any two distinct substances must differ either in their attributes or in their modes. But, Spinoza argues in 1p5d, substances that purportedly share the same attribute cannot legitimately be distinguished either by their modes or by their attributes. Thus, by 1p4, it follows that there are no substances that share the same attribute. Speaking of two substances that purportedly share the same attribute, Spinoza says, "[O]ne cannot be conceived to be distinguished from another, that is (by p4) there cannot be many, but only one [of the same nature or attribute]" (1p5d).

Spinoza seems to be saying in 1p4 that any two distinct things must have some difference between them and that this difference must concern the modes or attributes of a substance or substances. Further, Spinoza seems to be saying at the end of 1p5d, when he cites 1p4, that if two things are distinct, one must be able to *conceive*

them as such by appealing to a difference between them, by appealing to those features with regard to which they differ. A version of the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles is at work here:

(PII) If $x \neq y$, then there is some difference between x and y that enables us to conceive them as distinct.

Since Spinoza sees conceiving a fact as explaining it, we can say that for Spinoza

(PII') If $x \neq y$, then there is some difference between x and y that explains their nonidentity.

That the notion of explanation is thus operative in Spinoza's version of the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles shows that he would defend it, at least in part, by appeal to the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which he also accepts. According to that principle, all facts must be explainable. (PII') states how facts about nonidentity in particular must be explained.¹⁴ We will see later in this chapter that there may be another point at which Spinoza employs (PII') in the argument for monism.

There are two challenges to Spinoza's argument in 1p5d that I explore: first, why, for Spinoza, cannot substances that share the same attribute legitimately be distinguished by their modes? Second, why, for Spinoza, cannot substances that share the same attribute be distinguished by their attributes? After all, if they share some attributes but differ in others, then there would be a way to distinguish them by their attributes. I call the first problem the different modes problem and the second the different attributes problem. I consider them in turn in the next two sections, before examining the later stages of Spinoza's argument for monism.

2. The Different Modes Problem

Suppose that substance a and substance b share attribute x . Suppose further, for the sake of simplicity, that neither substance has any attribute besides x . Spinoza claims that a and b cannot be distinguished by their modes. His reason appears, if we quote in full the sentence I just cited as evidence that Spinoza accepts an indiscernibility principle:

If [two substances are distinguished] by a difference in their affections, then since a substance is prior in nature to its affections (by p1), if the affections are therefore put to one side [*depositis ergo affectionibus*] and [the substance] is considered in itself, that is (by d3 and a6), considered truly, one cannot be conceived to be distinguished from another, that is (by p4), there cannot be many, but only one [of the same nature or attribute] (1p5d; cf. KV App. 1, Prop. 1, dem.).

Spinoza's point seems to be this: since a substance is somehow prior to its modes, we are entitled to put the modes to the side when it comes to individuating substances.¹⁵

But, as in the case of substances a and b , once the modes are put aside, we seem to have no way to distinguish between a and b ; so we must conclude that $a = b$, after all.

To see why, for Spinoza, the priority of a substance over its modes would make modes irrelevant to the individuation of substances, we must look more closely at what Spinoza means by 'priority'. When he makes the claim of priority in 1p1, Spinoza says that it is evident from 1d3, the definition of *substance*, and 1d5, the definition of *mode*. These specify that a substance is in and is conceived through itself, while a mode is in and is conceived through another. In particular, as I noted, a mode is in and conceived through the substance of which it is a mode.

In asserting priority of a substance over its modes, Spinoza is clearly asserting that a substance and its modes stand in some kind of asymmetrical relation. The definitions of substance and mode suggest the following two claims as constituting the relevant asymmetry:

1. A substance is not in and is not conceived through its modes.
2. The modes of a substance are in and are conceived through that substance.

In invoking 1p1 in 1p5d, is Spinoza concerned, in particular, with one of these two aspects of his thesis of priority; that is, does Spinoza reject a situation in which substances are individuated by their modes because such a situation would violate a particular one of the above pair of claims? It is clear, I believe, from 1p5d, that Spinoza is more directly concerned with a violation of (1) than with a violation of (2).

To see that this is true, return to the crucial passage from 1p5d:

If [two substances are distinguished] by a difference in their affections, then since a substance is prior in nature to its affections (by p1), if the affections are therefore put to one side and [the substance] is considered in itself, that is (by d3 and a6), considered truly, one cannot be conceived to be distinguished from another, that is (by p4) there cannot be many, but only one [of the same nature or attribute]. (1p5d; my emphasis)

Notice that Spinoza here invokes the definition of *substance* and the claim, from that definition, that a substance is in itself. Why does he invoke the notion of being in itself? The italicized passage indicates that the following is what Spinoza has in mind. If we do *not* put the modes aside, that is, if we allow a substance to be individuated by its modes, then we are not considering that substance truly. We will, Spinoza is saying here, be considering it not in itself. Since, for Spinoza, everything is either in itself or in another (1a1), by considering a substance not in itself, we would, it seems, be considering it in another. This other consists, presumably, of the modes of the substance by which we are individuating the substance.

Spinoza's emphasis on the notion of being in itself in this context, therefore, implies that if we allow modes to individuate a substance, then we are treating that substance not as in itself, but rather as in its modes. Such a result would directly violate the definition of substance and also (1), the first component of the priority relation. Notice, however, that it would not, by itself, violate (2), the other component

of that relation. For this reason, I believe that (1) is primary in Spinoza's mind in 1P5d: he is more concerned in 1P5d with what a substance is in and conceived through than with what modes are in and conceived through.¹⁶

Can we discern a good, Spinozistic reason for believing that (1) would be violated if substances could be individuated by their modes? I believe that we can, that there is, actually, a rather simple way of showing how (1) would be violated if substances could be individuated by their modes alone. To bring out this reason, it is helpful to focus not on the assertion that substance is in itself, but on the assertion that substance is conceived through itself. This shift in focus is legitimate, since the relations of being in and being conceived through are mutually entailing for Spinoza.¹⁷ Further, I need to emphasize an important explanation of the meaning of the term 'being conceived through' that Spinoza gives in rd3. The definition in full follows: "By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed."¹⁸ In the second half of the definition, Spinoza seems to be appealing to the claim that what it is for x to be conceived through y is for it to be the case that the concept of x must be formed from the concept of y.

With this point in mind, we return to the scenario in which substances a and b each have attribute x and are distinguished only by their modes. Let us say that a has set of modes m1 and b has set of modes m2. In the light of Spinoza's focus on (1) and on the issue of what substances are conceived through, we must ask, through what is, for example, substance a conceived in our scenario? That is, what concepts are required in order to have the concept of substance a? Since, for Spinoza, substances are conceived under their attributes (1P10s), we can say that conceiving of substance a requires conceiving of its attribute x. Conceiving of x is not sufficient for conceiving of a, however, because there is something else besides a, that is, b, that has attribute x. Thus forming the concept "The substance with attribute x" would not, by itself, suffice for having the concept of a in particular (compare the thought, "the senator from New York").

Since the concept of x is not sufficient for having the concept of a, the concept of a must have richer content than simply "the substance with attribute x." In other words, a must be conceived through something in addition to attribute x. One needs a concept that, perhaps together with the concept of x, would suffice for having the concept of a. Since the concept of x by itself could not accomplish that because attribute x does not differentiate a from b, the required additional concept must be a concept of something that differentiates a from b.¹⁹ And in our scenario such a thing can only be, of course, the modes of those substances. To have the concept of a, we must, therefore, have the concept not only of attribute x, but also of set of modes m1, the set of modes that a has and that differentiates a from b. That is, one must, in order to conceive of a, conceive of it as "the substance with attribute x *and* set of modes m1."

Thus, in our scenario, the concept of substance a would require the concept of a's modes. Substance a would, therefore, be conceived, at least in part, through its modes.²⁰ And here we have a violation of (1) and thus a violation of the priority of a substance over its modes. This is, I believe, a very natural and simple way to see (1)

as at work in 1P5d, just as the text itself indicates, and to use (1) to provide a valid solution to the different modes problem.²¹

3. The Different Attributes Problem

Thus we have obviated one problem that faces Spinoza's argument for the thesis that substances cannot share attributes. But there is another problem—one that might be called the different attributes problem. Let us grant that two substances cannot be individuated solely by their modes. Even so, there seems to remain the possibility that they can be individuated by a difference in some attributes while sharing some others. For example, suppose that substance c has only two attributes: thought and extension. Further, suppose that substance d also has two attributes. However, although d has extension, as c does, it lacks thought. Its second attribute is some different attribute z. Here two extended substances seem to be individuated by the fact that one has thought and the other does not. This is a case of attribute sharing, and Spinoza thus needs to rule it out in order for his argument for substance monism to be valid. But what could be illegitimate about this scenario? This is the different attributes problem.²²

The kind of strategy used to solve the different modes problem can show us how to solve this one. To solve the different modes problem, I started by asking, Through what is substance a conceived? To solve the different attributes problem, I start by asking a similar question, Through what is substance c conceived? In answering this question, I develop a line of thought formally similar to that used in the different modes case.

Recall that c has extension and thought. Substance d has extension and attribute z. Although conceiving of the attribute of thought might be sufficient for conceiving of substance c, conceiving of the attribute of extension is *not* sufficient for conceiving of c, because there is something else besides c: d, which has the attribute of extension. Thus forming the concept "The substance with the attribute of extension" would not, by itself, suffice for having the concept of c in particular. To conceive of this particular substance, we must conceive it through something in addition to extension or instead of extension. One needs a concept that, perhaps together with the concept of extension, would be sufficient for having the concept of substance c, rather than substance d. Since the concept of extension could not be what we are seeking because extension does not differentiate c from d, it appears that the required further concept must be a concept of something that differentiates c from d. And in our scenario such a thing can only be, of course, the other attributes of those substances, the attributes with regard to which c and d differ.²³ To conceive of c, we must, therefore, have the concept of the attribute of thought, that attribute which c has and which differentiates c from d. We can conclude from this that we must, in order to conceive of c as extended, conceive of it as "the substance with the attribute of extension *and* the attribute of thought." In other words, the concept of a certain extended substance, that is, c, requires the concept of thought. Given Spinoza's notion of conceiving through, it follows that extended substance c is conceived through thought.

Would the claim that a given extended substance is conceived through thought violate any of Spinoza's principles, in the way that, as we saw, the claim that a substance is conceived through its modes violates Spinoza's principle of priority? The answer is, I believe, yes. The envisioned scenario conflicts with the conceptual separation between the attributes, with Spinoza's claim that each attribute of a substance is conceived through itself.

To bring this out, it is helpful to consider a conclusion that Spinoza explicitly draws from the claim in *ip10* that each attribute is conceived through itself. In *2p6d* he says, after restating *ip10*: "So [*Quare*] the modes of each attribute involve the concept of their own attribute, but not that of another one." Spinoza is saying that, for example, an extended mode involves the concept of extension, but not of thought. Since for Spinoza, the claim that *x* involves the concept of *y* is equivalent to the claim that *x* is conceived through *y*,²⁴ and since this claim in turn is, as we have seen, equivalent to the claim that the concept of *x* must be formed from the concept of *y*, it follows from *2p6d* that, for Spinoza, the concept of an extended mode does not require the concept of thought. Spinoza thus considers that the conceptual barrier between the attributes precludes any situation in which to conceive of a given extended mode, one must appeal to thought. But, if this is the case, then it should equally be the case that the conceptual barrier precludes a situation in which conceiving of an extended substance requires conceiving of the attribute of thought. I can think of no reason why the former situation would be precluded, but the latter not. Since the conceptual barrier thus rules out any case in which conceiving of an extended substance requires an appeal to thought, it rules out the case in which substance *c* and substance *d* share the attribute of extension but differ with regard to thought. This point is generalizable, and we can conclude that because of the conceptual barrier Spinoza can legitimately reject any case in which two substances share one or more attributes yet differ with regard to others. This, then, is my solution to the different attributes problem.

For reasons that will become clear shortly, we should articulate the precise way in which the conceptual barrier rules out the different attributes case. What led to the violation of the conceptual barrier in the case of *c* was the fact that one could have the conception of one of *c*'s attributes taken independently of another of *c*'s attributes, without having the conception of *c* itself. That is, the violation consisted in the fact that one of *c*'s attributes (that is, extension) was not, independently of another of *c*'s attributes (that is, thought), sufficient for conceiving of *c*. To conceive of *c*, appealing to extension alone was not enough; another attribute had to be invoked. The fact that this conclusion violated the conceptual barrier suggests that an implication of the conceptual barrier is the following:

(3) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, is sufficient for conceiving of that substance.

(3) is the specific claim to which one must appeal in order to solve the different attributes problem in the way I just proposed.

Thus we have, I believe, a simple and elegant solution to this problem. This is important, but we must ask the further question, Is it actually Spinoza's solution? It must be admitted that Spinoza does not explicitly describe or attempt to preclude a case in which two substances share some attributes but differ in others. Nevertheless, I want to show that not only does Spinoza appreciate this problem, but he also intends to eliminate it in precisely the way that I have just outlined. To reach this conclusion, I point out that (3), the key claim in my proposed solution to the different attributes problem, follows from two of Spinoza's most important definitions and that, in at least two places, Spinoza makes claims that are very much like (3). Further, in one of those places, Spinoza explicitly ties this type of claim to the conceptual barrier between the attributes, just as I did in my presentation of the solution.

It is important that one can derive (3) from Spinoza's definition of *attribute* together with his definition of *essence* (or of that which pertains to the essence of a thing).²⁵ An attribute, for Spinoza, somehow constitutes the essence of a substance: "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence" (*1d4*). Further, Spinoza also holds that conceiving of a thing's essence is sufficient for conceiving of that thing:

I say that to the essence of any thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is necessarily posited and which, being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken away; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing. (*2d2*; my emphasis)²⁶

These claims together indicate that each attribute of a substance is sufficient for conceiving of that substance and, in particular, that

(3) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, is sufficient for conceiving of that substance.

One passage where Spinoza directly argues along the lines of (3) occurs in *Ep 9*. Simon de Vries wondered, in *Ep 8*, how a single substance could have, as Spinoza claims, a plurality of attributes. This is a standard objection to Spinoza, and one that Descartes would surely press.²⁷ I will try to shed some light on it later in this chapter. But here I am interested in a presupposition that emerges from Spinoza's response. In restating the problem in his own words, Spinoza takes it to be the problem of "how one and the same thing can be designated [*insigniri*] by two names." Presumably, these designators enable one to single out or distinguish the object in question. (The word Spinoza uses here can mean "to distinguish" or "to make known.") So the problem Spinoza sees is that of how there can be two different ways in which one can single out the same object.

The fact that Spinoza's claim about names and designators is meant to capture a feature of the way attributes relate to a substance indicates the following: for Spinoza, just as, in his examples, each name of a given object by itself is sufficient for singling out or distinguishing that object, so too

(4) Each attribute of a substance, by itself, is sufficient for singling out or distinguishing that substance.

(4) is clearly similar to

(3) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, is sufficient for conceiving of that substance.

Thus Spinoza's likening of attributes to designators here suggests that he holds something like (3), the assertion that is the heart of my solution to the different attributes problem.

In Ep 9, Spinoza does not explicitly tie the (3)-like assertion to the conceptual barrier between the attributes. But he does precisely that in an important passage from 1p10. There, while elucidating 1p10, the proposition in which he introduces the conceptual barrier, Spinoza says:

[E]ach [attribute of a substance] expresses the reality or being of the substance.²⁸

The fact that Spinoza says this in a context that elucidates his view about the extent to which the attributes are independent of one another indicates that he is asserting here:

(5) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, expresses the reality or being of that substance.

Now (5) is not an explicit statement of (3), but I think it can be shown that for Spinoza (5) is equivalent to (3). Notice, first of all, that Spinoza would regard saying that each attribute expresses the *reality or being* of the substance as equivalent to saying that each expresses the substance itself. Spinoza often uses claims about the being of x and claims about x itself interchangeably.²⁹ Thus (5) is equivalent to

(5') Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, expresses that substance.

To show that (5') and, thus, (5) are equivalent to (3), we need to show that for Spinoza:

(6) x expresses y if and only if x is sufficient for conceiving of y.

There are a number of places in which Spinoza appears to rely on this assertion. For example, in 2p5d, after saying that the modes of a particular attribute express that attribute in a certain way, Spinoza infers (with the help of 1p10) that the modes involve the concept of that attribute. Since, as 1p2d indicates, for Spinoza the notion of involving the concept of a thing is equivalent to the notion of being conceived through that thing, we can see that he is here saying that the modes are conceived through

their attribute. As we have seen (in the discussion of 1d3), this, in turn, is equivalent to saying that conceiving of the modes requires conceiving of the attribute. Spinoza is therefore making the point here that if one conceives of the modes then one is also conceiving of the attribute; that is, that conceiving of the modes is sufficient for conceiving of the attribute. For Spinoza, because a mode expresses a certain attribute, conceiving of that mode is sufficient for conceiving of that attribute. (For a similar passage, see 2p1d.)

The passage from 2p5d provides evidence that Spinoza holds the left to right half of the equivalence in (6), that is, the claim that if x expresses y, then x is sufficient for conceiving of y. That Spinoza accepts the full equivalence is evident from 2p10d. There Spinoza treats the claim that the essence of man expresses God's nature in a certain and determinate way as equivalent to the claim that the essence of man cannot be conceived without God. Now to say that the essence of man cannot be conceived without God is, for Spinoza, to say that the essence of man is conceived through God.³⁰ To say this is, as we have seen, to say that conceiving of the essence of man requires conceiving of God, and thus it is to say that conceiving of the essence of man is sufficient for conceiving of God. So, for Spinoza, the claim that the essence of man expresses God's nature is equivalent to the claim that conceiving of the essence of man is sufficient for conceiving of God. Here Spinoza seems to rely on a general principle such as (6).³¹

Since Spinoza accepts (6), we can see the claim in 1p10 to the effect that

(5') Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, expresses that substance.

as tantamount to the claim that drives my proposed solution to the different attributes problem, that is, the claim that

(3) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, is sufficient for conceiving of that substance.

The fact that Spinoza makes an assertion such as (3) in Ep 9 and 1p10 shows that he seeks to rule out situations in which an attribute by itself fails to enable us to conceive of or to express a substance. He is asserting that there are no cases in which an attribute is sufficient for conceiving of a substance only with the help of other attributes. Now a case in which two substances share an attribute but differ with regard to others, such as the case of substances c and d, is precisely such a case. In fact it is the *only* case in which an attribute would require the help of other attributes in order to provide a way of conceiving of the substance that has those attributes. If two substances share *all* their attributes, then no attribute of the substance can provide a way of conceiving of that substance, even with assistance from other attributes of that substance. (In such a case, one would have to appeal to the modes in order to conceive of the substance. We have already seen how Spinoza's priority thesis precludes such an appeal.) Further, if a substance shares *no* attributes with other substances, that is, if each of its attributes is unique to that substance, then each attribute of that substance

would, by itself, be sufficient for conceiving of that substance. It follows that the only case in which an attribute of a substance would be insufficient for conceiving of the substance without the help of other attributes would be precisely a case in which two substances share some attributes but differ with regard to others.

Thus, even though he does not explicitly mention a case in which two substances share some but not all their attributes, we can see that Spinoza seeks to eliminate precisely this kind of case. Further, IP10s, in particular, shows that he wants to rule out this kind of case by invoking the conceptual barrier between the attributes. For these reasons, I conclude not only that Spinoza is sensitive to the different attributes problem, but that he also endeavors to solve it by the kind of strategy that I have developed here.

Let us step back a bit and consider, in the light of one another, Spinoza's responses to the different modes problem and to the different attributes problem. Spinoza would respond to the different modes problem by considering what is required to conceive of a given substance and by concluding that, in the case in which two substances are differentiated only by their modes, each substance would be conceived through its modes, that is, that conceiving of any one of the substances would require conceiving of its modes. This, however, would violate the priority of each substance over its modes. The same strategy led to Spinoza's solution to the different attributes problem. Here we reached the result that, in the case in which two substances that share an attribute are differentiated by their other attributes, an extended substance, for example, would be conceived through thought. This, however, would violate the conceptual barrier between the attributes.

The fact that the two solutions are alike in this way is, I think, an appealing feature of my overall interpretation of Spinoza's view that substances cannot share attributes. Further, my interpretation suggests that a key aspect of Spinoza's view of attributes is the claim that each attribute by itself is sufficient for conceiving of the substance that has that attribute. The "by itself" here means that each attribute is sufficient for conceiving of the substance independently of the other attributes of the substance and independently of the modes of the substance.

4. The Impossibility of Substances with Fewer Than All the Attributes

In its role in defusing the different attributes problem, Spinoza's conceptual barrier between the attributes is crucial to the no-shared-attribute thesis and thus to Spinoza's monism. But there is another, equally important way in which the conceptual divide supports Spinoza's monism. To see this role, I discuss an apparent gap in the argument for monism. In presenting this gap, I follow Garrett's 1979 article, "Spinoza's 'Ontological' Argument," in which he identifies this gap and insightfully shows how Spinoza tries to close it.

Spinoza claims in IP7: "It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist." Part of what this entails, for Spinoza, is that any possible substance necessarily exists. This is evident from the fact that, on the basis of IP7, Spinoza argues in IP1d1 that since

God is defined as a substance (the substance of infinite attributes) and since a substance by nature exists, it follows that God necessarily exists. In IP14 Spinoza continues that since God has all the attributes, and since no two substances can share attributes, it follows from the fact that God exists necessarily that necessarily no other substance exists.

This argument rules out, for example, the existence of a thinking substance whose only attribute is thought (call it "ts1") and similarly rules out the existence of an extended substance whose only attribute is extension (call it "es1"). Thus a substance such as ts1 is not, for Spinoza, possible, although it may initially seem to be. Spinoza is, in effect, arguing in this way:

- (i) Each possible substance necessarily exists.
- (ii) God is a possible substance.
- (iii) Therefore, God necessarily exists.
- (iv) Since God exists and has all the attributes, and since there is no sharing of attributes, ts1 is not a possible substance.³²

We can see that (in step [ii]) Spinoza is asserting the possibility of God to show the impossibility of ts1 and similar substances.

But the question immediately arises: could not Spinoza equally well have argued from the possibility of ts1 to the impossibility of God? Is there anything in Spinoza that precludes an opponent from arguing in the following way?

- (i) Each possible substance necessarily exists.
- (ii') ts1 is a possible substance.
- (iii') Therefore, ts1 necessarily exists.
- (iv') Since ts1 exists and has thought, and since there is no sharing of attributes, it follows that God necessarily does not exist; that is, God is impossible.³³

This, of course, would be a disastrous line of argument from the point of view of Spinoza's monism. He needs to show that his argument for the conclusion of God's existence and ts1's nonexistence does not commit him to the soundness of a parallel argument for the view that ts1 exists and God does not. In other words, Spinoza urgently needs to show why it is illegitimate to start out, as his opponent does, with the claim that ts1 is a possible substance.

Garrett convincingly shows that Spinoza is aware of this problem and that, in at least some passages, Spinoza attempts to resolve it by asserting that God has more power to exist than ts1 (or any other substance with fewer attributes than God).³⁴ In IP11s Spinoza says:

[T]he more reality belongs to the nature of a thing, the more powers [virtutes] it has, of itself, to exist. Therefore, an absolutely infinite being, or God, has, of himself, an absolutely infinite power of existing.³⁵

This passage shows that, for Spinoza, a substance with fewer than all the attributes, such as ts1, has less power to exist than does God. Before seeing how Spinoza argues

for this claim, let us investigate its meaning and the way in which it would obviate the difficulty at hand.

At least part of what, for Spinoza, is entailed by saying that God has more power of existing than *ts1* is that if we grant that *ts1* exists, we must also grant that God exists.³⁶ This is true for the following reason. For Spinoza,

(7) Something with lesser power to exist cannot exist if something with greater power to exist does not.

(7) is for Spinoza trivially true. If *x*, with lesser power to exist, exists and *y*, with greater power, does not, then the fact that *x* does exist and *y* does not shows that, after all, *x* has greater power to exist than does *y*.³⁷ Thus, for Spinoza, a nonexisting thing cannot have greater power to exist than an actually existing thing. Given (7) and Spinoza's view that God has more power to exist than *ts1*, it follows that

(8) If *ts1* exists, then God exists.

With (8) in hand, we can see why Spinoza regards himself as entitled to reject the view that *ts1* is a possible substance. (8) shows that the existence of *ts1* requires the existence of God as well. Since God and *ts1* share an attribute, we can see that the existence of *ts1* would require that there be a case of attribute sharing. Since Spinoza thinks that there is, and can be, no such sharing, we can see how, for Spinoza, the existence of *ts1* would be impossible.³⁸ This conclusion would obviate the opponent's argument from the claim that *ts1* is possible to the conclusion that *ts1* exists but God does not. We can therefore see how, by invoking the claim that God has more power to exist than does *ts1*, Spinoza would block an important challenge to his argument for substance monism.³⁹

Since this claim about God's power turns out to be crucial to Spinoza's argument, it behooves us to investigate how he argues for it. Spinoza claims, in a passage I quoted earlier, that the more reality a substance has, the more power to exist it has (*1p1s*). Spinoza also says that the more reality a substance has, the more attributes it has (*1p9*).⁴⁰ Thus a substance's power and its number of attributes are proportional to the same thing, that is, the reality of the substance. This indicates that a substance's power and number of attributes are proportional to one another. If one substance has more power than another, then it has more attributes than the other, and, conversely, if it has more attributes, it has more power. Since, by definition, God has more attributes than does *ts1*, it follows that God has more power to exist than does *ts1*. The connection between attributes and power provides, therefore, the ground for the claim I have called crucial to Spinoza's argument for monism.

But now, of course, we are led to the question, How does Spinoza argue that attributes and power are correlated in this way? We can discern in Spinoza the following line of thought. With focus again on *ts1* and God, let us show why, for Spinoza, God's having more attributes is correlated with God's having more power to exist than does *ts1*. Spinoza holds that

(9) If *ts1* exists self-sufficiently, it has the power to do so *only* because of the fact that it has the attribute of thought.

Similarly, Spinoza would claim that if *es1* exists self-sufficiently, that is only because it has extension. Spinoza asserts (without argument) a claim like (9) in *Ep 35*: "it can only be the result of a perfection that a being should exist by its own sufficiency and force."⁴¹ The context in this letter and in *Ep 36* makes it clear that Spinoza takes attributes to be perfections and that the degree of perfection of a substance is proportional to the number of its attributes. So Spinoza's point is that a being can exist by its own sufficiency *only* as a result of its attributes.

With the help of (9), we can reach the claim that:

(10) God has whatever would give *ts1* power for self-sufficient existence; but God has further features that also give God power for self-sufficient existence.

(10) follows, in part, from (9) as I now show. (9) claims that its having thought would account for the self-sufficient existence of *ts1* (if indeed it did exist). Similarly, its having extension would account for the self-sufficient existence of *es1* (if indeed it did exist). Now God has the attribute of thought. So, whatever power thought gives *ts1* to exist on its own, it also provides for God. *ts1*, by (9), has no other power for its self-sufficient existence; but this is not the case with God. Since extension would account for *es1*'s self-sufficient existence, it would do the same for God, the substance of all attributes. So having extension provides God with a measure of power for self-sufficient existence that is not possessed by *ts1*. Similarly, each of the other infinitely many attributes that God has provides God with even further power. Thus we can see why (10) is true for Spinoza.⁴² Further, it trivially follows from (10) that God has more power to exist than does *ts1*. This is how Spinoza seems, in *Ep 35*, to support his assertion that God has more attributes than *ts1* and therefore has more power to exist than does *ts1*.

Spinoza's argument here is valid. Unfortunately, however, he cannot legitimately rely on it. Spinoza aims to prove that God has more power to exist as a means to showing that God exists and *ts1* does not. By showing this, Spinoza would rebut an opponent's charge that *ts1* exists and God does not. In the course of arguing that God has more power, Spinoza asserts (9) without argument. However, Spinoza is not entitled to assume (9), since this is precisely the kind of assertion that Spinoza's opponent can be seen as denying in his argument that *ts1* exists and God does not. The opponent takes seriously the possibility that *ts1* has more power to exist than does God. In doing this, the opponent is taking seriously the possibility that some difference between *ts1* and God gives *ts1* more power to exist than God, and thus that some feature that *ts1* has and God lacks is at least part of the reason why *ts1* has the power of self-sufficient existence. Since *ts1* and God share thought, the opponent is, in effect, claiming that a feature besides thought is (part of) what gives *ts1* power to exist. But this is precisely the denial of (9). So we see that, in taking his position, the opponent was, in effect, denying (9) all along. Thus Spinoza is, of course, not entitled to assume it, as he apparently does.

I can make this point more concrete by elaborating the Cartesian objection considered earlier. A Cartesian would deny (and, in Ep 8, de Vries does deny) that a substance could have more than one attribute. For this reason, we can see that a Cartesian would hold that a certain difference between God (as Spinoza defines God) and ts1 gives ts1 more power to exist than God. Although ts1 and God both have thought, they differ in that God has other attributes besides thought, and ts1 does not. This difference, a Cartesian would say, is clearly to the detriment of God (as Spinoza defines God) since the notion of a substance having more than one attribute is simply incoherent, whereas the notion of a substance having just one attribute is perfectly legitimate. Thus, the Cartesian would say, God would be precluded from existing by God's very concept, but ts1 would not be precluded by ts1's concept. In this way, we can see the Cartesian objection as holding that it is not simply the fact that ts1 has the attribute of thought that would give ts1 self-sufficient existence; rather, the objector would say, ts1's existence would be due to that together with the fact that ts1 has no other attributes. Thus this Cartesian objection illustrates how an opponent of Spinoza's view that God has more power to exist than ts1 can be seen as denying (g) all along, that is, as denying that ts1's having thought is *all* that is relevant to its self-sufficient existence. Also relevant would be some further difference between ts1 and God, such as the difference concerning whether or not the substance in question has other attributes besides thought. We can see, then, that, in his argument that God has more power to exist than does ts1, Spinoza simply takes for granted the main point at issue. In other words, he begs the question against one who denies that God exists instead of ts1.

With the argument just outlined, then, Spinoza has not made any headway on the problem of why God has more power to exist than does ts1 or, crucially, on the problem of why ts1 is not a possible substance. As I pointed out, the absence of resources to resolve the latter problem in particular would undermine Spinoza's substance monism. Thus there is good reason to look for a more successful, but still Spinozistic, argument for the claim that ts1 is impossible.

My strategy for the rest of this section follows: Assuming the no-shared-attribute thesis and several other Spinozistic principles, including especially the conceptual barrier between the attributes, I offer an argument for Spinoza's monism, which will make clear exactly how one can, without begging the question, validly argue on Spinozistic terms that ts1 is impossible. Further, although I will not offer a direct defense of Spinoza's view that the more attributes a substance possesses the more power it has to exist, my argument here will uncover a strong reason for the similar Spinozistic claim that there is some difficulty with the existence of a substance of fewer than all the attributes and that this difficulty is lessened the more attributes a substance has. After this more successful Spinozistic argument for monism and the view that ts1 is impossible, I will explore the extent to which this argument can actually be found in Spinoza.

To begin the argument, I want to show that, for Spinoza, each attribute must exist, that is, for each attribute *x*, there is some substance that has *x*. It is not hard to see why Spinoza would accept this claim. For Spinoza, attributes, like substances, are conceived through themselves (Iprod). Since, on Spinoza's view, the self-con-

ception of substances entails that each possible substance necessarily exists (Ipr), it would likewise seem to be the case that each possible attribute necessarily exists.⁴³

It is important to see that this assertion is a relatively weak one by Spinozistic standards. It is *not* the assertion that all of the attributes are possessed by the same substance and that no attribute is possessed by any other substance. This latter assertion is, in effect, the assertion of Spinoza's substance monism, and we are, of course, not entitled to that yet. I want to show now how we can get from my weaker assertion to the stronger claim of monism.

From Spinoza's view that no two substances share attributes, together with the weak assertion that each attribute exists, we can draw the conclusion that if *x* is an attribute then *x* is possessed by one substance and by no other. Thus we can speak of *the x-substance* and, similarly, of *the thinking substance* and *the extended substance*.⁴⁴ In what follows, when I speak of the thinking substance and the extended substance, I simply mean to refer to the unique substance that possesses thought and the unique substance that possesses extension.

The question I want to focus on is this: How are these uniquely possessed attributes distributed among substances? That is, is the extended substance identical with the thinking substance? Is it identical with the substance that possesses attribute *x*, etc.?

To answer this question, I make more extensive use of a principle that I invoked earlier, Spinoza's version of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles:

(PII) If $x \neq y$, then there is some difference between *x* and *y* that explains their nonidentity.

In the light of this principle, consider the relation between the thinking substance and the extended substance in the scenario just described. If they are to be nonidentical, there must be a difference between them that explains their nonidentity. What could such a difference be?

Notice that we can say right away that there are a number of properties that the thinking substance and the extended substance share. For example, each has the property of being a substance. They therefore also share all the properties entailed by this property, including the properties of being self-caused, being infinite and eternal, being prior to its modes, and so on. Such shared properties might be called attribute-neutral properties, since to say that something has one of these properties does not entail anything about which particular attribute or attributes it has or does not have.

Indeed, it seems that the thinking substance and the extended substance share *all* their neutral properties and that any difference between them must consist in non-neutral properties. For this reason, any basis for concluding that the thinking substance and the extended substance are not identical must derive from the fact, if it is a fact, that they have different attributes. This is indicated by Ipr, which we saw earlier: "Two or more distinct things are distinguished from one another, either by a difference in the attributes of the substances or by a difference in their affections." Since we have already ruled out cases in which substances are differentiated by

modes alone, if the thinking substance and the extended substance are to be distinct, they must be distinguished by one or more attributes.

Let us consider whether we can appeal to the attribute of extension in order to distinguish the thinking substance and the extended substance. The extended substance has the attribute of extension, of course, but one might suppose that the thinking substance does not have this attribute and that we could in this way explain their nonidentity.⁴⁵

Such a strategy, however, does not work. To understand why, we simply need to ask the question, *Why*, in this situation, does the thinking substance lack the attribute of extension? Spinoza's Principle of Sufficient Reason demands an answer here. I want to show that there can be no explanation of this purported fact. In my argument for this point, the conceptual barrier between the attributes figures prominently.

One attempt to explain why the thinking substance lacks the attribute of extension might proceed as follows: The thinking substance is distinct from the extended substance. Since according to 1P5 there is no sharing of attributes between distinct substances, the thinking substance does not have extension. This explanation might seem valid, but since it presupposes the nonidentity of the thinking substance and the extended substance, it cannot be used in a noncircular fashion by one who seeks to explain the nonidentity. So this attempt to account for the thinking substance's lack of extension must be put aside.

A second attempt might proceed thus: the thinking substance lacks extension because its having the attribute of thought precludes it from having the attribute of extension. On this view, *because* it has thought, this substance fails to have extension.

Again, this explanation might appear to be good; nevertheless, it is wholly illegitimate in Spinozistic terms, since it violates the conceptual barrier between the attributes. For Spinoza, the proposition that each attribute is conceived through itself (1P10) entails the following important claim:

(11) The fact that a substance *fails to have* a certain attribute cannot be due to its having a certain other attribute.

That Spinoza accepts (11) and sees it as following from the fact that each attribute is conceived through itself is evident from the fact that immediately after demonstrating the conceptual independence of attributes, he says:

From these things [*ex his*], it is evident that although two attributes may be conceived to be really distinct (i.e. one may be conceived without the aid of the other), we still cannot infer from that that they constitute two beings, or two different substances. (1P10)

Spinoza is here saying that the very fact that attributes are conceived through themselves shows that from the claim that a certain substance has the attribute of thought, which is conceived through itself, and a certain substance has the attribute of extension, which is also conceived through itself, we cannot conclude that these sub-

stances are not identical. One can see why this claim would be attractive to Spinoza. If a substance is prevented from having the attribute of extension by the fact that it has the attribute of thought, then a fact involving extension—that is, the fact that a certain substance does not have that attribute—would be due to, and thus conceived through, a fact involving thought.⁴⁶ This would be to allow more of a conceptual or explanatory connection between thought and extension than Spinoza would countenance.

Return now to the attempted explanation of the thinking substance's failure to have extension by appealing to its having thought as precluding its having extension. Since Spinoza accepts (11), he would reject such an explanation. So we are still without a way of explaining why the thinking substance lacks extension, if indeed it does lack extension.

For similar reasons, the following explanation would also fail: "The thinking substance lacks extension because it has some other attribute *x* which precludes its having extension." This explanation is ineffective because, just as the conceptual barrier showed that *thought* cannot preclude a substance's having extension, it would also show that *attribute x* cannot preclude a substance's having extension.

I want to consider one further potential explanation of the thinking substance's failure to be extended, but in order to do so, I need to return briefly to an objection to Spinoza that I have mentioned at a couple of points already. Descartes would object to Spinoza by claiming that it is impossible for a substance to have more than one attribute, and that, therefore, since thought and extension are attributes, a substance's being thinking precludes it from being extended. Spinoza's claim (11) denies that one attribute can preclude another in this way. Thus we can see Spinoza as holding that it is possible for a substance to have more than one attribute, and that this is possible precisely because of the conceptual separation among the attributes. The conceptual barrier ultimately provides an answer to de Vries and to the Cartesian objection to Spinoza's account.⁴⁷

With this point in mind, let us consider a final attempt to explain the failure of the thinking substance to have extension. One way to explain why a thing possesses or lacks a certain property is to appeal to the fact that it is part of the thing's nature or essence to possess or lack that property. Perhaps, then, it is part of the nature or essence of the thinking substance that it lacks extension. This would be the case if, for example, it were part of the nature of the thinking substance to have thought *and no other attribute*. (This might be seen as the nature of the substance I called "sr.") If this is the case, then we could appeal to the fact that the nature of the thinking substance is restrictive in this way in order to explain why it lacks extension.⁴⁸

We can readily see that this explanation is unsuccessful. We have already granted that the attribute of thought must exist and that only one substance has it. According to the just-mentioned explanation of the thinking substance's failure to have extension, it is the nature of that substance to possess only thought. But we are now inevitably led to ask, *Why* should the one substance that possesses thought be a substance whose nature it is to have only thought? Since Spinoza grants that it is possible for a single substance to have more than one attribute, it is possible that thought is possessed (uniquely) by a substance whose nature it is to have thought *as well as*

other attributes, including extension. If this possibility were realized, then, of course, the one thinking substance would *not* lack extension. Thus, if one were to explain the thinking substance's failure to have extension by appealing to its nature as a substance that has only thought, we would need to explain why thought is not possessed instead by a substance whose nature allows and requires it to have both thought and extension. In other words, the problem now is to explain why the one substance that possesses thought has the less inclusive, rather than the more inclusive, nature.

However, no explanation seems to be available. Given that, for Spinoza, because of the conceptual barrier, the more inclusive nature is possible, there would seem to be no reason why a substance with this nature did not exist instead of the thinking substance with the less inclusive nature. Thus, if one seeks to explain why the thinking substance fails to have extension or to be identical with the extended substance by appealing to its nature as less inclusive in the way I just described, then one's explanation must ultimately rely on a brute fact to the effect that the thinking substance with the less inclusive nature exists. But Spinoza would reject such a brute fact because of his acceptance of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and thus he would also reject this explanation of the thinking substance's failure to have extension.

All of the potential explanations of the thinking substance's lack of extension that we have considered have failed. And the ultimate reason for their failure is the conceptual barrier between the attributes. It is this barrier that gives rise, as we saw, to (11)—the claim that a substance's lack of a certain attribute cannot be due to its possessing a certain other attribute—and thus also gives rise to Spinoza's claim that a substance can have more than one attribute. These particular results of the conceptual barrier demonstrate, as I have outlined, that the purported explanations do not succeed.

Further, I can think of no other potential explanation of the thinking substance's lack of extension that does not also fall prey in similar ways to (11) and the conceptual barrier. I conclude that if, in our scenario, the thinking substance fails to have extension, that is, is not identical with the extended substance, then, given the conceptual barrier between the attributes, there is no difference between the thinking substance and the extended substance that would enable us to explain their non-identity.

From the claim that there is no difference that explains this non-identity, together with (PII), Spinoza's version of the Principle of Indiscernibles which demands that there be such an explanation, it follows that the thinking substance is identical with the extended substance. In a similar way, we can argue for the Spinozistic view that the thinking substance is identical with the substance of attribute *x*, with the substance of attribute *y*, and so on. We thus reach the conclusion that there is a single substance that has all the attributes; that is, we reach Spinoza's claim of substance monism.

In presenting this argument for Spinoza's substance monism, I have found a Spinozistic justification for the assertion which is crucial to his monism and for which he argues question-beggingly in Ep 35. This is the assertion that the substance

that has thought and no other attribute, that is, *ts1*, is not a possible substance. This substance cannot exist, because its existence would violate (PII) and would involve very many brute facts: the fact that *ts1* lacks extension, the fact that it lacks attribute *x*, and so on for all the other attributes (with the exception of thought itself). Regarding each of these facts, one cannot, without at some point violating the conceptual barrier between the attributes, explain why it holds. Thus there can be no explanation, on Spinozistic terms, of such facts. Since, for Spinoza, there can be no unexplainable facts and since the existence of *ts1* would bring with it many such facts, it follows that it is impossible for *ts1* to exist.

It is important to note that, for Spinoza, the reason for *ts1*'s nonexistence cannot be simply the fact that God exists. Since, as we have seen, *ts1*'s existence would equally prevent God from existing, to explain why *ts1* does not exist by appealing to God's existence, we would need to explain also why God and not *ts1* exists in the first place. But this merely gets us back to the original question, Why does *ts1* not exist? To make progress on this question, we need to appeal to a fault internal to *ts1* that prevents it from existing, instead of merely arguing that some other substance besides *ts1* exists. In the light of my argument earlier, we can now pinpoint the fault internal to *ts1*—its existence would violate (PII) and would thus involve many brute facts. By contrast, the existence of God does not violate (PII) and involves, as we have just seen, none of the brute facts that afflict *ts1*; it is precisely for this reason that God exists instead of *ts1*.

In recognizing that *ts1* is impossible for this reason, we are able to reach a claim strikingly similar to Spinoza's claim that the more attributes a substance has, the more power it has to exist. As we have just seen, *ts1*'s existence involves very many brute facts, one for each attribute that it lacks. The existence of a substance whose only attributes are thought and extension would also involve very many brute facts of this type, but since it has one attribute that *ts1* lacks, the former substance is not burdened with one of the brute facts to which *ts1* is subject. In the case of *ts1*, unlike the case of the substance with thought and extension, we are faced with the question, Why does it lack the attribute of extension? As we consider substances with more and more attributes, we consider substances that avoid more and more brute facts concerning attributes—brute facts that apply to lesser substances. When we reach the substance of *all* attributes, God, we reach a substance whose existence avoids all such brute facts. Thus, unlike all the other substances, no brute fact concerning attributes precludes God's existence.

The assertion that the more attributes a substance has, the more existence-precluding brute facts it avoids, is clearly similar to Spinoza's crucial view that the more attributes a substance has, the greater its power to exist. Each claim asserts that the question whether or not a substance exists depends, at least in part, on the number of its attributes. But I am not confident that these claims amount to the same thing, since I am not confident that the notions of avoiding more brute facts and of having more power to exist are equivalent for Spinoza. I do not here explore this question further.

We must now ask, Is the Spinozistic argument I have just presented actually Spinoza's? It must be admitted that Spinoza does *not* explicitly try to prove the im-

possibility of substances that are less than all-inclusive, such as *ts1*, by invoking the conceptual barrier between the attributes in quite the way that I have just described. Instead, to the extent that Spinoza explicitly takes up the question of the impossibility of *ts1*, he appears to offer the question-begging argument that I found in Ep 35. Nevertheless, there is at least some indication that Spinoza appreciates the way in which, as in the above argument, reliance on the conceptual barrier can help to generate identity claims, including claims of substance identity.

The first and most important point to consider is that Spinoza does explicitly make the central claim in the argument for monism that I presented: that because of the conceptual barrier between the attributes, one attribute of a substance cannot preclude it from having any other attribute. This assertion is evident, as I noted, in the opening sentence of *ip10s*.

Further, it is important to compare the argument I have presented with Spinoza's argument for *mode* identity, for the identity of modes of one attribute with modes of another attribute. I have discussed this in detail elsewhere, so I will be brief here.⁴⁹ For Spinoza, ideas are modes of thought. Each idea is identical with, is one and the same thing as, the object of that idea (*2p7s*). Thus, for example, the idea of a mode of extension is identical with that mode of extension, and so, since my body is a mode of extension, the idea of my body is identical with my body. Since, for Spinoza, the idea of my body is my mind (*2p13*), he holds a version of the mind-body identity thesis.

We can see Spinoza arguing for mode identity in the following way. Since, as I have just emphasized, the conceptual barrier prevents attributes from legitimately individuating substances, it also prevents them from legitimately individuating modes. For example, the fact that a mode is a mode of thought cannot prevent it from being identical with a mode of extension. To hold otherwise is to hold that a mode can fail to be identical with a mode of extension, because it is a mode of thought. But this is to rest a fact involving the attribute of extension on a fact involving the attribute of thought, which would violate the conceptual or explanatory separation between the attributes.

Now Spinoza holds a thesis of parallelism according to which "[t]he order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (*2p7*). For Spinoza, this entails that an idea and its object share a wide range of attribute-neutral properties, including temporal properties, properties specifying the numbers of causes and effects of a mode, and the property of having a certain degree of complexity. Since, for example, the mind and the body are parallel modes, they share these attribute-neutral properties. Further, since non-neutral properties do not, as we just saw, enable us to individuate modes of thought and modes of extension, it follows that, for Spinoza, there would be no legitimate explanation for the non-identity of mind and body, if indeed they were not identical. Given Spinoza's version of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, it follows that the mind is identical with the body.

The fact that Spinoza sees parallelism as generating the identity of modes of thought and modes of extension and sees non-neutral properties as unable to individuate modes of thought and modes of extension is evident from the following pas-

sage in *2p7s*, where he treats the claim for mode identity as equivalent to the claim for parallelism:

[W]hether we conceive nature under the attribute of extension, or under the attribute of thought, or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes, that is [*hoc est*], that the same things follow one another.

This passage makes sense only if Spinoza sees the sameness of neutral properties guaranteed by parallelism as, by itself, sufficient for mode identity. This view about neutral properties shows that, for Spinoza, non-neutral properties are unable to individuate modes.⁵⁰ I conclude that Spinoza does indeed see the identity of modes as generated in the way I just indicated.

This argument for mode monism has, of course, the same general structure as the argument for substance monism that I outlined. In the substance argument, I reasoned that since the thinking substance and the extended substance share neutral properties, such as being a substance, being self-caused, and so on, and since the conceptual barrier guarantees that other, non-neutral properties, such as the attribute of extension, do not enable us to distinguish the substances, it follows that the thinking substance is identical with the extended substance. The fact that Spinoza relies on this kind of argument in the *mode* case shows that he does appreciate the way the conceptual barrier between the attributes can be used to argue for identity claims. Further, since Spinoza explicitly says in *2p7s* that the character of mode monism derives from (or at least is analogous to) the character of substance monism,⁵¹ and since he regards the conceptual barrier as undergirding mode monism in the way I have described, it seems that he accepts that the barrier also undergirds substance monism. There is, then, some reason to see the kind of argument for substance monism that I have presented as operative in Spinoza. It must be emphasized, however, that Spinoza also, and more explicitly, grounds his substance monism in the different and less successful line of argument that emerges in Ep 35.

5. Conclusion

The general point that emerges from my inquiry is that certain features of Spinoza's notion of attribute provide him with the means to defend his argument for substance monism from a number of important challenges. These features include (1) the fact that, for Spinoza, each attribute of a substance, independently of the modes of the substance and independently of the other attributes, is sufficient for conceiving of the substance, and also (2) the fact that, for Spinoza, because of the conceptual independence of the attributes, no attribute of a substance can prevent that substance from having any other attribute. However, that Spinoza has a powerful defense of his monism does not, of course, mean that his argument for that conclusion is sound. To understand whether or not it is, we need to address a further challenge: do any features, and, in particular, do thought and extension, exhibit the radical conceptual

independence that Spinoza accords to attributes? In the light of my inquiry, I believe that this is the question most worth exploring to gain further insight into the basis of Spinoza's monism and to arrive at a final assessment of it.

Notes

An earlier version of this chapter was part of a symposium on Spinoza at the March 1995 meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association and was also delivered at Stanford University in January 1996. I would like to thank the people present on these occasions for helpful remarks. I especially want to thank Don Garrett (who organized the APA session) and Edwin Curley (who was the respondent at that session). Finally, I am grateful to Robert Adams, to students in two different seminars at Yale, and to the editors of this volume for very useful comments on earlier drafts.

1. Translations from Spinoza are adapted from CI or, in the case of Letters 35 and 36, from Spinoza (1995). Quotations from Spinoza's Latin are from G.
2. In previous work, I have defended the validity of Spinoza's argument for *mode* monism, for the claim that modes of thought, such as particular minds or ideas, are identical with modes of extension, such as bodies. See Della Rocca (1993 and 1996a, chapters 7 and 8). As I indicate, my defense of substance monism in this study is continuous with my earlier defense of mode monism. Nonetheless, the objections against substance monism, which motivate much of my present discussion, raise fundamental issues that are not directly relevant to mode monism.
3. In this section I draw on material from chapter 1 of Della Rocca (1996a).
4. The two notions are, for Spinoza, equivalent. See Curley (1969, 15-18); Donagan (1988, 68); Garrett (1990b, 107n24).
5. See, for example, 2p38d; but also see 2d3.
6. This is evident from some of the ways in which Spinoza employs 1a4: "The knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its cause." See in particular 1p3d, 1p6cd, and 1p5d.
7. See KV part 1, chapter 1 (G I, 17); Ep 6a:2a5 can also be read as making this point.
8. I address this problem in chapter 9 of Della Rocca (1996a).
9. For example, the use of 1d5 in 1p15d and Loeb (1981, 167).
10. For different approaches to this issue, see Curley (1969; 1988), Carrero (1995).
11. The restriction to possible substances must be admitted here. Spinoza would not, of course, say that an impossible substance exists by its very nature.
12. I do not in this chapter consider Spinoza's quite different proof of this thesis in 1p8s2.
13. Spinoza's citation of 1d5 in the demonstration shows that by *affections* he means *modes*.
14. For evidence that Spinoza accepts the Principle of Sufficient Reason, see 1a3, 1p11d, and Garrett (1979, 202-3). For further discussion, see Della Rocca (1996a, 131); Garrett (1990b, 98-100). If the nonidentity of x and y would be explained by relevant differences between x and y, how would the identity of x and y be explained? I believe that, for Spinoza, the identity of x and y is to be explained by the *absence* of a difference that would explain nonidentity; that is, identity is explained by the sharing of all features a difference in which would ground nonidentity. This is, indeed, what 1p5d suggests when Spinoza treats as equivalent the claim that certain things cannot be conceived to be distinguished and the claim that they are identical.
15. It is clear from Spinoza's Latin that it is because of the priority that we can put the modes aside. This is the significance of the *ergo* in the passage quoted. Curley does not translate this word and I have modified his translation accordingly.

16. Garrett (1990b) offers a sophisticated response to the different modes problem that sees Spinoza as primarily concerned with violations of (2) and not with violations of (1). I think that, for the reasons given above, 1p5d clearly cuts against this interpretation.

17. See note 4.

18. See also, 1p8s2, where Spinoza speaks of a substance as "what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that the knowledge of which does not require the knowledge of any other thing."

19. Objection: perhaps Spinozistic concepts are like Kripkean proper names, that is, perhaps they can be about a particular object even if the one employing the concept does not command the concept of anything that differentiates the object in question. I do not think that such a position could plausibly be attributed to Spinoza, but to investigate the detailed reasons why Spinoza would reject it would take us too far afield here. I take up this issue in chapter 5 of Della Rocca (1996a). Garrett (1990b, 97) implicitly rejects such a Kripkean understanding of Spinoza's notion of a concept of an object.

20. Given the equivalence of the relations of being in and of being conceived through, we can say that in this (Spinozistically absurd) situation, substance a would also be, at least in part, in its modes.

21. Doney (1990) offers a similar solution to the different modes problem. Carrero (1995, 251) makes the general point that Spinoza's rejection of the individuation of substances by their modes is very much in line with Aristotelian/Scholastic approaches to individuation.

22. This problem was first raised by Leibniz (L, 198-99), and it has been given its most perspicuous and thorough treatment in Garrett (1990b, 83-101). Unfortunately, I cannot here take up Garrett's solution to this problem or his criticisms of other proposed solutions. Garrett's solution to the different attributes problem is one that Spinoza would accept, but is not clearly one on which Spinoza actually relies. Here also, as in his solution to the different modes problem, Garrett's solution goes astray by focusing on that through which modes are conceived instead of that through which a substance is conceived.

23. For the reasons given in the previous section, we cannot appeal to the modes of the different substances.

24. See, for example, 1p2d.

25. I am indebted here to Edwin Curley and, through him, to Charles Huememann.

26. In Della Rocca (1996a, chapter 5), I raise some difficulties concerning the aspect of Spinoza's definition that I am highlighting here.

27. For Descartes's rejection of multiple-attribute substances, see CSM I, 298, AT VIII B, 349-50, and Rozenmond (1998, 24-25).

28. [*Inimquodque realitatem aut esse substantiae exprimit.*]

29. See, for example, the way in which Spinoza moves from talking about persevering in one's being (in 3p7 and 4p18d) and preserving one's being (in 4p18s, 4p20, and 4p25) to talking about preserving oneself (in 4p22, d, c, 4p26d, 4p35c2). All of the passages cited from part 4 are derived from the same claim in part 3, namely, 3p7.

30. To see this, compare 1a4 with 1p6cd and 1p5d, and also compare 1a5 with 1p2d and 2p4d. I discuss these connections in Della Rocca (1996a, 205n-20).

31. See also the way in which Spinoza employs 1d8 in 1p2d.

32. Spinoza thus accepts an entailment from God's existence to *tsi*'s nonexistence. Despite this entailment, God's existence is not the *explanation* of *tsi*'s nonexistence. (I argue that Spinoza would not see all entailments as capturing explanatory relations in Della Rocca (1996a, 41). Exactly why Spinoza would not say that God's existence explains *tsi*'s nonexistence, and exactly what Spinoza would identify as the explanation of *tsi*'s nonexistence will become clear later.

33. See Garrett (1979, 209-10). Koistinen (1991) and Kulstad (1996) also consider this problem.

34. Actually, Spinoza's claim is that God has more power to exist *of itself (a se)* or *by its own sufficiency (sua sufficientia)*, than *tsi*. I will, for simplicity, omit this qualification in some of my formulations. Nothing untoward should result from this omission. Since, for Spinoza, given the definition of a substance, the only way a substance could exist is by its own sufficiency, there is no need, in speaking of a substance's power to exist, to specify that what is in question is its power to exist by its own sufficiency.

35. For Spinoza, a substance with one attribute, although infinite in its own kind (the kind specified by that attribute), is not absolutely infinite (1d2). Only a substance with all attributes can be absolutely infinite.

36. See, for example, Ep 35: "if a being which is endowed with less power exists by its own sufficiency, how much more does another exist which is endowed with greater power" (G IV, 182). See also Ep 36: "if we are willing to maintain that extension or thought [which can each be perfect in its own kind . . .] exist by their own sufficiency, the existence of God, who is absolutely perfect, will also have to be granted" (G IV, 185).

37. This is evident from 1P11d3: "if what now necessarily exists are only finite beings, then finite beings are more powerful than an absolutely infinite being."

38. Garrett (1979, 215) puts the point this way: "the existence of any lesser substance entails the existence of a substance, God, which is incompatible with the existence of the lesser substance. [This] presumably show[s] the definitions of lesser substances to be defective."

39. Even if the opponent's argument is obviated in this way, Spinoza would not thereby have justified one of the starting points of his own argument, namely, the claim that God is possible. What the appeal to God's greater power of existing would establish is, at most, that if any substance is possible, then God is possible. But even if this is established, Spinoza would still need to show that some substance is indeed possible. For a Spinozistic argument for such a claim, see Garrett (1979, 216–17).

40. 1P9: "The more reality or being each thing has, the more attributes belong to it." See also Ep 9 (G IV 45).

41. *Non nisi ex perfectione provenire potest, ut aliquod Ens sua sufficientia et vi existat* (G IV, 182).

42. Cf. Deleuze: "God, having all attributes, fulfills, *a priori*, all the conditions for a power to be asserted of some thing; he thus has an 'absolutely infinite' power of existence" (1992, 90). See also Guéroult (1968, 109).

43. Cf. Ep 10 (IV 47): "[T]he existence of the attributes does not differ from their essence."

44. Thus, in this case, unlike the scenario described in the previous section, each attribute of a substance would by itself be sufficient for conceiving of that substance.

45. The question I am raising here, Does the thinking substance have the attribute of extension? could in more cumbersome but more properly Spinozistic terms, be expressed: Is the thinking substance identical with a substance which has the attribute of extension? Spinoza would, I believe, answer the former question in the negative, but this does not preclude him from giving an affirmative answer to the latter question. Spinoza can consistently give these two answers because he would, I believe, regard the contexts "has the attribute of extension" and "is extended" as referentially opaque. (For details, see Della Rocca [1996a, chapter 7].) Since the latter question thus involves a more accurate expression of Spinoza's monism, it is, strictly speaking, the appropriate question to ask here. But, for the purpose of simplicity, I continue to focus on the former question. The substance of my argument here would not be affected if Spinoza's commitment to the referential opacity of contexts such as "has the attribute of extension" were explicitly taken into account and if the more cumbersome question were substituted throughout for the simpler question I actually consider.

46. Spinoza makes similar use of the conceptual barrier when he says (in 1P11d2) that

substances of different natures can neither give one another existence *nor take it away*. Cf. 4p29d: "Our power of acting . . . however it is conceived, can be determined, and hence aided or restrained, by the power of another singular thing which has something in common with us, and not by the power of a thing whose nature is completely different from ours."

47. For similar points, see Deleuze (1992, 79–80), Charlton (1981, 526), Donagan (1988, 79), and Woolhouse (1993, 41).

48. See Garrett (1990b, 84–85).

49. See Della Rocca (1993) or Della Rocca (1996a, chapters 7 and 8).

50. Further evidence that Spinoza regards non-neutral properties as irrelevant in this way comes from the intensionality that he sees inherent in such properties and that pervades Spinoza's system. I have documented such intensionality in Della Rocca (1996a, chapter 7).

51. "[T]he thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, which is now comprehended under this attribute, now under that. So also [*sic etiam*] a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways" (2P7s).