SPINOZA'S ONTOLOGY OF SUBSTANCE AND MODES: A ONE-CATEGORY HOLISTIC MEREOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

SPINOZA'S ONTOLOGY OF SUBSTANCE AND MODES: A ONE-CATEGORY HOLISTIC MEREOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

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All through his career, Spinoza endorses substance and modes as the two categories of his ontology. In the *Ethics*, he defines substance as "what is in itself," mode as "what is in another," asserts in E1a1 that "whatever is, is either in itself or in another," and in E1p15d explicitly concludes that "except for substances and modes there is nothing." Therefore, whatever exists, is either a substance or mode for Spinoza. However, how to best interpret the relationship between these two categories, which he stipulates in terms of 'being in,' has been an enduring problem in Spinoza scholarship. The traditional approach to the problem understands this relationship in terms of scholastic Aristotelian distinction of being in or inherence, which defines ontological independence and dependence, that results in a two-category ontology which rules out a mereological structure of the relationship between these two categories. In this thesis, I attempt to reject this dualist reading and establish a one-categorical holistic mereological understanding of Spinoza's substance and modes. I argue that the traditional dualist reading of Spinoza's ontology does not afford a

compelling account of Spinoza's doctrines regarding hierarchical one-category being, bare substratum, and immanent causation along with his descriptions of the holistic mereological structure of the substance-mode relation. Instead, I advocate that *priority monism* provides us with a framework to reconsider this enduring problem and reconstruct substance and modes in terms of the single category of power [*potentia*] by challenging the traditional reception.

Keywords: Ontology, Mereology, Early Modern Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Spinoza

ÖZ

SPINOZA'NIN TÖZ VE KİPLER ONTOLOJİSİ: TEK-KATEGORİ BÜTÜNCÜL MEREOLOJİK YENİDEN İNŞA

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Spinoza, kariyeri boyunca töz ve kipleri kendi ontolojisinin iki kategorisi olarak kabul eder. *Etika*'da tözü "kendi içinde olan," kipi "başkasının içinde olan" olarak tanımlar, E1a1'de "var olan her şeyin ya kendi içinde ya da başkasının içinde olduğunu" ileri sürer ve E1p15d'de açıkça şu sonuca varır: "tözler ve kipler dışında hiçbir şey yoktur." Dolayısıyla Spinoza'ya göre var olan her şey ya bir töz ya da bir kiptir. Ancak Spinoza'nın 'içinde olma' olarak ifade ettiği bu iki kategori arasındaki ilişkinin en iyi şekilde nasıl yorumlanacağı Spinoza araştırmacıları için kalıcı bir sorun olmuştur. Soruna geleneksel yaklaşım, bu ilişkiyi, ontolojik bağımsızlığı ve bağımlılığı tanımlayan skolastik Aristotelesçi 'içinde olma' veya içerilme ayrımıyla anlar ve Spinoza ontolojisini, bu iki kategori arasındaki mereolojik yapıyı dışlayan iki kategorili bir ontoloji olarak alır. Bu tezde, düalist okumayı reddederek Spinoza'nın töz ve kip kavramlarına ilişkin tek kategorili bütünsel mereolojik bir anlayış tesis etmeye çalışıyorum. Spinoza ontolojisinin geleneksel düalist okumasının, Spinoza'nın hiyerarşik tek kategorik varlık, çıplak töz, içkin nedensellik ve cevher-kip ilişkisinin

bütüncül mereolojik yapısına dair öğretilerine ikna edici bir açıklama sağlayamadığını savunuyorum. Bunun yerine, *öncelik monizminin* bu kalıcı sorunu yeniden değerlendirmemize ve geleneksel kabulü sorgulayarak cevher ve kip kavramlarını güç [*potentia*] terimleriyle yeniden inşa etmemize olanak tanıyan bir çerçeve sağladığını savunuyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ontoloji, Mereoloji, Yakın Çağ Felsefesi, Orta Çağ Felsefesi, Spinoza

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E	Ethics (*Ethica*)
Ep.	Spinoza's Letters (*Epistole*)
PPC	Descartes' Principles of Philosophy (*Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae*)
CM	Appendix containing Metaphysical Thoughts (*Cogitata Metaphysica*)
KV	Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being (*Korte Verhandeling van God de Mensch en deszelfs Welstand*)
TdIE	Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect (*Tractatus de lntellectus Emendatione*)
TP	Political Treatise (*Tractatus Politicus*)
TTP	Theological-Political Treatise (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*)
CGLH	Hebrew Grammar (*Compendium grammatices Linguae Hebraeae*)

I use the following abbreviations pertaining to Spinoza's writings in this thesis: I refer to passages from the *Ethics* by means of the following abbreviations: a: axiom, c: corollary, d: definition (when it appears immediately on the right side of E), d: demonstration (in all other cases) E: *Ethics*, e: explanation, l: lemma, p: proposition, s: scholium, app: appendix, pref: preface. The Arabic number to the right of E indicates the part of the *Ethics*, such as "E1a3", which stands for the third axiom of part 1. References to Spinoza's other texts are abbreviated as follows: CM I.i = *Metaphysical Thoughts* Part I, ch. i; KV I.i. 1 = *Short Treatise*, Part I, ch. i, sec. 1; TdIE, 1 = *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, sec. 1.

Passages from Plato's texts are referred to by the page number of the Stephanus edition.

Passages from Aristotle's texts are referred to by means of Bekker numbering.

Passages from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* are referred to with the abbreviation ST followed by a Latin number indicating the part number, Q followed by an Arabic number indicating the question number, and A followed by an Arabic number indicating the article number. For example, 'ST II.I, Q2, A3,' meaning First Part of the Second Part, Question 2, Article 3.

Passages from Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* are referred to with the abbreviations Inf., Purg., and Par. meaning 'Inferno,' 'Purgatorio,' and 'Paradiso' respectively, followed by the Canto and line numbers. For example, 'Inf. 18.8-9,' meaning Inferno, Canto 18, lines 8-9.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dualism in ontology commonly refers to 'substance dualism,' the position that defends there are two ontologically independent substances, typically mind and body. Here, I define another kind of dualism, which can be called 'category dualism' or 'substance-property dualism,' that pertains to the internal structure of a substance regardless of the number of substances there are (i.e., real or numerical distinction). Substance-property dualism construes two ontological categories, one of which is the more ontologically fundamental substance, *res*, subject, or object and other more superficial ones that inhere in, are predicated of, or ontologically depend on the former, traditionally coined as accidents, modes, or more neutrally, properties. The idiosyncrasy of substance-property dualism is denying a part-whole structure of the relation between substance and properties, thus conceiving an asymmetric dependence relation of the latter on the former in a layered structure. While substance dualism admits two ontologically independent categories, substance-property dualism takes substance and properties as two ontological categories in an asymmetric dependence relation of the latter on the former, which amounts to a layered ontology, where substance is the ground layer upon which the less fundamental layers of properties build. As such, substance-property dualism might be substance- (e.g., in my view, mistaken reading of Spinoza as a substance monist who is a category dualist taking modes as properties of the one substance or God) and genus monist (viz., that one higher category of being applies to both substance and properties such as Scotist real accidents or Suárezian, Cartesian, and Spinozist modes) while being a category pluralist at the same time.

Substance-property dualism at least goes back to Aristotelianism, which defines a four-category ontology through the orthogonal distinctions of *being in* or *inherence*

and *being said of* or *predication* in the *Categories*, where the former defines ontological independence and dependence, whereas the latter defines particularity and universality.[1] These distinctions lead to a four-category ontology (i.e., *substantial particulars* or *primary substance*, *substantial universals* or *secondary substance*, *accidental particulars*, and *accidental universals*) in Aristotelianism. However, these can be reduced to two categories in effect: substantial particulars or primary substances and others that either ontologically depend on or predicated of them. Substantial universals or secondary substances do not ontologically depend on their primary counterparts as they do not inhere in them, although it is controversial whether they are ontologically *on a par* with them since Aristotle describe them as secondary substances. The following image is a layered ontology in which substance, as the most fundamental layer, stands still beneath more superficial layers aligning from substantial universals to accidental particulars.

All through his career, Spinoza endorses substance and modes as the two categories of his ontology. This can be traced back to an early letter (October 1661) to Henry Oldenburg, where he remarks that "[e]xcept for Substances and Accidents, nothing exists in reality"[2] or the *Cogitata Metaphysica* that "there is nothing in Nature but substances and their modes."[3] In the *Ethics*, he defines substance as "what is in itself and is conceived through itself,"[4] mode as "that which is in another through which it is also conceived,"[5] asserts in E1a1 that "whatever is, is either in itself or in another," and in E1p15d explicitly concludes that "except for substances and modes there is nothing." Therefore, it is safe to say that whatever exists is either a substance or a mode for Spinoza. However, how to best interpret the relationship between these two categories, which he stipulates in terms of 'being in' and 'being conceived through,' has been an enduring problem in Spinoza scholarship.

[1] 1a16-1b10. In this thesis, I will refer to the scholastic reception of Aristotelianism, as it was the kind of Aristotelianism with which Spinoza was acquainted and discussed. Although I am aware of and sympathetic to the readings which challenge the scholastic reading, it exceeds the scope of this thesis to discuss them here.
[2] More on Spinoza's terminological transition from 'accidents' to 'modes' in Chapter 3.
[3] CM II.i I/249/29
[4] E1d3
[5] E1d5

Spinoza is customarily classified as a 'substance monist,' a coinage, which accounts for the fact that he asserts that there is but one substance and his originality against the scholastic Aristotelian plurality and Cartesian duality of substances.[6] However, this classification is concerned with the numerical distinction of substances while in the sense I describe 'substance-property dualism,' he is almost universally considered a dualist. Accordingly, substance is the most fundamental layer, and the modes are its properties for Spinoza. As Spinoza straightforwardly denies universals of any ontological status and describes modes as particulars,[7] the categories are reduced to two (i.e., substance and particular properties), and his ontology is traditionally taken as a two-category or dualist substance-property ontology, which rules out a mereological structure of the relationship between the two in the Aristotelian layered ontology model. The relationship between the two categories, then, is simply a subject-property relation spelled out in numerous ways. Pierre Bayle, who is one of the early commentators of Spinoza, takes it as a predication relation.[8] Denying both the inherence and predication relations between substance and modes, Edwin Curley takes them as two ontologically independent categories and the relation thereof as causation,[9] while Charles Jarrett,[10] John Carriero,[11] and Martin Lin[12] take inherence as the sole relationship between these two categories, concluding that modes simply ontologically depend on substance. As a self-described proponent of the strong

[6] E1p14: "Except God, no substance can be or be conceived." For an opposing view against the classification of Spinoza as a monist, see Pierre Macherey, "Spinoza est-il moniste?," in *Spinoza: Puissance et Ontologie*, eds. Revault d'Allones and H. Rizk (Paris: Kimé, 1994), 39–53; Mogens Lærke, "Spinoza's Monism? What Monism?," in *Spinoza on Monism*, ed. Philip Goff (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 244-262.

[7] E1app (II/83); E2p40s1; E4pref (II/208); CM I.i/235/30-31; CM I/263/5; KV I.x/49; TdIE, 99/2/36.19. Cf. Samuel Newlands, "Spinoza on Universals," in *The Problem of Universals in early modern Philosophy*, ed. Stefano Di Bella and Tad M. Schmaltz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 62-87 and Karolina Hübner, "Spinoza on Universals," in *A Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Hoboken: Wiley, 2021): 204-214. For an opposing view see Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Hackett Publishing, 1984), 39-40.

[8] Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique par Mr. Pierre Bayle* (Compagnie des Libraires, 1734).

[9] Edwin Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's "Ethics"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[10] Charles Jarrett, "The Concept of Substance and Mode in Spinoza," *Philosophia* 7 (March 1977): 83–105.

[11] John P. Carriero, "On the Relationship between Mode and Substance in Spinoza's Metaphysics," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 33, no. 2 (April 1995): 245-273.

[12] Martin Lin, "Substance, Attribute, and Mode in Spinoza," *Philosophy Compass* 1, no. 2 (March 2006): 144-153.

traditional understanding of Spinozistic substance and modes, Yitzhak Melamed advocates that the latter does not only inhere in the former in terms of the Aristotelian ontological dependence relationship between substance and accidents, which is explicated as 'being in but not being a part of,' but also are predicated of it in the sense of scholastic Aristotelian conception of *propria* as 'necessarily following from its essence while not constituting its essence itself.'[13] Against these two contesting camps, Michael Della Rocca, in arguably the most innovative, influential, and controversial reading of Spinoza since Curley, defends the view that the ontological dependence implicated by the 'being in' relation is one and the same as the causal dependence relation, both of which are ultimately nothing but conceptual dependence.[14] Even though Della Rocca's interpretive thesis is that instead of ontological dependence conception is the most fundamental relation between substance and modes, his overall framework is still within a dualist layered ontology leaning towards idealism, in which the attribute of Thought is prioritized over Extension.[15] Consequently, the dualist reading agrees that (i) substance is ontologically (or conceptually) independent, (ii) modes are ontologically (or conceptually) dependent on substance, and (iii) there is no mereological structure to the relation between substance and modes.

On the continental philosophy front, a similar yet much more politically oriented return to Spinoza was taking place with Martial Gueroult's original studies and Louis Althusser's rereading of Marxist social theory through Spinozist philosophy in the late 1960s and 1970s. Deleuze's influential but controversial reading of Spinoza followed his professor Gueroult's track to some extent. Nevertheless, although some of his interpretations have been dismissed as corrupting Spinoza's philosophy for the sake of promoting his own, he has made important contributions to Spinoza scholarship, which has been recognized by both continental and analytic scholars. However, both Gueroult and Deleuze was following the traditional understanding in taking the inherence relation between substance and modes as an ontological dependence relation despite their otherwise radical approaches. Negri, in a series of outstanding works on

[13] Yitzhak Y. Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[14] Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 58-69.
[15] Cf. Samuel Newlands, "More Recent Idealist Readings of Spinoza," *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 2 (February 2011), 114-117.

Spinoza which spread over four decades from 1980s to 2020, was the only interpreter who hinted at a mereological relationship between Spinoza's substance and modes. Nevertheless, such a reading, which takes this thesis seriously, has been on the rise within contemporary Spinoza scholarship conducted outside of English-speaking academia with scholars such as François Zourabichvili, Sophie Laveran in French, and Dominik Perler in German.

In this thesis, I attempt to reject the dualist reading that Spinoza's ontology is composed of a substance as the fundamental layer that stands still beneath other changing layers that are modes and establish a one-categorical holistic mereological understanding of the relation between the two, where the former is composed of the latter in a holistic mereology. Agreeing with the interpretive theses (i) and (ii), I argue that (iii), which ensures the traditional dualist reading of Spinoza's ontology, does not afford a compelling account of Spinoza's doctrines regarding one-category hierarchical being, bare substratum, and immanent causation, as well as his descriptions of the holistic mereological structure of the substance-mode relation. Instead, I argue that *priority monism*, as has been explicated by Jonathan Schaffer,[16] provides us with a framework to challenge the traditional reception and reconsider this enduring problem. I further trace the philosophical pedigree of Spinoza's substance mode relationship and demonstrate that even though none of these are unprecedented ideas having their lineage in scholastic and Modern thought, Spinoza brings together these apparently conflicting currents to a junction in a novel manner. Although similar approaches to the reading I propose here can be found in the literature, this thesis provides three novel arguments against the dualist reading and a novel approach to how the priority monistic rendering can fit into Spinoza's various doctrines.

An Outline of the Chapters

The thesis is comprised of two main chapters. In the first chapter after introduction, I give a historical background of the ontology of substance and its transition from the

[16] Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," *Philosophical Review* 119, no. 1 (2010): 31-76. Also see Jonathan Schaffer, "On What Grounds What," in *Metametaphysics*, eds. David J. Chalmers, David Manley and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 347-383.

dualist scholastic Aristotelian substance-accident relation to that of substance-mode relation in Cartesian philosophy while discussing the reasons behind this transition. I attempt to accomplish two objectives here: to demonstrate what kind of world category dualism constructs and what is philosophically at stake in comparison to Spinozist ontology, which I interpret as a full-fledged monism; and to develop the concepts that will be useful for understanding Spinoza's vocabulary and conceptual environment. I track the development of the conception of properties from accidents as dependent but diminished beings (viz., two distinct genera of being applied to substance and properties) to real accidents as ontologically independent categories possessing the same kind of being with substances, and finally to modes as real and ontologically dependent categories. I also defend the view that it was an endeavor to simplify the four-category to a one-category ontology by denying the ontological status of universals through nominalism, maintaining genus monism of being that applies to both categories and substance monism by holding one independent category.

For this purpose, in the first section, I first give an overview of ontology and what it consists of to lay the ground for the examination coming along. I recognize being or existence along with ontological independence/dependence or priority/posteriority relations as the sole tools of the ontologist's arsenal. Then, in the second subsection, I move on to a general account of the conception of substance and discuss the historical vocabulary for the concept. In the third subsection, I introduce the orthogonal distinction between two ancient problems addressed or two functions assumed by this conception that I coin the *ontological* and *logical problems/functions*. Despite the novel coinage, the idea behind them is nothing beyond the Aristotelian formulation of inherence and predication. In the fourth subsection, I discuss the ontology of mereology through Jonathan Schaffer's framework in terms of the existence of and dependence relations among parts and wholes. Following these preliminary stipulations, in the final subsection, I lay out the 5 archetypal conceptions of substance.

In the second section, I analyze Aristotle's ontological conceptions regarding substance, accidents, matter, form, and the relationship among them. The Aristotelian model of ontology had been the prevalent paradigm for understanding the nature of being for more than three centuries before Spinoza. Therefore, understanding the

former will help us compare it to the latter and see how they differ and how the latter solves the problems brought about by the former. To understand Aristotelian ontology, I will first explicate his conception of substance and the criteria he provides for it in the *Categories*. Next, I will analyze the notions of matter and form from the *Metaphysics* and *Physics*; and finally, I will wrap up the concepts of essence, accidents, and properties from the *Topics* as well as other sources.

In the third section, I scrutinize Thomas Aquinas's ontology, which employs the Aristotelian terminology such as substance, accidents, matter, and form. Although his terminology is primarily borrowed from Aristotle's works, he not only reconciles the Aristotelian ontological concepts with Christian theology as well as Neoplatonist doctrines but also covers their deficits, and inconsistencies and brings them to their logical consequences. The Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions regarding substance, essence, accidents, matter, form, and emanationism were reinterpreted by Aquinas through the theological doctrines concerning the divine trinity, divine grace, divine providence, divine will, creationism, and human dignity. Thomist doctrines have been widely considered to be the culmination of scholastic philosophy and reaffirmed by the Catholic Church over centuries. Therefore, struggling with Thomist or scholastic philosophy, in general, meant not only discussing with a philosophical current, but a very concrete prevalent power, whose doctrines are not limited to Catholicism, but, even though with significant variations, can be extended to the whole Abrahamic paradigm of the image of the world. In order to understand Spinozist conceptions of God, nature, substance and modality, then, it will be important to understand this paradigm of the image of the, against which he expounds these concepts.

In the fourth section, I survey the ontological territory on which Dante Alighieri constructs his *Divine Comedy* and *The Convivio*. His works provide quite imaginative instantiations of his ontological depictions and therefore understanding them can give us a vivid picture of the world described by Christian philosophers from Augustine to Aquinas as well as Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna and Averroes, all of whose intersection might be said to be Aristotle. To understand Dante's ontological conceptions, I will first analyze his description of the Empyrean, which I will argue to assume the ontological function of substance as the primary being. Next, I will examine his hylomorphism and his understanding of the Trinitarian Person, which I

will argue to employ the logical function of substance as accounting for the unity of individual things.

In the fifth section, I delve into Duns Scotus' arguments against the Thomist conception of prime matter and the diminished existence of accidents. Against these, he develops the idea of an ontologically independent matter and real accidents, both of which are concepts that are going to be remarkably important in early modern thought.

In the sixth section, I explore Francisco Suárez's conception of modal distinction and modes. I discuss how this novel conception distinguishes from accidents and real accidents, which are its counterparts declining in popularity during early modern thought. I give an account of these concepts in which sense they were borrowed and integrated as an essential part of Descartes' and Spinoza's ontological systems.

In the seventh section, I discuss Descartes' conception of substance and the contributions he makes to it through the idea of modification. I first sketch the two distinct stipulations Descartes gives for substance as God and substance as extension and mind. Then, I look into the conception of modification in relation to this understanding of substance. I argue that Descartes' introduction of modification is a continuation of the transition from the multi-category Thomist ontology that ensues from the four-category scholastic Aristotelian ontology wedded with Catholic doctrines. In that regard, Cartesian ontology is an episode to the trend of simplifying the scholastic ontology which was undertaken by Jesuit philosophers in the early modern period, that is characterized by eliminating universals from the ontological realm and conceiving accidents, or now, modes, as immanent to the substance.

In the next chapter, I defend the one-category holistic mereological reading of the relation between Spinoza's substance and modes against the customary dualist reading.

In the first section, I outline the traditional two-category or substance-property dualist reading of Spinoza's ontology. I first sketch the scholastic Aristotelian conceptions of inherence and predication along with the four-category ontology which ensues from these conceptions. Then, I outline how the traditional Spinoza scholarship takes these

conceptions of inherence and predication for Spinoza and read a two-category ontology of subject and properties into his philosophy through them.

In the second section, I argue against the dualist reading by objecting that the conceptions of substance and modes it entails contradict Spinoza's doctrines regarding hierarchical one-category being, bare substratum, and immanent causation along with his descriptions of the holistic mereological structure of the substance-mode relation.

In the third section, I argue for a one-category holistic mereological or priority monistic reading of the substance-mode relation for Spinoza. I discuss the rejection of the mereological structure of the relationship between substance and modes while he admits its plausibility for the relationship between finite and infinite modes. Instead, I argue that Spinoza rules out a mechanical mereological structure or *pluralism* of the substance-mode relationship, but not a one-category holistic mereological structure or priority monism. I show that Spinoza's descriptions of the holistic mereological structure, in fact, applies to the very relationship between substance and modes and this reading aligns better with his doctrines regarding hierarchical one-category being, bare substratum, and immanent causation along with his descriptions of the holistic mereological structure of the substance-mode relation.

CHAPTER 2

ONTOLOGY AND SUBSTANCE

In this part, I discuss the fundamental problems and concepts of ontology and the fundamental conceptions of substance before tracing the scholastic and Cartesian background of Spinoza's ontology and conception of substance. For this purpose, I first give an overview of what problems and concepts ontology fundamentally consists of and how the concept of substance follows from addressing these problems through fundamental ontological concepts, and in what ways goes beyond those. In the coming sections, I give an exposition of the Aristotelian and Thomistic ontologies, particularly with respect to their conceptions of inherence, predication, substance, accidence, essence, matter, and form. Then, I attempt to lay bare the instantiations of these conceptions in the *Divine Comedy*, through Dante's ontological presumptions regarding substance, the Empyrean, matter, form and the Trinitarian Person. Finally, I discuss the transition from substance-accidence relation to substance-modality relation in early modern Scholasticism and Descartes.

2.1. Fundamental Ontology & Preliminary Conceptions of Substance

Although it is notoriously difficult to give a definition of ontology, I would like to start with a discussion regarding why I am using this term instead of the semantically related term 'metaphysics.' In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle defines the subject matter of metaphysics as "being as such" and "first causes." However, there are at least two problems with this definition. First, not every contemporary metaphysics admit of first causes, and second, metaphysics has come to denote more than the discipline which studies being as such. As Wolff once noted "[i]n metaphysics, ontology or first philosophy comes first, general cosmology is second, psychology is third, and natural

theology is last."[17] Accordingly, ontology was viewed as one part of metaphysics. This is controversial though. Peter van Inwagen *et. al.* question whether this maneuver amounts to anything beyond mere linguistic manipulation.[18] Nevertheless, I will stick to the term 'ontology' rather than 'metaphysics' in order to avoid the confusions that come with the latter. In the first section, I will discuss the fundamental problems and notions of ontology to prepare the ground to understand the concept of substance.

Howard Robinson observes that unlike most other philosophical concepts, which are borrowed from ordinary language, 'substance' is among the few essentially philosophical terms of art.[19] However, this Latin term was used to cover three Greek terms (*Ousia, Hypokeimenon, Hypostasis*), each with different connotations, which ended up in a number of confusions in the history of philosophy. Moreover, the ontological presupposition implied in the term, which literally means 'that which stands beneath,' exacerbates these confusions, let alone be a remedy.

So, in order to lay bare the context in which Spinoza was using this term and to discern the character of the Spinozist conception of substance, I am going to analyze and distinguish the layers of this complex concept. Before heading into Spinoza's conception of substance, I give a historical analysis of the concept of substance in order to discern different meanings connotated to it and discuss which of these meanings comply with Spinoza's characterization of substance.

To accomplish this, I will first give a brief account of the concept of substance in the framework of ontology. Secondly, I will discuss the terms that have been covered by substance and expound the two meanings that have been in play through these terms. Finally, I will attempt to explore these findings in the history of philosophy through Aristotle to Descartes.

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[17] Christian Wolff, *Preliminary Discourse* #99, trans. Richard J. Blackwell (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963): 50-51.
[18] Peter van Inwagen, Meghan Sullivan, and Sara Bernstein "Metaphysics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2023 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/metaphysics.
[19] Howard Robinson "Substance," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/substance/>.

2.1.1. Fundamental Ontology

The first and foremost predicate of ontology is obviously 'being' or 'existence." Ontology might well be defined as the discipline that studies of what and how 'being' or 'existence' can be predicated. A simple predication of 'being,' however, would end up in a *flat* ontology, which was Quine's project in his "On What There Is," where he attempts to give a method of saying what exists.[20] Jonathan Schaffer sums up the Quinean task as "to say what exists" and the Quinean method as "to extract existence commitments from our best theory."[21] Eventually, for the Quinean, the ontological structure is *flat* as the task is merely to solve whether a given entity is in the set of existence *E* or not.[22]

Despite this dominant Quinean view of ontology in contemporary analytic philosophy, there is another traditional predicate of ontology, which is grounding, dependence, fundamentality, or priority. Predicating such relations to entities goes back to Aristotle as in the *Categories*, he defines ontological independence and dependence through the concept of being in or inherence,[23] and starts the *Metaphysics* by inquiring what are prior and posterior in being,[24] before concluding that form (*morphê* or *eidos*) is the most fundamental and independent being on which matter (*hulê*) depends, as I will be discussing in a bit. Consequently, the Aristotelian ontological framework, which works with ontological dependence relations, has an *ordered* topology, unlike the flat ontology, which does not admit such relations.[25] Materialism, for instance, assumes our sensations ontologically depend on a material brain, while idealism defends that some immaterial mind is the fundamental being which makes possible our sensations that apparently pertain to some material world. Consequently, predicating being (or existence) and independence/dependence (or priority/posteriority) are the two tools of ontologist's arsenal.

[20] Willard Van Orman Quine, "On What There Is," *The Review of Metaphysics* 2, no. 5 (September 1948): 21-38.
[21] Jonathan Schaffer, "On What Grounds What," in *Metametaphysics*, eds. David J. Chalmers, David Manley and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 348.
[22] Schaffer, "On What Grounds What," 354.
[23] 1a16-1b10; 2b6–7
[24] 1005a14 – 17
[25] Schaffer, "On What Grounds What," 350-356.

Along with these two tools, though, there is the idea of a hierarchy of being, which takes being to come in degrees. It is almost always related to ontological dependence as its proponents render beings that depend for their existence on others as lesser than others that exist independently. The idea has been in circulation at least since Plato, who seems to speak of such an order of beings.[26] Aristotle's discussion that existence does not apply to everything in the same sense seems to endorse this view as well.[27] This was the popular view among Neoplatonism up to the 13th-century high scholasticism until Duns Scotus' challenges advocating the univocity of being. Spinoza seems to posit a hierarchy of being as he commonly speaks of degrees of being, reality, or perfection. Nonetheless, as will become clearer in due course of this work, in terms of the univocity of being, I will offer a Scotist reading of Spinoza as well as argue that ontological dependence does not necessarily imply the idea of diminished beings or that the latter has a genuine ontological meaning and will thus stick to the two fundamental ontological tools of being and independence/dependence.

2.1.2. The Terminology for Substance

The principal term Aristotle uses for substance is '*ousia.'* D. J. O'Connor notes that this word was used to mean "property" in the sense of possession in earlier Greek writers as well as a synonym for *physis*: "a term that can mean either the origin of a thing, its natural constitution or structure, the stuff of which things are made, or a natural kind or species."[28] The second term that is used interchangeably with *ousia* by Aristotle is '*hypokeimenon'* ("that which underlies something"), which can be said to be reflected in the Latin term '*substratum*' ("an underlying layer"). The final Greek term, which occurred particularly in later Greek and principally in the Christian theologians' discussions about the real nature of Christ was '*hypostasis,'* which meant "standing under" and of which the Latin word '*substantia*' is a literal translation.[29]

[26] *Republic: Book VII*, 507b–520a
[27] *Meteorology* 389b31–390a19; *De anima* 412b20–22; *Metaphysics* 1035b22–25
[28] Daniel John O'Connor, "Substance and Attributes," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: MacMillan, 1967): 295.
[29] O'Connor, "Substance and Attributes."

2.1.3. Two Functions of the Concept of Substance

Robinson acknowledges that two paradigmatic functions assumed, or two kinds of problems addressed by the conceptions of substance through the history of philosophy can be distinguished.[30] The first of these is the more generic function of the primary or independent being; some being which is predicated of independent existence in contrast to others which are dependent on it, as I have discussed in the previous subsections.[31] Most philosophical systems admit some substance in this sense unless they are mere inventories of what there is, as in the Quinean flat ontology, or as Robinson indicates, are exceptions, such as logical positivism or pragmatism, which treat ontology as a matter of convention, although it might be disputed that sense data for the former and praxis for the latter are the ontologically fundamental categories in their systems. The second function, on the other hand, is the more specific function of defining a particular kind of primary being, which is related to the intuitive notion of individual things or objects of our ordinary experience. I find this distinction accurate not only because it is recognized by other scholars such as Jonathan Rée[32] or O'Connor[33] but also as it clearly applies not only to the Aristotelian and scholastic conceptions of substance as the subject of being said of or predication but also to the modern conceptions of substance from Hume[34] and Kant[35] to first-order logic.

In its secondary sense, then, conceptions of substance account for what may be called the *logical problem* of reconciling the identity and difference between individual

[30] Robinson, "Substance."
[31] See 2.1.1
[32] Jonathan Rée, "Substance," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy*, eds. Jonathan Rée and J. O. Urmson (New York: Routledge, 2005): 373.
[33] O'Connor, "Substance and Attributes."
[34] "When we gradually follow an object in its successive changes, the smooth progress of the thought makes us ascribe an identity to the succession…When we compare its situation after a considerable change the progress of the thought is broken; and consequently we are presented with the idea of diversity: In order to reconcile which contradictions, the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a *substance, or original and first matter*." David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Peter Harold Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press): 220.
[35] "[…] something that could exist as a subject but never as a mere predicate […]" (B 149), "[…] if one leaves out the sensible determination of persistence, substance would signify nothing more than a something that can
be thought as a subject (without being a predicate of something else)." (B 186), "[…] something can exist only as subject, not as mere determination of other things, i.e., can be substance […]" (B 288). Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason: The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, trans. and eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

things or their properties. The function of the concept of substance in the context of this problem is to answer the question of how the difference in the plurality of our sensations is identified as singular objects in our ordinary experience and how these singular things are identified as universals in our understanding so that the difference of plurality is identified in singularity, singularity in universality and universality under the wider category of substantiality thus. It can be said that, in this sense, the concept of substance functions as logically grounding our pre-ontological convictions concerning singularity and universality. In other words, it is concerned with the logic of things that are given in and that make up the inventory of our ordinary experience. I call this the logical problem because even though it can be solved ontologically, it is not inherently an ontological problem.

Aristotle's conception of substance's capacity of *being said of* or *predication* in the *Categories* or Kant's formulation of substance as a category of the understanding in the *Critique of Pure Reason* may be regarded as accounts for addressing this logical problem. First-order or predicate logic may be said to be the ultimate formalization of such a pre-ontological apprehension of the world. Accordingly, when Aristotle denominates the singular object as the primary substance, which is the ultimate subject of predication while calling all the essential universals predicated to it as secondary substances, what he is doing is logically accounting for our pre-ontological presumptions concerning singularity and universality. In other words, such a conception of knowledge is a logically necessary condition of our pre-ontological conception of a world made up of singular things, which exist *per se*. In a similar vein, by regarding substance as a transcendental category of understanding, Kant formalizes while canonizing it as the universal and necessary condition of the identity of singular objects of our ordinary experience. Substance in this logical sense, is the condition of possibility of a certain form of logic, that is the subject-predicate logic. This logic presupposes substance as the subject, which is predicable of properties, without itself being a predicate.

Two further subproblems can be discerned under this logical problem of identity and difference: synchronic and diachronic identity. The first is concerned with the atemporal identity of things; whereas the second is concerned with the temporal identity of things. That is to say, the former is concerned with the identity and

difference of things in a presupposed and abstracted de-temporalized, non-dimensional, infinitesimal point of time; while the latter with the identity and difference of things through time, or through change.

The more fundamental function of substance, on the other hand, is to address what would be called the *ontological problem*, or the problem of what grounds what. The function of substance in this context is to specify the most fundamental being or beings. That is to say, substance, in this sense, denominates what exists in its own right. The relation of these most fundamental beings to the rest of existence can be conceptualized in diverse manners and the discussion concerning the ontological problem can be traced as back as to the beginning of philosophy with Thales, who proposed water as the *arche* of being. With him and other arche philosophers we can see the primeval manner of addressing this problem through the idea of a first principle or primordial being as the origin or building block of all existence in this world. Water for Thales, *apeiron* for Anaximander, fire for Anaximenes, or atom for the atomists are substances in this sense.

Aristotle addresses the ontological problem both in the *Categories* and *Metaphysics Z*. Inherence, or "being in but not being a part of something,"[36] denotes the ontological function of substance and the distinction between it and accidents. He regards the individuals in the former and form (*morphê* or *eidos*) in the latter as the appropriate candidate for the primary being.[37] Accordingly, individuals or forms are what exist independently, whereas qualities or relations can exist in or through them. So, with Aristotle we can distinguish another manner of conceptualizing substance in the second sense as something which underlays or grounds and which can be predicated of other types of existence such as qualities or relations.

[36] *Categories* 1a20

[37] It should be noted here that whether there is a primary being, or whether being can be univocally applied for Aristotle is controversial as Joseph Owens points out. I will avoid this discussion as it is beyond our focus here. Nonetheless, I would like to point out that following Aristotle's definition of substance as what exists in its own right in the *Categories*, as I will be expounding in the following part, I do believe, it is possible to speak of it as an ontologically primary being for him, although it may not be the sole being in this sense. Joseph Owens, "Is There Any Ontology in Aristotle?" in *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review / Revue canadienne de philosophie* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 697-708.

2.1.4. Mereology

Another major problem ontology accounts for is the relations of parts to whole and of parts to parts within a whole. Although mereology has been recognized as an independent discipline in the 20th century, particularly since Leśniewski coined the term in his *Foundations of the General Theory of Sets*[38] of 1916 and *Foundations of Mathematics* of 1927–1931,[39] historically, it has been deeply entangled with ontological problems. Mereology denotes not only a discipline that studies the "formal features of the relation of parthood, and about identity and existence conditions for wholes"[40] regardless of their ontological statuses (i.e., whether they exist or not or which depends on the other), but also a theory, which has come to be called Classical Extensional Mereology developed by logicians and philosophers such as Leśniewski, Tarski, and Goodman, that claims (a) parthood is transitive; (b) given some things, there is at most one thing composed by them; (c) given some things, no matter how heterogeneous and disparate they are, there is at least one thing composed by them.[41]

Mereology in the sense of a discipline and theory is beyond the scope of this study, though. From the ontological scope, mereology is concerned with whether parts and wholes actually exist, which is independent, and which depends on the other. This discussion can at least be traced back to the ancient atomists, who admitted the existence of both parts and wholes while taking the latter ontologically dependent on the former. Parmenides, on the other hand, according to Schaffer's interpretation, while agreeing with atomists that both parts and wholes exist, took the former to be ontologically dependent on the latter.[42] However, in his recent book, *The Parmenidean Ascent*, Michael Della Rocca refuses this view, arguing that Parmenides rejects any and all distinctions amounting to a monism which he calls *strict monism*, but more on this in a bit.[43]

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[38] Stanisław Leśniewski, "Foundations of the General Theory of Sets" in *Stanislaw Lesniewski: Collected Works Volume I*, eds. Stanisław J. Surma, Jan T. J. Srzednicki, D. I. Barnett, V. Frederick Rickey, trans. D. I. Barnett (1916; repr. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992): 129-174.
[39] Stanisław Leśniewski, "Foundations of Mathematics" in *Stanislaw Lesniewski: Collected Works Volume I*, eds. Stanisław J. Surma, Jan T. J. Srzednicki, D. I. Barnett, V. Frederick Rickey, trans. D. I. Barnett
[40] Giorgio Lando, *Mereology: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic), 2.
[41] Lando, *Mereology: A Philosophical Introduction*, 1.
[42] Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," 32, 66.
[43] Michael Della Rocca, *The Parmenidean Ascent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1-3.

Even though Parmenides denied any mereological structure of being, at least since Aristotle, there is a venerable tradition which holds that the whole-part relationship can be conceived in a way in which the whole is prior and indivisible to its parts. As the parts of living organisms are inseparably dependent on the whole body, they are in no sense parts when separated from the whole organism, according to Aristotle.[44] The application of the idea of the dependence of parts on wholes can be found throughout Western philosophy, such as Aquinas' depiction of *totum potentiale*,[45] as well as non-Western philosophies, such as Chinese Buddhist Fazang's "The Rafter Dialogue"[46] or "Essay on the Golden Lion."[47]

Husserl was one of the first to attempt a thorough formulation of a theory of mereology, although his conceptions are entangled with the ontologically relevant notion of dependence when he distinguishes between independent parts (*pieces*) and dependent parts (*moments*).[48] The first kind of these conceptions denotes separable entities that have attributes extrinsic to their wholes, while the second type denotes inseparable entities that only have attributes intrinsic to their wholes and, therefore, are undetachable.

Schaffer has lately elaborated on the possible ontological stances towards mereology and advocated the view that the whole is prior to and indivisible into its parts in a series of influential papers. In his famous "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," he describes *priority monism* as the doctrine that regards the whole as the fundamental being as it is prior to its parts which are dependent on it, while *pluralism* considers the parts as fundamental, their whole being dependent on and posterior to them.[49] Schaffer breaks

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[44] *Meteorology* 389b25-390b2, *On the Soul* 412b10-24, *Parts of Animals* 641a17-641a32, *Generation of Animals* 734b22-28 and 735a5-9, *Metaphysics* 1034b20-1034b33, 1035b4-1036a13 and 1041a33-1042a2. It is a tension in Aristotle scholarship whether this understanding applies to his metaphysics or not, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[45] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.77, art.1, corp, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (New Advent, 2008). https://www.newadvent.org/summa.

[46] Fazang, "The Rafter Dialogue," in *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han Dynasty to the 20th Century*, trans. David Elstein, eds. Justin Tiwald and Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2014): 80-86

[47] Fazang, "Essay on the Golden Lion," in *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy*, 86-91.

[48] Edmund Husserl, "On the Theory of Wholes and Parts," in *Logical Investigations, Volume 2*, trans. John N. Findlay (1900; repr., New York: Routledge, 2001), 3-47. Also see Achille Varzi, "Mereology," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/mereology.

[49] Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," 31.

down priority monism into two assumptions: (i) that there is a whole and it has parts (i.e., that the whole has a mereological structure); (iia) that the whole of the world is ontologically prior to its parts. While pluralism agrees with the first assumption, it takes (iib) the parts to be ontologically prior to their whole. It is possible to dispute the first assumption, too, though. *Existence monism* is the doctrine that there is only one actual concrete object and therefore no parts.[50] Della Rocca, however, argues that there is a stricter monism than *existence monism* as articulated by Schaffer, which he calls *strict monism*. According to Della Rocca, as put forth by Parmenides, *strict monism* rejects distinctions of all sorts.[51]

Some points about terminology. I will use the labels *holistic/organic mereology* and *mechanical mereology* interchangeably with Schaffer's terminology of "priority monism" and "pluralism"[52] to avoid the connotations of monism to acosmism and pluralism to atheism even though Schaffer clearly distinguishes them through his explication of nihilism and organicism.[53] To distinguish the parthood conceptions in these two distinct understandings of part-whole relations, I will borrow the terminology of *dependent parts* and *independent parts* from Edmund Husserl.[54] The former concept denotes parts that are ontologically posterior and dependent on their whole in holistic mereology, whereas the latter denotes parts that are ontologically prior and independent of their whole in mechanical mereology.

2.1.5. Archetypal Conceptions of Substance

With respect to these two functions of the concept of substance, we can speak of three archetypal conceptions of substance: logical, ontological, or both. That is to say, a

[50] Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," 66.
[51] Della Rocca, *The Parmenidean Ascent*, 3.
[52] Cf. Emanuele Costa, "Whole-Parts Relations in early modern Philosophy," in *Encyclopedia of early modern Philosophy and the Sciences*, eds. Dana Jalobeanu & Charles T. Wolfe (Springer, Cham, 2021), 2176-2182.
[53] Also, as Dominik Perler points out these are foreshadowed in Aquinas' definition of "integral whole" (*totum integrale / das integrale Ganze*) and "power whole" (*totum potentiale / das Vermögens-Ganze*). Dominik Perler, "Gibt es Individuen? Überlegungen zu Spinozas Monismus," Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie 63, no. 3: 497-517 (2015).
[54] Husserl, "On the Theory of Wholes and Parts."

conception of substance may assume only the logical function, the ontological function, or both of them.

In the Aristotelian corpus as well as scholastic philosophy which follows the former with respect to ontology to a great extent, the two functions are intertwined for the most part. The criteria Aristotle provides in the *Categories*, as I will be expounding in subsection 2.2, consists of both logical and ontological ones. So, it can be said that Aristotelian and scholastic conceptions of substance are the archetypal conceptions of a mixture of the logical and ontological conceptions of it, which account for both the identity of individual things and their existence.

Kant's conception of substance, pace the Aristotelian, can be said to be purely logical as it is nothing beyond the transcendentally necessary condition of our understanding of individual things. However, there is also the thing-in-itself, which supplies the matter of our experience according to Kant and which may arguably be called substance in the ontological sense of being existentially fundamental. Kantian concepts of forms of intuition along with categories of understanding may as well be called substantial in the same manner, just like Hume's concepts of impressions and ideas which make up the whole inventory of his world.

Still, there is a difference between Hume's ontological commitment to his concepts of impressions and ideas, and, say, the Cartesian commitment to God. The difference is that the Humean commitment is to beings which are foundational parts, through which the whole being (at least as we know it) is constructed; whereas the Cartesian commitment is to a being which causally makes the whole being possible while not having a part-whole relation thereof.

It can be seen that further distinctions pertaining to the characteristics of the relation between substance and accidents, properties or things may be made among these five preliminary conceptions of substance; *(i) inherence* accounts for the criteria of independent existence and the ontological conception of substance; traditional substance theories which succeed from the Aristotelian conception of being in or inherence that distinguishes substance and accidents, where the latter depends on the former ontologically. It defines a two-category ontology which has been more

formally stipulated as object-property ontology by John Heil more recently.[55] The characteristic of a two-category ontology or category dualism is that it admits the existence of and the ontological dependence relation between the two categories while rejecting a mereological relation thereof, as has been put in Aristotle's phrase 'being in but not being a part of.' The picture is a layered ontology, in which substance is the most fundamental layer and the one the others are built upon. Traditionally, in Neoplatonic or Thomistic systems, being is taken to be diminished as the layers move from deeper to more superficial levels. *(ii) Predication* is paradigmatized in the Aristotelian subject of predication defined through the relation of being said of or being predicated of, which distinguish universals and particulars. It is reflected in the Kantian substance, which he defines as "something that could exist as a subject but never as a mere predicate,"[56] and formalized in predicational or first-order logic, where a substance, a characterless entity solely capable of being predicated is pre-supposed. It can be said to be the characteristic relation in the logical conceptions of substance. The orthogonal distinction of inherence and predication make up the standard scholastic Aristotelian four-category ontology of *substantial particulars* or *primary substance*, *substantial universals* or *secondary substance*, *accidental particulars* and *accidental universals*. (*iii) Composition* theories admit the mereological relation between the two categories of part and whole along with both the existence of and the ontological dependence between them. Accordingly, parts are ontologically independent, thus substantial, while the whole is dependent, thus composed of them. Further distinctions can be made: *iii.i. material composition* – the primeval mode of the ontological conception of substance devised by the arche philosophers, water for Thales, atom for ancient atomists; *iii.ii. ideal composition* – impressions and ideas for Hume or tropes for modern trope theories.[57] *(iv) Causation* is another sort of ontological conception of substance that is slightly different from the inherence conception, in which something brings into something else into existence which is not necessarily ontologically dependent on it. Cartesian God, Kantian thing-in-itself, or

[55] John Heil, *From an Ontological Point of View* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). John Heil, *The Universe As We Find It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[56] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 149, B 186, B 288.
[57] Donald C. Williams, "On the Elements of Being: I," *The Review of Metaphysics* 7, no. 1 (1953): 3-18. Donald C. Williams, "On the Elements of Being: II," *The Review of Metaphysics* 7, no. 2 (1953): 171-192.

Curley's reading of the Spinozist substance may be said to be examples. And, finally, *(v) modification*, which came to be developed by early modern Jesuit scholastics such as Fonseca and Suárez's notion of modal distinction. Descartes adopted the concept to apply it to his mental and extended substances. It literally means the ways (*modi*) of being of a substance and regarded as a move from the substance-accident relation particularly in response to the disputes revolving around the universality and independence of accidents as well as the equivocity of their being with their substance. Accordingly, modes are particular properties that are completely dependent on their substance (pace Scotus), which cannot be conceived without it in a two-category ontology, yet, they possess the same kind of being with them (pace Aquinas). In that reading, modification is a variation of a dualist *(i) inherence* conception of substance. I will later argue that it can instead be read in a priority monistic, i.e., organic mereological conception of substance, which admits a mereological relation between a subject and its properties, while, pace *(iii) composition* conceptions, conceives the whole, which is the subject or substance in this case, to be ontologically prior to its parts, which are its properties or modes in this case.

2.2. Aristotle

In this subsection, I analyze Aristotle's ontological conceptions regarding substance, accidents, matter, form, and the relationship among them. The Aristotelian model of ontology had been the prevalent paradigm for understanding the nature of being for centuries before Spinoza. Therefore, understanding the former will help us compare it to the latter and see how they differ and how the latter solves the problems that the former brought about. To understand Aristotelian ontology, I will first explicate his conception of substance and the criteria he provides for it in the *Categories*. Next, I will analyze the notions of matter and form from the *Metaphysics* and *Physics*; and finally, I will wrap up the concepts of essence, accidents, and properties from the *Topics* as well as other sources.

One of the difficulties with speaking of Aristotle's ontology is due to the question whether there was any ontology for him at all. Owens[58] answered this question

[58] Owens, "Is There Any Ontology in Aristotle?"

negatively as Aristotle defined the science of being *qua* being as the science of the primary instance of being and that its particular instance was the divine being for him.[59] Accordingly, 'being' does not univocally apply to everything, and since a science requires a subject, which is univocally common to everything that falls under it, it seems to be impossible to have a universal science of being, or ontology. Yet, as I am going to show in the following subsections, by defining substance as what exists in its own right or the fundamental being, Aristotle pinpoints the subject of his ontology.

The two major sources of the Aristotelian conception of substance are the *Categories* and *Metaphysics Z*, in which Aristotle seemingly provides some distinct criteria of substance. Although he does not dwell upon all of these criteria, they all became profoundly influential in the literature to come. Following these criteria, Aristotle settles on two different conceptions of substance in these two works. In the former, substance turns out to be the individuals, which cannot inhere in or be predicated of anything else while being capable of underlying what can be predicated of or inhere in them. Expunged from what are predicated of or inhering in them, they can be thought to be bare entities which can be compared to contemporary theories of *bare particulars*.[60]

In the *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, after introducing the concepts of matter (*hulê*) and form (*morphê* or *eidos*) and discussing which one of them would qualify properly as the substance, Aristotle eventually identifies it with the latter. Accordingly, substance is identified with the very fundamental characteristics of an individual thing which makes that what it is. This seems to be in contradiction with some of the criteria of substance he provides in the *Categories*, such as predicability and underlying, as the matter seems to be the ultimate subject of predication and what underlies any form.[61]

Still, even in this early stage, two common approaches are conspicuous. First is that the individuality of particular things is preconceived as brute facts, and the purpose of the examination happens to be to give a logical and ontological account of these pre-

[59] *Metaphysics* 1003a33-bl7, 1005a33-b2.
[60] See Theodore Sider, "Bare Particulars," *Philosophical Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (2006): 387–97.
[61] *Metaphysics* 1029a7-1029a26.

ontologically conceived entities. Secondly, in accordance with the general understanding of substance I have depicted so far, there are two distinct problems the Aristotelian conception of substance accounts for. The first of these is what I have called the logical conception, i.e., substance as the intellectual condition of the unity of individual objects despite their differing and conflicting qualities and relations; and the second is what I will call the ontological conception, i.e., substance as what underlies the existence of objects and ensures both the existence and ontological unity of them.

2.2.1. Six Criteria of Substance of the *Categories*

Aristotle's project in the *Categories* is basically to give an exhaustive exposition of the classes of all entities (*ontos*) existing in the world (i.e., substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection). The relationship between these entities can be reduced to the two categories of substance and accidents, which are understood through the standard scholastic Aristotelian orthogonal pair of distinctions regarding 'being in' or inherence and 'being said of' or predication.[62] Briefly, the former distinction defines substantiality and accidentality, while the latter defines universality and particularity.

According to scholastic Aristotelianism, what does not inhere in another is a substance, whereas what inhere in but are not parts of a substance are accidents.[63] The idea here is that the substance of an object is the most fundamental level of being, in which everything else, that are accidents, pertaining to that object inheres. In that regard, what Aristotle introduces through the relation of inherence is ontological priority and posteriority or independence and dependence: substance is ontologically prior and independent, whereas accidents are posterior and dependent. On the flip side, what are not predicated of another are particulars, as these cannot be applied to any instance but themselves, while what are predicated of another, or universals can be applied to a number of instances.

[62] 1a16-1b10
[63] 1a20

A four-category ontology comprised of *substantial particulars* or *primary substance*, *substantial universals* or *secondary substance*, *accidental particulars*, and *accidental universals* ensues from this pair of distinctions. Socrates himself does not inhere in himself nor can be predicated to another; thus, it is the substantial particular or primary substance. His humanity, which is his substantial universal or secondary substance, does not inhere in another either, as it is ontologically too fundamental to inhere in another, but can be predicated to Parmenides or Plato as well. Socrates' particular skin color, bulging eyes, snub nose, or large fleshy lips inhere in Socrates himself and cannot be predicated to anyone else but him, while the ideas of whiteness, eye, nose, or lip inhere in the mind and can be predicated to a range of human beings or animals, which make the former accidental particulars and the latter accidental universals.[64]

Inherence is defined quite clearly in this definition, as Aristotle specifies that there is an ontological priority and dependence of the grounded to the ground. Yet this priority and dependence are not provided in a mereological relationship, which means that the two entities can neither come into existence through nor be conceived in terms of each other. Thus, what exists in another is only partially dependent on it, as the latter is a necessary but insufficient condition of it. From an epistemological perspective, we are aware of the grounded and the ground is posited as a necessary condition of it, while the ground cannot be conceived through the grounded and vice versa as they are not in a mereological relation in this conception. The ground, which is the subject, then, is a presumption that requires an epistemic leap from what one experiences to what necessarily conditions it. The relation of inherence as specified by Aristotle as "to be in another, while not being a part of it" is, in this sense, a transcendent relation.

The relation of predication, on the other hand, is not as clearly spelled out by Aristotle. We infer from his comparison of man predicated of a subject and the individual man that it is a relation between a universal which is predicated to an individual subject which is an empty variable when it is devoid of its predicates.[65] The relation, then, can

[64] For a concise account of the standard Aristotelian treatment of these distinctions in relation to Spinoza, see Carriero, "On the Relationship between Mode and Substance in Spinoza's Metaphysics," 246-253.
For a contemporary defense of four-category ontology see Edward J. Lowe, *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2006).
[65] 1a20-1b9

be understood in terms of first-order or predicate logic, where the subject is the variable, and the universal is the predicate.

If regarded only in logical terms this conception can be easy to make sense of. However, Aristotle does not seem to be positing it merely as a logical apparatus, but as an ontological one as well. Therefore, thought in this context, an empty subject of predication seems to be a problematical idea, similar to the subject of inherence, as it is an unintelligible supposition, which Aristotle will try to avoid in the *Metaphysics*.[66]

Also, the idea of universals, in the ontological context, will be another controversial issue for Aristotle scholarship. Aristotle remarks that they do not exist in their subject, but merely predicated or said of them. Is that supposed to mean that they exist in somewhere else or do they exist at all? This is a discussion which will transform into realism, conceptualism, and nominalism.

According to the orthodox interpretation of the universals for Aristotle, they are entities which exist in individual things,[67] while others deny that universals exist in individual things but rather that they come into being in the mind through inductions from them.[68] It is beyond the extent of this research to engage in this discussion, yet it can be noted here that Edward Regis's interpretation is in more accordance with the logical character of the predication relation, whereas the orthodox interpretation attributes a more ontological character to it.

There are four combinations of the predication and inherence relations. The first is being predicated of but not being in a subject (a), among which Aristotle remarks, are universals such as 'man.' Secondly, there are entities, which inhere in but are not predicated of a subject (b), such as colors. There are also some entities which might be both predicated of and present in some subject (c); like a certain knowledge, such as ornithology, which is present in a mind, yet predicable of a particular body of knowledge, that is biology.

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[66] 1029a20

[67] Whitney J. Oates, *Aristotle and the Problem of Value* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). Ralph W. Clark, "Saint Thomas Aquinas's Theory of Universals," *The Monist* 58, no. 1 (1974): 163-172.

[68] Edward Regis Jr, "Aristotle on Universals" in *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 40, no. 1 (January 1976): 135-152.

There seems to be a consensus among Aristotle scholars that the first group (a) denotes essential or non-accidental universals, whereas the latter two (b & c) seem to be more controversial. The orthodox interpretation takes the second group (b) as accidental or non-substantial individuals,[69] while others dismiss the ascription to Aristotle of the doctrine that there are individuals other than substance.[70] Also, the third group (c) is regarded as accidental or non-substantial universals by the orthodox interpretation, which is challenged by Regis on the ground that they are not universals.[71]

Lastly, there is the quite straightforward class of entities which can neither be predicated of, nor be present in a subject (d), such as the individual man or individual horse. Thus, this last class of concrete individual things makes up the first and foremost class of substance as *primary substance* and is defined by Aristotle as such:

> A substance—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse.[72]

However, he goes on to mention another criterion of the concept, according to which universals of genera and species, which can be predicated of but do not inhere in a subject (a), and which include individual entities, are called *secondary substances*:

> The species in which the things primarily called substances are, are called secondary substances, as also are the genera of these species.[73]

In this secondary sense then, substance is predicable of a subject and marks the determining characteristics, and in this sense, the essence[74] of it. Thus, the more qualities which pertain to a certain individual are expressed by a secondary substance, the more substantial it is, as Aristotle explains, "[o]f the secondary substances the species is more a substance than the genus, since it is nearer to the primary substance;"[75] since, the species, rather than the genus gives a more accurate account

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[69] Oates, *Aristotle and the Problem of Value*. Clark, "Saint Thomas Aquinas's Theory of Universals."
[70] Gwilym Ellis Lane Owen, "lnherence," *Phronesis* 10 (1965): 97-105. Regis, "Aristotle on Universals."
[71] Regis, "Aristotle on Universals."
[72] 2a13-2a18
[73] 2a13-2a18
[74] By essence, I simply mean the most fundamental characteristics of an individual thing here; and not the Aristotelian concept of "*to ti ên einai*" which I will be addressing in the next part.
[75] 2b8-2b22

of the individual thing. This makes sense considering the primary substance is the individual and a species such as *Felis catus* determines more of the characteristics of an individual cat than the genus *Felis*.

This idea of substance as the essence of a thing will be developed and specified as its proper sense in the *Metaphysics* by Aristotle; yet even its secondary status in the *Categories* implies the centrality of the Aristotelian doctrine concerning essential and accidental predication. While universals which are said of a subject are, although secondarily, still categorically substances and not just any other category; the other class of entities, which are present in a subject, comprises accidental categories (i.e. quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection).

The ontological priority of a category of being, which is capable of, or which possesses the power of existing independently in contrast to the dependent categories of existence others is another important doctrine concerning the Aristotelian ontology. Accordingly, primary substances can exist on their own; whereas other entities, such as qualities and relations, only as the qualities of or relations between substances.[76] It should also be kept in mind that, this dependence, as we have already seen, is not a mereological dependence and therefore the latter have a distinct ontological and epistemological statuses from the former. The ontological status of the essential universals (a) seems to be ambiguous though, as they are predicated of but not present in a subject. Does this 'not being present in a subject' mean that they are independent entities like primary substances or that they are not present at all, but mere abstractions of the intelligence, which would be a doctrine that may position Aristotle in nominalism? He does not give any further hint to provide an answer to this question as far as I can see.

Another criterion for substance is defined by Aristotle as "it is because the primary substances are subjects for all the other things and all the other things are predicated of them or are in them, that they are called substances most of all."[77] This idea of substance underlying all other modes of beings characterizes substance as a substratum

[76] "Thus all the other things are either said of the primary substances as subjects or in them as subjects. So if
the primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist." (2a35-2b7)
[77] 2b8-2b22

universally grounding every other entity which possibly exists in this world. In that sense, every entity other than a substance, inheres in or predicated of substances.

Why do the other modes of being need such an entity to be predicated of or present in? This question can be answered from the perspective of the logical problem or the unity of singular things despite of their various and contradicting properties. As Aristotle takes singular things as brute facts, the subject of inherence and predication emerges as a logical consequence of the unity of these diverse properties. However, from the perspective of the ontological problem or the question of the most fundamental being, there does not seem to be any reason to suppose that what Aristotle takes as qualities or relations require a subject to underlie them. Locke, famously, tried to defend such an idea of a subject, or a *bare substratum*,[78] on ontological grounds which was going to be destroyed by the likes of Berkeley and Hume.

The idea of substance as underlying other modes of being presupposes the transcendence of the ground to the grounded in two senses. Epistemologically it opens a gap between them as we know the grounded through experience but not the ground. Ontologically it attributes a prioritized status to the ground as it is independent while the grounded is dependent. In case this dependence was defined as a mereological dependence, the relation might have been an immanent one, since the grounded would not be existing in something which is alien to it, but in something of which it is a part and something which it composes. However, Aristotle rules out this possibility in the beginning.

Finally, Aristotle emphasizes the identity of substance in contrast to the multiplicity of its contradictory accidents:

> It seems most distinctive of substance that what is numerically one and the same is able to receive contraries. In no other case could one bring forward any- thing, numerically one, which is able to receive contraries. For example, a colour which is numerically one and the same will not be black and white, nor will numerically one and the same action be bad and good; and similarly with everything else that is not

[78] The idea then we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing, but the supposed, but unknown support of those qualities, we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist, *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*, which, according to the true import of the word, is in plain English, *standing under or upholding*. (II xxiii 2)

> substance. A substance, however, numerically one and the same, is able to receive contraries. For example, an individual man—one and the same— becomes pale at one time and dark at another, and hot and cold, and bad and good.[79]

This criterion defines substance as a characterless entity which is merely capable of admitting other -even conflicting- entities, while preserving its identity. This conception seems to bring the idea of bare substratum again, that is a subject striped of all form, which reminds of the disputably Aristotelian conception of *prime matter*, as I will discuss in the following part. Furthermore, this identity is not only preserved despite of admitting conflicting qualities synchronically, but also of admitting conflicting qualities diachronically. That is to say, the substance is capable of preserving its identity while going through change.

Six criteria of substance can be discerned in the *Categories* thus:

(i) *the criterion of individuality*;

(ii) *the criterion of logical predicability and non-predicability* (i.e., being a subject capable of being asserted of something, while incapable of being asserted to anything, or simply predication. Although Aristotle speaks of this criterion as a criterion of substantiality, he still coins the universals, which do not inhere in but predicable of something, *secondary substances*. So, it is fair to take this criterion as a looser criterion of substance, I believe);

(iii) *the criterion of essentiality* (i.e., not inhering in but being predicated of another, being *substantial universals*, or *secondary substances*. Essentialism is basically making an ontological commitment to such entities, while anti-essentialism is denying them);

(iv) *the criterion of independent existence* (i.e., not inhering in another or *ontological independence*);

(v) *the criterion of underlying* (i.e., being the subject of inherence for other categories of being, or the subject of *ontological dependence*);

(vi) *the criterion of identity through change*.

[79] 4a10-4a20

According to these criteria, the substance of the *Categories* ultimately turns out to be an entity to support the characteristics of other categories logically and ontologically, while having no characteristics *per se*, which is basically the definition of a *prime matter* or *bare substratum* or, in this case, *bare particular*. Thus, in the final analysis, the primary substance, as Aristotle expounds it in the *Categories*, seems to be identified with the conception of a characterless entity merely capable of supporting some characteristics alien to itself through the relations of inherence and predication, which is a conception he will be denying in the *Metaphysics*.

Among the six criteria of substance provided by Aristotle, four (i, ii, iii & vi) can be counted to be addressing what I have called the problem of identity or the logical problem; and two (iv & v) addressing the problem of existence or the ontological problem. Therefore, it can be said that the former group of criteria are the necessary and sufficient conditions of a *logical conception of substance*, whereas the latter, of an *ontological conception of substance* for Aristotle.

The first set of these criteria, namely *the criterion of individuality*, is nothing but an uncompromising recognition of the apodicticity of the singular things as brute facts. Along with his second criterion, namely *the criterion of logical predicability and non-predicability*, Aristotle postulates the singular things as the primordial beings of the world he portrays. *The criterion of essentiality* and *the criterion of identity* ensure the identity of the singular thing and that there are certain qualities which pertain to the singular thing which persist, despite of its temporal and atemporal differences. In sum, these criteria are given by Aristotle as the logical conditions of a pre-ontological view about the world, in which strictly distinguished singular things are the ontological inventory of the world. These criteria ensure the intellectual unity of different properties, through a concept of substance as a characterless variable, merely capable of being assertible of other entities.

The latter set of criteria (iv & v), on the other hand, is to ensure that substance is the origin of all existence. However, as I have previously argued, this understanding of origination is different from the origination conceptions in its conception of substance as not what constitutes other entities but merely 'underlies' them in an alienated manner. The entities of the Aristotelian ontology, other than substance, are not made

up of his substance. Therefore, substance or the ground transcends that which are grounded.

2.2.2. Aristotelian Hylomorphism

The picture is a bit different in the *Metaphysics Z*, where Aristotle discusses what the primary being (*ousia*) or subject (*hypokeimenon*) would be, while adding a twist to the discussion he carried out in the *Categories* by introducing the two novel concepts of matter (*hulê*) and form (*morphê* or *eidos*).

Before asking which of these two concepts or their composition would properly be called substance, Aristotle repeats the two major criteria of substance as presented in the *Categories*. First of these is what we have called the *criterion of independent existence* (iv), through which substance ensures the existence of its own and others;[80] and the second is the *criterion of predicability* (ii), through which the substance is predicable of something while itself being un-predicable to anything.[81]

Following these two criteria, Aristotle first rejects the idea that the substance is matter, which underlies things as a substratum when they are expunged from all of their accidents. Although the criteria of the *Categories* led us to this conclusion, as I have already argued, Aristotle rejects this answer in the *Metaphysics* on the ground that "both separability and individuality are thought to belong chiefly to substance."[82] Apparently, matter cannot be the substance as it does not provide us with a principle of separability and individuality, since it would be all the same for every individual as form is what gives its separability and individuality. Aristotle, thus, seems to be denying the idea of a bare substratum or bare particulars and eventually the idea of a prime matter by denying that a generic matter, which would be the same for various individuals, can be the substance.

[80] "Clearly then it is in virtue of this category that each of the others *is*. Therefore that which is primarily and is simply (not is something) must be substance." (1028a9-1028a31)
"For of the other categories none can exist independently, but only substance." (1028a32-1028b2)
[81] "We have now outlined the nature of substance, showing that it is that which is not predicated of a subject, but of which all else is predicated." (1029a7-1029a26)
[82] 1029a27-1029a33

The substantial criteria of individuality (i) and essentiality (iii) of the *Categories* seem to have suppressed non-predicability (ii) in the *Metaphysics* then, since the matter, which is predicated of the form according to the latter, is not considered to be the substance. As Aristotle denies substantiality of the matter, he seems to deny non-predicability of the substance as well. Instead, individuality with its essential predicates which determine what it is, seems to have replaced it as the substance.

After his elimination of matter as the proper candidate for substance, Aristotle is left with a choice between form or the composition of form and matter. However, he also eliminates the latter for not so obvious reasons and consequently favors form over the other two. This choice is perplexing, as it seems to be in contradiction with his doctrine of substance in the *Categories*, where individuality is a criterion of substance (i), and the composite is the individual according to the *Metaphysics*. Yet, it may be said to be in accordance with the *criterion of essentiality* (iii) as the form gives the essence of a particular. One way of interpreting this choice is considering the form not as the universal itself but rather as the numerically different instances of the same universal. Accordingly, the form as universal is individualized in the matter. In that sense, it may be said that the form is considered as the individualizing principle by Aristotle in the final analysis, which is still in accordance with *the criterion of individuality* (i).

Also in the *Physics*, Aristotle applies his concepts of matter (*hulê*) and form (*morphê* or *eidos*) to give an account of change or what I have called the diachronic identity of individuals. Accordingly, there are two types of change: accidental and substantial change. When a concrete individual gains or loses a property, then it is going through an accidental change. If a person learns to play piano, for instance, this is an accidental change. But if a substance gains or loses its very existence, such as if a person dies, then this is a substantial change.[83]

Aristotle remarks that there must be an underlying something which persists through change and a form acquired during change.[84] In an accidental change what persists is the substance, which is the form as we know from the *Categories*. So, when the person learns to play the piano, her substantial form is preserved. But, in a substantial change,

[83] *Physics* 189b30-191a22
[84] *Physics* 190a13–191a22

the substantial form changes, while what persists is the matter. When a person dies, her body, which is the matter of that person persists, but the form which makes her a human being is lost.

The concepts of *potentiality* (*dunamis*) and *actuality* (*entelecheia*) or *activity* (*energeia*), which Aristotle introduces in *Metaphysics Θ*, also account for change or the diachronic identity of individuals. Potentiality is the latent capacity in an object to be in a more developed state, while actuality is the present state of the object. He further relates the latent capacity or potentiality of the object to matter and its present state to the substance or form.

As the matter is what underlies during substantial changes, it may be asked what the character of this matter is, or whether it has any character expunged from its essential and accidental forms. Aristotle asserts that there are four fundamental elements: earth, water, air and fire, which can transform into each other.[85] When a matter changes from one element to another there must be a form which changes and something which underlies that persists through the change. And as this underlying thing cannot be one of the fundamental elements in this case, then there must be a *prime matter* which has no form or no properties. It has also been interpreted by Aquinas in *The Principles of Nature* as Aristotle posited that there is a prime matter, which is the matter of the fundamental elements.[86]

Still, it is controversial whether Aristotle commits to the idea of prime matter as he does not seem to do so in the passages he explicitly uses the term "prime matter" (*prôtê hulê*) or "primary underlying thing" (*prôton hupokeimenon*) such as *Physics*, 192a31, 193a10, 193a29; *Metaphysics*, 1014b32, 1015a7–10, 1017a5–6, 1044a23, ix 7, 1049a24–7; *Generation of Animals*, 729a32. Yet, in a rather ambiguous passage in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle seems to posit the idea of prime matter, although not qualifying it as "prime":

> When all else is taken away evidently nothing but matter remains. […] By matter I mean that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined. For there is

[85] *On the Heavens* 305a14–35
[86] Thomas Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, trans. R. A. Kocourek (1956), C1-3, C2-14, https://isidore.co/aquinas/DePrincNaturae.htm.

> something of which each of these is predicated, so that its being is different from that of each of the predicates; for the predicates other than substance are predicated of substance, while substance is predicated of matter. Therefore the ultimate substratum is of itself neither a particular thing nor of a particular quantity nor otherwise positively characterized; nor yet negatively, for negations also will belong to it only by accident.[87]

Aristotle employs *the criterion of underlying* (v) of the *Categories* here for the matter, as he remarks that it is what underlies beneath all forms and substances. He further remarks that this matter, without any form, is what the substance is also predicated, although itself is not the substance. So, in this sense, the matter seems to be in accordance with *the criterion of logical predicability* (ii) of the *Categories* as well. Nevertheless, although matter is evidently in accordance with these two criteria of substance, Aristotle denies it may be the substance and eventually considers the form to be what genuinely qualifies as substance as we have already seen.

It can be said that Aristotle seems to be obliged to commit to the idea of prime matter as a logical consequence of his own doctrines, although he seems to be reluctant to admit it. Nonetheless, this idea will be taken seriously by Aquinas as well as Dante and will have a central function in their ontological doctrines as I will analyze in the following subsections. Furthermore, not only the idea of a matter expunged from its forms but also the idea of some forms stripped off of their matter will be developed and assume an important function in their thoughts, arguably digressing Aristotle's descriptions of these concepts.

2.2.3. Essence, Accidents, Properties

Aristotle also distinguishes "*to ti ên einai*," literally "the what it was to be," or the shorter term "*to ti esti*," literally "the what it is" from the form in *Metaphysics Z*. The phrase was translated into Latin and later into English as *essentia* or maybe more accurately as *quiddity* or *whatness*, as even the expression itself implies that what Aristotle means is some kind of inquiry into the nature of things.

[87] 1029a7-1029a26

Aristotle remarks in *Metaphysics* that "[n]othing, then, which is not a species of a genus will have an essence— only species will have it."[88] That means the essence or the whatness of a thing belongs to its species such as human or tree. So, it may be said to be an inquiry into the very general characteristics of that species.

In this sense, the Aristotelian concept of *essence* or *whatness*, points to an epistemologically incomplete inquiry rather than something completely given. How it relates to the concept of form, which Aristotle considers to be the ultimate substance is rather ambiguous in the *Metaphysics*. However, following his analysis of form and matter, it follows that there are completely given ontological essences of singular things according to Aristotle, although these require an epistemological inquiry which is inherently incomplete in principle.

We have already seen in subsection 2.2.1 that something is substantial if it exists on its own and therefore does not inhere in another, whereas it is accidental if it inheres in another. Aristotle defines this inherence relation as 'being in, but not being a part of.'[89] So, an accident is something which exists in another while not being a part of it. It is also modally contingent, which distinguishes it from substantial entities as well as form which determines the essence of a given thing. A property, on the other hand, distinguishes from an accident only in terms of modality. Accordingly, the former is a certain type of the latter, which necessarily follows the essence of a thing, while not constituting its essence itself.[90]

2.2.4. Conclusion

Aristotle's main ontological concern is giving an account of the singular things and what governs the change among them. This is understandable as our ordinary experience is constituted of singular things along with their variations, and not, say, of quantum fields. He devises a number of conceptual tools to make sense of these phenomena. Substance, accidents, properties, essence, matter, form, potentiality, and actuality are all such tools for this endeavor. As I have argued, these account for two

[88] 1029b23-1030a17
[89] *Categories* 1a20
[90] *Topics* 128b14-128b21

aspects of these phenomena: they first make sense of the unity of the singular things, which have various characteristics within themselves as well as their identities with other singular things through names despite their distinguishing features. Secondly, they account for how they exist. Substances are what possess independent existence and they make the existence of other types of beings possible. These are the Aristotelian responses to the two functions of the conceptions of substance as I have presented them. Eventually, the picture is a layered ontology in which the categories of beings that depend on each other build on each other to make up the whole inventory of things that compose the world around us.

2.3. Thomas Aquinas

In this subsection, I scrutinize Aquinas's ontology, which employs the Aristotelian terminology such as substance, essence, accidents, matter, and form. Although his terminology is primarily borrowed from Aristotle's works, he not only reconciles the Aristotelian ontological concepts with Christian theology as well as Neoplatonist doctrines but also covers their deficits and inconsistencies and brings them to their logical consequences. The Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions regarding substance, essence, accidents, matter, and form were reinterpreted by Aquinas through theological doctrines concerning divine trinity, divine grace, divine providence, divine will, creationism, and human dignity. Thomist doctrines have been widely considered to be the culmination of scholastic philosophy and reaffirmed by the Catholic Church over centuries. Therefore, struggling with Thomist or scholastic philosophy, in general, meant not only discussing with a philosophical current, but a very concrete prevalent power, whose doctrines are not limited to Catholicism, but, even though with significant variations, can be extended to the whole Abrahamic paradigm of the image of the world. In order to understand Spinozist conceptions of God, nature, substance, and modality, thus, it will be important to understand this backdrop against which he develops these concepts.

Ultimately, Thomist ontology takes seriously both the *Categories* and *Metaphysics* by Aristotle and reconciles the four-category ontology that is described in the former with the hylomorphism of the latter. As the culmination of scholastic Aristotelianism, it

envisions a layered picture of the world at the ground of which lies prime matter and subject, and upon this foundation rises substantial and accidental forms. Aquinas further introduces the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being into Aristotelianism by taking accidental forms possessing a diminished kind of being compared to their substantial counterparts. To expound on Thomist ontology, I will first explicate his hylomorphism and lay bare the Aristotelian criteria he employs through his conceptions of matter and form. Next, I will analyze the notions of essence, accidents, and properties. Through these concepts, I will clarify his understanding of the material, immaterial substance, and, eventually, God.

Aquinas exposes his ontological conceptions of substance, essence, and accidence majorly in *On Being and Essence*, *The Principles of Nature* as well as the first part and the first part of the second part of the *Summa Theologiae*. Yet, again it is questionable whether it is possible to speak of an ontology of Aquinas as he follows Aristotle on the idea that being does not univocally apply to everything, but rather analogically. The being of material and immaterial things and that of God are completely different. Aquinas calls the material and immaterial things substances, while does not admit that God is a substance, but rather as *ipsum esse subsistens*, as 'his subsistence' or what self-subsists.[91] So, in that sense, as I am going to show in the following subsections, Aquinas's God is the substance in terms of Aristotle's criterion of substantiality of *independent existence (i)* and satisfies the ontological function regarding the two functions of substance I have propounded; while the second function of substance, namely the logical function, will be satisfied by his hylomorphism.

2.3.1. Thomist Hylomorphism

Aquinas begins *The Principles of Nature* by making a distinction between *essential* or *substantial* existence, which he calls existence *simpliciter*, against *accidental* existence, which he calls existence *secundum quid* (i.e., secondary whatness or secondary qualities). He illustrates this distinction through the case of an individual human being, which, accordingly, exists *simpliciter* while his qualities, such as color, are *secundum quid*. Here, it can be seen that Aquinas commits to *the criterion of*

[91] ST I-II, Q.3

individuality (i) of the *Categories* as he defines the individual human as a substantial existence.[92]

He introduces matter as the potency to existence for both substance and accidents[93] and calls the potency to substantial existence *matter from which* or *prime matter*, while the potency to accidental existence is *matter in which* or *subject*.[94] The former has incomplete existence as it exists by virtue of what comes to it, whereas the latter has complete existence *per se* as it does not exist by means of the accidents predicated of it.[95]

There is also a third kind of matter, which Aquinas introduces in *On Being and Essence*, as I will be explicating in the following subsection. This is called *designated matter* and functions to account for the problem of individuation or what I have called the *logical problem of unity of the individuals*. He needs such a conception because neither prime matter nor the subject, which are both conceptions of bare substrata and, therefore, are without any characteristic of their own and generic for all individuals, can account for the differences of various individuals. So, Aquinas is forced to either admit that the difference between two individuals is ensured merely by its forms, or that there are also differences in the matters of various individuals. If he chooses the former path, then he has to agree that the matter of human beings and lesser objects such as dogs or tomatoes are one and the same. Yet, this idea seems to contradict with his pre-ontological conceptions regarding a presumed hierarchy of being, so he opts for the latter path. I will be developing this idea in the following subsection.

Next, there are forms. Every existence, whether substantial or accidental, has a form and that which gives the former is the *substantial form* and the latter *accidental form*. While the matter is the potency of existence or the capacity to bear various predicates, the form is the act that makes the entity what it is in actuality. Thus, matter is related to potency and form to action.[96]

[92] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-1
[93] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-2
[94] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-3
[95] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-4
[96] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-5

Aquinas explains change in terms of *generation* and *corruption* through his conception of forms. Accordingly, when a substantial form is introduced, something comes into being *simpliciter* or a substantial change takes place, and when an accidental form is introduced, a change *secundum quid* happens. If the change is from non-existence to existence, then it is a *generation*, and if it is from existence to non-existence then it is *corruption*. His account of change is quite similar to the Aristotelian conception of change in the *Physics* through the threefold conception of "being in potency which is *matter*, non-existence in act which is *privation*, and that through which something comes to be in act which is *form.*"[97] So, a mass of bronze bears the potency to be a statue in its matter, yet it is not a statue until it has the form of a statue in act.[98]

Accidents, in this conception, are divided into two as necessary and non-necessary. The former, Aquinas defines as qualities which cannot be separated from thing, whereas the latter as the qualities which can be separated.[99]

Expunged from all of its forms, whether substantial or accidental, we have *prime matter*. Aquinas remarks that this entity neither exists without a form, nor be defined or known in itself, however it exists as the ground of all existence.[100] And as such, it has no numerical distinction. It has no numerical distinction not because it is an individual with a certain form, but rather because it spreads beneath all being while not having any property *per se*.[101]

2.3.2. Essence, Accidents, Properties

Aquinas introduces and analyzes the concept of essence in *On Being and Essence*, where he defines it in terms of the ten Aristotelian categories. Accordingly, it signifies "something that is common to all natures on account of which various beings fall under the diverse genera and species, as for example humanity is the essence of man, and so

[97] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-8
[98] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C1-6,7,8
[99] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C2-10
[100] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C2-14,15,16,17
[101] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, C2-16

on for the rest,"[102] which means that accidents that are all beings that fall out of the category of substance according to Aristotle's categorization, have essences, as well as substances, do.

Aquinas notes here that "essence" has also been named "*quiddity*" ("whatness") following Aristotle's terminology of "what something was to be" as I have expounded in subsection 2.2.3. However, Aquinas seems to be uncomfortable with this term as it merely refers to a linguistic entity by signifying the definition of a thing, whereas the term "essence" signifies an ontological entity "through which and in which a thing has its being."[103]

Following his distinctions regarding primary and secondary substances as well as substantial and accidental forms in *The Principles of Nature*, Aquinas distinguishes the beings and essences of substances and accidents too. While a substance has a being primarily and essence without qualification, an accident has a being and essence with qualification.[104]

Next, he introduces *simple* and *composite substances*. Material substances, which have both matter and form such as human beings, are composite substances; whereas others, which have only form such as God or angels, are simple substances. Aquinas proposes, without any justification, that the essences of the latter are superior to those of the former.[105] It is not clear from his argumentation why this has to be the case as it may well be argued that the former is superior to the latter as it comprises of more entities, which may be considered to make it more of a substance, especially with respect to the sense of 'wealth' of the term substance. Then again, it may well be questioned here why God or angels should be simple or pure forms as he introduces these doctrines almost out of nowhere. However, Aquinas again employs his pre-ontological conceptions, this time regarding divine simplicity, to sanctify simplicity over compositeness.

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[102] Thomas Aquinas, "On Being and Essence," in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Gyula Klima, Fritz Allhoff and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, trans. Gyula Klima (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 227-250.
Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 228
[103] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 229
[104] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 229
[105] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 229

The essences of composite substances are the composition of matter and form according to Aquinas.[106] It can be seen that this appears to be in contradiction with Aristotle's choice of form as the proper substance of things. Yet, Aquinas does not accept that, since form alone cannot give the individuality of a thing but rather what it participates in with the others. Then again, taken as prime matter or subject, matter as well does not seem to ensure the individuality of a particular thing as they are both generic and characterless. Thus, Aquinas introduces his concept of *designated matter* at this point to account for this problem of individuation or what I have called the *logical problem of unity of individuals* and which he defines as:

> […] matter considered in just any way is not the principle of individuation, but only designated matter is. And by designated matter I mean matter considered under determinate dimensions.[107]

We have already seen that in *The Principles of Nature*, Aquinas defined prime matter as what underlies substantial forms. Aristotle, as I have expounded in subsection 2.2.2, was reluctant to commit to this concept as he considered it to be something characterless and, therefore, inconceivable, even though it appeared to be a logical consequence of his conceptions regarding matter and form. Accepting this concept as a necessary logical consequence of Aristotelian ontology, Aquinas straightforwardly integrates it into his ontological system, despite Aristotle's philosophical concerns pertaining to it. Yet, he does not only commit himself to this concept, but also to its even more controversial binary opposite conception of pure form. Aristotle in no passage defines and endorses such an idea. So, it may be said to be a purely Thomistic notion, which he derives from the Aristotelian paradigm to account for the doctrines of Christian theology regarding divine simplicity and the immateriality of God, angels, and souls.

It is beyond the extent of this section to discuss the essences of immaterial substances as these do not account for any object of the material world, which is the only world that matters in the scope of this research. Yet, this question is two-partite as I have developed since the beginning of this section. The first part is how these notions

[106] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 229-230
[107] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 231

function to make sense of the unity of individuals, while the second part is how they function to make sense of their very existence. And, even though, the immaterial substance is irrelevant to the first part of this question, in the framework of the second question, it becomes meaningful. It accounts for this question as the ultimate immaterial substance is pure form and simplicity, and therefore essentially existing and the first cause of all other beings.[108]

Such a notion of God can be seen to be in accordance with Aristotle's *criterion of independent existence* (iv) in contrast to other immaterial or material substances, which depend on God for their existence. Yet, unlike the Aristotelian substance, which underlies other entities (*criterion vi*), other entities do not inhere in Aquinas's God, but rather, it causes them to exist. This definition of a substance as a cause of the existence of other entities, which do not inhere in it is a novel criterion of substance than the Aristotelian ones. Thus, I am going to call it the *criterion of causation (vii)*.

The relationship between God and other substances, then, is a relation of causation. However, the relationship between other substances and their accidents is different. The existence of the accidents depends partially, but not completely, on their subjects,[109] whereas the substances other than God depend completely on God for their existence. Subjects, thus, are necessary but insufficient conditions for accidents, while God is the necessary and sufficient condition of all beings.

As Aquinas follows the inherence relationship between subject and accidents as defined by Aristotle in the *Categories* as 'being in, but not being a part of,'[110] the epistemological and ontological transcendence I argued for the Aristotelian conception of subject-accident relation in 2.2.1 applies to Aquinas's conception as well. However, there is a more profound transcendence between Aquinas's God and other substances as it requires a greater epistemological leap from the latter to the former as well as there is a greater ontological hierarchy between the two.

Finally, the Aristotelian and scholastic distinction between accident and property ('*proprium*') or proper accident can also be found in Aquinas's work.[111] There is a

[108] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 240
[109] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 245-246
[110] 1a20
[111] ST I-II, Q. 17, A. 9, ad. 2; Q. 53, A. 2, ad. 3

distinction of modality between the two, as while the former is contingent, the latter necessarily follows from the essence of a thing, although it does not constitute its essence itself.

One of the instantiations of these ideas, by means of which we can have a more vivid understanding of Aquinas's doctrines regarding substance, essence, accidents and properties is the notion of transubstantiation or the change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ during Eucharist. According to Aquinas, what happens during this sacrament is a substantial change.[112] But, usually, what happens in a substantial change is that the essential form is changed while the matter stays the same. In the case of transubstantiation, though, Aquinas argues, both the matter and form of the bread and wine turn into the body and blood of Christ.[113] Considering substance and essence for Aquinas is the composition of matter and form, the substance and essence of the objects of this sacrament change completely. What may be said to be more interesting and what gives us more clue about Aquinas's conception of the substance-accidents relationship is that although the sacraments' substance changes, their accidents remain the same after the consecration.[114] We know that accidents depend on their subjects for their existence. However, I have argued that this dependence is not a complete dependence but a partial one. In that sense, subjects are necessary but insufficient causes of accidents. In the case of transubstantiation, we can see how they can behave independently of their subjects, as even though the latter changes completely, the former can remain all the same. Furthermore, following Aristotle's discussion on the equivocity of being suggesting that indeed the accidents exist, but only to the extent that 'exist' has a different meaning than what it carries in the case of substance,[115] Aquinas proposes a deflationary account where substance is considered to have a full-fledged existence while other categories are seen as existing in a lesser sense as aspects of it.[116]

[112] ST III, Q. 75, A. 2
[113] ST III, Q. 75, A. 6
[114] ST III, Q. 75, A. 5
[115] *Meteorology* 389b31–390a19; *On the Soul* 412b20–22; *Metaphysics* 1035b22–25.
[116] ST I, Q.45, A. 4

2.3.3. Conclusion

Aquinas defines material things as what are composed of matter and form. However, the former is pure potentiality and has no existence without the latter. So, matter for him, is not a real being. Individual material things, that are what constitute the content of our ordinary experience, then, are particular substances of matter and form. In that sense, they account for the unity of individuality, or the logical function of substance. Aquinas solves the logical problem through his conceptions of prime matter, subject, designated matter, substantial form, accidental form, proper accidents.

Then, there are the immaterial substances, or angels, which are simple substances as they are made purely of form. Nonetheless, they also depend on God for their existence. Therefore, God's existence is not univocal with the existences of the substances. Only God's existence is identical to its essence and therefore *ipsum esse subsistens*, what subsists on its own.

Aquinas's world, then, is made up of the singular things of ordinary experience, which are pretty much Aristotelian particular substances composed of matter and form. There are also immaterial substances or angels, which are pure forms. And, finally, there is God, which is also purely immaterial and whose essence is identical to its existence and, therefore, independent existence. God is the necessary and sufficient cause of all other beings, yet the latter do not inhere in the former. In that regard, Aquinas diverges from the Aristotelian conception of substance and introduces a novel conception of substance as causation. This novel conception of substance as a transcendent cause of other beings will be kept up to Descartes. Spinoza, however, will turn this idea of God as the cause of all being into an immanent cause.

2.4. Dante Alighieri

In this subsection, I survey the ontological territory on which Dante Alighieri constructs his *Divine Comedy* and *The Convivio*. His works provide quite imaginative instantiations of his ontological depictions and therefore understanding them can give us a vivid picture of the world described by Christian philosophers from St. Augustine to Aquinas as well as Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna and Averroes, all of whose intersection might be said to be Aristotle. To understand Dante's ontological

conceptions, I will first analyze his description of the Empyrean, which I will argue to assume the ontological function of substance as the primary being. Next, I will examine his hylomorphism and his understanding of the Trinitarian Person, which I will argue to employ the logical function of substance as accounting for the unity of individual things.

Christian Moevs counts five principles that are what construct Dante's world: extension itself does not exist in extension, but in Intellect or the Empyrean, pure conscious being; matter itself is not material, but a principle of unintelligibility; all finite form is a self-qualification of the Intellect and the former participates in the latter; Creator and creation are inseparable but not the same; God cannot be known through experience, but through knowing oneself as one with God or in God.[117] Even in these introductory remarks, Aristotelian and Thomist influences are obvious. We have already seen how matter is not something real for Aristotle and Aquinas as well as how all being is created by God as a transcendent cause of it.

I would like to make a preliminary note on how I will be reading Dante's *Divine Comedy*. My main interpretative thesis will be that it is an analogical work depicting a this-worldly odyssey starting from the doxic world represented by the *Inferno*, to the transcendent experience of an absolute unity with being in the highest sphere of the *Paradiso*, which is the Empyrean. Dante's idea of transcendence from ordinary experience to the ultimate experience of unity with the primary being can be compared to the Platonic conception of *aletheia* (which Dante alludes at the top of *Purgatorio*,[118] when he drinks from the river Lethe, which happens at the crucial point of his passage from the earthly heaven to the eternal heaven) as well as the Aristotelian conception of *nous*, especially in its power to attain the first principles. In this regard, Dante's pilgrimage turns out to be a mystic journey guided by reason. Thus, I will be taking Dante's depictions, symbolisms, analogies, and allegories in the framework of this overall interpretative thesis of the text.

[117] Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 4-5.
[118] Purg. 31

2.4.1. Divine Intellect – the Empyrean

Following the specified interpretative thesis, the Empyrean according to the *Divine Comedy* should not be understood merely cosmologically, but rather ontologically as well. However, the cosmology is also helpful in making sense of the ontology as the former gives ample evidence about the latter.

According to the Aristotelian cosmology, beyond the sphere of fixed stars there was the extensionless Unmoved Mover, which is the first cause of the chain of natural causality. The immediate subject of its effect was the eighth sphere of fixed stars, that is the 'first moved' or the *primum mobile*. Following Hipparchus's discovery of the precession of the equinoxes around 129 B.C., a transparent ninth sphere, the Crystalline, whose sole function was to transfer the motion from the Unmoved Mover to the whole universe, replaced the *primo mobile*.[119]

The Empyrean, as the tenth heaven, was introduced by Catholics to ontologically replace and assume the function of the Aristotelian Unmoved Mover, which is purely immaterial.[120] The *primo mobile* is taken as the last material sphere by this depiction of the universe.[121] Among both Islamic and Christian Neoplatonists, the Empyrean was thought to have a greater influence on this world, whereas more committed Aristotelians, such as Aquinas, had little use for it regarding its effects on the sensory world.[122] Although Aristotle's Unmoved Mover was not material, the Empyrean was thought to be material by some medieval thinkers. Aquinas specifies its matter as 'the supralunar quintessence or *aither*.'[123]

The most important characteristic of the Empyrean may be said to be that it is luminous. The luminosity of the *Paradise* is a recurring theme in the *Divine Comedy* such as Dante and Beatrice meeting twenty-four bright lights in the sphere of the Sun[124] or Dante, becoming blind by the light of the highest heaven[125] and eventually, merging with the light.[126] Also, in the *Convivio*, Dante stresses the luminous character

[119] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 16.
[120] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 17.
[121] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 16, 37-38.
[122] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 18.
[123] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 19.
[124] Par. 10 & 12
[125] Par. 30
[126] Par. 33

of the Empyrean: "Catholics place the Empyrean Heaven, which is to say, the "heaven of flame," or "luminous heaven;""[127] "[b]y these three virtues we ascend to philosophize in that celestial Athens where Stoics and Peripatetics and Epicureans, by the light of eternal truth, join ranks in a single harmonious will."[128]

This characteristic relates it to what has been called the 'metaphysics of light' which was inherited by Christianity from Neoplatonic tradition. Metaphysics of light, in general, does not take the assertion that God is light in a metaphorical way, but still does not reduce God to this sensory quality. Light was regarded as a self-subsisting entity in this tradition and was argued to be the substance of the Empyrean. However, Aquinas insisted that light was an accidence rather than a substance, and therefore not self-subsistent.[129] Consequently, light could only be compared to God in a metaphorical manner for him and could not be the substance of the Empyrean.[130]

Moevs[131] observes that the Empyrean of the *Divine Comedy*, diverges from that of the scholastics in a profound manner as it is absolutely immaterial,[132] uncreated, it is pure intellect,[133] it does not exist in space or time while all other beings exist in it as intellectual objects.[134] So, it can be said that for Dante, the Empyrean is made of an intellectual substance which everything else inheres in. Two criteria of Aristotelian substance *independent existence (v)* and *underlying (vi)* are in operation here as well as the Thomist criterion of *causation (vii)*.

The Empyrean, for Dante, turns out to be the divine intellect in which all the material and immaterial things exist as intellectual objects. Whereas for Aquinas, as I have shown in the previous part, there is no inherence or underlying relation between God

[127] Con. 2.3
[128] Con. 3.14
[129] ST I, Q. 67, A. 1-2
[130] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 20-21.
[131] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 21.
[132] "From matter's largest sphere, we now have reached the heaven of pure light, light of the intellect, light filled with love, love of true good, love filled with happiness, a happiness surpassing every sweetness." (Par. 30.38-42)
[133] "This is the supreme edifice of the universe in which all the world is enclosed and beyond which there is nothing; it is not itself in space but was formed solely in the Primal Mind, which the Greeks call Protonoe." (Con. 2.3.II)
[134] "The nature of the universe, which holds the center still and moves all else around it, begins here as if from its turning—post. This heaven has no other where than this: the mind of God, in which are kindled both the love that turns it and the force it rains. As in a circle, light and love enclose it, as it surrounds the rest—and that enclosing, only He who encloses understands." (Par. 27.106-114)

and the material and immaterial substances, for Dante the relationship thereof is a relation in such a manner. In that regard, this relation can be said to be the Aristotelian relation of both being present in and predicated of a subject (c), which he illustrates as a certain knowledge. Yet, following Aristotelian conception of inherence again, neither material nor immaterial objects are not parts of it, so that they exist in it but not in a mereological relationship. All material and immaterial objects, then, exist in the divine intellect as a knowledge of it, in respect of which, it is possible to say that this concept functions as the substance in the ontological sense of primary being in Dante's ontology. In this regard, the divine intellect or the Empyrean is the ultimate ontological element for Dante, which provides the primary being and assumes the ontological function of substance.

2.4.2. Dante's Hylomorphism

As we have seen in the previous part, matter, for Dante, has no being *per se* as it is not a self-subsistent entity.[135] In that sense, it is not a substance in the Aristotelian as it does not satisfy the independent existence condition. This is also in accordance with Aquinas's rejection of matter as an independent being when it is expunged from form.

Also, in the *Monarchia*,[136] Dante remarks that the prime matter is pure potentiality and therefore cannot be attributed existence. Furthermore, the world exists in the divine mind and is extended through the matter, which only exists as potentiality.[137] Forms realize the full potential of the matter through their actuality all the time.

For Aristotle, form was what makes a thing what it is and made its subsistence possible more than matter. A thing could be known through its form, which is the actuality and the whatness of a thing, while the matter is in itself unknowable. Aquinas, as I have presented in the previous subsection, follows this Aristotelian conception in his doctrine about matter and form. Yet, he adds a Neoplatonic element of hierarchy by positing that immaterial substances are more substantial than material substances while God is at the peak of this hierarchy of being, which is defined in terms of

[135] Par. 22.64-67, 27.106-114; Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 37.
[136] Mon. 1.3.3
[137] Mon, 2.2.2

simplicity. Material substances, according to Aquinas, are less perfect than immaterial ones since the former is composed and the latter simple, while God is the most perfect and the only one with independent existence as it is the most simple.

This idea of a gradation of existence is inherited by Dante as well. In the *Convivio*,[138] Dante propounds an intellectual order of the universe which is also cashed out in terms of simplicity. Accordingly, God is the highest being, lessening to the angels, human beings, animals, plants, minerals and finally earth. The idea is, again, that the more composite one thing is with matter, the lesser being it has. As angels are pure forms, they are simple and the highest beings except God. There is also always the metaphysics of light accompanying this hierarchy. We know from the *Paradiso* that the closer one gets to the divine intellect, it becomes lighter. Similarly, in the *Convivio*, Dante compares the angels and the divine intellect to opacity or transparency.[139]

Unlike human beings or angels, God is not itself a form and cannot be thought of as composed of forms. The relationship between forms and the divine intellect may rather be thought of as a relation of partaking:

> […] since every effect retains part of the nature of its cause […] every form in some way partakes of the divine nature; not that the divine nature is divided and distributed to them, but that it is shared by them in almost the same way that the nature of the Sun is shared by the other stars. The nobler the form, the more it retains of this nature; consequently the human soul, which is the noblest form of all those that are generated beneath the heavens, receives more of the divine nature than any other.[140]

In the previous part on the Empyrean, I expounded the idea that all the substances exist in an inherence relationship of an idea or knowledge to the mind in the model of the Aristotelian relation of being present in and predicated of. Furthermore, here we see that in addition to inhering in the divine mind, the forms retain the nature of it to some extent as well. To sum up, the divine intellect is simple and forms and matter inhere in, are predicated of, but not part of it. They are both ideas in the divine mind; yet, the forms also partake in, or retain the nature of it to some extent and the more extent they do this, do higher they are in the hierarchy of being.

[138] Con. 3.7
[139] Con. 3.7
[140] Con., 3.2

It seems like we have a certain theory of mind here. Accordingly, the Empyrean, the divine intellect or mind, harbors ideas of form and matter like a container. But the container analogy is misleading as the relationship between the former and the latter is not described only in terms of inherence and predication. If that was the case, we might have had a more naïve theory of mind. Yet, by assimilating it with the idea of participation, Dante gives a more sophisticated theory of mind in an idealist model, according to which the content of the intellect, which is divine intellect for him, is partially in the nature of it.

Consequently, Dante's hylomorphism, which is although not as elaborated as Aquinas's, gives an account of the unity of individuals from the model of an Aristotelian matter and form conception, but in a more idealist manner. In this regard, his hylomorphism assumes the logical function of substance to understand the singular objects of this world.

2.4.3. The Trinitarian Person

In this part, I am going to demonstrate how Dante employs the logical function of substance to account for the unity of the diversity of the Trinitarian person in the *Divine Comedy*.

The idea of one substance in three persons is instantiated in one particular application of the term *persona* by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, according to Heather Webb.[141] She remarks that it is a term 'to open a space between singleness and diversity in order to speak of the Trinity.' It can be seen that such an idea of the Trinitarian Person is in accordance with the Aristotelian substance criteria of individuality, as it is conceived as an individual despite the distinct persons inhering in it; of logical predicability and non-predicability, as it is a subject capable of being asserted of something, while incapable of being asserted to anything; and of underlying, as accordingly, there is one substance underlying all three of these persons.

[141] Heather Webb, *Dante's Persons: An Ethics of the Transhuman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8.

This conception of the divine persons is also in accordance with Aquinas as he defines the term 'person' as containing individual substance.[142] Furthermore, he remarks that personhood is a particular instance of substance in the genus of rational substances[143] and as the highest substance it is properly attributed to God.[144] However, the personhood of God distinguishes from the personhood of human beings or angels in that for the former it merely signifies a relation, which does not inhere in it as an accident to a subject, but as the divine essence itself.[145]

Webb also remarks that Augustine defines the term *persone* in the Trinitarian sense is used to 'not simply reduced to silence when we are asked three what.'[146] Accordingly, by the usage of the names 'substances' or 'persons' who employed the term "did not wish to give any idea of diversity, but […] wished to avoid any idea of singleness; so that as well as understanding unity in God, whereby there is said to be one being, we might also understand trinity, whereby there are also said to be three substances or persons.[147]

Person or substance, in the trinitarian sense, then, amounts to the unity of the diversity or the diversity of the unity of God. And, in that sense, it can be said to be a special application of the logical function of substance.

Dante employs such a meaning of the Trinitarian person in two cantiche in the *Paradiso*. The first of these emphasize the unification of the diversity of the divine Person as a particular instance of substance:

> They sang no Bacchus there, they sang no Paean,
>
> but sang three Persons in the divine nature,
>
> and in one Person the divine and human.[148]

Next, he stresses the one essence of the three divine persons:

> And I believe in three Eternal Persons,

[142] ST I, Q. 29, A. 1
[143] ST I, Q. 29, A. 2
[144] ST I, Q. 29, A. 3
[145] ST I, Q. 29, A. 4
[146] Webb, *Dante's Persons: An Ethics of the Transhuman*: 7-8.
[147] The Trinity, VII, 3
[148] Par., 13.25-27

and these I do believe to be one essence,

so single and threefold as to allow[149]

Consequently, it is possible to see how the logical conception of substance is in play in Dante's interpretation of the Trinitarian Person. Essence seems to be the unifying principle of the Trinitarian Person here.

2.4.4. Conclusion

For Dante, the primary being is the Empyrean, which is pure intellect. The objects of our ordinary experience are thoughts of this intellect. They are described as inhering in and predicated of it, while not being a part of it. Furthermore, they partake the nature of the divine intellect to varying extents. In that sense, there is a certain emanationism in his conception of the Empyrean.

Taking his cue from this emanationist inclinations, Bruno Nardi argued to discredit Dante's Thomism and instead to show that he was an emanationist. Catholic theologians and scholars, such as Busnelli and Mandonnet, tried to demonstrate that he never diverged from the Thomistic doctrine of creation. Moevs replies to these discussions by pointing out the Neoplatonic character of Aquinas's thought and that a certain understanding of emanationism was already inherent in it.[150]

Eventually, the Empyrean is the ultimate ontological principle for Dante. It is the primary being which makes possible the existence of all other beings. Therefore, it assumes the ontological function of the concept of substance, as I have argued so far.

Dante's conceptions regarding matter and form, on the other hand, do not address the being of the objects of our experience, but rather their unity as singular things in spite of their diversities. They exist in the Empyrean as the ideas in a mind, but not in a manner that are something completely alien to it, but in a manner which resemble it as they partake in it. Dante, thus, accounts for the singularity of the objects of ordinary experience, which I have called the logical function of substance, through his hylomorphism.

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[149] Par., 24.139-141
[150] Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy*: 109-110.

Finally, the Trinitarian Person appears as a certain application of the logical function of substance to account for the Christian doctrine of divine trinity. Accordingly, the essence of the trinity as relation stands as the unifying principle of the three persons in it, which assumes the logical function of substance in this conception.

2.5. John Duns Scotus

Scotus is a philosopher who is not particularly known for his novel theories but for offering strong arguments, conceptions and developing our understanding for common scholastic theories.[151] Here I will look into two of his arguments concerning bare substratum and real accidents, which are going to be significantly influential and controversial by the early modern period, which are some of the most major problems early modern philosophers will be struggling with. Spinoza, in particular, will address both of these issues, which will be prominent in the thesis I will be offering.

2.5.1. Prime Matter

In his *Lectura*, Scotus first argues against the Thomist thesis that prime matter cannot exist on its own without any form. According to him, matter not only persists while changing its forms, but also subsists immediately through causation by God. This is a progressive idea for scholastic thought, because as we have seen matter was commonly conceived to be a secondary being ontologically dependent on the divine intellect (i.e., the Empyrean), which is pure form. However, with Scotus, matter seems to be taken ontologically *on a par* with form.[152]

So, if prime matter subsists as the most basic stuff which subsists through all substantial changes, one can reasonably ask whether or not it has any properties *per se*? In other word, is prime matter for Scotus a bare substratum, an entity without any properties *per se* when divorced from its forms, which was the view held by his opponent here, Aquinas. Because, as we have seen in the previous subsections, Aquinas held that matter is pure potentiality, the thinnest kind of existence, that is

[151] Cf. Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27.
[152] Also see G. R. M. Ward, *Oxford University Statutes*, 2 vols. (London: W. Pickering, 1845–51) and Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus: Great Medieval Thinkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

merely capable of being attributed of substantial or accidental forms while lacking any properties of its own whatsoever. Scotus argues against this conception of matter on the ground that, first, pure potentiality cannot possibly be an actual existent, and, second, it would not be able to fulfill the functions that were anticipated for it by Aristotle.[153]

In case of substantial change, or in technical terms, corruption and generation, then, prime matter always persists, but the substantial form changes. One question that occupied scholastic philosophers in the case of corruption and generation though was what happens to the substantial form that took part in the corruption after generation. Scotus had an ingenious answer to that question. When corruption precedes generation, there's no overlap in time; corruption happens first, followed by generation. However, let's focus on the moment of generation. At that instant, the corrupted element no longer exists. Therefore, the agent responsible for creating the new substance cannot be using those corrupted elements, as they're absent. It's not valid to argue that the agent needed those ingredients earlier but not now because the crucial moment is now - when the new substance is created, and the agent's action is fully realized. Hence, if the agent doesn't require those ingredients now, it never did.[154]

2.5.2. Real accidents

In the thirteenth century, scholars interpreting Aristotle's metaphysics understanding of accidental forms was deflationary, in the sense that such forms are lacking being in the full sense that substance does. However, by the fourteenth century, influenced by John Duns Scotus, this view changed. Accidents were seen as real entities. Later, in the seventeenth century, some rejected the idea of "real accidents," aligning with the earlier scholastic approach rather than the dominant realism of their time. This shift indicates that the divide isn't merely medieval versus modern or Aristotelian versus mechanistic. The later scholastic realism considered accidental forms as independent beings, supported by ecclesiastical authority. Critics like Robert Boyle argued that this

[153] Cross, *Duns Scotus*, 17-23.
[154] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*, 27-28.

perspective was contradictory, treating accidents both as accidents and substances.[155] This criticism wasn't new; it had been raised throughout the scholastic era. Despite defenses by scholastic authors, there's a tendency in later scholasticism to liken accidents to substances, aiming for a unified metaphysical understanding where both are of the same kind.

As we have seen the previous part, Aquinas was a proponent of the view that accidents are dependent on their substance while lacking a proper existence of their own. He was following Aristotle's discussion on the equivocity of being in his argument. Scotus, on the other hand, was a full-fledged opponent of this account. Against the Thomist equivocity of being, he famously defended the 'univocity of being.' His argument was simple, yet, as always, effective.

Scotus gives his most extensive account of the ontological status of accidents in his discussion concerning "Whether accidents exist in the Eucharist without a subject," as this was when the scholastics were the most troubled with this question.[156] Here he argues for the existence of accidents as such:

> Accidents are principles of acting and principles of cognizing substance (according to *De anima* I [402b21–25]), and are the *per se* objects of the senses. But it is ridiculous to say that something is a principle of acting (through either a real action on matter or an intentional action on sense or intellect) and yet does not have any formal being (*entitatem*). For so we might say that a chimera acts or is sensed. It is also ridiculous for something to be per se a state (*passionem*) of a being, unless it has some being *per se*, or to be the endpoint of some change or mutation, unless it has some being. But all substances, if they have any states, [these states] are accidents. And any change involving growth, alteration, and location is a change toward an accident, as its endpoint.

Robert Pasnau observes that Scotus gives us "a laundry list of the principal roles played by accidental form in scholastic thought:

- as principles of acting (e.g., heat makes water hot) [line 1];
- as objects of sense and intellect (e.g., color acts on sight) [lines 1–2];

[155] Robert Boyle, "The Origin of Forms," in *The Works of Robert Boyle*, eds. Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis (London: Pickering & Chatto), V: 308–9.
[156] *Ordinatio* IV.12.1 (Translation taken from Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*.)

- as states (or, we might say, properties) of substances (e.g., a certain extension makes an object square) [lines 5–6];
- as the endpoints of change (e.g., a person grows to be six feet tall) [line 6]."[157]

Scotus contends that it is ridiculous (*truffa*) to attribute such functions to accidental forms while denying proper existence of them at the same time. He suggests that assigning these roles to non-existent entities, such as a chimera, would be equally nonsensical. It can be seen how easily this theory can explain transubstantiation, since if the accidents are independent of their subjects, the latter may change while the former subsist independently of it. This argument is crucial because it encapsulates the later scholastic support for the doctrine of real accidents. While scholastic thought encompasses various questions, the central issue revolves around the status of standard Aristotelian metaphysical components.

As I will argue in the next section though, denying diminished existence does not necessarily imply ontological independence though. The Scotist paradigm, in a way, follows the Thomist paradigm in that full-fledged existence is attached to independence, just as diminished existence is to dependence.

2.5.3. Conclusion

Duns Scotus develops some strong arguments against the Thomist understanding of prime matter and accidents. Two important takeaways for our research here is that, first, he shows how matter can be understood as a being on its own with its inherent properties and nature *per se*. And, secondly, that with all the functions accidents play in our understanding of this world, it is non-sensical to attribute some diminished existence to them. He further develops the idea of real accidents following his analysis of accidents, which will be controversial but influential in early modern thought.

2.6. Francisco Suárez

Following Scotus, the widespread agreement in scholastic thought was a refrainment from describing accidents with a halfway sort of existence. When accidents are

[157] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*, 197.

comprehended in this manner, it naturally prompts the question of what it truly signifies to describe something as having reduced existence. If we grasp existence to any extent, it appears unlikely that it can be partially present. What exists, exists completely, and what doesn't exist, simply doesn't exist. This assumption might hold true, were it not for the prevalent custom of placing certain accidents within this uncertain realm of ambiguity. However, even after this Scotist treaty concerning the univocity of being was established among the scholastics, some properties were still regarded as lesser than the others. Before Francisco Suárez, this was the more common sense of modes against real accidents.[158]

Albertus Magnus, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, remarks that "an accident is truly only the mode of a substance," describing accidents as modes.[159] Later, Aquinas distinguishes the ten categories as ten modes of being (*modi essendi*).[160] After Henry of Ghent, the term *modi essendi* becomes a denomination for the seven lesser categories, while the categories of Substance, Quality, and Quantity are labeled as *res*. As Scotist understanding of real accidents became predominant, the question was whether all nine accidental categories are independent beings or some of them define mere modes of *res*.[161]

Suárez's novelty among these scholastics is that he describes modes in a genuine way over and above real accidents. He introduces 'mode' and 'modal distinction' as:

> We ought to posit among created things an actual distinction in the nature of things (*ex natura rei*), prior to the operation of intellect, which is not such as there is between two *res* or entities that are entirely distinct. This distinction could be called real in the general sense of the term, because it does truly occur on the side of reality, and not through an extrinsic denomination made by intellect. Still, to distinguish this from the other, greater real distinction, we can call it either a distinction in the nature of things, . . . or it can more properly be called a modal distinction because, as I will explain, it always occurs between some *res* and its mode.[162]

[158] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 244-246.
[159] *Metaphysics* VII.1.1.
[160] *Sent* IV.12.1.1.1 ad 1 and *De substantiis separatis* ch. 8
[161] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 245.
[162] *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 7.1.16 (Translations of Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae* are from Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*.)

After explaining real and mental distinction, which are common technical denominations in scholastic philosophy, he discusses what he considers to be a novel idea, the modal distinction. Accordingly, a real distinction is between two distinct beings, or *res*, that are ontologically independent of each other, whereas a modal distinction is between a *res* and a mode or between two modes, that is to say, between an independent and dependent being or two dependent beings.

He starts describing what a mode is in contrast to entities (*entitates*), a term which is use roughly interchangeably with *res* as Pasnau points out:[163]

> So as to prove and clarify the assertion [of the previous passage], I claim that among created things, beyond the *entities* that are there—the substance and root of things, so to speak—there are found certain real *modes*, which are both something positive, and which in their own right (per seipsos) act on those entities, giving them something that is outside their whole essence as individuals existing in reality.[164]

What Suárez establishes here initially is that modes are real beings in their own right. So, they are not mind-dependent beings and the distinction between modes and *res* is not a distinction of reason or a formal distinction. He continues with defining the dependence of modes:

> Creatures are imperfect, and so either dependent, composite, limited, or changeable with respect to various states of presence, union, or determination. As a result, they need such modes, by which they are made complete with respect to all these [states]. This is so because, necessarily, this making complete does not always occur through entirely distinct entities— indeed this cannot even be reasonably conceived as being the case—and so as a result real modes are required. […] [A] mode is not properly a *res* or an entity, unless one is using the term 'being' (*ens*) broadly and in the most general sense, for whatever is is not nothing. In contrast, if we take 'entity' for that *res* that of itself and in itself is something, in such a way as not at all to require its being intrinsically and essentially affixed to another, but instead either is not capable of union with another, or else can be united only by means of a mode that is distinct in the nature of things from itself, then a mode is not properly a *res* or an entity. Here

[163] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 255.
[164] *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 7.1.17

> is where its imperfection shows best: it must always be affixed to another, to which it is immediately united *per se*, not by means of another mode.[165]

Suárez here argues that a mode necessarily depends on a *res*, yet admits that it has being in the most general sense. How to interpret his position is tricky though. Pasnau elaborates three possibilities.[166] First approach takes modes as real but dependent on their substance, which is what truly exists, while modes are merely certain ways for it to exist. It can be seen that the dependence of modes is taken to deny a real existence of them. In this sense, Aquinas' treatment of accidents can be said to be as modes. Regardless of its accuracy of Suárez's modal realism, even though this was the view defended by him, it is not the version of that was influential in the seventeenth century.

Another approach suggests that while modes have a proper kind of existence, they depend on more substantial non-modal properties of the substance itself. Although this seems to be a good formulation that would help make sense of the dependency of modes on substance as well as the determinacy of substance by the modes, Pasnau eliminates this alternative on the ground that it contradicts the early modern modal realists' insistence on taking essential features of substance as modes.[167]

The approach Pasnau favors is the polar opposite of the second one. While supervenience takes the essential properties of substance as determining its modes, according to the third approach, substance is radically indeterminate and depend on modes for its existence. On this account, the substance is inherently incomplete when conceived in isolation and cannot exist without being attributed of entities of another category, that are modes. So, according to Pasnau, there is a mutual ontological dependence relationship between modes and substance for Suárez as well as other modal realists, most specifically, Descartes.

It is beyond the objectives of this research to extensively discuss Suárez's conception of modal distinction and modes. Pasnau's mutual dependence interpretation of the substance-mode relationship is interesting and influential. Although he cashes out the

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[165] *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 7.1.19

[166] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 269-275.

[167] Cf. Descartes in *Principles* I.48: "Perception, volition, and all the modes both of perceiving and of willing are referred to thinking substances. To extended substance belong size (that is, extension itself in length, breadth, and depth), shape, motion, position (*situs*) of its parts, their divisibility, and the like."

dependence of substance on modes in terms of 'determinacy,' it still needs modes for its existence. The ontological consequences of this idea would be disputable. However, regardless of the discussion concerning what modes exactly are for Suárez and Descartes, I believe it would be fair to say that they both take modes to be both genuinely real (pace Thomist accidents) and dependent on substance (pace Scotist real accidents), which is also in accordance with his description of modal distinction in terms of asymmetric separability. Accordingly, a sign of being modally distinct is the asymmetric separability of a substance from its mode, such that the former can survive the separation, but not vice versa. This is in contrast to a real distinction, where two entities can exist independently of each other.[168] This takeaway will be important as Pasnau's interpretation does not apply well to Spinoza since he explicitly and recursively spells out a one-way dependence of modes on substance as we are going to see in the following section.

2.6.1. Conclusion

Suárez's discussion of modal distinction and modes reinforces the idea that ontological dependence does not necessarily imply a diminished existence. Through modal distinction, he demonstrates how there can be a distinction that is different from both distinction of reason and real distinction. This allows him to construe some being that exists in the proper sense while depending on an ontologically more fundamental being. Pasnau interprets the relation between the two beings as ontological dependence on the side of modes, and determinacy on the side of substance, which would make them substantial properties. One advantage this might bring is saving substance from being a bare substratum. However, it is confusing how substance and substantial properties are two distinct categories unless they are distinct in some sense.

[168] *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 7.2.6–8, 7.2.9–10. Also see Stephan Schmid, "Efficient Causality: The Metaphysics of Production," in *Suárez on Aristotelian Causality*, ed. Jakob Leth Fink (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 96, n. 34.

2.7. René Descartes

In this subsection, I discuss Descartes' conception of substance and the contributions he makes to it through the idea of modification. I first sketch the two distinct stipulations Descartes gives for substance as God and substance as extension and mind. Then, I look into the conception of modification in relation to this understanding of substance and lay bare the Cartesian rendering of modification as a continuation of Suárez's model which takes the properties of a substance as both possessing univocal being (pace Aquinas) and dependent on their substance (pace Scotus).

The Cartesian conception of substance and modes had an obvious influence on Spinoza. He did not only adopt his vocabulary from Descartes, but also conceptualized these central ontological categories of his philosophy around those of Descartes'. However, as I am going to argue in the next part, Spinoza introduced the mereological relation between these two categories in addition to the Cartesian conception. Nevertheless, the concerns of Spinoza, as well as Descartes and Suárez were similar in that they were attempting to conceive an ontology of particulars (thus denying accidents as universals) and in which modes are completely dependent on and immanent to their substances while possessing a being *on a par* with them. In other words, they were part of the modern project which envisioned an understanding of nature in terms of integral parts instead of metaphysical parts.[169]

Inheriting the Aristotelian tradition, Descartes sticks to the *inherence conception of substance*, but adds *causation* and *modification*, first of which pertaining to God and the latter to other substances. Descartes gives two different definitions of substance in two instances, which are remarkably reminiscent of two of the Aristotelian criteria we have discussed in the previous subsections. The first of these definitions can be found in a reply to his *Meditations* and evokes the *(v) the criterion of underlying*:

> Substance. This term applies to every thing in which whatever we perceive immediately resides, as in a subject, or to every thing by means of which whatever we perceive exists. By 'what we perceive' is meant any property, quality or attribute of which we have a real idea.[170]

[169] Cf. Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 7-8.
[170] *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 161/153

Although agreeing with Aristotle that substance should be a subject on which other categories of being depend, Descartes does not specify that it should itself not be inhering in anything else. Therefore, it seems like Descartes does not lay out a distinction pertaining to the ontological statuses of God and other substances in the *Meditations*.

Yet in another reply and also in the *Principles*, he defines substance in a similar vein to Aristotle's *criterion of independent existence (iv)*:

> Now the very notion of substance is this: that it can exist by itself, that is without the aid of any other substance […][171]
>
> All we can mean by 'substance' is 'thing that exists in such a way that it doesn't depend on anything else for its existence.'[172]

And in this sense, only God can be properly called a substance:

> Actually, there's only one substance that can be understood to depend on nothing else, namely God. We can see that all the other substances can exist only with God's help. So the term 'substance' doesn't apply in the same sense to God and to other things—meaning that no clearly intelligible sense of the term is common to God and to things he has created.[173]

Thus, Descartes declares his stance against the Scotist doctrine of *univocity of being* and posits an ontological distinction between God and the other substances. In this conception, in accordance with an inherence conception, God is the substance in which extension and thought subsist.[174]

Yet, there is another and a novel sense of substance in the Cartesian conception of God. Accordingly, Descartes specifies God not only as the logical and ontological subject of which the other modes of beings inhere and be predicated, but also as the causal condition of their existence. Reminding the Abrahamic understanding of God, which was inherited by Aquinas, and of which Spinoza will be profoundly critical, God is the creator, or the transitive cause of other substances. In other words, whereas,

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[171] *Principles of Philosophy*, 226/145
[172] *Principles of Philosophy*, 51
[173] *Principles of Philosophy*, 51
[174] If we tried to consider thought and extension apart from the substances in which they inhere—the substances that have them—we would be regarding them as things that subsisted in their own right, and would thus be confusing the ideas of a mode and a substance. *Principles of Philosophy*, 64.

for Aristotle, substance is a necessary condition of the existence of other categories of beings; for Descartes, God is not only the necessary but also the sufficient condition of the existence of the other substances as well as every kind of being one may possibly conceive of. But, even though other substances inhere in God, they are also caused by God to exist according to Descartes. This is what I will call the *causality conception of substance*.

Melamed recognizes Descartes' aberration from the Aristotelian conception in the way he cashes out the independence of the substance. Unlike Aristotle, he claims 'the independence of (primary) substance is defined solely in terms of predication, Descartes stipulates that substance in the full sense of the word must also be causally independent.'[175] Thus, Melamed concludes, a genuine substance for Descartes must be in accordance with the 'causation stipulation of substance: 'x is a (full-fledged) substance only if it is not caused by anything else.''[176] In this respect, it may be seen that Melamed's account of the Cartesian conception of substance confirms my depiction of what I have called the *causality conception of substance*.

In addition to the *inherence* and *causality conceptions of substance*, there is another conception of substance that Descartes proposes. The relation between God and the other two substances, as well as the relations within extension and thought, differ from each other. In section 56 of the *Principles*, Descartes speaks of the difference between 'mode' and 'attribute' or 'quality;' where he remarks that they mean exactly the same, while their usage differs. Accordingly, 'attribute' denotes the most general features of a substance, which is being extended for matter, while 'quality' denotes its kind, such as fluidity for liquids. 'Mode,' on the other hand, is an affection or alteration of substance. Subsequently, this implies that there is ontologically no difference in terms of the statuses of substance, attribute, and mode. In other words, modes are of the same ontological character as their substance and merely a modification of it and, therefore, immanent to it, whereas the subject and predicates for an inherence conception of substance are of distinct characters, and substance transcends the others. This hinges on Descartes' rejection of hylomorphism as simply making no sense in *The World* on

[175] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 13.
[176] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 13.

the grounds that matter necessarily has a shape.[177] In this regard, the Cartesian conception of substance aspires to diverge from the scholastic Aristotelian model of substance, where the substance and its accidents are alienated from each other because of their different ontological characteristics.

Such a conception of modification was actually inherited by Descartes from scholastic philosophy, particularly through Fonseca and Suárez, as noted by Tad Schmaltz.[178] Whether modes are solely of matter or if they may pertain to thought as well has been a recent debate majorly through Malebranche's arguments that the modes of mind cannot be derived from the idea of thought unlike all bodies can be derived from the idea of extension.[179] However, Galen Barry rejects this argument with reference to the simplicity of the mind in contrast to the divisibility of body.[180]

Another important feature of a modification conception of substance is its rejection of the Aristotelian doctrine of singular substances. For the Cartesian ontology, substance exists as a totality of singularities. Singular things are merely modifications or ways of being of a substance.

Des Chene remarks that Descartes' rejection of real qualities grounds an identification of inherence with ontological dependence.[181] Accordingly, although Descartes divides things into substances and modes dependent on them in the *Principles*, he does not distinguish between inherence and ontological dependence. All the sensible qualities, such as colors, are modes of extension.[182]

Although Des Chene's interpretation of the Cartesian modes demonstrates an important aspect of his conception of modification, I think it lacks to account for the immanent character of the modes to their substances. As Descartes explicitly remarks that a mode is nothing but a modification or affection of a substance and also nothing

[177] *The World and Treatise on Man*, 89/25.
[178] Tad M. Schmaltz, "Suárez and Descartes on the Mode(s) of Union," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58, no. 3 (2020): 471-492.
[179] Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, trans. and eds. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[180] Galen Barry, "Cartesian Modes and the Simplicity of Mind*," Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 96, no. 1 (2015): 54–76.
[181] Dennis Des Chene, "Aristotelian Natural Philosophy: Body, Cause, Nature," in *A Companion to Descartes*, eds. Janet Broughton and John Carriero (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2007): 20.
[182] Des Chene, "Aristotelian Natural Philosophy: Body, Cause, Nature," 21.

really distinct from the substance, it is obviously not something which simply inheres in or depends on the substance; but rather the substance, expressing itself through it.

Heil makes the similar point that the modification conception of the properties of substance amounts to a species of internal relation.[183] And goes further on that:

> Modes are not added to substances; modes are ways substances are. Modes and substances are *correlative*.[184]

So, as Heil remarks, a modification conception of substance, in contrast to the Aristotelian accidence relation between the substance and its dependents, implies the immanence of the former to the latter. Therefore, we may say that Descartes' modification conception of substance entailed this immanence, which can be seen in his take on real accidents. In the *Meditations*, he remarks that one cannot know of their existence and in the *Principles* argues that it is philosophically contradictory to suppose accidents that can exist independently of some substance.[185] Yet when challenged about the Eucharist by Arnauld that his account of real accidents and modes is against the doctrines of the church, he not only gets around it but also claims to better adhere to both the Catholic dogma and experience by noting that he never really rejected them but only pointed out that they cannot be a natural part of ontology. Still, he considers it to be possible for God to intervene in the special occasion of transubstantiation and separate the properties of substance turning them into real accidents, which shows that it is a real miracle.[186]

2.7.1. Conclusion

I have argued that Aristotle puts forward six criteria for substance in his *Categories* and *Metaphysics*. Furthermore, Descartes contributes two novel conceptions to these criteria by developing certain notions he inherits from scholastic philosophy. Although he does not dwell upon these criteria, they will become very important in modern philosophy especially for Spinoza. The significance of the first of these, which I have

[183] John Heil, "Accidents, Modes, Tropes, and Universals," *American Philosophical Quarterly Special Issue: Metaphysics 51/4* (October 2014): 338.
[184] Heil, "Accidents, Modes, Tropes, and Universals," 339.
[185] *Principles of Philosophy*; see esp. Part 4, arts. 198ff: vol. t. p. 284. *Fourth Set of Replies*, 172-178.
[186] *Fourth Set of Replies*, 172-178.

coined as the *causality conception of substance*, brings causality as a constitutive and primitive concept for ontology for the first time in the history of philosophy. This will be a very central doctrine for Spinoza, and he will dwell upon it by taking causality through his concept of *potentia* as the most fundamental concept of his ontology. And the second criteria introduced by Descartes, which I have named the *modification conception of substance*, although inherited from late scholasticism, has been given a central function in his ontology. This idea will also be profoundly influential for Spinoza as he will construct his whole ontological system through the concepts of substance and modes. Eventually, he will bring the idea of modification, which started in Medieval philosophy to its horizon by laying bare a one-category ontology of complete immanence.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETING SUBSTANCE & MODES FOR SPINOZA

3.1. Dualist Reading of Spinoza's Ontology

As we have seen in the previous part, a four-category ontology comprised of *substantial particulars* or *primary substance*, *substantial universals* or *secondary substance*, *accidental particulars* and *accidental universals* ensued from the Aristotelian distinction of inherence (i.e., ontological independence-dependence relations) and predication (i.e., universality and particularity) in response to what I have called the ontological and logical problems. Spinoza's conception of substance and modes seems to be in accordance with the Aristotelian inherence distinction as he defines substance as "what is in itself"[187] and modes as "what is in another."[188] Yet, it does not appear to be compatible with the predication distinction as he straightforwardly denies universals of any ontological status and characterizes modes as particulars.[189] Thus, the categories are reduced to two (i.e., *primary substance* and *accidental particulars* or *modes*) and his ontology is traditionally taken as a two-category or dualist system which rules out a mereological structure of the relationship between these two categories. Accordingly, his substance is the particular substance that is the deepest layer, which makes the existence of accidental particulars possible without being composed of them. His aberration is that there is no multiplicity of

[187] E1d3
[188] E1d5
[189] E1app (II/83); E4pref (II/208); CM I.i/235/30-31; KV I.x/49; TdIE, 99/2/36.19. Cf. Samuel Newlands, "Spinoza on Universals," in *The Problem of Universals in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Stefano Di Bella and Tad M. Schmaltz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 62-87 and Karolina Hübner, "Spinoza on Universals," in *A Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Hoboken: Wiley, 2021): 204-214.

particular substances unique to each individual object of this world,[190] but a single substance that applies to the whole of these objects.[191]

Some commentators, such as Bayle[192] and Curley,[193] identify the inherence relation specified in these propositions with predication and conclude that modes, as particular things, are of the wrong logical category to be predicated of substance since it is only universals that can properly be predicated of a substance according to the Aristotelian account. Curley's strategy to evade the alleged 'category mistake' is to deny both the inherence and predication relations between Spinoza's substance and modes. Instead, he proposes a dualism in which these two categories have complete ontological independence while the latter causally depends on the former.[194] Another strategy is to stick to the inherence and predication distinctions, along with suggesting that Spinoza committed to the former but not the latter, which was adopted by Jarrett,[195] Carriero,[196] and Lin.[197] According to their interpretation, Spinoza defines an Aristotelian inherence relationship of ontological dependence between substance and modes but, by denying predication, takes them as accidental particulars. Della Rocca agrees with these scholars to the extent that, following Descartes, Spinoza uses inherence in the technical sense of ontological dependence while arguing against them that "he differs from Descartes because Spinoza sees inherence as nothing but conceptual dependence."[198] Melamed, on the other hand, sticks to the stronger claim that modes both inhere in and are predicated of substance[199] and proposes that the

[190] "A *substance*—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g., the individual man or the individual horse." (*Categories*, 2a13–2a18). This was actually not only the common view in scholasticism but also 17th century early moderns such as Descartes and Locke.
[191] E1p14
[192] Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique par Mr. Pierre Bayle*.
[193] Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969): 18; *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's "Ethics"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988): 31.
[194] Edwin Curley, "Spinoza's Metaphysics Revisited," in *Spinoza in Twenty-First-Century American and French Philosophy*, ed. Jack Stetter and Charles Ramond (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019): 38.
[195] Jarrett, "The Concept of Substance and Mode in Spinoza."
[196] Carriero, "On the Relationship between Mode and Substance in Spinoza's Metaphysics."
[197] Lin, "Substance, Attribute, and Mode in Spinoza."
[198] Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, 59-61. Della Rocca also points out that Spinoza identifies inherence and ontological dependence with causation, which Jarrett notices as well but considers to be some confusion ("The Concept of Substance and Mode in Spinoza," 83).
[199] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 7.

former relation should be understood in the manner of the Scholastic Aristotelian conception of *accidentia* as "being in, but not being a part of"[200] and the latter in *propria* as "necessarily following from [something's] essence while not constituting its essence itself."[201] He aligns with Bayle, Curley, and Bennett in cashing out both Aristotelian and Spinozist conceptions of ontological independence/dependence through predication against Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin, who associate these with inherence while separating from the former that predication necessarily entails universality.[202] My understanding of the matter is that the latter view gives a more compelling account of inherence and predication distinctions for Aristotle and ultimately for the Spinozist inherence relation between substance and modes as a manner of speaking on ontological dependence and independence. It is true that the *primary substance* is not predicated of anything else, but the *secondary substance*, which is predicated of particulars, is still a kind of substance because it does not inhere in another, according to the *Categories*. E1p15d provides significant evidence that Spinoza considers inherence to be synonymous with ontological dependence in a similar vein with this Aristotelian conception, as he uses "modes cannot be without substance" [*modi autem sine substantia nec esse possunt*] interchangeably with modes' "being in another" [*in alio est*] with reference to E1d5.

Nevertheless, despite their terminological disputes, Melamed agrees with Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin in taking the relation between Spinoza's substance and modes as an ontological dependence relation, which does not admit of a mereological structure. Furthermore, even though Melamed argues for the stronger claim that modes can be predicated of as well as inhering in substance, he does not mean by this that modes are universals, as Bayle and Curley took the predication distinction to mean, but that modes as particulars might as well be predicated of substance. To achieve this, he resuscitates an interesting sense of the concept through the Scholastic Aristotelian term *propria*. In this sense, predication is not of universals but of properties that necessarily follow from the essence of substance while not constituting its essence. Hence, he argues, Spinoza rejects Bayle and Curley's dichotomy between singular things and

[200] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 48.
[201] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 51-52.
[202] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 13-14.

universal properties, and defends a position where modes are conceived to be in between singular things and properties, thus superseding the alleged categorical error while establishing their modal equivalence to as well as ontological dependence on substance.[203] As such, while Melamed's reading of the substance-mode relation for Spinoza diverges from the radical dualism of Curley, which rejects both inherence and predication and only admits a causal relationship between two ontologically independent categories, it aligns with Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin in attributing to Spinoza a two-category ontology in which substance is a property bearer and properties are particular ways substances are. The novelty he brings to the commentary of the latter kind is how Spinoza builds necessary modality into the conception of his modes by utilizing the term *propria*.

Ultimately, according to the standard post-Curley dualist reading, Spinoza's (i) substance is ontologically independent in the manner of the Aristotelian substantial particulars that stand as a layer behind all accidental or substantial change, only deviating from the latter in that there is a single such layer; (ii) modes are ontologically dependent on substance[204] in the sense of Aristotelian accidental particulars (or *propria*, which are but one kind of accidents); (iii) there is no mereological structure to the relation between substance and modes.

One might ask why then Spinoza gave up on the old vanilla term 'accident' in favor of more fashionable 'mode' if all he meant by the latter was already involved in the former. In fact, Spinoza did utilize 'accident' along with 'mode' at least until October 1661, as we know from Letter 4, addressed to Oldenburg, where he uses the two terms interchangeably. Later, he gives an explanation for his abandonment of the former for the latter in a passage from the *Cogitata Metaphysica*:

> I only wish it to be noted, concerning this division, that we say expressly that being is divided into Substance and Mode, and not into Substance and Accident. For an Accident is nothing but a mode of thinking, inasmuch as it denotes what is only a respect. E.g., when I say that the triangle is moved, the motion is not a mode of the triangle, but of the body which is moved. Hence the motion is called an accident with respect to the triangle. But with respect to the body, it is called a real being, or mode.

[203] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 50-54.
[204] With the exception of Curley's radical dualism which takes modes as ontologically independent.

> For the motion cannot be conceived without the body, though it can without the triangle. (CM I/236/31–237/5)

Melamed, for one, interprets this passage as saying that a mode cannot be conceived independently of its substance, whereas an accident can be so conceived.[205] According to him, Spinoza's transition from accident to mode was for avoiding two ambiguities: first, regarding the independence of real accidents from their subject and second, whether they can be particulars instead of universals.[206] It can be seen that this assessment is accurate not only with respect to Spinoza's construal of modes as ontologically dependent particulars, but also historically with the conceptions of modal distinction and modes shaped in the hands of Suárez, which Descartes later integrates into his ontology. Accordingly, modal distinction is defined as a lesser real distinction in terms of an asymmetric relation of dependence. It differentiates from a mental distinction as it is not merely a product of thinking, and from a full-fledged real distinction as it does not specify two independent beings but one.[207] It can be seen that Spinoza takes the asymmetric dependence relation as the principal character of modal distinction in CM2.4 (G I/257), which will be important when we discuss his usage of the term in subsection 3.3:

> […] The modal distinction is shown to be twofold: there is that between a mode of a substance and the substance itself, and that between two modes of one and the same substance. We know the latter from the fact that, although either mode may be conceived without the aid of the other, nevertheless neither may be conceived without the aid of the substance whose modes they are. The former is known from the fact that, although the substance can be conceived without its mode, nevertheless, the mode cannot be conceived without the substance.

There seems to be more in that passage (CM I/236/31–237/5) though. Firstly, Spinoza invokes a Scholastic mental distinction between substance and accident ("an Accident is nothing but a mode of thinking") whereas a real distinction between substance-mode ("with respect to the body, it is called a real being, or mode"), which is in line with the

[205] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 30.
[206] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 30, 48; "The Banishment of Accidents from Spinoza's Paradise," *Acta Philosophica* 31, no. 1 (March 2022): 59-60.
[207] Francisco Suárez, *On the Various Kinds of Distinction*, trans. by Cyril Vollert (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1947), 7.2.6–8 (44-46).

Suárezian modal distinction conception. Secondly, he gives a separate function to accidents than modes, that is merely mental, which hints that there is a space in Spinoza's system for merely mental entities that do not have any kind of real distinction. So, the motion of a triangular shaped object is nothing but a mental being with respect to the abstract idea of triangle, but with respect to the real object, it is a real being that can only be modally distinguished from the object, i.e., the motion depends on the triangular object for its existence while the object itself can exist independently.

3.1.1. Inherence

With regards to the Spinozist conception of inherence, Melamed argues against Curley who denies it for Spinoza. He observes that it is common to think of mental things to inhere in another thing (such as ideas in an immaterial mind or material brain), though this may not be so problematic for Curley since what he is concerned with seems to be the inherence of physical things in another thing, rather than mental things in another thing.[208] However, the idea of physical things inhering in another thing (i.e., a substance) might as well be found in the doctrines of Spinoza's contemporaries such as Leibniz, Arnauld and Nicole, or Descartes.[209]

Furthermore, Melamed reconstructs Spinoza's argument for inherence in two stages. First, with the postulation of substance as absolutely infinite, Spinoza conceives it to be extensively everywhere. Therefore, it involves both *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*.[210] Secondly, following his readings of E1p12,[211] E1p13,[212] and E2p10s2,[213] Melamed denies that this involving is in the manner of a whole involving its parts. Accordingly, in case Spinoza conceived the inherence relation between substance and its modes to be a whole-part relation, following the ontological priority he gives to

[208] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 43.
[209] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 44-45.
[210] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 46-47.
[211] "No attribute of a substance can be truly conceived from which it follows that the substance can be divided." (E1p12)
[212] "A substance which is absolutely infinite is indivisible." (E1p13)
[213] "[They] did not observe the [proper] order of philosophizing. For they believed that the divine nature, which they should have contemplated before all else (because it is prior both in knowledge and in nature) is last in the order of knowledge, and that the things which are called objects of the senses are prior to all." (E2p10s2)

parts over the whole, he would have had to hold that parts are prior to substance. However, Melamed contends that this is not the case for Spinoza. Then, the inherence relation is not a part-whole relation, or in other words, modes do not exist in substance as parts to a whole for Spinoza. If modes inhere in substance, but not as parts of substance, as God[214] is indivisible, then what may this inherence mean?

Melamed follows Jarrett and Carriero in recognizing how Spinoza draws on medieval Aristotelianism regarding the modes' inherence in substance and answers that modes can be understood in affinity with the Aristotelian accidents, which inhere in but not as parts of a substance. Following how Aristotelians took the inherence relation as a ontological dependence relation and thus distinguished substances and accidents, according to Melamed, Spinoza defines modes as accidents in terms of the function of being ontologically dependent on but not parts of substance.[215] Melamed further remarks that the transition in the terminology of 'accidence' to 'modification' in Spinoza's writings can be traced back to his Letter 4, addressed to Henry Oldenburg, where he uses the two terms interchangeably. Later, Spinoza gives an explanation to why he abandons using the terminology of 'accidence' in favor of 'modification' in a passage from the *Cogitata Metaphysica*,[216] which Melamed interprets as saying that a mode cannot be conceived independently of its substance, whereas an accident can be so conceived.[217] Melamed observes that both historically[218] and for Spinoza,[219] the transition from the terminology of accidents to modes is actually a shift from the conception of a partially independent relationship between a subject and its accidents

[214] Spinoza famously uses substance, God, and Nature synonymously: E2pref (II/206), E2p4d: "God or Nature." Ep.6 IV/36/24: "I do not separate God from nature, as everyone known to me has done."
[215] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 48.
[216] "I only wish it to be noted, concerning this division, that we say expressly that being is divided into Substance and Mode, and not into Substance and Accident. For an Accident is nothing but a mode of thinking, inasmuch as it denotes what is only a respect. E.g., when I say that the triangle is moved, the motion is not a mode of the triangle, but of the body which is moved. Hence the motion is called an accident with respect to the triangle. But with respect to the body, it is called a real being, or mode. For the motion cannot be conceived without the body, though it can without the triangle." (CM I/236/31–237/5)
[217] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 30.
[218] Melamed does not address the history of the transition from accidents to modifications in his *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, but in his paper: Yitzhak Y. Melamed, "The Banishment of Accidents from Spinoza's Paradise," *Acta Philosophica* 31, no. 1 (2022): 51-55.
[219] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 30 & 48.

to the conception of a completely dependent relationship between substance and its modes.[220] Thus, this transition is not merely terminological, but also conceptual.

3.1.2. Predication

As for predication, Melamed has to argue not only against Bayle and Curley, who denies both inherence and predication, but also against Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin, who admit the former while denying the latter for the Spinozist substance-mode relationship. According to Bayle's reading, Spinoza's modes are singular or individual things. Following Aristotelian logic, which hinders the class of particulars from being predicated of a subject, he concludes that Spinoza committed a categorical mistake by conceiving modes as predicated of substance. Taking his cue from him, Curley identifies the relation of inherence with predication in Spinoza and concludes that since there is a conspicuous logical error in conceiving modes as predicated of (i.e., inhering in) substance, he would not have committed such an error and therefore the predication or the inherence relation in Spinoza was nothing over and above a simple transient efficient causation relationship between substance and modes.

Melamed remarks that Curley's interpretation is grounded on a charitable interpretation and shows a great effort in demonstrating that Curley's reading is not consistent with Spinoza's work by presenting more than thirteen strong objections against it. I will not be addressing his objections here, so, let us turn to how Melamed interprets the predication relation in Spinoza against the criticisms coming from Bayle and Curley. As I have already noted, Melamed does not only distinguish inherence and predication relations in Spinoza against Bayle and Curley's interpretations, but also diverges from Carriero, Jarrett and Lin's readings, which suggest that the Spinozist modes inhere in but are not predicated of substance. Melamed's general strategy in conceiving the inherence relation in Spinoza was depicting it in the manner of the Aristotelian conception of 'being in' and thus of accidents as I have already explained.

[220] The transition from accidents to modifications has also been recognized as a transition from an independent and external relationship to a dependent and internal one in the doctrines of Medieval philosophers such as Duns Scotus, Pedro da Fonseca and Francisco Suárez by John Heil, "Accidents, Modes, Tropes, and Universals," *American Philosophical Quarterly Special Issue: Metaphysics 51/4* (October 2014): 333-344 as well as in the Cartesian philosophy by Tad M. Schmaltz, "Suárez and Descartes on the Mode(s) of Union," *Journal of the History of Philosophy 58/3* (2020): 471-492.

Similarly, he argues that the predication relation in Spinoza would be understood in reference to the Aristotelian and Scholastic conception of 'being a property of.'[221] In that manner, he agrees with Bayle and Curley as well as Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin on that the Spinozist predication relation cannot be understood in terms of the Aristotelian predication or 'being said of' relation. Nevertheless, he rejects Bayle and Curley's dichotomy between singular things and properties along with their identification of modes with singular things, and defends a position where modes are conceived to be in between singular things and properties. As such, it is possible to speak of modes as predicable of substance not in the sense of 'being said of,' but in the sense of 'being a property of,' and therefore the alleged logical error is superseded.

The key passage, which allows Melamed's reading, is E1p16,[222] where Spinoza speaks of the inference of modes from the divine nature and goes on to demonstrate this inference with respect to the relation between *proprium* (*property*) and essence:

> This proposition must be plain to anyone, provided he attends to the fact that the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing a number of *properties* [*plures proprietates*] that really do follow necessarily from it (i.e., from the very essence of the thing); and that it infers more *properties* the more the definition of the thing expresses reality, i.e., the more reality the essence of the defined thing involves. (E1p16, emphases added by Melamed)

First of all, Melamed remarks that the *infinita infinitis modis* mentioned in this proposition are not attributes, as has been claimed by some readers of this passage; but they are rather the modes which follow from the nature of substance.[223] Secondly, Melamed argues that Spinoza takes the 'essence,' 'nature' and 'definition' of a thing to be interchangeable.[224] Finally, Melamed comes to his crucial account of *propria* and *essentia*. Here, he makes an important elucidation with reference to the Scholastic terminology, in which a threefold distinction of qualities makes up a thing: the first type are qualities which make the thing what it is (*essentia*); the second are qualities that necessarily follow from the essence of the thing but do not constitute the essence

[221] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 49.
[222] "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, (i.e., everything which can fall under an infinite intellect)."
[223] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 50.
[224] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 50-51.

(*propria*); and the third are qualities that are caused to some extent by a source external to the thing itself (*accidentes*).[225]

Following this elucidation, Melamed argues that Spinoza identifies *Natura naturata* (i.e., modes) with *propria*. According to Melamed, Spinoza terms modes as *propria* in E1p16d and thus defines a relation of *essentia-propria* in the Scholastic sense between substance and modes.[226] Furthermore, Melamed continues that, particular things and modes are nothing but *propria* for Spinoza.[227] Thus, he concludes that there is no category mistake in the Spinozist conception of the relation of predication between modes and substance, since modes as *propria* are the correct category to be predicated of substance.[228]

By alluding to the Scholastic *propria-essentia* distinction, Spinoza accomplishes delivering three important definitions at once: he defines the modal, ontological and mereological characters of the relation between modes and substance. Modally, both *essentia* and *propria* are necessary whereas *accidentes* is merely contingent for an object. However, although being modally *on a par* with *propria*, *essentia* is ontologically precedent to it. This explains the precedence or the ontological priority of substance over its modes. Accordingly, *propria* are the non-essential, yet necessary consequences of *essentia* while being ontologically posterior to it. In that sense, *propria* necessarily flow from the *essentia* and the former are predicated of the latter. Furthermore, *propria* do not constitute the essence, thereby providing further support for Melamed's rejection of the mereological structure of the substance-mode relation for Spinoza.

So, what does predication add to the substance-mode relation? It reiterates the ontological priority of substance and the rejection of mereological structure of the relation between substance and modes that has already been established through the inherence conception. What it introduces is the modal aspect of this relation. Consequently, Melamed's interpretation can be summarized into five key interpretive theses: (i) there is no mereological relationship between substance and modes; (ii)

[225] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 51.
[226] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 52.
[227] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 52-54.
[228] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 54.

substance is ontologically and causally independent; (iii) modes are ontologically and causally dependent on substance; (iv) universals have no ontological status; (v) modes are modally necessary. As such, while his reading of the substance-mode relation for Spinoza diverges from the radical dualism of Curley, which rejects both inherence and predication and only admits a causal relationship between two ontologically independent categories, it is in line with Heil's description of two-category ontology in which substance as property bearer and properties as the ways substances are are complimentary and aligns with Jarrett, Carriero, and Lin in attributing such a category dualism to Spinoza.

3.2. Objections Against the Dualist Reading

Now, let us examine the implications of substance-property dualism for Spinoza and scrutinize how it accommodates three other doctrines present throughout his work: hierarchical one-category being, bare substratum, and immanent causation of substance.

3.2.1. Hierarchical One-Category Being

All through medieval philosophy, one recurring theme was the ontological status of accidents and modes, or more broadly, of the properties of substance within a dualist substance-property ontology. The debate revolved around the questions of whether properties really exist and are separable from their subject. Furthermore, the examination of the Eucharist posed a significant problem to these ontological disputes as the accidental forms of the sacraments remaining the same while the substantial forms changing into the body and blood of Christ during transubstantiation compelled medieval Catholic philosophers to make room for this extraordinary phenomenon.

Robert Pasnau elaborately surveys how the understanding of accidents switched from *deflationary* accounts that take them "as lacking any proper being of their own" in the thirteenth century to a realist conception as "beings in their own right, capable of existing independently of their subjects" under the influence of Duns Scotus in the fourteenth century, before the rejection of this latter doctrine of *real accidents* by the

seventeenth-century authors.[229] The deflationary accounts range from outright denial of properties, or *eliminativism*, as Pasnau coins it, to assigning degraded existence to them in contrast to the substances they inhere in.[230] Although eliminativism was a stance no one proposed in scholasticism, the dominant view from early scholasticism up until the thirteenth century was deflationary.[231] Aquinas holds a deflationary account according to which only substance truly exists while all other categories are not truly existent but only aspects of it.[232] He follows Aristotle's discussion on the equivocity of being suggesting that indeed the accidents exist, but only to the extent that 'exist' has a different meaning than what it carries in the case of substance.[233] In response to such deflationary accounts, Duns Scotus argues that given the various functions attributed to accidents in the scholastic ontology, it is ridiculous to hold that they do not really exist. Thus, accidents must exist in the univocal sense with substances. Yet, Scotus goes further by asserting that the real existence of accidents amounts to their separability or independence of the substances to which they belong.[234] The idea of an independent accident was a problematic concept, though. Following the Aristotelian account, an accident is an accident to the extent that it inheres in another, which is to say that it depends for its existence on another. However, if real accidents can act independently of their substances, then they would be no more accidental, but substantial. Suárez's conception of modal distinction and modes seems to take both these concerns into account and come up with the solution that there is no categorical mistake in thinking that the properties of a substance can be real in the full sense while depending on it for their existence.

Three questions can be found at the bottom of these disputes: whether properties exist at all; whether they depend on substances for their existence; and whether they have a

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[229] Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274–1671* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 180.
[230] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*, 181; Thomas Hobbes, *De corpore* 7.1; Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*.
[231] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*, 183; *Averroes on Aristotle's Metaphysics: An Annotated Translation of the So-Called "Epitome"* XII.25, trans. Rüdiger Arnzen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Richard Rufus of Cornwall, *Scriptum in Metaphysicam*, eds. Rega Wood, Jennifer Ottman, and Neil Lewis (Forthcoming: Oxford University Press); Albert the Great, *Opera omnia*, *Metaphysics* VII.1.1, VII.1.4, ed. B. Geyer et al. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1951–).
[232] *Summa Theologica* I, Q.45, art.4, corp., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (New Advent, 2008). https://www.newadvent.org/summa.
[233] *Meteorology* 389b31–390a19; *De anima* 412b20–22; *Metaphysics* 1035b22–25.
[234] "Ordinatio," IV.12.1, in *Opera omnia,* ed, C. Balic et al. (Vatican: Scotistic Commission, 1950–).

diminished existence. Although the latter two questions depend on the first, it can be seen that they are independent from each other.[235] Rejecting their existence will bring about eliminativism, whereas accepting it may result in either a deflationist or realist account of properties. Refusing their ontological dependence on or admitting their independence from substance to some extent will lead to accidental realism while accepting the former and rejecting the latter to either deflationism or modal realism. Finally, the deflationist will infer from the dependent existence of properties that they have, in fact, a diminished existence, while realists, both accidental and modal, will take the being of properties to be univocal with that of substances.

Following these discussions, we can speak of four distinct types of particular properties in terms of ontological dependence and hierarchy of being relations. The conception of a property completely dependent on while having a lesser being than a substance is an accident. Real accidents are properties which tend to depend on a substance but act independently on special occasions while enjoying the same kind of existence with it. Finally, modes possess the same existence with their substance like real accidents, but, similar to accidents, cannot be separated from it. Another type of properties worth mentioning here, which will be useful shortly, is the contemporary conception of tropes.[236] Tropes are very similar to real accidents in that they have a real independent existence, but they have such an independent existence that they no longer tend to depend on a substance and, hence, are taken as properties in a one-category ontology. As Heil remarks, today, the terms "mode" and "trope" are mostly taken as equivalent, while the former is understood more at home in a two-category ontology as attributed to a substance and the latter in a one-category bundle theory as modes minus substance.[237]

So, where does Spinoza stand in all these discussions? Let us move one step at a time. *I. Existence of properties:* As we have seen since the beginning, all through his earliest writings to his *magnum opus*, *Ethics*, Spinoza consistently articulates in various ways that both substance and modes exist.[238] *II. Dependence of properties:* As I have

[235] Pasnau makes the same point in *Metaphysical Themes*, 204-205, 269.
[236] Donald C. Williams, "On the Elements of Being: I," *The Review of Metaphysics* 7, no. 1 (1953): 3-18.
[237] Heil, *The Universe As We Find It*, 106.
[238] Ep.4 IV 13/30-14/35, CM II.i I/249/29, E1d3, E1d5, E1p15d

discussed in the previous section, whether we appeal to the Jarrett, Carriero, Lin commentary that Spinoza's usage of 'being in' is a reference to the scholastic Aristotelian conception of inherence as ontological dependence or to Melamed's commentary that modes are ontologically dependent on substance as its *propria*, there is widespread consensus that modes strictly depend on substance. *III. Diminished existence of properties:* This is tricky. As Schaffer points out,[239] there is one passage in the *Ethics* where Spinoza remarks that 'being' univocally applies to all individuals in Nature:

> [W]e are accustomed to refer all individuals in Nature to one genus, which is called the most general, i.e., to the notion of being, which pertains absolutely to all individuals in Nature.[240]

In the same passage, Spinoza explicates that he identifies possessing being with reality and perfection. As he customarily speaks of substance as the most perfect or real being in comparison to modes,[241] it follows that the same kind of belonging to his two ontological categories of substance and modes, which make up "all individuals in Nature." Spinoza further remarks here that the negation or lack of being of such individuals can be translated into a lack of power,[242] which gives us a hint that being can be understood in terms of *potentia*.[243] The operation of this understanding can be followed in some key propositions of the *Ethics*. E1p34 states that "God's power [*potentia*] is his essence itself." This is quite straightforward, and considered with E1p20,[244] the conclusion is that there is nothing to a substance other than *potentia*. Later in the demonstration to E3p6, where Spinoza introduces perseverance [*conatus*], the key concept for his understanding of singular things and consequently his natural, psychological, moral, and political theory,[245] he remarks that "singular things are modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way (by

[239] Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, last modified Winter 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/monism.
[240] E4pref (II/207)
[241] For example, KV II.iv.10, PPC I.P4S, CM III/I/254, TTP1, G III/28, E1p33S2, E1App
[242] "Quatenus itaque Naturæ individua ad hoc genus revocamus et ad invicem comparamus et alia plus entitatis seu realitatis quam alia habere comperimus eatenus alia aliis perfectiora esse dicimus et quatenus iisdem aliquid tribuimus quod negationem involvit ut terminus, finis, *impotentia*." (emphasis added)
[243] I will use *potentia* instead of 'power' to distinguish it from *potestas*, including "oomph" in KV.
[244] "God's existence and his essence are one and the same."
[245] Cf. Garrett, "Spinoza's Conatus Argument," 127.

E1p25c), i.e. (by E1p34), things that express, in a certain and determinate way, God's power [*potentia*], by which God is and acts." Accordingly, both substance and modes can be cashed out in the single category of *potentia*.

Thus, Spinoza seems to be following the Scotist univocity of being, right? Maybe not so fast. In *The Principles of Philosophy*, Spinoza outrightly posits that "a substance has more reality than an accident or mode […]; accordingly there is more objective reality in the idea of a substance than in that of an accident"[246] along with that 'reality' translates univocally into 'being' and 'perfection' in his vocabulary,[247] which he utilizes on several occasions, such as "the more reality or being each thing has,"[248] "degrees of reality or being in ideas,"[249] or degrees of reality and perfection contained in ideas.[250] It can be seen that this idea pervades over his career as he also speaks of degrees of "reality or being a being has" in an earlier letter to Simon de Vries (1663), [251] and degrees of perfection in minds in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.[252] There is no doubt that he committed to this idea in the more advanced stages of his career, as in the *Ethics*, one can find degrees of excellence in objects and of reality or perfection in ideas,[253] of perfection of men,[254] of perfection and reality things possess.[255] Again, he repeatedly explicates how the intensities of being and reality amount to what we call the perfection of beings.[256]

So, does that mean that Spinoza admitted modes as diminished beings in his ontology? It may seem likely, and some scholars have defended this view.[257] However, in a dualist substance-property ontology, it would be contradictory for Spinoza to posit that

[246] PPC I.a4
[247] PPC I.p4l7
[248] PPC I.p9
[249] PPC I.a9, I.p7l1
[250] PPC I.p4s
[251] Ep.9 (IV/45)
[252] TTP I (III/21)
[253] E2p13s (II/97), E2p49s (II/133)
[254] E4p58s, E5p31s
[255] E5p40
[256] E4pref (II/207), E5p40
[257] See John Caird, *Spinoza* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1888), 171; Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul, 1880; reprinted by Elibron Classics, 1995), 177; Michael Della Rocca, "Rationalism Run Amok: Representation and the Reality of the Emotions in Spinoza," in *Interpreting Spinoza*, ed. Charles Huenemann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 52. Also see Samuel Newlands, "More Recent Idealist Readings of Spinoza," *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 2 (2011): 116.

modes, as it would mean that the same properties have both equivocity and univocity of being with their substance at the same time. Univocity and equivocity of being cannot be coextensive in a two-category layered ontology as a property must have one sort of existence, which is either full-fledged or lesser than the proper sort of existence that belongs to their substance. So, is Spinoza committing an obvious contradiction by adhering to two incompatible positions here, or is there a way to reconcile them? Even though these two propositions are contradictory in a dualist ontology, perhaps they might work well together in a different ontological setting. If we bring in a mereological structure to the relation between substance and properties, then the diminished being of modes would just mean holding a larger share or intensity of the whole, while the same sort of existence applies both to the parts (i.e., modes) and the whole (i.e., substance).

Before moving on, let's see how Spinoza cashes out these degrees of being, reality, or perfection in terms of intensities of *potentia* in the *Ethics*. In E1p11s (II/54), he equates being more real to possessing more *potentiae*, which entails that substance exists absolutely since it has infinite *potentiae*. In E4pref, he makes it clear that when we find more being in some beings or reality than others, or that these are more perfect than others, this is only a manner of speaking simply because "they do not affect our Mind as much as those we call perfect." So, there is no reality of degrees of being, or reality, or perfection, except the intensity of *potentia* a singular thing possesses to affect our mind. Thus, substance, as the most real or perfect being, would have the most *potentia*, while modes have more or less being, reality, or perfection with respect to the intensity of *potentia* they share of the whole.[258]

3.2.2. Bare Substratum

We have seen how the dualist reading of Spinoza's ontology takes substance as the fundamental layer in which modes as properties are borne as in an Aristotelian model. The conundrum of conceiving substance as a property-bearer in a layered ontology is

[258] For a similar view, see Valtteri Viljanen, *Spinoza's Geometry of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Also, Stephan Schmid, "Review of Spinoza's Geometry of Power, by Valtteri Viljanen," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 95 (2013): 361.

ending up in the conception of a bare substratum, according to which a substance is an entity that supports other properties ontologically while itself having no properties *per se*. Aristotle himself denied matter as the proper candidate for substance on this ground, when he discussed what is the most fundamental layer in the *Metaphysics*, since, otherwise, substance would be a generic entity without any properties *per se*.[259] Nevertheless, given his layered ontology consisting of primary substance or matter as the bearer of forms, the inevitable consequence of a bare substratum in the form of the *prime matter*[260] haunted him throughout all his work, particularly following his doctrines regarding essential and accidental changes of the four fundamental elements.[261]

It was a lively debate that extended all through the medieval to the early modern period. Aquinas, embracing this consequence, considered the concept of *prime matter* or 'matter from which'[262] as the potency to substantial existence while the *subject* or 'matter in which' as the potency to accidental existence.[263] According to him, expunged from all substantial or accidental forms, there is prime matter. Aquinas remarks that this entity neither exists without a form nor is defined or known in itself. However, it exists as the ground of all existence and, as such, has no numerical distinction.[264] It has no numerical distinction, not because it is an individual with a certain form but rather because it spreads beneath all being while not having any property *per se*.[265] It is controversial whether Descartes committed to such an idea of bare substratum as there are a number of passages where he seemingly posits that substances cannot be immediately known but only inferred from the existence of

[259] *Metaphysics*, 1029a27-1029a33.
[260] It is controversial whether Aristotle commits to the idea of prime matter as he does not seem to do so in the passages he explicitly uses the term "prime matter" (*prôtê hulê*) or "primary underlying thing" (*prôton hupokeimenon*) such as *Physics*, 192a31, 193a10, 193a29; *Metaphysics*, 1014b32, 1015a7–10, 1017a5–6, 1044a23, ix 7, 1049a24–7; *Generation of Animals*, 729a32. Yet, in a rather ambiguous passage in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle seems to posit the idea of prime matter, although not qualifying it as "prime" (1029a7-1029a26).
[261] *On the Heavens*, 305a14–35.
[262] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, 1, 2.
[263] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, 1, 3.
[264] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, 2, 14-17.
[265] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature to Brother Sylvester*, 2, 16.

properties,[266] whereas, in others, he speaks of them as bundles of properties.[267] Locke's idea of bare substratum derives from a similar understanding of a two-category ontology, in which properties or qualities are borne in an undeterminable substance that ontologically supports them.[268] Similarly, contemporary bare particulars theories are two-category ontological theories, which take property bearers as bare substrata.[269]

As an uncompromising rationalist who champions the attitude that nothing can evade intellectualization, one can see how Spinoza finds bare substance an intrinsically absurd idea. Nevertheless, as we can see from Descartes' affirmation, rationalism does not seem to necessitate the rejection of bare substratum. Yet, we know that Spinoza is not fond of the idea of a bare substratum as he explicitly ridicules it in two passages from *Cogitata Metaphysica*.[270] But, if substance is what subsists through all change in its properties in a two-category ontology, one can reasonably ask whether or not it has any properties *per se*? In other words, if substance is merely a bearer of modes, which are its properties, and distinct from the whole of its modes, does not that entail that substance is a bare substratum devoid of any properties *per se*?s

One quick answer might be attributes are the *per se* properties of substance. So, stripped of the modes, substance has attributes as its *per se* properties. In this case, Spinozist ontology would not be a two-category ontology but a three-category one with substance, attributes as substantial forms, and modes as accidental forms. Indeed,

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[266] René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, eds. and trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985-1986), 210.
[267] René Descartes, *Descartes' Conversation with Burman*, ed. and trans. John Cottingham, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 15. This reading of Descartes' substances was endorsed by Peter Markie, "Descartes's Concepts of Substance," in *Reason, Will, and Sensation*, ed. John Cottingham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 63-87 and Cottingham, "Descartes' Conversation with Burman," 77-79. Also, see Matthew Stuart, "Descartes's Extended Substances," in *New Essays on the Rationalists*, ed. Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 84-86.
[268] "The idea then we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing, but the supposed, but unknown support of those qualities, we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist, *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*, which, according to the true import of the word, is in plain English, *standing under or upholding*."
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Roger Woolhouse (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 268-269.
[269] Theodore Sider, "Bare Particulars," *Philosophical Perspectives* 20 (2006): 387–97.
[270] "Our opponents do make this separation when they strip the thinking thing of every thought and feign it as that prime matter of the Peripatetics." (CM I/280/19)
"For to conceive a thinking thing without any thought is the same as wishing to conceive an extended thing without extension." (CM I/280/32)

this was a strategy employed by his contemporaries such as Wolff.[271] I doubt if that works for Spinoza though. Although a comprehensive discussion of attributes cannot be delivered here, I ask the reader to recall my disclaimer at the beginning of this dissertation that the only two ontological categories for Spinoza are substance and modes, as he spells out ontological status only in terms of predicating being or inherence (independence/dependence), none of which apply to attributes. Spinoza never introduces attributes as an ontological category. Whenever he specifies what there is, he specifically mentions substance and modes. So, I cannot see any reason to admit attributes as an ontological category and consider them as a solution to the problem of bare substratum.[272]

Another approach would be to assert that the bearer is somewhat dependent on, inseparable from, or inconceivable independently of its properties. Pasnau defends a version of this approach in his take on modal distinction and modes for Suárez and Descartes.[273] Accordingly, substance is "necessarily in need of modes in order to exist at all" and "radically incomplete when considered all by itself, and cannot coherently exist without the addition of entities of another sort, modal entities."[274] So, Suárez and Descartes' modes are almost substantial properties according to Pasnau. They are so indispensable for the substance that it cannot be conceived without them. It is puzzling, though, to distinguish and conceive two categories of substance and properties, and yet say that these cannot be conceived independently. If they cannot be conceived independently, how can we know or conceive that there is such a distinction in the first place? Heil, in his defense of two-category ontology, attempts to overcome this problem by asserting that the categories of modes and substance are separable only in thought or conception but inseparable in reality,[275] which basically means that there is only one category in reality but two in thought. What Heil defends here in scholastic

[271] Christian Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia* (Frankfurt & Leipzig: Officina libraria Rengeriana, 1736), §771-773, https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_1HsPAAAAQAAJ/page/n11/mode/2up.
[272] For more on the status of Spinoza's attributes see Andreas Schmidt, "Substance Monism and Identity Theory in Spinoza," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, edited by Olli Koistinen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), where Schmidt examines Deleuze's reading that there is no real but a formal distinction between substance and attributes.
[273] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 269-275.
[274] Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, 271-272.
[275] "At any given time, a substance and its properties are separable, however, only in conception or thought, not in reality." (Heil, *The Universe As We Find It*, 54)

terms, which were borrowed by Spinoza, is that there is no real but a mental distinction between these two categories.

However, regardless of the ontological perplexities that follow these doctrines, I doubt if neither attempt would work for Spinoza. Pasnau's approach to Suárez and Descartes' modes would fall short because Spinoza repeatedly explicates that substance exists and can be conceived independently; and Heil's proposal would be long because the distinction between substance and modes is not a formal but a modal distinction, which is a real distinction, as according to the E2p7 doctrine,[276] what is true in thought should be true in reality.[277] Therefore, if substance and modes are truly distinguishable in thought, they must be so in reality, or the other way around, as well. And, since substance exists and can be conceived independently of its modes, it translates that it exists and can be conceived without any properties *per se*, just as a bare substratum. In the priority monistic model, on the other hand, Spinoza's contempt of bare substratum makes more sense as it naturally follows from the fact that there is no substance that stands beneath its properties as a latent layer.

3.2.3. Immanent Causation

We know that the idea of immanent causation has been a prominent feature of Spinoza's project from his earliest work *Short Treatise*, where he describes it [*inblyvende oorzaak*] as "God acting on himself"[278] to one of his later letters from 1675 addressed to Oldenburg: "[…] I maintain that God is, as they say, the immanent, but not the transitive, cause [*causam immanentem, ut ajunt, non vero transeuntem*] of all things,"[279] or to the *Hebrew Grammar*, on which Spinoza worked simultaneously with *Ethics,* where it appears in connection to reflexive verbs: "[…] because it frequently happens that the agent and the patient [of an action] are one and the same person, […] it was necessary to devise another form of infinitive which would express an action as it is related to the agent, or immanent cause [*ad agentem, sive causam*

[276] E2p7: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things."
[277] Cf. E1p8s2. This is also in accordance with Suárez's explication of modal distinction as a lesser kind of real distinction that describes a one-way dependence relation as we have seen in 2.1.
[278] KV I/26, 35
[279] Ep.73 IV/307

immanentem]."[280] In the *Ethics*, Spinoza abruptly asserts that "God is the immanent [*immanens*], not the transitive [*transiens*], cause of all things" in E1p18. The proposition is proven with reference to (i) substance being the cause of all things (E1p16c1),[281] (ii) all things being in substance (E1p15),[282] and (iii) no substance being outside of the one substance (E1p14). Peculiarly, there is neither a scholium to the proposition, nor is it ever referred to in the rest of the *Ethics*.

Two different ways of construing immanent causation can be discerned in these passages. First is the one from *Ethics*, which is defined in terms of inherence: immanent causation is a kind of efficient causation whose effect is in itself.[283] The other is through the relation between the 'agent' (or cause) and the 'patient' of an action. Here, immanent causation is the sort of causation where the patient undergoing the action is identical to the agent doing it.[284] Stephen Zylstra skillfully demonstrates how both ways of construing immanent causation should be taken as aspects of Spinoza's same unified theory, rather than mutually exclusive alternatives, as these can be found in writings from the same, mature, period of Spinoza's career even though he does not explicitly state this in the *Ethics*.[285] He further clarifies the apparent contradiction between the latter definition of God's immanent causation that implies undergoing its own actions and the technical sense of undergoing that defines partial causation in E3d2[286] by illustrating how Spinoza employs these terms in two distinct ways. I will follow Zylstra in taking Spinoza to consider immanent causation to imply

[280] CGLH12 G I/341–42
[281] "[…] God is the efficient cause of all that can fall within the sphere of an infinite intellect."
[282] E1p15: "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God."
[283] This is in accordance with Spinoza's possible sources for the concept: Franco Burgersdijk, *Institutionum logicarum libri duo* (Amsterdam: Gillis Valckenier and Casparus Commelijn, 1660) https://books.google.com/books?id=oOEPAAAAQAAJ, I.17 comm. 6 f. (65) and Adriaan Heereboord, *Hermēneia logica, seu Explicatio, tum per notas, tum per exempla, synopseos logicae Burgersdicianae* (Leiden: David à Lodenstein and Severyn Matthysse, 1650) https://books.google.com/books?id=3MBkAAAAcAAJ, I.17 qq. 7–9 (102 f.).
[284] This is more in line with the Aristotelian scholastic construal of the concepts. See, e.g., *Metaphysics*, 1050a23-b2 and Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*. trans. A. Pegis, J. Anderson, V. Bourke, and C. O'Neil, (New York: Doubleday, 1955-57), II.23.5; *On the Power of God*, trans. L. Shapcote, (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932-34), 10.1. The idea survives in early modern scholasticism in Suárez: DM 48.2.1 [26.873– 4] and DM 18.7.45–51 [25.645–47].
[285] Stephen Zylstra, "Spinoza on Action and Immanent Causation," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 102, no. 1 (2020): 29-55.
[286] E3d2: I say that we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e. (by D1), when something in us or outside us follows from our nature, which can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone. On the other hand, I say that we are acted on when something happens in us, or something follows from our nature, of which we are only a partial cause.

undergoing, according to which immanent cause turns out to be both the adequate cause and the ontological subject that undergoes the cause.

The idea of immanent causation in scholastic and early modern thought is contrasted to the idea of *transeunt*[287] causation. This distinction goes back to a passage from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where he distinguishes between the actions in which the actualization of a potency is in the thing being made and those in which the actions exist in the subject of the action.[288] Following Aristotle, Aquinas distinguishes two kinds of actions: ones which remain in [*immanenere*] the subject of the action and ones which pass over [*transire*] it.[289] The idea survives in early modern Scholasticism in Suárez.[290]

In an attempt to argue against taking God *qua Natura Naturans* as adequate cause and *qua Natura Naturata* as partial cause in the sense specified by E3d2, Zylstra points out that since these are modally distinct beings, even though not really distinct, this interpretation does not satisfy the identity of the agent and patient Spinoza stipulates for immanent causation in CGH12 G I/342.[291] I completely agree with this subtle insight, yet cannot see how this does not extend to the dualist reading in general. If substance and modes are two modally distinct categories of being, then substance as the agent is not identical with its modes that are the patient, which violates the identity of the agent and patient condition for immanent causation.

Don Garrett interprets the immanent cause in Spinoza as the unification of *inherence* and *efficient causation*.[292] Taking his cue from Garrett, Melamed further observes that

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[287] I will use the term '*transeunt*' rather than Curley's translation of 'transitive,' since the latter is opposed to intransitive whereas the former is opposed to immanent.
[288] *Metaphysics*, 1050a23-b2.
[289] Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*. trans. A. Pegis, J. Anderson, V. Bourke, and C. O'Neil, (New York: Doubleday, 1955-57), II.23.5.
Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. L. Shapcote, (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932-34), 10.1.
[290] For Suárez's distinction between transeunt and immanent actions, see DM 48.2.1 [26.873– 4], and for a detailed discussion of this distinction DM 18.7.45–51 [25.645–47]. Also see Schmid, Stephan, "Efficient Causality," in *Suárez on Aristotelian Causality*, ed. Fink, Jakob Leth (2015), 88-89.
[291] Cf. Stephen Zylstra, "Spinoza on Action and Immanent Causation."
[292] Don Garrett, "Spinoza's Conatus Argument" In *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, eds. Olli I. Koistinen & John I. Biro, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 157n31. Also see John Morrison, "Restricting Spinoza's Causal Axiom," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 65, no. 258 (January 2015): 40-63; Alison Peterman, "Spinoza on Extension," *Philosophers' Imprint* 15, no. 14 (April 2015): 13.

Spinoza's assimilation of inherence with efficient causation is an aberration from the Aristotelian tradition, according to which efficient and final causes were external causes, whereas material and formal causes were internal causes.[293] For Melamed, Spinoza's reasons for this extension of internality to efficient causation seems to be ambiguous and with little influence on his overall philosophy, if not arbitrary.[294] However, this conception as I have explicated thus far gives us a very important clue on how Spinoza understands the relation between substance and modes. If substance is not the *transeunt* cause of its modes,[295] which means that if there is no other ontological category other than itself that is affected by its actions, then it should be identical to its modes, which are the objects of its actions. Whereas according to the dualist reading, the object of the actions of the substance should be its modes and not God himself as the two are modally distinct from each other. If substance is a distinct category from its modes, then they are not identical, in which case there is an apparent conflict between Spinoza's conceptions of immanent causation and his ontology of substance and modes.

3.3. Monistic Reconstruction of Spinoza's Ontology

So, the question is whether Spinoza is a dualist who construes some kind of hierarchy of being or independence between substance and modes, or a monist who wants to eat his cake (i.e., substance) and have it too (i.e., modes). On the flip side, if a two-category ontology is incompatible with Spinoza's conception of substance and modes as I have argued so far, how can a one-category ontology be compatible with his straightforward ontological commitment to the two categories of substance and modes? The answer would be in a part-whole relationship in which both substance and modes can be understood in terms of the single category of the whole in a holistic mereological relationship, *i.e.*, in a *priority monism* as Schaffer coins the term.[296] According to the

[293] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 62-63.
[294] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 64-65.
[295] I will use the term '*transeunt*' rather than Curley's translation of 'transitive,' since the latter is opposed to intransitive whereas the former is opposed to immanent.
[296] Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," *Philosophical Review* 119, no. 1 (2010): 31-76. Also see Jonathan Schaffer, "On What Grounds What," in *Metametaphysics*, eds. David J. Chalmers, David Manley and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 347-383.

priority monism model, both whole and parts are real where the latter ontologically depend on the former. As such, it prescribes an ontological commitment to (i) a mereological structure and (ii) the ontological dependence of the parts on their whole. I have already discussed how everyone (except Curley) agrees on (i) the ontological dependence of modes on substance. So, if we can demonstrate that there is (ii) a mereological structure between them, then the Spinozistic substance-mode relation turns out to fit perfectly into the priority monism model.

However, the problem with this approach is that Spinoza explicitly denies that substance can be divided into parts in E1p12 and E1p13. Furthermore, Spinoza considers parts to be prior in nature to their wholes in Letter 35, while describing substance to be prior to its modes.[297] Thus, scholars conclude, the relationship between Spinoza's substance and modes is not a whole-part relationship,[298] while some admit the plausibility of a holistic mereological relationship between Spinoza's finite and infinite modes.[299] I am going to argue here that this denial of the mereological structure of the substance-mode relationship commits a logical leap by failing to qualify in which sense Spinoza rules it out in E1p12, E1p13 and Ep.35, and that the passages where he explicitly speaks of a holistic mereology, which Melamed and Schmaltz admit of the relationship between finite and infinite modes, in fact, applies to the very relationship between substance and modes.

For this purpose, after addressing the conventional reading of E1p12, E1p13, and Ep.35, the first subsection of this section offers an alternative reading of these passages where Spinoza allegedly rejects the part-whole relationship between modes and substance. In the next subsection, by providing evidence from E1P15, the *Physical Digression*,[300] Ep.32, and the *Short Treatise*, where he straightforwardly speaks of a

[297] For example, E2p10s2 where Spinoza criticizes other philosophers for missing the proper order of philosophizing as they "did not observe the [proper] order of philosophizing. For they believed that the divine nature, which they should have contemplated before all else (because it is prior both in knowledge and in nature) is last in the order of knowledge, and that the things which are called objects of the senses are prior to all."
[298] See Curley, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, 890n6; Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 59-60, 81-85; Garrett, "Spinoza's Conatus Argument," 135.
[299] See Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 130-132; Schmaltz, "Spinoza's Mereology."
[300] This is a short treatise on corporeal bodies that Spinoza inserted between E2P13 and E2P14, which was called "the Physical Digression" by David Lachterman, "The Physics of Spinoza's 'Ethics'," in *Spinoza: New Perspective*, eds. R. W. Shahan and J. I. Biro (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 75.

holistic mereology, I argue that he does not categorically deny the mereological structure of the substance-mode relationship, but rather a certain instantiation of it in which the parts are understood to be ontologically prior to their whole, and, thus, the whole to be divisible to its parts. However, this is not the sole understanding of a mereological relationship, and, therefore rejecting it does not imply categorically rejecting a mereological relationship. I am going to demonstrate here that, although rejecting a mereological relationship between substance and modes in which parts are ontologically prior to their whole, Spinoza never rejects, and, in fact, endorses the doctrine of a mereological relationship among them in which the whole is ontologically prior to its parts.

3.3.1. Spinoza's Rejection of Mereological Structure

The denial of the mereological structure of the relation between substance and modes is majorly grounded on E1p12 and E1p13, where Spinoza sets forth the indivisibility of substance, which can be reconstructed as follows:

1. Parts either retain the nature of the whole (i) or not (ii).
2. If parts retain the nature of the whole (i), then each part will be infinite (E1p8),[301] its own cause (E1p7),[302] and have a different attribute (E1p5).[303] Then, there will be many substances formed from one, and the parts won't have anything in common with their wholes and the whole will be able to be and be conceived without its parts, which is plainly self-contradictory.
3. If parts do not retain the nature of the whole (ii), then, since the whole can be divided into equal parts which do not retain its nature, it would lose its nature after this division takes place. Eventually, that would mean the whole would cease to be in case it is divided into parts, which do not retain its nature.

What Spinoza stresses here is that the whole cannot be divided into parts that can be and be conceived *per se*, i.e., into substantial parts. In the first scenario, the parts of

[301] "Every substance is necessarily infinite."
[302] "It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist."
[303] "In Nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute."

substance are each unique substances themselves. This is absurd for Spinoza as it would mean that the whole is composed of parts that are completely independent entities ontologically and conceptually. So, both the whole and its parts must be substantial beings which have nothing in common. In the second scenario, the parts of substance feature some nature completely distinct from their whole, which is also absurd according to Spinoza since such parts cannot sum up to compose something with which they have nothing in common. In both cases, Spinoza rejects the idea that substance may have parts that feature some characteristics independent of and prior to their whole. Put in other words, this is to deny substantial parts of substance.[304]

It can be seen that this idea is strongly related to the doctrine that substance cannot be a whole, which is composed of parts that are ontologically prior to itself. In Ep.35, Spinoza denies a part-whole relation between substance and its modes in terms of the priority of substance to its modes:

> [God] is simple, and not composed of parts. For component parts must be prior in nature and knowledge to what is composed of them. In a being eternal by its nature this cannot be.[305]

Also, in E2p10s2, Melamed notes,[306] Spinoza stresses the priority of substance to its modes, while criticizing other philosophers for missing the proper order of philosophizing as they:

> […] did not observe the [proper] order of philosophizing. For they believed that the divine nature, which they should have contemplated before all else (because it is prior both in knowledge and in nature) is last in the order of knowledge, and that the things which are called objects of the senses are prior to all.

Similarly, in KV I.ii I/24, Spinoza argues that God having divisible parts that "can be conceived and understood without the others" would contradict with his simplicity, and in PPC P17, after asserting that "God is simple," Spinoza denies that substance can be composed of parts as the parts would have to be ontologically prior to substance, which, according to him is absurd as it contradicts his doctrine of the ontological

[304] Schaffer points out that parts are understood to be substantial parts in a mereological relationship in which they are conceived to be ontologically prior to their whole. Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," 41.
[305] Ep.35 IV/181
[306] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 47-48.

priority of substance. Accordingly, if substance is prior to its modes, while parts are prior to their wholes, the relationship between the former cannot qualify as a relationship in the manner of the latter. Therefore, there cannot be a mereological relationship between substance and its modes. We have already seen that, as this relationship cannot be recognized as a mereological relationship, Melamed argues that it should be understood on the Aristotelian model of subject-accident relationship as '*being in, but not being a part of*.' Now, let us try to find out whether this argument for the incompatibility of a mereological relationship between Spinoza's substance and its modes with reference to these passages is tenable and whether a kind of mereological relation can be reconciled with them and the rest of Spinoza's oeuvre.

3.3.2. Rereading Spinoza's Rejection of Mereological Structure

In the framework of the parthood and mereological relationship conceptions I discussed in subsection 2.1.4, it can be seen that in the passages Melamed brings forward, Spinoza understands 'part' in the narrow sense of 'independent part' and rejects merely mechanistic mereology between substance and its modes, in which the whole is divisible into its independent parts. So, they rule out the conceptions of independent parts and mechanistic mereology but not the conceptions of dependent parts and holistic mereology. Although the priority and indivisibility of the whole are indeed in contradiction with the conceptions of independent parthood and mechanistic mereology, they are not only non-contradictory with dependent parthood and holistic mereology, but they are also their most fundamental assumptions as Schaffer's analysis shows. Therefore, we have no reason to suppose that Spinoza rejects dependent parts and holistic mereology between substance and modes with respect to these passages.

This conception of substance as an organic whole of modes as its dependent parts does not contradict Spinoza's doctrine of simplicity either, as in KV I.ii I/24, PPC P17, and CM I/258, Spinoza cashes out simplicity in terms of the indivisibility and priority of the whole to its parts. Accordingly, an organic whole which is composed of parts that

are indivisible and prior to its parts might as well qualify as simple in terms of Spinoza's simplicity stipulation.[307]

3.3.3. Holistic Mereological Reading of the Substance-Mode Relation

So far, I have argued that what Spinoza denies of the substance-mode relation is specifically a mechanical mereological relation and that this denial does not necessitate a rejection of holistic mereology. However, this also does not entail that he endorses a holistic mereological relation thereof. Therefore, we have to look into the passages where Spinoza describes modes as dependent parts of substance in a holistic mereological relation. First desideratum of this conception is the ontological priority of the whole to its parts (i.e., substance to its modes), which is satisfied in numerous passages as I have already argued. Second desideratum is if there is a mereological structure of the relation between substance and modes. For answering this question, I will identify if Spinoza speaks of (i) substance as a whole (i.e., substance having parts), (ii) substance as an organic whole (i.e., substance having dependent parts), (iii) modes as parts, (iv) modes as dependent parts, and (v) modes as dependent parts of substance as an organic whole.

Let's begin with the *Ethics*. In E1p15s, after arguing by a *reductio ad absurdum* in the first four scholia that substance cannot have parts, to the end of the 4th scholium, Spinoza concludes that there cannot be parts that are really distinct from each other in nature or the corporeal substance, by defining 'real distinction' in the sense of independent parts I have so far explicated:[308]

> [O]f things which are really distinct from one another, one can be, and remain in its condition, without the other. Since, therefore, there is no vacuum in Nature (a subject

[307] It is remarkable how Husserl points out that although "[t]he terms 'complex' and 'simple' are […] defined by the qualification of having parts or not having parts, [t]hey may […] be understood in a second, possibly more natural sense, in which complexity, as the word's etymology suggests, points to a plurality of disjoined parts in the whole, so that we have to call simple whatever cannot be 'cut up' into a plurality of parts, i.e. that in which not even two disjoined parts can be distinguished." (Husserl, "On the Theory of Wholes and Parts," 4)

[308] Spinoza's explication of 'real distinction' reminds Duns Scotus' conception of 'real distinction' which can be expounded as "if x can exist without y, or y without x then x is really distinct from y." Cf. Andreas Schmidt, "Substance Monism and Identity Theory in Spinoza", in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, edited by Olli Koistinen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

> I discuss else- where), but all its parts must so concur that there is no vacuum, it follows also that they cannot be really distinguished, that is, that corporeal substance, insofar as it is a substance, cannot be divided.

According to this passage, things are really distinct in case they can exist in their respective states independently of each other and Spinoza rejects that nature or the corporeal substance might have or be divided into such really distinct or independent parts, which is in line with his denial of divisible parts of substance in E1p12 and E1p13. I have already shown how the idea of divisible parts is implicit in the idea of independent parts and mechanistic mereology, as well as that denying them does not necessitate denying a mereological relationship categorically. However, conspicuously, in the next sentence, as the reason for his denial of independent and divisible parts, Spinoza shows the concurrence of the parts of Nature. There are two important admissions in play here. The first is that, by mentioning the parts of Nature, he admits some kind of parts of substance since Nature is a way of speaking of substance for him. Secondly, by showing the concurrence of these parts as the reason for his denial of independent and divisible parts of substance, Spinoza admits a dependence parts of substance. Hence, in this passage, Spinoza admits (i) substance as a whole (i.e., substance having parts), and (ii) substance as an organic whole (i.e., substance having dependent parts).

Further in E1p15s5, Spinoza remarks that "parts are distinguished in [the matter] only insofar as we conceive matter to be affected in different ways, so that its parts are distinguished only modally, but not really." So, although denying that there can be divisible or independent parts in the corporeal substance in the previous passages of E1p15s, Spinoza again admits that it has parts, but notes that they are not distinguished really, but only modally.[309] Keeping in mind the dependent character of modes against the independent character of accidents as has been articulated not only by Spinoza but also historically by others such as Suárez, and Descartes, what Spinoza means here might well be translated as that there are no real or independent parts (following E1p15s4), but only modal or dependent parts of nature or the corporeal substance. It

[309] A similar emphasis on the denial of the reality of the distinction of parts can be found in Ep.12: "[I]t is nonsense, bordering on madness, to hold that extended Substance is composed of parts or bodies really distinct from one another."

is obvious that such a conception of real and modal distinction makes more sense in holistic mereology.

Melamed reads this passage as "[a] real distinction is a distinction between two substances, which can be and be conceived without each other. A modal distinction is a distinction either between a substance and its mode, or (as is clearly the case in E1p15s) between two modes of the same substance."[310] He defines the former as an independent distinction, while the latter, in a rather tautological manner, as a distinction pertaining to modes. However, following his reasoning as well as Suárez's construal of modal distinction through an asymmetric dependence, as we have seen in the previous section, I believe it makes more sense to define a modal distinction as a dependent distinction in contrast to a real distinction which is defined as an independent one.

What we know from E1p15s4 and E1p15s5, so far, is that we can speak of modal or dependent, but not real or independent parts of the corporeal substance; that these modal parts relate to each other in such a way that they, as a whole, determine the characteristics of each other and prior to this relation have no characteristics; and therefore, that they are indivisible, as they do not have any characteristics prior to their relations to the other parts and consequently to the whole. Although Spinoza addresses the corporeal substance here, we can conclude from the E2p7 doctrine that what holds for the corporeal substance holds for all the attributes of substance as well. He also stresses this point in his Letter 32 to Oldenburg that the dependence of parts is not limited to the corporeal substance, but also to the mind as well.[311] This description of substance as a whole of dependent parts, thus, is perfectly compatible with a holistic mereological conception and, in this passage, Spinoza speaks of (iii) modes as parts,

[310] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 129. Apparently, Melamed applies Melamed applies Descartes' definition from *Principles* I.60.

[311] "[…] since it is of the nature of substance to be infinite, it follows that each part pertains to the nature of corporeal substance, and can neither be nor be conceived without it.
You see, therefore, how and why I think that the human body is a part of Nature. But as far as the human mind is concerned, I think it is a part of Nature too. For I maintain that there is also in Nature an infinite power of thinking, which, insofar as it is infinite, contains in itself objectively the whole of Nature, and whose thoughts proceed in the same way as Nature itself, its object, does." (Ep.32, IV173-174)

(iv) modes as dependent parts, and (v) modes as dependent parts of substance as an organic whole.

This is also in accordance with E2p13l7s of the *Physical Digression*, where Spinoza describes one individual to be part of a larger one, which is itself part of a larger, and taken to infinity "we shall easily conceive that the whole of nature is one Individual, whose parts […] vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole individual." Given his identification of nature with God and substance, this passage can be read as a straightforward expression of the description of substance as a whole composed of parts which do not have any independent characteristics, but which are in an infinite variance dependent on the whole. Although this passage is part of a short treatise on corporeal bodies, following E2p7 and Letter 32, again the conception of corporeal nature or substance as an organic whole of its modes can be extended to the other attributes as well. This short passage describes (i) substance as a whole (i.e., substance having parts), (ii) substance as an organic whole (i.e., substance having dependent parts).

Nevertheless, such a reading of the *Physical Digression* can be challenged particularly with respect to a letter from 1675, in which Spinoza replies to Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus through their common friend G. H. Schuller. Asked for examples for his conceptions of immediate and mediate infinite modes, Spinoza refers to E2p13l7s after mentioning 'the face of the whole Universe' (*facies totius Universi*) [312] as an example for the latter kind. Following this passage, some commentators, including Melamed, conclude that what Spinoza means by 'nature,' which he stipulates in E2p13l7s as one individual made up of parts that vary in infinite ways while not engendering any change of the whole, is not substance, but infinite mediate modes.

Although a comprehensive discussion of Spinoza's conception of 'infinite modes' exceeds the scope of this thesis, a brief discussion regarding this enigmatic concept is required at this point. First, it should be noted that it has been commonly regarded as the most unique,[313] yet ambiguous[314] Spinozist concept. Melamed admits that it is not

[312] Ep.64.IV/278
[313] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 113; Kristina Meshelski, "Infinite Modes," in *Spinoza: Basic Concepts*, ed. Andre S. Campos (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2015), 25.
[314] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 114, 135, 136; Meshelski, 25.

possible to provide definitive answers to the questions regarding infinite modes within the limits of Spinoza's text[315] and Kristina Meshelski remarks that any reading of this concept will depend on one's overall reading of the Spinozist ontology.[316]

While infinite modes have been identified with the laws of nature by Curley and Bennett,[317] and infinite immediate modes with attributes and infinite mediate modes with the totality of finite modes by Meshelski,[318] Melamed brings forward a novel interpretation by taking infinite modes as holistic nets of finite modes.[319] I agree with Melamed's reading, and it is consistent with my overall reading of the Spinozist ontology, except that I argue that this holistic mereological relationship, which Melamed finds between the finite modes and infinite modes, extends to substance. In that regard, the concept of infinite modes is a way of speaking of the whole of modes expressed under a certain attribute. The corporeal infinite mode is the whole of modes, which is substance, expressed through the attribute of extension, and the intellectual infinite mode is the one expressed through the attribute of thought.

I believe this reading also gives a better account of Spinoza's word choice of 'nature' in E2p13l7s and Ep.32 or 'corporeal substance' in E1p15s4 and E1p15s5. He is not simply speaking of infinite modes in these passages; otherwise, he would have easily indicated it by following his notation of "modes which exist necessarily and are infinite" (E1p23) or "things which follow from the absolute nature of God's attribute" (E1p21). Instead, he uses the terms 'nature' and 'corporeal substance' which straightforwardly refer us to his conception of substance or God.

The concept of infinite modes is clearly an incomplete concept in Spinoza's corpus and therefore open to speculation. Since there is no corresponding concept in his predecessors or contemporaries, it is hardly possible to historically track what it might mean as well. However, given the uncertainty in the text, my brief account of infinite

[315] Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 136.
[316] Meshelski, "Infinite Modes," 25.
[317] Edwin Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 45-74; Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 106-111.
[318] Meshelski, "Infinite Modes."
[319] Compare Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, 131; Schmaltz, "Spinoza's Mereology."

modes as expressions of substance can be reconciled with it at least as consistently as its counterparts.

More evidence for this account of the mereological relationship between substance and modes can be found in Spinoza's earlier writings such as Letter 32. In this correspondence with Oldenburg from 1665 (during when Spinoza is supposed to be working on his *Ethics*), he starts by noting without any qualification that "each part of Nature agrees with the whole to which it belongs" and "coheres with the others,"[320] which is an obvious recognition that Nature (which can be taken synonymously as God, substance or infinite modes in the sense I have already expounded) has parts that are characterized as dependent on each other. He continues "that every body, insofar as it exists modified in a certain way, must be considered as a part of the whole universe, must agree with the whole to which it belongs, and must cohere with the remaining bodies,"[321] by explicitly recognizing bodies as parts of the whole universe and remarking that every body is modified such that they are in coherence with the others as well as the whole, which means that the parts are indivisible neither of each other nor the whole. This is not only in accordance with his indivisibility desideratum of E1p12, and E1p13 but also with the dependent parthood and holistic mereology conceptions. This short passage describes (i) substance as a whole (i.e., substance having parts), (ii) substance as an organic whole (i.e., substance having dependent parts), (iii) modes as parts, (iv) modes as dependent parts, and (v) modes as dependent parts of substance as an organic whole.

Although the *Short Treatise* is somewhat controversial, not only because it is a rather early work, but also because none of the surviving manuscripts are Spinoza's own and they were never prepared for publication,[322] it provides valuable insights into his understanding of the mereological structure of the relationship between substance and modes. Here, Spinoza first gives a very precise description of independent parthood and a mechanic whole as a "thing composed of different parts […] such that each singular part can be conceived and understood without the others."[323] After rejecting

[320] Ep.32.IV/170
[321] Ep.32. IV/173
[322] Cf. Edwin Curley, "Editorial Preface to Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being," *Collected Works of Spinoza*, 46-50; Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 7.
[323] KV.I.ii.I/25

that in nature there are no such parts and wholes and that substance may be a whole of such independently conceived parts, in the 'Dialogue Between the Intellect, Love, Reason, and Lust,' he describes 'infinite Nature' as an 'eternal Unity,' "in which everything is contained"[324] and "outside which one cannot imagine anything."[325] It should be noted that Spinoza is definitely not speaking about infinite modes when he uses the term 'Nature' here, as he specifies it as "completely infinite and supremely perfect,"[326] which applies only to substance. It can be challenged, nevertheless, by Melamed's reading of the substance-mode relationship that the Unity, which Spinoza mentions here, is a relationship of 'being in, but not being a part of,' as he spells it out in terms of containment. However, later in the dialogue, in response to the challenges made by Lust, he stipulates, in the name of Reason, that God is a whole because it consists of its effects or creatures in a similar manner to intellect is a whole as it consists of its concepts.[327] The way he expounds 'whole' is still vague though, as 'being in, but not being a part of' seems to be compatible with this conception. Later, in the dialogue between Erasmus and Theophilus, when the former reminds the latter's remark that "the effect of an internal cause remains united with its cause in such a way that it makes a whole with it,"[328] Theophilus replies that "the universal is made of various disunited individuals, whereas the whole is made of various united individuals."[329] Even though Spinoza notices that "the whole is only a being of reason," shows that he considers cause and effect as dependent parts of an organic whole. Furthermore, even more strikingly, he makes a distinction between a universal and a whole, according to which, the former is made of various disunited individuals, which can be interpreted as independent parts, whereas the latter is composed of united individuals which can be interpreted as dependent parts, which seems to discard the 'being in, but not being a part of' reading.

[324] KV.I.ii.I/28
[325] KV.I.ii.I/30
[326] KV.I.ii.I/28
[327] KV I.ii.I/30
[328] KV I.ii.I/31
[329] KV I.ii.I/33

3.3.4. Historical Perspectives

While it is true that the interpretation of the substance-mode relationship I presented has not been the mainstream position in Spinoza scholarship, there has always been a prominent scholarship that regards it in a holistic mereological manner. It can be traced back to Harold Joachim, who describes it as such in his *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza: Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata*:

> A single "extended" thing—a particular body e.g.—is finite and dependent; a fragment torn from its context, in which alone it has its being and significance. Neither in its existence nor in its nature has it any independence. It owes its existence to an indefinite chain of causes, each of which is itself a finite body and the effect of another finite body; it owes its nature to its place in the whole system of bodies which together constitute the corporeal universe.[330]

H. F. Hallett in his outstanding work *Aeternitas* expounds this view by claiming that 'it was necessary for [Spinoza] to maintain both the reality and the incompleteness of the parts as modes of Substance; and thus the doctrine of the eternity of the human mind, so far from being an excrescence on his theory, an elaborate pretence, or a last relic of superstition, is the keystone of the system.'[331] He describes the parts in this relation in accordance with the conception of dependent parthood as reciprocating[332] and dependent,[333] while the whole in a holistic manner as 'not an aggregate like a flock of sheep, in which the parts are individuals, but the whole a mere collection; nor is it a whole of parts as a machine is a whole of parts, i.e. of parts which are all different from it, but are nicely formed and adjusted to constitute the single whole.'[334]

Samuel Alexander also reads the substance-mode relation as a holistic mereological relation in his *Spinoza and Time* by holding that 'Substance or God or Nature […] is the universe as a whole, not as an aggregate of things, not even as a whole of parts in the sense in which you and I who are organic are wholes of parts without being mere aggregates, but as a unitary being from which all its so-called parts draw their nature

[330] Harold Joachim, *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza: Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 23.
[331] Harold F. Hallett, *Aeternitas: A Spinozistic Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 144.
[332] Hallett, *Aeternitas*, 93.
[333] Hallett, *Aeternitas*, 145.
[334] Hallett, *Aeternitas*, 146-147.

and in the end their existence' and adding that '[i]n themselves these parts, or as Spinoza calls them, modes, have no being except in God.' [335]

In a similar vein, J. S. Mackenzie recognizes Spinoza as a *cosmist* after defining the term as "[a] theory may be essentially singularistic, in the sense that it regards the whole of reality as an inseparable unity, no aspect of which is really independent of the rest; and it may yet be pluralistic, in that it recognizes within that unity many fundamental distinctions that cannot be annulled" in his *The Meaning of Reality*. [336]

Schaffer also acknowledges in *Historical Matters*, the appendix to his *Monism: The Priority of the Whole,* that the "[…] third main thread in the monistic tradition is that of the world as an integrated system. Arguably the seed of this idea can be found in what Spinoza wrote to Oldenburg (*referring to Letter 32*)" and that "Spinoza speaks of conceiving that "the whole of nature is one individual, whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways (*referring to E2P13SL7*).""[337]

The holistic mereological understanding of the substance-mode relationship is becoming a more popular stance within contemporary Spinoza scholarship conducted outside of English-speaking academia. Zourabichvili, in *Spinoza: A Physics of Thought,*[338] and Laveran, in *The Competition of Parts: Criticism of Atomism and Redefinition of the Singular in Spinoza*, defend similar positions.[339] Perler, in his "Are there individuals? Reflections on Spinoza's monism," argues that Spinoza defends a form of priority monism between substance and modes.[340] Most recently, Florian Vermeiren, in "A Geometry of Sufficient Reason: Reconceiving Space and Quantity with Spinoza, Leibniz, Bergson, Whitehead and Deleuze" delicately argues against the standard view that the substance-mode relation has no mereological structure and

[335] Samuel Alexander, "Spinoza and Time" in *Philosophical and Literary Pieces*, ed. John Laird (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1939), 25.
[336] John S. Mackenzie, "The Meaning of Reality" in *Mind 23*, 19–40 (1914): 27.
[337] Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," 68.
[338] François Zourabichvili, *Spinoza: Une physique de la pensée* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002). Translation of the title is mine.
[339] Sophie Laveran, *Le concours des parties: critique de l'atomisme et redefinition du singulier chez Spinoza* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014). Translation of the title is mine.
[340] Perler, "Gibt es Individuen? Überlegungen zu Spinozas Monismus." Translation of the title is mine.

defends a holistic mereology thereof.[341] Also in the analytic community of Spinoza scholarship, Samuel Newlands can be counted as a radical voice in this regard. Although, in a similar vein to Della Rocca's idealist reading, Newlands renders the Spinozist substance-mode relationship as a conceptual dependence relationship, pace Della Rocca, he unpacks this relationship as part-whole "structured containment relations between more and less complete ways of conceiving God." Nevertheless, he does not give a textual discussion of the mereological structure of this relation.[342] My point is not to endorse these commentators' interpretations unqualifiedly, but to show that what may be called the strong mereological interpretation of the substance-mode relation in Spinoza has long been a valid interpretative thesis.

Melamed's position, which may be called the weak mereological interpretation, has been recently expounded in more detail by Schmaltz.[343] To account for the apparent contradiction between Spinoza's passages which seem to deny and others (Ep.32 in particular) which seem to affirm a holistic mereology, Schmaltz proposes a distinction between modal and substantial mereologies, where a holistic mereology applies to the former, but not to the latter. Accordingly, the dualism is between infinite modes that are organic wholes of finite modes, which inhere in and predicated of substance. Considering Spinoza's references to nature and corporeal substance as wholes and modes as its parts and given the E2p7 doctrine that whatever holds for the attribute of extension also holds for the attribute of thought, I do not see any hindrance from reading the substance-mode relation as a whole-part relation. Furthermore, Melamed and Schmaltz's distinctions between modal and substantial mereologies seem to be redundant as there is no contradiction between Spinoza's stipulations of the priority and indivisibility of the substance and a holistic mereology as I have argued so far. Therefore, *pace* Melamed and Schmaltz, I stick to the strong interpretation that the substance rather than infinite modes is the organic whole of modes that are its parts.

My thesis is set apart from these commentators in several ways. First of all, I develop three original arguments in favor of why the relation between modes and substance

[341] Florian Vermeiren, in "A Geometry of Sufficient Reason: Reconceiving Space and Quantity with Spinoza, Leibniz, Bergson, Whitehead and Deleuze," PhD diss., (KU Leuven, 2023), 25-36.
[342] Samuel Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 79.
[343] Schmaltz, "Spinoza's Mereology."

should be understood in a part-whole structure for Spinoza. Secondly, through these arguments, I establish how Spinozist priority monism implies category monism. Thirdly, I offer a comprehensive reading of Spinoza's *oeuvre* to demonstrate the priority monistic reading. Fourth, while arguing for the priority monistic reading, I offer a novel interpretation of the unique Spinozist concept of infinite modes. Finally, the major contribution of my thesis might be taking *potentia* as the single category of Spinoza's ontology, which might open up wide possibilities as I will be briefly discussing in my conclusion.

Two last questions to be addressed here briefly would be why Spinoza remarked that substance cannot have parts in certain passages while admitting it in others and why he has not specified two kinds of parthood and part-whole relation. For the first question, I have already indicated that what Spinoza denies in the passages where he argues why the substance cannot have parts is a particular instantiation of parthood, which may be called a dependent part. However, there is no passage where he denies dependent parts of the substance, but there are passages where he speaks of nature and corporeal substance as a whole of coherent or dependent parts. That is to say, in the passages where he denies parts of substance, he conceives of parthood in a narrow sense that only includes independent parts.

For the second question, although there was quite a developed research on mereology in the Middle Ages,[344] the idea of a mereological structure in which the whole is ontologically prior to its parts was to be explored at least until Leibniz's conception of matter. Previously, the term 'part' was defined in terms of division and, thus, an indivisible part was categorically mistaken. It was only in the 19th century or 20th century that the idea was applied to ontology, epistemology, and philosophy of language. Moreover, the conventional definitions and terminology of mereology as a sovereign discipline started to develop through the works of Stanisław Lesniewski who

[344] There was a mereological vocabulary available from the Middle Ages which define *universal*, *integral*, and *potential* wholes as well as *quantitative*, *essential*, or *potestative* parts. However, this vocabulary does not address the fundamental ontological relationship of mereology, although it gives quite a comprehensive account of mereological relationships. For more on Medieval Mereology, see Andrew Arlig, "Medieval Mereology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, eds. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, (https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/mereology-medieval, 2023) and on Aquinas's mereology see David Svoboda, "Thomas Aquinas on Whole and Part," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 76, no. 2 (2012): 273-304.

coined the term starting from 1916.[345] Therefore, considering the deficiency of a widely accepted vocabulary available for him to define and describe holistic mereology, it was Spinoza's challenge to use the term 'part' equivocally to refer to two distinct kinds of parthood and part-whole relations, instead of specifying two discrete terms for them. This, I believe, is also why he refrained from describing modes as parts but still kept doing it more qualifiedly and in more subtle ways all through his work.

That being said, dependent parts were not an entirely unprecedented idea in Scholastic philosophy. As Perler points out, independent parts had its precedents in the scholastic conception of "integral parts" while dependent parts in "potential parts."[346] He further argues, in line with the reading I offer here, that Spinoza rejects that the substance, which he identifies as God, can have the former in favor of the latter. Accordingly, potential parts are taken as dependent, inseparable and indivisible parts of their whole. Aquinas gives the example of the human soul and its parts. The soul is a 'potential whole' (*totum potentiale*) because there are parts of the soul responsible for specific activities. However, unlike integral parts, potential parts do not have priority over the whole, neither in a logical nor in a temporal sense.

Furthermore, as we have seen how Melamed demonstrates Spinoza identifies modes with *propria*, Aquinas analyzes potential parts or powers as a *propria* in the *Summa Theologica* 1.77.1[347] or concerning the vegetative powers of the soul in *The Soul*.[348] Similarly, Aristotle discusses the category of quality in the *Categories* and divides it into four species: habits and dispositions; natural capabilities and incapabilities; affective qualities and affections; and shape. The former two species here can be identified with powers. All of these, I believe, provide us with solid evidence that Spinoza had the historical context in which he can conceive the substance as an organic

[345] Stanisław Leśniewski, "Foundations of the General Theory of Sets" in *Stanislaw Lesniewski: Collected Works Volume I*, eds. Stanisław J. Surma, Jan T. J. Srzednicki, D. I. Barnett, V. Frederick Rickey, trans. D. I. Barnett (1916; repr. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992): 129-174.
[346] Perler, "Gibt es Individuen? Überlegungen zu Spinozas Monismus," 506-512.
[347] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (New Advent, 2008). https://www.newadvent.org/summa.
[348] Thomas Aquinas, *The Soul*, trans. John P. Rowan. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1949).

whole composed of modes as its dependent parts as well as both in terms of the one-category concept of *potentia*.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

My main point in this thesis was to argue for a one-category holistic mereological, i.e., a priority monistic relation between Spinoza's substance and modes against the dominant substance-property dualism that takes it in a scholastic Aristotelian subject-property relation. For this purpose, I started with lying bare and discussing how this understanding of being developed from Aristotle to Descartes. For Aristotle, there was a four-category ontology, spelled out in terms of the orthogonal distinctions of inherence and predication. Even though these defined two distinct relations –the former ontological independence/dependence, spelled out as "being in, but not a part of a subject," while the latter universality/particularity— they both specified properties of a subject which is a substantial particular: substantial universals, accidental universals, and accidental particulars.

As Aristotelianism was inserted into scholastic thought through the endeavors of Thomas Aquinas, it was blended with Neoplatonic and Catholic doctrines. Apart from its subtleties in accomplishing this, the important takeaway for our research here is that it developed a dualism in which accidents depended on their substances while enjoying a lesser existence than them. Developing astute arguments concerning the nature of being, John Duns Scotus convinced high scholastics that it does not make sense of the nature of being to be predicated in degrees. Yet, this univocity of being, according to Scotus, came with the outcome that accidents are independent from their subjects. As we come closer to the early modern period, this idea of real accidents became increasingly a crisis as it seemed obviously contradictory to suppose properties as independent and, thus, almost substantial. After numerous attempts at solving this apparent contradiction, Francisco Suárez had the most influential explanation through

his conceptions of modal distinction and modes. Accordingly, modes have real being as Scotus once prescribed, yet they are not real in the sense of existing independently of a subject and what distinguishes them from a substance is this very dependence. They are characterized by their dependence on a subject. René Descartes successfully installed this Suárezian concept into the ontological structure of his extended substance.

Given this historical backdrop, Spinoza's construal of the substance-mode relation is standardly taken within this dualist substance-property relationship. Indeed, everything seems to be in favor of this interpretation: Spinoza's description of modes relation to substance in terms of being in another (*in alio*), his rejection of the divisibility of substance into parts echoing Aristotle's description of inherence as "being in but not a part of a substance." Looks might be deceiving though. First of all, as I have detailed through three original arguments here, substance-property dualism does not fit in well with Spinoza's doctrines regarding hierarchical one-category being, bare substratum and immanent causation. Nevertheless, I am not offering a charitable interpretation merely grounded on this inconsistency. Instead, I demonstrate how his denial of parts is logically connected to his view that substance is indivisible, which does not necessarily imply a categorical rejection of a mereological relation between his substance and modes but merely a rejection of a mechanistic one. In a mechanistic mereological relationship, the whole is composed of integral parts in scholastic terms and independent parts, in the neutral terms I have employed here, that are ontologically independent while the whole is dependent on them, which implies that there are divisible substantial parts. Yet, in a holistic mereological relation, the whole is composed of potential parts in scholastic terms, or dependent parts as I have utilized here, that ontologically depend on their whole and therefore cannot be divided or conceived separately. As I have shown through Spinoza's texts, as he identifies inherence with ontological dependence and does not categorically deny a mereological structure thereof, he leaves open a space for a holistic mereological reading. Furthermore, he does not only leave this space open, but he also explicitly describes such a structure of the relation between substance and modes in numerous bits throughout his work. Thus, I believe, we have sufficient evidence to turn the standard reading around and admit that he ascribes modes as dependent parts to substance. In

addition to this holistic mereological structure of the relation between substance and modes, this reading takes *potentia* as the one category that applies both to substance as the whole and modes as parts, which has its precedents in Aristotelian and Thomist construals of potential parts as dispositions, capabilities or powers of the souls, which is also in accordance with Spinoza's description of modes in terms of scholastic technical term of *propria*, those properties which are not essential to but necessarily flow from a substance.

Beyond these historical and textual discussions, though, I believe there is further significance in such a reading of Spinozist ontology as it allows for a more dynamic understanding of singularity, individuality, and thinghood. First of all, recent ontological and physical developments favor a holistic mereological ontology. As Pasnau narrates, the history of ontology from scholastic to modern philosophy was a move away from metaphysical parts to integral parts. Modern atomism was grounded on taking such integral parts as substantial. However, the limits of such an ontology have been well exposed philosophically in the past few centuries. Yet, ontological problems did not turn into a crisis as modern science worked, which allowed scientific discourse to overlook them. The real blow came from empirical physics as quantum experiments showed the poverty of the atomistic view that took the existence of some unknown substantial parts for granted. As Schaffer points out, today we possess good physical evidence that the cosmos is an entangled system that is fundamentally a whole, rather than a sum total of parts. Modally, the atomist cannot anymore pinpoint some ultimate parts as the ground of being and must lean towards the possibility of atomless gunk.

These ideas have been explored and elaborated in terms of their implications into political territories by new materialism particularly in the past three decades. Taking their cue from power-centered non-atomist non-essentialist, but still naturalist and deterministic readings of Spinoza, as well as 20th-century French philosophy, the idiosyncrasy of various new materialists, can be said to be their rejection of "old" materialisms: the passive nature of ancient conceptions of atoms with pre-existing shapes, sizes and locations, and the priority of some substantial particles of which power is attributed in modern atomism. Instead, new materialism takes power and,

therefore, relationality as central while not denying naturalism and determinism, hence, not vanishing into mysticism.

The influences of new materialism can be traced back to the investigation of the nature of political power in its forms, which penetrate the entire political, public, and private space, especially among the works of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Antonio Negri. I believe this current of investigating political power as a pervasive existence in all political levels has culminated in feminist theories, which succeeded in demonstrating and politicizing the power relations even within private spaces by exposing the exploitation of women's domestic labor, domestic violence or marital rape; a territory that has long been neglected and even denied of political space by political theorists, which is no wonder why resonates with the feminist political agenda of new materialism.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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Email:

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
PhD	Middle East Technical University	2024
MA	Istanbul Bilgi University	2013
BS	Middle East Technical University	2008

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English, French, German, Latin (Research), Ottoman Turkish (Research)

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Ontolojide düalizm genellikle zihin ve beden gibi iki ontolojik olarak bağımsız tözün var olduğunu savunan ‘töz düalizmi’ anlamına gelir. Burada, ‘kategori düalizmi’ veya ‘öz-özellik düalizmi’ olarak adlandırılabilecek, var olan tözlerin sayısından bağımsız olarak (yani, gerçek veya sayısal ayrım) bir tözün iç yapısına ilişkin başka bir düalizm türünü tanımlıyorum. Öz-özellik düalizmi, ontolojik olarak daha temel bir töz, nesne veya özne ve bunların üzerine inşa edilen, onlardan türeyen, veya onlara ontolojik olarak bağımlı olan daha yüzeysel kategorileri içerir. Bu kategoriler geleneksel olarak ilinek, kip veya daha nötr olarak özellik olarak adlandırılır. Töz-özellik düalizminin özgünlüğü, töz ve özellikler arasındaki ilişkisi için bir parça-bütün yapısını reddetmesi ve dolayısıyla birinin diğerine asimetrik bağımlılığını tabakalar yapısında kavramasıdır. Töz düalizmi iki ontolojik olarak bağımsız kategoriyi kabul ederken, töz-özellik düalizmi, töz ve özellikleri birinin diğerine asimetrik olarak bağımlı olduğu bir ilişki içinde ele alır, bu da daha az temel özelliklerin üstüne inşa edildiği temel katman olarak tözü kabul eden tabakalı bir ontolojiye denk gelir. Sonuç olarak, töz-özellik düalizmi hem tek tözcü (örneğin, Spinoza'nın yanlış bir okuma olduğunu düşündüğüm, kipleri tek bir töz veya Tanrı'nın özellikleri olarak kabul eden tek tözcü düalist kategori okumasında olduğu gibi) hem de tek türcü (örneğin, Scotus'un gerçek ilinekleri veya Suárez, Descartes ve Spinoza'nın kipleri gibi) olabilirken, aynı zamanda kategori çoğulcusu olabilir.

Töz-özellik düalizmi en azından Aristotelesçilik’e kadar uzanır ve *Kategoriler*'de var olan dört kategori ontolojisini tanımlar. Bunlar, var olma veya içerilme ve predikasyon veya yüklemlenme ortogonal ayrımlarıyla tanımlanır; bunların ilki ontolojik bağımsızlık ve bağımlılığı, ikincisi ise tikellik ve evrenselliği tanımlar. Bu ayrımlar, Aristotelesçilik'te dört kategori ontolojisine (yani, *tözsel tikeller* veya *birincil tözler*, *tözsel evrenseller* veya *ikincil tözler*, *ilineksel tikeller* ve *ilineksel evrenseller*) yol açar. Ancak, bunlar işlevleri bakımından iki kategoriye indirgenebilir: tözsel tikeller veya birincil tözler ve onlara ontolojik olarak bağımlı olan veya onlara yüklemlenen diğer

kategoriler. Tözsel evrenseller veya ikincil tözler, birincil muadillerine ontolojik olarak bağımlı değildir, çünkü onlarda içerilmezler, ancak Aristoteles'in onları ikincil tözler olarak tanımladığı göz önüne alındığında, onların ontolojik olarak onlarla aynı düzeyde olup olmadığı tartışmalıdır. Buradan neşreden imge, tözün en temel katman olarak durduğu ve daha yüzeysel katmanların tözsel evrensellerden ilineksel tikellere kadar hizalandığı tabakalı bir ontolojiyi göstermektedir.

Kariyeri boyunca, Spinoza töz ve kipleri ontolojisinin iki kategorisi olarak tasvir eder. Bu, Henry Oldenburg'a yazdığı erken bir mektupta (Ekim 1661) veya *Cogitata Metaphysica*'da "doğada tözler ve kiplerdan başka bir şey yoktur" diye belirtmesinde görülebilir. *Etika*'da, tözü "kendi içinde olan ve kendi aracılığıyla kavramsallaştırılan şey," kipi "başkasının içinde olan ve bu başkası aracılığıyla kavramsallaştırılan şey" olarak tanımlar, E1a1'de "her ne varsa ya kendi içinde ya da başkasının içinde" olduğunu belirtir ve E1p15d'de "tözler ve kipler dışında hiçbir şey yoktur" sonucuna varır. Bu nedenle, Spinoza için var olan her şeyin ya töz ya da mod olduğunu söylemek doğrudur. Ancak, Spinoza'nin 'içinde olma' ve 'aracılığıyla kavramsallaştırılma' terimleriyle ifade ettiği bu iki kategori arasındaki ilişkinin en iyi nasıl yorumlanacağı Spinoza araştırmalarında sürekli bir sorun olmuştur.

Spinoza genel olarak 'töz monisti' olarak sınıflandırılır. Bu tanımlama, onun sadece tek bir töz olduğunu savunduğunu ve skolastik Aristotelesçi töz plüralizmine ve Kartezyen töz düalizmine karşı özgünlüğünü belirtir. Ancak, bu sınıflandırma tözlerin sayısal ayrımı ile ilgilidir. Benim tanımladığım 'töz-özellik düalizmi' bağlamında ise, neredeyse evrensel olarak bir düalist olarak kabul edilir. Dolayısıyla, Spinoza için töz en temel katmandır ve kipler de onun özellikleridir. Spinoza, evrensellerin ontolojik statüsünü doğrudan reddettiği ve kipleri tikeller olarak tanımladığı için kategoriler ikiye (yani, töz ve tikel özellikler) indirgenir ve ontolojisi geleneksel olarak iki kategorili bir ontoloji veya düalist töz-özellik ontolojisi olarak kabul edilir. E1p12 ve E1p13'te tözün parçalara bölünebilir olduğunu reddetmesinden ötürü, Spinoza ontolojisi, töz ve kip kategorileri arasındaki ilişkinin mereolojik yapısını reddeden Aristotelesçi tabakalı ontoloji modelinde okunur. Spinoza'nın erken yorumcularından Pierre Bayle, bunu bir yüklemlenme ilişkisi olarak ele alır. Töz ve kipler arasında hem içerilme hem de yüklemlenme ilişkilerini reddeden Edwin Curley, onları iki bağımsız ontolojik kategori olarak kabul eder ve aralarındaki ilişkiyi nedensellik olarak ele alır.

Charles Jarrett, John Carriero ve Martin Lin, bu iki kategori arasında yalnızca içerilme ilişkisini kabul eder ve kiplerin basitçe töze ontolojik olarak bağımlı olduğu sonucuna varır. Yitzhak Melamed, kiplerin hem Aristotelesçi 'parçası olmadan içinde olma' seklinde tanımlanan ontolojik bağımlılık ilişkisi anlamında töze içerildiğini, hem de 'tözün özü olmayıp onun özünden zorunlu olarak neşreden' Skolastik Aristotelesçi *propria* anlamında ona yüklemlendiğini savunur. Bu iki kampın aksine, Michael Della Rocca, Curley'den bu yana Spinoza'nın en yenilikçi, ilham verici ve bir o kadar tartışmalı okumasında, 'içinde olma' ilişkisiyle ima edilen ontolojik bağımlılığın ve nedensel bağımlılık ilişkisinin nihayetinde kavramsal bağımlılıktan başka bir şey olmadığını savunur. Della Rocca'nın yorumsal tezi, ontolojik bağımlılığın değil, kavramsal bağımlılığın töz ve kipler arasındaki en temel ilişki olduğunu savunsa da genel çerçevesi hala, düşünce sıfatının uzam sıfatını ontolojik olarak önceledigi, idealizme eğilimli düalist tabakalı ontoloji içindedir. Sonuç olarak, düalist okuma şu konuda hemfikirdir: (i) töz ontolojik (veya kavramsal) olarak bağımsızdır, (ii) kipler ontolojik (veya kavramsal) olarak töze bağımlıdır ve (iii) töz ve kipler arasında mereolojik bir yapı yoktur.

Kıta felsefesi cephesinde ise, benzer fakat daha siyaset felsefesi odaklı bir Spinoza'ya dönüş yaşanıyordu. 1960'ların sonları ve 1970'lerde Martial Gueroult'un orijinal çalışmaları ve Louis Althusser'in Marksist sosyal teoriyi Spinozist felsefe üzerinden yeniden okuması bir hayli etkiliydi. Deleuze'ün ilham verici ancak tartışmalı Spinoza yorumu, bir dereceye kadar hocası Gueroult'un izini takip ediyordu. Bazı yorumları Spinoza'nın felsefesinin içine kendi felsefesini okumak amacıyla bozmakla suçlanmasına rağmen, hem kıtasal hem de analitik bilim adamları tarafından kabul edilen önemli katkılar yaptı. Bununla birlikte, Gueroult ve Deleuze, radikal yaklaşımlarına rağmen, töz ve kipler arasındaki içerilme ilişkisinin bir ontolojik bağımlılık ilişkisi olduğu geleneksel anlayışı takip ediyorlardı. Negri, 1980'lerden 2020'ye kadar uzanan Spinoza üzerine bir dizi önemli çalışmada, Spinoza'nın töz ve kipler arasındaki ilişkiyi bir mereolojik ilişki olduğunu ima eden tek yorumcuydu. Bu tezi ciddiye alan bir okuma, Fransızca'da François Zourabichvili, Sophie Laveran ve Almanca'da Dominik Perler gibi İngilizce konuşulan akademi dışındaki çağdaş Spinoza araştırmalarında yükselişte olan bir eğilimdir.

Bu tezde, Spinoza'nın ontolojisinin, değişken kipler ve onların altında duran temel katman olan tözden oluştuğunu iddia eden düalist okumayı reddederek ikisi arasındaki ilişkiyi, ikinci kategorinin ilki aracılığıyla anlaşılabildiği tek kategorili bütüncül mereolojik bir yapıda tesis ediyorum. Yorumsal tezler (i) ve (ii) ile hemfikir olarak, Spinoza'nın ontolojisinin geleneksel düalist okumasını sağlayan (iii)'ün, Spinoza'nın tek kategori hiyerarşik varlık, salt töz ve içkin nedensellik ogretileri ile töz-kip ilişkisinin bütüncül mereolojik yapısı hakkındaki ifadelerine güçlü bir açıklama sunamadığını savunuyorum. Bunun yerine, Jonathan Schaffer'in ayrıntılı bir şekilde tarif ettiği *öncelik monizminin,* bu geleneksel anlayışa meydan okumak ve bu kalıcı sorunu yeniden değerlendirmek için bir çerçeve sunduğunu iddia ediyorum. Ayrıca, Spinoza'nın töz-kip ilişkisinin felsefi kökenini takip ederek, bu fikirlerin soyağaçlarının skolastik ve modern düşüncede olsa da Spinoza'nın bu akımları yeni bir kavşakta bir araya getirdiğini gösteriyorum. Literatürde bu okumaya benzer yaklaşımlar literatürde mevcut olsa da, bu tezde düalist okumaya karşı üç yeni argüman geliştiriyor ve töz ve kip kategorilerinin, güç [*potentia*] kavramı aracılığıyla nasıl anlaşabileceğini ve bu kavram aracılığıyla Spinozist kategori monizminin nasıl tesis edilebileceğini gösteriyorum.

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TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans** / Master ☐ **Doktora** / PhD ☒

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