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Eternal and expansive super necessitarianism: a new interpretation of Spinoza's metaphysics

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ETERNAL AND EXPANSIVE SUPER NECESSITARIANISM
A New Interpretation of Spinoza's Metaphysics

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PH.D. THESIS

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To my mom, brother, sister, dad, and my two little angels, Caroline and Bella.

"God acts solely by the laws of his own nature, constrained by none."

Spinoza
Ethics

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Abstract

A key issue concerning the views of Spinoza is whether he is a necessitarian or if he allows for the existence of possibilities. Commentators on Spinoza agree that his metaphysics revolve around, at the very least, a deterministic universe in which the laws of nature, together with all preceding causes, determine everything that occurs. There is also agreement that Spinoza does allow for doxastic (or epistemic) possibility, which involves humans being able to imagine different outcomes based on inadequate knowledge of preceding causes. For instance, humans can imagine a particular car existing or not existing. The divide among commentators occurs over the issue of whether Spinoza is a necessitarian or not. For instance, consider the existence of a black car. If Spinoza is a necessitarian, then the car could not be any color other than black; otherwise, the car could have been a different color. Due to Spinoza's acceptance of a universe based on deterministic laws, the entire causal order would have to be different in order to produce the car in a different color. A major focus of this study, therefore, will be on whether Spinoza allows that the entire causal order could have been different.

Views supporting a necessitarian interpretation of Spinoza, those of Garrett and Koistinen, will be examined as well as views supporting a possibilist interpretation of Spinoza, those of Curley and Walski, and Miller. The views of these five commentators will be examined in an attempt to determine their plausibility in regard to Spinoza's writings as well as their plausibility in regard to the consistency of their arguments. In order to simplify the task of examining the allowance of possibilities other than doxastic in Spinoza's metaphysics, this study will focus on Miller's view of nomological

possibility. Nomological possibility involves everything that is consistent with the laws of nature when the laws of nature are considered separately from the actual causal order. In the course of this study the shortcomings of the views defending standard necessitarianism will be demonstrated; the problems of the views espousing the allowance of nomological possibilities will also be demonstrated. A major shortcoming of the necessitarian views involves the plausibility of including one particular causal order within God's essence, while a major shortcoming of the possibilist views will be their inability to handle the parallelism doctrine that Spinoza holds.

A major aim of this study is to demonstrate that nomological possibility, when combined with IP17 in the Ethics, yields a result in which all the things consistent with the laws of nature end up actually existing. IP17 declares that "God creates everything that He understands." If God understands everything consistent with the laws of nature, then He creates everything consistent with the laws of nature. The hybrid view, which is termed "super necessitarianism," will be examined to sketch a way that it could fit into Spinoza's metaphysics. The view of super necessitarianism will be considered in three variations, those of eternal, expansive, and concentrated. Eternal super necessitarianism involves all the things consistent with the laws of nature being created over the vast spans of time, while expansive super necessitarianism involves all the things being created over the vast universe. Concentrated super necessitarianism involves all the things being created within the same finite mode but expressed through different attributes. The choice will be made as to which of the three variations of super necessitarianism is most plausible, and finally it will be shown how super necessitarianism avoids some of the problems inherent in the necessitarian and possibilist views.

Public Abstract

Spinoza advocates a view in which the laws of the universe produce things in a precise order and in which each cause has to produce one particular effect. Commentators on Spinoza disagree over whether Spinoza allows for the entire causal order to be different or not. If Spinoza does allow that the causal order could be different then he must allow for things that don't actually exist but are not prohibited from existing by the laws of nature in his system. In this study it will be argued that Spinoza actually holds the view that everything that is not prohibited by the laws of nature ends up existing at some point in time and space. The plausibility of the view which says that everything not prohibited by the laws of nature ends up existing will be termed "super necessitarianism," and the view of super necessitarianism will be explained as to why it works in Spinoza's system and why it is a better alternative than competing views that hold Spinoza allows for only one particular causal order and views that Spinoza allows for the possibility of different causal orders.

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Introduction

This dissertation is devoted to determining whether Spinoza is a necessitarian or allows for possibilities of some sort. To begin, then, we will start by examining different kinds of possibilities in an attempt to determine which kind is most promising for Spinoza to have allowed, if indeed he does allow for possibilities in his metaphysics. The first kind of possibility we will consider is combinatorial possibility, which is a view put forward by Armstrong. Theodore Sider lays forth Armstrong's view:

> Armstrong identifies possible worlds with "rearrangements." These rearrangements are to be states of affairs. Possible worlds typically concern states of affairs that do not actually obtain. Armstrong therefore needs to speak of merely possible states of affairs, despite their absence from his ontology. His strategy is factionalist: though merely possible states of affairs do not, strictly speaking, exist, talk of them is as acceptable as talk of ideal gasses and frictionless planes. Think of this as talk about what is true according to a fiction of merely possible states of affairs, a fiction laid out (not explicitly) in his books.[1]

Armstrong presents his combinatorial theory of possibility as combinations of actual states of affairs that are supposed to inhabit possible worlds. States of affairs are just ways that the world (universe) is at any given point in space and time. Translated into the metaphysical language of Spinoza, at any given time there will be finite modes (individual, particular things) that exist in a particular configuration and these finite modes will be objects of at least two attributes, Extension and Thought. As objects of Extension, the finite modes will take up physical space and as objects of Thought, the finite modes will basically be ideas which have as their objects the finite modes as objects of Extension. The extended finite modes will be arranged in some configuration and, for Spinoza, this translates roughly to a state of affairs.

[1] SIDER, THEODORE, 'Another Look at Armstrong's Combinatorialism', *Nous*, vol. 39, issue 4, 2005, pg. 680.

The extended finite modes can be rearranged into a new configuration, at least in our imaginations, which will roughly translate into Armstrong's notion of combinatorial possibility. Combinatorial possibility is similar to a concept in Spinoza which we will introduce here briefly, that of doxastic (or epistemic) possibility. In order to understand Spinoza's notion of doxastic possibility, a brief explanation of the laws of nature in Spinoza's metaphysics is necessary. The laws of nature are deterministic, meaning that for each cause in the causal order only one effect can be produced. The upshot is that, when all the preceding causes are taken into account, the effects are perfectly predictable. The preceding causes, in conjunction with the laws of nature, determine everything that exists in the universe. Spinoza is, then, a determinist at the very least and potentially a necessitarian.[2] In part IV of the Ethics in definition 4 Spinoza writes:

> I call individual things *possible* insofar as, in attending to the causes by which they should be brought about, we do not know whether these causes are determined to bring them about.[3]

Spinoza is defining a type of possibility, doxastic, which is the only type of possibility for which he definitely allows. Doxastic possibility involves a lack of knowledge on our parts concerning the preceding causes in the causal order.[4] If we had perfect knowledge concerning the preceding causes we would know whether a certain thing exists or not – it is only some defect in our knowledge concerning the preceding causes that allow us to imagine a particular thing existing or not existing. For example, let us consider one yellow rose in a flower bed populated almost exclusively by red roses.

[2] The explanation of determinism vs. necessitarianism will be deferred to chapter 1.

[3] Ethics, pg. 322.

[4] There may also be a defect in our knowledge concerning at least some of the laws of nature, but our focus in this dissertation, for the sake of simplicity, will be on some defect in knowledge concerning the preceding causes in the causal order.

The existence of one yellow rose among all the red roses is determined by all the preceding causes in the extended causal order coupled with the laws of nature governing extended things. If we were aware of all the preceding causes, then we would know beforehand that one yellow rose would appear in the midst of all the red roses. However, since our knowledge of the preceding causes is inadequate in some way, we can imagine that all the roses in the flower bed will be red or that all will be yellow or that half would be red and half yellow, and so on.

Doxastic possibility involves some defect in our knowledge[5] but the ability to consider more than one outcome involves the human imagination. In the imagination, disparate ideas can be apparently fused together to seemingly form an idea that we think might match up to something in the physical world. The imagination can form an apparent idea of an extended object such as a unicorn that cannot exist – assuming that unicorns cannot exist in the universe – or it can form an apparent idea of something that might or might not exist, such as a bed of roses with a single yellow one surrounded by red ones. The imagination can form the apparent idea of a bed of roses with one yellow one by apparently fusing together ideas that we already have. For instance, we could be apparently fusing together ideas of a single yellow rose and a bed of red roses into the apparent idea of a bed of red roses with a single yellow rose in it.

The apparent fusing of ideas in the imagination is basically the same as combining various ideas together to form a new, composite idea. We are basically combining aspects of the world which we have previously run across – the ideas which we apparently fuse together – into new patterns that may or may not fit anything existing in the physical world. The ideas that we

[5] The defect in knowledge can involve a lack of knowledge concerning the preceding causes or overlooking relevant information.

apparently fuse together in the imagination come from our contact with the world, basically our contact with different configurations of extended objects in the world which, as we noted before, is roughly analogous to combining various aspects of the world into different states of affairs as is done in combinatorial possibility. Combinatorial possibility, then, is very close to the doxastic possibility for which Spinoza allows, with the similarity only increased by the fact that combinatorial possibilities are fictions in much the same way as doxastic possibilities are fictions in Spinoza's metaphysics.

Combinatorial possibility also bears a strong resemblance to another type of possibility that one commentator on Spinoza, Jon Miller, thinks Spinoza allows, that of nomological possibility. Nomological possibility will be considered in depth in chapters 5 and 6, but for the purposes of seeing links with combinatorial possibility, we will briefly introduce the notion of nomological possibility. Nomological possibility involves anything that is consistent with the laws of nature – anything that the laws of nature in and of themselves do not prohibit from existing. In other words, nomological possibility involves anything that the laws of nature would allow to exist given the needed preceding causes. For instance, let us consider the bed of roses.

The roses being all red or all yellow or a mixture between the two colors are outcomes consistent with the laws of nature – there is nothing in the laws of nature in and of themselves which prohibit any of the outcomes. In fact, the bed of roses will turn out to be mostly red with a single yellow, but the color of the roses is only determined by the preceding causes coupled with the laws of nature – the laws of nature by themselves do not determine what colors the roses will be. Something that the laws of nature in and of themselves would prohibit from existing could be a unicorn – assuming that a unicorn is something that is inconsistent with the laws of nature – and therefore a unicorn would not exist no matter what the preceding causes in the causal order

were. A unicorn would simply not exist no matter what, prevented from existing by the laws of nature, again assuming that there is something inconsistent with the laws of nature about a horse with a single horn attached to the middle of its forehead. Varying colors of a bed of roses, however, would be consistent with the laws of nature and thus be nomological possibilities.

Combinatorial possibility comes in when we consider how we might be aware of what the laws of nature allow. We take the experiences we have with the world and combine them in our imagination in order to have some awareness of nomological possibilities. Picking things from our experience allows us to pick from things that we know are consistent with the laws of nature, so combining them into new combinations give us some awareness of different nomological possibilities. We can thus understand nomological possibility better by viewing it through the lens of combinatorial possibility.

Combinatorial possibility does not seem to have been allowed by Spinoza in exactly the form outlined by Armstrong, but doxastic possibility seems rather close to combinatorial possibility and nomological possibility – if Spinoza did allow for nomological possibilities – is closely related to combinatorial possibility. Thus we can use the concept of combinatorial possibility to shed some light on doxastic and nomological possibility in the course of this dissertation. Now let us consider a different sense of possibility that may shed some light on Spinoza's allowance of possibility, namely an interpretation of the sense of possibility held by the Stoics and put forward by R. J. Hankinson:

> It appears that the Stoics are prepared to treat as necessary those things which simply as a matter of fact have turned out to be true, and whose truth is now unassailable…That last sentence may be misleading – for the Stoics, there will always be a causal explanation as to why things have turned out thus and so – there is no such thing as simply turning out true…A statement that we would normally consider contingent will only be necessary for the Stoics if there is as a matter of fact some causal factor operative at the time to prevent its failing to be true.

> If this is right, the Stoics can evade an obvious objection: if your definition of necessity holds, then anything that will as a matter of fact turn out true must be necessary, not for logical reasons, but because, given the iron-clad necessity of the unfolding of fate, there are reasons in the world now (in the form of the total nexus of its causal processes) why things will turn out thus. Determinism should, after all, be temporally indifferent. But, the Stoics will reply, consider what it is to be a cause, or at least a perfect cause. If A is a perfect cause of B, A is actually acting to bring B about. In this sense, there are no perfect causes of future events.
>
> This yields two distinct types of modality. The first one might label 'species possibility.' In this case some predicate P is possibly applicable to an individual of natural kind K just in case K's can, other things being equal, be P's. Thus Philo of Megara apparently held that a piece of wood at the bottom of the ocean could be burnt, just because wood is naturally flammable. But secondly there is what might be called actual possibility, according to which the submerged wood is not now flammable because of actually obtaining circumstances. The Stoics, on this view, restrict non-actual species possibilities to future cases; but they do none the less admit some of them. The Stoics buy Philo's account in forward-looking cases only; otherwise the actual prevention condition in their modal definitions kicks in.
>
> If this is right, it is false to say that the only type of possibility available to the Stoics is epistemic. Consider an example of Aristotle's: a new cloak might perish as a result of ordinary wear, or it might be cut. For the Stoics, *sub specie aeternitatis* there is only one thing that can happen to it – the unravelling of fate will see to that. However, there is nothing now in the world that prevents either outcome, for no causally efficient state of affairs is now making it the case that it will (or will not) be cut. There is thus a point to Chrysippus' insistence that fate is an ineluctable chain of antecedent causes.[6]

Hankinson interprets the Stoics as holding three distinct types of possibility: species, actual, and epistemic. The third, epistemic, is the one type of possibility definitely allowed by Spinoza and which we already discussed above under the name of doxastic possibility. Whether we term it 'doxastic possibility' or 'epistemic possibility,' it involves some defect in our knowledge concerning the preceding causes in the causal order so that we can imagine something existing as well as not existing, whereas if we knew all the preceding causes we would know whether the thing in question existed or not. The first two types of possibility that Hankinson discusses may or may not shed additional light on Spinoza's sense of possibility, so let us examine the first two types.

[6] HANKINSON, R. J., 'Determinism and Indeterminism', *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld, Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 527-528.

Actual possibility, as Hankinson presents it, involves outcomes that will eventually come to pass, so that actual possibilities are outcomes that in the future will be true. Given that Stoics hold a deterministic view of the universe, so that the laws of nature coupled with all the preceding causes in the causal order will determine everything that exists in the universe over the course of time. In other words, actual possibilities are outcomes and things that are not true in the present due to the fact that they do not yet exist but at some point in the future they will come into existence and thus be true at that point. Actual possibilities, then, are basically future actualities. The sense in which they are possible is that they are not impossible since they will be actualized at some point. Anything that is actualized must be possible in the sense that the thing actualized is not impossible – were the thing to be impossible, then the thing would never be actualized.

In Spinoza's metaphysics, two different conditions are needed to bring about the existence of things (finite modes). The first condition is that the finite mode in question is consistent with the laws of nature – the laws of nature in and of themselves do not prohibit the existence of the finite mode in question. The second condition is that the preceding causes are in place that, coupled with the laws of nature, determine the finite mode to exist. What Hankinson terms non-actual species possibility appears to only meet the first condition since non-actual species possibility appears to only require consistency with the laws of nature. The example Hankinson considers of the piece of wood being flammable at the bottom of the ocean is a species possibility solely due to the flammable nature of wood – the flammability of wood is something consistent with the laws of nature since wood can be burned.

The example of the flammable wood at the bottom of the ocean appears to be similar to nomological possibility. Nomological possibility involves outcomes that are consistent with the

laws of nature, and the flammability of wood is consistent with the laws of nature. However, the example as it stands would not work as a nomological possibility. It is a nomological possibility that the wood burn, but only when the wood is taken in isolation – adding the water to the scenario would presumably cancel out the flammability of the wood. Unless detail were added to the scenario, such as the wood being enclosed in an airtight container, it is difficult to see how the example would work as a nomological possibility. To be a nomological possibility, the outcome in question has to be consistent with the laws of nature.

A different example of a non-actual species possibility would fit better as a nomological possibility, such as a piece of wood laying on the ground in conditions which are conducive for starting a fire. In the revised wood example there is nothing concerning the laws of nature, such as a great quantity of water, which is inconsistent with the wood catching fire. The revised wood example thus could be a nomological possibility. The importance of identifying non-actual species possibility – or at least some instances of it – with nomological possibility is that it shows that determinists like the Stoics might be able to accommodate nomological possibility. Spinoza, at the very least, is a determinist, so it seems that nomological possibility could potentially fit in his metaphysics as well.

The key point in fitting nomological possibility in Spinoza's metaphysics is determining whether Spinoza is a determinist or a necessitarian. If Spinoza is a determinist, then the potential compatibility of the Stoics' determinism with nomological possibility becomes significant; if Spinoza is a necessitarian, then the significance of nomological possibility potentially fitting into determinism is greatly diminished. The question of whether Spinoza is a necessitarian and whether he allows for nomological possibility is a question we will examine in detail, particularly in chapters 5 and 6. It is interesting to note that Miller, who argues that Spinoza

does allow for nomological possibility, also argues that Spinoza is a necessitarian. We will thus be faced with two questions: one concerning whether Spinoza is a necessitarian or determinist and the second concerning whether Miller is right in thinking that nomological possibility and necessitarianism are compatible.

The third type of possibility which Hankinson identifies, actual possibility, involves outcomes that are not only consistent with the laws of nature but also have all the preceding causes in the causal order in place. In other words, actual possibilities are not only consistent with the laws of nature but the causal order will progress to the point where all the needed causes are in place to bring about the outcome in question. Actual possibilities are possibilities only in the sense that they are not impossible since they come into existence. A better way to classify actual possibilities would be as actualities. We are focused in this dissertation on possibilities that could have existed but do not in fact exist. Actual possibilities will not be a concern since they do in fact exist at some point and are therefore not the sort of possibilities in which we are interested.

A final type of possibility we will consider in the introduction is what may be termed "broad logical possibility." To examine broad logical possibility and its potential connection to Spinoza, let us consider what Miller has to say on the subject. He writes:

> It will be noticed that I have said nothing about what might be called "broadly logical possibility."…We could recast "broadly logical possibility" in terms that do not involve possible worlds and then ask what Spinoza might say about this reformulated conception. For example, we might consider any proposition broadly logically possible that does not violate the axioms of logic – thus, it is broadly logically possible that a person should jump over the moon. This may seem a weak concept of possibility…but it also seems comprehensible enough…reformulated in seventeenth century terms, the question could be: are the logical axioms true in virtue of the nature of thought itself, or in virtue of something else? For Spinoza, who believed there is nothing outside of Nature, the answer must be: Thought (with a capital "T" to denote clearly the reference to *Deus sive Natura's* attribute, Thought)…Cast in such terms, the logical axioms seem to be the Thought-analogues to the laws of physics which are among the basic laws of Extension…If it is the case that the axioms of logic are among the basic laws of Thought, then we can ask: what are the laws of Extension that are parallel to those supposed laws of Thought…that make us believe it possible for

> people to jump over moons? This question is sanctioned by the doctrine of mind-body parallelism, which requires that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things." If there are laws of Thought that would allow for the possibility of people jumping over moons, then there must be laws of Extension that allow for the same. Since (to the best of our knowledge) there are no such laws of Extension…there are no such laws of Thought, either. So, on Spinozistic grounds, putative logical possibilities like people jumping over moons are not real possibilities at all; they are something else, probably acts of the imagination.
>
> The upshot is not that Spinoza would deny the existence of a category of possible things or truths that are describable as broadly logically possible. It is rather that he would define this category less expansively than is currently fashionable. In common with many of us, Spinoza could say that to be broadly logically possible is to be compossible with the axioms of logic. However, he would add, to be compossible with the axioms of logic is to be compossible with the laws of Thought. Since the laws of Thought are the laws of Nature (considered as a thinking being), broadly logical possibility in Spinoza's philosophy turns out to be synonymous with nomological possibility, as I have described it. Thus there is a set of possibilia that could be called "broadly logically possible"; this set is identical with the set of possibilia that are nomologically possible.[7]

Miller argues that Spinoza does not allow for what he calls "broadly logical possibilities" in the more traditional sense wherein things are considered possible as long as they do not suffer from some sort of self-contradiction. For instance, the existence of a round square would not be a possibility under the traditional sense of broadly logically possible since a round (circular) thing does not have multiple sides, does not possess any right angles, and all points on the edge of the round thing are equidistant from the center while a square thing has multiple sides (specifically four), possesses four right angles, and the points on the edge of the square thing vary in distance from the center. A thing cannot at the same time have no sides and multiple sides, have no right angles and four right angles, and have all points on the edge be both equidistant and not equidistant from the center.

A round square requires that the thing in question have properties that are contradictory in nature and therefore the thing cannot exist for precisely that reason. Anything that lacks this contradiction, however, would qualify as a possibility under the umbrella of broad logical possibility. Thus, for example, it would be possible under the broadly logical sense of possibility

[7] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001), pp. 808-811.

for a human to breathe in space because there is nothing inherently contradictory about considering a human breathing in space. It is true that the laws of nature as we understand them would prevent a human from breathing in space, rendering it impossible in fact, but going against the laws of nature does not rule out something being possible in the traditional broadly logical sense – rather it is rendered possible or impossible by either the presence or lack of internal contradiction.

Miller continues by arguing that logical possibility (of any kind) is based on what he terms "axioms of logic" which are in turn based on the laws of Thought (as in the attribute of Thought). The laws of Thought run parallel[8] to the laws of Extension in Spinoza's system and thus there is a one-to-one match with each law of Thought having a law of Extension to which the Law of Thought corresponds. Thus if there is no law of Extension that allows humans to breathe in space – and as far as we know no such law allows space breathing – then there is no corresponding law of Thought that allows us to form an idea of humans breathing in space as a genuine possibility. We only think that we can truly form an idea of a human breathing in space but what we are really doing is putting together the idea of space and the idea of a human breathing in our imagination.

The axioms of logic correspond to the laws of Thought so we cannot truly form an idea of a human breathing in space and consider it a genuine logical possibility. According to logic under Miller's understanding of Spinoza a person breathing in space is impossible even in the bounds of what is broadly logically possible. Broad logical possibility covers what the laws of

[8] Miller bases the parallels between the laws of Thought and the laws of Extension appropriately enough on the parallelism doctrine which Spinoza introduces in part II of the Ethics. The parallelism doctrine will be discussed in greater depth in later chapters – it presents a serious problem to not only Curley and Walski but also to Miller.

Thought allow and the laws of Thought allow under the attribute of Thought only what corresponds to what the parallel laws of Extension allow under the attribute of Extension.

Broad logical possibilities are only those things which the laws of Thought allow and, since the laws of Thought only allow the corresponding idea to what the laws of Extension allow among extended things, broad logical possibilities in fact are the same as nomological possibilities in Spinoza's metaphysics. Thus Miller denies that Spinoza thinks that broad logical possibilities exist, at least in the form in which we traditionally think of them, but Spinoza allows for broad logical possibilities that are really identical to the nomological possibilities which Miller argues that Spinoza allows. If this interpretation is right, logical possibility and nomological possibility collapse together in Spinoza's system.

The parallelism doctrine, requiring ideas and the extended things which are the objects of the ideas to be in perfectly parallel positions in their respective causal orders, appears to support Miller's reasoning. For the purposes of this dissertation, then, we will be focusing mainly on nomological possibility as well as doxastic possibility. The different types of possibility we have considered in this introduction – combinatorial, species and actual, and broadly logical – are all either similar to nomological or doxastic possibility or can be easily translated into nomological or doxastic possibilities. Thus we will focus on nomological and doxastic possibility during the course of this dissertation. Now let us turn to the major issues concerning necessitarianism and allowance of nomological possibilities.

Chapter 1: A Brief Introduction to Spinoza's Metaphysics

Spinoza is usually interpreted as a necessitarian, and there is strong textual evidence to support the necessitarian reading of Spinoza. If Spinoza is a necessitarian, then any passages which suggest that unrealized possibilities exist must be interpreted in a way that reconciles the apparent contradiction. If, on the other hand, Spinoza does allow for unrealized possibilities, then there might be a way to make sense of necessitarian-leaning passages that make them compatible with possibilism (the allowance of unrealized possibilities). This work will examine the question of whether Spinoza is a necessitarian and, if so, what kind of necessitarian.

Necessitarianism is the view that everything that exists in the universe, has existed, or will exist could not have been any different than how it actually is. Anything that exists in the universe at any given moment necessarily (in the sense of logical necessity[9]) exists and could not be any different from what it actually is. Indeed, the causal order itself could not be different since for each cause there is only one effect it can produce. In other words, the universe is governed by causal laws that produce guaranteed outcomes rather than probalistic outcomes and the order of causes and effects could not be different.[10] For example, consider a white billiard ball striking a black billiard ball at some specified time and location. The impact causes the black ball to move in some direction and the white ball to slow down. According to necessitarianism,

[9] All references to necessity concerning Spinoza in this study will be references to logical necessity.

[10] Spinoza cashes this out in the Ethics, part I, axiom 3: "From a given determinate cause there necessarily follows an effect; on the other hand, if there be no determinate cause, it is impossible that an effect should follow." This passage is quoted from: SPINOZA, BARUCH, *Complete Works*, edited by Michael Morgan, translated by Samuel Shirley. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), pg. 218. The majority of passages from Spinoza's writings will be taken from the Shirley translation and henceforth will be cited with the work of Spinoza specified along with the page numbers from the Shirley translation. Any passages not taken from the Shirley translation will be noted as such.

these balls could not collide at any other time or place – even the collision happening a second earlier or an inch to the left would be impossible. The direction of the balls' trajectory and even their colors could not be different. The same thing applies to the entire causal series – no alternative causal series can exist.

There are a number of passages which strongly suggest that Spinoza is a necessitarian. An early statement of Spinoza's apparent necessitarianism appears in part I of the Short Treatise:

> Now, we maintain that, since all that happens is done by God, it must therefore necessarily be predetermined by him, otherwise he would be mutable, which would be a great imperfection in him. And as this predetermination by him must be from eternity, in which eternity there is no before or after, it follows irresistibly that God could never have predetermined things in any other way than that in which they are determined now, and have been from eternity, and that God could not have been either before or without these determinations. Further, if God should omit to do anything, then he must either have some cause for it, or not; if he has not, then it is necessary that he should not omit to do it; this is self-evident.[11]

This passage seems uncompromisingly necessitarian with Spinoza stating that God predetermines everything and that God 'could never have predetermined things in any other way'. It is the Ethics, however, which contains the strongest textual evidence for necessitarianism, with the first occurring in IP16, in which Spinoza states:

> From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinite things in infinite ways (that is, everything that can come within the scope of infinite intellect).[12]

Spinoza continues in the scholium to IP16:

> I think I have shown quite clearly (Pr. 16) that from God's supreme power or infinite nature an infinity of things in infinite ways – that is, everything – has necessarily flowed or is always following from that same necessity, just as from the nature of a triangle it follows from eternity to eternity that its three angles are equal to two right angles.[13]

[11] Short Treatise, pp. 51-52.

[12] Ethics, pg. 227.

[13] Ibid, pg. 228.

And in IP29:

> Nothing in nature is contingent, but all things are from the necessity of the divine nature determined to exist and to act in a definite way.[14]

A similar statement occurs in briefer form in IP33:

> Things could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than is the case.[15]

And lest one think Spinoza holds that extended things exist in a necessitarian order but allows for the existence of ideas of unrealized extended things, he appears to rule that out in IIP7:

> The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.[16]

These propositions, especially taken together, appear to state unequivocally a necessitarian view, that things could not have been produced in any other order and that the order of ideas is the same as the order of extended things. No room seems to remain for unrealized possibilities or, for that matter, ideas of unrealized possibilities, and the issue might rest there if not for other passages that seem to have a possibilist lean. In short order we will consider passages suggesting that Spinoza allows for at least ideas of unrealized possibilities, but first let us consider what unrealized possibilities or ideas of unrealized possibilities would be if they in fact existed.

Unrealized possibilities are, simply put, things that could have existed but in fact do not. For instance, it seems possible that in the previous example the two balls could have been red

[14] Ibid, pg. 234.

[15] Ibid, pg. 235.

[16] Ibid, pg. 247.no

and green or twice as heavy or twice as large as they actually were. The most likely type of unrealized possibilities that Spinoza allows for, given the interpretations we will be accepting in this work, are unrealized nomological possibilities. We will examine nomological possibilities in much greater depth later, particularly in chapters 5 and 6, but for now we can understand nomological possibilities as anything that is not prohibited by the laws of nature. Examples of nomological possibilities are easiest to grasp if we focus on extended things.

A good example of nomological possibility is the balls we have been considering which it seems could have been red and green or blue and orange. In fact the particular balls we are considering are red and green but the laws of nature would allow the balls to be blue and orange under different circumstances. The color of the balls is determined by the laws of nature in conjunction with all preceding causes in the causal order of extended things. The preceding causes in conjunction with the laws of nature determine that the balls are red and green respectively. Since the laws of nature do not prohibit the balls being different colors, or at least the laws of nature in and of themselves do not prohibit different colors, it is a nomological possibility that one ball be blue instead of red and the other ball orange instead of green. The balls are not in fact blue and orange, so we can consider the possibility of them being colors other than red and green to be unrealized nomological possibilities.

Nomological possibilities will be considered to be the most likely type of possibilities, other than doxastic possibilities which could not exist but which we imagine could exist due to defects of some kind in our knowledge, because the laws of nature will be interpreted as necessary in this work. The reasoning behind interpreting the laws of nature as necessary will be examined in greater depth later in this chapter, but it involves first of all interpreting the laws of nature as infinite modes and then interpreting the infinite modes as being included within God's

essence and therefore necessary. Being necessary, the laws of nature could not be different and thus nomological possibilities are restricted to what the actually existing and necessary laws of nature do not prohibit and what they would allow under different circumstances.

Unrealized nomological possibilities will be the focus of our inquiry and it will be one of our tasks to determine whether Spinoza does allow for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities or whether he is a strict necessitarian. If Spinoza does allow for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, then perhaps he does not support strict necessitarianism.

At this early juncture let us briefly consider two ways we can interpret Spinoza that seem consistent with his apparent standing as a necessitarian. One interpretation rules out unrealized nomological possibilities while the second interpretation does allow for unrealized nomological possibilities or at the very least ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. The first interpretation is that Spinoza holds the view of necessitarianism; the second interpretation is that Spinoza holds the view of determinism.

Two different views, necessitarianism and determinism, might be applicable to Spinoza. Both views are based on natural laws which are deterministic so that each cause necessarily produces a certain effect and cannot fail to produce that effect. The difference between the two views lies in the totality of the causal order. In necessitarianism the total causal order is necessary – the causal order cannot be other than it actually is and there are not any alternate

causal orders which could have existed but in fact do not. Necessitarianism, then, will not allow for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities.[17]

Determinism is similar to necessitarianism in that determinism posits that each cause will necessarily produce a certain effect. For instance, referring back to the billiard ball example, if the white billiard ball strikes the black billiard ball, then the black one will move in a certain direction at a certain speed. Unlike necessitarianism, however, determinism allows for the nomological possibility that a green ball struck a blue ball – due to color changes not being prohibited by the laws of nature – instead of the balls being white and black or that the balls were twice as large or twice as dense or traveling faster or slower than they actually were. Determinism allows for the existence of alternative causal orders (based on unrealized nomological possibilities), unlike necessitarianism.

Determinism depends on causal laws that produce certain outcomes, but the view does not specify exactly what things on which the causal laws operate, or at least it does not specify without reference to preceding causes. Determinism and necessitarianism both state that causal laws necessitate what effects are produced by causes, but necessitarianism states that there is no alternative to the casual order whereas determinism allows for alternative causal orders. Determinism allows for the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities, at least in terms of the entire causal order, whereas necessitarianism does not, and therefore any passage suggesting the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities would fit better with a deterministic view. Both views are potentially compatible with Spinoza's philosophy and part of this study will attempt to determine which view Spinoza most likely holds.

[17] Miller, the champion of nomological possibilities, does think that the view of nomological possibilities is consistent with necessitarianism. We will examine Miller's view in depth in chapter 5.

Unrealized Nomological Possibilities in Spinoza's System

The ontological status of unrealized nomological possibilities in Spinoza's system must be considered and they must fit somewhere in his metaphysics, if Spinoza does allow for the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities. For Spinoza, the universe is synonymous with God. God encompasses all that exists and is in fact identical with all that exists.[18] God has at least two attributes, Thought and Extension, and, for Spinoza, the attributes are general kinds. Ideas are particular instances of the attribute of Thought, and the objects of a great many of these ideas are extended bodies that are particular instances of the attribute of Extension.[19] The question for Spinoza is whether there are extended things that never come to be (unrealized nomological possibilities) or, alternatively perhaps, ideas that have as their object extended things that don't exist (ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities).

The first passage we will consider where Spinoza seems to allow for unrealized nomological possibilities occurs as an axiom in part II of the Ethics:

> The essence of man does not involve necessary existence; that is, from the order of Nature it is equally possible that a certain man exists or does not exist.[20]

The meaning of this passage can be illuminated more clearly by considering it along with definitions offered for contingency and possibility in part IV of the Ethics:

[18] Spinoza defends this view in the Ethics part I, props. 11-17.

[19] That is, the objects of these ideas are extended bodies when the objects of the ideas are not ideas themselves.

[20] Ethics, pg. 244.

> I call individual things *contingent* insofar as, in attending only to their essence, we find nothing that necessarily posits their existence or necessarily excludes it.
>
> I call individual things *possible* insofar as, in attending to the causes by which they should be brought about, we do not know whether these causes are determined to bring them about.[21]

The definition of contingent things applies to things that are in God but does not apply to God – the essence of God includes necessary existence, so God is the paradigm example of something that is decidedly not contingent. It is the contingency of other things (the modes of God) that is in question. The infinite modes, which follow directly from the attributes, or are mediated by another infinite mode, present no problem and can be considered just as necessary as God, being included within God's essence. A standard way to understand the infinite modes is as laws of nature, as demonstrated in this passage from Curley:

> In the case of at least one of the infinite modes, motion and rest, we have a tolerably clear idea what that mode's "following" from the attribute might consist in. There are laws of motion and rest, principles which apply to all bodies which are in motion or at rest, principles which are deducible from the laws of extension, i.e., from principles which apply to all extended things without qualification. These laws of motion and rest in turn serve as the principles of explanation for more particular facts, i.e., for laws of lesser generality and for particular happenings in nature. These laws are infinite in the same sense that the laws involved in the attributes are: they apply throughout nature, without limitation to any particular time and place.[22]

The passage from Curley focuses on laws of Extension as infinite modes, but it is easy enough to infer that the laws of Thought are also infinite modes. The laws of nature, which can be understood as infinite modes[23], operate in a deterministic fashion in Spinoza's universe. The laws of nature dictate the exact causal order of finite modes, but the laws of nature do not in and

[21] Ibid, pg. 322.

[22] CURLEY, EDWIN, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 45-46.

[23] I am assuming, along with Curley, that infinite modes can be understood as laws of nature.

of themselves necessitate what things are in the causal order. In other words, the laws of nature may be deterministic, but this by itself does not guarantee one causal order over any other.

The laws of nature do determine what finite modes exist and in what order, but they only do so in conjunction with the preceding causes in the causal order. If the preceding causes are different, then the finite mode which is determined to exist will also be different. In order for the preceding causes to be different the entire causal order would have to be different, but as far as the laws of nature are concerned, it is all the same. The laws of nature will determine what finite modes exist based on preceding finite modes and thus determine the entire causal order, but the laws of nature do not determine on their own that one causal order exists instead of another. In order to fully understand the point, let us for the sake of this example assume the causal order has a beginning.

The beginning of the causal order in conjunction with the laws of nature determine what finite modes exist in the causal order at every moment after the beginning. The laws of nature, however, do not determine what finite modes are present at the beginning of the causal order. One initial configuration of the finite modes at the beginning of the causal order produces one causal order while a different configuration of finite modes at the beginning of the causal order will produce a different causal order from the first. The laws of nature do not determine the finite modes which exist at the beginning of the causal order and therefore do not in and of themselves determine one causal order over another causal order. Rather, it is the laws of nature in conjunction with the configuration of finite modes at the beginning of the causal order which determines all the finite modes in the causal order.

The causal order of extended things is determined by the laws of nature together with the initial configuration of extended things. The laws of nature determine that a particular extended finite mode exists and at what point it exists in time and space, but the laws of nature alone do not determine the existence of the extended finite mode and the particulars of that existence. The laws of nature act upon the preceding causes in the causal order to determine the existence of each extended finite mode. If the preceding causes are different or rather could have been different, then the extended finite mode in question will also be different in its particulars or will not exist at all.

Extended finite modes lack necessary existence in their essence and any particular extended finite mode may or may not exist. Arguing for the necessity of extended finite modes, or finite modes in general, is problematic due to the lack of necessity from their own nature and the lack of necessitation from the laws of nature alone. In order for the laws of nature to necessitate the existence of particular extended finite modes, the preceding causes in the causal order (and therefore the entire causal order) must be necessary and could not have been any different.

Further Problems with the Necessity of Finite Modes

Necessitarianism, if that is the view to which Spinoza subscribes, requires that all the finite modes in the universe be necessitated. As noted in the previous section it is the entire causal order of finite modes which would have to be necessary, since individual finite modes are neither necessitated by their own nature nor by the laws of nature in and of themselves. The

laws of nature under our interpretation are necessary and deterministic and they, in conjunction with the preceding causes in the causal order of finite modes, determine when and where particular finite modes will exist. Thus the entire causal order would have to be necessary in that no alternative causal orders exist and any Spinozan passages which suggest that the entire causal order is not necessary must somehow be reconciled with necessitarianism if Spinoza is interpreted as a necessitarian. Let us consider a set of passages which throw doubt upon the necessity of the causal order of finite modes in Spinoza's metaphysics:

> IP21: All things that follow from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must have existed always, and as infinite; that is, through the said attribute they are eternal and infinite.
>
> IP22: Whatever follows from some attribute of God, insofar as the attribute is modified by a modification that exists necessarily and as infinite through that same attribute, must also exist both necessarily and as infinite.
>
> IP23: Every mode which exists necessarily and as infinite must have necessarily followed either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God or from some attribute modified by a modification which exists necessarily and as infinite.
>
> IP28: Every individual thing, i.e., anything whatever which is finite and has a determinate existence, cannot exist or be determined to act unless it be determined to exist and to act by another cause which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and this cause again cannot exist or be determined to act unless it be determined to exist and to act by another cause which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and so ad infinitum.[24]

The first three propositions detail how the infinite modes (both immediate and mediate) follow from the attributes of God, and Spinoza argues that the infinite modes are both eternal and necessary. IP22 states that whatever is modified by an infinite mode must also exist necessarily and be infinite, which seems to rule out finite modes being caused by infinite modes – otherwise it seems the finite modes would exist necessarily and be infinite, but then they would no longer be finite modes. IP28 states that a finite mode must be caused by another finite mode, so again a finite mode being caused by an infinite mode is ruled out.

[24] Ethics, pp. 230, 231, 233.

The infinite modes follow directly from the attributes and are necessary by virtue of being included within God's essence,[25] but the finite modes are caused by other finite modes, not directly by the attributes or infinite modes, so it is difficult to understand from where the finite modes would derive their necessity. There seems to be a disconnect between God's nature or essence (the attributes and the infinite modes) and the finite modes, so it is difficult to understand how the finite modes could be included within God's essence and therefore necessary.[26]

The finite modes and, by extension, the entire causal order of extended finite modes and the causal order of the ideas of the extended finite modes may not be necessary in Spinoza's system. Certainly IP28 suggests they are not necessary – finite modes causing other finite modes does not say anything about the entire causal order of finite modes. The finite modes from one causal order cause finite modes in the same fashion as finite modes in any alternate causal order cause finite modes, so IP28 does not by itself suggest the existence of any particular causal order. If the finite modes are not necessary, then it seems Spinoza must make allowance for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. Therefore let us look first for textual evidence that support the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities in Spinoza's system.

No firm textual evidence for the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities in Spinoza's writings can be found. The passage most amenable to being interpreted as allowing for the existence of unrealized possibilities occurs in part 2 of the Ethics in proposition 8 wherein Spinoza writes:

[25] According to the interpretation which we will be adopting shortly.

[26] This argument (in shortened form here) is one put forward by Bennett.

> The ideas of nonexistent individual things or modes must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God in the same way as the formal essences of individual things or modes are contained in the attributes of God.[27]

IIP8 does not refer to unrealized nomological possibilities, but rather ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities – or at least it can be interpreted as a discussion of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. If Spinoza wished to allow for the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities, it seems likely that he would have referred to nonexistent individual things rather than ideas of nonexistent individual things. Two issues arise from this passage that will be dealt with later: first, whether ideas of nonexistent individual things actually do refer to ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities and second, if the passage does refer to ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, how ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities could exist without the unrealized nomological possibilities themselves also existing. The existence of unrealized nomological possibilities in addition to ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities seems to be required by the parallelism doctrine.

The parallelism doctrine is introduced in part II of the Ethics in proposition 7:

> The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.[28]

The parallelism doctrine basically states that the causal order of ideas and the causal order of extended things are in exactly the same sequence, perfectly parallel. It must be remembered that each finite mode which is an object of Extension in the extended causal order is perfectly parallel to a finite mode which is an object of Thought in the causal order of ideas. The finite mode which is an object of Extension is an extended thing and the parallel finite mode as an object of

[27] Ethics, pg. 248.

[28] Ibid, pg. 247.

Thought is the idea of the extended thing which is parallel to the idea. The finite mode that is the extended thing and the finite mode that is the idea may or may not be the same finite mode, depending on how Spinoza's metaphysics is interpreted, but the important point is that the extended thing and the idea of the extended thing occupy perfectly parallel spots in their respective causal orders.

Any extended thing that exists will occupy a particular place in the causal order of extended things and the idea of that extended thing will occupy a particular place in the causal order of ideas that is parallel to the position of the extended thing in the causal order of extended things. The upshot of this is that there appears to be no room in the causal order of ideas for ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. Ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities have, by definition, no extended thing that acts as a counterpart to the idea for the very simple reason that the unrealized nomological possibility does not exist. Since the unrealized nomological possibility does not exist, it obviously cannot be extended and cannot occupy a place in the causal order of extended things. No place is occupied in the extended causal order by the unrealized nomological possibility, so there will be no place occupied in the extended causal order to parallel the place occupied in the causal order of ideas by the idea of the unrealized nomological possibility.

Deeper Examination of IIP8

Before moving on to more in depth analysis of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, let us first consider whether IIP8 can be interpreted as discussing ideas of

unrealized nomological possibilities. Further evidence concerning what Spinoza is discussing in IIP8 can be found in the scholium to IIP8:

> Should anyone want an example for a clearer understanding…I shall try to illustrate it as best I can. The nature of a circle is such that the rectangles formed from the segments of its intersecting chords are equal. Hence an infinite number of equal rectangles are contained in a circle, but none of them can be said to exist except insofar as the circle exists, nor again can the idea of any one of these rectangles be said to exist except insofar as it is comprehended in the idea of the circle. Now of this infinite number of intersecting chords let two, E and D, exist. Now indeed their ideas also exist not only insofar as they are merely comprehended in the idea of the circle but also insofar as they involve the existence of those rectangles, with the result that they are distinguished from the other ideas of the other rectangles.[29]

Spinoza's example consists of a circle in which infinite chords form infinite rectangles and notes that the chords and rectangles cannot exist without the circle also existing. The chords/rectangles can be read as representing extended finite modes, while the circle symbolizes God; extended finite modes cannot exist without God existing[30] in Spinoza's metaphysics so, by analogy, the chords/rectangles cannot exist without the circle also existing. Spinoza then deliberately singles out two chords as actually existing.

The actually existing chords, which he names E and D, are distinguished from all the other chords by the fact that E and D actually exist and the other chords do not. Spinoza focuses on the ideas of the chords of E and D being distinguished from the ideas of the other chords that do not actually exist. He notes that the ideas of E and D not only exist in the sense that they are comprehended in the idea of the circle – as modes, specifically modes of Thought/ideas, are comprehended in the idea of God – but also exist in the sense that the rectangles (and the chords) which are the objects of the ideas exist.

[29] Ibid, pg. 248.

[30] The relationship of God to the modes is discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

The ideas of the chords E and D exist in two senses, one in which they are comprehended in the circle and the second in which their objects actually exist. The ideas of the other chords, on the other hand, only exist in the sense that they are comprehended in the circle. The chords, it is important to recall, are representing extended finite modes. The chords that actually exist in the circle, namely E and D, represent extended finite modes that actually exist and the nonexistent chords represent nonexistent extended finite modes. The ideas of E and D, then, are ideas of extended things that actually exist. The other ideas of the chords that are nonexistent are ideas of extended things that are nonexistent.

Spinoza allows for the existence of ideas of nonexistent extended things, but it is unclear exactly what Spinoza is allowing when he allows for the existence of ideas of nonexistent extended things. Nonexistent things could be describing things that could have existed but in fact do not actually exist, things that cannot ever exist because the laws of nature will not allow the thing in question to exist, or things that have existed in the past and no longer currently exist. Let us briefly examine each of these three options to hopefully gain a clearer understanding of what Spinoza might be discussing.

The first option is that the nonexistent things which are the objects of the ideas allowed by Spinoza are things that could possibly exist, but do not actually exist. Under this first option the things would include variations of things that do not actually exist but could have existed were the causal order to have been different. For example, let us consider a black ball that actually exists. The laws of nature coupled with the preceding causes in the causal order determined that the ball would be black and there is actually no way that the ball could have been other than black. However, if we consider what the laws of nature would allow, the ball could have been red or green or blue or any other color than black. The ideas of nonexistent things

which Spinoza speaks of in IIP8 would therefore be ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities under the first option.

The laws of nature could potentially allow the ball to be a color other than black, but the preceding causal order determines that the ball is colored black. For the ball to be colored anything other than black to be a genuine possibility, it seems that Spinoza must allow for the existence of alternate possible causal orders which, as we have seen earlier, would most likely make Spinoza a determinist and would have him allowing for the existence of unrealized nomological possibilities. On the other hand, the other two interpretations of ideas of nonexistent things would fit comfortably with a necessitarian interpretation of Spinoza.

The second interpretation is that Spinoza is referring to ideas of things that cannot exist due to the laws of nature. The nonexistent things are prohibited by the laws of nature, which could include such things as unicorns. A unicorn has no internal contradiction, since there is nothing contradictory about a horse-like animal with a single horn protruding from its forehead. Assuming that unicorns cannot exist, however, there must be something in the laws of nature which prohibit their existence. Somehow or other the laws of nature prevent unicorns from existing even though it is otherwise possible that they could exist.

Ideas[31] of unicorns would seemingly fit the bill for ideas of things that do not actually exist without opening up any room for nomological possibilities. Since unicorns cannot actually exist it is obviously not possible that they could exist and therefore unicorns would not require

[31] Ideas is actually a misnomer since we will discover in chapter 3 that the apparent ideas of unicorns are actually constructs of our imagination.

the existence of alternate possible causal orders. Without any alternate possible causal orders the road is still left open for necessitarianism.

The third option is that the ideas are of things that do not exist at present, but have existed in the past. The ideas in this case have as their objects things that are neither impossible things that are prohibited from existing by the laws of nature nor are nomological possibilities that could have existed but in fact do not exist. The objects of these ideas are things that have existed but no longer currently exist. For example, let us consider a horse that existed and was definitely part of the causal order of extended things but has since perished so no longer exists.

The horse we are considering was part of the causal order of extended things but has since perished. Under the third option the idea of the horse, however, still exists but no longer has a corresponding extended thing in the causal order. The third option has the virtue of explaining how we can speak of things that no longer exist – since we can still speak of them it certainly appears that we still possess the ideas of those things that have ceased to exist.

The problem of which of the three options we should take when confronted with IIP8 will be examined more closely in chapter 3.[32] For now, it is important to note that one of the options to interpret IIP8 involves ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, things that could possibly have existed but do not in fact exist.

Proposition IIP8, and especially the scholium to IIP8, can certainly be interpreted as referring to ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, and if the passage is speaking of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities their existence is not ruled out. On the contrary, under the first interpretation Spinoza would seem to definitely affirm the existence of such ideas. If

[32] As we shall learn in chapter 3 Koistinen favors the third option.

Spinoza is discussing ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities in IIP8, then it appears that Spinoza could be holding two incompatible positions – necessitarianism and the view that there are unrealized nomological possibilities.

The Necessity of the Infinite Modes and the Finite Modes

We have been assuming that the infinite modes are necessary, but now it is time to examine this issue in greater depth. One way we may do so is explained by Donagan:

> The infinite modes of the absolutely infinite substance are therefore not modes in the sense of things immanently caused by another thing. Rather, they and the absolutely infinite substance are one and the same thing, of which a series of distinct concepts can be formed, those later in the series being 'conceived through' those earlier in it. That is, the immediate infinite mode of the absolutely infinite substance as constituted by any given attribute is conceived through that attribute as it exists in reality, and its mediate infinite modes (although Spinoza only mentions one, he does not exclude the possibility that there are more) are conceived through the immediate one; and any prior mediate ones.[33]

The infinite modes, according to Donagan, are conceived through the attributes and any (conceptually) prior infinite modes and are basically layered conceptions of the same thing.[34] The attributes provide the first layer of conception and then the immediate infinite modes add another layer(s) and finally the mediate infinite modes add more layer(s). We need not get into a

[33] DONAGAN, ALAN, *Spinoza* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pg. 106.

[34] It is not entirely clear what Donagan means when he discusses the infinite modes (which includes the laws of nature in the interpretation we have adopted) as being different conceptions of the same thing (i.e. God's essence) but the important point for our purposes is that there is interpretative evidence that the infinite modes are included within God's essence and therefore are necessary. For the purposes of this study, we are assuming that the infinite modes are included within God's essence (in particular the laws of nature) and are therefore necessary. Another way to come to the conclusion that the laws of nature are necessary is to note that there is but one universe (as we will discover in chapter 6 Spinoza does not allow for the existence of multiple universes) and the one universe has to have laws of nature governing it so that there is only one set of laws of nature and they are in that sense necessary.

discussion of how the layering might work – the key point is that all the conceptions are of the same thing. God as substance is first conceived through the attributes and then God as substance is conceived through immediate infinite modes as conceived through the attributes and finally God as substance is conceived through mediate infinite modes as conceived through the immediate infinite modes as conceived through the attributes. All the conceptions, no matter how layered, are all of God as substance, so are all conceptions of God's essence.

The infinite modes are all layered conceptions of God's essence. In order for the infinite modes to be different they would need to be conceptions of different things, so basically conceptions of two different essences of substance, one substance being God and the other substance being something else. Since the existence of a different essence of substance means that the other essence must also necessarily exist, there would end up being two substances that exist, and Spinoza rules that out quite early as being impossible.[35] Being differing conceptions of God's essence, the infinite modes thus cannot be different, and that includes the infinite modes which we are interpreting as the laws of nature.

The infinite modes are fairly easy to identify as included within God's essence as they are eternal and infinite just the same as God as substance and attributes. The finite modes, on the other hand, are a different matter since they are not only set apart by IP28 but they are also obviously neither eternal nor infinite. The finite modes do not encompass all of extension, for example, as the infinite modes do or occupy all the eternal timeline either as the infinite modes

[35] In proof of IP14: 'So there can be no substance external to God, and consequently no such substance can be conceived. For if it could be conceived, it would have to be conceived necessarily as existing; but this is absurd.' Ethics, pg. 224.

do. If we take a law of nature as the example of an infinite mode and a particular human as an example of a finite mode, then we can see more clearly the difference.

A particular human exists for only a certain amount of time on the eternal timeline, coming into existence at some point and then going out of existence at some point later on the timeline. A law of nature, on the other hand, occupies the entirety of the timeline – a law of nature, as an infinite mode, is the same throughout time and never changes. Since the particular human comes into existence and goes out of existence, it is much more difficult to identify a particular human as included within God's essence and certainly far more debatable whether a particular human, or other finite modes, should be interpreted as being included within God's essence.

By the same token, a law of nature also encompasses the entirety of what the attributes cover, and the attributes cover everything that exists. As we will usually do in this study for the sake of simplicity whenever we are discussing the attributes encompassing the entire universe we will focus upon the attribute of Extension. Extension is the easiest attribute to think about when we discuss the universe, for the simple reason that whenever we think about the universe we tend to think of the extended universe. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the attribute of Thought also encompasses the entire extended universe, though how it does so is less easy to understand and certainly much less easy to discuss.

The finite modes are problematic to include within God's essence, though there are ways to attempt to do it. One way is to consider the entire set of finite modes as an infinite mode in itself, which is one of the approaches Garrett makes, and which we will examine in chapter 2. A second way is to make all God's properties, including the finite modes, a part of God's essence

and thus essential, which is the approach Koistinen takes when presenting his view of superessentialism, which we will examine in chapter 3. We will consider these two ways to interpret the finite modes as included within God's essence and thus necessary in due time, but first let us consider what our interpretation of the infinite modes as part of God's essence and thus necessary means for the views we will be considering.

The laws of nature, as infinite modes, are necessary and thus set in stone which means that we will only be considering what the actual laws of nature allow and do not allow under various circumstances. The 'actual' part of the actual laws of nature can be dropped since the laws of nature which exist are the only laws of nature that could exist, so it is entirely appropriate to simply refer to the laws of nature. All we will be considering, then, is what things are consistent with the laws of nature, which frees us from any problematic speculation as to how the laws of nature might be different, if they could be different, and whether we think they are necessary or not. The laws of nature which actually exist are the only ones we will be considering, which simplifies our task.

The biggest effect the necessity of the laws of nature have will not become apparent until we reach chapters 5, 6, and 7, where we will consider Miller's view of nomological possibility and the implications of the view. The only nomological possibilities with which we will have to concern ourselves are those which the actual laws of nature allow, which will simplify our task considerably. Now let us consider the difficulties of arguing that the finite modes are also necessary.

The finite modes, as described in IP28, do not proceed directly from the attributes but rather proceed from the attributes as modified by preceding finite modes. In other words, the

causal order of finite modes plays a crucial part in determining which finite modes exist at any given time – the attributes (and the infinite modes) do not determine in and of themselves which finite modes exist at any given time. It seems, then, that any particular finite mode could have been different provided that the preceding causes in the extended causal order were also different and, in conjunction with the laws of nature, determined some other finite mode to exist.

Any particular finite mode apparently could have been different under this analysis, but it is actually more fitting to say that the entire causal order of extended finite modes could have been different. The existence of alternate causal orders seems probable since the attributes and infinite modes in and of themselves do not determine the existing causal order. Of course, the existence of alternate causal orders would mean that Spinoza is a determinist rather than a necessitarian, but that is an issue which we will lay aside for now for further analysis later.

The importance of the potential existence of alternate possible causal orders, given that the attributes and infinite modes do not alone determine what extended causal order exists, lies in the fact that the alternate possible causal orders would be composed of unrealized nomological possibilities. The unrealized nomological possibilities would not actually exist by virtue of the fact that they are unrealized, but the ideas of the unrealized nomological possibilities may exist if for no other reason than to explain how we can discuss unrealized nomological possibilities in the first place. In other words, it could be argued that we must have ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities in the alternate causal orders in order to be discussing the issue at all.

For now, it is only important to realize that it is problematic in Spinoza's system to interpret finite modes as included within of God's essence and therefore necessary. Before moving on to briefly examine some solutions that purport to reconcile the apparent contradiction

between Spinoza's necessitarianism and his allowance of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, let us consider some background concerning Spinoza's conception of God.

Spinoza's Conception of God

The arguments concerning necessitarianism and ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities really start with Spinoza's conception of God. In this section we will attempt to sketch out why Spinoza thinks that God is the one and only substance. Since Spinoza thinks God is the one and only substance, God's nature or essence will play an important part in our attempt to determine exactly what Spinoza's view is, so let us begin by considering some of the things that Spinoza says about God's nature or essence. Early in the Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being (which we will henceforth refer to as the Short Treatise) Spinoza has this to say on the issue of God's nature:

> That there is no finite substance, but that every substance must be infinitely perfect in its kind, that is to say, that in the infinite understanding of God no substance can be more perfect that that which already exists in Nature.[36]

In this passage Spinoza introduces two key concepts that we will explore in depth in this study, "infinite" (or infinity) and "perfect" (or perfection). Spinoza says that God is both infinite and perfect, so it will be very important to attempt to determine exactly what he means by the terms "infinite" and "perfect". It is important to note at this juncture that the term "perfect" usually indicates a standard – wherein something is perfect only if it is free of flaws and the less flaws

[36] Short Treatise, pg. 40.

something has the closer it approaches to perfection – and there is a hint of a standard when Spinoza writes that 'no substance can be more perfect', but that is thin evidence for any type of standard. As we shall discover, the evidence against Spinoza holding a standard of perfection is more substantial.

God is perfect and the only substance, so there is no other substance with which to compare God. Thus it is difficult to say whether Spinoza is implying a standard of perfection or not because only one substance could be measured for perfection. Spinoza may simply be saying that God is perfect – in the sense that perfection just reduces to whatever it turns out that God is – not that God measures up to any standard of perfection. The issue of whether Spinoza considers perfection as a type of standard will play an important part in Garrett's arguments in particular and will be examined in greater depth when we reach chapter 2, but for now it is important to note that there is doubt about whether Spinoza thinks that perfection indicates some sort of standard.

Another issue that is important for the argument between necessitarianism and possibilism is Spinoza's claim that God encompasses everything. The issue of God encompassing everything feeds into the issues concerning infinity and perfection as well as another issue which bears directly on necessitarianism and possibilism, that of the causal order of extended things and the causal order of the ideas of the extended things in the extended causal order being perfectly parallel.

Before moving on to issues resulting from Spinoza's view of God as the one and only substance which everything is 'in', we must first consider some problematic features of Spinoza's view on God and other aspects in need of clarification. One of Spinoza's claims, in

IP5 "In the universe there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute."[37], is that each attribute can be possessed only by one substance and not many. At first glance it certainly seems that more than one substance could possess the same attribute. To hopefully shed more light on this issue, let us consider what Steven Nadler has to say:

> It is worth noting an important objection that the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, one of Spinoza's contemporaries, made to Spinoza's argument at this point. Spinoza is assuming that if two substances have an attribute in common, then they cannot be distinguished from each other by their attributes; and, thus, conversely, that if the can be distinguished from each other by their attributes, then they must not have an attribute in common. Leibniz insists…that this train of reasoning is valid only if one is also assuming that a substance cannot have more than one attribute…If a substance is limited to one attribute, then it can be proved that if two substances are distinguishable from each other by a difference in their attributes, it must be because they do not (and cannot) have an attribute in common…But, Leibniz insists, if a substance can have two or more attributes, then it would seem possible for two substances both to be distinguishable from each other *and* to share an attribute.[38]

Leibniz certainly seems to have a point when he says that it seems that substances can have one attribute in common but then perhaps each have another attribute which differentiates one substance from the other. For instance, substances one and two could both have the attribute of Extension but substance one also possesses the attribute of Thought while substance two also possesses an attribute we will refer to as C. While both possess the attribute of Extension, it seems that substance one could be differentiated from substance two on the basis of substance one having the attribute of Thought and substance two having attribute C. If this kind of case is possible then it seems that Spinoza is incorrect and more than one substance can have the same attribute. To gain further insight into Spinoza's line of reasoning here, let us return to Nadler:

> Leibniz is right, it would seem, and Spinoza can reply only that he is indeed assuming that a substance has only one attribute. This is Descartes's view, and it would be perfectly reasonable for Spinoza to appeal to such a principle. This would be problematic for Spinoza's project, however, since very soon (IP9) he will need to claim that substance can have many – in fact, infinite, - attributes.[39]

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[37] Ethics, pp. 217-218.

[38] NADLER, STEVEN, *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pg. 61.

[39] Ibid, pg. 62.

The line of thinking that substances can have only one attribute would solve the problem of differentiating substances based on their attributes alone[40] – if each substance has only one attribute then the attribute of each substance will differ and it will be easy to discern the difference between two substances. The view that substances can have only one attribute apiece may solve the problem of IP5, but it raises a greater problem when Spinoza turns to God.

The problem of adhering to Descartes's one attribute principle, as Nadler suggests, becomes even harder to understand since Spinoza, only a few propositions later, claims that God (the only substance that exists) possesses all the attributes. Offhand it certainly does seem that Spinoza is contradicting himself in the apparent one-eighty from only one attribute substances to one substance possessing all the attributes. Let us briefly explore how we might resolve this dilemma before moving on.

An explication of what Spinoza may have in mind not only in rejecting the thesis that multiple substances may share the same attribute but also an objection along a similar vein, that the universe could be composed of multiple attributes, but that each attribute expresses the essence of a different substance. In other words, for each attribute that exists there would be a distinct substance which has that one attribute as its essence. Donagan's reasoning begins thus:

> By proposing an alternative, Simon de Vries, the spokesman of the Amsterdam group that did not at first understand why he held that a substance can have more than one attribute, indirectly argued that it is not. Rather than say that one substance has every attribute, he suggested the following: 'if I should say that each substance has only one attribute, and if I had the idea of two different attributes, I could rightly conclude

[40] In proof of IP15: 'If they are distinguished only by a difference of attributes, then it will be granted that there cannot be more than one substance of the same attribute. But if they are distinguished by a difference of affections, then, since substance is by nature prior to its affections, disregarding therefore its affections and considering substance in itself, that is, considering it truly, it cannot be conceived as distinguishable from another substance.' Ethics, pg. 219.

> that where there are two different attributes, there are two different substances.' This proposal raises two deep questions.
>
> First, does not a world in which every attribute constitutes a substance, but no substance is constituted by more than one, contain as much reality as one containing a single substance constituted by every attribute? Secondly, if attributes are really distinct from one another and totally independent, would a world in which no substance is constituted by more than one attribute differ in any way from one in which those attributes all constitute the same substance? In other words, how does a substance constituted by really distinct attributes differ from a mere aggregation of substances of one attribute.[41]

The objection raised by de Vries differs from that raised by Leibniz, but the end result is the same, apparently leaving open the possibility that multiple substances exist. Instead of challenging IP5, de Vries accepts IP5 and runs with it, making the principle absolute so that for each attribute that exists a distinct substance must exist that is constituted by each attribute. The de Vries' objection accepts IP5, contrary to Leibniz, but raises a different problem that could block Spinoza's line of argument to one substance existing that possesses all the attributes if the objection cannot be adequately answered. Leibniz's objection, on the other hand, rejects IP5 but could also result in blocking Spinoza's line of argumentation resulting in the one substance with all attributes.

De Vries is suggesting that multiple attributes exist in the universe but denying that the multiple attributes are all contained within the same substance. Rather, each attribute that exists (at the very least two, Thought and Extension) is contained by a separate, distinct substance. The question then becomes whether Spinoza can reasonably insist that there is only one substance instead of many, especially given the no-shared attribute principle that he adheres to in IP5. IP5 would fit with either Spinoza's one substance or de Vries' multiple substances, given that neither

[41] DONAGAN, ALAN, *Spinoza* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pg. 84.

Spinoza nor de Vries is suggesting that more than one substance possesses the same attribute. In order for de Vries' objection to be overcome more is needed than just IP5.

The challenge for Spinoza in answering de Vries' objection thus becomes explaining why we should think that one substance must possess all the attributes, especially given that at least on the surface, multiple substances each possessing one attribute appears to be a reasonable model for the universe. In fact, the multiple substances model might fit better with Spinoza's argument earlier that substances having different attributes have nothing in common[42] – it seems that an idea of something really is entirely dissimilar from the extended object of that idea. It is hardly unreasonable to suppose that the idea and the extended object of the idea are not only objects of two different attributes, but also objects of two different substances, one substance constituted by the attribute of Thought and the second substance constituted by the attribute of Extension. After all, the dissimilarity between idea and extended thing could not be more clearly expressed than by having each be an object of a different substance and the two substances, since they are constituted by different attributes, having absolutely nothing in common just like the idea and the extended object appear to have nothing in common.

The response Spinoza could make is suggested by Donagan:

> A de Vriesian world would consist of an infinite extended substance as described in Descartes's physics, an infinite thinking substance completely independent of the extended one...It could only be by accident be the world which…human beings conceive…In such a world, it would be an accident if the infinite thinking substance thought about any other substance at all; and if it did, it would be a further accident if it thought about them as they are. Why should the infinite thinking substance think about other substances which cannot affect it or be affected by it? And if it does, why should it think of them as they are?[43]

[42] Spinoza first states that substances with different attributes have nothing in common with each other and then states that substance is prior in conception to modes (meaning, for our purposes, that the modes of each substance would have nothing in common). The upshot is that the modes of the extended substance would be completely unlike the modes of the thinking substance – hence the radical disparity between extended things and ideas.

[43] DONAGAN, ALAN, *Spinoza* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pg. 85.

A de Vriesian world would have an extended substance overlapped with a separate thinking substance which only happen, by pure chance, to align with one another. The thinking substance need not align with the extended substance at all and also need not have ideas which have as their objects extended things. The alignment and the fact that the thinking substance accurately represents the extended substance are results purely from chance. The description of the kind of world which de Vries' model would yield points to one possible response that Spinoza could give. In order to understand the response Spinoza might be able to offer, we need to consider Spinoza's reliance on PSR (Principle of Sufficient Reason). Let us see what Della Rocca has to say on the issue of PSR:

> Consider first the PSR, the principle according to which each fact, each thing that exists, has an explanation. The explanation of a fact is enough – sufficient – to enable one to see why the fact holds. The explanation of a fact enables us to see the explained fact coming, as it were. If the explanation of a thing were not sufficient in this way, then some aspect of the thing would remain unexplained, unintelligible…In Spinoza…the PSR takes on an outsized importance – it's rationalism on steroids, but for the fact that, in Spinoza's eyes, this total commitment to the PSR is completely natural.
>
> Spinoza's commitment to the PSR emerges most clearly in IP11d2: 'For each thing there must be assigned a cause or reason, both for its existence and for its nonexistence.' This principle is strong because it requires an explanation not only for existence, but also for nonexistence.[44]

Della Rocca is arguing that Spinoza has a strong PSR, so that he requires a reason for everything, both for the existence of things and the nonexistence of things. For instance, for every human that exists at any particular time and place, Spinoza requires an explanation sufficient to account for the existence of that human and all his or her properties, including temporal and spatial location. The laws of nature coupled with all the preceding causes provide a sufficient explanation for the existence of the particular human due to the fact that the laws of nature are

[44] DELLA ROCCA, MICHAEL, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pg. 4.

deterministic and thus each cause can only produce a certain effect. In addition to explaining what exists, Spinoza also requires a sufficient explanation for everything that does not exist.

A de Vriesian world, as Donagan notes, would only conform to our world by sheer accident. There would, in other words, be no explanation as to why the kind of world in which we live exists instead of a different type of world but one that still conforms to the de Vriesian model, which merely requires that multiple distinct substances each with their own distinct attribute exist. The only requirement for a de Vriesian world is that all the attributes that exist each have their own distinct substance and that all coexist within the same world.

The de Vriesian model does not require that the substances line up at all, and any added requirement would be ad hoc. In the case of the thinking substance the ideas which are finite modes of the thinking substance need not have as their objects the finite modes of the extended substance. The extended finite modes of the extended substance need not have ideas of which they are objects. It would be entirely possible in a de Vriesian world to have finite modes of the extended substance not line up at all with the finite modes of the thinking substance. The happenstance existence of a de Vriesian world of the type in which we live would, in other words, have no reason sufficient to explain it and would therefore violate the PSR.

Spinoza's reliance on a strong version of the PSR may provide him with a reason strong enough to reject a de Vriesian type world, but the response relies on accepting a strong version of the PSR in the first place. The response may, in other words, be less than palatable to anyone who is not a devoted rationalist like Spinoza. There is, however, a second response that Spinoza could make against the de Vriesian model of the universe, specifically why we should not think that the universe is composed of a number of substances each with their own attribute and which

happen to overlap and line up with each other so that the ideas in the thinking substance happen to have as their objects the extended things in the extended substance.

Donagan writes on the subject:

> A passage in the *Short Treatise* reveals that such considerations were in Spinoza's mind when he put forward his principle of substance plenitude Why, he asks, do we believe that 'all these attributes which are in Nature are only one, single being, and by no means different ones (though we can clearly and distinctly understand the one without the other)'…That is, the attributes we see everywhere are everywhere seen as united. Yet we see only two: extension and thought…
>
> Something I submit, like the following. The primary objects of the thinking of all human beings are happenings in their own bodies…They construct conceptions of the world in the light of these primary objects…the thoughts of all human beings must be finite modes of an infinite thinking substance, and their ideas of their bodies and of their physical environment are either true or false representations of finite modes…The coherence of those ideas with one another, and the fact that those who have them can regard them as both generally true and corrigible…suggests that they are as they are regarded. In that case, the whole system of ideas in the infinite thinking substance of which human minds are finite modes can reasonably be supposed to be a materially true representation of the whole system of finite bodies in the actual infinite substance constituted by extension…because the world is experienced as a unity, the attributes actualized in it cannot constitute a number of distinct substances.[45]

The apparent unity of the universe, in which extended things and ideas seem to line up seamlessly, speaks against a de Vriesian type of universe. A universe in which there are a number of distinct substances, each with their own distinct attribute, seems unlikely to line up as well as the universe in fact appears to do. A single substance with all the attributes, on the other hand, is much easier to imagine lining up precisely as the universe does.

It is important to recall at this juncture that the primary aim of this study is not to prove that Spinoza must be right in his argument that one substance has all the attributes or that everything in the universe is in God (which is an argument to which we will shortly turn), but it is helpful to be given some reason to accept the one substance model and the parallelism doctrine

[45] DONAGAN, ALAN, *Spinoza* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp. 85-86.

among other things, especially since the parallelism doctrine in particular will have a large impact on the arguments concerning necessitarianism vs possibilism.

The Meaning of 'Everything is in God'

Spinoza, in this line of argument especially concerning God having all attributes and also being infinite, also asserts that all is in God and nothing can exist outside of God. The line of argument concerning God as the one and only substance and that everything else that exists is "in" that substance, requires further explanation and comment before we move on to consider some of the implications of the God-is-everything view. In this section we will attempt to sketch out the relation between substance and modes in Spinoza's metaphysics.

First of all, it is not entirely clear what Spinoza means when he claims that everything is "in" God. Spinoza lays out the 'everything is in God' claim in part I of the Ethics:

> **Proposition 15**: Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be conceived without God.
>
> **Proof**: Apart from God no substance can be or be conceived, that is, something which is in itself and is conceived through itself. Now modes cannot be or be conceived without substance; therefore, they can be only in the divine nature and can be conceived only through the divine nature. But nothing exists except substance and modes. Therefore, nothing can be or be conceived without God.[46]

Spinoza claims that everything is "in" God which, as we have seen, appears to mean that nothing can exist outside of God. God is the one and only substance and the only other things that exist are attributes and modes. Attributes are the essence of the substance, and thus cannot exist

[46] Ethics, pg. 224.

without substance. Attributes cannot be conceived without also conceiving of substance. Modes, on the other hand, cannot be conceived without also conceiving of substance.

Spinoza's argument concerning God possessing all the attributes and indeed basically possessing everything that exists, so that everything that exists is "in" God, can best be understood by starting with Spinoza's starting point, which is Descartes. Let us turn to Della Rocca for help on this subject.

Della Rocca notes that Spinoza treats what Descartes considers substances, such as bodies and minds, the same way in which Descartes treats modes of substances. For example, I the case of a table Spinoza treats the table itself as a property of the one substance, God. The issue then becomes whether the table can properly be considered as a property of God. Della Rocca writes:

> But how is this possible? How can a thing such as a table or your mind be a state or a feature of another thing such as God? Such objects are not, it would seem, ways in which God or anything else exists, rather they have an existence of their own.
>
> But to make this important point…is not to eradicate the intuitive unease…that ordinary objects are modes in the Cartesian sense. This is because it may seem extremely implausible to regard the table, your mind, and your body as simply particularized states of something else. It seems almost (if not equally) absurd to regard my body…as a property that God has…Such a view would seem scarcely intelligible; it does not do justice to our sense of the robustness that we and other ordinary objects seem to enjoy.[47]

Della Rocca is raising the concern that things such as minds and bodies do not seem to be properties. Mind and bodies seem to be radically different from properties such as color or texture. It is arguable that properties such as redness and coarseness cannot exist without something of which to be a property, so that some object is red (has redness) or some object is coarse (has coarseness). On the other hand, minds and bodies seem far more independent and

[47] DELLA ROCCA, MICHAEL, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 61-62.

able to exist on their own without needing a substance of which to be a property. At the very least it seems highly implausible that minds and bodies are mere properties of a substance (God), rather than being independent things on their own.

The issue of whether minds and bodies can be properties of God is crucial to Spinoza's system and is especially crucial to an argument put forward by Koistinen which we will examine in chapter 3. Koistinen's argument for superessentialism, as he terms it, relies on Spinoza having an ontology which allows only for the existence of properties and substance.[48] Let us now return to our discussion of how all extended things and ideas can be finite modes of God.

Edwin Curley, following Descartes, thinks that Spinoza allows for two different types of conceptual dependence, which is ultimately what the relationship between substance and finite modes boils down to – finite modes cannot be conceived without first conceiving of the substance, thus making finite modes conceptually dependent on substance. The first type is inherence, in which finite modes inhere in substance and are properties of substance, such as color and shape. With inherence finite modes cannot exist independently at all, so the substance must exist for the finite modes to exist at all.[49]

The second type of conceptual dependence, which is causal dependence, involves the finite modes being unable to exist without being first caused by God. In the case of causal

[48] It is true that reversion to a Cartesian sensibility would involve only the existence of properties and substances, but Koistinen's superessentialism relies on more than properties and substances being the only things that exist. Rather, superessentialism relies on God being the one and only substance with all the modes (especially the finite modes) being properties of the one substance, God. If finite modes such as minds and bodies cannot plausibly be established as properties of God, then superessentialism fails before it even starts. The determination of all finite modes as properties of God is therefore crucial to Koistinen's argument for superessentialism.

[49] CURLEY, EDWIN, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

dependence, the conceptual connection is that the finite modes are the effect and substance (God) is the cause, so the effect cannot be conceived without also conceiving of the cause, per Spinoza's causal axiom.[50] Causal dependence allows for some separation between God and finite modes (specifically finite modes like minds and bodies) in that the finite modes which fall under the second type of conceptual dependence are not properties of the one substance, God, and therefore have some small measure of independence.

If Curley is right, it would be incorrect to refer to all finite modes as properties or states of God. Certainly the finite modes which fall under the second type of conceptual dependence, minds and bodies, would seem ill-fitting as properties of God. Della Rocca continues:

> The question…is this: in virtue of what are inherence, and mere causation different kinds of conceptual dependence? What makes them distinct? This is a pertinent question because…they are both kinds of conceptual dependence. Wherein do they differ?...There seems to be no way…except to say that mere causal dependence is the kind of conceptual dependence that, for example, bodies bear to God…and inherence is that kind of conceptual dependence that, for example, states of bodies bear to those bodies. Such an answer merely states that there is a difference between inherence and mere causation without explaining what the difference consists in. If the account were to end here, I think Spinoza would regard this account as unacceptably trading in primitive or brute facts.[51]

Della Rocca argues that the two types of conceptual dependence are inadequately separated, with the explanation being that the two types are different, with one being property-based and the other being causally-based. The explanation basically boils down to the fact that one set of finite modes are properties which the rest of the finite modes are not properties. The properties would naturally include things such as size, color, shape, texture, etc. which Descartes allows for as modes of substances and thinks are properties of substances. The second type of conceptual

[50] "From a given determinate cause there necessarily follows an effect; on the other hand, if there be no determinate cause, it is impossible that an effect should follow." In Ethics, pg. 238.
[51] DELLA ROCCA, MICHAEL, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pg. 65.

dependence roughly corresponds to the substances of Descartes, which are caused by God but are not properties of God.

The difference between the property-based finite modes and the causally-based finite modes is hard to explain in Spinoza's system since, unlike Descartes, Spinoza explicitly allows for the existence of only one substance. Spinoza also does not mention two types of finite modes, at least in the sense of one type being property-based and one being causally-based instead of the distinction between extended finite modes and finite modes of Thought. The lack of any explicit mention of two different kinds of finite modes and the great difficulty in articulating why there are two types instead of just one suggests that Spinoza did not in fact allow for two types of finite modes. The lack of explanation as to why there would exist two different types of conceptual dependence is, for Della Rocca, the most telling objection against Curley's interpretation.

Della Rocca, it must be recalled, subscribes to the interpretation that Spinoza held a strong version of the PSR, an interpretation which we are accepting in this study. A strong PSR dictates that not only must the existence of everything be explained but also the non-existence of everything be explained. Therefore, some explanation must be forthcoming for why there would exist two types of conceptual dependence. The lack of explanation makes the existence of two types of conceptual dependence a brute fact and the existence of a brute fact would be a violation of a strong version of the PSR. Thus, if Spinoza holds a strong version of the PSR, the brute fact that two types of conceptual dependence exist would be unacceptable to him and not something that he would incorporate into his system.

The end result of our inquiry into what Spinoza means by being "in" God has led us to the conclusion, with help from Della Rocca, that Spinoza is speaking of a relation of conceptual dependence as in an inherence relation. For Spinoza, all finite modes including minds and bodies inhere in God, the one substance, as properties. Thus we have shown that the property-substance ontology that Koistinen requires for his superessentialism argument is plausibly held by Spinoza.

A second result of establishing that all finite modes are properties of God is that the entire set of finite modes could be interpreted as being included within God's essence, perhaps as an infinite mode. Garrett's argument that the entire set of finite modes is an infinite mode will thus have additional traction. The divide between finite modes and God that was noted in IP28 is also somewhat narrowed by the interpretation of finite modes as properties, though the issue will still remain of how much of the divide remains due to the fact that IP28 maintains that finite modes cause other finite modes and do not result directly from God's essence

The Causal Order and Nomological Possibilities

The causal order of Nature, as we discovered earlier, consists of at least two components. The first component is the causal order of extended finite modes in which all the extended (material/physical) finite modes in the universe are included. The extended causal order, together with the laws of nature, determine exactly what happens in the extended universe and in what order and was the main topic of discussion concerning the debate between determinism and necessitarianism. If the extended causal order cannot be different, then Spinoza is a

necessitarian. On the other hand, if the extended causal order could have been different, then determinism seems to be the way Spinoza is leaning.

The second component is the causal order of ideas which is perfectly parallel to the extended causal order. The causal order of ideas consists of ideas which have as their objects the extended finite modes in the extended causal order. The order of ideas lines up in a perfect one-to-one correspondence with the causal order of extended things. Thus there appears to be no room left for any alternate possible causal orders – if this is indeed the case, then it seems that Spinoza is definitely a necessitarian of some sort.

The causal order of extended finite modes, or the extended causal order, is much easier to discuss than the causal order of ideas because it is easier to understand how the causal order of extended things functions than the causal order of ideas. The ideas in the causal order of ideas apparently have the same causal connections that the extended things in the extended causal order have, but it is easier to understand how the causal connections of the extended causal order function. The collision of two balls, for instance, causes one ball to move and the other to slow down. The causal order of ideas has the same order and connection as the extended causal order, but it is difficult to explain how the idea of one ball could cause the other to either move or slow down, whereas changes in position and velocity are easy to understand when considering extended things. For the simple reason that the extended causal order is easier to understand, we will focus the majority of our attention on the extended causal order.

God (including attributes, infinite modes, and finite modes) and the extended universe (for the attribute of Extension) can be considered as basically synonymous and the idea of the universe and the idea of God are the same (for the attribute of Thought). The fact that nothing

exists outside of God in Spinoza's system will bear largely on the issue of whether alternate possible causal orders can exist since the alternate causal orders would somehow have to be in God.

The existence of ideas of alternate possible causal orders seems like a way to potentially get around the problem and fit alternate causal orders into God, but the solution of having ideas of alternate causal orders appears to run afoul of Spinoza's parallelism doctrine, which states that the extended causal order and the causal orders of ideas of extended things must be perfectly parallel. The doctrine of parallelism would appear to require that ideas of alternate causal orders have the extended alternate causal orders themselves be actualized – thus there would be multiple extended causal orders in the universe. The potential existence of multiple causal orders within the universe will be examined when we get to Miller, particularly in chapter 6. For now let us just note that the existence of multiple causal orders within the universe seems dubious in Spinoza's system. Now let us consider one type of possibility that Spinoza does allow.

The apparent false ideas born of some lack of information form the basis of the one kind of possibility that Spinoza definitely allows. Epistemic or, as Miller[52] prefers, doxastic, possibility involves being able to imagine something existing when we lack or overlook the information needed to know that it does or does not exist. For instance, a book discussing Spinoza might or might not exist, depending on relevant preceding causes.

The example of the book on Spinoza involves such a book either existing or not existing. If we knew all the preceding causes, such as the author having the idea and typing out the book,

[52] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001).

then we would know if the book existed or not. Doxastic possibility will come into play when we do not know if the thing in question exists – if we knew that the book existed then we would also know that the requisite preceding causes existed; on the other hand, if we knew the book did not exist, then we would know that not all of the requisite preceding causes existed.

In chapter 5 Miller's view of nomological possibility will be scrutinized, both for its plausibility as a view that Spinoza might have held and its implications for Spinoza's metaphysics overall. The view of nomological possibility involves all the things that are not prohibited by the laws of nature but cannot actually exist due to the lack of requisite preceding causes. Miller's view of nomological possibility will be explained in greater depth in chapter 5, but let us briefly consider what the view is and what the chances are that Spinoza actually held that view.

Nomological possibility involves all the things that are consistent with the laws of nature. For instance, the laws of nature in and of themselves would allow any given ball to be black or white or any other color. There is nothing in the laws of nature in and of themselves that prohibit the existence of a black ball or a white ball. It is the laws of nature coupled with all the preceding causes that determine what color the ball will be.

The view of nomological possibility does not rule out necessitarianism according to Miller,[53] though determinism would seem to provide a better fit. Since there is an existing causal order, the nomological possibilities cannot exist since that would require replacing the entire causal order. In the ball example, the existing causal order coupled with the laws of nature determines that the ball is black. The ball cannot be any other color because that would involve

[53] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001).

replacing the existing causal order. Nomological possibilities are what the laws of nature would allow under certain circumstances but since the circumstances can only come about with a complete change of the causal order, nomological possibilities are never actualized.

Miller favors the view of nomological possibility which would seem to fit best with determinism, though Miller insists that the causal order could not have been different. Determinism allows for alternate possible causal orders, while necessitarianism denies the existence of alternate possible causal orders. We will discuss in chapter 5 whether the view of nomological possibility can fit with necessitarianism and whether nomological possibility can be considered distinct from doxastic possibility. The similarity between nomological possibility and doxastic possibility suggests that the two kinds of possibility are not distinct. We will examine nomological and doxastic possibility in greater depth in chapter 5.

Conclusion

A conflict exists between necessitarianism and ideas of unrealized possibilities in Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza's apparent necessitarianism is supported by strong textual evidence, though there also seems to be textual support for the allowance of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. In this study there will be two approaches to evaluating the question of whether Spinoza is a strict necessitarian or whether he allows for ideas of unrealized

nomological possibilities.[54] The first is examining the direct textual evidence in Spinoza's works. Passages suggesting a strict necessitarian view and passages suggesting an allowance for ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities will be evaluated in an attempt to discover which way Spinoza appears to be leaning. Different ways to interpret the passages will be explored in an attempt to make the passages mesh together. The interpretations may involve emphasizing some passages over others or reading the passages in a manner that may not be immediately apparent.

The second approach will involve evaluating Spinoza's apparent necessitarianism and apparent allowance of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities, not by direct reference to Spinoza's writings, but by an analysis of the soundness of the reasoning in the passages. In other words, Spinoza's views will be examined for their plausibility and coherency. Inconsistencies will be pointed out, as well as undesirable consequences. Problems such as these may provide reason for favoring one interpretation of a passage, so the two approaches will work together.

In Chapter 2 the views and arguments of the first of the commentators supporting a necessitarian reading will be presented and analyzed, namely the views and arguments of Garrett. In Chapter 3 the same will be done for the views and arguments of another commentator who maintains that Spinoza is necessitarian, Koistinen. In Chapter 4 the views and arguments of the first of the commentators favoring a possibilist reading of Spinoza, Curley and Walski, will be examined. Chapter 5 will feature an analysis of the views and arguments of the second commentator to favor a possibilist reading, Miller.

[54] If we can have ideas of extended things that are not actualized, then we can think about the unrealized extended things and it seems that the unrealized extended things would at the very least be logically possible (which under our interpretation virtually collapses into nomological possibility).

Chapter 6 will feature the primary arguments for the view that I favor, based upon the views of Miller in chapter 5. In Chapter 7 I will explain how my view can work in Spinoza's system by considering three different variations of the view I find to be most plausible and analyzing them to discover which is most plausible. Additionally, in chapter 7 I will analyze Spinoza's concept of infinity especially in regard to extension (space) and time in an attempt to shed more light on the plausibility of some of the variations.

Chapter 2: Garrett's Arguments of the Standard of Perfection and the Set of Finite Modes as Infinite Mode

As noted in chapter 1, one way to resolve the tension between apparently contradictory passages regarding necessitarianism and ideas of unrealized possibilities is to argue that Spinoza is definitely a necessitarian and then reinterpret those passages which suggest that he allows for ideas of unrealized possibilities. Don Garrett has adopted this approach, and in this chapter his arguments will be presented and an analysis will be offered.

One of Garrett's strongest arguments for Spinoza being a necessitarian involves interpreting a potentially possibilist-leaning proposition in a way that is necessitarian friendly. Let us begin by examining Garrett's proposed solution to how IP28 can be squared with the necessitarian reading. IP28 states that only determinate finite modes can cause determinate finite modes, so, as we discovered in chapter 1, there exists a disconnect between the propositions detailing the infinite modes (IP21, 22, 23) and IP28. In other words, the finite modes are not logically entailed by the infinite modes.

Garrett's suggestion is that Spinoza attaches an additional constraint. He writes:

> If Spinoza accepts the requirement that the series of finite modes must express the highest degree of reality and perfection, then he could well maintain that the series of finite modes does *not* follow from the absolute nature of the attribute, but only from that nature *together with* this additional necessary constraint. This constraint, it might be argued, pertains to the nature of the attributes, but not to their *absolute nature*, as evidenced by the fact that the constraint requires *different* modifications at different places and times.[55]

Garrett's proposed solution is that Spinoza attaches the additional constraint of perfection that necessitates the existence of the actual series (causal order) of finite modes. The constraint of

[55] GARRETT, DON, "Spinoza's Necessitarianism," in Yirmiyahu Yovel, ed., *God and Nature in Spinoza's Metaphysics* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pg. 198.

perfection is supposed to guarantee that no alternative possible causal orders of finite modes exist. The idea is that only one series of finite modes can be perfect, and that the series must be perfect due to God's perfection since the series is contained within God. God has the highest degree of perfection, so the series of finite modes must also possess the highest degree of perfection. There is at least one difficulty with this solution.

The problem does not rely so much on the text as how Spinoza's system could actually work; the perfection criterion is something that Spinoza perhaps did not advocate but, if Garrett is right, should have advocated in order to make his system work. The first problem we are discussing, then, relies not so much on the text as how Garrett's addition of the perfection criterion would work in Spinoza's system. The key point here is whether it works in the first place and also whether it is something that would have been acceptable to Spinoza.

The first problem with the perfection criterion is that it is difficult to maintain that there is one particular series of finite modes which is the most perfect and must therefore be the actual series. It seems easy to imagine that there are multiple series of finite modes which are equally perfect and therefore there would be no reason for any one of these series to exist instead of the others. In other words, if there are multiple finite mode series which are equally perfect, then there is no reason for one perfect series to exist instead of another equally perfect series.[56]

It might be thought that Spinoza could insist that only one series of finite modes actually satisfies the criteria of perfection, since perfection is usually defined as being free of flaws. If

[56] Another possibly more fundamental problem for Garrett lies in his appeal to the criteria of perfection which only one series meets. That one series is perfect implies a comparison with other series that are not perfect. If there is an implicit comparison with other (alternative) series, then it would seem to count against Spinoza being a necessitarian. A necessitarian would not allow for the existence of alternative series, so there would be nothing with which to compare. If Spinoza is a necessitarian, then, there should be no reliance on comparison between alternative series in his system.

something is perfect, then it has exactly the properties (or modes in this case) that it requires to be free of flaws and adding or subtracting or changing even one mode would make the series less than perfect. By this definition of perfection, there might be only one perfect series of finite modes – the perfect series would have exactly the modes and order of modes required to be without flaws and any change would make the series imperfect. Therefore, there could be only one collection of finite modes and one order of the modes for a series to be perfect. However, Spinoza does not appear to accept the view that perfection is a separate standard that God or reality meets. Instead he thinks that perfection just is reality. He makes the point clear in definition 6 of part II of the Ethics: "By reality and perfection I mean the same thing."[57]

Spinoza does more than equate perfection with reality – he gives two senses of perfection, one in the sense in which humans use the term "perfection" and the second in the sense that perfection just is reality. We will start with the human sense of perfection which depends on the perspective of the person using the term "perfection," but it is important to keep in mind that the second sense of perfection in which perfection equals reality does not depend on anyone's perspective. Spinoza elaborates on the human sense of perfection in the preface to part IV of the Ethics:

> But before I begin, I should like to make a few preliminary observations on perfection and imperfection, and on good and bad. He who has undertaken something and has brought it to completion will say that the thing is completed; and not only he but everyone who rightly knew, or thought he knew, the intention and aim of the author of that work. For example, if anyone sees a work (which I assume is not yet finished) and knows that the aim of the author is to build a house, he will say that the house is imperfect. On the other hand, as soon as he sees that the work has been brought to the conclusion that its author had intended to give it, he will say that it is perfect.[58]

[57] Ethics, pg. 244.

[58] Ibid, pg. 320.

In the first part of the passage Spinoza defines perfection as something being completed to the satisfaction of its creator. In other words, a thing is perfect only when it can fulfill the goals set by its creator and has all the features specified by the creator. The easiest way to think about this definition of perfection is to use, as in the passage above, an example of a human creating something. The example considered is that of a house, with the house being considered imperfect before being finished and being considered perfect after it is finished. The house example can be expanded upon to illustrate the point Spinoza is making about perfection more clearly, but first we must consider more of the passage in question. Spinoza continues:

> But if anyone sees a work whose like he had never seen before, and he does not know the artificer's intention, he cannot possibly know whether the work is perfect or imperfect. This appears to have been the original meaning of these terms. But when men began to form general ideas and to devise ideal types of houses, buildings, towers, and so on, and to prefer some models to others, it came about that each called "perfect" what he saw to be in agreement with the general idea he had formed of the said thing, and "imperfect" that which he saw at variance with his own preconceived ideal, although in the artificer's opinion it had been fully completed.[59]

The notion of perfection involves more than just what is considered complete by the creator of the thing that is called perfect. Whenever the thing in question is completed to the creator's specifications the thing is called perfect, but what is specified in the second portion of the passage is what it means to call something imperfect. More precisely, it specifies how others can still call the thing imperfect which the creator of the thing considers perfect.

The second sense of imperfect is different from the first sense, which is the sense of imperfect in which one who knows (such as the creator) exactly what features the thing is supposed to have when completed can judge the thing as imperfect when it has yet to be completed. In other words, the first sense of imperfection involves looking at a thing that has not

[59] Ibid, pp. 320-321.

yet been completed to the creator's specifications and deem the thing imperfect – the first sense of imperfect is, in a word, synonymous with incomplete. The second sense of imperfect differs from the first in that, for one thing, it is not synonymous with incomplete but rather is used by those who do not know when the thing in question is actually complete.

The second sense of imperfect is used by those who do not know a thing is complete with respect to the creator's specifications but call the thing in question imperfect because it does not match to the standards established by the person calling the thing imperfect. In other words, a person other than the creator has a notion of what the thing in question should be like and calls the thing imperfect when it does not conform to his standards. We can illustrate this more clearly by going back to the house example. Let us consider a house in which the creator intends to build a two-story house with three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

The two-story house with three bedrooms and two bathrooms is built to the specifications of its creator, so the creator deems it perfect. On the other hand, another person has in mind a house that has five bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a swimming pool. The second person expects a house with five bedrooms, three baths, and a swimming pool, so he declares the house to be imperfect because it fails to meet his expectations. The second person has a certain set of expectations, a blueprint in his mind if you will, and when the existing house does not match up with the blueprint in his mind he declares the house imperfect. In the second person's mind, the house is not complete since it fails to have the features he expected it to have.

Perfection and imperfection, at least in the human sense, are based on human standards and expectations and often have nothing to do with reality. The point that perfection and

imperfection in the human sense often have nothing to do with reality is driven home more clearly in the next section of the passage, where Spinoza writes:

> There seems to be no other reason why even natural phenomena (those not made by human hand) should commonly be called perfect or imperfect. For men are wont to form general ideas both of natural phenomena and of artifacts, and these ideas they regard as models, and they believe that Nature (which they consider does nothing without an end in view) looks to these ideas and holds them before herself as models. So when they see something occurring in Nature at variance with their preconceived ideal of the thing in question, they believe that Nature has then failed or blundered and has left that thing imperfect. So we see that men are in the habit of calling natural phenomena perfect or imperfect from their own preconceptions rather than from true knowledge…So perfection and imperfection are in reality only modes of thinking, notions which we are wont to invent from comparing individuals of the same species or kind; and it is for this reason that I previously said that by reality and perfection I mean the same thing.[60]

Perfection in the human sense is a mode of thinking, basically a standard which humans have invented to explain the differences between what they expect and what exists in reality. People come across examples of various things, form expectations for these things, and then call perfect whatever meets these standards and imperfect whatever does not meet these standards. For instance, going back to the house example, a person comes across a number of houses, all with a swimming pool, so the presence of a swimming pool becomes part of his standard for the perfection of any house in that he expects a proper house to have a swimming pool.

Any house that is encountered with a swimming pool, then, could be considered a perfect house, and any house encountered that lacks a swimming pool would be considered an imperfect house. The final portion of the passage thus explains where we get our standards of perfection. Whatever standard of perfection we have is composed of our expectations and, as with all expectations, sometimes they are met and sometimes they are not met. Whenever the expectations are met, the thing in question is perfect; whenever the expectations are not met, the thing in question is imperfect.

[60] Ibid, pp. 320-321.

Things are perfect to the extent that they are completed to the satisfaction of the creator of the thing and imperfect to the extent that they are not completed to the satisfaction of the creator of the thing. Thus far we have focused on the notion of a human creator determining the features of a thing he created and deeming it perfect when he has successfully added all the features. We started with the human example because it is easiest to understand – humans create things with their own expectations and these expectations do not necessarily match the expectations of others. The differing expectations lead the creator to deem the thing in question perfect while other people with different expectations deem the thing in question imperfect. In our transition from the human sense of perfection to the sense of perfection in which perfection equals reality, we need to switch to Nature and in the case of Nature the creator is God so we will have to consider God's expectations vs the expectations of humans.

Nature or, as we might call it, the universe, is created by God and meets God's expectations of what features the universe should have. It is important to note that we are considering the relation between God and Nature in the same sense that we consider the relation between a human creator and a house in order to better understand the analogy. God's creation of Nature is more complicated since God and Nature are the same and Nature is created by God in the sense that God causes everything.

One thing to keep in mind is that while a human creator and a house are separate, God and Nature are not separate, so the comparison between human creation and God creation works best in a metaphorical sense. Instead of God having expectations regarding Himself, it is probably more accurate to say that God and Nature simply are the same and perfect. There will be a fact of the matter concerning what is more real and more perfect, and ultimately has nothing to do with any expectations, at least in the case of Nature as a whole. Keeping the limitations of

the analogy in mind, let us consider how the human sense of perfection works when considering Nature.

Using the human standard of perfection for the purposes of analogy, the universe has all the features God as creator expects, so the universe meets to His satisfaction. Basically the idea is that God is the creator of everything, so everything in the universe is completed to the satisfaction of the creator. Since everything in the universe is completed to God's satisfaction that means that everything in the universe is perfect as far as God is concerned. Things are complete in the sense that at any particular stage each thing possesses all the features that the creator intended – it is not complete in the sense of being the final product, but complete in the sense that all stages possess all intended qualities.[61]

Applying the sense of human perfection to God and Nature is going to be ultimately metaphorical, since God and Nature are the same. However, we can strengthen the relation of the human sense of perfection and God by appealing to the parallelism doctrine which we introduced in chapter 1. According to parallelism, the causal order of ideas must match perfectly with the causal order of extended things, so that the extended thing and the idea of that extended thing occupies a parallel slot in their respective causal orders.

The relation between the human sense of perfection and God can be strengthened by having the ideas in the causal order of ideas represent the expectations that God would have according to the human sense of perfection. The causal order of extended things would then

[61] Spinoza does use a comparative sense of perfection in regard to humans, basically with the idea that humans that are more knowledgeable about God are more perfect. The more knowledge one has about God (the universe) then the easier it is to navigate the universe and the more active one can be. This helps explain the eventual equation of perfection with reality with power of activity, since those more knowledgeable about reality will be more perfect in that they will be able to act more freely and thus have greater power of activity.

represent the features that match up with the expectations. Since the causal order of extended things perfectly match the causal order of ideas, so the expectations of God, as represented by the causal order of ideas, would be perfectly matched by the universe having all the expected features, represented by the causal order of extended things.

Nature is perfect in that it is complete – has all the features at any one time that the creator intended – but this is only achieved by having the causal order of ideas and the causal order of extended things represent expectations of the creator and features of the creation, respectively. However, it is not a perfect representation and it would be more accurate to say that God is perfect and that perfection equals reality. Applying any standard of perfection, and in particular human perfection, is thus going to be problematic.

The universe being perfect (and therefore complete) does help us to understand how Spinoza can equate perfection and reality. God is perfect in that He has all the features which He expects to have (in a metaphorical sense) and composes all of reality. Since God composes reality and is perfect, then reality is God and God is perfect, so reality is perfect. Reality is complete and therefore perfect in that God is all of reality and God has all the features which He expects to have. It is not much of a leap from saying that reality is perfect to equating reality with perfection.

Equating reality with perfection seems to work all right when it comes to just considering God, but it becomes problematic when we consider that perfection can typically be used in a comparative sense at least in our usual language usage. Some things can be said to be more perfect than other things. If reality is equated with perfection, then the things that are more perfect have more reality than the other things that are not as perfect. It is difficult to understand

how something can have more reality than something else – it seems an inappropriate comparison to make.

The comparison that one thing has more reality than another thing seems similar to saying that one thing is more real than another thing. It seems much more appropriate to say that something either possesses reality or does not possess reality; the assertion that one thing has more reality than another thing seems an inappropriate assertion to make. A thing being more or less real appears to be analogous to a thing existing more or less – it seems that a thing either exists or it doesn't exist: there are no degrees of existence. The same seems to hold true for a thing being more or less real (having more or less reality) – a thing is either real (exists in reality) or not real (doesn't exist in reality): there are no degrees of being real, no degrees of having more or less reality.

The problem of using perfection and therefore reality as a comparative term might be taken as an indication that the human standard of perfection is in play, instead of perfection in terms of God and Nature. It is important to recall that the analogy between a human creator and a house and God and Nature was only accomplished by artificially separating God and Nature. The human standard of perfection cannot really be applied to God, so the human standard of perfection would function as a substitute.

Using the sense of human perfection, a thing being more or less perfect is easy to understand since a thing fulfills one's expectations to varying degrees. Using the human standard of perfection to explain how a thing can have more or less reality is difficult, but it seems it can be done, at least in a manner of speaking. A thing might have more or less reality

under the human standard of perfection by reference to our expectations of the thing in question being more or less real, having more or less reality.

A thing could have more or less reality under the human standard of perfection by considering whether the expectations we have for a thing are realized in reality or not. In other words, we have a set of expectations for a thing by which we judge the thing to be more or less perfect according to how many of the expectations it fulfills and the same set of expectations can be used for a thing having more or less reality by considering whether the expectations of the thing exist in reality or fail to exist in reality.

The more expectations that are fulfilled by the thing, that is, the more features it has that match our expectations, the more perfect it is and the closer our image of the thing with all the features we expect comes to be in reality as more of those features appear on the thing in question. At the very least the appearance of expected features in reality shows how we might be able to interpret having reality in a comparative sense, or at least having reality in the comparative sense can make some sense from the human perspective. Establishing that having reality can be a comparative term from the human perspective does not help all that much, however, because Spinoza explicitly uses reality in a comparative sense in regard to substance early in part I of the Ethics, and the human standard of perfection does not apply to God (substance) and Nature. One prominent example is found here:

> **Proposition 9**: The more reality or being a thing has, the more attributes it has.
>
> **Proof**: This is evident from Definition 4.[62]

[62] Ibid, pg. 221.

Definition 4: By attribute I mean that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence.[63]

In proposition 9 Spinoza explicitly states that a thing can have more reality which certainly implies that other things can have less reality. The 'thing' mentioned in proposition 9 is apparently a substance, given that the proof refers to definition 4, and definition 4 speaks of attributes which constitute the essence of substance. Hence proposition 9 is discussing substance – a substance that has more reality has more attributes, again implying that there could be a substance that has less reality and therefore has fewer attributes.

The primary aim of IP9 involves laying the groundwork for IP11 in which God will be stated to have all the attributes, so stating that the more reality a thing has the more attributes it has is important in the sense that God encompasses all reality, so by extension God encompasses all the attributes. However, IP9 can be indirectly applied to our discussion concerning perfection since Spinoza equates perfection with reality elsewhere and thus, at least for the purposes of this discussion, we can assume that perfection can be substituted in for reality in IP9. Since the implication apparently exists that there can be substances with more reality and substances with less reality, reality seems to be used as a comparative term in proposition 9. Reality is apparently being used as a comparative term, but we will substitute in perfection for reality so that it matches our discussion concerning perfection.

One possible alternate interpretation that would not have reality as a comparative term needs to be examined. If the alternate interpretation does not seem plausible, then we can attempt to discover just what it would mean for reality to be a comparative term as well as what

[63] Ibid, pg. 217.

is meant by equating perfection with reality. The alternate interpretation is that Spinoza is just making the point that God encompasses all of reality and that there is no reality that exists outside of God. Under this God-as-all-reality interpretation "reality" would not be a comparative term since there would not be more than one substance with differing degrees of reality, but only one substance with all of reality.

The God-as-all-reality interpretation is based upon the fact that a couple of propositions later Spinoza declares that one substance has all the attributes and then a few propositions after that declares that the one substance with all the attributes is God. He is building toward the conclusion that God is the one and only substance with all the attributes through noting that a substance with more reality has more attributes. Since God has all the reality, therefore God has all the attributes. We can move on to analyze why the God is all reality interpretation would render the notion of having more reality not as a comparative notion but as something else.

God is the one and only substance that can exist. The God-as-all-reality interpretation is building to the conclusion that God is the only substance and possesses all the attributes and therefore encompasses all of reality, and is based on the underlying assumption that there is only one substance. Since the underlying assumption is that only one substance can possibly exist, reality is not being used as a comparative term since there are no other substances with which to compare the only substance. Rather, the point is simply being made that having more reality means having more attributes but without the implication that there are substances with less reality and therefore fewer attributes.

"Reality" only seems to be used as a comparative term in proposition 9. Rather, Spinoza is building to the conclusion that God is the only substance and has all the attributes and

encompasses all of reality. Proposition 9 largely serves to definitely state the link Spinoza think exists between having more reality and having more attributes so that it is easier to argue for the conclusion that God has all the attributes and encompasses all of reality. The God-as-all-reality interpretation would solve the problem of apparently using reality as a comparative term when it is exceedingly awkward to use as a comparative term.

The God-as-all-reality interpretation seemingly solves the problem of using reality as a comparative term by eliminating the apparent implication that more than one substance exists with some substances having more reality and thus more attributes and some substances having less reality and thus fewer attributes. If reality is to be used as a comparative term at all we can fall back on using the term reality the same as we use the term perfection in human terms, so that something has more reality or is more perfect when it conforms more precisely to our expectations.

The interpretation involving God-as-all-reality seems to neatly solve the problem of both using reality as a comparative term and equating reality with perfection since that would seem to result in using reality as a comparative term. Under the God-as-all-reality interpretation perfection would only truly be used as a comparative term under the human standard of perfection while when considering God perfection is simply equated with reality. As neat a solution as the God is all reality interpretation might seem to be, there are problems with it that must be addressed if we are to truly accept it.

The first problem is that it requires Spinoza to have used two senses of the word perfection in the Ethics concerning perfection from God's perspective, as it were. Even though proposition I9 does not mention perfection, we are assuming the 'perfection is the same as

reality' assertion that Spinoza makes elsewhere for the purposes of this discussion. Proposition 9 appears to use the human sense of perfection since reality (and perfection equals reality) is used in a comparative sense, but proposition 9 definitely is speaking of God, so the human sense of perfection, at least according to part IV, should not apply. We thus face the problem of attempting to determine whether Spinoza is really using two senses of perfection in discussing God or if we are just reading the different uses of perfection into proposition 9.

One reason we might have to think that Spinoza is employing two senses of the term "perfection" is that it would parallel the possible use of different senses of the term "substance" in part I of the Ethics which we briefly introduced in chapter 1. In chapter 1 we explored a possible interpretation of proposition 5, in which Spinoza asserts that each attribute can be possessed by only one substance so that there apparently could only be one thinking substance and only one extended substance. The interpretation we considered was that Spinoza was still employing the notion of substance put forward by Descartes, who thought that there were multiple thinking substances and multiple extended substances.

The purpose of proposition 5 under this alternate interpretation is to argue against the Cartesian notion that multiple substances with the same attribute exist. Spinoza is trying to make the point that there is only one thinking substance and only one extended substance rather than multiple substances sharing the same attribute. The apparent restriction that Spinoza is using for substances, the restriction that each substance can possess only one attribute, is therefore only a provisional restriction. In other words, Spinoza is using, more or less, the Cartesian notion of substance and is getting rid of the Cartesian notion by stages until he can move on to his own view of God as the one and only substance.

Spinoza under this interpretation is transitioning from the human sense of perfection to God's sense of perfection in much the same way that he transitions from the Cartesian notion of substance to his own notion of substance. Spinoza is using perfection as a comparative term but only using human perfection in the comparative sense and not God's perfection. One more aspect of this interpretation needs to be explained before we move on to consider the problems with the interpretation and attempt to decide whether the interpretation truly fits.

We have already briefly discussed what Spinoza might have had in mind when he apparently used "reality" as a comparative term in proposition 9, but the reasoning bears repeating as well as clarification. In proposition 9 Spinoza asserts that the more reality a substance has, the more attributes the substance has. The explanation explored earlier for the apparent use of "reality" as a comparative term in proposition 9 involved interpreting the use of the term "reality" in the light of the human standard of perfection. The idea is that something has more reality under the human standard of perfection when more of the expectations we have for a thing are realized. That being said, the interpretation of reality under the province of the human standard of perfection suffers from one rather obvious defect: proposition 9 specifically states that a substance having more reality has more attributes, so our expectations would have to be in terms of attributes rather than features.

The features a thing has seems to form the basis of how perfect we take a thing to be and therefore how much reality we take a thing to have rather than the number of attributes that the thing possesses. To illustrate this point, let us return to the house example. To determine the level of perfection of the house, we look to see if the house has a tennis court, a swimming pool, and five bedrooms. If the house has all of these features (the court, pool, and bedrooms), then we deem the house to be perfect. Should the house lack any of these features we deem the house

to be more or less perfect depending on how many of the features that the house possesses, so a house possessing most of the features would be deemed more perfect and a house possessing few of the features would be deemed less perfect. Translating the number of features into the amount of reality, the house possessing most of the features will be deemed to have more reality and the house possessing few of the features will be deemed to have less reality.

The substitution of attributes for features in determining whether a thing is more or less perfect and has more or less reality seems awkward. Considering again the example of the house, the house will not be deemed more or less perfect or have more or less reality depending on how many of the features it possesses that we expect a house to have, but rather will deemed as being more or less perfect and having more or less reality depending on how many attributes the house possesses. Thus, a house that possesses both the attributes of Thought and Extension will be deemed to be more perfect and have more reality than a house possessing only the attribute of Thought or a house possessing only the attribute of Extension.

The expectations for the house can easily be understood in terms of certain features we expect it to have, but it is much less easy to understand why we should expect the house to have both the attribute of Extension and the attribute of Thought. Basically, then, a house that is only an idea of a house (only has the attribute of Thought) and a house that is only the extended house (only has the attribute of Extension), are each less perfect and therefore have less reality than a house that is both the extended house and the idea of that house (has both the attributes of Extension and Thought).

The interpretation of proposition 9 as using the human standard of perfection and by extension the apparent use of reality as a comparative term in light of the human standard of

perfection yields a rather odd result. The result is that a house that is both the extended house and the idea of the house has more reality than a house that is only an idea of a house or a house that is only the extended house. Using the human standard of perfection for proposition 9 seems far too problematic so it seems it should be abandoned.

The Basic Problem with Reality being a Comparative Term

Spinoza asserts that some things are more perfect than other things – that some things have more reality than others. Spinoza uses reality in an apparently comparative sense in the early stages of book I of the Ethics in which he lays out his proof for the existence of a single substance and identifying that single substance as God. Using perfection, at least in the human sense, in a comparative sense would be understandable, but using reality in a comparative sense is difficult to understand, as reality is not used typically as a comparative term.[64] It is not clear what it means for something to have more reality or less reality, for some things to be more real and others to be less real. It seems to make more sense for things to be either real or not real, to have reality or not have reality. How then are we to understand how reality can be used in an apparently comparative sense? Let us turn to Della Rocca for a clue where to start. He writes:

> For Spinoza, reality is equivalent to power, and, in this light, we can see what he means by saying that God has the most reality: as a self-sufficient and unique substance, God has the most power possible. If such a substance lacked some power, what could prevent it from having that power? There is no other substance

[64] Since, as noted before, Spinoza equates perfection with reality, he definitely seems to allow the use of reality as a comparative term, or at least discusses reality/perfection in comparative terms – the problem comes in understanding just how reality is supposed to be understood as a comparative term and, by extension, how the equation of perfection with reality is supposed to be understood. As we discovered above, an interpretation using the human sense of perfection in proposition 9 does not work, so the problem of using reality in a comparative sense remains.

> to prevent God from having that power, and certainly no mode could prevent God from having as much power as possible, so any such lack would have no explanation and is thus disallowed by Spinoza. Thus God has the most power and reality possible, and, as such, determines everything else.[65]

Della Rocca points out that, for Spinoza, having more reality is equivalent to having more power. Power, as we usually use the term, is perfectly understandable as a comparative term in which power denotes the ability to perform actions. Thus, the more power the thing has, the greater its ability to perform actions. The more power something has the more things it can accomplish – essentially the thing with more power can outperform the thing with less power. It is easy to see, then, how power can be used comparatively.

Perfection, however, at least in the human sense, is also easy to understand as a comparative term, in that something that is more perfect has more features we expect of it and something that is less perfect has fewer features that we expect of it. Understanding perfection as a comparative term was of no help in understanding reality in a comparative sense, so it is difficult to see how understanding power as a comparative term will be of any greater help. Still, it may be useful to consider the passages in which Spinoza equates reality and power in the hope that more light may be shed on the matter.

Spinoza deals with the issue of perfection, reality, and power in the preface to part IV of the Ethics:

> For it is important to note that when I say that somebody passes from a state of less perfection to a state of greater perfection, and vice versa, I do not mean that he changes…but that we conceive his power of activity, insofar as this is understood through his nature, to be increased or diminished. Finally, by perfection in general I shall understand reality.[66]

[65] DELLA ROCCA, MICHAEL, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 77-78.

[66] Ethics, pg. 522.

In this passage Spinoza equates perfection not merely with power but with power of activity. Power of activity, for Spinoza, is the ability to act on one's nature, to do whatever it is that thing's nature necessitates it to do. For instance, a tiger's essence or nature, or at least a large part of it, necessitates the tiger to hunt for food. A caged tiger has less power of activity because it lacks the ability to act on its impulse to hunt, while a free tiger has greater power of activity because it has the ability to act on its impulse to hunt.

God, then, has the greatest power of activity because nothing can limit God's ability to act on the impulses of His nature. Since perfection is equated with power of activity, God is most perfect because He has the greatest power of activity. This is all well and good, but defining power of activity in and of itself does nothing to solve the problem of equating perfection, power of activity, and reality, since, as it now stands, power of activity is equivalent to perfection which is equivalent to reality, but power of activity is not equivalent to reality. To hopefully resolve this issue, let us dig deeper.

A second passage where Spinoza discusses reality and power of activity occurs in part II of the Ethics, in the scholium to proposition 49:

> Third, it may be objected that one affirmation does not seem to contain more reality than another; that is, we do not seem to need greater power in order to affirm that what is true is true than to affirm that what is false is true. On the other hand, we do perceive that one idea has more reality or perfection than another...Again, I absolutely deny that we need an equal power of thinking to affirm that what is true is true as to affirm that what is false is true. For these two affirmations, if you look to their meaning and not to the words alone, are related to one another as being to non-being.[67]

Spinoza is laying out the difference between true and false ideas in terms of our ability to affirm them. It takes more power to affirm true ideas because they are real. Here again Spinoza links

[67] Ibid, pp. 274, 276.

power and reality, perhaps suggesting that a person has greater power who is more in touch with reality. The person who is more in touch with reality also has greater power to act and thus is more perfect than a person who is less in touch with reality. Power of activity would be closely related to reality, in that the more in touch with reality one is the more power of activity he possesses; power of activity is related to perfection in that both are standards which vary together but are not identical, and the difference will be shown shortly. First, though, a word must be said concerning what Spinoza means by power of activity.

Power of activity in Spinoza's metaphysics as it pertains to humans refers to our knowledge concerning the world (reality) providing the means for us to act with a greater degree of freedom. The more knowledge we possess concerning how the world really is, the greater our ability to navigate said world. We can link the issue of power of activity to the parallelism doctrine in that our knowledge consists of being familiar with the ideas in the causal order of ideas and, since the causal order of ideas is perfectly parallel with the causal order of extended things, our knowledge of the ideas would enable us to perfectly predict where and when the extended thing which is the object of an idea will appear. Knowledge of the ideas provides us with a kind of map which we can use to better navigate the world and, the more easily we can navigate the world, the freer we are to act.

The closer one comes to perfection the more one knows about reality, and the more one knows about reality, the easier it is for that person to act, giving him greater power of activity. Conversely, the farther one gets from perfection the less he knows about reality and the less he knows about reality the weaker his power of activity becomes. Finally, reality must stand alone in this interpretation since it serves as the basis for defining the other two terms, but this

interpretation does have the advantage of conforming to a commonsense notion of reality. Reality is reality and there is little else to say on the matter.

In the above interpretation perfection is a standard of sorts, pointing to how closely things conform to reality and the level of knowledge people have concerning reality. Whether this type of standard helps salvage Garrett's suggestion that Spinoza is using perfection as a standard that only one set of finite modes conforms to is another matter. Perfection is a standard closely tied to reality, perfection being a measure of how closely something approaches reality or gets further from reality. Applying the standard of perfection to different sets of finite modes, the one set of finite modes that conformed to the standard of perfection would correspond to reality, while any sets of finite modes that did not conform to perfection would not conform to reality. Thus the set of finite modes that exist do conform to a standard of perfection as Garrett's theory requires, but this standard of perfection is closely linked to reality. It is the close link of the standard of perfection to reality that ultimately dooms Garrett's theory of the standard of perfection.

The set of finite modes that do exist conform to a standard of perfection, but that standard of perfection is so closely tied to reality as to make conformation with the standard inadequate for the purpose of Garrett's theory. Conforming to the standard of perfection as previously defined only indicates that the set of finite modes corresponds precisely with reality. The set of finite modes that conforms to the standard of perfection is the same set of finite modes that actually exist. At first glance this setup satisfies Garrett's theory as the existing set of finite modes do conform to a standard of perfection that no other set of finite modes satisfy. Interpreting the setup in light of the standard of perfection as defined previously, a serious flaw is revealed.

The existing set of finite modes conforms to the standard of perfection, which measures how closely something hews to reality. The existing set of finite modes, in turn, corresponds to reality for the simple reason that the existing set composes reality by virtue of being the set that actually exists. The existing set of finite modes, then, corresponds to reality and reality basically sets the standard to which perfection adheres. The existing set of finite modes, composing reality, therefore sets the standard to which perfection adheres. In other words, the existing set of finite modes sets the standard of perfection to which it is supposed to conform. It is thus a trivial matter for the existing set of finite modes to conform to the standard of perfection, because the existing set of finite modes sets the standard of perfection by composing reality to which the standard of perfection conforms.

The entire argument begins to look very circular – the actually existing set of finite modes exists by virtue of conforming to the additional constraint of perfection; perfection is a standard that measures how closely things conform to reality; the actually existing set of finite modes compose reality and as such set the standard of perfection, which basically boils down to how closely things conform to the actually existing set of finite modes; therefore, the actually existing set of finite modes exist by virtue of conforming to the standard of perfection which is set by the actually existing set of finite modes composing reality. The circularity of the argument apparently cuts away any support for Garrett's theory that Spinoza maintained that the actually existing set of finite modes have to conform to the additional constraint of perfection.

A different possibility is that Spinoza is making the point that if perfection is reality and God is perfect (and thus equivalent to reality), then there doesn't seem to be any room left for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. If God encompasses all of reality and the causal order of extended things, with the ideas of the extended

things in a perfectly parallel causal order, are what really exists, then there doesn't seem to be any room left over for unrealized nomological possibilities or ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. The actual series is necessary just in the sense that there does not exist an alternative possible series anywhere on the ontological grid.

The unrealized nomological possibilities wouldn't fit in the causal series of extended finite modes since they are unrealized, and the ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities would have no fit in the series of ideas because there would be nothing to parallel. The unrealized nomological possibilities wouldn't show up in the causal order of extended things for the simple reason that unrealized nomological possibilities do not actually exist and are therefore not extended. Ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities also seemingly could not exist because each idea in the causal order of ideas parallels its extended object in the causal order of extended things and ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities would have nothing to parallel since their objects are not included within the causal order of extended things.

God encompasses all reality so there would also be no room for any ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities outside of God. In order to exist, ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities would have to fit within God and the obvious way to fit the ideas in is to include them within the causal order of ideas but, as we have just discovered, we can't fit ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities into the causal order of ideas. Thus it appears that ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities have no place to fit within God and if they cannot fit into God, then the ideas cannot exist. If this analysis is correct, then Garrett's solution may be viable. However, it still seems suspiciously close to saying that unrealized possibilities are impossible due to the fact that they are not part of reality (the definition of unrealized).

Interpreting the standard of perfection as leaving no room for unrealized nomological possibilities because God is perfect and God corresponds to reality suffers from much the same problem as the previous interpretation of the standard of perfection as being set by reality. Perfection being a measure of how closely things hew to reality is virtually the same as saying that God's perfection does not allow for the existence of any unrealized nomological possibilities. If Spinoza is merely making the point that God and reality are equivalent, then it is difficult to see how a standard of perfection can fit in. Garrett's perfection criterion is problematic and implausible, so let us move on to examine his second proposal.

Set of Finite Modes as an Infinite Mode

Garrett's second suggestion for how the tension between IP28 and the other propositions can be reconciled is that the totality of the infinite series of finite modes is itself an infinite mode. An infinite mode is something that encompasses all of time and everything in the universe comprehended in one of the attributes at any one time. Thus, an infinite mode of Thought would encompass all time and everything that is comprehended in the attribute of Thought in the universe at any one time; the same holds true for an infinite mode of Extension. The infinite modes, to put it simply, have no limits while the finite modes do have limits.

Garrett is attempting to show that Spinoza is a necessitarian by dealing with the problem of the seeming lack of necessity of the finite modes. The series of finite modes, if itself an infinite mode, will be no problem since infinite modes are necessary under the interpretation we adopted in chapter 1 that infinite modes are included within God's essence and therefore

necessary. As an infinite mode the entire series of finite modes – for the sake of convenience I will refer to the entire series as the timeline, so that each finite mode occupies some point on the timeline – would have to exist eternally, being included within God's essence. As an infinite mode and thus included within of God's essence, the entire timeline would presumably have to be eternal and always existent. Finite things would occupy part of the eternal timeline, so finite things would not exist eternally – in the sense that they do not occupy every portion of the timeline – but they would still be part of an eternal and necessarily existing thing.

An objection could be raised here to the effect that considering the series of finite modes as an infinite mode is not enough to guarantee that the series of finite modes is thus necessary as the series that actually exists. In other words, even if the series of finite modes is an infinite mode, then it may only guarantee that a series of finite modes exists, not that the actual series of finite modes exists and must exist. The problem would arise as to why the actual series of finite modes exists and is an infinite mode rather than a different series of finite modes that could just as well have been an infinite mode. One approach to overcome this objection is to incorporate the series of finite modes into God's nature without attempting to argue that the series of finite modes is an infinite mode, which is what Kloistinen aims to do and Koistinen's argument will be examined in chapter 3. However, there is another approach that might work.

An infinite mode is included within God's essence and therefore necessarily exists, which we can interpret as being eternal and always existing. The approach we can take relies on discovering evidence that Spinoza discusses the series of finite modes as though they are collectively an infinite mode. The kind of evidence for which we will be searching is twofold: that the series of finite modes is discussed as though it were included within God's essence, and discussing the series of finite modes as though the entire series has been always existent.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence occurs in the Principles of Cartesian Philosophy:

> Finally, neither time nor duration can be imagined before creation; these began along with things. For time is the measure of duration; or rather, it is nothing but a mode of thinking. Therefore it presupposes not just some created thing, but, in particular, thinking men.[68]

This passage can be interpreted as suggesting that time does not pass in the way we perceive – rather than having a past, present, and future there would just be an eternally existing timeline. In other words, what we would call past, present, and future all exist and it is only our place on the timeline which lends to our identifying past, present, and future – the timeline itself is always existent and does not change, but rather it is our position on the timeline that changes. It seems reasonable to suppose that time would not be perceived as past, present, and future without someone (like thinking men) to perceive it as such. An always existent timeline would lend support for the treatment of the entire series of finite modes (which we are considering as the timeline) as an infinite mode. Another piece of evidence can be found in Letter 12:

> The affections of Substance I call Modes. The definition of Modes, insofar as it is not itself a definition of Substance, cannot involve existence. Therefore, even when they exist, we can conceive them as not existing. From this it further follows that when we have regard only to the essence of Modes and not to the order of Nature as a whole, we cannot deduce from their present existence that they will or will not exist in the future or that they did or did not exist in the past. Hence it is clear that we conceive the existence of Substance as of an entirely different kind from the existence of Modes. This is the source of the difference between Eternity and Duration. It is to the existence of Modes alone that we can apply the term Duration; the corresponding term for the existence of Substance is Eternity, that is, the infinite enjoyment of existence or – pardon the Latin – of being (*essendi*).[69]

The passage states that Eternity is to Duration as Substance is to Mode – Eternity and Substance are both infinite, while Duration and Mode (unless you are talking about an infinite mode) are

[68] Principles, pg. 204.

[69] SPINOZA, BARUCH, *Complete Works*, edited by Michael Morgan, translated by Samuel Shirley. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), pg. 788.

finite. Substance is infinite and necessarily exists, so maybe Spinoza is implying that Eternity is not only infinite but also necessarily exists. If Eternity necessarily exists and Eternity can be read as timeline (which would seem to be the rough equivalent), then Spinoza is referring to a necessarily existing timeline, or always existent timeline. However, the preceding interpretation is probably carrying the analogy too far, since Spinoza does not make any use of the necessary existence analogy which I have proposed. Rather, he focuses on the infinite/finite analogy:

> What I have said makes it quite clear that when we have regard only to the essence of Modes and not to Nature's order, as is most often the case, we can arbitrarily delimit the existence and duration of Modes without thereby impairing to any extent our conception of them; and we can conceive this duration as greater or less, and divisible into parts. But Eternity and Substance, being conceivable only as infinite, cannot be thus treated without annulling our conception of them.[70]

Here Spinoza is arguing that Eternity, or the timeline, can only be conceived of as a whole. If the timeline can only be conceived as a complete and indivisible entity, it certainly suggests that the timeline exists all at once, in that what we refer to as the past, present, and future all have the same ontological status. Let us examine the next portion of the passage to see if more evidence can be discovered.

> Further, from the fact that we are able to delimit Duration…separating the efflux of Duration from things eternal, there arise Time…to delimit Duration…in such wise as enables us to imagine them easily, as far as possible. Hence it can clearly be seen that…Time…are nothing other than modes of thinking, or rather, modes of imagining.[71]

The classification of time as a mode of the imagination is suggestive that we merely imagine that time flows or passes and that the past and future actually have the same ontological status as the present. The notion that time is a mode of the imagination suggests an eternally existing timeline

[70] Ibid, pg. 788.

[71] Ibid, pg. 789.

instead of having past, present, and future wherein the present is the only one that exists at any given time. There is textual support in Spinoza's writings for the interpretation that he viewed the timeline as always existent. Now let us look for support for the view that the timeline is included within God's essence.

A passage supporting the inclusion of the timeline within God's essence can be found in a different work, Principles of Cartesian Philosophy:

> From this it clearly follows that duration is distinguished only by reason from the total existence of a thing. For as much as you take away from the duration of a thing, so much you necessarily take away from its existence.[72]

It is particularly the second sentence which suggests that the timeline is included within God's essence. If taking away from a thing's duration (persistence through time) takes away from its total existence, it suggests that taking away duration does not merely shorten the length of a thing's existence, but actually takes away part of the thing, assuming that total existence means roughly the same as taking the entire thing into consideration. If we can apply this to God,[73] taking away any of the timeline (duration) also takes away from God, indicating that the timeline is included within God's essence. If the timeline is included within God's essence, then taking away any portion of the timeline would take away some of God's essence. Hence the timeline is apparently included within God's essence. Let us move on to examine whether the strategy of searching for evidence that indicates that the timeline is always existent and included within

[72] Principles., pp. 185-186.

[73] The earlier passage definitely states that Duration can only be applied to modes, but since duration is not capitalized in the passage under consideration, we are interpreting the term "duration" in a more generic sense that might be applied to God.

God's essence will save Garrett's proposal that the entire series of finite modes is an infinite mode. We now need to consider an objection to the above strategy.

Problem with Saving the Infinite Mode Argument

The objection can be stated like this: the textual passages were not taken from the Ethics and in the Ethics, where the strongest textual support for Spinoza as a necessitarian is located, virtually nothing can be found. It is especially telling that no support for the series of finite modes as always existent and included within God's essence can be found at the most crucial point in or around IP28. If Spinoza held either view, then why did he not discuss them in the Ethics, particularly in or around IP28 where these views could have helped to establish necessitarianism? That he did not suggests that Spinoza held neither view.

In reply, I will point to one of the propositions in Book I of the Ethics that seems to support a necessitarian view and might be interpreted in such a fashion as to support an always existent timeline that is included within God's essence. Let us recall IP33, which reads: "Things could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than is the case."[74] As noted in Chapter 1, the most natural interpretation of this proposition is as an expression of necessitarianism. However, while Spinoza seems to espouse necessitarianism in IP33, there seems to be no explicit statement of support for an always existent timeline that is included within God's essence.

[74] Ethics, pg. 235.

The best that can be done is to read the views into the proposition - the phrase 'could not have been produced by God in any other way' could indicate that the timeline is included within God's essence and the phrase 'or in any other order than is the case' could indicate an always existent timeline. If the timeline is always existent and is included within God's essence then the timeline could not have been different, and could not have been in any other order. The two views can be wrung from the proposition, but only by stretching its meaning probably past the breaking point. However, even more troubling is a more glaring omission.

One might reasonably expect Spinoza, if he held that the timeline is always existent and included within God's essence, to discuss them at one of the most crucial points for a necessitarian interpretation of Spinoza - proposition 28 of Book I of the Ethics. As noted earlier, there is a difficult transition for Spinoza from the infinite modes to the finite modes. If Spinoza had made use of an always existent timeline included within God's essence to establish the entire series of finite modes as an infinite mode, then the problem of transition from infinite modes to finite modes could have been smoothed over. In fact, there would be no real transition since we would be going from infinite mode to infinite mode. There is, however, no indication of either view in IP28.

IP28 only discusses finite and determinate modes and how they cause each other. No attempt seems to be made to argue that the entire series of finite modes is an infinite mode – in fact, no mention at all is made of infinite modes. If Spinoza intended to present the series of finite modes as an infinite mode, then the discrepancy between what the always existent timeline included within God's essence interpretation requires Spinoza to have intended and what the actual text suggests that he intended must be accounted for.

In attempting to account for the discrepancy there are at least three possibilities: Spinoza was careless in leaving out talk of the always existent timeline included within God's essence, as well as the series of finite modes as an infinite mode; Spinoza did not think these views, including the entire series as an infinite mode, were needed to support necessitarianism, at least in IP28; or Spinoza did not hold the view that the timeline is always existent and included within God's essence or hold that the entire series of finite modes were actually an infinite mode.

The first possibility seems highly improbable for such a great thinker. The second is more likely, as Spinoza may have thought necessitarianism could be established via his other arguments. This scenario is certainly possible. However, the question is left open as to why Spinoza would have thought that using the view of the always existent timeline included within God's essence to establish the series of finite modes as an infinite mode was unnecessary at such a crucial point in his arguments. Arguing that the series of finite modes is an infinite mode would have largely eliminated the apparent disconnect between the infinite modes and the finite modes. The second scenario becomes even more unlikely when we also factor in that Spinoza did not speak of infinite modes at all in IP28, which seems a very odd omission if he intended to establish the entire series of finite modes as an infinite mode.

The third scenario seems the most likely, especially given the paucity of textual support for the always existent timeline included within God's essence interpretation, not to mention any really direct evidence that Spinoza thought that the series of finite modes constituted an infinite mode. Without better evidence for Spinoza's support of these views, it seems probable that he did not hold these views. In my opinion, this final objection is devastating to the always existent timeline included within God's essence interpretation of Spinoza. Without this interpretation, Garrett's second argument for necessitarianism does not work, at least as it stands. Koistinen

takes a different approach to including the finite modes within God's essence, but before we move on to examine Koistinen's arguments, let us review why Garrett's arguments ultimately are unsuccessful.

Garrett's first argument involved a standard of perfection which he thinks that Spinoza applies to the entire set of finite modes. The entire set of finite modes must match the standard of perfection and, since there is only one set of finite modes which can match the standard, that set of finite modes necessarily exists. If the set of finite modes which matches the standard of perfection necessarily exists, then Spinoza is shown to be a necessitarian.

One problem with the standard of perfection that Garrett is suggesting involves the fact that matching such a standard of perfection suggests that perfection is being used in a comparative sense. Using perfection in a comparative sense works well when we consider the human sense of perfection, since the human sense of perfection involves expectations and whether those expectations are met or not. Various things can meet the human standard of perfection by fulfilling all the expectations of the person judging perfection, and there is plenty of room for comparison since many things could fail to meet expectations. However, the human sense of perfection is not being used when considering the entire set of finite modes.

The entire set of finite modes falls under the sense of perfection in which perfection is equivalent to reality. The set of finite modes meets the standard of perfection if the set conforms precisely to reality. However, it seems that the set of finite modes that actually exists sets the standard of perfection since the standard is set by reality. The actual set of finite modes constitutes reality and the standard of perfection is set by reality, so the standard of perfection which the actual set of finite modes actually conforms to is set by reality which is constituted by

the actual set of finite modes. In other words, the actual set of finite modes conforms to a standard of perfection set by itself, which makes the whole process look very circular.

Garrett's second argument involves suggesting the entire set of finite modes is itself an infinite mode. If the entire set of finite modes is itself an infinite mode, then the set of finite modes could be considered as included within God's essence and therefore necessary. The problem with interpreting the entire set of finite modes as an infinite mode involves considering two factors in which the set of finite modes does not appear to resemble an infinite mode: the set of finite modes would have to exist eternally and there would need to be some indication that the set of finite modes is included within God's essence.

Infinite modes exist eternally as they are included within God's essence, so there would need to be some indication that the set of finite modes also exist eternally, so that there would be no moment in which the set of finite modes did not exist. There would also have to be some indication that the set of finite modes are included within God's essence in order to overcome IP28 which definitely suggests that the set is not included within God's essence. As we discovered, some evidence for eternal existence and inclusion within God's essence of the set of finite modes can be found, but the evidence is thin and nonexistent at the most crucial point in the Ethics, IP28. The paucity of evidence led us to conclude that Garrett's second argument is also unsuccessful. Now that we have considered Garrett's two arguments and found them to be unsuccessful, let us move on to Koistinen's arguments for interpreting Spinoza as a necessitarian.

Chapter 3: Koistinen on Superessentialism

Koistinen agrees with Garrett that Spinoza is most definitely a necessitarian. Instead of introducing a separate standard of perfection or suggesting that the entire series of finite modes is an infinite mode, Kloistinen argues:

> In a substance-property ontology *(C)*, the assumption that the actual world is not the only possible world is true if and only if (i) some substance could have failed to exist or (ii) there is a possible but unactualized property. Now, the first disjunct, (i), is impossible because of the necessary existence of substances (B). The second disjunct, (ii), cannot hold, because it follows from superessentialism (A) that the possible but unactualized property requires its own substance which by (B) should exist. But because (B) also guarantees that all possible attributes are exemplified, this new substance should share an attribute with some of the existing substances which is denied by (D).[75]

To put it simply, God, the only substance, necessarily exists and, under the view of superessentialism, God necessarily possesses all His properties or else would not be God. If there were different properties God could have, the different properties would belong to another substance which would also necessarily exist. The second substance that necessarily exists would share the same attributes with the original substance, God, but that would mean two different substances exist and share the same attribute, an eventuality that Spinoza rules out early in part I of the Ethics. In order to understand the next portion of the argument, it is important to note that Koistinen maintains that Spinoza only allows for the existence of substance and properties, a substance-property ontology.

The substance portion of substance-property ontology is easy to understand, as Spinoza explicitly argues that substance necessarily exists, there is only one substance, and that substance

[75] KOISTINEN, OLLI, 'Spinoza's Proof of Necessitarianism', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* 67 (2003), pp. 308-309.

is God, as we discovered in chapter 1. Since substance-property ontology dictates that only substance and properties exist, everything that exists beyond substance – or rather in substance because it would not exist beyond substance in any sense – must be a property of some sort.

The finite modes are what Koistinen's argument turns on and it is clear that he definitely puts the finite modes into the category of properties.[76] Finite modes are properties of God and, since God must possess all His properties or not be God according to superessentialism, God must possess (in the sense of the finite modes being properties) all the finite modes He actually does possess or He would not be God.

The necessity of all the finite modes ties back into the necessary existence of substance portion of the argument. If the finite modes could be different in any way, then the substance possessing those different finite modes would necessarily exist since, it is important to recall, finite modes are properties of substance and thus any different properties that could exist would necessarily exist in the form of a second substance. More than one substance cannot exist according to Spinoza, so the second substance obviously cannot exist and thus the finite modes could not be any different. Thus the actual series of finite modes is essential for God to be God.

Finally, the 'no shared attributes' thesis stated by Spinoza in book I proposition 5 of the Ethics provides the explanation for why there cannot be more than one substance by blocking the possibility of more than one substance sharing the same attribute. In chapter 1 we discussed IP5 and determined that Spinoza is on fairly solid ground (at least in relation to the rest of his system) to have both IP5 and the statement that God possesses all the attributes. Since God

[76] The interpretation of all finite modes as properties is also the interpretation that we adopted in chapter 1.

possesses all the attributes and no attribute can be possessed by more than one substance, any substance other than God is ruled out.

In summation, Koistinen's argument maintains that only one substance exists, God, and God possesses all of his properties necessarily, including the entire series of finite modes, meaning that the actual series of finite modes necessarily exists. The conclusion reached from these premises makes Spinoza a necessitarian since God necessarily has the causal order of finite modes which actually exists. Before moving on, a word needs to be said at this juncture concerning the plausibility of superessentialism.

Superessentialism is not as absurd as it might appear at first glance. There is, after all, a tendency to think that an extended thing would not be the same were it to have different properties. If, for example, the current pope had one of his properties suddenly changed, say the color of his hair, we would find it difficult to assert that the pope was exactly the same as he had been before the change. One of his properties would have changed and any change in properties would result in something that is at least slightly different. The problem comes in accepting that a property like hair color could be considered an essential part of the pope, so that even a change in hair color would result in the pope basically being a completely different person.

The concept of superessentialism, in which any change in properties results in a completely different thing – the focus is on God, but since God is everything superessentialism can more or less be applied to everything as an inseparable part of God – seems rather hard to swallow and arguing for the view would likely produce a dissertation in and of itself. It must be remembered, however, that we are not considering whether superessentialism is a plausible view that we could accept – rather, we are attempting to determine whether superessentialsim is a

view that Spinoza plausibly held. As a result, we need to focus on Spinoza's system and whether superessentialism can comfortably fit within that system. The only plausibility we are truly concerned with is the plausibility of attributing the view of superessentialism to Spinoza and whether the view works in his system.

The view of superesssentialism, with the caveat of focusing only on the plausibility of said view within Spinoza's system, certainly is based on views that we can confidently state that Spinoza holds. The necessary existence of God is explicitly stated by Spinoza multiple times in part I of the Ethics and also underlies the substance portion of the substance-property ontology ascribed to Spinoza by Koistinen. The third part of the foundation, the no-shared attribute thesis, is also put forth by Spinoza early in part I of the Ethics and plays a crucial role in establishing God as the one and only substance that exists.

The supposition that Spinoza relied on a substance-property ontology can reasonably be gleaned from the fact that God is substance and everything is in God and we accepted the view of Della Rocca in chapter 1 that all finite modes are properties of God. The finite modes are what concerns Koistinen, so it is enough to acknowledge that we have accepted finite modes as properties of substance (God), so we have already accepted Koistinen's substance-property ontology, or at least the main thrust of substance-property ontology.

The three pillars upon which Koistinen constructs his superessentialism are well attested in Spinoza's system and thus the foundation of superessentialism in Spinoza's system at least rests on firm ground. Whether the combination of the three pillars into the view of superessentialism works is another matter, but at the moment it is important to note that it is at least plausible to attribute superessentialism to Spinoza. The ultimate viability of the view of

superessentialism in Spinoza's system is something we will examine shortly, but first let us consider the advantages the view of superessentialism would confer to those who interpret Spinoza as a necessitarian, starting with the potentially troublesome nature of the finite modes.

The finite modes, as we discovered in chapter 1, are more difficult to consider as necessary in Spinoza's system mostly because of the relation of IP28 in the Ethics to IP21-23. IP21-23 state that the attributes and the infinite modes follow from God necessarily, so the attributes and infinite modes can be (and have been in this study) interpreted as included within God's essence and therefore necessary in the sense that they could not be different. Finite modes, on the other hand, are partly caused by other finite modes so that it is much more difficult to interpret the finite modes as included within God's essence and in a necessitarian light.

Superessentialism provides a solution to the difficulty of fitting the actual set of finite modes into necessitarianism. The difficulty being, of course, that the particular finite modes that exist depend on a combination of the laws of nature and the preceding causes in the causal order. The finite modes in the causal order do not seem to be necessary, since it seems that the entire causal order could have been different. The solution offered by superessentialism involves making the finite modes all necessary as they are properties of God and God has all His properties necessarily. Let us examine Koistinen's view of superessentialism to see if the problems we will raise and discuss can be overcome.

One problem occurs with the nature of the finite modes and how they might fit in Spinoza's system. Specifically, necessitating the finite modes threatens to upset the priority of substance over modes established in IP1, which states "Substance is by nature prior to its

affections."[77] Affections, for Spinoza, are the same as modes (particularly finite modes), so the proposition is stating that substance is prior to its modes. Just what priority Spinoza has in mind is spelled out in definition 3 and 5 of book I of the Ethics:

> By substance I mean that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that the conception of which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed.
>
> By mode I mean the affections of substance, that is, that which is in something else and is conceived through something else.[78]

And in the proof of proposition 5 in book I:

> But if they are distinguished by a difference of affections, then, since substance is by nature prior to its affections and considering substance in itself, that is, considering it truly, it cannot be conceived as distinguishable from another substance. That is, there cannot be several such substances but only one.[79]

The priority of substance over finite modes is one of conceptual priority, in which substance can be conceived all by itself without conceiving of finite modes, while finite modes cannot be conceived without also conceiving of substance.[80] God, then, as substance should be able to be conceived without also conceiving of God's finite modes. However, if the entire series of finite modes is necessary, then God could not be conceived without also conceiving of the finite modes. Since the finite modes are essential to God's essence according to Koistinen's view of superessentialism, it might not be possible to conceive of God without also conceiving of the finite modes which are essential to God's nature.

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[77] Ethics, pg. 218.

[78] Ibid, pg. 217.
[79] Ibid, pg. 219.

[80] The infinite modes, as we discussed in chapter 1, are accepted in this study as being included within God's essence. The conceptual priority of substance is not threatened since the infinite modes, being included within God's essence, must be conceived when we conceive of God as it is natural to assume that we cannot conceive of God without also conceiving of God's essence.

The view of superessentialism seems to require that the finite modes are conceived at the same time as substance in order to fully understand God. Since this apparently violates the conceptual priority of substance over modes which Spinoza has established, it seems that superessentialism will not work. Before we move on, let us briefly examine another way in which the issue of conceptual priority of substance over modes can be demonstrated to be very problematic for Koistinen's theory of superessentialism.

Spinoza identifies God with substance in IP11, so when one conceives of substance fully one should also be conceiving of God fully at the same time. In other words, if you conceive of substance what is in your mind, what you are conceiving, should be basically the same thing as you conceive when you conceive of God, since God and substance are the same thing under different names. However, satisfying superessentialism and trying to keep the conceptual priority of substance over finite modes intact, you should be able to conceive of substance fully without at the same time conceiving of God fully – or at least conceiving of God in all but name when you are conceiving of substance.

In order to conceive fully of God, which is conceiving God's essence, under superessentialism you would have to conceive both of substance and of finite modes. The conceptual priority of substance over finite modes requires that we are able to conceive of substance without also conceiving of finite modes. In other words, conceptual priority requires that substance can be conceived alone, but this would violate superessentialism in that in only conceiving of substance we would not fully be conceiving God's essence. If we can conceive of substance without fully conceiving God's essence, then it seems the identification of God and substance in IP11 will not work.

The attempt to maintain both superessentialism and the conceptual priority of substance over modes thus disrupts the identification of God with substance. Since Spinoza seems to definitely identify God with substance, this disruption is unacceptable and it seems that either supereseentialism or the conceptual priority of substance over modes must be dropped. As Spinoza holds to the conceptual priority of substance over modes, it seems the obvious view to drop is superessentialism. Thus it seems very problematic to include the finite modes as well as the infinite modes within God's essence as Koistinen does with superessentialism, and the problem of necessitating the finite modes which actually exist seems to remain. Now let us turn to a second problem with Koistinen's argument, related to the first problem but presenting a different dilemma.

The second problem with Koistinen's solution arises even if we accept that the finite modes are part of God's essence and are therefore necessitated. Spinoza argues that there can be only one substance (God), because God possesses all the attributes and substances cannot share attributes. He also maintains that God could not possibly have a different essence, because the different essence would also exist due to the necessary existence of substance and there then would exist two (or more) Gods, which would be impossible due to God having all the attributes and substances not being able to share attributes. Thus, God's essence is necessitated, but if God's essence includes the finite modes, then a problem arises. If the finite modes are included within God's essence, then it becomes less clear why God must have the essence which he has instead of a different essence.

It seems quite easy to imagine a different series of finite modes, so it is difficult to think of a reason why one series would exist over another.[81] The issue of the necessity of the actual set of finite modes hearkens back to the distinction we made in chapter 1 between necessitarianism and determinism. Necessitarianism is the view that, as concerns the finite modes, there are no alternative sets of finite modes that could have existed. The actual set of finite modes is the only set of finite modes that could exist. Determinism, on the other hand, allows for the existence of alternate sets of finite modes. The existence of alternate sets of finite modes means that the actual set of finite modes could have been different.

Necessitarianism is obviously perfectly compatible with superessentialism, since there is only one set of finite modes that ever could have existed and this necessary set of finite modes would fit perfectly with the necessary properties of superessentialism. If superessentialism can successfully be applied to Spinoza, then it appears he is committed to being a necessitarian and the debate concerning necessitarianism would be decided. That being said, the fact that the attributes and laws of nature do not appear to dictate in and of themselves exactly what they operate upon (at least as a whole), makes superessentialism a dubious fit in Spinoza's system.

The attributes do not seem to dictate exactly what finite modes exist beyond the fact that the finite modes are extended and ideas and objects of whatever other attributes that exist. Beyond dictating that the finite modes are extended and objects of Thought and so on, the attributes do not dictate exactly what finite modes that exist. The laws of nature also do not determine exactly what finite modes they operate upon, at least to the extent of determining the whole set of finite modes.

[81] It might be necessary that there exists a series of finite modes, but this fact by itself does not necessitate the existence of any particular set of finite modes.

The laws of nature determine exactly what effect will result from a particular cause, so that for any given finite mode the laws of nature determine exactly the effect it will produce, as well as the cause that produced it, and so on in either direction of causation. Beyond that, the laws of nature do not determine the overall set of finite modes – rather, the laws of nature simply interact with whatever finite modes exist. The attributes do not appear to dictate exactly what the set of actual finite modes are, nor do the laws of nature, which seems to allow for the existence of alternate sets of finite modes (or alternate causal orders).

The apparent existence of alternate causal orders opens the question of why one causal order is actualized instead of a different causal order. In order to fully understand the problem, we need to consider Spinoza's reliance on PSR (Principle of Sufficient Reason), which we first discussed in chapter 1. Della Rocca argues that Spinoza requires a reason for everything, both for the existence of things and the nonexistence of things. For instance, for every human that exists at any particular time and place, Spinoza requires an explanation sufficient to account for the existence of that human and all his or her properties. The laws of nature coupled with all the preceding causes provide a sufficient explanation for the existence of the particular human.

The nonexistence of a particular human can be explained in much the same manner as the existence of a particular human can be explained, with reference to the laws of nature and all preceding causes. The explanation for the existence or nonexistence of any one particular thing is not all that hard to grasp in Spinoza's system – though it is complicated since it involves knowledge of the laws of nature and all preceding causes – but the explanation is at least in principle understandable.

The entire causal order is a different matter because the existence of the actual causal order cannot be explained simply by reference to the laws of nature and all preceding causes. All the preceding causes are included in what needs to be explained and the laws of nature can only provide the explanation for why the causal order proceeds in the manner which it does, such as why there exists finite modes A, B, C and D in part of the order rather than W, X, Y and Z – the preceding causes coupled with the laws of nature explain why the first set of finite modes exists rather than the second set.

The existence of the actual causal order must be explained by more than just the attributes and the laws of nature, and, if alternate causal orders are allowed, then the nonexistence (nonactualization) of the alternate causal orders must also be explained by more than just the attributes and the laws of nature.

Necessitarianism appears to get around this problem of explanation by eliminating the existence of alternate causal orders. The actual causal order exists for the simple reason that it is the only causal order that can be actualized. There is no need to explain any further beyond the fact that the actual causal order is the only causal order that could exist and obviously no explanation is required for the nonactualization of any alternate causal orders because there are no alternate causal orders. No alternate causal orders may be allowed under necessitarianism, but the problem still remains of explaining why the actual causal order has been actualized. More specifically, the problem is explaining why the actual causal order is the only causal order that could have been actualized.

One way to give an explanation would be to simply say that the actual causal order is the only one that could be actualized because that's the way things are. The actual causal order is

the only one that could have been actualized due to the nature of the universe or, put more simply, because God's essence dictates that the actual causal order is the only one that could be actualized. The explanation for the actual causal order being the only one that could be actualized is a brute fact at worst and hopelessly vague at best.

The explanation being vague is not totally crippling, although it certainly raises the question as to why we should consider the explanation a true explanation at all. For instance, if we were to explain why water boils and appeal to the essence of water in the explanation as in water is something that boils at a certain temperature, then the explanation would not be helpful in the least. Granted, such an explanation can work to a degree with something that we cannot understand but it still seems a rather weak explanation. We can go the vague explanation route if necessary, but it would be far from ideal for Spinoza if he holds the strong version of the PSR.

The worst outcome of the proposed explanation, that it amounts to a brute fact,[82] is far more problematic for an explanation within Spinoza's system. In fact, it is a misnomer to refer to a brute fact as an explanation at all, since a brute fact is something that is simply true without any explanation. Thus a brute fact would by definition not be an explanation, so it is hard to see how a brute fact could fit with the strong version of the PSR. The only way the proposed explanation could possibly work is laid out by Della Rocca:

[82] One way that might get around having the actual set of finite modes being a brute fact is that the actual set of finite modes could instead be interpreted as a necessary truth. The idea here is that God would have a certain set of ideas (the ideas that match the extended things that exist in the extended causal order) and that there are no ideas beyond that set of ideas which match the set of extended things. Since no other ideas could exist, it is necessary for the extended causal order to exist as is via the doctrine of parallelism. A necessary truth would require no explanation, much like God's essence is a certain way and replies no explanation as to why that is. However, a problem will arise with this solution in chapter 6, when we examine the combination of IP17 and nomological possibilities, a combination which will throw considerable doubt as to whether God is only capable of having a certain set of ideas that basically constitute the actual causal order.

> Since God – as the substance of infinite attributes – has the most reality, the most properties possible follow from his nature, i.e. he has *all* possible properties. Spinoza concludes from this that God determines all things. (Notice here, by the way, the implicit equation of particular things and properties of God.)[83]

God has all the properties that are possible, i.e. God encompasses all the finite modes that can possibly exist. The way in which we are interpreting this claim is laid out in chapter 1 during the discussion on nomological possibility – God possesses all possible properties translates into God creates everything that is consistent with the laws of nature or God creates everything that is not prohibited by the laws of nature.

The claim that God possesses all possible properties or, more precisely for our purposes, that God creates all nomological possibilities sounds fine for the moment, but will become highly problematic when we examine it more closely in chapter 6. God creating everything that is allowable under the laws of nature translates, when coupled with IP17, into God creating everything that He can understand. God surely understands the laws of nature and everything that is allowable under the laws of nature, so creating everything allowable under the laws of nature covers a very wide scope. The claim that God possesses all possible properties, that God creates every finite mode that can possibly exist nomologically, seriously limits what God can understand when we try to fit the claim into the constraints of necessitarianism.

The issue of fitting nomological possibility with IP17 is an issue which we will return to in chapter 6, but a brief word can be said about how the combination might look in light of the parallelism doctrine. If God understands everything allowable by the laws of nature and creates everything that He understands, then what He understands would basically form the causal order of ideas and what He creates would basically form the causal order of extended things. The

[83] DELLA ROCCA, MICHAEL, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pg. 77.

causal order of ideas would then synch up with the causal order of extended things – since presumably God creates the extended things in the same order as the ideas that He understands – and the parallelism doctrine would fit in. This is but a brief overview of what we will be examining in much greater depth in chapter 6.

The issue of whether the necessitarian interpretation of only the actual set of finite modes being able to exist at all can be reconciled with the strong version of the PSR, nomological possibility, and IP17 is one to which we will return in chapter 6. Suffice to say for the moment that Koistinen's argument for superessentialism is looking rather shaky and unconvincing. Let us set aside for now whether Koistinen's superessentialism can be correctly applied to Spinoza and turn instead to another issue which Koistinen considers, namely that of interpreting an important passage that seems to allow for ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities in a manner that is compatible with necessitarianism.

The passage in question that Koistinen is attempting to interpret in a necessitarian friendly manner is IIP8, which we first discussed in chapter 1. Before examining Koistinen's attempt to reconcile IIP8 with the necessitarianism that Koistinen maintains that Spinoza holds, let us briefly reexamine IIP8 to see just what makes IIP8 a problem when it comes to a necessitarian reading of Spinoza. An apparent tension exists in Spinoza's system between the parallelism doctrine he lays out in IIP7 and the apparent allowance for ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities in the very next proposition, IIP8. First, let us consider the two passages in question, with IIP7 first:

> **Proposition 7** The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.[84]

[84] Ethics, pg. 247.

IIP7 seems to definitively state that there is a one-to-one correspondence between ideas and extended things. In the universe, there is a causal order of extended things which encompasses every extended thing in the universe. In other words, there is no extended thing in the universe that exists outside the causal order, and the causal order is arranged in a particular order with particular causal connections between certain extended things. IIP7 states that ideas also have a particular order with particular causal connections between certain ideas, and the order and connection of the ideas is the same as that for extended things. Thus there seems to be no room left for ideas of anything outside the causal order.

And now IIP8:

> **Proposition 8** The ideas of nonexistent individual things or modes must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God in the same way as the formal essences of individual things or modes are contained in the attributes of God.
>
> **Scholium** Should anyone want an example for a clearer understanding…I shall try to illustrate it as best I can. The nature of a circle is such that the rectangles formed from the segments of its intersecting chords are equal. Hence an infinite number of equal rectangles are contained in a circle, but none of them can be said to exist except insofar as the circle exists, nor again can the idea of any one of these rectangles be said to exist except insofar as it is comprehended in the idea of the circle. Now of this infinite number of intersecting chords let two, E and D, exist. Now indeed their ideas also exist not only insofar as they are merely comprehended in the idea of the circle but also insofar as they involve the existence of those rectangles, with the result that they are distinguished from the other ideas of the other rectangles.[85]

IIP8 specifically references ideas of nonexisting things, extended things which cannot be part of the extended causal order since the causal order is filled with extended things that existed, exist, or will exist, and we do appear to have ideas of nonexisting things. Whether any of these nonexisting things are nomological possibilities is another matter entirely. As noted in chapter 1, there are three ways to interpret the nonexisting chords, including the nonexisting chords

[85] Ibid, pg. 248.

referring to things that cannot possibly exist like unicorns, things that have existed but do not exist at the current time, and nomological possibilities.

The first option was already considered in chapter 1 and found to be inadequate due to the simple fact that there are no actual ideas of things such as unicorns. We think that there are ideas of things such as unicorns due to our imaginations appearing to fuse together two disparate ideas, an idea of a particular horse and an idea of a particular horn in the case of a unicorn. We mistake the two apparently fused but actually separate ideas of the horse and the horn as one idea, an idea of a unicorn.

The misidentification of the imaginative construct as an actual idea is due to the fact that we are not aware of the information separating the ideas of the particular horse and the idea of the particular horn. Put in simple terms, we fail to notice that the idea of the particular horse does not contain a horn in the center of his forehead or that the idea of the particular horn did not come with an attached horse. Now we can see in even clearer terms why the imaginative constructs masquerading as ideas of things such as unicorns will not work for the nonexistent things in IIP8.

IIP8 explicitly states that the ideas of nonexistent things are comprehended in the infinite idea of God rather than in the attribute of Thought as all other ideas would be. God would not have the imaginative construct of a unicorn in the infinite idea of Himself for the simple reason that God would not make the mistake of which we are guilty, namely of mistaking an apparent fusion of two disparate ideas for an idea of a single thing. God would recognize that the ideas of the particular horse and the particular horn are clearly separate and not a single idea at all, so

there would be no comprehending such an idea in the infinite idea of God for the simple reason that there is no single idea to comprehend.

The second option is to interpret the ideas of nonexistent things as ideas of finite modes that existed in the past but no longer currently exist. An interpretation of IIP8 based on things that have existed in the past but no longer currently exist is the interpretation favored by Koistinen. If Koistinen can persuasively interpret the ideas of nonexistent things as ideas of things that do not involve unrealized nomological possibilities, then he will have succeeded in offering a plausible interpretation of IIP8 that defuses a potential threat to necessitarianism and thus can be interpreted as being compatible with necessitarianism.

The third option is to interpret the nonexistent things in IIP8 as unrealized nomological possibilities. What is comprehended in the idea of God would then be the ideas of the unrealized nomological possibilities, which are simply what the laws of nature would allow under circumstances that are different than what the existing causal order actually provides. The notion of unrealized nomological possibilities is problematic in and of itself as we will discover in chapter 6, but for now let us focus on the difficulty it would pose for necessitarianism if that is indeed what Spinoza is discussing in IIP8.

Unrealized nomological possibilities would have no ideas parallel to them for the simple fact that unrealized nomological possibilities are not part of the extended causal order due to the fact that they are unrealized. We are aware what the laws of nature in and of themselves allow to exist[86] given various circumstances (various preceding causes in the causal order). For instance,

[86] For the sake of simplicity, we are assuming that we are aware of all the laws of nature and what is consistent with the laws of nature. We are focusing solely on the knowledge (or lack thereof) of preceding causes in the causal order in regard to predicting what comes next in the causal order.

we are aware that the laws of nature allow that a car could be colored either black or red – one set of preceding causes will result in the car being colored black and a different set will result in the car being colored red.

Only one set of preceding causes exists for the particular car in question, so whether the car is black or red is determined by the actual set of preceding causes. In order to think about the car being red (if the car is actually black) we need to not only ignore the actual car and its color but also ignore the actual preceding causes, at least for the purpose of visualizing the car as red. What we are thinking about is a construct of the imagination, as to have an idea of the particular car in question being red is not possible since the particular car is not actually red, but is a construct that could have been an idea – unlike the imaginative construct of a unicorn – if the preceding causes in the causal order had been different. Thus we engage in a sort of willful ignorance when it comes to contemplating nomological possibilities – we pay attention to what the laws of nature allow under various circumstances but ignore, at least for the moment, the actual causal order which would rule out the unrealized nomological possibilities.

The willful ignorance of the actual causal order may work fine for humans, but it runs into a big problem concerning God as we will discover in chapter 6. For now, let us simply note that nomological possibility involves ignoring the actual causal order in order to contemplate what the laws of nature would allow with alternate causal orders.

In order to make the nomological possibility interpretation viable we must explain how there can be ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities even though an idea of an urealized nomological possibility would be an idea of something that doesn't exist by definition and thus would appear to violate the parallelism doctrine presented in IIP7. A potential answer to our

conundrum can be found in the curious claim made by Spinoza that the ideas of nonexistent things which he is discussing in IIP8 cannot be understood through the attributes as other finite modes as ideas are, but rather can only be comprehended in the infinite idea of God – i.e. the mind of God, the idea of everything that exists.

Comprehending something in the idea of God rather than the normal way of comprehending it in the attributes[87] has a meaning that is not clear, but for our purposes it is not necessary to attempt to determine exactly what it could mean to comprehend something in the infinite idea of God. Rather, for our purposes it is sufficient to note that the fact that ideas of nonexistent things cannot be simply comprehended through the attributes, suggesting that there is something inherently special (for lack of a better term) about the ideas of nonexistent things.

Perhaps ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities have to be comprehended in the infinite idea of God because the only ideas that can be comprehended in the attributes are those ideas which have as their object an extended thing in the extended causal order. In order to be comprehended in the attributes, a finite mode may be required to be objects of both Extension and Thought.

Finite modes are comprehended as objects of an attribute, whether it be Thought, Extension, or any other attribute that exists. Spinoza typically speaks of finite modes as objects of Thought and Extension, with the finite mode considered as an idea as an object of the attribute of Thought and as an extended thing as an object of the attribute of Extension. This notion is especially crucial in the doctrine of parallelism, wherein we can comprehend the same finite

[87] For that matter, it is not clear what it means to comprehend something in the attributes. For the purposes of this discussion, it is not necessary that we have a firm grasp on what it means to comprehend something in the attributes – rather, what is important is that existent things are comprehended in the attributes and nonexistent things have to be comprehended in the infinite idea of God.

mode in the extended causal order as an object of Extension and also in a parallel place in the causal order of ideas as an object of Thought.

A finite mode that is an idea of an unrealized nomological possibility is an object of Thought for the simple reason that it is an idea, but it has no parallel as an object of Extension because unrealized nomological possibilities do not actually exist and are thus obviously not objects of Extension. Thus ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities would have some reason why they might need to be comprehended in the infinite mind of God instead of comprehended in the attributes as finite modes typically are. Let us keep in mind our discussion of unrealized nomological possibilities having a reason to be comprehended in the infinite idea of God rather than the attributes as we consider Koistinen's alternate interpretation in which finite modes that no longer exist are represented by the nonexistent chords.

The solution to IIP8 Koistinen offers addresses more than just the problem presented by IIP8, but applying the solution to IIP8 is the most problematic aspect of Koistinen's line of argumentation so that aspect is what we will concentrate on.

Koistinen offers this argument:

> For Spinoza modes are either finite or infinite. A finite mode has spatiotemporal limits and a mode that fails to have such limits is an infinite mode. Let us suppose that Jones raised his hand in his bedroom 12.2. 1995. Now, this particular raising of his hand…came into being when Jones' hand went up and it ceased to exist when Jones laid his hand down. Moreover, this particular hand raising does not exist in Jones' kitchen but in his bedroom. Thus, because this hand raising has spatiotemporal limits it is a finite mode. But consider now the truth expressed by the sentence "Jones raised his hand in his bedroom 12.2. 1995." This sentence is *about* the finite mode "Jones' raising his hand" and it says that the finite mode occurred in Jones' bedroom at 12.2. 1995…"Jones' raising his hand in his bedroom 12.2. 1995" seems to have no spatiotemporal location. This entity is beyond the temporal and spatial order and is for that reason an infinite mode.[88]

[88] Koistinen, Olli, "On the Consistency of Spinoza's Modal Theory" in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (1998) Vol. XXXVI, pp. 72-73.

Jones raising his hand in his bedroom on December 12, 1995 is a finite mode according to Koistinen and presumably he is identifying the extended finite mode of Jones raising his hand in a certain place at a certain time. The finite mode in question comes into existence when Jones raises his hand and goes out of existence when Jones puts his hand back down. The idea of that extended finite mode would then come into existence and go out of existence at the same time as the extended finite mode since the corresponding idea occupies the matching spot in the parallel order of ideas, and the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of extended things, according to Spinoza.

Koistinen continues by noting that the sentence 'Jones raising his hand in his bedroom on December 12, 1995' seems to differ significantly from the extended finite mode of Jones raising his hand in his bedroom on December 12, 1995. Koistinen maintains that the first is a finite mode because it has a spatiotemporal location and that the second is an infinite mode because it really has no spatiotemporal location and is timelessly true.

The importance of having both the extended finite mode of Jones raising his hand and the infinite mode of 'Jones raising his hand on December 12, 1995' is driven home by Koistinen when he explains the connection with IIP8:

> The conjunction of God's having ideas of everything possible and IIP7, according to which there is a perfect parallelism between ideas and their objects, seems to generate a problem: if there is now an idea in God of some singular thing, say Alexander the Great, then the parallelism appears to require that Alexander the Great should exist now. But Alexander the Great does not exist now…IIP8 occurs, it is thus not correct to claim that it is about ideas of possible alternative individuals. Rather, it is natural to view IIP8 as providing an answer to the question of how it is possible to refer to things that do not exist now.[89]

[89] Ibid, pg. 74.

Koistinen lays out his proposed solution to IIP8 as far as interpreting it in a way that is consistent with necessitarianism. Extended finite modes such as Jones raising his hand exist only for a limited time and then cease to exist. Parallelism is interpreted by Koistinen as requiring that the idea which has as its object Jones raising his hand go out of existence at the same time Jones raising his hand goes out of existence. The interpretation of parallelism is plausible, depending on what meaning you assign to Spinoza's statement that the order and connection of ideas are the same as the order and connection of extended things.

The idea of Jones raising his hand thus goes out of existence in this interpretation, but it certainly appears that God should still possess the idea of Jones raising his hand. If nothing else, it seems the idea of Jones raising his hand must still exist since we can refer to it. The infinite mode of 'Jones raising his hand on December 12, 1995' fills the gap, at least according to Koistinen. Being an infinite mode, the sentence 'Jones raising his hand on December 12, 1995' never ceases to exist, so the infinite mode in question explains how God can still have the idea and how we can still refer to the idea. The nonexistent things in IIP8 are, according to Koistinen, things that did exist at one time but no longer exist. The nonexistent finite modes are thus extended finite modes that have existed in the past but no longer currently exist, at least under Koistinen's interpretation of IIP8.

The advantage in Koistinen's interpretation as regards necessitarianism is that it avoids any inclusion of unrealized nomological possibilities in IIP8. The nonexistent finite modes in IIP8 can then be interpreted as extended finite modes that did exist at one point but no longer currently exist, and Spinoza's system should be able to handle any discussion of extended finite modes that once existed but no longer currently exist provided, of course, that Koistinen's interpretation of parallelism is correct.

The nonexistent chords in IIP8 are argued by Koistinen to be extended finite modes that used to exist but no longer currently exist. Whatever the nonexistent chords are in IIP8, they lack any sort of explicit mention of spatiotemporal location and this is problematic when attempting to interpret the nonexistent chords as extended finite modes that once existed, as there is no indication that the nonexistent chords ever existed at all, much less that they existed at some previous point in the past.

The chords in IIP8 are only distinguished by existence and nonexistence. There is no indication of any temporal difference between the existent and nonexistent chords in IIP8, so there seems to be no reason to think that a temporal difference constitutes what separates the existent and nonexistent chords. In order to interpret the existent chords as current extended finite modes and nonexistent chords as extended finite modes that existed in the past, we would need to directly translate existent to currently existing and nonexistent to existing in the past.

Translating existent into currently existing and nonexistent into existing in the past may solve the initial problem of interpreting IIP8 as a discussion of currently existing finite modes vs past finite modes, but it raises a new problem. The new problem is that there is nothing which leads us to conclude that we should translate existent into currently existing and nonexistent into existing in the past.

The most natural interpretation of IIP8 is that Spinoza is making a distinction between extended finite modes that exist and extended finite modes that don't exist, and nothing more. There is nothing to indicate that a difference in time has anything to do with what Spinoza means by nonexistent finite modes as opposed to existent finite modes. Thus the natural interpretation of dividing finite modes into those that exist and those that do not exist seems most plausible. In

addition, there is another factor that supports the more literal interpretation, and it involves the manner in which the nonexistent finite modes are to be understood.

The existent finite modes are understood or comprehended in the attributes, just as we would expect, but the nonexistent finite modes cannot be comprehended in the attributes but instead must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God. Koistinen's interpretation offers the solution that infinite modes expressing eternal truths about finite modes are what must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God. According to Koistinen's interpretation of parallelism, apparently both the extended finite mode and their corresponding idea cease to exist at the same time. If there is still an idea of the extended finite mode in question then it has to be an infinite mode which expresses an eternal truth about the finite mode, and it is the infinite mode which must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God.

Infinite modes, however, seem comprehendible in the attributes and do not seem to require the infinite idea of God for comprehension. In chapter 1 we accepted the interpretation that substance, attributes, and infinite modes are layered conceptions of God's essence.[90] The base layer is presumably substance, then the attributes, and finally the infinite modes, so it seems that infinite modes should have to be comprehended (conceived) through (in) the attributes. Putting aside the layered conceptions interpretation, it is hard to understand how an infinite mode as an eternal truth (idea, so an object of Thought) can be comprehended without Thought or, for that matter, how the infinite idea of God can be comprehended without the attribute of Thought. It seems that Thought is necessary to comprehend both infinite modes of Thought and the

[90] As noted in chapter 1, it is not clear what a layered conception of God exactly means, but our aim here is not to understand what the layered conception is – rather, we are merely considering a plausible way that the conception might be layered and the implications the layering might have for Koistinen's argument.

infinite idea of God, so it is difficult to see why Spinoza would insist that infinite modes of Thought cannot be comprehended in the attribute of Thought.

The interpretation of nonexistent finite modes as finite modes that have existed but no longer currently exist and the infinite modes expressing eternal truths about those finite modes fails to provide a compelling reason for needing to comprehend anything (infinite modes or past extended finite modes) through the infinite idea of God rather than the attributes. The alternate interpretation of nonexistent finite modes as unrealized nomological possibilities, however, does not share that problem. Unrealized nomological possibilities could not be comprehended in the attributes of Extension at all, and at best they could only be comprehended in the attribute of Thought.

Unrealized nomological possibilities are nonexistent finite modes, and finite modes fall firmly under parallelism. Since unrealized nomological possibilities are never extended by definition, they cannot have a place in the extended causal order and parallelism seems to block any ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities from being in the causal order of ideas since there would be no parallel in the extended causal order. Thus it seems plausible to think that unrealized nomological possibilities could never be comprehended in the attributes at all and must be comprehended in a different manner.[91] A reason might then exist for unrealized nomological possibilities to have to be comprehended in the infinite idea of God rather than in the attributes.

We can conclude that Koistinen's interpretation does not provide the solution to IIP8 that he thinks it does. Interpreting the nonexistent chords in IIP8 as finite modes that once existed

[91] What exactly that different manner is we are leaving vague – the different manner involves somehow being comprehended in the infinite idea of God.

with eternal truths about the past finite modes as infinite modes comprehended in the infinite idea of God fails to provide a reason why the nonexistent modes (chords) should have to be comprehended in the infinite idea of God rather than comprehended in the attributes.

Koistinen's superessentialism, on the other hand, argues for interpreting Spinoza as a necessitarian, but at the cost of apparently not satisfying the strong PSR of Spinoza by lacking an explanation for why God has the essence He does. If God's essence includes all the finite modes, then it becomes unclear why God has the essence He does. The problem of lack of explanation makes superessentialism look less than compelling.

Having surveyed several attempts to argue that Spinoza is a necessitarian and does not allow for the existence of ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities and found all the attempts lacking, let us now turn to arguments that support the interpretation of Spinoza as allowing ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities and not being a necessitarian at all.

Chapter 4: Curley and Walski on the Non-necessity of the Set of Finite Modes

In chapters 2 and 3 views were considered that interpreted Spinoza as a strict necessitarian and as not allowing for ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities. Now is the time to examine arguments that Spinoza did allow for ideas of unrealized possibilities and attempt to reconcile that view with his apparent necessitarianism. The views of Edwin Curley and Gregory Walski will be examined in this chapter.

Curley and Walski argue that Spinoza is best understood as a determinist rather than a necessitarian. We can get a sense of what led them to the conclusion that Spinoza is a determinist by briefly considering a passage from Curley:

> He does, of course, identify the one substance, God, with Nature, when he uses the famous phrase *Deus seu Natura* in the Preface to Part IV. Everyone agrees that this phrase should be translated 'God or Nature,' with the 'or' being understood to represent some kind of equivalence between the two terms it links. But to what does the term 'Nature' here refer? In IP29S Spinoza had already indicated that it is crucially ambiguous, between *natura naturans*, nature regarded as active, and *natura naturata*, nature regarded as passive.[92]

The passage Curley is referring to, IP29S, reads thusly:

> Before I go any further, I wish to explain at this point what we must understand by '*Natura naturans*' and '*Natura naturata*.'…that by '*Natura naturans*' we must understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, the attributes of substance that express eternal and infinite essence; or, God insofar as he is considered a free cause. By '*Natura naturata*' I understand all that follows from the necessity of God's nature, that is, from the necessity of each one of God's attributes; or all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God.[93]

Curley goes on:

> This suggests that Spinoza's well-known identification of God with Nature should be read as an identification of God with *natura naturans*, i.e., as an identification of substance with its attributes…God,

[92] CURLEY, EDWIN, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 36-37.
[93] Ethics, pg. 234.

> considered as a free cause (= all of the attributes of subtances, by IP29S), produces and acts on things other than God (= the modes, both finite and infinite) in virtue of the laws of his own nature (= the laws of the attributes which constitute his nature), and that those things other than God must be understood to follow from those laws. So we must think of extension as involving certain laws…and we must think of the infinite modes of extension, and of particular finite bodies, as following from those laws.[94]

Curley uses the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* to suggest that Spinoza's identification of God with Nature is only partial, in that Spinoza is referring specifically to an identification of God with *natura naturans*. *Natura naturans* is identified as substance and attributes, while *natura naturata* is identified with the modes that follow from substance. God, in Curley's estimation, is not identified with *natura naturata* (the modes) and thus there is separation of some sort between God as substance and attributes and the modes. The infinite modes, though not explicitly identified with God, do follow closely from the attributes, as the laws involving the attributes are expressed by the infinite modes (as laws of nature). The finite modes are the primary focus here, so let us continue to follow Curley's reasoning:

> There is, in my interpretation, a good sense in which there is nothing contingent in nature: the most general features of the universe, that is, the laws involved in the attributes of substance, are necessary in the sense that they could not have had a cause distinct from themselves, and hence, could not have been otherwise; other, less general features of the universe, the infinite modes in which are inscribed the subordinate laws of nature, could not have been otherwise because they follow from features of the universe which, in their own right, could not have been otherwise; and particular features of the universe, the finite modes which we might think of as particular facts in nature, could not have been otherwise because they follow from the general features of the universe in conjunction with other particular features of the universe.[95]

Curley is describing Spinoza as a determinist, in that the laws of nature determine everything that exists in conjunction with the preceding finite modes. If Spinoza is a determinist, then nothing

[94] CURLEY, EDWIN, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 37-39.
[95] Ibid, pg. 49.

could have been different given the existing causal order. As noted in chapters 2 and 3, the laws of nature in and of themselves do not necessitate one overall causal order to exist over another.

Curley and Walski argue that Spinoza is a determinist (or moderate necessitarian in their terms) rather than a necessitarian (or strict necessitarian in their terms). As noted earlier, Curley and Walski interpret the infinite modes as laws of nature. According to determinism, the laws of nature operate with causal necessity, but the things on which the laws operate are not necessitated, at least in the sense of there being only one possible causal order and no alternative causal orders that could have existed. The things that exist are determined by a combination of the causal laws and the preceding causal order of things. Thus, according to Curley and Walski, Spinoza does leave open the possibility of alternate possible causal orders and so is a determinist rather than a necessitarian.

In considering Curley and Walski's arguments for Spinoza as determinist, let us first consider where Curley starts, namely his interpretation of the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. In Curley's interpretation, Spinoza only identifies God with *naturans* and not *naturata*, which is not identified with God but rather caused by God. Let us consider an alternate interpretation by Steven Nadler:

> Despite the neatness and sophistication of the causal interpretation, it must be granted that, in the light of this distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*, there is certain advantage to the reading according to which God is identical to the whole universe, in both its active invisible and passive visible aspects. Spinoza identifies *Deus* with *Natura*. Thus, when he tells us that *Natura* includes both a *naturans* aspect and a *naturata* aspect, the natural conclusion would seem to be that *Deus* is to be identified with both of these. God is both the active and the passive dimensions of Nature, what causes (or "natures") and what is caused (or "natured"). If, as IP29S claims, *Natura naturans* just is God, "insofar as he is considered as a free cause," it would seem to follow that *Natura naturata* is also God, in so far as he is considered in some other way.[96]

[96] NADLER, STEVEN, *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pg. 83.

The fact that Spinoza identifies God with Nature consistently without specifying anything about *naturans* (outside of IP29S) does suggest, as Nadler notes, that Spinoza is identifying God with the whole of Nature rather than just the *naturans* aspect. We will not delve further into how *naturans* and *naturata* are to be interpreted, but the point is that Curley's interpretation is not the only interpretation or, for that matter, the most obvious interpretation. Let us move on now to passages that Curley and Walski consider in their argument for a determinist interpretation of Spinoza.

Curley and Walski discussion focuses on two passages from the Ethics:

> **VP29S**: We conceive things as actual in two ways: either insofar as we conceive them as related to a fixed time and place, or insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature. Now the things that are conceived as true or real in this second way, we conceive under a form of eternity, and their ideas involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.
>
> **IIP9**: The idea of an individual thing, existing in actuality has God for its cause not insofar as he is infinite but insofar as he is considered as affected by another idea of a thing existing in actuality, of which God is the cause insofar as he is affected by a third idea, and so ad infinitum.[97]

Curley and Walski interpret these two passages in the following way:

> These two passages suggest that it is only abstract types which follow from the absolute nature of an attribute…a singular thing which has spatiotemporal existence but does not follow from the absolute nature of an attribute…Where IP28 asserts that *singular things* do not follow from the absolute nature of an attribute of God, but from God insofar as he is considered to be affected by another singular thing, IIP9 makes the same assertion about *ideas* of singular things. Expressing the general point in the language we're using, we say that abstract types follow unconditionally from the necessity of the divine nature, whereas existent singular things follow only conditionally from the necessity of the divine nature, that is, given an accommodating prior series of finite causes.[98]

Abstract types, such as human, follow directly from the attributes: the abstract physical form from Extension and the idea of an abstract physical human form from Thought. Particular

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[97] Ethics, pp. 248, 376.

[98] CURLEY, EDWIN AND WALSKI, GREGORY, 'Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered' in Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (eds.), *New Essays on the Rationalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 250-251.

humans are an exemplification of the abstract type human which come about in the course of the causal order from other particular things. The abstract type human is not identical with any particular human or even the collection of all humans, so the abstract type is not part of the causal order (either extended things or ideas). The abstract type does not result from any particular finite modes, so the only way for the abstract type to exist in any sense is to come directly from the attributes, or come directly from the infinite modes which come directly from the attributes. In other words, the abstract type human is an infinite mode.

The Curley/Walski interpretation suffers from a problem arising in relation to Axiom 1 in part II of the Ethics: "The essence of man does not involve necessary existence; that is, from the order of Nature it is equally possible that a certain man exists or does not exist."[99] The second half of the axiom poses no problem – according to the interpretation, any certain (particular) human might or might not exist depending on the causal order of finite things. The first half of the axiom is, however, problematic: if essence of man (human) refers to the abstract type of human, then necessary existence should be involved because the abstract type is an infinite mode. The axiom, however, states that the essence of man does not involve necessary existence.

The essence of man certainly sounds like it is describing the abstract type of human and, if this is indeed the case, then the axiom appears to contradict the Curley/Walski interpretation. Perhaps, however, the axiom is not referring to the existence of the abstract type of human not being necessary, but that necessary existence is not included within the essence of the abstract type human. Only God has necessary existence, so it is perfectly reasonable that the abstract type human would not include necessary existence. Note that we are not speaking of the

[99] Ethics, pg. 244.

necessary existence of the infinite mode of abstract type human but rather the blueprint (such as it is) of humans constituted by the abstract type human.

Assuming the interpretation is plausible Curley and Walski could therefore interpret the axiom in such a way that it could help their case. However, Curley and Walski still face the problem of identifying the ontological status of unrealized nomological possibilities (or even ideas of unrealized nomological possibilities). Another worry is that Spinoza appears to be a nominalist about entities like the essence of human nature (abstract type human).

If Spinoza is a nominalist about things such as the essence of human nature, then the essence of human nature would not really be a separate entity, but a pastiche of numerous ideas. The ideas composing the essence of human nature would be those ideas that we have of humans, combined together in almost a blurring fashion with whatever we consider to be the essential features of humans emphasized in the pastiche. However, this is only a smearing together of already existing ideas and not any separate entity.[100]

The component parts of the essence of human nature would be already existing ideas contained within the causal order of ideas, so the essence of human nature, such as it is described in the nominalist fashion, definitely has a place within Spinoza's universe. The essence of human nature would not come directly from the attribute of Thought, then, but would come indirectly from the attribute of Thought via the ideas of various humans. Therefore, if Spinoza is

[100] Spinoza lays out this view in scholium 1 of IIP40: "From similar causes have arisen those notions called 'universal,' such as 'man,' 'horse,' 'dog,' etc.; that is to say, so many images are formed in the human body simultaneously (e.g., of man) that our capacity to imagine them is surpassed, not indeed completely, but to the extent that the mind is unable to imagine the unimportant differences of individuals (such as the complexion and stature of each, and their exact number) and imagines distinctly only their common characteristic…The mind expresses this by the word 'man,' and predicates this word of an infinite number of individuals." Ethics, pg. 267.

a nominalist about entities such as the essence of human nature, then Curley and Walski must look elsewhere for an example of something that comes directly from an attribute.

The effort of showing the essence of human nature to be something that comes directly from the attributes has now been shown to be a problematic, if not futile, endeavor. Now let us move on to consider Curley and Walski's engagement of a centerpiece of Garrett's argument for necessitarianism, namely the treatment Garrett gives IP16, IP29, and IP33 of the Ethics. Curley and Walski present the argument for necessitarianism, specifically for IP16, first:

> Let's turn now to the *Ethics* and begin by looking at IP16. This is the first proposition in the *Ethics* which raises problems for our view. Garrett contends that IP16 commits Spinoza to strict necessitarianism in two ways. First, he argues, Spinoza is committed to each of the following claims:
>
> (1) Everything which falls under an infinite intellect follows from the necessity of the divine nature.
> (2) "The necessity of the divine nature" is something necessary.
> (3) Whatever follows from something which is necessary is itself necessary.
> (4) Everything which is actual falls under an infinite intellect.
> (5) Everything which is actual is necessary.
>
> (5) is apparently equivalent to necessitarianism in the strict sense (the doctrine that every actual state of affairs is logically or metaphysically necessary, or that the actual world is the only possible world), or rather it is equivalent to strict necessitarianism if "necessary" is used throughout the argument in the sense of absolute necessity and if "actual" means what we might naturally suppose it does.[101]

As Curley and Walski note, Garrett's argument for IP16 expressing a necessitarian view hinges on what Spinoza means by necessity and whether or not Spinoza actually allows for two different types of necessity in IP16 without explicitly saying so. If Spinoza is allowing for two different types of necessity when he speaks of necessity in IP16, then IP16 may not be the strong statement of necessitarianism that it initially appears to be. Curley and Walski base their entire

[101] CURLEY, EDWIN AND WALSKI, GREGORY, 'Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered' in Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (eds.), *New Essays on the Rationalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 244-245.

critique of Garrett's argument on the supposition that Spinoza is allowing for two types of necessity in IP16:

> Let us consider…the following interpretation:
>
> > (1') Everything which falls under an infinite intellect follows *in some way* (*either conditionally or unconditionally*) from the necessity of the divine nature.
> >
> > (3') Whatever follows unconditionally from something which is absolutely necessary (i.e., necessary by reason of its essence) is itself absolutely necessary; but if something follows only conditionally from something which is absolutely necessary, then it is not itself absolutely necessary, but only conditionally necessary (i.e., necessary by reason of its cause).
>
> Given these amendments, Garrett's argument leads only to the harmless conclusion that
>
> > (5') Everything which is actual is either absolutely necessary or conditionally necessary.
>
> This is harmless (for the purposes of this chapter) because it is consistent with moderate necessitarianism.[102]

Curley and Walski read in two types of necessity into IP16 even though Spinoza does not explicitly state that there is more than one type of necessity that is involved in IP16. Their argument relies on the supposition that Spinoza implicitly includes two types of necessity in IP16 and, as support for that supposition, point out that IP21, IP22, and IP23 certainly seem to outline a different kind of necessity from that outlined in IP28. Or rather the first three propositions could be interpreted as outlining a different kind of necessity from that outlined in IP28. The key issue is whether or not the two sets of propositions do actually outline two different types of necessity or not.

A clue may be found in what Curley and Walski deem a side issue that is not directly relevant to the dispute between Curley and Walski on one side and Garrett on the other. It is true that the issue in question does not have any direct bearing on the dispute, but it may shed light on

[102] Ibid, pp. 245-246.

what Spinoza was trying to convey in IP21, 22, 23, and 28 of the Ethics. The issue in question is whether Curley and Walski's interpretation of Spinoza which separates absolute necessity and conditional necessity raises a significant problem with the status of the infinite modes. They write:

> According to (3'), the infinite modes should be necessary in precisely the same sense that the attributes are necessary. If we equate "absolute necessity" with the logical necessity of modern modal logics, and if we equate "follows from" with the entailment relation in those logics, this is inescapable…But this thesis about the infinite modes has its problems, both philosophically and textually. If the infinite modes are eternal in the same sense that God (or his attributes) is (are) eternal – that is, if their existence follows necessarily from their definition – then the infinite modes are *causa sui*. And this seems inconsistent with their status as modes.[103]

The restatement of (3), (3'), dictates that the infinite modes will have the same necessity as God, i.e. absolute necessity. Curley and Walski emphasize the difference between God and the modes (presumably including the infinite modes)[104], that God's essence involves existence (God is self-caused) while the essence of the modes do not involve existence. If the infinite modes have the same type of necessity (absolute necessity) as God, then, as Curley and Walski indicate, the infinite modes should also have an essence involving existence and be self-caused. Since modes do not have an essence involving existence and are not self-caused, this means that either infinite modes do not share the same necessity as God or that infinite modes would not function as modes.

[103] Ibid, pg. 248.

[104] It is true that the layered conception interpretation we accepted in chapter 1 does not have this problem since infinite modes are simply a different conception of God's essence, but Curley and Walski do not adopt this interpretation so the interpretation is not in force in terms of their argument.

Attempting to solve this apparent contradiction Curley and Walski turn to a passage in the Short Treatise where Spinoza seems to treat the infinite modes in a different manner that may be compatible both with them having absolute necessity and being modes:

> Some objects are corruptible in themselves; others, through their cause, are not corruptible; but there is a third [object] which, solely through its own power and capacity, is eternal and incorruptible.
>
> The corruptible, then, are all the singular things, which have not existed from all time, or have had a beginning. The next are all those [universal] modes which we have said are the cause of the singular modes. But the third is God, or what we take to be one and the same thing, the Truth.[105]

The passage speaks of the finite modes being corruptible and the infinite modes and God being incorruptible, language which does not seem to lend itself to a discussion concerning Spinoza's stance on the infinite modes as concerns their necessity, whether absolute or conditional. Curley and Walski, however, interpret the terms "corruptible" and "incorruptible" in such a way as to make the passage relevant to the issue of the kind of necessity that the infinite modes have. They present the following argument:

> The corruptible, singular things are clearly the finite modes of the *Ethics*. The universal modes, which Spinoza characterizes as the cause of the singular modes, are clearly the infinite modes of the *Ethics*, which function as a kind of bridge between God and finite modes. Like God, the universal modes are incorruptible. But unlike God, they do not owe their incorruptibility to their own nature; they owe it to their cause, God.[106]

Curley and Walski interpret "corruptible" and "incorruptible" in terms of necessity. They do not explicitly state the exact relationship they take "corruptible" and "incorruptible" to have with necessity, but presumably "corruptible" (or corruptibility) can be interpreted as meaning

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[105] SPINOZA, BARUCH, *The Collected Works of Spinoza Volume I*, edited and translated by Edwin Curley (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1988), pp. 62-63.

[106] Curley and Walski's argument is based upon a different translation from the Shirley translation we have been using. Instead Curley and Walski base their argument on this translation: CURLEY, EDWIN AND WALSKI, GREGORY, 'Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered' in Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (eds.), *New Essays on the Rationalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 248-249. We will examine the current argument using the Curley translation.

conditional necessity and "incorruptible" (or incorruptibility) can be interpreted as meaning absolute necessity. Finite modes would then fit neatly into the conditional necessity category and God would fit neatly into the unconditional necessity category.

Infinite modes, however, fall somewhat awkwardly between two stools – the infinite modes definitely do not have conditional necessity but do not have exactly the same absolute necessity as God or, rather, both the infinite modes and God have absolute necessity but for different reasons. God has absolute necessity by virtue of his own nature while the infinite modes have absolute necessity by virtue of their cause – so basically they get their absolute necessity secondhand from God.

Curley and Walski think that their interpretation of "corruptible" and "incorruptible" in the Short Treatise passage may solve the dubious status of the infinite modes in terms of what kind of necessity they have.[107] Curley and Walski's argument initially seems to have merit but the merit entirely depends on whether "corruptible" and "incorruptible" can be reasonably interpreted as stand-ins for two different kinds of necessity. However, when we consider the rest of the passage which Curley and Walski reference the issue becomes much more doubtful. First let us consider the passage (in the same translation that Curley and Walski are using) from the beginning to the point where the quoted passage appears:

> Love, then, arises from the perception and knowledge which we have of a thing, and as the thing shows itself to be greater and more magnificent, so also is our Love greater and greater. It is possible to rid ourselves of Love in two ways, either by knowledge of a better thing, or by finding that the thing we have loved, and have regarded as something great and magnificent, brings much misery with it. But Love is also such that we never strive to free ourselves of it (as we do of wonder and the other passions). This is for two reasons: (1) because it is impossible; (2) because it is necessary that we not be free of it. It is impossible because it does not depend on us, but only on the good or advantage we find in the object. If we did not want to love it, it would be necessary for us not to have known it before. And this does not depend on us or on our freedom. For if we knew nothing, certainly we also were nothing. So it is necessary that we not be

[107] It is important to keep in mind that we are assuming that Spinoza allows for two kinds of necessity as Curley and Walski claim for the purposes of the current argument.

> free of it, because, given the weakness of our nature, we could not exist if we did not enjoy something to which we were united, and by which we were strengthened. Love, then, is nothing but enjoying a thing and being united with it. We divide it according to the qualities of the object man seeks to enjoy and unite with.[108]

Looking at the beginning of the passage it becomes very clear that Spinoza is discussing love, defining it and also discussing its nature. Love for Spinoza is simply enjoying a thing and being united with it. Since we apparently cannot get rid of love and would not wish to even if we could, Spinoza focuses on what sort of thing we can love – what sort of thing we can enjoy and with which we can be united. It is important to note that the union with whatever thing we love is supposed to strengthen us, according to Spinoza, and it is this strengthening that makes love essential for us. Since the strengthening is what is key for Spinoza it is important for us to love the type of thing which will most strengthen us, Spinoza begins to discuss what types of things we can love in order to focus in on the things that we should love. The discussion of the types of things we can love is the part of the passage upon which Curley and Walski focus their attention.

Before moving on to the latter part of the passage, let us consider what effect, if any, the beginning of the passage has upon Curley and Walski's argument. That the quoted passage is taken from the middle of a discussion about love does not suggest that the passage in question has anything to do with necessity. Spinoza is discussing the types of things we can love and is specifically focusing upon which type of things we should love. Having the deciding factor among the type of things be necessity seems unlikely, as the type of necessity which a thing possesses does not seem likely to affect our ability to enjoy that thing or the amount of strengthening that uniting with the object will give us. Still, it is quite possible that necessity is

[108] SPINOZA, BARUCH, *The Collected Works of Spinoza Volume I*, edited and translated by Edwin Curley (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1988), pg. 62.

the deciding factor for Spinoza and the reason that necessity is the deciding factor is simply not apparent to us yet. Therefore, let us look at the passage as it continues beyond the discussion of the types of things we can love.

> Which of these three kinds of object should we choose, and which reject? As far as the corruptible are concerned…certainly loving them, and uniting ourselves with them, does not strengthen our nature at all. For they are weak, and the one cripple cannot support the other. And not only do they not help us, but they are even harmful to us...show how Reason teaches us to separate ourselves from things so corruptible…By those which *are not in our power* we understand those which, being outside us, do not undergo any changes through us…Next we come to the second kind of objects. Though these are eternal and incorruptible, they still are not such through their own power. And if we examine the question briefly, we shall immediately become aware that these are nothing but modes which depend immediately on God…Because he is perfect, our Love must necessarily rest in him.[109]

In the latter half of the passage Spinoza discusses what type of things we should love. The first type of things, the corruptible things which are clearly the finite modes, are rejected by Spinoza as appropriate objects of love. The second type of things, those incorruptible through their cause and clearly infinite modes, are considered an improvement but are quickly rejected by Spinoza as proper objects of love. He seems to reject the infinite modes as proper objects of love for the simple reason that they are not God and God is really the only proper object of love. The entire passage, then, is a discussion of love, specifically what love is and what type of things are properly suited to be objects of love.

The question that remains to be answered is whether Spinoza is discussing necessity in the passage even though he does not hint at it or discuss it directly. If Spinoza is discussing necessity under what Curley and Walski refer to as 'surrogate' terms of "corruptible" and "incorruptible," then he would have to be discussing necessity in terms of different types of necessity being the deciding factor between which type of things is suitable for our love. In

[109] Ibid, pg. 63-64.

other words, the criteria for deciding between the three types of things is conditional vs absolute necessity as well as the two different reasons why something has absolute necessity.

Under the Curley/Walski interpretation finite modes are corruptible (have conditional necessity) and are unworthy of being objects of love for this reason. God and infinite modes are both incorruptible (have absolute necessity) so the criteria to choose between them must be based on something else. Since God has absolute necessity because of his essence and infinite modes have absolute necessity because of their cause (God), God is the proper choice as an object of love. Now let us consider how necessity works as a criterion in light of the explanation that Spinoza gives as to why we should not choose the finite modes or infinite modes and instead choose God as the proper object of love.

Spinoza rejects the finite modes as proper objects of love because they are outside our control. The kind of control he is speaking of does not come from the fact that we are a free cause (independent and uncaused) because we are no such thing, but rather from a different source. The source is not made entirely clear in this passage, so let us look elsewhere for the answer. We do not have to look far, as half of the Short Treatise is devoted to defining the emotions and our general patterns of thinking, with instructions on which emotions are beneficial and which are best avoided. The Ethics is even more detailed in describing how we can control our emotions and thinking.[110]

[110] Given that Spinoza is at the very least a determinist of some sort it is unclear just how controlling our emotions and thinking is supposed to fit in with the fact that all our actions are causally determined in one way or another. Since our actions are causally determined we can't exert a greater level of control over our emotions and thoughts – whether we can change our emotions and thoughts at all is causally determined as are all our other actions. For instance, consider someone who reads the Ethics. The prior causal order will determine how the reader responds to the Ethics – one causal order could lead to total rejection of the book, while another causal order could lead to embracing the ideas of the book wholesale. Since the response is determined by the causal order it is unclear just what Spinoza means by having control over our emotions and thoughts. Spinoza seems to embrace a Stoic type of

The source of the control, then, involves our apparent ability, according to Spinoza, to control our emotions and thoughts as opposed to our total lack of ability to control extended things beyond our own body (and quite possibly our own bodies as well). Extended things are beyond our control, but there must be more to the difference of control than just the fact that we can't control extended things outside ourselves, since we can't control infinite modes either, much less God. The control has to do with our emotions and thoughts and, since we are already concentrating on this passage, let us focus on the control of the emotion of love.

The most obvious difference between finite modes on one side and infinite modes and God on the other side is that finite modes are, well, finite and infinite modes and God are eternal. In other words, finite modes exist for only a time and then cease to exist, while infinite modes and God exist and never cease to exist. Having any finite mode as an object of love almost guarantees that the object of love will be lost at some time and grief will ensue which will weaken the person. On the other hand, having infinite modes or God as an object of love guarantees that the object of love will always exist which allows the person to avoid grief altogether. The fact that finite modes only last for a certain period of time is what distinguishes finite modes from infinite modes and God; perfection is then what specifically separates infinite modes from God.

Perfection[111] is what ultimately separates God from the finite and infinite modes and makes God the appropriate object of love, but perfection alone does not explain why Spinoza thinks infinite modes are more appropriate, though still inadequate, than finite modes. The fact

worldview as concerns our control over our emotions and thoughts but this fact does nothing to resolve just what he means by having control over our thoughts and emotions in a deterministic universe.

[111] The term "perfection" here is not intended to be taken under any particular interpretation – rather, the point here is that God is perfect while the modes are not perfect.

that finite modes only last for a certain period of time and then cease to exist while infinite modes always exist seems to hold great promise as a criterion that Spinoza uses in addition to perfection.

The difference between the finite modes on one hand and the infinite modes and God on the other hand seems to be centered around the fact that finite modes only exist for a certain period of time before ceasing to exist whereas the infinite modes and God are eternal. Necessity does not factor in, save perhaps for the fact that God necessarily exists and the infinite modes also necessarily exist though because they are caused by God and not by their own nature.

The passage in the Short Treatise dealing with the emotion of love does not, then, appear to be discussing necessity of any type, much less discussing two different types of necessity. Rather, Spinoza is explaining that eternal things rather than transient things are appropriate as objects of love. The passage from the Short Treatise does not have the relevance to the passages in the Ethics that Curley and Walski claim. If IP21-23 and IP28 are focused on describing two types of necessity, absolute possessed by infinite modes and God and conditional possessed by finite modes, then the passage from the Short Treatise about love seems to have no relevance. However, the passage about love does discuss finite modes, infinite modes and God and the differences among them, so perhaps the passage is relevant though not in the sense that Curley and Walski claim.

The overall thrust of the Ethics, as was noted earlier, is to explain and guide the reader to realize that God is what they should be focusing upon and that focusing upon anything else is not only a waste of time but is positively harmful. By focusing upon God and recognizing one's own place in a necessitarian or deterministic universe the person becomes much happier, more

fulfilled, and able to act much more freely. Setting aside the issue of how exactly all this is supposed to work in a necessitarian or even deterministic universe in which persons and their thoughts and emotions are part of the causal order and cannot do anything not determined by the preceding causal order coupled with the relevant causal laws, let us focus on how all this impacts the interpretation of IP21-23 and IP28.

IP21-23 outline how the infinite modes function and what sort of relation they bear to God, while IP28 outlines how the finite modes function and what sort of relation they bear to God and other finite modes. The focus of IP21-23 and IP28, in light of the passage on love, may be outlining the difference in terms of the fact that finite modes only exist for a certain period of time and then cease to exist while infinite modes are eternal. The focus would not be on necessity at all, much less outlining two different types of necessity.

The difference between the modes outlined in IP21-23 and IP28 in the context of Spinoza's overall focus on how we should live seems to be the fact that finite modes only last a short time while infinite modes are eternal. The issue of what kind of necessity each of the different kinds of modes has is still critical and must be addressed by Spinoza – it is just important to note that IP21-23 and IP28 may not be the best place to look to find the answer. It seems safe to say that the passage from the Short Treatise does nothing to support Curley and Walski's argument that IP21-23 and IP28 is focused on two different kinds of necessity. Let's move on then to the next stage of Curley and Walski's argument concerning IP16:

> Garrett also contends that the demonstration of this proposition makes it clear that the relation between the divine nature and the infinitely many things supposed to follow from it "is to be understood as the relation between a scholastic essence and its properties" and that TdIE 96 shows that "the properties of a thing are all deducible from the essence of the thing *alone*." But Spinoza regularly oversimplifies the relation between the essences of things and their properties, as when he suggests in IP17S1 that it follows simply from the nature of a triangle that the sum of its three interior angles is equal to the sum of two right angles, as if the definition were the only assumption needed to derive that theorem. If we look at the proof of the theorem in Euclid's *Elements*…we find…we assume the definition of a triangle in order to prove the

> theorem, but we must assume other propositions as well, such as the definitions of a right angle and of parallel lines and (what's much more serious since it involves an assumption which is neither definitional nor plainly axiomatic) the famous parallel postulate.[112]

Curley and Walski point out that Garrett suggests that IP16 is meant to be understood in the light of God possessing the infinite things in infinite ways in the form of properties. God's essence is best understood as a scholastic essence and all of God's properties (critically the finite modes) can be deduced merely by considering God's essence alone.[113] Curley and Walski then argue that, even if Garrett's interpretation is correct, it means little because Spinoza often makes definitions (which are interchangeable with essences in Spinoza's system) do work for which definitions are simply not suited. The example of a triangle is raised in which Spinoza claims that facts such as the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles can be deduced from the definition (or essence) of a triangle alone.[114]

Curley and Walski maintain that the properties of a triangle, such as that the sum of its three angles is equal to the sum of two right angles, cannot be deduced from the definition alone.

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[112] CURLEY, EDWIN AND WALSKI, GREGORY, 'Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered' in Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (eds.), *New Essays on the Rationalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pg. 249.

[113] Garrett's argument is reminiscent of Koistinen's superessentialism.

[114] An issue that may be of relevance to the definitional argument is Spinoza's claim in part II of the Ethics that the idea of God is one. The relevance to the definitional argument is that all the ideas of extended things, as well as everything involving the attribute of Thought, may be in an inseparable plenum just as the extended universe is, with the upshot being that the ideas of extended things may not be separable from the essence of God. If the ideas of extended things are inseparable from the essence of God (at least the essence involving Thought), then the definition of God would include all the ideas of extended things and the definitional argument would work as Garrett claims. If the ideas of extended things are included within the definition of God, then all the extended things would also be deducible from the definition alone due to the parallelism doctrine ensuring that all the extended things line up with the ideas of the extended things. The problem with using the idea of God being one is that the ideas of extended things are thereby included within the essence of God (since essence and definition are interchangeable for Spinoza) and we are basically back to Koistinen's view of superessentialism and all the problems with superessentialism which we considered in chapter 3. We will shortly examine the connection between a successful definitional argument and the view of superessentialism.

More pieces of information, such as the parallel postulate, are required before anything can be deduced about the triangle's angles. The same holds true for God – God's properties cannot be deduced from considering his definition/essence all by itself; more information is needed, such as the preceding finite modes in the causal order explicated in IP28.

Before fully considering our response we must first examine the passage from which Garrett's reliance on definitions is taken, in the Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect:

> The most secure conclusion is to be drawn from some particular affirmative essence, i.e., from a true and legitimate definition...the correct path to discovery is to develop our thinking from the basis of some given definition, and progress will be more successful and easier as a thing is better defined…I shall therefore first discuss the conditions of definition…the following requirements must be satisfied in definition:
>
> 1. If the thing be a created thing, the definition, as we have said, must include its proximate cause. For example, according to this rule a circle would have to be defined as follows: a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other movable. This definition clearly includes the proximate cause.
> 2. The conception or definition of the thing must be such that all the properties of the thing, when regarded by itself and not in conjunction with other things, can be deduced from it, as can be seen in the case of this definition of a circle. For from it we clearly deduce that all the lines drawn from the centre to the circumference are equal.[115]

In this passage Spinoza seems to claim that all the properties of a thing can be deduced solely through its definition (or essence). Claiming its properties can be deduced solely through the definition is one thing; establishing just how deducing all the properties from a definition is supposed to work is another thing entirely.

The only specific definition Spinoza discusses in this passage is that of a circle: the definition of a circle must include its proximate cause so giving the definition that 'a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other movable' is acceptable as a definition. The definition Spinoza gives for a circle of a figure with a line that is fixed at one end and movable at the other end seems far too simple to fulfill the requirements demanded of a

[115] Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, pp. 25-26.

definition in Spinoza's system. The definition of a circle which fulfills all of Spinoza's requirements must be much richer than the one he offers; otherwise, if Spinoza really thinks that a definition as vague as the one he offers provides a basis to deduce all the properties of a circle then Curley and Walski do have a strong point.

However, it seems wiser to give Spinoza the benefit of the doubt and assume that he was demonstrating not the entire definition but rather a crucial portion of what a complete definition must have. Thus 'a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other movable' would be a component of a complete definition of a circle – in this case it would mark the inclusion of the proximate cause of the circle.

The interpretation that Spinoza is putting forth a component of the definition of a circle rather than the entire definition means that, if correct, Spinoza is guilty of less than precise language when he says 'a circle would have to be defined as follows: a figure described by any line of which one end is fixed and the other movable.' The wording certainly implies that he is offering the complete definition of the circle in question, but since this definition appears to contradict the claim that every property can be deduced from the definition it seems safer to assume that the component interpretation is correct and move on.

We need not discuss in depth whether Spinoza is correct in saying that the line fixed at one end and movable at the other end provides us with the proximate cause in the definition or even what a complete definition would look like – such a discussion is beyond the scope of this inquiry. It is enough to acknowledge that Spinoza may be correct, if the definition provided is rich enough to deduce all the properties of a circle from it. Let us move on to consider what this

means when we consider the crucial point for this inquiry: if God's definition is rich enough to deduce all of God's properties then does this fact favor necessitarianism?

Spinoza, further on in the passage, does maintain that we can deduce all of God's properties from God's definition where he is discussing the definition of an uncreated thing. He finishes the passage by saying "And finally, it is required that all its properties can be deduced from its definition."[116] The 'it' in question refers to God (the only uncreated thing) and clearly states that all of God's properties can be deduced from God's definition.

The key question becomes whether the finite modes fall under the category of God's properties – if the finite modes can be considered as properties,[117] then Garrett seems on firm ground when he argues that Spinoza holds such a position which is conducive to necessitarianism. We are assuming for the sake of argument that Spinoza is right and that there is a suitable definition for God that allows all the properties to be deduced solely from the definition. We are considering whether that helps Garrett's case for Spinoza being a necessitarian or not – in pursuit of that aim let us compare the deduction of properties solely from the definition to the view of superessentialism which was the core of Koistinen's argument.

As with Koistinen's superessentialism, using the interpretation of finite modes as properties paired with the assumption that God has all of His properties necessarily – properties are included in God's essence or definition by the definition argument or superessentialism – threatens both the conceptual priority of substance over finite modes and any reason for God

[116] Ibid, pg. 26.

[117] It is important to recall that we accepted the interpretation of all finite modes as properties in chapter 1, though Curley and Walski do not accept this interpretation.

having one essence over another beyond merely being a brute fact.[118] The conceptual priority of substance over finite modes requires that we be able to conceive of substance all alone but cannot conceive of finite modes without also conceiving of substance.

The conceptual priority of substance over finite modes is established quite early in the Ethics so it seems important to Spinoza's metaphysics and any interpretation that threatens this conceptual priority must become doubtful. If all the finite modes (properties) can be deduced solely from the definition (or essence) of God, it seems that all the properties would have to be somehow included in the definition itself. Thus the definition would include all the properties in one way or another and it would be impossible to have the definition without also having the specific set of properties (finite modes) that actually exist included.

When we looked at Koistinen we noted that including all the finite modes in the essence of God made it impossible to conceive of God without also conceiving of all the finite modes. Since God is substance and substance is explicitly said to be conceivable on its own without conceiving of anything else, we should be able to conceive of God without at the same time conceiving of anything else. Including all the finite modes within God's essence makes it impossible to conceive of God without at the same time also conceiving of the finite modes which violates what Spinoza clearly establishes early in the Ethics.

The second problem is that having properties be deducible solely from the definition of God make it so that the slightest difference in the finite modes could not even be conceived. Substance necessarily exists – the essence of substance includes existence so there is no possible

[118] As we noted in footnote 74 in chapter 3, it may be possible to interpret the existence of the actual set of finite modes as a necessary truth instead of a brute fact. The important key is that a necessary truth has no explanation beyond being necessary and this creates problems when we consider IP17 in the Ethics, problems which we will examine in chapter 6.

way for substance to not exist. If properties (finite modes) are included in the definition of God, then the slightest change in the finite modes would result in a different definition. The definition of God is equivalent to the essence of God, so any change in the finite modes would result in a different essence and, if the different essence can be conceived it must exist so there would be two different Gods. Since Spinoza denies that the existence of more than one God is possible then the essence of God cannot be changed in the slightest and this includes the finite modes.

The actual set of finite modes would be the only nomologically possible set of finite modes then, which looks like absolutely no problem if Spinoza is a necessitarian. However, Spinoza, under the interpretation we accepted in chapter 1, relies on a strong PSR and requires a reason for the existence or nonexistence of everything. The main problem is that we are considering what modes are nomologically possible and it is important to recall that nomological possibility involves what the laws of nature in and of themselves do not prohibit. We will consider this issue in depth in chapter 6, but for now just let us note that the only restriction that seems applicable to nomological possibilities is what the laws of nature prohibit. No reason for the existence of one nomologically possible set of finite modes over another is evident, thus threatening to turn the existence of the actual set of finite modes into a brute fact (or necessary truth).[119] The two problems we have now considered put Garrett's definitional argument in the same doubtful status as Koistinen's superessentialism, so Curley and Walski do seem to have some traction in their argument against Garrett.

[119] Again, we will consider the issue of nomological possibility being compatible with necessitarianism in chapter 6. Suffice to say for now that the combination of nomological possibility with IP17 of the Ethics appears to indicate that God should understand more than one set of nomologically possible finite modes (the actual set) since God should understand what the laws of nature will or will not allow under different circumstances.

Curley and Walski are probably correct about the problematic nature of Garrett's definitional argument, though not for the reasons they give since it seems feasible for definitions to somehow contain all the properties of the things for which they are definitions. If the definition contains all the properties of a thing in some manner, then all the properties could be deduced from the definition so Garrett is on solid ground here. However, if all the properties of God are included in the definition of God and the finite modes are interpreted as properties, then the definitional argument suffers from the same problems as Koistinen's superessentialism. Thus the definitional argument seems too problematic to provide the base for a necessitarian interpretation of Spinoza.

The argument Curley and Walski put forth for their interpretation of IP21-23 and IP28 implicitly discussing two types of necessity, absolute and conditional, rests on shaky ground, especially when they discuss the love passage from the Short Treatise. The love passage is discussing three types of things in terms of whether they last only a relatively short time or are eternal and whether they are perfect[120] or not. What the love passage does not discuss about the three different kinds of things is what sort of necessity the three kinds of things have. If Curley and Walski want to use the love passage to shed light on IP21-23 and IP28, then perhaps IP21-23 and IP28 is not discussing necessity at all.

Curley and Walski argue that Spinoza allows for abstract types, such as the abstract type human, which come directly from the attributes as opposed to particular humans. The interpretation of abstract type human versus particular humans suffers from two problems, the first of which is that a definition in book II of the Ethics states that the essence of man does not

[120] It is important to recall that 'perfect' is not being used in any particular sense in the discussion of the love passage – it is only being used in the more general sense of God being perfect and the modes not being perfect.

involve existence. Essence of man sounds roughly equivalent to abstract type human and the definition seems to state that the abstract type human does not have necessary existence. However, this part of the definition could be interpreted to read that particular humans do not necessarily exist.

The second problem is that Spinoza may well be a nominalist about abstract things like the abstract type human. If Spinoza is a nominalist, then there would be no actual abstract type human. There would be no abstract type human originating from the attributes for the simple reason that there would be no abstract type human and Curley and Walski's argument would never get off the ground.

Curley and Walski do not offer adequate evidence for interpreting Spinoza as a determinist,[121] especially since the beginning of their argument, the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, can be interpreted in a different and seemingly more natural fashion. The rest of their arguments, as we have seen, also fail to convince. Now let us turn to Jon Miller, who thinks that unrealized nomological possibilities can be fit into Spinoza's universe and reconciled with the interpretation of Spinoza as a necessitarian.

[121] Another problem for Curley and Walski involves the parallelism doctrine. Since Curley and Walski do not think that the finite modes are necessary, they must make allowance for the existence of possibles in Spinoza's metaphysics. However, it is not clear where possibles could fit, given the parallelism doctrine in which all the extended things in the extended causal order are in the exact same order as the ideas of the extended things in the causal order of ideas. If ides of possibilities existed, then the extended things which are the objects of those ideas would also have to exist – so it is not clear where Curley and Walski could fit possibilities into Spinoza's metaphysics. Possibilities could not be extended, since they would then be actualities, and ideas of possibilities would appear to run afoul of the parallelism doctrine. Curley and Walski could argue that Spinoza should not have presented the parallelism doctrine, but this is problematic due to the central nature of the parallelism doctrine in Spinoza's metaphysiscs.

Chapter 5: Miller on Nomological Possibilities

Jon Miller argues that Spinoza does allow for possibilities, illustrated clearly in this passage:

> So, for everything except God, there are two requirements for existence: a non-self-contradictory essence (which is one way of saying that the thing must be compatible with the laws of nature) and a particular cause or set of causes. For something to be merely possible, however, it must merely be compatible with the laws of nature.[122]

Miller is suggesting that the laws of nature operate with causal necessity and that anything that exists must be compatible with these laws, which would fit with either necessitarianism or determinism. The fact that he explicitly allows for nomological possibilities appears to show he does not support necessitarianism – in a word, he seems to be arguing for determinism. However, he later goes on to write:

> On my interpretation of Spinoza, the actual world is the only possible world, because the *ordo causarum* (which necessitates the existence of everything) is itself necessary. Nothing that is a part of this world could not be not a part of it (including the *ordo causarum* itself); and conversely, nothing that is not a part of this world could be a part of it. It does not necessarily follow (for Spinoza or anyone else), though, that all possible particulars are existent. Why not? Because there could be particulars that are possible, insofar as the laws of nature do not necessarily prohibit their existence, and yet do not and could not exist, because the causal order does not allow them to exist. If I am correct, Spinoza concedes such nonexistent particulars in passages such as the beginning of part 2 of the *Ethics*. So he is at once an advocate of universal necessity and a defender of nonexistent possibles or particulars.[123]

Miller is claiming that the view of nomological possibilities is compatible with the view of necessitarianism, so that Spinoza actually holds both views even though they appear to be contradictory. Before we begin to examine Miller's view, let us consider briefly what he needs to make his hybrid view viable. First, he needs to establish that Spinoza might have held a view

[122] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001), pg. 808.

[123] Ibid, pp. 811-812.

allowing for nomological possibilities. The view allowing nomological possibilities would be easy to establish if Spinoza were interpreted as an determinist, since determinism allows that the causal order could have been different. Nomological possibilities would then be those things that could have been produced by the laws of nature if the causal order had been different. Fitting nomological possibilities with necessitarianism is not as easy.

Necessitarianism does not allow for any alternate causal orders, so Miller must deal with two problems arising from this fact. First, if Spinoza does allow for nomological possibilities, then how can he maintain his status as a necessitarian? In order for nomological possibilities to qualify as possibilities it seems that there should be a chance that they could have existed.[124] According to Miller nomological possibilities exist in the sense that they would be consistent with the laws of nature is the laws of nature were considered in isolation without reference to the actual causal order.

The causal order itself, however, cannot be different according to Miller. The natural question that then arises concerns why we should accept that the causal order would be necessary even though the laws of nature allow for there to be nomological possibilities. The most obvious way to approach the issue of the causal order being necessary is to adopt a view advocated by Garrett or a view advocated by Koistinen. Miller could follow Garrett by arguing that the causal order must conform to a standard of perfection that guarantees that only one causal order could exist or Miller could adopt superessentialism, which Koistinen advocates, so that God's essence would include the causal order of finite modes thereby making the causal order necessary since God's essence is necessary.

[124] Otherwise it seems that nomological possibilities hold the same status as doxastic (epistemic) possibilities, which is a problem for Miller's view that we will examine shortly.

Adopting either view will obviously expose Miller's theory to the criticisms[125] that we considered for Garrett's standard of perfection in chapter 2 and Koistinen's superessentialism in chapter 3. Even if Miller can establish the kind of necessitarianism he needs there still remains a second problem with which he must deal, namely the issue of identifying the nature of nomological possibilities and fitting them into Spinoza's metaphysics.

The view embracing nomological possibilities has two additional problems to overcome if it is to fit in Spinoza's metaphysics. First, nomological possibilities require that the laws of nature be considered in isolation. Since Miller considers Spinoza to hold that the causal order of finite modes is necessary, there would be no nomological possibilities if the laws of nature were considered in conjunction with the causal order of finite modes.

A view allowing for nomological possibilities, in order to fit with necessitarianism, requires that the laws of nature be considered in isolation and it is not clear that this is possible in Spinoza's system. To consider the laws of nature in isolation and thus consider what the laws would not prohibit from existing if the proper preceding causes were in place requires that the actual causal order of finite modes, which is necessary according to Miller, be ignored.

Ignoring the causal order appears to be similar to another concept which Spinoza addresses in book 4 of the Ethics in the fourth definition: "I call individual things *possible*

[125] In chapter 2, we considered two problems for Garrett's standard of perfection: one, that necessitarianism does not allow for alternate causal orders and thus the fact that the actual set of finite modes conforms to a standard of perfection (if one exists for Spinoza) is vacuous for the reason that there would be no alternate causal orders to use as a basis of comparison; two, that Spinoza equates perfection and reality, making the standard of perfection one that is set by the actual set of finite modes (reality) to which of course the actual set of finite modes conforms, making the argument look rather circular. In chapter 3, we considered two problems for Koistinen's superessentialism: one, that superessentialism threatens the conceptual priority of substance over modes; two, that superessentialism rules out any alternate causal orders since any alternate causal order that existed would have to actually exist, resulting in multiple Gods, which Spinoza rejects as impossible – the second is not really a problem for the view of superessentialism but it does pose a problem for fitting the views of superessentialism and nomological possibilities together.

insofar as, in attending to the causes by which they should be brought about, we do not know whether these causes are determined to bring them about."[126] This concept Miller refers to as doxastic possibility, which is a species of possibility that exists only because of our inadequate knowledge concerning whether the necessary preceding causes exist which, when coupled with the laws of nature, produce the finite mode in question.

Doxastic possibility involves thinking a thing might exist because we lack the knowledge of at least some of the preceding causes. The preceding causes coupled with the laws of nature determine whether a thing exists or not, so lacking knowledge of some preceding causes would leave us uncertain as to the thing's existence so we can imagine it existing and we can imagine it not existing.[127] For instance, consider a tree that is dead and rotting away from the inside. At some point the tree will deteriorate to the point where the laws of nature – including gravity and laws governing the tensile strength of the wood fibers among other laws – determine that the tree will collapse and fall.

The preceding causes in the causal order paired with the laws of nature will determine exactly when and under what conditions the last crucial wood fiber will give way – if we were aware of all the preceding causes in the causal order that are necessary to bring about the demise of the final wood fiber, then we could predict exactly when the tree will topple. We might think that the tree could topple today or tomorrow or in ten years, but there is not the slightest chance that the tree will topple at any of those times unless the requisite preceding causes are present in the causal order.

[126] Ethics, pg. 322.

[127] For the purposes of this discussion we are assuming that the knowledge we possess of the laws of nature is completely comprehensive so that we can focus on the preceding causes in the causal order.

Doxastic possibility depends on defects in our knowledge, specifically the lack of knowledge concerning the requisite preceding causes in the causal order.[128] Doxastic possibility is thus based on ignorance of a sort – ignorance of preceding causes that are needed to bring about a thing. Nomological possibility is also based on lack of knowledge in a way – in order for nomological possibilities to exist we must ignore our knowledge of the causal order and specifically ignore the preceding causes which we are aware will bring about a thing. We could say that nomological possibility is based on ignorance of a sort, namely willful ignorance or, put another way, an intentional bracketing of information about preceding causes.

Doxastic possibility is based on ignorance, usually of an unwitting variety, and nomological possibility can be interpreted as based on ignorance, though of a willful sort. Since both seem to be based on some sort of ignorance it might appear that nomological possibility could be a particular species of doxastic possibility. It might be appropriate to say that doxastic possibility and nomological possibility are two sides of the same coin of ignorance, one side being unwitting (we could almost say unwilling) ignorance and the other side being willful ignorance. At first glance this seems a good situation for Miller to find himself in, since doxastic possibility is definitely present in Spinoza's system and it would seem likely that nomological possibility would also fit into Spinoza's system. That being said, there is a problem with the interpretation closely linking nomological possibilities with epistemological possibilities which makes this close identification unacceptable for Miller.

Miller clearly distinguishes between the two senses of possibility:

> There is the vastly different usage of the two concepts of possibility. The nomological concept is basically a consequence of Spinoza's views on causation, laws of nature, and existence; it does not feature prominently in his philosophy (as proven by the relative paucity of texts in which it appears). The doxastic

[128] Keep in mind that we are assuming complete knowledge of the laws of nature for this discussion.

> concept, though, is crucial. If Spinoza could convince his readers to accept as necessary all existent particulars, then he could significantly advance his ethical objectives, for the actual ethics of the *Ethics* is predicated on the existence of a universal and eternal metaphysical determinism...For everything else, it is better to regard that thing as necessary than as possible or contingent. Given these ethical doctrines, it made rhetorical sense for Spinoza to emphasize the doxastic concept of possibility.[129]

Miller states that the two types of possibility are compatible and can coexist in Spinoza's system without contradiction, but he declares that nomological and doxastic possibility are two distinct types of possibility. Identifying nomological possibility as a species of doxastic possibility is ruled out by Miller and thus he will resist any effort to make such an identification. We will return to the issue of keeping doxastic and nomological possibility separate, but for now let us examine Miller's argument concerning how nomological possibility is supposed to be compatible with necessitarianism.

Miller must marry nomological possibility with a causal order that could not be different (as required by necessitarianism) even as nomological possibility seems to require the consideration of alternate causal orders. Miller needs to establish two things to make his theory of nomological possibilities fit together with his view that Spinoza is a necessitarian. The first thing he needs to establish is that Spinoza should be viewed as a necessitarian and second that, as a necessitarian, Spinoza still allows for possibilities other than doxastic. Let us consider his attempts to establish each in turn, starting with establishing Spinoza as a necessitarian.

Miller addresses this issue only briefly, writing:

> Recent critical work has resulted in persuasive enough arguments for taking Spinoza to be a necessitarian that, in my opinion, a constraint on any interpretation of Spinoza's views on possibility must be that it is compatible with necessitarianism. If I am not mistaken, mine meets this requirement.[130]

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[129] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001), pp. 813-814.

[130] Ibid, pp. 811-812.

Miller does not explain explicitly why he thinks that Spinoza is a necessitarian – he simply says that the work of others has convinced him that Spinoza is a necessitarian. So let us attempt to discern what arguments would most likely support Miller's requisite form of necessitarianism, though the arguments may have to be modified somewhat to yield the necessitarianism that Miller needs. A view identical or similar to Garrett's notion of an additional criterion of perfection or Koistinen's superessentialsim would seem to suit Miller's requirements best.

The causal order of finite modes that actually exists is the only one that matches the criterion of perfection according to Garrett's argument for a standard of perfection. Since the actual causal order is the only causal order that measures up to the standard of perfection – at least in Garrett's argument for the standard of perfection – the actual causal order is the only causal order that could exist, making the existing order necessary. On the other hand, embracing Koistinen's superessentialism would make the causal order part of God's essence and therefore necessary, ruling out any alternate causal order since any alternate causal order would require that more than one God exists. Problems with the two views were examined in chapters 2 and 3, but a brief recap may be useful and there are also specific problems when it comes to fitting the views with Miller's view of nomological possibility.

The standard of perfection that the causal order would have to conform to under Garrett's view seems to require that there be alternate causal orders that can be compared to the actual causal order. Without the comparison it is difficult to imagine how we could say that the actual causal order is the only causal order to meet the standard of perfection. For Miller and his view of nomological possibilities the existence of alternate causal orders would be no problem save for the fact that he insists Spinoza is a necessitarian.

Garrett's argument for the standard of perfection also suffers from the problem presented by the fact that Spinoza equates perfection with reality. As noted in chapter 2, it becomes difficult to understand how there could still be a standard of perfection in the light of perfection being equated with reality. Any standard of perfection becomes based on what actually exists, resulting in the actual set of finite modes being compared to a standard set by the actual set of finite modes. Since the actual set of finite modes will obviously measure up to a standard set by itself, the standard of perfection becomes vacuous and appears to be unsuitable for Miller's needs. Let us move on then to consider Koistinen's superessentialism again.

Superessentialism makes the causal order necessary by including the causal order within God's essence and, since God's essence is necessary, the causal order is necessary by virtue of being included within that essence. Superessentialism would thus make the causal order necessary but, as with the case of the perfection criterion, bringing in superessentialism will raise the same problems we considered in chapter 3. Perhaps the key problems which tie most closely with applying the view in support of Miller's thesis are the dual ones of violating the conceptual priority of God over finite modes and the fact that the existence of any alternate causal orders would necessitate the existence of more than one God.

Spinoza explicitly states that substance has conceptual priority over modes so that substance can be conceived without also thinking of modes, but including modes within God's essence would require us to conceive of substance and modes simultaneously. The second problem is that any change in the causal order would necessitate the existence of a second God since finite modes are included within God's essence and the essence of God necessarily exists.

The conceptual priority of God is stated early in book I of the Ethics, where Spinoza says that substance (God) can be conceived alone and through itself while finite modes can only be conceived through God. If the causal order is part of God's essence, however, then it seems that God cannot be conceived without also conceiving of the causal order and thus the conceptual priority of God over the finite modes is violated. This problem is an especially acute one for Miller since his view appears to require that the laws of nature be conceived without also conceiving of the actual causal order in order for nomological possibilities to exist in the first place. The laws of nature are included within God's essence and thus the ability to conceive of the laws of nature without also conceiving of the actual causal order suggests that the causal order is not included within God's essence.

Superessentialism also poses a problem for the existence of potential alternate causal orders. If the causal order is part of God's essence, then any change in the causal order would result in God's essence being different. When conceiving of God's essence, we must also conceive of existence because God's essence includes existence, so when conceiving of God's essence being different we must conceive of that different essence necessarily existing. Since the second essence has necessary existence, it must exist which results is the existence of two different Gods, which Spinoza rules out as impossible. Thus superessentialism seems to rule out any alternate causal orders.

Nomological possibilities, on the other hand, appear to require the existence of alternate causal orders. Even though the alternate causal orders could never actually exist according to Miller's view, they would have to exist in some sense (at least in the realm of thought)[131]

[131] This raises a larger problem for Miller, namely that he has no way to fit nomological possibilities or ideas of nomological possibilities into Spinoza's metaphysics. As in the case of Curley and Walski, Miller cannot fit

because otherwise we would simply be speaking gibberish when referring to nomological possibilities. Nomological possibilities involve what the laws of nature would allow to exist providing that the laws were operating upon different finite modes in the causal order (hence an alternate causal order). Nomological possibilities require the existence, at least in some form, of alternate causal orders while superessentialism requires that no alternate causal orders exist. Nomological possibilities and superessentialism thus appear to be incompatible.

Garrett's perfection criterion appeared to turn out better suited for nomological possibilities, as it seems to require the existence of alternate causal orders. Without alternate causal orders there is seemingly no way to determine that the actual causal order meets the standard of perfection. However, as we have seen, an additional hurdle has to be overcome, namely the insistence of Garrett (and Miller) that Spinoza is a necessitarian and, as such, does not allow for the existence of alternate causal orders. Thus Miller's view does not seem able to establish the first condition needed for the allowance of nomological possibilities in Spinoza's metaphysics.

The second condition that must be met involves establishing nomological possibility as a category of possibility that is sufficiently distinct from doxastic possibility. Nomological possibilities are defined as what the laws of nature would allow if the causal order were different or, put it another way, nomological possibilities are those things which the laws of nature do not

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nomological possibilities into Spinoza's metaphysics without violating the parallelism doctrine. Nomological possibilities do not exist and are therefore not extended, ruling out their inclusion in the extended causal order. On the other hand, ideas of nomological possibilities seem to be ruled out since any ideas in the causal order of ideas must have the extended thing which is the object of the idea in a parallel position in the extended causal order and there can be no extended thing in the extended causal order because nomological possibilities do not actually exist. Thus Miller is in the difficult position of having to claim that Spinoza should not have the parallelism doctrine as part of his metaphysics, even though the doctrine features prominently in Spinoza's metaphysics. The problem becomes even more acute when we consider IP17 in the Ethics, which appears to rule out nomological possibilities altogether. We will examine the problem in depth as concerns IP17 and nomological possibilities in chapter 6.

prohibit in and of themselves. They must be distinguished from doxastic possibilities, which involve humans thinking that something could possibly exist due to a lack of knowledge. A failure to distinguish nomological possibility would likely involve nomological possibility collapsing into doxastic possibility.

The key issue when it comes to doxastic possibility and its relation to nomological possibility is whether Spinoza has a place for nomological possibility that is sufficiently separate from doxastic possibility. Spinoza allows for doxastic possibility and Miller acknowledges this, but insists that Spinoza also allows for nomological possibility as a type of possibility distinct from doxastic possibility.

Doxastic possibility involves a lack of knowledge on our parts concerning what things are in the extended causal order so that various things can be imagined as existing.[132] As noted before, doxastic possibility is not so far from nomological possibility, which involves considering what the laws of nature could allow if the requisite preceding causes were in place. For nomological possibility we have to ignore the actual causal order in order to consider what the laws of nature would allow if the causal order was different. This willful ignorance, as we shall call it, is close to the unwitting ignorance involved in doxastic possibility. Thus a key issue for Miller is whether he can sufficiently distinguish doxastic and nomological possibility as two distinct categories of possibility rather than a combined category of possibility based on some sort of ignorance. Let us first consider what Miller has to say on this issue.

Miller writes:

[132] It is important to recall that we are assuming complete knowledge of the laws of nature and what they allow to exist for the purpose of focusing on gaps in our knowledge concerning the causal order.

> I have sketched two concepts of possibility and argued for the attribution of each to Spinoza…it must be noticed that when Spinoza in the *Ethics* and elsewhere speaks of possibility in the doxastic terms I have described, he usually refers to actually existing things and not the nonexistent particulars that I have argued also belong to his system…His doxastic concept of possibility thus concerns the degree of knowledge we have toward one type of particular – the existent particular…in key respects my Spinoza could still be said to allow for only one possible set of existing things: the actual set. Even though there are nonexistent particulars that are possible because they do not conflict with the laws of nature, these things could never exist because they are not part of the causal order of nature...The nomological concept is basically a consequence of Spinoza's views on causation, laws of nature, and existence.[133]

Miller argues that, for Spinoza, doxastic possibility is of primary concern in his system but that nomological possibility also has a place. Doxastic possibility, so Miller argues, is focused on existent particulars (things, finite modes) and concerns the amount of knowledge we possess about the existent particulars. In other words, the less knowledge we possess about an existent particular, the more room there is for doxastic possibility and, since our knowledge will always be incomplete due to defects in our knowledge or our awareness – having the knowledge but lacking access to it or not understanding the information properly – there will always be room for doxastic possibility in humans. Nomological possibility, on the other hand, concerns what the laws of nature could allow to exist but do not actually exist, so it seems apropos to say that nonexistent particulars are the focus of nomological possibility.

Miller claims that doxastic possibility is focused on existent particulars and appears to imply that nomological possibility is focused on nonexistent particulars. If this distinction is true, then it would nicely underlie the division between doxastic and nomological possibility and make it more plausible that Spinoza allows for both kinds of possibility. The example we shall be considering concerns a car, involving both the blueprint of the car as well as whether the car ends up existing or does not end up existing.

[133] MILLER, JON A., 'Spinoza's Possibilities' in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, No. 4 (June 2001), pp. 813-814.

The car example which we will be using to test the proposed division between existent and nonexistent particulars – that is supposed to match the division between doxastic and nomological possibility – involves two alternatives. In both alternatives any person involved in the example will possess knowledge of the blueprint for the car. The first alternative will also involve the existence of the car – the car being manufactured using the blueprint and thus being an existent particular. The second alternative involves the nonexistence of the car – the car not being manufactured using the blueprint and thus being a nonexistent particular.

According to Miller, the first alternative should fall under doxastic possibility for Spinoza since it involves an existent particular and any discussion of possibility should involve our lack of knowledge about whether the requisite causes are in place to bring the car into existence. The second alternative should fall under nomological possibility since it involves a nonexistent particular that nevertheless could have existed in the sense that the laws of nature do not prohibit its existence – its existence is prevented by the lack of requisite preceding causes in the causal order. Let us examine each of these alternatives in turn to determine how well they fit (or fail to fit) the distinction between doxastic possibility dealing with existent particulars and nomological possibilities dealing with nonexistent particulars.

The first alternative in the car example, involving knowledge of the blueprint of the car and the car actually being manufactured from the blueprint and thus being an existent particular, should fall solely under the purview of doxastic possibility. Nomological possibility only deals with things that the laws of nature would have permitted to exist but do not in fact exist. So nomological possibility does not apply to the first alternative. Doxastic possibility, on the other hand, is relevant. If we lack knowledge concerning whether the car actually exists and, by extension, whether the requisite causes are present in the causal order – save for the blueprint,

the existence of which is already known – then doxastic possibility applies to the first alternative. We can imagine the car existing and we can imagine the car not existing. Any number of things could happen to prevent the car from being manufactured from the blueprint so there is no way to determine whether the car exists or not without having knowledge of the preceding causes.

For the first alternative, then, nomological possibility does not apply and doxastic possibility does apply at least when we lack needed knowledge. The second alternative of the car example involves knowledge of the car blueprint, but in fact the car was never manufactured. The requisite causes are absent from the causal order so the car has not been determined, by the laws of nature in combination with the preceding causes, to exist. We are dealing, then, with a nonexistent particular, as the car does not in fact exist. Under the distinction we are considering the car, since it is a nonexistent particular, falls under the realm of nomological possibility and not the realm of doxastic possibility.

Nomological possibility focuses on what the laws of nature would allow if the causal order happened to be different, but since the causal order is in fact not different nomological possibilities cannot exist. The car in the second alternative is a nonexistent particular[134] but is something that the laws of nature would allow to exist if the causal order were different, so the car in the second alternative fits perfectly as a nomological possibility. Nothing in the laws of nature in and of themselves prevent the car from existing and the car itself is a nonexistent particular.

[134] The language concerning a car being a nonexistent particular is somewhat misleading, but we are only using the terminology for the sake of convenience. Saying that the car in the second alternative is a nonexistent particular allows us more easily to compare it with the car in the first alternative which is an existent particular.

The two alternatives in the car example produce the results with respect to nomological possibility that could be predicted beforehand, as the first alternative excludes nomological possibility due to involving an existent particular. The car example does support the view of nomological possibility as far as applying nomological possibility to only the second alternative. In order to fully support Miller's view doxastic possibility cannot be applied to the second alternative, so let us focus on the second alternative in light of doxastic possibility.

The car in the second alternative is a nonexistent particular so, according to Miller, doxastic possibility should not come into play. Doxastic possibility should apply only to existent particulars and nomological possibility should apply only to nonexistent particulars. However, it is unclear why doxastic possibility would not apply in the second alternative if we happen to lack the knowledge of whether the car actually exists or not or whether the requisite causes are in place to bring about the car's existence. We do have knowledge of the blueprint for the car, so it seems quite possible for us to imagine the possibility (doxastic) that the requisite causes followed after the blueprint in the causal order and brought the car into existence.

Miller might object that we are really using nomological possibility in the second alternative as it is a nonexistent particular. We only think we are using doxastic possibility but we are actually using nomological possibility. There is a way Miller might support this claim by somehow demonstrating that the second alternative really is only using nomological possibility despite appearances to the contrary. The car in the second alternative does not actually exist, but the laws of nature in themselves do not prohibit the car's existence – rather it is lack of requisite causes in the causal order which prevents the car's existence.

The second alternative is, in a word, tailor-made for nomological possibility. That being said, it does not mean that the second alternative is solely the province of nomological possibility and there seems no positive way to demonstrate that the second alternative is solely suited for nomological possibility. A better approach is to see whether we can rule out doxastic possibility as being applicable to the second alternative. If doxastic possibility does not work with the second alternative, then it seems safe to say that nomological possibility alone works with the second alternative.

The car in the second alternative can seemingly be imagined either to exist or not exist if we lack the knowledge of the preceding causes which would determine the car's existence (or nonexistence). We have the knowledge of the existence of the blueprint which allows for the car's existence in conjunction with other causes, so it seems entirely possible we can imagine the car existing as well as imagining the car not existing. Doxastic possibility thus seems perfectly applicable to the second alternative and there seems no way, at least at first glance, to confine the second alternative solely to nomological possibility.

Miller could respond that the apparent doxastic possibility in the second alternative actually depends on our knowledge of what the laws of nature would allow to exist given requisite preceding causes. The apparent doxastic possibility in the second alternative depends on exactly the basis, what the laws of nature allow, that nomological possibility depends on. So, basically, what is apparently doxastic possibility in the second alternative is actually nomological possibility. The solution demonstrating apparent doxastic possibility to actually be nomological possibility may solve the initial problem, but raises two more problems.

The first problem is that the solution does not only apply to the second alternative. In the first alternative the car does exist, but we can easily imagine that it does not exist if we lack knowledge of the car's existence or knowledge of the requisite causes. When first examining this issue we identified our ability to imagine the car as not existing as an instance of doxastic possibility and this seemed a reasonable identification. However, using the same argument as was applied to the second alternative, it becomes clear that the apparent case of doxastic possibility in the first alternative can be reclassified as nomological possibility.

The fact that we can imagine that the car does not exist in the first alternative depends on our knowledge of the laws of nature[135] and, specifically, which preceding causes are needed to interact with the laws of nature in order to bring about the existence of the car. We are uncertain of the car's existence because we lack knowledge about the presence or absence of the requisite preceding causes, and which preceding causes are requisite are known to us through our knowledge of the laws of nature. We know that the laws of nature will permit the existence of the car but only if the proper preceding causes are present in the causal order. Since the case of possibility in the first alternative depends on knowledge of what the laws of nature do and do not allow, it can be classified as nomological possibility.

The first and second alternatives of the car example can both be associated with nomological possibility. The upshot of this is that doxastic possibility virtually collapses into nomological possibility. If this argument succeeds, then, Miller will have shown that Spinoza has, in effect, misidentified what he terms doxastic possibility and should be emphasizing a combination of lack of knowledge and knowledge of what the laws of nature will allow rather

[135] It is important to recall that we are assuming complete knowledge of the laws of nature for the purposes of this discussion.

than just speaking of possibility governed by our lack of knowledge. Miller, however, would also disprove his own assertion that Spinoza allows for two distinct categories of possibility.

The second problem involves applying nomological possibility to God. God is fully aware of everything that the laws of nature allow under different circumstances, so should be fully aware of all nomological possibilities. However, God being aware of nomological possibilities is problematic in relation to IP17 of the Ethics. IP17 states explicitly that God creates everything that He understands,[136] so that would appear to require that God create all nomological possibilities (which He understands) and thus transform nomological possibilities into nomological actualities. We shall examine the view of nomological actuality in the next chapter, but before moving on let us finish with Miller.

Miller tries to wed his notion of nomological possibility, which covers all that the laws of nature allow, with necessitarianism. The marriage does not appear successful, as adopting Garrett's standard of perfection or Koistinen's superessentialism in order to establish necessitarianism only introduces the problems with the two views which we covered in depth in chapters 2 and 3. Separating nomological possibility from doxastic possibility also proved to be rather difficult if not impossible. It seems, then, that Miller's view should be laid to one side, but there may be a way to recast his view of nomological possibility.

[136] An additional problem arises with parallelism, in which all ideas in the causal order of ideas have an extended object in perfect parallel to the idea in the causal order of extended things. In other words, according to parallelism ideas cannot exist if the extended things which are the objects of these ideas do not also exist. The idea of a red car, for instance, could not exist without the red car also existing. Therefore, God can only have the idea of a red car if the red car itself exists, making the red car not a nomological possibility anymore due to the fact that it exists. The upshot is that parallelism appears to prevent God from understanding nomological possibilities, at least if the nomological possibilities are really things that don't exist.

Perhaps Miller did not go far enough in pairing nomological possibility with necessitarianism in Spinoza, in light of IP17. Instead of considering all the things that the laws of nature would allow given the proper circumstances and classifying them as possibilities, maybe it would be more accurate to classify all the allowed things as actualities – which would mean that all the things come into existence at some point in time and space. The view that all the things that the laws of nature would allow to exist are actualized we will term nomological actuality, and it is to this new view that we must now turn.

Chapter 6: Nomological Possibility and IP17

Nomological possibility includes everything that the laws of nature would allow to exist but that lack the requisite causes that are needed in conjunction with the laws of nature to bring about the thing in question. The requisite causes only exist for the things that are actually in the extended causal order. The other things cannot exist since the requisite causes do not in fact exist, but the laws of nature would allow their existence and God is perfectly aware[137] that the laws would allow their existence. Nomological possibilities would all be known by God since they are allowable by the laws of nature.

Nomological possibilities are things that the laws of nature would allow to exist in the extended causal order but do not in fact exist because the requisite causes in the causal order do not in fact exist. Ideas of nomological possibilities have to be ideas of extended things that could have been but are in fact not, since if they do exist in the realm of extension they would be actualized and therefore not possibilities anymore. Two problems arise from trying to fit nomological possibilities with God.

The first problem involves the parallelism doctrine which we have discussed before. The parallelism doctrine would rule out the existence of ideas of nomological possibilities since the ideas could not fit in the causal order of ideas with no extended thing in a parallel position in the extended causal order. The second problem involves proposition 17 of part I of the Ethics. Let us examine the second problem first. In IP17, Spinoza writes:

[137] In what sense God would be aware of nomological possibilities is hard to say, but as noted earlier it is only a problem if we stick to the view of nomological possibilities, so that God would be aware of what the laws of nature allow to exist while the nomological possibilities would not exist. Since we are going with the view of nomological actuality, the problem of God being aware of nomological possibilities does not ultimately pose a problem.

God acts solely from the laws of his own nature, constrained by none.

Scholium Others take the view that God is a free cause because – so they think – he can bring it about that those things which we have said follow from his nature – that is, which are within his power – should not come about; that is, they should not be produced by him. But this is as much as to say that…from a given cause the effect should not follow, which is absurd…although they conceive of God as having in actuality intellect in the highest degree, they yet do not believe he can bring about the existence of everything which in actuality he understands, for they think they would thereby be nullifying God's power…I think I have shown quite clearly (Pr. 16) that from God's supreme power or infinite nature an infinity of things in infinite ways – that is, everything – has necessarily flowed or is always following from that same necessity…my opponents…seem to be denying God's omnipotence. For they are obliged to admit that God understands an infinite number of creatable things which nevertheless he can never create.[138]

God creates everything within His understanding and there is nothing which He understands which He does not create. Presumably among those things which God cannot understand and therefore cannot create are things that are incomprehensible due to an internal contradiction, such as a round square. Whether other things fall into the category of things that God cannot create is an issue to which we will be returning shortly.

Nomological possibility must somehow fit with the fact that God creates everything that He can understand. We have already seen that doxastic possibility cannot be applied to God since it is impossible for God to lack any knowledge, but nomological possibility did seem applicable[139] to God since nomological possibility involves knowledge of what the laws of nature allow to exist. God would be fully aware of all the things that the laws of nature would allow, so it at least seems that nomological possibility can be applied to God. Being aware of is basically the same as understanding – presumably God could not be aware of what the laws of nature allow without at the same time understanding what the laws of nature allow. Thus God can understand what the laws of nature would allow under certain circumstances.

[138] Ethics, pp. 227-229.

[139] Again, only in the sense that God should understand what the laws of nature do and do not allow to exist and not in the sense that nomological possibilities do not actually exist. In other words, we are using the term "nomological possibility" here only as a transitional term – we are not accepting the view that allows for nomological possibility, but rather we are accepting the view embracing nomological actuality.

God creates, or produces, everything that He understands, by IP17, so, given that God understands what the laws of nature allow, all those things that the laws of nature allow are created by God. God understands what the laws of nature would allow under any circumstances so God creates everything that the laws of nature would allow under every different circumstance that could ever exist. To illustrate this, let us return to the car example. In both alternatives of the car example a blueprint of the car existed, so the blueprint as a requisite cause was in place. Given the blueprint, the laws of nature would either allow the car to exist or not allow the car to exist depending on which additional preceding causes appeared in the causal order.

The blueprint can exist in one scenario but the car fails to be manufactured because the car company goes bankrupt. The lack of money needed to produce the car can be a factor preventing the car from existing. It need not simply be lack of money, however. A multitude of causes could prevent the car from existing. For example, the blueprint could be lost or burned in a fire, or the plant in which the car was to be produced explodes.

By the same token, there are many different causes which could bring about the existence of the car. For instance, the company could go bankrupt but be purchased by another company which produces the car. Another thing that could happen is that the company decides not to make the car but then the blueprint gets switched with another blueprint of a car that is scheduled to be produced. By switching the blueprints, the company may produce a car they never intended to produce, but the car will exist all the same.

The different permutations of preceding causes in conjunction with the laws of nature which allow the car to exist or prevent the car from existing are seemingly endless. No attempt to list all the different variations will be made. What is important to note, however, is that all the

different variations would be known by God and understood by God. Since every variation is understood by God, every variation would then have to be created by God. Nomological possibility becomes nomological actuality. Let us consider some problems that such an interpretation raises.

The first problem is that the above interpretation requires reconciliation with other portions of Spinoza's metaphysics which, at least on the face of it, clash with nomological actuality. One prominent clash is that nomological actuality would seem to require multiple causally isolated causal orders in order to accommodate all the variations in the causal order. Spinoza's metaphysics, however, appears to allow for only one causal order in one universe. In order to illustrate why multiple causally isolated causal orders are apparently required for nomological actuality, let us consider how nomological actuality might work in the context of a single causal order. The best way to illustrate how this might work is to consider the car example and the different variations that need to be accommodated for nomological actuality within the confines of a single causal order.

The car example involves the existence of the blueprint for the car and under a certain range of circumstances the car comes into existence while under a different range of circumstances the car does not come into existence. It is easiest to first consider two basic outcomes, one in which the car comes into existence and the other in which the car does not come into existence. In order to produce each outcome certain requisite causes in the causal order have to appear after the blueprint, with one set of requisite causes producing the car and another set not producing the car.

Ensuring both outcomes requires that both sets of requisite causes appear in the causal order. The existence of both sets of requisite causes in a single causal order may not seem problematic, but having both outcomes is certainly problematic. It is important to recall that we are talking about a single car either coming into existence or not coming into existence. With both outcomes included in the causal order, the car comes into existence and the same car fails to come into existence – the same car both does and does not exist and a contradiction ensues. Thus to avoid the contradiction, it seems that multiple causal orders are required.

We must therefore consider whether Spinoza's system will accommodate multiple causal orders that are causally isolated. If Spinoza's system will not accommodate multiple causally isolated causal orders, then the issue of fitting nomological actuality into Spinoza's metaphysics becomes highly problematic. Extension is all contained within God and at least in principle everything that is extended is able to interact. It is important to remember at this point that the extended causal order encompasses everything within the universe that is extended.

There is but one extended universe so, if there are to be multiple causal orders, they would all have to be contained within the one extended universe. However, since interaction among all the extended things can happen no matter how indirectly, it is difficult to imagine how the multiple causal orders would stay separate at all. In all likelihood the separate causal orders would all collapse into a single causal order or, more precisely, there would be only one causal order to begin with. Let us examine the theory of nomological actuality in light of this new information.

Nomological actuality, as we have seen, appears to require multiple causal orders that are separate in order for all the different outcomes to become actualized. To illustrate this let us

return to the car example. At the very minimum, nomological actuality requires that there be two outcomes from the completion of the blueprint of the car: first, that the car comes into existence after the completion of the blueprint, and second, that the car fails to come into existence after the completion of the blueprint. To ensure that both outcomes are produced it seems multiple causal orders are required, since a single causal order would either determine the car to exist or determine the car not to exist, not produce both outcomes. The multiple causal order requirement, however, apparently is incompatible with the single causal order of Spinoza's universe.

The apparent clash between the inability to accommodate nomological actuality versus the apparent requirement for nomological actuality must be reconciled in some manner. There are two basic ways to resolve this clash and in the remaining portion of this chapter we will examine each way. The two basic ways are as follows: affirm nomological actuality and particularly the passage from Spinoza which most strongly supports this view, IP17, while attempting to explain how nomological actuality can be compatible with Spinoza's system; or deny nomological actuality while explaining IP17 in such a way that does not support nomological actuality. Let us consider each of the two ways in succession.

The first way is to affirm nomological actuality and find a way to explain how nomological actuality can be compatible with Spinoza's system. Somehow multiple causal orders must fit within a single extended universe. The most obvious way to accommodate multiple separate causal orders is a multiple universe model, in which each separate causal order resides in a different and separate universe.

The main problem is keeping the universes separate so that they do not interact causally, since each causal order in each universe is supposed to be causally separate from the other causal orders in the other universes. However, in Spinoza's system there is only one universe. Multiple universes will not work for the simple reason that each universe would be required to be a separate chunk of extension in order to keep each causally isolated from all the others. Each multiple universe, in effect, would limit the other universes because each would be extended and separate. Since there can be no limits on extended substance, multiple universes simply will not work. If the multiple causal order view is to work at all, it must somehow fit into one extended universe.

We must examine, then, whether there is the possibility of fitting separate multiple causal orders within one extended universe without requiring that they interact. In other words, this would be the multiple universe view fused with the one universe requirement – minus, of course, the actual multiple universes. The multiple causal orders would still exist not in multiple universes but within one extended universe.

The existence of multiple causal orders within the same universe could probably best be accommodated by having each separate causal order within its own individual galaxy. To better understand this, let us return to the car example and, specifically, the two basic outcomes that could result from the completion of a blueprint of a car. One basic outcome is for the needed requisite causes to appear in the causal order and, together with the laws of nature, bring about the car. The other basic outcome is for different requisite causes to appear in the causal order and, together with the laws of nature, not bring about the car.

The two basic outcomes are that the car comes into existence or that the car does not come into existence. Let us refer to the causal order in which the car comes into existence as causal order A and the causal order in which the car does not come into existence as causal order B. In order for both outcomes to be accommodated in a single universe, both A and B must exist sufficiently separately in a causal sense - separate to the extent that A still produces the outcome of the car coming into existence and B still produces the outcome of the car not coming into existence - in the same universe. If A and B are not sufficiently separate in a causal sense, then there exists a danger that one of the outcomes might not occur. The need for causal separation, which we will discuss at greater length later in the chapter, involves guaranteeing that both outcomes occur. Any causal interference from one causal order (galaxy) to another might mean that one of the outcomes does not occur and, since nomological actuality requires that both outcomes occur, we must rule out causal interference. As noted above, probably the easiest way for us to think about this is to place each causal order into its own individual galaxy.

The two causal orders which we are considering, A and B, would each exist within their own separate galaxy within a single universe. For the sake of simplicity, let causal order A (in which the car comes into existence) reside in galaxy A while causal order B (in which the car does not come into existence) resides in galaxy B. Galaxy A and galaxy B, then, have their own separate causal orders within the same universe. The first issue we must examine is how A and B remain causally separate without existing in separate universes.

In order to understand how A and B might remain causally separate even within the same universe, we must examine the universe in which we reside to see if A and B can both reside in the universe and remain causally separate since this is the actual universe and the only universe. The actual universe in which we reside possesses two important characteristics that might enable

multiple causal orders to exist in the same universe and still remain causally separate to ensure different outcomes in each causal order. The first characteristic is that the universe apparently originated from a single common point[140] and the second is the sheer distance among galaxies. Combined, these two characteristics may make it possible to fit multiple causal orders into a single universe. Let us examine each of these characteristics in turn to see exactly how they help the multiple causal order model.

The first characteristic, that of the universe originating from a common point, ensures that all the causal orders will be linked. The multiple causal orders are connected by having a common source. However far out the multiple causal orders diverge from one another, they will all be connected by having a common source. In fact, it is misleading to refer to the system we are considering as separate multiple causal orders – we should instead refer to multiple branches (with each galaxy being a branch) of a common causal order. Having multiple branches of a common causal order still allows for the branches to remain separate while also reflecting the fact that all the branches have a common source.

The branches version appears to allow the causal orders to remain sufficiently separate to ensure that all possible outcomes are produced as well as maintaining at least some connection among the causal orders – a connection, which though minimal still exists, which we would expect within a single universe. The different outcomes which causally isolated branches would produce cover all the things that are allowed to occur (or exist) by the laws of nature and thus satisfies IP17. The apparent causal isolation of the multiple causal branches is reinforced by the

[140] It is unclear whether Spinoza would allow that the universe has a beginning, especially in light of issues we will examine in chapter 7. For the purposes of the current argument, however, we will assume that Spinoza does allow that the universe has a beginning.

sheer size of the universe, which is the second characteristic of the universe which helps the multiple causal order view.

The universe spans billions of light years, so there appears to be plenty of extension in which the multiple causal branches can separate and remain sufficiently isolated to produce all the different outcomes that the laws of nature allow. While the universe itself is several billions light years across, the nearest galaxy to our galaxy is millions of light years distant. So, basically, the universe is not only massive but the distance between galaxies is also massive. The great distances between galaxies seem to ensure that each galaxy is separate enough to have its own causal branch that can produce outcomes independent of all the other branches.

The causes in each causal branch seem too far removed in space to produce effects in any other causal branch which could interfere in the outcomes produced by that galaxy. It seems, then, that each causal branch will be sufficiently isolated to allow different outcomes among the different branches. Since all the causal branches have a common source in the origin point of the universe, the causal branches seem sufficiently connected to be contained within one universe. Before considering a few problems with the multiple causal branch view, let us first consider the car example in order to better demonstrate how placing multiple causal branches within the actual universe could help the view of nomological actuality.

The car example has two alternatives: after the blueprint of the car is completed causes will appear in the causal order that, coupled with the laws of nature, will either result in the car coming into existence or the car not coming into existence. As before, let us consider the causal order, or rather causal branch, in which the car comes into existence to be A and the causal branch in which the car does not come into existence B. A and B produce outcomes that cannot

be produced by the same set of causes combined with the laws of nature. Rather, the two outcomes need to be produced by separate sets of causes that are causally isolated enough from each other that the different causes in one will not affect the outcome of the causes of the other.

Causal branch A produces the outcome of the car coming into existence and the causes in A could interfere with the causes in B which produce the outcome of the car not coming into existence. The causes in A help bring the car into existence which goes against what the causes in B do, namely prevent the car coming into existence, so any causal interaction between A and B could interfere with the outcome in B. The same works in reverse, of course, as the outcome in A, the car coming into existence, can be interfered with by the causes in B. It is imperative for A and B to remain causally isolated so that the outcomes of A and B are not changed.[141]

The structure of the actual universe apparently helps fulfill the requirement of keeping A and B sufficiently isolated to prevent the causes in A interfering with the causes in B and vice versa. The common source of causal branches A and B also keep A and B within the same overall causal order, which helps the two fit into the same universe.

A and B seemingly can be thought of as causally isolated when we place them in separate galaxies within the actual universe. For simplicity, let us place A within our galaxy, the Milky Way, and B within the closest neighbor to the Milky Way, the Andromeda galaxy. The Andromeda galaxy is approximately 2 and a half million light years distant from the Milky Way

[141] It is important to remember that the view embracing nomological actuality requires that all outcomes consistent with the laws of nature are produced. Changing either A or B may prevent one of the outcomes from occurring, so the causal isolation is designed to ensure that all outcomes are produced as the view of nomological actuality requires.

galaxy and it is easy to imagine that the sheer distance precludes any causal interaction between A and B.

The view of nomological actuality seems to require multiple causal orders which have different sequences of causes in order to bring about all the different outcomes allowed by the laws of nature. As we discovered, the requirement of multiple causal orders initially seemed to require multiple universes, each with its own separate causal order, that are causally isolated. However, the existence of multiple universes is incompatible with Spinoza's system in which only one universe exists, so instead we must attempt to fit multiple causal orders into a single universe if we are to make the view of nomological actuality work. Hence our attempt to fit multiple causal branches within the actual universe. There are problems, however.

One problem is that Spinoza does not allow for the existence of empty space within the universe. Spinoza's view is neatly expressed by Johnathon Bennett when he writes:

> When Spinoza says that there cannot be vacuum, then, he does not mean that there cannot be stretches of space that do not manifest solidity, mass, gravitational force, or whatever. He is not predicting what you will find if you ransack the physical universe. His point is a conceptual one: if the two sides of the jar do not touch, it follows logically that there is something between them.[142]

Spinoza thinks that the universe is a whole in which there is no such thing as a vacuum, or empty space. If empty space between two galaxies meant that nothing was separating the galaxies, then the galaxies would be abutting one another. In the universe there is no empty space or vacuum between galaxies but the apparent empty space is really just extended substance. We must

[142] BENNETT, JOHNATHON, 'Spinoza's Vacuum Argument' in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy 5*, (Blackwell, U.S., 1980), pg. 395.

reevaluate the multiple causal branch theory within the actual universe to see how it is affected by this change.

The multiple causal branch view seemed to be strengthened by applying it to the actual universe, in part because of the vast distances between galaxies. The immense distance among galaxies appeared to help by potentially isolating each galaxy (separate causal branch) causally from one another, so that causes from one causal branch do not interfere with the causes of any other. The presumed lack of causal interference appeared to ensure that all the nomologically possible outcomes are actualized.

The presumed lack of causal interaction stemming from the vast distances among galaxies depends upon each galaxy not being causally connected to the others. If, on the other hand, there are no voids (vacuums) between galaxies but rather a continuation of extended substance, then the presumed causal isolation of each galaxy is undone. Causes in one galaxy will interact with causes in other galaxies, so there will instead be an interlocking web of causal interaction among the galaxies. Thus we are back to a single interconnected causal order instead of multiple separate causal branches.

The existence of extended substance between galaxies rather than an empty void eliminates any chance that the galaxies can be causally isolated from one another. The causal interaction resulting from lack of any voids can best be illustrated with an analogy. Let us imagine each bit of extended substance as a domino, though the domino analogy is far from perfect since the dominos appear to be separate instead of one continuous whole as extended substance is. One domino falls and hits another and then that one falls and hits another and so on in a representation of the causal order where each falling domino is a cause and an effect of the

previous cause. Now let us consider how the domino analogy can shed light on what the existence of extended substance between galaxies means for the causal interaction between galaxies.

The domino example is best viewed from the perspective of one particular galaxy, so let us consider the effect of one domino falling within that galaxy. The one domino falls and hits another and so on and creates multiple paths of dominos falling, so eventually dominos at the edge of the galaxy will be struck and fall. As the dominos at the edge fall, some will fall outward (beyond the edge of the galaxy).

A domino in one galaxy, in order to causally affect the dominos in another galaxy, needs to strike dominos in another galaxy by a very indirect route. In other words, the domino in one galaxy needs to start an order of falling dominos that eventually end up striking a domino in another galaxy in order to causally affect the dominos in the other galaxy. If there are no dominos outside the edge of either galaxy, that is, between the galaxies, then there will be no causal interaction. The dominos at the edge of the galaxy which fall outward (beyond the edge of the galaxy toward the second galaxy) will strike nothing and therefore will go no further and will not causally affect anything in the second galaxy.

Causal isolation is what the multiple causal branch view seems to require in order to ensure that all the outcomes required by nomological actuality do occur, but potential causal isolation is dependent upon an empty void between galaxies. Spinoza does not allow for an empty void between galaxies to yield potential causal isolation, so there will end up being causal interaction between galaxies. The dominos at the edge of the galaxy will fall outward and strike

a domino outside the galaxy and, after a long order of dominos, will strike a domino at the edge of the second galaxy, thereby causally affecting the second galaxy.

The two galaxies may be causally connected by a long route, but they are still causally connected and so causal isolation of the galaxies is no longer tenable. The causal interconnections among galaxies would be far too many to enumerate or even fully grasp, but the point that must be grasped is that causal isolation for the galaxies is a pipedream. Rather, the galaxies are interconnected in so many ways causally that it is misleading to speak of multiple causal branches – instead we should be speaking of a complicated interconnected single causal order. We no longer are speaking of a multiple causal branch view because such a view cannot fit with Spinoza's conception of the universe. If nomological actuality is still to work in a Spinozistic universe we must find a way to reconcile it with a single interconnected causal order.

Nomological actuality requires that all the outcomes allowed by the laws of nature be actualized, with the effect that there are no nomological possibilities in the universe – every allowed outcome is actualized so anything that would be a nomological possibility becomes actual. The causal interconnection among galaxies threatens nomological actuality because if just one outcome is changed, then one of the allowed outcomes may not be actualized.

Separate causal orders guaranteed that all outcomes allowed by the laws of nature were actualized. Causally interconnected galaxies, on the other hand, removes the guarantee. Let us return to our car example to examine the point in greater detail. The car example, specifically as we have considered it in relation to nomological actuality, has two basic allowable outcomes. After the completion of the blueprint for the car, causes will appear in the causal order which will interact with the laws of nature and either bring the car into existence or not bring the car

into existence. In order for the view of nomological actuality to hold, both of the outcomes have to occur.

The actualization of both outcomes seemed best guaranteed by postulating two separate universes. The causal isolation between two universes would be ideal for allowing two different outcomes. In universe A, in which the car comes into existence, the causal order with the laws of nature produces the outcome of the car coming into existence and in universe B the same will occur but for the outcome of the car not coming into existence. Multiple universes, however, are not allowed in Spinoza's system, so we switched to separate galaxies.

Separate galaxies appeared to provide the causal isolation through the sheer distance between them that would ensure that no causal interaction between the causal orders of separate galaxies occurred. However, in Spinoza's system we discovered that galaxies are not causally isolated. Without causal isolation there is no guarantee that both outcomes will occur – A's outcome could be changed into the car not coming into existence while B's outcome would remain the same, or the reverse could occur with A's outcome staying the same and B's outcome changing.

The changing of either outcome, A's or B's, without also changing the other outcome, so that both outcomes are the same - i.e. both A's and B's outcome will be that the car exists or both outcomes will be that the car does not exist - will violate the view of nomological actuality since it is no longer the case that all outcomes occur.[143] Causal interactions among galaxies eliminate the guarantee that both outcomes will occur and throws doubt upon the viability of the view of

[143] This is an oversimplified example involving only two potential outcomes, but the conclusion still holds if we consider the myriad of outcomes that are consistent with the laws of nature. If one of the outcomes consistent with the laws of nature does not occur, then the view of nomological actuality is violated.

nomological actuality in Spinoza's system. There are two different ways we can respond to this difficulty, and we will examine each in sequence.

The first possible response we can make is simply to drop the view of nomological actuality, which solves the problem immediately. Dropping the view of nomological actuality eliminates any conflict between the view of nomological actuality on the one hand and Spinoza's single interconnected causal order on the other. Dropping nomological actuality, on the other hand, raises again the problem that the adoption of the view of nomological actuality was designed to solve in the first place, that of IP17.

IP17 seems to require that all nomologically possible things are actualized, which poses a problem if no way can be found to fit this requirement with the rest of Spinoza's system. We have examined several ways of resolving the inconsistency, such as multiple universes and multiple causal branches, but have run into great difficulty every time. Let us return, then, to IP17 to see if any alternative interpretation can be found that will not require us to adopt nomological actuality.

The key passage we are considering in IP17 occurs in the scholium:

> I think I have shown quite clearly (Pr. 16) that from God's supreme power or infinite nature an infinity of things in infinite ways – that is, everything – has necessarily flowed…God's omnipotence has from eternity been actual and will remain for eternity in the same actuality…my opponents…are obliged to admit that God understands an infinite number of creatable things which nevertheless he can never create. If this were not so, that is, if he were to create all the things that he understands, he would exhaust his omnipotence, according to them, and render himself imperfect. Thus, to affirm God as perfect they are reduced to having to affirm at the same time that he cannot bring about everything that is within the bounds of his power. I cannot imagine anything more absurd than this, or more inconsistent with God's omnipotence.[144]

[144] Ethics, pp. 228-229.

The key point is that God creates everything within His understanding because otherwise His omnipotence would be less perfect and that would be impossible because God is perfect. God necessarily creates everything He understands. The key to understanding what Spinoza means in this passage is what the phrase "everything God understands" means. A natural way to understand this phrasing seems to be that Spinoza is indicating that God creates everything that is consistent with the laws of nature. In a word, then, this passage seems to dictate the view of nomological actuality. Before moving on to consider alternate interpretations, let us more closely examine why this passage seems to support the view of nomological actuality.

The view of nomological actuality is that all the outcomes allowed by the laws of nature are actualized. When we turn to consider what God understands, we must surely grant that He understands the laws of nature given that the laws of nature are included within God's essence (as per the interpretation we adopted in chapter 1). In part II of the Ethics in the scholium to proposition 3, Spinoza writes "in Pr. 16, I, we proved that God acts solely by the same necessity whereby he understands himself; that is, just as it follows from the necessity of the divine Nature…that God understands himself."[145] So God understands Himself necessarily, and that understanding would presumably include the laws of nature as they are included within God's essence.

God, then, understands the laws of nature and presumably understands all the things that could be allowed by those very laws of nature. It's not a leap to think that God, since He has both the laws of nature and all the varying causes in His understanding/mind, also understands all the outcomes that the laws of nature, coupled with varying sets of preceding causes, produce.

[145] Ibid, pg. 245.

If God is able to understand all the outcomes, then God understands all of what Miller terms nomological possibilities.

Understanding all the nomological possibilities,[146] God, according to what seems a natural interpretation of IP17, creates all that He understands and therefore actualizes all nomological possibilities. As they are all actualized it is no longer appropriate to term them nomological possibilities, but rather rename them nomological actualities and we have returned to where we were before, at the view of nomological actuality. Since, however, the lack of discrete causal orders in Spinoza's universe poses a serious problem for nomological actuality, let us reexamine IP17 to see if there is another interpretation that does not lead to nomological actuality.

Any reinterpretation of IP17 needs to reduce the number of things created by God in some fashion, by one of two general ways: reducing the number of things which God can understand or reducing the number of things God can create from His understanding. The first way involves making nomological possibilities incomprehensible in some fashion so that God cannot understand them and therefore cannot create them; the second way involves making it so that God can understand nomological possibilities in some fashion, but not in such a fashion as to be able to create them. Let us examine each way in sequence, beginning with the first.

The first way of reinterpreting IP17 involves rendering nomological possibilities incomprehensible so that God cannot understand them and, since He cannot understand them,

[146] Keep in mind that we are only using the term "nomological possibilities" in a transitional sense – God can only understand what things of which He has ideas. As noted before, ideas of nomological possibilities cannot exist since their existence would violate the parallelism doctrine – the ideas of nomological possibilities would have no corresponding extended things in the extended causal order. This is not a problem for the view we are adopting, however, since the view of nomological actuality involves ideas and the extended objects of those ideas in their respective causal orders and thus does not violate the parallelism doctrine.

cannot create them. The most obvious way of rendering nomological possibilities incomprehensible is to make them self-contradictory. In essence, nomological possibilities would be the equivalent of a round square. We might think that we can understand a round square, but all we are really doing is pairing two ideas that simply do not mesh: a circle and a square. God would be fully aware of the incompatibility of the two ideas.

A square has four equal sides and four 90 degree angles – the square must have the four equal sides and four 90 degree angles by definition. If a shape lacks the four equal sides and four 90 degree angles, then the shape simply is not a square. On the other hand, a circle has no sides and a center point equidistant from all points on its outer perimeter and a shape cannot lack either of these qualities and still be a circle. In trying to mesh the circle and the square, we are trying to fit together two incompatible things.

A shape cannot both have four sides and no sides at the same time and a shape cannot both have four 90 degree angles and a center point equidistant from all points on the perimeter (making one interior angle of 360 degrees) since that would involve both having four 90 degree angles and one 360 degree angle. A round square, then, is a self-contradiction and cannot be understood by God and therefore also cannot be created by God.

A round square is an incomprehensible concept and therefore cannot be understood and created by God. If nomological possibilities are similar in nature to a round square, then nomological possibilities are also incomprehensible and cannot be created. The problem would thus be solved and we could safely dispose of the notion of nomological actuality. The key then is to determine whether the round square comparison is apt.

Nomological possibilities are things and occurrences that the laws of nature would not prohibit. A round square, on the other hand, is incomprehensible, trying to mesh two different concepts that simply do not mesh. Nomological possibilities, by comparison, seem perfectly comprehensible. The laws of nature are certainly comprehensible – since they are included within God's essence and God can certainly comprehend His own essence – and the different requisite causes are comprehensible, since nomological possibilities involve the same general sorts of causes that actually exist at other times and other places.

The laws of nature and all the different potential requisite causes are comprehensible to God, so to deny that the end result is nomological actuality involves assuming that the combination of the laws and the potential preceding causes must somehow be incomprehensible. The key here is determining exactly from where the source of incomprehensibility could come, since on the face of it, as we have seen, what is actual and what is nomologically possible are similar and both seem easy to comprehend. To illustrate the difficulty in discovering the source of the incomprehensibility, let us return to the car example to examine the difference between the actual outcome and a potential outcome (nomological possibility).

The car example features two different outcomes, one in which the car comes into existence, and one in which the car does not come into existence. Let us consider the outcome where the car exists to be the actual outcome and the outcome in which the car does not exist to be a potential outcome. Both outcomes share the existence of the blueprint and the laws of nature – they differ in the preceding causes in the causal order.

The difference between the two outcomes rests solely on the differing causes in the causal order after the production of the blueprint – there is a divergence after the blueprint is

produced with one order of causes leading to the outcome of the car coming into existence while the second order of causes leads to the car not coming into existence. If incomprehensibility creeps in anywhere, it seems reasonable to look for it in the differing causes between the two outcomes since what is similar between the two (the laws of nature and the blueprint) seems unlikely to produce any incomprehensibility.

To examine the differences more closely, let us select a single point at which the two causal orders diverge. The point must be at some time after the production of the blueprint but before either the car comes into existence or does not come into existence. Let us select the point at which the chief executive of the company in question, Michael, either decides to utilize the blueprint to make the car or decides against using the blueprint to make the car.[147]

The causal order remains the same until a divergence occurs with the decision of Michael to either build the car or refrain from building the car. In the actual case, Michael decides to build the car and the car is produced from the existing blueprint. In the possible (in a nomological sense) case Michael decides not to build the car and the car is not produced from the existing blueprint. There is no obvious difference in comprehensibility between the two as each seems understandable, so let us consider a slightly different scenario.

The car example is by no means unique as there are a number of different cars with a number of different blueprints and a number of different executives who decide on the fate of the

[147] Picking one point where the two causal orders diverge is oversimplifying the workings of the causal order, since there are numerous causes leading up to the decision which determine which decision Michael actually makes. There could, for instance, be a number of economic factors which play a key role in determining the decision. However, for the purposes of this examination it is enough to simply note that the causal order is much more complex than the example we have selected would suggest and that Michael's decision is meant to simply stand for all the causes in the causal order which differ between the outcomes and cause either the car to come into existence or not come into existence.

car, specifically whether to build the car or not to build the car. In fact, the executive that we have been considering, Michael, will decide the fate of many a car if he works for a number of years. Thus, it seems entirely appropriate to imagine a scenario in which there is a blueprint produced for another car, which we shall call car B, and which Michael decides not to produce from the blueprint. The second case is similar in all respects to the first case concerning car A which was produced, with the only apparent difference being that the car is produced in the first case and the car is not produced in the second case.

The case of car A involves a car which is produced from a blueprint after Michael decides it should be produced, while the case of car B involves a car which is not produced from a blueprint after Michael decides against producing it. Assuming that nomological possibilities are somehow incomprehensible, the apparent nomological possibility that A would have failed to be produced is incomprehensible in A's case and the apparent nomological possibility that B would have been produced is incomprehensible in B's case.

The incomprehensibility shifts from not producing the car to producing the car. There does not seem to be any similarity between the two to account for the incomprehensibility save for the fact that the outcome of the car not being produced is not actualized in the case of A and the outcome of the car being produced is not actualized in the case of B. The key to the incomprehensibility seems to lie purely in what is actualized and what is not actualized in each case.

Incomprehensibility appears to rely solely on what is actual and what is not. In the case of A, the production of car A from the blueprint is perfectly comprehensible because this is the outcome that actually occurs, while not producing A from the blueprint is incomprehensible

because this outcome is not actualized. The reverse is true in case B. Comprehensibility and incomprehensibility in each case seems to rest on whatever is or is not actual. If an outcome is actualized, then the outcome is comprehensible, whereas if the outcome is not actualized, then the outcome is incomprehensible.

The comprehensibility of any particular outcome is determined by whether the outcome is actualized or not, so that the actualized outcomes are comprehensible and the non-actualized outcomes are incomprehensible. In other words, what actually exists is comprehensible and what seemingly could have existed but does not in fact exist is incomprehensible. Comprehensibility rests on existence and incomprehensibility rests on nonexistence. The reasoning behind comprehensibility and incomprehensibility is thus starting to look very circular – let us examine the reasoning more closely to see the circularity.

God can only understand what is comprehensible and can only create what He understands; conversely, God cannot understand what is incomprehensible and cannot create what He does not understand. The things that are comprehensible are things that actually exist and the things that are incomprehensible are things that do not actually exist. God can understand things that are comprehensible which are things that actually exist and God can create those things which He can understand.

God, then, can only create things that actually exist. However, since the things actually exist it means they have already been created and thus must have been understood by God in the first place. What we seem to have, then, is a vicious circle wherein God creates what He understands but only understands what actually exists, i.e. what He has already created. It seems a vacuous truth to say that God understands those things which He has created since He must

have understood them to create them in the first place. Seemingly no light is shed on the actual criteria by which God understands things.

An alternate interpretation that we must consider at this juncture is that God can only understand the ideas of extended things that exist because in the universe there exists at any one moment a certain configuration of extended things. The ideas that exist have to be the ideas of the extended things that exist and line up perfectly with the configuration of extended things. The doctrine of parallelism ensures that the configuration of ideas would perfectly match the configuration of extended things, and the only things that can be understood are the ideas that exist in that moment. Since the ideas are ideas of the extended things that currently exist, then the only comprehensible things would be the extended things that currently exist which are objects of the ideas that currently exist.

The alternate interpretation would ensure that God could only understand the ideas of extended things that currently exist, since those are the only ideas that can currently exist. No room is left for ideas of nomological possibilities and thus God cannot understand them and cannot create them. There are, however, three problems with the alternate interpretation.

The first problem is that the interpretation does not line up well with the language in IP17S. Spinoza is addressing his critics in the scholium, noting that "if he were to create all the things that he understands" then God would not be omnipotent. Against this Spinoza is arguing that it is actually against God's omnipotence to understand things that He does not also create, so Spinoza is pushing for the view that there is nothing which God understands that he does not also create.

The alternate view does not directly clash with Spinoza's argument, since everything that God understands is also created. The way in which the alternate interpretation has been presented does seem to reverse the sequence, since the configuration of extended things was put forward first and, by the parallelism doctrine, the configuration of ideas has to match up with the extended configuration. It seems to put the extended things first and the ideas after, so that whatever exists is the understandable thing. We would seem to be right back to the notion that reality just is as it is and the ideas have to match up with it, which would seem to indicate that God does not understand what He creates but rather understands what already exists, thus making the language of the scholium somewhat vacuous.

"Create" tends to be an active term, in that God is actively doing something when He creates everything that He understands. The alternate interpretation, on the other hand, appears to throw "create" in a much more passive light, since God only understands what exists and it is no longer clear that He is actively creating anything. The question would then arise as to why Spinoza is using the term "create" at all. It is true that Spinoza is addressing the view of his opponents when he uses "create," but there is nothing to indicate that he does not also deem it appropriate for his own view of God. Also, IP17 states clearly that "God acts solely from the laws of his own nature," and "acts" is typically an active verb, thus indicating that "create" is probably also active. However, if there is a problem with the language of IP17S clashing with the alternate interpretation, there is also an easy way to modify the alternate interpretation to get around the problem.

The alternate interpretation can be modified so that the configuration of ideas is put first, so that God can actively create the extended things on the basis of the understanding of the existing ideas. The ideas that exist would thus be the only things understandable and thus the

objects of those ideas would be the only extended things created by God. The problem raised by "create" being an active term is avoided, but a new problem arises, which is the second problem which we must consider.

The second problem is that the existing configuration of ideas which God understands and thus creates exists without any sort of explanation. The existence of the configuration of ideas appears to be a brute fact. As we noted before, Spinoza appears to subscribe to a strong PSR, so that everything that exists must have an explanation and everything that does not exist must have an explanation. In this case the existence of this particular configuration of ideas would have no apparent explanation and the nonexistence of any potential alternate configuration of ideas would also have no apparent explanation. In defense of the alternate interpretation one might say that there will be certain things that have no explanation even in Spinoza's metaphysics and the configuration of ideas may be one of those things.

Certain things it seems must be accepted even by Spinoza without any explanation beyond the fact that they happen to be that way. For instance, God's essence presumably has no explanation beyond the fact that God exists and the fact that God has a certain essence.[148] The configuration of ideas might be among those things that exist without any further explanation. It seems the most likely way to include the particular set of actually existing ideas among the things that require no explanation is to include them within God's essence.

[148] We might call these things with no explanation "necessary truths."

In order to stick to a strong PSR as closely as possible,[149] it seems likely Spinoza would want to limit the number of things without explanation and including the particular set of actually existing ideas is a way to limit the number of things without explanation. In chapter 3 we considered the feasibility of including the existing set of finite modes within God's essence. If the set of finite modes could be included within God's essence, then they would be necessary and there would be no alternate sets of finite modes that exist.

The set of finite modes would certainly include the configuration of ideas, so including the configuration of ideas within God's essence would solve the problem of lack of explanation – or at least it would be one less inexplicable thing that Spinoza has to acknowledge. God's essence seems to require no explanation and anything included within God's essence would seem to require no explanation, so the configuration of ideas would thus seem to require no explanation. However, including the configuration of ideas within God's essence would suffer from the same problem as including the set of finite modes within God's essence – the configuration of ideas does not seem a likely thing to fit comfortably within God's essence in Spinoza's metaphysics.

We will not rehash the arguments in chapter 3, but here is a brief consideration of factors which make it unlikely that the configuration of ideas would fit within God's essence. The first factor is that neither, at least in and of themselves, the attribute of Thought nor the laws of nature governing ideas appear to dictate the set of ideas which actually exist. The laws of nature will determine the ideas which exist but only in combination with the preceding ideas in the causal

[149] Presumably the less Spinoza has to put aside a strong PSR and admit that there are things without an explanation, the better it would be for his system. The more things that Spinoza acknowledges that are without an explanation, the weaker his commitment to a strong PSR appears to be.

order of ideas – the laws of nature in and of themselves will not determine the entire set of ideas. The second factor is that including the configuration of ideas within God's essence threatens the conceptual priority of substance over modes. It seems that we would could not conceive of substance without also conceiving of finite modes of Thought (ideas). Fitting the configuration of ideas into God's essence is thus highly problematic, but not necessarily unworkable. Let us now turn to the third problem with the alternate interpretation involving a particular configuration of ideas.

The third problem involves IP16, specifically where it states "infinite things in infinite ways." On the face of it, there is no problem for the interpretation involving a single configuration of ideas, especially since Spinoza equates the phrase with "everything" in IP17S. "Everything" would include both the configuration of ideas and the extended things which God creates from His understanding of those ideas. However, a problem arises with the term "infinite" in the phrase "infinite things in infinite ways."

The term "infinite" will be examined in depth in chapter 7, particularly what Spinoza has in mind when he uses the term. In chapter 7 we will discover that Spinoza means that something is numerically limitless when he uses the term "infinite." The things would be numerically limitless, which means that the finite modes would be numerically limitless including the ideas. If the ideas are numerically limitless it seems highly unlikely that there would only be a certain configuration of ideas that exist, at least if that configuration of ideas excludes ideas that the laws of nature would not prohibit. On the other hand, if the configuration of ideas included everything that is consistent with the laws of nature, then it seems a better fit with the ideas being numerically limitless. The upshot is that numerically limitless ideas point us back to the view of nomological actuality even under the alternate explanation of a certain configuration of ideas.

Thus it seems that the alternate explanation tends toward nomological actuality as much as our initial interpretation. Let us get back, then, to our examination of the view of nomological actuality.

The problem we are considering involves what makes an idea comprehensible if we reject the view of nomological actuality so that basically only one thing that is nomologically possible actually exists. We determined that the difference in comprehensibility can be traced to whether something exists or not, so that only things that exist are comprehensible. Applying this apparent difference in comprehensibility to IP17S, God can only understand and create things that actually exist, but that would mean that He had already understood and created them. The type of reasoning here harkens back to Garrett's argument for the standard of perfection underlying necessitarianism. Under one interpretation the standard of perfection ended up amounting to a standard set by reality, i.e. what actually exists in the universe. Reality, then, set the standard of perfection to which reality had to match and, of course, reality met the standard it set. However, it may be possible to reinterpret the current understanding of comprehensibility as based on what actually exists in a more favorable light.

Rather than God understanding those things that actually exist and thus being able to create the things that actually exist, but which He must have already created and understood since they already exist – we could attempt to place understanding and creation before actuality. Basically, God understands certain things and creates those things but He understands them prior to their actuality. Let us examine this reinterpretation and see if it solves the circularity problem.

God understands things in the reinterpretation before He creates them and thus before they actually exist. The circularity problem no longer exists since now we have a straight line

starting from understanding. First God understands, then God creates, and only then are the things actualized. God's understanding of things no longer depends on what actually exists – rather, the actual existence of things depends on God understanding them and creating them. The circularity problem is thus solved but a new problem arises since God's understanding of things is still based on their comprehensibility.

The effort to explain why God can understand and create the things that actually exist while He cannot understand and create things that do not actually exist relies on what makes something comprehensible instead of incomprehensible. Comprehensibility, in turn, was something that could be applied to actual things for the reason that they exist so God must have understood and created them while incomprehensibility could be applied to things that do not exist since God apparently did not understand and create them. It was determined that there must be something about actual things that made them comprehensible while non-actual things are incomprehensible.

The only apparent difference between actual and non-actual things was that actual things exist while non-actual things do not. Comprehensibility, then, appeared to rest upon the fact that actual things exist and it was something about existence that gave things comprehensibility. However, basing comprehensibility on the fact of existence created a vicious circle wherein the comprehensibility of things depended on their existence and this comprehensibility allowed God to understand and create them. God could only understand things that exist, but to exist in the first place God must have already understood and created these things. So God understands and creates the very things which He must have already understood to create in the first place.

The attempt to extract ourselves from the vicious circle revolves around God understanding and creating things that therefore must have been comprehensible in the first place. The things that do not actually exist were apparently incomprehensible and God therefore could not understand and create them. In both cases the understanding and creation (or lack of both) is based upon the initial comprehensibility of the things in question, not upon the actuality or non-actuality of the things in question. The reinterpretation successfully breaks the circle, but now we are back to the beginning as we no longer have a basis for comprehensibility.

Comprehensibility rested on actuality and non-actuality as a basis and that explained the relevant difference between things that exist and things that do not exist since things that exist are comprehensible and can be understood and created by God and things that do not exist are incomprehensible. The difference was explained in terms of comprehensibility based on actuality and non-actuality, albeit at the cost of creating a vicious circle. Now, however, the circle is broken but the basis for comprehensibility has been removed and we no longer have a clue as to what makes actual things comprehensible or non-actual things incomprehensible.

We have returned to where we started, with no basis for comprehensibility that will separate things that actually exist from things that do not actually exist. Perhaps, however, we have been taking the wrong approach in searching for an exact basis of comprehensibility to separate the actual from the non-actual. It might be the case that the fact that things are actual proves they are comprehensible without providing any exact basis for that comprehensibility.

Actual things are known to be comprehensible simply by virtue of the fact that they exist so that God must have been able to understand and create them in the first place. The comprehensibility of actual things, and by extension their existence as actual things, in this case

would be much like the existence of the precise set of the laws of nature that dictate what happens in the universe. The laws of nature are included within God's essence and thus are necessarily the way they are since God necessarily has the essence he does. So the finite modes (the actual things that exist in the universe) could be considered in a similar vein.

God's essence has no explanation beyond the fact that God has a certain essence. The actual set of finite modes may be similar in that they have no explanation beyond the fact that they exist. We seem, then, to have returned to the alternate interpretation of a particular configuration of ideas that exist at any one moment and that the extended finite modes match. As we discovered in our examination of the alternate interpretation, the most promising way it might work is to put the configuration of ideas first, so that "create" in IP17S can still be considered in an active sense. The configuration of ideas would have no explanation beyond the fact that they happen to exist, much like God's essence.

In order to match better with "infinite things in infinite ways," however, we discovered that including everything consistent with the laws of nature worked better than any restriction which limited things to less than everything that is consistent with the laws of nature. We have thus returned to the view of nomological actuality again.

Nomological actuality or as we will term it in the next chapter for a reason shortly to be explained, super necessitarianism, allows us to interpret IP17 in a natural way, i.e. that God understands everything allowed by his own infinite modes (laws of nature) and creates all that He understands. There are certainly issues with super necessitarianism which must be considered and we will be doing just that in the following chapter. The next step is embracing nomological actuality and necessitarianism so that everything that is allowed by the laws of

nature necessarily exists. The combination of nomological actuality and necessitiarianism we shall term super necessitarianism and it is to this new view that we now must turn.

Chapter 7: Super Necessitarianism

In chapters 2 - 5, views were considered that purport to resolve the apparent contradiction between necessitarianism and the view of nomological possibilities in Spinoza's metaphysics. The views in chapters 2 and 3 emphasized the necessitarian strains in Spinoza's thinking and tried to reinterpret the apparent nomological possibilist passages. In chapters 4 and 5, on the other hand, the views considered tried the reciprocal tactic of emphasizing the nomological possibilist strain and trying to reinterpret the apparent necessitarian passages. Chapter 6 focused on the implications of Miller's view of nomological possibility in relation to a crucial passage in the Ethics, IP17. In this chapter we will further consider the notion of nomological actuality which was introduced in chapter 6, and how nomological actuality might fit into Spinoza's system.

Nomological actuality, as we termed the view that all nomological possibilities are actualized, will now be considered under the more appropriate nomenclature of super necessitarianism. The term super necessitarianism is more appropriate because IP17 reintroduced necessity into the mix, but the view of nomological actuality goes beyond regular necessitarianism, hence the term super necessitarianism. There are three different variations of super necessitarianism which we will be considering, though the three cannot be taken as an exhaustive list. Rather, the three variations we will consider seem most likely to fit into Spinoza's system while remaining distinct.

The first variation is that all nomological possibilites are actualized, but they are actualized not all at once but over the eternal stretches of time. Let us call this first variation eternal super necessitarianism. The second variation, which we shall call expansive super

necessitarianism, is that all nomological possibilities are actualized in the infinite reaches of the extended universe.

The third and final variation is that every single finite mode contains within itself every nomological actuality involving that particular finite mode. This final variation revolves around each nomological actuality being an object of a different attribute so that every nomological actuality is present but the vast majority are hidden because we are only able to detect two attributes, Extension and Thought. Let us call this third variation concentrated super necessitarianism.

The first variation, eternal super necessitarianism, allows the existing universe with only a singular causal order to encompass all nomological actualities by spreading out those nomological actualities over the entirety of the eternal timeline. The viability of eternal super necessitarianism relies to some extent on how much time the eternal timeline encompasses. Nothing exists outside of God, so the timeline only exists as long as God exists. God is eternal, so at first glance it certainly seems that the timeline would be endless and by endless we mean that the timeline would have no beginning or ending. However, in Spinoza's system it is unclear whether "eternal" means that time is endless or simply that no time exists outside of the timeline.

"Eternal," in Spinoza's system, serves a function for time in a fashion parallel to the function the term "infinite" serves for Extension, Thought, and any other attribute that exists. As noted before, it is easiest to think of "infinite" in terms of infinite extension, so we will consider infinite extension as a parallel to eternal time. Earlier we noted that at a minimum, infinite extension refers to all the extension that exists. So when we say that God possesses infinite

extension, what we are saying at the very least is that God encompasses all extension. Similarly, at the bare minimum God encompasses the entire timeline, or all the time that exists.

Infinite extension and eternal time can also have expanded meanings that involve endless extension on the one hand and endless time on the other. Endless extension would involve the extended universe being so that whatever spatial point was selected there would be extension beyond that spatial point in every direction. The eternal timeline is similar to infinite extension in that the endless version can be understood by picking a temporal point on the timeline. Wherever we select the temporal point on the timeline, there will always be time preceding it (past) and following it (future).[150]

The non-endless version of the eternal timeline, on the other hand, has a temporal point which can be selected where no time precedes it (indicating the beginning of the timeline) and a temporal point wherein no time follows it (indicating the end of the timeline). God encompasses the entire timeline but the timeline would have a beginning and an ending. However, even if the eternal timeline has a beginning and an end the timeline does not have actual limits under Spinoza's notion of what a "limit" is.

The lack of limits on the timeline, even if the timeline is not endless, parallels the lack of limits on an infinitely extended universe even if said universe does not have endless extension. Later we will explore how the lack of limits on a non-endless universe and a non-endless timeline works, but for now it is just important to note that there are two possible versions of the timeline – one endless, the other non-endless. The more important issue at the moment

[150] It might be workable to have a version of eternal time in which there is a beginning to the timeline but no end or where there is an end to the timeline but no beginning. However, for our purposes it is sufficient to consider the version in which the timeline has neither beginning nor end, as any difference among the three different versions of the endless timeline are negligible, at least in terms of considering the viability of eternal super necessitarianism.

concerning the endless vs the non-endless versions of the timeline is which version would fit best with eternal super necessitarianism. Before we consider in greater depth which version of the eternal timeline would work best with eternal super necessitarianism, let us take a closer look at just how eternal super necessitarianism is supposed to work.

All combinations allowable under the laws of nature must be actualized according to super necessitarianism. To illustrate exactly what we are talking about, let us return to the car example in chapter 6, but modified to focus on two variations of an existent car. The first variation of the car is completed on December 20th at 2 p.m. and colored black; the second is completed on December 10th of the same year at 1 p.m. and colored red.

The car example we have been considering, it is important to recall, is vastly oversimplified in relation to how things work in Spinoza's causal system. In Spinoza's universe all the preceding causes leading up to the extended thing in question must be taken into account, in conjunction with the laws of nature. The interconnectivity of extended finite modes in the universe means there is no way to isolate various causal strands from one another.

The entire extended causal order is interconnected, so we must take into account the entirety of the causal order up to the point where the extended thing exists. The entire causal order will have to vary with each different variation in the car. It seems that one causal order would include the black car being completed on December 20th at 1 p.m., and a different causal order would include the red car coming into existence on December 10th at 2 p.m. As noted in chapter 6, the easiest way to accommodate the existence of both cars is to have multiple separate causal orders, but multiple separate causal orders are not allowable in Spinoza's universe.

The eternal timeline somehow has to accommodate both variations of the car in order for eternal super necessitarianism to work. The only way for the timeline alone to accommodate the two variations is for the variations to exist at different points on the timeline. The black car will exist at some point on the timeline and then the red car will exist at either a later point on the timeline or an earlier point on the timeline. The difficulty then becomes explaining how a single causal order can produce one variation and then produce another variation at a different point on the timeline.

The two cars cannot be variations of exactly the same finite extended mode since the cars exist at widely different points on the timeline. A problem arises when we consider exactly what we have in mind when discussing nomological possibilities which are all actualized under super necessitarianism. By nomological possibilities we typically mean different ways that the laws of nature would allow the same finite mode to be.

The car has two variations we have been considering: the first is that of the black car which is completed on December 20th at 1 p.m. and the second is that of the red car which is completed on December 10th at 2 p.m. We normally think of the two different variations as basically being the same car, albeit with different features in each case. In other words, they are two different versions of the same car (same finite mode). Being the same car, however, is impossible for two variations at different points on the timeline. If eternal super necessitarianism is to work, we need to think of the variations of the car in different terms. We can look for help in understanding the issue in the work of David Lewis:

> I advocate a thesis of plurality of world, or *modal realism*, which holds that our world is but one world among many. There are countless other worlds…The worlds are something like remote planets; except that…they are not remote. Neither are they nearby. They are not at any temporal distance whatever from here. They are not far in the past or future, nor that matter near…They are isolated: there are no

> spatiotemporal relations at all between things that belong to different worlds…There are so many worlds, in fact, that absolutely *every* way that a world could possibly be is a way that some world *is*.[151]

The modal realism championed by Lewis has significant similarities with super necessitarianism, especially when he says that for every way a world could be, a world exists that matches those specifications. It is true that Lewis includes far more variations than what is allowed by the laws of nature: Lewis' modal realism allows for worlds (universes) that have different laws of nature. We have accepted the interpretation of the laws of nature as necessary in Spinoza's system given that the laws of nature are considered as infinite modes and as such are included within God's essence. Therefore, Lewis' modal realism must be modified first of all to the extent that we only focus on the worlds which have the same laws of nature.

The limitation of the variety of worlds to those worlds which have the exact same laws of nature is not the only modification which we need to apply to conform to super necessitarianism. A second modification concerns the multiple universes central to the view of modal realism, universes which are causally isolated from one another and are not in the same space as our universe. The causally isolated universe model, as we have seen, will not work in Spinoza's system.

The differences between super necessitarianism and Lewis' modal realism prevent us from fully ascribing the latter view to Spinoza. We are not suggesting that super necessitarianism can be explained by examining Lewis' version of modal realism. We can, however, take a page from Lewis to help us explain why we should think the two cars we are discussing are two different nomological possibilities that are actualized.

[151] LEWIS, DAVID, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Glasgow: Bell and Bain, 1986), pg. 2.

The two instances of the car on different points on the timeline should answer the question concerning first of all what the car would be like under a certain set of conditions and second what the car would be like under a second set of conditions. We have already noted that the two cars are not instances of the same finite mode so the question must be understood a little differently since the two cars cannot literally answer the question of what the same car would be like under two different set of circumstances. There must be something else to make us think that the cars are two examples of alternate nomological possibilities.

Lewis' modal realism can now give us the clue we need to understand how the two cars might be thought of as representing alternate nomological possibilities. Lewis writes:

> As other worlds are alternative possibilities for an entire world, so the parts of other worlds are alternative possibilities for lesser individuals…a counterpart of Oxford is similar to Oxford in its origins, or in its location *vis-à-vis* (counterparts of) other places, or in the arrangement and nature of its parts, or in the role it plays in the life of a nation or a discipline. Thus Oxford might be noted more for the manufacture of locomotives than of motor cars, or might have been a famous centre for the study of paraconsistent hermeneutics, iff some other-worldly counterpart of our Oxford, under some suitable counterpart relation, enjoys these distinctions.[152]

Lewis speaks in terms of counterparts when he discusses different possibilities concerning the same thing. The example he gives is Oxford, in which the Oxford in our universe is similar enough in relevant ways to make us consider the counterpart to Oxford in the other universe as an alternative to how our Oxford could have been. The similarity between the two is what allows us to consider them alternatives in relation to one another. Let us consider how we can apply the concept of similarity to eternal super necessitarianism.

[152] Ibid, pg. 8.

The variations of the car are not different versions of the same extended finite mode, but rather two extended[153] finite modes that are very similar but are not in fact the same. It is akin to a situation in which two cars instead of one car are created. The two cars are simply two different versions of one type of car produced from the same blueprint and give examples of what various features the car can have. In our example the two cars could differ solely in such a simple feature as color with one being black and the other being red. The important factor here is that the laws of nature allow the car to either be black or red, so the two cars can represent nomological possibilities that have been actualized (albeit as different extended finite modes) and give us an analogy with the different variations of the car on the eternal timeline.

The two different variations which we are discussing are examples of what would be allowed by the laws of nature not by virtue of the fact that they are two versions of the same car but two versions of the same type of car that are similar enough to represent different nomological possibilities. There is, however, a difficulty in the similarity relation.

The difficulty concerns the similarity relation of counterparts just in general and specifically how exactly we are to understand the similarity relation, particularly when it comes to relevant similarity. Considering the car example, we need some indication of how much similarity and what kind of similarity is needed to make the black car a counterpart of the red car.

Two things that are cars of highly similar design are probably similar enough to be considered as counterparts. On the other hand, two things that are the same color but are otherwise not similar – one is a stereo system and the other a car – are most probably not similar

[153] We are focusing on the extended finite modes as a basis of comparison, but it is important to note that the ideas of the extended finite modes would also be involved.

enough in a relevant way to be considered counterparts and thus alternate nomological possibilities that are actualized. The solution to our problem is rather simple: we just intuitively know what makes a counterpart and what does not make a counterpart when it comes to similarity.

The proposed solution to our problem concerning relevant similarity is not to attempt any elaborate defense or offer a precise explanation of what constitutes a relevant similarity. Our contention here is that we simply have a feel for what makes a similarity sufficiently relevant for being a counterpart and what makes a similarity non-sufficient. For example, a similarity in that both extended things are cars and of a similar style and size is sufficiently relevant to make counterparts while a similarity such as having the same color or being made of the same material is not sufficiently relevant to make counterparts. Before moving on, let us consider a few implications concerning our intuitive view.

One obvious implication is that we are not specifying an exact definition for what makes a similarity relevant – rather, we are just relying on intuition and a general feeling about what makes a similarity relevant when it comes to making one thing a counterpart of another thing. It may seem that we are dodging the question and that our solution is too vague to support any version of the counterpart theory in relation to super necessitarianism. However, we must keep in mind that our aim is simply to sketch out how super necessitarianism could possibly work in Spinoza's system, and also consider which form of super necessitarianism is most plausible.

A second implication is that the counterparts of super necessitarianism are not as similar in eternal super necessitarianism as they are in Lewis' modal realism in one critical respect. The counterparts in eternal super necessitarianism do not exist nearly simultaneously but rather at

widely different points on the timeline. The example of the cars that we have been using is misleading in this key respect concerning eternal super necessitarianism.

The car example that we have been using describes two cars developed from a blueprint that are highly similar but different in at least one, if not more, respects. The black car is completed on December 20th at 1 p.m. of a certain year, while the red car is completed on December 10th at 2 p.m. of the same year. The two cars purport to demonstrate super necessitarianism counterparts with differing features of color, time, and date. For eternal super necessitarianism, however, only the difference in color will be applicable.

The car example set in Lewis' modal realism will help illustrate the point more clearly. Car one in universe one is completed on December 20th at 1 p.m. of the year 1986 and is painted black. Car two in universe two is completed on December 10th at 2 p.m. of the year 1986 and is painted red. Since the two cars were completed within the same general time frame it seems natural enough, at least under the similarity criterion, to say that car one represents one way that the laws of nature would allow a certain car to be like, while car two represents another way that the laws of nature would allow. In other words, when we say of a certain car that it could have been completed on December 20th and painted black or it could have been completed on December 10th and painted red, cars one and two seem to provide the answers to those questions.

Cars one and two do not in fact answer the question of what the same car (since they are not in fact the same car) would be like under different circumstances, but they give the appearance of answering the question fairly readily. In other words, the two cars completed in the same year (albeit in different universes) seem similar enough to be considered counterparts.

The two cars when considered under the umbrella of eternal super necessitarianism function a bit differently.

Car one in eternal super necessitarianism is painted black and is completed on December 20th at 1 p.m. in the year 1986. Car two is painted red and is completed in the year 30,000.[154] With the two cars so widely separated on the timeline it is difficult to think of them as counterparts. Something existing in the year 1986 as compared to another thing existing in the year 30,000 seems radically different despite how many other similarities the two things share. The dissimilarity inherent in being separated by potentially vast stretches of time on the timeline might make eternal super necessitarianism too problematic.

Expansive super necessitarianism, as we shall soon see, also relies on similarity to let us consider separate extended finite modes as counterparts. The counterparts in expansive super necessitarianism are widely separated by space instead of time, and it will be one of the tasks we need to perform when considering expansive super necessitarianism to determine whether eternal or expansive super necessitarianism is more plausible. For now, though, we need to finish our analysis of eternal super necessitarianism.

Eternal super necessitarianism suffers from the problem that the counterparts on the timeline are separated by potentially vast stretches of time. The temporal separation of the counterparts (alternate nomological actualities) might make the counterparts of eternal super necessitarianism too dissimilar in comparison to the counterparts of expansive super necessitarianism for eternal super necessitarianism to be the most plausible form of super necessitarianism. We will address the issue of level of similarity again when we discuss

[154] For the purpose of the car example we are assuming that the date that the red car comes into existence is known.

expansive super necessitarianism, but for now we need to consider a problem closely related to the problem of temporal separation.

The related problem is that highly similar things have to appear at different points on the timeline, with the great amount of similarity providing the basis for two (or more) to be counterparts. It is much easier to imagine the existence of counterparts in separate universes because each thing in a separate universe would have its own separate causal order.

Any one thing in Spinoza's universe has all the features it does due to the combination of the laws of nature and the preceding causes in the causal order. Only a specific set of preceding causes in the causal order would produce a thing with a particular set of features. If the smallest thing were altered in the causal order, the thing in question would either have different features or would not exist at all. In other words, the way to get counterparts in Spinoza's system is to have nearly identical orders of preceding causes (in the single causal order) so that the combination of the preceding causes and the laws of nature will yield similar but different results.

The car example can be simplified to focus on only one feature that differs between the two cars, so let us focus on color. The difference in color is determined by the color of paint that was used and the paint used is determined by what paint was delivered and the paint delivered is determined by what was ordered, and so on, stretching back with preceding causes in the causal order as far as the eternal timeline goes. In order for color to be the only dissimilarity between the two cars, the preceding causes in the two causal orders would have to be virtually identical.

Having a near-identical order of preceding causes in the causal order is easy when we are considering two separate causal orders, but the requirement for near-identical preceding causes is

much more difficult when considering temporally disparate stretches of the same causal order. Somehow the causal order has to effectively reset in order to produce another order of preceding causes that is nearly identical to the initial order of preceding causes.

The effective reset of the causal order presents a formidable problem: if the causal order is actually reset the causal order would be interrupted so that there would be causes that fail to produce the effect determined in combination with the laws of nature. An interruption of the causal order would violate a key premise in Spinoza's system. Axiom 3 in part I of the Ethics states: "From a given determinate cause there necessarily follows an effect; on the other hand, if there be no determinate cause, it is impossible that an effect should follow."[155]

The effect necessarily follows from the cause, so no cause could fail to produce its effect and an actual reset would violate this precept. For the sake of this discussion, let us assume that Spinoza allows for an initial configuration of the universe. The initial configuration of extended things in the universe, coupled with the laws of nature, determine the causal order to unfold in a certain way and, per our car example, eventually yield a black car. To produce the red car later on the timeline, the causal order has to effectively reset into a configuration that is nearly identical to the initial configuration. Any causes that existed at the moment of reset would fail to produce their effects since any effects they would produce would presumably not yield anything close to the initial configuration. In order to save eternal super necessitarianism, there must be some way that the causal order effectively resets without any actual reset.

The mechanics of how the one causal order on the timeline would effectively reset itself are beyond the scope of this dissertation and might be beyond our ken anyway. To get the effect

[155] Ethics, pg. 218.

of resetting without actually resetting, somehow the single causal order must produce nearly identical causal orders (portions of the single causal order) time and time again. How exactly the causal order virtually recycles itself periodically we can but guess – the important thing to acknowledge is that an effective reset at least seems within the realm of possibility.

The effective resetting of the causal order is easier to imagine occurring the longer the period of time we are considering. Over endless stretches of time it is easier to imagine that the causal order somehow effectively resets time and time again. Thus the meaning of the term "eternal" will be of great importance to the apparent feasibility of eternal super necessitarianism. If "eternal" turns out to mean some limited period of time, no matter how vast, then the viability of eternal super necessitarianism declines. However, if "eternal" turns out to mean that the timeline is endless, then eternal super necessitarianism becomes more plausible.

The meaning of the term "eternal" ties in closely to the meaning of the term "infinite" – the eternal timeline is basically an infinite timeline. As we have noted before, "infinite" at the very least means encompassing all, so infinite time at the very least means encompassing all of time. Spinoza could also mean that, in addition to encompassing all time, infinite time is endless. Infinite time in the endless sense would mean something slightly different – no point on the timeline could be selected where there would not be time both preceding and following the selected point. There would, in other words, be no beginning or end to the eternal timeline.

An eternal timeline in the endless sense of infinite would provide plenty of room, at least in a metaphorical sense, for the causal order to effectively reset itself time and time again. We will revisit the issue of the plausibility of eternal super necessitarianism after we determine the

most likely meaning of the term “infinite” in Spinoza’s system. For now, though, we must examine the second type of super necessitarianism, expansive super necessitarianism.

Expansive super necessitarianism is a view that maintains that all nomological possibilities are actualized in the vast reaches of the infinite extended universe instead of the vast reaches of the eternal timeline. As with eternal super necessitarianism, expansive super necessitarianism must work within the model of one universe if it is to work at all. Let us return to the car example for a closer examination.

The two cars which we considered in regard to eternal super necessitarianism differed in color, one being black and the other being red. Initially the cars also differed in the date and time of their completion, with the black car being completed on December 20th at 1 p.m. and the red car being completed on December 10th at 2 p.m. As we discovered in the examination of eternal super necessitarianism, the time similarity does not work. The two cars will exist at widely divergent points on the timeline.

Expansive super necessitarianism does not suffer from the same problem, at least in regard to time. The two cars can exist at two points that are close on the timeline and in fact can be simultaneous. However, a similar problem does arise. The two cars are not radically dissimilar in time but are radically dissimilar in spatial location.

The more similar the two cars are, the easier it is to consider them as two variations that would be consistent with the laws of nature. Before moving on to consider in greater depth the level of similarity in expansive super necessitarianism, it is important to remember that we are using the level of similarity not to show that the counterpart version of super necessitarianism

must work in some form – rather, we are focusing on which version of super necessitarianism shows the most plausibility.

The determination of which form of super necessitarianism is most plausible, as we are approaching the problem, is based upon which form provides us with the most similarity between counterparts. It is only in this narrow focus that we are considering the level of similarity in expansive super necessitarianism. Keeping our narrow focus in mind, let us move on to consider the level of similarity in greater depth.

The two cars that we are considering as counterparts are widely separated in space rather than time. Instead of the black and red cars existing on widely divergent parts of the timeline, the black and red cars will instead be separated by vast distances. The vast difference in time no longer poses a problem, but spatial location now becomes quite dissimilar.

Instead of the black and red cars being separated by millions of years or some other vast stretch of time, the two cars are potentially separated by millions of light years or some other vast stretch of distance. In eternal super necessitarianism the temporal dissimilarity forced us to consider how the mechanism of producing counterparts over the vast stretches of time might actually work. In expansive super necessitarianism we face a similar problem, but a problem that stems from spatial rather than temporal distance. The problem is that somehow counterparts are produced in widely different spatial locations.

The easiest way to account for the production of things so similar that they can be considered counterparts is the supposition that there are separate causal orders. However, as we determined earlier, there is no way to fit totally separate causal orders within Spinoza's one universe. There are no voids in Spinoza's universe, so there is no way to causally isolate

multiple causal orders, no matter how much spatial distance exists between them. If the counterpart model of expansive super necessitarianism is to work, it must work within the confines of a single causally interconnected universe.

A way must exist, if expansive super necessitarianism is to work, to produce the black car at a certain time and date and the red car at a similar time and date in widely disparate spatial locations as if each was produced by its own separate causally isolated causal order. The problem for expansive super necessitarianism concerning the lack of separate causal orders parallels the problem which we considered for eternal super necessitarianism concerning the fact that resets of the causal order seem to be required but cannot happen in Spinoza's system.

An effective (not actual) resetting of the timeline in some way was the solution we determined upon to make eternal super necessitarianism work. In order to produce virtually identical things that could be considered counterparts but separated over vast stretches of time, the causal order must be effectively reset. The causal order cannot be actually reset since that would violate Spinoza's causal axiom, but the results of resetting the causal order are required in order to have counterparts exist at varied points along the timeline. Thus we have the advantages of resetting the causal order, but only at the cost of a completely mysterious process.

Expansive super necessitarianism suffers from a similar problem, though one based on space rather than time. Instead of somehow getting the results of resetting the causal order without any actual resetting, in expansive super necessitarianism we need the results of having multiple isolated causal orders without actually having multiple isolated causal orders. As in the details of effectively resetting the causal order, we do not need to concern ourselves with how

exactly the results of multiple isolated causal orders exist – it is sufficient to acknowledge that a mechanism that can render the results of multiple isolated causal orders might exist.

The mysteriousness of the mechanism that creates the results of multiple isolated causal orders in expansive super necessitarianism will count against the plausibility of the view, but only in the competition for determining which type of super necessitarianism is most plausible. It is important to remember that our acceptance of the view of super necessitarianism is based on separate considerations, as we discussed in chapter 6. Our current examination is intended only to determine which form of super necessitarianism is most plausible.

Eternal super necessitarianism depends on the mechanism of producing the results of resets of the causal order without actually having any resets. As was noted in the discussion of eternal super necessitarianism, an eternal timeline that is endless makes it easier to suppose that the mechanism can work. The situation is similar in regard to expansive super necessitarianism but in relation to space rather than time. As endless time would help the workings of eternal super necessitarianism, so endless extension would help make the workings of the mysterious mechanism behind having the results of isolated causal orders without actually having isolated causal orders be somewhat plausible.

Endless extension means that for whatever spatial point we might select there is always extension in every direction beyond the selected spatial point. The key to having endless extension is, of course, the sense in which Spinoza uses the term "infinite." The viability of both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism relies to some extent on how Spinoza is using the term "infinite" both in relation to time and space. Before we examine Spinoza's use of the term "infinite," let us first consider the third form of super necessitarianism.

The meaning of the term “infinite” plays a crucial role in the third type of super necessitarianism we are considering, concentrated super necessitarianism. Concentrated super necessitarianism involves the actualization of all nomological possibilities in a manner rather different from eternal or expansive super necessitarianism. Eternal and expansive super necessitarianism involve the actualization of all nomological possibilities, but with the former having the actualized nomological possibilities spread over time and the latter spread over space. Beyond the difference in reliance on time vs space, eternal and expansive super necesstiarianism are quite similar. Concentrated super necessitarianism is a different animal.

Concentrated super necessitarianism involves a countless number of attributes which fulfill the role of actualizing all the nomological possibilities, and is therefore more dependent on the meaning of “infinite” than either eternal or expansive super necessitarianism. Eternal super necessitarianism might work without endless time. How it would work in some limited frame of time is difficult to imagine, but not ruled out due to the mysterious workings of the mechanism of effectively resetting the causal order without actually resetting it.

Expansive super necessitarianism is also easier to imagine working if the extended universe is endless. As in the case of eternal super necessitarianism, the mechanism of expansive super necessitarianism is easier to suppose working in an endless extended universe, but could possibly work in a non-endless extended universe. Concentrated super necessitarianism, on the other hand, is highly dependent on the meaning of the term “infinite.”

Concentrated super necessitarianism involves the nomological actualities being expressed in individual finite modes through the medium of the various attributes. Instead of the actualization of nomological possibilities over the vast reaches of time or space, all the

nomological possibilities are actualized in the same finite mode. The same finite mode will somehow contain all the different variations consistent with the laws of nature.

The attribute of Extension expresses the nomological actuality of which we are aware, the nomological possibility actualized in what we consider the actual universe. However, under concentrated super necessitarianism the nomological actuality embodied under the attribute of Extension is only the tip of the iceberg – there are innumerable[156] other nomological actualities under different attributes beyond Extension and Thought and are attributes to which we have no access.

The potential workings of concentrated super necessitarianism, or at least our best guess as to the workings given that we have no access to the attributes beyond Extension and Thought, can be illustrated by returning to our example of the cars. In the original example, the black car is completed on December 20th at 1 p.m., while the red car is completed on December 10th at 2 p.m. When considering the car example in our examinations of eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, we discovered that neither was a precise fit.

The most promising basis for the cars being counterparts was determined to be similarity in both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism. Neither of the two super necessitarianisms posited cars that were similar in nearly all ways, as each had a component that was highly dissimilar on the two cars. Eternal super necessitarianism had two cars that were very dissimilar

[156] Concentrated super necessitarianism is not absolutely dependent upon the term "infinite" meaning numerically limitless – it might conceivably work if "infinite attributes" means simply "all the attributes that exist." However, even if the attributes do not necessarily need to be numerically limitless, there must absolutely be attributes beyond Extension and Thought included among the infinite attributes.

in temporal location, while expansive super necessitarianism had two cars that were very dissimilar in spatial location.

Eternal and expansive super necessitarianism each have their own huge dissimilarity as a drawback, and it all depends on which dissimilarity we find more palatable as to which of either eternal or expansive super necessitarianism we find to be more plausible. Concentrated super necessitarianism, on the other hand, presents a very different drawback.

Concentrated super necessitarianism is based on the various attributes beyond Extension and Thought. Under concentrated super necessitarianism all the nomological actualities inherent in any finite mode are contained within the finite mode itself. Unlike both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, the counterparts in concentrated super necessitarianism are neither separated in time nor in space. In fact, it may be inappropriate to call the various nomological actualities counterparts at all, since the purported counterparts are not separate.

The counterpart theory under which we have been operating in our examinations of both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism assumes two separate finite modes which function as alternate nomological actualities (counterparts) based on the level of relevant similarity between the two. In concentrated super necessitarianism the paradigm of what constitutes an alternate nomological actuality changes significantly.

The alternate nomological actualities in concentrated super necessitarianism are formed by the various attributes of which a single finite mode is an object. One nomological actuality is formed by the finite mode as an object of Extension and Thought is the only nomological actuality to which we have access. Although we lack access to the other attributes and thus the nomological actualities under those other attributes, they form what amounts to counterparts –

though in a different sense than in eternal and expansive super necessitrainism – in concentrated super necessitarianism.

The counterpart model (for lack of a better term) for concentrated super necessitarianism can be more easily understood if we again consider the car example. The car to which we have access is the black car as the finite mode as an object of Extension (and Thought). The finite mode in question also has a myriad of other attributes of which it is an object according to concentrated super necessitarianism. The black car is simply the finite mode as object of Extension[157] and represents one nomological actuality.

The other nomological actualities are represented by the same finite mode as objects of the attributes to which we have no access. The red car, then, can be considered to be the finite mode as an object of attribute X. The finite mode as an object of the attribute of Extension and as an object of the attribute of X are simultaneously present in the finite mode itself, as are the finite mode as an object of all the countless number of other attributes. Other nomological actualities are represented by the finite mode as objects of other attributes.

A green car, for instance, could be represented by the finite mode as an object of attribute Y, a yellow car as an object of attribute Z, and so on. Obviously concentrated super necessitarianism is completely dependent upon there being more than the two attributes of Thought and Extension. If Thought and Extension are the only attributes that exist, then concentrated super necessitarianism simply does not work. The viability of concentrated super

[157] The finite mode as an object of Extension and an object of Thought jointly represent the one nomological actuality to which we have direct access. The emphasis on Extension in this section is primarily meant to focus on the difference between finite modes as object of Extension and finite modes as objects of attributes other than Extension or Thought.

necessitarianism, then, relies on what Spinoza means by the term "infinite" and specifically what he means when he refers to "infinite attributes."

The meaning of "infinite" in Spinoza's system will be examined shortly, but first let us briefly consider the overall viability of concentrated super necessitarianism. There is a fundamental problem concerning the nature of the nomological actualities in concentrated super necessitarianism or, more precisely, the nomological actualities beyond the finite mode as an extended object. The finite mode as an extended object poses no problem and is exactly what we would expect a nomological actuality to be.

Eternal and expansive super necessitarianism have all the nomological actualities as extended finite modes.[158] Concentrated super necessitarianism has only one nomological actuality per finite mode with that finite mode as an object of Extension (and Thought). The other nomological actualities are the same finite mode but as objects of other attributes. To understand the problem raised by only one nomological actuality being an object of Extension, let us return to the car example.

The first nomological actuality, the black car, is a finite mode as an extended object and the second nomological actuality, the red car, is the same finite mode as an object of attribute X. When the black and the red cars were both extended finite modes, as under eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, the comparison between the two was easy to grasp. Both the black and

[158] Again, the finite modes in eternal and expansive super necessitarianism are objects of both Extension and Thought – the emphasis on the finite modes as objects of Extension is intended to emphasize the difference between a finite mode as an object of Extension and a finite mode as an object of an attribute other than Extension or Thought.

red cars are extended objects and operate under the laws of nature governing extended things, giving us a basis of similarity for the two to be counterparts.

The black and red cars under concentrated super necessitarianism are, respectively, the finite mode as an object of Extension and the same finite mode as an object of attribute X. Attribute X is simply a label that we affix to whatever attribute the red car falls under, but we know nothing beyond the label we have provided and indeed cannot know anything about attribute X since it is an attribute to which we have no access. The red car, then, is utterly incomprehensible beyond the affixed label and the label is itself no more than a gesture at whatever attribute the red car falls under. In other words, all we know about the red car is that it falls under 'that' attribute, whatever 'that' attribute is.

The red car's similarity to the black car is thus minimal, with only the sharing of the same finite mode counting as a similarity. In fact, it is hard to understand how the red car as an object of attribute X can be a counterpart of the black car, which is extended. The black car is an extended object in the shape of a car, with the most general features of a car, including tires, engine, seats, and so on. The black car is extended with features that rely on Extension and is, obviously, colored black.

In eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, the black car as an extended object and the red car as an extended object are easy enough to compare. The red car can in principle, though probably not in fact, be encountered at a different time (under eternal super necessitarianism), or a different location (under expansive super necessitarianism). The red car, if we could encounter it directly, would be extended and have similar features to the black car. We could recognize the red car as a potential variant allowable under the laws of nature to the

black car. The situation changes drastically, however, under concentrated super necessitarianism.

The red car under concentrated super necessitarianism would not be extended or have any of the same features as the black car for the simple reason that the features are all dependent on the attribute of Extension. The black car as an extended object has features that all have length, width, and depth (extended in all three dimensions) while the red car as an object of attribute X has no features that are extended. The lack of extension also applies to any car that is an object of any other attribute.

The black car is also colored, but no other attribute can lay claim to having color as a feature, at least the way we understand color. The red car as an object of attribute X is not even red. Terming the finite mode as an object of attribute X to be the "red car" is in fact a misnomer because it is neither red nor a car.

The only way we can come close to identifying the finite mode as an object of attribute X as the red car is the fact that it is contained within the same finite mode as the black car and thus shares the exact same temporal and spatial location. Beyond existing at the same time and location, there is nothing else we can point to in common between the black car and what we have been terming the red car. The utter lack of similarity rules out concentrated super necessitrarianism as the most plausible form of super necessitarianism since we are basing our inquiry concerning the most plausible form of super necessitarianism on similarity.

The relative lack of plausibility for concentrated super necessitarianism means that we must look to either eternal or expansive super necessitarianism as the most plausible form of super necessitarianism. In order to determine which is more plausible it will first be helpful to

examine Spinoza's concept of "infinite" and "eternal" to see if the terms "infinite" and "eternal" more likely mean "encompassing all that exists" or "endless in addition to encompassing all that exists." If the extended universe and the timeline are both endless, then there is plenty of room, at least metaphorically, for the effective resetting of the causal order in eternal super necessitarianism or the effective multiple separate causal orders of expansive super necessitarianism. Let us first examine whether there is good reason to think that the universe is spatially endless.

Spinoza's view concerning "infinite" is central, so let us focus on examining passages in which Spinoza discusses the infinite extension of God or Nature or the universe in an effort to determine how Spinoza is using the term "infinite" in relation to the extended universe. Spinoza declares that Extension is not only an attribute of God but that the attribute of Extension is infinite. This is stated in proposition 11 in part I and proposition 2 in part II of the Ethics:

> **Proposition 11** God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.[159]
>
> **Proposition 2** Extension is an attribute of God; i.e., God is an extended thing.[160]

Proposition 11 establishes that God has infinite attributes and all of these attributes express eternal and infinite essence. Proposition 2 of part II establishes that Extension is one of the infinite attributes which express eternal infinite essence. As an attribute Extension expresses eternal and infinite essence, which could indicate that extension is endless and thus the universe is spatially endless. If we use the typical definition of "infinite," which means limitless and

[159] Ethics, pg. 222.

[160] Ibid, pg. 245.

limitless usually corresponds with endless, then extension would be endless and the universe spatially endless. However, Spinoza uses the term "limit" in a different sense.

The concept of limit in Spinoza's system can be ascertained starting with definition 2 and proposition 2 in part I of the Ethics:

> **Definition 2** A thing is said to be finite in its own kind [*in suo genere finite*] when it can be limited by another thing of the same nature. For example, a body is said to be finite because we can always conceive of another body greater than it. So, too, a thought is limited by another thought. But body is not limited by thought, nor thought by body.
>
> **Proposition 2** Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common.[161]

Spinoza is establishing that substances having different attributes have nothing in common and cannot limit each other. In definition 2 Spinoza establishes that body (Extension) cannot limit thought and thought cannot limit body. By limit Spinoza is referring to a sort of restriction on a body or thought. It is easiest to grasp the concept of limit in Spinoza's system by explicating it using two extended bodies. Consider two extended bodies – which we are presuming for the sake of this example cannot pass through each other – such as two balloons that are being inflated within an enclosed space that has walls, a ceiling, and a floor. The balloons might not have room to fully expand, but the only things that can limit the expansion are other extended things such as the other balloon and the walls and the ceiling. All extended bodies that are impermeable can limit each other in the same fashion that the balloons were limited by each other and the walls.

Extended things limit each other basically by pushing against each other and presenting a material obstacle which cannot be pushed through. Thoughts also limit each other in some

[161] Ibid, pg. 217, 218.

fashion. Thought, however, cannot limit a body nor can a body limit a thought, which is easy to understand since one is material and the other immaterial. The objects of other attributes also cannot limit objects of Extension or objects of Thought or one another.

The principle that only extended things can limit extended things also applies to substance. An extended substance can only be limited by another extended substance but, as we discovered in chapter 1, only one substance exists according to Spinoza. Thus the one substance, which has Extension as well as all the other attributes, cannot be limited by anything. As an extended substance it could only be limited by another extended substance, with the same holding for all attributes. Since there are no other substances, the one substance is not limited by anything and without any limit, the extended substance is infinite. There are two ways to understand the notion of "infinite" based on Spinoza's definition of "limit."

The first way of understanding the notion of "infinite" in Spinoza's system is that the one and only substance that possesses the attribute of Extension encompasses all of extension. In other words, any bit of extension that exists will be part of the extended substance so there will exist absolutely no extension that is separate from the extended substance.

All extension will be part of the extended substance, but that does not mean the extended substance is endless. If the view of infinite extension that Spinoza is using merely involves all the extension that exists, then any amount of extension – it is easiest to think of extension in terms of volume – can be considered as infinite extension as long as it encompasses all extension so that there is no further extension that can limit it. Thus, for example, the universe could measure two feet in all three dimensions, making a volume of eight cubic feet.

Provided that the eight cubic feet represented all the extension that existed, the eight cubic foot universe would be considered an infinite universe. Since an eight cubic foot universe obviously is not endless, the first way to interpret the notion of infinite supports a limited view (at least in the sense of limit that we typically use) of infinite extension. For the sake of convenience, we will refer to this view as limited infinite extension.

The second way covers the same ground as limited infinite extension, but goes beyond it. "Infinite" as it applies to extension encompasses all the extension that exists, just as in limited infinite extension, but also indicates that extension is endless. The extended universe under the second view of "infinite" has no quantifiable dimensions. Extended substance encompasses all extension and extends endlessly in all directions, and we shall call it endless infinite extension.

Now that we have two interpretations of "infinite," let us consider how Spinoza is using the term "infinite" in his discussion in the scholium to proposition 15 in which he defends the view that substance is infinite. The passage reads as follows:

> If corporeal substance is infinite, suppose it to be divided into two parts. Each of these parts will be either finite or infinite. If the former, then the infinite is made up of two finite parts, which is absurd. If the latter, then there is an infinite which is twice as great as another infinite, which is also absurd.[162]

Spinoza is discussing an argument claiming that the impossibility of splitting substance into two parts demonstrates that substance is not divisible. By applying both concepts of infinite extension, limited and endless, to the argument against substance being divisible and seeing how each works, we will attempt to find out which sense of "infinite" Spinoza is using for the extended universe.

[162] Ibid, pg. 225.

The argument states that dividing an infinite substance (in this case extended) into two parts leads to two possible results, each of which has absurd consequences. If the two parts are finite, then two finite parts would have to add up to an infinite whole which is impossible; if the two parts are each infinite, then the infinite whole is twice as large as each of the infinite parts which is absurd as one infinite cannot be greater than another infinite – for Spinoza it does not make sense to speak of one infinite being numerically greater than another infinite. Let us examine each result when limited infinite extension is applied.

In limited infinite extension, extended substance is infinite by virtue of encompassing all extension and finite whenever it does not encompass all extension. If the infinite extended substance is divided into two infinite parts, then the infinite whole must encompass all extension and each of the two infinite parts must also encompass all extension. Each of the three (whole and two parts) would have to encompass exactly the same amount of volume. If we go back to the eight cubic foot universe considered before, the infinite whole would have to encompass all of the eight cubic feet, and each infinite part would also have to encompass all of the eight cubic feet. Thus the whole and both of the parts would encompass exactly the same volume, making the three identical. Having parts identical to the whole is an absurd conclusion, so limited infinite extension succeeds in the portion of the argument concerning a division into infinite parts.

The second portion of the argument states that infinite extended substance cannot be divided into two finite parts, since two finite parts cannot add up to an infinite whole. Employing the concept of limited infinite extension, let us see if extended substance can be divided into two finite parts. Remember that the infinite whole under limited infinite extension represents a universe that has measureable extension. If the infinite whole is measureable and

endless then it seems to pose no problem to divide the infinite whole into two finite parts. Let us return to the eight cubic foot universe which is infinite under limited infinite extension.

Dividing the eight cubic foot universe in half yields two finite parts that are each four cubic feet in volume. Each part is finite under limited infinite extension by virtue of neither part encompassing all of extension. Adding one finite part of four cubic feet to the other part of four cubic feet results in eight cubic feet which is equal to all extension and thus equal to the infinite whole. Limited infinite extension fails to show that infinite substance cannot be divided into finite parts and this is a good indication that Spinoza is not using "infinite" in the sense of limited infinite extension. Let us now apply endless infinite extension to the divisibility argument.

First it must be noted that the infinite whole of substance would be unmeasurable under endless infinite extension, extending endlessly in all directions and having a volume that is unmeasurable. Under the first portion of the argument the infinite whole is split into two infinite parts. Each infinite part would be unmeasurable and endless under endless infinite extension, and therefore basically the same as the infinite whole. The division of the infinite whole under endless infinite extension suffers from the problem that Spinoza does not allow that one infinite can be greater than another infinite.

In Spinoza's eyes, the infinite whole and the infinite parts would be identical due to the fact that all are infinite and one infinite is not greater than another infinite. Dividing the infinite whole into two infinite parts under endless infinite extension would thus suffer basically the same problem as dividing the infinite whole into two infinite parts under limited infinite extension, that of each of the parts being equal to the whole. Endless infinite extension can therefore successfully handle the infinite parts portion of the divisibility argument. Now let us

move on to examine whether endless infinite extension can handle the second portion of the argument.

The second portion of the divisibility argument states that the infinite whole cannot be divided into two finite parts. Under endless infinite extension substance encompasses all extension, extends endlessly in all directions, and has unmeasurable volume. The finite parts, if infinite extended substance could be divided, would neither encompass all extension nor extend endlessly in all directions and would also have measurable volume.

The first two, encompassing less than all of extension and not extending endlessly, pose no problem since we would expect this result as the parts should not equal the infinite whole. The third, however, is unworkable because two measurable volumes, no matter how massive they may be, will not add up to an unmeasurable volume. Thus endless infinite extension works quite well with both portions of the divisibility argument. Endless infinite extension seems to be the way to go, which indicates that Spinoza is using "infinite" in the endless sense for extension and therefore likely using "infinite" in the endless sense in general. To further confirm that Spinoza is using "infinite" in the endless sense generally, let us look at the eternal timeline (which is basically infinite time) to see if it appears that Spinoza is using "infinite" in the endless sense for time as well.

Infinite extension being used in the endless sense does not guarantee that Spinoza is using the endless sense of infinite in regard to the eternal timeline. Let us then examine some passages where Spinoza discusses the temporal existence of the universe and try to discern whether he thinks that substance (the universe) is temporally endless or not. The first passages we can examine occur in part I of the Ethics:

Proposition 7 Existence belongs to the nature of substance.

Proposition 11 God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.[163]

In proposition 7 Spinoza establishes that existence belongs to the nature of substance, meaning that substance necessarily exists. The meaning of existence in proposition 7 is ambiguous, since there is no mention or hint of any length of time involved. Proposition 11 greatly helps in clarifying what is meant in proposition 7 when Spinoza maintains that existence belongs to the nature of substance. Substance, or God, is "eternal" and "infinite." "Eternal" and "infinite" apply to all attributes, but let us consider extended things in reference to time.

"Eternal," as we saw with "infinite," can be understood in two ways. The first we will refer to it as limited eternal duration – eternal duration should be read as eternity or being eternal since duration is not applicable to God in Spinoza's system. In limited eternal duration the timeline – it is easier to conceive of time as a timeline extending both back and forward from our perspective and acting like a fourth spatial dimension – is fully occupied by substance. In other words, there is absolutely no point on the timeline, which encompasses all time that exists, where substance does not exist. Similarly to limited infinite extension, limited eternal duration dictates that the timeline must include some amount of time that can be measured.

The second way that eternal can be understood we will refer to as endless eternal duration, which involves a timeline that not only encompasses all time that exists but is also endless. Since the timeline extends endlessly in either direction – assuming that the timeline has no beginning or end – time becomes unmeasurable. Now that we have defined the two ways in

[163] Ibid, pg. 219, 222.

which "eternal" can be understood, let us look to other passages in Spinoza for evidence to decide between limited and endless eternal duration.

The propositions in part I of the Ethics, 7 and 11, are neutral in the use of the term "eternal" and can be read either way, as was the case when we considered infinite extension. Limited eternal duration, which only requires that God's existence encompass every bit of time, and endless eternal duration, which requires both that God's existence encompass every bit of time and that the amount of time is endless and unmeasurable, work equally well with IP7 and IP11.

A key piece of evidence can be found in the Principles of Cartesian Philosophy, where in part I of the Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts Spinoza writes concerning eternity:

> [*What is Eternity, Duration, and Time.*] From our previous division of being into being whose essence involves existence and being whose essence involves only possible existence, there arises the distinction between eternity and duration…Duration is the attribute under which we conceive the existence of created things, insofar as they persevere in their actuality… Here with regard to duration we should note something that will be useful to us later when we speak about eternity, to wit, that it is conceived as longer and shorter and as if composed of parts, and, secondly, that it is an attribute of existence only, not of essence.[164]
>
> Furthermore, because duration is conceived as longer or shorter, or as consisting of parts, it clearly follows that no duration can be attributed to God. For because his being is eternal, that is, there cannot be in it any before or after, we can never attribute duration to God without at the same time destroying the true conception we have of him. That is to say, by attributing duration to him we would be dividing into parts that which of its own nature is infinite and can never be conceived except as infinite.[165]

Duration is distinguished from eternity in that duration is applied to created things and eternity applied to God. Duration is equated with the existence of a created thing, while God's essence involves existence, meaning that God necessarily exists. Spinoza makes the difference clearer with the distinction of "being whose essence involves existence" and "being whose essence

[164] Principles, pp. 185-186.

[165] Ibid, pg. 190.

involves only possible existence" where God is the former and created things (finite modes) the latter. Possible existence means that a thing may or may not exist at any point on the eternal timeline.

Possible existence is associated with finite things and particularly their duration while necessary existence, which applies only to God, is associated with eternity. The distinction between duration and eternity is laid out at the end of the passage: "by attributing duration to him we would be dividing into parts that which of its own nature is infinite and can never be conceived except as infinite." Spinoza is denying that God can be thought of in terms of duration, which can be divided into parts and be longer and shorter – as in the first portion of the passage.

Eternity cannot be longer or shorter or divided into parts. The inability to use longer or shorter in reference to eternity makes sense, as eternity encompasses the entirety of the timeline, so that no bit of the timeline is not included within eternity. Thus saying eternity is longer or shorter makes no sense since eternity is always the same length, being the entire length of the timeline. Eternity also cannot be divided into parts. As in the case of infinite extension, let us consider how we could show that it is impossible to divide the eternal timeline (eternity).

The eternal timeline can be imagined to be divided into two parts. The two parts will either be finite (not eternal) or infinite (eternal). As in the case of infinite extension, where endless infinite extension was found to provide the best basis for the argument against division, so endless eternal duration provides the better support for the indivisibility of the eternal timeline. The case of division into two eternal parts is easily handled by both limited and endless

eternal duration, since each part would have to encompass all of time and thus both parts would be identical to the whole, which is absurd.

The case of dividing the eternal timeline into two non-eternal parts plays out much the same as was the case when infinite extension was imagined to be divided into two finite parts. No matter how large the chunks of time covered by each non-eternal part, the two can never add up to an endless eternal timeline. The eternal timeline under limited eternal duration, on the other hand, appears able to be divided into two non-eternal halves. For example, it seems that the eternal timeline could only encompass ten years, assuming ten years is all the time that exists. Dividing the ten-year eternal timeline into non-eternal parts yields parts of five years each, which when added together equal the whole eternal timeline. Thus under limited eternal duration it appears that the eternal timeline can be divided into non-eternal parts.

The divisibility argument favors endless eternal duration, but we can go further and consider a more decisive argument concerning the eternal timeline, namely an argument revolving around disruption of the causal order. The argument parallels an argument that was considered in evaluating eternal super necessitarianism, where we considered whether a resetting of the causal order was feasible in Spinoza's system. The resetting of the causal order was seemingly required for the production of counterparts that are highly similar, and the impossibility of any actual reset was fully explicated through the use of the car example.

Recall that in the car example a black car exists in the present time frame and a red car exists at some other time as a counterpart to the black car. Setting aside the obvious fact that the two cars will not be similar in the time in which they exist, the red car, to warrant being a counterpart, must be highly similar but differing from the black car in some feature other than

time. In order to be so similar as to be almost identical, the two cars would have to have nearly identical preceding causal orders.

In the context of eternal super necessitarianism, two causal orders that are nearly identical would be easiest to account for if the causal order somehow managed to reset to conditions similar to the initial conditions that brought about the black car but with slight differences. The reset is seemingly necessary since all the preceding causes in the causal order together with the laws of nature determine what features the thing in question will have. However, as we discovered during our examination of eternal super necessitarianism, an actual resetting of the causal order is simply incompatible with Spinoza's system so an effective resetting had to be substituted.

The problem of resetting the causal order does not factor into our current discussion concerning the sense of "infinite" (or "eternal") used in relation to the eternal timeline. The key issue we need to address is the reason behind the incompatibility of an actual reset in Spinoza's system, which is the causal disruption inherent in any actual reset.

The resetting of the causal order is not allowable in Spinoza's system partly because of causes right before the reset which would fail to produce their effects. As noted before, it is impossible for Spinoza that a cause should fail to produce its effect, according to the causal axiom introduced early in the Ethics. There would also be effects – the things existing upon the resetting of the causal order – that lack causes. The effects would have come into being without their causes, which is also impossible under Spinoza's system.

A highly similar problem occurs with the eternal timeline in limited eternal duration and involves the fact that the eternal timeline has a beginning and an end. If the timeline does not

stretch endlessly in both directions, then there will come a point on the timeline where there is no time preceding it and there will also be a point on the timeline where no time is following it. The first point will constitute the beginning of the timeline and the second the end of the timeline.

The beginning of the timeline will have all the extended things in the universe in their initial configuration, a configuration which, together with the laws of nature, will determine everything that happens in the universe from that point. Since all the extended things in the opening configuration have no preceding causes they will in essence be effects without their corresponding causes. Having effects without their corresponding causes to bring them about is a violation of Spinoza's axiom that every effect necessarily has its cause preceding it.

The second half of the causal axiom, that a cause necessarily produces its effect, is violated at the end of the timeline, as the causes at the very end of the timeline will exist without producing their effects. The eternal timeline under limited eternal duration violates both principles in the causal axiom so it appears certain that limited eternal duration will not work.

Endless eternal duration does not suffer from the same problem since the timeline under endless eternal duration has neither beginning nor end. Since endless eternal duration avoids the problem of causal disruption, we can confidently state that endless eternal duration is the most plausible form of eternal duration for Spinoza's system. Earlier we also discovered that endless infinite extension is best suited for Spinoza's system.

Endless eternal duration and endless infinite extension reinforce one another in regard to the notion of "infinite" which Spinoza is using. It seems highly likely that Spinoza is using the endless sense of infinite in all cases. To gain further confirmation, let us consider Yitzhak Melamed on eternity in Spinoza. In Spinoza's Metaphysics he writes:

> The eternity of the infinite mode is merely everlastingness or sempiternity…This fascinating and original understanding of eternity as self-necessitated existence deserves a careful and detailed elucidation that cannot be carried out here. However, even a cursory examination of the explication of this definition makes clear that God's eternity cannot be equated with infinite duration.[166]

The infinite modes are identified with endless duration or everlastingness but, according to Melamed, that type of eternity is not applicable to God. We, on the other hand, have accepted an interpretation of the infinite modes as included within God's essence, so for us the concept of eternity applied to infinite modes is equally applicable to God. The eternity of infinite modes as explained by Melamed lines up well with endless eternal duration, provided that we can interpret everlastingness as time without beginning or end.

Melamed discusses little about the infinity of the extended universe or the attributes, but it seems safe to say that Melamed would support Spinoza's use of "infinite" in a consistent manner. If Spinoza is using "eternal" in the sense of endless eternal duration, then it seems safe to say that Spinoza is also using infinite extension in the sense of endless infinite extension and the infinity of the attributes in an endless sense as well. Let us review where our examination has taken us.

The term "infinite" is used by Spinoza to denote something without limits, but it is not entirely clear what he means by having no limits. He defines being limited, at least in terms of substance, as having another substance with the same attribute limiting the original substance. The easiest way to understand the limitation is to consider two substances possessing the attribute of Extension – the two substances cannot occupy the same extended area, so they limit

[166] MELAMED, YITZHAK, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2013), pp. 123-124.

each other in that there is some extension for each which cannot be occupied. Since there cannot be two substances, it is impossible for the only substance, God, to be limited.

Substance or God is infinite, but it is not immediately clear what it means for a substance to be infinite (without limits). There are two possibilities as to what infinite means: first, God encompasses all that exists, with God encompassing all extension for infinite extension and all time for eternal time; second, God not only encompasses all that exists but whatever can be considered as infinite is endless, so that in infinite extension there is no spatial point that can be selected beyond which there is not further extension in every direction and in eternal time there is no temporal point on the timeline without time preceding and following that point.

The first option, which we termed limited infinite extension for infinite extension and limited eternal duration for eternal time and the second option, which we termed endless infinite extension and endless eternal duration respectively, appeared to fit equally well with Spinoza's definition of "infinite." Upon closer examination, it was discovered that the argument for the indivisibility of substance, which we considered for infinite extension, fits better with endless infinite extension.

The option of dividing infinite extension into two finite parts does not work well with limited infinite extension, since it certainly seems that a measurable quantity of extension could be divided with the two parts equaling the whole. Endless infinite extension fits better, because two finite parts, no matter how large they may be, can never add together to equal an extended universe which is unmeasurable.

The case for endless infinite extension is strong, but the case for the endless eternal duration is even stronger. In addition to the indivisibility argument, a strong argument can be

made that limited eternal duration violates Spinoza's causal axiom while endless eternal duration does not. Endless eternal duration avoids violating the causal axiom as there are no effects without causes or causes without effects. The case for endless eternal duration and thus the endless interpretation of "infinite" was further strengthened by considering Melamed, who pointed out that infinite modes are supposed by Spinoza to be eternal in the sense that they are everlasting – which lines up with endless eternal duration. Now, let us return to our examination of eternal super necessitarianism and expansive super necessitarianism.

Eternal super necessitarianism involves the actualization of all nomological possibilities over the course of time. It was determined that an effective, but not actual, resetting of the causal order was needed to make the workings of eternal super necessitarianism more plausible. How exactly an effective but not actual resetting of the causal order might occur is beyond our understanding, though we decided that an endless eternal timeline would greatly facilitate the mysterious reset process. The endless interpretation of infinite has been determined to be Spinoza's likely view, and that establishes endless eternal duration as the model to use for the eternal timeline.

Expansive super nessitarianism, on the other hand, involves the actualization of all nomological possibilities over the vast reaches of the extended universe. It was determined that the effective, but not actual, existence of multiple separate causal orders was needed to make expansive super necessitarianism viable. As in the case of the effective resetting of the causal order, the effective multiple separate causal orders are the result of some mysterious process. The plausibility of such a mysterious process is increased since endless infinite extension was determined to be the most likely interpretation of infinite extension.

The situation we are faced with at the end of our inquiry involves roughly equivalent plausibility for eternal and expansive super necessitarianism. Both rely on mysterious processes to work and both processes were determined to be more plausible because the terms "infinite" and "eternal" were found to most likely be used in the endless sense in Spinoza's system.

Before deciding between eternal and expansive super necessitarianism it is important to remember that we determined super necessitarianism to be proper for Spinoza's system not on the basis of the plausibility of any particular type of super necessitarianism. Rather, super necessitarianism was found to be appropriate for Spinoza's system due to considerations which were covered in chapter 6 and largely revolved around IP17 which states that God creates everything that He understands. Since the acceptance of super necessitarianism in some form was determined by other factors, our task in the current chapter is to decide which general form of super necessitarianism is most plausible.

The choice has come down to eternal and expansive super necessitarianism. We now have to determine whether it is more plausible for nomological actualities to be spread out widely in time and produced by effective resets of the causal order, or whether it is more plausible for nomological actualities to be spread widely in the extended universe and produced by the effective existence of multiple separate causal orders.

Any difference in plausibility between the two remaining forms of super necessitarianism would probably have to be determined as best as possible by attempting to determine which way of producing all nomological actualities would most likely work – effective resetting of the causal order or effective multiple causal orders. We could dig in Spinoza's writings to attempt to find clues as to which form of super necessitarianism he is likely to have preferred and, no doubt

combined with a fair amount of speculation, we might be able to construct a case for the preference of one form of super necessitarianism over the other. There is, however, a better way.

The better way is to not decide at all between the two. We can accept both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism as the forms of super necessitarianism which best fit in Spinoza's system. Both eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, or perhaps it would be better to say a blend of the two, account for all nomological actualities in the universe. Before fully accepting this conclusion, we must first consider a couple of difficulties with the blending.

The first difficulty with which we must contend is that we are trying to blend two different forms of super necessitarianism which are, in fact, significantly different. Eternal super necessitarianism relies on the vast expanses of time to account for the existence of all the nomological actualities with effective resets of the causal order. Expansive super necessitarianism, on the other hand, relies on the vast reaches of space and the effective existence of multiple separate causal orders.

Eternal and expansive super necessitarianism rely on dissimilar mechanisms with one rooted in time and the other rooted in space. However, the dissimilarity does not prevent any blending of the two. While it is true that the two forms of super necessitarianism are significantly dissimilar, it does not follow that the two are incompatible. In fact, the significant dissimilarity actually makes the two more compatible.

Time and extension are both infinite in the endless sense so the mysterious mechanisms behind eternal and expansive super necessitarianism are easier to accept. It might initially be thought that the two mechanisms are not compatible since the one for eternal focuses on an effective reset of the causal order and the one for expansive focuses on effective multiple causal

orders. However, a moment's reflection will reveal the two mechanisms to be fully compatible, or at least potentially fully compatible as we do not understand the workings of the mechanisms.

The two mechanisms might be incompatible if the one for eternal super necessitarianism actually reset the causal order and the one for expansive super necessitarianism actually produced multiple separate causal orders. The periodic resetting of the causal order could interfere with the multiple separate causal orders, at least presuming that the reset affected all the multiple causal orders. However, since the causal order is not actually reset and the multiple separate causal orders do not actually exist, the potential incompatibility is avoided and it appears the two mechanisms are at least potentially compatible.

The compatibility of the two mechanisms cannot be ascertained with any certainty, since both mechanisms are beyond our understanding. The two mysterious mechanisms could be incompatible due to interactions which we could not understand, but it seems reasonable to suppose that the two mechanisms are compatible. After all, nothing suggests that there would be utter incompatibility between the two mechanisms – the two mechanisms will probably work differently together than alone, but it does not seem the two would be incompatible.

Spinoza's universe is infinite in the endless sense in extension, time, and attributes. Concentrated super necessitarianism, though it has the needed prerequisite in endlessly infinite attributes, will not work for the simple reason that we would expect all the nomological actualities to be extended. Concentrated super necessitarianism, or rather endless attributes, basically fills the role of expanding the diversity of the things produced by God.

Conclusion

Spinoza's stance on necessitarianism and the allowance of ideas of possibilities has been determined to strike a balance between the two and go beyond both. Necessitarianism becomes super necessitarianism and includes everything that is consistent with the laws of nature. Possibilities, at least in the nomological sense, do not exist because anything that can exist does exist. There is also no room left for ideas of nomological possibilities since everything of which there can be an idea is actualized.

The only possibilities of any sort in Spinoza's system are those possibilities for which he directly makes allowance, namely doxastic or epistemological possibilities. Doxastic possibilities consist in a lack of knowledge on our part wherein we think a finite mode may or may not exist because we are not aware of all the preceding causes. If we were aware of all the preceding causes, then we would know for certain whether a particular finite mode exists or does not exist. The only possibilities Spinoza allows, then, are due to defects in our knowledge.

The ideas of possibilities which we seem to have are due to our imaginations seemingly fusing ideas together, such as the apparent idea of a unicorn which is really just an idea of a horse and an idea of a horn apparently merged together in our imaginations. We fail to notice that the idea of the horse and the idea of the horn are not really one idea since we ignore the differences between the extended finite modes which are the objects of the ideas that are seemingly fused together in the imagination.

The apparent ideas of possibilities are thus merely constructs of our imagination and do not reflect ideas of things that can actually exist in the world – so we are left with apparent ideas

of the imagination and possibilities which we consider to be possible only due to defects in our knowledge. The apparent ideas of the imagination are composed of ideas that appear to have been fused together, though the fusion is only in a metaphorical sense – the ideas that compose the metaphorical fusion are true ideas, it's just that we fail to notice that the ideas do not really go together. Such is the state of possibility in Spinoza's metaphysics. We will momentarily return to nomological possibilities to see if they can be modified and recast in a different role, but for now let us consider how the blend of eternal and expansive super necessitarianism helps to make better sense of some of the arguments we considered in chapters 2 – 5.

Final Thoughts

Garrett presented as one of his arguments the idea that Spinoza has a standard of perfection to which the actual set of finite modes has to conform. Since only one set of finite modes conforms to the standard of perfection, that set of finite modes necessarily exists. Considering Garrett's argument again under eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, we can see Garrett was in fact right, though not in the manner which he thought.

The actual set of finite modes does conform to a standard of perfection, at least perfection in the sense of completeness. The actual set of finite modes is complete for the simple reason that no more finite modes can exist – everything that is consistent with the laws of nature actually exists. Since the actual set of finite modes is complete, it conforms to the standard of perfection. The standard of perfection as completeness is still something of an empty standard since no other sets of finite modes exist with which to compare the actual set. Still, perfection as

completeness does constitute something of a standard of perfection and the actual set of finite modes conforms to the completeness standard, so Garrett's argument is partly correct.

Koistinen's argument for superessentialism was considered in chapter 3 and involves every aspect of God being essential to God. In other words, nothing can be changed about God, including attributes, infinite modes, and finite modes, because any change would result in a substance that is not God. The most crucial part of superessentialism is the part about the finite modes – not a single finite mode can be added, omitted, or changed without God ceasing to be God. Every finite mode is essential to God being God and so every finite mode is necessary.

A problem for the view of superessentialism resulting from the requirement that all finite modes that do exist are necessary because they are included within God's essence is that there is no explanation as to why one set of finite modes exists as opposed to another set of finite modes. The strong version of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) that we have interpreted Spinoza to hold requires that everything that exists requires an explanation for why it exists and everything that does not exist requires an explanation for why it does not exist.

The view of superessentialism, then, appears to violate the strong PSR by lacking an explanation as to why the actual set of finite modes exists and why a different set of finite modes does not exist. The model of super necessitarianism which we have accepted, the model combining eternal and expansive super necessitarianism, helps get partially around the problem of violating the strong PSR by eliminating any potential alternate sets of finite modes that could exist – all the finite modes consistent with the laws of nature exist.

The view of superessentialism in the context of the eternal and expansive super necessitarianism model works in Spinoza's metaphysics for basically the same reason as a

standard of perfection exists – no finite mode can be added, omitted, or changed for the simple reason that all the finite modes that can exist actually do exist. No finite modes can be omitted by definition, and no finite modes can be added since all the finite modes that can exist do exist. As for changing any of the finite modes, any change would result in an alternate nomological actuality, and all the nomological actualities exist, so no finite modes can be changed either. The view of superessentialism works in the context of the eternal and expansive super necessitarianism model, though it does not demonstrate necessitarianism as Koistinen thought, but rather is a result of super necessitarianism.

The model of super necessitarianism which we have accepted does partially avoid the problem of violating the strong PSR as the view of superessentialism does, but the problem of violating the strong PSR is not avoided totally. No longer is there a problem of a lack of explanation for the existence of the actual set of finite modes and the nonexistence of any alternate sets, but a similar problem still arises. The problem now becomes one of having no explanation for why the configuration of finite modes along the endless timeline and through the endless extended universe is the way it is and not any different. For a simple illustration, let us return to the car example.

Let us assume that the black car exists in the present on Earth while the red car exists 30,000 years in the future in another galaxy. There is no explanation as to why the red car does not exist in the present on Earth instead of the black car or, for that matter, why the red car does not exist 60,000 years in the future or in the same galaxy as the black car. There are innumerable variations for both the black and red cars and there is no explanation for the specific spatiotemporal location of any variation. A partial explanation does exist in that the laws of nature determine when the black and red car will exist in combination with the preceding causes

in the causal order, but then the problem simply becomes one of having no explanation for why the causal order is ordered the way it is and not some other way.

The lack of explanation for the spatiotemporal location of finite modes brings us back to an issue which we have discussed earlier, namely that Spinoza must allow for at least some things that lack an explanation. For instance, God's essence is the way it is and there really is no further explanation that can be offered. In similar fashion, the spatiotemporal order of the finite modes in the view of super necessitarianism can be viewed in a similar way in that the spatiotemporal location of finite modes is simply a necessary truth[167] much like God's essence. Thus the view of super necessitarianism suffers from the same problem as the view of superessentialism, though it is a lesser problem due to the fact that at least super necessitarianism does not clash with IP17.

A significant problem for Curley and Walski involves the parallelism doctrine and where ideas of nomological possibilities would fit in Spinoza's metaphysics. The view of super necessitarianism does, however, avoid the problem resulting from the parallelism doctrine. The problem for Curley and Walski is that they have difficulty locating nomological possibilities in Spinoza's metaphysics, and in particular harmonizing nomological possibilities with the doctrine of parallelism. Unless they wish to deny the parallelism doctrine, it appears that there can be no ideas of possibilities since any ideas of nomological possibilities would have no matching extended object in the extended causal order. In other words, ideas of nomological possibilities can't exist in the context of the parallelism doctrine since any idea in the causal order of ideas

[167] Both God's essence and the exact spatiotemporal configuration of the finite modes in the causal order lack explanations so we are adopting the term of "necessary truth."

has to have its matching object in the extended causal order and ideas of nomological possibilities could not have any matching object.

The view of super necessitarianism, on the other hand, has no problem with the parallelism doctrine due to the fact that there are no ideas of nomological possibilities for the simple reason that there are no nomological possibilities. Only nomological actualities exist, and nomological actualities have both an extended thing in the extended causal order and the idea of that extended thing in the causal order of ideas. Thus there is no problem with the parallelism doctrine as there is for Curley and Walski.

Miller's view of nomological possibility, first introduced in chapter 5, led us straight to super necessitarianism. When considered with IP17, it turns out that nomological possibility should really be nomological actuality, meaning that everything allowable under the laws of nature exists somewhere at some point in time.

Nomological possibility, as Miller presents it with alternate finite modes that the laws of nature would have permitted to exist given the requisite preceding causes, is misnamed because IP17 explicitly states that God creates everything He understands. The natural conclusion is that God understands everything allowable by the laws of nature, which are nomological possibilities. Since God can understand all the nomological possibilities,[168] God creates all the nomological possibilities, making the term nomological actualities more accurate.

[168] It is important to remember that we are only using the term "nomological possibilities" when discussing God for the simple fact that we lack a better term. The parallelism doctrine would block God from understanding nomological possibilities because there would be no ideas of nomological possibilities to understand – since no nomological possibilities exist in the extended causal order, there would be no ideas of nomological possibilities in the causal order of ideas. However, since we accept the view of super necessitarianism in which there are only nomological actualities and no nomological possibilities, this problem does not arise for us.

Miller's version is not viable, but a modified version of nomological possibility can be useful. Let us recall that we were led to conclude that Miller's version of nomological possibility is the flip side of the coin of doxastic possibility from a human perspective since both are based upon some form of ignorance. Nomological possibility as a complement to doxastic possibility means that we can imagine different outcomes based upon what the laws of nature allow under certain circumstances. Now that we have discovered super necessitarianism to be the proper interpretation of Spinoza's stance on necessity vs possibility, we can cast nomological possibility in a different light.

Nomological possibilities recast as a complement to doxastic possibility would work in such a way that we are aware what the laws of nature would allow if the preceding causes were different. In addition, we lack the knowledge that the requisite preceding causes exist somewhere, whether it be at some point on the timeline or at some point in the extended universe. Since we are unaware that the needed requisite causes actually exist for all the finite modes consistent with the laws of nature but not present to us, we consider the finite modes to which we have no access to be nomological possibilities instead of what they are, namely nomological actualities.

The recast form of nomological possibility allows us to be aware, at least in some sense, of the existence of nomological actualities beyond those with which we come into direct contact. Direct contact does not necessarily mean that each of us literally has to come into contact with the nomological actuality via our senses. Direct contact could mean that someone else has come into contact with the nomological actuality via their senses or that we can accumulate sufficient evidence to be relatively sure that a particular nomological actuality existed at some point – such as determining a particular finite mode existed via archeological discovery.

Any nomological actuality with which we either have contact with our senses or some other form of evidence are not subject to the form of nomological possibility which we are discussing. Rather we are considering the nomological actualities to which we have no access whatsoever – they are so separated from us in time or space that we cannot gather any sort of evidence that they exist. Any awareness of nomological actualities beyond our ability to gather any evidence comes solely from our knowledge of what finite modes are consistent with the laws of nature. We are aware of the myriad of variations the laws of nature allow with the needed requisite preceding causes in the causal order. The awareness of what the laws of nature allow does not give us the knowledge that all the variations exist – that knowledge comes from the line of reasoning we pursued starting with IP17 in Spinoza's metaphysics – but it does allow us awareness of what variations there could be. What we lack is the knowledge that the requisite preceding causes are present at some point in time and space in the causal order, at least beyond the knowledge gleaned from our reasoning concerning IP17 and nomological possibilities.

Nomological possibility, recast as a complement to doxastic possibility, thus is similar to doxastic possibility in that it deals with a defect in our knowledge, namely a defect in our knowledge concerning the existence of preceding causes somewhere or sometime in the causal order which produce particular nomological actualities. The recast nomological possibility conforms also to the requirement of nomological possibility that involves knowledge of what is allowable under the laws of nature.

As a complement to doxastic possibility the recast nomological possibility involves a lack of knowledge, but whereas doxastic possibility usually involves partial knowledge concerning the existence of requisite preceding causes, recast nomological possibility involves total

ignorance of the existence of requisite preceding causes. Nomological possibility is thus a complement to doxastic possibility but still is distinct from doxastic possibility.

Nomological possibility, recast as a complement of doxastic possibility, plays the important role of allowing us to be aware of the existence of nomological actualities that are beyond our ability to gather any evidence – we can be somewhat aware of nomological actualities beyond those with which we have direct contact. We consider nomological actualities beyond our direct experience to be nomological possibilities due to a lack of knowledge.

The interpretation of Spinoza which relies on eternal and expansive super necessitarianism presents us with a universe in which all the finite modes consistent with the laws of nature exist at some point in the endless universe and at some point on the endless timeline. Super necessitarianism resolves problems presented by the various views on necessitarianism and nomological possibilities we have considered in these pages. Some views are correct at some level but fail to embrace the fullness of the view we determined Spinoza to have, that of super necessitarianism.

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