

**SPINOZA'S NOMOLOUS MONISM:
A Comparison of Spinoza and Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Mind**

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By

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I defend the model of philosophy of mind, which is inspired by my reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*. The model bears certain similarities with Donald Davidson's anomalous monism (AM), but is distinct insofar as it can solve problems plaguing Davidson's AM. I achieve this in three chapters. In the first chapter I offer my model for philosophy of mind inspired by my understanding of Spinoza. I claim that the only possible way for creating a coherent model for philosophy of mind out of Spinoza's theoretical framework is to speculate that, among anything else, Spinoza's system is an epistemological theory of true causal explanations of the world, which I named nomolous monism (NM). Then I defend Nomolous Monism against alternative interpretations. In the second chapter I bring Davidson to the discussion by identifying his reading of Spinoza's philosophy of mind with Nomolous Monism. Then I analyze Davidson's Anomalous Monism and I reply to its possible objections. Finally, in the third chapter I compare Nomolous Monism with Anomalous Monism. I argue that Nomolous Monism has the potential to overcome certain objections plaguing anomalous monism, while also discussing certain advantages that Davidson's Anomalous Monism possesses.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Dr. Peter Neznik from Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice, Slovakia.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Spinoza believed that absolutely all world events (including mental and physical events) occur in causally deterministic processes; so true sciences, which explain causal processes of the world events, must also be strictly causal. Hence, the science of philosophy of mind, which studies causal relations between mind and body, should be also strictly causal. In times of fervent philosophical discussions about the best scientific method, Spinoza argued that philosophy of mind should adopt the deductive method to study psycho-physical processes. The deductive method is such that conclusions are deduced from premises; so to understand the conclusion, one must understand the premises. Spinoza advocated for the deductive method in his book entitled *On the Improvement of the Understanding*. However, Spinoza put the deductive method into practice in another book entitled *Ethics*. The *Ethics* is written in the form of tractatus, where definitions of key terms, followed by axioms, lay bases for propositions, where one proposition is logically deduced from the other. *Ethics* is a mysterious work in the sense that it is difficult to accurately interpret, mainly because Spinoza seems to comment on many diverse topics at once: *Ethics* discusses the existence of god, the metaphysical determinism of causal events in the world, the analysis of emotions and passions, the theory of morality, the (non)existence of freedom in the deterministic world, and philosophy of mind. But the pool of topics is not limited to those listed above, and one might also find in *Ethics* explicit and implicit discussions of topics such as human happiness or virtues. Nevertheless, it is Spinoza's position on philosophy of mind, that is the main concern of this thesis.

In the vast scholarly commentary on Spinoza, the phrase 'Spinoza's philosophy of mind' is one of the most cited phrases, but the meaning of the phrase is dissimilar among authors (I

present a sample of diverse readings of Spinoza in the third section of the first chapter). I think that the reason for this is that Spinoza's *Ethics* does not present any model for philosophy of mind that would be coherent and developed fully enough for one to create a clear picture about Spinoza's position. *Ethics* certainly contains propositions explicitly debating psycho-physical causations, but the number of relevant propositions is quite limited. If we put the relevant propositions together, they might not be adequate to provide a complete model of his philosophy of mind, and they might even be inconsistent. Optionally, in order to make an assumption about Spinoza's model of philosophy of mind, we can expand the interpretative analysis of the text of *Ethics* to other philosophical issues present in the text that could clarify Spinoza's position on philosophy of mind. This is what this chapter attempts to do; it analyzes *Ethics* and it identifies principles that support the specific model for philosophy of mind. The goal is to make the model coherent, so my model argues for a coherent reading of the principles found in *Ethics*. Yet, I acknowledge that Spinoza's philosophical intentions with his theoretical principles might be different from the model for philosophy of mind that I present, because it is possible that the principles present in Spinoza's text could be unrelated to problems of philosophy of mind. Also, it is possible that Spinoza's own approach to the problems in the philosophy of mind could be different from the model that I present. For these reasons, rather than calling the model presented here by the title of 'Spinoza's model', I prefer to call it a 'Spinozistic model'. Therefore, since Spinoza does not explicitly provide the complete and coherent model for philosophy of mind, whether my model based on Spinoza's theoretical principles is Spinoza's actual position is the matter of interpretative speculation and probability.

In all cases, I attempt to prove my reading of Spinoza's principles by a direct textual support. For instance, in the case of Spinoza's substance monism, which is broadly seen as

ontological monism (i.e., an idea that the external world is metaphysically monistic), I argue that in the relation to his philosophy of mind, Spinoza thought of substance monism epistemologically. The ontological reading of substance monism presents a hypothesis that the external world is in some sense monistic; and the epistemological reading of substance monism presents a hypothesis that there is a scenario of full, monistic, understanding of world causalities and events. An advocate of the metaphysical approach to *Ethics* will disagree with the epistemological reading of substance monism; but I ask my readers to be patient, for if I am right, Spinoza`s monism could have a twofold meaning. The Twofold meaning means that in *Ethics* substance monism is metaphysical in Spinoza`s approach to metaphysics, and substance monism is also epistemological in Spinoza`s approach to the theory of knowledge and to philosophy of mind. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that Spinoza has never explicitly posed any of the five theoretical principles that I identify. I derive all five principles from the text interpretatively (i.e., abstractly).

To start with, in this chapter I argue that Spinoza`s *Ethics* establishes five principles (substance monism, conceptual dualism, strict determinism, mode identity and parallelism) and that the model for philosophy of mind that can be coherently drawn from these principles is an epistemological model of causal explanations based on the deductive method. I call this model Nomolous Monism (NM). The name ‘nomolous’ should indicate that contrarily to Donald Davidson`s anomalous monism, where mental explanations are anomalous and hence free, on NM mental explanations are as strict and causal as physical explanations. The chapter consists of three sections. The first section provides textual support for five principles that underlie Spinoza`s theoretical framework. In this section I explain in detail how NM deals with the first three principles, namely substance monism, conceptual dualism and strict determinism. The second section then shows how NM complies with the remaining two principles, namely mode identity

(i.e. identity thesis) and parallelism. In the third section I introduce alternative interpretations of Spinoza's philosophy of mind, and I defend my nomolous monist inspired by my reading of Spinoza.

1.1 Spinoza's Five Principles

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate five principles underlying Spinoza's philosophy of mind and to describe how the first three principles comply with NM. A part of this demonstration is a detailed discussion on the difference between ontological and epistemological reading of the principles. As I explain, the ontological reading leads to the speculation that Spinoza's philosophy of mind discusses psycho-physical causal processes between mind and body in a metaphysical sense; and the epistemological reading leads to the speculation that Spinoza's philosophy of mind discusses only the correct *way of explaining* these psycho-physical processes between mind and body in a conceptual sense. The difference is technical, but important: speaking or reading ontologically (in a metaphysical sense) means that it is intended that the matter of speaking or reading refers to something really existing in the world; but speaking or reading epistemologically (in a conceptual sense) means that the matter serves as an *explanation* of something really existing but it is not intended that the explanation necessarily and explicitly denotes anything really existing. Hence, since philosophy of mind discusses processes between both mind and body, the ontological reading of Spinoza's philosophy of mind would necessitate the interpretation that Spinoza believes in the ontological existence of both mind and body. But the epistemological reading of Spinoza's philosophy of mind means that even though Spinoza talks about mind and body, his propositions referring to mind and body do not amount to an argument that both mind and body really exist in the world. Yet, this does not mean that the epistemological reading denies the obvious fact that humans exist in the world. It rather means that the notions 'physical (i.e.

bodily) events' and 'mental (i.e. mind) events' are synonymous to 'physical explanations' and 'mental explanations' respectively. For instance, when explaining human behaviour, we can create either the notion of body or of mind (or both), and we can proceed with corresponding mental and physical explanations; but names 'body' and 'mind' are purely conceptual and what really exists is the human organism.

I argue that Spinoza's philosophy of mind could be an epistemological system of causal explanations of nature, which I call nomolous monism. NM is backed by the following five principles that appear in the theoretical framework of *Ethics*:

(1) *Substance Monism*: there is only one substance, called God or nature, which *is* one and the only universe.

(2) *Conceptual Dualism*: substance can be conceived through two different attributes, each attribute generating its own vocabulary.

(3) *Strict Determinism*: all that exists is determined by strict laws of nature.

(4) *Mode Identity*: explanatory particulars of the intelligible and the extended, mind and body, are one and the same thing.

(5) *Parallelism*: there are two causal chains of explanations, physical and mental, that run parallel in the way that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things."¹

Parallelism enforces a rule called trans-attributive causal ban, so there is a ban on psycho-physical causations. On NM, the trans-attributive causal ban means that premises from one vocabulary cannot support conclusions from different vocabulary. In the following five sub-sections I will explain and establish each of these five principles in relation to NM.

¹ Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, Trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 86.

1.1.1 Substance Monism

On NM substance monism is read epistemologically. The epistemological reading of substance monism means that substance monism is a hypothetical scenario that if some intellect knew everything that there is to know about the causality of the world up to the primary cause, the hypothetical scenario would in this sense provide an idea that the world is monistic (assuming that such knowledge is possible and true). This means that if some intellect knew everything about the world's causality up to the 'primary explanation' that adequately reflects the primary cause, it would be impossible to have a true explanation that is not a part of such an explanatory system of the monistic substance. Hence substance pluralism is impossible. Epistemological substance monism might seem as a philosophical fancy, since the scenario is highly improbable, but I think that, among anything else, it was important to Spinoza's theory of knowledge, for it ought to navigate sciences to the right direction. Epistemological substance monism should remind scientists that even though the world seems to be highly complex in its causal chains; in accordance to the deductive method, if we want to understand the world fully, we must seek an explanation of the primary cause. This entails that when explaining the effect, scientists must understand the cause. Epistemological substance monism reminds us that there somewhere is a primary cause, so a complete scientific investigation must follow the causality with an attempt to discover the primary cause (however impossible it might be).

With respect to substance monism, many interpreters argue that Spinoza establishes his monism in the late 2p7 of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza explicitly states that "substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute,

now through the other.”^{2,3} However, I believe that Spinoza establishes monism much sooner because it implicitly follows from 1p11 in the text. There he claims that God, as a substance consisting of infinite attributes, necessarily exists because by 1p7 existence belongs to the nature of substance. Monism follows from 1p11 if we consider what has been said earlier in both, 1d6, which states that God is absolutely infinite (i.e., consisting of infinite attributes), so contains in its essence whatever expresses reality; and 1p5, which states that there cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same attribute. If both 1d6 and 1p5 are true, monism follows. Spinoza himself argues in proposition 1p14 that “besides God no substance can be granted or conceived”⁴, referring to the logical implications from the propositions 1p11, 1d6 and 1p5.

More traditionally, 2p7 states that “substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other.”⁵ I claim that monism is established in 1p11 because only then it makes sense for Spinoza to claim in 1p15 that “besides God, no substance is granted or can be conceived.”⁶ He would not say so if he didn’t believe that he has already proven it. Additionally, that Spinoza understood 1p11 as a proof of substance monism is indicated by his introduction of 1p11, where he writes that “let him read the following propositions, which show that there is but one substance in the universe, and that it is absolutely infinite.”⁷

² Ibid., 86.

³ Since Spinoza’s *Ethics* is written in a form of tractatus, in my thesis I adopt a uniform and the most common citation form; for instance, in 1p23, the first number refers to the first part of *Ethics*, ‘p’ symbolizes a proposition, and the digit ‘23’ denotes the 23rd proposition of the first part of *Ethics*. ‘a’ standing for axiom or ‘d’ standing for definition may replace ‘p’ from the example.

⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, 54.

⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁷ Ibid., 51.

Substance monism is usually understood metaphysically. That is, substance monism generally means that the external world is metaphysically monistic. Hence the world is externally one. Meanwhile this could be true in relation to Spinoza's metaphysics, in what follows I will argue that in relation to Spinoza's philosophy of mind, substance monism could be essentially epistemological monism.

On my reading of Spinoza's epistemological system, Spinoza's 'attributes' (thought and extension) are (two) different ways of explaining the world; and Spinoza's 'modifications' are explanatory particulars that emerge when explaining the world. For instance, we can explain a human behaviour of a scared person in two ways: by referring to reasons-giving (i.e., under the attribute of thought) or by referring to neural firings (i.e., under the attribute of extension). In the first case, a particular reference to the idea of fear is a mental modification of substance; in the second case, a particular reference to the increased adrenalin level is physical modification of substance. The epistemological reading of substance monism has foundations in Spinoza's text. In 1p5 Spinoza argues that there cannot be two substances that share one attribute, and he does so on the assumption that in order for there to be two substances, they would need to be *distinguished* at first, either by the difference in their attributes or by the difference in their modifications. Spinoza then says that neither attributes nor modifications designate more than one substance. It is the word 'distinguish' that indicates that substance monism could be essentially epistemological monism. If we approach 1p5 with the epistemological reading of substance monism, 1p5 means that so long as we cannot distinguish two substances, we cannot know two substances. The same sentiment appears in 1p6, where Spinoza continues proving monism by the claim that one substance cannot cause another substance, "for, if substance be produced by an external cause, the knowledge of it

would depend on the knowledge of its cause, and it would itself not be substance.”⁸ One could argue that if 1p6 was meant ontologically, Spinoza’s proof would fail, since substance could be produced by an external cause that is not known. Thus, the cited proof of substance monism is valid only on the assumption that the causality is meant epistemologically. This means that when Spinoza talks about what is caused, he talks about what can be adequately known (through causal explanations), and when he talks about substance, he talks about the most basic concept of knowledge that does not need anything else for its full understanding.⁹ Notice that the epistemological reading of substance monism consistently follows from the conceptual definition of substance in 1d3: “by substance, I mean that which is in itself, and is *conceived* through itself: in other words, that of which a *conception* can be formed independently of any other conception.”¹⁰ If both substance monism and causality are meant epistemologically in accordance to the axiom 1a4, which states that “the knowledge of an effect depends on and involves the knowledge of a cause”,¹¹ Spinoza’s philosophy of mind is a model of causal explanations.

The epistemological monist reading of Spinoza means that at the centre of his philosophy of mind is not a metaphysical theory for ontologically causal events, but rather an epistemological theory for causal explanations of ontological events. Yet, I do not claim that it is impossible to read Spinoza’s propositions on substance monism and causality metaphysically; rather, I claim it is also possible to read Spinoza’s propositions epistemologically. I speculate that the reason for the possibility of twofold reading is that *Ethics* simultaneously comments, among others, on both:

⁸ Ibid., 48.

⁹ See definition of Substance: Ibid., 45.

¹⁰ Ibid. (Emphasis added)

¹¹ Ibid., 46.

theory of knowledge and metaphysics. The model for philosophy of mind that I present below is inspired by the epistemological reading of Spinoza's propositions.

Nomolous Monism (NM): NM means that if the human intellect accurately explains the whole causality of nature, it creates a mental understanding that nature is monistic (*epistemological substance monism*). The explanation can be given in two vocabularies (*conceptual dualism*) that present one and the same knowledge. Since names in each vocabulary amount to the knowledge about the same substance, in this sense these names are one and the same thing (*mode identity*). Since the explanations in both vocabularies follow the same concatenation of events, the explanations are parallel to each other (*epistemological parallelism*). Since the concatenation of events that explanations describe is strictly deterministic, there is no space for freedom in our explanations (*strict determinism*). Lastly, explanations in one vocabulary cannot provide a premise for explanations in a different vocabulary (*trans-attribute causal ban*). That is how substance monism, conceptual dualism, mode identity, and strict determinism hold together with epistemological parallelism and with the psycho-physical (i.e., trans-attribute) causal ban.

From this definition, four characteristics of nomolous monism are visible. First, nomolous monism assumes that since events occur in causal chains, true explanations of these events must reflect the causal structure of the world. The causal structure of the world is strictly deterministic. NM is thus only concerned with accurately mirroring the causal relations between events in the world, and it generates causal explanations when it accurately reflects causal relations between events in the world. Second, NM generates a system of true explanations and hence the model disregards any false explanations. I will explain and defend this view in the discussion below on 'discriminating against inadequate ideas'. Third, NM can hypothetically generate a full explanatory system of all causal relations between events, so nomolous monism opens up an

epistemic access to the ‘primary cause/event’, which Spinoza calls substance (i.e., God); so NM is a model of substance monism. Fourth, on NM particular explanations refer to particular names denoting particular things, which Spinoza calls modifications of substance. For example, the explanation ‘fire causes smoke’ refers to the particular names ‘fire’ and ‘smoke’, which in turn refer to the fire and the smoke that exist in the world, where there obtains a causal relation between fire and smoke such that fire causes smoke. In this respect, modifications are adjectival predicates of substance.

The epistemological reading of substance monism can be challenged. Plausibly, Spinoza in 1p5 indicates the ontological reading of substance monism. The proposition 1p5 states that since two substances cannot be distinguished, they cannot exist ‘in the universe’. Spinoza does not state that since two substances cannot be distinguished, they cannot exist in ‘mind’ or ‘idea’; but he uses the word ‘universe’. This indicates that Spinoza, at least in some sense, speaks in 1p5 metaphysically. Yet, I think that there exists a way to achieve both: preserving the metaphysical reading, and yet, defending epistemological reading, and so I think that one can argue that the meaning of 1p5 is twofold.

One can preserve the metaphysical reading when reading those propositions of *Ethics* that relate to Spinoza’s metaphysical system. But one can defend the epistemological reading when one is interested in Spinoza’s theory of knowledge. When employing the epistemological reading (i.e., starting with the assumption that the epistemological reading is true), one possible way of explaining Spinoza’s phrase ‘in the universe’ is that Spinoza here simply stretches the epistemological theory to ontology. Incidentally, this is what my model of nomolous monism does: I argue that 1p5 completes the stretch from epistemology to ontology by adopting what some

interpreters call the discrimination against inadequate (i.e. false) ideas.¹² Inadequate (false) ideas are explanations of the ontological causality that do not adequately or accurately reflect reality. Hence, they are inaccurate explanations. Adequate (true) ideas are accurate explanations of the ontological causality. The discrimination against inadequate ideas means that Spinoza does not discuss inadequate ideas, but rather he discusses only adequate ideas (i.e. true explanations), and that is why we can legitimately think that his NM generates true propositions about how the world is. The discrimination against inadequate ideas could explain why Spinoza wrote that there is only one substance not only in mind but also in the universe. If taken radically, the discrimination renders epistemological substance monism identical to ontological substance monism. This is not because both kinds of monism are one and the same thing, but because, given that NM is a model of all possible true propositions; within this model, it is senseless (if not impossible) to assume anything ontologically existent that is not epistemologically conceived. That epistemology is identical to ontology is a strong claim; but as far as I can see, only such oversimplification defends my epistemological reading of the text and explains the subsequent textual stretch from epistemology to ontology. The claim means that adequate (i.e. true) ideas are a perfect image of metaphysical events.

The doctrine of the discrimination against inadequate ideas is not an instance of idealism, for what exists ontologically does not depend on our adequate knowledge of it. There is no relation of dependence, but a relation of assurance. The assurance is that if the causal explanation accurately explains causal relations between events, causal explanation adequately reflects the actual ontological causality. NM is not idealistic because it does not deny that there are false

¹² The discrimination against inadequate ideas is fully explained by Jonathan Bennett. See: Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, (The Unites States of America: Hackett Publishing Company, 1984), 128.

explanations; yet, since NM does not discuss false explanations, it is a model of ideal true explanations. Only on this level are we correct in calling the model ‘idealistic’ (or, perhaps, ‘ideal’). On this model, we can imagine a scenario that if our examination follows the causality of nature up to its primary cause (God), our examination creates a mental understanding that the caused nature is in some sense monistic. In this sense, the scenario is the scenario of substance monism. This is due to two facts: first, in the scenario, a full explanation of anything in nature finds God as a primary cause. Second, in the scenario, the knowledge of effect depends on the knowledge of cause. In fact, since events are caused by prior events, this is a scenario of the only possible complete knowledge of nature; substance monism is a logical consequence of such examination.

The examination method is deduction that Spinoza introduced in his *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, where he explains: “It is evident that, in order to reproduce in every respect the faithful image of nature, our mind must deduce all its ideas from the idea which represents the origin and source of the whole of nature, so that it may itself become the source of other ideas.”¹³ The examination based on the deductive method leads Spinoza to distinguishing between an active nature (*natura naturans*) and a passive nature (*natura naturata*).

By nature *viewed* as active we should understand that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself, or those attributes of substance, which express eternal and infinite essence, in other words (Prop. xiv., Coroll. i., and Prop. xvii., Coroll. ii.) God, in so far as he is considered as a free cause. By nature *viewed* as passive I understand all that which follows from the necessity of the nature of God, or of any of the attributes of God, that is, all the modes of the attributes of God, in so far as they are considered as things which are in God, and which without God cannot exist or be conceived.¹⁴

¹³ Benedict Spinoza, *On the improvement of understanding*, Transl. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 16.

¹⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, 68-69. (Emphasis added)

Consequently, when discussing Spinoza's epistemological theory, the difference between epistemology and ontology in Spinoza is simple. Epistemology is a sphere of explanations (i.e., reasons) for events, where a thinking mind is required to undertake the explaining; ontology is a sphere of metaphysical causality of events that occur regardless of whether they are perceived or conceived by a thinking mind. In the cited passage above, notice that the use of the emphasized word 'viewed' could support the epistemological reading by restricting the proposition to what is conceived or understood as passive and active nature; this implies that when active and passive natures are imagined, they do not necessarily exist beyond that imagination. In other words, Spinoza's distinguishing between the two natures does not only mean that there exist two natures; It could also mean that if we examine the causality of things in nature to their cause of origin, we shall find that they have one primary cause (*natura naturans*) of which they are mere accidents (*natura naturata*). If this is true, that *natura naturata* 'is in God' means that God is an explanation for it. Therefore, the scenario would be once again a result of NM.

If NM is the actual Spinoza's position, because of the discrimination against false explanations, in Spinoza epistemological monism is identical to ontological monism in the sense that since epistemological explanations truly reflect ontological events, we can assume the state of ontological events from the explanations. If we follow the causality of natural order to its primary cause, we establish epistemological substance monism that is secondarily (or accidentally) ontological.

Consequently, in NM I hypothesize and transform Spinoza's substance monism to the monism with two characteristics. First, substance monism is essentially epistemological monism. Epistemological monism is a view that under the complete system of true explanations, the world is in the real sense one. This view follows from the mentioned scenario of the complete

examination of nature's causality. Epistemological monism is a logical consequence of such examination because the examination entails a mental understanding that everything is in some sense caused by the primary cause; and because due to the discrimination against false explanations, it is impossible that there is any true causal explanation that is not a part of NM. Hence, it is impossible that NM does not include all true explanations. Second, epistemological monism is on Spinoza's model identical to ontological monism, because on NM, it is senseless (if not impossible) to think about anything ontologically existent that is not epistemologically conceived. Therefore, substance monism that is not intended to have a meaning of ontological monism has from this simplistic epistemological perspective the ontological meaning after all.

1.1.2 Conceptual Dualism

The second principle, conceptual dualism, means that substance can be conceived through different attributes. Infinite intellect could conceive such substance through infinitely different attributes; however, human intellect is restricted to two attributes, thought and extension: "Thought is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking thing."¹⁵ (2p1) "Extension is an attribute of God, or God is an extended thing."¹⁶ (2p2) The famous claim for conceptual dualism from 2p7 states that "substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other. So also, a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, though expressed in two ways."¹⁷ This view, combined with my interpretation of substance monism as epistemological monism, entails that if perceived by a thinking mind, substance monism is conceptual dualism. To borrow an example from Spinoza, "A

¹⁵ Ibid., 83.

¹⁶ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷ Ibid., 86.

circle existing in nature, and the idea of a circle existing, which is also in God, are one and the same thing displayed through different attributes.”¹⁸ In other words, the circle perceived and the circle conceived grant one knowledge about the same object from two different perspectives. Therefore, on NM’s model of causal explanations, the attribute of extension and the attribute of thought are two different ways of explaining one modification of substance, and possibly one and the same substance.

Returning back to Spinoza’s text, there is also a question of the correlation between God’s intellect and human intellect, since both thought and extension through which a thinking mind approaches reality are attributes of both human and God’s intellect. I think that it is possible that in Spinoza human intellect is only a part of God’s intellect in the symbolic sense that human intellect conceives the world only in two ways, meanwhile there is an infinity of such ways. The best way to demonstrate this is by returning to the discussion on substance monism. The proposition proving substance monism in 1p14 states that “besides God no substance can be granted or conceived”,¹⁹ and the proof for it is that “if any substance besides God were granted, it would have to be *explained* by some attribute of God, and thus two substances with the same attribute would exist, which (by prop. 5) is absurd.”²⁰ The proof is drawn from two principles: first, in order for substances to be conceived, they must be explained exclusively through attributes; and second, God consists of all attributes. Therefore, given the first principle, if any substance besides God were granted, it would have to be explained through some attribute; and given the second principle, such substance would share the attribute with God, which is by 1p5

¹⁸ Ibid., 86-87.

¹⁹ Ibid., 54.

²⁰ Ibid., 54-55. (Emphasis added)

absurd.²¹ Therefore, if we accept both principles, there can be no more than one substance that is conceived. The above proof of substance monism is a perfect demonstration of how important the distinction between human and God's intellect is. The distinction serves as a reminder that while the human epistemological apparatus is restricted to two ways of explaining the nature, there are infinite different ways of explaining the nature that are not accessible to human intellect.

Now, when discussing the distinction between God's intellect and human intellect, we must be careful about the following point. We must be careful in considering the role of the word 'explained' from the 1p14 proof above. The word 'explained' could indicate that it is God's existence that directly depends on whether God is explained; however, this would trigger the metaphysical reading of 1p14 which is inconsistent with NM. In order to read 1p14 coherently with NM, in 1p14 it is not the existence of God, but the complete knowledge of God (i.e., Nature) that is granted when God is explained. Similarly, the proposition 1p16 states that "God is the efficient cause of all that can fall within the sphere of an infinite intellect."²² In order to make the proposition 1p16 coherent with NM, 1p16 must be read as a claim that whatever falls within the sphere of some infinite intellect suffices for it to be adequately explained (i.e., truly explained in accordance with the discrimination of false ideas, so the explanation reflects reality, and contains no false ideas). If we want to make NM coherent with both propositions, we must read the word 'explained' not in the sense that the explanation grants the existence of God, but rather in the sense that the explanation entails the conception of God. Since the 'that-clause' in 1p16 restricts the

²¹ 1p5 states and proves that "there cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same nature or attribute." *Ibid.*, 47.

proposition about the cases that have God for their efficient cause, when we employ the epistemological approach, the 1p16 does not state anything more than that whatever is conceived by an infinite intellect *can* be explained by saying ‘because God’. Yet to say ‘because God’ does not mean anything else but to refer to the strict causality of events. The use of the ‘that clause’ strongly indicates that Spinoza could be in 1p16 interested in what is comprehended or explained and that he does not attempt to talk about anything that is neither comprehended nor explained. If we also follow this reasoning behind what the ‘that clause’ indicates, it becomes clear that God has an explanatory character, not a metaphysical character. In other words, following the interpretation coherently with NM, it is the epistemological question of what is a correct and true explanation of conceived reality that Spinoza attempts to explain. Incidentally, this could even explain why he regularly adds a stipulation of the form ‘in so far it is conceived/explained/perceived’. If this is true, substance monism is epistemological monism in the sense that all possible ways of explanation conceive or grant one reality. What is the correlation between God’s intellect and the human intellect? From the interpretation of substance monism provided, the human intellect is only a part of God’s intellect in the sense that it conceives the world only in two ways, meanwhile there is an infinity of such ways. Interestingly, even though limited to two ways of describing, human intellect hypothetically can yet provide a complete knowledge of the world through causal explanations and thus can create the understanding that the world is monistic.

1.1.3 Strict Determinism

The strict determinism of nature is associated with Spinoza’s substance monism established in 1p11 and afterwards. Determinism belongs to the core of his system of causation from God to God’s modifications. In *Ethics*, traits of determinism start in 1p18 where Spinoza states:

God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things. Proof. – All things which are, are in God, and must be conceived through God (by Prop. xv.), therefore (by Prop. xvi., Coroll. i.) God is the cause of those things which are in him. This is our first point. Further, besides God there can be no substance (by Prop. xiv.), that is nothing in itself external to God. This is our second point. God, therefore, is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things. Q.E.D.²³

Later, in the corollary to 1p25, Spinoza states that “individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner.”²⁴ The strict determinism thesis immediately follows in the three succeeding propositions: Spinoza claims that

[1] a thing which is conditioned to act in a particular manner, has necessarily been thus conditioned by God; and that which has not been conditioned by God cannot condition itself to act [1p26]... [2] a thing, which has been conditioned by God to act in a particular way, cannot render itself unconditioned [1p27]... [3] every individual thing, or everything which is finite and has a conditioned existence, cannot exist or be conditioned to act, unless it be conditioned for existence and action by a cause other than itself, which also is finite and has a conditioned existence... and so on to infinity [1p28].²⁵

The text combines these three points before it leads to 1p29, which states that “nothing in the universe is contingent, but all things are conditioned to exist and operate in a particular manner by the necessity of the divine nature”²⁶ The effect of the principle of strict determinism on NM is that when NM establishes that Spinoza’s philosophy of mind is related to (or, even a result of) the epistemological theory of causal knowledge, which the discrimination of inadequate ideas suggests contains only true explanations, the true explanations must be strictly causal. So true mental explanations and true physical explanations must be causal explanations. Another effect of strict determinism is that NM denies the possibility that there is a freedom in the world. If the only true

²³ Ibid., 62.

²⁴ Ibid., 66.

²⁵ Ibid., 66-67.

²⁶ Ibid., 68.

knowledge is strictly causal, where the knowledge adequately reflects ontology, it is impossible that the ontology is free.

I must admit that some passages related to strict determinism are not coherent with NM. The initial proposition causes no problem: 1p18 can be read to state that all things which are, are in God, and *must be conceived* through God; God is the cause of those things *which are in him*. The 1p18 thus can be read coherently with NM to state in the epistemological sense that all things have God for their explanation, probably because all possible ways to explain those things are in God's intellect. However, since Spinoza starts 1p29 proposition by the phrase 'nothing in the universe is contingent' rather than by the phrase 'nothing in the explanation of the universe is contingent', it is undeniable that Spinoza here talks about what exists *per se*. In the proof of 1p29 Spinoza states that whatsoever is, is in God (which still can be understood explanatorily) and that since God is not contingent but necessary, the modes of God follow therefrom necessarily. Spinoza then states "further, God is not only the cause of these modes, in so far as they simply exist (by Prop. xxiv., Coroll.), *but also in so far as* they are considered as conditioned for operating in a particular manner."²⁷ The phrase 'but also' that introduces the view that God also serves as an explanation implies that what Spinoza mentioned beforehand was not meant explanatorily. If this is true, God strictly determines the caused modes with or without them being conceived. Ultimately, in 1p33 Spinoza commits himself to say that "things could not have been brought into being by God in any manner or in any order different from that which has in fact obtained."²⁸ That undoubtedly is a fact about how the world is metaphysically. I find it impossible to make these propositions coherent with NM; but as I mentioned at in the introduction, it is possible that NM is

²⁷ Ibid. (Emphasis added)

²⁸ Ibid., 70.

not necessarily Spinoza's position on philosophy of mind, or NM does not cohere with the whole of Spinoza's text, since the text comments on diverse, often metaphysical, topics.

Aside from this point, it is important to note that Spinoza's God is unlike common views of God. For Spinoza, God is not a person and has nothing in common with religion. Rather, God is nature; and therefore, is not free, for it itself is nothing more than the laws of nature that are adequately explained. Spinoza's God is a god of a philosopher who saw the world mechanically governed by physical laws. Consider the following passage:

Followers of religion "assigning final causes, have imported a new method of argument in proof of their theory – namely, a reduction, not to the impossible, but to ignorance; ... For example, if a stone falls from a roof on to someone's head, and kills him, they will demonstrate by their new method, that the stone fell in order to kill the man; for, if it had not by God's will fallen with that object, how could so many circumstances (and there are often many concurrent circumstances) have all happened together by chance? Perhaps you will answer that the event is due to the facts that the wind was blowing, and the man was walking that way. 'But why,' they will insist, 'was the wind blowing, and why was the man at that very time walking that way?' If you again answer, that the wind had then sprung up because the sea had begun to be agitated the day before, the weather being previously calm, and that the man had been invited by a friend, they will again insist: 'But why was the sea agitated, and why was the man invited at that time?' So they will pursue their questions from cause to cause, till at last you take refuge in the will of God – in other words, the sanctuary of ignorance. So, again, when they survey the frame of the human body, they are amazed; and being ignorant of the causes of so great a work of art, conclude that it has been fashioned, not mechanically, but by divine and supernatural skill.²⁹

God thus is an essential element in the strict determinism thesis. I believe that in Spinoza, god plays an important role in his revolutionary vision of strictly deterministic world for which he dares to provide an epistemological model. The role could be such that in our explanations, rather than taking a refuge in a sanctuary of ignorance (be it the 'will' of religious gods or the recourse to chance), we should investigate the causality of events. If we take Spinoza's stance and terminology that god is a primary cause, then the idea that god exists is an assurance that the search

²⁹ Ibid., 78.

of causal explanations is the only true epistemological model. In fact, strict determinism complies with both ontological and epistemological readings. The justification of the latter follows from NM that accurately reflects the former.

1.1.4 Mode Identity

Mode identity is especially relevant to NM. Mode identity is established in 2p7, which states that “substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance [i.e., substance monism], comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other [i.e., conceptual dualism]. *So also*, a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing [i.e., mode identity], though expressed in two ways.”³⁰ The best way to introduce what the mode identity means is to explain what Spinoza means by modes. If we follow the doctrine of NM, we can translate 2p7 as the claim that when we explain one and the same substance in two different ways, we create two kinds of vocabulary: abstract vocabulary and physical (i.e., concrete) vocabulary. Modes are then nothing more than explanatory particulars of each kind of vocabulary. Mode identity means that particulars are identical in the sense that they explain one and the same thing. For example, a reference to neural firings and to reasons explains one and the same behaviour.

There is a vital issue whether Spinoza’s physical modes are physical objects in the world in the sphere of ontology, or mental conceptions of physical objects in the sphere of epistemology. The stance on this issue decides whether NM, which is based on epistemological readings of principles, can argue that the principle of mode identity is ‘Spinoza’s principle’ or ‘Spinozistic’ principle’. If physical modes are the former, NM’s epistemological reading of mode identity (i.e., the reading that employs the latter option) is ‘Spinozistic’. I will deal with this issue in the next

³⁰ Ibid. 86.

section, where I provide my reasons for reading the physical modes and the whole of mode identity in epistemological manner.

1.1.5 Parallelism

Parallelism is stated in 2p7 in a famous claim: “the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things”.³¹ This means that there are two causal chains, mental and physical, that run in parallel. An important complement to parallelism is what is often called the trans-attribute causal ban from 3p2, which states that “body cannot determine mind to think, neither can mind determine body to motion or rest.”³² I do not list it as a sixth assumption, for I consider it to be a part of the principle of parallelism.

Similar to the mode identity, the question to ask is whether ‘Spinoza’s parallelism’ speaks about parallel causal chains of mental and physical events, or about parallel causal chains of mental and physical explanations. Thus, is parallelism meant ontologically or epistemologically? I address this question in the next section. On NM, parallelism is epistemological in the sense that if we explain one event or occurrence from two perspectives (and if in both we explain it accurately), for each and every explanatory particular from one vocabulary, there is a corresponding explanatory particular from second vocabulary, where both corresponding (parallel) explanatory particulars accurately explain one and the same occurrence. On NM, parallelism is not causal in the sense that it enforces causes of two kinds for one occurrence. It is causal in the sense that it enforces that causal explanations of two kinds can accurately explain one occurrence. On NM, the trans-causal ban means that an explanation citing physical vocabulary for the cause and mental vocabulary for the effect will fail to yield epistemologically accurate results.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 131. [Emphasis added]

In relation to NM, there is an interesting question of whether there should be a ban on trans-language explanations, even if such trans-language explanations were explaining a concatenation of mental events (the same ‘mental’ sphere). For example, does NM, in explaining John’s feeling of love for Jane ban a possible premise in German ‘John dachte an Jane’ (John thought of Jane) for a conclusion ‘John feels in love with Jane’, where both premise and conclusion are mental explanations? But NM does not discuss the trans-language explanatory ban, because it is concerned with the objective competence and the necessity of science to causally explain the world, rather than with subjective language skills to explain matters in various languages. Not much more can be added to this question, but I wish to remark that NM is inspired by Spinoza’s division of the world to rational or scientific explanations, rather than by the division of the world to languages.

In the next section I will deal with the question whether NM’s meaning of the principles of mode identity and of parallelism is similar to Spinoza’s meaning. For now, I hope that it is clear that all five principles have a textual support, and it was my intention to prove it.

1.2 Nomolous Monism and Epistemological Parallelism

In this section I explain how NM complies with the epistemological reading of mode identity and parallelism; and I will scrutinize whether NM’s reading of both principles could have enough textual support to identify it with Spinoza’s wording of both principles.

Since mind and body are in Spinoza modes, at first, I will look closely at how Spinoza defines modes. Spinoza does not provide a straightforward definition of mode, perhaps because it was too clear to him; however, the meaning can be inferred from his argumentation. By 2p1, thinking is one of many attributes of God and particular thoughts are modes “which in a certain

conditioned manner, *express* the nature of God.”³³ By 2p2, “extension is [also] an attribute of God,”³⁴ and by the previously mentioned corollary of 1p25, “individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are *expressed* in a fixed and definite manner.”³⁵ For example, when explaining John’s being in love with Jane, a reference to John’s thought of Jane is a mode of thought but a reference to John’s level of oxytocin is a mode of extension. Hence both individual things and individual thoughts are modes (modifications of attributes). That particular thoughts are conceptual is clear from the text; and if I am right in putting an interpretative emphasis on the word ‘expressed’, particular things are also conceptual. On NM, since both attributes (i.e., thinking and extension) are two ways of explaining God (thus Nature), and since the sphere of explaining is conceptual, both individual things and particular thoughts are explanatory and conceptual particulars of either abstract or physical (i.e., concrete) vocabulary. Therefore, if we follow this line of reasoning, the difference between individual things and individual thoughts is that they belong to different kinds of vocabulary, since the former are names that denote things in the physical world and the latter are names that denote things in the abstract world. This means that on NM, Spinoza’s phrase ‘individual things’ is actually read as ‘ideas of individual things’. Accordingly, modes are names that denote particulars in either physical or intelligible vocabulary. Names (i.e. modes) denoting ideas of physical particulars denote variations of physical vocabulary, where certain parts are thin and thick (where thin and thick stand for much more complex predicates). Names (i.e. modes) denoting abstract particulars denote variations of intelligible vocabulary. This might seem like an idealism, for if the text talks about physical vocabulary and not about the physical world, it might appear that the text

³³ Ibid., 83. (Emphasis added)

³⁴ Ibid., 84.

³⁵ Ibid., 66. (Emphasis added)

denies the physical world. But I think that Spinoza's text does not deny the existence of the physical world; rather, it simply does not discuss it, for what it discusses is the epistemological system of explaining the physical world. That Spinoza does not discuss the physical world does not mean that he denies it. If we speculate that Spinoza discusses the epistemological system of explaining the physical world, we must apply the epistemological reading of the function of the modes. The epistemological reading of the function of modes also offers a possible theory of what conceptualizes mass to particular objects. Accordingly, all objects in a room are one mass unless they are perceived by some observer, who makes from the mass particular modes. On NM, Human is also a part of the mass, but once human is epistemologically conceived, human is referred to either via mode of extension (i.e., the name 'body') or via mode of thinking (i.e., the name 'mind').

However, here I bend Spinoza's text a little, for he doesn't use the term 'name', but he rather uses more generally the word 'idea' to denote abstract particulars that are conceived and the word 'thing' to denote physical particulars that are perceived. Spinoza's use leaves the modes open to the ontological reading, for Spinoza's use of the word 'thing' could still imply physical objects and not names for physical objects. However, Spinoza's phraseology is not the only confusing thing. Later in the text, immediately before 2p7 that asserts parallelism and mode identity, the proposition 2p6 confuses the reading of modes even more, for it states that "things [that are] represented in ideas follow, and are derived from their particular attribute, in the same manner, and with the same necessity as ideas follow (according to what we have shown) from the attribute of thought."³⁶ Does Spinoza talk about things themselves or only about things that are 'represented' in ideas? In other words, does he mean by the word 'things' actual physical objects, or ideas of external objects that are perceived? The first part of 2p6 that-clause (i.e., *represented*

³⁶ Spinoza, *Ethics*, 86.

in ideas) suggests the second, but the ontological approach implies the first. To resolve this dilemma, I think that we can refer not only to the first, but also to the second part of the that-clause (i.e., *derived from their particular attribute*). Since attributes are different ways of explaining one substance, things and ideas that follow from their attributes must be no more than causal explanations of two different vocabularies. This goes in favour of the epistemological reading that is tied to Spinoza's substance-attribute-mode theoretical framework that is a part of nomolous monism. Notice that both 1p2 and 2p2 themselves, which begin Spinoza's treatment of mind-body interaction, and which generate the famous 2p7 statement of mind-body identity and parallelism, complies with NM as established earlier. Both 1p2 and 2p2 reiterate that thinking and extension are the two ways humans can access reality.

On my epistemological reading, Spinoza's philosophy of mind needs not be controversial. After all, when explaining the same human behaviour, neuroscientists refer to 'material things' such as neural firings, meanwhile cognitive psychologists refer to 'ideas' that might involve reasoning and decision-making. And I argue that 2p7 is not radical either. I think that if we follow my argument that Spinoza's text supports NM, then he must mean in both statements of 2p7 that *since* we can study the world from two different points of view, we can create two different vocabularies that in some sense grant the knowledge of one and the same thing. Therefore, even if our studies amount to causal explanations that belong to different vocabularies, since these causal explanations grant knowledge about one and the same thing, it is true that they explain one and the same thing from two different points of view; and since we study one and the same thing, causal explanations from either point of view reflect the same chain of events. That is how on NM the epistemological reading of substance monism holds conceptual dualism and mode identity together with parallelism.

What does then NM say about mind-body interaction if parallelism is understood epistemologically? First, it is imperative to remember that parallelism is epistemological in the sense that if we explain one event or occurrence from two perspectives (and if in both we explain it accurately), we explain one and the same thing. Parallelism is not causal in the sense that it enforces causes of two kinds for one occurrence. It is causal in the sense that it enforces that causal explanations of two kinds can accurately explain one occurrence. Second, it is imperative to realize that this does not prohibit us from explaining the occurrence from only one perspective! Third, it is imperative to note that the occurrence does not need to be explained at all. On this model, if we explain one and the same behaviour, we can approach it from either biological or psychological perspective (or both). Fourth, the trans-attribute causal ban means that an explanation citing physical vocabulary for the cause and mental vocabulary for the effect will fail to yield epistemologically accurate results.

Nevertheless, several of Spinoza's propositions call into question this interpretation of Spinoza, and so it could be that NM's reading of the principles is different from Spinoza's reading. First, Spinoza makes several propositions about 'what does the mind consists of' that invoke the ontological reading. Spinoza establishes by 2p12 that "whatsoever comes to pass in the object of the idea, which constitutes the human mind, must be perceived by the human mind."³⁷ The 'which-clause' indicates that Spinoza understood the mind as nothing else but the actual idea of some object; and this could still cohere with the epistemological approach. However, right after this, Spinoza establishes in 2p13 that "the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body... and nothing else."³⁸ This is proven by the assertion that "if there were any other object of the idea

³⁷ Ibid., 91.

³⁸ Ibid., 92.

constituting the mind besides body, then, as nothing can exist from which some effect does not follow (I. xxxvi.), there would necessarily have to be in our mind an idea, which would be the effect of that other object (II. xi.); but (II. Ax. v.) there is no such idea.”³⁹ From this it follows that the mind is the idea of the body.⁴⁰ Spinoza then starts up a series of arguments that lead to the claim that “the ideas, which we have of external bodies, indicate rather the constitution of our own body than the nature of external bodies.”⁴¹ This could mean, for instance, that when we look at a red patch, the idea of it indicates the constitution of our eyeball and of our neural structure, rather than the constitution of the red patch. But on NM, the idea should indicate the constitution of the red patch. Spinoza’s text here seems to be inconsistent with NM’s position, and Spinoza’s text gets very close to the metaphysical theory of mind-body interactions that suggests the ontological reading of parallelism.

One possible way of explaining this is that there are, in fact, two ways of advocating for the ontological reading of parallelism, direct and indirect. First, the direct ontological reading of parallelism would mean that Spinoza’s parallelism does not talk about parallel explanatory causal chains, but about parallel metaphysical causal chains of mental and physical events in the world. If we followed the direct ontological reading of parallelism, the fact that mind is an idea of the body would mean that events in the mind depend on events in the body. For example, Jane’s idea of a red patch depends on neural firings of Jane’s brain. But this would inevitably mean abandoning the epistemological reading of Spinoza’s philosophy of mind (NM) and to rather advocate for the ontological reading in the sphere of metaphysics. Second, the indirect ontological reading of parallelism starts from the epistemological reading of Spinoza’s philosophy of mind (NM), and

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Also see, Ibid., 102.

⁴¹ Ibid., 98.

then transitions from epistemology to ontology. The transition can be done in the same way as the transition from epistemological monism to ontological monism, and hence via the assimilation of reasons and causes that occurs due to the earlier mentioned discrimination of false ideas. So when explaining Jane`s anger on NM, I can refer to the causation of her thoughts or to the causation of her neural firings. In so doing, my explanations truly and accurately describe Jane`s anger, so explanations of two kinds grant causes of two kinds.

While the mentioned passages seem to lend themselves to the ontological reading of parallelism, I believe that the epistemological reading is still preferable, because it avoids inconsistencies that are unavoidable on the ontological reading. The first inconsistency is that if Spinoza`s parallelism is read ontologically as the existence of two causal chains of mental and physical events, which are separate and do not interact, then Spinoza`s concept of mental dependence on the physical conflicts with the causal ban, which also must be read ontologically. Hence the causal ban prohibits not only causation, but also any kind of determination. The second inconsistency is that the ontological parallelism conflicts with the mode identity thesis, because for things (i.e., mind and body) to be identical, they would need to be in the same causal chain. However, if parallelism is ontological, mind and body exist in separate causal chains, and so mind and body are not identical.

Moreover, in 2p13, Spinoza says that “the idea of body and body, that is mind and body (II. xiii.), are one and the same individual conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension.”⁴² This text supports epistemological parallelism for it states that the difference between mind and body is definitional, meanwhile they both refer to one and the same individual due to the mode identity. Even though mind and body are two different names, what

⁴² Ibid., 102.

they explain is one and the same thing. And we can speculate that Spinoza's definition of mind, which implies that even mind is at the bottom line physical, can be understood as a stipulation that amounts to the belief that it is the explanation of physical causality that gives us the 'actual knowledge'.

This fits with NM's reading of Spinoza's ban on psycho-physical causality presented in 3p2, according to which "body cannot determine mind to think, neither can mind determine body to motion or rest."⁴³ On NM, the psycho-physical (i.e., trans-attribute) causal ban is not a metaphysical causal ban; it is a ban on explanations of one, which would follow from the predicate of the other. So, an explanation using exclusively mental vocabulary yields epistemological results (i.e., is enlightening). For example, 'Socrates believed that drinking hemlock was best, so he chose to drink hemlock' is illuminating, since the explanans and explananda are mental. But 'Socrates' neural firing A occurred, so he chose to drink hemlock' is not enlightening, for this does not enlighten us about Socrates' motives, nor does it explain why the neural processes causes these effects.

In conclusion, NM means that if the human intellect accurately explains the whole causality of nature, it creates a mental understanding that the nature is monistic (*epistemological reading of substance monism*). The explanation can be given in two vocabularies (*conceptual dualism*) that present one and the same knowledge. Since names in each vocabulary amount to the knowledge about the same substance, in this sense these names are one and the same thing (*mode identity*). Since the explanations in both vocabularies follow the same concatenation of events, the explanations are parallel to each other (*epistemological parallelism*). Since the concatenation of events that explanations describe is strictly deterministic, there is no space for freedom in our

⁴³ Ibid., 131.

explanations (*strict determinism*). Lastly, explanations in one vocabulary cannot provide a premise for explanations in a different vocabulary (*trans-attribute causal ban*). That is how substance monism, conceptual dualism, and mode identity hold together with epistemological parallelism and with the psycho-physical (i.e., trans-attribute) causal ban.

1.3 Defending Epistemological Parallelism

In the next section I defend the epistemological interpretation of parallelism against alternative interpretations of Spinoza's philosophy of mind. To start with, there are two well-known scholars who have debated the accurate reading of Spinoza's philosophy of mind: Jonathan Bennett and Edwin Curley. In order to understand Spinoza's philosophy of mind, rather than focusing on the interpretation of mind and body as modes, Bennett and Curley focus on the interpretation of 1a4, which states that "the knowledge of an effect depends on and involves the knowledge of a cause,"⁴⁴ and which Spinoza uses to prove the 2p7 parallelism. In their approaches, Bennett reads 1a4 and 2p7 ontologically, whereas Curley reads both epistemologically.

In Bennett's view, parallelism states that "a mental realm runs parallel in the finest detail to the physical realm."⁴⁵ This is expressed in Spinoza's terminology via the use of 'is the object of' and its converse 'is the idea of'. If x is physical, then the idea of x , symbolized as $I(x)$, is mental. If x causes y , then $I(x)$ causes $I(y)$. If we inquire what is the object of $I(x)$, we inquire in the form $O(I(x))$? The answer would be: $O(I(x)) = x$. Unlike on NM, for Bennett, x is not a conception of physical objects or physical occurrence, but it is rather an ontological physical object or ontological physical occurrence itself. The difference is that on NM's epistemological model,

⁴⁴ Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 127.

both explanatory particulars the I (x) and x are conceptual, meanwhile in Bennett only I (x) is conceptual. Thus Bennett's parallelism is not a mere correlation between propositional truths and facts about the world, but it is rather more broadly an ontological correlation between mental events and physical events. Bennett provides the following example:

I stab you, you feel pain, you cry out. Spinoza cannot allow the causal chain from stabbing to feeling to crying, but he must grant that some deep, reliable connection is involved. His parallelism thesis lets him explain the data without admitting interaction, because it says that there are two causal chains.

Stab -> O (feeling) -> Cry
I (Stab) -> feeling -> I (Cry)⁴⁶

On the diagram, the causal chain from stab to the object of feeling of pain and to the cry is purely physical on the ontological level; meanwhile the causal chain from the idea of stab to the feel of pain and to the idea of cry is purely mental on conceptual level. In Bennett's opinion, this hypothesis about matching causal chains and the trans-attribute causal ban is meant to criticize our ordinary belief that physical stabs cause feelings of pain which cause crying. For Bennett, the ontological reading of 1a4 and of parallelism fits with the remaining four assumptions. Bennett summarizes this for us in the following:

We know that according to Spinoza the thinking substance is (identical with) the extended substance [identity], physical and mental particulars are modes of that one substance [monism] under its different attributes [dualism], and there is a mapping relation which pairs off physical modes with mental ones [parallelism]. But he also says, astonishingly, that between a physical particular and its mental correlate there is not only a correlation but also an identity [mode identity]— that is, $x = I(x)$ — and that is why parallelism holds.⁴⁷

The ontological distinction between stabs and ideas of stabs could imply that mode identity is false (as I pointed out above in my second inconsistency with metaphysical reading of parallelism). For that reason, in his ontological reading of parallelism, Bennett also makes a theoretical move that

⁴⁶ Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 132.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

saves the identity thesis.⁴⁸ In order to do this, Bennett proposes that mental and physical causal chains are parallel because they share the same properties. Bennett states that the world is extended and *F*, for a value of *F* such that the world is thinking and *F*; where *F* is what makes the extended and the thinking world identical: “That is, what it takes for an extended world to contain my body is the very same property that is needed for a thinking realm to contain my mind; just as what it takes for a female to be a sister is the very same property that is needed for a male to be a brother.”⁴⁹ Parallelism holds with mode identity in the sense that, “in every instance of the parallelism a single property or mode *F* is instantiated by both the thinking and the extended worlds.”⁵⁰ In accordance to this, Spinoza’s thesis is that, “if P1 is systematically linked with M1, then P1 is extension-and-*F* for some differentia *F* such that M1 is thought-and-*F*.”⁵¹ For instance, a physical stab is a specific physical ontological occurrence within physical laws such that a mental conception of physical ontological stab is an idea of physical occurrence reflecting the same physical laws. Bennett, however, addresses neither the conflict of prioritizing the physical nor the trans-attribute causal ban (as I pointed out above in my first inconsistency with metaphysical reading of parallelism). That is, Bennett does not address the issue that Spinoza defines mind as ‘an idea of the body’, which seems to imply that mind is determined by the body. The definition conflicts with Spinoza’s trans-attribute causal ban which prohibits not only the causation, but also any kind of determination. So Bennett might resolve the second inconsistency, but he ignores the first inconsistency.

⁴⁸ Bennett, “*Spinoza’s Mind-Body Identity Thesis*,” 577-578.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 577.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza’s Ethics*, 141.

Curley thinks that Spinoza is an epistemological parallelist. Curley reads parallelism as a correlation between facts about the world and true propositions. For example, ‘Paul’s mind is a set of propositions which truly describe Paul’s body.’⁵² On this reading, ideas are only confined to true propositions, but as Bennett claims, “that is all right too, since it is uncontroversially true that Spinoza has to discriminate against false ideas even if these are psychological items such as beliefs.”⁵³ On Curley’s reading, modes of extension are facts about the physical world and modes of thought are true propositions; hence parallelism holds. However, according to Bennett, Curley’s parallelism “gets Spinoza out of any conceivable trouble with his parallelism, but only by making it so empty as to lack all metaphysical significance.”⁵⁴ It is empty in the sense that parallelism does not state anything at all about the actual interaction between mind and body.

Now, I want to claim that empty is not too bad. Moreover, I think that the ontological reading is inconsistent. If we allow ontological parallelism, then we must allow ontological mode identity thesis. But then Spinoza’s parallelism does not treat the problem of causation after all; it rather disposes with it. On the ontological reading of parallelism, the trans-attribute causal ban, and mode identity, causation does not occur because there is nothing to interact with, since the mental and the physical are one thing. Bennett’s example of ‘stab – feeling – cry’ explains the situation perfectly. The stab cannot cause the idea of stab or vice versa, for one automatically is the other with the time difference zero. In the example, the ontological reading is not only inconsistent in the sense unresolved above, but also empty in the sense that it is a metaphysical answer to the question when does the physical become the mental and vice versa: It happens at no

⁵² Ibid., 129.

⁵³ Ibid., 128.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

time; they are ‘one and the same thing’. In essence, my reading adheres to Curley’s epistemological reading and it takes 1a4 as an important element of the theory of causal knowledge.

Interpreters have also debated whether in the ‘so also’ phrase of the proposition 2p7,⁵⁵ which moves the proposition from substance monism to mode identity, Spinoza drives in an inference or a comparison. Remember that 2p7 states that “substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance [i.e., substance monism], comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other [i.e., conceptual dualism]. *So also*, a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing [i.e., mode identity], though expressed in two ways.”⁵⁶ If he carries out an inference, he asserts the mode identity because the substance itself is monistic. If he carries out a comparison, mode identity is not a result of substance monism and conceptual dualism, but it is a separate premise that Spinoza asserts. However, I think that it does not really matter whether ‘so also’ phrase is an inference or a comparison; and that what does really matter is that for Spinoza both substance monism and mode identity are true. Personally, I think that Spinoza does carry out an inference, but he does not state it clearly only because he believes that the inference is clear due to the fact that his ‘philosophy of mind’ is a general theory of causal knowledge.

Robert J. Delahunty argues that there are three possible meanings for parallelism. First, parallelism might mean that psychic functions are correlated with the bodily structures, similarly as “memory, let us say, is correlated with a certain portion of the cerebral cortex, in such a way

⁵⁵ Michael Della Rocca, “Spinoza’s Argument for the Identity Theory,” In *The Philosophical Review* (1993): 185.; Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza’s Ethics*, 142.; Jonathan Bennett, *Eight Questions about Spinoza*, 2.; Colin R. Marshall, “The Mind and the Body as ‘One and the Same Thing’ in Spinoza,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2009): 904.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 86.

that the one is necessary and sufficient for the other.”⁵⁷ The second meaning might be that mental states correlate with bodily conditions, “so the feeling of pain, for instance, might be correlated with the firing of the C-fibres in the body.”⁵⁸ Third and the most general meaning might be that mind’s history accompanies the body’s history, so a feeling of being tired is correlated with a feeling of stomach pain.

Delahunty states that to choose an accurate meaning, one must decide how to interpret 2p7s, which states that mind and body are ‘one and the same thing’ that is ‘sed duobus modis expressa’.⁵⁹ According to Delahunty, the Latin phrase could mean either ‘expressed in two ways’ (a) or ‘expressed in two modes’ (b). In my view, the conversation here returns to the problem that I have discussed in this chapter: option (a) implies the epistemological reading, whereas the option (b) implies the ontological reading if one does not recognize Spinoza’s substance/attribute/mode theoretical framework in a similar fashion as NM recognizes (i.e., as a scheme for a theory of knowledge). Delahunty favours the ontological reading, which commits him to the theory of metaphysical causality rather than to the nomolous monistic interpretation.

For numerous reasons that I introduced in the previous section, parallelism must be epistemological in a way that it is the explanation of ‘one and the same thing’; its importance rests on the acknowledgement that in our explanations of one and the same thing, we must be aware of parallelism (i.e., the possibility of two different views for causal explanations). In fact, I think that epistemological parallelism complies with all three Delahunty’s meanings of parallelism, for our explanations that explain one and the same substance can coherently refer to pairs of bodily

⁵⁷ R.J Delahunty, “Spinoza,” (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 195.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

structures and psychic functions, or to pairs of mental states and bodily conditions, or to pairs of mind and body histories.

While Bennett and Delahunty oppose my view on parallelism, Colin Marshall even more radically argues against the validity of the principle of mode identity that underlies NM. Marshall⁶⁰ claims in two separate arguments that Spinoza supports mode non-identity thesis, which states that mind and body are not identical. In the first argument, Marshall argues that mode non-identity thesis follows from Spinoza's multiple substance system⁶¹ that is allegedly established through the combination of substance-attribute identity (i.e., substance and attribute are one and the same thing) and of multiple attribute system.⁶² This means that since each attribute grants its own separate substance, if there are multiple attributes, then there are multiple substances. But since modes are identical only if they belong to the same substance, mind and body that are a matter of different attributes are not identical, because both mind and body belong to the different substance.

The best way to disprove Marshall's view is to reiterate what Bennett says in his *Spinoza's Mind-body Identity Thesis*.⁶³ According to Bennett, monism is for Spinoza an 'only one world thesis'⁶⁴ and substance-pluralism is only an intellectual illusion⁶⁵ caused by the conceptual attribute pluralism in the case of infinite intellect and by the conceptual dualism of thought and extension in the case of human intellect. I think that a substance-attribute identity is a false

⁶⁰ Colin R. Marshall, "The Mind and the Body as 'One and the Same Thing' in Spinoza," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2009): 897-919.

⁶¹ Other well-known interpreters of substance pluralism include: Martin Lin, 'Substance, Attribute, and Mode in Spinoza,' *Philosophy Compass* 1 (2006): 53-144, Edwin Curley in his earlier work, Edwin Curley, *Spinoza's metaphysics*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1969) and Louis Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

⁶² Marshall, The Mind and the Body as 'One and the Same Thing' in Spinoza, 915-916.

⁶³ Jonathan Bennett, *Spinoza's Mind-Body Identity Thesis*, 573-584.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 577-578.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 583.

Marshall's assumption that results in his failure to recognize this intellectual illusion. As a proof of it, see section 1.1, where I argue in support of substance monism and conceptual dualism.

In his second argument, Marshall, together with Delahunty, further argues that in parallelism there are *differences* between the body causation and the mind causation. He establishes this conclusion by arguing that Spinoza establishes ontological parallelism (i.e., the ontological existence of both extended and thinking causal chains). The ontological view then leads him to the claim that since mind and body causal chains ontologically exist in parallel, they exist separately. And, since they exist separately, they are *different* (i.e., distinct) in their causal chains; and since they are different and they cannot relate to each other (2p6), they must be non-identical.

This is a mistake, however, for parallelism does not entail mode non-identity thesis, but rather proves mode identity thesis. Spinoza has never claimed that parallelism is the ontological reality and therefore that causal events of body and of mind exist as metaphysically distinct attributes. That there is only one substance means that there is a scenario of the complete knowledge of the world; and even though there are two ways of explaining that allow for the scenario of full knowledge, since both ways describe one and the same thing, both ways are in this sense identical. Only if due to the discrimination against false ideas we accept that epistemological monism equals ontological monism, we can conclude that there is only one ontological causal chain, which can be *explained* either through mental or physical vocabulary, or both. Now, I accept the stretch from epistemological to ontological monism; however, I do not accept the stretch from epistemological to ontological parallelism. Ontological parallelism would talk about the mental and physical as ontological events and that would go contrary to the doctrine of nomolous monism. On NM, epistemological parallelism means that there is a possibility of parallel mental and

physical causal explanations. If we combine epistemological parallelism with ontological monism, it means that there are different *explanations* of the same causal chain. This should be understood as a *reason* why Spinoza claims that mind and body cannot relate. They cannot relate not because they are different, but because there is nothing to relate to, since they are already ontological one (substance).

This position is well elaborated in Bennett's later text *Eight Questions about Spinoza*,⁶⁶ where he argues, contrary to his earlier views, that parallelism should be understood epistemologically. He argues that when Spinoza claims that mind and body cannot causally interact, he means that there cannot be a mental explanation of physical explanandum statements: "When Spinoza asserted the causal separateness of the attributes, all he meant was that intellect cannot follow any explanation running from one attribute to another."^{67,68}

In alignment with 'later' Bennett, Michael Della Rocca argues against Delahunty, proving that Spinoza did adopt an identity theory of modes.⁶⁹ The defence is formed via Della Rocca's focus on what Spinoza says about causation. Initially in the text, Delahunty and Della Rocca both agree that Spinoza distinguished between immanent and transitive causation. Immanent causation is causation from substance to modes, where transitive causation is causation from modes to modes. Yet, this point soon becomes the point of their departure. For Delahunty, mind and body are identical only if they stand in the same causal chains. However, since there is a ban on *transitive* attribute causation (Spinoza's 2p6d, 2p5, 2p7s), mind and body stand in separated causal chains.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Bennett, *Eight Questions about Spinoza*, 1-11.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ Davidson calls this nomological irreducibility. See: Donald Davidson, "Spinoza's Causal Theory of the Affects," In *Truth, Language, and History: Philosophical Essays Volume 5*. (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2005), 9.

⁶⁹ Michael Della Rocca, "Causation and Spinoza's Claim of Identity," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1991): 276-265; Michael Della Rocca, "Spinoza's Argument for the Identity Theory," *The Philosophical Review* (1993): 213-183. and Michael Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

According to Delahunty, it therefore follows that mind and body are not identical. For Della Rocca, Delahunty's inference would be correct if and only if trans-attribute causation was transparent. However, he argues that Spinoza's transitive causation is not transparent, but opaque. The referential opacity means that mind and body differ only in the use of different names; mind and body thus differ only intensionally. In reality, even though they differ intensionally, mind and body are ontologically identical; thus, they are extensionally equivalent. Hence, mind and body are intensionally inequivalent, but extensionally equivalent.

In conclusion, NM's view of epistemological parallelism conflicts with Bennett's ontological parallelism presented in his earlier book *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*; but it aligns with Curley's interpretation. Bennett himself agrees with NM's view in his later paper *Eight Questions about Spinoza*, arguing against Delahunty's ontological parallelism. The closest to NM's view is the interpretation of Della Rocca, who via differentiation of intensionality and extensionality shows that Spinoza's philosophy of mind is the epistemological model of causal explanations. At the same time, NM's approach to Spinoza's philosophy of mind conflicts with Marshall's argument against the mode identity thesis, but I have shown where Marshall errs.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

In the previous chapter I provided a model of philosophy of mind inspired by Spinoza's text. I demonstrated that Spinoza's philosophy of mind essentially could be an epistemological model of true explanations of the world. I call this model nomolous monism (NM). The last section of the previous chapter defended NM against alternative interpretations of Spinoza, but one important reading of Spinoza, Donald Davidson's reading, was left out. This chapter, therefore, starts in the first section with the analysis of Davidson's reading of Spinoza, where I demonstrate that Davidson's reading resembles NM. The second section of this chapter continues with the analysis of Davidson's Anomalous Monism (AM), where I also provide possible objections to AM accompanied with potential replies to the objections. I will use this analysis of AM in the subsequent third chapter, where I will compare NM with AM.

2.1 Davidson's reading of Spinoza

In this section I introduce Davidson's reading of Spinoza's Philosophy of Mind. In Davidson's paper entitled "Spinoza's Causal Theory of the Affects", Davidson contrasts Spinoza's philosophy of mind with his own doctrine of AM. I demonstrate that Davidson's interpretation of Spinoza resembles NM in claiming that Spinoza does not comment on ontology. Yet, even though Spinoza does not comment on ontology, Davidson finds a way to argue that Spinoza does not conflict with psycho-physical ontological causality that AM attempts to prove. Davidson admits that:

I suppose it is inevitable that when we try to understand a philosopher whom we find altogether admirable, yet difficult and obscure, we are drawn to an interpretation we find as consistent and congenial as charity prompts and honesty permits. Thus I do not feel abashed to admit that the reading I find plausible of Spinoza's ontological monism coupled

with a dualism (or multiple) explanatory apparatus is close to my own view of the relation between the mental and the physical. I call this position anomalous monism.⁷⁰

Resembling NM, Davidson thinks that Spinoza's philosophy of mind is based on five principles, which are nearly the same as the five principles I listed in the section 1.1. First, Davidson agrees that strict determinism is central to Spinoza's system, according to which the system of physical nature is deterministic and closed in the sense that all events, including human actions, are a part of the deterministic system of nature. Since human actions belong to this system, they cannot be free and undetermined. Davidson also recognizes the trans-attribute causal ban (which I list in addition to the fifth NM's principle), which states that the world of thought does not interact with the physical world in the sense that "our conception of thoughts, of desires, of memories, and of reasoning is a conception that does not include the defining properties of physical objects such as precise location in space, a shape, physical texture, and chemical composition."⁷¹ Because Davidson recognizes that Spinoza's system is a model of explaining the events in either mental or physical vocabulary, the function of the trans-attribute causal ban in this model is to assert that premises from one vocabulary cannot support conclusions in the second vocabulary. Second, there is a parallel relation between mental and physical explanations in two epistemological respects: Firstly, the parallel relation is demonstrated in the sense that our mind is constantly aware of what is going on in our bodies and yet our mind is not aware about what is going on in the bodies of others. Secondly, the parallel relation is demonstrated in the sense that objectively there are parallel mental and physical propositions that truly describe any ontological event. Davidson says:

[There is a global] respect in which the order of thoughts precisely parallels the order of extended things and events. If the physical world is fully determined by laws and the distribution of bodies and their motions... then we know that there exists an infinite set of propositions about the distribution of bodies and their motions at some moment which, in

⁷⁰ Donald Davidson, *Spinoza's Causal Theory of the Affects*, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

conjunction with the laws, would enable an infinite mind to calculate the entire history of the universe. If we think of the world of thought as consisting of all these truths, then there is a clear sense in which ‘the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. (IIP7)⁷²

In this passage, Davidson explains how both physical and mental propositions truly describe any world event. Third and fourth, Davidson also states that the nature of this parallel connection is embedded in ontological monism and conceptual dualism: “the mental and the physical are just two ways of viewing and understanding one and the same world.”⁷³ Fifth, Davidson adds that, “an ontology that comprises just material objects and events may yet be complete if the mental objects and events are identical with the material, and so purely physical science can, in one clear sense, be complete.”⁷⁴ Hence, he also endorses the principle of mode identity. Finally, and most crucially, Davidson recognizes that Spinoza is concerned with the deductive epistemological system of true propositions, where, “the connection of ideas is that of deduction: a proposition describing one state of the universe may be deduced from a description of an earlier state of the universe by appeal to the laws of nature.”⁷⁵ This is because all events are a subject of non-exceptional, strict determinism. This is important because NM argues that the deduction of causal processes in mental vocabulary and the deduction of causal processes in physical vocabulary line up exactly, but Davidson’s AM argues that they are very different vocabularies, one (physical) is deterministic, the other (mental) is free and anomalous.

In order to show how to understand what Spinoza’s philosophy of mind attempts to claim, Davidson urges us to consider the most common objection to Spinoza:

Spinoza insists on causal relations among physical events, and each of these physical events is identical with some thought. Suppose, then, that the ringing of a bell causes some

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

complex event in my brain, and this event is identical to my awareness of the sound. If the ringing of the bell causes the event in my brain, and this event *is* (in the sense of identity) a thought, how can Spinoza consistently deny that the physical sound caused the thought? ... If *a* caused *b* under the attribute of extension, and *b* is identical with *c*, where *c* is conceived under the attribute of thought, how can we deny that *a* caused *c*, where *a* is conceived as extended, and *c* as a modification of mind?⁷⁶

In other words, could we object that Spinoza's parallelism, mode identity and trans-attributive causal ban are inconsistent? In response, Davidson reminds us "that a cause for Spinoza is primarily something that explains, even fully explains, its effect... we can understand IIIp2 as denying only that a full and adequate explanation of an event described under one attribute can be given by appeal to a cause described under another attribute."⁷⁷ In support of this interpretation, Davidson cites Hampshire, who states: "to Spinoza...to 'explain' means to show that one true proposition is the logically necessary consequence of some other... The ideal of scientific explanation is here purely deductive and mathematical."⁷⁸ Davidson agrees with Hampshire's interpretation:

the point of IIIp2 is not, then to deny that mental events can cause physical events, but to deny that they can explain them (and conversely, of course). Nothing in this picture of the relations between mind and body, the mental and the physical, rules out what we would call the causal interaction of particular physical events with particular mental events. We therefore do not have to saddle Spinoza with the logical absurdity that would result from holding that the physical event of a bell ringing cannot cause a mental awareness of the ringing... In my view, Spinoza does not deny that the ringing of the bell may cause us to be aware of the ringing; what he denies is that it is possible to give a fully adequate explanation of the occurrence of the belief by appeal to laws of nature and to the cause described in physical terms.⁷⁹

In other words, once again, Spinoza's trans-attribute causal ban denies that premises from mental vocabulary support conclusions from physical vocabulary, and vice versa. Davidson believes that

⁷⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 9-10.

because, since Spinoza does not comment on psycho-physical ontological causality, he does not deny it and so his system does not conflict with it. And if we put the matter in this way, NM allows this argument. But contrary to AM, it is not on NM's philosophical agenda to make ontologically relevant conclusions, but to offer a coherent epistemological theory that could comply with Spinoza's epistemological system of true explanations.

But if we read monism ontologically, NM can be even more explicit as to why Spinoza does not comment on psycho-physical causality. A more explicit interpretation is that Spinoza does not claim that a causes c , because Spinoza knows that, in reality, the causality occurs on the ontological level such that o^1 (ontologically one – bell ringing) causes o^2 (ontological one – human non-conceptual interaction with the bell ringing).⁸⁰ Spinoza's o^1 differs from Davidson's a in a way that o^1 simply occurs as non-conceptual, whereas a is our conception of o^1 under the attribute of extension. Spinoza's o^2 differs from Davidson's b or c in a way that o^2 is a non-conceptual effect of cause o^1 , whereas b and c are different conceptual explanations of the same o^2 . It is because Spinoza's opponents think that Spinoza meant modes as ontologically existing mental and physical events, that they think that he is involved in logical absurdities. I have introduced o^1 and o^2 to make this important distinction between ontology and epistemology. From the view of NM, Spinoza's system discusses epistemology and so NM overcomes the objection posed by Davidson. The only exception to NM that I apply in this more explicit interpretation is that I make monism not only epistemological but also ontological. Interestingly enough, the causation from o^1 to o^2 implies strict deterministic natural laws and that implies that humans behave in accordance with strict deterministic natural laws.

⁸⁰ Only during my reading of Davidson I found that Marx Wartofsky suggests the same.

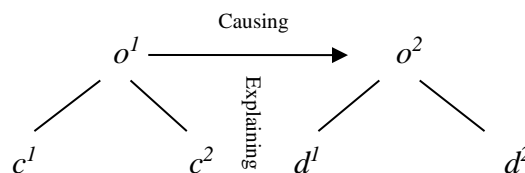
Of course, it could be objected that if o^1 causes o^2 , where o^1 , via ontological identity, is both mental and physical substance, and o^2 , via ontological identity, is both mental and physical substance; then since o^1 causes o^2 , the mental causes the physical, because o^1 and o^2 is both mental and physical substance. However, this would be a mistake, for both o^1 and o^2 are one substance that is neither mental nor physical. Substance can only be *viewed* as either mental or physical, or both, only if described. Describing, though, is irrelevant to the ontological identity and to the ontological causality.

In order to demonstrate why Spinoza does not comment on psycho-physical causality, I have to change the letters around. The explicit interpretation follows NM's interpretation: only if some intellect explains o^1 under the attribute of extension, for instance, referring to physical sound pitches, it now creates a causal explanation under the attribute of extension. Let's call it c^1 . And if some intellect explains o^1 under the attribute of thought, for instance referring to the abstract idea of the phenomenal sound of ringing, it now creates a causal explanation under the attribute of thought. Let's call it c^2 . Epistemological mode identity means that c^1 and c^2 provide the identical knowledge about o^1 , but only from two different perspectives. The 'identical' knowledge means that there is the epistemological force of the identity thesis, so both mental and physical explanations provide true causal knowledge (i.e., knowledge that adequately and accurately explains the causality of events). The same sentiment applies to o^2 . If some intellect explains o^2 under the attribute of extension, for instance, referring to the brain's neural firings, it now creates a causal explanation under the attribute of extension. Let's call it d^1 . And if some intellect explains o^2 under the attribute of thought, for instance referring to the abstract idea of awareness of bell ringing, it now creates a causal explanation under the attribute of thought. Let's call it d^2 . Therefore, NM cannot accept the standard understanding of causality; but depending on what

attribute is concerned, we can make a proposition that either c^1 caused d^1 or that c^2 caused d^2 . Making a proposition about causality makes no difference to the actual ontological causality; the real ontological causality occurs at the ontological level, not at the explanatory level. The causation at the explanatory or epistemic level is there only because explanations follow and accurately reflect the real ontological causality, so the explanations must be causal. Also, for this reason the objection that since a causes b , and b is c ; so a causes c , is irrelevant to Spinoza because in Spinoza a , b , and c are a matter of the ontologically inert sphere of explaining.

If we assume that epistemological monism is ontological monism, when we make a proposition that c^1 caused d^1 and that c^2 caused d^2 , in this proposition $c^1[o^1]$ ontologically is c^2 , and $d^1[o^2]$ ontologically is d^2 , but c^1 conceptually is not c^2 and d^1 conceptually is not d^2 . The set of causal explanations under the attribute of extension (c^1 and d^1) are facts about the world. The set of causal explanations under the attribute of thought (c^2 and d^2) are true propositions.

<p>c^1 – explanation referring to physical sound pitches c^2 – explanation referring to abstract idea of ringing d^1 – explanation referring to referring to brain's neural firings d^2 – explanation referring abstract idea of awareness of bell ringing</p>



NM suggests that Spinoza's parallelism is much narrower in focus; if parallelism is meant epistemologically, it means that Spinoza does not explicitly comment on ontological causality, where the real causation occurs. Hence, even if Spinoza's system hints at the existence of o^1 to o^2 (i.e., ontological causality via ontological monism), his system explicitly discusses and is intended to discuss the 'explaining' part from the diagram above. Moreover, the explanatory parallelism also features with the trans-attribute causal ban, so there cannot be psycho-physical causal explanations either. And even if parallelism was meant ontologically, parallelism would aim only

to explain the puzzle ‘at what instance the physical becomes mental?’ The answer would be: it happens at no instance, since what is described as mental, and what is described as physical, are one and the same thing. Hence Spinoza’s view that mind is the idea of body.⁸¹ We could only hypothesize that the bell ringing causes the mind’s awareness of it only because the body perceives the bell ringing and its corresponding mind believes that the perception is true that the bell is ringing. We would, however, force the standard conception of causality on the non-standard (epistemological) NM.

In conclusion, in this section I analyzed Davidson’s reading of Spinoza’s philosophy of mind. I showed that Davidson’s reading resembles NM, because both readings stress that Spinoza’s philosophy of mind does not comment on the psycho-physical ontological causality. A difference is that Davidson claims that since Spinoza does not comment on psycho-physical causality, his system does not conflict with it. NM perhaps allows the same, but it is not on NM’s philosophical agenda to make ontologically relevant conclusions, but to offer a coherent epistemological theory that could comply with Spinoza’s epistemological system of true explanations. In this section I also gave a reason why NM does not comment on psycho-physical ontological causality. In doing so I assumed that NM’s epistemological monism is ontological monism. This work will be important in the second section of the third chapter, where I relate NM to Davidson’s AM.

2.2 Davidson’s Anomalous Monism

In this section I analyze Davidson’s AM, and then provide possible objections to it, accompanied with potential replies to the objections. I will use the analysis of AM in the third chapter, where I

⁸¹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, 102.

relate NM to AM in order to help AM to overcome, once and for all, the objections introduced in this section.

Davidson's AM, which was first presented in his article *Mental Events*,⁸² "endorses ontological reduction, but eschews conceptual reduction."⁸³ Ontological reduction is coupled with 'ontological bias', which means that "all events are [ontologically] physical",⁸⁴ but "not all events are [ontologically] mental."⁸⁵ In Davidson there is also a 'Spinozistic' principle of identity that states that "mental events are identical with physical events."⁸⁶ The identity thesis means that mental events and physical events are identical at the ontological level. In addition, Davidson asserts three principles:

1. *Causal Interaction*: "at least some mental events interact causally with physical events."⁸⁷

2. *Nomological Character of Causality*: "where there is causality, there must be a [strict] law."⁸⁸

3. *Anomalism of the Mental*: "there are no strict deterministic laws on the basis of which mental events can be predicted and explained (the Anomalism of the Mental)."⁸⁹

At first, these three principles seem inconsistent. If there are no strict mental laws (principle 3), and causality requires strict laws (principle 2), how can mental events have causal efficacy (principle 1)? Davidson resolves this apparent inconsistency by endorsing the identity thesis which takes mental events to be identical to physical events, though mental vocabulary is irreducible to physical vocabulary. In his paper entitled "Thinking Causes", Davidson explains: "that mental

⁸² Donald Davidson, "Mental Events," in *Experience and Theory*, (London: Duckworth, 1970).

⁸³ Donald Davidson, "Thinking Causes," in *Mental Causation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 187.

⁸⁴ Davidson, *Mental Events*, 120.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

entities (particular time-and-space-bound objects and events) are physical entities, but that mental concepts are not reducible by definition or natural law to physical concepts.”⁹⁰ Identifying mental with physical entities (events) allows Davidson to claim that mental events cause physical events even though there is an inconsistent triad: (1) causality is lawlike, (2) the mental is not lawlike, and (3) the physical is law-like. He gets around the inconsistent triad and claims that mental events cause physical events by virtue of the fact that the mental events are physical events, which allows the mental to be law-like; hence causal. However, since mental concepts (explanations) are not reducible to physical concepts, mental explanations are not law-like. The result is that mental events cause physical events, but mental explanations of these relations are not law-like explanations, but are rational explanations. However, physical explanations of these relations are law-like explanations. So, the causal relation between events has a mental rational explanation and a physical law-like explanation. Mental events have causal power due to the identity thesis, but mental explanations are devoid of law-like explanatory force, rather they have rationalizing epistemic force.

For Davidson, the causation is an extensional relation, or an ontological relation (i.e. a feature of the world); it holds no matter how described, since it is mind-independent. The causal explanation, however, is an intensional relation, or an epistemic relation (i.e. a feature of language), since it holds only under explanations. Explanations are supposed to make sense of things to people, and by providing a causal explanation, things become clear to humans. So, causal (law-like) explanation is one way to make sense of things to humans. For example, if I say ‘smoke occurred’, and you wonder why? If I say ‘well, fire occurred, and there is a law from fires to smoke, so the fire caused the smoke’, then now you understand why the smoke occurred. There is another

⁹⁰ Davidson, *Thinking Causes*, 187.

type of explanation, called reasons explanation, that does not refer to causal laws, so is not a causal explanation. Reasons explanation makes things intelligible to people in a different way, by appeal to reasons. For example, if I say ‘Joe is wearing a tin foil hat’, you are confused. Why is he doing that? If I explain ‘well, Joe believes the aliens are trying to listen to his thoughts, and wearing the tin foil hat will keep his thoughts safe’, then you understand why he is wearing the hat. This is a reasons explanation, not a causal explanation. The thing that illuminated the confusion was rationality, not causality. So, there are two different explanatory vocabularies, each referring to the same thing. For example, if I say ‘Joe fell in love with Jane’, and you wonder why? I can give you a causal explanation: ‘an increase in oxytocin in Joe’s brain occurred, and the increase in oxytocin leads to attachments, so Joe is attached to Jane’, then you understand the causal relation between events via a physical causal explanation. One could also explain the same events through a reasons explanation: ‘Joe desires a kind partner, and Joe believes Jane is kind, so Joe fell in love with Jane’. So, the same causal relation between events has two explanations.

Now, I would like to point out two possible objections to AM. The first objection is that if the identity thesis is meant ontologically, then identifying mental and physical events may reduce mental and physical events to mental and physical explanations. For Davidson, the combination of ontological monism and conceptual dualism means that we can *describe* individual events, which are “unrepeatable, dated individuals such as the particular eruption of volcano”⁹¹, with either mental or physical vocabulary. Yet, additionally, Davidson states that that there are ontological mental events that are physical events. However, if the world is, due to the identity thesis, ontologically unified, there are no such things as the same ontologically existing individual events that would be also existing *ontologically* in both mental and physical spheres. Rather, there are the

⁹¹ Davidson, *Mental Events*, 115.

same individual events that can be *described* using both mental and physical vocabulary. So, the verb 'is' in the sentence 'mental is physical' is ontologically unifying in the sense that since the mental and the physical refer to the ontologically identical (i.e., one) event, they ontologically exist only as one and the same thing, not as two things. If an event ontologically exists as one and the same thing, but the event is referred to via two adjectival phrases 'mental event' and 'physical event', the adjectival phrases are a matter of epistemology. In other words, should the identity thesis have ontological force, it is ontologically impossible that there are three ontologically existing things: a mental event, a physical event, and an event that is both descriptively mental and descriptively physical. But Davidson wants to argue that there are ontologically existing mental events and physical events that are also ontologically identical. A way to get around this problem is to change a meaning of mental and physical events: identity thesis with ontological force in a combination with conceptual dualism must mean that there is only one ontologically existing event that can be then described as mental or physical. Referring to the ontologically existing events as mental events and physical events should be a matter of epistemology, because due to the ontological identity thesis, mental and physical events do not ontologically exist but are only a matter of language explanations. But because of this, mental events function as mental explanations and physical events function as physical explanations, since they all are matters of epistemology and there is no difference between them; both 'mental event' and 'physical event' that refer to the individual events are reduced to the sphere of explanations. Because it is logically impossible that there are three ontological things: mental events, physical events, and events that are identically mental and physical, Davidson must give up his argument for the ontological force of psycho-physical causality, where the identity allows mental events to influence physical events. However, this could also mean that Davidson's reference to psycho-physical causality in his first

principle is devoid of ontological force. After all, we can ask: can we speak about mental events if not described as mental? I do not think so. To exemplify this point, with a bit of imagination we can think of two ontological events that occur far away in the jungle, (individually dated events in time and space) – for example, a disagreement between two persons leading to anger. It is not until some mind explains the individually dated events, that we can talk about them as ‘mental’ and ‘physical’ events, depending on the vocabulary choice. Only in our language it can be claimed either that the mental event of disagreement led to the mental event of anger, or that a law-like physical event of neural activity led to the increase of adrenaline level. It is yet obvious that all linguistic references (‘mental’ or ‘physical’) to the individually dated events are forms of explanations. So only individual events are ontologically causal, and adjectival notions ‘mental event’ and ‘physical event’ do not add to this causality. This grants the reduction problem that I have just described and simultaneously the problem that the reference to psycho-physical causality is devoid of ontological force.

There is a potential, very simple reply to this objection. One cannot know about anything ontologically existing, unless epistemologically conceived; but knowledge requires ideas. So the problem from above would mean that not only *referring* to events as ‘mental’ and ‘physical’ is a matter of epistemology, since linguistic referring occurs in ideas; but also so-called individually existing ontological events are a matter of epistemology, since the so-called individual events too are only ideas. Hence since we require to use language to speak about them, all three mental events, physical events, and individual events are a matter of epistemology. Interestingly, this solution would make AM analogous to NM in the sense that both would be irrelevant to ontology altogether (on all levels). In fact, there are two (related) problems here: if all ontological questions are epistemological, that means that so are all questions of logic and mathematics; it is then not

possible to make ontological assertions on the basis of logical necessity (as Spinoza does when speaking about metaphysics, especially Book I), nor perhaps to do theoretical physics. This then also means that there is no way out of skepticism. Nevertheless, I think that there is a way out: AM avoids the reduction to epistemology because it *intends to ontologically speak* about psycho-physical causality and about causality of individual events. ‘Speaking about’ always invokes epistemology, but if the intention of speaking is to comment on ontology, the topic of the speech should be at least speculatively allowed.

The defense against my first objection to AM is simple, but it leads to another objection. If there should be speculatively allowed ontological causality of mental events to physical events, then ontological psycho-physical causality conflicts with the speculative ontological identity thesis of mental events with physical events that AM argues for. Ontological psycho-physical causality means that mental events causally interact with physical events. But in order for them to interact, they must be ontologically separate, so there is something to interact with. But if there is ontological identity thesis, mental and physical are monistic and not separate. Therefore, it is by definition impossible that there are both ontological identity thesis and ontological psycho-physical causality, for it is impossible that ontologically monistic events are also ontologically dual. Of course, Davidson would reply: since mental event m is the physical event p that causes the physical effect p^* , m causes p^* , so we have psycho-physical causation via identity thesis. But Davidson’s response would be irrelevant and futile, because his identity thesis is not ontological, but logical. If Davidson’s identity thesis was ontological, it would mean by necessity that mental and physical exist ontologically as one thing, hence no ontological psycho-physical causality is possible. To help Davidson resolve this problem, in the third chapter of this thesis I will develop a better version of AM, which I will call Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM).

The second objection against AM is that causality is law-like and Davidson wants to argue for psycho-physical ontological causality, but the law-like causality occurs only at the physical level. He argues for psycho-physical causality by arguing that mental events are ontologically physical events, which renders mental events causally efficacious. As a result, we can claim that mental events cause physical events. For example, we can state that ‘Joe’s meeting Jane’ (M1) increased the oxytocin level in Joe’s brain (P2), because Joe’s meeting Jane (M1) is Joe’s perception of Jane’s pheromones (P1), and so on a standard diagram M1 causes P2, because M1 is P1, and P1 causes P2. Yet, physical effects can have a law-like physical explanation and an anomalous (i.e., non-law-like) mental explanation.

The objection, which has been also pointed out by Davidson’s critics, is that AM loses mental causal efficacy, for if M1 causes P2 only because M1 is P1, where the law-like causality is at the physical level from P1 to P2, then the real causality happens at the P-level, not the M-level. Numerous critics reject Davidson’s AM on the grounds that it fails to preserve mental quausation. Mental quausation, as defined by Terence Horgan, is a relation that allows “two events c and e, together with two properties F and G, to jointly instantiate the 4-place relation expressed by the locution ‘c qua F causes e qua G’.”⁹² That Davidson fails to preserve mental quausation means that while physical events are causally efficacious, mental events are not causally efficacious *qua* being mental (i.e., under their mental explanations, or in virtue of their mental properties). Since AM takes causal relations to be law-like, and law-like relations are not mental relations, but are physical relations, events are causally efficacious only *qua* physical explanations/properties. So, mental events *qua* mental explanations/properties are not causally efficacious. This result not only fails to

⁹² Terence Horgan, “Mental Quausation,” in *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol. 3 (1989), 47.

preserve mental causation, but it may render AM incoherent, because the first principle of AM states that mental to physical causation occurs.

Davidson attempts to make two fixes on how to deal with the second objection. First, in *Thinking Causes*, Davidson replies to his critics who raise this second objection by pointing out that mental events have causal efficacy as events, which cause no matter how described.⁹³ Thus, it is not true that causality instantiates physical laws (though causal explanation does invoke physical laws). Since causality is an ontological relation and it holds no matter how described, Davidson believes that he has overcome this critique. However, since causality on AM is meant ontologically and hence non-epistemologically, then critics miss the point only because AM applies a dual standard of causality. The dual standard technically means that Davidson's referring to events as 'mental' and 'physical' applies to both ontology and epistemology. When it applies to epistemology, Davidson speaks about physical causal explanations and about mental non-causal explanations, and he applies his 'identity thesis' to accomplish the psycho-physical ontological causality. When it applies to ontology, Davidson argues that events do not cause as mental and physical, but that they cause no matter how described. For instance, Davidson states that AM "is formulated on the assumption that events are non-abstract particulars, and that causal relations are extensional relations between such events."⁹⁴ But he also states that "mental events [ontologically] cause and are caused by physical events."⁹⁵ That the concept of causality refers to both spheres (in the first sphere as ontological causality and in the second sphere as epistemic causality) is not a mistake; this ambiguity allows him to especially avoid an attack from Davidson's direct critic, Jaegwon Kim.

⁹³ See: Davidson, *Mental Events*, 122.

⁹⁴ Davidson, *Thinking Causes*, 190.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

A short version of the Davidson-Kim dispute is as follows: Davidson argues for psycho-physical ontological causality that has two features: first, psycho-physical ontological causality is always physical but only sometimes mental; second, there is psycho-physical ontological identity. Kim, like Horgan, complain that Davidson`s argument for psycho-physical ontological causality loses mental quausation, because given that causality is always physical, the causality occurs at the physical level. Because the mental is ontologically identical to the physical and causality occurs at the physical level, the mental is causally inert; hence the loss of mental quausation. Yet, when Kim points out that Davidson`s causality is exclusively physical and that the mental is causally inert, Davidson, using the first sphere of his dual standard of causality, states that causality is neither.

The question then is how ontologically relevant (and philosophically fair) is it to state by adjectival phrases that ‘mental’ events cause ‘physical’ events, and soon afterwards to state that events cause no matter how described? He makes the argument as to why AM is relevant to ontology. In first, he argues that:

the idea that mental properties make no causal difference is consistent with the view that there are no psycho-physical laws (strict or not) and with the supposition that every singular causal relation between two events is backed by a strict (physical) law; it is also consistent with the thesis that mental events (i.e. events picked out by mental properties) are causally related to physical events. So AM+P is *consistent* with the (epiphenomenalist) view that the mental properties of events make no difference to causal relations. But this is not enough to discredit AM+P, for it does not follow that AM *implies* the causal inertness of the mental properties, and this I see no way of establishing.⁹⁶

Davidson here argues that AM together with the third principle, the second principle, and with the first principle respectively, could be consistent with the proposition of the causal inertness of the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 199-200.

mental. But Davidson's defensive strategy is that even if AM + 1st + 2nd + 3rd principle could be consistent with the causal inertness of the mental, the ontologically causal inertness of the mental does not follow from AM by necessity. According to Davidson, since it does not follow by necessity, AM does not affirm it and so it does not conflict with it. Given that the meaning of his terms 'mental' and 'physical' is epistemological, I indeed do not see why AM should either prove or conflict with ontological psycho-physical causality. In other words, when Davidson interprets his first principle as the claim that 'mental is causally related to physical in the epistemological sense' and hence when Davidson interprets his psycho-physical causality epistemologically, then surely the charge that on AM mental is causally inert on the ontological level is avoided and Davidson is correct that the charge does not follow from AM by necessity.

The only problem is that since it ought to be the theorist who should prove his propositions, it might be difficult to accept any ontologically relevant propositions about psycho-physical causality that should follow from AM to its first principle. I think that by claiming that the causality is neither physical nor mental, Davidson in avoiding Kim's objection makes AM's psycho-physical causality irrelevant to ontology. I also think that the fix from above that claims that the mental inertness does not conflict with AM because it does not follow from it, only confirms that AM psycho-physical causality is irrelevant to ontology. Nevertheless, Davidson believes that the dual standard of causality allows AM to argue for the first principle of psycho-physical ontological causation by the fact that mental events are physical events that cause physical events, so mental events cause physical events. But as I shown, Davidson's way of avoiding the loss of mental quausation and of relating AM to ontology entails the self-contradiction, since if mental and physical causality is epistemological, AM's first principle is not related to ontology.

The second fix against second objection charging AM from the loss of mental causation is even less successful. The fix follows from Davidson's concept of supervenience. According to Davidson, mental explanations supervene on physical explanations,⁹⁷ which in agreement with the definition of supervenience means that mental explanations cannot distinguish any entities that cannot be distinguished by physical explanations. He claims that "supervenience as I have defined it does, as we have seen, imply that if two events differ in their psychological properties, they differ in their physical properties (which we assume to be causally efficacious). If supervenience holds, psychological properties make a difference to the causal relations of an event, for they matter to the physical properties, and the physical properties matter to causal relations."⁹⁸ For instance, the death by a loud gun shot would be different from the death by a silent shot, even though the shot is fatal in both scenarios. From this Davidson concludes that events with different mental properties make a difference to physical properties, which yields different effects.

The problem with this argument is that there is no doubt that the scenarios describe two ontologically different kinds of death; but there are two different scenarios not because there are two different explanations, but because there are two different kinds of ontological *cause* of death. The ontology of a loud shot is different from the ontology of a silent shot. It is a different cause of death, not a different explanation of the cause of death, that yields different effects. In fact, the scenario portrays two kinds of ontologically fatal shots. Therefore, it is false to state that it is a differing explanation 'loud' and 'silent' that makes the ontological difference; what makes the ontological difference is two ontologically different causal scenarios. Of course, the description 'loud shot' is true of a loud shot, and false of a silent shot. So, to truly describe an event as a 'loud

⁹⁷ See: Ibid., 188.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 200.

shot' means that the event is loud, which is a different shot than a quiet shot. However, it is not the description 'loud shot' that makes the shot ontologically loud. What makes the 'loud shot' ontologically loud is the ontology itself. I could be deaf and explain both shots as silent, seemingly making the deaths the same, but since in reality two ontologically different scenarios would occur, my explanations are ontologically irrelevant.

The first thing to suspect in this argument, in any case, is the phrase 'difference making' when one is claiming to prove the ontological efficacy of the mental. We can undeniably argue that a man's suicidal idea of jumping under an oncoming train 'made a difference' to whether the man is alive or dead, but also an explanation that the man is dead because he got fired from work would suffice. Yet, all explanations aside, two ontological events occurred, a cause and an effect. Also, meanwhile the difference making is strictly conceptual because a memory is required to remember the previous state of what has been changed or affected, the ontology does not care about what has been before. It does not care about anything, especially not about the past.

In conclusion, AM is based on 'Spinozistic' principles of conceptual dualism and psycho-physical identity. I say 'Spinozistic' not 'Spinoza's', for AM asserts the ontological meaning of psycho-physical identity, and it is unclear whether ontological reading of the identity thesis would be correct in relation to Spinoza's position on philosophy of mind. In fact, AM here differs from NM, which I have developed as a possible coherent 'Spinozistic' model for philosophy of mind, because NM does not assert ontological but non-ontological (i.e. epistemological) meaning of identity thesis. AM also asserts that there is a triad of principles: psycho-physical ontological causality, strict (law abiding) causal singular relations, and yet no psycho-physical laws. AM claims the distinction between ontological identity yoked with conceptual dualism allows all three of these principles to be true. Davidson also attempts to show how supervenience helps showing

that the triad is possible. AM intends to show, against all odds, that the first principle can be anomalously ontological. In this section I demonstrated that Davidson can do this because he applies the dual standard of causality, meaning that the word ‘causality’ is employed to speak about both causation that holds true no matter how described, and causal explanation that requires law-like physical vocabulary. Davidson’s dual standard is not a mistake, but an intended philosophical tool that links ontology with epistemology.

I pointed out that AM faces two objections. First, ontological identity thesis conflicts with ontological psycho-physical causality. By definition both principles conflict with each other, because if the mental is ontologically the physical, then it is impossible that there is psycho-physical ontological causality, since given that the mental *is* the physical, they cannot interact for there is nothing to interact with (since both are one). In my reply to the first objection I argued that if mental events are mental explanations due to the fact that we cannot know about mental events if not explained, then the same applies to the so-called individual ontological events, which are meant to be ontological and thus non-epistemological. Since we cannot know about individual ontological events unless explained, if the objection is allowed, it applies to the whole of AM. My proposed defence is that since any ‘speaking about’ invokes epistemology, as long as the propositions intends to refer to ontology, ontologically relevant conclusions of the speech should be allowed. So ontological psycho-physical causality should be speculatively allowed. Yet, I pointed out that even if in this defence against the first objection we allow AM to comment on ontology, this in return instigates an even bigger problem. If there should be the speculatively allowed ontological causality of mental events to physical events, then mental events and physical events must be ontologically separate (distinct). But if there is an ontological identity thesis, mental events and physical events are monistic and not distinct. Therefore, the ontological identity thesis

and ontological psycho-physical causality conflict with each other. I resolve this problem in the third chapter of this thesis, where I develop a better version of AM.

Second, AM argues that mental events are causally efficacious because mental events are physical events and physical events are causally efficacious. If this is true, then mental causation may be true, but mental causation is false, for mental events do not cause qua mental but qua physical. AM itself comes with the defence against the second objection via two fixes: first, via the philosophical tool called supervenience; and second, via arguing that ontological events cause no matter how described. However, I showed that both fixes are unsatisfactory, since both leave AM irrelevant to ontological psycho-physical causality, which was AM's original assertion in its first principle.

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

In the previous chapter I analyzed Davidson's anomalous monism (AM) and I pointed out some objections to it. I partially replied to these objections, but I will try to overcome them, once and for all, in this chapter. To do this, however, I suggest that some alterations to AM be made, and I borrow the ideas for the alteration of AM from nomolous monism (NM). Yet, since NM is exclusively an epistemological system of true explanations, and problems of AM are related to its arguments for psycho-physical ontological causality, one of my tasks is to relate NM to ontology. In doing so, however, I distance the original thesis of NM, which keeps it coherently epistemological, and I approach what is a better version of AM. I call AM's better version Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM). The word 'decode' should indicate that the DNM model is unexceptionally causal (i.e., non-anomalous) not only on the physical explanatory level, but also on the mental explanatory level.

3.1 Nomolous Monism versus Anomalous Monism

In the first section of this chapter I relate NM and AM. First, I point out that they are similar in arguing for three principles: monism, conceptual dualism and the identity thesis. They are also different, because monism and the identity thesis are ontological on AM but epistemological on NM. In order to relate NM to AM, I make some alterations on NM: I make NM's monism and identity thesis also relevant to ontology. Second, I demonstrate that the interpretation of the identity thesis is subtly different on AM than on the altered NM, which ultimately results in a vital distinction between AM and altered NM. Particularly, mode identity is ontological on both models, but is epistemological only on altered NM. This means that altered NM and AM agree that mental

and physical explanations denote the same ontological thing; however, they disagree in what knowledge mental and physical explanations provide. Altered NM argues that mental explanations are rational explanations, but that they provide as true causal and law-like knowledge as physical explanations. However, AM argues that contrary to physical explanations, which are causal and law-like, since mental explanations are rational, they are not causal and law-like explanations. Mental explanations explain by appeal to rationality and reasons. I argue that this is where AM is open to the criticism that AM loses mental causation (mental causation qua mental). I suggest that if AM adopts NM's mode identity with epistemological force, then mental rational explanations can be true causal and law-like explanations as well, and AM withstands criticism.

NM and AM are similar in three following respects. First, as suggested in the names of both models, they both assert monism. AM asserts monism through the ontological reduction of mental events to physical events, where all events are physical, and some physical events are mental. NM asserts monism through substance monism, but substance monism is predominantly epistemological monism. Epistemological monism means that since adequate knowledge reflects ontological causal chains, under a hypothetical scenario of complete adequate knowledge of the world's causality down to its primary cause, there is an idea that the world is epistemologically monistic.⁹⁹ Hence, NM's epistemological monism does not conflict with AM's ontological monism, but only because ontologically speaking NM does not comment on how the world is. This is due to the fact that NM is an epistemological system of true explanations of the world, where we cannot assume anything ontologically existent that is not conceptually conceived. Yet, as I explained in the first chapter, the theoretical framework of NM may also show that NM's monism

⁹⁹ I explain this rationale in more detail in the first section of the first chapter above.

means that the world is also ontologically one. We can argue that on NM, substance monism is ontological monism due to the feature of NM called the discrimination of inadequate ideas. Recall that the discrimination of inadequate ideas means that NM does not discuss false explanations of the world but only true explanations. Therefore, on NM every explanation truly explains the world, so we can assume that epistemology adequately reflects ontology. Consequently, epistemological monism is ontological monism. If substance monism is both epistemological monism and ontological monism (due to the discrimination of inadequate ideas), then NM complies with AM in asserting ontological monism.

Second, both NM and AM argue for conceptual dualism, which asserts that there are two different ways of describing the ontologically monistic world. The two different ways of describing result in twofold explanatory particulars; that is, the names in either mental or physical vocabulary that denote the same ontological thing. The only difference is that AM and NM describe the explanatory particulars differently: AM calls the kinds of the explanatory particulars mental and physical explanations; and NM calls kinds of the explanatory particulars mental and physical modes. For the sake of relating AM to NM, I will apply AM's terminology.

Third, both NM and AM agree that the combination of ontological monism and conceptual dualism grants the psycho-physical identity thesis. The identity thesis (i.e., Spinoza's mode identity) means that two kinds of explanatory particulars are identical. Yet, there is a subtle difference in the meaning of 'identity thesis' that results in a vital distinction between the two models. The subtle difference is that even though both NM and AM comply in claiming that explanatory particulars are identical in the sense that they denote the same ontological thing, the models conflict in what knowledge the explanatory particulars generate. NM argues that even though mental explanations are rational explanations, they provide as true causal and law-like

knowledge as physical explanations provide. However, AM argues that because mental explanations explain by appeal to reasons, mental explanations do not provide true causal and law-like knowledge. Mental explanations provide rational, not law-like explanations; and physical explanations provide law-like, not rational, explanations. So on NM, the identity thesis has ontological and epistemological force, but on AM the identity thesis only has ontological force.¹⁰⁰

However, does NM's conceptual dualism comply with both epistemological monism and the epistemological force of the identity thesis, given that the combination of the last two appears to result in a conceptual reduction? The conceptual reduction means that both mental and physical explanations are essentially the same explanations, so conceptual reduction conflicts with conceptual dualism, which asserts that mental and physical explanations are different. My reply is that conceptual dualism complies with both epistemological monism and with the epistemological force of the identity thesis, for neither of them generates the conceptual reduction. Recall that epistemological monism means that since adequate knowledge reflects ontological causal chains, under a hypothetical scenario of complete adequate knowledge of the world's causality down to its primary cause, there is an idea that the world is epistemologically monistic. It is true that adequate knowledge can be provided in either physical or mental causal explanations (or both), but this does not mean that mental and physical explanations are the same explanations. They still are different kinds of explanations, the first rational and the second physical (or more broadly scientific), yet both adequate (i.e., accurately reflecting ontological causal chains). Also recall that

¹⁰⁰ There is a second subtle difference that the ontological force of the identity thesis is non-exceptional on NM, but exceptional on AM. NM asserts that the world is always both mental and physical, but AM asserts that the world is always physical and only sometimes mental. This means that contrarily to AM, NM applies a non-exceptional ontological force to the identity thesis. But it is obvious that there must be some mind that conceives events in order to make any proposition about them. Therefore, since NM states that all ontologically individual events in the world are both physical and mental only if events are described, there must be an infinite mind that does two things: first, it follows the infinite logic of causal ontology in the world, and second, it assures a true proposition that all ontologically individual events are both mental and physical.

by the epistemological force of the identity thesis, mental explanations (though rational) provide as true causal and law-like knowledge as physical explanations provide. But there is an obvious difference between claiming that mental and physical explanations provide the same type of knowledge and between claiming that they are the same explanations. For example, there is a rational causal law that a paper thrown into open fire burns, so a child can accurately explain the ontological occurrence by citing this law. Here the meaning of the word 'rational' is that when explaining the event of the burning paper, we rationalize that it occurred *because* we threw it into the fire. But there is also a physical causal law, which a scientist can cite to accurately explain the same ontological occurrence, that a paper composed of certain micro-molecules and exposed to certain temperature, burns under certain conditions (where the paper's composition, temperature, and other conditions are a matter of complex scientific facts). The scientific facts backing physical laws are results of scientific measurements and experiments. Nonetheless, both mental and physical explanations have the epistemological force of the identity thesis, for both are as true causal and law-like knowledge as physical explanations, yet they are a different type of explanation citing different explanatory particulars, so they resist conceptual reduction.

In what follows, I would like to discuss how this subtle difference in the epistemological forces of the identity thesis leads to a vital distinction between NM and AM. On NM, the identity thesis has always both ontological and epistemological force. The ontological force means that explanatory particulars denote one and the same thing if, of course, we allow the identity thesis to apply to ontology in the same sense as we allow substance monism to apply to ontology. If we didn't allow that the identity thesis applies to ontology, the identity thesis obviously could not have an ontological force at all, for the whole intended point of NM is only to discuss the epistemology of true explanations. But for the sake of helping AM to overcome its problems, NM must relate to

ontology via the discrimination of inadequate ideas. The epistemological force means that mental explanations are rational explanations, providing as true causal and law-like knowledge as physical explanations provide; and due to the strict determinism, which enforces that ontology occurs in the strict causal chains, both mental and physical explanatory particulars that adequately reflect ontological causal chains must be strictly causal. So not only mental and physical explanations provide the same knowledge, but also this knowledge is strictly causal.

If we apply Davidson's terminology to NM, mental explanations would be as law-like as physical explanations. But law-like explanations, which follow the strictly deterministic causality of ontological events (if explanations are accurate), destroy a possibility of speaking about freedom. This means that in our mental explanations, it is false to speak about freedom of mind. For example, if I say 'Joe is wearing a tin foil hat' and explain that 'Joe believes the aliens are trying to listen to his thoughts, and wearing tin foil will keep his thoughts safe', then on NM the explanations by reasons are as true and causal as physical explanations. There is also an important observation to make: if we combine ontological identity with epistemological identity, then NM claims that every explanatory particular, which provides the same type of knowledge, is ontologically the same thing. This means that every mental explanation refers to a mental event that is also physical, and many physical explanations refer to physical events that are also mental. My mental explanation of the causal relation between events accurately reflects the ontology that is both mental and physical. My explanation of Joe's rationality is true, so not only there must be ontologically causal chain of mental events, but also these mental events must be physical events. So my explanation of Joe's rationality also points at physical events, say Joe's neural firings. Similarly, there must be a physical explanation of neural firings that corresponds with the mental events. The mental events that are physical events are causally responsible for Joe's reasoning that

I have described, but this should not mean that Joe's reasoning has two ontological causes, since the mental and the physical is one and the same thing. I return to this problem in the second section of this chapter.

Consequently, because the altered NM asserts both epistemological and ontological force of the identity thesis, but AM asserts only ontological force of the identity thesis, the altered NM and AM make vitally distinct philosophical claims. The different philosophical claim is that mental explanations are always true on NM, but sometimes false on AM: AM argues that identity thesis has ontological force, so distinct explanatory particulars denote the same ontological thing. AM also argues that the identity thesis does not have epistemological force.¹⁰¹ With AM, the absence of epistemological force in the identity thesis means that mental explanations, which refer to mental events that are physical, provide different types of knowledge than physical explanations. Mental explanations are not law-like, hence are anomalous and free. That mental is anomalous is a logical result of the fact that the epistemological force of the identity thesis is absent. So it is possible that there is psycho-physical ontological causality but also that there are rational explanations. But causality is law-like, and rational explanations are not law-like, so given that rational explanations are not law-like, we explain the mind as non-deterministic (anomalous) and free. However, on AM, the mind lacks a causal efficacy qua mental (i.e., it lacks mental quausation). But because of the anomalousness of mental explanations, mental explanations do not actually reflect the ontology; they rationalize ontology (often falsely). This is because the

¹⁰¹ Also, as I mentioned in the above footnote, even though both NM and AM argue for ontological force of the identity thesis, their claim is slightly different. The difference is on NM the ontological force of the identity thesis is non-exceptional, which requires an infinite mind, but on AM the identity thesis is only occasional. That identity thesis has only an occasional ontological force means that in the world, events are always physical, and only those events that are identical to individual minds are both mental and physical. But since AM's ontological identity applies to mind and body, and we are only concerned with the psycho-physical ontological problem, the ontological force of identity thesis is true to our problem on both AM and NM. Hence, this difference is unimportant.

ontological causal chains are strictly deterministic, so explanations that accurately reflect the strictly deterministic causal chains are law-like. So only law-like explanations are true explanations. It hence follows that because only physical law-like explanations accurately reflect the deterministic causality, only the physical explanations are true. Thus, because AM argues that mental explanations are not law-like, AM cannot claim that mental explanations accurately explain ontological causal chains. Therefore, the difference in the epistemological force of the identity thesis results in a different philosophical claim that mental explanations are always true on NM, but sometimes false of AM.

Notice that on AM the causality is law-like and mental explanations are not law-like. Yet, AM argues that the mental is causally efficacious via the ontological force of the identity thesis. In other words, mental events are causally efficacious by virtue of the identity of mental events with physical events. But since the identity thesis lacks epistemological force, AM rejects mental quausation. That is, even though there is psycho-physical causality at the ontological level, because mental explanatory particulars are not law-like, we cannot claim causation at the mental explanatory level. AM is here open to criticism, for if mental explanations are anomalously non-deterministic due to the absence of the epistemological force of the identity thesis, and yet mental events are causally efficacious via the ontological force of the identity thesis, then we can only speak about the real law-like causality at the physical explanatory level. In other words, if we can say that the mental is quausal only via physical causal explanations, then causality occurs at the physical level.

Could NM, with its feature of strict determinism that is reflected to both mental and physical explanations, solve AM's problem that it loses mental quausation to the physical level? I believe that it can, but only if AM surrenders the anomalousness of mental explanations and

accepts that strict determinism is applied to mental explanations as it is applied to physical explanations. In other words, AM must admit that the identity thesis has an epistemological force, so mental explanations provide the same type of knowledge (i.e., true, causal and law-like knowledge) that is provided by physical explanations. If this is not done, then we cannot refer to mental explanations as premises for physical conclusions.

Surrendering the freedom on the mental explanatory level might be a repellent idea to many philosophers; but resembling Spinoza's revolutionary vision of the true science, should we be interested in the scientific epistemological model for the explanations of the world, we should not feel afraid to commit to true and exact scientific facts about the world even if those facts conflict with our desires to make the world free. We can perhaps learn from Spinoza to see in determinism a beauty and to see in this beauty a wonder, and we should follow Spinoza's doctrine of freedom according to which the more we learn about the deterministic world, the freer we can become.

Of course, AM has its own way of proving psycho-physical causality and yet saving the anomalousness of mental explanations: a philosophical tool called supervenience. AM argues that mental explanations of events are different explanations than physical explanations, but are causally relevant explanations because they supervene on physical explanations of the event. Recall that supervenience states that mental concepts cannot distinguish any entities that cannot be distinguished by physical concepts, so a change in the mental explanations implies a change in the physical explanation.¹⁰² AM argues that even though mental explanations are not strict and causal, we can speak about the causal relevance of mental properties via supervenience that should give mental properties causal relevance to physical effects. So, we can state that the idea of hearing the bell ringing (mental explanation) supervenes on a brain state (physical explanation) that causes

¹⁰² See: Davidson, *Thinking Causes*, 188.

the person to say ‘the bell rang’. The idea of hearing the bell ringing is causally relevant to the physical utterance of the person since the absence of the hearing of the bell ringing would imply the bell didn’t ring, so the person would not utter anything. Still, because it is the brain state that causes person’s utterances, the fix through supervenience leaves AM open to the original criticism that only via physical explanations we can actually talk about causality.

In order to avoid the criticism, I suggest that AM makes mental properties causally relevant via the epistemological force of the identity thesis, so mental explanations of mental events are causally relevant explanations, and that AM avoids the supervenience thesis.¹⁰³ I suggest that AM agrees with NM’s view that the mode identity thesis is as epistemological as it is ontological. If AM adopts this feature of thus altered NM, AM becomes a better version of AM. I call it Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM). If DNM asserts that the identity thesis is epistemological, so mental explanations are as law like as physical explanations, and hence mental explanations track causation in the same way as physical explanations, we can solve the mental causation problem. The consequence of this move, however, is that the anomalism of the mental is abandoned, since the mental is nomolous. This leads to the conclusion that freedom is not preserved.

In this section I compared AM to NM and I argued that they comply in arguing for three principles: monism, conceptual dualism and mode identity. Then, in order to relate AM to NM, I made some alterations to NM. I made substance monism and identity thesis ontologically relevant,

¹⁰³ My critics could argue that since Spinoza defines mind as ‘an idea of body’, physical has the explanatory priority over mental, and so Spinoza too applies a version of supervenience. My reply is that even if this was true, it would play no real importance to our model, for mental explanations are already as law-like as physical explanations. That mental explanations are as law like as physical explanations is the only thing that I need to avoid supervenience. Then, my critics could argue that Spinoza’s definition of mind might mean that the world is probably ontologically physical, but my response would be similar. The world is ontologically as mental as physical, so there is no place of the priority of mental. After all, the definition is so obscure that all arguments that follow therefrom are nothing more but speculations. See: Spinoza, *Ethics*, 102.

so the altered NM completely agrees with AM. Still, I pointed out that there is a subtle distinction between the altered NM's and AM's interpretation of the identity thesis. On NM the identity thesis is epistemologically relevant, but on AM the identity thesis is not epistemologically relevant. I argued that since AM does not claim the identity thesis is epistemologically relevant, it is open to the criticism of failing to secure the mental causation. For this reason, I suggested that AM profits from complying with NM in claiming the identity thesis has epistemological force.

3.2 Anomalous Monism and Epistemological Force of the Identity Thesis: Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM)

In the previous section I suggested that DNM consists of ontological monism, conceptual dualism, and the identity thesis that has both epistemological and ontological force. However, by aligning AM to NM in DNM, DNM distances itself from the actual meaning of NM, which does not originally relate monism and identity thesis to ontology. DNM also distances itself from the original AM's intentions to maintain that there is a freedom of mind. Nevertheless, DNM borrows from NM what is useful (the epistemological force of the identity thesis) and surrenders in AM what is conflicting (anomalousness of the mental). Yet, should DNM argue for what is essential to AM (psycho-physical ontological causality), it faces the problem that it argues for two eventually conflicting positions: ontological identity thesis and ontological psycho-physical causality. In fact, the original NM does not relate to ontology not only because it is not in its philosophical implications, but also because there is a logical problem that arrives from stating the ontological force of the identity thesis and the ontological psycho-physical causality. In a nutshell, the problem is that if names 'body' and 'mind' denote one and the same thing, then this conflicts with the ontological psycho-physical causation thesis, if this thesis is understood as implying that there ontologically exist body and distinct mind that causally interact. If they causally interact, then they

must be ontologically separate. But the ontological force of the identity thesis states that they are ontologically identical. So the problem is that they cannot be both identical and separate.

As I mentioned in 2.2 in this thesis, Davidson would think that this is not a problem on AM: since mental event m is the physical event p that causes the physical effect p^* , m causes p^* , so we have psycho-physical causation that is ironically granted via identity thesis. But to repeat what I said in 2.2, Davidson's response would be irrelevant and futile, because his identity thesis is not ontological, but logical. Davidson's claim that mental event m is the physical event p has a logical force. If Davidson's identity thesis was ontological, it would mean by necessity that mental and physical exist ontologically as one thing, hence no ontological psycho-physical causality.

It seems necessary that on DNM either the identity thesis or psycho-physical causation cannot be true. But both principles are essential to AM's philosophical intentions that DNM inherits; therefore, in this section I try to deal with this logical problem. I suggest that DNM proceeds by a direct asserting of the ontological identity thesis, but only by an indirect assuming that there is psycho-physical causality. The indirect assuming of psycho-physical causality means that DNM does not directly claim psycho-physical ontological causality but assumes it. DNM can assume it by adopting two characteristics: (1) DNM must refuse NM's trans-attribute causal ban, so that mental explanations can provide premises for physical conclusions; (2) DNM must adopt NM's epistemological system of true explanations, so explanations are true explanations that adequately reflect ontology. Then, not only mental and physical explanations adequately separately reflect ontological causality, but also psycho-physical explanations (mental premises for physical conclusions, and vice versa) adequately reflect ontological causality. Since psycho-physical explanations reflect ontological causality, they assume it. So we can assume the psycho-physical ontological causality.

Nevertheless, as I mentioned above, there are logical problems with the ontological reading of NM's principles. But before I start dealing with these logical problems, I will explain why DNM should refuse NM's trans-attribute causal ban. If DNM adopted a trans-attribute causal ban, it would be disastrous to DNM's claim of psycho-physical ontological causality. As we remember, NM includes the parallelism thesis that features with the trans-attribute causal ban. On NM, the causal ban is on attributes level, so mental explanations cannot function as premises for physical conclusions, and vice versa. If we allowed the trans-attribute causal ban to apply to DNM, this would mean that since the causal ban is on attributes, we could not speak about psycho-physical causality on the explanatory level, even if we can assume that there is psycho-physical causality at the ontological level. How could we *speak* about ontological psycho-physical causality, if *explaining* psycho-physical causality is prohibited? Therefore, trans-attribute causal ban cannot be applied to DNM that intends to comment on the psycho-physical ontological causality. I suggest that even if DNM should follow NM in applying the epistemological force of the identity thesis, when allowing parallelism, DNM must refuse the NM's trans-attribute causal ban. In fact, DNM already refuses the trans-attribute causal ban if we adopt Davidson's claim that a mental explanandum has a mental reason as explanans, while a physical explanandum has a physical causal explanans, but also, that a physical explanandum can have a mental reason as explanans. However, Davidson claims so via his supervenience thesis and not because he considers mental explanations to be causal explanations. But the supervenience thesis is open to the attacks mentioned in 2.2, so DNM should not adopt it in its claiming of ontological psycho-physical causality. Instead, what we need is the identity thesis with the epistemological force and parallelism without the trans-attribute causal ban. As a result, we should be able to state that Joe's wearing a tin foil hat is an effect of his beliefs, and this explanation would be not only causal but

also true, even if explained exclusively in rationality. But we can also truly explain in the exclusively physical explanation that Joe's wearing a tin foil hat is an effect of his neural firings. Yet, we are allowed to use reasons as premises for physical explanatory conclusions and to state that his rational beliefs caused some neural firings, resulting in Joe's wearing a tin foil hat. How is it possible to illuminate by using a premise of rational belief for a conclusion of neural firing? Well, remember that DNM is a system of true explanations that features with the identity thesis with the epistemological force and parallelism without the trans-attribute causal ban. So DNM allows there be mental law-like explanations and physical law-like explanations. Because DNM is a system of true explanations, for there to be law-like explanations of any kind, they must be first discovered. So only after laws are discovered, either in mental or physical vocabulary, corresponding mental or physical explanations can be uttered. But because DNM is a system of true explanations, trans-attributive explanations cannot mean that we cannot use a premise from mental explanation for physical explanatory conclusions, unless such trans-attribute explanations are true and law-like. So trans-attribute explanations are possible and can illuminate on DNM only if we have via true observations discovered trans-attribute explanatory laws. For this reason and only under this condition we are allowed to use reasons as premises for physical explanatory conclusions and state that Joe's rational beliefs caused some neural firings, resulting in Joe's wearing a tin foil hat.

Ultimately, when DNM says that speaking about psycho-physical causality at the explanatory level *assumes* the psycho-physical causality at the ontological level, DNM suggests the following point. The 'assuming' means that if we use premises from mental explanations for physical explanatory conclusions, since both types of explanations truly reflect the psycho-physical causality at the ontological level, we can make a general assertion that mind sometimes

causes the body exactly as explained. If this is true, we technically apply a dual standard of causality: the causality is meant first epistemologically, second ontologically. But this is fine only if epistemology equals ontology (as it is on NM). Therefore, DNM (similarly to NM) must be an epistemological system of true explanations, and its monism must be proclaimed epistemological, and arguably ontological via the discrimination of inadequate ideas.

The theoretical framework of DNM is thereby complete. To sum it up, DNM must be the epistemological system of true causal explanations that follows strict ontological causal chains. Because of conceptual dualism, ontological causal chains can be truly explained in mental and physical explanatory particulars that are causal. DNM also adopts the identity thesis that has both ontological and epistemological force, so both mental and physical explanations provide the same true, causal and law-like knowledge, and simultaneously, they denote one and the same ontological thing. I advise that DNM also accepts the parallelism thesis; not because parallelism is necessary, but because parallelism eases to imagine how mental and physical explanations denote one and the same ontological thing. Because DNM allows the trans-attribute explanatory causation, mental explanations can serve as premises for physical explanatory conclusions, and vice versa. The trans-attributive explanatory causation is illuminative if it is based on trans-attributive causal laws. Since DNM is an epistemological system of true explanations (featuring the discrimination of inadequate ideas), we can assume that what is explained is ontologically true. Therefore, we can assume that there is an ontological psycho-physical causality.

I now would like to return to the mentioned logical problem of DNM that I also posed against AM in 2.2. The problem is that DNM argues for two eventually conflicting positions: ontological identity thesis and ontological psycho-physical causality. If body and mind denote one and the same ontological thing (ontological identity thesis), then this conflicts with the ontological

psycho-physical thesis, according to which there is ontologically existing body and ontologically existing mind that causally interact. If they causally interact at the ontological level, they are separate; but how can they be separate if they are one and the same thing?

To analyze and to resolve the problem, we must address a question whether the ontological force of the identity thesis is meant in standard or non-standard sense. Does a proposition that mind (M) and body (P) are one and the same thing mean that M is equal to P in a standard sense, where M and P ontologically exist as a one thing; or that M exists ontologically and body exists ontologically but also M is equal to P in a non-standard sense, where M exists and P exists and also a third thing exists (perhaps human) that existentially unites M and P? If the ontological force of the identity thesis is meant in the non-standard sense, DNM indeed faces the objection that I also made against Davidson, that if there is ontological identity thesis and ontological monism, so the events are monistic, it is by definition impossible that ontologically monistic events are also ontologically dual. DNM could potentially argue that the non-standard sense of the ontological force of the identity thesis avoids the objection, since it enforces two levels of ontological existence: one level where mind and body exist separately, and the second where they exist as a one united thing.

However, if DNM dodges in this way, it fails to overcome the objection, because the objection can be restated that monistic events are ontologically dual at the first level. Using the diagram from the second chapter, the non-standard meaning would also mean that if causality occurs at o^1 to o^2 level (where both o^1 is mental and physical, and o^2 is mental and physical), then m^1 causes both m^2 and p^2 ; and p^1 causes both p^2 and m^2 . So caused events would have two causes, which conflicts with what is called a causal exclusion problem, according to which “no event (i.e.,

effect) can have more than a single sufficient cause occurring at a given time.”¹⁰⁴ So the non-standard sense of the ontological thesis faces two mentioned problems: first, the conflict of ontological dualism, which is required by psycho-physical ontological causality, and ontological identity monism; second, the problem of causal exclusion. Additionally, parallelism, which requires mental and physical events to run in parallel (at the same time), only confirms the ontological identity thesis and hence the problem of causal exclusion. Also, parallelism restores the initial conflict between the ontological force of the identity thesis and ontological psycho-physical causation: if mind and body run in a parallel causal chain, they are ontologically separate. If they are separate, they are not the same. But this conflicts with the ontological force of the identity thesis that requires them to be the same. Consequently, if we wanted to apply the non-standard meaning of the ontological force of the identity thesis, the AM that argues for psycho-physical causality would be inconsistent in all the mentioned respects. But to give to psycho-physical causality an ontological force is our intention; therefore, the ontological force of the identity thesis cannot have the non-standard sense.

Let's turn to the second option. If the ontological force of the identity thesis is standard, then mind and body are one and the same thing (M=P) at one ontological level. But this might immediately imply a problem that what really exists is one ontological thing (O). If causality occurs from o^1 to o^2 level, then mental and physical events face the threat that they are devoid of ontological causality, for only individual events ontologically exist and adjectives 'mental' and 'physical' are a kind of explanation. This problem also means that the adjectival phrases 'mental events' and 'physical events' are reduced to the sphere of epistemology and hence that there is not

¹⁰⁴ Dwayne Moore, "The Principle of Causal Exclusion," in *The Causal Exclusion Problem*, (Peter Lang Publishing: New York, 2014), 61.

much difference between mental/physical events and mental/physical explanations. How can we ensure that we can speak about the causality of ontologically existing between mental and physical events while claiming that they are ontologically one and the same thing? This can be done through now well-known stretch of epistemology to ontology. The stretch of epistemology to ontology means that due to the discrimination of inadequate ideas, the ontological existence of mental and physical events should be indirectly assumed even though it is not directly asserted. The indirect assuming of psycho-physical causality means that DNM does not directly claim psycho-physical ontological causality but assumes it. DNM claims that mental explanations can provide premises for physical conclusions and since explanations are true explanations that adequately reflect the ontology, the psycho-physical explanatory causation reflects the ontological psycho-physical causation. Since it reflects it, it assumes it.

In accordance to the suggested stretch from epistemology to ontology, both psycho-physical causality and parallelism cannot mean that mental and physical parallel causal chains exist ontologically, for then the ontological reading conflicts with the ontological force of the identity thesis. In order to help DNM overcome its problems, if psycho-physical causality and parallelism are read epistemologically as a possibility of two true parallel causal explanations, we can apply the discrimination of inadequate ideas to make conclusions relevant to ontology, so the ontologically monistic causal events are also *probably* psycho-physically causal and parallel at the ontological level. In other words, because the discrimination of inadequate ideas states that DNM's epistemological reading disregards false ideas, then DNM that explains ontologically monistic events in two parallel psycho-physical explanations assumes that there are two parallel psycho-physical ontological causes. After all there is a reason for why I stated in the second chapter that parallelism must be epistemological. I did so because if parallelism was ontological, NM would

run to the problems pointed out by Spinoza's critics that there is an inconsistent triad: parallelism, trans-attribute causal ban and identity thesis. If parallelism was read ontologically as the existence of two separate causal chains that cannot interact, then mind and body are causally different. But if they are different, they cannot be the same and so the identity thesis fails. Therefore, should NM solve Davidson's problem, DNM's parallelism must assert that we can epistemologically speak about two causal chains, so they can be then indirectly ontologically assumed. The same reasoning must apply to psycho-physical causality that must be too epistemological. If it was ontological, mind and body would be separate and so not identical. If at least the *assumption* of the two ontologically parallel and psycho-physical causal chains isn't true, then all we could say is that humans do things causally from one event to the other. But then we would have to forget the topic of psycho-physical causality, since mind and body would not really exist.

Consequently, the parallel psycho-physical ontological causality is on DNM indirectly assumed. It is an important element of DNM that the parallel psycho-physical ontological causality is not a principle of the model, but a mere result of it. If DNM is read as the epistemological system of true explanations, we can assume that because there are two parallel causal explanations, there might be corresponding two parallel ontological causal chains. After all, to truly *explain* means to adequately and accurately reflect. And because there is no trans-attribute causal ban, there is psycho-physical causation; direct at explanatory level and indirect at ontological level. The DNM is then freed from logical problems that AM faces and that the ontologically relevant NM would face. Because DNM is helped to prove the efficacy of mental, it thereby absolves AM from charges against it.

DNM thereby loses freedom but earns the doctrine that decoding the world in either physical or mental explanations makes us freer. The decoding in either mental or physical

vocabulary stands against conceptual reductionism, for the different vocabularies are different types of explanations that refer to different explanatory particulars. Yet, both mental and physical explanations provide the same type of knowledge (i.e., true and law-like knowledge), so conceptual dualism complies with the epistemological force of the identity thesis.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I defended the model of philosophy of mind, which is inspired by my reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*. The model bears certain similarities with Donald Davidson's anomalous monism (AM), but is distinct insofar as it can solve problems plaguing Davidson's AM. The thesis consists of three chapters. In the first chapter I offered my model for philosophy of mind inspired by my understanding of Spinoza. I proved by referring to Spinoza's text that five principles are present that are probably relevant to his position on philosophy of mind. The five principles are monism, conceptual dualism, strict determinism, mode identity (i.e., identity thesis), and parallelism with a feature called trans-attribute causal ban. I argued that the only possible way of creating a coherent model for philosophy of mind out of the mentioned Spinoza's principles is to speculate that his system suggests the epistemological system of true causal explanations of the world, which I named nomolous monism (NM). That NM is the epistemological system of true causal explanations means that it only considers true (adequate) explanations and it disregards false (inadequate) explanations. It hence discriminates against inadequate ideas. The first chapter consists of three sections. The first section deals with the first three principles (monism, conceptual dualism and strict determinism). I explained that on NM the monism is epistemological monism, so there is a scenario that if our examination follows the causality of nature up to its primary cause (God), our examination creates a mental understanding that the caused nature is in some sense monistic. Conceptual dualism means that we can explain the world in two ways: mental and physical. Strict determinism means that the world occurs in strict ontological causal chains, so both mental and physical explanations must be causal. The second section then showed how NM complies with the remaining two principles (identity thesis and parallelism). Identity thesis means that mental and physical explanatory particulars provide one and the same knowledge. Parallelism

means that we can explain the word in mental or physical parallel causal vocabulary, but that due to the psycho-physical causal ban we cannot use mental explanations as premises for physical conclusions, and vice versa. The third section closed the first chapter by introducing alternative interpretations and by explaining why NM should be preferred.

In the second chapter I brought Davidson to the discussion by identifying his reading of Spinoza with NM, where I demonstrated that Davidson's reading resembles NM. The second section of this chapter continued with the analysis of Davidson's AM. I demonstrated that AM is based on 'Spinozistic' principles of ontological monism, conceptual dualism and ontological psycho-physical identity. I say 'Spinozistic' not 'Spinoza's', for AM asserts the ontological meaning of monism and the ontological psycho-physical identity, and it is unclear whether ontological reading of the principles would be correct in relation to Spinoza's position on philosophy of mind. The center of my focus is AM's triad of principles: psycho-physical ontological causality, strict (law abiding) causal singular relations, and yet no psycho-physical laws. AM claims that the notion of supervenience helps showing that the triad is possible. The AM intends to show, against all odds, that the psycho-physical causation can be anomalously ontological. I explained that Davidson can do this because he applies the dual standard of causality, meaning that the word 'causality' is employed to speak about both the psycho-physical causation and the causal singular relations which disregards any explanations. Davidson's dual standard is not a mistake, but an intended philosophical tool that links ontology with epistemology.

In the second section of second chapter I also provided two objections to AM accompanied with potential replies to the objections. The first objection attacks AM's argument of ontological identity thesis. If the argument is true, then adjectival phrases 'mental events' and 'physical events' are reduced to the sphere of epistemology and they technically are explanations of ontologically

unified events. If this is the case, then AM cannot speak about the psycho-physical ontological causality. The second objection attacks AM's argument that mental events are causally efficacious because mental events are ontologically identical to physical events and physical events are ontologically causally efficacious. If the argument is true, then mental events lose 'mental quausation', for events do not cause qua mental but qua physical. AM itself comes with the defence against the second objection via the philosophical tool called supervenience; however, I showed that supervenience is unsatisfactory. Instead, I proposed my own defence of AM against both objections.

My proposed defence against the second objection is done via Davidson's dual standard of causality. The dual standard means that AM claims both the psycho-physical ontological causality and the singular ontological causality, which disregards explanations. AM can establish the psycho-physical ontological causality via ontological identity thesis, and when the second objection attacks that the causality is then exclusively physical and that the mental is causally inert, AM can resort to the second meaning of causality and thus can state that the actual causality is neither physical nor mental.

In my proposed defence against the first objection I argued that if mental events are mental explanations, since we cannot know about mental events if not explained, then the same applies to so-called individual ontological events, which are supposed to be ontological and hence non-epistemological. Since we cannot know about individual ontological events unless explained, if the first objection is allowed, it applies to the whole of AM. My proposed defence is that since any 'speaking about' invokes epistemology, we should allow (at least speculatively) commenting on ontology if it is an intent of the speech.

Lastly, in the second section of the second chapter I pointed out that even if we allow AM to comment on ontology, this in return invites an even bigger problem. If there should be speculatively allowed ontological causality from mental to physical, then mental and physical must be ontologically separate. But if there is ontological identity thesis, mental and physical are monistic and not separate. Therefore, the ontological identity thesis and the ontological psychophysical causality conflict with each other. I resolve this problem in the third chapter of this thesis, where I develop a better version of AM, Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM).

In the third chapter I compared NM with AM. I argued that NM has a potential to safeguard AM. To do this, however, I suggested that some alterations of AM be made, and I borrowed the ideas for the alterations of AM from NM. The third chapter consists of two sections. In the first section I compared AM to NM and I demonstrated that they comply in arguing for three principles: monism, conceptual dualism and identity thesis. Yet, since NM is exclusively the epistemological system of true explanations, and the problems of AM are related to its arguments for psychophysical ontological causality, one of my tasks was to relate NM to ontology. In doing so, however, I distanced myself from the original thesis of NM and I approached what is a better version of AM. I called AM's better version Decode-Nomolous Monism (DNM). Relating NM to ontology, I made substance monism and identity thesis ontologically relevant, so NM and AM assimilate in DNM. Still, I pointed out that there is a subtle distinction between NM's and AM's interpretation of the identity thesis. On NM the identity thesis is epistemologically relevant, but on AM the identity thesis is not epistemologically relevant. If the identity thesis is ontologically relevant, explanatory particulars denote one and the same ontological thing. If the identity thesis is epistemologically relevant, explanatory particulars provide the same type of knowledge (true and law-like). I believe that since AM does not claim that identity thesis is epistemologically relevant, it is open to the

criticism that mental events are causal only as physical events. For this reason, I suggested that DNM adopts NM's epistemological force of the identity thesis.

I argued that it is inevitable that DNM renders the mental causally relevant via the epistemological force of the identity thesis, and that DNM avoids the erroneous supervenience thesis. I suggested that DNM adopts NM's approach that the identity thesis is as epistemological as it is ontological. If DNM asserts that identity thesis is epistemological, mental explanations are as true and law like as physical explanations. Yet, DNM's acceptance of the epistemological force of the identity thesis means that we cannot speak about the freedom of mind. However, I recommended that DNM takes the strict determinism that applies to both mind and body as a fine scientific fact.

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