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A Conceptual History of the Idea of Self-Causation

From Plato's Forms to Hegel's Concrete Universal

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Dissertation submitted for the completion of
Ph.D. requirements

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Summary of Contents

The dissertation is a historical-cum-conceptual examination of the idea of self-causation (*causa sui*). In the Western metaphysical tradition, self-causation has been understood in two ways: (i.) as an individual existent's spontaneous self-creation and internal causal or ontological determination (what we term *ontological self-causation*), and/ or (ii.) as an individual's logical identity with an essence that uniquely characterizes it and out of which all of its features issue (*logical self-causation*). In sum, self-causation is (i.) the internal reason for an individual's existence, and/ or (ii) the internal reason for an individual's individuality.

The question whether there really are existents self-caused in at least one of these two senses – and what precisely we can know or say about them – has, in one form or another, occupied metaphysicians of all historical epochs. Our aim is to distil the idea's logical structure and explanatory scope through philosophical engagement with a careful *selection of paradigmatic discourses* in the history of metaphysics. These are: Plato's Theory of Forms, Aristotle's theory of substance, John Duns Scotus' and Francisco Suárez's theories of individuality, G. W. Leibniz's monadological and Baruch Spinoza's monistic metaphysics, Immanuel Kant's transcendental and G. W. F. Hegel's dialectical theory of individuality – inasmuch as they all contain, presuppose, or prefigure, theories of self-causation.

A dialogical discussion of issues specific to each key discourse reveals a shared problematic bound up with an individual's *being* or *becoming* (what it is) according to an internal principle, usually also *in relation to* other individuals or within a *general order* of things. It emerges that, after Aristotle's step away from Plato's transcendent Forms, the theory of self-causation embeds itself in *immanentist, particularistic metaphysics*. We argue that this theory finds its most complete articulation in Hegel's metaphysics of the concrete universal. The outcome of the theory is that an individual can

coherently be understood as self-caused *only if* it is fully identical with a unique essence (*logical self-causation*) yet *without* bringing itself into being (*ontological self-causation*). Self-causation is shown, accordingly, to be a viable criterion for an individual's logical identity *qua* individual.

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CHAPTER 1

Introducing the History and Logic of the Idea of Self-Causation

This work examines the idea of self-causation (*causa sui*) – broadly, that an individual’s *reason* for existing and/ or for being *this* individual and no other must be found *within* the individual itself rather than *outside* or *beyond* it. We investigate self-causation as conceived in the history of Western metaphysics, and focus on the *logical* and *ontological* dimensions of the notion rather than on its relation to human agency. Indeed, these dimensions ought to be examined first, for the relevance of the idea to human action to become visible.

Despite its seeming mysteriousness and multiple meanings, *causa sui* has occupied a privileged position in key metaphysical systems. Yet, there has been very little scholarly effort to puzzle its logical structure out in a concentrated way. A sustained inquiry running along the history of Western metaphysics has not, to my knowledge, been previously carried out. However, if we take metaphysics to be a holistic, *diachronic* – and not merely *synchronic* – dialogical inquiry into the nature of reality, *historically informed philosophical discussion* of such focal ideas is necessary. I take it that metaphysics cannot be done in a historical vacuum – and the argument in this work demonstrates this to be the case through the lens of self-causation.

Adrian Pabst’s comprehensive and prescient study of the metaphysics of individuation and relationality – in *Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy* – is exemplary in its demonstration of the historical unfolding of important metaphysical ideas.¹ However, its scope is even broader, and its final aim is distinct from ours. Its intention is to demonstrate the failure of ancient

¹ See Pabst (2012).

(especially Aristotelian), modern² and post-modern theories of individuation to account for the ontological relations between beings in the world, and between beings and God. Pabst argues that Christian Neo-Platonist metaphysical theology, grounded in a conception of relational individuality that begins with Plato, is superior to all other theories of individuality. In Pabst's view, this is so due to the focus of much Aristotelian, Scholastic and modern metaphysics on the *self-individuating (i.e. self-caused) individual* – that is to say, on the individual whose *reason* for *being* at all, and/ or for being or becoming *what* it is, and *how* it is, is *immanent* to it. As a result of this focus, ontological relationality, based in *transcendent* divine order, loses all significance.

Pabst teases out the staggering implications of this immanentist metaphysics of self-individuation (individuals' self-causation) for theology and political community more generally. He laments the consequences of Aristotle's positing of an 'indifferent God' as 'self-thinking thought': a kind of final cause of all change in the empirical world, but not a *Creator* of finite existents. Pabst also sees as a mistake the gradual 'autonomization' begun by some Scholastics (e.g. Scotus, Ockham, and later on Suárez) of logic and of the ontology of ordinary (empirical) individuals from the higher metaphysics of theology and the transcendent Good – and supports Aquinas' opposition to this move.

In that sense, the idea of the self-individuating individual represents, for Pabst, the question-begging postulational autonomy of the realm of sensuous finitude from divine transcendence – and the eventual immanentization of God or the postulation of His death *qua* (meaningful) God. This brings on the severing of faith from reason (treated now mainly as *scientific* reason) as well as post-modern proclamations of the 'end of metaphysics'. This results, also, in the liberal politics of the autonomous individual unmoored from community *in* God, and, thus, severed from Truth, Beauty, and the Good. The

² Notably, Scholastic of the Scotist, Ockhamist and Suárezian variety, and modern, especially Spinozist, Kantian, and post-Kantian.

possible revivification of metaphysics and of its political significance in our time is, for Pabst, theological – and requires us to go beyond this possibly vicious philosophical bequest.

It is quite correct that finite individuals' principle of self-causation cannot explain *why they are* – or *why they are created*, i.e. ontologically related to God and each other, rather than *self-created* – ***in general***. It explains *why they are what they are, in the very way that they are* – from a perspective internal to them. It does not supply an adequate way of thinking *how* and *why* they *come to be* at all, besides becoming *this* or *that* determinate individual; it is not a way of understanding 'creation'. To this effect, William Desmond writes:

Becoming puts us in mind of coming to be, but coming to be is not identical with becoming. For in becoming, one becomes a *determinate something*, out of a prior condition of determinate being and towards a further more realized or differently realized determination of one's being. Coming to be, by contrast, is prior to becoming this or that; for one must be, and have come to be, before one can become such and such. Becoming itself suggests something more primordial about coming to be. Creation is connected with this more primordial coming to be – a coming to be that makes finite becoming itself possible but that is not itself a finite becoming. In every finite being that becomes, which is all beings, there is intimated this prior coming to be which is not a finite becoming: "that it is at all" is here in question, and that it has come to be this at all.

The point is not a dualistic opposition that claims being is prior or antithetical to becoming. There is a "coming to be", an origination of the "that it is at all", presupposed in every being that is this or that. This prior coming to be is like becoming in its dynamic character, and yet it is other to becoming in that it exceeds finite determination or self-determination. [...] What is suggested is an overdetermined source of origination out of which coming to be unfolds. To speak of "creator" is a way of putting us in mind of this other source that is not a finite determinate source of beginning or becoming, for that would be to make determinate what exceeds determination. It is extremely difficult to think of this *hyper* dimension on the other side of determinate beings. Our thinking is more convenient with finite things – convenient with this, that, and the other in *becoming*, less convenient even with the becoming of this, that, or the other, and even less again with the more primordial *coming to be* in becoming.³

In such terms, our examination of the idea of self-causation involves "less convenient" thinking of an individual's self-becoming according to an

³ Desmond (2008, pp. 248-9).

internal criterion, albeit not yet of the individual's "coming to be" from a "creator". Our present aim is, in other words, not to pursue the theological and political implications of this inherently immanentist metaphysics, or to argue the defensibility of its logic against theological questions, but to provide a conceptual history of its unfolding by way of engaging with a number of problems historically and conceptually bound up with *causa sui*. Attending to these problems involves evaluating different paradigmatic accounts of self-causation against each other, identifying key advances and drawbacks, and weeding out incoherencies – until the most coherent version of the theory of self-causation, *from a perspective internal to the metaphysics informed by the theory*, is revealed. This does not, as yet, involve theological inquiry into the possibility that *self-causation as an immanent explanation of individuality* may be transcended or opened to a more 'primordial', originative ontological source,⁴ or an attempt to stand apart from its logic and subvert it.

At their most advanced, metaphysical discourses of self-causation, notably Hegel's, want to 'outlaw' attempts to transcend them. Theological-metaphysical thought of the kind shown forth by Desmond and Pabst will, rather than being a study of the *historical logic* of self-causation, venture beyond this logic. Our investigation aims to demonstrate the historical unfolding, and, finally, the most conceptually satisfactory articulation, of the notion of *causa sui* – *not* to independently defend discourses such as Hegel's as 'the ultimate of all metaphysics'. Considering the widespread lack of clarity and definiteness vis-à-vis self-causation in philosophical scholarship, such study is indispensable. For it is only upon *understanding* an idea such as this that we are well-prepared to judge *whether it can, or ought to be, subverted or transcended* – or to see its broader implications.

The reason for the relative 'silence' on self-causation in recent scholarship, for the scattering of '*causa sui*' mentions along discussions of other issues, and for the proliferation of partly synonymous terms that may

⁴ This source is intimated in Desmond's writings, see e.g. Desmond (2008).

go equally unexplained, might be that *causa sui* is instinctively considered ‘self-explanatory’. For it has traditionally been employed as an *explanatory* notion, not as one *itself in need of explanation*. It has often acted as a tacit, or more obvious, presupposition in explications of individuality, essence, intrinsicity, fundamentality, spontaneity, self-actualization, freedom, and free will. Yet, it tends to be extensively discussed only in exegetical studies of this or that philosopher, and mainly when it is explicitly made the foundation of a metaphysical system, e.g. in Spinoza’s postulation that God-Substance is *causa sui*. On the other hand, *causa sui* is sometimes immediately written off as nonsensical – because it is automatically understood in one of the incoherent ways we consider a little later on. Because of this, it is often wrongly assumed to be a necessarily question-begging formulation.

Discussions at least *implicitly* pertaining to self-causation can be found in ancient discourses, particularly Plato’s and Aristotle’s, in Scholastic and early modern philosophy, notably in the works of Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Francisco Suárez, René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Baruch Spinoza and Ralph Cudworth, as well as in Immanuel Kant’s Critical project and in Alfred North Whitehead’s process philosophy. Self-causation is implicit in Georg W. F. Hegel’s, in Bernard Bosanquet’s and in Francis Herbert Bradley’s Absolute, in Arthur Schopenhauer’s Will and in Friedrich Nietzsche’s Will to Power, as well as in Theodor W. Adorno’s contentions about the non-identity of individuality. While the textual grounding of self-causation in these discourses is somewhat challenging – due to ‘translation’ difficulties, various terminological overlaps, and an abundance of variations and synonyms – the presence of *communicable discursive structures* is often unmistakable. We take pains to articulate these structures in each chapter.

The above list of philosophical figures is far from exhaustive. Our aim is not to trace all historical conceptions of self-causation, *but to demonstrate the structure and scope of the notion that emerges out of this history*. The various

philosophical theories serve as paradigmatic examples of discussions bound inextricably with this notion. This does not mean that the discussions in question should directly employ the term ‘self-causation’ – or that they should be seen as reducible to the kinds of dialogue we set up. But, we show that important truths about self-causation, as it ought to be understood, *logically follow* from what the philosophers we examine argue within the context of their respective projects, as they understand them. The logical criteria for self-causation are *extracted* from these projects – only insofar as the arguments therein contained *lend themselves* to such a strategy rather than having an alien conceptual scheme imposed on them. Reciprocally, these extractable criteria provide the *lens* through which the projects are appraised.

A certain selectiveness, narrowing of focus, and simplification, are, therefore, necessary. If we are to understand philosophers in the Western metaphysical *tradition* as speaking to *shared philosophical problems*, we must find a *common language* between them while doing minimum violence to their projects. Some philosophical ‘translation’ is inevitable, as each philosopher builds upon his predecessors on the basis of it. Rather than examining any given project *only on its own terms*, as an end in itself, or totally abstracting from it for the sake of a general system of self-causation, we seek *balance* between the two extremes: a kind of ‘*third way*’. Thus, instead of merely addressing the way each philosopher thinks of the given matter (self-causation), we also address *the matter as such*. This necessarily involves, but is by no means limited to, exegesis.

A guiding narrative is developed in which the main issue, as the ‘stalk’, branches out into a number of subordinate narratives specific to each philosopher. So, care is taken not to obscure the tree by letting the individual branches crowd out our vision of it. A convincing defense of this kind of historical methodology can be found, for instance, in Rodney Howsare’s recent commentary vis-à-vis Pabst’s book *Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy*. Although they concern a study with a different aim and scope, Howsare’s insights apply equally well to the approach of the present work.

Because this defense is so eloquent and relevant, we quote its most poignant assertions:

[...] The historians in particular will argue that an *a priori* narrative determines the manner in which the various players are treated on the way, so that no one thinker gets the careful attention he/ she deserves. [...]

[...] First, a genealogy of modernity is not that different from the various philosophical histories of philosophy (borrowing a phrase from Gilson) found at least as early as the works of Plato (*Theaetetus* and *Philebus*) and Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, book 1). The purpose of these overviews of various positions was not so much to present the “historical” Heraclitus or Parmenides, as it was to pass philosophical judgment on the relative merits and demerits of past philosophical positions.

[...] Second, it will inevitably be claimed that this approach is simply inaccurate, that we can’t possibly learn about, say, Duns Scotus in one chapter in a book which has very likely framed the question in a way that Duns Scotus would have never framed the question. Hans-Georg Gadamer addresses this sort of objection in a discussion of period instrument reproductions of classical or baroque music. As Gadamer puts it: “Thus for example, historicizing presentations – e.g., of music played on old instruments – are not as faithful as they seem. Rather, they are an imitation of an imitation and are thus in danger ‘of standing at a third remove from the truth’ (Plato)” (119–20). [...] It might seem simply obvious that [...] painstaking historical scholarship and attention to detail would show greater affection for or fairness to Bach’s music than an interpretation of the same pieces with a modern piano and a modern orchestra, perhaps even conducted by a person who has been “corrupted” by classicism, romanticism or even modernism. Yet Gadamer makes the rather counterintuitive suggestion that it is quite possible that it is the latter performance that does more justice to Bach, for, rather than treating Bach as a dead composer in the museum of baroque music history, he is treated as somebody who might still have something musical to say on modern instruments, after the Classical, Romantic and Modern periods. The question is whether there is something here that transcends time and place, and this, of course, will require an act of discernment and retrieval on the part of the person interpreting the work in a new context. The historical reproduction will be safer and more accurate, but at the risk of implying that Bach is irrelevant as a composer and to the *non-specialist* listener of today.

[...] These acts of retrieval look at individual thinkers of the past in the light of the whole in a way that is analogous to the role of the composer or conductor vis-à-vis the individual instruments in a symphony. As Josef Pieper argues in *In Defense of Philosophy*, philosophy’s job is to say something about the whole, rather than just the part, whereas the scientist gains his *precision* (*precaedere*: to cut off) by considering a part in abstraction from the whole. [...] (a) as communal, linguistic animals, we ought not [to] avoid engaging the history of thought as we try to formulate our answers to perennial human questions, and (b) we can’t do this without attempting to determine how an

individual thinker fits into the broader discussion, and whether or not individual contributions mark an advancement or setback on the issue.⁵

Assuming a defense of our historical-cum-conceptual approach along these lines is taken on board, we may proceed to justify our choice of the locution ‘self-causation’ from a pool of possible synonyms.

Choice of Locution

The term ‘self-causation’ has been used in the literature as a synonym of, or in conjunction with, the following groups of rough synonyms: ‘self-creation’, ‘self-production’, ‘self-origination’ or ‘self-generation’; ‘self-motion’, ‘autokinesis’, ‘self-activity’, ‘self-actuation’ or ‘self-change’; ‘self-containment’, ‘self-sufficiency’ or ‘autarky’; ‘self-subsistence’ or ‘self-sustenance’; ‘self-maintenance’, ‘autopoiesis’ or ‘self-organization’; ‘self-determination’ or ‘internal determination’; ‘self-realization’ or ‘self-actualization’; ‘self-dependence’ or ‘metaphysical independence’; ‘freedom’ or ‘free play’; ‘autotely’, ‘autofinality’ or ‘self-relation’; ‘intentional causality’, ‘the causality of freedom’ or ‘spontaneity’; ‘power’, ‘will’, ‘internal energy’ or ‘force’; ‘free will’, ‘autonomy’ or ‘decision’; ‘self-individuation’, ‘individuality’, ‘particularity’, ‘singularity’, ‘uniqueness’, ‘unrepeatability’, ‘incommunicability’, ‘privacy’, ‘this-ness’ or ‘haecceity’; ‘resilience’, ‘self-preservation’, ‘will to power’, ‘ontological perseverance’ or ‘conatus’; ‘perfection’ or ‘satisfaction’, and so forth.

These terms are not semantically flat and should not be run together. It will be seen that their use as synonyms of ‘self-causation’ befits only certain contexts. The literature within which such terms tend to appear is typically concerned with the work of one or other philosopher, while the issue of self-causation is not the argumentative focus, but merely part of the exegesis –

⁵ See Howsare (2015). In this commentary, Howsare refers to Gadamer (1991), Gilson (1937) and Pieper (1992).

submerged under various historical and conceptual detail. The terms will be defined and referenced appropriately as soon as – *and if at all* – they appear in the discussion, here or in the chapters to follow. Their use will mark changes in the way self-causation has been conceived historically.

‘Self-causation’ is our preferred locution because, unlike more exoteric terms such as ‘uniqueness’ or ‘spontaneity’, it captures both the sense of the existent’s ‘individuality’ (‘*self-*’) and of the individual’s internal reason for being and/ or becoming an existent in general and/ or *this* individual existent (‘*-causation*’ in the broad sense) in our key metaphysical discourses. Our use of ‘cause’ resuscitates Platonic and Hellenistic dimensions of ‘causality’ inclusive of *ultimate metaphysical reasons* and *teleology*. *Causa sui* is, thus, also, *ratio sui*. Terms such as ‘self-realization’ or ‘self-maintenance’ do not capture this meaning. Exoteric terms such as ‘uniqueness’ or ‘individuality’ do not speak to the essential element of an individual’s *spontaneous* and *active* self-determination in some of our discourses, or to the fact that this self-determination is often thought, on the model of Aristotle’s metaphysics, to be a temporal process of self-change.

With all this in mind, we may now outline our criteria for the notion of *causa sui*.

Criteria for Self-Causation

When philosophers refer to a thing, an action, or a process, broadly understood, as self-caused, they mean at least one of two things. The thing is ontologically self-caused and/ or it is logically self-caused. That a thing is *ontologically self-caused* means that it cannot be generated by other things as well as that it spontaneously arises out of its own generative power. *Spontaneity* refers to the lack of external causal determination.⁶ *Generative*

⁶ See e.g. Kant (2002b, pp. 125-6) on the spontaneity of (practical) freedom.

power is the thing's exercised capacity to give rise to an effect – that is, its *causal power*.⁷ This type of self-causation is not the same as ontological independence (or self-dependence). A substance may have absolutely self-dependent existence in the sense of being the *one and only* thing that exists, or be ontologically independent of other substances in the sense of having separate existence, without spontaneously creating itself.

That a thing should arise out of its own causal power at some point in time is self-contradictory. Generation in time, as Aquinas has argued, presupposes an efficient cause either temporally prior to or simultaneous with its effect.⁸ Though it is impossible for a perishable thing to generate itself in full out of nothing, it may still be able to generate changes within itself if it persists for a stretch of time. This means that the thing would generate its future states out of its present ones. Since the thing's present states are not self-generating, but are, rather, externally determined, its future states will, too, be so determined. *Self-generation* in time is, therefore, impossible.

Another possibility is that a self-generating thing may be eternal. Then, it has always been, meaning that it cannot have generated itself out of nothing at some point in time. Even if it everlastingly generates itself, it must do so in full, and it is unclear why this should be needed if the thing is always already there. The only way it could generate 'itself' is by generating changes within its always already existing 'self' instead of producing itself in full out of nothing. We can find such a view in Leibniz, who seems to think that a (non-divine) thing's eternity does not preclude change as long as the change is *internally determined*. This is to say that it must be a *self-change* rather than a change imposed 'from without' through causal interactions with other

⁷ On the conception of change and causal power in Aristotle, for example, see e.g. Gnassounou, Kistler (2007, pp. 3-7). On Spinoza's notion of causal power, see e.g. Bennett (1984, pp. 283-4).

⁸ See Aquinas' statement "Nihil est causa sui ipsius; esset enim prius seipso, quod est impossibile. [Nothing is its own cause, because then it would be prior to itself, which is impossible.]" in Aquinas (1918, I, c. 18, n. 4, p. 49). On Aquinas' understanding of self-causation, see e.g. Spiering (2011). Aquinas refers to '*causa sui*' e.g. in Aquinas (1889, Part I, quest. 83, art. 1, obj. 3 & repl.; 1973, quest. 24, art. 1).

things.⁹ But this, too, leads to contradiction. For how can eternity and change be compatible? *Pace* Leibniz, then, the notion of ontological self-causation is incoherent.

Whether it is self-generating or not, a thing, if it endures, eternally or for a stretch of time, may be self-sustaining. Such, for example, are Aristotle's, and, at least in some sense, Leibniz's and Spinoza's substances¹⁰ – all of which are discussed in this work. Bound as it is with the idea of change, the notion of *self-sustenance*, like that of self-generation, is incoherent. This is easy to establish in the case of eternal things, for eternity contradicts change. The idea of self-sustenance normally implies a thing's sustaining itself, in an effortful way, in the face of possible qualitative or quantitative changes or possibly hostile impact from things in its environment. The idea, in its Aristotelian variety, does not preclude the thing's use of things friendly to it, as an organism uses food or shelter, for the purposes of maintaining an equilibrium. Self-sustenance is not the same as *absolute self-dependence*.¹¹ These implications tell a 'survival' story, and it is hard to see why eternal things should be seen as 'surviving'.

A self-sustaining thing can, then, only be perishable. Such, for example, is an Aristotelian individual substance, say, a particular rabbit. Aristotle's notion of the rabbit's self-sustenance depends on the idea that a particular thing can sustain qualitative changes while remaining numerically one and the same throughout the process. That is to say: it *survives* change. This idea rests on an incoherent metaphysics of time. Within this metaphysics, a rabbit is *in* time – in that it is perishable – and, yet, *outside* time – in that it preserves

⁹ On this internal principle of spontaneous change in Leibniz's monadology, see e.g. Rutherford (1994, p. 134), Reid (2012, pp. 276-7) and Savile (2000, pp. 111-15).

¹⁰ Multifaceted discussions of Aristotle's self-sustaining substances can be found in e.g. Scaltsas (2010) and Wedin (2002). On Leibniz's self-sustaining monads as substances and selves, see e.g. Bobro (2004). On Spinoza's self-sustaining Substance, see e.g. Scruton (2002).

¹¹ On Plato's understanding of Forms as absolutely self-dependent, see e.g. Silverman (2003, p. 132).

itself over time. Then, the rabbit is halfway between being perishable and being eternal. This is an odd conclusion.

That a thing is *logically self-caused* means, on the other hand, that it is identical with the totality of logical conditions essentially constitutive of it – conditions without which the thing would be something else entirely. According to Aristotle, for example, a necessary and sufficient condition for being a particular rabbit is belonging to the kind ‘rabbit’, and, relatedly, being a mammal, being an animal, and so on. Such necessary and sufficient conditions constitute a thing’s *essence* or nature. When we say that a thing is logically self-caused, we mean, accordingly, that its essence is provided by the thing itself, not by things beyond it. Thus, a rabbit is identical with its essence, for it is *its* nature to be this kind of animal.

It should be evident that an ontologically self-caused thing is also logically self-caused. If it is self-generating, it contains within itself the necessary and sufficient conditions for its generation as well as for its ‘continuing to be’ for a stretch of time, if it is finite, or for all eternity if it is infinite. If a thing is logically self-caused, on the other hand, it does not follow that it is ontologically self-caused. That a particular rabbit is identical with the essence of a rabbit does not entail that the rabbit is self-generating. It only means that the rabbit’s reason for being what it is – i.e. its essence – is internal (or immanent) to it. Hence, although the notion of ontological self-causation is incoherent, that of logical self-causation still stands. The argument which unfolds in this work demonstrates that the notion of logical self-causation is, however, coherent *from the perspective of a certain kind of metaphysics*.

The Aim of the Argument

Our argument aims to show that the coherent theory of self-causation is historically embedded within *immanentist, particularistic metaphysics*. After Aristotle’s immanentization of Plato’s transcendent Forms, this metaphysics

gradually unfolds to overcome the incoherencies contained in various successive theories of self-causation and finds its best articulation in Hegel's dialectics of the concrete universal. This overcoming happens in accordance with the logical structure of the idea of self-causation. So, it is always assumed that the individuality of an individual, usually a finite existent, ought to be explained through a principle internal to it. This self-explanation is the individual's logical self-causation.

According to this immanentist, particularistic metaphysics, in order to be able to think of an individual thing as logically self-caused, we must also think of it as something that exists, i.e. as *ontologically real* or *actual*. Only as realized in such an individual, can the essence (the internal principle of logical self-causation) perform its explanatory role; otherwise, there would be nothing actual to explain, and the essence would be merely an abstract logical possibility. Since logical self-causation is, by definition, an individual existent's internal reason for being and/ or becoming *what* and *how* it is, it presupposes the individual's existence, i.e. its ontological reality. While metaphysical thinking that includes the 'transcendent source' (God) from which things come to be 'before' they become *what* and *how* they are is *more than ontology*, the immanentist framework *limits metaphysics to ontology*. As Desmond writes, for instance:

[...] *meta* can mean both "in the midst" but also "over and above", "beyond". [...] This double sense of "*meta*" can be taken to correspond to the difference of *ontology* and *metaphysics*: ontology as exploration of being given as immanent; metaphysics as open to a self-surpassing moment of thought that points us to the porous boundary between immanence and what cannot be determined entirely in immanent terms. [...] While premodern metaphysics is sometimes said to opt for the *meta* as "above", modern philosophy generally has opted for the *meta* as immanent.¹²

In other words, metaphysics limited to the realm of the immanent – and to finite existents – is ontology. Our historical inquiry demonstrates that it is within such immanentist metaphysics (ontology) that the logic of self-causation variously embeds itself after Aristotle's step away from Plato's

¹² Desmond (2012b, pp. 196-7).

Theory of Forms. Metaphysics can be broadly defined as inquiry into the ultimate realities – which aims at explanations, or intimations, of *why* and *how* all things *come to be, become, and are*. This inquiry reveals reality, in the ultimate sense, to be unified, whole, orderly, intelligible, and meaningful through-and-through. Modern metaphysics generally comprises immanent explanations for individual existents, and seems to exclude intimations of the ontological relations between the finite realm and a transcendent God, and, so, between ontology and theology. It abolishes the notion of ontological difference between an immanent and a transcendent order of reality, and, thus, gradually obviates discussion of the latter, limiting all rational discourse to immanence. This kind of metaphysics can be traced back to Duns Scotus' positing of a lack of ontological difference between God and created beings. This move is first enabled by Aristotle's immanentization of the Platonic Forms, and results in Hegel's total, processual, immanentization of the infinite. Or, as Pabst argues, all this is due to a

[...] tradition which inaugurated modernity and underpinned neo-scholasticism as well as the (English, French, and German) Enlightenment. [...] [i.e.] the mixed Scotist-Cartesian-Kantian legacy which combines a metaphysics and epistemology of representation either with a transcendental priority of infinity over finitude or a critical limitation of knowledge to the finite.¹³

[...] modernity radicalizes the late medieval, scholastic redefinition of metaphysics as the transcendental science of ontology and the concomitant relegation of theology to the sole sphere of the supernatural. [...] 'the modern' collapses divine being and created being into a single univocity and singularity whose virtual formality is transcendently prior even to the possibility of essence and the actuality of existence. By contrast, Neo-Platonist theology defends the idea of a metaphysical reality of God's transcendent creative act of being in which all immanent beings participate. In this sense, modern philosophy is correlated with a transcendental science of ontology that displaces and ultimately destroys metaphysics.¹⁴

Very broadly, the 'transcendental science of ontology', as referred to above, is, *inter alia*, concerned with providing logical conditions for finite existents'

¹³ Pabst (2012, p. 305).

¹⁴ Pabst (2012, p. 383).

individuality¹⁵ – i.e. with explaining *why they are what they are in the way that they are* via finitely realized essence – not with intimating how and why ‘they come to be at all’ or *that* ‘they are at all’. An immanent individual is seen as logically self-caused when it is ontologically actual in finitude (its essence *qua* logical possibility is realized). The ‘ultimate’ reason for its individuality is sought from within this immanent ontological actuality – not from beyond and in the divine origins of all actuality or in the process of actualization from a transcendent source. The ‘transcendent’, e.g. Plato’s Forms-*qua*-essences, or God for the Neo-Platonists, is transmuted into a condition of the possibility of the immanent individual’s actuality, i.e. of its *essence in existence*. As such, this condition is ‘virtual’, ‘formal’ and ‘abstract’ with respect to finitude – and is, thus, only in a purely logical sense, *prior* to the actual existent and its essence. According to this immanentist metaphysics, the existent’s logical identity with its essence is only fully realized in ontological actuality which is simply the *existence of essence*. It is essence-in-existence, rather than existence itself or the origin of all actuality, which is, then, the source and principle of self-individuation.

This is not the place to investigate *whether* or *how* this ultimately brings along the destruction of metaphysics as per Pabst, but, rather, to concretely demonstrate *the way* it variously happens in our individual discourses, and *that* the idea of self-causation and the conflation of metaphysics with the ontology of immanent individuality are historically and conceptually inseparable. Yet, even within this conflation, ontological self-causation is impossible. Therefore – beyond the physical and conceptual relationships

¹⁵ ‘Transcendental ontology’ or the ‘science of transcendentals’ have various meanings in different medieval Scholastic discourses, but this falls outside our purview here. Although the meanings of the term ‘transcendental’ for the Scholastics are much richer and more various than they are for Kant, it can be argued that, in certain cases, e.g. in Scotus’ and Suárez’s work, ‘transcendentality’ also pertains to ‘essence’ as a logical possibility prior to its existence in an individual, as well as to the logical conditions of the possibility of any existent. It may also pertain to the divine mind – which contains all individual essences in the form of ‘potencies’ – as a condition of the possibility of finite individual existents.

between or within individuals – the ultimate ontological origination of the world, i.e. the source of the fact that ‘things are at all’, remains a *blank space*.

Consequently, after Plato, theories of logical self-causation tend to conflate the self-causation of individuals with the self-causation of particulars, and to show that individuals *are* particulars. For Plato, the genuinely and ultimately real individuals are the transcendent Forms of which sensuous particulars are imperfect instantiations. Although the particulars are the same *in essence* as the Forms they instantiate, the *reality* of the Forms *qua* individuals is *transcendent and genuine* while that of particulars *qua* particulars is *incoherent, dependent, and not ultimately or independently real, qua* sensuous. By contrast, for Aristotle, Scotus, Suárez,¹⁶ Leibniz, and Kant, though maybe not so straightforwardly for Spinoza and Hegel, an individual is the same as a particular. For Spinoza, all particulars are modifications (*ways of being*) of one great Substance, but, even in this case, as we shall show, each particular is essentially, albeit partially, the same as the individual it modifies in a way that immanentizes particulars into substantial individuality and substantial individuality into particulars. In Hegel’s case, the individual arises as an ultimate unification of universality with particularity, so the particular and the fully determinate individual are similarly immanentized to each other.

Additionally, because the theories of self-causation found in all our discourses demand an immanent explanation of individuality/ particularity, generality is internalized into particularity and no longer ‘general’. This idea finds its full expression in Hegel’s metaphysics of the concrete universal, where the universal and the particular articulate the same actual individual. In virtue of being so concretely articulated and thereby *particularized*, the universal is no longer a generality, and can provide an immanent explanation of the particular. This explanation is the particular’s logical identity with the particularized universal. In virtue of this identity, the particular is an articulation of the – logically self-caused – individual. Within this

¹⁶ Though, for Aristotle, Scotus, and Suárez, God is arguably ‘more individual’ than finite particulars.

metaphysics, then, ‘individual’ is a ‘catch-all’ term for both ‘particular’ and ‘universal’. There are no ‘bare particulars’, i.e. particulars without essences (natures), and uninstantiated universals, i.e. abstract generalities.

All the above conclusions are attained through the application of a specific historical-cum-conceptual approach which centres on the idea of self-causation.

Application of the Method

Our work takes the shape of a *dialectically unfolding historical journey with no pretensions to comprehensiveness*: from Plato’s Theory of Forms to Hegel’s metaphysics of the ‘concrete universal’. The method – mutually corrective dialogue between philosophers – is dictated by, as much as it dictates, the content. The selection of philosophical figures is necessarily representative rather than exhaustive. Including more philosophers and arguments would only add unnecessary length and breadth. The anticipated outcome – *a coherent account of (logical) self-causation from the perspective of immanentist, particularistic metaphysics* – is a culmination of the following historical steps, forwards and backwards.

Plato’s Theory of Forms and Aristotle’s theory of substance illuminate the tension between individuals and general essences in the way it first arises in ancient discourse. The historical implications of Aristotle’s conception of self-causation as self-sustenance and self-change are brought to bear in the works of the medieval Scholastics and the early moderns. Unlike Aristotle’s, Suárez’s theory of self-causation is broadly coherent (according to the criteria for a theory of self-causation) – and more satisfactory in conceptual terms than Scotus’. But, Aristotelian metaphysics of self-change persists even in the works of philosophers such as Leibniz and Spinoza, who – in the footsteps of Scotus, Ockham and Suárez – embrace individual essence(s).

Kant understands self-causation as a living thing's ability to self-organize, in the realm of nature, as 'formal purposiveness' with no external goal in aesthetic contemplation, and as free will and spontaneous action, in the realm of morality. His claim that self-causation understood in these ways is inaccessible to theoretical reason might seem to prohibit theoretical attempts to transcend the dissatisfactory metaphysical accounts of self-causation found in the work of many of his predecessors. Even so, within his transcendental theory of experience, Kant arguably (unintentionally) lays the groundwork for a coherent *theory* of individuals' logical self-causation.

Hegel's dialectical logic of the concrete universal radicalizes this theory by demonstrating that logic and metaphysics are one. A universal, as an abstract logical possibility, is concretely realized through actual finite particulars that are, reciprocally, fully realized by it. This dialectical process *results* in an individual that is explained in virtue of a reason internal to it: the concretized universal. In that nothing is more fully determined than it, this self-caused individual – the 'concrete universal' – *becomes* what it is, and is, in virtue of this self-becoming, ontologically actual. Metaphysical reality and metaphysical explanation are immanentized to this ontological realization. The logical identity of an (ontologically actual) particular with its essence is only possible through – or, finds its truth in – this realization. So, an identity is achieved between *logic* (thought) and *ontology* (being) – and this identity *ends* in immanentist metaphysics ('*meta*' in the sense of 'amidst', no longer 'beyond'). Rather than defending Hegel's metaphysical theory independently, we regard it as the historical-cum-conceptual culmination, and dialectical transmutation, of an idea present in embryo in Plato's Theory of Forms.

The way in which this series of claims is to be fleshed out and justified in the chapters to follow must now be sketched out.

Outline of the Argument

For Aristotle, we said, being self-caused means being identical with the essence of your kind: that is, being general. Yet, he is credited – often at the expense of his teacher Plato – with attentiveness to the individuality that makes up reality.¹⁷ Chapter 2 (“Plato’s Forms as Self-Caused Individuals”) and Chapter 3 (“Aristotle’s Self-Changing General Substances”) challenge this view. Chapter 2 offers an adaptation of Plato’s Theory of Forms, revealing the Forms to be logically self-caused individuals grounding all of reality to the exclusion of all counterfactual possibility. Chapter 3 investigates Aristotelian particulars, concluding that they are subsumed under generality and, therefore, incoherent *qua* particular.

For Plato, Forms *qua* essences are the *only* reality in an ultimate sense. Physical existents are reducible to them *in terms of essence*. His metaphysics is, then, ultimately monistic rather than dualistic, and *does* account for the individuality of an individual from within the individual itself.¹⁸ The individuals are the Forms which are *logically self-caused* in that they are fundamental realities and, thus, provide the internal reasons for their own individuality. They are not *ontologically self-caused*, for they are not beings, and do not *come to be*, but are, rather, ontologically relational in that they *only are* in relation to the Form of Being. An Aristotelian substance such as *a* rabbit, on the other hand, is logically, but not ontologically, self-caused – because, despite counting as a being and having the individual power to

¹⁷ See e.g. Wood (1990, pp. 165-7).

¹⁸ William Desmond writes that “Plato is standardly presented as entailed in dualism, yet his sense of the doubleness of time and eternity may augur a nonreductive approach to the transcendence of the origin – namely, the impossibility of reducing to a univocal unity the different orders of the origin itself and finite being” in Desmond (1995, p. 235). See also Desmond (2003, pp. 19-52). It must be noted that Plato’s Forms and sensuous particulars are synonymous (univocal) in terms of essence, but they indeed belong to different orders of reality in that the Forms are ultimately real, simple, and independent, while particulars are dependently real and complex. See also Desmond (2014, pp. 110-19) on the need to attend to the metaphysical needs embodied in Platonism, even to its ‘caricatured version’ as simple dualism.

endure, it is brought into being at a certain point in time as a result of the reproduction of other rabbits.

Although the Aristotelian essence ‘rabbit’ does not arise at a point in time and is definitionally independent, it is never ontologically separate from particular rabbits, which do. The Platonic Forms, on the other hand, are to be thought of as independent of physical particulars, as well as of each other (although they are ontologically relational, vis-à-vis the Form of Being). Their individual independence, simplicity and unchangeability are not at all exclusive of instantiability in the physical world or, indeed, of interrelatedness – what we shall refer to as ‘blending’ – between Forms. This does not amount to the Forms’ generality, because particulars are not ultimately real – that is, there is nothing genuinely real with respect to which the Forms can be general.

Unlike Plato’s, Aristotle’s conception of individuality, and, so, of individuals’ logical self-causation, is compromised by self-change and generality. An Aristotelian substance such as a rabbit needs to change itself, say, from a baby rabbit to an adult rabbit, in order to fulfil the essence of the *kind* rabbit. This self-change, for the rabbit, is directed by a ‘rabbit’ form – what Aristotle also terms an ‘entelechy’ – of a certain *kind*: say, an appetitive soul. According to all appearances, this entelechy is a general one: the same in all substances of the same kind. Self-sustenance, also, suggests that a substance such as a rabbit is part eternal, part perishable, landing us in contradiction. Although the substance’s persistence is not indefinite, it is dictated by an eternal general essence.

The only truly eternal substance is Aristotle’s Unchanged Changer – a kind of God and an individual with a unique essence. Aristotle understands the divine self-causation not as self-change or self-generation, but as purely immaterial and absolutely self-dependent ‘Self-Thinking Thought’. Yet, this God is not a particular, and Its reality, like that of the Platonic Forms, is unmoored from space, time and matter. Lacking a coherent account of self-

causation, Aristotle's theory of perishable *particular* substances must fall into dust.

These issues are partially resolved in the work of some of Aristotle's metaphysical heirs – medieval Scholastics like Duns Scotus, Ockham and Suárez. Chapter 4 (“Self-Causation in Scotus’ and Suárez’s Theories of Individuality”) examines the success of the theories of logical self-causation contained in Scotus’ and Suárez’s metaphysics of individuality while pinpointing difficulties often traceable to Aristotle’s legacy. While Scotus holds the more conservative view to the effect that individuals have equally real unique and shared essences,¹⁹ Suárez asserts that individuals are what they are wholly in virtue of themselves *qua* ‘total entities’, rather than because of something outside of them or an essence they share with other members of the same kind.

These entities are made up of individual matter, form, a mode of hylomorphic union, a mode of subsistence (independence), and separable accidents and their modes (particular ways of being). Generality (commonality) is merely an interpretive aspect of such a ‘whole’. The ‘general’ aspect of Suárez’s self-caused particulars, in other words, *abstracts* from the particulars *qua* whole rather than explaining them. It is distinguished from their individuality only in relation to the human mind. So, relationality (in virtue of a ‘shared nature’) is reducible to individuality.

Although this makes for a broadly coherent account of individuals’ logical self-causation, a number of difficulties bound up with the complexity of Suárez’s Aristotelian hylomorphic individuals remain. Suárez attempts to mediate and simplify this complexity by emphasizing a mode of union which conjoins an individual form with an individual piece of matter. Modes are a relational, rather than an absolute, category, and are, therefore, fully dependent on substance or accident *qua its* ways of being. Additionally, not

¹⁹ Each shared essence is, however, uniquely particularized in a Scotist individual, and is not actual or real outside an individual. Prior to its actualization in an individual, the shared essence is neither particular nor truly general.

just some general substantial form, but all *individual* forms, pieces of matter, as well as accidents (accidental forms), are treated as logically self-dependent in virtue of their own individual essences, albeit ontologically incomplete (unrealized) outside of composites. By relating these incomplete individuals, modes help produce the ontologically complete (fully realized) composite particulars. While a substantial mode such as hylomorphic union integrates form with matter into a composite, accidental modes such as ‘inherence’ help accidents attach to hylomorphic composites. Furthermore, a mode of subsistence enables substance to self-relate *qua* independent of, and distinct from, other substances – i.e. to *endure* – throughout all these modifications.

It is evident that such modifications constitute a kind of change, and – seeing as modes are *part* of individuals rather than being self-subsistent – individuals must be *self-modifying*, that is, self-changing. But, this is in some sense inaccurate – for modes are *constitutive of* individual composites which do not, in virtue of modes, change *qua* composites. Rather, modes change a composite’s *components* by ontologically completing them. However, this account is confusing and uneconomical because, despite being logically self-dependent, individual forms, parcels of matter and accidents can only be fully actualized, complete individuals *once* they are conjoined in a composite individual. Their separate principles of logical self-causation must be ontologically realized in the logically self-caused composite existent they become part of. Not unimportantly, also, because Suárez immanentizes generality (commonality) to logically self-caused individuals, there are no genuine relations that form the basis of a unified, holistic order of things.

Chapter 5 (“Leibniz’s Monadic Self-Causation and Spinoza’s Self-Caused God-Substance”) shows that Leibniz and Spinoza dissolve Suárez’s troubles by thoroughly absorbing accidents into self-caused individual substance. Difficulties bound up with the issue of self-modification *qua* self-change, however, remain, even in these superiorly integrated systems. Although both Leibniz and Spinoza make greater effort to demonstrate the relatedness of finite existents within an integrated reality, this relatedness is

reducible to substance's self-change and the unified reality is a 'general order' to which finitude is subordinated.

Like Aristotle's particulars, Leibniz's individuals (the 'monads') undergo self-change (or, self-actualize). But, the monads are modelled on the human mind, or are, in fact, 'proto-minds'.²⁰ Each of them contains all of reality – a kind of infinite universal order – within itself, but mostly in unconscious, or, rather, confused or unclear, form. In metaphysical terms, these monadic 'forms of knowing' are, in fact, *unique modes* (ways of being) in virtue of which a monad relates to all other monads in the Universe. Rather than interblending with other individuals, or instantiating shared essences, these modifications²¹ constitute the individual's contact with what is other than it. The 'series' of modifications – through which self-change occurs and to which this contact is reducible – is the monad's unique 'perspective' on the Universe.

So, a monad is logically self-caused; its perspective is its individual essence. It is also ontologically self-caused (and, thus, logically incoherent) in that it is a being that alone effects its perspective, be it in relation to – and due to the good will of – a divine being that is said to grant existence to all monads. Although Leibniz does, indeed, suggest that God creates monads and is able to destroy them, these creative and destructive powers can only be figurative. In that each monad contains all of reality, albeit confusedly, it is, like the whole of reality, eternal. Although it is only in relation to the divine that they have being, monads *processually* constitute their unique perspectives in a self-relating, self-sufficing manner, and, so, serially generate their own being. Further, in that a monad anyway contains the *whole universe*, albeit in mostly confused form, it is deprived of any *genuine* relations to other monads. Consistency between different monads, ensuring that they belong to one and the same Universe, is *conceptually* instituted by God through a

²⁰ See e.g. Strawson (1990, pp. 117-34) and Whitehead (1978, p. 19).

²¹ The terms 'modification' and 'mode' are interchangeable. 'Modification' emphasizes the *activity* through which a mode modifies (and, thus, changes) a substance.

principle termed ‘pre-established harmony’. While the perspectives are individual, what they are perspectives on is general.

Insofar as they constitute a local perspective on the infinite universal order, a monad’s internal modification (self-change) and relatedness have, for Leibniz, a *real*, and not merely figurative, significance. If this were not so – instead of being an independent logically self-caused individual, each monad would have to actually *be* the infinite Universe. In a word, monads would have to be mere modes of an infinite *one* logically self-caused, universal Substance – the world as a whole. Leibniz’s monadological metaphysics would, therefore, collapse into a monism virtually indistinguishable from Spinoza’s. It appears that, without such a collapse, Leibniz’s monads face the incoherence of simultaneously being (i.) eternal, logically self-caused individuals, *and* (ii.) perpetually in the process of becoming what they are and coming to be more generally in virtue of this self-becoming. There is a further incoherence. Each monad should, in virtue of its uniqueness, be a ‘*world apart*’. Yet, each is *a part of one and the same world*. The logical coherence of this world comprises the compatibility between monads and is, therefore, supposed to be reducible to the individual self-causation of each monad. Because it is this coherence that *necessitates* God to ‘create’ the world of monads, his role as ‘Creator’ seems ‘nominal’.

Spinoza’s monism may seem to be able to solve some of these tensions. Despite initial appearances, however, his God-Substance, too, succumbs to the incoherent marriage of eternity and self-change found in Leibniz’s monads. For, instead of being all ‘oneness and sameness’ (although It is that, too), the Substance has individual determinations analogous to Leibniz’s monads. These may be understood as instantiations of the Substance that are immanent to It rather than being separate or less genuinely real. Spinoza thinks of them as Its ‘modes’: the various differentiable, infinite and finite, *ways* in which It is. These infinite and finite modes are subordinated to a generality, but neither logically nor ontologically self-caused and, therefore, not incoherent.

At the same time, the Substance *is* its individual determinations. It is not merely general with respect to Its ‘modes’. Therefore, the Substance, too, must be a complex individual. Since It determines an infinite number of finite individuals, It must, like a Leibnizian monad, *internally change* from one modification to the next. Also like the Leibnizian monads, It is *simple* and *eternal* rather than *really* serially unfolding. The reason for this contradiction is that Spinoza conceives of Substance as being at once active and passive, and, so, self-changing: *natura naturans* (nature naturing) as well as *natura naturata* (nature natured). In virtue of being *natura naturans*, Substance determines Its ways of being. In virtue of being *natura naturata*, It *is* these determined ways of being: infinite and finite. *Qua* eternal and infinite, Substance does not change. *Qua* finite and perishable, It changes in passing from one finite way of being to another.

Given the visibly meagre progress made on the way to theorizing metaphysical issues such as self-causation in a coherent fashion, Kant’s foreclosing of any possibility for theoretical access to, or sensuous ontological realization of, the notion comes as no surprise. Chapter 6 (“Kant and Hegel on Sensuous Individuality and Self-Causation”) dwells, in its first part, on Kant’s understanding of individuality as empirical and only knowable *in relation to* us, rather than metaphysically explicable in any ultimate way. This conception of individuality involves a sober relegation of the principle of self-causation to the realm of reason’s ‘regulative ideas’. The latter part of our chapter examines Hegel’s intellectual act of transcending the need for this relegation: a dialectical act which builds upon Kant’s theory of finite individuality rather than regressing to pre-Kantian metaphysics. We view Kant’s project as unintentionally laying the groundwork for Hegel’s dialectical theory of self-causation.

Instead of positing a self-active metaphysical principle organizing empirical reality, Kant argues that the notion of self-organization cannot be approached theoretically. Rather, in studying nature, we must comport ourselves toward living things *as though* they operated according to a

teleologically oriented self-active principle. Aesthetic contemplation is also *as though* self-sufficing without being theoretically known as such. The same is to be said about human action. That one's actions are spontaneous, i.e. not determined by what is temporally prior to or simultaneous with them, is not, for Kant, a theoretical claim. Yet, in the realm of morality, we can *practically* affirm our freedom and spontaneity. But, with respect to theory, the principle of self-causation is *regulative*: we must act *as if* living things, aesthetic contemplation, and our moral actions, were self-caused. It is not *constitutive*, for it is theoretically undecidable whether they are actually so. Constitutive principles are limited to our ordinary sensuous experience.

While empirical things *qua* known are synthesized by our faculty of understanding and transcendently determined, they cannot be said to be identical with [their] essences and, thus, self-caused. Logical self-causation requires metaphysical self-explication, which Kant's objects of cognition cannot be afforded within the transcendental framework. We can rationally comport ourselves *as though* a sensuous individual were self-caused while cognizing (knowing) it as causally determined by other individuals. This causal determination is such *in relation to* the transcendental structures of our cognitive apparatus, rather than independently. Self-causation, for Kant, is, then, related to teleology, aesthetic judgement, and practical moral action, which are severed from the ordinarily knowable sensuous world.

However, Kant develops a viable transcendental theory of individuals *qua* knowable within the sensuous world. He shows that the application of concepts to sensuous particularity is *productive*, via what he understands as *sensuous concepts* termed 'schemata', of our knowledge of empirical individuals that cannot be said to have metaphysically positable essences. Kant's empirically active 'concepts of the understanding' limit theoretical speculation about such essences – and the latter are reduced to limiting conditions *or* methodological presuppositions, or granted logical possibility without knowledge and ontological reality. But, within the transcendental framework, the schematism can be viewed as unwittingly laying the

historical-cum-conceptual groundwork for a kind of theory of ‘schemata’ *qua* ultimately explicatory sensuous, particularized, concepts – a theory which is only fully realized by Hegel’s dialectical reason. Therefore, instead of following Kant from the theory of individuality of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the *practical, regulative, non-theoretical* idea (or, *ideal*) of self-causation of the other two *Critiques*, we show that Hegel’s dialectical metaphysics of the concrete universal radicalizes the schematism into a coherent theory of logical self-causation.

Pace Kant, Hegel *is* concerned with a viable notion of essence – which he pursues by way of dialectical reason. He rationally demonstrates that abstract, general essence is not a coherent alternative to ontologically realized, unique essence. This is to say that logical self-causation is not merely a practical postulate and a regulative idea, but *can* also be theoretically posited. As opposed to revealing how things *seem* to be within the bounds of our experience, in the way knowledge through constitutive principles does, belief through regulative principles reveals things as they *ought* to be in an ideal rational realm. The alternative to this is revealing how things *really* are, as a synthesis of how they *seem* and how they *ought* to be: i.e. a Hegelian *third way* which trumps Kant’s Critical project.

This ‘third way’ aims to show that a sensuous individual and its logically possible essence presuppose and entail each other, and are, *pace* Kant, also *reciprocally determining*. A particular, which would otherwise be abstract, is *determined* by essence; essence, which would otherwise be abstract, is *determined* by the sensuous particular. The essence is (*becomes*) unique because it is no longer understood *in abstracto*, but only *in concreto*, as the *essence* of an *existent*, while existence is the *existence of essence in actuality*. Since this is so, ‘essence’ is not, as for Kant, purely ‘in thought’ and separated from the sensuous in being inaccessible to our concepts, but has, in fact, its ultimate truth in them. So understood, essence passes into, *becomes*, and, at bottom, *is*, the concept – which has, for Hegel, ultimately metaphysical meaning. Thus, a sensuous particular, its concept, and the individual they

together determine (and that, in turn, determines them), are ultimately one and the same logically self-caused individual: what Hegel terms the ‘concrete universal’. An individual is also a particular and a universal.

This involves no ontological self-causation (self-creation) or self-change subtended by a statically eternal being or essence. The concrete individual does not bring itself into being *ex nihilo* or out of itself *qua* (already fully determined) individual – for it is a *result* of the synthesis of the abstract universal (*qua* merely general concept instantiable in *any* particular of its kind) and not-yet-determinate (i.e. un-conceptualized) particularity. Apart from their mutual integration, these are *not yet* the logically self-caused individual. The integration is not a change subtended by a pre-existent logical identity, but a *self-becoming*. The subordination of particularity to generality is, thus, overcome. Whether this metaphysical ‘pan-logism’ exhausts all theoretical knowledge, and crowns ultimate reality, or not, it does *bring the idea of self-causation to its logical completion*.

CHAPTER 2

Plato's Forms as Self-Caused Individuals

This chapter examines individuals' self-causation in a strictly Platonic context. While the Forms as individuals are effectively considered in independence of their particular instances, these instances reduce to them *in terms of essence*. Plato's metaphysical starting point is the realm of Forms *qua* fundamental realities which transcend their instances. Sensuous particulars are derived from, or dependent on, this fundament. A particular has no further essences than those granted to it by the Forms it instantiates. Since the essences of particulars *are* Forms, a Form is the only kind of Platonic individual of genuine concern to us. In that a Form and its particular instance share an essence, they are synonymous and, in effect, *essentially* one and the same thing. But, while one is independently real, the other is dependent and apparent.

The dependent reality of particulars, however, means that, if a theory of individuals' self-causation can be found in Plato, it cannot really be a theory of *particulars'* self-causation. Particularity being an appearance, the Forms are not particulars despite being individuals. This is to say that, while Plato may indeed be able to offer a coherent theory of individuals' self-causation, the theory stops shy of particularity. Thinking of a particular as genuinely self-caused can only be the fruit of epistemic confusion. Real self-causation characterizes the Forms *qua* genuinely real individuals.

It may seem bold to suggest that a conception of an individual's self-causation is present in Plato's Theory of Forms. 'Self-caused' is, after all, not a term that he can uncontroversially be said to use. A Form, in Plato's language, is αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ('itself by itself', *absolutely self-dependent*) and χωριστόν ('separate', *independent*), but does this mean it is self-caused?¹

¹ See e.g. the *Phaedo* in Plato (1961, pp. 40-98) on the conception of Forms as αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ and χωριστόν.

What follows, in the body of this chapter, is our attempt to answer this question *at some length*, by way of offering a synoptic vision of Plato's Theory of Forms: one that helps us to imagine what we may refer to as 'the *consistent* Plato'. We want to suggest that, although he does not straightforwardly use the term 'self-causation', a theory of self-causation is implicit in – and lends consistency to – his Theory of Forms. The danger of glossing over some internal discord in his work is a reasonable price to pay for an integrated understanding of the Forms.²

The *short* answer to the question whether 'self-causation' or '*causa sui*' are appropriate terms in the Platonic context is that they come closest to an adequate translation of the term αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ. Hence, they have been used in discussions of the Platonic Forms, or of Platonic and Neo-Platonic principles such as 'the One' and 'the Good'.³ As stated in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, for "the Greek terms formed with *auto-* and *heauto-* [...] Romance languages would use a genitive construction: *causa sui*, *compos sui*, *cause de soi*, *maîtrise de soi*, *conscience de soi*".⁴ The translation of αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ as *causa sui* is undoubtedly imperfect. There may, nonetheless, be a common philosophical concern and a possibly communicable logical structure informing Plato's use of the term αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ to describe a Form's metaphysical and logical self-dependence, and other metaphysicians' use of '*causa sui*', 'identity with an essence', 'self-individuation', etc., to describe God or empirical particulars. This is especially true for logical self-causation, which does not entail self-creation (ontological self-causation), but is only the identity of an individual with *its* essence.

An interpretation of the Forms in terms of logical self-causation may seem to be overly *horizontal* and to ignore the *verticality* between shadows

² In accordance with this understanding, Plato's 'ascent' – his metaphysical theories – and his 'descent' – his social and political theories – need not be treated as separate.

³ See e.g. Bene (2013, p. 149, n. 43) and Ousager (2005, pp. 123-47, 177-80).

⁴ See Cassin (2004, p. 468).

or illusions,⁵ sensuous particulars, lower-order Forms of particulars and their qualities (e.g. the Form of Bed, Snow, Redness, Coldness, etc.), higher-order Forms (Being, Sameness and Difference, Motion and Rest), and the Good as the Form of all Forms (the most excellent reality).⁶ However, our horizontal interpretation of each Form as logically self-caused, i.e. self-dependent in terms of being its own essence, is fully compatible with the *vertical relationality* between Forms. Further, while the vertical relation between Forms and their particular instances focuses upon the latter's dependence on the former, the horizontal dimension of each Form's self-dependence and ultimate reality tells a different story: one bound up with the individuality of each Form and with the broader metaphysical independence of Forms *qua* genuine realities. Ultimate metaphysical reality, for Plato, still has its transcendent ('*meta*' as 'beyond') rather than immanent ('*meta*' as 'amidst') meaning.

While it is, indeed, true that the Good is more elevated than all other Forms – that it is, in fact, the loftiest Form⁷ – its superlative excellence does not necessarily amount to its being more genuinely real, or individual, than the 'lower' Forms.⁸ Its 'vertical power' is, in effect, tied with the genuine reality and logical self-dependence of each individual Form with which it interrelates. This is shown forth by the fact that the Good blends only with the αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ (self-dependent) Forms, not with their parasitic 'Bad' Opposites: that is, with Beauty, Justice, Piety, Being, not with Ugliness,

⁵ Reflections of sensuous particulars, for Plato, are often said to be less real than, or, at least, inferior to ('worse' than), directly perceived sensuous particulars. While the former are available to our imagination (*εἰκασία*), the latter are available in direct sense experience (*πίστις*). See Plato's *Republic* in Plato (1961, pp. 575-844). This pertains especially to Plato's Divided Line. For discussion of ontological and epistemological issues surrounding the Divided Line, see e.g. Brentlinger (1963), Cresswell (2012), Davies (1967), Dreher (1990), Fogelin (1971), Foley (2008), Gonzalez (1996), Hackforth (1942), Malcolm (1962), Notopoulos (1936), Raven (1953), Sidgwick (1869) and Smith (1996).

⁶ For an account of this verticality with respect to Plato's various causal explanations, see e.g. Andriopoulos (2011).

⁷ Shields (2011) contains a defense of the Good (of the *Republic*) as one self-dependent Form amongst many and not merely a relational or teleological structure for all Forms.

⁸ See Shields (2011, pp. 288-9) for a refutation of the 'degrees-of-reality' reading which conflates 'superlative reality' with 'superlative goodness'.

Injustice, Impiety, Non-Being. Thus, the vertical relationality bound up with excellence is reciprocal with the αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ horizontal individuality of Forms, wherefore the Good Itself is a self-dependent Form besides being relational, while its Bad 'Opposite', the Bad (Evil), is parasitic on it. In this sense, it is the 'bad' parasites, not the 'lower-order' Forms that are 'less real' than the Form of the Good. The notion of logical self-causation as a Form's logical identity *qua* individual is, therefore, useful.

It is due to an exclusive focus on the inherently self-contradictory notion of self-causation *qua* self-creation that the explanatory power of the idea of *causa sui* for Platonic metaphysics is often ignored or dismissed as a kind of "Baron Munchausen [...] self-causation".⁹ It is the latter that brings along infinite regress and logical contradiction. *If* nothing can be created *ex nihilo*, an individual must be brought into existence by another individual, which must in turn be produced by yet another individual, and so on *ad infinitum*. If the individual is to be self-creating, it must self-divide indefinitely. The idea of self-causation *qua* self-creation ends, thus, in nonsense. Plato's Forms are not ontologically self-caused, i.e. self-created, as their ontological reality is relational. The Form of Being is a logically self-dependent Form wherewith all Forms, but not their 'Bad' Opposites, are interrelated. The 'Bad' Opposites relate to Being's own 'Bad' Opposite, Non-Being.¹⁰

The Form of the Good is 'higher' than the Form of Being – which suggests that all real things *are* because they are interrelated with the Good while 'Bad' combines with 'Non-Being'. Ontological relationality and the Form of Being are embedded in an excellent relational structure within which each Form is excellent, and, so, αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ. Each Form is relationally good, but it is not *the* Good:¹¹ since all Forms, including the Good, are logically self-caused. Therefore, it may make more sense – as Asger Ousager

⁹ Mary Margaret McCabe uses this term vis-à-vis the idea of God as self-creating in the Platonic context, see McCabe (2015, p. 220). See also Ousager (2005, p. 129).

¹⁰ See Notes 11, 41 and 42 to this chapter.

¹¹ Although Forms do not relate to absolute Non-Being, they do relate to relative Non-Being (i.e. not-being), e.g. each Form *is not* the Good.

suggests – to refer to the αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ (in-itself-ness), or, what we understand as the logical self-causation, of an individual, as *ratio sui* rather than *causa sui*.¹² Such a conclusion is predicated, however, on a questionable distinction between ‘cause’ and ‘reason’, and on an understanding of ‘cause’ as physical cause non-identical with its effect, rather than as the reason for, or essence of, its effect.

The word closest to the notion of ‘cause’ contained in ‘*causa sui*’ *qua* logical self-causation – a word indeed applied to Forms in their relationship to sensuous particulars – is αἰτία,¹³ meaning both ‘cause’ and ‘reason’, a necessary *and* sufficient condition. In non-Platonic accounts where ‘cause’ and ‘reason’ are two different things – the former representing physical necessity, the latter providing a motive for action – a cause is only a necessary condition, never a sufficient one. Admittedly, Plato also uses the neuter term αἴτιον,¹⁴ of which αἰτία is “the feminine personalisation”,¹⁵ to designate physical causes and physical necessity: i.e. that which causes things to come into existence (and to become), both at the macro-level of God’s primordial act of creation (the ultimate cause, αἴτιον) and at the micro-level of interrelated sensuous particulars (each auxiliary cause, ζυγαῖτιον, acting as an ‘instrument’ of αἴτιον).¹⁶ It is in the sense of αἴτιον that *causa sui* – *qua* ontological self-causation – is incoherent, and, therefore, impossible. In the sense of αἰτία, *causa sui* – *qua* logical self-causation, i.e. explanation of genuinely real individuals via necessary and sufficient conditions – is fully

¹² See Ousager (2005, pp. 129-37).

¹³ See e.g. Plato’s *Philebus* and *Timaeus* in Plato (1961, pp. 1086-150, 1151-1211) for scattered mentions of this term to signify the reason for the becoming of everything. See Ousager (2005, pp. 126-8) for some quotations and clarifications. See Andriopoulos (2011) for a detailed, nuanced discussion of Plato’s causal explanations.

¹⁴ See e.g. the *Greater Hippias* (297a) in Plato (1961, pp. 1534-1559) where Socrates says that αἴτιον cannot be the cause of itself (i.e. self-caused) because it has to be different from what it causes. He clearly has in mind something like ontological, not logical, (self-) causation.

¹⁵ See Ousager (2005, p. 126).

¹⁶ See e.g. Hankinson (1998, pp. 113-14) and Mueller (1998, p. 88).

coherent; it is effectively the same as *ratio sui*.¹⁷ Αἴτιον is inexplicable and unintelligible without αἰτία, and depends on it.¹⁸

It may be objected that this interpretation of Plato's causal account of reality is too static, as it seems to fixate on the Forms as their own ultimate *reasons* and as genuine realities, and to ignore the role of the Creator from the *Timaeus* who is also the *efficient cause* of the world as a whole, not just the logical cause of the sensuous and not merely another Form wherewith other Forms interrelate. We emphasize, in response, that it is the αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ Form of the Good and the relational excellence of all other αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ Forms that is the *reason* why such 'creation' is possible and realized in the first place. From the perspective of creation as a dynamic divine act, the Forms, as ultimate realities, are *that for the sake of which anything ought to be created*: they are final causes and rational explanations. The theory of logical self-causation which undergirds the Theory of Forms requires us to view the Forms not only from the perspective of this act, but, first and foremost, from the perspective of their own self-sufficing reality.

Additionally, Plato can be said to understand the Good as the "Form of Forms, and the only existential source of everything in both the worlds of Being and Becoming"¹⁹ and as "the cause of the causes (*aitia tôn aitiôn*)"²⁰ *only in the sense* that the Good explains the Forms *qua* related to the Good, though not their logical identity *qua* individual.²¹ This approach does not weaken Plato's demiurgic narrative of creation (via αἴτιον) in accordance with the highest Good (*qua* αἰτία), but, rather, rationally strengthens it. Because αἰτία has "explanatory priority [...] in explaining the way the efficient cause [αἴτιον] works [...] [it] works as a cause by informing and directing god's desire [to create the world]".²²

¹⁷ See Ousager (2005, pp. 126-37) for a detailed discussion of this.

¹⁸ See Johansen (2008).

¹⁹ Andriopoulos (2011, p. 306).

²⁰ Andriopoulos (2011, p. 306).

²¹ See Shields (2011, p. 288) for a defense of this view.

²² See Johansen (2008, p. 475).

This explanatory priority also operates at the level of already existing (created) sensuous particulars. So, in his confrontation with materialist accounts of causality, Socrates worries about a prisoner's plight concerning which "they claim that his sinews and bones are the cause of his being in prison, not his decision to stay".²³ According to a 'bifurcating' account of cause and reason, physical causal necessity and metaphysical independence (freedom) are two different things entirely. Bones and sinews are part of our relational entanglement and external determination in a physical world while decisions express our freedom to act on the basis of reasons. In the case of the prisoner in the 'bifurcating' account, it is physical causes that are determining with respect to what comes to pass, while reasons are laid aside. Causes and reasons, in other words, occupy different, often incompatible, realms. Frequently, physical entanglement prevents from acting according to reasons.

We argue that Plato's Theory of Forms, with its focus on αἰτία, points beyond this incompatibility between relationality-*qua*-causal-determination and individual independence. Plato posits Forms as that which provides not just necessary, but also sufficient, conditions for any particular thing – be it an action, a person, a tool, the world as a whole, and so on – that is, its causes and its reasons all at once. That a Form such as Beauty is a beautiful thing's αἰτία means that the thing is a particular instance of Beauty available to our senses, or, in further Platonic terms, that the thing partakes of Beauty and is thereby fully explained *qua* beautiful. Then, it is not physical traits or properties that, in the ultimate sense, 'cause' the thing to be beautiful. Similarly, bones and sinews are not, *by themselves*, what, in the capacity of ζυαίτιον, 'causes' a prisoner to be unable to slip out of chains, break iron bars or tear stone walls down.

Bones and sinews, physical traits and properties, are subordinately necessary ζυαίτια enacting the αἴτιον whose ultimate necessary and sufficient reasons are to be found in the Forms. The complex body with a

²³ Silverman (2002, p. 57). See Plato (1961, p. 80) for the original discourse.

particular sensuous constitution has its *reason for being so* in the Form Man Itself, also perhaps in the Forms Hardness Itself, Softness Itself, Equality Itself or its (bad) Opposite Inequality, the Good Itself, and so on. Ultimately, it is these Forms, in conjunction with one another, that cause the human body and its material surroundings to be so constituted. According to this account, physical determination and action on the basis of reasons come together. A physical state of affairs is such because of the Forms that ground it: it has its sufficient reason in them. Acting contrary to this state of affairs, and, thus, to the Forms, would be unreasonable: unintelligible.

In his investigation of the Platonic Forms as causes in the *Phaedo*²⁴ and their relationship to Aristotle's formal causes, C. C. W. Taylor notes Plato's "lump[ing] together [of] logically necessary and sufficient conditions with causally necessary and sufficient conditions".²⁵ Any Form is a logical cause, that is, a cause *and* a reason, whether it acts with – what in contemporary discourse we understand as – logical or only causal necessity and sufficiency. That the number 'three' is odd and that fire is hot are facts caused with equal logical necessity. That fire should ever not be hot, for Plato, is contrary to logic, and, indeed, nonsense.²⁶ Furthermore, Taylor importantly corrects the definition of an Aristotelian formal cause provided by G. E. M. Anscombe – 'The form [...] is what makes what a thing is made *of* into that thing'²⁷ – through the superior characterization "which answers the question 'Given a certain matter, *e.g.* a quantity of bronze, what are the characteristics whose possession by that matter is a necessary and sufficient condition of its being a thing of a certain kind, *e.g.* a statue?'"²⁸ A form does not simply 'shape' a thing into what it is: it provides the logical condition(s) for what the thing is.²⁹

²⁴ See Plato (1961, pp. 40-98).

²⁵ Taylor (1969, p. 51).

²⁶ Brentlinger has similar things to say in Brentlinger (1972, p. 75).

²⁷ See Anscombe (2002, p. 49), as quoted in Taylor (1969, p. 55).

²⁸ Taylor (1969, p. 55).

²⁹ On *aitiae* as causes and reasons in the *Phaedo*, see also Vlastos (1969). On *aitiae* and teleological explanations, see Matthews & Blackson (1989).

Socrates' sitting in prison, as we can draw from the *Phaedo* and the *Crito*,³⁰ is not due to physical inability to do otherwise; in fact, it was physically possible for him to escape. Rather, it is due to his character and intelligence, his knowledge of what is best. What could easily be seen as external physical constraint, or, alternatively, as overcoming such a constraint by escaping, is now understood as rational decision. Instead of being a separation of physical causality from reason or rational justification, this is an act of conjoining cause and reason. It is for this reason that αἰτία is more 'intentional' and 'rational' than αἰτιον: unlike αἰτιον, it provides a complete metaphysical explanation.³¹ Thinking with Plato, we conceive of Socrates' act of sitting in prison instead of escaping as an instantiation of the Good, the Beautiful, and all the Forms conjoined with them, including the ones responsible for the body's constitution. While this act cannot have its αἰτιον (physical cause) in itself, it does have its αἰτία (reason) in itself, for the Forms constitute *its* essence (αἰτία), from and toward which all physical causal acts (via various micro-actions, or micro-conditions, ζυγαίτια) flow.

If the prisoner, say, is enlightened, and reaches out to the Forms *qua* permanent limiting and enabling, necessary and sufficient, conditions, he is no longer restless or doomed. He has seen that his being in prison can never be fully explained by the particular unequal relationship between his bones and sinews and the stone wall or the iron bars, or by the authorities' accusations based in a type of social order, good or bad, or by the particular acts he is accused of, or by the individuals influenced by these acts. The final explanations can be found, instead, in the Forms Man Itself, Equality Itself and its Opposite Inequality, Life Itself, the Good, and so on. One may wonder whether there could not be a full chain of physical causal explanations constituting, as a whole, a conjunction of necessary and sufficient conditions. A 'whole', however, is not intelligible by sole reference to particulars. It implies one-ness which Plato's complex sensuous things never truly have if

³⁰ See Plato (1961, pp. 27-39, 40-98).

³¹ See e.g. Ousager (2005, p. 126).

considered *qua* particulars. Oneness, like all other things – Equality, Life, the Good – is due to Forms which grant reality to their particular instances.

The prisoner can discover, in other words, that there is no other way that things could be, for a realm of ultimate logical causes explains the seeming chain of causes in the physical world. As long as he is unable to understand this, he is trapped in shadows. When he does understand it, he is free in prison, not unfree as common sense erroneously suggests. Freedom, then, is not the contrary of determinism – indeed, *qua* sensuous particular, one *is* determined by the Forms – but the act of knowing that which *ought to be*. By understanding a logically self-caused Form as one's logical cause, one partakes of the Form's metaphysical independence. The tardiness of the body – bones brittle and sinews flimsy relative to the cement walls and iron bars – is then not perceived to be at odds with the will to act a certain way. That will is inseparable from one's physical body together with which one is able to partake of the cause-reason Man Itself. Given the realization that everything, including one's desires or decisions, is ultimately explicable via permanent, necessary, all-embracing causes, as well as sufficient reasons, beyond particulars and their material world, the idea that anything could be otherwise is metaphysical and logical nonsense. The prisoner's desire he would be elsewhere and in different circumstances than he is presently in is in the sphere of imaginative projection intelligible only as part of the sensuous world that partakes of the reality of Forms. There is no other intended reality or real possible world.

This foreclosing of counterfactual possibility affirms the Forms as fundamentally real individuals. Since the physical world essentially reduces to Forms and is thoroughly explained by them, particulars are not independent individuals, but derivative and dependently real. Apart from being a cause-reason explaining and grounding particulars, a Form explains and grounds itself. While particulars are logically caused, in other words, a Form is logically *self*-caused. However, the idea that the Platonic Forms are self-caused individuals has undergone fierce debate in Platonic scholarship,

especially under the challenge of the Third Man Argument and the associated problems of predication and ontology. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to examine some salient aspects of this debate.

Predication, Being, and the Third Man

A certain use of language in Plato's Middle Dialogues, particularly the *Phaedo*, the *Republic* and the *Parmenides*,³² has been interpreted to mean that "the Form is a universal which has itself as an attribute and is thus a member of its own class, and, by implication, that it is the one perfect member of that class",³³ as well as that "the Form *has* what it *is*: it is self-referential, self-predicable".³⁴ This has led the so called 'self-predictionalist' Platonist interpreters³⁵ to say that a Form, for Plato, can be predicated of itself just as well as it is predicated of particulars. Thus, the Triangle Itself is triangular just as well as a triangular earring, the Circle Itself is circular as well as a football, and Beauty Itself is beautiful as well as Helen of Troy.

There is, in other words, a kind of *synonymy*³⁶ of predication between Forms and particulars. A triangular particular is said to be triangular *in the same sense* as Triangularity Itself. In Gail Fine's account of Aristotle's definitions of synonymy and homonymy, a triangular thing and Triangularity Itself are synonymously triangular if, besides sharing the same name, they have the same corresponding essence. If the corresponding essence is different, they are homonymous rather than synonymous.³⁷ The necessary and

³² In the *Phaedo*, Socrates says that "whatever else is beautiful apart from absolute beauty is beautiful because it partakes of that absolute beauty" (Plato 1961, p. 81), which implies that absolute beauty (Beauty Itself) is also beautiful. In the *Republic*, the Form of the couch (bed) seems to be treated as *a* couch (bed), see Plato (1961, p. 822). In the *Parmenides*, Plato's Parmenides has a young Socrates admit that the Form of Largeness is itself large, see Plato (1961, p. 926).

³³ Allen (1960, p. 147).

³⁴ Allen (1960, p. 147).

³⁵ See e.g. Malcolm (1985), Nehamas (1973) and Silverman (2002).

³⁶ Also known as 'univocity' as opposed to 'equivocity' or 'homonymy'.

³⁷ See Fine (2004, p. 144).

sufficient conditions for a particular seen under the aspect of triangularity are exhausted by the Form Triangularity Itself. Hence, as Fine also concludes, we hardly equivocate when we speak of a triangular earring and of Triangularity Itself: our meaning is, indeed, the same.³⁸

Equivocation occurs, however, when we consider the *being* of Platonic Forms and particulars. We could only speak of synonymy in the case of being if we treated being as a predicate, which, then, given that any sensuous particular *is* by sharing in the essence Being, would mean that being is synonymously predicable of Forms and of particulars. We may leave the historical moot arguments surrounding the question “Is being a (real) predicate?” aside. For it is not predication that we are concerned with as we inquire into the ontological status of a Form or particular, but rather a Form’s or a particular’s relation to real Being, to the Form Being Itself. If we were to treat the Forms as beings – as things that *are* – ‘being’ would simply be a predicable property. Plato’s dialogue the *Sophist* may suggest,³⁹ however, that Being is an independent Form to which all Forms are related.⁴⁰

While a Form is always necessarily, absolutely, eternally related to Being and never to its bad Opposite, absolute Non-Being,⁴¹ a sensuous particular can partake of both Being and Non-Being.⁴² The Form of Being provides necessary and sufficient conditions for particular beings under the aspect of ‘being’. But, unlike Being, particular beings are not simple; they have multiple aspects. Being complex, they are prevented from being more than ‘partially’ identical with any one of the Forms. Their partaking of a Form is,

³⁸ See Fine (2004, pp. 147-9).

³⁹ See Plato (1961, pp. 957-1017).

⁴⁰ For a perspective on this, see Anscombe (1966).

⁴¹ The Forms are, however, related to relative Non-Being, in relation to other Forms. Thus, any self-identical Form *is not* any of the Forms which it is not identical with: e.g. Triangularity *is not* Circularity, Sameness, Beauty, Equality, Redness, and so on. For a perspective on this, see Hegel (1870). Relative Non-Being is ‘difference’ from Being, i.e. the Form Difference, rather than Being’s absolute Contrary or Negation. Absolute Non-Being is *unqualified non-being* rather than *not being something or other* or *not being a certain way*. See Plato’s *Sophist* (Plato 1961, pp. 957-1017).

⁴² Since particulars are not ultimately real, nothing prevents them from partaking of absolute Non-Being alongside Being. Non-Being is, anyway, dependent on Being rather than a ‘positively’ self-dependent Form.

therefore, necessarily deficient. Thus, a particular's partaking of Being leaves 'space' for Being's opposite Non-Being as well as for partaking of Forms other than Being: Triangularity, Redness, Beauty, and so on. A particular being can also be triangular, red, and beautiful. The Form Being Itself, on the other hand, can only stand *in relations* to Redness, Triangularity, and Beauty. A particular thing is an instantiation of these relations.

This difference between Forms and particulars should explain why, according to many interpreters, the Forms can self-predicate while their particular instantiations cannot. In the case of a Form, there either obtains (i) an identity between a Form and the essence predicated of it,⁴³ or (ii) a primitive connection of Being, expressed by the copula *is*, between a Form and its essence *qua* subject and predicate.⁴⁴ Neither obtains when essences are predicated of particulars. A particular has many essences predicated of it without being fully and singularly identical with any one of them. It is, however, logically identical with the *whole conjunction* of essences which it instantiates, and is *essentially* reducible to this conjunction. A red thing is never simply red, and is, thus, not Redness: it reduces to the interrelation of Redness with many other Forms. The claim to a Form's absolute self-dependence is, however, apparently unsettled by the Third Man Argument, which aims to show that Forms can be exposed as in fact dependent for their definitions on further Forms. Such dependence of Forms on Forms would eliminate the difference between a Form and a particular.

Arguments such as the Third Man are engendered primarily by the understanding of Forms as 'logical causes': that is, as essences providing necessary and sufficient conditions for particulars. On Richard Sharvy's causal-logic interpretation of predication in Plato, for example, "the Forms are causes of predicative facts; they are truthmakers"⁴⁵ and have *dative* significance with respect to particulars. Triangularity Itself is *that in virtue of*

⁴³ On the Identity approach, see e.g. Allen (1960), Bestor (1980), Moravcsik (1963) and Nehamas (1978, 1982).

⁴⁴ On the Predicationist approach, see Code (1986), Nehamas (1978) and Silverman (2002).

⁴⁵ Sharvy (1986, p. 509).

which triangular things are triangular. It is this causal logic in the Theory of Forms rather than self-predication on its own that makes the Forms liable to the Third Man Argument by having them yield to a vicious regress.⁴⁶ This can be demonstrated in the following manner.

A set of particular triangular things can be said to be triangular in virtue of the Form Triangularity. This proposition does not lead to a regress *unless* we decide to state that being triangular is something triangular particulars and the Form Triangularity have in common, and, then, explain *why* Triangularity Itself is triangular. Sharvy states that the notion of a Form's self-causation – that a Form should cause itself to be triangular – seems vague, absurd, self-contradictory. Hence, the causal explanation needs to be performed through another Form of Triangularity. This generates an argument to the effect that all triangular particulars *and* Triangularity are triangular in virtue of a further Form Triangularity-1. Seeing as that further Form's being triangular also needs to be explained, a further proposition issues: 'All triangular particulars *and* Triangularity *and* Triangularity-1 are triangular in virtue of Triangularity-2'. The resulting regress is supposed to show that we should never be able to provide a *complete explanation* of causation in the context of Plato's Theory of Forms because causation seems to be a *transitive relation*.⁴⁷

The apparent self-contradictoriness of self-causation, as noted by Sharvy, can also be stated, in Samuel Rickless' terms, as a principle of "Non-Self-Explanation", that is, "(NSE) No Form of F-ness is F by virtue of partaking of itself".⁴⁸ In her study of Aristotle's *Peri ideōn* (*On Ideas*), Fine refers to this same principle as "*strong non-identity*", that is, as a requirement that "*nothing* [...] [be] F in virtue of itself", in opposition to "*weak non-identity*", according to which "*sensible Fs are F in virtue of something distinct from*

⁴⁶ See Sharvy (1986, p. 511).

⁴⁷ For a version of the argument, using the Form of Largeness, in the *Parmenides*, see Plato (1961, p. 926).

⁴⁸ See Rickless (1998, p. 520). He terms this principle NSE following Peterson (1973). In Rickless (2007, p. 41), a distinction is made between "**Non-Self-Partaking (NSP)** No Form partakes of itself" and "**Non-Self-Explanation (NSE)** It is not by virtue of partaking of itself that the F is F", though it is acknowledged that NSE follows directly from NSP.

themselves”.⁴⁹ ‘Weak non-identity’ states only that sensuous particulars cannot have a property or essence in virtue of themselves, but always in virtue of their partaking of a separate⁵⁰ entity, a Form. Being complex by partaking of many Forms, they are only partially identical with any one Form they partake of, in that only one aspect of them partakes of it. ‘Strong non-identity’ states that no entity whatsoever, not even Forms, can have a property or essence in virtue of itself.

The infinite regress triggered by ‘strong non-identity’ is not a problem in itself. A problem is, however, discernible in the event that a Form’s metaphysical status *qua* self-dependent is compromised. It is contrary to the definition of Triangularity Itself *qua* Form, to be caused by a further ‘Triangularity Itself’. This contradiction can be stated, following Francis J. Pelletier and Edward N. Zalta, as an unwarranted negation, implied by the Third Man Argument, of one of the principal propositions which play a role in it (the Argument), namely of the requirement for “**Uniqueness** (‘U’): The Form of *F* is unique”.⁵¹ The Form Triangularity Itself has to be unique if the property of being triangular exhibited by *all* triangular particulars is initially explained by a single Form Triangularity: a One (Form) over Many (particular instances). But it cannot be unique if its partaking – and thereby the partaking of its many particular instances – of a further *non-identical* Form Triangularity-1 is posited. These are the implications of the famous Third Bed argument in the *Republic*.⁵² There it is stated that the Form of the Bed must be unique, for, if there were to be two or more such Forms, they would have to in turn partake of another Form of Bed which would, then, have to be the real one, and so forth. Since an infinite regress is impossible in the divine

⁴⁹ Fine (2004, p. 225). Fine suggests that Plato is committed to self-predication, weak non-identity, and Separation (a Form’s metaphysical independence from particulars), and that he accepts One Over Many (the requirement that one Form be instantiated by many instances) for the most part. But, she argues that this does not have to commit him to strong non-identity and the Third Man. See Fine (2004, pp. 226-7).

⁵⁰ Understanding a Form’s ‘separateness’ as ‘metaphysical, logical and definitional independence’ is apt.

⁵¹ Pelletier, Zalta (2000, p. 168).

⁵² See Plato (1961, p. 822)

order of Forms as fundamental realities, a Form must be unique. The principle of strong non-identity is, then, at stake. Furthermore, a Form cannot be said to be completely identical with its essence, or to primitively *be* the essence predicated of it, if it is explained through another Form.

Gladly, as Constance Meinwald shows, the requirement for non-self-explanation rests on a mistake. In her study of Plato's *Parmenides*, she attempts to say "Good-bye to the Third Man"⁵³ via a categorial distinction between predication in relation to itself (*pros heauto*), e.g. 'Triangularity Itself is triangular', and predication in relation to other things (*pros ta alla*), e.g. 'The earring is triangular'.⁵⁴ The first kind of predication is not "the everyday variety of predication", but "a special mode" thereof.⁵⁵ While Triangularity is triangular *qua* being itself, triangular particulars are triangular *qua* partaking of Triangularity. *Pros heauto* predication, for Meinwald, is not limited to self-predication, but extends to any case of essential predication applying to a Form. For example, Forms situated 'higher' in a certain genus-species tree will always be essentially, i.e. *pros heauto*, predicable of their 'lower' branches. Thus, 'Redness is Coloured' is a *pros heauto* predicative claim, as being coloured is part of the *essential nature* of being red.⁵⁶ To allow the Third-Man chain to begin, we must treat both modes of predication in the very same way: Triangularity Itself *and* all triangular earrings possess the common property 'being triangular' in virtue of another Form Triangularity-1. Such equal treatment, Meinwald contends, is wrongheaded.⁵⁷

As Bryan Frances⁵⁸ and Pelletier's and Zalta's critical discussions of Meinwald's theory show, however, we cannot treat claims such as "The Form of Ideality is ideal", "The Form of Eternity is eternal", "The Form of Rest is

⁵³ Though, according to Pelletier & Zalta, she only ever manages to say *Auf Wiedersehen*, see Pelletier, Zalta (2000, p. 187).

⁵⁴ See Meinwald (1991, p. 155). See also Frede (1967) and Meinwald (1992).

⁵⁵ See Pelletier, Zalta (2000, p. 165).

⁵⁶ For an extensive explanation of this, see e.g. Frances (1996).

⁵⁷ See Meinwald (1991, pp. 156-7).

⁵⁸ See Frances (1996).

at rest", "The Form of Intelligibility is intelligible",⁵⁹ and so on, as predications *pros heauto*, necessarily. They can, in fact, be 'everyday-variety' predications of the form *pros ta alla*, for what is predicated are shared properties of the Forms such as being eternal, changeless, intelligible, ideal, and so on.⁶⁰ Since Meinwald does not notice this, the Third Man is bound to recur. If 'The Form of Eternity is eternal' is a predication *pros ta alla*, rather than a predication *pros heauto* as one might automatically have assumed, there seems to be nothing wrongheaded in joining the Form of Eternity together with all other Forms *qua* eternal *pros ta alla*, and letting it, together with them, partake of a further Form Eternity-1. No category mistake is committed in this way, for no predication *pros heauto* is joined with predications *pros ta alla*. The principle of strong non-identity needs to be disabled, for us not to meet a second Third Man within the realm of Forms.

Frances, Pelletier and Zalta notice further that the Third Man may return at an even higher level, consisting of *pros heauto* predications only. If, say, Red, Blue and Green are all Coloured *pros heauto*, while, even more obviously, Colour is self-predicatively Coloured *pros heauto*, and if it is not required for 'Colour is Coloured' to be an identity statement, Red, Blue, Green, and Colour, can be Coloured-1 *pros heauto*. This is to say that there can be a Form Colour-1 non-identical with Colour and above it in the genus-species tree: a Form part of the essential nature of Red, Blue, Green, and Colour. There can also be Colour-2 above Colour-1 in the light of whose essential nature Red, Blue, Green, Colour, and Colour-1, are all Coloured-2 *pros heauto*. There we have a loftier Third Man from which Meinwald's solution, based as it is on the categorial distinction between *pros heauto* and *pros ta alla* predication, offers no escape.

This problem can be tackled by investigating the premises it rests on. That Forms are self-predicative, as well as that properties are generally

⁵⁹ See Pelletier, Zalta (2000, p. 183).

⁶⁰ In Malcolm (1985, p. 82), these are referred to as 'second-level' properties. They define a Form *qua* Form (in general) while 'first-level' properties define it *qua F* (a specific Form, say, Redness). Redness is immutable, eternal, ideal (second-level) and red (first-level).

predicable of them, loom large amongst these premises. As Wilfrid Sellars rightly points out in his paper “Vlastos and ‘The Third Man’”,⁶¹ the notion of self-predication is fraught with difficulty, due to the Platonists’⁶² tendency to think of ‘*F*-ness’, e.g. being triangular (Triangularity Itself), as an Aristotelian particular substance.⁶³ Indeed, speaking of the Forms in self-predicational terms is tantamount to treating them as though they were Aristotelian substances, which they certainly are not. It is only thus that the Forms could be conceived of both as predicable of something, *qua* general with respect to that thing (like Aristotelian forms or species), and as ‘subjects’ of which something can be predicated, *qua* particulars (like Aristotelianhylomorphic substances or their matter *qua* subject of predication).⁶⁴ It is only thus that Triangularity Itself could be triangular, or Beauty Itself – beautiful. While the Forms *are* individuals *qua* fundamentally real independent essences, however, they are neither Platonic nor Aristotelian particulars.

Apart from targeting self-predication specifically, this charge should target predication in general. Although it does serve certain purposes of linguistic simplicity to say that Forms are eternal, intelligible, ideal, changeless, even simple, *one*, and so on, the metaphysically correct manner of speaking is: All Forms relate to – or ‘blend’ with – the Form of Eternity, the Form of Intelligibility, the Form of Ideality, the Form of Oneness, and so on. It is a mistake to treat a Platonic Form as an Aristotelian substance whose essence is a property predicated of it, as in: Redness is red. Or whose other properties are shared with other Forms, as in: Redness, Triangularity and Being are eternal and intelligible, that is, share the properties of eternity and intelligibility. Instead, we must treat a Form as a simple individual essence which interrelates with Eternity, Intelligibility, Being, and so on, as all other Forms do. We must be wary, in other words, of taking manners of description

⁶¹ See Sellars (1955).

⁶² In this case, Sellars targets Gregory Vlastos.

⁶³ See Sellars (1955, p. 429).

⁶⁴ While (Aristotelian) form *qua* general is predicable of the material component of an Aristotelian substance, the entire substance *qua* particular cannot be predicated of anything.

germane to our language, such as adjectival predication, to mirror some sort of Aristotelian substance metaphysics.

According to this interpretation, Pelletier's and Zalta's worry that Meinwald's solution says *Auf Wiedersehen* to the Third Man, only to see it return at a higher level,⁶⁵ is quickly dissolved. If what counts, metaphysically, is not predication of properties, but relations of Forms to Forms, a proposition such as 'The Form of Eternity is eternal' always refers us to the relation of a Form to itself. Distinctions between *pros heauto* and *pros ta alla* predications are, in other words, inconsequential. What has metaphysical weight in predicative claims such as 'Redness is Coloured' and 'Colour is Coloured' is not *pros heauto* predication of Coloured-ness but a necessary *blending* relation between Redness and Colour in the first case and a self-relation – self-identity – in the second. Therefore, the Forms are irreducibly simple and have no properties predicated of them. Since a Form has no properties at all, it cannot have contradictory properties.

This makes Forms different from sensuous particulars which are complex, multiaspectual and characterized by contradictory properties. Beauty and Ugliness, Being and Non-Being, the Good and the Bad, can be admixed in particulars. According to some alternative interpretations, however, Forms may not be so different from their sensuous instances. Through the *Parmenides* – it is sometimes claimed – Plato realizes that Forms are not simple or non-contradictory. Since they imply that, contrary to what we have argued, the Third Man argument and the principles of predication and self-predication need not be circumvented, these claims must now be addressed.

⁶⁵ See Pelletier, Zalta (2000).

Alternatives to Simplicity

An alternative interpretation has been forwarded, for instance, by Rickless, in his sophisticated analysis of the challenge Plato's *Parmenides* presents to the Theory of Forms.⁶⁶ This challenge consists in demonstrating that, rather than being simple and self-dependent, the Forms do partake of further Forms (as in the Third Man) and sometimes, indeed, of mutually contradictory Forms. According to Rickless, the principle of non-self-explanation and the principles of predication and self-predication⁶⁷ need not be dispensed with. What is dropped, instead, is the principle of "Radical Purity", i.e. "(RP) No Form can have contrary properties. [For any property F, no Form can be both F and con-F.]", as well as the stronger "(RP*) No Form can have a property and its negation. [For any property F, no Form can be both F and not-F.]" which entails RP.⁶⁸ These principles emerge from the Theory of Forms available in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates argues that, while Simmias (a sensuous particular) is tall relative to Socrates and short relative to Phaedo, i.e. both tall and short (*not*-tall and *con*-tall), Tallness Itself can never be both tall and short.⁶⁹ Socrates uses this argument and arguments analogous to it in order to contend that, since the soul partakes of Life, it cannot partake of Death (and is, therefore, immortal).⁷⁰ In the *Phaedo*, the Forms are treated as 'radically pure' in the sense that they – as well as things they necessarily accompany, as Hotness accompanies fire, Coldness snow, Oddness the number Three, and Life the soul – cannot admit of their opposites.

⁶⁶ See Rickless (1998, 2007).

⁶⁷ These are principles established in 'reconstructions' of Plato's arguments rather than principles explicitly employed by Plato. Such reconstructions look for what is implicit in the original discourse and, thus, have the function of 'hypotheses' open to revision. Our task is to determine which of the principles that seem to undergird Plato's arguments must be at work for the Theory of Forms to be self-consistent. Arguably, the principle of non-self-explanation is not actually upheld by Plato, though an unwitting young Socrates may seem to admit it in the *Parmenides*, see Plato (1961, p. 926). The principle of self-predication, on the other hand, is usually abstracted from Plato's language in some of the middle dialogues, see Note 32 to this chapter.

⁶⁸ Rickless (1998, p. 511).

⁶⁹ See Plato (1961, pp. 83-4).

⁷⁰ See Plato (1961, p. 87).

If Radical Purity is dropped, as Rickless suggests it is in the *Parmenides*, it is no longer true that a Form cannot be both one and many, or that the Form Triangularity Itself is solely self-identical. In fact, in blending with other Forms, Triangularity can contain both the property of being triangular and other properties, non-identical with triangularity. It can, for instance, blend with Being (Triangularity *is*), with Line (a triangle arises from three intersecting lines), with Angle (a triangle has three angles), and so on. Thus, it can have the properties of being, linearity, angularity, and so forth. At first glance, this should make it near impossible to define a Form as being what it is solely in virtue of itself.⁷¹

What would it mean, in light of our example, to say, in the fashion of Plato's *Parmenides*, that "the One has that property and its contrary *and* the One has that property and its negation"?⁷² Unlike the 'beautiful', the 'triangular' cannot be said to have a contrary, but it can surely be said to have a negation. The linear, the angular and the circular can be conceived as not-triangular. In terms of the blending of the Line, the Angle, and even Being, Triangularity can then be said to have the property of being triangular as well as its negation, which is a straight rejection of strong radical purity. We would suggest, nonetheless, that this does not compromise absolute self-dependence, for a Form is not reducible to the Forms it relates to or 'blends' with. It does not mean that a Form's logical identity *qua* **this** Form and no other can be explained in terms of those Forms. It does not commit us, therefore, to holding fast to non-self-explanation. Then, a Form is identical with its essence, that is, with itself. Against Rickless' challenge, in other words, a Form can be understood as logically self-caused despite possibly *seeming* to be a mere multiplicity arising out of its blending relations with other Forms.

⁷¹ For a fuller account of blending and combination of Forms, or, of Collection and Division, see e.g. Cornford (1935, pp. 252-300).

⁷² Rickless (1998, p. 543).

The following worry may arise with respect to this provisional solution. There are different kinds of triangles: equilateral, isosceles, scalene, right-angled. Are we to say, then, that each of these is a separate Form, and to break the Form of Triangularity into Equilateral Triangularity, Isosceles Triangularity, Scalene Triangularity and Right-Angled Triangularity? However, this is not a problem pertaining to the Forms, but rather to their particular instantiations. There is only one Form of Triangularity, which, together with Numbers taken as Forms, *causes* particular equilateral, isosceles, scalene and right-angled triangles. In distinguishing types of triangles, we are, in effect, 'mentally representing' several interrelated Forms rather than one: for instance, Line combined with a certain Number, Angle combined with a certain Number, Line and Angle combined with Equality in the case of the equilateral or isosceles triangle, and so on. They are *all* triangles. What differs is the specific kind of Form-combination which produces a particular instantiation of Triangularity. While Triangularity Itself is the unique essence, 'equilateral,' 'isosceles,' 'scalene' and 'right-angled' are 'specifications' or 'patterns' resulting from combinations with other Forms. Rather than there being an individual Isosceles Triangularity in the realm of Forms, there is a pattern of interrelated Forms that expresses 'what it is to be an isosceles triangle'.

There is a further challenge to face, however. Rickless suggests that the principle of 'No Causation by Contraries' (NCC) should be abandoned together with the principle of Radical Purity.⁷³ 'NCC' states that no Form should be caused by Forms contrary to each other. *Qua* reciprocal with Radical Purity, NCC can also be derived from the Theory of Forms as presented in the *Phaedo*. As the Form of Three cannot be logically caused by Oddness and Evenness, and the soul cannot instantiate both Life and Death, no Form can be caused by contrary Forms. Retaining the principles of self-

⁷³ See e.g. Rickless (2000, p. 186).

predication and predication, however, Rickless summons the following counterexamples from the *Sophist*.

The Form Sameness is the same as itself (*pros ta alla*), but different from the different (*pros ta alla*), wherefore Sameness is both same and different, that is, both *s* and con-*s*. Conversely, Difference is the same as itself (*pros ta alla*), though different from what is different than it (*pros ta alla*), wherefore Difference is both same and different. Hence, Radical Purity is to be abandoned. Motion and Rest partake of Difference because they are different from each other (*pros ta alla*); Motion and Rest partake of Sameness because they are the same in that they both partake of Being (they both *are*, *pros ta alla*). Therefore, Motion and Rest are caused by contraries: again, *s* and con-*s*. Hence, 'No Causation by Contraries' is to be rejected. As a consequence, principles such as Uniqueness are also toppled: a Form – say, Motion – seems to partake of more than one Form, of Sameness *and* Difference.

In these examples, Forms such as Sameness Itself and Difference Itself, Rest Itself and Motion Itself, are presumed to *partake of* Forms, that is, to be *logically caused* by Forms distinct from them. Granted a dialogue such as the *Sophist* indeed appears to suggest the existence of such relationships of partaking between the Forms, these cannot be of the same order as the relations between particulars and Forms.⁷⁴ While Forms interblend without being logically dependent on each other *for their individual essences*, particulars are dependent on the Forms in being logically caused by them. Thus, although Rest and Motion interblend with Sameness, Being and Difference, they cannot simply be said to *essentially* depend on them.⁷⁵

Even if we were to live with (self-)predication, that Sameness Itself is the same as itself, and that it is different from Difference Itself, are not predications pertaining solely to the self-relational essential nature of

⁷⁴ For an interesting interpretation of these relationships of partaking between Forms and Forms, see Anscombe (1966). She pictures a curious diptych-like 'patterning' of Forms – which might avoid the 'repugnant conclusion' of Plato's Parmenides to the effect that a Form is itself and its negation or contrary at the very same time.

⁷⁵ See, again, Shields (2011) for a defense of a view similar to ours in relation to the Form of the Good from the *Republic*.

Sameness. If they were predications *pros heauto*, that Sameness Itself is both the same and different would be a true scandal for the Theory of Forms, for it would entail that Sameness Itself contain within itself Difference Itself. Sameness and difference in the case of Sameness are not said in the same sense: whereas Sameness is same in reference to itself, it is different in reference to other Forms. It is wrong, furthermore, to say that Sameness and Difference partake of each other in the same way a particular partakes of a Form, or that they cause each other or contain each other. That Rest Itself and Motion Itself, on the other hand, are the same in that both have Being is not tantamount to saying they are the same without qualification as to what aspect this sameness refers to; indeed, they are also different, a predication *pros ta alla*. That both have being, is only to say, via a predication *pros ta alla*, that they are both related to the Form Being Itself. Even the latter statement does not imply that the Forms are *essentially dependent* on Being. They only relate to it in the same way they can relate to any other Form.

Now, we must recall that any type of predication, whether *pros heauto* or *pros ta alla*, treats a Form as a particular rather than as a universal. While Aristotelian talk of predication is best suspended, Meinwald's broad conceptual framework may be retained. *Pros heauto*, a Form is what it is in virtue of itself, even if it is not, strictly speaking, predicable of itself. *Pros ta alla*, a Form *relates* to other Forms without thereby losing its essential self-dependence. All Forms relate to Being *pros ta alla*. Being relates to Being both *pros heauto* and *pros ta alla*, for it is both a unity (*pros heauto*) and a seeming multiplicity (*pros ta alla*) in that it necessarily relates to *all other* Forms in order to be Being. This is to say that Being relates to itself both in terms of itself and in terms of its relations to *all other* Forms. It relates to the other Forms in virtue of the principle that all Forms *are pros ta alla*. Like all other Forms, Being *is pros ta alla*; this like-ness (a relation to Likeness or Sameness Itself) is its relation to them. Being has being because it is Being as well as because it relates to all other Forms that have being. Its essence is at once individual and relational: at once self-dependent and 'mixing' with other

individuals. Its likeness with all other Forms lies, also, in its being identical with itself while being non-identical with all Forms other than itself.⁷⁶ Thus, like all other Forms, Being blends both with Sameness and with Difference.

In containing variously interrelated Forms, the realm of Forms can be figuratively described as a kind of 'mixture'. It is to the elucidation of this curious metaphor that we must now turn in order to further clarify the status of Forms as simultaneously self-dependent and interrelated, rather than self-contradictory, and, thus, as simple rather than complex. What is multiple, we want to show, are the Forms' interblending relations rather than essences and predicable properties.

The Realm of Forms and the Good Life as 'Mixtures'

By being the ultimate reasons, and, thus, also, their own reasons – where the notions of 'reason' and 'cause' are conjoined – the Forms are thoroughly self-caused, that is, *absolutely self-dependent*. Since they are many rather than one – constituting as they do *an integrated reality* – they are also thoroughly relational, that is, *interblended*. Contrary to what interpreters of Plato may so far have argued,⁷⁷ no problems arise out of these seemingly contradictory 'behaviours'. The Good, the Beautiful, Being, and so on, have to combine and blend in various ways for there to be an integrated world. Else there would only be a senseless aggregate of discrete units without any inter-intelligibility or indication that Reality is in harmony with God. This is no puzzle in need of solution. It is a mistake to conflate interrelatedness with the predication of properties. It may be best to think of this interrelatedness as *overlapping*, or 'porousness', rather than as sharing of properties which somehow attach to Forms, characterize them and rob them of simplicity.

⁷⁶ Hegel expresses a similar idea in his exposition of Plato's philosophy in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, see Hegel (1870).

⁷⁷ See e.g. McCabe (1994) for a discussion of so-called 'paradoxes' in Plato's account of individuals.

It is tempting to visualize this as intersection between perfect spheres, conceiving of the spheres as ideal 'embodiments' of the Forms. In intersection, the spheres share a 'region' without any one of them ceasing to be the individual, *one*, sphere that it is. Take two spheres as separate and different essences. If they intersect, do they compromise each other's independence, grounded in metaphysical, logical and causal necessity? As the shared 'region' is essential to each of them, it is fair to contend that they do not.⁷⁸ In this way, Being, the Good, Sameness, Difference, and so on, intersect with all other Forms, and the shared region of intersection belongs to each Form equally. One may want to distinguish between a Form's individual essence and its relational essence. While the entire sphere is the Form's individual essence, all the shared regions of intersection with other Forms constitute the Form's relational essence.

But is it fair to assert that a Form has two essences if the individual essence and the relational essence overlap? It seems absurd to contend that the Form of the Good only partially overlaps with the Form of Being, or that the Good and Being, Difference and Sameness, overlap partially with all other Forms. Indeed, they must overlap *fully*, or porously interpenetrate, for mereology does not belong in the realm of Forms. We were wrong, then, to illustrate the interrelatedness of Forms with the shared regions of intersecting spheres. Difference Itself, for instance, is interrelated with *all* other Forms in that each one of them is different from the next in terms of its individual essence. Then, Difference blends fully with all other Forms. The difference between *fully* and *partially* is not one of degree, but of kind. We do not mean that a whole is laid over a whole, part by part, but that Forms in some sense become *one* while remaining *many*. It is as if we are looking at *one* sphere and *many* spheres all at once. That is what the entire realm of Forms is, metaphorically speaking: it is the Sphere of Mixture.

⁷⁸ The idea of the 'sphere' may, in fact, be quite apt, for, as Lynne Ballew shows in relation to Parmenides' fragments and the *Timaeus*, "the motion of mind which thinks truly is circular, and [...] sense perception (αἴσθησις) and opinion (δόξα) move, like their sensible objects, in straight paths" (Ballew 1974, p. 200).

Difference does not lose its individual essence in blending with other Forms, nor is it a mere abstraction from their relationships. The mixture of Forms is, thus, different from a cake mixture. The latter is also no mereological aggregate of eggs, butter, sugar, flour, and so forth. These so called 'ingredients' enter into complex relations and the resulting blend is something completely new which cannot be said to have them as parts. Even more, eggs, butter, or sugar, do not retain any kind of individual essentiality: they go into the mixture and *become* it. In the mixture of Forms, on the other hand, none should lose its individual essentiality. Difference, Being, the Good, and all other Forms, mix together but stay themselves like invisibly overlapping spheres. Difference's blending relations with all other Forms constitute its relational essence. This relational essence is not *really* distinct from Difference's individual essence, but only *interpretively* so. It would be absurd for a simple Form to have two separate essences. That would either take us back to the incoherence of mere mereology or have us run up the difficulty of explaining why a Form is suddenly *two* not just in terms of its relational aspects, but also in terms of its whole individual self. A Form's having two essences would be tantamount to its having two selves or two natures.

Curiously, the visualizing power of the Sphere is not a fiction, nor far from what Plato himself, and his friends the Pre-Socratics, visualize. In the *Timaeus*, God creates a cosmos whose beginnings are indeed in a perfect sphere: a kind of round self-sufficient animal that feeds on its own excrement – an imitation as good as possible of the Forms.⁷⁹ For Empedocles, too, cosmogony begins in a Sphere in which all elements – earth, fire, water, air – are contained, and Love, dominating over Strife, effects their *mixing*.⁸⁰ Thanks to the great work of Love, "individual elements cannot be distinguished"⁸¹ in the Sphere. As Michael C. Stokes shows, however, this is

⁷⁹ See Plato (1961, p. 1164).

⁸⁰ See Stokes (1971, p. 162).

⁸¹ Stokes (1971, p. 162).

not to say that the elements have disappeared into an utter indissoluble unity: for Strife cyclically breaks the homogeneity that Love has created.⁸²

Although there is no “endless round of mixture and dissolution”⁸³ in Plato's realm of Forms, there is, in a sense, a ‘permanent’ mixture where all the blending individual Forms are simply present and ‘decoupleable’ from each other.⁸⁴ That they are decoupleable does not mean that they come in and out of their interrelations, but, rather, that they preserve their individual logical and essential independence while being permanently interrelated. If there were no blending between the Good and Life Itself, for instance, we would not be able to speak of the ‘good life’. Yet, if we could not decouple Life Itself from the Good *qua* Good, it would be impossible to speak of a bad life or of a long life. It is as though ‘mixture’ and ‘dissolution’ were there at once rather than taking turns cyclically.

Let us dwell on the possibility of conceiving of ‘bad life’. Surely, the characterization Bad is fully dependent on the Good; it is its bad Opposite. The Opposite of a Form can be defined as absolute non-resemblance to the Form: not simply the qualified negation or contrary of a Form (as in: Being is *not* Redness or Tallness is *contrary* to Shortness) but its absolute voidance. This ‘bad opposition’ to Forms is different from the opposition between Sameness and Difference or between Motion and Rest. While Sameness and Difference blend with each other and with Being, and Motion and Rest blend with Being despite not blending with each other, the ‘bad’ Opposites of Forms – such as Ugliness, the Bad, Impiety, Injustice, and unqualified Non-Being – are not independent of the Forms they oppose, and do not blend with Being. Any Form may be the negation of another one, and many can be contraries, though not all of these are ‘bad’ Opposites. The Bad is a kind of parasite on the Good, not an ‘Itself by Itself’ Form. It partakes by absolutely *not* partaking. If a Form is absolute plenitude, its bad Opposite is absolute

⁸² See Stokes (1971, p. 163).

⁸³ Stokes (1971, p. 163).

⁸⁴ For a more detailed comparison between doctrines in the *Timaeus* and doctrines extractable from Empedocles' fragments, see Hershbell (1974).

privation. This privation is best instantiated in Plato's Matter (the Receptacle) conceptualized in the *Timaeus* as absolute privation of Forms: formlessness that partakes of the Forms in a most incomprehensible manner.⁸⁵

A visualization, in the manner of Anscombe, of a diptych of Forms overlaid with their Negations and Contraries⁸⁶ may be useful here even if we replace the Negative or Contrary with the 'bad' Opposite. If Life Itself, the Good and its Opposite are laid over each other, fully overlapping as in our metaphorical description of coinciding spheres, the diptych of the Good and the Bad can be opened, leaving Life Itself to only overlap with the Bad in a particular instantiation. No such opening really occurs within the realm of Forms, but it does, and then only *apparently*, when it is a question of sensuous instantiation of all possible combinations – and spectra – of essences. Since the Opposites of Forms are not genuine Forms, a Form only *really* relates to Being and the Good, not to Non-Being and the Bad.

More than this, the good life, led in the world of sensuous particulars, is also a mixture: one that instantiates the mixture between Forms and the Form of the Good. It is a 'mixed life'. Our contention is – beyond the recognition that sensuous particulars are mixtures – to the effect that these particulars partake also of the Forms' capacity for individual independence and relationality without contradiction. The mixed life of pleasure and intelligence which Plato endorses in the *Philebus*,⁸⁷ is expressive of this non-contradiction between independence and relationality as far as the deficient reality of sensuous particulars allows. Indeed, Socrates' pleasure in wine-drinking, youthful male beauty and good jesting in the *Symposium*,⁸⁸ his delight in the discourse on love and the soul on his long walk and rest on a tree-bestrewn meadow with young Phaedrus in the eponymous dialogue,⁸⁹ or his defense of a life of measured pleasure in the *Philebus*, are not distractions

⁸⁵ See Plato (1961, pp. 1176-8).

⁸⁶ See Anscombe (1966).

⁸⁷ For an argument to this effect, see Carone (2000). See Plato (1961, pp. 1086-150).

⁸⁸ See Plato (1961, pp. 526-74).

⁸⁹ See Plato (1961, pp. 475-525).

from mental clarity in philosophical inquiry as the *Phaedo*⁹⁰ might have led us to believe they are.

A good life, however, *partakes of self-dependence*, rather than being *really* self-dependent in an ultimate sense. It also *partakes of relatedness* rather than being *really* relational. The good measure that reason *qua* noesis provides has to do with intentional orientation toward the Forms in partaking of them. This is where our initial idea of freedom-in-prison needs qualification. It is only freedom *as far as sensuous particulars go*. To the extent that the word 'freedom' is used univocally across Forms and sensuous instantiations, particulars such as we are can be said to be free. Platonically understood, however, this 'freedom' is derivative from the freedom of Forms. With respect to the genuinely and ultimately real, Plato is a monist; though he pluralizes Forms within their realm, as well as their sensuous instantiations. The good life in the sensuous world is a mixture that instantiates mixture in the realm of Forms.

The *Philebus* shows that, both in the realm of Forms and in the world of sensuous instantiation, the Mixture combines two principles: the Unlimited and the Limit. In the sensuous world, pleasure is generally understood as 'unlimited' in that a pleasant thing or experience can be enjoyed more or less. Hence, the term 'Indefinite Dyad' for the principle of the Unlimited: it can go on indefinitely in both directions (more and less). Yet, Plato thinks that pleasure can be limited through self-restraint and focus on 'pure pleasures': simple contemplative delights unsullied by turmoil, undisturbed by pain and excessive intensity. Such is our aesthetic delight in simple geometrical shapes and patterns as well as in pleasant smells, individual sounds, textures or colours (rather than complex melodies or pictures).⁹¹ In much the same way, a Form can be understood as variously relational and, thus, in a sense, 'unlimited'. From the perspective of a human knower, a Form may always be known or instantiated in combination with 'more' or 'fewer' (*many*) Forms,

⁹⁰ See Plato (1961, pp. 40-98).

⁹¹ Complex melodies or pictures may give rise to turmoil.

although, in a genuinely knowing divine mind, all Forms and their interrelations are intellected at once (as *one*). The Form is, at the same time, limited in being identical with itself *qua* simple individual. It can, thus, be contemplated as simple.

Plato's exclusion of all pleasures admixed with pain – and of all unhealthy or unnatural states of deficiency or excess – from the good life, has further implications for the idea of mixture. The good life, he suggests, consists in the *right* mixtures. As George Harvey argues, this indicates that there could not be *bad* or *wrong*, that is, counterfactual, mixtures:

[...] these states of pleasure and pain occur when the status of a living organism as a mixture is in some sense destroyed, so that in at least one important sense, a living creature that is sick or in some state of pain or pleasure is not a mixture.⁹²

Unseasonable pleasures, disease and adversity must, nonetheless, be granted some reality. Since they are deficiencies, excesses and states of disequilibrium, however, it is only fair that they be defined in terms of what is other than them: good mixtures characterized by health, temperance and harmonious activity. This is to say that they are not instantiations of self-dependence and do not accord with the true blending relations between Forms.⁹³ Thus, the pleasure of scratching oneself may only be understood in relation to a painful desire for restoring a harmonious bodily state, and, so, in relation to well-being. The pleasure of well-being, on the other hand, is a self-dependent one as far as sensuous things go: instead of striving beyond itself, it dwells and delights in itself. Well-being is an instantiation of the Good and the Beautiful in combination with the Forms responsible for the body's constitution.

None of this is to say that a sick dog or a man with the flu are not sensuous particulars. Rather, they cannot *by themselves* be defined as individually identifiable particulars. Their definition is always in relation to something other. Hence, they are *aspects* of genuine particulars *qua* good

⁹² Harvey (2009, p. 14).

⁹³ J. N. Findlay refers to these relations as 'true eidetic joints', see Findlay (1974b, p. 281).

mixtures rather than being the particular mixtures themselves. This is in accordance with the Bad and the Ugly being mere parasitic aspects of the really self-dependent individual Forms Good and Beauty. Or, as Harvey writes:

[...] critical to understanding what is *apeiron* [unlimited] is to observe that such a characterization may refer to certain aspects of a particular individual – having a fever, for example makes one aspect of Socrates *apeiron*; it does not mean that he is no longer a human being.⁹⁴

There are, in other words, *normative standards* for what the world can and ought to be.⁹⁵ These standards are 'imposed' by 'the highest' Reality, or by what, in the *Philebus*, is referred to as the Cause of the Mixture: the Craftsman-God. The divine Craftsman as pure knower of all reality – and human craftsmen as particular instantiations of divine craftsmanship and knowledge of Goodness, Beauty and Truth – might be said to 'make' reality as it is: good, beautiful and true. Truth is to be understood as an instantiation of the manner in which reality really is. That God 'makes' reality as it is, however, must not necessarily be interpreted as a causal statement vis-à-vis the Forms *qua* individuals. Unless we want to land in infinite regress, or, alternatively, abolish the Forms and make God the one and only reality, we should understand it so: God is such that reality is such.

The Divine Mind, perhaps, can also be understood as a Form. It is not, then, really, a Cause *of* the Mixture, but rather the *eminent* Form *in relation* to which *all* Forms must display themselves as both individual and relational, that is, as Mixtures of the Limited and the Unlimited. If the Forms did not relate to God, they could be discrete atoms, or, alternatively, mere appearances dissolving into relations indefinitely. God's benevolence and lack of jealousy, as understood in the *Timaeus*,⁹⁶ are compatible with the Forms' individual self-causation. This compatibility is what makes all reality, including sensuous instantiations, relationally *generous* – instead of general

⁹⁴ Harvey (2009, p. 17). Text in square brackets is mine.

⁹⁵ On this, see again Harvey (2009).

⁹⁶ For an excellent discussion of the Demiurge's lack of jealousy as a 'motive for creation', see e.g. Cornford (1997, pp. 33-9). See also Lovejoy (1936, p. 68).

– yet self-dependent: all in the image of God. This is so because all that is real relates to God: Forms by interblending, sensuous particulars by partaking of Forms. This metaphysics culminates in a sacred unitary vision of a cosmos within which Forms and their instantiations come together.

Conclusion

Our discussion of individuality, self-dependence, interblending and mixture across the realm of Forms and the physical world shows that Forms and particulars are not really distinct in terms of essence though they belong to different orders of reality (independent and dependent, respectively). Although there is a coherent theory of Forms *qua* self-caused individuals in Plato, these are not particulars. For, unlike the Forms, Plato's particulars are not simple: each of them reduces to many Forms instead of being fully identical with one coherent essence. Now we are led to believe that particulars are synonymous with Forms on the Aristotelian definition of synonymy – then that particulars are not real in the ultimate sense. Particularity *qua* particularity seems, in some sense, derealized. Partaking both of the Forms and of their bad Opposites – Platonic particulars, therefore, often appear to later metaphysicians to be no more than mere aspects of real individuals.

Adopting a different starting point – possibly in order to reverse this ostensible derealization of particularity – Aristotle takes a stride beyond the Platonic theory, by immanentizing forms to sensuous particulars. Yet, his theory of individuals' self-causation fares worse than Plato's in terms of logical coherence. We investigate the failings of this theory, while salvaging its successes, in our next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Aristotle's Self-Changing General Substances

The aim of this chapter is to examine Aristotle's substantialist metaphysics insofar as it can be understood as containing a theory of empirical particulars' self-causation. We contend that, although this theory may seem to go beyond the conception of *non-particular individuals'* logical self-causation implicit in Plato's metaphysics of Forms, it ultimately fares worse. While an Aristotelian particular substance is logically identical with its essence, rather than defined 'from without', it is not so *qua* particular or individual, but *qua* general. The reason for this is that all particular substances of the same kind are identical with the same general essence. Referring to Aristotelian substances as genuine individuals is, therefore, problematic.

While the theory of self-causation undergirding Aristotle's metaphysics succeeds as a theory of individuals' *logical* self-causation,¹ it fails as a theory of *individuals'* self-causation by falling into contradiction. Aristotle's possible term for 'self-causation' corresponds to Plato's: viz. καθ' αὐτὸ ('in virtue of itself'). As Theodore Scaltsas writes, Aristotle's "*kath' hauto* entities [...] [are] *self-caused*, meaning that they are what they are in virtue of themselves".² This notion is meant to "function as the very *denial* of the most fundamental presupposition of Plato's Theory of Forms, that a [sensuous particular] thing is what it is not in virtue of itself, but in virtue of participating (*metechein*) in a Form that gives it its being and substance".³

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle identifies several senses in which the expression 'in virtue of' can be used. One is "the form or substance of each thing, e.g. that in virtue of which a man is good is the good itself", another – "the proximate subject [i.e. the matter] in which an attribute is naturally

¹ On Aristotle's theory of substances as 'self-caused unities', see Scaltsas (2010, pp. 169-87).

² Scaltsas (2010, p. 170).

³ Scaltsas (2010, p. 170). Text in square brackets is mine.

found, e.g. colour in a surface”;⁴ there are still more meanings that constellate around the uses of the expression in everyday discourse. What is of special interest to us here is the use of the term vis-à-vis sensuous particulars *qua* logically self-caused. In one sense, it applies to “the essence of each thing”, e.g. “Callias is in virtue of himself Callias and the essence of Callias”.⁵ This is to say that Callias, *qua* sensuous individual, is identical with his essence – in being what he is in virtue of himself. In another sense, “Callias is in virtue of himself an animal”⁶ – meaning that Callias is, in virtue of his identity with the essence of Callias, also characterized not only by the species ‘man’, but by the genus ‘animal’ whereof his identity as *a* man makes him a member. In a third sense, Callias has his accidents, qualities, or whatever characteristics, in virtue of his identity as *a* man – just as “a man is alive in virtue of himself”.⁷

Finally, ‘in virtue of itself’ applies to “[t]hat which has no cause other than itself; man has more than one cause – animal, two-footed – but man is man in virtue of himself”.⁸ Also, an individual has, in virtue of itself, whatever belongs to it alone – e.g. attributes unique to it, say characteristics that one can have only *qua* man. Thus, for example, chickens, too, are two-footed, but man alone amongst animals has rationality. An individual such as ‘Callias’ is not, for Aristotle, uniquely individuated in terms of his form, defined as the specific *way* in which his matter is configured. Callias shares with all other men the form ‘man’, in virtue of which he is characterized by the species-essence ‘man’ as well as by the genus ‘animal’. So, it is the species-essence that is unique *qua* species-essence, not an essence of Callias *qua* **this** man. The essence of Callias, for Aristotle, is not ‘Callias-ness’, but ‘man’. So it is in virtue of being identical with the shareable essence ‘man’ that Callias is logically self-caused. He is *this* man Callias due to being numerically distinct from other men – yet, he is formally and specifically the same as them. It is

⁴ See *Metaphysics*, Book V (Δ) 1022a14-1022a24 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2. Text in square brackets is mine.

⁵ See *Metaphysics*, Book V (Δ) 1022a25-1022a36 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁶ See *Metaphysics*, Book V (Δ) 1022a25-1022a36 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁷ See *Metaphysics*, Book V (Δ) 1022a25-1022a36 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁸ See *Metaphysics*, Book V (Δ) 1022a25-1022a36 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

the essence 'man' that dictates the kind of attributes or qualities that Callias can have in virtue of being man – so, he has them *because* of the logically self-caused individual that he is. Hence, it is the form, and, derivatively, the species-essence, that motivate accidental changes within the individual. This means that the expression καθ' αὐτὸ ('in virtue of itself') concerns, as in Plato's metaphysics of forms, causes *qua* reasons, i.e. *qua* necessary and sufficient conditions for the individuality of the individual; *causa sui* is *ratio sui*. But, the individuals, this time, are sensuous particulars, not absolutely self-dependent Forms – and are self-caused *qua* general, not *qua* individual.

Unlike his teacher Plato – for whom interrelatedness between fundamental individuals, rather than generality, constitutes an integrated metaphysical reality – Aristotle harmonizes *empirical* reality through generality. By 'generality', we do not only mean what Aristotle understands as 'genus', i.e. that which can further be differentiated into 'species': e.g. Animal or Bird (both differentiable).⁹ For lack of a better word to designate what is common between particulars, we treat Aristotle's notion of 'species' – defined as that which cannot be further differentiated, e.g. Man – as general, too.

We investigate Aristotle's understanding of form as a basic eternal essence which allows empirical particulars such as rabbits to count as 'something-s', as well as of these particulars as compounds of matter and form. We attend, notably, to the relationship between matter and form (in the *Metaphysics*), with the aim of laying bare the structure of Aristotelian 'particularity'. In building this structure, Aristotle negotiates a number of key Platonic elements while at the same time creating a more empirically accessible metaphysical picture than Plato's.¹⁰ Unlike Plato, he thinks that natural things do reach their ends, and, thus, their highest good, *within* nature. It is true that, for Plato, too, physical things are as good as can be, for they partake of Beauty and the Good, and are "not incomplete, failed, aborted,

⁹ See e.g. *Parts of Animals*, Book I 645b21-645b27 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

¹⁰ For a discussion of Aristotle's philosophy as in harmony with Plato's, see Gerson (2005).

mutilated, worthless, or useless".¹¹ But they are only dependently real and their highest good is *really* in the realm of metaphysically independent Forms *qua* fundamental individuals.

Rejecting the independent reality of forms, Aristotle regards them as immanent to sensuous particulars.¹² This is not to say, however, that 'form' is merely empirical or that, being plainly interwoven with matter, it perishes when a particular does. While they are ontologically inseparable from particulars, Aristotelian forms are eternal and shared between particulars of the same kind, e.g. of the kind 'rabbit'. Although the particular perishes, the form lives on in the particular's progeny.¹³ A particular is, thus, numerically perishable while specifically eternal.

Understood as 'hylomorphic substances', i.e. as compounds of matter and form, particulars are brought to full actuality – to the best shape they can attain *in* nature – by forms. Without a form to actualize it, a parcel of matter could not be a particular. Being purely potential rather than an actual substance, it could not be referred to as a 'thing' at all. Unlike Aristotle's, Plato's Forms cannot be said to in any sense inflict change on matter by 'actualizing' it. Matter, for Plato, is absolutely opposed to the Forms and partakes of them by virtue of absolute non-partaking: by being the Forms' 'bad' Opposite. Its relationship to the plenitude of Forms is expressed through privation: in formlessness. Aristotle seemingly grants a more positive status to matter. While a Platonic Form is a self-dependent individual, an Aristotelian form is genuinely privy to individuality only through its conjunction with a numerically distinct parcel of matter.¹⁴

Seeing as the relationship between matter and form is one between the merely potential and the purely actual, empirical particulars are caught in a

¹¹ Johnson (2006, p. 82).

¹² See e.g. *Categories*, 2a35-2b7 – 2b23-2b28 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

¹³ See e.g. *On the Soul*, Book II 415a23-415b8 – 415b9-415b11 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

¹⁴ This is not to say that matter is the sole principle of individuation of sensuous particulars, but only that genuine individuality, for Aristotle, is solely possible via the conjunction of form with a numerically distinct parcel of matter. See Cohen (1984) for a defense of this view.

continual tension between potentiality and actuality. No particular is ever fully actual in all possible respects simultaneously; its potentiality and actuality are always 'mixed'. In order to attain a certain size, for example, a rabbit must go through a process of gathering food, of nourishment and growth – that is, a process of *self-change*. This self-change presupposes an enduring underlying substance that remains numerically one and the same despite qualitative and quantitative changes. Paradoxically, these changes take place *in order to* actualize – certain aspects of – this one and the same particular. The particular's identity is *conferred* to it by its form which, *qua* eternal, does not itself change. The numerically distinct parcel of matter of the particular also does not change *qua this* particular's, and is, therefore, also essential to this identity. But, it is only *this* particular's because of the conjunction with (and actualization by) the form. We argue that this understanding of self-change (self-actualization) is subtended by an incoherent combination of eternity (no-time) and finite endurance *in* time in the same particular. Change – the mark of persisting perishable things – is rendered *self-change* in virtue of an *eternal* form which motivates it. A form is also general with respect to particular things of the same kind. This is to say that, in virtue of *self-change* guided by form, a particular is subordinated to generality.

Being without form would derealize a thing and turn it into 'no-thing', whence form and matter are inextricably connected *in* a particular. Although form is what actualizes matter-*qua*-potential in the sense of making it possible for a particular to be referred to as one, this reference is not to the form itself, but to the *entire* compound of form and matter. In addition to enabling us to identify a particular and refer to it as a 'this-such' – matter organized in a certain *way* – 'form' conjoined with matter necessarily qualifies the particular for membership in a certain kind, say the species 'man'. Everything that is a 'this' is also a 'such' and a 'something'. It is impossible to be a 'particular something' without being 'something of a certain kind'. This might seem to mean that particularity-*qua*-particularity is exhausted by the numerical

distinctness provided by the parcel of matter actualized by form. Paradoxically, this numerical distinctness is only identifiable via matter's conjunction with form. While, considered by itself, the '*solo numero*' difference is empty of essence, a particular is essentially – identical with – the essence of its kind. Fully actualized particularity is, thus, ultimately general.

Through this move, the individual simplicity characteristic of Plato's absolutely self-dependent Forms is all but lost. To Aristotle's credit, his forms, too, are what they are in virtue of themselves – that is, logically self-caused – and do not, strictly speaking, have properties predicated of them; hence, they are also simple. It is forms that are predicated of the parcels of matter composing particulars, while the essence of a kind is predicated of the entire hylomorphic compound that a particular substance is. Yet, forms are inseparable from matter and cannot, therefore, be spoken of as simply independent. This is not to say that form is in any way *dependent* on matter: only that it cannot form a full-fledged particular without it. Being compounds of matter and form, these full-fledged particulars cannot be spoken of as truly simple although they are also meant as logically self-caused.

There is, however, a part of Aristotle's metaphysics of self-change that may be successful in emphasizing a particular's uniqueness *qua* particular. This is his theory of a particular's teleological self-actualization *qua* ensouled organism. The particular *qua* particular is ostensibly placed as the 'end' of the organism's self-actualization. The 'soul' – what Aristotle calls an 'entelechy' – is the form actualizing the particular's matter. Since this entelechy is a component of the particular, the particular in its entirety is *self*-actualizing. The self-actualization is based, however, on the incoherent conjunction of self-change with self-sustenance, and turns out to have the general, rather than the particular, as its end. There are various steps that take Aristotle to this unfortunate conclusion.¹⁵

He makes a promising distinction between: self-change for the sake of

¹⁵ This is not to say that Aristotle himself finds the conclusion problematic.

general states of affairs – e.g. divine orderliness of the kind present in Plato's realm of Forms – and self-change for the sake of the particular *qua* particular. Being guided by an eternal, unchanging form (entelechy) shared by all particulars of the same kind, however, self-change for the sake of the particular *qua* particular turns out to be for the sake of the particular *qua* general. This self-contradictory conclusion hangs on the particular's hylomorphic nature as a combination of the actual (form) and the potential (matter), of the active and the passive. This combination of contradictory elements is what motivates self-actualization *qua* self-change. Self-actualization is an *activity* through which the soul *qua* active actualizes matter *qua* passive.

While Aristotle does notice that nothing can be both active and passive, he limits this requirement to the temporary states and aspects of a persisting, self-sustaining particular: nothing can be both active and passive *in the same respect at the same time*. While the particular does not admit of contradictoriness in the same respect at the same time, it does sustain contradictions when considered *in its whole lifetime*. We may try to find a way out of the contradiction by looking for clues that Aristotle does not always treat actuality and potentiality as really distinct, but rather as two ways of treating the same particular. His metaphysics of potentiality and actuality gives indication that, once the necessary and sufficient conditions for a particular's having the full potentiality to become actual are fulfilled, the particular is instantly actualized. While this is an attractive way of dealing with the difficulty, it does not eliminate the incoherence of self-actualization's subordination to generality.

Aristotle takes pains, nonetheless, to distinguish particulars – *qua* logically self-caused – from entities that are not logically self-caused. Unfortunately, while making this distinction, he equates a particular's logical self-causation with the particular's role as an enduring 'substratum' of which qualities or properties can be predicated at different times and which can shed these qualities or properties without perishing. Thus, while the entity 'pale

man' perishes, a man that ceases to be pale does not perish *qua* man. The 'endurance' of man is, in turn, subtended by the eternity and generality of the form which qualifies the particular man for membership in the species 'man'.

With this broad argumentative structure in mind, we may proceed to flesh out the details of Aristotle's subordination of the particular to the general. This discussion has three 'moments': (i.) investigation of a living thing's ensouled self-change, (ii.) negotiation of the distinction between potentiality and actuality, and (iii.) examination of Aristotle's counterposition of enduring logically self-caused particulars to transient non-self-caused entities.

Aristotle's Self-Changing Living Things

Aristotle's discussion of teleologically self-changing, particular living things hinges on his subordination of the particular to the general. In order to change itself while remaining one and the same, a living particular must persist through time. Its endurance is enabled by the general form that qualifies it as a member of a kind: a 'something'. Becoming such a member involves the particular's teleological unfolding under the guidance of the form-entelechy. A living thing actualizes itself *qua* particular in virtue of final causes. Final causes are immanent to all animate beings, that is, animals and plants which, unlike inanimate things like stones and minerals, have, at a minimum, 'nutritive souls'.¹⁶ Here we trace out the relationship between this final causation and the particular's particularity and generality. We argue that, while Aristotle is at pains to stress that the particular *qua* particular is the end of its self-active efforts, his broader metaphysics of substance is presupposed by – and short-circuits – this emphasis.

The notion 'final cause' has several senses, though, as Monte R. Johnson

¹⁶ See *On the Soul*, Book II 415a23-415b8 – 415b9-415b11 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1. Animals have nutritive, sensuous and appetitive souls while humans have all these *and* rational souls. This is not to say that animals and men have more than one soul. The soul *qua* form is one, though it exhibits different 'ways' of organizing matter.

usefully expounds, it has two broad orientations: one is 'for the sake of which', the other 'for the sake of whom'.¹⁷ While the former concerns states of affairs, states of being or the way reality is or ought to be ('which': well-being, beauty, eternity) *qua* aims, the latter applies to particular beings ('whom': a plant, a man, a star) *qua* beneficiaries. An organism sustains itself and flourishes for the sake of divine order, the highest excellence, beauty, goodness or eternity ('for the sake of which'). A plant absorbs water and nutrients and regenerates itself for the sake of the nutritive soul that, together with a parcel of matter, makes the plant a particular ('for the sake of whom' – the plant *qua* ensouled). Some different, though related or analogous, senses of these distinct orientations exist, too. A builder builds a house for the sake of – the existence of much needed – shelter ('for the sake of which') as well as for the sake of the future occupants as beneficiaries of his labour who need the shelter ('for the sake of whom'). One performs bodily exercise for the sake of oneself *qua* beneficiary ('for the sake of whom') as well as for the sake of health ('for the sake of which').

Living things nourish themselves, grow and reproduce, and things like stones or water bodies are materially organized in the way they are, for the sake of divine orderliness.¹⁸ This orderliness is analogous to the state of health rather than to a beneficiary. The reason for this is that, being perfect, the divine could not in any way be benefited, if by 'benefit' we mean a 'change for the better'. While the person who exercises is benefited by the exercise, health is not, hence the analogy. The same can be said about final causes such as beauty and the good, both of which are expressed in divine orderliness. As the most perfect physical entities in Aristotle's cosmology, on the other hand, the stars have everlasting circular motion as their aim ('for the sake of which') as well as being the beneficiaries of this motion ('for the sake of whom'). In being bettered by their own activity, they are similar to plants, animals and

¹⁷ See Johnson (2006, pp. 64-80). See e.g. *On the Soul* in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1 for the original discourse.

¹⁸ For a discussion of Aristotle's concept of God as final cause, as well as of the relationship of the concept to Plato's 'kindred doctrine', see Forsyth (1947).

humans, but more excellent than them.¹⁹ 'For the sake of whom', then, applies broadly to a particular's self-actualization for the sake of the particular, while 'for the sake of which' expresses this self-actualization's directedness toward the all-encompassing orderliness of reality as a whole.²⁰

Living beings pursue their natural ends for the sake of the full immaterial actuality of God *qua* unchanged 'motivator' of change in particulars. In his *Metaphysics* – where he understands his project as theological – Aristotle insists that final causes cannot succeed each other indefinitely. Rather than arguing that eating is for the sake of walking, walking for the sake of health, health for the sake of happiness, and so on *ad infinitum*, we must posit a first principle: first and ultimate final cause.²¹ This 'cause' should be completely unchangeable and fully actual rather than striving and self-changing in the manner of particulars. This unqualified excellence is expressed in restful contemplation of what is utterly immaterial – thoughts. While the forms of particulars are souls actualizing parcels of matter according to the kind of self-actualizing living being, God's 'form' is 'thought' that eternally actualizes itself by being its own object of contemplation.²² Like the Platonic Forms, particularly the Form of the Divine Intellect, Aristotle's God must be an utterly simple and non-contradictory logically self-caused individual.

However, Aristotle's sensuous particulars can have themselves as the final cause of their activities, too. Plants, for instance, are the beneficiaries of their own growth, animals the beneficiaries of the satisfaction of their appetites, humans the beneficiaries of their agriculture, craftsmanship and philosophy, and so on. Such a reading, as supported by Johnson,²³ runs counter to those offered by Aquinas²⁴ and David Sedley,²⁵ who interpret

¹⁹ See e.g. *On the Heavens*, Book II 292a14-292b24 – 292b25-293a11 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

²⁰ See e.g. Johnson (2006, pp. 64-73) for an extended discussion of this.

²¹ See *Metaphysics*, Book II (α) 994a1-994a19 – 994a20-994b6 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

²² See *Metaphysics*, Book XII (Λ) 1072b31-1695 – 1073a3-1695 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

²³ See Johnson (2006, p. 80).

²⁴ Aquinas' reading of Aristotle's teleology can be found in: Aquinas (1963, 1999). A refutation of Aquinas' reading can be found in Johnson (2006, pp. 79-80).

²⁵ See Sedley (1991).

Aristotle as saying that *all* organisms eaten by humans, that is, plants and animals, exist, thus, for the sake of man *qua* the ultimate beneficiary.

It is tempting to think of a way of mediating between the argument in favour of 'individual – self-benefiting – teleology' and the one in favour of 'anthropocentric – man-benefiting – teleology' or 'hierarchical teleology'. We may contend that an individual organism's self-oriented growth and flourishing can have a further final cause reaching beyond the individual organism to other individuals of other kinds. More than this, many further final causes along the teleological hierarchy, and, finally, an ultimate final cause in divine orderliness, may be thought of as supervening on the initial self-orientation. Thus, the conflict of views may be resolved by means of accepting that Aristotle's teleology can be regarded as 'local' and 'global' at once. Without such mediation, it might seem hard to understand in precisely what way different particulars can pursue their natural ends for the sake of the ultimate harmony actualized by a divine final cause. Characterizing a particular's teleological orientation as both 'local' and 'global', however, seems rather vague.

Aristotle's sublunary world is made of individual living things from which forms are inseparable.²⁶ Due to the materiality of particulars, simple interblending between them which would ensure the simultaneous 'globality' and 'locality' is not possible. For there to be an integrated, harmonious actual world, however, there must be some kind of relatedness. Since Aristotle's particular living things become what they are through teleological self-actualization, it would make sense for their individual teleologies to be somehow interlinked. Johnson's reading is that living things, say plants, are *necessarily* the sole beneficiaries of their actions ('for the sake of whom') although they can *incidentally* be used for the sake of human craft, say agriculture ('for the sake of which'), thus benefiting man ('for the sake of

²⁶ There are also inanimate things, which – being mere matter – cannot truly be spoken of as substances.

whom').²⁷ We may add that, while a plant might, indeed, incidentally benefit humans without naturally having a man as its beneficiary, the use of the plant for nourishment is a *necessary* part of the man's own teleological process of benefitting himself. Rather than issuing from the plant's self-actualization, this necessity issues from the man's self-actualization. 'Man' *qua* beneficiary should, indeed, not be seen as the final cause belonging to a plant from the outset.²⁸ Relatedness between Aristotle's particulars of different kinds is, then, *asymmetrical*.

In an important sense, any organism that is its own beneficiary is identical with itself, that is, with its own essence. Insofar as Aristotle treats a particular's teleological orientation as self-change, however, its self-causation *qua* particular is incoherent. For there to be self-change, there must be an enduring underlying substance which is able, at a later moment, to become what it presently is not. This is to say that something, say a brown rabbit *b*, is able to become a white rabbit not-*b*, or vice versa. When considered in its full lifetime, the thing should possess contrary qualities without having changed its identity or ceased to be logically self-caused, that is, identical with its (unchanged) essence. Its particularity, then, seems elusive, for all that is always 'one and the same' in it is, in fact, its general essence. The particular living being has sustained itself through nourishment – eating living beings other than it – and survived qualitative and quantitative change in the process. This presupposes a metaphysics of time according to which eternity and finite endurance *in* time dwell together. The ultimately perishable survives many deaths – of its qualities and states, as well as of some of its matter *qua* *its* matter²⁹ – in virtue of its eternal essence. The individual is sustained not by the eternity of its individuality, but by that of the generality it instantiates. The only escape from this conundrum would seem to be a return to pure Platonic

²⁷ See Johnson (2006, p. 80).

²⁸ This is similar to Mariska Leunissen's formulation of a "distinction between primary and secondary teleology" in Leunissen (2010, pp. 40-47).

²⁹ Matter does not perish in an unqualified way, but only as the matter of *this* particular. A man's body does not perish unqualifiedly as matter, but only as the body of *this* man.

Forms as the *only* real individuals.³⁰ Aristotle's particulars turn out to be little more than the kinds they belong to.

The aim of an Aristotelian particular is not to self-actualize *qua* individual but *qua* generality. The sprouting tulip root aims to become as good and beautiful a tulip as a tulip *generally* can. Its final cause is a 'tulip generality', not itself *qua* particular. Then, even though an Aristotelian notion of self-causation as a substance's being 'what' it is (essence) in virtue of 'how' it is (form) agrees with a coherent understanding of particularity, it fails insofar as the 'how' and the 'what' are general. This teleological generality is also a requirement imposed by reality, since rational limit is needed for actions to take place at all.³¹ If there were no such limit to what the tulip could become, its nourishment and growth would be unintelligible.

Generality, for Aristotle, must be the basis of relatedness between particulars of the same kind. Socrates, Plato and Gorgias are related in virtue of having the same essence 'man'. The form 'man' can be maintained in self-actualization through nourishment and growth, appetite and ratiocination, as well as passed on to a numerically distinct individual through reproduction. Why this should be so seems mysterious, since the form is eternal and logically self-dependent. It seems, then, that the general identity of a persisting particular remains intact *despite* the qualitative and quantitative changes inflicted by growth, nourishment or ratiocination, rather than because of them. This is especially evident in Aristotle's insistence, in the *Physics*, that nothing can come to be a thing of a certain kind from another thing of the same kind – say, dog from dog, and animal from animal – since the kind is always already there. Equally, an animal cannot become such from something that is *not* animal, for that would mean that it should come to be *qua* what is not (yet) animal. And it is impossible for something that is unqualifiedly *not*

³⁰ For a discussion of Aristotle's reasoning concerning 'self-dependent terms', with reference to Plato's self-dependent Forms, see Lewis (2013).

³¹ For a discussion of the ethical significance of Aristotle's 'limit' (*horos*) in relation to the highest good, see Peterson (1988). Since our focus is broadly metaphysical, we set the specifically ethical aside.

a thing of a certain kind to become a thing of that kind. A numerically distinct parcel of matter in the dog's progeny comes to be dog from dog only accidentally: in the sense that it so happens that an eternal form is conjoined with a numerically distinct parcel of matter qualifying the new hylomorphic particular for membership in the species 'dog'. Although the conjunction between a specific form with a specific kind of matter is not accidental, the form's coming to be an element of *this* particular dog is. It comes to be such *only as part of* the empirical particular, for the form's nature is eternal and cannot unqualifiedly come to be.³²

The case is different for a man's coming to be white or musical: that is, his qualified becoming. A musical man must come to be from something that is *not* musical rather than from what is man or what is not man. Unlike musical man and non-musical or unmusical man (which are not always already musical, non-musical or unmusical), man is always already man, because a man is an essentially unchangeable substance. Aristotle goes on to hint that this is so because "the same things can be spoken of in terms of potentiality and actuality".³³ The non-musical is not *a* thing, that is, a particular: hence, it is not potentially musical, but just that – non-musical. A man that is non-musical, on the other hand, *is* potentially musical, for 'man' underlies and survives qualitative changes. 'Man' can be spoken of in terms of potentiality and actuality: the embryo – or the baby boy – *is* man, though not in full actuality. Its final cause – the full actuality of – 'man' is attained *through* and *despite* (self-) change.

A question arises, also, as to the sense in which we can refer to a thing-becoming-actual as *changing itself* toward attaining its final cause. Being eternal, its form does not change, which means that what is changed must be the substance's material component and that matter must be changed by form. If there is such a 'division' into 'changer' and 'changed', are we still justified in referring to the substance as *self-changing*? If we are not, Aristotle's

³² See e.g. *Physics*, Book I 191b18-191b26 – 191b27-191b27 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

³³ See *Physics*, Book I 191b28-191b29 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

account of a particular's teleological unfolding should not be incoherent. Furthermore, it may be that the form does not change a particular's matter spontaneously; rather, the particular may change under external influences. This would undermine self-change and teleologically realized self-causation.

In Book VII of the *Physics*, Aristotle argues that everything that is moved is moved by something,³⁴ self-motion being a special case of this.³⁵ He thinks that there are three types of motion: locomotion (change of place), qualitative change (affection of substance) and quantitative change (increase or decrease).³⁶ Everlastingly moving things like the heavenly bodies are self-moving only in terms of their rotatory locomotion. Plants have locomotion only insofar as their growth constitutes a change of place. Animals acquire the ability for locomotion only after qualitatively and quantitatively changing themselves.³⁷

Be that as it may, in Book VIII of the *Physics*, Aristotle appears to suggest that animals – or living things more generally – may not be genuinely self-moved, but, rather, moved by things in their environment.³⁸ If a thing is moved by something other than itself, it must be passive in some respect, and nothing can be simultaneously active and passive in the same respect. If a particular rabbit is increased in size due to eating a large amount of grains, it cannot have inflicted that change upon itself: rather, the grains inflicted it. The rabbit is passive in relation to the grains, while the grains are active with respect to the rabbit: they causally determine it to desire them, eat them and increase in size. How can it be, then, that the rabbit actualizes *itself* through nourishment and growth if it cannot be at once active and passive, but, rather, only passive? Susan S. Meyer claims to successfully solve this difficulty by appealing to a Stoic distinction between causes:

³⁴ See *Physics*, Book VII 241b33-242a49 – 250b4-250b9 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

³⁵ See *Physics*, Book VIII 256a4-256a21 – 256b3-256b12 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

³⁶ See *Physics*, Book VII 243a32-243a9 – 243a10-244a6 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

³⁷ See *Physics*, Book VIII 260b29-261a12 – 261b27-263a3 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

³⁸ See *Physics*, Book VIII 253a8-253a21 – 253a22-253a32, 259a20-259b31 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1. This is discussed in Freeland (1994), Furley (1994), Gill (1994) and Meyer (1994).

In response to the claim that external stimuli cause our actions in a way that makes our actions not up to us, the Stoic Chrysippus drew a distinction between two types of cause. There are, on the one hand, he claimed, “perfect and principal” causes, and on the other hand, “auxiliary” causes. The external stimulus that “makes” the agent have a particular occurrent desire is only the auxiliary cause of his action, whereas the agent is the perfect and principal cause.³⁹

Meyer asserts that, in virtue of making a similar distinction between ‘intrinsic’ and ‘accidental’ causes, Aristotle holds that a particular cannot be made to act by external factors, except accidentally. This is to say that the rabbit would not be ‘made’ to want and eat the grain – and to increase in size – if it were not directed by itself *qua* beneficiary of the act of eating and growing. The *intrinsic* active element is, then, the rabbit’s appetitive soul, rather than the grain, while the passive element is the rabbit’s actualizable matter. It is the entire hylomorphic particular that is, thus, changed in *some* respect, while the soul is not changed, except accidentally, i.e. *as part of* the particular. Hence, the particular is, indeed, both active and passive when considered over its whole lifetime, though never in the same respect at the same time.⁴⁰ Although this explanation lends some coherence to Aristotle’s notion of self-change, the notion is still compromised by its presupposing an enduring particular ultimately subsumed under generality.

There is something worrisome, furthermore, in the notion of final cause. That is its unusual meaning as the thing’s highest good, completion, functionality, or fineness, rather than what we would ordinarily assume is contained in the notion of ‘finality’, say, a literal end such as death. Death, for Aristotle, is not the final cause of life. Living organisms are, rather, their own final causes as well as striving toward the final cause of divine creation and eternity. The worry lies in the fact that many things in nature do not, in that sense, attain their final cause *qua* highest good, for they may degenerate or

³⁹ Meyer (1994, p. 76).

⁴⁰ Follow Aristotle’s detailed argument in *Physics*, Book VIII 257a32-258a25 – 258a26-258b3 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

die prematurely.⁴¹ This is the reason why so much hangs on the notions of capacity and potentiality rather than merely on actuality.

It is only the divine – the Unchanged Changer, God – that is pure actuality. A particular is always a mixture of potentiality and actuality. Even if a particular will in the future be nipped in the bud and, thus, prevented from reaching its full actuality, it still has, in potentiality, the final causes that it does: the capacity or power to become actual. This may again be due to the security that instantiating a generality – and persisting in virtue of it – provides. If the generality of ‘kind’, as well as the form in virtue of which a particular belongs to a ‘kind’, are eternal and unchangeable, it is always matter *qua* potential that changes.

This change can be understood as a kind of ‘activity’. In being the ‘motivator’ of this activity, the form-entelechy is also the active element of the hylomorphic particular. *Qua* real component of the particular, however, the matter must, despite being potential and passive, contribute toward the sum of necessary and sufficient conditions for the particular’s being a ‘this-something’. We must engage in further analysis of the interplay between potentiality and actuality, between the active and the passive, in order to determine what this contribution may constitute.

Seeing as conjunction with matter proffers the particular’s individuality, matter may be able to salvage – some of – the particular *qua* particular. But, since, *qua* unsubordinated by generality, this individuality is exhausted by the numerical distinctness of a particular, a more plausible suggestion is that matter *qua* potentiality does not contribute anything really distinct from actuality. Rather, matter *qua* potential and form *qua* actual ‘abstract’ from the substance *qua* whole. Self-actualization would, then, no longer be self-change over a stretch of time, and the criteria for a particular’s coherent self-causation would be closer to being fulfilled. Though it would not save Aristotle from the problem of generality, this possibility is worth exploring.

⁴¹ This is what makes George Santayana suspicious of the notion of final cause. See e.g. Santayana (2009, p. 188-97).

Actuality and Potentiality, the Active and the Passive

What is usually translated as 'actuality' is Aristotle's term *energeia*, also translatable as 'activity' or 'being-in-actuality'; what is conventionally translated as 'potentiality' is the term *dunamis*, also translatable as 'power', 'capacity', 'being-in-capacity'.⁴² As Jonathan Beere is at pains to show, however, Aristotle's term *energeia* is an unusual word which, unlike *dunamis*, was not in ordinary use, and cannot be straightforwardly translated as 'actuality' and 'activity' – terms that are not always interchangeable.⁴³ It is often translated as 'actuality' simply because that seems to be the proper correlate of 'potentiality'. Yet, it is hard to grasp the distinction between 'actuality' and 'activity' that Beere outlines in dialogue with other commentators negotiating the difficulty:

[...] In some cases, things are *actually* active, but, in other cases, they are *potentially* active. Things are not only actually *active*, but also actually inactive and inert, actually in possession of powers and capacities, or actually in possession of properties that have nothing to do with activity.⁴⁴

Seeing as Aristotle understands form as that which actualizes a particular's matter and motivates the particular's self-change,⁴⁵ it is difficult to conceive of 'actuality' and 'activity' as separate. Aristotle sees actuality as logically prior to potentiality – there can be no acorn without an oak – meaning that actuality is both a starting point and a final point to which potentiality 'reduces'. This 'reduction' means that, although much lies in potentiality, e.g. the musicality or ruddiness or health of a presently non-musical, pale or sickly man, not all of these potentialities will be actualized. 'Actualization' can be understood as an 'activity' of – or as the 'active exercise' of a capacity for – becoming a certain way: actually musical, ruddy or healthy. A man can begin

⁴² For a discussion of this thematic, see e.g. Beere (2009) and Johansen (2012). With reference to human actions in particular, see Kühl (2008).

⁴³ See Beere (2009, pp. 155-67).

⁴⁴ Beere (2009, p. 159).

⁴⁵ There are, nonetheless, activities actualizing capacities, such as contemplation (thought) *qua* actualizing the capacity for thought, which do not necessarily involve a change or a self-change. See e.g. Beere (2009, p. 170).

to actualize his musical potential by actively exercising his capacity for becoming (and being) musical. He may actualize his potential for ruddiness by actively adopting an iron-rich diet.

There may, indeed, be different senses in which the terms 'actuality' and 'activity' apply to particulars, their states and their actions. Nonetheless, a particular's being actual in terms of its general form or of any changeable aspect of its being, say its size or qualities, presupposes *an activity* through which this actuality was – or is being – attained. Saying that something is actually inactive but potentially active in some respect or other is as good as saying that it has some capacity for engaging in an activity that *brings about* a certain actuality. That this capacity is actual when no activity is present adds nothing to its status *as* capacity *for* actualizing a certain activity, quality or state of being. Furthermore, we must be attentive to the *respect* in which anything is said to be actual or active. A man's general form 'man' has always been actual, but there is an *activity* leading up to the full actualization of *this* particular man. The conjunction of the form 'man' with a numerically distinct parcel of matter is preceded by reproductive *activity*.

A chemical substance might be thought of as potentially active if it is known that, though inert and stable now, the substance would get activated if it came into contact with some other substance. Its activity is, thus, conditional. The substance might be said to have the actual powers to act even while being actually inactive. But is it rather not the case that things are actually active at the same time as they are potentially active? They would not be actually active if they did not have the capacity for activity, and a capacity cannot be said to disappear upon its being exercised.⁴⁶ A thing is in possession of powers or capacities at the same time as it exercises them.

It may be possible, in other words, to think of *energeia* as the 'other side' of *dunamis*. In this way, *dunamis* and *energeia* are two different ways in which anything can be said to be alive, active, functional or present. It is only

⁴⁶ See e.g. Beere (2009, p. 173) for a discussion of this.

substances which already have the capacity or power to be or act in a certain way that will actually be or act so. In this sense, power and actuality, or power and the active exercise of a capacity, do not, strictly speaking, succeed each other in time. Rather, they appear to co-exist and to be inextricably tied.⁴⁷ We only classify the sleeping man as 'living' because of knowing him to have the capacity to live an active life: that is, exercise the virtues, fulfil his civic obligations, and so on. His previously having been active determines our recognition of him as having, even in his state of inactivity, the power to act. Here, 'activity' can unproblematically be understood as the 'actual' exercise of a capacity or power. We would hesitate to classify the sleeping man as living if we knew him to have been comatose since birth, that is, inactive throughout his existence.

That said, Aristotle does think that it is possible for a thing to actually have certain capacities or potentialities at one time and actually exercise them at another.⁴⁸ This is the reason why the notion of *dunamis* is necessary, though not sufficient, for a thing's having a final cause. While the thing needs to have some actuality – *energeia* – in order to count as a thing defined by an essence in the first place, it may fail to attain its 'full actuality'. This failure is understood as such due to the thing's having a much greater capacity than is actualized. Had it not the capacity to succeed, it would certainly not be understood as failing to do so. Thus, a bud in the process of flowering could be crushed in a violent storm, making its full actuality impossible although the bud had the power for such fullness, a power actualizable *in ideal conditions*.

There is plenty of suggestion, still, in the direction of an argument *for* the inseparability of potentiality from actuality, of genuine capacity from its active exercise. If such inseparability is the case, a particular's self-actualization need no longer be understood as self-change. *If* this suggestion

⁴⁷ For some hints in this direction, see e.g. Beere (2009, p. 164-66).

⁴⁸ See e.g. *Metaphysics*, Book IX (Θ) 1046b29-1046b33 – 1047a30-1047b2 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2. See also e.g. Beere (2009, p. 170-4) for a discussion of the (in)compatibility between actuality and potentiality.

is taken on board, Aristotle's theory of self-actualization can be interpreted as pointing in the direction of a coherent notion of particulars' self-causation. In partial⁴⁹ support of such a proposal, Zev Bechler highlights the notion of 'genuine potentiality' which he defines as the state which provides all the necessary conditions for a thing's becoming actual, thus being essentially indistinguishable from the thing's actuality. This refers back to the notion of logical self-causation as a particular's providing the necessary and sufficient conditions for what it is. If a state provides *all* the necessary conditions for a thing's becoming actual, the sufficient condition can be provided simply by the thing's actually becoming actual. If the particular is internally prepared and the external conditions are right, there is nothing to prevent this becoming-actual. To this effect, Bechler writes:

[...] First genuine potentiality and its actuality are in fact one and the same state. [...] genuine potentiality transforms into its actuality by logical necessity, since to say "it transforms into" and to say "it is one with" is to say the same thing. Consequently, corresponding to the last or end-potentiality there is a "first actuality", and they are identical.

[...] Since when all the necessary conditions exist the potentiality must actualize at once, this demand entails the disappearance of the genuine potentiality at the moment of its creation; that is to say, it entails its nonexistence for any time point. Consequently, genuine potentiality cannot possibly exist for any finite interval of time, and is identical with its ensuing (or first) actuality. **Genuine potentiality does not denote a real entity, state, or condition distinct from the ensued actuality.**⁵⁰

This is to say that the transformation from potentiality to actuality takes place with logical necessity and involves nothing beyond the particular itself. This meets our criteria for logical self-causation as a particular's being explained by nothing beyond itself. In this sense, thinking of potentialities as temporally preceding the actualities into which they will be transformed, may, indeed, be misconceived. Potentiality's 'saturation' – what Bechler refers to as 'potentiality-end' – corresponds, in fact, to the 'entrance' into actuality. The transformation being logical through and through, it would be logically

⁴⁹ The support is 'partial' because not all potentiality is what Bechler conceives of as 'genuine potentiality' or 'potentiality-end' and not all actuality is 'first actuality'. See Bechler (1995, pp. 17-8).

⁵⁰ Bechler (1995, pp. 17-8). Highlight in bold is mine.

contradictory for all the necessary conditions constituting a certain potentiality to be genuinely fulfilled without this issuing in actualization: an issuing that results in the particular's proffering necessary *and* sufficient conditions for its own actuality. In this sense, there is no finite stretch of time, prior to, or beyond, the actuality, in which potentiality, in its full logical fulfilment *qua* genuinely actualizable potentiality, could be said to exist. Then, the 'ideal conditions' that would have been needed, in our 'flower bud' example, for genuine potentiality to be attained, may be considered as part of the sum of logically necessary conditions for actualization.⁵¹

Unfortunately, none of this removes the problem of generality. Rather, we are referred back to a conception of logical self-causation inherited from Plato. By seemingly granting a more positive status to physical particulars, Aristotle intends to dissolve the apparent trouble inherent in a Platonic positing of metaphysically independent real essences and their dependently real instances. Although general essences, for Aristotle, define individuals in a crucial way, their reality is inseparable from that of particular hylomorphic compounds. Though Aristotelian particulars are meant to be irreducibly unique in their numerical distinctness from one another, however, they are hardly simple or unique in essence. Instead, they are subjects whereof general essences are predicated, and hylomorphic composites wherein non-particulars can be instantiated.⁵²

Aristotle is sorely aware, nonetheless, of the need to articulate a conception of particular substance as simple, that is, as logically self-caused. To this end, he counterposes complex entities non-identical with their essences to logically self-caused particulars, in much the same way Plato opposes sensuous particulars to Forms. This counterposition also reveals

⁵¹ Aristotle explains that the lack of external hindrances is already implied in the notion of potentiality, for it is a potentiality for actualization *in the appropriate conditions*. See *Metaphysics*, Book IX (Θ) 1048a1-1048a24 – 1048a25-1048b9 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁵² Debates concerning the status of non-substantial individuals (non-particulars) are as extensive as they are heated. For a synoptic view of the different positions, in addition to an original argument, see e.g. Cohen (2013). For a detailed account of substance and non-substantial individuals, see Wedin (2002).

some crucial elements of Aristotle's treatment of self-causation and relatedness. The details of this must now be addressed.

Simple Individuals' Self-Causation

Aristotle's counterposition of logically self-caused substances to non-self-caused entities is, in effect, an opposition between enduring substances and transient particulars. While the former are genuine unities whose kind, e.g. the species rabbit, fully determines what they are in virtue of the eternal form that organizes their matter, the latter are mere aspects of these unities. While a 'rabbit' is an enduring, self-caused substance, a 'white rabbit' is transient, for the rabbit may cease to be white without ceasing to be a rabbit. This seems puzzling, for an enduring substance is also perishable. Yet, 'rabbit' never goes into absolute non-being, for it is specifically eternal. Aristotle's efforts to distinguish the simple, self-caused particulars from complex non-self-caused entities – like his efforts to emphasize the particular as beneficiary of its own activity – result in his subsuming these particulars under generality.

An example of an entity that is not logically self-caused is a particular pale man: a man that has the quality of pallor. The essence of a pale man should contain within itself, apart from the essence of 'man', the essence of pallor. But a pale man is only accidentally pale: he could become tanned or rosy-cheeked without ceasing to be man. This is to say that the particular pale man is only accidentally, rather than essentially, united with the quality of pallor. Then, he is, rather, identical in essence with a particular man. A particular man is, however, identical with the general essence 'man' and, is in virtue of that, logically self-caused. Hence, a particular pale man is not identical with the essence 'pale man' which must combine the essence of man with the essence of pallor. If 'pale man' were identical with the essence of 'pale man', the essence of man and the essence of pale man would be the same, which is absurd. This is one of the various reconstructions of Aristotle's

well-known argument from *Metaphysics Z*,⁵³ and can be understood as a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*.⁵⁴

The argument can extend toward a further one. A musical man is not identical with the essence of 'musical man', for musicality would need to be part of that essence. A musical man is, rather, identical in essence with a man as well as with the essence of 'man'. Therefore, a musical man and a pale man are identical in essence. That these identities are solely accidental follows from the fact that 'pale man' and 'musical man' are accidental unities or what Gareth Matthews refers to as 'kooky objects'.⁵⁵ A pale man may cease to be pale, and then it would be ridiculous to treat a man that is still musical, but no longer pale, as identical with a pale man that no longer exists. In relation to this, Matthews writes:

In this context 'the non-musical' is the not-musical *person* (rather than nonmusicality) and 'the unmusical' is the unmusical person. What Aristotle is telling us is that, when the man becomes musical, the man survives but each of these kooky objects perishes:

the not-musical (one)
the unmusical (one)
the unmusical man

The implications of this doctrine are staggering. When the man rises, the seated man ceases to be; when the woman awakens, the sleeping woman passes away; when the baby cries, the silent baby perishes.⁵⁶

To make a long story short, all this is to say that Aristotle understands self-caused particulars as the only enduring non-accidental unities. A pale man and a musical man are, thus, only accidentally identical with a man, because all that is enduring about a pale man and a musical man is man. In implicating that the seated man or the silent baby perish as soon as the man rises or the baby begins to cry, Aristotle comes closer to a coherent account of transient

⁵³ See *Metaphysics* Book VII (Z) 1029b23-1030a17 – 1030a18-1030a26 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁵⁴ For a detailed discussion of this argument, see e.g. Dahl (1997).

⁵⁵ See Matthews (1982, pp. 224-5).

⁵⁶ Matthews (1982, p. 225). On the topic of sameness, identity and accidental sameness, see also Lewis (1982) and Pelletier (1979). The original discussion can be found in: *Physics*, Book I 189b34-190a4 – 190a32-190a33 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1.

particulars, yet remains reasonably distant in holding that a man and a baby endure nonetheless. In being perishable, his 'kooky objects' lack the ontological weight of enduring, self-caused particulars. Otherwise, it would be redundant to assert that a seated and a standing man are only accidentally identical, for, if considered as distinct real particulars characterized by unique essences, they should not be identical at all. Yet, in Plato's footsteps, Aristotle demands *simplicity* for self-caused substances. A seated man and a silent baby are far too complex, on his construal, to be identical with their essences.

While 'man' may be numerically one *qua* essence, the individuals it characterizes are truly numerically distinct from one another. Pallor, when accidentally united with man, is a non-substantial individual, that is, a non-particular rather than a particular substance. This is because a particular substance can never be predicated of anything else. At the same time, 'pallor' is also possessed of a kind of generality in that it can attach to – or inhere in – many individual substances without itself being a substance. But – unlike general essences of kinds such as 'man' – 'pallor', like 'beauty', can apply to things homonymously instead of synonymously. While Socrates cannot be more 'man' than Plato, he can be paler or less beautiful than him.

All this runs counter to interpretations according to which substantial forms are, in fact, particulars, that is, unique essences.⁵⁷ On the 'particular-essence' construal, to each particular man belongs a substantial form numerically distinct from the substantial forms belonging to other particular members of the species 'man'. The only way that would be possible is if the forms actualizing the matter of particulars of the same kind – say, horses – were referred to – as 'horse' – homonymously. This would mean that to each name 'horse' corresponds a distinct essence and that these distinct 'horse' essences somehow still manage to qualify the particular horses for membership in the species 'horse'. This seems implausible.

⁵⁷ Such interpretations can be found, for instance, in Frede (1987, pp. 49-80), Frede & Patzig (1988), Hartman (1977, pp. 57-87), Irwin (1988, pp. 217-19), Lloyd (1981), Owens (1957, pp. 223-7), Sellars (1957) and Witt (1989, pp. 143-79). For a refutation of these, see e.g. Loux (2008, pp. 197-235).

The 'particular-essence' interpretations aim to resolve the puzzle of the apparent incompatibility of the claim that a single form is the 'substance-actuality' of all members of a species with the requirement that general essences of particulars not be substances (because, unlike general essences, substances are not predicable of anything). Without resorting to particular essences, Michael J. Loux claims to resolve this puzzle – it seems to us, successfully – by teasing out the distinction between 'species-predication' and 'form-predication'.⁵⁸ Proffering the essence of the species to which a particular belongs and displaying the particular's 'what', species-predication is *essential predication*. Predicating form of parcels of matter, thus showing their *how*, form-predication, on the other hand, is *accidental predication*. Although form qualifies the hylomorphic particular for essential predication, it is not really a subject of predication, for it is predicated of matter – i.e. matter is such a subject. Form is, in a word, not a general essence (predicable) *of* a whole hylomorphic particular, but a general essence *predicable of matter* with the aim of qualifying this particular for its species-essence. Considered by itself, Aristotelian form is, like a Platonic Form, logically self-caused in that it is (logically identical) with its own essence. However, forms, for Aristotle, are not to be considered as ontologically independent of matter or as metaphysically independent of sensuous particulars more generally.

But, could it not be that *what* a thing is (essential predication) and *how* it is (accidental predication) amount to the same thing? For, ultimately, a substance is *what* it is – the essence corresponding to the species it is a member of – in virtue of (i.e. *because of*) *how* it is, that is, of its form. To the extent that this is so, the substance is logically self-caused. This particular horse is *what* it is, essentially a member of the species 'horse', *because* this flesh, these bones, these hooves, these neighing sounds, *are* a horse: they are a certain way, a *how*, a form. Form is predicated of matter-*qua*-subject, *wherefore* species can be predicated of the hylomorphic-particular-*qua*-

⁵⁸ See Loux (2008, pp. 147-274).

subject: a certain horse.⁵⁹

Form-predication is accidental *not* because matter could be arranged in a different way than it is – e.g. in a particular horse – were there to be a different formal cause for its arrangement. Rather, what kind of matter it will be joined into a compound with is not the sort of ‘information’ – if we may call it that – stored in the essence of a form. The particular only arises after form and matter – together – *become* a particular substance whose essence will be given by a species, *not merely by the form corresponding to the species*. Species-predication is, therefore, *essential*, for, once a substance is determined in virtue of a form bound with a kind of matter in a particular compound, it could not be anything else than it is in terms of its membership in a species. The species contains within its essence ‘information’ of the *whole* hylomorphic compound. An explanandum such as ‘A man is a man’ – that is, a certain man is a member of the human species – is explained via an explanans of the kind ‘A body is a man’ – that is, matter is organized in a certain way. This kind of explanation differs prominently from a circular explanation such as ‘The Form Man Itself is identical with its essence, and its essence is the Form Man Itself’. Something particular – a certain man – is explained *qua general* in virtue of the predication of yet another general essence – a form – of its matter.

It is worth emphasizing that the particular substance ‘a certain man’ is not, in fact, simply the general essence, or species, ‘man’, shared by many particular men, but an *instantiation* of it. Be that as it may, the essence and the instantiation are logically identical, for the essence is, in a sense, immanent in the particular by being what the particular truly is. Further, it is *because* of the form ‘horse’ that this logical identity is possible and exists. In that sense – as Loux aims to show – in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (*Z* and *H*), a form-essence such as ‘horse’ *is* the primary substance – while the species-essence ‘horse’ characterizing the entire hylomorphic particular ‘*this* horse’ is

⁵⁹ See e.g. Loux (2008, p. 151-5) for a discussion of this.

derivative (a secondary substance).⁶⁰ This is confusing. Clearly, the particular horse thus derived is a perishable being while the kind 'horse', as well as the form 'horse' independently of the matter it joins, live on in other – numerically distinct while specifically the same – individuals.

Further, a particular horse is a composite of matter and form, where it is the form that actualizes the matter into a full-fledged particular; else, matter would always be mere potentiality. While matter *is*, in an unqualified sense, imperishable in that it never vanishes into nothingness, matter's becoming *this* or *that* – *such and such* a – particular is completely dependent on form. *Qua* what actualizes the particular – and *qua* really simple and imperishable – form is, indeed, then, the primary substance. This thesis issues, according to Loux, from Aristotle's efforts, in the *Metaphysics* (Z and H), to ground the earlier scheme of 'familiar particulars' and 'species'⁶¹ from the *Categories* in the fundament of form's predicative tie to matter.⁶² Loux formulates the thesis thus:

Both the idea that universals expressing essences deserve status as primary *ousiai* [substances] and the idea that as hylomorphic composites familiar particulars cannot be ontologically fundamental⁶³ function as constraints on the theory Aristotle develops in his attempt to answer anew the question, Which things are the primary *ousiai*? Indeed, the convergence of these two ideas results in the central thesis of that theory, the thesis that it is the substantial forms of ordinary subjects that are the primary *ousiai*.⁶⁴

It is definitely not the case, then, that, matter is the fundamental individuating reality of which substantial forms are simply predicated *after the fact of individuation*. But then we are confounded. Empirical reality is constituted by particulars, yet, *because of* the generality of form and its fundamental

⁶⁰ This is the central argument in Loux (2008).

⁶¹ According to the *Categories*, the 'familiar particulars' are the primary substances – men, horses, rabbits – while the 'species' predicated of them are secondary and derivative. 'Genera' – like Animal – are, in turn, predicated of the species. See e.g. *Categories*, 2a35-2b7 – 2b23-2b28 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 1. Loux's aim in Loux (2008) is to show that *Metaphysics* Z and H reverses this order – to the effect that 'form' becomes the primary substance while the hylomorphic compound characterized by species-essence is secondary and derivative.

⁶² See *Metaphysics*, Book VII (Z)-Book VIII (H) in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

⁶³ In the sense that the Platonic Forms, for example, are ontologically fundamental: simple and fundamentally real.

⁶⁴ Loux (2008, p. 5). Text in square brackets is mine.

simplicity, what they *really* are is 'essences'. Particulars *are* essences in spite of *not* being the essences themselves, but being, rather, *instantiations* of kinds. Familiar, empirical reality is composed of *this-such-es* – certain form-matter individuals – that amount to *this-something-s* – individuals of certain kinds. Particular substances are *this-something-s* in virtue of being *this-such-es*. It has turned out, however – as we noted earlier – that a form is, despite being an essence of the general kind, *not* the essence *of* a particular. Rather, the particular *qua* hylomorphic instantiates an essence corresponding to a species. This is to say that the *entire* matter-*plus*-form particular must, therefore, be logically identical with the essence of the kind, and form-essence is only partially identical with species-essence. Matter *and* form make the composite individual, yet, while form is logically self-caused in the sense of being identical with itself, the composite it contributes to is logically self-caused in the sense of being identical with something general.

An enigma seems to have replaced a mystery. On Aristotle's construal, as it appears, the particular is thoroughly explained through the general. As G. E. L. Owen, relatedly, expounds in his discussion of the particular and the general in Aristotle's metaphysics,⁶⁵ a growing and becoming thing, for Aristotle, becomes not a particular, say *a* tree, but a *kind* of thing: a *something*, the kind 'tree'. The particular tree becomes the kind 'tree' in virtue of the form 'tree' predicated of its phloem/ cortex matter.

In the well-known example of the making of a bronze sphere from a chunk of bronze, it is not that a sphere is produced, but that what becomes *becomes something*, that is, a sphere.⁶⁶ Although the bronze sphere is indeed an individual thing, it is the whole compound bronze-*plus*-sphere that is individual, while the *sphere* is an ingenerable form (a *such*). Were the sphere to be an individual that one made, in addition to the individual *a* [*this*] bronze sphere, we would need another individual sphere to make it from, which

⁶⁵ See Owen (1978-9).

⁶⁶ See *Metaphysics*, Book VII (Z) 1033a24-1033b19 – 1033b20-1034a8 in Aristotle (1991), Vol. 2.

would issue in an infinite regress. So, the better formulation is: we make it so that the form 'sphere' is compounded with a piece of matter. In virtue of this compound, the nature of a thing finds its explanatory *terminus* in a general essence which the thing has become and is identical with.

A bronze sphere is not a logically self-caused living individual, but, rather, something 'made' (in the sense described above) by man. Yet, the case with living things must be analogous. Arguably, the First Changer does not 'make' ('create') the form 'man', but, rather, makes it so, or *is* in such a way – *qua* final cause – that the form 'man' and the matter of man be conjoined into an instantiation of the species-essence 'man'. Being the ultimate final cause, this God 'motivates' living things to independently pursue their natural ends, via self-actualization and self-becoming, in accordance with this conjunction.

Conclusion

We conclude that, while moving us toward ontologically real, logically self-caused, particulars, Aristotle's account does not do full justice to *the particularity of the particular*. Aristotelian forms do indeed preserve the logical self-dependence of pure Platonic Forms by being identical with their essences and unsullied by the nature of matter⁶⁷ or by the 'kind'-essence *qua* essence of the entire hylomorphic compound. As shown in the example of the 'bronze sphere', these forms, also, do not yield to vicious regress. Yet, they hardly account for all of ontological reality, especially considering that they are general and, thus, shareable between individuals.

It is whole hylomorphic compounds that are the *full* particulars – although their self-becoming and identity with their species-essence are derivative from the actualization of their matter by form. Such a particular is

⁶⁷ On this 'purity' of Aristotle's form, see e.g. Wedin (2002, pp. 289-342).

logically self-caused only in the sense of being *what* it is (kind) *because* of *how* it is (form's actualization of matter). But, it is not what it is in virtue of its individuality – that is, of a unique essence. A coherent theory of self-causation requires each individual to *be* – logically identical with – a unique essence. Aristotle's God is the only actual individual that meets this criterion. Forms are logically self-caused too, but they are not actual apart from composites.

Some medieval Scholastics – notably, Duns Scotus, Ockham and Suárez – grapple with these difficulties by modifying Aristotle's conception of particular substance as well as proposing original theories of individuality. Our next chapter assesses relevant ideas in Scotus' and (in greater detail) Suárez's accounts of individuality. We show that, while Suárez's ontology contains a largely coherent theory of individuals' self-causation, a number of difficulties bound up with the complexity and (self-) change of hylomorphic compounds remain.

CHAPTER 4

Self-Causation in Scotus' and Suárez's Theories of Individuality

Our principal aim in this chapter is to distil a theory of individuals' logical self-causation from two influential Scholastic conceptions of individuality: briefly, Duns Scotus', and – at much greater length – Suárez's. Although the notion 'logical self-causation' – i.e. the idea of an ontologically real (actual) individual's identity with the logical conditions constitutive of its essence – does not appear in literal terminological form in their discourses, all the necessary elements of such a theory of self-causation are present: to wit, individuals (particulars), uniqueness, and individuation in virtue of unique essences. That being so, applying our terms can hardly be presumptuous. Our arguments concerning self-causation follow logically from, despite not being explicitly present in, the original discourses.

According to Scotus, a 'common' (potentially general) and a strictly individual nature are two equally 'defining', and equally based-in-ontological-reality, aspects of particulars – none reducible to the other. The generalizable (potentially shareable) and the individual (unshareable) aspect of a particular are distinguished not just in relation to the human intellect, but also mind-independently – although both are grounded in the same fundamental 'essence', the essence of an individual. They compose *one* individual, rather than two independent ones, and the shareable aspect is not ontologically real apart from an individual that *actualizes* and particularizes it. It is shareable only in the sense that it is *potentially* particularizable in another such individual – and *known* to be so particularizable.

Scotus terms the aspectual difference a 'formal – rather than real, ontological – distinction'. This may seem to amount to a claim that it is possible to refer to an individual as logically self-caused in two ways: (i.) *qua* identical with its strictly individual (unique) nature – what commentators of Scotus' work usually refer to as *haecceitas* or 'haecceity' ('thisness'), and (ii.)

qua identical with its potentially general nature. Whereas (i.) would explain the individual *qua* individual, (ii.) would explain it *qua* – partaking of, or particularly instantiating – generality. But this would problematically imply that explaining an individual in terms of its individuality has the same ontological weight as explaining it in terms of a potentially general nature (be it particularized). Scotus grapples with this difficulty,¹ though – as we shall see – his solutions are vague. At bottom, the common nature, cognized by the human mind as general (i.e. potentially shareable), and the *haecceitas* that particularizes it, are, ontologically, one and the same individual. But, they are not formally the same, as the common nature by itself (i.e. considered apart from its particularization) is not unique. At the same time, the common nature by itself is also not general – for it is only in relation to the human mind that it can be known as counterfactually particularizable and abstractable from *this* or *that* particular. Scotus' theory is confusing – and by no means parsimonious.

We address this problem by appealing to Suárez's theory of individuality. It is known that Ockham is the most prominent Scholastic to address the problem – his solutions indeed precede and significantly inform Suárez's. However, Suárez's treatment of individuation is much more sophisticated, wherefore it is his metaphysics – rather than Ockham's – that is to serve as a representative example of the conceptual motion beyond Aristotle's general self-caused particulars. Rather than *inquiring into* a principle of individuation – and, thus, into a coherent notion of self-causation – Ockham seems to take for granted that all real things are purely individual as well as that they are so because of themselves and not due to something outside them.² Such – he thinks – are not only the familiar hylomorphic substances (*this* substance), but also the parcels of matter (*this* matter) and the forms (*this* form) that compose them, as well as some accidents which attach to them, e.g. qualities like colour (*this* redness). What are usually understood as generalities – say,

¹ See Bates (2010, p. 86).

² For a detailed discussion of this thematic, see Maurer (1994).

'humanity' (or the species 'man') – are also treated as individuals, because Ockham thinks of each man as possessing a different, strictly individual, humanity (*this* humanity). Generality is not a shareable essence, but a mental quality which encompasses several things at once.³ One's apparently general thought of humanity is really a uniquely individual mental act (*this* thought) that *intends* all individual men between whom there is nothing but simple resemblance.⁴

Ockham's theory of individuals is digested into Suárez's while the distinction between particularity and generality is given much subtler treatment. Suárez argues that the distinction between an individual's unique and general nature is *conceptual* – i.e. that generality is an *interpretive* aspect of the individual. He contends, further, that the individual is individuated by its *whole* entity – matter, form, and their union – rather than by a mere property of 'thisness' (as in Scotus). There *is* a principle of *self*-individuation, and it is positive and *entitative* – for individuality is more than a brute fact. Instead of arguing that generalities are really just individual mental acts intending absolute individuals, Suárez shows that real individuals *lend themselves to generalization* by finite minds although generality is just an interpretive abstraction from the individuals *qua* whole. This is to say that we are not obliged to genuinely split reality into logically self-caused forms, pieces of matter, and apparent (*really* individual) universals or individual mental acts. Our focus is self-caused individuals as *whole* entities of which a shareable nature is an *aspect* rather than being a nature that accounts for them (as in Aristotle and, in a very limited sense, Scotus) or a '*really* individual' mental act that signifies them (as in Ockham). We are not concerned with how things are conceptualized, but with how they really are – whether *absolutely* or *in relation to* a finite intellect. Although this position is not too far from Ockham's, it places greater emphasis on ontological reality as such than on

³ Arguably, Scotus' contention that the 'common nature' is general only in relation to the human mind already points in this direction.

⁴ For a discussion of this, see Boehner (1946a) and Panaccio (2004, pp. 23-7).

our concepts of it (even when it comes to explaining 'generality'), for individual entities *qua* whole, and inclusive of generality, are not understood as exempt from explanation. This explanation is *immanently metaphysical* (in the modern sense augured by Suárez's separation of the divinely metaphysical from the finitely ontological).

Although, like Ockham, Suárez conceives of forms, of parcels of matter and of some accidents as self-individuated just like the hylomorphic individuals they compose, he takes pains to show that they are *ontologically incomplete* – i.e. not fully actual – on their own. Rather than explicitly arguing that this 'incompleteness' is necessary *per se* (i.e. that the 'incomplete' individuals could never actually *be* by themselves), he contends, *on the one hand*, that parcels of matter and substantial forms (especially vegetative and animal souls) are *naturally* disinclined to persist by themselves and inclined to form substantial composites. A substantial form is essentially the part of the composite that is primarily responsible for the substance's having a specific nature as well as for the acquisition and maintenance of accidents that help preserve this nature. There are, for Suárez, forms that are dependent on matter for their existence, viz. forms of inanimate substances as well as vegetative and animal souls, and forms able to subsist independently, viz. rational souls. Natural necessity for forming composites with matter is especially pronounced for the former – which, unlike the rational soul, are fully dependent on matter for their being.

On the other hand, Suárez argues that this 'natural (or physical) necessity' is not – what he understands as – a 'metaphysical necessity'. By the former he means the way sublunar individuals generally behave in nature, in the absence of miracles occasioned by immaterial beings such as God. 'Metaphysical necessity' concerns what could not possibly come to pass differently than it does – even by God's will – and what is ordained by the immaterial. The attachment of a rational soul to a material body is not 'metaphysically necessary' – for the soul is immortal – whence leaving the body at the moment of death, and the resurrection of numerically the same

substance (say, a man) in heaven, are possible. The miracle of the Eucharist also shows that accidents such as the quantity and quality of bread and wine can persist when their substance has been replaced by the divine substance (Christ's body and blood). This is to say that an accident's inherence in a substance is not metaphysically necessary. While accommodating such 'metaphysical' occurrences, Suárez demonstrates that it is 'naturally necessary' for forms, for parcels of matter and for accidents to only exist as complete individuals as part of a substantial composite. Because the metaphysical occurrences *can* be accommodated on *exceptional* occasions towards which nature is not generally inclined, divine metaphysics is regarded as 'super-natural'.

What Suárez understands as the territory of 'physics' – the world of sublunar realities – as opposed to the realm of metaphysics – immaterial beings such as God, the angels and celestial bodies – is, in much modern immanentist thinking, characterized as broadly metaphysical. Suárez's separation of 'physics', in the sense of immanentist ontology, from 'metaphysics', in the sense of the 'super-natural', *enables* the gradual historical exclusion of the transcendent and the divine from rational discourse more generally. We show that the idea of logical self-causation *qua* self-individuation operates, for Suárez's, at the level of the 'physical' world – a world he gives what is appropriately understood as immanently metaphysical attention and grounding.⁵ In this world, individuals are only ontologically complete when they form composites. Suárez's typically Scholastic theological concern with miracles, with the immaterial independence of the rational soul, or with what is in principle possible through God's will, is here primarily of expository significance, while his world of 'physical necessity' occupies argumentative centre-stage.

The 'completion' of naturally incomplete individuals is only possible

⁵ Hence, throughout our discussion, the term 'metaphysical' broadly applies to ontology and the immanent – rather than merely to an immaterial realm – except where otherwise indicated (e.g. in the discussion of Suárez's notion of 'metaphysical form').

through a relational category of modes – that is, ‘ways of being’ which unify matter with form into complete substances and help accidents attach to the resultant composites. Rather than being self-dependent like individual entities, modes are totally dependent on them: they are mere *affections*⁶ of individuals, not individuals in their own right. Logically self-caused individuals – forms, matter, composite substances or accidents – are only complete *when* and *as* they *exist* as conjoined and integrated through modes, i.e. as they form a robust *actual* substance. Although, just as for Ockham, an accident is individual by itself and not because of the substance it attaches to, it is real only ‘in potency’ outside the substance. An individual ‘in potency’ is not on its own a full ontological entity. *Qua* individual in virtue of being identical with a unique essence, the accident is logically self-dependent; *qua* ontologically incomplete, it is not fully real. The same holds for parcels of matter and substantial forms that are not conjoined in composite substances. ‘Fullness’ is only possible *in* – and *for* – *actually existing* individual composites.

This ‘actualist’, immanentist metaphysics of logical self-causation makes for a coherent, but worryingly complex, picture. A Suárezian individual existent may appear to be a *seemingly* unitary composite whose *whole* individuality is explicable in terms of the individualities of the parts. If it is a mere combination of its components’ principles of self-causation, the hylomorphic individual’s principle of self-causation dissolves. The combination of matter, form and modes is held together only by the individual’s existence which does not, by itself, contribute to individuality. Individuality is the *essence*, i.e. the unique nature, *as it exists* – it is not the existence itself. And this essence seems to be a conjunction of the essences of the composite’s components: substantial and accidental form, matter and modes. More than this, the substance is a logically self-caused individual apart from the equally self-caused accidents, although, barring miracles such

⁶ Thus, the terms ‘modification’ and ‘affection’ can be used interchangeably.

as the Eucharist, the accidents are only fully real in conjunction with a substance. In that sense, both substance and accidents are dependent on the substance's *existence* for the full realization of their unique essences, and, thus, for their (fully actual) self-causation.

Furthermore, there are problems bound up with the function of modes in the composite they hold together. Because the modes are not separate from the individuals they modify, Aristotle's discourse of self-change is re-introduced – for, if a mode is part of an individual, the individual must be *self*-modifying. Then, the mode of union between matter and form is *constitutive of* a composite individual. This individual is in some sense *unchangeable* in that it is what it is in virtue of its unique individuality. If it were not identical with an unchangeable nature, there would be nothing to identify it as at all times *this* individual. Yet, the mode of (hylomorphic) union continually modifies a substantial form and matter by 'binding' them – and, thus, produces a kind of *internal change* in the composite. The form can also be said to induce concomitant changes which 'configure' matter *qua* subject of predication for the inherence of accidents without which the composite could not naturally exist (say, a certain quantity and some basic qualities). The problem is that there is evident contradiction in an individual's being at once *outside* time – *qua* eternally identical with its individual essence – and *in* time – *qua* changing as it becomes what it is through the union of its individual components.

Suárez's idea of actualization of potencies is, however, not strictly Aristotelian, for it is not based on self-change for the sake of generality (an eternal form or a species-essence). Self-actualization is a *becoming* – rather than a change for the sake of fulfilling the nature of a kind. As matter and form are modified by a relational mode, they *come to exist* – i.e. *become actual* as essential components of a complete substance – *in an instant act of creation*. Suárez believes that this 'instance' is God's act of bestowing existence on essence. Although God *lets* the essence *exist*, he does not, strictly speaking, give rise to the essence itself. Prior to actuality, the essence has a

merely objective existence in God's mind: an existence 'in potency'. *In* actuality, the individual individuates itself in virtue of the essence. Since the individual existent is identical with what is always already *its* unique essence – an essence only fully real when coupled with *its* (the individual's) existence – it is logically self-caused *qua* individual. It is not ontologically self-caused, as its existence is caused by God *qua* Creator – even though it is, once created, ontologically independent in the sense of having a separate existence (from God and from other finite substances).

This story must now be teased out in the requisite detail. First, we elucidate the transition from Scotus' 'formal distinction' to Suárez's 'conceptual distinction' between uniqueness and generality, and explain the significance of this transition for a theory of logical self-causation. We bring out the relationship of formal and conceptual distinction to *real* distinction – the distinction between different individuals. For both Scotus and Suárez, real distinction may be said to *follow upon* the intrinsic individuality provided by uniqueness – for there can be no difference without such individuality. We, then, address the category of modes as that which unifies self-caused individuals, and untangle issues surrounding the complexity of composite individuals and the possible contradictoriness in an individual's internal change through modes. Most importantly, we emphasize that Suárez's ascribing a relational function to modes allows him to keep possibly 'too many' logically self-caused, albeit ontologically incomplete, individuals, which the modes 'glue together' in actual composites. A picture of individuals that are held together *by* their simple, indissoluble individuality – rather than by modes that combine different individualities or by *existence* which is not by itself individual – seems better integrated. However, such a picture only begins to emerge with Leibniz's and Spinoza's metaphysics – the subject of our next chapter.

The Implications of Scotus's and Suárez's Notions of Formal, Conceptual and Real Distinction for Individuals' Self-Causation

Scotus holds that a particular *qua* particular is indeed possessed of a unique nature with which the particular can be said to be identical.⁷ This nature is known as *haecceitas* – a 'thisness' irreducible to generality. Yet, he asserts that a real, in principle shareable, essence is still in place. This essence is termed a 'common nature', for it is *potentially* shareable by all particulars of the same species. In virtue of its uniqueness, a Scotist particular fulfils the criteria for being logically self-caused *qua* particular. However, rather than simply arguing that the potentially general is parasitic on this particularity and owes its reality to the unique nature, Scotus contends that the 'common nature' is equally real.

The reality of the common nature is, nonetheless, not an essence 'over and above' the particular's *haecceitas*, but, rather, one ontologically indistinguishable from the *haecceitas*. The relationship between the *haecceitas* and the common nature is, in fact, akin to one between 'actuality' and 'potency'. Since – unlike a Platonic Form – the 'common nature' can never be understood as ontologically independent of the particular, it is not *really* or *actually* 'common' or general, but only *potentially* so.⁸ Thus, although Socrates' essence 'humanity' is ontologically inseparable from his individuality, and, so, ultimately, identical with the 'Socrateity', it is *potentially* the essence of any other man, i.e. potentially identical with any other individuality. This is to say that a 'common nature' cannot by itself be a fully actual entity, and is only actualized by an individual. Nonetheless, *qua* possibly 'general'⁹ – that is, *qua* potentially individuated by a *haecceitas*

⁷ For a discussion of 'thisness' and identity also beyond the Scotist context, see e.g. Adams (1979).

⁸ A Platonic Form is also not *really* general, but for a different reason – namely, that the sensuous particulars with respect to which it would have to be general are not ultimately real.

⁹ Even if this possibility or potentiality for generality is only discerned by the human mind, the 'common nature' is mind-independently real. It is not in itself general, as it is the mind

other than the one it is actually individuated by in *this* particular – the 'common nature' is just as real as the *haecceitas*.

This is Scotus' attempt to preserve a coherent view of individuality without foreclosing epistemic access to an ontologically real and mind-independent 'common nature' characterizing individuals of the same kind.¹⁰ Although *haecceitas* is 'knowable in itself' – i.e. knowable *absolutely*, in its full reality, to a divine mind – the common nature is knowable *in relation to* us.¹¹ This 'relativity' does not mean that the common nature is dependent on a human intellect. Rather, an individual entity presents itself in a certain 'form' to a human mind, though the 'form' is real prior to intellection. On the basis of this 'form', the mind 'adds' an idea of 'generality' to the singularly actualized common nature – i.e. the mind abstracts from the individual. *Haecceitas* is, arguably, also accessible to human knowers, albeit never in clear form, but, rather, in the form of an intuition *that* there is a *haecceitas*, the immediate knowledge of which only becomes possible *after* the end of earthly life. In that case, the idea of *haecceitas* is 'added' only by God's mind. Although the common nature is ontologically indistinguishable from *haecceitas*, there can be direct knowledge *of* it in *this* life. In spite of these differences in knowability, an individual substance is not to be counted twice on account of its distinguishable common and unique nature. More than this, the common nature must not be considered a separable entity, or *really* general, despite being knowable, by means of abstraction, as specifically one and the same across individuals of the same kind.

However, if the *haecceitas* and the common nature were to be treated as indistinguishable in all possible respects except in their knowability in this life, one would hardly see the need to remark upon them separately. Scotus deals with this difficulty by positing a helpful, though somewhat mystifying, notion: that of 'formal distinction'. Like the reality of the common nature

that turns it into generality. It is also not in itself particular, for it is *haecceitas* that particularizes it.

¹⁰ For a discussion of this, see e.g. Wolter (1994, p. 272).

¹¹ For a discussion of this, see e.g. De Monticelli (2004).

itself, the reality of a formal distinction between a common and a unique nature is apart from – and prior to – intellectual discernment. This means that the difference in knowability is well-founded by virtue of having an ontological ground. Nevertheless – despite being more than conceptual – formal distinctness is less real than the distinctness between two separate individuals.¹² This is to say that, while a real distinction produces two ontological entities, a formal distinction reflects two formal aspects of one and the same entity. All this can be summarized in ontological and epistemic terms as follows:

(i.) An individual's *haecceitas* and its common nature are not *really* distinct: at the ontological ground level, they are one and the same individual substance.

(ii.) The distinction between an individual's *haecceitas* and its common nature is mind-independent: it exists apart from the ways the individual is approached by human knowers.

We may infer, on the basis of (i.), that an individual's being logically self-caused *qua* identical with its unique nature is *really* the same as its being identical with its common nature. Being different from Aristotle's general substances would, thus, seem paradoxically tantamount to being the same as them. But, the difference is that Scotus' 'common nature' is only *potentially* general, and is *actually* uniquely particularized in each individual by means of what the *haecceitas* 'adds' to it. It is, also, known to us as general by means of what the human mind 'adds' to it in abstracting it from actual individuals. The intellection of generality needs to involve such 'addition' rather than a mere 'extraction' of the common nature by means of stripping away the particularity attaching to it – *because* the common nature is not in itself really general, but only potentially so.¹³

Additionally, the conclusion that an individual's self-causedness *qua*

¹² For discussions of Scotus' notion of formal distinction, see e.g. Copleston (1950, pp. 507-13), DeGrood (1975, pp. 38-44), Dreyer & Ingham (2004, pp. 33-8), Friedman (2012, pp. 380-4), King (2003, pp. 22-5), Lemos (1988, pp. 189-204) and Mayorga (2007, pp. 61-4).

¹³ See e.g. Boehner (1946b, pp. 42-4f) for a discussion of this.

unique is the same as its being identical with its common nature problematically assumes a referentially transparent context for the assertion of an individual's logical self-causation. It is supposed that, if we replaced the term 'unique nature' with the term 'common nature' by virtue of their identical reference (to one and the same individual substance), the statement that the individual is logically self-caused *qua* individual will still be true. This does not seem to hold up, as the individuality of the individual, for Scotus, is fully explained only by the *haecceitas* and not by the common nature. Referring to the *haecceitas* as a unique *nature* or *essence* appears, in fact, confusing, for *haecceitas* is not a 'what (it is to be a certain thing)' in the same way an Aristotelian understands 'essence' to be a 'what'. If 'what-ness' could be stretched to apply to *haecceitas*, it would not be 'what it is to be a particular of a given kind', but, rather, 'what it is to be *this* particular'. Even this would be a problematic assertion, for, rather than being an essence or principle of individuality – *what* it is to be *this* individual – *haecceitas* is *sheer* individuality and a 'fundament' of individuation. 'Whatness' is *quidditas*, not *haecceitas*.

Whereas, for Aristotle, 'this-ness' is usually attributed to the matter of a hylomorphic particular – with form contributing a definiteness which enables the recognition of the entire compound as a 'this-such' and a 'this-something' – Scotus' notions of 'this-ness' and its distinction from the potentially shareable 'such' and 'what' are much subtler. He argues that it is *as though* the *haecceitas* and the common nature were different, rather than *that* they are *really* different. He illustrates this point thus:

This difference is made clear by an example: if whiteness be set down as a simple species not having in itself two natures, yet there is something really in whiteness whereby it has the idea of color, and something whereby it has the idea of difference; and this reality is not formally that reality, nor formally the reverse, nay one is outside the reality of the other – speaking formally – just as if they were two things, although now by identity those two realities are one thing.¹⁴

¹⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d2, n. 407 (Simpson).

Although this illustration involves a species and a genus ('whiteness' and 'colour'), the case is analogous for an individual and a species. Socrates and his humanity are really one and the same thing, though 'Socrateity' and humanity are formally different from each other. This is not to be confused with a *conceptual* distinction – also known as a 'distinction of reason' – which would be a distinction only *in relation to* a finite intellect. We may be tempted to call the formal difference *interpretive* – arguing that, depending on the way one looked at it, an individual could reveal itself either in its haecceity or in its common nature. Even so, the 'interpretive shift' *must* be understood as subtended by a real difference. That 'real difference' is 'less than' the non-identity between two separate individuals, but 'more than' a merely conceptual difference found in a knowable individual by its knower.¹⁵ It is precisely because the notion of formal distinction, defined in this way, appears so enigmatic that, as Paul Franks writes, it "has been understood [after Scotus] sometimes to signify a real distinction, sometimes to signify a merely rational distinction, and sometimes to signify one or other distinction intermediate between the real and the rational".¹⁶

Suárez, for one, indeed 'reduces' formal distinction to a rational one despite Scotus' insistence that formality has greater ontological weight than what human rationality affords. If such a reduction is performed, we need no longer worry that what we could coherently think of as a logically self-caused individual is really the same as an Aristotelian general substance. For even if we were to accept that the context within which an individual substance is to be understood is referentially opaque rather than transparent, it would be more difficult to concede that an individual substance could *also* be metaphysically explained (in the immanent sense) in terms of its general nature – be that nature only *potentially* shareable by other particulars and known to be so shareable by means of the mind's abstraction. Even if it is not so explained

¹⁵ This is discussed, for instance, in Bates (2010, pp. 82-5).

¹⁶ Franks (2003, p. 208). Text in square brackets is mine.

qua individual, it is hard to fathom that, at bottom, the '*qua* individual' *haecceitas* is the same thing as the '*qua* potentially general' *real* common nature. This is why Suárez employs the term 'conceptual distinction' as he explains:

I say [...] that the individual adds to the common nature something conceptually distinct from it, belonging to the same category and metaphysically composing the individual as an individual difference which contracts the species and constitutes the individual.¹⁷

Suárez's phrasing must not mislead us into thinking that, if an individual, say Socrates, could be said to 'add' something to the common nature 'human being', the latter can be understood as something that exists apart from – and outside of – Socrates. In that the distinction between the individual and the common nature is conceptual rather than real – in that they belong to the 'same category' – there is nothing that is really 'added' to the common nature.¹⁸ The common and the unique nature are 'parts' of the same whole in such a way that conceiving of Socrates as '*this* human being, Socrates', on the one hand, and as a 'human being' more generally, on the other, merely involves looking at the same individual from two different perspectives. The 'conceptual distinction' can be understood as a kind of 'mutual inseparability' imposed by the individual whole:¹⁹ no part of the entity can truly be without the other.

This 'inseparability' is also what individuality's metaphysical act of 'contracting' the species consists in. The 'broad' species *qua* shareable is by no means separable from the non-shareable individual difference by which it is 'limited' (or 'narrowed'), rather than being left to 'dilate' over all other individuals of the same kind. The 'kind' does not really exist: without being 'real', it is the same as the individual difference 'contracting' it. There is no '*more* real' Scotist formal distinction that underlies the interpretive shift between the shareable and the unique – and, in fact, the 'common nature' is a

¹⁷ See *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. V, Sect. 2 in Suárez (1605). Quoted in: Gracia (1994, p. 492).

¹⁸ For a discussion of this, see Gracia (1982, pp. 9-14).

¹⁹ See Ariew (2012, p. 41).

mere abstraction from the *whole* individual. The individual difference (uniqueness) that contracts the common nature is also such an abstraction insofar as it is understood merely as an essence: a non-shareable nature. What is real is the concrete, *existent* individual entity.

The emphasis on the 'whole' Socrates – on the *entitas tota*²⁰ – rather than on a Scotist haecceity (Socrateity), is crucial. Suárez's conception of individuality is set in terms of a *total, unitary* individual, rather than in terms of a 'this-ness' that seems 'super-added' to a substance. Suárez's 'addition' of individual difference to the species is obviously also a 'positive' move, but only conceptually so. Since Scotus' distinction between unique and common nature has extramental reality, his substance's realities seem one too many, and his justification for the proliferation of distinct (if only formally) natures is unnecessarily vague. If the common nature is an abstraction from the whole (on Suárez's account), it makes no sense to assert that an individual is logically self-caused in virtue of being identical with its common nature – be that common nature only potentially shareable, insofar as it is known as general by the human mind, as per Scotus. The individual is logically self-caused in virtue of being identical with itself *qua* whole – rather than only with its unique essence or with its common nature both of which, apart from concrete existence, are abstractions from the whole.

This is still not to say that the distinction between the common nature and the individual's uniqueness is *produced* by the mind. The mind is, in fact, 'urged' by reality to discover the distinction that exists *in relation to* it. In that reason is 'reasoned' by reality into distinguishing interpretive aspects of the whole, the difference between unique and common nature is termed a 'distinction of the reasoned – rather than the reasoning – reason'.²¹ Rather than being different more-than-mental forms of the individual entity, the distinguished concepts are 'abstractable' aspects of the self-individuated

²⁰ The *entitas tota* – 'whole entity' – is a principle adopted by Leibniz, too. See e.g. Cover, Hawthorne (1999, pp. 26-50) and McCullough (1994, pp. 206-12).

²¹ For a discussion of this, see e.g. McCullough (1996, pp. 94-7).

whole; but they are real *qua* aspects. A conceptual distinction is *aspectual* while a real distinction is *entitative*. The notion of real distinction helps us posit many *different* logically self-caused individuals – each individuated by itself. The notion of conceptual distinction, on the other hand, is conducive to our ability to understand an individual as self-caused *qua* multiaspectual whole – a totality wherefrom generality abstracts.

A discussion of these distinctions, however, leaves a whole lot out: notably, the relationship of the individual entity to what has historically been understood as its 'accidents', e.g. its size, its qualities or its location in space. Furthermore, the *togetherness* or *union* of the substance's primary constituents – matter and form – is not addressed by either real or conceptual distinction. Were these issues to be left unexplained, there would be nothing to stop Suárez's individuals from being discoursed upon merely in terms of Aristotelian particulars' self-actualization as self-change. This would mean that Suárezian particulars are self-contradictory: *outside* time in virtue of an unchangeable form thanks to whose conjunction with (or, actualization of) matter they endure throughout the actualization of their accidents, but *in* time in virtue of the internal change that such actualization amounts to. Yet, Suárez's understanding of both the issue of accidents and of the individual's wholeness is demonstrably different from Aristotle's.

Indeed, Suárez subscribes to the Aristotelian postulate that an individual can persist *through* – and *despite* – accidental change, retaining its numerical identity while losing and gaining accidents. However, unlike Aristotle, he grants accidents some independence from the substances they attach to and treats them as self-caused individuals in their own right. Although this is a fraught philosophical move, it necessitates emphasis on an illuminating category – the relational category of modes as an individual entity's 'ways of being'. It is only through modes that a substance can self-cohere and relate to non-substantial individuals such as accidents. Therefore, Suárez adapts the notion of modes – together with that of 'modal distinction' between different

modes or between an entity and its modes²² – from Scotus' work.

According to Scotus, an entity's nature can have 'intrinsic modes', that is, 'ways of being' which modify the nature while being fully dependent on it. Such modifications are most readily evident in cases of qualitative variability: a red thing, for instance, can be *more* or *less* red. The degree – or intensity – of the redness is an 'intrinsic mode' of redness. A certain degree of redness could not exist apart from the quality 'redness', or, in Peter King's words, "[i]t makes no sense to speak of degrees without saying of what they are the degrees".²³ Building on this Scotist fundament, Suárez conceives of a mode as an *affection of* – or a *dependency on* – an entity such as a substance or accident (say, quality). A mode's nature is *intentional* – for, instead of being self-subsistent, it must modify *something* other than itself *qua* 'this' mode – whence it can never exist apart from that which it modifies.

The wholeness and self-dependence of an individual composite is not attained merely by matter and form, but by the mode of *union* – the way *this* matter and *this* form abide together. Further, the individual endures because of its mode of *subsistence* – the way the individual relates to itself *qua* independent, thus distinguishing itself from all other individuals. The substance can theoretically be thought of apart from its substantial modes because it does not depend on *this* or *that* absolute entity 'union' or 'subsistence', but simply on a relational entity 'the union *of* *this* matter and *this* form and the 'subsistence *of* *this* composite. Suárez's modes – say, *this* union – are self-individuated (i.e. have unique essences, only partially identical with those of the composites they help constitute) like self-dependent substances and accidents, but no composite substance is dependent for its actualization on particularly *this* union or *this* inherence; another 'union' or 'inherence' can, in principle, do.²⁴ However, unlike accidents, modes can only be seen as self-individuated *as part of* (*this* or *that*) substance,

²² For a brief discussion of modal distinction, see e.g. King (2003, pp. 25-6).

²³ See King (2003, p. 25).

²⁴ Naturally, the hylomorphic substance's 'composite' essence will, then, be slightly different – for it is partially identical with the essences of modes.

never independently.

This ontology seems to set a logically self-caused individual substance apart from accidental change in a sharper way than Aristotle's conception of accidents as always already potentially contained in substances. Aristotle's 'man' is always potentially white or musical – as the individual actuality of *this* whiteness and *this* musicality is wholly dependent on *this* man they characterize. *Qua* constituted by *this* matter and *this* accidental form, Suárez's accidents – unlike Aristotle's – have their own concrete intrinsic principles of individuation rather than being dependent for their very principle of individuality on the substances they are conjoined with.²⁵ Although an accident indeed *presupposes* substance, as well as attains full existence and individuates itself *in relation to* a substance, it still *actively* individuates *itself* through its own principle of individuation which is not partially identical with that of substance. Aristotle's non-substantial individuals such as 'whiteness' are, in contrast, concretely individual only as inhering in – and dependent on – a substance.²⁶ For Suárez, it is *this* mode of inherence, rather than the inhering accident, that is dependent. Also, the mode of inherence of an accident is dependent on the accident rather than on the substance in which the accident inheres.

Due to the constitutive role modes play in Suárez's metaphysics of individuality, their relationship to individuals must be addressed in greater detail. Additionally, a well-grounded conceptual 'backstory' to Suárez's accidents' non-participation in Aristotelian self-change must be provided. How and why must individual substances preserve their 'apartness' from accidents? The backstory can help us determine if a Suárezian theory of different 'types' of self-caused individuals – substances and accidents – can hold water. We must also inquire whether a substance's self-modification can be considered a self-change. A notion of self-change, as discussed previously, is pernicious to a coherent theory of self-causation, due to a self-contradictory

²⁵ For a discussion of this, see e.g. Thiel (1998, pp. 218-23).

²⁶ For a discussion of this, see e.g. Bäck (2014, pp. 222-4) and Cohen (2013, pp. 233-4).

combination of eternity and finite-endurance-*in*-time. It is to a discussion of these issues that we now turn.

Suárez on the Relationship of Modes to Self-Dependent Individuals

In respect of the relationship between an individual and its modes, several questions need addressing. The most urgent one of these is whether the modes can be said to in any sense *change* individual substance. For an individual cannot be simple – in the sense of being metaphysically explained (in the immanent sense) by *one* unique essence – and, thus, logically self-caused, if it needs to become what it presently is not. The answer hangs on the dependent status of modes, as well as on what kind of entity they are modes of – a substance (for substantial modes) or an accident (for accidental modes). A substantial mode – such as the *union* between matter and form, or the *subsistence* of the composite – can hardly be said to change an individual substance, as the substance would not be what it is without these modes. Substantial modes, in other words, help constitute an individual rather than change it.

Considered as a unity of matter, substantial form and substantial mode, a substance is understood apart from any properties. Thus, the substantial individual can metaphorically be described as 'thin'. There is discernible differentiation in this 'thinness', too – which constitutes neither real nor merely conceptual distinction. This is so because the truly basic logically self-caused individuals are matter and substantial form, considered independently of each other. Matter and form are, however, ontologically – or, in Suárez's terms, *naturally* – 'incomplete' without each other. And the differentiation in a 'thin' individual is not 'strong' enough – barring divine intervention or the death of a rational being possessed of an independent, immortal soul – to split the composite back into matter and form as independent entities. Furthermore, the substantial modes must continually hold the individual composite together

– for, apart from helping to constitute it, they are thoroughly dependent on it. The distinction between a mode and the substance it affects is, therefore, never a fully real one in the ontological sense of producing two separate entities.

Modal distinction is characterized by what Suárez describes as ‘one-way separability’, as opposed to the ‘two-way separability’ involved in the real (ontological) distinction between two independent individuals.²⁷ This means that, while an individual substance or accident *can* be understood apart from its modes, a mode can never be conceived of apart from the substance or accident it affects. This is so even though modes such as *this* union and *this* subsistence are individual in virtue of themselves (for *this* union is not *that* union) – as the union is always *between* two individuals other than itself *qua this* union, and the subsistence always *of* an individual other than itself *qua this* subsistence. Although a mode is *how* a substance is, it must be distinguished from an Aristotelian form which is *how* a substance is in terms of the configuration of the substance’s matter. Whereas an Aristotelian form is logically self-dependent while ontologically inseparable from substance, a mode is inconceivable except as dependent on something other than itself.

Suárez thinks that modal – rather than Scotus’ formal – distinction must rightfully occupy the space between the real distinctness of two or more separate individuals and the conceptual distinction between a single individual’s unique and common nature. According to formal distinction, a unique and a common nature are, in a sense, logically self-dependent, as each *is* the individual substance. Neither *haecceitas* nor the common nature has a lesser ontological status than the logically self-caused whole actual individual, for they *are* it. Modal distinction, on the other hand, establishes a hierarchy of independent individuals and the modes that depend on them. Although, since they constitute it, substantial modes cannot be said to change ‘thin’ substance, they may be thought of as *completing* the composite’s

²⁷ See Ariew (2012, p. 41). The original discussion can be found in *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. VII, Sect. 2 in Suárez (1605).

constituents – matter and form – and, in that sense, perhaps changing *them*. By uniting *this* form with *this* matter, the mode of union can also ‘facilitate’ matter’s acceptance of accidents without which the composite substance could not naturally exist. Even if ‘change’ can indeed be said to take place in matter (in its being completed and inhered in) or form (in its inhering in, or uniting with, matter, and being completed), however, it is with the status of the complete individual – i.e. with the composite – that we are concerning ourselves, rather than merely with its components. And the complete individual *qua* itself does not change – instead, it *becomes* (what it is).

Accidental modes – modes of accidents – on the other hand, *can* change the (composite) individual by helping attach properties to it and, thus, ‘thickening’ it.²⁸ But this does not change the individual *qua* ‘thin’. The ‘thick’ individual – *with* properties – is merely an accidental unity, for accidents are separable from it. There is some suggestion, however, that it is only accidents which can be said to merely ‘embellish’ the composite that are truly separable, while there are inseparable ones without which the substantial form would leave the matter and the composite’s death would occur. Suárez argues, in fact, that an accidental change can go sufficiently far as to pass into the sphere of substantial change: thus, if some accidents basic to being an alive human being are removed, the soul (substantial form) leaves the body and a corpse is left behind.²⁹ However, it is due to the form that these accidents are *naturally* inseparable from the composite, and, without the union with form, there is no reason why matter should be so configured by accidents and, thus, disposed to ‘accept’ form.

Without the form, the composite *qua* ‘thin’ does not exist. Insofar as alterations are merely accidental, i.e. not causing its form’s departure, it exists ‘unchanged’ *qua* hylomorphic composite. The ‘thick’ supervenes on the ‘thin’ and is not the logically self-caused entity. This may seem similar to the

²⁸ For a discussion of this, see e.g. Moreland (2010, pp. 178-9).

²⁹ For some arguments in this direction, see e.g. *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. XV, Sect. 1 in Suárez (1605) or in Suárez, Kronen (2000, pp. 24-5).

supervenience of Aristotle's kooky objects 'musical man' or 'standing man' on the self-caused substance 'man'. It must be emphasized, therefore, that a Suárezian substance's acquisition of accidents is not mere actualization of the substance's potentialities (although it is that too), but also conjunction with *additional, accidental* individuality. This makes a theory of substantial self-change less applicable to Suárez's conception of individuals – for accidental changes are not internal to individuals *qua* 'thin'. Yet, why must accidents be separable from substance? In order to fully understand Suárez's motivations for making accidents independent – and, thus, to better evaluate his success in avoiding conceptions of self-causation as self-change – we must glimpse into the background of substance's 'modal' relationship to accidents.

Suárez understands shape and motion as modes, though not as ones which are completely – and directly – dependent on an individual substance. Rather, *qua* qualitative, shape, for instance, is a mode of quantity – as he thinks that nothing can have a shape without having a certain quantity.³⁰ More than this, he believes that quantity, as well as *some* qualities, such as 'heat', are effectively independent entities – what he refers to as 'real accidents' – in that they are separable from the substances they can attach to. In this sense, 'real accidents' might be understood as some sort of non-particular – non-substantial – individuals which, like Aristotelian substantial forms, have a kind of logical self-dependence. Indeed, Suárez treats 'non-substantial individuals' as logically self-caused in that he understands them as individuated by their own entity – composed of matter and form – just as an individual substance is individuated by its own entity. On these terms, non-substantial individuals seem to have the same ontological status as substances, and the *relations* between a particular substance and its accidents are effected through modes.

The idea of separable accidents is partly dogmatic, insofar as it serves to

³⁰ For some elaboration on this, see e.g. Rozemond (1998, p. 107).

explain the miracle of the Eucharist and the doctrine of transubstantiation. The quantity and various sensuous qualities of bread and wine must be able to persist as 'real accidents' in spite of no longer being attached to the substances of the bread and wine which have been 'transformed' into the flesh and blood of Christ. The accidents are not to attach to this 'new (divine) substance', for, being complete in itself, it does not need additional alteration. Therefore, they must be able to exist by themselves as accidental forms – subsisting apart from substance – though they are not, outside the miracle of the Eucharist, naturally inclined to do so.

Be that as it may, there seem to be philosophical, rather than merely dogmatic, reasons for Suárez's understanding of accidents such as quantity and some qualities as independent.³¹ This is in line with the conviction of many Scholastics that what is revealed through faith is also demonstrable through reason. An accident's being separable from substance in the miracle of transubstantiation is, thus, to be sought in the essence – *qua* ontologically realized logical ground – of the accident. Furthermore, Suárez's position represents a broad philosophical view – of simple individual substances – going back at least to Scotus. According to this view, real, unitary, enduring individuals – e.g. Socrates – are really 'thin', i.e. to be understood apart from accidents (and the modifications of accidents) which attach to them and enact their 'thicker' determination. On the other hand, 'thick' individuals – e.g. fat, white, musical, philosophical, ugly, ironic Socrates – are only accidentally unitary, for Socrates can, in principle, continue to be Socrates while ceasing to be fat, white, musical, philosophical, ugly or ironic.

Still, there must always be *ways* for the accidents of quantity and quality to relate to individual substances. The most representative example of such 'ways of relating' is the accidental mode of 'inherence'. *Qua* relational – rather than absolute like substance and accident – 'inherence' can only have a dependent reality: it is always the inherence *of* an accident in an individual

³¹ Pasnau (2011, p. 261) and Rozemond (1998, pp. 108) hold such a view.

substance. Due to the accident's independence, the relation of an accident such as quantity to an individual substance is not, at first sight, necessary (i.e. imperative for the ontological completion of substance). However, substance invariably needs to attain a 'thicker' determination of itself in virtue of its acquisition of accidents. Else, it would be a mere featureless 'no-thing' – in possession of no recognizable characteristics. Or, in the case of naturally 'inseparable' accidents, the substance would lose its form and cease to exist *qua* 'thin' without its 'thicker' determination. Without the accidents making up the (physical) head, for instance – say, as a result of decapitation – the rational soul leaves the body and one ceases to exist *qua* substantial composite. The various colours and textures of the human head – in the very way it exists, as 'dark brown', 'ruddy', 'smooth', 'curly', 'sallow', 'bloodless', etc. – may not *as such* be necessary for the continuance or annulment of hylomorphic existence, but they are ontologically inseparable from, and help recognize, a body as animated by soul, as diseased or as abandoned by the soul. It is, in fact, thanks to the soul *qua* substantial form that accidents return a body to its normal state after a disharmonious spell caused by disease or injury. They do so by means of the mode of 'inherence' which is able to bridge the gap between substance and accidents for the sake of 'thickness', either necessary or decorative.

Were we to give an independent ontological status to 'inherence', we would need to account for the relationship between the mode and the individual via another mode of inherence – which would lead to an infinite regress. A strictly single mode of inherence must, therefore, mediate between an individual substance and an accident. On these terms, modes – *qua* immediately and completely dependent on an individual (a substance or accident) – serve as "regress-blockers".³² This simplifies the relationship between substance and accidents by reducing the number of intermediate categories to bare necessities: an accident's internal 'way of being' – the mode

³² See Pasnau (2011, p. 256).

of inherence – is what relates it to substance. The absolute dependence of modes on substances and accidents does not entail the dependence of an accident on the substance to which a mode of inherence helps it attach or the dependence of the substance on the inherence of a specific accident. An individual (substance or accident) needs 'inherence' in order to relate to other individuals (substances or accidents) but it does not need the inherence of *this* or *that* specific accident or in *this* or *that* specific substance.

Modes are, therefore, more intimately tied to the individual than its 'accidental properties', such as its particular colour or temperature. There is a certain kind of *identity* between a mode such as 'motion' and the accident of 'quantity' it modifies, although the moving individual substance to which the accident attaches can come to rest. A quantity could not fully exist without 'participating', via its modes, in a substance's moving or being moved from one place to another, taking one shape or another. A substance cannot possibly exist without being integrated by the mode of hylomorphic union or without enduring throughout accidental changes via the mode of subsistence. Yet, while the 'motion', 'shape' or 'inherence' (for accidents), the 'union' and 'subsistence' (for substance), cannot exist except as modifying an individual, the individual need not be understood as modified by – and, thus, identical with – all of them at once or any one of them permanently. An accident of quantity is not always modified by such and such a quality or inhering in such and such a substance. Despite always having a unique nature in potency, a composite substance does not always exist and endure accidental changes, wherefore it does not at all times identify with its modes of union and subsistence – though it does at all times *of its existence*. Further, it is conceivable that *this* matter and *this* form composing the substance could have been unified by a different mode of union than the present one, or that they could be separated (by God) and united by a different union (which would constitute 'substantial change'). This is to say that the modal distinction – between an individual and its modes, on the one hand, and between the individual's different modes or *within* the individual *qua*

modified by its different modes, on the other – constitutes a 'partial identity' and 'partial distinctness'.³³ This is clearly reminiscent of the partial identity between a simple Platonic Form and its complex, multiaspectual particular instances. However, modes are ontologically immanent to individuals in a way in which Plato's sensuous particulars are not to Forms.

The intimate relationship between an individual and its modes – which goes beyond the 'one-way inseparability' characterizing modal distinction – seems to rather hark back to Aristotle's conception of a substance's self-change. Indeed, a mode 'affects' a substance or accident, which is to say that it *changes* it; quantity *qua* 'real accident' is, thus, changed when it is made to inhere in a substance under the mode of a certain quality. One is indeed reminded of Aristotle's process of self-change through actualization of potentialities, and Aristotelian particulars' endurance in the face of change. However, like real accidents such as quantity and some qualities, Suárez's form (especially the rational soul) – as the alleged effector of self-change – is, in terms of its logical identity *qua* individual, independent of the substance (or accident, in the case of accidental form) it helps compose. Substantial form's union with matter in a 'thin' substance, as well as the 'thickening' of substance through the attachment of accidents, are functions of the modes, not merely form's actualization of potentialities. Though, admittedly, vegetative or animal souls and the forms of inanimate substances are *more* dependent on matter than the rational soul – which, unlike them, can 'naturally' exist independently while also being naturally disposed to unite with matter (a body). A material substantial form such as an animal soul is, in fact, 'educated' – that is, *brought out* – from matter where it always already inheres.

This 'inherence' or 'ontological dependence' on matter, however, is also a mode which unites form with matter. This is to say that a hylomorphic composite – say, a rabbit – comes to be by the same act by which the rabbit's

³³ See Pasnau (2011, pp. 272-3) for a discussion of this.

soul *qua* substantial form comes to be from matter. By contrast, the rational soul, being immortal, 'comes to be' *absolutely* – directly from God *qua* Creator – and unites with matter without originally inhering in it. A material substantial form, just like an accident, can only exist independently 'by God's power' – by a miracle. Thus, a material form naturally exists only as long as the hylomorphic composite does, while a rational soul lives eternally. Yet, both the animal soul's inherence in matter and the rational soul's purer, 'independent' union with a material body are effected by modes – which affect both matter and form – rather than by the form's sheer actualizing power. In being effected by modes, accidental alteration, on the one hand, and the composite's birth and death by means of union and dissolution (*viz.* substantial change), on the other, seem similar in principle.³⁴ Both accidents and material substantial forms do not come into existence *per se*, but *as part of fully determined composite substances*. Although the rational soul does not necessarily come into existence by the same act as the composite of which it becomes a constituent, it is made 'complete' in the physical world only as the composite comes to be. For Suárez, this 'coming to be' of the composite, by means of God's instant act of adding existence to essence, coincides with the composite's determinate *self-becoming qua this* individual. 'Coming to be' in the absolute sense is, in that sense, conflated with qualified individual becoming. God's act of creation is rendered trivial: it is simply the external, efficient cause of the individual's self-individuation.

Yet, Suárez insists that it is thanks to the substantial form that certain naturally necessary accidents are configured in the composite's matter. It is due to the form of man, for example, that a man's flesh has the accidents that it does (quantity, qualities such as heat) without which the substantial composite would fall apart. This 'dissolution' is, however, precisely the disappearance of the mode of union – a mode without which form would not be able to exercise any effect on matter. Further, endurance is, in effect,

³⁴ On Suárez's lessening of the distinction between substantial and accidental change in this respect, see e.g. Hattab (2012, pp. 111-12).

Suárez's 'subsistence' – a mode of 'thin' substance – rather than the function of an eternal substantial form in the face of self-actualizing change. *Qua* mode, a certain individual's 'subsistence' is not eternal; its ceasing to modify a substance is the substance's ultimate ceasing to be able to self-relate *qua* ontologically real individual independent of all others – the individual's death *qua* self-dependent.

In spite of the independence of accidents, and substance's independence from any one accidental mode, the particular is ineluctably 'thickened' – changed and actualized – *through modes*. The particular's original 'thinness' seems opaque. But one must remember that accidental modes modify *accidents* rather than substance – 'making' them attach to substance. Since accidents are separable from the substances they attach to, 'thinness' cannot simply be thought of in terms of Aristotelian potentiality. While an Aristotelian 'man' is potentially white, a Suárezian 'man' is (accidentally) whitened by an accidental mode that attaches a separable accident to him. This is complicated by the fact that, if some naturally necessary accidents are separated, the 'thin' composite itself will pass out of existence. Though an ordinary particular such as 'horse' does not depend on the inherence of *this* or *that* accident, it does depend on the inherence of – or union with – substantial form, and, in virtue of that, also on the inherence of the concomitantly necessary accidents. The matter and the form of a hylomorphic individual are in principle separable – that is, logically self-dependent – but they are both ontologically 'incomplete' prior to being 'conjoined' by a substantial mode of inherence or union,³⁵ for they cannot naturally *be* (exist) without each other. The resultant composite individual can really undergo one type of change: *accidental change* – e.g. the individual's becoming sizeable, white or hot – without this going as far as to entail a substantial change. *Substantial change*, on the other hand, is merely the individual's passing out of existence. Death is, thus, the same as *this* individual's ontological

³⁵ See e.g. *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. XV, Sect. 5 in Suárez (1605) or in Suárez, Kronen (2000, pp. 77-8).

dissolution. *Qua* 'thin', the composite individual is hardly self-changing, for accidental change, when purely accidental, is apart from it and does not affect it – and it is not a change produced by the 'thin' individual.

These reflections show that the metaphor of 'thinness', as applied to Suárez's thought, differs *subtly* from some more recent conceptions of 'thinness'. On D. M. Armstrong's definition, a 'thin particular' is "the particular apart from its properties";³⁶ together with its properties, the particular is 'thick'. So far, so good. But Armstrong also makes the qualification that the 'thin' particular is not 'bare' but 'clothed', because, despite being taken as non-identical with, and independent of, its properties, it can be understood as instantiating them.³⁷ As Theodore Sider suggests, for instance, it could be possible for the instantiation of properties to be part of the 'thin' particular's essence.³⁸ If instantiation is understood as a kind of relation, Suárez's 'thin particulars' are, rather, 'bare particulars' – as properties cannot be said to be part of their essence and a relation to them occurs only accidentally. Gustav Bergmann's characterization of 'bare particulars' suggests, however, that they are not merely devoid of properties, but also of essences (natures):

Bare particulars neither are nor have natures. Any two of them, therefore, are not intrinsically but only numerically different. That is their bareness. It is impossible for a bare particular to be "in" more than one ordinary thing. That is their particularity.

[...]

A bare particular is a mere individuator. Structurally that is its only job. It does nothing else. In this respect it is like Aristotle's matter, or, perhaps more closely, like Thomas' *materia signata*. Only, it is a thing.³⁹

Suárez's principle of individuation – as well as Scotus' *haecceitas* – share with Bergmann's 'bare particulars' and with Armstrong's 'thin particulars' the individual's numerical uniqueness ('thisness') as well as its lack of any further features beyond the individuality (Suárez) or 'thisness' (Scotus).

³⁶ See Armstrong (1997, p. 115).

³⁷ See Armstrong (1989, p. 95).

³⁸ See Sider (2006).

³⁹ See Bergmann (1967, pp. 24-5).

However, it is not possible to think of either Suárez's individuality or Scotus' *haecceitas* as mere numerical difference devoid of anything intrinsic. Since, like the common nature, *haecceitas* *is* in fact the individual substance in itself, uniqueness is an intrinsic nature upon which the extrinsic – numerical distinctness from other unique individuals – should follow. However, individuality as something intrinsic to an individual is only fully expounded in Suárez's work.⁴⁰ As J. J. E. Gracia shows, Suárez understands individuality as that which is incommunicable in an individual: what cannot be shared – or *common* – between individuals, even of the same kind.⁴¹ In this respect, Suárez writes:

Although a thing's being one in itself [i.e. individual] is by nature prior to its being distinct from others, nevertheless the latter follows intrinsically from the former without any positive addition being made to the thing itself that is one, but only by negation, by which, having posited the other term, it is true to say that this is not that. [...], in the case of individual unity, what is a principle of the individual with respect to its constitution and its incommunicability or indivisibility in itself is also a principle of its distinction from others; and, conversely, what is a principle of distinction must also be a principle of constitution.⁴²

In this sense, Suárez's individuals are not bare particulars, for they are not natureless or *not*-natures. Rather than being mere individuators, they are the individuals *qua* individuated by themselves: by the *entitas tota*. In the context of Scotus' and Suárez's thought, a particular might be thought of as 'thin' when it is considered *solely* in terms of its individuality. In Scotus' case, this 'thinness' is highlighted both positively and negatively. On the one hand, *haecceitas* is something 'added' to the common nature rather than a mere 'instance' of the common nature as a Platonic particular would be of the Forms. On the other hand, *nothing* apart from *haecceitas* constitutes a logical condition for the individual's uniqueness. In Suárez's case, the 'incommunicable' nature is also 'added', although it is conceded that the

⁴⁰ See Gracia (1994, pp. 475-510). See also Gracia's comprehensive study of individuation, Gracia (1988).

⁴¹ See Gracia (1994, pp. 484-5).

⁴² See *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. IV, Sect. 3 in Suárez (1605) as cited and translated in Gracia (1994, p. 485).

'addition' reflects nothing more than a conceptual distinction between the unique and the common.

Further, there are many things individuality is asserted as *not* being – which is a negation rather than an 'addition'. For example, Suárez's principle of individuation is not an individual's existence, for a unique essence is knowable in itself – *in principle* (e.g. by God) if not *in fact* (by human knowers) – quite apart from the existent it individuates. The principle of individuation is also not quantity or other accidents, for these are separable from a substance. It is not an individual's specifically configured matter, for Socrates' bones and sinews can hardly account for 'Socrateity'. It is not substantial form, for form without matter cannot provide necessary and sufficient conditions for a hylomorphic composite's individuality. Although Scotus's *haecceitas* is none of these things either, it does not encompass them, for it is a formal reality of individuality – outside the formal reality of the common nature – rather than an actualized logical principle and an immanent metaphysical (ontologically realized) ground of individuation. In that sense, *haecceitas* cannot serve as a principle of logical self-causation – since, even though an individual is *this* individual in virtue of its *haecceitas*, the individual is not itself *solely* and *entitatively* in virtue of *haecceitas*. In contrast, Suárez's principle of individuation is entitatively *all-encompassing*: it represents a so called 'individuation by entity'.⁴³ As such, it is indeed a principle of – ontologically realized – logical self-causation.

What is meant by entity is either a simple individual – a substantial or accidental form or matter – or a composite individual such as a hylomorphic substance. Just as in Aristotle's metaphysics, both a simple individual, such as a form, and a hylomorphic compound may be understood as logically self-caused. There are many kinds of logically self-caused individuals in Suárez's ontology: forms, matter, accidents, and hylomorphic composites. The criterion of logical self-causation is fulfilled for each of these kinds of

⁴³ See Gracia (1994, pp. 498-9).

individuals because each has its own entity, i.e. itself, as its principle of individuation. But this picture is complicated by the fact that a composite substance's principle of individuation is effectively derived from the principles of individuation of its components – of *this* form and *this* (parcel of) matter and *this* union between them. It may seem, then, that reality at the ground-level is composed just of substantial and accidental forms, and parcels of matter. However, this is implausible, as forms, matter, and accidents, must stand in necessary relationships of mutuality for there to be an integrated *actual* ('physical') world of *whole* individual *existents*. Individuals such as substantial matter and form only become ontologically complete in the physical world after forming 'thin' hylomorphic composites. It is only upon – or in virtue of – this completion that substances are 'thickened' by accidents that presuppose them and become, in turn, ontologically complete in relation to them.

Here, a Suárezian theory of individuals' self-causation faces the same dilemma as a purely Aristotelian one. Simple entities – like Aristotle's forms – are straightforwardly logically self-dependent, but it is, for Suárez, as for Aristotle, implausible that a coherent picture of the actual world can be constructed *solely* on the basis of these. Indeed, matter, form, accidents, and modes, must be interrelated in a way true to our experience of everyday particulars: men, horses, rabbits. On the other hand, the complexity of composite particulars is puzzling. In effect, a Suárezian composite is individuated by itself *qua entitas tota*, but, *qua* composite, it is *in principle* divisible – if *actually* undivided – into *this* matter and *this* form, each self-individuated. *This* matter and *this* form are held together by *this* substantial mode of union. *This* independent composite particular endures and distinguishes itself thereupon in virtue of *this* substantial mode of subsistence: a kind of self-relation and distinction from others.

If this is so, it is easy to think of the principle of individuation of the whole composite as a mere combination of the principles of individuation of the matter, the substantial form and the substantial modes respectively. A

mode's principle of individuation must be partially identical with that of the entire composite, for both inherence and subsistence are 'internal relations': a relation of *this* form to *this* matter, and *this* composite's relation to itself (and, what is the same, its distinction from others), respectively. This means that the 'thin' hylomorphic particular is not ultimately 'thin': not only does it have *a* nature, but it has several natures – those of its components. Being composed of form and matter too, the accidents that serve to 'thicken' the 'thin' substance also have natures.

Besides, while substantial form and matter constitute a concrete, *physical* composite, they also seem to produce a kind of 'imitation' of – or abstraction from – the physical individual. Suárez refers to this abstraction as 'metaphysical form'. The metaphysical form corresponds to Aristotle's 'species-essence' in that it is "the entire nature of a thing"⁴⁴ – combining the nature of the matter and the nature of the form. Suárez circumvents Aristotle's problem of identifying individuals with general essences by arguing that the metaphysical form is a real form or essence only by analogy with physical form and is, thus, not fully identical with the individual *qua* composite of matter and substantial (physical) form. Metaphysical form is not really distinct from the individual hylomorphic composite as it exists, but the individual is not simply a combination of the nature of *this* matter and the nature of *this* form – i.e. it is not mere metaphysical form.

Apart from being *partially* identical with its metaphysical form-essence, an individual is characterized by a kind of 'terminal difference' – that is, *individual incommunicability*, as opposed to a shareable essence. The individual is only *partially* identical, also, with this 'absolute difference'. This 'characterization' is the 'terminus' – or the *limit* – of what the individual can be *qua* unique. In that metaphysical form – the individual's essence – is not really distinct from the incommunicable terminus, incommunicability and essence are, at bottom, *entitatively* the same. The essence in abstraction is *not*

⁴⁴ See e.g. *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. XV, Sect. 11 in Suárez (1605) or in Suárez, Kronen (2000, p. 178).

the individual's uniqueness;⁴⁵ but, the uniqueness is *the essence as it exists*, i.e. 'metaphysical form' immanentized. The essence plus existence is the unique individual; the whole individual minus its existence is the essence in abstraction from ontological immanence. If our understanding of logical self-causation as the individual's identity with a unique essence is to meet Suárez's criteria, this must be the essence *as it exists in the unique individual* – in the concretely unified, self-subsistent individual composite of matter and physical form. Apart from its existence, the essence is mere abstraction from the individual whole – a form by analogy.

What seems to emerge is that the composite individual *is* a robust unity against the accidents. If this were not so, the 'thickened' particular would also be considered a unitary individual individuated by its *entitas tota* as a combination, this time, of the *substantial* form, matter and mode of union, and the *accidental* form and mode of inherence. However, the particular that is now and again 'thickened' by *this* or *that* accident can be 'thinned' again and then 'thickened' by other accidents (even if specifically the same – one 'whiteness' being replaced by another). The individual's robustness lies at the core of Suárez's explanation of the doctrine of transubstantiation. In the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist, the *whole* substance (matter, form and inherence) of the bread and wine 'changes' into the *whole* substance of Christ's body while the perceivable accidents of the bread and wine remain *qua* separable. Rather than being accidental change, this is *substantial* change: the substance of the bread and wine vanishes *qua* substantial composite and Christ's body is 'produced' in its place. This is Suárez's way of suggesting that individuals do not *really* change in the ontological sense: rather, they come into, and pass out of, existence. Thus, the incoherent idea of self-causation as self-change seems – at least partially – transcended. However, the distinctions between 'thin' and 'thick' particulars

⁴⁵ Now we can see why replacing *this* mode of 'union' or 'subsistence' with another 'union' or 'subsistence' does not affect the 'essence in abstraction', though it does affect the entitatively realized essence *qua* unique.

(metaphorically implemented in our interpretation of Suárez's discourse), and, thus, between substance and accidents, do not make for an especially parsimonious theory of logical self-causation. These distinctions produce a number of – seemingly intractable – difficulties.

Identifying Lingering Problems in Suárez's Account of Self-Individuated Entities, and Conclusion

There are further problems which the 'robust thinness' of Suárez's individuals does not easily overcome. Such, for instance, is the problem of endurance. Like Scotist *haecceitas* – and *unlike* Bergmann's 'bare particulars', which are merely momentary⁴⁶ – Suárez's individual entity is enduring rather than absolutely transient.⁴⁷ According to the 'bare particular' view, change in a persisting composite is explained by means of an evaluation of the differences between 'momentary' things – i.e. absolutely transient 'temporal slices' – which constitute the complex continuant. The 'momentary slices' are individual solely in virtue of a nature-less, property-less 'bare particular' unique to each. That particular is, reciprocally, momentary in virtue of the 'slice' it individuates. Thus, two 'slices' completely identical in properties can count as really distinct as long as they are individuated by two really distinct bare particulars.⁴⁸

Though this is not the place to assess such a metaphysical account, it is at least clear that it goes some distance toward avoiding the incoherent marriage of unchangeable individuality (*outside* time) with internal change (*in* time). It is from the differences between 'momentary slices' – which do

⁴⁶ See Bergmann (1967, p. 34). For a discussion of Bergmann's momentary bare particulars, see e.g. Angelone & Torrenzo (2009). For an insightful introductory discussion of different metaphysical theories of the 'persistence through time' of 'concrete particulars' (e.g. 'endurantism' and 'perdurantism'), see Loux (2006, pp. 230-58).

⁴⁷ For a detailed comparative discussion of Scotus' *haecceitas* and Bergmann's bare particulars, see Park (1990).

⁴⁸ See e.g. Kim, Sosa, Rosenkrantz (2009, p. 139-40) for a summary of this account.

not themselves change (for they are momentary) – that a kind of continuity arises. This continuity is not individuated by *one* 'bare particularity', though each of its 'slices' is. Not so with Suárez's individual substance – which is both a continuant *and* individuated by *one* individuality, rather than 'split' into individual moments. This substance endures, however, primarily in virtue of its mode of subsistence rather than in virtue of an Aristotelian eternal form. It must be recalled that the subsistence of substance is effectively a mode of self-relation and distinction from others and, *qua* mode, it is a relational aspect of substance rather than an exhaustive definition. Even so, 'subsistence' is a substantial mode – that is, *constitutive of* substance – and, as such, it ensures that the substance endures *qua* self-dependent. But, given that the individual composite is after all transient, it is unclear what such endurance entails.

Although accidental change is inconsequential to the individual *qua* 'thin', it is evident that the latter persists long enough to be variously 'thickened' by accidents – and, in fact, *because* it is so 'thickened'. This is not to say that there is any point at which a composite substance is literally 'thin' – but, rather, that 'thinness' is what is enduring and unchangeable about a Suárezian hylomorphic substance, while 'thickening' is a function of its changing accidents. The composite could not naturally come to be or survive *qua* composite without being already 'thickened' by some necessary accidents, though not necessarily by *this* or *that* individual accident. The 'thin' substance, on the other hand, must be *this* composite for as long as it exists – its essence being eternal, albeit only as an 'objective potency' in God's mind, and only truly individual *as it exists*. This 'eternity' is not supplied by substantial form. Unlike an eternal Aristotelian form, the physical substantial form *perishes* upon substantial change – excepting the 'human (rational) soul' which is united with a resurrected body after death.

Despite the transience of substance and physical form, Suárezian particulars cannot be absolutely transient. There seems to be, in effect, a *spectrum* of transiency for particulars. 'Thick' particulars – *qua* accidental

unities – can be more transient than ‘thin’ ones – as a white or musical man tends to be shorter-lived than a man more generally. Though, a ‘thick’ particular such as a quantified substance, generally speaking, lives as long as the ‘thin’ substance, for every composite must possess an accident of quantity in order to exist (but not *this* or *that* quantity). On the other hand, a ‘thick’ particular *qua* characterized by a certain shade of redness or quality of musicality – that is, by an accidental mode – may be even more transient than red-faced or musical man in general. If substantial form is not eternal, however, the ‘endurance’ of ‘thin’ substance must be differently based than that of Aristotelian substance – for, not having an eternal form, a substance cannot be said to be both *in* time and *outside* time. Even the heavenly union of the human soul with a resurrected body could possibly be thought of as a ‘new birth’, rather than as the eternity of *this* one substantial form (though this is not Suárez’s view). Still, it seems impossible to think of a principle of individuation – of self-individuated *entitas* – as something merely perishable and untouched by eternity.

Let us look at this from a different angle. The relations between a substance and its accidents – that is, between different individuals – are ways in which both substance and accidents are *punctuated* by time. These ‘punctuations’ are enacted by the modes. *At one time*, an accident is affected to inhere in a substance. *At a certain point in time*, substantial form and matter are affected by the mode of union, and form a composite. *At another time*, the mode of union ceases to affect form and matter, and the composite substance perishes – i.e. undergoes substantial change. Substantial form, matter and accidents all have independent principles of individuation, yet only truly *come to be* – that is, gain full ontological status in the physical world – once they participate in the making of an individual composite. If this is so, temporal punctuations by mode are mere aspects of real entities, i.e. ‘internal changes’ enacted by modes whose *existence* is that of the entity (substance or accident) they modify. And the existence of the inhering accidents is that of the substance inhered in.

Then, there is little sense in *really* counterposing 'thin' particulars to accidents – for the combination of form, matter and accidents, via substantial and accidental modes, can be thought of as *producing* an ontologically full *entitas*. This may, however, have us deal again with the old Aristotelian problem of self-change – as Suárez's 'thick' particulars must, then, be self-changing in a similar way to Aristotelian substances. If an entity's principle of individuation is its 'essence as it exists', an accident's essence is only fully real when part of the 'thick' particular that is, then, self-changing in virtue of accidental change. Although this self-change does not concern the 'thin' particular *per se*, it does generally concern the particular as a variously transforming – 'thick' and 'thin' – *existent*.

In order to substantiate just such a point, perhaps, Suárez posits a purely mental distinction between existence and essence, arguing that, without existence, essence is real only in the form of 'objective potency'. This is to say that it is logically possible for essence to exist – and that it always lives as an idea in the divine intellect. In that existence is 'non-repugnant' to it – which is to say that it is not logically self-contradictory for it to exist – essence *can* be caused by God to attain its full ontological reality.⁴⁹ Once this fullness is in place, the complete individual can be thought of as its own cause: for, *rather than causing the essence itself, God only causes the essence to exist in an individual*. All this is to say, then, that Suárezian particulars are not merely perishable. Their principles of individuation are eternal and objective in virtue of being 'non-repugnant' to existence – yet, only upon existence is the particular fully individuated. An individual – a substance or accident – individuates itself in virtue of its own essence, though only 'as the essence exists'. Not only the essence of the whole entity, but also those of matter, form and accidents, naturally exist only in the composite existent. In this sense, a substance's acquisition of accidents and the unification of substantial form with matter in a hylomorphic composite are, after all, actualizations of

⁴⁹ See *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. XXXI, Sect. 2 in Suárez (1605). For a discussion of this, see e.g. Secada (2000, pp. 63-5).

potencies – the potencies of substance and accidents. Logical self-causation is, thus, tied to, and fully realized in, actuality.

Still, a 'thick' particular cannot be said to be logically self-caused, for what is lasting and truly essential about it – and, thus, unchangeable prior to substantial change (death) – is the 'thin' particular, considered apart from the logically self-dependent accidents. Yet, an accident cannot really be considered logically self-caused prior to its full actuality – the coming to existence of its essence – in the 'thick' particular substance. It turns out, then, that a 'thick' particular is really two or more logically self-caused individuals bound together – the 'thin' substance and one or more variously modified accidents attached to it – while the accidents are *dependent* on the substance *for the full ontological realization* of their logical self-causation (self-individuation). Substantial form is similarly dependent on the hylomorphic substance it helps compose for this very actuality.

This picture is hardly simple – indeed, it calls for a better integrated conceptualization of logically self-caused individuals. It is no accident that early modern metaphysical theories of self-causation draw upon Suárez's insights without preserving his distinction between substance and accidents. Leibniz's metaphysics of monads and Spinoza's monistic metaphysics are cases in point. While the former includes accidents in the essences of infinitely many individuals – thus reducing the accidental to the substantially and modally essential – the latter does so by constructing a tightly woven metaphysics of a single infinite Substance, Its essential Attributes and Its modes. Additionally, Leibniz and Spinoza are seemingly more concerned than Suárez to demonstrate the unity *of the whole world* in general by theorizing more broadly the relations between different finite existents – rather than merely between finite substance and its accidents, and between a composite's matter and form. However, by analogy with Suárez's reduction of relatedness ('commonality') between individuals to a logically self-caused individual's particularized and only mentally distinguishable 'common nature', relations

between Leibnizian and Spinozist finite existents are fully immanentized to (a) logically self-caused individual(s). To boot, neither Leibniz nor Spinoza fully succeeds in shedding Aristotle's narratives of self-change and generality which re-emerge in a different form. This is the topic of our next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Leibniz's Monadic Self-Causation and Spinoza's Self-Caused God-Substance

This chapter undertakes an elaboration of Leibniz's monadological, and Spinoza's monistic, metaphysical thought, insofar as they embody a significant logical step in the historical development of the idea of individuals' self-causation. Leibniz and Spinoza reduce accidents to essential modifications of individual substances – which is more conducive to a well-integrated conception of self-causation than Suárez's allowance for logically self-dependent accidents. Such reduction means that an individual must capaciously encompass, under its essence, all things that pertain to substance – that is, material, formal, accidental and modal aspects.¹ But it also means that the individual is metaphysically explained in virtue of its identity with *one* simple, unique essence. Being truly undivided and indivisible, this essence is not a sum-total of the essences defining the individual's logically self-dependent components as in Suárez's ontology of hylomorphic substantial composites.

Self-causation – *causa sui* – is a term Spinoza employs in the definition of his *one* God-Substance, and is equally applicable to Leibniz's finite substantial individuals (the 'monads'). Spinoza understands Substance as an infinitely rich and infinitely simple individual whose essence does not require any other essences for Substance's metaphysical explanation. Spinoza can be said to understand this essence as a *concept* – for the way Substance is *conceived of is* Its metaphysical explication in terms of a complete, ultimate

¹ For a detailed account of Leibniz's metaphysical picture of whole individuals, in its various revisions, see e.g. Di Bella (2005) and McCullough (1996). For a conciser discussion, see e.g. Mugnai (2001).

essence.² Because Spinoza's understanding of 'cause' corresponds to the Platonic conjunction of cause and reason, of necessary *and* sufficient conditions, this also means that Substance logically causes Itself, in the sense of providing Its own internal reason, rather than being so 'caused' by other individuals. Hence, for Spinoza, too, *causa sui* means *ratio sui*.

Leibniz conceives of the essence of an individual as a unique "complete concept" (or "full notion")³ out of which all of the individual's actions, accidents, or anything that happens to it and can be said (predicated) of it, flow. The acts by which these 'aspects' of substance issue from it are *spontaneous*. That is to say, they are not determined (or, 'necessitated') by external causal influences, or metaphysically explicable by anything other than the substance itself. In this sense, Leibniz's substances are also *causa sui* and *ratio sui*. In his early metaphysics, for instance, he writes:

[...] whatever takes place [...] in any substance is a consequence of its notion, so that the mere idea or essence of the soul [substance] carries with it the requirement that all the soul's [substance's] states [...] must arise spontaneously from its own nature.⁴

The term 'logical self-causation', then, applies both to Spinoza's God-Substance and to a Leibnizian substance inasmuch as both are logically identical with a unique essence. However, there is, both in Leibniz's and in Spinoza's metaphysics, *more* than the individual's logical identity with its essence and the derivability of all its accidents from this essence. Since they are so derivable, and, thus, essential⁵ to the individual, accidents are, in effect, substantial modifications:⁶ *ways* or 'states' in which substance is. But, Leibniz also argues that these modifications arise *spontaneously* from the individual's

² See *Ethics*, Part I, Definitions & Axioms in Spinoza (2001, pp. 3-4).

³ See e.g. *Correspondence with Arnauld* (1686-87), I, [G., II., 47-59], Hanover, July 14, 1686 in Leibniz (1989, pp. 333-5).

⁴ *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686) in Leibniz (2004, p. 24). Text in square brackets is mine.

⁵ In the sense of being contained necessarily in the substantial individual, not in the sense of literally *changing* the individual.

⁶ The terms 'mode' and 'modification' can be used interchangeably. We use 'modification' in order to emphasize the *activity* of modifying an individual substance.

essence – that is, in a way internally determined in substance alone, out of its own ‘causal power’, rather than as a result of external causal influences. Since, *qua its* logically derivable modes, substance’s states are essential to it – they are an essential part of its *being*, too. Then, Leibniz seems to also have in mind a kind of spontaneous self-creation, i.e. *ontological self-causation*. This creates curious tension between substance, *qua* always already identical with a changeless essence (i.e. *qua* logically self-caused), and substance *qua* processually self-creating (i.e. *qua* ontologically self-caused).

Although Leibniz does suggest that this self-creation is ‘dependent’ on God’s choice to create *this* world with all its individuals,⁷ it is hard to fathom what such ‘dependence’ can mean. He insists that each accident of individual substance or each thing that happens to it (i.e. each ‘predicate’) proceeds *freely* (spontaneously) from the substance rather than being ‘necessitated’ by God or anything extraneous. At the same time, what is ‘created’ by God – i.e. what is allowed to exist – is *this* individual with its complete concept (essence) which, from God’s eternal ‘view’, is eternal. However, since this concept (essence) is made up of all the spontaneously flowing internal aspects of the individual, it is the individual’s own achievement from the get-go. Then, since God can only create the individual *qua* ‘whole’ (with its ‘whole’ essence), yet this ‘wholeness’ is the individual’s achievement, the ‘creation’ is, paradoxically, nothing other than the individual’s *self*-creation in light of the eternal essence.

There is similar tension in Spinoza’s metaphysics. Apart from understanding God-Substance as logically self-caused, Spinoza seems to also understand It as ontologically self-dependent – for It requires nothing apart from Its own essence in order to necessarily exist. In fact, the very first ‘Definition’ of the *Ethics* reads: “By cause of itself, I understand that, whose

⁷ See e.g. *Correspondence with Arnauld* (1686-87), I, [G., II., 47-59], Hanover, July 14, 1686 in Leibniz (1989, pp. 333-5).

essence involves existence; or that, whose nature cannot be conceived unless existing".⁸ Because the essence of the all-encompassing *one* God-Substance explains all there is *qua* absolute and eternal, Substance's existence, *qua* 'explanandum', must necessarily exist; else, there would be nothing to explain. *Qua* explicans and explicandum respectively, the eternal, total *essence* of all there is, and the eternal, total *existence* of all there is, entail and presuppose each other. Since Spinoza considers absolutely *all* there is as *one* Substance, Substance's reason for being Itself must be internal to Itself – for there can be no 'beyond' wherein an external reason could be found. However, if Substance always already *is* (eternally) – then, perhaps, it need not bring Itself into being, i.e. actualize Itself, in a processual manner. For Its existence, as an ontologically real infinite thing fully determined by Its essence, is the same as this essence and, therefore, unchangeable, rather than processually determined. Although the Substance is ontologically self-dependent, it need not be ontologically self-caused in the sense of gradually bringing itself into existence. Yet, just like Leibniz's monads, Spinoza's Substance is finitely modified and has various internal aspects – meaning that there may, in a sense, be such a process of self-creation.

We show, in this chapter, that a kind of internal change indeed characterizes both Leibniz's and Spinoza's individuals, and that it has a decidedly Aristotelian structure which embodies the tension between activity and passivity, between actuality and potentiality. But, unlike Aristotle, Leibniz and Spinoza do not set up this self-change in terms of the fulfilment of the essence of a species such as 'rabbit'. Thus, at first blush, they do not subordinate an individual's logical self-causation – i.e. an individual's identity with *its* essence – to generality. However, they posit an integrated *one and the same* world – the whole Universe ordained by God, for Leibniz, and the single God-Substance, for Spinoza – on which finite individuals provide

⁸ See *Ethics*, Part I, Definitions & Axioms in Spinoza (2001, pp. 3).

finite perspectives. This means, for Leibniz, that, apart from being essentially *unique*, all different finite individuals need to be essentially *compatible*. For Spinoza, this concomitance is ensured by the fact that each finite existent is, in fact, a modification of the *one and the same* Substance. For both Leibniz and Spinoza, the compatibility between finite existents is only possible if they, in a sense, instantiate a universal order which is, in some sense, general in relation to them. Thus, finite individuals are still subordinated to generality, albeit in a different sense than in Aristotle's theory of substance.

The subordination happens *through* the relations of compatibility between finite individuals. For Leibniz and Spinoza, as for Suárez, these relations are effected by modes. This is to say that, rather than being separate from, and external to, individuals, relations are merely *ways* in which an individual is. Relations can obtain either *within* substance, i.e. between different modes of the same individual (for Spinoza), or *between* different finite individuals (for Leibniz). Leibniz's simple self-caused individual's modes effect the relations to *all other* individuals in the world. In harmony with these *other* self-caused individuals, the individual takes part in the production of a self-consistent world, objectively unsurpassable in its richness, relational simplicity and coherence. The world's 'richness' consists in there being in the Universe as many self-caused individuals as can possibly co-exist without contradiction, and as many relations between them as possible. The world's 'simplicity', on the other hand, is grounded as much in the simplicity and harmony of the relational network that connects these individuals as in that of the individuals themselves *qua* self-caused. This is to do with the lack of any real, positive 'addition' to that which is essential to logically self-caused individuals – for the relations between them reduce to their unique essences. The world's relational structure is metaphysically grounded in its essential structure.

Since no finite (set of) modification(s), and, therefore, no (set of) relation(s), is fully identical with the whole eternally unique individual,

however, the relational structure seems to be an abstraction from the self-caused whole individual, rather than an ontological reality in its own right. For, considered *qua* whole, the individual is not divided into its relations. Nonetheless, the relational structure must in an important sense be real as part of the world's essential structure. For, without relations between individuals identical with their unique essences, there cannot be a consistent world. Since this relational structure is ultimately reducible to the essences of logically self-caused individuals, it can be real only insofar as it is ideal. This is to say that the structure is not *independently real*, and, thus, *not real in an ontologically fundamental way*.

This is Leibniz's solution to the contradiction inherent in an individual's being *eternal* and, at the same time, having to *become* what it is, from being what it is *not*, through a process of internal change that unfolds in time. If the process of becoming and the eternal essence were equally real, there would be a strong contradiction between the two. If, as Leibniz insists, self-change has a merely dependent reality, and is, thus, nothing apart from the individual's unchangeable essence, the contradiction seems disabled. This is to say, then, that *ontological self-causation is not independently real*.

A palpable tension lingers, however, because the relational structure *must* be real for Leibniz's *many* self-caused individuals not to collapse into *one* fundamentally real individual. It is not clear why *many* fundamentally real substantial individuals should be posited at all if the relational structure interconnecting them – i.e. the Universe *as a whole* – has no independent reality and is merely an abstract generality. In being related via their various modifications, Leibniz's individuals have the status of 'local' perspectives interrelated within a global, universal order. If these interrelations were merely 'beings of reason' – aspects produced by mind rather than discovered in metaphysical (ontological) reality – it should follow that there are really no finite logically self-caused individuals. For the modifications from which the interrelations issue could not then be real *qua* modifications of independent

finite individuals, and – seeing as modes are by definition constitutive of, and, thus, essential to, their substances – the individuals themselves must collapse into a fundamentally non-relational, unified and undifferentiated, infinite substantial reality. It is this reality, rather than finite interrelated individuals, that must, then, be independently real.

Such a 'monistic collapse' is not viable for Leibniz's system. He thinks it imperative for reality, in its entirety, to be infinitely rich *and* infinitely simple. Reality's constitution by an infinite number of simple, logically self-caused substances is necessary for such richness and simplicity. But this means that the tension between the relational structure's reality and ideality is unresolvable. Since the relational structure is shareable, it is – unlike the unique and incommunicable essences of individuals – also *general*. In virtue of their internal changes from mode to mode, Leibniz's individuals instantiate this generality. If the generality is reducible to each of them, however, it is not independently real. The relations that compose it are also not independently real. From here it follows that individuals are not *really* related and each of them *is* ultimate (independent) reality.

But, if there is to be *one* unified reality, they *have to* be related. This automatically means that they relate to each other through internal modifications that amount to self-change and, thus, instantiate a general order. Leibniz's meaning is that it is so from the perspective of the human mind which is finite and modified *in relation to itself*. Therefore, the relational structure – and the self-change and generality it implicates for self-caused finite individuals – are ideal. However, this in turn compromises the independent reality of the *many* finite self-caused individuals.

These conceptual ambiguities might at first seem resolvable through Spinoza's monistic system where finite existents are indeed explicitly reduced to one substantial reality – a unique and infinite, logically self-caused God-Substance. This Substance is infinite in that It relates within Itself an infinite richness of infinite and finite modes which, unlike It, are not self-caused. The

infinite modes are internally differentiated into finite modes at least in part externally determined with respect to other finite modes. So, Substance modifies Itself not only infinitely, but also *finitely* – that is, *is* in some sense finite – insofar as It is partially identical with each one of these finite modifications. There is, on the face of it, no tension between reality and ideality at the level of a Spinozist finite (particular) existent – for that existent is fully reducible to and dependent on the truly self-caused infinite (individual) Substance. But, the tension resurfaces at the level of unitary substantial reality *qua* finitely, and not just infinitely, expressible. Although Substance is, in an absolute sense, eternal and unchangeable, It contains internal change in virtue of the differences between its infinitely many finite modifications. Seeing as, *qua* modifications, these are partially identical with and, thus, constitutive of It, It would not be Itself – and so, would not be logically self-caused – were they to be merely ideal (dependently real) but not playing an essential part in the constitution of fundamental reality⁹ *qua* unchangeable. Although Spinoza's self-sufficient eternal Substance is supposed to be impervious to such constitution by finitude, it would be contradictory for modes to be derived from It if they were not always already there, as 'part' of It.

Beneath a superficial contrast between Leibniz's pluralistic and Spinoza's monistic metaphysics of self-causation, the two systems converge in terms of a basic incoherence. This incoherence arises out of an ontological need to articulate the infinite richness and simplicity of the Universe in terms of the undeniable facts of finitude which exist in concreteness, perspectival limitedness and spatio-temporal relatedness. The requirement that the general order depend on the essence(s) of (a) logically self-caused individual(s)

⁹ A similar view is convincingly defended against counterarguments in Harris (1973, pp. 55-69; 1995, pp. 23-38). However, Errol E. Harris does not interpret Spinoza's God-Substance as ultimately incoherent as a result of Its poorly mediated combination of holistic changelessness (sameness) with internal modal change (differentiation).

cannot dissolve this basic incoherence. For the order's internal interrelatedness must be real in a way that is not merely reducible to incommunicable, undifferentiatedly eternal, essences, if these individuals are to be what they are.

The details of this complex, unmitigated, or, at least, insufficiently mediated, tension must now be fleshed out, first in Leibniz's metaphysical thought, and then in Spinoza's. This involves clarification of Leibniz's understanding of the world's relational structure *qua* dependent on the world's essential structure, and of the contradiction between eternity and internal change emerging from this understanding. The possibility that inquiry into this problem can be rendered otiose through Spinoza's monistic conception of self-caused Substance is examined and then rejected. The rejection is due to the profound similarity between Leibniz's and Spinoza's respective treatment of self-modification *qua* internal change and of finitude's relationship to an infinite universal order.

The Dependence of the World's Relational Structure on Substantial Individuals' Logical Self-Causation in Leibniz's Monadological Metaphysics

There is only one kind of self-caused individual in Leibniz's system – the finite substance known in his mature metaphysics as a 'monad'. Accidents, modes, matter, and form, are mere aspects of substance, and, thus, fully dependent on it. Rather than being logically self-dependent in virtue of proffering its own principle of individuation, an accident, for Leibniz (as for Aristotle), is an individual only in virtue of the substantial individual of which it is an accident. What is more – Leibniz's accidents play a constitutive role with respect to their substances, in the sense that the latter would not be what they are without that which 'accidentally' belongs to them. This 'accidental

possession' – say, a certain quality such as '*this* whiteness' or '*this* heat' – does not amount to a substance's being characterized by an abstract entity ('whiteness' or 'heat' in general), but, rather, to the having of a unique property. The accident's 'uniqueness' is, however, bestowed on it by the substance – wherefore an 'accident' is ultimately an 'essential (or *monadic*) property'.¹⁰

Then, no additional relational modes are needed for the integration of two separate individuals, substance and accident, each with its own unique essence – for the essence of the latter is reducible to, or dependent on, that of the former. In this sense, a modification and an accident of substance amount to the same thing – for an accident affects substance without having a separate essence and existence. A mode whose function is to unify form and matter is, for similar reasons, also redundant: as matter and form do not have essences apart from that of an individual substance they are part of. Since an 'accident' makes no 'positive' addition to a substantial individual, it can be referred to merely as a 'mode' or 'modification'. Anything that characterizes substance – quantity, qualities, material (bodily) or formal (mental) aspects,¹¹ as well as occurrences, events or situations involving it – can be referred to as a substantial modification.

Nevertheless, modes continue to have a relational function; though, in a Universe in which the only independent individuals are really distinct substances, relations obtain only between such substances, rather than between matter and form or between substance and accidents. It is thanks to such relations that an integrated, harmonious *world* – instead of, merely,

¹⁰ See e.g. Di Bella (2005, p. 88-9). For a discussion of the ways in which Leibniz's accidents can be understood as essential, see e.g. Savage (1998, pp. 33-8).

¹¹ On the face of it, this is the Aristotelian distinction between matter (body) and form (soul) in individual substances *qua* living things. However, as T. S. Eliot notes in his discussion of the development of Leibniz's 'monadism', Leibniz's early modern distinction between matter and form (body and mind) is different from Aristotle's. Matter and form (body and mind), for Leibniz, as for Spinoza, are at bottom one and the same thing, while Aristotle's are essentially different even if existing only in relation to each other. See Eliot (1916, pp. 546-7).

integrated substantial composites – is possible, and *exists*. It is so, as Leibniz writes in his mature metaphysical work,

[f]or the simplicity of substance does not in any way rule out a multiplicity in the modifications which must exist together in one simple substance; and those modifications must consist in the variety of its relationships to things outside it – like the way in which in a *centre*, or a *point*, although it is completely simple, there are an infinity of angles formed by the lines which meet in it.¹²

Further, Leibniz might seem to show that a simple substance is, in effect, identical with the infinite multiplicity of modifications that supervene on it and constitute it. In other words, the substance may seem to somehow be identical with the whole multitude of its relations to all other substances in the world. This is complicated by the fact that, since a Leibnizian individual is eternal – in its essential identity with a timeless unique essence – this multiplicity is not a finite set or series. For there is, in fact, no limit on the number of actual and possible modifications affecting an individual. This is to say that a substance has an infinite modal capacity – i.e. is infinitely differentiable. This, however, does not mean that a substantial individual is literally a sum of its parts, or of its modifications – for, being logically prior to them, it lends them their uniqueness, and is, thus, something ‘over and above’ them.¹³

The modes are, in effect, not ‘parts’ in a mereological sense, but dependent aspects that uniquely *belong* to substance. Each is partially identical with and partially distinct from substance – but this ‘partialness’ refers to the individual’s being more than any one of its modifications precisely in virtue of its infinite modifiability. This is so in spite of the fact that, in virtue of the partialness, the individual is *also* finite. While a sum of modifications is not infinitely differentiable – for it is just a sum and not an entity – a whole individual *is*. This unlimited internal differentiability is, in

¹² See *Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason* (1714) in Leibniz (1998, p. 259).

¹³ See e.g. Frankel (1981, p. 195), Ishiguro (1999, p. 222, n. 34) and Russell (1992, p. 58).

turn, externally expressed in relations with other individuals. For instance, an individual such as a flower can be modified in different ways in terms of its colour, being of different shades of red at different points in time. Or, a thinking human mind can be modified by different thoughts at different times. A flower of a certain shade of red can share space, and, thus, exist at the same time as, another flower of a similar shade. And one man's thoughts can be externalized in the world, in relation to the externalizations of other men's thoughts. All this means that, since an individual is infinitely modifiable, it is, as well, relatable to all other individuals in an infinite number of ways. These individuals are, therefore, also infinitely differentiable – and can be infinitely numerous.

But, all this suggests that Leibniz may conceive of a finite individual's multitude of modifications, and of the correlated multitude of individuals in the Universe, as a kind of *potential infinity*¹⁴ – *actually* limited into a finite number of logically self-caused individuals, each affected by a finite number of modifications. Leibniz contends, however, that he has in mind an *actual infinity* which he justifies with God's essential and necessarily actualized capacity to create the *richest possible* world with the *simplest possible* means. And there can be nothing richer and more simply organized (considering its richness) than a world consisting of an infinite number of simple, logically self-caused, modally finite,¹⁵ individuals. Each of these individuals is at once infinitely rich in terms of its infinitely interrelated modifications, and infinitely simple in its eternally posited self-causedness. For its relations to the infinite number of modifications of an infinite number of individuals supervene, in fact, on its own infinite series of modifications – an infinity fully reducible to the individual's simple, eternal essence.

In light of the kind of interrelatedness in this rich and simple reality, any

¹⁴ This is the way in which Aristotle and the Scholastics conceived of infinity.

¹⁵ Each mode is finite, thus finitizing substance, though the series of modes is infinite.

change divinely inflicted on an individual substance entails a change of the entire world. Just as, being a combination of the essences of *this* matter, *this* form and *this* substantial mode, a hylomorphic composite would have to change if we replaced its mode with another one, the entire relational structure of Leibniz's world would need to change if one individual substance were to be differently modified than it presently is.¹⁶ Since a Leibnizian individual is not divisible into different logically self-caused components, it is difficult to conceive of it apart from the ways in which it is modified. Only *qua* subject of predication is it conceivable apart from modes or accidents, but the *whole* individual substance is not exhausted or explained by this subject. It is for all these reasons that an accident, for Leibniz, can never be an independent individual that may or may not cease to inhere in *this* or *that* substance; instead, an accident must be nothing more than a mode of substance.

Leibniz's mature metaphysics is, then, best viewed as containing a two-category ontology¹⁷ that describes individual substances and their modes *qua* 'ways of being'. These modes are partially identical with the individuals they modify. While a complex hylomorphic individual is conceivable apart from the mode that unifies its matter and its form – in the sense that *this* union could in principle be replaced by a different union – a Leibnizian individual *qua* whole is conceivable only *as* modified by its various modes. It is, also, in virtue of its infinite modal differentiability and eternity, an entity over and above these modes; yet, precisely because of the actual differentiation constituted by the modes, it must be conceived *with* them. A mode's 'partial

¹⁶ See e.g. *Correspondence with De Volder* (1699-1706), IV, [G., II., 224-28], Hanover, July 6, 1701 in Leibniz (1989, p. 524-5):

[...] there is nothing in the whole universe which does not need, for its perfect concept, the concept of everything else in the universality of things, since everything flows into every other thing in such a way that if anything is removed or changed, everything in the world will be different from what it now is.

¹⁷ For a discussion of modes within the context of two-category ontology, see e.g. Heil (2008, pp. 19-21).

identity' with substance may refer to the presence of an infinite number of still *other* modes which temporally punctuate substance – that is, produce different substantial modifications at different times.

One may want to suggest that this affects the relational structure of the world without affecting its essential structure; but it is not so – precisely because of an individual's partial identity with its modifications *qua* determinants of this relational structure. For Leibniz's view is that the integrative, relational function of modes is, in fact, reducible to a substantial individual's monadic properties.¹⁸ It is the individual substances that are modified by modes constitutive of substantial essence, wherefore the essential and the relational structure of the world are at bottom one and the same. This 'relational harmony' is, in Leibniz's view, 'pre-established' by God's 'good will', but in accordance with what is *objectively* the best¹⁹ possible relational structure of the Universe – a structure dependent on the unique individuals out of which the relations issue. Thus, for example, modes in the soul (a unique individual) *necessarily* relate to corresponding states in the body, itself emerging from soul-like substantial individuals that interrelate with the soul-like individuals composing other bodies in the world.

It must be emphasized that the realm of 'physical' necessity – Leibniz's 'normal everyday events' arising from the relationships between bodies and souls – is, on the face of it, distinct from that of 'metaphysical' necessity – Leibniz's God. While it is *in principle* possible for a world composed of

¹⁸ For a discussion of this reduction, see e.g. Maunu (2004). For a discussion of the metaphysical nature of Leibniz's doctrine of the reducibility of inter-monadic relations to non-relational individual properties of monads, see e.g. Rescher (1981, pp. 68-72).

¹⁹ See e.g. *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686) in Leibniz (2004, p. 2) where Leibniz reaches the Platonic conclusion that, rather than it being the case that the world is good because God wills it, it is the case that God wills the world because it is objectively good. See also *Correspondence with Arnauld* (1686-87), I, [G., II., 47-59], Hanover, July 14, 1686 in Leibniz (1989, pp. 338), where Leibniz writes that "only the *hypothesis of concomitance or of the correspondence of substances with each other* explains everything in a way that is understandable and worthy of God".

different individual substances and, thus, characterized by a different relational structure, to exist, it would be 'morally subpar' for God to actualize such a world. This is so because the world *actually* brought into being by God is objectively the best possible one in the sense that a *maximum* of difference, embodied in the infinitely many different individual substances, is accommodated into a carefully integrated, conceptually consistent world. In that the relations which integrate this world effectively reduce to the simple interrelated individuals that compose it, the relational structure itself is, in reality, *simple*. However, it is not metaphysically impossible for a world with different individuals and a different relational structure to exist; though such a world would either be 'poorer' in individual difference or have a less 'simple' relational structure than the actual world. In that such a world's actualization would imply a kind of 'deficiency' or 'lack' – a failure to bring into existence the greatest possible plenitude with the simplest possible means of relation between individuals – God's act of creation would be morally inferior and, therefore, not praiseworthy, despite being in principle possible. Such imperfection would not accord with the *nature* of God – whence the moral necessity for creation of the actual world is grounded in a kind of metaphysical necessity, notwithstanding Leibniz's insistence on God's *choice* to actualize the best world. Because the individuals of this thus actualized world are, in fact, *self*-actualizing, the metaphysical necessity is internal to them: that is, it is ontological and immanent.

An act of harmonization of all individuals should, accordingly, be the same as an act of bringing these individuals into existence. The ontological or existential dimension of the world, however, follows upon its logical consistency. Individuals are only harmonized in such and such a way because it is logically non-contradictory – in Leibniz's terms, *compossible* – for them to exist *in one and the same* world. It is, nonetheless, not logically contradictory for monads with different essences and, hence, different inter-monadic relations to exist in another possible world – a world which,

however, for moral and metaphysical reasons, is never made actual. The non-contradictoriness of compatible monads in the actual world is dependent upon the individuals *qua* identical with unique essences, i.e. *qua* logically self-caused. That an individual monad is logically self-caused (or, *causa sui*) means, for Leibniz, that all its properties and constituents (accidents, modes, matter, form) – though not its existence *per se* – follow from its essential nature.²⁰ All these internal aspects *are* the substance, and are, therefore, (partially) identical with, and explained in virtue of, this nature. Further, the world's harmonious relational structure is consequent upon the monads' logical self-causation.

Although Leibniz's 'monads' have no 'common natures' or 'general essences' to interconnect them, they *are* interrelated on a 'conceptual' basis. This is to say that an individual substance is related to every other individual in a way conceptually (and logically) compatible with the way every other individual is related to it. Thus, if Agamemnon is the father of Iphigenia, Iphigenia is also the daughter of Agamemnon, in a [*this*] world in which she is sacrificed by her father for [*this*-]world-specific reasons. The compatibility between Agamemnon (and all that can truly be said about him) and Iphigenia (and all that can truly be said about her), as well as between these and all other individuals in the world in which the sacrifice of Iphigenia occurs (and all that can truly be said about them), is what Leibniz refers to with the term 'compossibility'.²¹

This compatibility is understood to have *explanatory* (or *conceptual*) significance²² that supervenes upon the individual self-explicatory

²⁰ See e.g. Schacht (1984, pp. 56-8) for a discussion of *causa sui* in this sense in relation to Leibniz and Spinoza.

²¹ Although 'compatibility' usually refers to the relationship between substances and 'compossibility' to the relationship between propositions, the two terms can also be used interchangeably. See e.g. Savage (1992, p. 127, n. 2). For a discussion of compossibility and 'being in the same world', see also Koistinen, Repo (1999). For a discussion of compossibility as the 'co-existence of possible individuals', see Nachtomy (2002).

²² See Di Bella (2005, p. 96).

significance – i.e. the self-causation – of the actual individual existents between which compatibility obtains. For real existents, *qua* logically self-caused individuals, are prior to the ways in which they can be conceived of and relationally explained – even if it is only because of their logical non-contradictoriness in *this* world²³ that they are brought into being. The explanation is logical, for the harmonious existence of individuals in a common world is not merely contingent upon God's *willed* actualization of possible essences. God's will can, in effect, be viewed as dependent on the requirement for compatibility between existents, and, *more fundamentally* – since this compatibility *qua* relational structure supervenes upon the essential structure of the world – *on the unique essences* of the logically self-caused individuals between which relations obtain.

It is of the essence of the relational structure connecting Leibniz's individual existents that it does not consist in the kind of 'ever-present', 'eternal' *interblending* that exists between Platonic Forms. In spite of being eternal like the Platonic Forms, Leibniz's monads cannot be understood *qua* whole apart from their 'temporal instantiations' – i.e. from their process of 'becoming'. For such temporality is an essential constituent of a monad's 'wholeness'. It is also a determinant of a monad's 'containment' of infinity (the whole Universe) in an ultimately finite way – that is, a way that does not exhaust the Universe *qua* composed of an infinite number of monads.

The explanation for this lies in the function of modes as a monad's temporal 'punctuations' that effect its relations to all other existent monads in the world. If a mode is partially identical with the monad it modifies – in the sense of making it possible for something to be said about the monad, *qua* subject which is, indeed, *a certain way* (or *certain ways*), i.e. in such and such a *present state* – then, conversely, the same monad, *qua* partially distinct from

²³ Rather than other, equally possible but 'worse' (less plentiful and/ or less simply organized) worlds.

the mode, is also *not* as it appears under this particular (set of) mode(s). Since Leibniz does respect the Principle of Non-Contradiction – to the effect that nothing should be *p* and not-*p* in the same respect at the same time – it should follow that the monad is *also* partially identical with other (sets of) modes, i.e. with temporal states other than what may be understood as its ‘present modal state’ at any given moment. Indeed, if a monad is partially distinct, i.e. non-identical with, a certain temporal state (mode or combination of modes), there must be other such states wherewith it is partially identical. However, since the monad must be a self-cohering, self-relating unity in order to be truly ‘whole’, a certain ‘connectedness’ between its various (sets of) modes *qua* states is imperative.

This ‘connectedness’, is, for Leibniz, akin to a relation between actuality and potentiality. Thus, *qua* ‘present monadic state’, a certain (set of) mode(s) may be understood as *actual* – or as *actualizing* the monad in a certain way. The states or modes which are not yet actual may, on the other hand, be thought of as merely potential. What is more – they can be understood as, in a certain sense, brought about through the activity of already actual modes. Since this ‘actualization of potencies’ takes place within one and the same individual entity – a monad – the process can be thought of as one of *self-change*. Although this process is *internal* to an entity that Leibniz conceives of as essentially eternal *qua* whole, it cannot, *qua* process, itself be eternal. Indeed, there are earlier and later states – modes or combinations thereof – to be distinguished within the monad’s ‘(self-)actualization’. There is, as it appears, an unmitigable contradiction between the monad *qua* eternal entity identical with an unchangeable unique essence and the monad *qua* temporal, processual ‘entity’ having to *gradually become* what it is through an infinite series of modifications (and bring itself into being-*this*-individual). This is the contradiction between logical and ontological self-causation.

Yet, a contradiction only exists if a monad’s temporal becoming is *real* in independent terms rather than merely apparent. In that case, inter-monadic

relations would, in fact, be relations between contemporaneous states (modes and sets of modes) of different self-actualizing monads rather than ever-existing relations between eternal whole substances. Then, both the relational and the essential structure of the world would be ever-changing rather than eternal and unchangeable. The different ways in which Leibniz negotiates, and possibly mitigates, this problem must now be discussed.

The Dependent Reality of Monadic Self-Actualization and of Inter-Monadic Relations between Modes

Like Aristotle, Leibniz takes pains to preserve the 'wholeness' of an internally complex individual substance *qua* differentiated into active/ actual and passive/ potential elements. He shows that, whenever an *actual* present state (mode or set of modes) modifies a monad, all other monadic states – past or future – are implicated in this present in the form of *potencies* (dispositions, capacities, inclinations),²⁴ in virtue of the monad's capacity for 'memory' (or 'retention') and 'anticipation' ('appetition').²⁵ Suffice it to say, for our present purposes, that 'retention' and 'appetition' (for lower, corporeal monads), or 'memory' and 'anticipation' (for higher, rational monads), constitute a present monadic mode's partial identity with modes that precede and succeed it in the monad's temporal process of self-actualization. It is due to the active exercise of its capacity for implicating past and future modes that a monad is able to self-cohere. The processual relationship between its different states – a relationship enacted by retention (or memory) and appetite (or anticipation) – replaces that between Aristotelian matter *qua* potentiality and form *qua*

²⁴ See e.g. *New Essays on Human Understanding* Preface and Book I "Innate Notions" (1704) in Leibniz (2005).

²⁵ See e.g. Broad (1975, pp. 94-102) and Fenton (1973, p. 110) for concise discussions of this.

actuality.

Through this 'self-actualization' narrative, the terms retention/ memory and appetite/ anticipation are harnessed into the explanation of each individual monad's self-causation. The temporal ordering of (sets of) modifications constitutes a monad's process of self-actualization (as self-change) – *as well as* its simple essence *qua* partially identical with each mode, and, at least in some sense, fully identical with the complete, infinite multiplicity of modes *despite* being logically and ontologically prior to any one (combination of) mode(s). In virtue of encompassing a multiplicity of modifications issuing from the monad's essence, the monad is logically self-caused. In that it is processually constituted by an infinite modal, temporal spectrum in virtue of which it becomes what it is in spite of being eternal – i.e. despite being always already existent as an entity identical with a unique essence – the monad is, also, logically incoherent.

In other words, Leibniz frames Aristotelian discourse of actuality and potentiality in terms of a kind of 'mentality' which encompasses both the occurrent and the non-occurrent or dispositional.²⁶ Instead of limiting this discourse to the rational soul, however, he extends it to all substances – inorganic (viz. minerals), plants and animals alike – while believing an animal soul to be more passive than a rational one, but less passive than a plant soul that is in turn less passive than a corporeal substance. A corporeal substance is composed of largely passive and mechanically acting 'bare monads'.²⁷ Since 'activity' and 'passivity' are derived from a notion of 'mentality', what is 'more active' is understood as 'more conscious', what is 'passive' – as 'unconscious'. Thus, all real individuals – from bare monads to rational souls – have the past and the future implicated in their present states. Whereas, in 'bare monads', this is only due to a kind of 'blind', 'unconscious', 'indistinct'

²⁶ See, again, *New Essays on Human Understanding* Preface and Book I "Innate Notions" (1704) in Leibniz (2005).

²⁷ See e.g. Broad (1975, p. 101) for a brief discussion of this.

retention of old states (modes) and equally 'blind' appetite for new ones, it is also due to conscious reflection, in the form of recollection and anticipation, in rational monads (viz. human or angelic souls). Though they, too, can be characterized by some of the blind retention and appetite of 'bare monads', human rational souls have the gift of 'clarity' and 'consciousness'. 'Dimness' and 'unconsciousness' in the rational soul are present due to the soul's necessarily harmonious interrelatedness with the 'bare monads' that compose the human body. The soul is, thus, in a sense 'compromised' by its embodiment. In a different sense, however, it is hardly compromised – for its compatibility with corporeal monads flows from the various internal modifications that follow from its own individual essence. This view is clearly expressed, for instance, in the following passage from Leibniz's early metaphysical work:

33. We also see how to clear up that great mystery of union of the soul and the body: how does it come about that the active and passive states [or: the doings and undergoings] of the one are accompanied by active and passive states – or anyway by corresponding states – in the other? This is a mystery because it is utterly inconceivable that the one should influence the other, and it is not reasonable to fall back on the extraordinary operation of the universal cause – God – to explain normal everyday events. Here, however, is the true explanation of those events. **I have said that whatever takes place in the soul or in any substance is a consequence of its notion, so that the mere idea or essence of the soul carries with it the requirement that all the soul's states or perceptions must arise spontaneously from its own nature.** And they must do this in just such a way that they correspond, unaided, to whatever happens in the whole universe, but more particularly and more perfectly to what happens in the body which is assigned to the soul in question. That is because, in a way and for a time, the soul expresses the state of the universe through the relation of other bodies to its own. This also tells how our body *belongs to us without being attached to our essence.*²⁸

This implies that the relational structure of the Universe does not relate eternal, unchangeable whole entities, but different states (modes and sets of modes) of entities. Although all substances in the world are harmoniously interrelated, there are 'nodes' of harmony – such as a soul and the body

²⁸ *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686) in Leibniz (2004, p. 24). Highlight in bold is mine.

assigned to it. Such a 'node' is analogous to a hylomorphic composite, just as the harmony between the soul's and the body's modal states (modes and sets of modes) is analogous to a hylomorphic mode of union. Unlike Aristotelian and Scholastic 'form' and 'matter', however, the soul, on the one hand, and the substantial individuals composing the 'body' assigned to it, on the other, are not positively different *kinds* of individual in a sense that the soul is purely immaterial while material individuals are totally unlike souls. Rather, there is something *of* the corporeal that belongs to the soul, just as there is something soul-like about corporeal substantial individuals. This is so because the modifications through which the soul relates to its body and the body relates to its soul cannot be removed from either the soul or corporeal substances, but are, ultimately, essential to them. Rather than it being a consequence of extraordinary divine operation – since God metaphorically actualizes individuals without being the creator of their very *possibility* and essence as logically self-caused individuals – this is a result of individuals' principle of self-causation. Self-causation operates as the internal principle in virtue of which a substance's process of self-actualization *qua* self-modification follows directly from the substance's essence. Modal self-actualization, *qua* (some kind of) *ontological self-causation*, needs *logical self-causation* (as the individual's logical identity with its unique essence), although the latter does not need, and, in fact, contradicts, the former.²⁹

The essence is the substance's 'complete concept' which includes the substantial individual's relations to all other individuals in the Universe. Seeing as these relations issue from modifications inherent to each substantial individual, each individual is completely determined in virtue of the modifications that flow from its essence rather than issuing from other individuals. Thus, Iphigenia's 'daughterhood' modifications arise spontaneously from her own substantial nature – in that she and only she is

²⁹ For this reason, ontological self-causation is incoherent,

this particular daughter – rather than being caused by Agamemnon's 'fatherhood' modifications. In a certain sense, Agamemnon belongs to Iphigenia as *her* father; his 'fatherhood', however, is not part of her individual essence, but a relation dependent on an independent individual 'Agamemnon' wherewith she is related. It is in a similar sense that a body belongs 'for a time' to a rational soul without being part of the soul's essence. For the states of the corporeal substances interrelate these substances with the soul rather than being the soul's own states *qua* modes constitutive of its essence.

This is so because all of Leibniz's substances are logically self-caused individuals – each independent of all others both in terms of its whole essence and in terms of the various modal states constitutive of this essence. More than this, Leibniz goes beyond an Aristotelian classification of forms-actualities into *kinds* of souls: vegetative, appetitive, sensible, locomotive or rational. Rather than arguing that an individual substance is an actual 'something of a certain kind' – say, a vegetative, appetitive, sensible, locomotive and rational soul altered and integrated into a *specific* human kind of soul – Leibniz, like Suárez, emphasizes upon the substance's *whole unique entity* and its internal modifications. It is the internal change passing between one mode and another – rather than an actualization of potentialities for the sake of the kind of form actualizing an individual – wherein Leibniz's monadic self-actualization consists. The specific 'compresence' of vegetative, appetitive, sensible and locomotive elements with rational soul in Aristotelian form is replaced by what Leibniz understands as *less conscious* (obscure and confused) and more conscious (clear and distinct) states or modes. In this picture, greater consciousness, clarity and distinctness are equated with greater 'activity' – in the sense of greater autonomy in recollecting the past (a kind of 'voluntary memory') and in the evaluation of possible courses of future action. Unconsciousness, confusion and obscurity, on the other hand, amount to 'passivity': a kind of 'subordination' to activity,

a 'waiting to be actualized'.³⁰

Curiously, it is not necessarily in relation to the active states of the same monad that a certain confused monadic mode may appear to be *passive*. A monad's aspect of passivity under a certain (set of) modification(s) seems, in fact, to be such in relation to something external to the monad. An example would be an overwhelming physical obstacle in relation to a weak human body. Just as the body finds itself unable to *act* on the obstacle, a monad *qua* passive is unable to *act* in relation to what appears to subordinate it *qua* external to it. However, Leibniz thinks that this only appears to be so – for a monad is not passive because an external object really is affecting it. On the contrary, it is because a monad *qua* confused 'experiences' itself as passive – i.e. modifies itself to be passive through its passive modes – that it can appear to be affected by things external to it rather than by its own nature. Rather than being subordinated by something outside of itself, therefore, the monad, under its 'passive' modifications, is 'subordinated' by more active modifications in its own nature. This is so because the active modifications comprise relations to corresponding modifications in other monads. No 'acting' or 'suffering' is forced, or inflicted on the monad from the outside. In spite of fitting into a conceptual network within which all active and passive monadic modes are interrelated via inter-monadic relations, these modes flow from the nature of the monad they modify.

It follows that, rather than self-actualizing for the sake of fulfilling a species-essence, a monad does so for the sake of its own unique essence. Then, although the internal incoherence of the notion of self-change is not resolved, the problem of generality seems to be – in the sense that monads modally self-constitute as unique, self-directed individuals, through retention (of past unique modes) and appetite (for future unique modes). In spite of

³⁰ For a discussion of this thematic, see e.g. Anapolitanos (1999, pp. 44-8). See also Russell (1992, pp. 167-170).

this, a monad would not be an actual existent if its actualization were not in perfect logical and conceptual harmony with that of all other existents in the actual world. Its compatibility with these existents depends on its being so modified as to constitute a 'local' perspective on a 'global' relational structure – an 'intelligible order' of conceptually interrelated monads.

Although the relational structure supervenes on the logical self-causation of individual monads, it must be emphasized that it is not, after all, a mere abstraction from individuals. Indeed, the relations expressed in monadic modes *constitute* self-actualizing monads rather than merely abstracting from them. Even if relations *qua* modes of individual monads – and, thus, inconceivable apart from the monads they modify – can never be 'general' (i.e. shareable between monads), the *entire* intelligible relational structure *is* shareable (albeit perspectively in each monad). This is expressed in Leibniz's understanding of a monadic spectrum of substance-actualizing (sets of) modifications. This spectrum constitutes the monad's 'perspective' on *one and the same* Universe – a world shared by all other, equally perspectival, substances. Although this 'perspective' will be seen as different when seen 'from different angles' – that is, in view of *this* or *that* monadic modal state – all of the monad's states can, in principle, be derived from just one of its states, because past, present and future are implicated in each other.

Granted, the 'one and the same' Universe is only shared insofar as monads are considered in terms of the inter-monadic relations obtaining between them.³¹ As Massimo Mugnai points out, these relations are "denominations only seemingly external, [...] in reality *denominations intrinsicae*, [...] founded on the general connection of all things"³² and

³¹ See Di Bella (2005, pp. 345-7) for a discussion of inter-monadic relations and individuation.

³² See Mugnai (1978, p. 2). For Leibniz's statement of this doctrine, see e.g. *Correspondence with De Volder* (1699-1706), V, [G., II., 239-41], Hanover, April, 1702 in Leibniz (1989, p. 526):

“individual accidents inherent to the substances”.³³ This is to say that, though some relational properties, such as Agamemnon's fatherhood in relation to Iphigenia, might seem external to a substance, say Agamemnon (for he could in principle be himself without fathering Iphigenia), they are, in fact, an essential part of the substance. In effect, the substance (monad) is not truly explained without them – for they reduce to its essence *qua* constituted by various modifications that temporally punctuate it. Thus, although, under one (set of) modification(s), Agamemnon is, indeed, not (yet) Iphigenia's father, he is her father under another (set of) modification(s) in a later monadic state. It is only in virtue of a harmony between the states of different temporally self-actualizing monads that there can be a logically consistent world. This leads to the conclusion that the world is not consistent in ever the same way, but, rather, in as many ways as there are different (sets of) modifications of monads and, thus, contemporaneous inter-monadic relations.

However, a focus on a set of contemporaneous inter-monadic relations *is*, at the same time, an abstraction from the general concomitance between *whole* monads. This concomitance is not a mere succession of ‘instantaneous’ compatibilities between contemporaneous monadic modifications. This is so because the monads, and, thus, also, the relational structure of the world, are really eternal, while time is merely *ideal* (i.e. not independently real, but abstracting from, though grounded in, fundamentally real individuals). This argument is corroborated by the recognition that, since a monad is ever-existent, it can be modified in an *infinite* number of ways – and, so, temporally punctuated by an infinite succession of states. An objection may be raised to the effect that an eternal individual could, instead, be eternally modified by ever the same modes – ‘ways’ of being just as everlasting as the substance

To be in a place is not a bare extrinsic denomination; indeed, there is no denomination so extrinsic that it does not have an intrinsic denomination as its basis.

³³ Mugnai (1978, p. 2).

they modify. This, however, does not remove the fact that, from a finite perspective on infinity – i.e. from the point of view of a substance that experiences its existence as temporally punctuated – such eternal entities can, in principle, be modified, and, thus, conceived of, in an infinite number of ways through infinite temporal unfolding. Still, it may be objected that, even if an eternal substance *could*, in principle, be infinitely modified and temporally punctuated, it does not follow that it *is*, in fact, so modified and punctuated. But, Leibniz protects himself against precisely such an objection by arguing that a monad is not *really*, internally, infinitely plural, but *ideally* so. Or, in Andrew Haas' words,

[t]he monad's unity is its multiplicity – a multiplicity that is excluded insofar as it is included, is real only if it is ideal. Multiple relations between monads are non-relations; thought-of-an-other is only thought-of-self. In Leibniz's multiplicity as such [...], each monad is a unity for itself, a one that is indifferent to the others, to its other – external multiplicity is internalized: monads have no windows because they need none, because everything, the entire world, is always already reflected in every monad.³⁴

In other words, the modal infinity in virtue of which we understand a substance's individuality is to do with our rational monads' ways of conceiving of the Universe. It is only in relation to the human mind (itself a monad) and its modifications that monads and the Universe as a whole have temporal states, while time does not exist from a divine perspective. Our recognition of contemporaneous inter-monadic relations that issue from monadic modes *qua* temporal states, on the other hand, could be understood as a kind of *spatialization* of monads and the Universe they constitute. Contemporaneous modes of monads – each monad *vertically* differentiated into different temporal states by its various modifications – are *horizontally* interconnected *as if* in a spatial configuration.³⁵ Like temporality (the vertical,

³⁴ Haas (2000, p. 102). Haas' discussion addresses, in fact, Hegel's view of Leibniz's monadological metaphysics. See e.g. Hegel's discussion of Leibniz in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. The Lectures of 1825-1826* Vol. 3 (Medieval and Modern Philosophy) in Hegel (1990, p. 192).

³⁵ See e.g. Rescher (2013, pp. 102-3).

modal differentiation of monads), spatiality (the horizontal relational web of modally differentiated monads) is ideal. We can conceive of an infinite number of infinitely modified and, thus, spatially related, monads.

The ideality of spatio-temporality suggests that no self-actualization *as* self-change, and, so, no ontological self-causation, *really* occurs, at the absolute ground-level. Self-change takes place only *ideally*, i.e. in relation to the human mind that is also a kind of monad (a rational soul). For – in a word – a monad is not a substance that occupies space, can move between places, and changes over time; rather, space and time *abstract* from it. It is because space and time are not independently real that ‘spatial’ relations between contemporaneous monadic states (modes and sets of modes) cannot be said to *be* independently – that is, to have an ontological status in any way external to a monad. Only eternal monads *are*, while inter-monadic relations are accidents essentially reducible to monads. Ultimately, this means that, while logical self-causation, for Leibniz, really characterizes a monad in virtue of the monad's being identical with its individual essence, it involves the monad's becoming what it is, through a process of gradual self-modification and self-creation, only in an *ideal* sense. However, the relational structure represented in the horizontal and vertical, ideal structure of space-time is, paradoxically, a mere abstraction only if it is understood as composed of relations inessential, and, so, *external*, to individual substances. When conceived of as fully *internal*, and, so, *essential*, to monads, the relational structure and the different modes (monadic accidents) that compose it are *dependently real*³⁶ – due to the modes' (partial) identity with the monads themselves. Insofar as this is the case, the relational structure, as a kind of general intelligible order, is, in a substance-dependent sense, a ‘one and the same’ generality, be it infinitely perspectivized, shared by all monads *qua* variously modified individuals – or, *qua* perspectival takes on one and the

³⁶ See, again, Haas (2000, p. 102).

same world.

What is more, in spite of being guised in a protective mantle of 'ideality', self-change seems to have a decidedly *essential* significance to monads, for – without the change between modifications in the modal spectrum constituting a monad's perspective – the monad will no longer *have*, or *be*, a 'local' perspective on the Universe. Being inconceivable apart from the substance they modify, but not mere abstractions from it, modes are constitutive of substance. More than this, they are not only partially identical with, and partially distinct from, substance, but also with (from) each other. This is the reason why a 'present' monadic mode can have 'past' modes 'implicated' in it through 'retention' or 'memory', as well as being able to *pass* into 'future' modes through 'appetition' or 'anticipation. These are, in effect, Leibniz's 'mentalist' metaphors for the whole monad's partial identity with, and distinctness from, modes, and for the modes' partial identity with, and distinctness from, each other. It is due to this partial identity (distinctness) between its modes that the monad is a perspective at all rather than being the whole Universe. This is so even though the temporality constituting the partial identity in the perspective is ideal. It is hardly a surprise, therefore, that some clues can be found, in Leibniz's early thinking, for a possible argument to the effect that all individuals are, in fact, essentially the same. A young Leibniz argues that individual substances modify the same intelligible order while being only modally distinct from each other:

It can easily be demonstrated that all things are distinguished, not as substances (radically), but as modes. This can be demonstrated from the fact that, of those things which are radically distinct, one can be perfectly understood without another; that is, all the requisites of the one can be perfectly understood without all the requisites of the other being understood. But in the case of things, this is not so; for since the ultimate reason of things is unique, and contains by itself the aggregate of all requisites of all things, it is evident that the requisites of all things are the same. So also is their essence, given that an essence is the aggregate of all primary requisites. Therefore the essence of all things is the same, and things differ only modally, just as a town seen from a high point differs from the town seen from a plain. If only those things are really different which can be separated or which one can be

perfectly understood without the other, it follows that no thing really differs from another, but all things are one, just as Plato argued in the *Parmenides*.³⁷

This line of reasoning would seem to lead Leibniz's metaphysics of individuals into a "monistic collapse"³⁸ and, thus, to an agreement with Spinoza's metaphysics. However, as Leibniz's mature metaphysics shows, the modal distinction between different monadic perspectives on one and the same 'intelligible order' (the whole Universe) constitutes, in effect, an *ideal* spatio-temporal appearance that supervenes on real individual substances. Whether vertical (between earlier and later modes) or horizontal (between contemporaneous modes), modal distinction only matters insofar as it is a distinction between the modes of *independently real individuals qua primary ontological entities*. Arguing that the real individuals are modes of *one* substantial reality puts the cart before the horse – for it is the individuals that are prior *qua* logically self-caused substances wherefrom a coherent world issues.

Although, for instance, a world-specific relation between Iphigenia and Agamemnon is a logical condition – that is, a 'requisite' – for the existence of both Iphigenia and Agamemnon as verily modified in the actual world, this relation is differently particularized in each of them. Thus, Iphigenia is in a relationship of (*this*) 'daughterhood' to Agamemnon while Agamemnon is in a relationship of (*this*) 'fatherhood' to Iphigenia. The 'daughterhood' relational property is unique to Iphigenia and reducible to *her* monadic essence; and the 'fatherhood' relational property is unique to Agamemnon and reducible to *his* monadic essence. None of this is to say that the *relation* between Agamemnon and Iphigenia is thereby dissoluble into two relations. Rather, *one* relation emerges from two monads' relational properties which

³⁷ See *That a Perfect Being is Possible* (1676), A VI.3, 573 in Leibniz (1992, pp. 93-5). Also quoted in: Di Bella (2005, p. 74).

³⁸ See Di Bella (2005, p. 75).

are ultimately reducible to monadic properties.³⁹ Further, in order to be able to perform its relational function, a mode must in some sense depend on many monads as 'absolute terms' of the relation. In this way, any point of Iphigenia's 'daughterhood' is interlinked with Agamemnon in his corresponding modifications as her 'father'. This, however, does not mean that Iphigenia's mode is resolved into the many other modes modifying the monads to which Iphigenia is related. Rather, her mode is 'one' in virtue of its primary logical dependence on one individual substance (Iphigenia).⁴⁰

All inter-monadic relations (and, therefore, intra-monadic modes) – like Iphigenia's daughterhood and Agamemnon's fatherhood – must be mutually coherent in order to produce a world composed of compatible monads. Indeed, there being a conceptual relation between different monads, it is not possible to clearly conceive of any one of them without also (gradually, from a finite perspective) conceiving of all other monads to which it is related, and, hence, of the whole world. This is so because *conceiving of* other monads is always done from the perspective of a human mind, itself a monad that becomes what it is through a temporal succession of states. A complete metaphysical explanation for a monad – that is, an explanation which is not constrained by a given monadic temporal state (mode), but 'encompasses' a monad *as an eternal whole* – accounts for the monad in its full uniqueness. The relations to other monads issue from this uniqueness rather than being some general determinants of the monad. The essence of a completely

³⁹ See e.g. *Correspondence with De Volder* (1699-1706), IV, [G., II., 224-28], Hanover, July 6, 1701 in Leibniz (1989, p. 525):

[...] For just as relations result from a plurality of absolute terms, so qualities and actions also result from a plurality of substances. And just as a relation is not compounded from as many relations as there are terms to be related, so neither are the other modes which depend on many things resolvable into many modes. It does not follow, then, that a mode which requires many things is not a unity but a composite of many modes.

⁴⁰ See Note 39.

determined individual such as a monad is not a general, shareable structure of merely conceptual relations – such as the ‘intelligible order’ of the Universe – but, rather, *exactly* what *this* actual, existing monad is, *minus* its existence.⁴¹ In the realm of possibility (in God's mind) – prior to its actualization – *this* monad's essence could not be otherwise than it is. In virtue of this unique essence, the monad is logically self-caused when it *is* (in existence).

Thus, Leibniz retains the narratives of self-change and generality. But, by understanding them as *ideal* and *conceptual* – that is, indeed, as *narratives* told from the perspective of human souls *qua* monads – he seemingly immunizes monadological metaphysics against their weaknesses. However, that the spatio-temporal structure through which the relations between logically self-caused monads is, in fact, *ideal* – and that the conceptual relatedness between individuals is not *really*, in an absolute sense, a result of the individuals' instantiation of a general order of things – cannot mean, for Leibniz, that temporal self-actualization and spatial relatedness are inessential to monadological reality. If they were insignificant, and fully reducible to an eternal, unchangeable order – all *being* and no *becoming* – a monad would surely not be a *local* perspective, and there would be no need for *many* real entities, each irreducibly unique and variously modified by modes that could not modify other monads.

Instead, there would be only one substantial individual differentiated by its modifications; monads would fully reduce to these modifications and, thus,

⁴¹ For a discussion of this, see Di Bella (2005, pp. 84-6). The original discussion can be found, for instance, in: *Correspondence with De Volder* (1699-1706), IV, [G., II., 224-28], Hanover, July 6, 1701 in Leibniz (1989, p. 524):

[...] I have already established the fact that incomplete things such as lines or figures can be similar to each other even if they are produced by different causes, as an ellipse made by a conic section may be similar to an ellipse made by motion in a plane. But in completely determined things this cannot happen, and so one substance is not perfectly similar to another, nor can the same substance be generated in many different ways. On this ground (as well as on other considerations) I once concluded that there are no atoms, that space is not a substance, and that primary matter itself, or matter separate from all activity, cannot be included among substances.

to the one substance. Then, it would be unnecessary to insist on the ideality of self-actualization in time (i.e. of ontological self-causation), of spatial relatedness between contemporaneous modes and of the conceptual containment of the whole 'intelligible order' in one individual. There would be no separate individuals to actualize, no contemporaneous (sets of) modes of independent individuals to relate, and no multiplicity of, paradoxically self-creating, perspectives to understand as instantiations of a general order.

Indeed, Spinoza's monistic metaphysics seems, at first glance, to take us out of Leibniz's conceptual quagmire in just this way. There has been some speculation to the effect that it is precisely by trying to oppose Spinoza's monism that Leibniz gets himself into this quagmire in the first place.⁴² Such a theory may be simple and plausible enough, provided that Spinoza's metaphysical system can be demonstrated to offer more coherent solutions to the problems of self-change and generality, and, thus, a more cogent theory of an individual's self-causation. Unlike Leibniz's substantial monads, Spinoza's finite individuals are, in virtue of being mere modes of substance, not determined by their own unique natures, but by the divine *one* Substance they modify and, so, by *Its* unique nature (essence). This is to say that, rather than being self-caused, they contribute, secondarily, to the self-causation of this divine Substance. This monistic configuration seems, on the face of it, simpler and more coherent than Leibniz's monadological one in several ways which must, therefore, claim our attention. Upon further examination, however, it is revealed that Leibniz's difficulties linger on in slightly different form. We now advert to this problematic.

⁴² See e.g. Stewart (2006).

Spinoza's Self-Caused God-Substance and the Problem of Ideality for Its Finite Modes

Spinoza's monistic metaphysics explicitly obviates the need to morally justify the actualization of a world characterized by a certain essential and relational structure, as that world is not logically or ontologically independent of the divine Substance that brings it into being. While Leibniz's God is a perfect 'monarch' monad beside a multitude of imperfect, but equally self-caused, monads, Spinoza's God *is*, in fact, in Its internal differentiation, the multitude of imperfect finite individuals, despite, paradoxically, also being logically and ontologically prior to, i.e. 'over and above', them. *Qua mode of* God-Substance, each finite particular existent is partially identical with It, though, as we shall see, not logically caused by It in an entirely direct manner. At first glimpse, Spinoza's finite modes cannot be understood as local perspectives on the global 'intelligible order' within which they are interlinked. For that order *is* the *one* God-Substance that contains them – rather than being encompassed by them as a Leibnizian individual 'contains' the whole world.

However, being a global order, Leibniz's Universe also in a certain sense 'contains' the locally modified self-individuated monads – just as, being modes *of* Substance, Spinoza's finite individuals, express Substance in a limited way and, thus, provide local perspectives on It. In a word, Spinoza's finite modes are *ways* in which the one Substance *is* – and are, therefore, effectively 'arranged' together, in consonance with this divine reality, in a way not unsimilar to Leibniz's inter-monadic concomitance.⁴³ An ostensible difference is to be found in the *kind* of 'arrangement' or connectedness existing between monads or modes. While relations are internal and ultimately reducible to what is already contained within – and essential to – a monad, connectedness for Spinozist finite modes is attained through

⁴³ A similar view can be found e.g. in Hicks (1917-18) and Stewart (2006).

sequential determinations analogous to the temporal states distinguishable in a monad's processual self-actualization. Just as there is a kind of serial procession – be it ideal – from mode to mode, in the self-actualizing activity (ontological self-causation) of a logically self-caused monad, there is, at the level of Spinoza's logically dependent finite modes, a sequence representing a 'finite causality' *within* the great, logically self-caused God-Substance.

The criterion for Spinozist 'finite causality' is the contrary to the criteria for self-causation. It states that, *qua* influenced, and, at least in part, externally determined, by other existents like itself, a finite existent does not have all its effects – i.e. everything that arises in and happens to it – follow spontaneously from, or be identical with, its own nature (essence). For that essence is not self-sufficient in the sense of being the ultimate reason for the logical self-identity and particular existence of the mode. In fact, a finite modal essence is derivable from, or contained in, God-Substance's all-encompassing essence⁴⁴ – a substantial nature that *is* self-sufficient, and irreducible to any one of the modal essences it (mediately, as we shall see) determines. God is also the ground of a finite mode's existence.

In virtue of this self-sufficiency, God-Substance's essence *is*, in fact, *Nature* (as a whole), i.e. the whole world – although It is also logically and ontologically prior to the world's finitely articulated actuality. That this God-Nature determines the nature of a finite mode means that it determines the mode's 'activity'. This is to say that, insofar as a mode is an aspect of the Substance which, in virtue of determining Its own, infinite and finite, aspects, is active, the mode is also active. However, most finite modes (except, as we later explain, exceptional mental modes which 'transcend' their finitude) are not only 'active', but also 'passive' – in relation to other finite modes analogous to Leibniz's monadic modifications. Insofar as it is 'passive', what happens to a mode is determined by other finite modes that demonstrate

⁴⁴ See e.g. Casarino (2011, pp. 213-14) for a discussion of this.

'activity' in relation to it. The 'activity' of these limitedly more powerful modes is also determined by the divine Substance – for their (modal) essences, as well as their existence, are ultimately derivable from the divine substantial essence and existence.

This is to say that a finite mode's lack of self-determination, due to its being overpowered (as an antelope is overpowered by a lion) – and its being determined, instead, by other finite modes – is, fundamentally, the same as its being determined by the unique God-Substance. The reason for this is that the active, overpowering modes are also determined by the Substance. Like Leibniz's monadic temporal self-actualization within a fundamentally timeless monad, Spinoza's finite causality within substantial, divine self-causation could be understood as *ideal* – i.e. not independently real. Further, since a finite mode's whole essence is, in fact, determined by the one Substance, it follows that, if a mode is passive with respect to other modes, the Substance Itself must also be passive. In that a passive mode is *Its* way of being – the mode's essence being derivable from the Substance's nature – all that belongs to the mode belongs equally to Substance.⁴⁵ Indeed, Spinoza

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the relationship between mode and substance in Spinoza's metaphysics, see Carriero (1995). Carriero identifies the following two relationships: (i.) the causal relationship between God-Substance and Its modes, and (ii.) the Aristotelian/ medieval Scholastic dependence of accidents or modes on substantial individuals. He argues that Spinoza's metaphysics of substance is heavily informed by the latter, and that (i.) and (ii.) are distinct. He also insists that an Aristotelian like Aquinas, for instance, understands self-causation as the causal process through which substance causes its accidents or modes to exist – as the accidents or modes flow from substance as its effects. But this does not mean that these accidents or modes contribute in any way to substance's essence – for substance is what it is apart from them. However, Carriero does not take into consideration the contentions of a later Scholastic like Suárez to the effect that a mode is partially identical with the substance it modifies, as well as constitutive of it. He also does not consider the possibility that Substance's (self-)causation can be understood as *logical* (self-)causation – and, hence, that modes can follow from Substance because they (or their essences) are in fact derivable from Its essence (even if the essence is at bottom unchangeable). If causation, from Spinozist Substance to Its modes, is understood as logical, not merely efficient, causation, there will not be a gap between (i.) and (ii.). Admittedly, Spinoza's understanding of Substance as also being the ontological ground of each finite mode (and, thus, of its *conatus*), i.e. the mode's reason for *being*, complicates matters. For, combined with Substance's logical self-causation inclusive of modes (i.e. if the Substance causes Itself, and modes are part of It, It also causes them), this means a kind of self-creation *qua* ontological self-causation which is ultimately

understands Substance-Nature, in the active sense (i.e. in its highest, eternal reality), as *natura naturans* (nature naturing), and as *natura naturata* (nature natured) in the passive sense (i.e. in its infinite and finite modifications).⁴⁶

Thus, there is, in Spinoza's monism, the same need to mitigate the tension between (fundamental) *reality* and *ideality* (dependent reality) as in Leibniz's monadological metaphysics. On the one hand, the substantial God-Nature is logically self-caused in virtue of the active, whole – simple, unique, self-contained and indivisible – essence wherewith It is identical. On the other, Substance *is* the multiplicity of modes which succeed each other in that an active mode's overpowering of a passive one is part and parcel of the *internal* self-actualization (ontological self-causation) of the One. This is the familiar contradiction between an individual's always already existent self-sufficiency and its processual self-actualization as self-change. While the former is real in an absolute, unconditional sense, the latter is real only on the condition that it is ideal (dependently real).⁴⁷

Unlike a Platonic Form or an Aristotelian individual substance,⁴⁸ a Spinozist finite individual is determinate not merely due to its own essence (except in a derivative sense) – that is, not due to its own logical self-causation – but due to the self-caused nature of God-Substance. In that it expresses the *infinite* nature of self-caused Substance, the finite individual *qua* substantial mode must 'make an effort' to express It fully – for it seems absurd and arbitrary to express just 'part' of an infinite nature which is eternal, whole,

incoherent with logical self-causation despite presupposing it. The idea of ontological self-causation is, hence, based on a contradictory presupposition, and is, therefore, self-negating (self-defeating).

⁴⁶ See *Ethics*, Part I, Proposition 29, *Scholium* in Spinoza (2001, p. 28). See Nadler (2006, pp. 81-3) in support of the view that Spinoza identifies God-Substance not only with *natura naturans*, but also with *natura naturata*.

⁴⁷ Hegel describes 'Spinozist idealism' in similar terms, see Hegel (1990, pp. 151-65). Further, a view that Spinoza's finite modes are mere 'appearances' while Substance is Reality can be found in Joachim (1901, pp. 111-14). A view that H. H. Joachim's argument could be circumvented can be found, on the other hand, in Lennox (1976).

⁴⁸ For an interesting take on Spinoza's acceptance of certain elements of the Aristotelian conception of [formal] essence, see Ward (2011).

and not mereologically dividable into mutually independent finite parts. This 'effort' is what Spinoza terms *conatus* – that is, a finite mode's act of, and reason for, perseverance in its being, i.e. of continuing to exist in virtue of expressing Substance *qua* active.⁴⁹ Hence, the mode's 'conatus' is its active element *qua* finite expression of infinite active Substance, and its essence *qua* fully expressive of the essence of self-caused Substance. *Qua* expressive of the passive nature of Substance, on the other hand, a passive mode is characterized by what opposes its conatus, i.e. by what is non-identical with it – other finite modes that, in virtue of their non-identity with the mode, and by means of their own conatus, negate and overpower it by 'annulling' its existence (i.e. its conatus-essence in actuality) and asserting their own.

Analogously, Leibniz's monads are not only active, but also passive, because of processually becoming what they are, over time – although this process is real only insofar as it is ideal, i.e. only in a dependent and reducible way. Thus, they are *actively* modified by only a certain set of modifications at a certain stage of a monad's becoming, while all the modifications preceding or succeeding this stage are passive. Relatedly, a certain monad's modes may be active in relation to another monad's passive modes – as a certain set of modes of monads composing a lion's body are more active than a certain set of modes of monads composing an antelope's body. The former are still less active than some modes of highly conscious, rational monads that can clearly understand the 'interaction' between a lion and an antelope. According to this clear understanding, the interaction is only apparently – or,

⁴⁹ See *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 6 in Spinoza (2001, p. 105):

[...] **Each thing, in so far as it is in itself, endeavours to persevere in its being.** *Demonstration.* Individual things are modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determinate manner [...]; that is to say [...], they are things which express in a certain and determinate manner the power of God, by which He is and acts. A thing, too, has nothing in itself through which it can be destroyed, or which can negate its existence [...], but, on the contrary, it is opposed to everything which could negate its existence. Therefore, in so far as it can and is in itself, it endeavours to persevere in its own being.

in relation to our ways of conceiving of it – a causal one, but *really* – in an *absolute* sense – the result of a divinely established, logically imperative harmony between variously modified monads. For any relation between modes of different monads is to do with the requirement for compatibility between individual substances – a requirement dependent on the individuals' essences – rather than with a monad's literal subordination to other monads.

Whatever the differences between Leibnizian individuals and Spinozist finite modes, there are pronounced similarities. Just as a Leibnizian individual 'contains' the whole Universe in virtue of its infinity of relational modifications, a Spinozist finite mode must express the whole one Substance in virtue of its relations to other finite modes. But, being finite and, unlike Leibniz's monads, *not* ultimately self-caused – that is, not determined through itself (except in a derivative way in the case of the most active modes) – a Spinozist finite mode can only act in consonance with the Infinite Substance – that is, express It *fully* – by becoming a cause in an endless 'cause-effect' modal series. All of the relata in this series are determined by Substance by means of causal relations. Then, a finite mode is, on the one hand, 'caused', and, thus, made active, by Substance – which provides the logical conditions (essence) as well as the ontological ground (reason for being) for all the modes and their conatuses. On the other hand, the mode is negated by Substance – which 'causes', i.e. determines logically and ontologically, an infinite number of other finite modes, thus 'dwarfing' each of them by limiting its power, and, so, its activity.

Further, a passive finite mode can be simultaneously active in relation to other, passive, modes that may in turn be active in relation to still other, passive, modes. The relationship between finite modes' activity and passivity is, however, not as simple as that between an active, devouring, lion and a passive, devoured, antelope. Spinoza seems to suggest, in fact, that, although doing something to another embodied being is certainly more of an activity than doing nothing, it is still a passion if it is inadequately understood. Thus,

for example, a man fighting a wild animal can be said to be active, even if he is physically overpowered, provided that he has adequate ideas of the causal interaction between himself and the animal *qua* finite modes of God-Substance.⁵⁰ That is to say – he must understand these modes as expressive of infinite Substance insofar as, *qua* finitely modified, It effectively *is* these finite modes in their necessary interrelation. This relates back to our point concerning the greater activity of a monad modified to clearly know the reason for relations between active and passive monadic modes, and brings to light a deep-seated convergence between Leibniz's monads and Spinoza's finite modes. Indeed, it seems that, just like Leibniz's monads, Spinoza's finite modes – *qua* local perspectival expressions of a general intelligible order, God-Substance – must be ideal in order to be real. They must be dependent, well-founded, apparent, realities, though not illusions.

But, let us take a deeper look into what active knowing of the substantial (intelligible) order – what corresponds to Leibniz's highly conscious monadic modifications – constitutes for Spinoza. This analysis must be prefaced by some factual details about the structure of modification in Spinoza's metaphysical system – a structure to be revealed as only superficially different from Leibniz's. Spinoza argues that Substance has Attributes, each of which fully expresses Substance's essence – in such a way that each of them can be said to be logically self-caused. For both are fully identical with Substance – while being distinct realities and, thus, lying outside of each other.⁵¹ They are

⁵⁰ See *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 1 in Spinoza (2001, p. 99):

[...] Our mind acts at times and at times suffers: in so far as it has adequate ideas, it necessarily acts; and in so far as it has inadequate ideas it necessarily suffers.

⁵¹ See Deveaux (2003) for an argument against 'the prevailing view' that Attributes are identical with Substance. She argues that this identity is either understood as identity between God's essence and the sum of distinct attributes (the "collection view") or as identity between God's essence and a totality of indistinct, non-discrete attributes (the "totality view"). She omits a possible "ontological Oneness view" according to which each one of the attributes –

formally distinct – each expressive of substantial essence and none needing anything beyond itself for its own definition.⁵² Thus, the Attributes known to us – Extension and Thought – are definitionally independent of each other in that none is defined in terms of the other. That many definitionally different Attributes express Substance's essence does not mean, however, that this essence is composite and divisible into as many essences as there are Attributes. The Attributes Extension and Thought are what the (human) intellect knows of Substance, although what is, thus, known is well-founded – i.e. grounded in Substance's essence – rather than mind-dependent.⁵³ What is, thus, conceived is substantial essence under the formal aspect of Extension or Thought. The Attributes *are* God-Substance *qua* active – and, thus, also logically self-caused in virtue of being identical with Its essence, regardless of the formal aspect under which this essence makes itself available.

In that it is identical with Substance and expressive of Its infinite nature, each Attribute is also infinite. Accordingly, any modification that follows directly from an Attribute's infinite nature must itself be infinite if it is to be partially identical with Substance in the sense of having (expressing) Substance's essence *in a certain way* different from the way other modifications, under other formal substantial aspects, have (express) the same essence. In that sense, Substance is modified by the Infinite Modes 'Infinite Thought' – viz. absolutely all thought in the world – and 'Motion and Rest' – viz. absolutely all physical activity and passivity in the world – under the Attributes Thought and Extension respectively. Insofar as it is fully dependent on Substance, under the relevant Attribute *qua* formal aspect of Substance, an Infinite Mode, like a finite one, is not self-determined and, thus, not logically

that is, never *all* of them at once, either as a collection or as a totality – *is* God's essence under a different formal (Scotist) aspect.

⁵² For a discussion of this formal distinction, see e.g. Schmidt (2009, pp. 92-4).

⁵³ Henk Keizer, amongst others, argues that, although the attributes are epistemologically defined by Spinoza (as what *we* know of Substance), they are ontologically real in the sense of having a mind-independent existence, see Keizer (2012).

self-caused. For it is not merely its own individual essence that it is identical with and from which all its internal modifications (modes within modes) issue. Rather, its essence is derivable from, and fully determined by, Substance's essence. Each Infinite Mode is internally differentiated into an infinite series of finite modes.

However, God-Substance is absolutely infinite, while finite modes express It in a limited manner, in such a way that none of them, on its own, can exhaust Substance's infinite expressibility – though the infinite series of finite modes aims to articulate Substance's infinite nature through infinitely various finite actualities. This is to say that there is a gap between the infinite modification of Substance, under a certain Attribute, and finite modes. It is difficult to conceive of an act through which Infinite Substance determines a *finite* mode, if it is clear that, *qua* infinite, Substance is *infinitely* modified, as well as producing infinite effects. Since the Universe is constituted by *one* Infinite Substance, it should follow, in Spinoza's view, that, when Substance is at once the logical cause⁵⁴ and ontological ground of something, this something should not be other than Substance – for there is nothing other than It – but fundamentally identical with It. Hence, what follows logically and ontologically from Substance *qua* infinite should also be infinite. And, while a series of finite modes *is* infinite, each mode – and not just the entire series – should follow from Substance and not be non-identical with It. Besides, the series of finite modes is infinite in a linear, temporal, way, rather than in the holistic, ultimately explicatory, fundamental, eternal way of Substance Itself. Then, it is difficult to explain how a finite mode that is determined by its relations with other finite modes follows from Infinite Substance.

Spinoza attempts to *mediate* this gap only vaguely, through a metaphor

⁵⁴ See Curley (1969, pp. 49-54) for the view that a necessary, even if not sufficient, condition can be a cause. Curley's contention is in line with Goudge (1961, pp. 62-4). However, in our view, a genuine logical (or, formal) cause that constitutes reality in the ultimate sense provides both necessary and sufficient conditions. Only a finite cause, in the temporal world, can be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for its effect.

that is usually taken to designate a kind of 'Mediate' Infinite Mode bridging the gap between an 'Immediate' Infinite Mode such as Motion and Rest and finite modes. That is the mode he refers to as the "face of the whole universe".⁵⁵ *Qua* mediator between infinite and finite modifications, this mode mitigates the tension between change and eternity, between ideality and reality – in that it modifies Substance to infinitely differentiate itself, and, thus, *internally change* in infinite ways without really changing *qua* whole individual. Thus, the "face of the whole universe" is a mode "which, although varying in infinite ways, yet remains always the same".⁵⁶ This mode, on the whole, could also be understood as analogous to a Leibnizian monad which, though internally changing in virtue of encompassing an infinite number of modifications, is eternal, and, thus, in an absolute sense, always the same.

In its material aspect, i.e. under the Attribute of Extension, the change within the 'whole universe' consists of an infinite number of finite bodies able to enter causal relationships with each other due to being spatially related *qua* bodies. These causal relationships consist in a finite mode's being able to be active or passive in relation to finite modes (partially) non-identical with it – an activity or passivity ultimately reducible to the fundamentally active and passive nature of Substance *qua* '*natura naturans*' and '*natura naturata*' respectively. Spatial relations are determined by Substance *qua* directly modified by the Infinite Mode 'Motion and Rest' under the Attribute of Extension. A body's ability, *qua* active in relation to itself in virtue of its 'conatus', to move from one place to another – or, *qua* active in relation to other bodies, to move another, resting, relatively passive, body from one place to another – presupposes a network of spatial relations determined by Substance's general extended nature under one of Its formal aspects.

⁵⁵ See the *Letters*, Letter 64 (To the Learned and Experienced G. H. Schuller, from B.d.S.) in Spinoza (2002, p. 919). For some commentary on this, see e.g. Garrett (2003, pp. 40-2).

⁵⁶ See the *Letters*, Letter 64 (To the Learned and Experienced G. H. Schuller, from B.d.S.) in Spinoza (2002, p. 919).

Arguably, this network corresponds to the *horizontal* relational structure abstractable from Leibniz's monads.

Under a different formal aspect – the Attribute of Thought – the change within an infinite modification thoroughly lacks extendedness, and, thus, a horizontal relational structure. Thus, it is purely a change from one idea or thought to another – say, from a sad to a cheerful thought. In Spinoza's view, 'ideas' *qua* finite modes are not causally related to bodies – as bodies are related to other bodies – but only to other ideas.⁵⁷ Rather than being mere concepts of things – as the concept of a flower, for example, serves to provide some general understanding of individual flowers – ideas are *intentional* modes of thinking aimed at individual bodies *qua* finite modes under the Attribute of Extension. This is to say that to each individual idea corresponds an extended object, say a physical state of the body. No change within a body can take place without a corresponding modification of the mind *qua* finite mode within which ideas (modes within a mode) arise.⁵⁸

This view strongly resembles Leibniz's doctrine of harmony between the mind's modifications and those of the corporeal monads. Leibniz's monads have passive modes precisely because they have to harmonize with the modes of bodily monads. However, Leibniz also argues that, though belonging to the rational soul, the body is not part of, but simply in harmony with, the soul's essence. Yet, the soul 'part' which harmonizes with the body may be said to be a kind of 'material' aspect of a soul-monad, just as the body 'element' which harmonizes with the soul may be a 'mental' aspect of a corporeal monad. This opens up the possibility that the 'material' and the 'immaterial' *can* be modal/ essential aspects of the same monad. Analogously, the essence

⁵⁷ See Murray (2013) for a discussion of the implications of the 'strict parallelism and causal non-interaction' requirement for finite individuation of ideas and physical objects. For a defense of the 'numerical identity' thesis according to which a mode of extension and a mode of thought are two different expressions of numerically one and the same thing, see Della Rocca (1991).

⁵⁸ See Spinoza, Part II, Proposition 7 & 12 in Spinoza (2001, pp. 50, 55).

of body and soul is fundamentally the same for Spinoza – for it is derived from the essence of one and the same individual that determines them. Further, like Spinoza's modes, Leibniz's monads share the same intelligible order in virtue of being local perspectives on the whole Universe. If they are not thought of as independently real in their spatial relatedness and temporal unfolding, Leibniz's monads must be thought of as mere modes of a Spinozist Substance.

Conversely, just like Leibniz's monads, Spinoza's series of finite modes under the Attribute of Thought could be understood as presenting a kind of temporal sequence of modifications (even if Spinoza does not explicitly put it this way) – in that it is in the mind that a body can be known as undergoing a succession of changes.⁵⁹ True activity, for Spinoza, as for Leibniz, proceeds from understanding the order of reality with the highest clarity, and from acting out of one's own nature *qua* determined by God's. In that sense, nothing can be understood as truly active if it is only extended, only a body, and has no mental mode. Then, a body is only truly active with respect to other bodies when its states correspond to the mind's active modes of knowing – that is, when it is understood by the mind as acting from its own nature *qua* determined by God's. The succession of activities 'registered' by the mind is, then, a kind of *temporal* sequence – for there would be no series of passivity and activity in a body without a mind successively registering it *over time*.

Change within the fundamentally unchangeable, infinitely modified universe is, thus, for Spinoza, as for Leibniz, characterized by variation of the spatial relations between individuals and by a temporal process of mentally registered activity and passivity. In both metaphysical systems, the variability of this spatio-temporal structure is, in each of its aspects, dependent on the

⁵⁹ For an account, and transformation, of Spinoza's system that proposes understanding the Attributes Extension and Thought as Space and Time respectively, see Alexander (1921).

fundamentally eternal intelligible order of reality (logically self-caused Substance). Most importantly, in both systems, an individual's self-causation is not possible without infinite internal differentiation in virtue of which an individual encompasses, or internally relates to, all of reality, without losing its whole entity's identity with a unique essence.

Both systems also acknowledge their being developed from the perspective of a human mind, as evidenced in Leibniz's modelling of his monadological metaphysics on the human soul and in Spinoza's ineluctable focus on the two Attributes accessible to our minds. Further, like Leibniz, Spinoza emphasizes the predominantly partial knowledge, and so, partial activity, of finite modes. For a human mind, *qua* mode of Substance, to only have adequate ideas (modes within a mode), it would need to be the only cause of all ideas (modes of Substance) that follow from it – that is, the internal principle of their essence and existence. Having only adequate ideas, and, thus, adequate knowledge, thus, amounts to being like Leibniz's logically self-caused monads – all of whose modes follow necessarily from their own unique essences. However, it must be remembered that a Leibnizian monad's knowledge is equally 'inadequate' (in Spinozist terms) – or, *more or less*, i.e. *variably* or *spectrally*, (in)adequate depending on the type of monad (viz. corporeal or rational). That the monad's modes follow spontaneously from its essence is also to do with this essence's being in pre-established relations to other monadic essences in accordance with the requirement for harmony.

The mind, for Spinoza, is only modified by adequate ideas if it has clear and distinct knowledge of the necessary relationships between ideas-*qua*-finite-modes – *as* relationships which express the infinite essence of God-Substance. Inasmuch as it is modified to know this expression, the mind can, also, like a Leibnizian monad in a harmonious relational Universe, be understood as identical with its own essence, i.e. as logically self-caused. For its ideas flow spontaneously and actively from it. However, this self-causation is derivative from the essence of self-caused God-Substance which, unlike

the human mind, is an expression only of Itself rather than of anything more fundamental than It. The human mind, on the other hand, is an expression of God-Substance rather than merely of itself.

In other words, Spinoza argues that the mind can give rise to an adequate idea and, thus, be *active* – insofar as God-Substance is understood to be modified by this active idea. This idea may also give rise to inadequate and confused ideas in the same mind. For God-Substance is modified not just by the initial (active) idea, but also by other ideas (in other minds).⁶⁰ Since Substance is not modified by only one finite mind, and the ideas that arise from this mind's causal power are, also, modifications of Substance *qua* modified by many other minds and ideas, it follows that the mind will also happen to be a 'partial cause' of ideas – in the sense that it will be acted upon, and not merely active, in its production of them.⁶¹ Ideas are fully active and adequate only when the mind knows clearly their necessary relations with their causal predecessors and successors; it is precisely this knowledge that 'frees' it and renders it (albeit derivatively) self-determined. Inadequate ideas, on the other hand, seem, due to a lack of such knowledge, "like conclusions without premises",⁶² although both the 'premises' and the 'conclusions' should be available in a fully comprehending infinite (divine) mind. This divine comprehension can articulate itself in the human mind to the extent that the latter can have adequate ideas. Though different on the surface, this argument is not unsimilar to Leibniz's suggestion that an infinite number of monads actualize themselves, with varying, hierarchically arranged, consciousness and clarity, in accordance with the inter-monadic harmony established by God.

The mind has confused, i.e. inadequate ideas, "as often as it is determined to the contemplation of this or that *externally* – namely, by a chance

⁶⁰ See *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 1, *Demonstration* in (2001, pp. 99-100).

⁶¹ For a concise discussion of this thematic, see e.g. Lord (2010, pp. 84-6).

⁶² See *Ethics*, Part II, Proposition 28, *Demonstration* in Spinoza (2001, p. 72).

coincidence, and not as often as it is determined *internally* – for the reason that it contemplates several things at once, and is determined to understand in what they differ, agree, or oppose one another”.⁶³ In other words, the mind has confused ideas insofar as they correspond to the body's being causally influenced by other bodies (external and non-identical with it). So, the mind ‘registers’ *this*, then *that*, particular corporeal modification by means of its ideas *qua* mental modifications – without clearly understanding the necessary connections between *this* and *that* mode, i.e. their various differences, agreements, and oppositions, inasmuch as they make for partial, but mutually coherent, aspects of the infinite God-Substance.

Indeed, Spinoza's reasoning is in line with the conception of modes as partially identical with the Substance they modify as well as with each other. If an idea always followed necessarily from a finite mind and were not related to, or partially identical with, other ideas in other minds, but, rather, had this mind as its exhaustive logical and ontological ground, it would be fully identical with it and ultimately self-created and self-determined. Then, there would be no distinction between any two ideas *qua* finite modes. There would be only one mind, or one idea – which is, broadly, impossible for finite modes. Yet, while two ideas indeed differ from each other in that they are *different* finite modes, they agree in their expression of logically self-caused, infinite, one Substance, similarly to the way Leibniz's monads conceptually agree in their expression of one and the same Universe.⁶⁴ Ultimately, this seems to

⁶³ See *Ethics*, Part II, Proposition 29, *Scholium* in Spinoza (2001, p. 73).

⁶⁴ Harris's interpretation is similar to ours, e.g. in Harris (1973, p. 242):

The coming to be and passing away in time of finite things in the material world, are then seen as a partial feature or aspect of a single, indivisible, infinite and absolute totality – the eternal being of God-or-Substance. They are not unreal, for they do proceed necessarily from the divine essence. They are actual elements within the reality of nature and do constitute the modes of substance under a real and necessary attribute of God. Only for the imagination are they merely fleeting episodes of ephemeral significance. Their finiteness is not illusory, for their mutual determinations are essential to the multiplex unity of substance. But their temporal existence in itself is not of ultimate significance, for they can neither be nor be conceived except through

amount to an agreement *in essence*, and, thus, re-introduces the problem of generality – for the essence finite modes express is shared by all, rather than unique to any one of them. What is unique to a finite mode is the *partial* expression of the *really* and *singularly* unique essence of Infinite Substance. This is the local, perspectival relatedness to other modes, equally partial in their expression.

Spinoza's arguments vis-à-vis our attainment of adequate knowledge of this 'agreement in essence' unmistakeably point in this direction. He distinguishes between three types of knowledge: imagination, reason (*ratio*), and intellectual intuition (*scientia intuitiva*).⁶⁵ The imagination always produces vague and confused (inadequate) knowledge, for Spinoza understands it as constituted by the mind's modifications to the extent that they correspond to the body's being affected by other bodies. So, the mind is aware of, or 'feels', *this* or *that* pain, say due to the body's being bitten by a dog, without having adequate knowledge of the necessary cause-effect connections insofar as they are *in* God-Substance (or, determined by It). Reason, on the other hand, constitutes adequate knowledge inasmuch as it can, on the basis of common notions of what *generally* happens in nature, infer an effect's relation to its causes: say, when we trace heartburn to indigestion caused by a certain type of food. But it is only intellectual intuition which is adequate in the ultimate sense in that the mind forms ideas of the self-caused nature of God-Substance, of Its modifications by infinite modes such as the "face of the whole of the universe", and, so, of the combination of eternal identity with internal differentiation in virtue of finite modes. This

the infinite being of God, in which they all live and move. To understand the world in this way is to conceive things adequately and is part of *scientia intuitiva*; and any mind that has perfected its knowledge to this degree has transcended the finite nature of its body, and the transient existence of things in space and time in a synoptic awareness of "all time and all existence".

⁶⁵ See e.g. *Ethics*, Part II, Proposition 40, *Scholium* & *Scholium* 2 in Spinoza (2001, pp. 78-81).

is to say that, beyond mere scientific reason, metaphysical intuition 'sees' the first and ultimate cause, and can comprehend simultaneously the order of finite modes *qua* aspects of eternal and infinite God-Substance, and, thus, the human mind's and its body's necessary place in this order. In that it sees itself as an articulation of this Substance, the mind becomes ultimately identical with It, and, so, eternal and self-caused, albeit in a derivative way.

However, this does not eliminate the fact that the finitude of modes, including of the 'blessed' mind delighting in adequate ideas, is subordinated to God-Substance as an absolutely unconditioned individual. And it is sorely unclear *in what way* finite individuals ought to contribute to It, as well as *why* It needs the internal change between finite modes if It is always already what It is in virtue of Itself, logically and ontologically 'over and above' all modifications. Spinoza argues that *scientia intuitiva* involves having adequate ideas of the individual essences of finite modes as they are *in*, or determined *by*, God-Substance. However, this individuality seems to be limited to 'ratios', i.e. to variously apportioned substantial aspects, within the Infinite Mode Motion and Rest *qua* mediated by the internally differentiated "face of the whole universe". These aspects can only have individual essences to the extent that they internally differentiate God-Substance Itself *qua* modified in infinite ways according to a certain accurate, necessary, universal, order that is Its own.

Spinoza suggests that our highest knowledge of eternity and of ourselves as part of such an order is both our intellectual love of God and His love of us, and also, therefore, His love of Himself, i.e. Substance's self-relation.⁶⁶ But, this intellectual relation to God involves knowledge of a real order of interrelated finite modes. Unlike the "rare" and "noble"⁶⁷ enlightened sage-minds which seem to transcend their finitude, most of these modes have not

⁶⁶ See e.g. *Ethics*, Part V, Proposition 32 & 33 in Spinoza (2001, pp. 248-9).

⁶⁷ See *Ethics*, Part V, Proposition 42, *Scholium* in Spinoza (2001, p. 256): "But all noble things are as difficult as they are rare."

merely a conatus (activity) in virtue of their part in the essence of Substance, but also 'passivity' *qua* conatus-negation. Thus, most finite modes – as well as, at least partially, the enlightened minds which cannot *only* have adequate ideas, or, even if they do, cannot exhaust *all* possible adequate knowledge of God⁶⁸ – are ultimately 'dwarfed' by the infinite Substance on which they provide modal perspectives. Although this Substance is not general in the sense of an Aristotelian species-essence, Its vaguely articulated relationship to finitude is, like Leibniz's Universe, along the lines of a general order which dominates and swallows up particulars rather than letting them determine either themselves or Substance, as ultimately coherent individuals. God-Substance, *qua* general in this sense, always remains logically and ontologically prior to Its various modal (self-)actualizations. There are various contradictory senses in which these modifications both *are* and *are not Its* actualizations, for they cannot be said, *on the whole*, to determine It, despite, *internally*, processually differentiating It. They can also not be said to determine *themselves*, except in a derivative sense in the case of supremely active minds and their bodies.

Conclusion

It emerges that, despite surface disagreements, Leibniz's monadological and Spinoza's monistic metaphysical systems are profoundly convergent in their treatment of an individual's self-causation. Both systems demand the individual's capacious containment of its accidents *qua* modifications, and of its material (or, extensive) and formal (or, mental) aspects. The individual's logical self-causation means that all these modifications and aspects follow

⁶⁸ For God-Substance has an infinite number of formal aspects (Attributes) of which we know only two.

from a unique essence spontaneously and necessarily – without the external influences which characterize the realm of temporal finitude – *because* they are essentially identical (each partially) with the (whole) individual. While, for Leibniz, all finite existents are capacious, logically self-caused, ontologically real, individuals, Spinoza argues that there is only one such, infinite, individual whereof every finite existent is merely a mode. However, a Leibnizian individual is identical with a unique essence in virtue of being a local perspective on a global intelligible order that, like Spinoza's one Substance, 'contains' all finite existents. Like a Spinozist finite mode, a Leibnizian individual is 'local' in virtue of its harmonious relatedness with other finite individuals.

This relatedness issues from the individuals' 'active' and 'passive' modifications – or, more precisely, from the individuals *qua* active or *qua* passive. The interplay of activity and passivity presupposes a process of self-actualization *qua* ontological self-causation within an individual – viz. within Leibniz's finite substances, on the one hand, and within Spinoza's one Substance, on the other. Being one of internal change, this process comprises the individual's temporal unfolding as well as its spatialization as the externalization of relatedness between finite embodied individuals. Yet, for both Leibniz and Spinoza, the temporal and spatial-relational aspects characterizing self-change are real only insofar as they are ideal (dependently real) – and so, as they are variably known by human beings *qua* finite individuals, be that knowledge robustly grounded in independent, ultimate reality. In their highest metaphysical reality, both Leibniz's intelligible order of finite individuals and Spinoza's one Substance are eternal and, thus, unchangeable – i.e. logically self-caused and ontologically independent, though not ontologically self-caused in a processual manner.

In spite of presenting a coherent theory of logical self-causation as an individual's identity with a unique and timeless essence, Leibniz and Spinoza are not entirely successful in shedding the incoherencies involved in a

conception of self-change for the sake of generality (or, ontological self-causation for the sake of divinely decreed universal order). This means that both Leibniz's and Spinoza's individual(s) are ultimately incoherent. The contradictions inherent in the metaphysical systems these individuals belong to emerge from an attempt to reconcile a fundamentally unchangeable, logically self-caused substantial individual with the infinitely many finite modifications which effect its internal change (ontological self-causation). This ontological self-causation presupposes, but also contradicts, the logical self-causation which is inseparable from the logical self-consistency and *changelessness* of the general divine order.

Further, it might appear that it is *from the perspective of a finite mind* that finite modes' dependent reality is a reality at all. For Leibniz's metaphysics seems to issue from a mind *qua* finite individual, and Spinoza's understanding of a finite mode's partial identity with self-caused Substance is based on a human mind's modification by not only adequate, but also inadequate, ideas. However, despite being aware of the limited perspective from which their systems proceed, both metaphysicians operate under the premise that there is a kind of harmony between the human mind's ideas, on the one hand, and (metaphysical, ontological) Reality as it really is, on the other. For both Leibniz and Spinoza, the human mind is in harmony with infinitely many finite individuals like itself, which, together, constitute, or *express*, all of reality. In virtue of understanding this harmony, the mind intellectually intuits the highest metaphysics. This *expression*, however, is contradictory in that it involves a kind of internal change and processual self-creation – of God-Substance or of monads in the bringing of Its/ their modes, and, so, of Itself/ themselves, into being – *within* fundamentally unchangeable and eternal substantial reality.

Kant endeavours to circumvent incoherencies such as this by turning his attention *away from* any kind of necessary metaphysical harmony between fundamental reality and the human mind, and *toward* the latter's ways of

conceiving of the world. Rather than it being the case that the mind's modes – i.e. its *ways* of knowing – are in conceptual harmony with *all* individuals *qua* equally expressive of one and the same intelligible order, the *mind*, for Kant, knows particulars in the sensuous world via 'synthesis' of concepts with spatio-temporal particularity. He only allows for a kind of non-theoretical access to 'supersensuous', purely rational, self-causation and its possible realization. However, *pace* Kant, Hegel argues that we *can*, and *do*, think coherently of concepts and spatio-temporal particulars as jointly productive of ultimately real logically self-caused individuals. Our next chapter considers Kant's Critical view of individuality and self-causation, then Hegel's transcendence and radicalization of this view.

CHAPTER 6

Kant and Hegel on Sensuous Individuality and Self-Causation

We have seen that the contradictions in Leibniz's and Spinoza's theories of self-causation are traceable to their demand that an individual be an eternal, metaphysically ultimate being, on one hand, and perpetually self-becoming, on the other. The self-becoming is carried out by means of an infinite series of self-modifications which are not independently real in the ontological sense, but are, rather, dependent on the individual-*qua*-eternal-and-unchangeable. These modifications exist only in relation to other modifications (of the same individual or of other individuals) and are 'registered' as such by, or in relation to, the finite human mind (which is a series of such modifications in the form of ideas). At the same time, however, the mind's ideas, *qua* modifications of an eternal substantial individual, are in harmony with metaphysically ultimate reality – as they are simply ways in which this reality is. That said, there is palpable incoherence in the assertion that, although individuals always already are in an absolutely unconditional way, they are also ontologically realized processually via self-modification.

Kant seems to do away with this problem by banishing from theoretical inquiry any metaphysical insight into what we might call ultimate, eternal reality, as well as into any possible self-causation within such reality – and focusing his (theoretical) attention, instead, on *our knowledge of* the empirical world of finite sensuous individuals, and on the logical (transcendental) conditions for such knowledge. Via Kant, as well as *beyond* him, Hegel returns self-caused individuality to theoretical inquiry, however without the incoherencies contained in the theories of self-causation produced by Kant's predecessors.

This chapter has two main aims. The first is to examine the details behind Kant's claim that theoretical access to (a realization of) the idea of self-

causation is impossible because nothing self-caused is available in empirical experience, as well as to show that, against his own intentions, he prefigures a theory of sensuously realized self-causation-*qua*-self-individuation via the transcendental schematism of the imagination. He argues that the concepts by means of which we understand the world, i.e. the logical conditions of *any* experiential knowledge, are always synthesized with spatio-temporal sensuous particularity, but cannot get a purchase on any sort of theoretically positable and metaphysically ultimate essence of any particular. A logically coherent *theory* of self-causation is prohibited by Kant because he limits theoretical inquiry to the sensuous world while giving the idea of self-causation supersensuous, purely rational, regulative, and practical, status. Whether this limitation of theoretical reason and the concomitant relegation of self-causation to the supersensuous are necessary or final is, however, open to inquiry.

Our second aim is to demonstrate Hegel's way of questioning such conclusions. We do so through *a necessarily simplified rendition* of his dialectical movement beyond Kant's separation of theory from practice, and of empirical knowledge from rational intuition. We interpret this movement through the lens of Hegel's concept of the 'concrete universal' – which we gradually show to coincide with the notion of a logically self-caused individual as we have defined it throughout. We want to show that Kant's separation of the sensuous from the supersensuous is something the logic of the idea of self-causation historically moves beyond by unifying or relating the sensuous and the supersensuous and immanentizing them to each other. We focus, therefore, on those aspects of Kant's project which foreshadow this development (namely, the schematism as an exercise of the imagination), rather than on the aspects that strengthen the separation.

The textual grounding of the notion of self-causation is somewhat challenging – as, although both Kant and Hegel make use of roughly synonymous locutions, these uses, in Kant's case, do not coincide with 'a

knowable, ontologically realized, logically self-caused individual'. Nonetheless, this non-coincidence is intimately bound with Kant's implicit views vis-à-vis self-causation as we have defined it. In his Critical project, the idea of self-causation is relegated to non-theoretical, non-empirical – moral, teleological, and aesthetic – judgements, and banished from the knowable sensuous world. In Hegel's work, on the other hand, Kant's theory of finite, non-self-caused sensuous individuals is turned on its head, and the logic of self-causation is realized *within* this sensuous world through a kind of dialectical self-determination that culminates in the concrete universal.

The concept of 'causation' is, for Kant, a logical condition of knowledge of the empirical world. However, in his moral philosophy, he also claims that we can think the idea of a kind of "causality through freedom".¹ To this effect, he writes:

The moral law is in fact a law of the causality through freedom and hence a law of the possibility of a supersensible nature, just as the metaphysical law of the events in the world of sense was a law of the causality of sensible nature. Thus the moral law determines that which speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined, viz., the law for a causality the concept of which was only negative in speculative philosophy; and it thus first provides the concept with objective reality.

[...] since it is absolutely impossible to give an example in conformity with this idea in any experience, because no determination of causality that would be absolutely unconditioned can be encountered among the causes of things as appearances, we were able to *defend* the *thought* of a freely acting cause, when we apply this thought to a being in the world of sense, [on the one hand,] only insofar as this being is also regarded a noumenon, on the other hand. [...] However, I was not able to *realize* this *thought*, i.e., to convert it into *cognition* of a being acting in this way, not even as regards merely its possibility. Pure practical reason now fills this vacant place with a determinate law of causality in an intelligible world (causality through freedom), viz., the moral law.²

[...] Freedom as a negative determination – i.e. as something that involves **not** being interfered with by sensible causes – is also connected with a **positive** power and even a causality of reason, a causality that we call a 'will'.³

[...] Separating his causality (his will) from all natural laws of the sensible

¹ See e.g. Kant (2002b, pp. 66-9).

² Kant (2002b, pp. 66-8).

³ See *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) in Kant (2005, p. 49).

world *does* indeed involve a contradiction if this is the very same subject we previously brought under natural laws; but the contradiction will disappear if they [...] admit that behind appearances things in themselves must stand as their hidden ground, and that we can't insist that the laws of operation of these grounds must be the same as those that govern their appearances.⁴

Kant argues, in other words, that there is, *in pure thought*, though not in our knowledge of empirical reality, a kind of causality according to which our actions cannot be seen as determined by a series of physical causes. A being which acts in this 'absolutely unconditioned' way has autonomy in causing its actions. The actions are, thus, not conditioned by anything outside the acting being (or, the agent) itself. By contrast, beings in the sensuous world – say, individuals, or events – are always known as conditioned, influenced, determined, physically caused, by things other than, and outside of, themselves. What Kant refers to above as “the metaphysical law of the events in the world of sense” or “a law of the causality of sensible nature” is the ‘law’ according to which every sensuous thing is always known to be so determined or physically caused: in a certain order of sensuous appearances. This ‘law’ is ‘metaphysical’ only in the sense of giving immanent explanations from within the empirical world: i.e. within an ontology of finite sensuous individuals. Knowledge of these individuals is enabled by transcendental conditions logically prior to experience, but these conditions are only meaningful within the framework of our unified experience of sensuous reality.

The “law of the causality through freedom” or the “moral law” is, on the other hand, “a law of the possibility of a supersensible nature” in the sense that a supersensuous nature is logically possible though not ontologically realized in the sensuous world.⁵ While, from within this sensuous world

⁴ See *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) in Kant (2005, p. 50).

⁵ Kant does seem to suggest, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that the (logical) possibility of the supersensuous nature *could* be *actualized* by the causality of the will, though, of course, since the nature is supersensuous, not in the sensuous world, see Kant (2002b, p. 64). See also Allison (2012, p. 120).

whereof we have theoretical knowledge (under the guidance of ‘theoretical’ or ‘speculative’ reason), this nature is only negatively defined, the moral law, which is practical but not theoretical, gives it a more positive definition. It posits it as a kind of ‘freely acting cause’ (also termed ‘*causa noumenon*’ or ‘noumenal cause’⁶), i.e. a cause that can spontaneously determine action without being conditioned or determined by anything outside of itself. In the *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*, for instance, Kant speaks of this ‘cause’ as a kind of ‘free will’. It would not be wrong to think of this ‘will’ as defined in virtue of an internal principle, an internal nature – as identical with this principle, and, thus, according to our definition, as logically self-caused. However, this logically self-caused nature is not ontologically realized in the actual, sensuous world, nor can it be known through synthesis with an intuition (sensuous or otherwise).⁷

But then, Kant says something even more interesting – namely, that thought of this ‘uncaused cause’ can actually be applied to the world of sense, but only insofar as we think of the cause as ‘supersensuous’, or, in his terms, as a ‘noumenon’. This is to say that this ‘cause’ can give rise to, or determine, certain actions or changes in the sensuous world, without itself being determined by anything outside of itself. The term ‘uncaused’ is a negative definition – which emphasizes the fact that the cause is not influenced or determined by anything sensuous. Inasmuch as it is ‘positive’ or determined via its own nature, however, this ‘cause’ is also *self*-caused rather than merely uncaused. Although Kant does not explicitly use the term *causa sui*, his term ‘causality of reason’ captures the Platonic meaning of *causa sui* as *ratio sui* – or, that which has its ultimate reason within itself. This ‘noumenal self-causation’ is, when positively defined, the ‘hidden ground’ of appearances – even though this ground is not knowable, and its logical possibility is,

⁶ See Kant (2002b, p. 68).

⁷ See Kant (2002b, p. 68).

theoretically speaking, not translatable into empirical possibility and actualization. Kant thinks that, by means of practical reason, the thought of this self-causation *is* actually realized – but this in no way enhances our theoretical knowledge.

This corresponds, also, to his ‘transcendental deliberation’⁸ from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he assigns the pure concept of ‘intrinsicity’ – “only what has (as regards its existence) no reference whatever to anything else different from itself is intrinsic”⁹ – to noumena, and ‘extrinsicity’, or pure ‘relationality’ and interdependence without an internal principle of self-explication, to sensuous appearances. However, such a noumenon is purely self-referential “as regards its existence”, not its essence. Yet, ‘existence’ is the ontological realization of an essence – wherefore, if something were to be existentially self-referential, it would also need to be essentially self-referential. Since noumena cannot be known, this can mean that, *were they to be ontologically real*, they would be explicated and known solely in terms of themselves. That is to say, they would be both logically self-caused and ontologically independent (even if they were not *per se* self-created) – due to an internal principle of logical identity and independent existence. As the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgement* show, respectively, these thoughts and ideas are either realizable only practically, or remain purely figurative, in the realm of the ‘*as if*’.

In the figurative sense, ‘self-causation’ lurks in the way Kant defines teleological and aesthetic judgement in the *Critique of Judgement*. In relation to living beings in nature, for example, he writes:

[...] a thing that is to be cognized as a natural product but yet at the same time as possible only as a natural end must be related to itself reciprocally as both cause and effect, which is a somewhat improper and indeterminate expression, in need of a derivation from a determinate concept.

The causal nexus, insofar as it is conceived merely by the understanding, is a connection that constitutes a series (of causes and effects) that is always

⁸ See Kant’s Appendix in Kant (1996, pp. 323-45).

⁹ Kant (1996, p. 326).

descending; and the things themselves, which as effects presuppose others as their causes, cannot conversely be the causes of these at the same time. The causal nexus is called that of efficient causes (*nexus effectivus*). In contrast, however, a causal nexus can also be conceived in accordance with a concept of reason (of ends), which, if considered as a series, would carry with it descending as well ascending dependency, in which the thing which is on the one hand designated as an effect nevertheless deserves, in ascent, the name of a cause of the same thing of which it is the effect. [...] Such a causal connection is called that of final causes (*nexus finalis*). The first could perhaps more aptly be called the connection of real causes, and the second that of ideal ones [...].¹⁰

Our understanding of the sensuous world amounts to knowledge of particulars, say living things such as plants and animals and their various parts, organs and functions, as products of physical (natural) causation, but not, reciprocally, as causes of that which produces them. Thus, even a living thing's processes of reproduction, nutrition, self-maintenance, and growth, can be known in terms of a certain order of sensuous changes through a causal series which, being irreversible and linear rather than circular, does not loop back from the effects to their causes. However, our systematic rational faculty, which always aims at more complete explanations, recognizes a kind of ideal final causality according to which sensuous living things are not products of efficient causal processes, but 'ends' – in the sense of being 'causes of themselves', or, being that for the sake of which their growth and concomitant sensuous changes occur. Kant contends that natural things as organisms are, *in the ideal sense*, self-organizing or self-maintaining, and changing for their own sakes: i.e. it is *as if* they are so. Here, 'ideal' does not mean 'dependently real', but purely rational rather than ontologically real: only 'in thought' rather than 'in reality'.

According to this ideal causality, the parts of an organism, say the leaves of a tree, are not only physically, but also logically, caused by the tree *qua* tree (i.e. a living thing of specific kind) – in the sense that it is in the nature of the tree to grow leaves, that is, the tree *qua* tree is the *reason* for its leaves.

¹⁰ Kant (2002a, p. 244).

Reciprocally, the tree would not be a tree without its leaves – which means that the leaves, too, in a sense, not only physically, but also logically, in part cause the tree – because they are essential to it. Since the leaves are so essential, they *are*, in fact, in part, *the* tree – which is to say that the tree is, at the same time, its cause and its effect, i.e. *a cause of itself*. Since its sensuous changes, and the ways its parts develop and participate in its (self-) maintenance *qua* tree, all necessarily follow from its nature – the tree can be said to be logically self-caused (Kant’s ideal ‘cause of itself’). This self-causation may, also, be ontological, since the organism is teleologically self-producing (e.g. growing its own leaves, i.e. *itself*), though such self-production would anyway presuppose logical self-causation. However, since the teleological judgement of such self-causation *qua* final causality is ideal in the sense of being purely rational and only possible *in thought*, it is not a judgement of the way ontological reality is. Rather, it is a judgement that would apply to a noumenon *as if* there really were such a thing.¹¹

It is clear from all this that Kant draws a sharp distinction between reason as ‘pure thought’ of the supersensuous and non-empirical, and, therefore, the unknowable, and reason limited by, and regulating over, our understanding of the empirical world. The former is best articulated by the moral law (practical reason). The latter’s ideas, though pure and *a priori* like those of practical reason, have the merely negative role of regulating, guiding, systematizing, and unifying, our knowledge of the sensuous world. The idea of self-causation as natural teleology is of this sort. As there is, for Kant, nothing sensuous with which the idea of a living thing’s teleological self-causation can be synthesized in our knowledge of the sensuous world, we can know natural things only as products of physical causation, while postulating the regulative idea of self-causation for the purpose of a more complete explanation. Kant

¹¹ Since the case of the aesthetic judgement of a beautiful thing as an ‘end in itself’ is analogous, we can forgo discussion of it.

treats noumenal self-causation in a more positive way through the ‘moral law’ or ‘pure practical reason’ which is divorced from the sensuous. Unlike theoretical reason’s regulative ideas, such as ‘self-causation’, the concepts of the understanding, e.g. the concept of ‘causality’ (in the sense of efficient, physical causation), get a purchase on the sensuous world because they can be synthesized with sensuous intuitions. So, there is another distinction: between understanding and reason.

In sum, Kant treats the idea of self-causation as inaccessible to theoretical reason due to the non-empirical nature of aesthetic, teleological, and moral judgements. But, we must remember that we are inquiring into the idea of self-causation *insofar as it historically embeds itself in immanentist, particularistic metaphysics, i.e. inasmuch as self-causation comes to be ontologically realized in the sensuous world*. These conceptual developments are not encouraged by Kant’s transcendental program. Nonetheless, we contend, counterintuitively, that, although concepts intimately bound with the logic of *causa sui* are mainly present in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgement*, it is certain arguments in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that enable, albeit inadvertently, the dialectical logic through which Hegel immanentizes the idea of *causa sui* to (sensuous) ontological reality. The seeds for a sensuously immanent idea of self-causation are arguably present, yet not meant to germinate, within the framework of Kant’s ‘transcendental schemata of the imagination’ *qua* ‘ways’ of mediating between intuited sensuous particularity and the conceptual generality of the understanding.

The germination is impossible as Kant does not theoretically affirm any sort of identity between a sensuous individual and a ‘hidden’ non-empirical ground (a noumenon). If such a ‘hidden ground’ were known as self-caused, the sensuous individual would, too, be so, were it to be known as identical with it – and, thus, to be posited as having an internal principle of logical identity *qua* **this** individual and no other. Such simple and intrinsic logical

identity can, however, for Kant, belong only to noumena, which cannot be ‘understood’, as self-caused or otherwise – not to sensuous individuals *qua* phenomena.

We argue that, paradoxically, it is from this kind of understanding that Hegel’s idea of the ‘concrete universal’ emerges. Therefore, instead of going along with Kant from the embryonic *theory* of individuation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the *practical, regulative, sensuously unrealized* idea of self-causation of the other two *Critiques*, we show that the *theory* can be coherently completed by means of an argument central to Hegel’s dialectical logic.

We contend that Hegel’s re-integration of experience and the ideas of pure reason in the concrete universal of the *Logic* amounts to an argument to the effect that the synthesis of our concepts with sensuous particularity is constitutive of ontologically real individuality. This re-integration is, at the same time, a rational *process* that involves unceasing adjustment and revision of our concepts (and misconceptions) vis-à-vis such individuality. This means that what we can eventually understand as a self-caused individual – the fully determinate, unified whole at which all conceptual attunement is aimed – is in principle fully intelligible. In both the *Little Logic* (of the *Encyclopedia*) and the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes explicitly of this process – and the textual grounding of the term ‘self-causation’ in his statements is relatively uncontroversial. For instance, he says:

The individual is the same as the actual [...]. Because it is first only *in itself* or *immediately* the *unity* of the essence and concrete existence [*Existenz*], the *actual* [*das Wirkliche*] can be productive [*wirken*]. But the individuality of the concept is simply *what produces* [*schlechthin das Wirkende*] and, indeed, no longer as the *cause* with the semblance of producing an other, but as what produces *its very self*. – The individuality, however, is not to be taken in the sense of only *immediate* individuality in terms of which we speak of individual things, human beings. This determinate sense of individuality surfaces first in the case of judgment.¹²

¹² Hegel (2010a, pp. 236-7).

In other words, the unity of the essence, as an abstract, variously particularizable, logical possibility, with particular existence, is the *actual*. It is in this actuality that the individual articulates itself, but it is only through a concept – *the* Concept – that the actual can be intelligible, and thereby fully determinate and concrete. This concept is, for Hegel, unlike Kant's concepts of the understanding, both the logical origin and the metaphysical completion of the world – the source and the end of actuality's ultimate intelligibility. So, in order to be fully known and concrete, 'essence' must pass into, become, or find its truth in, the 'concept'. The immanent, actual individuality is not just an *immediate* unity between essence and existence, but also determines itself conceptually out of the logical 'rupture' between its universality and particularity by *mediating* them – wherefore the individual is *the cause of itself*.

This 'causation' is identical with the universal's particularization, which is to say that the individual is *logically self-caused* to the extent that it *becomes* identical with the universal – and that, reciprocally, the universal, initially abstract, *becomes* concrete in this process. Because it is in *this* particular that the universal is concretized, it becomes unique to it. This is to say that the individual's logical self-causation, for Hegel, is also its ontological realization. The process of this self-causation *qua* self-individuation is demonstrated through a series of judgments. This ontological realization (or, *self-becoming*) does not, however, involve ontological self-causation. For there is no suggestion that the individual creates itself out of nothing or out of its own static eternity, but rather that it arises out of the differentiation of an initially abstract universal (concept) reflected by the series of particulars interrelated in virtue of particularizing it.

We may now flesh out our argument in three steps. First, we show *why*, for Kant, the concepts through which we know empirical individuals get no purchase on anything along the lines of 'noumenal self-causation'. Then, we demonstrate the way in which his transcendental schemata foreshadow

Hegel's sensuously articulated, particularized concept – even if, within Kant's project, the individuals synthesized via the schemata are only what they are in relation to us and apart from ultimate essences or noumena. Hence, it is not the case that sensuous individuals known via the schematism are logically self-caused, since they are not noumena. We finally argue that, even so, Hegel transmutes and harnesses the schemata's implicit dialectical power and radicalizes them through the notion of the 'concrete universal' which *is* a logically self-caused individual.

Kant on Our Knowledge of Sensuous Individuals

Kant's self-caused noumenon is not available in sensuous intuition wherewith a concept can be integrated, and 'exists' only as a rational idea: as a supersensuous 'hidden ground'. It is considered in respect of its ideality and logical independence – *apart from conceptualized sensuous particulars* in the world of empirical experience. But *in relation to knowable empirical things* – in the sense of logically grounding them and making them possible – Kant understands the ground of sensuous things, or the logical 'source' of the conditions of the possibility of our unified experience of them, as a 'transcendental object', not as an independent noumenon.¹³ A human self – endowed with, and constrained by, a conceptual apparatus with which to categorize sensuous particulars in a general way – may be understood as one of these 'transcendental objects', but termed a 'transcendental subject'.¹⁴ Transcendental objects different from this subject are logically related to it in such a way that they make possible empirical objects available in, and shaped by, its experience. In virtue of this, the subject experiences itself as an

¹³ On this conceptual distinction between the 'thing-in-itself' and the 'transcendental object', see e.g. Findlay (1981, p. 3) and Langton (1998, p. 31).

¹⁴ See e.g. Findlay (1981, p. 3).

empirical subject.

What is other than the subject becomes available to it in the form of sense contents which ‘affect’ it, causing it to ‘affect’ itself – that is, to bring forth a structure of experiencing them as determinate empirical objects.¹⁵ Such ‘affections’ are best understood as ‘modifications’ of the transcendental subject – transient aspects of it within the realm of sensuous experience which are, however, at once enabled and constrained by the subject’s *a priori* transcendental unity. This unity is correlative with the unity of the transcendental object, and belongs to the understanding insofar as it knows ontologically real sensuous things. This is different from reason’s regulative idea of a natural organism’s teleological unity which cannot be known and sensuously realized.

To the extent that the subject is empirical, it is always ‘affected’ (i.e. ‘modified’) by sense contents and by its own experience of them. Its experiential structure is what Kant conceives of as ‘sensuous intuition’ within which sense contents are organized as: (i.) sensuous particulars in certain spatial (perspectival) relationships with each other – and made of parts in such spatial relationships – or events and states of affairs whereof particulars, thus configured and interrelated, are part; (ii.) sensuous particulars or aspects thereof, or states of affairs and events whereof such particulars are part, which appear to one always in successive moments rather than all at once.¹⁶ An example of (ii.) could be – perceiving a change in the spatial relationships between moving sensuous particulars or between the parts of a sensuous particular: as the new spatial configuration necessarily follows upon the earlier one. It is clear that the understanding is already active in such intuitions of particularity, for otherwise there would be “a buzzing flow of sensation

¹⁵ See e.g. Allison (2015, pp. 389-98) for a discussion of self-affection.

¹⁶ See e.g. Falkenstein (2004) for a comprehensive discussion of Kant’s ‘intuitionism’ as presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic.

with no particular unity”:¹⁷ or, in Kant’s own words, “less than a dream”.¹⁸

The subject’s conceptual apparatus, as the source of this unity, is not determined by sense content, but, rather has its ground in the subject itself. However, without being synthesized with sensuous particulars, concepts are ‘empty’, and cannot make possible our knowledge of empirical objects and constitute the subject’s unified experience. Indeed, Kant argues that the unity of any possible experience arises from the relationship between the mind’s (subject’s) ‘passive’ affection by sense content, on the one hand, and the ‘active’ application of concepts to this content, on the other. The former is integrated into the mind’s spontaneous ‘self-affection’ in sensuous particulars’ spatio-temporal structuring. It is a *self*-affection because space-time, for Kant – i.e. spatial relations between, and within, different sensuous particulars, as well as the temporal changes of, and between, these particulars – is *ideal* in the sense of being reducible to the modes of mind and their synthesis. ‘Self-affection’, in other words, is the mind’s *modifying itself* to intuit spatio-temporal particulars that are not completely independent of it. The faculty of sensibility through which this self-modification takes place is ‘passive’ insofar as the mind ‘receives’ sense content, but, in conjunction with the understanding, ‘activity’ is introduced. This does not mean that ‘activity’ temporally follows upon ‘passivity’; rather, the two are concurrent.

The structure of the relationship between the mind’s ‘passive’ and ‘active’ modifications does not permit our concepts to harmonize with anything we may wish think of as ultimate, noumenal reality, i.e. reality that contains, besides sensuous experience, metaphysical (rational) explanations and essences. In fact, ‘reality’ itself is, for Kant, strictly speaking, a concept by means of which we understand the empirical world (or, objective, empirical reality). The function of the understanding, for Kant, is to constitute

¹⁷ See Savile (2005, p. 47).

¹⁸ Kant (1996, p. 162).

our knowledge of a sensuous world which cannot be said to be real ‘in itself’ – but only so *in relation to us*. In effect, the ‘in itself’ and ‘apart from us’ – signifying what is more than just sensuous, and what is fully explained in metaphysical terms – is, in a sense, merely a formality. It is an idea which we may assume methodologically, but not positively (except in the practical case of the moral law). Without a non-empirical ground to subtend them, empirical objects would not be possible – but, in the guise of the ‘transcendental object’, this is only a logical ground. This object cannot be known – because it is logically prior to, and responsible for, all knowledge.¹⁹ In experience, the sensuous particularity available in intuition is synthesized with our concepts in a way that in no way entails the particular’s ultimate, rational, self-explication. In Kant’s terms, such a particular is ‘empirically real’, though ‘transcendentally ideal’.²⁰

It is through the concepts of the understanding that we can successfully make judgments about *the world as it is available to us* – thus, aiming at, experientially circumscribed, truth. Rather than being derived from sensuous experience, these concepts are grounded in transcendental deliberation which takes place *a priori* in that it is independent of sensuous intuition. It is clear that the transcendental project immediately short-circuits any judgement as to the ‘essence’ of individuality – making it absurd to inquire into what an individual, say a sensuous particular such as *this* rabbit, is, in itself rather than merely in relation to us, and, therefore, *that* it is, say, self-individuated. In other words, although, as our later discussion suggests, via their schematization in the imagination, Kant’s concepts of the understanding prefigure a theory of logical self-causation grounded in experience and reason

¹⁹ See e.g. Gardner (1999, p. 155) on the different reasons for the unknowability of the thing-in-itself and of the transcendental object.

²⁰ See e.g. Senderowicz (2005) for a book-length defense of the coherence and plausibility of Kant’s transcendental idealism within the unity of his theory of knowledge. Our aim here is neither to reject nor to defend Kant’s transcendental idealism, but, rather, to demonstrate its way of prefiguring Hegel’s concrete universal.

alike, they do not run deep enough to enable such a theory – nor would Kant wish to enable it. Instead, they leave space for a kind of ‘deeper’ noumenal, supersensuous self-causation that is only logically possible (except, perhaps, in the realm of practical reason where it *can* be realized by the will).

There are, for Kant, four types of such concepts, each having three subtypes: (i.) quantity: unity, plurality, and totality (the *mathematical* categories); (ii.) quality: reality, negation, and limitation (the *dynamical* categories); (iii.) relation: subsistence and inherence (substance and accident), causality and dependence (cause and effect), and community (reciprocity); (iv.) modality: possibility, existence, and necessity.²¹ The judgements enabled by these concepts demonstrate that the individuation of an empirical individual is not due to mere concepts, but to the sensuous manifold as it is organized in spatio-temporal intuition. It is to such a manifold, i.e. a particular intuitable through different spatio-temporal perspectives in relation to other particulars – that an individual dog, say, owes its uniqueness. For example, the dog is successively cognized as *this* particular spatio-temporal, variously relational, combination of unity and plurality within which a number of particularized empirical concepts are constellated (‘brownness’, ‘furriness’, ‘ferociousness’, ‘velvetiness’, ‘sharp-toothed-ness’, ‘timidity’, ‘playfulness’, etc.) in sync with individuating sensuous intuition.

However, though the ‘pure concepts’ are not in themselves individual and are different in kind from sensuous particularity, they can be ‘individualized’ or ‘sensualized’. Kant expounds the synthesis between the sensuous and the conceptual in the mediating faculty of the imagination. For the spatio-temporal structure – emerging from the mind’s self-modification in the mental faculty of sensibility *qua* affected by the understanding – does not

²¹ See Kant’s Table of Categories in Kant (1996, p. 132). See e.g. Schulting (2012) for a book-length discussion of the categories.

directly lend itself to conceptualization by the understanding's categories. As sensuous intuition and the pure concepts are *heterogeneous*, sensuous particulars need further conditioning for their conceptual categorization – as do concepts for their application to particulars. Such conditioning is also necessary, but more straightforward, in the case of sensible concepts – e.g. empirical ones like 'dog' and mathematical ones such as 'circle'.

While one concept can correspond to any number of spatio-temporal particulars available in intuition – our experiential knowledge of a particular emerges from the singular synthesis of a concept with a spatio-temporal intuition. This synthesis is mediated by a *process* which 'maps' the concepts of the understanding onto concrete sensuous 'counterparts'. Thus, concepts, which are general and pure when *a priori*, and general and abstractable from concrete sensuous particulars when empirical, must be determined in a spatio-temporal, i.e. particular, fashion. Kant refers to this *productive* (in the case of *a priori* concepts) or *figurative* (in the case of sensible concepts) imaginative process as 'schematism'. While the former synthesizes our experience of individuals in general, the latter synthesizes particular visual configurations of individuals, e.g. the various images of a dog as we represent it to ourselves in order to cognize it as *a dog*.

The 'matching' or 'schematizing' bases itself on a kind of *homogeneity* of the *schematizing procedure itself* with intuited sensuous particulars, on one hand, and with the concepts under which they are subsumed, on the other. More than this, particularized, *sensualized (spatialized and temporalized) procedural concepts* – viz. the schemata of the quantitative, qualitative, relational, and modal, concepts in turn subsuming particular dogs – transcend the heterogeneity between a sensuous particular and the concepts under which it is subsumed. Thus, a schematized concept is, in effect, sensuous in being inseparable from the sensuous intuition, i.e. from the intuited particular, onto which it is schematized. The schema *qua* procedural concept is also inseparable from the general concept it schematizes, and is, so, also logical

and intellectual.

Although it is not an image, the schema of a sensible concept refers us to, or makes possible, a particular image or combination of images, say that of a particular dog (of a given size, a certain shade and intensity of fur-colour, etc.). However, when the concept is an *a priori* category of the pure understanding, we are not referred to a particular image of an individual, but, rather, to the way general concepts are spatio-temporally determined in synthesis with particular sensuous intuitions. Such a pure schema, then, is the *conceptual procedure* in virtue of which our unified experience of an empirical individual *in general* is *concretely* determined. In virtue of the sensuousness of its concept-schema, the resultant cognizable individual may be said to be logically identical with the concept – but with the concept *qua* sensuously followed rule, not *qua* generality heavy-handedly applied. For, although the sense content is received by the mind and not generated by it, but only spatio-temporally organized in its intuition, a full-fledged empirical individual cannot be known without synthesis via conceptual schemata.

Indeed, each of these schemata is, in our experience, inseparable from the sensuous individual the knowledge of which it helps synthesize. Were they to be treated as ultimately explicatory essences constituting noumena rather than knowledge of phenomena transcendently determined by unknowable grounds, the individuals *could* be understood as logically self-caused – and we shall argue that it is, in fact, by understanding them so that Hegel theorizes an individual's self-determination as a concrete universal. On the basis of this, Kant's schematism can be understood as *that in ordinary experience which gives intimation of what ontologically immanent logical self-causation may be like*. *Qua* synthesized in the imagination, the sensuous individual is not a 'thing-in-itself' fully accessible to reason, but an individual conceived solely within the world of experience which can never be treated

in the terms of noumenal self-causation.²² Therefore – though this is not the place to unpack the schematism and its various ambiguities in exhaustive exegetical detail – some clarifications and general directions as to the way in which it mitigates the separation between concepts and sensuous intuitions are due.

Although we pay some attention to Kant's conception of the schematism of empirical and mathematical concepts, these mainly serve to emphasize the difficulty of mediating the transcendental concepts which, unlike them, do not immediately lend themselves to sensuous imagining. Arguably, without their contrast with the sensible schemata, the transcendental schemata are hardly intelligible. In that the transcendental concepts are not limited to synthesizing particular images of individuals, they give us some insight into the most general logical structure of an individual.

Kant's Schemata as Sensuous Concepts

Kant argues that, while mathematical concepts such as 'circle' and empirical concepts such as 'dog' or 'plate' can be said to be homogeneous with sensuous intuitions, and with each other, the pure concepts of the understanding cannot. This 'homogeneity' means that the sensuous intuition and the concept under which it is subsumed share a defining characteristic or 'core of features' – making the subsumption immediately possible. Thus, the empirical concept 'dog' is homogeneous with intuitions of particular dogs.

²² The separation between the rational (supersensuous) and the sensuous is also evident in the initial 'discord' between imagination and reason in an encounter with the sublime – an 'experience' which transcends mental capacities such as understanding, sensibility, and even the highest sensuous faculty, imagination. In such an encounter, the rift between sensuous experience and pure, sensuously unconstrained, practical reason is once more apparent. See e. g. Deleuze (1984, pp. 50-52). See e.g. Crowther (1991, pp. 35-6) in support of such a view. See Guyer (2005, pp. 227-8) for a counterargument to the effect that pure practical reason is not positively affirmed in Kant's theory of the sublime, but, rather that the supersensuous is only negatively adumbrated.

The problem, however, is that particular dogs do not ever present themselves to us in a non-conceptual way, but only insofar as sensibility is in some sense filtered through the understanding. Therefore, it seems to, rather, be the case that the empirical concept of a dog is homogeneous with another set of concepts through which a sensuous intuition presents itself, e.g. “a loyal though bad-tempered borzoi with an off-white coat and bad teeth”.²³ The concept of ‘dog’ is *included* in the description, and, at the same time, *includes* all possible descriptions of actual and possible particular dogs. But these *are* descriptions which, by means of concepts, mediate sensuous content – that is, the homogeneity is not between a concept and a pre-conceptual intuition. This means, perhaps, that sensuous content *lends itself* to subsumption under a certain concept – and, reciprocally, that the concept is *abstractable from* a multiplicity of different sensuous particular inasmuch as they share a certain core of variously particularized general characteristics. The case with mathematical concepts is similar. Kant describes the homogeneity between sensuous intuition and such a concept thus:

Whenever an object is subsumed under a concept, the presentation of the object must be *homogeneous* with the concept; i.e., the concept must contain what is presented in the object that is to be subsumed under it. For this is precisely what we mean by the expression that an object is contained *under* a concept. Thus the empirical concept of a *plate* is homogeneous with the pure geometrical concept of a *circle*, inasmuch as the roundness thought in the concept of the plate can be intuited [also] in the circle.²⁴

This is to say that, in having sensuous particularity subsumed under it, or, in being abstractable from sensuous particularity, the concept is not insensitive to the spatio-temporal perspectivity of this particularity, but, rather, in some sense ‘contains’ it. It is not just an *abstractly general* concept, but, also, a *sensuous, individual* one. While *a priori* concepts of the pure understanding such as ‘unity’ or ‘substance’ are not homogeneous with the empirical concept

²³ See Bennett (1966, p. 148).

²⁴ Kant (1996, pp. 209-10).

‘plate’ thanks to which a sensuous particular is cognized as *a* plate, the geometrical concept ‘circle’ is. For one immediately recognizes what there is in common between the geometrical ideation of a circle and a plate – the circular shape that is concrete in the plate. Though it is true that the concept of a circle, or that of a plate, are not directly matched to anything purely sensuous, but are necessarily mediated by other concepts, extracting the concept ‘circle’ from many circular objects, and that of ‘plate’ from many plates, is relatively straightforward. This is so because the concepts ‘plate’ or ‘dog’ are so schematized as to be inseparable from images of particular plates or dogs with a certain core of general features – and are, in virtue of that, both sensuous and conceptual (general). Granted, none of the particulars measure up to the concept in its encompassing generality – and the concept is not limited to any one of them.

Imagining sensuous particulars that correspond to pure concepts of the understanding such as ‘totality’, ‘substance’, ‘causality’, or ‘possibility’, by contrast, is not so straightforward. Yet, if the pure concepts of the understanding are to be more than empty ideas, they must, too, like empirical and mathematical concepts, be able to ‘hook onto’ sensuous particularity in some way. Due to their heterogeneity from intuition, Kant contends, this can only be achieved through a ‘third term’ which is, on one hand, homogeneous with intuition – on the other, with pure concepts.²⁵ He refers to this term as “the *transcendental schema*”.²⁶ The schema is also ‘pure’, in the sense that it is not derived by empirical means, and is, rather, a necessary structure of experience – but is, nevertheless, both *sensuous* and *intellectual*.²⁷ In contrast, empirical and mathematical concepts *qua* schemata cannot be said to be ‘transcendental’ – in the sense of being necessary logical conditions of the constitution of *any* possible individual (object, event or state of affairs) in all

²⁵ See Kant (1996, pp. 210-11).

²⁶ Kant (1996, p. 211).

²⁷ Kant (1996, p. 211).

of empirical reality. The generality of empirical concepts is based on abstraction from our experience of individuals, rather than being responsible for our experience of *any* individual.²⁸ The generality of mathematical concepts is *a priori* without being a transcendental condition of *any* experience – and there are many (imperfectly circular, rectangular, polyhedral) sensuous particulars which, however deficiently, exemplify such concepts. But, in the case of the transcendental schemata, there are no sensuous particulars called ‘unity’, ‘cause’, or ‘substance’, wherefore a third transcendental term homogeneous with both intuition and concept must mediate between the sensuous and these categories.

One’s fear may be that this introduction of a term to integrate understanding and sensibility may lead to an infinite regress of the Third Man type. This danger is alleviated by the fact that the schema is not just another concept through which a sensuous particular and a general concept are explained, but a kind of a *conditioning* ‘modification’ of both which mediates and unifies them. For it is not the case that the sensuous and the conceptual element of experience are really distinct *parts*, and the schema – a third, really distinct, one. A dog, say, is not a sum-of-components such as: “general concept ‘substance’ + schema ‘substance’ + empirical concept ‘dog’ + schema ‘dog’ + spatio-temporal intuition”. Such may be the *logical structure* of experience of the empirical world, but knowledge of an empirical individual such as a ‘dog’ is not infinitely divisible into concepts and mediating terms – but is a *unified complex*, a ‘synthetic unity’, whereof these terms are aspects. Therefore the schema *qua* mediating term can be thought of as the imaginative synthesis itself – which is not itself in need of being synthesized with that which it synthesizes.

Despite the difference of sensible from pure, transcendental schemata,

²⁸ See e.g. Kant (1996, p. 284): “a synthesis obtained from experience, the concept then being called an *empirical concept*; or as a synthesis which, as a priori condition, underlies experience as such (the form of experience)”.

Kant's understanding of the schematization of empirical and mathematical concepts is instructive. For, either way (transcendentally or sensibly), a schema is understood as a 'processual method' of knowing individuals through synthesis rather than as a static concept. There are, however, important differences as to what the method is and the way it is followed. In the case of the schematization of an empirical concept, the schema is a kind of 'rule' that guides the imagination in its synthesis of a particular, say, a dog, out of a sensuous intuition and the empirical concept 'dog', in a specific way that is different from the 'rule' comprised by the schema of a house.²⁹ Because it is a rule, one can only assume that the way it will, in fact, be followed in the spatio-temporal 'modelling' of a sensuous particular will be particularized for different sensuous intuitions. But, it is clear that it is the following of this rule in the processual knowledge of a unified individual via synthesis, rather than some sort of pre-existing particularity of sensuous content, that particularizes the schema. In other words, the schema of an empirical concept is self-particularizing but only in synthesis with sensuous content. Or, in Kant's own words, "the only way in which objects can be given to us is by modification of our sensibility"³⁰ by the understanding. For the sensuous content is not intuitable as a spatio-temporal particular without the schema.

Yet, it is not only with the particularity of sensuous intuition, but also with the generality of a concept, that such a schema is homogeneous. On the one hand, it is the *following* of in an idiosyncratic rule for the synthesis of *this* particular. On the other, it *is* this rule which has a specific character for particulars of the same kind – and is, thus, in some sense universal amongst them. It is incoherent to argue, then, that a general rule is simply applied to a particular object or state of affairs. Rather, the rule, and the way it is followed in the synthesis of a particular spatio-temporal perspective, are *reciprocally*

²⁹ See e.g. Crowther (2010, p. 38) for a discussion of this. For comprehensive discussions of the schematism, see also Paton (1976, pp. 17-78) and Rosenberg (2005, pp. 140-61).

³⁰ Kant (1996, p. 212).

determining. More than it just being the case that the intuited particular is conditioned, and partially determined, by the rule – the rule itself is conditioned, and its content partially determined, by intuited sensuous particularity.³¹

But then, the function of the schematism is not to produce a mere ‘image’ of a sensuous intuition – for “the imagination’s synthesis aims not at an individual intuition but *at unity in the determination of sensibility*”.³² More than this, the individual intuition would not be recognized as *this* particular spatio-temporal perspective on an individual such as a dog, or on a state of affairs or event, without this more fundamental synthesis. For this perspective – as well as the knowledge that there are *other* such perspectives, and that the dog, or the states of affairs and events it is part of, is not reducible to the present perspective – would be impossible without the ‘unity in the determination of sensibility’. Further, Kant demonstrates the inadequacy of an ‘image’ through the example of an image of a triangle – which would inevitably be one of a particular triangle, isosceles, right-angled, obtuse-angled, with a certain length of each side, etc., and would not match the concept of the ‘triangle itself’ in its encompassing generality. Each image would, instead, be limited to one possible instantiation of the concept of triangularity. The schema as a *rule* or *method*, on the other hand, exists only “in thoughts”³³ – which is to say that only in synthesis with sensuousness is this ‘rule’ concretely followed out and its content fully determined. Equally, the sensuous intuition of a particular dog, or an image of it – say, a picture of this dog – does not directly match up with the empirical concept ‘dog’ which, in abstraction from particularity and the schema, is merely general. The particular perceptual perspective, or temporal sequence of perspectives, on a

³¹ For a discussion of a similar conception of ‘rule-following’ in Ludwig Wittgenstein and Sigmund Freud, see Puhl (2004, pp. 155-68).

³² Kant (1996, p. 212). Italics within this quote are mine, not Kant’s.

³³ Kant (1996, p. 213).

dog (barking, in certain surroundings, performing a certain series of movements) is hardly adequate to the concept of a dog which abstracts from *all* possible and actual dogs. Therefore, Kant writes,

The concept *dog* signifies a rule whereby my imagination can trace the shape of such a four-footed animal in a general way, i.e., without being limited to any single and particular shape offered to me by experience, or even to all possible images I can exhibit *in concreto*. [...] A *schema* of sensible concepts (such as the concepts of figures in space) is a product and, as it were, a monogram of the pure a priori imagination through which, and according to which, images become possible in the first place.³⁴

Then he immediately contends:

But the images must always be connected with the concept only by means of the schema that they designate; in themselves the images are never completely congruent with the concept. A schema of a pure concept of understanding, on the other hand, is something that one cannot bring to any image whatsoever. Such a schema is, rather, only the pure synthesis conforming to a rule, expressed by the category, of unity according to concepts as such. It is a transcendental product of the imagination which concerns the determination of inner sense as such, according to conditions of that sense's form (viz., time), in regard to all presentations insofar as these are to cohere a priori, in conformity with the unity of apperception, in one concept.³⁵

In other words, while an empirical concept such as 'dog' can be matched with particular images of dogs, just as a mathematical concept such as 'circle' can be matched with the image of a plate, pure concepts such as 'unity', 'plurality', 'causality', 'necessity', etc., clearly have no 'image' counterpart. There can be no image, say, of cause and effect. Rather than making particular 'images' possible, schemata of such pure concepts dictate rules according to which spatio-temporal individuals are known via synthesis within a *unified* experience. The unity of the transcendental subject from which the pure concepts issue, and the unity of the empirical individual known via synthesis,

³⁴ Kant (1996, p. 214).

³⁵ Kant (1996, p. 214).

are reciprocal in the synthesis. This reciprocity of ‘self’ and ‘world’ (constituted by empirical individuals as they are known to us) is what Kant refers to as ‘the unity of [transcendental] apperception’³⁶ – and is correlative with the ‘transcendental object’ as the logical ground of a known sensuous individual.

The determination of ‘inner sense’ is the process of schematizing the pure concepts in a *temporal* way. Thus, for instance, while the category of causality is general and intellectual rather than particular and sensuous, and so, not in time, its schema lets it be synthesized with sensuous intuitions so that they are represented in a *successive* fashion and one sensuous appearance necessarily precedes or succeeds another – as the act, say, of failing to swim always precedes the event of drowning, rather than vice versa. Since there will be intuitions that will be synthesized so as to be experienced as simultaneous – e.g. during an event such as a dance, where, apart from performing successive movements according to particularized general rules, the different dancers also move simultaneously – concepts should also be *spatially* schematized. This would be the determination of ‘outer sense’.³⁷ The spatio-temporal schematization takes place according to the general rule of a schema – but, in that it is carried out concretely in sensuous particularity, the rule itself is particularized, and becomes sensuous besides its intellectuality.

Insofar as all this is so, the schema is inseparable from particularity, and, since it is also conceptual, it may be understood as a viable model for that unique concept with which a logically self-caused individual, on our (not Kant’s) construal, can be said to be identical. However, the unity of the schematized individual, for Kant, is dictated by the transcendental subjective apparatus and its correlate, the transcendental object, which are unknowable – wherefore identity of the particular with any ultimately explicatory essence

³⁶ See e.g. Kant (1996, p. 313).

³⁷ Kant himself does not say much about this, but it can be inferred from the spatio-temporal character of sensuous intuition.

(which is not just experiential, but also absolutely rational) is experientially impossible. Nonetheless, *because* Kant's sensuous-conceptual individuals are coherent, and turn out to be the wholly unintentional groundwork for the theory of self-causation implicit in Hegel's 'concrete universal', we ought to attend to the way the general concepts applied to their sensuousness are schematized in the productive imagination.

Kant argues that the schema of the whole triad of quantitative concepts, i.e. unity, plurality, and totality, is *number* – which he defines as “a presentation encompassing conjointly the successive addition of one item to another” and as “nothing other than the unity in the synthesis of the manifold of a homogeneous intuition as such, a unity that arises because I myself produce time in apprehending the intuition”.³⁸ Although his conception of it in terms of enumeration is puzzling,³⁹ this schema can be understood as a kind of successive ‘tracing out’ of sensuous particulars’ various spatial and temporal aspects or scanning of different sensuous particulars in space and time. These aspects or particulars should be part of a homogeneous intuition – in the sense that what is ‘counted’ should be the same *kind* of thing, e.g. the times a certain movement is repeated (albeit with variation), the number of men in a crowd, of dancers in a dance, or whatever. In this process, the reciprocal unity of the experiencing subject with the experienced sensuous particular(s) so ‘traced out’ is still understood as underlying the plurality of aspects or particulars and combining them into a totality.

Consider, again, the collective dance. *Qua* spatio-temporally modified experiencing subjects, we can successively apprehend the dance in several ways: e.g. (i.) following the various movements and gestures, *qua* temporal aspects of the particular event, in different successive series; (ii.) scanning the different dancers, their bodies and costumes, *qua* spatial aspects of a dynamic

³⁸ Kant (1996, p. 215).

³⁹ See e.g. Crowther (2010, p. 41) for a discussion of this.

state of affairs, successively in any desired order.⁴⁰ Although Kant's provision of a single schema for all three quantitative categories may seem strange, it has an important advantage in that it lets us think of our processual knowing of a *multiaspectual* sensuous individual as unified all in virtue of *one* sensuous-intellectual concept, the quantitative schema. Thus, we experience an event as a *dynamic unified totality* of *many* different (interrelated) sensuous particulars, or a particular as a *dynamic unified totality* of *many* aspects. This schema, then, makes for a kind of a dialectical unification in virtue of which unity, plurality, and totality, are one and the same concrete sensuous individual (particular, state of affairs, or event) as available in our unified temporal experience. This unification is carried out, in a word, by means of a '*time series*'.⁴¹

The schema for the qualitative concepts of reality and negation, on the other hand, matches these concepts to the presence ("being") or absence ("not-being") of "sensation as such" in time.⁴² Since 'time' is the 'determination' (or 'form') of the sensuous, sensation is the 'determinable' (or 'matter'). There is a spectrum between the reality and negation of a sensation in that sensation can fill time in different degrees and magnitudes – according to the way it is determined in intuition. The schema of reality traverses this spectrum in time in the sense of successively 'producing' our experience of that reality and ascending to a certain degree, and then descending until the sensation's negation.⁴³ Think, for instance, of the transient sensuous reality of a sunset over the sea, gradually 'ascending' to a certain qualitative configuration – cloud shapes, orange and blue colours of a certain intensity, a reflection of sky in water. The qualitative whole does not appear to us as filling space and time in mutually independent parts lying

⁴⁰ A similar interpretation is offered in Crowther (2010, p. 41).

⁴¹ See Kant (1996, p. 217).

⁴² See Kant (1996, p. 215).

⁴³ Kant (1996, p. 216).

outside of each other: rather, it appears *at once*. The gradual disappearance of the sunset and the passage into night, by contrast, are the traversing of the spectrum from reality to gradual negation of that qualitative whole. Once the sensation underlying *this* sunset vanishes in virtue of the schematization of negation onto *this* sensuous particularity (as a unified complex of qualities of varying intensity), *any other possible* or actual sunset in space and time has to be *not this* (or, from a different perspective, *that*) sunset. Further, a sensuous individual of any other kind can be ‘not a sunset’, a ‘non-sunset’ – thus schematizing the concept of limitation. This is to say that all individuality non-identical with *this* individuality must, in some sense, relate to it – either in virtue of being a particular of the same kind (e.g. not *this* sunset, but *a* sunset), or of not having anything in common with it at all (e.g. a thunderstorm as a non-sunset), and, so, relating in virtue of non-relation. And *this* individuality can be no *other*. This means in turn that a schema, *qua* dialectical surpassing of reality and negation through limitation of all actual and possible individuality that is not *this* individual and *this* sort of thing, is in a sense essential to absolutely *any* sensuous individual. The dialectics here concern ‘*time content*’,⁴⁴ i.e. the synthesis of the quality of sensuous individuality, rather than merely the enumeration of individuals and their aspects.

A similar dialectical relationship is recognizable in the schemata of the relational concepts. The schema of substance is spatio-temporal permanence in relation to which temporal succession and simultaneity can be determined.⁴⁵ Indeed, the successive tracing out of changes, e.g. the qualitative traversing of the spectrum from reality to negation, is possible only against a background of relative immutability and permanence. Kant observes that time itself is unchangeable: for that which is in transition in time is what

⁴⁴ See Kant (1996, p. 217).

⁴⁵ See Kant (1996, p. 216).

changes.⁴⁶ The permanence of substance can only be such as far as sensuous things can be permanent in relation to their own aspects, or to other sensuous things or their aspects. For, while perceiving the appearance and disappearance of the sunset is a process of change, the Sun itself is more permanent than the changeable spectacles it participates in or than its own historical changes, albeit *not absolutely permanent*.

It is against the background of such *apparent, relative permanence* that the concept of causality can be schematized, sensuously reflecting hypothetical judgements such as “If the Sun dies, life on Earth will also die”. Then, the category of community (or ‘reciprocal causality’) is schematized onto the sensuous particularity of the Sun and of Earth-life. This schema again dialectically unifies the concepts of substance and successive causality into the concept of community. For, according to our hypothetical judgement, life on Earth and the Sun’s life are reciprocal and simultaneous. The Earth’s life and the Sun are non-identical with each other, but necessary for each other in this non-identity. The relative permanence of both Earth and Sun, combined with the causality running from the Sun’s to the Earth’s life or death, produces community between the Sun and Earth-life in that they are spatially related.⁴⁷ This is to say that they can engage in a kind of ‘back-and-forth’ causal interaction – where modifications of the Sun *qua* Substance are reciprocal with modifications of the Earth *qua* substance. If the Earth is suffering certain Sun-related changes, then it is because the Sun is changing in a certain way.

So, the schemata of the relational concepts are rules that deal with the ‘*time order*’ of our knowledge of all possible sensuous individuals – just as it is the Sun’s death, in our experience, that must necessarily precede the death of life on Earth. This is not to say that such processes are strictly ordered as ‘points’ in time, but that *one process or event necessarily presupposes*

⁴⁶ See Kant (1996, p. 216).

⁴⁷ See Martin (1955, p. 70) on the ‘thoroughgoing reciprocity’ between Earth and Sun in Kant’s theory of science.

another, or entails another. Thus, the Sun's death throes will necessarily implicate certain events for the Earth, such as destruction of its life-forms, and, possibly, its incineration and engulfment into the Sun. A different kind of end of Earth's life, say, a collision with another planet, however, need not be followed by the Sun's death. This is not to say that, in Kant's view, the Sun is completely unaffected by the Earth. Although it influences the Earth's successive states without being dependent on these states and the Earth's orbiting for its survival, it is reciprocal, i.e. in community, with the Earth, because "[i]n Kant's Newtonian conception [...] every action must have an equal and opposite reaction, and so the earth does necessarily influence the sun in turn – through its own (relatively small) gravitational force".⁴⁸ Furthermore, the 'time order' determined by means of the relational schemata is *irreversible*,⁴⁹ in the sense that *once* a sensuous individual or state of affairs comes to exist or an event or process begins taking place, it can die or cease, but it cannot be undone or returned to non-existence – nor can its causal consequences be prevented.

The relational schemata, in other words, further affirm the conclusions we drew from the qualitative schemata. The schematization of substance into relative permanence vis-à-vis other individuals and processes, of causality into the temporal enactment of these relations, and of community into the spatial framework that enables reciprocal causal interaction between transforming individuals, processes, and states of affairs, is the further articulation of the appearance, disappearance, and limitation into *thisness* and *suchness*, defined against *otherness* (of individuality and kind), of qualitative wholes. We experience no ever-permanent substance (always already what it is) – substantiality is, for us, an articulation reciprocal with relationality. This avoids the contradiction between absolute permanence (eternity) and spatio-

⁴⁸ Friedman (2000, p. 209). Also cited in: Longuenesse (2005, p. 55). On Kant's causal time-order, see Longuenesse (1998, pp. 371-3).

⁴⁹ See e.g. Savile (2005, pp. 72-80) on this irreversibility.

temporal modal mutability.

Finally, the schema of possibility requires that contradictory properties of individuals be schematized only successively, rather than being simultaneously present (in the same respect at the same time), for our experience of a sensuous individual to be possible. The schema is the rule that ensures the logical harmony in our knowledge of an individual. The schema of actuality ensures our knowledge of the individual's existence at a determinate time and place, i.e. the ontological realization of the logical harmony of possibility. The schema of necessity is the most puzzling: in Kant's words, "the existence of an object at all time".⁵⁰ This only makes sense if we think of that object as the entire world (in an absolutely all-encompassing sense, as far as empirical things go). The only kind of necessity that exists in Kant's empirical world is causal necessity – and metaphysical necessity (as that which cannot be otherwise than it is in an *absolute*, *ultimate*, and *eternal*, sense) cannot be theoretically posited. It makes sense, therefore, for Kant's schema of necessity to be a dialectical unification between the schema of possibility, which synthesizes contradictory properties of individuals successively rather than simultaneously, and the schema of actuality that ensures these individuals' determinate existence in space and time. If the accidents of the whole world are successively schematized when contradictory, i.e. in order to respect the principle of non-contradiction, *and* the world, with all its accidents, is actualized in space and time, there is no beginning or end to the process. For the world exists 'all the time' – and thereby encompasses the causal necessity embodied by the succession of all its accidents.

The modal transcendental schemata are, therefore, the rules that determine the "*time sum total*"⁵¹ for all possible and actual individuals as we

⁵⁰ Kant (1996, p. 217).

⁵¹ Kant (1996, p. 217).

experience them, for all of sensuous reality. As part of that ‘sum total’, the existence of any spatio-temporal particular, event, or states of affairs, presupposes, in our knowledge, their possibility and entails their necessity. Thus, the sensuous reality known via synthesis through the quantitative, qualitative, and relational, schemata is finally affirmed as being a reality which could not be known as otherwise than it is (known) in *all* and *any* of its aspects. The unified totality known as everything’s relation to everything else makes for the unchangeable reality of *all time*.

It turns out, then, that, via the schemata, a sensuous particular is known as fully determined as *this* individual. In virtue of the ‘time series’ schema, a particular is known as *one* of *many* particulars that succeed each other in time, or, even if possibly simultaneous, are intuited successively – or as *one* that has *many*, successively intuited, aspects. In virtue of the ‘time content’ schemata, each of these particulars is known as a unified qualitative whole whose individual reality seems to negate or limit that of any particular known to be non-identical with it. Thus, for example, the reality of a present sensuous experience in a certain spatio-temporal context is known as bringing along the negation of another, similar or different, experience in another context – just as the experience of dusk comes with experience of the negation of the sunset that precedes it and the consequent non-identity of all succeeding sunsets with *this* one. And any sensuous experience can limit any other experience, or features thereof, with which it is incompatible: thus, for instance, the experience of seeing the moon, as it looks at night, will generally never be included in that of seeing the sun at noon (for the noon-sun is a non-night-moon and belongs to the infinite class of non-night-moon experiences). By means of the ‘time order’ schemata, the relations and reciprocal determination between particulars are more concretely articulated in terms of the interplay of relative permanence and change, as well as in terms of causal succession and causal interaction – rather than simply through showing that one particular is known as numerically and qualitatively non-identical with

another as the other two types of schema do. Finally, the ‘time sum total’ schemata affirm the resulting knowledge of a unified spatio-temporal world – apparently composed of a multiplicity of interrelated, reciprocally determining, sensuous particulars – as possible, actual, and necessary, in all its aspects.

Since each of these schemata is a general feature of our knowledge of every sensuous individual in the world, but is, at the same time, irreducibly particular in its sensuous concreteness, we may wish to treat it as belonging to the particular’s essence insofar as such an essence can be known. Such an essence would, however, be an ‘intrinsic’ feature of individuality, and intrinsicity could only apply to unknowable noumena. We may wish to think of the aim of the schema – the unity of sensuous spatio-temporal determination – as indicative of each sensuous individual’s identity with the schematic rules responsible for our unified experience of its constitution. But, such identity can only be based in ‘transcendental unity’ which cannot, for Kant, be known – for it is what makes all experiential knowledge possible. Knowledge of such unity is ventured only in Hegel’s radicalization of the schema.

For Kant, the schema proceeds from an unknowable transcendental subject while the sensuous content it determines and unifies is grounded in an unknowable transcendental object. So, he never treats the imaginatively known sensuous particulars as knowable logically self-caused individuals. Yet, without ever dreaming of doing so, he enables Hegel to treat them in that way. Kant’s transcendental project creates a rift between reason and experience, between what *ought to be* (theoretical reason’s regulative ideas, practical reason’s idea of the ‘causa noumenon’) and what *is* (sensuous individuals known via synthesis of the concepts of the understanding with spatio-temporal intuition). Hegel dares to close this rift by demonstrating, via

dialectical reason, that the schema⁵² should be as metaphysically ultimate as a thing-in-itself: i.e. as a logically self-caused noumenon which is also ontologically real and finds its truth in the sensuously articulated concept (the schema). Ontologically immanent logical self-causation is, in his dialectical logic, not at all possible without something akin to the schema – what, for him, *becomes* the ‘concrete universal’. It is to a discussion of the *logical structure* of his radicalization of Kant’s project – and the consequences of such radicalization for a theory of ontologically real (i.e. immanent) logically self-caused individuality – that we now turn.

Hegel’s Concrete Universal *qua* Real Self-Caused Individual

For Kant, reason’s ideas of self-causation are divorced from experiential knowledge – and, at the same time, silenced and reduced to the methodological presupposition of an unknowable ideal. Their only affirmation is practical, in the case of the moral law – which is, however, divorced from sensuous experience. Hegel diagnoses the following problem in this separation: in limiting itself to sensuous experience, theoretical reason has already transcended its limitation. For the limitation is intelligible against the background of what it excludes from theoretical consideration – as well as vice versa. Further, in virtue of negating the logical self-causation of sensuous individuals – by arguing they are not self-caused, for they are causally and spatio-temporally interrelated with other such individuals and dependent for their constitution on concepts issuing from the transcendental apparatus – we have paradoxically *affirmed* it. In what way have we done so?

In our knowledge of the particular through synthesis, the sensuous intuition and the concept mutually determine each other, via the schema that

⁵² If we take the ‘concrete universal’ to be a radicalization of the schema.

is at once sensuous and conceptual. Thus, the quantitative, qualitative, relational, and modal, schemata are inseparable, say, from our awareness of the sensuous particularity of an event such as a dance. There is the particularization of the numerical (the ‘one and the many’): e.g. in the *many* individual dancers, their participation in the *one* dancing group and the totality of the dancing performance with all its *many* aspects, movements and stages. There is the qualitative appearance and disappearance of sensations in different rhythms and intensities, e.g. the end of one colourful combination of movements or dancing configuration and the beginning of another, and the defining of each configuration against the background of the other. There is also the interplay between the relative permanence of the dancing bodies, the irreversible temporal successiveness of the motions and gestures, and the reciprocal interaction between the dancers. Finally, there is the logical possibility of the dance, as we perceive it, in that everything in it happens in accordance with the principle of non-contradiction and no dancer, movement, quality, or whatever, is contradictory in the same respect at the same time. There is the existence of the dance and of the dancers, and, ultimately, the necessity of the whole event (in relation to us), of the dynamic state of affairs, and of the participant animated bodies, as part of the large scheme of things – i.e. of *all* of time and space, of our unified awareness of the whole empirical world.

The concepts *qua* general rules for the synthesis of our spatio-temporal perspectives on the particularity of the dance are ‘empty’ apart from this particularization – reciprocally, the particulars cannot be understood as real and determinate apart from the epistemic conditions for this synthesis. By saying that this unity attained via the schematism is dictated by the transcendental conditions of knowledge of *any* particular, we have said that the unified sensuous individual is *not* a transcendently real thing. Arguably, only a noumenon can have transcendental reality – but such reality is, for Kant, not ontologically actualized, as the noumenon is only ever granted

logical possibility (except in the practical idea of the 'causa noumenon').

Yet, then, Hegel would seem to argue, the logical possibility – which is, for him, the *possibly real* – is *necessary* for the individuality of the sensuous individual which can only be understood in virtue of such reality. The contradiction between the supersensuous as a pure logical possibility and the ontological, empirical reality of sensuous particularity is, in other words, necessary for the determination of each – logical possibility as such, and empirical reality as such. Due to this reciprocal logical determination, for Hegel, the sensuous is necessary for the purely rational, and, in fact, determines it, and vice versa. Logic is necessary for ontology, and determines it – and vice versa. Yet, this cannot be postulated as a simple identity or an immediate unity. Indeed, the rupturing of logical possibility as pure thought from existence in actuality, i.e. the initial positing of essence's radical otherness from existence, is imperative for the demonstration that essence and existence are necessary for each other. In a word, the unification of essence and existence in actuality is a mediated achievement. In Charles Taylor's words:

[...] in order to have a really sufficient reason for something, we have to outline conditions which are identical with or which entail the event or thing to be explained. But a reason which amounts to the same thing as what is explained is not satisfactory as an explanation: it fails to be informative. [...] To be informative an explanation must give us a ground which is not identical with what we are explaining. But in doing so, we lose the sufficiency of the reason; for ground and grounded are now no longer the same, and hence they are only contingently linked. [...]

The dilemma, or contradiction, in which we find ourselves with the notion of ground is thus this: to the extent that our citing of a ground is informative, it will be distinct from the entity to be explained [Hegel calls this 'real ground'], but then it will be insufficient; on the other hand, if it is sufficient, it will no longer be distinct from the explicandum, and then it will be empty and uninformative (what Hegel calls 'formal ground').

[...]

[...] the necessity required by the principle of sufficient reason is combined with the real differentiation of terms in the relationship of ground to grounded without which explanations are uninformative.

[...] As a whole (ein Ganzes) the system of related elements is one, it reflects identity, and the explanation of the whole by the whole is one in which ground

and grounded are identical. But as a system of different elements [...] the system has otherness, difference; ground and grounded are different entities which are related in this way. Reality is necessarily both. Without the necessary link which is identity, what exists would have no ground, it would be without foundation, hence would not exist. But without difference, real differentiation of elements, there could also be no existence [...].⁵³

This is to say that it is not satisfactory to dogmatically argue from the get-go that a sensuous individual existent and its ground are identical. It is legitimate to trace the individual's interrelatedness with other such individuals at the level of experience, although this does not lead to an ultimately satisfactory, sufficient, explanation. Hegel's conclusion, as Taylor articulates it, is similar to Kant's accommodation of real (efficient) causality and ideal causality (self-causation) in his treatment of natural organisms. However, for Hegel, the ultimate unity of existence and essence is also *real* because it is determined through differentiation in spatio-temporal sensuousness, rather than being merely incompatible with such differentiation. This determination is given further, fuller, expression in his discussion of the self-unfolding of the concept into concrete universality – where the actuality of essence finds its truth.

Since the notion of unity between sensuous content and *a priori* concepts is not derivable empirically, unified sensuous experience, in the sense of awareness of particulars, would be unintelligible if it were not the further determination of a kind of logically self-dependent ground (essence) from which all sensuous characteristics issue. On the other hand, that ground cannot be said to have any reality except in relation to the sensuous individual it grounds. Hegel trumps Kant by concluding that the supersensuous *qua* merely thought (subjective), and the sensuous *qua* known thought-content (objective), are reciprocal and can ultimately be said to form the very same individual that determines itself more richly and truly through both the universality of concepts and the particularity of the sensuous. In other words, Hegel explicitly determines – what Kant would understand as – our

⁵³ Taylor (1975, p. 264-7).

knowledge of a sensuous particular and the logical (rational) ground of such a particular into one and the same actual individual. Hegel refers to this individual as the ‘concrete universal’. This universal is the articulation of the concept through particularity. *Pace* Kant, the concept, for Hegel, has an ultimate metaphysical meaning.

We must remember that, for Kant, the pure concepts of the understanding do not demonstrate the individuality of a sensuous individual (particular). That individuality is spatio-temporal and is known through synthesis via the schemata – which ‘maps’ the concepts, and gives content to the judgements they enable, in time and space. However, even in the schematism, it is clear that the individuals known through synthesis are not rationally intelligible in an ultimate sense, as the concepts are sensuously limited, and unlimited logical space is left for a supersensuous thing-in-itself. The schema realizes the unity of the transcendental subject. The unity of our awareness of a sensuous individual is dictated by the transcendental object which is not sensuous and with which, therefore, theoretical knowledge may not establish the individual’s identity – as this object is the logical condition of any possible knowledge.

By contrast, Hegel reinvents Kant’s concepts and the judgements they enable, and shows that the ‘concrete universal’ is an ontologically real and *ultimately* intelligible self-caused individual – in a manner which we may now outline. The division of the sensuous and the supersensuous is, as Hegel adumbrates, a contrast between the understanding and reason – for while reason is pure thought, the understanding’s concepts are ‘determinate’, i.e. sensuously determined in synthesis with intuitions.⁵⁴ This is why reason can think logically self-caused things, though no such things are directly accessible in sensuous experience. It is not difficult to discern in Hegel’s conception of the understanding as “the faculty of the *single* determinate

⁵⁴ See Hegel (2010b, p. 529).

concept”⁵⁵ Kant’s idea of a conceptual rule that is at once sensuous and intellectual. Logically self-caused individuality can, for Hegel, be mediately arrived at via the concept’s self-particularization.

Hegel’s theory of an individual’s self-causation – or, in Hegel’s terms, of self-constitution or self-determination – is built on the following triad: that of the *universal*, the *particular*, and the *individual* (or, the *singular*). This is not to say that these ‘members’ of the triad are numerically distinct, for “number is a form unsuited to conceptual determinations, but for the determination of the concept itself it is unsuited the most”.⁵⁶ Rather, they are different, reciprocally determining, ‘moments’ of the determination of the same reality. Thus, the particular can only be understood in relation to the universal – for one can only be a particular man if one has something in common with other particular men, namely, a universal ‘humanity’. However, the universal ‘humanity’, considered in the abstract, is not at all changed by particular men – for it is not defined in virtue of its relation to, and difference from, these particulars.⁵⁷ A particular man is not different from the universal ‘man’, but from other particular men – while the abstract universal ‘man’ is the same and unaltered in all of them.

But, this universal’s instantiability can only be exhausted by an infinite number of particulars – since each particular instance is a *different*, limited instance of the universal. Then, the sameness of the abstract universal *across* particulars can only be attained in virtue of an infinite diversity of particular instances. By means of this *exhaustive* diversity – which is to say there could not possibly be any more particulars than there actually are – the universal can be said to be ‘complete’. So, on the one hand, we have the ‘dispersed difference’ of the infinite diversity of particulars – in that they are different

⁵⁵ See Hegel (2010b, p. 529).

⁵⁶ Hegel (2010b, p. 540).

⁵⁷ See the original discussion in Hegel (2010b, pp. 534-5).

from each other, and interrelated, but not unified into one ‘entity’ – while, on the other, the ‘absolute unity’ of the universal. The latter unity seems ‘unconstrained’ in relation to each particular because it can be *differently* instantiated in an infinite number of ways, i.e. it is not limited to, or exhausted by, any one particular. Its ‘contingency’ vis-à-vis a particular which instantiates it is due to *potential* instantiation in *another* particular.

However, particulars’ diversity from each other entails or presupposes a principle intrinsic to each that grounds the differences. But, since all particular instances of the same universal have that (abstract) universal in common, their difference from each other is grounded in each particular’s self-identity *qua* particular, not *qua* universal. Though, in that each particular instantiates the universal, it *is*, in fact, the universal, yet without exhausting it. The particular’s difference is, in fact, the universal’s difference from itself – its reference to something *other* than it, i.e. particularity. Yet, that ‘other’ is merely the differentiation of the universal’s abstract identity – i.e. the universal’s (the concept’s) self-particularization which we mentioned earlier.

In other words, the universal differentiates itself into particulars that can be said to be different from each other *only in relation to it*. They differentiate and particularize *its* abstract identity. This is to say that, unlike for Kant, the particular and the universal are not ultimately distinguished – and the universal’s differences, that is, the particulars, can be said to logically follow from the universal. Yet, of course, each particular *is* this universal. And each particular is defined in virtue of its relations to all other particulars wherewith it shares a universal – while these relations are, in effect, the universal’s differentiations. Since the particular and the universal are identical, and the particular’s differences are, in effect, the universal’s, the particular itself can be said to be self-determined. But, it is only so in virtue of its identity with the universal which is differentiated in virtue of it.

Therefore, the particular articulates a logically self-caused individual not in independence of universality, but insofar as it *is*, in part, the self-

particularizing, self-determining universal: i.e. in virtue of the universal which it particularizes and which, in virtue of *this* particularization, *becomes* unique to the particular. In each one of its infinitely many other particularizations, the universal is equally uniquely particularized. But, then, neither the particular nor the universal are still their abstract selves – i.e. the universal is no longer an abstract identity, only potentially differentiable in infinite ways, and common (shareable) between particulars, but is *actually* particularized in *this* particular (and differently particularized in *that* particular, etc.). And the particular is now not simply self-identical, but infinitely interrelated with all other particulars. In virtue of this reciprocal actualization of the universal and the particular, the *individual* – or the *singular* ‘concrete universal’ – arises. This ‘concrete universal’ is not reducible to *this* or *that* particular, but is, in effect, an articulation of the universal as an infinite ‘whole’ which differentiates itself by finitely articulating itself in infinitely many interrelated particulars. Crucially, *qua* concrete, this universal is not one and the same across its particular determinations.

This is not a simple process. Hegel demonstrates that this conclusion is attained gradually through a *dialectical reinvention* of Kant’s series of judgements enabled by the categories of the pure understanding. The last (modal) pair of these judgements *achieves* the concrete universal. We may now trace out this process while intermittently relating some of its intermediate conclusions to those of Kant’s schematism. We can show that, for Hegel, the process of finding the concrete universal through judgement is *dialectically rational*, and that dialectical reason unifies how things *ought to be* (abstract, purely logical universality) with how things *actually are* (sensuous experience). This tears down the wall erected by Kant between the understanding and reason, and between sensuous experience and pure thought of noumena. This leads to the contention that logically self-caused individuals are real and rationally positable from within the empirical world – for

knowledge within that world and rational intuitions are reciprocally determining.

Hegel defines judgement as “the *determining* of the concept through itself”⁵⁸ and as “the self-diremption of the concept” or “the *originative division* [...] of an originative unity”.⁵⁹ In a judgement such as “Socrates is a man”, the subject signifies the individual, and the predicate – the universal. It is clear that Socrates is a particular instance of the universal “man”. Further, Socrates, as a particular considered in abstraction from all other men – and ‘man’ considered as an abstract universal not limited to any single particular – will be mutually contradictory, but also logically identical with each other. For the universal ‘man’ needs to differentiate itself into different particulars, with each of which it is identical, in order to become concrete and actual – thus, Socrates is identical with *this* particularization of ‘man’. Hence, the judgement demonstrates the unity between the subject and the predicate by severing them from each other in virtue of the universal’s self-differentiation.

In Béatrice Longuenesse’s words, Hegel’s aim is to “reveal[s] what Kant’s table [of judgements enabled by categories of the understanding] was forgetful of, or worse, what it ossified: the process of mutual transformation of the predicate and subject of judgment”.⁶⁰ It is only in virtue of breaking the ‘originative unity’ that an individual, *qua* ultimately identical with the particular and the universal, can be demonstrated to be self-determined, and, so, logically self-caused. Rather than pre-existing the individual, its concept (the universal) needs to *become* in reciprocity with it. Hegel’s exposition of judgement, unlike Kant’s, traces the process of this self-articulation by paying attention to the *actual content* of judgement – that is, to the *actual self-constitution of an individual* which is neither merely a particular nor merely a universal – rather than only to the thought-form whose enabling concepts

⁵⁸ Hegel (2010b, p. 550).

⁵⁹ Hegel (2010b, p. 552).

⁶⁰ Longuenesse (2007, p. 214). Text in square brackets is mine.

do not get a grip on the ground of this individual through any one judgement.

Hegel's ordered discussion of each judgement comprises a conceptual re-attunement which takes us closer to the complete articulation of the individual's self-determination in the concrete universal. He does this in the following order (different, yet closely adapted, from Kant's): (i.) judgements enabled by the qualitative concepts, (ii) judgements enabled by the quantitative concepts, (iii.) judgements enabled by the relational concepts, and, finally, (iv.) judgements enabled by the modal concepts. It is in the modal judgements that concrete universality, that is, logically self-caused individuality, is *replete*.

He terms the qualitative judgements 'the judgements of existence'. In such a judgement, he argues, the subject and the predicate are not *at first* completely mutually determining, but each is posited *qua* unmediated. It is the judgement and its truth that mediates between the singular and the universal *qua* subject and predicate. Consider, for instance, the affirmative judgement. Its pure form is "*the singular is universal*" or "*the universal is singular*".⁶¹ Hegel's example of such a judgement is "The rose is red". As an "*immediate singular*"⁶² – which is to say, *this* individual rose specimen and *no other* – the rose still must be understood against the background of the universal 'rose' which is articulated in an infinite number of other, actual and possible, singular roses. Further, *this* rose is multiaspectually concrete in the sense that it embraces within itself a manifold of actual and possible qualities besides its redness – which is to say that its identity with its redness is only partial. This means that *this* rose 'maintains' its individuality across its entire multiplicity of qualities (or properties, or accidents) – in such a way that they are all individualized by it – but it is *unalterable* in relation to them, for they are determined by it. In that sense, the rose is the *singular* 'concrete

⁶¹ Hegel (2010b, p. 558).

⁶² Hegel (2010b, p. 559).

universal'.⁶³

On the other hand, 'redness' is the 'abstract universal', for, although it is individualized by its belonging to the rose, it could potentially be individualized in any other rose (or other potentially red individual of any kind). Insofar as this is so, that "the rose is red" means that *the singular is universal*. Yet, inasmuch as the 'redness' can be 'isolated' from all the other qualities, properties, or accidents, of *this* rose, it is a *singular* feature which has the potential of being exhibited in an infinite number of individuals, but is actualized in *this* one – i.e. *the universal is singular* (redness is a singular feature of the rose). Still, there is a problem. If both the subject (*this* rose) and the predicate (*is* red) were to be thought of as the determinate "unity of singularity and universality"⁶⁴ – the rose in virtue of its individual embracement of its manifold of characteristics, the redness by means of the singular actualization of its universal instantiability – both the subject and the predicate can be thought of as particulars. The redness of the rose is a particular kind of redness (the redness of roses), and the rose is a particular kind of rose. Thus, the judgement would be converted into the tautology "the particular is the particular".⁶⁵ This, in Hegel's view, is non-informative, unmediated self-identity, and does not fully demonstrate the reciprocal determination between subject and predicate characteristic of a judgement.

Therefore, he argues that, in the affirmative judgement, "[s]ingularity and universality cannot yet be united into particularity".⁶⁶ For, in order to also be a particular, this singular rose should, in some sense, be an instantiation of the universal in the predicate. However, the subject (the rose) is "an infinitely determinate concrete universal, and since its determinacies are as yet

⁶³ For a discussion of the concrete universal in this context, and also in the context of British Absolute Idealism, see, for instance, Stern (2007). See also, for example, Inwood (2002, pp. 374-80), Rosen (2014, pp. 425-9) and Taylor (1975, pp. 112-14).

⁶⁴ Hegel (2010b, p. 561).

⁶⁵ Hegel (2010b, p. 561).

⁶⁶ Hegel (2010b, p. 561).

qualities, properties, or accidents, its totality is the *bad infinite plurality* of them”.⁶⁷ By the ‘bad infinite plurality’ Hegel means the infinite enumeration of the individual’s (the rose’s) actual and possible characteristics which are not in reciprocally determining relationships with each other, but simply lie outside of each other in a kind of set or series. In this ‘bad infinity’, each particular is self-identical in virtue of its non-identity with all other particulars.⁶⁸ Since each of the rose’s characteristics is only partially identical with the individual rose, the subject is not *only* the one property declared by the predicate – for the rose is, possibly and actually, infinitely many other things and ways than simply ‘red’. If it is full essential identity we have in mind, the rose *is not* (singularly) red.

This brings us to the negative judgement of existence – in which, Hegel contends, the affirmative judgement attains its full determination and, thus, its truth.⁶⁹ Such a judgement is, for instance, “The rose is *not* white”. Thus, ‘not-white’ is the ‘other’ of the positive universal ‘whiteness’ potentially instantiable in an infinite number of ways. But, this is not a total negation because although ‘whiteness’ is denied of the individual rose, “the universal sphere, *colour*, is retained”⁷⁰ – which is to say that a certain, indeterminate, universal ‘colour’ is, in fact, posited of the rose. In virtue of this, it is also known that, while not white, the rose is, effectively, of a *particular* colour. Therefore, the negative judgement is also *positive* – for it is acknowledged that the universal attached to the rose is, indeed, *particularized*.

However, this is still not determinate enough – for “[t]he rose is not a thing of *some color or other*, but one that only has the one determinate color which is the rose-color”.⁷¹ While the particular asserted in the negative

⁶⁷ Hegel (2010b, p. 561).

⁶⁸ For a discussion of Hegel’s ‘bad infinity’ and ‘true (good) infinity’, see e.g. Houlgate (2006, pp. 408-32).

⁶⁹ See Hegel (2010b, p. 562-3).

⁷⁰ Hegel (2010b, p. 565).

⁷¹ Hegel (2010b, p. 566).

judgement is a kind of “indeterminate determinate” – in that, although it is known that the rose must have *some* determinate colour, it is not known which exactly the colour is – the *actual* colour must be a “determinate determinate”,⁷² i.e. an individual colour particularized in *this* very rose. Therefore, the judgement turns into the tautology “the singular is singular” (the individual rose has an individual colour). But, the rose is also a universal in that it embraces an infinite number of possible and actual characteristics apart from this singular colour – and, *qua* particular rose, it is more than its partial identity with its colour, for there are many other ways it could be in accordance with its abstract universal nature. Equally, this particular colour can potentially be exhibited in another individual, and, is, therefore, also identical with the abstract universal. Hence, the negative judgement also turns to the uninformative “the universal is the universal”.

Yet, unlike the affirmative one, the negative judgement demonstrates the mediation between the subject (the singular rose) and the predicate (*some* colour) through particularity *qua* the “indeterminate determinate”. It is only through this mediation that it really becomes clear in what way the abstract universal and the abstract singular determine each other to identity. Because the universality of a predicate such as ‘not-white’ is indeterminate, it is “more purified of limitation”⁷³ than a universality such as ‘red’ in the positive judgement. This is so because, in determining what the individual is, e.g. what colour the singular rose is, we have to negate the negation of white *qua* universal – a universality which must be particularized in individuals *other* than this rose. This means that we have to negate the possibility that whiteness would negate itself *qua* universal in order to particularize itself in *this* rose, while still leaving open *many* other possibilities for not-white colour-particularization. This readies us for judging that the individual is not, in fact,

⁷² See Hegel (2010b, p. 566).

⁷³ Hegel (2010b, p. 567).

the indeterminate particular colour, but a limited, determinate particular colour. Then, we find ourselves passing into the infinite judgement.

The positive and the negative judgement are both negated, and their ultimate truth is found in the infinite judgement, in the following way. If we judge that the rose is not an elephant, or that it is non-blue (rather than *not-blue*), the rose's individuality as the subject is left completely undetermined by the predicate. For such judgements are, essentially, 'nonsense'. Therefore, the individual rose could be *anything* – there are infinite possibilities for the actualization of its individuality. Rather than signifying a particular *kind* of characteristic the individual should at least have, as the negative judgement does, the infinite judgement demonstrates that there are infinite possibilities for what the individual may be. The point here is that, unlike the ordinary negation of negative judgement, infinite negation negates absolutely. That is – of course, a rose is not an elephant, it could never be!

By contrast, the rose may not be white, but it has to be another colour – and white *is* a colour, i.e. it is not negated in terms of the universality it shares with other colours. Because the predicate in the infinite judgement is *completely* negated, the individual is, in fact, non-identical with its own *total* negation – viz. a rose and an elephant are *completely incompatible*. In this negation of its negation, the individual attains its self-identity in the tautological judgement “the singular is the singular”. But, the individual is identical with the predicate through the copula “is”, so the “non-elephant” or “non-blue” are, in fact universals, for they can be actualized in many other individuals. These universals are identical with the rose *qua* universal, i.e. *qua* what this rose shares with other roses. So, “the universal is the universal” – yet, the difference between these two universals is so great that the judgement is nonsensical.

We have reached the singular individual *as such* – non-identical with the things that *any* individual, incompatible with it, can be, and, so, pitched against an infinite plurality of actual and possible individuals. So, we have

reached the quantitative judgement – which Hegel terms “the judgement of reflection”.⁷⁴ Here the order of discussion is reversed in comparison with Kant’s order of judgements and his schematism – where the quantitative concepts and judgements, and the schemata of the quantitative concepts, are discussed before the qualitative ones. Yet, a Hegelian dialectical logic seems implicit in these schemata. Qualitative judgements enabled by the schematized concepts of reality, negation, and limitation, would be of the sort: “This sunset is bright-orange”, “This sunset is *not* pink”, and “This sunset is not an ocean”. The spatio-temporal qualitative whole is not exhausted by its particular instance of a colour-concept or by the negations of particular colour-concepts, and is only fully qualitatively determined in its limitation to complete individuality via the total negation of that which is incompatible with it. This leaves open infinite possibilities for what the individual and the individuals other than it *might be* in terms of their quality. Though, it is clear that there is a *quantity* of them. For every sunset that is bright-orange, not-pink, or not an ocean, there are infinitely *many* actual and possible qualitative sunset-configurations which are *not* bright-orange or a different instance of bright-orange, different kinds of pink, and just as *many* actual and possible oceans and non-oceans which are, however, not sunsets. In other words, there is a plurality of individuals that lend themselves to a kind of ‘quantification’.

While the qualitative judgements seem to separate the subject from the predicate – the individual from the sensuous characteristics it may or may not possess – Hegel’s quantitative judgements pin down what is essential about the individual. These are universal judgements of the sort “All men are mortal”, particular judgements like “Some (though not all) men are happy”, or singular judgements like “This man is the murderer”. The determination of the individual’s concept, in the case of the qualitative judgement, is through the negation of the predicates and the reciprocal affirmation of the singularity

⁷⁴ Hegel (2010b, p. 568).

of the subject. The subject is the ‘basis’ against which the predicates are measured – in that, for instance, it depends on the rose’s individuality what sort of qualities are predicable of it. Hence, qualitative judgements are the most *immediate*. The individuality of the individual is not captured by the predicates, and is, therefore, affirmed in the subject. In quantitative judgements, on the other hand, the subject’s individuality is determined in virtue of its being measured against the predicate.

That said, the predicate is *also* determined further, in virtue of its individualization in *one* individual (in the case of the singular judgement), in a set of *similar* individuals (viz. the particular judgement), or in *all* individuals in possession of the essence captured by the predicate (viz. the universal judgement). In the case of the qualitative judgement, the predicate *inheres* in the subject. So, it is *this* rose which *has* this redness, *this* determinate colour indeterminately specified as not-white, or an essential incompatibility with being an elephant. In the case of the quantitative judgement, the predicate does not inhere in the subject as one of its properties, qualities, or accidents, but it *subsumes* the subject under itself – as the subject *qua* individual is, in fact, accidental in relation to it (rather than the other way around).⁷⁵ That is to say, it is because of mortality that a man is what he is – not because of *this* man that mortality is what it is.

The subjects of singular judgements such as “This man is the murderer” or “This dog attacked its owner” are individual in virtue of their predicates. Many men could in principle have been the murderer in such and such a particular situation, and many dogs could attack their owner, but it is *this* man who was a murderer in *this* situation, and *this* dog which attacked *its* owner on *this* particular occasion. So, again, *the singular is the universal*. Although *this* man and *this* dog are only partially determined by these predicates, for there is much else that can be predicated of them, the predicates are an

⁷⁵ See Hegel (2010b, p. 570).

essential determinant of them. At the same time, being the murderer or the dog which attacked its owner, in *a* situation in general is, though not universal to all men or dogs, instantiated, that is, *particularized*, in *a certain number* of men or dogs. Therefore, Hegel writes, the truth of the singular judgement is more fully determined in the particular judgement. But, the subject of particular judgements such as “Some people are happy” is a plurality of *singulars* – that is, *this* and *this* and *this* person are happy. However, such a positive judgement is not exhaustive, as it must necessarily be paired with its negative counterpart “Some people are *not* happy”. Therefore, the singulars in the particular judgement are not fully determined by the kind of universal supplied in the predicate. A complete determination of the subject is only achieved in the universal judgement.

The totality of men – some of which are happy, some not, one of which is the murder on this individual occasion, the others not – is already adumbrated in our examples of singular and particular judgements, though not completely. The complete determination of ‘men’ is in a judgement in which the predicate determines the essence of *all* men – for no contrary case in a judgement such as “Not all men are mortal” or “This man is not mortal” is possible. In a universal judgment, the subject and the predicate, the singular and the universal, are *equally* determining as to each other. For mortality, *qua* universal to men, is already inscribed in our understanding of a man – in a way in which being a murderer or being happy are not. And the subject ‘all men’ comprises a plurality of singular men each of whom is essentially characterized by mortality.

The affirmation of each particular man is a negation of all other particular men – but a negation which, in the universal judgement, has the kind of singularity which unites the ‘one’ to the ‘all’. In the three quantitative judgements, we see, in other words, a dialectical movement from the unmediatedly singular (*this* man *qua* subject with a predicate which signifies something unique to the man), to the particular (the multiplicity of men *qua*

subject with a predicate that signifies something some men have in common), and, finally, to the universal (the totality of men *qua* subject with a predicate that captures what is common to all men). But this universality is, also, the complete determination of each individual man. This individuality is *universal*, and its universality is *concrete*. Yet, the universal individual or the concrete universal is not ‘all particular men’ – for these are a plurality of individuals – but ‘*the* human being’. *Qua* concrete, the universal is not a mere ‘commonality’ between *all* particular man, but *the* fully determined individual.

So, *this* man is completely determinate, fully identical with its essence, and, thus, logically self-caused, as long as it is: *the* man. It may be tempting to think, as is customary in critiques of Hegel’s ‘identity metaphysics’, that the individual man is, thus, subsumed under identity and generality.⁷⁶ However, the individuality of *this* man, who is also *the* man, is not general – for the universality of man is indeterminate, and, therefore, not actual, if not dialectically unified with a particular man interrelated with other particular men. Reciprocally, a particular man is not the same as an actual, fully determinate, logically self-caused individual, without demonstrating the universality of man.

This dialectical, *relational* unification of particularity, universality, and individuality, is also discernible in the synthesis of Kant’s quantitative schemata. The successive scanning of the different spatial or temporal parts of a sensuous particular, or of different spatio-temporal particulars in a dynamic state of affairs, integrates the universality of the concepts of unity, plurality, and totality, into the experiential presentation of a particular, event, or state of affairs – in a way that can be said to foreshadow the articulation of Hegel’s ‘concrete universal’. This foreshadowing is enabled by each schematized concept. Thus, a multiplicity of individual men is the unification

⁷⁶ Such arguments can, for instance, be found in Deleuze (1994).

of the schema of unity and plurality with a certain sensuous spatio-temporal configuration of conceivable particular ‘men’. We may, further, infer that the synthesis of our concept of totality with an infinite number of actual and possible sensuous intuitions amounts to an experiential presentation of *all men*. Though such a comprehensive sensuous perspective on humanity is impossible for beings of our sensuous and cognitive constitution, it is *in principle* possible.

Therefore, we abstract the empirical concept ‘man’ from actual and possible sensuous particulars – though it needs to be schematically synthesized with sensuous intuition in order to be conceivable as *this* man. He is, also, *this* ‘one’ as well as *this* ‘totality’ – the abstract universal concretized. While Kant would say that it is the transcendental apparatus and the transcendental object that dictate such unity, Hegel would argue that it is only in the dialectical unification in experience *qua* unity of thought-form and thought-content that both thought (our concepts and ideas) and being (actual particulars) are completely determinate and real. It is through the dialectical relations logically unfolding from judgement to judgement that their self-determination is fulfilled. As demonstrated in the universal judgement, this self-determination is *necessary* – but it is best expressed in judgements of necessity, corresponding to the judgements enabled by Kant’s relational concepts.

In an affirmative judgement such as “The rose is red”, it is an accidental property that is predicated of the subject – which is to say that, though *this* rose needs to be red in order to be *this* rose and no other, *a* rose can conceivably be another rose, wherefore redness cannot be said to be an essential rose-property. By contrast, a relational judgement (a judgement of necessity) needs to demonstrate the *necessary* connection between the individual *qua* subject and the predicate. That is, what is predicated must be absolutely essential to the rose *in general* and unalterably – as long as it is *a* rose – i.e. not in its singular, mutable, multiaspectual qualitative

configuration. A judgement of this kind is what Hegel terms the categorical judgement – e.g. “The rose is a plant”.⁷⁷ The subject, ‘rose’, is a particular, with respect to the predicate ‘plant’ – and the connection between the plant and the rose may seem accidental, for a plant need not be a rose in order to be a plant. However, the plant *must* be a particular *kind* of plant such as a ‘rose’, and, in turn, not just *a* rose (or other plant), but an individual one (a *this*) in order to be fully determinate. In that sense, the subject and the predicate reciprocally determine each other.

Yet, since it is not the case that ‘plant’ *qua* genus should be predicated *only* of ‘rose’ *qua* species – for there are other possibilities – we need the hypothetical judgement to demonstrate that the concretization of the abstract universal ‘plant’ in concrete instances of a certain species, e.g. individual roses, is *contingent* in the sense of being a *possibility* which is *actualized* in the species and its concrete individuals. The hypothetical judgement has the causal shape “If A, then B”. In other words, if something is a plant, it has to be a particular plant (a plant of a certain species, e.g. *a* rose), and also an individual plant (e.g. *this* rose) – yet, before the possibility for concretization of the abstract universal is actualized, it *need not* be *this* instance of *this* species.

However, the universal can only be actualized in one species and one individual at a time, hence the need of a disjunctive judgement of necessity: “Either A or B”. In other words, a concrete universal that is a rose is not at the same time one that is a magnolia or a cherry tree. There are as many particularizations, which do not happen at the same time in the same individual, as there is capacity for particularization in the universal. In other words, a universal such as the genus ‘plant’ is only exhausted by means of its particularization in as many species non-identical with each other as possible. Each species in turn is concretized in as many numerically distinct individuals

⁷⁷ See Hegel (2010b, p. 576).

as possible. In this, each individual is also a particular instance in relation to the generality of the species. Thus, every particular's self-identity is determined by its non-identities with other particulars. These non-identities comprise the differentiation of the abstract universal – so each individual differentiated from others is the concretization of this universal. So, it is not the case that the abstract universal is something that all individuals share, but that: (i.) through its particularization, they *become* individuals; (ii.) it is not fully realized apart from their becoming. Paradoxically, the abstract universal is only ultimately real when concrete. Therefore, *qua* concrete, the universal is unique to each individual – and the individual is logically self-caused in virtue of its identity with it.

Hegel's categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive judgement, in other words, comprise a reinvention of the Kantian judgements enabled by the schematized concepts of substance, causal dependence, and causal reciprocity (community). While Kant focuses on such things as the relative permanence of a spatio-temporal particular in relation to its accidents or other particulars, on the sequential change between these accidents and particulars in necessary cause-effect series, and on the reciprocal causation between spatially related accidents and particulars, Hegel emphasizes the *necessary* logical structure of a sensuous particular. In all of his modal judgements, we are concerned with sensuous, spatio-temporal particulars (roses, plants) – wherefore Kant's schematism should generally be applicable. For both the empirical and the transcendental schemata are, in a sense, concretized abstract universals. But, Hegel demonstrates that this concretization is the *only*, and the *necessary*, way in which Kant's transcendental concepts and the transcendental object can be *real* and *determinate* – that is, in dialectical unification with the sensuous. The empirical content of his judgements demonstrates this unification. A substance has relative permanence; different individuals and aspects of individuals arise and perish at certain points in time and in successive causal series; and different individuals and aspects thereof are

spatio-temporally interrelated and interdependent (reciprocal). That is *because* the abstract universal is differentiating itself in particular kinds of things, and in individuals. Each individual, at any point in time, in any spatial configuration, with any present constellation of qualities and accidents, is *this* individual. Therefore, there is no pre-existing ‘abstract universal’ identity within which change *actually* happens. *The universal is, concretely, ever-different, and each change in the world is a different individual concretization.*

The final process of conceptual attunement through judgement is in the modal judgements – what Hegel terms ‘judgements of the concept’. This is where his transcendence of Kant’s separation of the sensuous from the supersensuous – of empirical cognitions of *how things* (constitutive of knowledge of the sensuous world) *are* from intellectual intuitions of *how things ought to be* (limited to regulative ideas) – culminates. The qualitative, quantitative, and relational, judgements can be said to capture things as they are *for us, qua* contained in our thoughts. Therefore, Hegel calls them still ‘subjective’. Thus, for example, the disjunctive judgement posits “the identity of the universal nature and its particularization”.⁷⁸ However, the unity of each particular is still a “negative unity”⁷⁹ – which is to say that each particular is self-identical in virtue of its non-identity with another particularization of the abstract universal. Hegel argues that this is not yet a completely self-determined *positive* individuality – for one defines oneself against another. Self-determination is completed in the three modal judgements: the problematic, which posits the individual’s possibility; the assertoric – which posits its actuality; and the apodictic – its necessity.

The assertoric judgement judges whether a singular thing *measures up* to its abstract concept: for example, “This house is *bad*” or “this action is

⁷⁸ Hegel (2010b, p. 582).

⁷⁹ See Hegel (2010b, p. 582).

good".⁸⁰ But, at the level of the assertoric judgement, it is still a "contingent matter"⁸¹ whether it is true or false that a house or action, as it actually is, measures up to the concept of what it ought to be (the latter being the Kantian thing-in-itself). Therefore, we need the problematic judgement which "is the assertoric judgement in so far as the latter must be taken positively as well as negatively".⁸² This is to say that the problematic judgement differentiates the subject (e.g. a house or action) from its predicate – which means that there is in it ground for "*being or not being what it ought to be*".⁸³ So the problematic judgement grasps *possibility* before the *fact*. While emphasizing the singularity of the subject, thus negating its subsumption into the abstract universality of the concept (what the subject *ought to be*), such a judgement also demonstrates the particularization of this universality. The *problematicity* of the judgement – inasmuch as it captures the possibility that the subject *might not* measure up to the abstract concept – affirms the subject in its concreteness, i.e. as it actually is.

That leads us to the third, truly objective, judgement of the concept – the apodictic judgment, of the individual's *actual, factual* constitution. This judgement has the shape "the house, **as so and so constituted**, is *good*".⁸⁴ Now the subject and the predicate have come together – as the subject's correspondence to its concept is based on knowledge of how the subject actually is. Hegel writes:

Such a universal, like "good", "fitting", "right", etc., has an *ought* for its ground, and contains at the same time the correspondence of *existence*; it is not the ought or the genus by itself, but this *correspondence* which is the *universality* that constitutes the predicate of the apodictic judgment.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ See Hegel (2010b, p. 583).

⁸¹ See Hegel (2010b, p. 584).

⁸² See Hegel (2010b, p. 584).

⁸³ See Hegel (2010b, p. 585).

⁸⁴ Hegel (2010b, p. 585). Text in bold is mine, not Hegel's.

⁸⁵ Hegel (2010b, p. 586).

This is to say that truth is in the *relationship*, in the fit, between the abstract universal – what the particular *ought to be* – and its particularization – what the particular *actually is*. The *ought* and the *actual existence* make sense, and are fully real and determinate, only *in relation to each other*. The ‘concrete universal’ is their unification. In Kant’s Critical philosophy, sensuous actuality is known according to transcendental conditions mandated in abstract universality – but only insofar as a correspondence is found, via the schematism, in sensuous intuition. What is not therein found – self-dependence instead of interdependence, final causality instead of efficient causality *ad infinitum*, the ground of individuality instead of its mere spatio-temporal sensuousness, simple intrinsicity as opposed to indefinite relationality, or, the essence as the internal principle of logical identity, i.e. logical self-causation – is relegated to the realm of the *ought*. So, a rift between reason, as ‘pure thought’, and experiential knowledge is opened. Hegel contends, on the other hand, that it is *reason in its dialectical form* – through the conceptual attunement occurring in a sequence of judgements, each of which transcends its predecessor – that demonstrates the *relationship* between *how things are* and *how they ought to be*. Initially, these appear as two independent, self-subsistent sides – for the abstract universal is posited in absolute opposition to the abstract individual.

Hegel understands this as the universal’s conceptual ‘self-diremption’ – its self-rupturing into particular differentiation, its *self-alienation*. But, the two sides are, then, understood as mutually determining each other. How and what a thing *ought to be* determines the thing as it *actually is*, but also, vice versa – how and what the thing *actually is* determines how and what it *ought to be*. Both sides are conditioned, so none has to simply cave in, and be subsumed under the other. Identity between them in the logically self-caused individual, and the self-identity of *this* individual, are the *completion* of the process, not its pre-existent, ever-eternal, purely rational ground. *Logical self-causation is an achievement, not an unalterable pre-condition* – and is,

therefore, richly informative. The concept's self-diremption in the separation of subject and predicate by the copula in a judgement is transcended in the apodictic judgement, and the concept is unified in virtue of the mutual syllogistic (inferential) integration of its three moments – universality, particularity, and individuality – in a rational, self-mediated, totality. That a house, say, as so and so constituted, is good, is such an inference, inasmuch as it integrates the universality of the house's concept with the actual house's particular constitution, into an individual which satisfies its, now individual, concept – i.e. an articulation of the concrete universal.

Although Kant's schemata are the sure predecessors of this rational process, they are locked within a theory of experience which is, only in a limited way, rational. Hegel's dialectical logic of concrete universality integrates the experiential with the *ultimately* rational, and, thus, coherently theorizes real, knowable, logically self-caused individuality. In dialectical reason, theory and practice are meant to come together. This is not an explanation of *why* individuality comes to exist at all, but of why it becomes determinate individuality – and, hence, does not make for a theory of ontological self-causation, even if it is a theory of determinate ontological reality.⁸⁶ Rather than intimating *that* and *why* an individual whole is at all, it

⁸⁶ See e.g. Rosen (2014, p. 308, 327, 329):

[...] existence is its own ground. [...] this is quite different from traditional doctrines of creation *ex nihilo* because for Hegel the *nihil* is part of what it means to exist and not the backdrop against or from which existence emerges as pure positivity.

[...] we cannot begin from sheer vacuity since we who begin are something rather than nothing. [...] this is a quite different question from that of how we happen to exist at all as thinking creatures. Nor is it a question of why there is something rather than nothing.

[...] There is then a creation, not precisely *ex nihilo*, but from the emptiest concept. The empty concept fills itself [...].

We can interpret this as meaning that self-causation is thought's (the Concept's) self-determination in particularity, and is, so, ontologically realized – yet, not that the world is spontaneously created *ex nihilo* or out of its always already existing ontological reality.

explains *what* it is *in the way* it is – which Hegel intends, *pace* Kant, to also be the way it *ought to be*.

There is, in this self-becoming, no pre-existing identity of the particular or of the concept, wherefore the process is not one of accidental temporal change subtended by an always already essentially determined substantial individual or concept – but of *reciprocal becoming* of individual and concept, of the concept *qua* individual and the individual *qua* conceptual. Because the ways of conceiving of reality are unceasingly adjusted *according to* the individuality and universality of that which is being conceived, the modification of a concept and the reciprocity of a particularized concept with conceivable particularity result in the synthesis of an *individual as a positive term of difference*.

Yet, we must not forget that concrete universality is not only *this* or *that* finite particular, although it articulates itself in mutuality with finite particularity. Just as Kant's transcendental schema of necessity is the rule through which we processually realize our unified experience of "all time", and, thus, of the whole sensuous world, with its interrelated particulars, as necessarily determined, Hegel's concrete universal processually determines, through its coeval determination of particularity, the totality of the Universe. Thus, it is not just that the house, as so and so constituted, is good, or that the man, as such and such, is beautiful, or that our actions, as so and so performed, are fitting, but, rather, that the *whole*, as so and so determined, is necessary. Abstract universality's various self-differentiation is reflected by an infinite number of interrelated particulars, and differentiated universality's self-unification is carried out *via* its determination of *all* particulars, and, so, of *all* individuality.

This is to say that no particular is arbitrary and isolated, but, rather, everything is part of the universal's self-determination as a *concrete totality*. This movement is exemplified in everything, but no exemplification is unmoored from the universal order of things which, by dint of its mutual

immanentization with particularity, is never abstract and undifferentiated, but dialectically living through the differences of the concrete. It is this *whole* that should be the *complete* self-caused individual which is both infinite and variously articulated in the finite. In virtue of its totality, and logical self-congruence, this universal-individual is (or, *becomes*) absolutely unconditioned, though this absoluteness is not static, but dynamically accomplished in three ‘moments’: the initial unexplicated immediate unity of the Concept, its self-diremption into seemingly polar opposites in judgement, and, finally, its ultimately (self-)explicatory recrudescence. It is only within the *whole*, ontologically realized by its own self-unification, that finite individuals can be interrelated articulations of ontologically immanent, logically self-caused individuality – yet, the ultimate individuality must be the infinite *whole*. In Desmond’s words:

The first universal is an abstract universal; as indefinite, it needs the definiteness of determinate particularity. But this particularity comes to be seen by Hegel as the universal’s own *self-particularization*. And so the universal *comes back to itself* in what Hegel calls the individual, which is the concrete universal. [...] his individuality has a character that is dialectically self-mediating through and through. And the true individual as the concrete universal means that there is really only one individual at the end. There is finally the concrete universality of the whole, which is the One that mediates with itself in and through its own otherness. [...] As Spinozistic freedom is rational consent to the necessity of the whole, so the Hegelian freedom of the will that wills itself means consent to the rational necessity of the absolute self-determining whole. Hegelian freedom is holistic obedience.

Within that whole, that individual, there are finite individuals, yes, with a qualified separateness. These are not the absolute individual, not the truly concrete universal. [...] the infinite value of humans can only be possible in a dialectically qualified sense. But this runs the risk of a *dialectical instrumentalizing* of the individual [...]. This individual is the means wherein the whole mediates itself, in that sense an instrument of the absolute whole: man, so to say, is the means by which God comes to self-determination; man is the medium of God’s self-knowing.⁸⁷

Although, indeed, finite individuals, for Hegel, may be said to be ‘obedient’ to the whole – reciprocally, the whole cannot be concrete without them. So,

⁸⁷ Desmond (2001, p. 145).

in being integral to the whole's *processual* self-determination in concrete universality which never pre-exists them, but emerges in reciprocity with them, it is not to *generality* and *static identity* that they can be said to be subordinated. For it is not possible for particulars to have *in common* that which is in each of them different: a difference only attained through particularity. Then, although a finite individual is *not* the absolute whole, there is no ready-made such whole which can be abstractly pinned down and logically defined in advance of particularity in the manner of Spinozist *causa sui* God-Substance. Although it is true that particularity is harnessed to the self-determination of the complete Universe, and that the universal (God, the Absolute) comes to Itself in complete clarity and self-knowledge in its own self-particularization (self-othering), the 'whole' is only unconditioned insofar as all conditions articulated in finitude necessarily lead up to definite particularity within which the 'whole' is limitedly articulated. That is to say, the whole determines itself and *self-becomes* through the determinacy and interrelatedness of conditioned finite particularity. J. N. Findlay takes such observations even further:

References to the "Universe", the "Whole", are [...] as rare in Hegel as they are frequent in the philosophers [of British Idealism].⁸⁸

The whole universe of fact and possibility is involved in my present act of writing, which can from this point of view be regarded as absolutely unconditioned, as *causa sui*. We must here note the vast difference between Hegel's conception of the relation of the individual Matter of Fact to the complete Universe of conditioning Matters of Fact, and the conception held by modern British idealists. While the latter hold that an individual Matter of Fact can be truly seen only in its full context in the total system of facts, Hegel rather believes that this total system of facts is truly seen only as bearing on, and as involved in, the individual Matter of Fact. For the British Idealists the Finitude of the individual thing or occasion is parasitic on the Infinity of the Universe; for Hegel the Infinity of the Universe (which as such "Bad") is parasitic on the True Infinity of the individual thing or occasion.⁸⁹

Though, this True Infinity need not be 'infinity in a grain of sand', but, rather,

⁸⁸ Findlay (1966, p. 17).

⁸⁹ Findlay (1966, pp. 202-3).

the processual articulation of the infinite ‘whole’ through finite particularity. Even if the ‘whole’ is, for Hegel, the ultimate true individual, this individual is processual, and not just *One*, but also *many*, in that it retains in the process the individuality of the finite. So, *causa sui* individuality is, counterintuitively, *both the whole and its various positive differences*. To put this less radically than Findlay, no ‘side’ is ‘parasitic’ on the other, but the two are *reciprocal*. The reciprocity between universality and particularity births the *third*, the ultimate: individuality which in turn loops back and determines that which births it in virtue of its fresh concreteness. But the process of birth and concretization is dynamic and unceasing: and the universal is still infinitely capacious, rather than limited to one *thisness*. In that the articulation of the concept and the reciprocal determination of a certain sensuous particularity *can* be seen *in relation to* the concept’s infinite capacity, and, so, to *other* sensuous particularity – this ‘other’ is negated, but also affirmed (as that which is negated). In these relations, individuality is also understood *negatively* – yet, because the relations are grounded in the *positive individualization* of the concept, this negativity presupposes and entails affirmation.

This dialectical metaphysics of individuality is not amenable to strict monistic or pluralistic categorization, and is, in Findlay’s words, a “self-pluralizing monism or self-unifying pluralism”.⁹⁰ Insofar as the unity encompassing the totality of interrelated particulars does not pre-exist the differentiation implied by the relations, but emerges out of the difference, the metaphysics is a ‘self-unifying pluralism’, and there is the *One* individual arising out of *many* interrelated ones (the concrete universal as the ultimate *whole*). Inasmuch as the unity is never abstract and undifferentiated, but always finitely concretized through particulars differentiable from other particulars, the metaphysics is a ‘self-pluralizing monism’, and the universal

⁹⁰ See Findlay (1974a, p. 162).

is not just *One*, but *many* individuals emerging from the *One*. This theory of self-causation is a conceptual and rational accomplishment within experience, not merely a sensuously unrealized idea of teleological or noumenal self-causation.

Conclusion

Thus, we have shown that, for Kant, knowledge of individuality is experientially possible via the transcendental schematism, while the idea of noumenal self-causation is purely rational but not sensuously realized. This divides experiential knowledge of individuals from rational explanations. Although the schemata are both sensuous and intellectual, both particular and universal, an individual experienced through them is not ultimately identifiable with a transcendental object or with a noumenon.

While, for Kant, the schematized concepts of the understanding and the judgements enabled by the concepts belong strictly to experiential knowledge, rather than to *thought* of noumena – for Hegel, anything we may wish to *think* of as a logically self-caused thing-in-itself is, in fact, an *achievement* of the process of reciprocal determination playing out between the universality of concepts and sensuous particularity. This universality is self-differentiating and self-particularizing, and particularity is explained in virtue of it. So, the particular and the universal form the same logically self-caused individual in the guise of the ‘concrete universal’. The universal is ever-different in its various particularizations – through which it self-becomes *qua* concrete – making it the case that self-causation *qua* self-individuation is a restless process rather than ready-made self-identity.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion, Limitations, and Directions for Future Inquiry

The theory of self-causation historically embeds itself in immanentist metaphysics and finds its best articulation in Hegel's dialectics. This conceptual culmination is enabled by the mutually corrective dialogue between his predecessors. Each of our chosen discourses contains a theory of self-individuation according to which an individual is *what* it is, *in the way* it is, for an internal reason – with the exception of Kant's transcendental project which initially banishes such a theory, but inadvertently enables its 'reincarnation' in Hegel. With this in mind, our steps can be retraced as follows.

We view Hegel's account as an ingenious response to Kant's systematic rejection of the theoretical coherence of self-causation. Hegel's dialectical logic takes the history of the idea of self-causation to its logical conclusion by radicalizing and transcending Kant's project. As this is a decidedly post-Kantian endeavour, *finite particularity is not explained away through what is general* in relation to it – i.e. a dogmatically posited eternal essence – as it arguably is, to various degrees, in the systems of Aristotle, Leibniz and Spinoza.

Further, there is *no incoherent marriage between internal change and such an eternal essence*. Change, in Hegel's system, is not what takes place within an essentially unchangeable, pre-existing, already-determined ('ready-made'), individual. Change is rather, the *difference* of individuality. In unfolding through *many* finite particulars, it is abstract universality which changes by differentiating itself – while the individual *qua* 'concrete universal' *self-becomes* rather than statically subtending the accidental changes caused by this differentiation. The particular *becomes* in reciprocity

with a universal that encompasses the particular's necessary relations to other particulars. Because this universal is thereby essential to the particular's self-identity, it *becomes* identical with the particular. Out of this dialectical relationship arises the 'concrete universal' – i.e. the logically self-caused individual.

As both sensuous and conceptual, the 'concrete universal' has its roots in Kant's 'schema' *qua* sensuous concept. However, due to the reason-limiting agenda of his transcendental project, Kant cannot grant his sensuous individuals logical identity with the schema as if the schema were some sort of ultimately explicatory and intelligible essence. The whole point of his transcendental idealism is, after all, circumvention of such metaphysical excesses. He tendentiously short-circuits the idea of self-causation – rendering it merely logically possible.

Yet, from a Hegelian perspective, it is thanks to the schema, which mediates between the generality of concepts and the particularity of sensuous intuition, that an empirical individual becomes what it is. Hegel thinks that this *self-becoming* is the ontological realization and rich determination of a logically possible essence which passes into the self-particularizing concept culminating in the 'concrete universal'. For Kant, theoretical reason is restricted by the mind's matching of concepts to spatio-temporal intuitions. For Hegel, it is due to this restriction – which limits the infinity of possibilities for what an individual *may be*, and the abstract idea of what the individual *ought to be*, to sensuous particularity as it *actually is* – that the individual is fully determined as what it is.

This is not to say that the individual generates itself ontologically – arising out of nothing or spontaneously generating changes within its timeless self. The relations to other particulars suggest that, in a sense, each finite individual arises out of others – or, out of a complex relational structure born out of the abstract universal's self-differentiation. So, Hegel's individuals are *not* ontologically self-caused. The particular, concrete complex of relations

that constitutes an individual makes for identity with a unique, inseparable essence that has its truth in the universal's concretization. The individual is thereby *logically* self-caused in that it has determined *itself* more richly, without having brought itself into being (out of nothing, or in incremental changes subtended by static eternity). There is nothing more metaphysically ultimate than its ontological realization, and no further reason for its being the individual it is than its concrete universality. Self-individuation in the concrete universal is a restless process which culminates in the *whole Universe* as coterminously *unitary* and *multiple* logically self-caused individuality variously articulated in interrelated particularity. The abstract universal can be differently particularized, becoming concrete as ever-different individuality, but all individuality as 'positive difference' is 'preserved'.

None of this is tantamount to a return to Leibniz and Spinoza. For their metaphysical pictures are captive to: (i.) the subordination of finite individuality to the general, and (ii.) an incoherent marriage between inadequately mediated abstract timelessness and finite change. Yet, Leibniz and Spinoza pave the way for a coherent and economical theory of self-causation by constructing tight-woven two-category ontologies that consist of infinitely capacious substance and its ontologically inextirpable modes *qua* dependent aspects. The fatal flaw of these ontologies is, on one hand, their subordination of particularity to a dominant 'ever one and the same' shareable order. On the other, it is their unmediated, self-contradictory demand that this essentially unchangeable order be internally ever-changing in order to accommodate its finite dependent realities.

The robust integrity of these accounts is due to employing the Scholastic category of modes without really dividing substance into different components in the manner of a predecessor such as Suárez. Granted, by means of the relational category of modes, Suárez is able to conceive of matter, form and accidents as simple, logically self-dependent, self-

individuated individuals, *without* implicating internal change within substance or subordination of individuals to generality. By equating accidents with modes and turning them into internal substantial relations between different finite individuals, Leibniz and Spinoza attain a superiorly integrated, holistic view of reality, but this ‘holism’ comes at a price.

Suárez’s separation of substantial and accidental individuals, of matter and form, allows him to fight off the spectre of Aristotle’s self-causation *qua* self-change-for-the-sake-of-generality in a way closed off to Leibniz’s and Spinoza’s more advanced – at once capacious and minimalist – ontologies. Due to this separation, accidental change is not *self*-change – while substantial change is substance’s birth or death: its self-becoming or passing out of existence. These developments are prefigured in Scotus’ theory of individuality, but it is only in Suárez’s metaphysics that a coherent theory of *whole* individuals, individuated in virtue of themselves, can be found. Yet, this metaphysics of ordinary (empirical) individuals is arguably too complex – for these are *composites* of individual matter and individual form, unified by modes of union, and made independent of other composites by means of modes of subsistence. Since every simple individual is individuated by means of its own unique essence, the essence of a composite seems to be nothing more than a sum of the essences of its individual parts. Besides, the self-individuation of each logically self-dependent component is ontologically dependent on an actually existent composite substance. An individual’s logical self-causation, for Suárez, is its identity with its *essence as it exists*. So, it is only the complex hylomorphic substance that is fully realized, and its components are logically self-caused and ontologically real in virtue of its realization. Outside actual existence, its unique essence, and the unique essences of the components, are mere ‘potencies’: logical possibilities in God’s mind.

By contrast with Suárez’s, Aristotle’s hylomorphic substances are changeless in virtue of their eternal, general forms, but changing in virtue of

their actualization of the potentialities of their material component. If a man changes from being unmusical to being musical, he does not do so *qua* man, but in terms of the actualization of potentialities inherent in his particular parcel of matter. His unchangeable species-essence *qua* man is enabled by his form – an eternal, general, fundamental essence. However, since matter and form are inseparable in a hylomorphic composite, form is accidentally part of the change occurring in substance. Form also subtends and motivates the self-change. It is in virtue of the fundamental essence which qualifies them for being members of a certain species that substances teleologically change themselves, while remaining one and the same, over time. Furthermore, this self-change – and, thus, the individuality of the individual – is not explained *qua* individual.

Yet, it is historically significant that the problems of self-change and generality result from Aristotle's efforts to step *away from* Plato's metaphysics of transcendent Forms, and *toward* an account of self-causation rooted in finite, sensuous particularity. Although, without this step, the unfolding of the history of the idea of self-causation toward the superiorly integrated account found in Hegel's dialectical logic would be impossible, the initial result is a theory far less coherent than Plato's. Sensuous particulars, for the latter, are *essentially* reducible to Forms, and, thus, dependently real *qua* particular – which issues in a metaphysics of pure essences *qua* transcendent individuals. Strictly speaking, these individuals are not general, for – if particulars are not really real – there is nothing in relation to which a Form can be general. The reality of Forms *qua* unique essences – *causa sui/ratio sui* in virtue of their simple self-identity – is, ultimately, all there is.

Plato's order of intimately interrelated, 'itself in itself' Forms-essences is *really* non-contradictory, eternal, non-particular, and non-empirical – for these are simple and unchangeable, though also being the ultimate grounds of

sensuous complexity and mutability.¹ A Form *is* non-identical with, or different from, all other Forms through its relations to the Forms of Difference and Being. These relations and non-identities *are* instantiated in dependently real sensuous particularity. However, each particular is incoherent (i.e. internally contradictory) due to being defined by a ‘mixture’ of contradictory essences (say, Tallness and Shortness, Ugliness and Beauty) rather than characterized by *one* simple, unique essence. This incoherence seems to ultimately amount to a certain kind of unreality. From the perspective of the logic behind the post-Platonic conceptual developments we have described, the realm of Forms seems coherent, but abstract – and, thus, not sufficiently informative.

This conceptual journey allows us to appreciate Hegel’s metaphysics of self-causation as the culmination of an idea whose logical structure is discernible in embryo in Plato’s Theory of Forms and gradually integrated into the world of ordinary experience by Plato’s successors. Our present inquiry finds conceptually satisfactory answers, in this respect, in a Hegelian theory which conceives of logically self-caused individuality as both dynamic *and* knowable, particular *and* universal, empirical *and* rational, finite *and*

¹ Interesting, in this respect, is William Desmond’s proposal, in Desmond (1995, pp. 213-14), for revivification of the Platonic project in a manner different from that of the immanentist metaphysics within which the notion of self-causation is historically embedded:

In the metaxological view the analogy of origination and the creative relation of source and issue is more fundamental than the analogy that fixes on determinate terms and their determinate relations. The truer insight promised by the analogy of origination is, I think, that the energy of transcendence in genesis is itself an analogical likeness of the ultimate unconditional energy of transcendence. Hence eternity is not a static unit of univocal intelligibility but the creative *energeia* of absolute transcendence, the agapeic origin. For if, as Plato suggests, time is a moving image of eternity, the case may *not* be that the dynamic is the image of the static, but that the dynamism of time is an image of the more ultimate, exceeding dynamism of eternity, as itself the unconditional energy of transcendence. The dynamic image images the dynamism of the original.

Such revivification requires an alternative way of thinking to the kind informing the historical logic of the idea of self-causation, wherefore discussion of it belongs to a metaphysical critique of immanentism we may undertake in the future.

infinite, contradictory *and* coherent, restless *and* self-unified. Yet, there may be alternative lines of inquiry. In addition to being of rich historical interest, alternative exploration would add further philosophical breadth, nuance and sensitivity, but, by crowding out the main issue, would obscure our present purpose. Here are the reasons for limiting our inquiry, and some possibilities for future study such limitation opens up:

(1.) Our philosophical method is ambitious due to tracing the development of the idea of self-causation in several monumentally important philosophical projects belonging to different historical epochs. While this enables us to argumentatively reveal the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of the discourse of self-causation, it inevitably limits synchronic inquiry into the broader historical context within which this discourse is developed in each paradigmatic example. The diachronic dimension of our project involves mutually corrective dialogue between philosophers: not as an end in itself, or for the sake of mere exegesis and critical comparison of their respective oeuvres, but in order to analyze and reveal the problems of the theory of self-causation. Therefore, large swathes of historical land must remain unploughed. Because our method is *also* humble in that we adopt a mostly diachronic perspective on a relatively small number of key figures, both the synchronic inquiry and the narration of intervening historical developments must be reserved for future endeavours.

(2.) Our present investigation is *heuristically* enclosed between Plato's Forms, as the starting point, and Hegel's concrete universal, as the logical culmination. But, the history of the notion of self-causation has, in reality, no rigid beginning or end. The roots of Plato's αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ can, in fact, be sought in Pre-Socratic metaphysics. The concept undergoes various transformations, also, in Hellenistic philosophy, e.g. in the Stoic ethical ideal of self-sufficiency ('autarky') or in Plotinus' metaphysics of Oneness. Exploration of these roots and branches would be of great historical *and* conceptual merit, even if it is largely insignificant to the thrust of our

argument here.

Additionally, time/ space constraints, and the needs of a historical narrative, make our rendition of the individual projects we *do* engage with ineluctably focused and selective. It is beyond doubt that there are different avenues through which, for instance, Kant's and Hegel's dialogues vis-à-vis self-causation can be laid out – e.g. through an in-depth inquiry into their respective views on teleology, or infinity, or morality, or aesthetics, rather than only into the notions of the schema and concrete universality. However, as with all of our lines of investigation, we have argued that the concrete universal, and its dialogue with Kant's schemata, is paradigmatic rather than exhaustive. Exhaustive exegesis in each chapter would have been expansive at the expense of the clarity of the historical unfolding of our notion.

(3.) Hegel's dialectical metaphysics of the concrete universal, and the narrative of self-causation that emerges from it, are abundantly re-interpreted and challenged in the metaphysical systems of British Absolute Idealists such as F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet. Interesting connections can be drawn, also, between Hegel's concrete universal and A. N. Whitehead's *causa sui* 'actual occasions'. Nietzsche's metaphysics of the Will to Power, Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the Will, and Adorno's negative dialectics, present still further and ever-richer challenges. Without any doubt, also, the notion of self-causation has important implications for contemporary metaphysical discussions of intrinsicity and causal powers, as well as of freedom and free will. Finally, Adrian Pabst's and William Desmond's² post-immanentist, theological, or 'metaxological', projects, could be employed to demonstrate that, beyond Hegel, the logic of self-causation may subvert and transcend itself. Since the coherent theory of self-causation we have extracted does not speak to the 'ontological source' or 'origination' of individuals, but merely to their logical identity *qua* individuals (even if this 'logic' is

² See e.g. Desmond (1992, 1995, 2001, 2008, 2012a, 2014). See, also, Note 1 to this chapter.

ontologically realized), inquiry into this ‘source’ will be necessary.

Having elucidated the logical structure and explanatory power of self-causation puts us in a position to go down such avenues in future projects.

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