Lenz, Martin. *Socializing Minds: Intersubjectivity in Early Modern Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Hardback, $74.00.

What Lenz proposes is revolutionary—rejecting the hegemony of individualistic interpretations of early modern philosophies of mind and replacing (some of) them with intersubjectivist interpretations. It's a brash but intriguing thesis.

According to Lenz, the hegemonic character of early modern individualism results from a Rylean historiography, namely interpretative approaches assuming that "mentalism" (that mind is characterized in opposition to physical behavior) entails individualism (that minds develop independently of other minds). To counteract this, Lenz aims to show how three canonical figures—Spinoza, Locke, and Hume—held strong intersubjective accounts of the mind despite being mentalists. They came to recognize, argues Lenz, there was a "contact problem" between mentalistic minds, and they used intersubjective principles to resolve this "contact problem." Thus, because of the intersubjectivist ways that they resolved the "contact problem," they should be interpreted as intersubjectivists about the mind (3-6).

Even though Lenz identifies all three as intersubjectivists, because each resolved the "contact problem" in different ways, each offered a different model of intersubjectivity. Spinoza offered a "metaphysical model" that sees interactions between minds arising from their contrary natures. Locke offered a "linguistic model" that see interactions between mind happen through language, which is "socially determined." And Hume offered a "medical model" that see mental states as sympathetically shared between minds (9). Lenz chose these three authors because they "provide the 'clearest' accounts by beginning to work toward a solution to the contact problem without already having one at hand. . . . [Thus,] I wish to present the chosen authors as case studies of the proposed models. Roughly put, all three authors encountered a theory of ideas that they must have thought needed revision so as to accommodate the interaction of mind" (13). The real

challenge, then, for Lenz is to defend his attribution of these models of intersubjectivity to Spinoza, Locke, and Hume respectively.

In the *Ethics*, says Lenz, Spinoza confronted a peculiar form of the "contact problem." Human minds contain prejudices, unfounded assumptions, and superstitions. Humans are largely ignorant of, if not mistaken in, the determinates of these unfortunate beliefs/ideas. Many of these determinates lie outside of us, and some of them even lie within other minds. These connections with other minds arise because the determinates of ideas are themselves ideas and because human minds, being nothing more than bundles of ideas, are complex ideas themselves. Therefore, many of our ideas/beliefs come from other minds. But the situation for Spinoza is even more peculiar, according to Lenz. In some cases, the ideas/beliefs that come into one's mind are those actually belonging to another mind (which are mistaken as one's own). So, Spinoza's mind-mind interactions determine ideas by literally sharing ideas, by, in other words, one mind placing their ideas into another mind. Thus, 'how can those minds come into contact in order to determine and share ideas' is Spinoza's version of the contact problem. Spinoza's answer, says Lenz, involves the *conatus* of ideas. (Because minds have a *conatus* and minds are nothing but complex ideas, all individual ideas have their own *conatus*, argues Lenz.) The *conatus* of an idea is its will to affirm the existence of its object. Minds interact through the struggle of contrary *conatuum* to affirm the existence of their objects. Because this struggle is a metaphysically dynamic event, rather than a merely logical one, Spinoza's intersubjectivism takes the form of a metaphysical model. As a result, the holism of ideas the Spinoza develops is an intersubjective holism, what Lenz calls an ecosystem of ideas.

Lenz sees Locke's "contact problem" arising from his "essence agnosticism" (the idea that real essences are cognitively inaccessible). This essence agnosticism cuts Locke off from Aristotle's answer for why we share cognitive content about substance ideas (namely, that our concepts derive from the same essences being contained in external objects). Because of this, says Lenz, Locke saw our ideas of the nominal essences of substances threated by instability. One

possible response, the one individualists typically adopt, is that Locke embraced this instability and made our ideas of nominal essences expressions of an individual's experiences. But Lenz sees Locke as moving in the opposite direction and asking instead, 'how could something other than Aristotle's solution provide stability to our ideas of nominal essences.' This is Locke's "contact problem." Language with its commitment to common use is the solution Lenz sees Locke as adopting. Through language our minds come together because we tacitly agree to regulate our use of names by common use. This is what provides semantic stability to our uses of names. Then, according to Lenz, Locke transferred this stability to our uses of ideas and Lenz has Locke maintaining that we all also tacitly agree to abide by the norms of common use for structuring our abstract, general ideas of nominal essences. Thus, an intersubjectivist account of language structures the contents of our ideas of substance.

Hume, according to Lenz, adopted a medical model for his intersubjective account of the mind. Lenz intends this to be understood literally, that Hume's model literally uses the principles a physician would use. Sympathy is the central aspect of Hume's medical model—sympathy is a form of contagion that moves between minds like a contagious disease. This is because there are physiological as well as mental aspects to sympathy. Hume's "contact problem" arose in making sense of this contagion model of sympathy. Lenz sees Humean sympathy as having a doxastic force similar to the mind's perception of objects. In both cases, this forcefulness is rooted in custom via our physiology. Impressions affect changes in the humoral balances of our bodies and brains. In the case of the perceptions of objects, it is the world-mind relationship that triggers these changes, but in the case of sympathy it is the social world, the mind-mind relationship that triggers these changes. These social aspects, then, cause changes in our beliefs through these changes in our physiologies. The mechanism is just like the mechanism of the imagination affecting bodily states (and vice versa). It is most prominent in cases of credulity and education, but it also arises in us whenever we are being affected by others. For Lenz's Hume, mental states are, thus, just like diseases.

The most challenging aspect of this book is engaging the gestalt switch necessary to see the primary texts as Lenz sees them. Frankly, this confounded me. Lenz does not help as much as he could. His narrative is surprisingly light on quotations from the primary texts, and lighter still on defenses of his specific readings. He's more focused on sketching out the details of his readings and making it more intuitive than on strongly hooking it into the primary texts. Fair enough, but upon re-reading the primary texts and looking for his reading, I struggled to motivate them. My struggle was especially pronounced at key points in Lenz's argument where the gestalt switch was driving it forward—those were the places I most wanted to see a textual basis and textual reasons why Lenz's readings ought to be preferred over the traditional ones. I could not see that.

Lenz's book is hardly the last word on this topic and there is much to consider regarding the extent to which intersubjectivity was arising among early modern philosophers. Lenz does us a great service in pushing us to consider more carefully how much of the early moderns' philosophical framework was intersubjective.

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