

SPINOZA'S RELIGION

THE ETHICS OF BEING IN GOD

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BEING-IN-GOD

'Being-in-God' is the fundamental tenet of Spinoza's thought. In the *Ethics* this is presented as an ontological principle and also, it seems, as an ethical task. In Part One, 'Of God,' Spinoza states that "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God" (E1p15). In Part Four, which focuses on the human condition and its empowerment, or virtue, he writes that "in proportion as we are affected with joy, we advance towards greater perfection, and consequently participate more fully in the divine nature [*eo magis de natura divina participamus*]." Though this claim is, on the face of it, purely descriptive, it is difficult to read the *Ethics* without regarding "advancing towards greater perfection" and "participating more fully in the divine nature" as a normative ideal. The fourth and fifth chapters in this book explore the idea that being-in-God is an ethical or spiritual task. Here, we will consider being-in-God as an ontological principle.

The first five words of E1p15 — *Quidquam est in Deo est* — tell us something fundamental both about God, and about everything that exists. God contains "whatever is," and "whatever is" is in God. It is worth pausing for a moment to take in this radical ontological claim. *All* being is qualified as being-in-God. I have hyphenated this phrase to emphasise that there is, for Spinoza, no being apart from God, or prior to God — just as Heidegger's concept of *In-der-Welt-sein*, "being-in-the-world," affirms that human being is always already related to a world. According to Spinoza, the fundamental and immediate truth about anything that is — anything at all — is that it is in God.

The preceding chapter shows how the geometrical order of the *Ethics* generates repetitions in the act of reading the text: when Spinoza cites an earlier claim in the course of a demonstration, the reader should recall or re-read the cited proposition in order to discern the truth of the present proposition. Through the process of reading the *Ethics*, each proposition gains a degree of intensity, a degree of significance, according to how often it is cited by Spinoza, and thus repeated by the reader. Those propositions that are most often reinforced are the philosophical equivalent of load-bearing columns in a building, since they are holding up the greatest portion of Spinoza's philosophical system. According to these principles of literary engineering, E1p15 is the hardest-working proposition of *Ethics* I. It carries one of Spinoza's longest scholia, and is cited throughout the text, more frequently than any other element of Part One: eight times in Part One, seven times in Part Two, and twice in Parts Four and Five. Through this repetition, the

principle of being-in-God acquires over the course of the *Ethics* a semantic density, and correspondingly a psychological power in the mind of the reader.

Moreover, this principle is inscribed into the foundation stones of Spinoza's metaphysics: his concepts of substance and mode. The first axiom of the *Ethics* states that "Whatever is, is either in itself or in another" (E1A1). Spinoza defines substance as "that which is in itself [*in se est*]" (E1D3), while a mode is "that which is in another [*in alio est*]" (E1D5). "Nothing exists besides substances and modes," Spinoza writes in the Demonstration to E1p15, citing Axiom 1: "Whatever is, is either in itself or in something else."¹ Since there is only one substance, namely God (see E1p14), everything that is, is in God. This includes God: God is substance, therefore God is *in se*.

But what does it mean to be "in God"? In 1945 Étienne Souriau observed that "the meaning of the little word *in* as it is found in [the first axiom of the *Ethics*] is the key to all of Spinozism," and more recently Don Garrett described "being in" as "perhaps the most fundamental relation in Spinoza's metaphysics."² It is safe to say that being-in-God does not mean spatial containment, nor does it mean being part of a whole. Rather, being-in-God is an ontological relation of dependency, which involves being "caused by" God and being "conceived through" God. For Spinoza, our being-in-God participates in God's own being-in-God. God, as substance, is caused by and conceived through itself (see E1D3). God's own being-in-God is a being *in se*, while our being-in-God is a being *in alio*. This is an ontological difference, and it is precisely this difference that secures the relation of profound metaphysical intimacy between God and finite things — an intimacy indicated by some of Spinoza's key concepts: expression, participation, immanence.

So the little word "in" plunges us into the deep end of Spinoza's metaphysics, since it is vital to the definitions of substance and mode, and to the relation between them — the relation of all things to God. Scholarly interpretations of the meaning and scope of the 'being in' relation not only differ, but lead to divergent interpretations of Spinoza's entire metaphysics.³

It is not surprising that even Spinoza's most accomplished readers struggle to make sense of being-in-God, or that his texts leave room for significant disagreement about what this means. One consequence of distinguishing between substance and mode, and insisting that substance is unique — that only God is substance — is that we cannot assume that our vocabulary, our grammar, and our concepts which structure our understanding of entities within the world can yield an adequate account of God. Being-in-God does not mean the same thing as being in my house, being in a good mood, being in trouble, or being in a relationship; nor do even pure metaphysical concepts of relation, such as causation, apply to God in the same way they apply to objects of experience. Our language applies to what Spinoza calls modes, and to the relations between modes. For this reason, Spinoza suggests

that even to claim that there is only one substance — as he does in the *Ethics* — is, strictly speaking, to improperly apply to God the concept of oneness, which properly applies only to the kinds of things in the world that can be counted.⁴

In this respect, Spinoza's metaphysics departs from Descartes's metaphysics, which conceives human beings as finite substances and God as an infinite substance. Descartes recognized that our way of being a substance is very different from God's way of being a substance — so much so, he argued, that “the term ‘substance’ does not apply in the same sense to God and to other things, meaning that no clearly intelligible sense of the term is common to God and to created things.”⁵ Nevertheless, treating these ways of being under a single category — substance — makes it possible to imagine the relations between God and the world to resemble relations between things in the world, since all these relations are relations between substances. This, in turn, paves the way for an anthropomorphic theology, which conceives God's nature and action on the model of human nature and action. Spinoza's distinction between substance and modes powerfully resists this anthropomorphism. As we shall see in the chapters to follow, it is true that Spinoza often suggests that modes — and especially human beings — can possess *to some degree* characteristics that substance possesses absolutely, perhaps even to the extent that singular things are capable of becoming “quasi-substances,” as Don Garrett puts it.⁶ Nevertheless, the categorical distinction between substance and mode remains fundamental to Spinoza's metaphysics.⁷

For these reasons we should allow the meaning of being-in-God to remain, to some extent, an open question: a question we attend to, and inhabit, whenever we read Spinoza. I think we should be prepared to understand ‘being-in’ to express both difference and identity. Of course, this will be a different difference, and a different identity, from the concepts of difference and identity we apply to things we encounter in the world. We need to be careful about the notion of otherness that Spinoza folds into his definition of a mode as that which is “in another [*in alio*].” God is not other than ourselves in the same way that the house across the road is other than my house, nor in the same way that a house is other than a tree. While different things in the world compete, so to speak, for space and for agency, God does not get in the way of the space we occupy, nor does God's power detract from our agency. On the contrary, our agency *is*, in some sense, God's agency. Yet we are not identical to God in the way that two things in the world might be imagined to be identical to one another. Being-in-God does not mean being-God: the little word “in” reminds us not to collapse the distinction between substance and mode. As Michael Della Rocca has explained, substance and modes stand in an “asymmetrical relation”: substance is not in (nor conceived through, nor caused by) its modes, whereas modes are

in (and are conceived through and caused by) substance.⁸ I am not God; I am a mode, while God is substance.

Part One of the *Ethics* constitutes a radical critique of anthropomorphism: the God under discussion here is not only unlike a human subject, but is not a subject at all.⁹ Since Spinoza's God is neither a subject nor an object — of knowledge, of experience, of action — treating God as a grammatical subject or object is a linguistic contrivance that tends to obscure the unique nature of God's being. For this reason, the strands of negative theology running through all religious traditions have something to teach us about how to inhabit the Spinozist question of being-in-God. Perhaps negative concepts such as 'non-duality' and apparently paradoxical teachings — such as Nicolas of Cusa's suggestion that God is "not other" or, as one of my teachers used to say, "not I, not other than I" — can gesture to the meaning of being-in-God.¹⁰ And perhaps we get closer to the truth of being-in-God through silence than through speech, text, or linguistically-ordered thinking. Like any theologian, Spinoza confronted these questions and constraints while writing the *Ethics*.

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Nevertheless, Spinoza takes an important step to elucidate his principle of being-in-God by explaining that "God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things [*causa immanens, non vero transiens*]" (E1p18). "Transitive" or "transient" causation means the production of an effect outside its cause. In his *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*, Spinoza states that "[God] is an immanent and not a transitive cause, since he does everything in himself, and not outside himself (because outside God there is nothing)."¹¹ In a letter to Henry Oldenburg written in late 1675, towards the end of his life, Spinoza sought to clarify his views about the relationship between God and Nature: "I favour an opinion concerning God and Nature far different from the one Modern Christians usually defend. For I maintain that God is the immanent, but not the transitive, cause of all things. That all things are in God and move in God, I affirm, I say, with Paul."¹² As these sources show, Spinoza consistently used the adjective *immanens* to indicate that God causes all things to be in God, not outside God. This suggests that the way God causes all things to exist is qualitatively different from the causal relations between finite things, which can be understood as extrinsic or "transitive" causes.¹³

As Spinoza's reference to "Modern Christians" in his 1675 letter to Oldenburg suggests, his insistence that God is the "immanent cause" of all things opposes a specific theological view. This "modern" view involved the separation of God from Nature.¹⁴ It can be discerned in both Calvinism and Cartesianism, the twin targets of the *Ethics*, which exemplify a decisive shift in early-modern theology and philosophy. Calvinism and

Cartesianism are in some important respects contrary bodies of thought — not least insofar as Calvin emphasised the authority of scripture, while Descartes emphasised the authority of human reason. Yet they both shaped worldviews that tend to separate God from nature, by producing voluntarist and anthropomorphic conceptions of God's activity. Though Dutch Cartesians and Calvinists engaged in hostile disputes over metaphysical and methodological questions, both factions emphasised God's supreme will.¹⁵ Calvin himself described God as “the supreme King and Judge,”¹⁶ while Descartes wrote that God “lays down laws in nature just as a king lays down laws in his kingdom.”¹⁷

This early-modern anthropomorphic governor-God subsequently ossified into the remote, skeletal God of eighteenth-century deism — which imagined that, having created the universe, God left it to function autonomously according to the mechanical laws he had designed — before crumbling into the vanishing God of nineteenth-century atheism.¹⁸ If the seventeenth-century churches had been receptive to Spinoza, he could have been their Aquinas for the new modern era that stretched ahead of them: his profound refusal of anthropomorphism, voluntarism, and the separation of God from nature could have insulated Christianity from the ravages of secularism to come. Instead, Protestants and Catholics alike denounced him as an atheist. Only after the intellectual influence of these churches had waned, thanks to the growing power of Enlightenment ideas, could Spinozism be taken seriously — only then, of course, it was too late to save their God from empiricism and positivism; from Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, and their twentieth-century successors.

The *Ethics* criticises, with remarkable clarity, the theology that would prove so vulnerable to these modern ways of thinking: “By God's power ordinary people [*vulgus*] understand God's free will and his right over all things which are, things which on that account are commonly considered to be contingent... Further, they very often compare God's power with the power of Kings” (E2p3s). The twin targets of Calvinist theology and Cartesian philosophy can be discerned in the scholium to E1p15, which exhibits the critical force of Spinoza's principle of being-in-God. Spinoza begins the scholium by dismissing a popular theological view that imagines God to be “like man, consisting of a body and a mind, and subject to passions.” He then argues, at greater length, with more sophisticated opponents — easily identifiable as Cartesians — who “entirely remove corporeal or extended substance itself from the divine nature [and] maintain that it has been created by God.” This suggestion that God created an “extended substance” that is outside, or “removed from,” God's nature, involves precisely the view of God as “transitive cause” that Spinoza rejects in E1p18.

Whenever Spinoza employs the adjective “immanent” it always designates a kind of causation, and is always opposed to “transitive” causation.¹⁹ Used in this way, the word

emphasises that God is not a remote, external cause of “whatever is,” but an intimate, internal cause. Nowhere in Spinoza’s works is immanence opposed to transcendence, and nowhere does Spinoza deny God’s transcendence. He never uses the word “transcendent,” which was not commonly applied to God until late in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Nevertheless, his critique of the idea of God’s “transitive” creation is now often interpreted by readers as a wholesale rejection of a religious tradition involving belief in a transcendent God — a tradition usually labelled with overly generalising phrases such as “classical theism” or “traditional Christianity.” Spinoza was responding to something much more doctrinally and historically specific than this: a separation of God and nature that he recognised as distinctively modern. As any student of Aquinas knows, God can transcend creation without being separate from it.²¹

Spinoza’s characterisation of God as an “immanent cause” has led to some rather careless misreadings of his theological position. In 1970 Gilles Deleuze asserted that “the entire *Ethics* is a voyage in immanence” and celebrated “the Spinozan critique of all transcendence,” and since then a chorus of researchers in philosophy and literary-cultural studies have heralded Spinoza as a thinker of “pure immanence.”²² Deleuze was an insightful reader of Spinoza: he rightly drew attention to the concept of power within the *Ethics*, and elaborated Souriau’s insight into the significance of expression in Spinozism — but on the question of immanence his influence has been pernicious.²³ And this interpretation of Spinoza is not confined to commentators who follow Deleuze; it also dominates what we might call the common-sense secularist reading of Spinoza, eloquently articulated by Steven Nadler, who insists that for Spinoza “there is no transcendent deity; there is no supernatural being... There is only Nature, and what belongs to Nature.”²⁴ Commentators of either school who express this sort of view seem to associate transcendence with an image of God standing outside the universe, separate from nature — an image that Spinoza certainly did reject. When they deny the transcendence of Spinoza’s God they have in mind what Bruno Latour calls “the wrong transcendence, the one that has immanence as its opposite rather than its synonym.”²⁵

Transcendence and immanence are two sides of the same coin, and most contemporary theologians who follow the broadly Catholic trajectory shaped by Augustine and Aquinas recognise this when they describe God as transcendent. For them, affirming God’s transcendence means affirming the ontological difference between creator and creation, between God and the universe. This difference secures the dependence of created beings on God. For Spinoza, being-in-God expresses his commitment to this dependence: “Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God.”

The widespread tendency to frame Spinoza’s philosophy as wholly immanent obscures the theological issues at stake in his work. While most philosophers assume that

the *Ethics* rejects a conception of God that is central to Christian teaching, theologians accept the persistent rumour that Spinoza denies God's transcendence, assume that Spinoza has no theological insights to offer, and therefore pay little attention to the *Ethics*.²⁶

We can begin to clear up this confusion by elucidating the distinction between pantheism and panentheism, and showing why Spinoza is not a pantheist. These terms, like the theological concept of transcendence, were not yet in use in Spinoza's time: 'pantheism' dates back to the early eighteenth century, and 'panentheism' to the nineteenth century. Spinoza has been described as both a pantheist and a panentheist (and also, of course, as an atheist), though pantheism is the most common label for his thought.²⁷

Historically, pantheism is a rather slippery concept. In his 1720 work *Pantheisticon* the Irish writer John Toland — often credited with coining the word "pantheist" in 1704, and certainly one of the first to use it in published work — attributed to pantheists the view that "All Things are from the Whole, and the Whole is from all Things," implying a mutual dependence between the one and the many. Toland described God as "the Force and Energy of the Whole, the Creator and Ruler of All," insisting that, for pantheists, God is "not separated from the Universe itself but by a Distinction of Reason alone."²⁸ By the mid-nineteenth century, the denial that God is distinct from the world was seen as the distinguishing feature of pantheism: in 1836 S. T. Coleridge aligned pantheism with "cosmotheism, or the worship of the world as God," and in 1848 Robert Wilberforce, a member of the Oxford Movement, wrote that the "principle [of Pantheism] is to merge the personality of the moral Governor in the circle of His works."²⁹ Pantheism is today commonly regarded as the belief that God is identical with the universe, "the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God."³⁰ This doctrine is considered a theological heresy by its critics precisely because it erases or understates the difference between God and creation.

Panentheism, by contrast, is the view that whatever is, is in God.³¹ Both pantheism and panentheism are contrary to the theological dualism emerging from Calvinism and Cartesianism — and from later mechanical philosophies that posited a creator God — yet they are also squarely opposed to one another. While pantheism denies God's difference from the world, panentheism affirms this difference. Pantheism is often synonymous with the denial of divine transcendence; panentheism, on the other hand, offers one way to interpret divine transcendence. These "ism" terms can be rather objectifying, as well as anachronistic, when applied to Spinoza, and more generally they often close off questions rather than signalling them. For these reasons, "being-in-God" is a more appropriate expression: this is closer both to Spinoza's texts and to the existential, experiential dimensions of his metaphysics, and it articulates a question as much as it names a concept

or a doctrine. Nevertheless, since Spinoza's philosophy has been so closely associated with pantheism, the distinction between pantheism and panentheism is an important one.

At first glance, the view that Spinoza is a pantheist seems much more credible than the charge of atheism. This interpretation has textual justification in the scholium to E1p29, where Spinoza distinguishes between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, and equates *natura naturans* with God:

Before I proceed further, I will explain to the reader, or rather remind him, what I mean by *natura naturans* and what by *natura naturata*. For from the foregoing propositions it is, I believe, already evident that by *natura naturans* we are to understand that which is in itself and is conceived by itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, *i.e.* (by E1p14c1 and E1p17c2) God considered as a free cause. By *natura naturata*, on the other hand, I understand everything that follows from the necessity of the nature of God or of any of his attributes, *i.e.* all the *modes* of the attributes of God, considered as things which are in God and which cannot exist or be conceived without God (E1p29s).

In this scholium, “that which is in itself and is conceived by itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence” is offered as a metaphysical description that applies equally to God and to *natura naturans*. At the same time, Spinoza is emphasising that God cannot be equated with *natura naturata*. To put this point in more traditional theological language, he is accentuating the difference between the divine creator and created beings: *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* are not two distinct objects, but nevertheless they are not simply alternative labels for the same reality. The distinction between them signifies an ontological difference. Spinoza's description of *natura naturata* at the end of this scholium closely echoes E1p15: just as “whatever is, is in God, and cannot be or be conceived without God,” so *natura naturata* is “in” *natura naturans*, and dependent on it. This relation of being-in expresses both difference and identity.

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Most attempts to characterise Spinoza as a pantheist gloss over the highly distinctive conception of nature invoked in this discussion of *natura naturans*, and appeal instead to the striking phrase *Deus sive Natura*, frequently repeated as a kind of slogan for Spinozism. Commentators often assert that “Spinoza identifies God with Nature” as if this claim were entirely uncontroversial, and as if no further explanation were required — and then they might implicitly project onto “God or Nature” what Spinoza calls *natura naturata*, conceiving this in a specifically modern way as separate from God, and concluding that by *Deus sive Natura* Spinoza really means “just Nature.”³² Steven Nadler, for example, has

argued that “the phrase ‘God or Nature’ is intended to assert a strict identity between God and nature (or some aspect of nature), not a containment relationship,” and he admirably sums up Spinoza’s view as: “God is nothing distinct from Nature itself. God is Nature, and Nature is all there is. This is why Spinoza prefers the phrase *Deus sive Natura*, ‘God or Nature’.”³³ In *A Secular Age* the Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor offers a similar interpretation in a more critical key, portraying Spinozism as a secularising force: “following a path opened by Spinoza, we can see Nature as identical with God, and then as independent from God... The immanent order can thus slough off the transcendent.”³⁴ Deleuze explicitly connects *Deus sive Natura* with pantheism when he declares that “the *Ethics* demonstrates a substantial identity [between God and Nature] based on the oneness of substance (pantheism).”³⁵

The view that Spinoza is a pantheist rests on a persistent tendency not only to interpret *Deus sive natura* too hastily, but also to give this phrase more weight than it deserves within Spinoza’s philosophical system. *Deus sive natura* occurs in just two passages in the *Ethics*. It does not appear in Part One, which is expressly focused on God; if Spinoza had wanted to make a robust metaphysical claim about the identity of God and Nature, surely this would have been the place to do it. Nor does Spinoza refer to *Deus sive natura* in any of the text’s definitions or propositions. The phrase occurs for the first time in the more loosely written Preface to Part Four:

Nature does nothing on account of an end. That eternal and infinite being we call God, or Nature [*quod Deum seu naturam appellamus*], acts from the same necessity from which he exists. The reason, therefore, or cause, why God, or Nature, acts, and the reason why he exists [*cur Deus seu natura agit et cur existit*] are one and the same (E4, Preface).

Here Spinoza conflates God and Nature in the course of ruling out final causes from both divine and natural agency. He is criticising a prevalent tendency to attribute purposes to nature, and since this tendency was closely allied to a misguided conception of God’s providence and free will, it was natural for him to treat God and Nature together in this discussion. This passage, with its focus on activity, echoes E1p29s in showing that insofar as Spinoza is equating God and Nature, he has in mind *Natura naturans* — Nature considered as an active power, expressed through infinite attributes — and not *natura naturata*. In applying the predicates “eternal and infinite” to Nature, Spinoza is identifying Nature with a recognisable conception of God, rather than identifying God with (and thereby reducing God to) a familiar concept of Nature. Normally our broadest conception of ‘Nature’ comprises the whole universe, composed of — in Spinoza’s terminology — thinking and extended substance, modified in so many ways as to produce a vast diversity of beings. When Spinoza identifies Nature with God, however, this conception of Nature

must be expanded, beyond consciousness and extension, to comprise the infinity of attributes which, he declares, belong to God. Spinoza offers *natura naturans* as, so to speak, an alternative name of God. This divine name works to free the concept of God from the cultural baggage — particularly the anthropomorphic and moralising connotations — it had acquired over many centuries.

After being thus introduced in Part Four's Preface, *Deus sive natura* is then repeated twice in the demonstration of E4p4. Here again, Spinoza's primary concern is not to elucidate his conception of God. In this proposition he is asserting that human beings are necessarily "part of nature" and subject to influences beyond their own power. Its demonstration emphasises that human beings are not autonomous or self-sufficient:

P4. It is impossible that man should not be a part of Nature and should suffer no other changes than those which can be understood by means of his own nature alone, and of which he is the adequate cause.

Dem.: The power [*potentia*] by which singular things (and consequently, [any] man) preserve their being, is the power of God, or Nature [*est ipsa Dei sive naturae potentia*], not in so far as it is infinite, but insofar as it can be explained by man's actual essence. The man's power, therefore, insofar as it is explained through his actual essence, is a part of God or [*seu*] Nature's infinite power, *i.e.*, of its essence (E4p4 and E1p4d).

In the first part of this demonstration, Spinoza makes clear that he is talking about God in a highly qualified sense: "not insofar as [God's power] is infinite." The issue at stake here is the relationship between an individual person's power and the power of "God or Nature"; Spinoza is explaining that these powers are distinct but not separate, identical but not the same. In the second part of the passage, the words *seu naturae* might themselves be read as signalling the very qualified sense of *Deus* at work here. While Spinoza suggests that human power is "part of" the "infinite power...of God or Nature," this claim cannot be true of God considered absolutely, since in Part One of the *Ethics* Spinoza has argued that God is neither composed of parts nor divisible into parts.³⁶ Indeed, his suggestion in E4p4d that "the power of man...is a part of the infinite power...of God or Nature" is further qualified by his claim that an individual's power "is the power of God or Nature...insofar as [God] can be explained by the actual essence of human nature" (emphasis added). Metaphysically, being *identical with* divine power (appropriately qualified) is quite different from being *part of* divine power. Spinoza's treatment of the metaphysical issue of parts and wholes, or "mereology," counts against giving undue weight to the phrase "God or Nature" and treating this as a robust pantheist claim. Though in the demonstration to E4p4 Spinoza conflates God and Nature in the course of insisting that human beings are "part of nature," it is precisely this mereological issue that demands a

clear distinction (though not, of course, a separation) between God and Nature. Substance is simple, indivisible; modes are not parts of substance (see E1p13). Spinoza never claims that a human being — or any other finite being or thing — is “part of God,” while he frequently asserts that we are “part of Nature.”³⁷ He is unusually imprecise when he writes that “the power of man...is a part of the infinite power...of God or Nature,” precisely because within his philosophical system it does not make sense to treat God and Nature as the same thing. “God” and “Nature” refer to distinct (though not separate) realities: Nature has parts, while God is simple, neither composed of parts nor divisible into parts.³⁸ The point Spinoza really wants to emphasise in this passage is that our power is inseparable from the wider reality in which we participate. He is arguing that we are mistaken when we take ourselves to be autonomous beings, or — to put it in more technical and more obviously Cartesian terms — when we take ourselves to be substances.

Read in context, then, Spinoza does not appear to be making a decisive metaphysical declaration about the identity of “God” and “Nature” when he uses the phrase *Deus sive natura* early in Part Four of the *Ethics*. In contrast to the shaky support for pantheism offered in these passing references to “God or Nature,” we find in Part One of the *Ethics* clear and prominent textual evidence for being-in-God (or, if you like, panentheism). The phrase *Deus sive natura* is not even a straightforward metaphysical claim, let alone a load-bearing tenet of Spinoza’s philosophical system, whereas the assertion of being-in-God at E1p15 is, as noted, one of the most significant propositions of *Ethics* I.

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Spinoza’s principle of being-in-God establishes an asymmetry between God and the universe, which is confirmed by his distinctive use of the concepts of substance and mode. Spinoza uses these concepts to assert the dependence of all things on God: to be a mode is to be constitutionally dependent, “in another” and conceived through another, whereas substance is self-sufficient, “in itself” and conceived through itself. This insistence on a one-way ontological dependence distinguishes Spinoza’s theology as sharply from pantheism as from the doctrine of a separate, anthropomorphic God which the *Ethics* explicitly refutes. We might call this latter doctrine the deist tendency, and Spinoza rejects it forcefully: “God is not only the cause that things begin to exist; but also, that they persevere in existing, or (to use a scholastic term) that God is the cause of the *being* of things [*causam essendi rerum*]” (E1p24cor.).

Although deism and pantheism appear to be theological opposites, they are alike in denying the asymmetry between God and the world, and in thus compromising our deep ontological dependence as beings-in-God. Pantheism privileges God’s immanence at the

cost of transcendence, while deism offers a false, hollow transcendence. Affirming the Spinozist alternative to these two positions is not a matter of finding a balance or a “mean” between immanence and transcendence, as if we must avoid an excess of either quality. Rather, Spinoza recognizes immanence and transcendence as inseparable features of one theological reality, securing true immanence *and* true transcendence.³⁹

On Spinoza’s own terms, the stakes of this issue are high. If we over-emphasise immanence, then it makes little difference whether we think of ourselves as beings-in-God, or parts of *natura naturata*: either way, we come to know ourselves as constitutionally dependent beings. Yet there are different kinds of dependence. As parts of nature, we are dependent on a network of ever-shifting finite things, while as beings-in-God we are *also* grounded in eternal, indivisible, immutable, necessary being. Unlike pantheism, the principle of being-in-God affirms the ontological difference that offers us this grounding: God is not identical with nature, but the ground of nature. This grounding secures Spinoza’s fundamental commitment to the intelligibility of being, which involves the claim that everything must have a reason or cause for its existence.⁴⁰ Without the concept of God (or *natura naturans*) as ontological ground, finite things could be explained by other finite things, but nature as a whole would have no explanation. It would be radically contingent. Spinoza’s metaphysics needs the concept of something that causes itself, and exists necessarily — that is, the concept of substance — to secure the intelligibility of nature as a whole. Part One of the *Ethics* proposes God as precisely this ground of being, and guarantor of intelligibility.

By means of his concept of substance, Spinoza accentuates the uniqueness of God, which is part of what divine transcendence signifies for modern theologians. Only God is substance, while everything else is a mode of substance, and God is thus ontologically different from all things, without being separate from anything. Furthermore, as we have seen, the causal relationship between God and finite things is qualitatively different from the causal relations among finite things: God as substance is the immanent cause of the modes, in contrast to the “transitive causation” that operates between the modes. These are two kinds of causal relations, and also of dependence relations.

God’s transcendence in a more relative and epistemic sense — our recognition that God’s being exceeds and surpasses everything we can know, conceive or imagine — is secured by Spinoza’s claim that God has an infinite number of attributes:

E1d6: By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence [*Per Deum intelligo ens absolute infinitum, hoc est, substantiam constantem infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam, et infinitam essentiam exprimit*].

Exp.: I say absolutely infinite, not infinite in its own kind; for if something is only infinite in its own kind, we can deny infinite attributes of it.⁴¹

Spinoza defines an attribute as “what the intellect perceives of substance, as constituting the essence of substance” (E1D4). However, when he defines God as a substance with an infinity of attributes, he describes an attribute not just as that which *is perceived*, but also, more actively, as that which *expresses*. An attribute is a way of being, a way in which something expresses its essence. Each attribute is infinite in its own kind, but God is absolutely infinite, since God has an infinity of infinite attributes. This robust doctrine of divine infinity underscores the qualitative difference between God and finite beings. In 1674 Spinoza wrote to his friend to Hugo Boxel, “Truly, I confess I still don’t know in what respect spirits are more like God than other creatures are. I know this: that there is no proportion [*nullam esse proportionem*] between the finite and the infinite; so the difference between the greatest, most excellent creature and God is the same as that between the least creature and God.”⁴²

Spinoza’s insistence on God’s infinite attributes signals the epistemological as well as the ontological import of God’s transcendence.⁴³ Human beings are constituted by their participation in two of God’s attributes: thought and extension. Spinoza defines the human mind as the idea of the body, or, in other words, consciousness of the body.⁴⁴ A human mind perceives only two attributes: its own way of being, which is thought or consciousness; and extension, the way of being of the body which is its object. This means that the fullness of God’s being eludes us. The metaphysical conjunction of immanence and transcendence running through Spinoza’s philosophy thus finds an epistemological correlate in the conjunction of divine revelation and divine hiddenness. God’s essence insofar as it is expressed through the attributes of thought and extension can be known by human beings, yet the infinity of attributes expressing God’s being remain inaccessible to us.

Postscript: knowing-in-God

Spinoza’s affirmation that being-in-God is the fundamental principle of all existence has immediate consequences for the task of philosophy — for this task must itself be undertaken in God. Philosophy thus becomes theological through and through. And its labour of thinking is shaped, stretched and tested by the following question: how is it possible to thematise, comprehend, and articulate a reality “in which we live and move and have our being”?

Spinoza shares this question with all philosopher-theologians who are committed to the principle of being-in-God. Although pantheism is now often regarded as a distinct (and rather idiosyncratic) metaphysical position, it is more productively understood as a tendency within all the great theistic traditions: Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.⁴⁵ Moreover, affirmations of being-in-God are not confined to the margins of these traditions. St Augustine, for example, the intellectual father of the western Christian churches, taught that “all things are in God [*omnia igitur in ipso sunt*],” though in a special sense, since God is “not a place.”⁴⁶ In the seventh century, John of Damascus wrote in his treatise *The Orthodox Faith* that “toward God all things tend, and in God they have their existence.”⁴⁷

As I explained in the Introduction to this book, situating Spinoza within any religious or theological tradition risks denying him the freethinking perspective which he maintained after he left his Jewish community in 1656, and which is fundamental to his thought. Yet I also suggested that situating Spinoza within modern secularism would likewise be a forced assimilation, carrying the different risk of suppressing the deeply theological orientation of the *Ethics*. In order to bring into view the distinctive philosophical task that follows from the principle of being-in-God, we may place Spinoza in dialogue with Christian theology, which constituted the immediate context for his philosophical work. This opens up a conceptual space that lets the theological issues at stake in the *Ethics* show themselves more clearly — provided we follow the example Spinoza set in his own life by situating his work within a theological discourse without seeking to convert that work to Christianity.

In the Latin Christian tradition, being-in-God gained a decisive philosophical expression in Anselm's *Proslogion*. This short work, composed in a monastery in the eleventh century, deserves to be regarded as the founding text of western philosophical theology (or theological philosophy), precisely because it opens a conceptual space configured by being-in-God. As a matter of fact — though not for this reason — Anselm's brief, accessible, and enormously rich work is a core text of the undergraduate curriculum in a subject named, rather misleadingly, ‘philosophy of religion.’⁴⁸ Today the *Proslogion* is most famous for setting out what Kant called the “ontological argument” for the existence of God, and for Anselm's description of his own philosophical endeavour as “faith seeking understanding.”⁴⁹

Though it remains a reference-point for scholarly debates about God's existence, the *Proslogion* is quite different from the kinds of text written by contemporary philosophers. It abounds with biblical references, and its arguments are embedded in a prayer — of praise, petition, and confession — that is addressed directly to God. It is also an account of philosophical labour. When we attend to its dramatic form, we discern

contemplative and devotional features of Anselm's project which resonate with the early biographical descriptions of Spinoza by Colerus and Bayle discussed in my first chapter. Anselm was actually a monk when he composed his works, while Spinoza in his later years created the quasi-monastic conditions of reclusive quietude demanded by his "great desire of inquiring into truth without any interruption," as Bayle put it. Monasteries could be busy places, so even within the cloister there were varying degrees of retreat from the world. In the opening chapter of the *Proslogion*, titled "A rousing of the mind to the contemplation of God," Anselm gathers his dispersed attention in order to seek God with his "whole heart":

Come now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little while in Him. Enter into the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything else save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out.⁵⁰

Here Anselm is undertaking an exercise in being-in-God: "rest for a little while in Him [*requiesce aliquantulum in eo*]." This expresses an aspiration rather than an accomplished state. Though being-in-God is, as he will assert in Chapter 19 of the *Proslogion*, an ontological fact, Anselm does not *feel* that he is resting in God. On the contrary, he finds himself "separated from God," desperately seeking God, and he implores God to "teach my heart where and how to seek You." Language of unfulfilled desire, often echoing the Psalms, abounds in this opening chapter:

What shall Your servant do, tormented by love of You [*anxius amore tui*] yet 'cast off far from Your face' (Ps. 31:22)? He yearns to see You [*Anhelat videre te*] and Your countenance is too far away from him. He desires to come close to You [*Accedere ad te desiderat*] and Your dwelling place is inaccessible; he longs to find you [*Invenire te cupit*] and does not know where You are; he is eager to seek you out [*Quaerere te affectat*] and does not know your face... How wretched man's lot is when he has lost that for which he was made!⁵¹

The *Proslogion* thus characterizes being-in-God as both an ontological truth and a spiritual task. Anselm situates his philosophical labour in the mysterious gap between the source of his being and a longed-for encounter with this source; between his desire for God and the knowledge, love and joy "in God" for which he hopes.

Indeed, Anselm finds that being-in-God makes it peculiarly difficult to know God. Because God encompasses him, surrounds him, he can never step back and *see* God. He cannot grasp God as a concept, imagine God as a figurative form, or posit God as an object. God is too close, too ubiquitous, as well as too immense, for him to gain any purchase.

Anselm tells God that his soul is “overwhelmed by Your immensity” (ch. 14). When he finally arrives at a definition of God, this very definition asserts the impossibility of defining God: “Not only are you that than which a greater cannot be thought, but You are also something greater than can be thought.”⁵² Anselm confesses that God’s “inaccessible light” is “too much” for him:

It shines too much and [my understanding] does not grasp it nor does the eye of my soul allow itself to be turned towards it for too long. It is dazzled by its splendour, overcome by its fullness, overwhelmed by its immensity, confused by its extent. O supreme and inaccessible light; O whole and blessed truth, how far You are from me who am so close to You! How distant You are from myself while I am so present to Your sight! You are wholly present everywhere and I do not see You. In You I move and in You I have my being and I cannot come near to You.⁵³

At apophatic moments like these, Anselm seems to be lost in God — and this bewilderment is an epistemic consequence of being-in-God. He goes on to suggest that the difficulty of encountering God is compounded by his own human limitations. Though his soul participates in God, “the senses of my soul, because of the ancient weakness of sin, have become hardened and dulled and obstructed.”⁵⁴

In the course of his philosophical prayer Anselm makes several claims that will be familiar to readers of Spinoza’s *Ethics*: God’s existence is necessary; God’s existence is entirely self-sufficient; God is “unlimited and eternal...in a unique way”; God is simple, being neither composed of parts nor divisible into parts.⁵⁵ And throughout the text Anselm returns repeatedly to his contemplative affirmation of being-in-God. “In You I move and in You I have my being,” he writes in Chapter 16 of the *Proslogion*, transposing Acts 17:28 into the second person. In Chapter 19 he explains that “[God] is not in place or time but all things are in Him,” and confesses to God that “You, though nothing can be without You, are nevertheless not in place or time but all things are in You. For nothing contains You, but You contain all things.” Anselm concludes in Chapter 20 that “You therefore permeate and embrace all things [*Tu ergo imples et complecteris omnia*],” gesturing to God’s simultaneously immanent and transcendent activity: the verb *impleo* means fill up, infuse, while *complector* means encircle, include.

Chapter 19 of the *Proslogion* indicates that Anselm’s principle of being-in-God (“all things are in You”) is closely connected to his affirmation that all things depend on God (“nothing can be without You”). As we have seen, whereas pantheism equates God with everything that exists, so that God might be identified with Nature, panentheism entails the absolute asymmetry between God and “all things.” Anselm emphasises that while all things depend on God, God does not depend on anything: “You...are completely sufficient

unto Yourself, needing nothing, but rather He whom all things need in order that they may have being and well-being.”⁵⁶ This ontological asymmetry is, in turn, closely connected to God’s transcendence. Anselm explains that God is not only “before” all things, but also “beyond” all things. An eternal God is “before” all things which come into existence, *and* “beyond” even eternal things, “because these things can in no way exist without You, though You do not exist any the less even if they return to nothingness.”⁵⁷

Like the *Ethics*, the *Proslogion* folds human experience — most immediately, that of author and reader — into its panentheist metaphysics. Anselm’s reflections on joy suggest that his ontological principle of being-in-God has powerful affective and ethical consequences. Citing Matthew 25:21, Anselm conceives human beatitude as “enter[ing] into the joy of the Lord.”⁵⁸ God is “the good,” “which contains [*continet*] the joyfulness of all [particular] goods” — just as God himself “contains [*contines*] all things.”⁵⁹ In the final chapter of the *Proslogion*, Anselm quotes John 16:24: “Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete.” He suggests that the “complete” joy given to a human being is exceeded by an “infinite” joy, so that “those who rejoice will enter into that [infinite joy].” Anselm confesses that he has discovered

a joy that is complete and more than complete. Indeed, when the heart is filled with that joy, the mind is filled with it, the soul is filled with it, the whole person is filled with it, yet joy beyond measure will remain. The whole of that joy, then, will not enter into those who rejoice, but those who rejoice will enter wholly into that joy.⁶⁰

This is a description of the affective, experiential manifestations of being-in-God. All things are in God, while God pervades all things; when people are truly joyful, they are in a joy that exceeds yet pervades their being. Although Anselm says he has “discovered” this joy, by the end of the *Proslogion* he is still hoping and searching for beatitude: “I pray, O God, that I may know You and love You, so that I may rejoice in You.”⁶¹

The *Proslogion* articulates the philosopher’s task as knowing a God in whom we live, move, and have our being. Anselm finds that this involves thinking God’s transcendence and immanence together, as one and the same thing. The effort to know God will be frustrated by any attempt to determine God by a concept, to posit God as an object, or to represent God in an image. Anselm’s own approach to this philosophical project is aporetic and open-ended. The *Proslogion* concludes with its author’s hope, desire, and resolution to continue pursuing his “God of truth.”⁶² Later philosophers who were faithful to this task — Thomas Aquinas being preeminent among them — retained Anselm’s apophatic appeal to faith while thinking (in) God more systematically. Others deviated from Anselm’s path by inclining either towards pantheism, thereby privileging immanence

over transcendence, or towards deism, thereby privileging transcendence over immanence.

We can read Spinoza's *Ethics* as accomplishing, in a purely philosophical medium, the task set out in Anselm's *Proslogion*. Spinoza remains committed to the principle of being-in-God throughout the *Ethics*, compromising neither immanence nor transcendence. While Anselm's biblical and poetic language articulates an experience of being lost in God, crying out to God for rescue within a boundless sea of divine magnitude, Spinoza achieves a rigorous philosophical knowing *in* God. This can equally be described as a theological knowing, a knowing of the order of God — though since it makes no appeal to faith, it is not theological in the sense in which Spinoza himself uses this term.

The character of this theological knowing is illuminated by the distinction drawn, in *Ethics* II, between three kinds of cognition: imagination, reason, and intuitive knowledge. Reason and intuition both yield “adequate” or true knowledge. Yet while reason cannot avoid conceptualizing God — positing God as an object, albeit in panentheist terms — intuition is inseparably a knowing-of-God and a knowing-in-God. Even this knowledge cannot, however, deliver the fullness of God's being. It apprehends God through, and indeed within, just two of God's infinite attributes. Unlike apophatic theologians such as Anselm or Aquinas, Spinoza does not refer transcendent truths about God's inaccessible nature to eschatological hope or to the mystery of faith. The *Ethics* is simply silent on whatever lies beyond the attributes of thought and extension.⁶³

Spinoza, like Anselm, acknowledged how difficult it is for a human mind to become fully conscious of the fact that it “participates in God.” He distrusted the language of sin that is so fundamental to Christian discourse, believing that his culture's collective self-image of sinfulness, with its emphasis on weakness and deviance, fostered a punitive moralism which inhibited the truly ethical task of human enlightenment and empowerment. Nevertheless, Spinoza's metaphysics and epistemology, grounded on the principle of being-in-God, frame his diagnosis of a natural propensity to error. The *Ethics* characterizes error as a “privation of knowledge,” often involving a tendency to mistake the part for the whole, to form confused ideas, and to attribute free will and autonomy to conditioned, dependent beings (see E2p35).

In a 1665 letter to Henry Oldenburg, Spinoza resorted, uncharacteristically, to a metaphor in order to convey human ignorance. “Let us imagine,” he wrote, “that there is a little worm living in the blood...as we do in this part of the universe.” This worm can distinguish “the particles of blood, lymph, etc.” and it will naturally, though mistakenly, “consider each particle of blood as a whole, not as a part.”⁶⁴ It is no coincidence that this is an image of a creature's immersion in its native element. We are beings-in-God who

cannot see the whole of God, and our perspective is limited to the elements (or the attributes) in which we live and move and have our being.

When we reflect on Spinoza's metaphor of the worm in the blood, and its analogical structure, some interesting epistemological questions emerge. The worm is, Spinoza suggests, analogous to a human being, and the blood in which it lives is analogous to "this part of the universe." Not only is each distinct particle of blood "a part" (mistaken for a whole) of the blood, but blood itself is a part of an organism's body – just as the "part of the universe" in which we dwell is a part (mistaken for a whole) of the entire universe. We can discern here a twofold relation of being-in: the worm is in the blood, and the blood is in the body. Analogously, we are in "this part of the universe," which in turn is in the entire universe. Perhaps this is what Spinoza would call the whole of nature, i.e. *natura naturata*. At every level of complexity "whatever is, is in God":

(a) worm	human being	→	is in God
(b) blood	this part of the universe	→	is in God
(c) body	the entire universe	→	is in God

On this model, our epistemic range is limited to (a) and (b). Of course, when we look back to Spinoza's century we see that there was much that remained to be discovered about "this part of the universe" — and while modern science has made great leaps, we still have an incomplete grasp of "this part of the universe," the object of our scientific enquiries, knowable in principle though by no means thoroughly known in practice. We can only suppose that the relation between our part of the universe and the whole of nature is analogous to the relation between the blood and the body. This analogy accentuates the dazzling complexity of the unseen whole, and suggests that *natura naturata* is as elusive as *natura naturans*.⁶⁵

Spinoza's letter to Oldenburg does not venture into these speculations. Indeed, the analogical force of his metaphor of the worm in the blood breaks down towards the end of his letter, where he suggests that the blood stands for "natural bodies" rather than for "this part of the universe." Spinoza emphasizes that he is "in ignorance" as to how "each part of nature agrees with its whole." To answer such a question, he explains, "we should have to know the whole of nature and its several parts" — and he says that he does not have this knowledge.

What Spinoza does claim to know in the *Ethics*, however, is that everything is in God, regardless of the enormously complex interconnections of wholes and parts

throughout *natura naturata*. The contrast between the complex knowledge of the networks and sequences of finite causes that shape each thing, and the simple, singular knowledge of each thing's being-in-God, is illustrated by the mathematical example Spinoza provides to explain his three kinds of cognition:

Suppose there are three numbers, and the problem is to find a fourth which is to the third as the second is the first. Merchants do not hesitate to multiply the second by the third, and divide the product by the first, because they have not yet forgotten what they heard from their teacher without any demonstration, or because they have often found this in the simplest numbers, or from the force of the Demonstration of P7 in Book VII of Euclid, viz. from the common property of proportional. But in the simplest numbers none of this is necessary. Given the numbers 1, 2, and 3, no one fails to see that the fourth proportional number is 6—and we see this much more clearly because we infer the fourth number from the ratio which, in one glance, we see the first number to have to the second (E2p40s2).

Although the second and third kinds of cognition — *ratio* and *scientia intuitiva* — both yield adequate knowledge, they are very different in character. People who possess *ratio*, a certain form of cultivated reason, can find the fourth proportional number on the basis of Euclid's demonstration. By contrast — and this case illustrates the simplicity, immediacy, and clarity of *scientia intuitiva* — “in the simplest numbers there is no need of this demonstration.” We can simply see that one is to two as three is to six.

Analogously, perceiving that God's essence — which is simply existence itself — is expressed in any existing thing, we may see in one glance that the thing is in God. “What do we understand more clearly than...what existence is?” wrote Spinoza in 1663.⁶⁶ The givenness of things, their bare being, discloses to us “the very nature of existence,” that is to say “God's eternal and infinite essence” (E2p45s, E2p47). This means that “God's infinite essence and eternity are known to all” (E2p47s), given immediately to our minds in our awareness of any existing thing, and perhaps most obviously in our self-awareness. “And since all things are in God and are conceived through God, it follows that we can deduce from this knowledge [of God's essence-and-existence] a great many things which we know adequately, and so can form that third kind of knowledge of which we spoke in E2p40s2,” i.e. *Scientia intuitiva* (E2p47s).

However, our intuitive knowledge of God's essence-and-existence often gets covered over or drowned out by the clamour of imaginative thinking. People tend to “join the name *God* to the images of things they are used to seeing” (E2p47s). Equally, our knowledge of singular things' being-in-God, which is given in every simple intuition of their existence, usually eludes us, because our ideas of other things are confused with our own reactions to them: “the ideas we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our

own body more than the nature of the external body” (E2p16c2). This is the predicament of imaginative thinking, and although rational thinking overcomes its confusions, it knows things by their common properties rather than in their singularity. Only in *Scientia intuitiva* do we receive things in their singularity, their givenness, their simple presence. Intuition does not add anything new; it is always already there, like the sun behind clouds, and it shines forth, becomes knowledge, whenever the busy clamour of imaginative thinking settles down.

When our minds and bodies become quieter, less agitated and crowded by images conjured by “memory or imagination,” we naturally become open to the simple truth of things: “very much conscious of ourselves, and of God, and of things” (E5p39s) as Spinoza puts it in Part Five the *Ethics*. Anyone can see in one glance how an extended being — a tree, for example — is in God. I cannot perceive the tree without perceiving that it participates in extension, one of the attributes that expresses God’s nature, and thus perceiving its relation to God as clearly as I perceive the relations between 1 and 2, and 3 and 6. Likewise, simply through my awareness of my own embodied, conscious being, I perceive myself through the attributes of extension and thought — and thus I feel myself to be in God. Our thinking is not set apart from nature; it participates in the natural-divine activity of consciousness — and things are intelligible, and real, only insofar as they are in God. For Spinoza, as for Anselm and other apophatic theologians, we cannot know God as an object. What can be known, however, is our own being-in-God, and the being-in-God of other bodies and minds.

In the thought of the deepest medieval theologians, such as Anselm and Aquinas, it makes little sense to distinguish ontology from theology. I think this is also true of the *Ethics* — as long as we understand theology simply as a thinking of God, which is not the way Spinoza himself used the term when he criticised theology and theologians in his *Theologico-Political Treatise* and his letters. We separate theology and ontology only by regarding theology as what Heidegger called an “ontic science”: an enquiry into a determinate entity, conceived as a subject or an object, about which the question of whether it exists can meaningfully be asked.⁶⁷ In contrast, those who argue that God exists necessarily, that God cannot be conceived not to exist — as St Anselm argues in his *Proslogion*, and as Spinoza argues in the *Ethics* — do not simply give an emphatically affirmative answer to the question of whether God exists.⁶⁸ Rather, elucidating God’s necessary existence shows why, properly understood, the existence of God is not a question at all.⁶⁹

¹ Discussing God's simplicity in the Appendix to his exposition of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, Spinoza refers the reader to Descartes's teaching (*Principles* I, 48, 49) "that there is nothing in nature but substances and their modes" – Curley vol. I, p. 323 / I 257 / CM II ch. 5.

² Souriau, *The Different Modes of Existence*, pp. 190-1; Garrett, 'Representation and consciousness in Spinoza's naturalistic theory of the imagination.'

³ On the relation of "being in," or inherence, see Garrett, 'Representation and consciousness in Spinoza's naturalistic theory of the imagination'; Nadler, "Whatever is, is in God": Substances and Things in Spinoza's Metaphysics'; Melamed, 'Inherence and the Immanent Cause in Spinoza,' 'Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance: The Substance-Mode Relation as a Relation of Inherence and Predication,' 'Inherence, Causation and Conception in Spinoza,' and *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, pp. 3-59; Garrett, *Nature and Necessity in Spinoza's Philosophy*, pp. 14-15, 90-1, 360-7; Della Rocca, 'Rationalism run amok: representation and the reality of the emotions in Spinoza' and 'Steps Towards Eleaticism in Spinoza's Philosophy of Action.' In this latter paper, Della Rocca makes two steps that have significant implications for Spinoza's metaphysics as a whole: first, he argues that modes can be "in" one another just as modes can be "in" God, thereby suggesting that mode-mode relations are essentially the same as mode-substance relations; and second, he argues that "nothing limited can be or inhere in God" (p. 29), which suggests that modes, being limited, are not, in fact, in God, and do not exist – only substance is real, thus making Spinoza an Eleatic monist. For a counter interpretation, see Melamed, 'Why Spinoza is not an Eleatic Monist (Or Why Diversity Exists).'

⁴ See Curley vol. II, p. 406 / 239b-40b / Letter 50 (Spinoza to Jarig Jelles, June 1674), and Curley vol. I, p. 312 / I 246 / CM I 6). For discussion of these passages and the issues they raise, see Lærke, 'Spinoza's Monism? What Monism?'; Della Rocca, 'The Elusiveness of the One and the Many in Spinoza: Substance, Attribute, and Mode.'

⁵ Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* I, §51.

⁶ See Garrett, *Nature and Necessity in Spinoza's Philosophy*, pp. 365-6.

⁷ Ursula Renz's *The Explainability of Experience* offers an illuminating discussion of how the substance-mode relation has been treated in scholarly literature: see pp. 35-9. Renz argues that the relation between substance and modes "is defined not by the modes' *ontological inherence* in the substance but by their *categorical difference*—which therefore also constitutes the key structural component of Spinoza's approach" (p. 44). This point about categorical difference is important — Spinoza insists that finite things in general, and human beings in particular, are not substances — but I do not see why this should be considered an alternative to ontological inherence, so long as this inherence, or being-in-God, is understood correctly. Renz is right to emphasise that "a mode is by no means something that inheres in God in the manner of an accident" (p. 44) and to thereby deny that Spinoza is a pantheist. Though she acknowledges "a mode's ontological dependency on the substance," i.e. on God, Renz seems to privilege a mode's dependency on other finite modes.

⁸ Della Rocca, 'Spinoza's Substance Monism,' p. 15.

⁹ See Renz, *The Explainability of Experience*, pp. 29-34, which argues for Spinoza's "radical dissociation of the concept of substance from the concept of subject" (p. 34).

¹⁰ See Cusa, *Directio Speculantis seu De Non Aliud*; Williams, *Not I, Not Other Than I*.

¹¹ Curley vol. I, p. 80 / I 35 / KV I ch. 3. In the *Short Treatise* Spinoza also states that "outside God, there is nothing, and [God] is an immanent cause" – Curley vol. I, p. 72 / I 26 / KV I ch. 2. As Curley explains, the composition date of the *Short Treatise* – which was "intended for circulation among friends", and was not published – is uncertain, and it is not known whether the original manuscript was in Latin or Dutch: see Curley vol. I, pp. 46-53.

¹² See Curley vol. II, p. 467 / IV 307a / Letter 73 (Spinoza to Henry Oldenburg, December 1675).

Spinoza's reference to Paul is an indirect citation of Acts 17: 27-8: "God...is not far from any one of

us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'" Paul is citing a Greek source, thought to be the philosopher-poet Epimenides of Crete.

¹³ Michael Della Rocca regards 'being in' as "co-extensive" with 'being caused by' and 'being conceived through,' and thus he argues that all causal and conceptual relations are thereby in-relations: to the extent that mode A causes mode B, mode B is in mode A – see 'Rationalism Run Amok' and 'Steps Towards Eleaticism in Spinoza's Philosophy of Action.' When I asked Della Rocca why he would not apply Spinoza's distinction between immanent and transitive causation to distinguish between substance-mode causation and mode-mode causation, he replied that he thinks the idea of transitive causation – between modes as much as between substance and modes – is incoherent on Spinoza's own terms. Be that as it may, it seems that Spinoza meant his distinction between immanent and transitive causation to apply to modes: one of his super-propositions, the definition E3D2, states that "I say that we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e., when something in us or outside us follows from our nature, which can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone." This suggests that a mode can be either an immanent cause or a transitive cause, i.e. a cause of an effect either within us, or outside us. For a discussion of some of these issues, see Melamed, 'Inherence, Causation and Conception in Spinoza'; for a critique of the claim that causation and conception are co-extensive, see Morrison, 'The Relation Between Conception and Causation in Spinoza's Metaphysics.'

¹⁴ In another letter to Oldenburg, Spinoza wrote that "I do not separate God from nature as everyone known to me has done"; see Curley vol. I, p. 188 / IV 36 / Letter 6 (Spinoza to Henry Oldenburg, April 1662).

¹⁵ During the early 1640s Gilbertus Voetius, Calvinist theologian and Rector of the newly founded University of Utrecht, clashed with his Cartesian colleague Henricus Regius, a Professor of Medicine. See Verbeek, *Descartes and the Dutch*; James, *Spinoza on Philosophy, Religion and Politics*; Douglas, *Spinoza and Dutch Cartesianism*.

¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Ch. 14, §5. Calvin was fond of citing Acts 17:27-8 (see *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Ch. 1, §1; Ch. 5, §3, §9, §14; Ch. 16, §1, §4), and he criticized "the Anthropomorphites, who imagined God to be corporeal, because the Scripture frequently ascribes to him a mouth, ears, eyes, hands and feet" (Ch. 13, §1); "there is nothing more unreasonable than the thought of contracting the infinite and incomprehensible God within the compass of five feet" (Ch. 11, §4). Calvin explains this figurative language in terms which somewhat anticipate Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*: "such forms of expression do not clearly explain the nature of God, but accommodate the knowledge of him to our narrow capacity" (Ch. 13, §1). However, Calvin's anthropomorphic descriptions of God's character make it difficult to avoid the image of a God presiding over and above the world. He attributes to God a strikingly punitive moral psychology, with particular emphasis on God's will, drawing on the portrayal of God in (what Calvin called) the Old Testament: "In the law and in the prophets [God] frequently declares that whenever he moistens the earth with dew or with rain, he affords a testimony of his favour; and that, on the contrary, when at his command, heaven becomes hard as iron, when the crops of corn are blasted and otherwise destroyed, and when showers of hail and storms molest the fields, he gives a proof of a certain and specific vengeance" (Ch. 16, §4); according to Calvin, inanimate things are "no other than instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions, according to his will" (Ch. 16, §2).

¹⁷ *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. III, p. 23.

¹⁸ The eighteenth-century sense of deism referred to here is different from the seventeenth-century sense, as articulated in Marin Mersenne's 1624 treatise *L'Impiété des Déistes, Athées, et Libertins, combattue et renversée*. In 1671 Lambert de Velthuysen associated Spinoza's views on religion with Mersenne's version of deism: "[Spinoza] doesn't rise above the religion of the Deists... [he] does not stay within the bounds of the Deists and leaves men an even narrower scope for worship." Mersenne's seventeenth-century French deists denied that Christian scriptures were divinely revealed, and argued that following the moral law

common to all monotheist religions was sufficient for salvation; Mersenne interpreted this view as a justification for “libertine” conduct: see Curley, vol. II, p. 374.

¹⁹ See Melamed, ‘Cohen, Spinoza and the Nature of Pantheism.’

²⁰ See Zachhuber, ‘Transcendence and Immanence’; Westphal, ‘Immanence and Transcendence.’ The *OED* records the first use in English of “transcendent” as a theological term in an article on ‘Deism’ in the 1877 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, where D. Patrick wrote that “Shaftesbury vigorously protests against the notion of a wholly transcendent God.”

²¹ In his introduction to the Christian doctrine of creation, Simon Oliver explains that, for Aquinas, “creation is not outside or alongside God as an alternative focus of being, as if God and creation were separate *things*. In an important sense, creation is ‘in’ God” – see Oliver, *Creation*, pp. 89, 72.

²² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 29, 88.

²³ See Souriau, *The Different Modes of Existence*, pp. 190-1. Many of Deleuze’s insights are recognizable, in embryo, in Souriau’s note on these pages. Souriau argues that in the *Ethics* (as opposed to in the *Metaphysical Thoughts*) “existence is certainly univocal, despite Axiom I [E1A1: Whatever is, is either in itself or in another], in which the *esse in alio* should be understood not as the fact of existing in a manner other than that of substance, but as the fact of being in the existence of the latter.”

²⁴ Nadler, *Think Least of Death*, ch. 1. Similarly, Yirmiyahu Yovel claims that Spinoza’s thought is characterized above all by “the philosophy of immanence,” or the idea that “this-worldly existence is all there is, as the only actual being and the sole source of ethical value. God himself is identical with the totality of nature, and God’s decrees are written not in the Bible but in the laws of nature and reason” – see Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: Vol. 1*, p. ix, and also *Spinoza and Other Heretics: Vol. 2*. Likewise, Steven B. Smith argues that Spinoza’s God is “not a divine or transcendent cause,” and that the “lesson” of the *Ethics* is “to remove the prejudice that God is a transcendent creator” – see *Spinoza’s Book of Life*, pp. 40, 48.

²⁵ Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, p. 299.

²⁶ Among exceptions to this tendency are Yitzhak Melamed, Sylvain Zac, and Nancy Levene. For Levene, Spinoza advances “a biblical concept of creation insofar as [his philosophy] maintains an absolute distinction between God and humankind while insisting that humankind transform itself into (because it is made from) the divine image. The crucial thing is to see that God’s nonseparation from the world – a sore point for most theological readers – is at the center of Spinoza’s understanding of the most valuable and difficult human project, which, as the Bible would put it, is to become holy as God is holy (Lev. 19: 2) – to become, in the words of Genesis, “like” God (Gen. 3: 22)” – *Spinoza’s Revelation*, p. 57. Zac emphasizes the difference between Spinozist creation and Biblical creation, while also reading Spinoza as offering a “spiritual path”; see Zac, ‘On the Idea of Creation in Spinoza’s Philosophy,’ p. 238.

²⁷ See Gueroult, *Spinoza I: Dieu*, pp. 220-39. Gueroult rightly argues that *panthéisme* is the most accurate label for the position set out in E1p14 and E1p15 since “les modes sont *en Dieu*, sans cependant être *Dieu* à la rigueur” — yet he understates the difference between pantheism and pantheism when he claims that “Par l’immanence des choses à Dieu est jeté le premier fondement du panthéisme, ou, plus exactement, d’une certaine forme de panthéisme” (p. 223). Gueroult argues (citing Letter 73) that Spinoza’s pantheism differs from that of ancient Hebrews, antique philosophers, St Paul and Augustine insofar as, for Spinoza, “les *substances de la Nature*, Etendue, Pensée, etc., sont Dieu même” (p. 223). Coupling these remarks with Gueroult’s emphasis on immanence in his commentary on E1p15 (he identifies two forms of immanence in *Ethics* I: one which posits nature in God, and one which posits God, as immanent cause, in nature – see p. 222) we might place him among those readers who do not recognize the transcendence of Spinoza’s God, and who see theological immanence and transcendence as contrary rather than as complementary. In his book *Spinoza* Alan Donagan denies that Spinoza is a pantheist because he affirms the ontological distinction between God and created things, and suggests that “Spinoza is a ‘pantheist’ in the sense in which process theologians understand that word”; however, he

also insists that, for Spinoza, “God is not a transcendent being” (pp. 90-1) – and the “process theologians” Donagan aligns with Spinoza were twentieth-century Christian thinkers who tended to deny God’s transcendence. For an outline of an interpretation of Spinozism as panentheism *and* a “radical variant of transcendent theology,” see Melamed, ‘Cohen, Spinoza and the Nature of Pantheism.’

For a valuable historical discussion of the Spinoza’s association with pantheism, particularly in the German context, see Nadler, ‘Benedictus Pantheissimus.’ Nadler’s own interpretation is that Spinoza was an atheist, not a pantheist: “Novalis got it wrong. Spinoza did not elevate nature into the divine. On the contrary, he reduced the divine to nature—he naturalized God” (p. 253). The opposite view is put forward by the 20th-century Catholic theologian Erich Przywara, who — following the “acosmist” reading of Spinozism pioneered by Solomon Maimon — contrasts “Spinoza’s world-denying theopanism” with “Schopenhauer-Nietzsche’s God-denying pantheism”: see Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, p. 52.

The view that Spinoza was an atheist is difficult to defend on the basis of the *Ethics*: in Part One we find a definition of God and a detailed account of God’s nature and relation to everything that exists, and Part Five describes a “wise person” who is “conscious of himself, of God, and of things.” For a helpful note on the charge of atheism levelled against Spinoza by his contemporaries, see Curley vol. II, pp. 47-9. Modern commentators who regard Spinoza as an atheist usually rely on the argument that his authentic views were entirely different from those expressed in his works and correspondence: see, for example, Strauss, ‘Persecution and the Art of Writing’; Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*; Smith, *Spinoza’s Book of Life*, pp. 41-4.

²⁸ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, pp. 15-18. Toland envisaged pantheists as a “Brotherhood” whose “Religion is clear, simple, easy, without blemish, and freely bestowed, not painted over, not intricate, embarrassed, incomprehensible, or mercenary; not luring Minds with silly Fables, and ensnaring them by the Filth, Inhumanity or Ridicule of Superstition; not subservient, I say, to the private Advantage of any Family or Faction against the public Good; not scandalized or railing at, much less disturbing or tormenting any Person or Persons, so that they be honest and peaceable Men” (pp. 94-5). For a detailed discussion of Toland and his “pantheism,” see Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*; Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* and ‘John Toland: The Politics of Pantheism.’ Champion emphasizes that Toland’s pantheism was as much an intellectual (and moral) disposition, committed to toleration and free debate, as a philosophical or theological theory.

²⁹ Coleridge, ‘On the Prometheus of Aeschylus,’ p. 1261; Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, p. 151.

³⁰ *The Oxford English Dictionary* 3rd edition (2005). The *OED* 2nd edition (1989) offers the following definition of pantheism: “The religious belief or philosophical theory that God and the universe are identical (implying a denial of the personality and transcendence of God); the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God.” See also Mander, ‘Pantheism’: “at its most general, pantheism may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe.” See also Mander, ‘Omniscience and Pantheism,’ and Nadler, ‘Benedictus Pantheissimus’: “in very general terms, pantheism is the view that rejects the transcendence of God” (pp. 243-4); Nadler goes on to distinguish two types of pantheism: a “reductive pantheism” that regards God as “identical with all that exists,” thus refusing any distinction between God and the world, and a view (closer, Nadler points out, to Toland’s pantheism) that recognises some distinction between God and the world and regards God as “contained or immanent within” the natural world. Nadler argues that Spinoza is not a pantheist in either of these senses.

³¹ The *OED* entry for “panentheism” reads “The theory or belief that God encompasses and interpenetrates the universe but at the same time is greater than and independent of it. Frequently contrasted with *pantheism*” – *The Oxford English Dictionary* 3rd ed., 2005. The German *Panentheismus*

appeared in 1828, in Carl C. F. Krause's *System der Philosophie*, and English and French versions of the term, drawn from Krause, were in circulation from the 1870s.

³² Spinoza does not offer a formal definition of "Nature" in the *Ethics*. It does not appear in the eight Definitions at the beginning of Part One: this list of definitions comprises "cause of itself," "finite thing," "substance," "attribute," "mode," "God," "free" and "necessary" things, and "eternity." The word 'nature' has many different meanings: the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists over thirty distinct uses of the noun, as well as transitive and intransitive verb forms. Given Spinoza's reluctance to define *Natura* in the *Ethics*, it is wise to treat this word as a provisional placeholder, an open question — especially when it is associated with God — rather than as a determinate entity, to which "God" can then be reduced. In a note in Chapter 6 of the TTP, Spinoza indicates that "By Nature here I understand not only matter and its affections, but in addition to matter, infinite other things [*alia infinita*]" (Curley vol. II, p. 154 / III 83 / TTP ch. 6), and this fits with his definition of *Natura Naturans* as "such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence" in E1p29s, combined with his definition of God as "a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an external and infinite essence" (E1D6).

³³ See Nadler, 'Benedictus Pantheissimus,' p. 243; *Think Least of Death*, ch. 1. See also Smith, *Spinoza's Book of Life*, p. 42: "*Deus sive nature* [sic] is a formula for the atheism that Spinoza either could not or would not admit to... God or nature is Spinoza's way of saying that nature is the ground of all things beyond which we need make no further inquiries."

³⁴ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 543.

³⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 110-11.

³⁶ See E1p13.

³⁷ See E3p3s, E4p2, E4p4, E4p57s, E4App.1, E4App. 6, E4App.7; see also Curley vol. II, p. 14 / IV 166 / Letter 30 (Spinoza to Henry Oldeburg, October 1665); Curley vol. II, p. 18 / IV 170a / Letter 32 (Spinoza to Henry Oldenburgh, November 1665); Curley vol. II, p. 113 / III 46 / TTP ch. 3; Curley vol. II, p. 509 / III 277 / TP ch. 2 §5. In a note to E3p51s, Spinoza claims that "the human mind is part of the divine intellect," the divine intellect being an infinite mode, not substance, i.e. not God *simpliciter*.

³⁸ An alternative explanation for Spinoza's imprecision here, suggested to me by Michael Della Rocca, is that Spinoza *does* mean to identify God and Nature, and that he speaks loosely when he says that Nature has parts. This is possible, though Spinoza uses the phrase "part of Nature" at least seven times in the *Ethics*, and never uses the phrase "part of God."

³⁹ This view has been developed with respect to Platonism, drawing on the way Socrates affirms the "presence" (*parousia*) or "sharing" (*koinonia*) of the Form of Beauty in particular beautiful things (see *Phaedo* 100d5-7): see Perl, 'The Presence of the Paradigm: Immanence and Transcendence in Plato's Theory of Forms.' Summarising Perl's argument, David Schindler explains how the "coincidence" of immanence and transcendence follows from the "logic of transcendence": "radical [ontological] difference does not imply dualism, but is precisely what prevents it. The transcendence of forms in relation to the sensible images that participate in them would *exclude* their immanence in sensible things *only if* forms and images were relative to one another *within the same order of reality*... it is precisely because the form transcends not only a particular sensible image, but in fact the very mode of existence of that image, that it can be present to it — and to every other. In other words, only partial transcendence — i.e., mere separation within the same order of reality — excludes immanence; true transcendence is coincident with immanence" — Schindler, 'What's the Difference? On the Metaphysics of Participation in a Christian Context,' pp. 5-7. Herbert McCabe makes a similar point, with respect to the Catholic tradition, when he writes that "the God of Augustine and Aquinas, precisely by being wholly transcendent, *extra ordinem omnium entium existens*, is more intimately involved with each creature than any other creature could be" — *God Matters*, pp. 45-6.

⁴⁰ This insight has been articulated with force and in detail by Michael Della Rocca, who identifies the “principle of sufficient reason” as the core principle of Spinoza’s metaphysics, drawing on E1p11dem2, “For each thing there must be assigned a cause or reason, both for its existence and for its non-existence.” See Della Rocca, *Spinoza*.

⁴¹ For a discussion of this idea (including a compelling argument to show that Spinoza was committed to God’s infinite number of attributes), see Melamed, ‘Spinoza on the Infinity of Attributes.’ Melamed points out that Descartes also asserts that God has “countless” attributes beyond the ones we know: see Descartes’ letter to Mersenne, July 1641 in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, p. 185. While “Descartes’ claim that there are uncountable divine attributes which we cannot comprehend secures the transcendence of the Cartesian God,” Melamed argues, “Spinoza’s claim that *Deus sive Natura* has infinitely many attributes which are not accessible to us makes *Nature* (with capital N, i.e., as not restricted to extended and thinking nature) *just as transcendent to us as God is*. This is a bold and highly original view which is consistent with Spinoza’s deep critique of anthropocentrism.” Michael Della Rocca, by contrast, questions the coherence of the claim that there are multiple attributes: see ‘The Elusiveness of the One and the Many in Spinoza: Substance, Attribute, and Mode.’

⁴² See Curley, vol. II, pp. 413-15 / IV 250-53 / Letter 54 (Spinoza to Hugo Boxel, October 1674). See also E1p17s.

⁴³ For a discussion of the history of the concept of the infinite, which provides fascinating insight into the medieval background to Spinoza’s use of this concept in the *Ethics*, see Lévy, *Figures de l’infini*, especially Chapter 3, on medieval Islamic thought; Chapter 4, on Christian scholastic theology; and Chapter 5, on Rabbinic Judaism, Kabbalism, and debates between Crescas and Maimonides concerning the divine attributes.

⁴⁴ See E2p11 and E2p13: “The first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human Mind is nothing but the idea of a singular thing which actually exists” and “The object of the idea constituting the human Mind is the body, or a certain mode of Extension which actually exists, and nothing else.” Ursula Renz provides a fine-grained analysis of these propositions in *The Explainability of Experience*, pp. 145-67.

⁴⁵ See Biernacki and Clayton, *Panentheism Across the World’s Traditions*.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, pp. 47–8; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, First Part (Prima Pars)*, Q8.

⁴⁷ John of Damascus, *Writings*, p. 202.

⁴⁸ Because this discipline developed in academic institutions that until very recently were closely linked to Christian churches, in Europe and North America ‘philosophy of religion’ still means, for the most part, the philosophy of the Christian religion. To situate Spinoza in this field of academic enquiry therefore risks Christianising his thought, but on the other hand his view of religion, which is the very opposite of parochial, is exactly what the philosophy of religion needs to help expand its cultural reach.

⁴⁹ See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 564-9.

⁵⁰ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 1.

⁵¹ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 1.

⁵² Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 15.

⁵³ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 16.

⁵⁴ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 17. At the beginning of Chapter 8 I explore how Spinoza takes up this idea of the soul’s senses, or intellectual feeling — including a conception of intuitive “vision” by the “eyes of the mind”.

⁵⁵ God’s existence is necessary: see Anselm, *Proslogion*, chs. 3, 22; God’s existence is self-sufficient: see chs. 12, 22; God is “unlimited and eternal...in a unique way”: ch. 13; God is simple: ch. 18.

⁵⁶ See Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 22.

⁵⁷ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 20.

⁵⁸ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 26.

⁵⁹ Anselm, *Proslogion*, chs. 24, 19.

⁶⁰ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 26.

⁶¹ Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 26.

⁶² Anselm, *Proslogion*, ch. 26.

⁶³ In a 1674 letter Spinoza makes the suggestive, though ambiguous, remark that he knows “some of” God’s attributes, which might imply that his knowledge of God goes beyond thought and extension, the two attributes ordinarily accessible to us: “I don’t say that I know God completely, but only that I know some of his attributes, not all of them, not even most of them. Certainly, being ignorant of most of them, does not prevent my knowing some” – Curley vol. II, p. 423 / IV 261 / Letter 56 (Spinoza to Hugo Boxel, October or November 1674). For a discussion of this passage, see Melamed, “‘A Substances consisting of an infinity of attributes’: Spinoza on the Infinity of Attributes.”

⁶⁴ See Curley vol. II, p. 19 / IV 171a / Letter 32 (Spinoza to Henry Oldenburg, November 1665).

⁶⁵ On the theological significance of analogy, see Chapter Five, note 43.

⁶⁶ Curley vol. I, p. 305 / I 239 / CM I ch. 1. See Melamed, ‘Spinoza’s Deification of Existence,’ p. 103.

⁶⁷ See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 58-9, and the opening pages of the 1927 lecture ‘Phenomenology and Theology.’ Challenging Heidegger’s classification of theology as “ontic” as opposed to ontological helps to address the difficulties Ursula Renz encounters when she seeks, in reading the *Ethics*, to “translate theological statements into ontological ones” (*The Explainability of Experience*, p. 40). Renz recognizes that “in most, if not all, cases in which Spinoza takes recourse to theological topoi, ontological questions are at stake,” and if we grant that ontology and theology are, for Spinoza, either intertwined or identical, then we do not need to “translate” his statements about God in order to grasp their ontological (and philosophical) import – since his conception of God is, so to speak, always already ontological.

⁶⁸ See E1p8s2 and E1p11. For discussions of Spinoza, the ontological argument, and God’s necessity, see Earle, ‘The Ontological Argument in Spinoza’; Don Garrett, *Nature and Necessity in Spinoza’s Philosophy*, pp. 31-61; Lin, *Being and Reason*, pp. 53-73.

⁶⁹ Étienne Souriau makes a complementary point, quoting the Russian theologian Lev Shestov: “we cannot say of God that he exists. For, in saying ‘God exists,’ we necessarily lose him” – *The Different Modes of Existence*, p. 198.