



1632-77

SPINOZA: EXTRAVAGANT, UNIQUE, AND REVOLUTIONARY

“Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God.”

I. PLAN:

- A. In this outline we will examine some of the extravagant, unique, and revolutionary aspects of Spinoza’s Part One of *Ethics* as a way to introduce Spinoza’s metaphysical project. In particular, we will examine substance monism, the geometric format of *Ethics*, and Spinoza’s identification of God as Nature. This last issue is somewhat popularized by those who consider Spinoza to be a “*God-intoxicated man*” and those who assert that Spinoza is an intellectual forbear to 20th Century naturalistic determinism.¹ Therefore, significant attention will be given to Spinoza’s notion of God.
- B. Here’s why? This debate regarding the identity of God endures throughout the literature on Spinoza for at least two reasons: (1) the obscure nature of his thought and presentation; (2) Spinoza’s identification of God with Nature is not only central to his metaphysics, but is the groundwork for his larger project: *Ethics*.² Though this

¹ Naturalistic determinism is the philosophical notion that every state of affairs (e.g., acts, decisions, and acts) is the inevitable consequence of antecedent states of affairs. The debate between those who believe he is affirming a pantheistic or panentheistic position or philosophical naturalistic determinism is both classic and contemporary. It is classic in that one cannot survey Spinoza without considering what Spinoza meant by God since it is at the very heart of his project. It is also contemporary in view of a growing interest in both pantheism and scientific determinism in Western thought and culture. In his work, *The God of Spinoza: A Philosophical Study*, Richard Mason makes an interesting observation:

Spinoza’s thinking about God and religion occupies an awkward intellectual location. It cannot be understood without a grasp of the central parts of his philosophical work. Conversely, many elements in his central philosophy cannot be understood fully without some grasp of his religious thinking. But those who have been interested in religion have seldom been willing to do justice to the metaphysical foundation of his work; and philosophers—at least in the English speaking world—have paid too little attention to his religious position [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2001], xi-xiii].

Genevieve Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook (New York: Routledge, 1996, 2007), 38-41.

² In his article, “Spinoza’s ethical theory,” Don Garrett observes:

Spinoza is in many ways—and as many have observed—a philosopher in the Cartesian tradition. His first published work was an elucidation of Descartes’s *Principles of Philosophy*, and Descartes is the only philosopher named and discussed in the *Ethics*. Some of his most fundamental metaphysical and epistemological doctrines are

debate is projected to continue indefinitely, we do not have to “*necessarily*” conclude that *Ethics* (and his other writings) is ultimately intelligible. In fact, consider the following claim by Steven Nadler:

Spinoza’s ultimate goal in the *Ethics* is to demonstrate the way to human happiness in a deterministic world filled with obstacles to our well-being, obstacles to which we are naturally prone to react in not entirely beneficial ways.”³

C. Here is how we will proceed (I. Plan). We will set the context of his person by reading an excerpt from Steven Nadler’s SEP article, “Baruch Spinoza” (II. Person) and consider why metaphysics was used as his starting point for his project on ethics. Then, we will explore what his central aim is in Part One of *Ethics: A case for substance monism* (III. Proposal). How we will do so is by considering three central aspects of Spinoza’s philosophy: It is extravagant, unique, and revolutionary.⁴ Within this threefold outline we will consider the following three interpretative debates in chronological order:

1. How does Spinoza’s geometric form contribute to his content?
2. What does Spinoza mean when he wrote, “*whatever is, is in God...*” [P15]?
3. Is Spinoza implying pantheism, atheism, or panentheism by defining “God as nature”?

Throughout this study we will consider some additional comments, factors, and sources.

Cartesian, while many others appear to result from reflection on various difficulties in Descartes’s position. His physics, too, is largely Cartesian. Despite this unmistakable influence, however, Spinoza’s guiding intellectual purpose was quite different from Descartes’s. Descartes sought primarily to improve the sciences-for himself and for others-by providing a better foundation for them. He justified this endeavor ultimately on the grounds that it would bring human beings greater mastery over nature. Spinoza, in contrast, sought primarily to improve the character of human beings-both himself and others-by improving their self-understanding. He justified this endeavor ultimately on the grounds that it would bring human beings peace of mind as integral aspects of nature [*The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Don Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 267].

Garrett goes on to say:

While Spinoza’s metaphysics, epistemology, and physics are in many ways Cartesian, his ethical purposes are in many ways Hobbesian. Like Hobbes, he conceives of human beings as mechanisms in nature that are motivated by self-preservation and individual advantage, and who, by the mutual employment of reason, can improve their way of life. Hobbes’s aim, however, is to show human beings how best to satisfy their desires by instituting mutually useful political and social constraints on their passions, and so to maximize their chances for a relatively long and pleasant life. Spinoza’s aim, while encompassing Hobbes’s, is much more ambitious: It is to show human beings how to achieve a mode of life that largely transcends merely transitory desires and which as its natural consequences autonomous control over the passions and participation in an eternal blessedness [*Ibid.*, 267-8].

³ Steven Nadler, *Spinoza’s Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), x.

⁴ Sir Anthony Kenny, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 3:68.

- D. Thesis statement of Part One of *Ethics*: Spinoza gives an ambitious account of substance monism as God as a starting point for his eventual conclusions on morality.
- E. Complimentary Statement: He believes a substance cannot produce anything else; substance must necessarily involve existence. Since there cannot be two or more substances with the same attribute Spinoza proposes: “P11: *God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists;* (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:417)” ; P15: *Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God* (Ibid., 420).”

1. A substance as what is “*in itself, and is conceived through itself*.”
2. An attribute is a property conceived, that is, “*what the intellect perceives*” of a substance. We will see that the one substance has infinite attributes. However, we can only comprehend two: extension and thought. I found Genevieve Lloyd’s illustration about attributes helpful. She writes:

Spinoza’s attributes are mirrors, each expressing in its own way the essence of a substance. But what is ‘expressed’ is also enveloped in the expression, like the tree in the seed. This is no passive reflection, but an active, dynamic articulation.⁵

3. A mode is a property conceivable by reference to a substance for it is “*it is in another*.” Consider Don Garrett’s understanding of a mode:

Spinoza defines a ‘mode’ as ‘the affection [i.e., the modification, or quality] of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is also conceived.’ Every mode of a substance is thus a particular modification of an attribute of that substance. Since every mode is in and conceived through the substance of which it is a mode, it must also be entirely caused by the substance of which it is a mode; thus, all causation is the self-determination and self-expression of a substance.⁶

We have to also note that there are two types of modes: infinite and finite modes:

- a. Infinite modes: Under the attribute of thought, substance can produce an infinite mode such as God’s intellect. Under the nature of extension, there are infinite modes such as certain regularities or uniformities of physical universe (laws

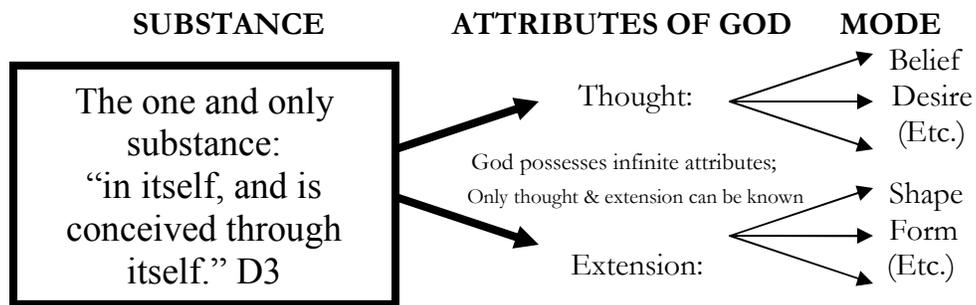
⁵ Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, 31.

⁶ Don Garrett, “Benedict de Spinoza,” *Blackwell Guide to the Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche*, edited by Steven M. Emmanuel (Malden, M.A.: 2001), 47.

of nature like motion and rest). Infinite modes are eternal serve to characterize the unchanging nature of the physical universe.

- b. Finite modes: particular things/facts (P17). They are individual things that express God’s attributes, flowing necessarily from God’s infinite nature in a certain and determinate manner (e.g., just as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its interior angles are equal to two right angles, so all things and facts follow from God’s nature).⁷

4. Consider this chart adapted from the lecture notes of Curtis Brown:⁸



F. Possible Counter arguments: First, common sense dictates that it is impractical to believe that a substance cannot produce another substance. For example, we are able to bear scientific witness to creatures generating other creatures. Second, it is possible to have good reasons for believing in a proposition that are quite separate from reasons that provide evidence for its truth as developed by thinkers like Blaise Pascal, Soren Kiekegaard, and John Henry Newman. To them, reason is corrupted, limited, and ultimately futile. And third, it is counter-intuitive ☺ (sorry, I “*necessarily*” cannot help it).⁹ While his work may be an extraordinary achievement in terms of offering a rationalistic metaphysical system, it is plainly wrong.

⁷ *History of Philosophy*, edited by Dion Scott-Kakuras, Susan Castagnetto, Hugh Benson, William Tashek, & Paul Hurley (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 145.

⁸ Curtis Brown, “Spinoza on Why There Can Be Only One Substance” at www.trinity.edu

⁹ Anthony Kenny, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 3:308-11.

II. PERSON:

- A. The following is an excerpt from Steven Nadler's *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article, "Baruch Spinoza".

Baruch Spinoza was born in 1632 in Amsterdam. He was the middle son in a prominent family of moderate means in Amsterdam's Portuguese-Jewish community. As a boy—known to his fellow Portuguese as Bento—he had undoubtedly been one of the star pupils in the congregation's Talmud Torah school. He was intellectually gifted, and this could not have gone unremarked by the congregation's rabbis. It is possible that Spinoza, as he made progress through his studies, was being groomed for a career as a rabbi. But he never made it into the upper levels of the curriculum, those which included advanced study of Talmud. At the age of seventeen, he was forced to cut short his formal studies to help run the family's importing business. And then, on July 27, 1656, Spinoza was issued the harshest writ of *cherem*, or excommunication, ever pronounced by the Sephardic community of Amsterdam; it was never rescinded. We do not know for certain what Spinoza's "monstrous deeds" and "abominable heresies" were alleged to have been, but an educated guess comes quite easy. No doubt he was giving utterance to just those ideas that would soon appear in his philosophical treatises. In those works, Spinoza denies the immortality of the soul; strongly rejects the notion of a providential God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and claims that the Law was neither literally given by God nor any longer binding on Jews. Can there be any mystery as to why one of history's boldest and most radical thinkers was sanctioned by an orthodox Jewish community?

To all appearances, Spinoza was content finally to have an excuse for departing from the community and leaving Judaism behind; his faith and religious commitment were, by this point, gone. Within a few years, he left Amsterdam altogether. By the time his extant correspondence begins, in 1661, he is living in Rijnsburg, not far from Leiden. While in Rijnsburg, he worked on the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, an essay on philosophical method, and the *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*, an initial but aborted effort to lay out his metaphysical, epistemological and moral views. His critical exposition of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, the only work he published under his own name in his lifetime, was completed in 1663, after he had moved to Voorburg, outside The Hague. By this time, he was also working on what would eventually be called the *Ethics*, his philosophical masterpiece. However, when he saw the principles of toleration in Holland being threatened by reactionary forces, he put it aside to complete his "scandalous" *Theological-Political Treatise*, published anonymously and to great alarm in 1670. When Spinoza died in 1677, in The Hague, he was still at work on his *Political Treatise*; this was soon published by his friends along with his other unpublished writings, including a *Compendium to Hebrew Grammar*.

- B. Why begin with Metaphysics in Part One of *Ethics*. In sum, it could be (1) the paradigm shift from scholastic philosophy to mechanistic science demands a new metaphysical explanation; metaphysical project gains its greatest value when it makes

a contribution to morality, or Spinoza is integrating new metaphysical and scientific insights (mechanistic) into an ancient way of doing philosophy: the pursuit of wisdom. Let's unpack these three possibilities further.

1. One reasonable explanation is that since traditional scholastic philosophy was already in an upheaval due to the “new” mechanistic science following the Copernican Revolution. A paradigm shift was occurring and thus, his agenda was already set; the world needed a new metaphysical explanation of the universe.¹⁰
2. Perhaps a more satisfying answer is that metaphysics gains their ultimate value from the contribution they make to morality. Consider the following by Donald Garrett:

In his conception of philosophy, all of these topics [metaphysics, philosophy of mind, epistemology, philosophy of physical science, and philosophy of psychology] gain their ultimate value from the contribution that an understanding of them can make to a good human life. Thus, he was particularly concerned to employ his more metaphysical and epistemological results to shed light on how human beings should live their lives, what they should pursue, how they can control their dangerous passions, and even how the modern state should be organized in order to promote human flourishing. Particularly important to the well-being of the well-ordered state is the role played by popular religion; and it is largely for this reason that Spinoza devoted intensive effort to the proper interpretation of the Bible. The significance of religion is not, however, by any means limited to its role in the state. On the contrary, stimulated no doubt in part by the ongoing conflict between science and Christianity—which he of course viewed from the distinctive perspective of an excommunicated Jew—he radically reconceived the nature of God, God's relation to human beings, and human beings' relation to God. Spinoza's identification of God with Nature is among the most striking and distinctive aspects of his philosophy; his radical displacement of revelation and ritual by philosophy and science is among its most modern.¹¹

¹⁰ *Blackwell Guide to the Modern Philosophers*, 47.

¹¹ *Blackwell Guide to the Modern Philosophers*, 47. In his article, “Spinoza's Ethical Theory”, Donald Garrett writes:

The Ethics seeks to demonstrate a broad range of metaphysical, theological, epistemological, and psychological doctrines. Most of these doctrines, however, either constitute, support, or elucidate the premises for his ethical conclusions. Moreover, Spinoza's choices concerning which metaphysical, theological, epistemological, and psychological doctrines to emphasize and develop are largely determined by their usefulness in supporting his ethical conclusions [268].

Or we might put it this way: In order to understand ourselves and pursue “blessedness” we must understand Nature first. By understanding Nature, we can better understand how we should live.

3. Genevieve Lloyd contends that Spinoza is reiterating an older conception of doing philosophy (e.g., Hellenistic philosophy): the integration of metaphysics and ethics:¹²

Spinoza’s way of integrating metaphysics and ethics is unusual, not only in contemporary philosophical practice, but in the history of modern philosophy. Despite all that links it to the projects of modernity, the *Ethics* reaffirms a much older conception of philosophy. It picks up ancient debates, where questions about the nature of knowledge and of the ultimate nature of things were integrated with reflection on the mental attitudes required for a well-lived life.¹³

III. PROPOSAL:

A. A Case for Substance Monism:

Now that we proposed our plan of study, summarized the life of Spinoza, and considered why metaphysics was his starting point on a work about morality, we will now direct our attention to an exposition of selected portions of *Ethics 1*. In sum, Part One is his metaphysical project whereby he will attempt to make a case for “*substance monism*.” But what is monism and why is Spinoza’s metaphysical project worth investigating? After we answer these two questions we will begin examining some of the extravagant, unique, and revolutionary aspects of Spinoza’s philosophy. In view of the two interpretative questions we will explore, more attention will be given to the first two aspects: extravagance and uniqueness.

1. Monism describes a group of views in metaphysics that emphasizes the oneness or unity of reality in some sense. Substance monism is a type of monism. In

¹² Genevieve Lloyd makes an interesting claim:

There is no correct reading of the *Ethics*. We may focus on its answers to ‘philosophical questions’-on what it can offer professional philosophical inquiry; or we may be primarily interested in reconstructing the work’s own intellectual context and agenda. Alternatively, we may want to put the text to work-applying it in our own rethinking of social and cultural issues. We may read it ‘affectively’-treating it primarily as a source of insight into how to live. But, if we read it exclusively in any of these ways, we may miss the audacious nexus Spinoza makes between metaphysical speculation, scientific theory, ethical reflection and the search for wisdom. From a contemporary perspective, one of the most astonishing things about the *Ethics* is that Spinoza presents himself as deriving wisdom about issues of living and dying out of metaphysical theories of substance and attributes, mind and body, individuality and modality. *The Ethics* undoubtedly offers insights into philosophical problems still under debate in academic philosophy. But they are inseparable from articulations of reflective wisdom of a kind that are not commonly regarded as part of the agenda of contemporary academic philosophy [*Spinoza and the Ethics*, 140-1].

¹³Ibid, 141.

essence, substance monism is the view that the mind and body are only modes of the same substance. Thus, any multiplicity of substances is a manifestation of only a single substance, whether in different states or from different points of view; there is only one self-contained and independent substance.¹⁴

2. In the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Brian McLaughlin offers the following definitions regarding the some of the various versions of monism:

Types of Monism:	Definition	Proponent
Dual-Attribute or Dual – Aspect Theory	Mental and physical are distinct modes of a single substance. Mental and the physical are only two of infinitely many modes of this one substance.	Spinoza
Material Monism:	Everything is material or physical.	Hobbes
Berkeley’s Idealistic Monism:	Everything is Mental. He held that both mental and physical phenomena are perceptions in the mind of God.	Berkeley
Hegel’s Idealistic Monism:	Everything is part of the World Spirit.	Hegel
Neutral Monism:	All of reality is ultimately of one kind, which is neither mental nor physical. Hume was a neutral monist, maintaining that mental and physical substances are really just bundles of neutral entities.	At one time Bertrand Russell called his version (which he supposedly held at one time) neutral entities sensibilia and claimed that mind and physical objects are logical constructions of out of them.

2. It is important to see how Spinoza goes further than Descartes:
- a. Spinoza definition of substance is as follows (D3): “What is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed.”
 1. His definition is twofold: (a) notion of being “in itself”; (b) notion of being “conceived through itself.” The central idea is that whatever is true of things themselves is reflected in the idea of those things.

¹⁴ *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards (New York: MacMillan), 5-6:363. In Roland Hall’s entry, “Monism and Pluralism”, he describes Descartes as perhaps as a partial monist. He writes:

A further possible doctrine, that might be called partial monism, is the belief that even if there is more than one realm of being, there is only one substance within some particular realm. For example, Descartes, who is a classical dualist insofar as he divides the world into the two realms of mind and matter, accepted partial monism about matter, which he treated as a unitary substance, while he rejected partial monism about minds [Ibid].

- b. Descartes defines substance as something that is not dependent on any other things for its existence. Descartes would agree with Spinoza that a substance is “in itself.” In essence, this means that substance has modes or qualities (e.g., size, shape) without itself being the quality of any other things.
1. For Descartes, God is a substance in the strongest sense. The justification for this notion is that God is absolutely independent, not dependent upon anything else. However, bodies and human minds are dependent upon God for its existence.

Consider Donald Garrett’s observation:

A consequence of this Cartesian definition, however, is that Descartes must acknowledge that only God is a substance in the strongest and strictest sense, since only God is entirely independent of anything else for his existence; other things, such as bodies and human minds, are substances only in a weaker sense, for they depend for their continued existences, in Descartes’ view, on God’s concurrence (46).

Thus, there is concurrence in Descartes’ view: God is entirely independent of anything else for his existence, but other things, such as bodies and human minds, are substances, in a weaker sense, depend upon God for their continued existence.

2. On the other hand, Spinoza uses “substance” univocally. For him, the requirements that a substance be absolutely in itself and conceived through itself entails that a substance must be absolutely the sole cause of its own existence.
- c. Why is Spinoza’s view of substance univocal?

A4: This is because things are conceived through their causes (1a4), so that if anything else caused a substance, the substance would be conceived through that cause and hence not through itself. But a thing can be self-caused only if its existence derives from its essence (1d1) rather than from any external thing; and since a thing is properly conceived by conceiving its essence (2d), it follows that a substance is a thing whose existence cannot be denied by anyone who forms a proper concept of its nature.

A4: The knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its own cause.

D1: By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing.

- d. Spinoza defines an “attribute” as “what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence.” This concept of an “attribute,” derives, in part of Descartes’s concept of a principle attribute. For Descartes, every ordinary quality or mode of a substance is in some way a specification of this principle attribute. While a Cartesian substance may undergo change of its particular modes, it cannot undergo a change of its principle attribute because the principle attribute constitutes what the substance essentially is.
1. According to Descartes, a substance cannot be without its principle attribute, and whatever has a given principle attribute is a substance of the kind constituted by the principle attribute.
 2. In his view there are two kinds of created substances, each with its own principle attribute: bodies have extension (physical, spatial, dimension character-as their principle attribute (and thus having, for example, particular sizes, figures, and motions among their modes); and minds having thought as their principle attribute (and thus, having, for example, acts of conceiving, affirming, doubting, attributing, and willing among their modes).
 3. While Spinoza agrees that extension and thought are each attributes that constitutes the nature of principle attributes, he denies that bodies and human minds are themselves substances, and he denies that a substance need to be limited to having a single attribute.
 4. On the contrary, the more reality or perfection a substance has, the more such attributes it will have: 1P9 (pg. 416).
 5. God, the most real and most perfect being, can therefore be defined as the substance who has infinite (that is, an unlimited) within its own realm (d6). Since the existence of God necessarily follows from this definition, according to Spinoza (1P11d), God necessarily exists.
 6. This God exists as a thinking substance (1p1), as previous philosophers had maintained, but also and equally as an extended (that is, physical, or corporeal substance (1p15s and 2p2), and as a substance of other infinite attributes unknown to the human mind as well.

7. Each divine attribute may thus be thought of as a fundamental way of being for God, each constituting the essence of God insofar as God is considered as existing in that particular way.
 - e. Lastly: Spinoza denies that substances can share an attribute; Descartes, for example, supposed that human minds were individual substances (albeit in the weaker sense of the term substance) all sharing the attribute of thought. Spinoza rejects sharing of attributes on the grounds that it would be impossible to distinguish different substances within the realm of a single attribute.
3. Spinoza's case for substance monism is divided into three parts: (1) eight definitions (which he delineates the essence of a thing) "D1-8", (2) seven axioms, and (3) demonstrations.¹⁵ Once his metaphysical project is established, he then moves to anthropology and epistemology in part 2. Afterwards, he offers three moral conclusions: Part 3 "On the Origin and Nature of Effects"; Part 4: On Human Bondage, or the Power of the Affect"; Part 5: "The Power of the Intellect, or on Human Freedom."
4. Now having defined substance monism, we will now consider some of the extravagance, uniqueness, and revolutionary aspects of Spinoza's Part One of *Ethics*. But we must bear in mind two observations:
 - a. First, by proposing "substance monism", Spinoza enters into larger conversation that finds its initial Western expression in Presocratic philosophy: "Monism [only one] and Pluralism [many kinds of things]."¹⁶
 - b. Spinoza is advocating a very unorthodox view of God: God is absolutely infinite being (substance), who necessarily exists and is self-determining (but not purposeful); everything else is a mode of God (inorganic and organic), whether ontologically and conceptually; they are dependent on

¹⁵ Genevieve Lloyd offers some interesting insights regarding Spinoza's use of axioms. She writes:

The opening axioms highlight another central theme: the necessary correspondence between thought and reality. What is true of reality is true also of thought: what is in itself must be conceived through itself. If we approach the correspondence from the other direction, the point is that a thing cannot be necessary if it can be conceived as not existing; the essence of such a thing does not involve its existence. Spinoza's axioms about causal relations also reflect this conviction of the necessary correspondence between thought and reality; the relations of dependence between what causes and what is caused are reflected in corresponding relations between the knowledge of effects and the knowledge of causes—the one is 'understood through' the other.

In addition to the 'being in' relation, which binds things together, and the 'thinking through' relation, which binds their concepts together, the axioms introduce us to another crucial relation—that between ideas and things. This is not causal relation but a relation of agreement: truth is a matter of agreement between ideas and objects. These three set of relations, between things between ideas, and between ideas and things—underpin the structure of the *Ethics*. The conviction that thought and reality—ideas and objects—must agree is one of the things that make it appropriate to describe Spinoza as a rationalist [*Spinoza and the Ethics*, 30].

¹⁶ Of course, this does not mean that monism and pluralism debate necessarily exclude each other in all of its expressions. For example, materialism states that everything that exists is of a single material kind, a material kind [*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, volumes 5-6, 363-4].

God. There is no teleological purpose for modes. Though substance has many attributes, we only know two: Thought and Extension. Lastly, the universe is an infinite body.¹⁷

B. Spinoza's Approach is Extravagant:

1. Though this work is quite foreboding, Spinoza's literary structure and argument is extravagant since it is based upon a geometric order, one that I personally find aesthetically harmonious, complex, and intense. In fact, the subtitle of Ethics states, "Demonstrated in Geometric Order."¹⁸ Nadler unpacks Spinoza's mathematical literary style:

Like Euclid in the thirteen books of his *Elements*, Spinoza begins each part of the Ethics with a set of definitions and axioms. These are followed by a series of propositions and their respective demonstrations. The demonstrations of each proposition relies only on the definitions, axioms, and already demonstrated propositions that precede it. Thus, the first proposition of Part One is supposed to follow only from two of the definitions of Part One, while proposition five is demonstrates through definition, three, axiom six, and propositions one and four.¹⁹

2. Why use a mathematical format? Did Spinoza merely mean to do this in order to appear audacious or purposely choose to mystify his readers? Or did he choose this format of deduction from self-evident principles in order to harmonize his understanding of reality and morality with his explanation? Perhaps a better question to address is whether there is some meaningful relationship between what he was attempting to communicate and how he communicated it?
3. According to Nadler, Harry Wolfson and H. H. Joachim see no logical connection between his argument and format; it was nothing more than a pedagogical decision.²⁰ Even Edwin Curley considers it nothing more than a teaching device. He writes:

The truth, I suggest, is that Spinoza's choice of the axiomatic method represents nothing more, and nothing less, than an awesome commitment to intellectual honesty and clarity. Spinoza wishes to use no important term without explaining the sense in which it is to

¹⁷ William Jarrett, *Spinoza: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 36-7.

¹⁸ *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:408.

¹⁹ Nadler, *Spinoza's Ethic*, 43-44.

²⁰ Ibid., 40 cf. Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1934,1:55; H. H. Joachim, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 12.

be understood, to make no crucial assumption without identifying it as a proposition taken to require no argument, to draw no conclusion without being very explicit about why that conclusion is thought to follow from his assumptions.²¹

4. Curley justifies his argument by claiming that many of Spinoza's contemporaries used terms in a similar way.²²
5. In contrast, both M. Gueroult and S. Nadler claim there is a necessary relationship between what he wrote and the way he wrote it. Nadler's textual support is P17:

But I think I have shown clearly enough that from God's supreme power, or infinite nature, infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, i.e., all things, have necessarily flowed, or always follows, by the same necessity and in the same way as from the nature of a triangle it follows, from eternity and to eternity, that its three angles are equal to right angles. So God's omnipotence has been actual from eternity and will remain in the same actuality to eternity. And in this way, at least in my opinion, God's omnipotence is maintained more perfectly [*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 426].

6. Since Spinoza contends for (a) no contingency in Nature, (b) necessitarianism, that is, everything is necessitated by causes to be such as it is (i.e., things could not have been produced in no other way, and in no other order), (c) causal determinism which governs all things in Nature, from Nature's eternal and infinite principles, (d) and that all is part of Nature – with an absolute, geometrical necessity, Nadler writes:

If he wants to exhibit the strictly mathematical necessity that (he claims) governs reality and show that all things 'flow' from God, he must employ a geometrically formatted series of demonstrations that reveal the logically necessary connections that unite (in the proper order) propositions about those things with propositions about god. If things in Nature really do follow from God just as the properties of a geometric figure follow from the nature of that figure, then the geometric method applied to metaphysics, physics, and human nature would seem to be uniquely qualified for Spinoza's purposes (Nadler, *Spinoza's Ethics*, 42).

7. I concur with Nadler because of the following statement by Spinoza in his preface to Part Three of *Ethics*:

²¹*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 402.

²² Ibid., 402-3. His textual support of others using a similar approach is a reference to Mark T. Mark, 'Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata: Spinoza's Use of the Axiomatic Method,' in *Review of Metaphysics* 29 (1975), 277-80.

Therefore, I shall treat the nature and power of the Affects, and the power of the Mind over them, by the same Method by which, in the preceding parts, I treated God and the Mind, and I shall consider human actions and appetites Justas if it were a Question of lines, planes, and bodies (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:492).

C. Spinoza's contribution is unique:

Spinoza's metaphysics is unique, in part, because he proposes that a single substance encompasses the universe and asserts that God is the only substance. In one broad stroke he does the following:

- 1. He eliminates the Aristotelian notion that there are many different visible, tangible substances, each specified by a particular form (e.g., frilled dragon lizard).**

D3: By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e., that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:408).

Substance does not require anything but itself to exist. Substance is ontologically independent.

D4: By Attribute I understand what the intellect perceived of a substance, as constituting its essence (Ibid., 408).

There is no substantive distinction between attribute and essence. However, when he uses the word "intellect" does he mean just thought?²³ Is he distinguishing appearance from reality?²⁴

D5: By Mode I understand the affections of a substance, *or* that which is in another through which it is also conceived (Ibid., 409).

Modes are dependent for they are conceived by reference to a substance and exist in another. A mode classifies an instance of a property and is a dependent entity, something that depends for its existence on another thing.²⁵

²³ Jonathan Bennett raises two good questions when it comes to Spinoza's definition of attributes:

If Spinoza does not think that attributes are essences, what does he think about them, and why does he explain the term 'attribute' in terms of something that is not true of attributes through not is perceived as being true of them? If on the other hand Spinoza holds that an attribute is an essence of any substance that has it, why does not he say so outright, instead of saying only that is 'perceived as' an essence? [*Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Don Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 85-6].

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 68.

Regarding both attributes and modes, consider the following by Anthony Kenny:

Spinoza, like Descartes, links the notion of substance with the notions of attribute and of mode. An attribute is a property conceived to be essential to a substance; a mode is a property only conceivable by reference to a substance. Armed with these definitions, Spinoza proves that there can be at most one substance of a given kind. If there are two or more distinct substances, they must be distinguished from each other either by their attributes or by their modes. They cannot be distinguished by their modes, because substance is prior to mode and therefore any distinction between modes must follow, and cannot create, a distinction between substances. They must therefore be distinguished by their attributes, which they could not be if there were two substances having an attribute in common. Moreover, no substance can cause any other substance, because an effect must have something in common with its cause, and we have just shown that two substances would have to be totally different in kind. (Kenny, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy*, 190-1).²⁶

D6: By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an infinite essence (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:409).

God, who is absolutely infinite, possesses all attributes.²⁷

P7: *It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist.*

Dem.: A Substance cannot be produced by anything else; therefore it will be the cause of itself, i.e., its essence necessarily involves existence, or it pertains to its nature to exist (Ibid., 412).

Existence is necessarily a part of the nature of substance.
No substance can cause any other substance because substance necessarily exists already.

P8: *Every substance is necessarily infinite.*

Dem.: A substance of one attribute does not exist unless it is unique, and it pertains to its nature to exist. Of its nature, therefore, it will exist either as finite or as infinite. But not as finite. For then it would have to be limited by

²⁶ In contrast to Kenny, Jonathan Bennett disagrees. He states:

But he [Wolfson] took Spinoza to hold that attributes are not really distinct from one another though they are perceived by intellect as being so. That is altogether indefensible: It ignores the wording of the definition of 'attribute,' which says nothing about distinctness. I interpret Spinoza as holding that the attributes are real, and really distinct, but that they are not really basic, are not really 'essences' in Descartes's sense. That fits the wording of the definition ('perceives as... its essence'), and harmonizes with my treatment of 2P7S [Ibid., 87].

²⁷ Only two attributes are known to our human minds: thought and extension.

something else of the same nature, which would also have to exist necessarily, and so there would be two substances of the same attribute, which is absurd. Therefore, it exists as infinite, q.e.d. (Ibid).

For that reason it is to be inferred absolutely that whatever is of such a nature that there can be many individuals [of that nature] must, to exist, have an external cause to exist. Now since it pertains to the nature of a substance to exist... Its definition must involve necessary existence, and consequently its existence must be inferred from its definition alone. But from its definition...the existence of a number of substances cannot follow. Therefore it follows necessarily from this, that there exists only one of the same nature, as was proposed (Ibid., 416).

Thus, any substance is necessarily infinite.
There exists only one of the same nature.

P11: *God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists* (Ibid., 417).

But this reason, or cause, must either be contained in the nature of the thing, or be outside it. E.g., the very nature of a square circle indicates the reason why it does not exist, viz. because it involves a contradiction. On the other hand, the reason why a substance exists also follows from its nature alone, because it involves existence. But the reason why a circle or triangle exists, or why it does not exist, does not follow from the nature of these things, but from the order of the whole of corporeal Nature. For from this [order] it must follow either that the triangle necessarily exists now or that it is impossible for it to exist now.

God is the one substance that exists.

2. **He rejects the Judeo-Christian theistic belief of an infinite-personal God that is both beyond and in the universe (Augustine; Aquinas; Pascal); God is not transcendent, rather God is the only substance of the universe.** For Spinoza, there is no distinction between God and nature. The 15 propositions reveal his view of God, which introduces another major interpretative debate: God or Nature. We will condense his list from 15 to 4 major propositions that reveal his view of God as Nature.

P5: *One substance cannot be produced by another substance* (Ibid., 411).²⁸

In nature there cannot be two substances of the same attribute which have something in common with each other (Ibid).

²⁸ Curley believes that P5 is the “first truly radical theorem Spinoza derives from his first principles” because he is arguing that there cannot be many, but only one substance or same nature [*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 411]. In other words, no two substances can have the same attribute.

P11: *God is a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists* (Ibid., 417).

Kenny points out that his proof of proposition 11 is *reductio ad absurdum*:²⁹

Dem.: If you deny this, conceive, if you can, that God does not exist. Therefore (by A7) his essence does not involve existence. But this (by P7) is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists, q.e.d (Ibid., 417).

P14: *Except God, no substance can be or be conceived* (Ibid., 420).

P15: *Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can or be conceived without God* (Ibid.).

- a. The upshot is since God is the only substance of the universe consisting of infinite attributes [ontological argument] which expresses eternal, and infinite essence, one who necessarily exists, then there is no other substance.
- b. Consider a statement about God from an earlier work, *God, Man, and His Well-Being*. Spinoza writes:

We have already said before that one substance cannot produce another, and that God is a being of which all attributes are predicated. From this it clearly follows that all other things cannot in any way exist or be understood without or outside him. So we have every reason to say that God is the cause of all things (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:80).

He goes on to say:

1. We say that God is an emanative [comes out?] or productive cause of his actions, and in respect to the action's occurring, an active or efficient cause. We treat this as one thing, because they involve each other.
2. He is an immanent [existing in and extending into all parts of the created universe] and not a transitive [same relation between terms, e.g., "is equal to"] cause, since he does everything in himself, and not outside himself (because outside him there is nothing) (Ibid).

But before we pursue our third interpretative question, perhaps it might be helpful to frame Spinoza's argument for substance monism this way:³⁰

²⁹ Kenny, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy*, 310.

³⁰ *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 64.

1. There is a substance that has every attribute.
2. There cannot be two substances that have an attribute in common.
3. There cannot be a substance that has no attribute.

Therefore

4. There cannot be substances.

- a. It infers God's existence ontologically by definition of a substance.
- b. No substance can depend on anything else for its existence; in other words, any substance must depend on itself for its existence.
- c. Rather than causal way, he takes a logical approach saying that existence of any substance is explained by the substance's nature. In other words, essence of a substance involves existence.
- d. Therefore, God or substance necessarily exists.

3. **What does Spinoza mean when he claims, "Whatever is, is in God?"**
Consider this next debate: Inherence vs. Causal interpretation:

- a. Inherence interpretation: Things are in God in the sense of being properties or states or qualities of God. In other words, things and their properties are themselves nothing but properties of God and thus, predicable of God.
 1. Example 1: As motion is a state of the moving body, so the moving body itself is a property or state of God (infinite attribute, extension).
 2. Example 2: Dr. D's thought is a property or state of his mind, so his mind is a property or state in God (in another of God's infinite attributes, Thought).

Therefore, moving body and Dr. D's mind are existing or expressing itself in one way (mode) or another).

4. Textual support:

P25c: Particular things are nothing but affections of God's attributes, or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:431).

5. Bayle rejected Spinoza:³¹
 - a. Logical problem: God would have incompatibly properties (e.g., happy person and sad person would equally be states of God; God would be both happy and sad).
 - b. Theological problem: God is subject to change, division, and motion, since the things that are modes of God are divisible and are constantly changing and moving (cf. James 1:17).
 - c. Incompatible truth claims: Spinoza contends that God is immutable and not subject to change (P20c2)
 - d. Most problematic: God is both the agent and victim of all the crimes and miseries of man.

b. Causal Interpretation:

1. Though Spinoza refers to particular things as 'affections of God's attributes (e.g., P25c), the relationship between God (substance) and things (modes) are described in causal terms: God (substance) is the infinite, eternal, necessarily existing (uncaused) cause of all things.
 - a. God's attributes can be seen as the universal causal principles of everything that falls under them-which is absolutely everything.
 - b. Attribute of Extension is the nature of extension and includes all the laws governing all material things (e.g., truths of geometry since they are extended objects);
 - c. Attribute of Thought is the nature of thought and involves laws (which is order) superintending all thinking things (e.g., laws of logic).

³¹ Curley defends Spinoza by stating:

Spinoza's modes are, *prima facie*, of the wrong logical type to be related to substance in the same way Descartes's modes are related to substance, for they are particular things, not qualities. And it is difficult to know what it would mean to say that particular things inhere in substance... What it would mean to say that one thing is predicated of another is a mystery that needs solving [Nadler, *Spinoza*, 76].

Nadler writes:

“Nature is governed by a necessary order as the active ground of all things, and to speak of God or substance just is, on this second interpretation, to refer to that universal causal framework” (*Spinoza*, 77).

2. Textual Support:

a. P15S: “All things, I say, are in God, and all things that happen, happen only through the laws of God’s infinite nature and follow (as I will show from) from the necessity of his essence” (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:424).

b. In a letter to Jacob Ostends Spinoza implies causality:

...it is the same, or not very different, to assert that all things emanate necessarily from God’s nature and that the universe is God (Nadler, *Spinoza*, 77-8; cf. Letter 43).

c. Nadler believes that no matter which interpretation is embraced, one must preserve the idea that Spinoza believed that there was some “special causal relationship that exists between God and things” because of the textual evidence (Nadler, *Spinoza*, 78). However, he acknowledges that what divides the interpretations is what to do with inherence. The causal interpreters say “no” to this question. But this presents a problem because P18 clearly affirms immanence:

P18: “God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things” (*The Collected Work of Spinoza*, 1:428).³²

³² What is the difference between an immanent cause and transitive cause:

- a. An immanent cause is a cause whose effects belong to or are part of itself (e.g, a mind is the cause of its own ideas) [Nadler, *Spinoza*, 79].
- b. A transitive cause brings about effects that are ontologically distinct from itself (e.g., the baseball is the cause of the broken window and the sun is the cause of the melted ice).

So the difference is that immanent cause is one whose effects belongs to or are part of itself whereas a transitive cause is one whose effects are ontologically distinct from itself [Ibid].

In personal correspondence with Dr. Don Garrett on 20 February 2009, I asked him what the difference is between an immanent cause and transitive cause. He thoughtfully responded:

You are right that this is a scholastic distinction. An immanent cause produces an effect that is in (“inheres in”) the cause itself. A common example was someone causing himself to blush. A transitive (or transeunt) cause produces an effect that is external to the cause (say, a bruise on someone else’s arm). So, Spinoza is saying that God is the cause of all things in such a way that those things are in God (in the sense of definition 3 of Part 1), not in such a way that they are outside of God.

- d. Possible solution: Logical immanence: God is the cause of all things-that everything must ultimately be conceived through God. Knowing the Spinoza emphasizes the logical concept between the concept of the effect and the concept of the cause through which it is conceived, it follows that the concept of the effect is logically contained and follows from the concept of the cause (Nadler, *Spinoza*, 80).

3. He discards the notion that God as the transient [short in duration] cause of all things.³³ For Spinoza, God is His own cause and is immanent (“to remain within”), that is, present and existing in all parts of the universe, not the ultimate Creator of all things.

Related, rather than thinking about ourselves and God in terms of cause and effect, Spinoza contends that we need to see ourselves and each other in terms of part and whole. Like Kenny states, “If we follow Spinoza’s hint we will see that he is inviting us to see nature as a single organic whole, of which each of us is a particle and an instrument.”³⁴ Thus, one implication is that the human mind and body is one identity, not two substances.

In personal correspondence with the author of *Spinoza: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Charles Jarrett offered his explanation:

The basic idea of a transitive cause is that the effect is produced by one "thing" or "subject" in some **other thing**; an immanent cause is the production of an effect or change by one thing or subject in itself (i.e. in that **same thing** or subject).

A simplistic example: if I tap my own shoulder, I produce a change in my self (I feel the tap). If I tap your shoulder, I produce a change in you (you feel it). I am an immanent cause in the first case, a transitive cause in the second.

S. holds that all of God's effects are in God (not in some other substance) and so God is the immanent cause of them (not the transitive cause). (I p18, d)

³³ Transient is that which lasts for only a short time and quickly coming to an end, disappearing, or changing (e.g., transient sunlight on an otherwise cloudy day).

³⁴ Kenny, *Modern Philosophy*, 193. Earlier Kenny noted:

All Spinoza’s contemporaries argued that finite substances were dependent on God as their first cause. What Spinoza does is to represent the relationship between God and finite substances not in terms of physical cause and effect, but in the logical terms of subject and predicate. Any apparent statement about a substance is in reality a predication [comment on the subject] about God: the proper way of referring to creatures like us to use not a noun but an adjective. Indeed the word ‘creature’ is not really in place: it suggests a distinction between a creator and what he creates, whereas for Spinoza there is no distinction between God and nature.

Kenny goes on to say:

The key element in Spinoza’s monism is not the doctrine that there is only one substance; it is the collapsing of any distinction between entailment [i.e., have something as consequence; the truth of one (A) requires the truth of the other (B)] and causation. There is just a single relation of consequence: it is this which unites an effect with its causes and a conclusion with its premises. Smoke follows from fire in just the same way as a theorem follows from axioms. The laws of nature, therefore, are as necessary and exceptionless as the laws of logic. From any given cause there necessarily follows from its effect, and everything is ruled by absolute logical necessity. For most other thinkers causes had to be distinct from their effects. Not so for Spinoza, given his identification of causation with entailment. Just as a proposition entails itself, God is His own cause and He is the immanent, not the transient, cause of all things [Ibid., 191-3].

Kenny states it this way:

It is more profitable to follow another line of thought which Spinoza offers in order to explain the structure of the universe. Our bodies, he remarks, are composed of many different parts, varying in kind from each other; the parts may change and vary, and yet individual retains its nature and identity. ‘We may easily proceed thus to infinity, and conceive the whole of nature as one individual, whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change in the individual as a whole (Eth, 43). This invites us to see the relationship between finite being and God not in terms of effect and cause but in terms of part and whole.’³⁵

We may easily proceed thus to infinity, and conceive the whole of nature as one individual, whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change in the individual as a whole (Ibid, 43).

4. Rather than arguing that God is the only agent of the universe, Spinoza goes even further by stating that God [or Nature, namely, the order of the natural universe] is the only substance.

P11: *God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists (The Collected Works of Spinoza, 1:417).*

5. The only genuine operating cause of the universe as a whole is God. Since God is both the only cause and substance in the universe, his existence and operation are all matters of logical necessity. Looking at it differently, since we are part of the whole, there is no free will (it is illusory); everything is as is by predetermined necessity.

All things follow from the eternal decree of God by the same necessity, as it follows from the essence of a triangle, that the three angles are equal to two right angles’ (Curley, trans. *Ethics*, 14).

“In nature there is nothing contingent; everything is determined, by the necessity of the divine nature, to exist and operate in a certain manner” (Ibid., 20).

Men are mistaken in thinking themselves free; their opinion is made up of consciousness of their own actions, and ignorance of the causes by which they are determined. Their idea of freedom is simply their lack of knowledge of any cause for their actions (*Ethics*, 53).

³⁵ Ibid., 193.

6. **Therefore we may conclude this entire section by considering the third debate whether Spinoza affirmed some version of pantheism, atheism, or pantheism. Once again the debate centers on P15: “Whatever is, is in God”:**

According to Steven Nadler, the critical question is “whether God is to be identified with the whole of Nature, including the finite modes, or only with substance and attributes, but not modes.

- a. On one end of the debate Edwin Curley and Alan Donagan contends that Spinoza is not a pantheist because he understands Spinoza to mean that God is identified only with substance and its attributes, but not with any modes. Nadler quotes Curley as stating, “‘Substance’ denotes, not the whole of nature, but only its active part, its primary elements” (Ibid., 68).³⁶
- b. On the other hand, Jonathan Bennett and Yirmiyahu Yovel assert that Spinoza is a pantheist because he identifies God with the whole of nature (Ibid).

1. Nadler’s response to this debate is worth noting. He writes:

For even if Spinoza does indeed identify God with the whole of Nature, it does not follow that Spinoza is a pantheist. The real issue is not what is the proper reading of the metaphysics of Spinoza’s conception of God and its relationship to finite modes. On either interpretation, Spinoza’s move is a naturalistic and reductive one. God is identical either with all of Nature or with only a part of Nature; for this reason, Spinoza shares something with the reductive pantheist. But—and this is the important point—even the atheist can, without too much difficulty, admit that God is nothing but Nature. Reductive pantheism and atheism maintain extensionally equivalent ontologies (Ibid).³⁷

Nadler goes on to say:

Rather, the question of Spinoza’s pantheism is really going to be answered on the psychological side of things, with regard to the proper attitude to take toward *Deus sive Natura*. . . it is a mistake to call Spinoza a ‘pantheist’ in so far as pantheism is still a kind of religious theism. What really distinguishes the pantheist from the atheist is

³⁶ *Interpreting Spinoza*, 53-70.

³⁷ Nadler distinguishes two types of pantheism: (1) Reductive pantheism which is the view that God is the world and all its natural contents, and nothing distinct from them. In other words, God is identical with everything that exists; (2) immanent pantheism: God is distinct from the world with its natural contents but is ‘contained’ or ‘immanent’ within them, like a water is contained in a saturated sponge.; nature contains within itself, in addition to its additional elements, an immanent supernatural and divine element [*Interpreting Spinoza*; 67].

that the pantheist does not reject as inappropriate the religious psychological attitudes denounced by theism. Rather, the pantheist simply asserts that God-conceived as a being before which one is to adopt an attitude of worshipful awe-is or is in Nature. And nothing could be further from the spirit of Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza does not believe that worshipful awe or reverence is an appropriate attitude to take before God or Nature (Ibid., 68-9).

- c. Anticipating counter-evidence, Nadler admits that Spinoza uses language that "seems deeply religious" (Ibid).

5P15: *He who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly loves God, and does so the more, the more he understands himself and his affects.*

5P32: Whatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge we take pleasure, and our pleasure is accompanied by the idea of God as a cause (Ibid., 611).

Cor.: From this third kind of knowledge, there necessarily arises an intellectual Love of God. For from this kind of knowledge there arises (by P32) Joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e. (by Def. ADD. VI), Love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as present (by P29), but insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call intellectual love of God (Ibid).

5P33: *The intellectual Love of God, which arises from the third kind of knowledge, is eternal* (Ibid).

Schol.: "If Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself (Ibid).

But Nadler believes they are not to be given a religious interpretation.³⁸

- d. Genevieve Lloyd and M. Gueroult seem to both suggest that Spinoza was a panentheist, not a pantheist. She writes:

The world is not God; but it is, in a strong sense, 'in' God. The challenge for modern readers is to grasp the closeness of this relation, which allows the world to be 'in' God, without collapsing either world into God or God into world (Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, 40).

Later she states:

³⁸ Ibid., 69.

Our world is not God. But, within that world, we are ‘in’ him in the strongest possible sense. Without that close connection between God and the world we inhabit, Spinoza, as we shall see, could not go on to draw ethical consequences of his metaphysics of substance and modes (Ibid).

- e. I personally find the debate to be inconclusive. Notwithstanding, I do find it curious that Spinoza borrows a number of attributes about God from Judeo-Christianity.³⁹

C. Lastly, Spinoza is revolutionary:

In this concluding section we will briefly examine three statements why Spinoza’s work is revolutionary.

1. **Spinoza’s system is revolutionary because he collapses scholastic distinctions that explain reality and proposes substance monism. This is reflected in propositions P1-P5 (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 1:410-11).**

P1: A substance is prior in nature to its affections.

P2 Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common with another.

P3: If things have nothing in common with one another, one of them cannot be the cause of the other.

P4 Two or more distinct things are distinguished from one another, either by a difference in the attributes of the substances or by a difference in their affections.

P5: In nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute

In sum, there cannot be two substances of the same kind.

2. **Spinoza’s system is revolutionary because God is identical with Nature. Spinoza states:**

³⁹ In his article in the *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, “Spinoza’s Metaphysics, Jonathan Bennett makes an interesting statement why he borrows attributes about God from Judeo-Christianity:

There is... no respectable reason for Spinoza to say that Nature has (in our sense) infinitely many attributes. (iv). He gets ‘infinite attributes’ into the story through his statement that God has infinite attributes, and we should ask why. Spinoza’s use of the term ‘God’ as one name for the natural world is evidently based on his believing that descriptions of God in the Judeo-Christian tradition come closer to fitting the natural world than to fitting anything else: infinite, not acted on from the outside, not criticizable by any valid standard, omniscient (in the sense of containing all the knowledge there could possibly be), omnipotent (in the sense of being able to do anything that is possible for anything to do). If in that spirit the attribution to God of ‘infinite attributes’ is to be justified, it must be through the tradition that God is the *ens realissimum*, the most real being, the being that exists in every basic way in which it is possible to exist. That leads us to God’s having all (possible) attributes, and does not entail anything about how many of them there are [*Cambridge Companion*, 65-6].

P14: “Except God, no substance can be or be conceived” (Ibid., 420).

P15: “Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God” (Ibid).

Therefore, instead of physical cause and affect, Spinoza sees the relationship between God and nature in terms of a subject and predicate. In other words, rather than cause and effect, nature is a comment about God; there is no distinction between God and Nature. Nadler claims:

...he sees the Ethics as laying out the truth. The book is about reality: its nature, its structure, its operations, and the implications of these for human happiness. In Part One, he is not just saying: “If you will assume for the sake of argument that this is what ‘substance,’ ‘God’ and ‘attribute’ are, then it will follow that God is the only substance and is identical with Nature.’ Rather, he is saying: “This is how ‘substance, ‘God’ and ‘attribute’ should be understood, if defined truly; and therefore it is the case that God is the only substance and is identical with Nature’ [*Spinoza’s Ethics*, 47].

3. **Having rejected up scholastic distinctions like actuality and potentiality, physical cause and effect, employing terms like God is immanent but not transcendent, and advocating substance monism, that is, God is the only substance, to my knowledge, Spinoza went beyond any other philosopher of his modern day. In fact, Charles Jarrett contends that what is most radical in Part One of *Ethics* is Spinoza’s view of God:⁴⁰**

2. God has no emotions, goals, or plans;
3. God does not have free will;
4. God is physical (as well as mental);
5. God is not separate from ‘the world’;
6. God has no inherent moral properties (e.g., justice or benevolence); and
7. God is adequately known by us (in his essence).

⁴⁰ Jarrett, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, 37.