

# Spinoza's theory of attributes

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## Abstract

Any account of Spinoza's understanding of attribute must be able to satisfy his definition criterion; that is, it must coherently accommodate the elements involved in his definition of attribute as “what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence” (E1d4). But this is not enough. There are several available readings that satisfy this criterion and are mutually incompatible. To know what Spinoza means we must supplement his definition criterion with a criterion aiming at consistency with other principles in his system. With the definition and consistency criteria in the backdrop, the aim of this paper is to offer a critical overview of the current state of the debate on Spinoza's theory of attributes.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Attributes play a central role in Spinoza's metaphysical system. For him, God or nature, the only substance, *consists* of infinitely many essential attributes (E1d6), including Thought (E2p1)—the mental realm—and Extension (E2p2)—the physical realm. Since a substance is defined as what is in itself and is conceived through itself (E1d3), and because anything that is not in itself must be in another (E1a1), it follows that everything else—from the entire physical universe to individual minds—is in the only substance.<sup>1</sup>

But exactly what is an attribute? In the *Ethics*, his main metaphysical work, Spinoza offers a definition aiming to answer this question: an attribute is “what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence” (E1d4). Note that this definition includes two relations:

(i) A *constitution* relation: an attribute constitutes the essence of a substance

and

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(ii) A *perception* relation: the constitution of the essence of a substance by an attribute is perceived by the intellect.

Any interpretation of Spinoza's theory of attributes must be able to coherently accommodate both the constitution and the perception relations in E1d4; that is, it must satisfy his *definition criterion*. But what does it mean for an attribute to constitute the essence of a substance? What is the nature of the intellect's perception of this constitution relation? What is the connection between these relations? Spinoza does not say.<sup>2</sup> As Michael Della Rocca (2002, p. 12) puts it, all we know is that an attribute *somehow* constitutes the essence of a substance. And, we may add, that the intellect *somehow* perceives this.

The ambiguities in Spinoza's definition of attributes have opened the door for several interpretations that purport to respect the definition criterion. However, given that these readings are often mutually incompatible, some other standard is required to establish which reading is preferable. To put it in the words of Noa Shein (2023, section 1.2), it must be granted that "it is not clear from the definition [of attribute] alone what exactly Spinoza means." To know what Spinoza means we must supplement Spinoza's definition criterion with a *compatibility criterion*: any account of Spinoza's theory of attributes must aim at compatibility with other principles in his system. For example, between any two competing interpretations that accommodate the constitution and the perception relations in E1d4, the one which shows more compatibility with Spinoza's ontological commitments should be preferred. With the definition and compatibility criteria as a backdrop, this paper offers a critical overview of the current state of the debate on Spinoza's theory of attributes.

## 2 | IDEALISM

Idealist interpretations posit that the distinction between attributes depends solely on the intellect.<sup>3</sup> On this reading Thought and Extension are distinct attributes, but there is nothing outside the intellect grounding their distinction. This conclusion is motivated by the apparent incompatibility between two views commonly ascribed to Spinoza:

- (1) *Attribute plurality*. There is more than one attribute.
- (2) *God's simplicity*. To be simple is one of God's necessary properties.

That Spinoza accepts (1) is evident from his view that both Thought and Extension are attributes. Although Spinoza does not explicitly assert (2), it can be argued that he follows a long tradition under which simplicity is considered one of God's necessary properties.<sup>4</sup> Idealists believe that, to render (1) and (2) compatible, it is necessary to accept that (1) has no ground outside the intellect. Idealists disagree, however, in their understanding of the precise nature of attributes.

### 2.1 | Subjective Idealism

Subjectivist idealism posits that attributes are illusions or inventions of a perceiving subject. This interpretation, closely associated with Harry Wolfson (see Della Rocca, 2019, p. 60; Lin, 2019, p. 81; Newlands, 2018, p. 15; Shein, 2009, p. 506), is supported by two key historical observations.<sup>5</sup> First, some influential Medieval Jewish thinkers, such as Maimonides, rendered divine attributes as illusions. Second, the view that Spinoza "consciously and advisedly aligned himself with that group of Jewish philosophers who held a subjective theory of attributes" (Wolfson, 1934, pp. 147-149).

Subjectivism satisfies the definition criterion. The perception relation reflects the fact that “to be perceived by the mind means to be *invented* by the mind” (Wolfson, 1934, p. 146), and hence that to be an attribute necessarily involves a relation to a perceiving subject. In turn, the constitution relation is understood as ideal rather than real, indicating that the mind assigns or predicates its perception of the essence of a substance.

*Subjectivism* comes, however, with two costs in terms of compatibility. First, since in God there is an idea of every thing, God perceives the constituting relation holding between Thought, Extension, or any other attribute and its essence. However, Spinoza argues that God's perceptions are always true. Therefore, anything perceived by God must exist outside of God's intellect as well. Some scholars suggest that Wolfson's use of “mind” instead of “intellect” in the previous passage highlights a distinction between finite and infinite intellect. They argue that Wolfson refers to finite minds like ours, not God's infinite intellect (see Della Rocca, 2019, p. 71; Lin, 2019, p. 81; Shein, 2023, section 1.8.1). This distinction, however, fails to address Spinoza's assertion that anything perceived by any intellect, including a finite one, must have a corresponding reality outside (E1p30d). Secondly, Noa Shein (2023, section 1.8.1; 2009, p. 510) convincingly demonstrates that Spinoza views God as omniscient, capable of knowing all things. However, Spinoza also maintains that any intellect, including God's, can only acquire knowledge through attributes. If attributes are merely inventions of finite minds, as subjectivist idealism suggests, then even God would be incapable of possessing knowledge. This difficulty, following Shein's terminology, can be termed the “illusory knowledge challenge.”

## 2.2 | Conceptualist Idealism

Conceptualist idealists, like subjectivist idealists, argue that the distinction between attributes is not grounded in anything external to the intellect. However, instead of viewing attributes as mere fictions, they understand them as concept under which the whole of reality can be understood. Thus, Della Rocca (2012, p. 14) argues that “to be extended is to be understood in terms of extension... [and] to be thinking is to be understood in terms of thought,” and Newlands (2018, p. 47) posits that “the thinking and the extended substance can be identical precisely because all differences among the attributes of a thing are like differences in the ways in which that thing is conceived.”

Conceptualism can be derived from Spinoza's commitment to the Principle of Sufficient Reason: “for each thing there must be assigned a cause, or reason, as much for its existence as for its nonexistence” (E1p11dem).<sup>6</sup> It has been argued that from the PSR it follows that existence and intelligibility are identical: “to be is to be intelligible” (Della Rocca, 2012, p. 10). This argument involves two key steps. The first is to show that the PSR necessitates a coextensiveness between existence and intelligibility— $x$  exists if and only if it is intelligible that  $x$  exists. Note that the left-to-right direction of this biconditional simply restates the PSR. To see why the right-to-left direction holds, consider that from the PSR it follows that in a scenario where it is both intelligible that  $x$  exists and intelligible that  $x$  does not exist, both the existence or non-existence of  $x$  would be brute facts, hence violating the PSR. Thus, if it is intelligible that  $x$  exists, it cannot be intelligible that  $x$  does not exist. But by the left-to-right direction of the PSR, if  $x$  does not exist it must be intelligible that  $x$  does not exist. Consequently, if it is intelligible that  $x$  exists,  $x$  must exist. The second key step in the argument is to show that the coextensiveness of intelligibility and existence implies their numerical identity. This result can be grounded, once again, on the PSR. To put it in the words of Della Rocca (2012, p. 10): “If existence and intelligibility were not identical despite being coextensive, then what is it in virtue of which they would be non-identical? But if existence and intelligibility are coextensive, nothing can ground their non-identity, as far as I can see.”

With the PSR and the Existence-Intelligibility identity principle in mind, we can see how the conceptualism satisfies the definition criterion. To constitute the essence of a substance is to be an explanation or concept for that substance. But the fact that  $x$  is an explanation of  $y$  presupposes that there is something that can understand  $y$  through  $x$ . And since, as we have seen, the understanding of  $y$  is numerically identical to the existence of  $y$ . Conceptualism has also the virtue of not rendering attributes fictions, and hence avoids the illusory challenge faced

by subjectivism. However, it also comes with a cost in terms of compatibility. One worry we might have is that since God consists of attributes and attributes are concepts, God consists of concepts. But a concept is an idea, and thus a mode of Thought that, by E1d5, must be in another and conceived through another. But, as we have seen, God is substance and hence in itself and conceived through itself. Conceptualists might counter by arguing that being a concept doesn't necessitate being an idea (see Newlands, 2018, p. 233). Yet, this separation between the conceptual and mental is debatable. Spinoza defines 'idea' as a concept of the mind (E2d3). But the definition of a thing expresses its essence (E2p8s) and a thing and its essence are coextensive (E2d2).

### 3 | OBJECTIVISM

Objectivist interpretations hold that attributes are numerically distinct; that is, distinct, independently of the intellect. Objectivism asserts that.

(1) *Attribute plurality*. There is more than one attribute.

introduces, in fact, actual multiplicity into the only substance. Consequently, objectivists also agree in rejecting.

(2) *God's simplicity*. To be simple is one of God's necessary properties.

As we have seen, Spinoza does not explicitly assert (2), and objectivists argue that his silence reflects his rejection of it. However, objectivists disagree in the metaphysical level in which they locate the multiplicity of attributes. In turn, different objectivist accounts face different challenges when it comes to the compatibility criterion.<sup>7</sup>

#### 3.1 | Substantialist Objectivism

*Substantialist objectivism* locates multiplicity at the level of substance. On this reading, if  $x$  and  $y$  are two different attributes,  $x$  and  $y$  are two different substances. This objectivist interpretation, commonly attributed to Martial Gueroult (see Lin, 2006, p. 148; Loeb, 1981, pp. 163-5; Woolhouse, 1993, p. 39), follows from the view that Spinoza accepts both<sup>8</sup>:

(3) *One-one constitution*: if an attribute  $x$  constitutes an essence  $y$ ,  $x$  and  $y$  are numerically identical.

(4) *Essence monism*: a substance has only one essence.

(3) is grounded in the view that Spinoza understands constitution in the same way as his contemporaries, and that for them constitution implies numerical identity. (4) is supported by a long tradition according to which for each thing, including God, there can only have one essence. Thus, by the objectivist reading of (1), attributes are numerically distinct, and, by (3), each attribute must constitute and be numerically identical a numerically distinct essence. And since, by (4), each substance can only have one essence, each numerically distinct essence must correspond to a distinct substance. Thus, on this reading each Thought and Extension constitutes, and hence is numerically identical to one essence. But since Thought and Extension are numerically distinct, there is one essence constituted by Thought and another essence constituted by Extension. In turn, there is one substance that has Thought as an essence, and another with Extension as its essence.

Substantialism satisfies the definition criterion. As we have seen, the constitution relation is read by the substantialist in terms of (3). The perception relation in E1d4 conveys the fact that, since for Spinoza the essence

of a substance is numerically identical to its existence (E1p20), the intellect is somehow involved in distinguishing each one-attribute essence from its related substance. Substantivalism comes, however, it comes with high costs regarding compatibility. First, the substantivalist needs to account for Spinoza's definition of God as the substance does that consists of infinitely many attributes (E1d6). Gueroult's claim that "God is 'constituted' of substances" (1968, p. 233) is commonly read as an indication that, for him, all the one-attribute substances somehow "construct" the absolutely infinite substance. The problem for the substantivalist is that Spinoza is clear when he holds that the unity of two substances is impossible (KV I.2). Crucially, *substantivalism* contradicts Spinoza's famous commitment to.

(5) *Substance monism*: There is only one substance –God or nature.

The problem for the substantivalists is that (5) is explicitly asserted by Spinoza in several passages (e.g., E1p10s, E1d11, E1d14, E1p30dem, E2p7s).

### 3.2 | Essentialist Objectivism

*Essentialist objectivism* shares with *substantivalism* its rejection of.

(2) *God's simplicity*. To be simple is one of God's necessary properties.

It also agrees in its endorsement of both.

(1) *Attribute plurality*. There is more than one attribute

and.

(3) *One-one constitution*: if an attribute  $x$  constitutes an essence  $y$ ,  $x$  and  $y$  are numerically identical.

However, essentialists depart from substantivalists because they believe that rejecting.

(5) *Substance monism*: There is only one substance

is too high of a cost to pay. Rather, for the essentialist, what must go is.

(4) *Essence monism*: a substance has only one essence.

Therefore, essentialists, interpreting (1) through an objectivist lens, maintain that Thought and Extension are numerically distinct. Following, (3) each must be numerically identical to a distinct essence. However, given (5), these distinct essences must belong to the same substance. Edwin Curley (1988, p. 28) supports this view, concluding that "there can be no absurdity in supposing that a being has more than one attribute, i.e., more than one essence."

Essentialism aligns with the definition criterion. Like substantivalism, it interprets the constitution relation in E1d4 according to (3). It also understands the perception relation as indicating the numerical identity between a substance and its essence(s), with the intellect capable of distinguishing between them. A significant advantage of Essentialism is its consistency with Spinoza's explicit commitment to (5). However, this consistency comes at the expense of rejecting (4). The notion of a single substance possessing multiple essences is not explicitly endorsed by

Spinoza and contradicts a long-standing philosophical tradition asserting that a thing can have only one essence. While this doesn't necessitate rejecting Essentialism outright, it does place the burden of proof on its proponents.

### 3.3 | Constitutive Objectivism

It has recently been suggested that the objectivist must preserve.

(5) *Substance monism*: There is only one substance.

and.

(4) *Essence monism*: a substance has only one essence.

Instead, they can reject.

(3) *One-one constitution*: if an attribute  $x$  constitutes an essence  $y$ ,  $x$  and  $y$  are numerically identical.

In turn, there are two ways to do this: (a) the objectivist can accept that Spinoza's contemporaries understood constitution in terms of (3), but that he departs from them. Or (b) the objectivist can show that in Spinoza understands constitution in the same way as his contemporaries, but they don't accept (3).

Constitutive objectivism defends that objectivist account based on (b). On this reading, the plurality of attributes obtains within one and the same essence (Salgado Borge, 2022a). This interpretation is grounded in the account of constitution developed in *Logic or the Art of Thinking*, the most influential logic textbook of Spinoza's time, written by Cartesian philosophers, and part of his known library. According to these Cartesian logicians, an essence separates a thing from others (Arnauld and Nicole, 1996, I. 7). They hold that each attribute necessary for an essence constitutes an essence, but an essence is numerically identical to the sum of all its attributes because, when an essence has more than one constituent, one attribute alone might not be sufficient for doing so. For example, in the case of a human being defined as a rational and mortal animal, the attribute rational constitutes that essence but, on its own, is not sufficient for separating humans from demons or angels.

Constitutive objectivism satisfies the definition criterion. The constitution relation obtains independently of the intellect and reflects the fact that each attribute is necessary for that essence. Similarly, substantivalism and essentialism, the perception relation can be explained by noting that essence and existence are numerically identical, but separable by the intellect. It can be objected that Descartes clearly endorses the (3), and he is likely to have been the primary influence on Spinoza regarding the nature of substance, attribute, and essence.<sup>9</sup> However, a closer examination reveals that Descartes' account of constitution doesn't necessarily imply this principle. After all, Descartes also thinks that the sum of the attributes of a thing is numerically identical to its essence and that that essence and that existence are two levels of analysis for one and the same thing. It's only that Descartes radically departs from the tradition when he holds that there can only be one attribute per essence (and extensively argues for it).

### 3.4 | Unity Challenges

Objectivist interpretations must explain how numerically distinct attributes can combine into a single, unified being. This has proved to be a difficult task for the objectivist. Some objectivists (e.g., Gueroult, 1968) have resorted to an attribute-neutral or ontologically prior aspect of reality to explain attribute unity. The problem with this strategy is

that God is omniscient and knows everything through attributes. Consequently, an attribute-neutral feature would exist beyond God's knowledge, contradicting his omniscience. Following Shein (2009, p. 511) we can call this the illusory knowledge challenge. Other objectivists account for attribute unity in terms of necessary coexistence (e.g., Curley, 1988). The problem here is that they do not differentiate genuine unity from mere aggregation. If necessary coexistence sufficed for unity, then any necessarily coexisting entities, like two grains of sand, would constitute a real unity, a clearly implausible conclusion. Following Smith (2014, p. 673 n. 37) we can call this the mere aggregate challenge.

## 4 | PERSPECTIVISM

Confronted with the challenges faced by the idealist and the objectivist, most Spinoza scholars today reject idealism and objectivism and adopt instead a perspectivist interpretation. Perspectivists agree with both substantialist and essentialist objectivists in that Spinoza accepts.

(3) *One-one constitution*: if an attribute  $x$  constitutes an essence  $y$ ,  $x$  and  $y$  are numerically identical.

Thus, for perspectivists, Extension constitutes the essence of a substance, and hence Extension is numerically identical to that essence –and the same is true for Thought and any other attribute. Perspectivists also agree with the substantialists in that Spinoza is committed to.

(4) *Essence monism*: a substance has only one essence.

However, they agree with the idealist reading of.

(1) *Attribute plurality*. There is more than one attribute.

For them, the distinction holding between is not actual independently of the intellect. Consequently, by (3) each Thought and Extension constitutes and is numerically identical to an essence, and by (4) that is one and the same essence. And since, as we have seen, for Spinoza a substance is numerically identical to its essence (E1p20), each attribute is also numerically the same substance.

Similarly to substantialist and essentialist objectivists, the perspectivist reads the constitution relation in the definition criterion in terms of (3). Now, although their account of the perception relation is similar to that of the subjectivist in that it indicates a form of mind-dependence, the perspectivist does not believe that this means attributes are merely inventions, as the fictionalist subjectivist does, or that the constitution relation has no basis in something beyond the intellect, as the conceptualist subjectivist does. Rather, for the perspectivist, an attribute is one way in which the whole essence of a substance can present itself to the intellect *upon reflection on reality*. These ways of presentation refer to something outside the intellect –God's essence–, and hence are partly grounded in reality. But they are also partly grounded in the intellect because, in reality, God's essence is one and simple.

By interpreting attributes as ways in which one and the same essence can be presented to the intellect, perspectivism elegantly circumvents the compatibility challenges faced by idealism. Unlike *subjectivism*, it avoids the illusory challenge. And unlike *conceptualism*, it does not need to resort to a controversial distinction between the conceptual and the mental. It also avoids the main compatibility challenges faced by the objectivist. Unlike *substantialism*, it does not involve positing that Spinoza rejects substance monism. And unlike essentialism, it does not posit that God has many essences. Moreover, perspectivism does not need to present, on behalf of Spinoza, an account for the unity of numerically distinct attributes because, in reality, they are numerically identical.

However, the perspectivist needs to explain what we should understand by “way of presentation” and show that Spinoza understands attributes in this way. A point of contention among perspectivists lies in their understanding of these ways of presentation.

## 4.1 | Semantic Perspectivism

Semantic perspectivism holds that attributes are objective concepts—concepts partly grounded in something beyond the intellect—under which the whole essence of a substance can be presented to the intellect. The semantic perspectivist adopts a broadly Fregean reading, contending that the distinction between attributes is one of sense, and not of reference. Under this ground-breaking interpretation, similar to how the Morning and Evening Star are two different semantic presentations of the planet Venus, each attribute represents a distinct way in which the whole essence of God is presented to the intellect (see Schmaltz, 2020, p. 198; Shein, 2009, p. 530).

It can be contended that semantic perspectivism is unsatisfactory, as if a thing  $x$  satisfies descriptions  $F$  and  $G$ , it is because both  $F$  and  $G$  are true of  $x$ . Thus, God satisfies the description 'is extended' because God is indeed extended, and God satisfies the description 'is thinking' because God thinks. It has been suggested that from this it follows that the semantic perspectivist is committed to ontological pluralism – the view that reality has more than one manner of existence. Consequently, God satisfies the descriptions 'is extended' and 'is thinking' because Thought and Extension are two distinct ways in which that substance exists. The problem is that, if this is the case, “we are no closer to answering the question of how such radically dissimilar features can be unified in a single substance” (Lin, 2019, p. 76).

One way in which the semantic perspectivism can respond is by pointing out that it has been demonstrated that ontological pluralism finds precedent in the Cartesian distinction between formal and objective being (Garrett, 2018, p. 274; Hübner, 2019, p. 16). On this account if  $x$  is an idea of  $y$ , then each  $x$  and  $y$  have formal reality (each exists), but  $y$  has also objective reality insofar as it is represented in  $x$ . To illustrate, suppose that I have an idea of the body of David Attenborough (DA). The formal being of DA is that body, whereas the objective being of DA is DA as represented in my idea. Analogously, the semantic perspectivist can argue that Spinoza builds on this distinction to hold that Thought and Extension are different manners of existence of one and the same substance. However, this move comes with two principal costs. First, the Cartesian distinction between formal and objective being holds between things and ideas. But ideas are modes of Thought, not attributes. Thus, ascribing this distinction to Thought and Extension seems to require further argumentation. Second, even if we accept that this is possible, Spinoza believes that God has several unknowable attributes beyond Thought and Extension. Thus, more work needs to be done to show that the distinction between formal and objective being can apply to the relation between all of God's manners of existence.

## 4.2 | Syntactic Perspectivism

According to the syntactic perspectivist, when we understand attributes as one and the same essence presented in different ways, we should read them as syntactic guises; that is, as non-semantic ways, akin to languages, through which that essence can be signified to the intellect. On this reading, for Spinoza “there is a world as-represented-by-the-language-of-extension and there is a world as-represented-by-the-language-of-thought. These are not really two metaphysically distinct worlds but merely artifacts of two ways of thinking about a single world” (Lin, 2019, p. 78).

Syntactic perspectivism avoids ontological pluralism and thus does not require resorting to the Cartesian formal-objective distinction. Instead, Lin suggests that Spinoza is following Francisco Suárez's distinction of reasoning reason, a distinction performed by the intellect without a basis in reality (DM, 7, I.4).<sup>10</sup> For Suárez, this involves an act of mental repetition, as illustrated by the statement “Peter is Peter,” which distinguishes the same



entity, Peter, from itself through the repetition of the term 'Peter' as both subject and predicate. One obvious problem for the syntactic perspectivist is that, since "Thought" and "Extension" are different terms, it can be objected that Spinoza cannot be using Suárez's distinction of reasoning reason to distinguish between them. The syntactic perspectivist can respond by holding that what matters is the semantic value of the terms. However, this line of response already signals a departure from the claim that the reading of attributes as syntactic guises is grounded on Spinoza's use of this Suarezian distinction. More importantly, it has recently been shown that for Suárez a distinction of reasoning reason must involve a comparison between adequate concepts or complete representations of one and the same thing (Salgado Borge, 2022b, p. 210). Thus, for Suárez the distinction of reasoning reason is semantic, and not syntactic.

### 4.3 | Reality Challenges

I conclude by showing that perspectivists need to face two compatibility challenges that have not been sufficiently recognised in the literature.

First, in the *Ethics*, Spinoza posits that "the more reality or being each thing has, the more attributes belong to it" (E1p9). Thus, God possesses more essence than a substance with only one attribute. However, if each attribute is numerically identical to God's essence in reality, how can we reconcile the connection between the number of attributes and the amount of essence? It is tempting to resolve this by making the degree of God's essence dependent on the intellect. This approach would bring the perspectivism closer to subjectivism. Yet, this approach must be rejected because, as previously noted, for Spinoza, the intellect is a mode of Thought, and a substance cannot rely on its modifications.

Second, Spinoza posits that "the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing a number of properties that really do follow necessarily from it (i.e., from the very essence of the thing); and that it infers more properties the more the definition of the thing expresses reality, i.e., the more reality the essence of the defined thing involves" (E1p16d, my emphasis). In this passage, Spinoza contends that some properties follow in reality from the essence of a substance, and these properties are proportional to the degree of essence of that substance. Thus, the more attributes a substance has, the more properties it has in reality. If attributes are not actually distinct, why would a substance with infinitely many attributes have more power than a substance with only one?

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None to disclose.

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For an introduction to Spinoza's metaphysics, see Lin (2006).
- <sup>2</sup> A seminal discussion on the ambiguities in E1d4 can be found in Haserot (1953).
- <sup>3</sup> I follow Della Rocca (2019, p. 60) in using the term "idealism" to refer to this interpretation and the term "subjectivism" to refer to a kind idealism.
- <sup>4</sup> A comprehensive account of historical issues and thinkers on divine simplicity can be found in Vallicella (2023).
- <sup>5</sup> G.W.F.Hegel and Harold Joachim are also commonly regarded as subjectivists (see Della Rocca, 2019, p. 60; Lin, 2019, p. 100).

- <sup>6</sup> For an alternative argument, see Newlands (2018, pp. 44–9).
- <sup>7</sup> Substantivalism and essentialism are widely regarded as paradigmatic objectivist readings (see Lin, 2006; Schmaltz, 2020; Shein, 2009).
- <sup>8</sup> For a recent defence of this view, see A.D. Smith (2014).
- <sup>9</sup> Cartesianism is arguably a principal influence on Spinoza's metaphysics (see Douglas, 2015; Garrett, 2021; Hübner, 2022).
- <sup>10</sup> For accounts of the influence of Suárez in Spinoza, see Melamed (2017) and Schmaltz (2020).

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