

DESCARTES AND SPINOZA ON THE PERFECTION OF GOD: A CONTRAST

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ABSTRACT

After repeatedly reading Descartes's Meditations on First Philosophy, what stills stands out most to this present essayist is Descartes's notion of God's perfection and how the perfection of the Divine includes the existence of the Almighty. Similarly, if we look to Spinoza's Ethics Book I and the beginnings of Book II, we find comparable claims; namely, that the Almighty's essence necessarily involves existence, and that this is a perfection of God alone. First, this article will detail how Descartes establishes God's existence via the argument from perfection, and how this perfection of God reinforces the existence of such a supreme entity. Next, this piece will treat Spinoza's understanding of God as that which must exist, and how this mandatory existence is solely of the perfection of God. Lastly, this paper will show that although Spinoza's understanding of God's perfection in his Ethics Book I and II may appear akin to Descartes, it would be incorrect to fully understand either philosopher's views on God's perfection as being entirely the same.

Keywords: History of Philosophy; Descartes; Spinoza; Perfection; Meditations on First Philosophy, Ethics;

1. DESCARTES'S PRELUDE TO THE ARGUMENT FROM PERFECTION AND THE ARGUMENT FROM PERFECTION AS FOUND IN THE *MEDITATIONS*

Upon entering Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*, we encounter what we know to be as Cartesian Doubt, or Descartes's methodical use of doubt, to be sure that we are sure that we know what we know in a way that is beyond mere opinion, or belief.¹ In other words, Descartes opens what is perhaps his most famous work by regarding everything that he can doubt as being that which must be cast aside, to make room for what is true to emerge most prominently.² For, as Descartes states:

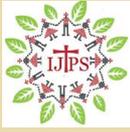
"...and it is a mark of prudence never to place complete trust in those who have deceived us even once."³

I.e., we find in Descartes's words that just as we cannot claim what invites doubt to be completely true, we cannot trust that which leads us astray from truth. So, what are some

¹ Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy Vol. IV: Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Leibniz* (New York: Doubleday., 1994)., 74-75 & Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998)., 54.

² Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998)., 54.

³ *Ibid.*, 60.



sources by which doubt would always arise, and thus truth never achieved? As understood by Descartes, these foundations for total uncertainty include the possibility that we are dreaming reality, as well as the possibility that a maniacal genius is constantly tricking us into believing that a deluded reality is real.⁴

However, Descartes starts to provide us with certainty by denying the possibility of either the fact that we are dreaming reality or that an evil omnipotent omniscience is deceiving us constantly. Now, regarding the chance that we are dreaming reality, we find Descartes denying this probability through the following:

“Nevertheless, it surely must be admitted that things seen during slumber are, as it were, like painted images, which can only be produced in the likeness of true things, and that therefore at least these general things—eyes, head, hands, and the whole body—are not imaginary things, but are true and exist.”⁵

In other words, regarding the possibility that we are dreaming a fictitious reality fails when we consider Descartes’s view that the more, we abstract from particulars, the more we are left with truths that appear in waking and dreaming life, which are thus universally valid.⁶ That is, to Descartes, when we dream, we tend to dream distortions of reality, while what we assign these distortions to nonetheless display characteristics that are never absent in either waking or dreaming life.

Let us take for example the idea of dreaming that a pink dachshund is at the foot of our bed. Now, when we dream of such a chimerical being, we must admit that elements of what we regard as the pink dachshund remain the same in waking life. Such elements include the extension, shape, place, and duration of our pink dachshund. In other words, if we peel away the pink element of the dachshund, a particularity, and even other individual peculiarities that we may dream of this dog breed, we cannot deny that this breed of canine possesses universal commonalities between itself as a breed. Thus, permanencies that remain in the realm of waking and sleeping life helps demonstrate that reality is not merely fantastical, rendering truth a valid pursuit and not deadened by dreamlife being the only reality that is certain.

From this, Descartes then has us consider perhaps we undergo deception in another way; namely, by a being who is nefarious and supreme, an evil genius, i.e., God as deceiver.⁷ That is, to Descartes, another path that would always lead us to unsurety and never truth, would be if a god of evil were deceiving us always, such that we believe in a reality that amounts to be only falsehoods and fictions. However, such a misleading divinity cannot be so. For, as Descartes declares:

“God, I say, the same being the idea of whom is in me: a being having all those perfections that I cannot comprehend, but can somehow touch with my thought, and a being subject to no defects whatever. From these considerations it is quite obvious that he [God] cannot be a deceiver, for it is manifest by the light of nature that all fraud and deception depend on some defect.”⁸

In other words, Descartes believes that since we possess an idea of self, for we cannot deny that we are the source that exercises the power of denial, when we engage in

⁴ Ibid., 60-63.

⁵ Ibid., 60-61.

⁶ Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster., 1972)., 563.

⁷ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998)., 62-63.

⁸ Ibid., 80.



denying, we must also possess the idea of the cause of this inescapable awareness of self. Such origin to Descartes is God.⁹ For, knowing the self is a perfection, for knowledge outshines ignorance, and what we possess the potential to further know must come from a source in which all knowledge is already actual.¹⁰ Thus, if knowledge is a perfection, and the actuality of all knowledge is the sum of all perfections, then there must be a perfect being who harbors and can bestow its perfections on to us, i.e., God.¹¹ Accordingly, if God holds all perfections, God must be perfect and as perfect no deprivation of perfection can pertain to God.¹²

Consequently, such infallibility renders God to never be a deceiver because even if God's perfect power would be on display if God were to fool us always, it would remain that God is being immoral by being deceptive.¹³ Thus, there would be an imperfection that would pertain to God which is an impossibility to Descartes. One reason for Descartes believing that God can never be imperfect is that we cannot cause ourselves to exist since we would never deprive ourselves of any perfections, if we were self-causal, and hence our perfections, again must issue from the Divine who contains all perfections.¹⁴ Or, as Descartes affirms:

“For nothing more perfect than God, or even as perfect as God, can be thought or imagined. But if I got my being from myself, I would not doubt, nor would I desire, nor would I lack anything at all. For I would have given myself all perfections of which I have some idea; in doing so, I myself would be God!”¹⁵

Now, upon encountering Meditation V of Descartes's *Meditations*, we begin to find Descartes unpacking the idea that God's perfection includes God's existence, through the following:

“What I believe must be considered above all here is the fact that I find within me countless ideas of certain things, that, even if perhaps they do not exist anywhere outside me, still cannot be said to be nothing. And although, in a sense, I think them at will, nevertheless they are not something I have fabricated; rather they have their own true and immutable natures.”¹⁶

I.e., to Descartes, there are indeed things that exist outside of the mind, and that do not rely upon the mind, such as Descartes's own example of the independence of a triangle's existence even if no triangle is in sight.¹⁷ In other words, if we imagine a triangle to exist, we are imagining something rather than nothing, or something that “still has a certain and determinate nature, essence, or form which is unchangeable and eternal.”¹⁸

Accordingly, to Descartes, we can even demonstrate the independence of something such as our imagined triangle from our minds by acknowledging that the essence of a triangle involves that all triangles share the angular sum of one-hundred-eighty degrees and that this angular sum equals the sum of two right angles. Therefore, because these properties of a triangle are inseparable from a triangle, regardless of our will to accept or deny these qualities, we find that there is a separation between ourselves and something such as a

⁹ Ibid., 76-79.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 71; 81-82.

¹⁴ Ibid., 78.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 88.

¹⁷ Ibid., 88-89.

¹⁸ Ibid., 88.



triangle.¹⁹ Lastly, this distinction renders at least one thing to exist outside of us rather than a world in which we can only validate the existence of ourselves.

Consequently, Descartes continues Meditation V by showing how it is that God is inseparable from existing.²⁰ That is because, existence, a power, or perfection, if absent from God, would render God imperfect so much so that Descartes draws us to consider the link between a mountain and a valley as just as undivorceable as is God from existing.²¹ That is, just as we always find mountains and valleys conjoined, in a way that neither would exist in the same way without the other, God links to existence in a way that utterly reinforces our idea of God as “a certain substance that is infinite, independent, supremely intelligent and supremely powerful, and that created me along with everything else that exists...”²²

Thus, since the idea of God arises from consciously demonstrating that such a being must be real, as the source of all perfections of which we both contain and contain only potentially, and because our status as something existing, which is a perfection that surpasses non-existing, implies that we come from a being who must exist perfectly.²³ Simply put, this being that must exist, as the common ground of all perfections, as understood by Descartes, is none other than God.²⁴ Finally, let us now examine Spinoza’s take on God, and how God’s necessary existence is a perfection of the Deity, alone.

2. KEY ELEMENTS OF SPINOZA’S GOD AND SPINOZA’S ARGUMENT FOR GOD’S NECESSARY EXISTENCE AS PERFECTION

As understood by Spinoza, God alone is perfect, or that which is reality itself.²⁵ For as Spinoza states:

“D6: By reality and perfection I understand the same thing.”²⁶

That is, God, to Spinoza, by being a substance, or that which alone is the cause of itself, which need no other essence for its conceivability is “free,” or limitless in all ways as reality.²⁷ For, that which need no other concept for its thinkability aside from itself, must be that which no concept can precede.²⁸ Thus, to Spinoza, God as first in the sequence of reality must be eternal.²⁹ That is because from the vantage of God to existence, God engenders existence by necessarily being that which exudes existence, to explain the existence of existence.

At the same time, from the vantage of we who exists to God, we can trace ourselves back to God as our ultimate cause, or common origin. Thus, Spinoza’s God is immanent, or that which is always present throughout existence.³⁰ Consequently, by being both first and ultimate cause that nothing can precede or outlast, God’s perfection rest in that nothing can

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 89-90.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 76.

²³ Ibid., 89-90.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 32.

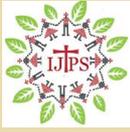
²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 2; 32.

²⁸ Ibid., 1-2.

²⁹ Ibid., 2, 13, & 14-16.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.



inhibit God from expressing itself, in part, as the various modifications of God's Thought, or individual thinking things insofar as we consider them as essences.³¹

In other words, the necessity of God's essence involving existence leads Spinoza to assert the perfection of God for no other being is requisite for the continuity of all reality as is God.³² An example to portray this idea regarding the necessary existence of God is akin to the definition of a square as that shape, enclosed by four equal lines in which each side is of the same length, equaling an angular sum of three-hundred-sixty degrees. That is, the essence of a square as conveyed by its definition includes both its immaterial and formal reality as always equaling the angular sum of three-hundred-sixty degrees.

Now, this definition parallels the existence of a square as that which possesses an area enclosed by four equal lines, since such a figure contains four ninety-degree angles adding to three-hundred-sixty degrees in total. Thus, God, as that which harbors an essence that involves existence, and as that which alone is self-causal as well as that which needs no other concept for its thinkability must exist.³³ That is because just like the immaterial angular sum of all squares resulting in three-hundred-sixty degrees, matching four equally enclosed lines of ninety degrees each, God as that sole eternal domain of all reality can only exist as infinite Nature.³⁴

For, it is only the infinite universe that can correspond to God as that which alone possesses an essence that involves what is requisite for all existence, neverendingly. Lastly, because the definition of God matches the existence of God, Spinoza finds that God, or Nature are inextricably in sync and thus are in unity, or oneness. For, as Spinoza states:

*"P20: God's existence and his [God's] essence are one and the same"*³⁵

And:

"D6: By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence

*Exp.: I say absolutely infinite, not infinite in its own kind; for if something is only infinite in its own kind, we can deny infinite attributes of it [NS: (i.e., we can conceive infinite attributes which do not pertain to its nature)]; but if something is absolutely infinite, whatever expresses essence and involves no negation pertains to its essence."*³⁶

As well as:

*"P11: God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists."*³⁷

In other words, God as a being that is infinite, is that which harbors in itself the attribute of extension, or the unlimited expanse of the natural order and as the expressor of this eternal and infinite attribute, God involves no negation, or deprivation of what is verily real, or any perfection findable in Nature.³⁸ Thus, God, by being that which affirms all of existence through its eternal and infinite essence, is that which is perfect alone; for, we

³¹ Ibid., 2, 13, 14-16, & 33.

³² Ibid., 1-2; 10-13.

³³ Ibid., 1-2.

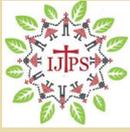
³⁴ Ibid., 2; 16.

³⁵ Ibid., 16.

³⁶ Ibid., 2.

³⁷ Ibid., 7.

³⁸ Ibid., 2; 7.



cannot attribute all perfections to any other being aside from God.³⁹ That is because two or more substance of the same attribute cannot exist, or that there cannot be a duplicate Almighty since only God is necessarily self-causal.⁴⁰

Accordingly, God alone is unique, or distinct and hence if there were two or more substances of the same attributes, we would be embracing the idea that God both is and is not God at one and the same time. That is because if there were multiple substances of the same attributes, we would be asserting that two entities are the same while simultaneously unique, or distinct, which is contradictory. In other words, for something to be a one of a kind it can only be singular, and since there cannot be two or more one of a kind, we find that the only substance is God, and as the sole substance, only God as the eternality of reality can handle the infinitude of the infinite natural order.

Furthermore, regarding the above quoted proposition eleven of Spinoza's *Ethics* Book I, we find another crucial element regarding how it is that God's necessary existence is a perfection of the Deity alone.⁴¹ That is, if we envision God, or that which possesses an essence that involves existence, we find that there must be a reason for the reality of the Almighty as well as a reason why such a being would be unable to exist.⁴² In other words, God must be the cause of itself on the grounds that nothing can take away the existence of God, since by nothing preceding God, nothing can compel God to be other than God.⁴³

Also, even if there were something that can exceed God, that would lead us back to the idea that God both is and is not concurrently, leaving us only with a contradictory, and thus untrue idea of God. That is because if something were able to overtake God, that being itself would be God, and thus we would be considering two substances, that although unique, cannot each be substances. Now, the reason why neither entities can be substances at one and the same time is that if each were a uniquely self-causal entity, each would be incompatible with the other, and hence, to maintain the unity of reality and existence, one would necessarily be in the other.⁴⁴

As such, Spinoza asserts that "whatever is, is either in itself or in another" or that a substance alone is in itself whereas a mode is in a substance, and thus if something took away, or overtook God's existence, God would then fall into being a mode, or a finite and limited being that ultimately requires another for its existence and conceivability.⁴⁵

Thus, regardless of affirming or denying God, we always fall back to the idea of a necessary substance, that is God, and hence because there is no logical reason that can compel God from not existing, God must exist, which is a perfection that only God possesses.⁴⁶ For, all that is other than God are "in another" as well as "...can be conceived as not existing." i.e., what is not a substance must be a variety of a substance's modes.⁴⁷

³⁹ Ibid., 7-9.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1-3; 32-33.

⁴² Ibid., 7-9.

⁴³ Ibid., 7-9; 13.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1-2; 3-4.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7-9.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1-2.



3. CONTRASTING DESCARTES'S AND SPINOZA'S VIEWS ON THE PERFECTION OF GOD

Now, although it may appear that Descartes and Spinoza share a common view of God's perfection, we should refrain from asserting this opinion fully. One reason as to why Descartes and Spinoza, albeit both affirming that God is perfect differ in their understanding of God's perfection is that each philosopher understands God's existence differently. For example, to Spinoza "P17: *God acts by the necessity of his [God's] nature alone, and is compelled by no one*" and does not will in the way in which Descartes understands how the will operates in connection to a supreme substance who is "independent and complete."⁴⁸ In other words, Descartes understands God as a being that is limitlessly free, while also that which always chooses or wills what is best, whereas to Spinoza:

"D7: That thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone. But a thing is called necessary, or rather compelled, which is determined by another to exist and to produce an effect in a certain and determinate manner."⁴⁹

I.e., God, to Spinoza is not free in the way we people believe ourselves to be free.⁵⁰ Instead, God is a necessary being, without limits, of which nothing that is, is or can exist prior or exterior to.⁵¹ Hence, because nothing can exert an influence over God, to compel God, God possesses the liberty to express its perfection of being as that which alone is at the greatest degree of reality, or that which alone contains an essence that involves existence.⁵²

In other words, unlike Descartes, who believes that God could be a deceiver, but never would be since that would imply that God lacks the perfection of moral uprightness, Spinoza believes that it is not of the perfection of God to be morally caring.⁵³ That is because if God's will bent, to favor anyone, the whole order and connection of reality and being would shift to serve the need of one at the expense of the well-being of all others.⁵⁴ As such, this absurd vision of how the will of God operates, Spinoza would never support, and instead Spinoza sees there to be a perfection in God's immutable constancy.⁵⁵

However, from Descartes's vantage it seems to be that there is a more intimate connection between God's perfection and our privations, or lack of perfections that we do not possess as well as each of our existences as individuals.⁵⁶ For example, we find that God creates and crafts the human mind, specifically, to be in its image and likeness.⁵⁷ Yet, we should recall that Descartes also declares that the mind is finite in comparison to God's all-knowingness, or infinite knowledge.⁵⁸ As such, it is because that we know that we know we

⁴⁸ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998), 81 & Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996), 13.

⁴⁹ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998), 81-82 & Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996), 2; 13.

⁵⁰ Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996), 28-29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 32; 1-2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 22-25.

⁵⁶ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998), 77-78.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.



are imperfect that the idea of what is infinitely perfect, or the idea of God emerges out of such self-awareness.⁵⁹ That is because our awareness of our imperfections implies that there is a greater degree of perfection that we know must be endlessly perfect.⁶⁰ For as Descartes asserts:

“First, while it is true that my knowledge is gradually being increased and that there are many things in me potentially that are not yet actual, nevertheless, none of these pertains to the idea of God, in which there is nothing whatever that is potential. Indeed this gradual increase is itself a most certain proof of imperfection.”⁶¹

Furthermore, another difference between Descartes’s and Spinoza’s understanding of God’s perfection rests in how Descartes understands himself to be a finite substance, or a being that understands itself to be the cause of its actions in an immediate way.⁶² Oppositely, to Spinoza we are not substances, but rather modes, or beings that utterly depend on God, so much so that our conceivability and nature not only relies on God but also that we are ultimately set by God.⁶³ That is, God fixes, or determines us to be that which can channel God’s effects, in a manner that we cannot refuse to communicate such determination within the confines of the one substance *Deus sive Natura*.⁶⁴

In other words, to Spinoza we are not independent in the way Descartes understands us to be. That is because God is not separate from existence, and the perfection of God does not consist in perfections that God can grant or imbed in us as separate substances.⁶⁵ Instead, from Spinoza’s view, God as the only substance is that which alone determines the nature of all things that follow from God’s perfection as the only being that possesses an essence that involves existence.⁶⁶ For as Spinoza asserts:

“A7: If a thing be conceived as not existing, its essence does not involve existence”⁶⁷

As well as: “P27: *A thing which has been determined by God to produce an effect, cannot render itself undetermined.*”⁶⁸

And lastly: “P28: *Every singular thing, or any thing which is finite and has no determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to produce an effect by another cause...*”⁶⁹

Also, another dissimilarity between Descartes’s and Spinoza’s accounts of God’s perfection includes how it is that Descartes maintains that God and existence, like a mountain to a valley, are in sync, yet not the same, whereas to Spinoza, God’s perfection rests in the fact that God and Nature are one and the same.⁷⁰ In other words, to Descartes, we may indeed understand God as being in unity with existence, but not the all-out domain of existence in which we exist, as does Spinoza. That is, to Spinoza, we may understand that God also exists

⁵⁹ Ibid., 77-78.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 77.

⁶² Ibid., 76-77.

⁶³ Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996), 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2; 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 2; 16.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1-2; 19.

⁷⁰ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998), 89-90 & Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996), 16.



as the extended, or infinite universe and not merely that the essence of material things, or the concept of extension belongs ultimately to God.⁷¹ That is because to Descartes, God, who as an infinite substance surpasses our level of being, transmits its infinitude on to creation, which reflects as the endless, or infinite universe.

Oppositely, to Spinoza, God, as an infinite substance is equally that which we can conceive to be the greatest entity, or the perfection of reality as well as that which exists as infinite Nature, or that which is endless corporeal substance.⁷² In other words, it is not that God alone possesses the attribute of Extension, or that God facilitates extended being to be possible, as we find in Descartes, rather, to Spinoza God is additionally Extension itself when we understand God in a strictly corporeal manner.⁷³ Thus, it is safe to assert that to Descartes God and existence are akin in that God reflects as existence, but only God is totally aware of this as an omniscient, supreme, and infinite substance.⁷⁴

However, to Spinoza, God is the unity of an infinity of attributes including our participation in Thought, or idealized Nature and Extension, or materialized God. Finally, that is because to Spinoza these attributes of God are that which we can intellectually sense as being of the essence of something that nothing else can entirely possess.⁷⁵ As such, this exclusive power to harbor attributes renders God's infinite existence to be a necessary perfection of eternal reality, which is also under the rubric of substance, or God via the lens of Spinoza.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

The initial purpose of this essay was to depict how it is that Descartes and Spinoza understand God's perfection as entailing the existence of the supreme being. First, this article outlined Descartes's views regarding the embrace of methodical doubt, the impossibility of dreaming reality, and the affirmation of God as a perfect substance and not a deceiver. Next, this piece invited readers to better understand how it is that Descartes believes God connects to existence, to set the stage for Spinoza's similar although distinct ideas regarding the perfection of God as involving the existence of the Deity. Afterward this essay analyzed why it is that Spinoza believes God's necessary existence is ultimately a perfection of the Almighty alone. Lastly, it was the final intent of this article to examine how it is that Descartes's and Spinoza's views of God's perfection are not merely duplicates.

Accordingly, it is with genuine hope that this present essayist suggest that more research may arise, to assist in establishing a greater divide between Descartes's philosophy as well as that of Spinoza, not so that we may understand each philosopher in isolation. Rather, it was the intent of this present author to consider Descartes and Spinoza as being distinct so that the uniqueness of each's theories may stand out even more.

⁷¹ Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster., 1972)., 566 & Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 7-9, 16, & 33.

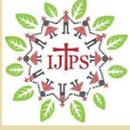
⁷² Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 1-2, 16, & 32-33.

⁷³ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998)., 92-93, Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster., 1972)., 565-566, & Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 16, 32-33.

⁷⁴ Descartes, René. Donald A. Cress trans., *Discourse on Method & Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998)., 76.

⁷⁵ Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 1-2, 7-13, & 16.

⁷⁶ Spinoza, Benedict De. Edwin Curley trans., *Ethics* (New York: Penguin Books., 1996)., 4-6, 10-13, 16, 25, & 31-33.



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