Intellectual History Review

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rihr20

# Between Cartesianism and orthodoxy: God and the problem of indifference in Christoph Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza*

Yoshi Kato & Kuni Sakamoto

**To cite this article:** Yoshi Kato & Kuni Sakamoto (2020): Between Cartesianism and orthodoxy: God and the problem of indifference in Christoph Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza* , Intellectual History Review

**To link to this article:** https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2020.1852373



Published online: 10 Dec 2020.

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY REVIEW
https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2020.1852373

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group



# Between Cartesianism and orthodoxy: God and the problem of indifference in Christoph Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza*

Yoshi Kato[a] and Kuni Sakamoto[b]

[a]Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan; [b]Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan

**ABSTRACT**

The present paper examines the Cartesian theologian Christoph Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza* (1690). Scholars have observed two opposing orientations in the work. Some have argued that Wittich offered a thoroughly Cartesian refutation of Spinoza. Others have found that he sometimes disagreed with Descartes and adopted a Spinozistic position. This paper reconciles these contrasting interpretations by comparing Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza* with his earlier work. In general, Wittich tried to refute Spinoza's monism by mobilizing Cartesian principles, which is particularly perspicuous in his discussion of God's being. However, once he turned to the issue of the divine will, he openly contradicted Descartes' teaching and approached Spinoza's necessitarianism. He chose to do so to remain orthodox, evading the accusation of Socinian heresy, which the conservative theologian Petrus van Mastricht had made against his *Theologia pacifica* (1671). This paper concludes that the widespread fear concerning Socinianism deeply conditioned the way theologians reacted to the Cartesian philosophy in the Netherlands in the late seventeenth century.

**KEYWORDS**

Descartes; Cartesianism; Spinoza; reformed theology; heresy; Socinianism

## Introduction

In the seventeenth century, René Descartes' (1596–1650) philosophy caused a great stir among theologians in the Netherlands. Some aligned themselves with it and argued for its compatibility with theological orthodoxy. Others fiercely opposed it and made numerous attempts to expose its heretical characteristics. The dispute in no way subsided with the arrival of so-called "radical Cartesians" like Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) and Lodewijk Meyer (1629–1681); their openly combative attitude toward orthodoxy only substantiated the claim of those who deemed Cartesianism as heretical.[1]

In this context, Christoph Wittich's (1625–1687) *Anti-Spinoza* (1690) occupies a unique position. Indeed, its author was a Reformed theologian with a strong allegiance to Descartes' philosophy, and, as such, he conducted one of the earliest and most comprehensive critiques of Spinoza's *Ethics*. Born in Brieg (Brzeg) in Silesia, Wittich was reared in a confessionally Reformed environment. At the same time, probably under the aegis of the Leiden philosophy professor Johannes de Raey (1622–1702), he came

**CONTACT** Yoshi Kato y-kato@rikkyo.ac.jp Kuni Sakamoto kunisakamoto@meiji.ac.jp

to be convinced that his Reformed faith was compatible with the new Cartesian philosophy. This conviction threw him into several bitter disputes with conservative theologians. Their attacks against the Cartesians in general and Wittich in particular gradually became stronger in the 1660s as the writings of Meijer and Spinoza emerged. Toward the end of his life, it became one of Wittich's main objectives to distance himself from such radical tendencies. At some point in this period, he began to work on the refutation of Spinoza's *Ethics*. The result remained in manuscript form when he died in 1687, and it was posthumously published in 1690. The five-part work was entitled *Anti-Spinoza sive examen Ethices Benedicti de Spinoza et commentarius de Deo et ejus attributis*. After the brief introduction written by the editor, there comes a preliminary survey on philosophical methodology. It is followed by the main part of the work: the thorough examination and criticism of the *Ethics*. Next comes the *Commentarius de Deo et ejus attributis* (hereafter, *Commentary*), in which the reader finds Wittich's extensive discussion on God. The work ends with his two letters, in which he once again criticizes Spinoza's monism and argues for the superiority of Cartesianism.[2]

Because of its unique character in the history of philosophy and theology, Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza* has already attracted a fair amount of scholarly attention. Yet, our contention is that much remains to be done to place the work more precisely in its historical context. The previous scholarship on *Anti-Spinoza* can roughly be categorized into two groups; interestingly, they propound contrasting interpretations. The first group takes a relatively standard position, interpreting the work as a Cartesian refutation of Spinoza's philosophy. It includes the classical work of Georg Pape, as well as more recent ones by Theo Verbeek, Alexander Douglas, and Kai-Ole Eberhardt.[3] In contrast, the second group points out that such a neat categorization fails to capture certain aspects of *Anti-Spinoza*, finding that, in the issue of the divine will, Wittich departs from Descartes' philosophy and adopts a Spinozistic position. In the 1940s Emanuel Hirsch alluded to this point, which has subsequently received further clarification from Christiane Hubert and Mark Aalderink.[4]

These interpretations have detected contrasting moments in Wittich. It is precisely this contrast that the present study aims to make sense of. Why did Wittich, writing a Cartesian refutation of the *Ethics*, end up rejecting Descartes and siding with Spinoza? To answer this question, we shall examine Wittich's criticism of Spinoza's God in *Anti-Spinoza*.

The first part of the paper considers Wittich's refutation of Spinoza's infamous identification of God with the world. The analysis illustrates the sense in which his overall arguments can be characterized as "Cartesian". The latter part inquires into why it became rather hazardous for Wittich to direct such Cartesian criticism against Spinoza on the issue of the divine will. Comparing *Anti-Spinoza* with his earlier work, our analysis ultimately points out that Wittich's departure from Descartes was prompted by the accusation of heresy against him by a conservative theologian of the period.

## Substance, attributes, and *Creatio ex Nihilo*

In the opening pages of *Anti-Spinoza*, Wittich introduces the distinction between the analytic and synthetic methods. The analytic method is a way of discovering truth by

means of what the intellect already knows clearly. In contrast, the synthetic method is a way of proving truths through the use of definitions, theorems, and propositions. Spinoza employs the latter in the *Ethics*, and it is his use of definitions that Wittich sets out to criticize.[5]

The *Ethics* begins with definitions of key terms such as *causa sui*, substance, attribute, and mode. According to Wittich, these definitions designate "second notions" (*notiones secundae*) that have no corresponding objects in the real world.[6] They must be abstracted from first notions, which are particular things in the world. Thus, if Spinoza wants to proceed philosophically in an orderly way, he must start with the definition of particulars, such as God and the mind, and only after that can he form second notions. More seriously, his definitions differ radically from commonly accepted ones. Wittich points out the following:

> But this indeed cannot be excused, for he [Spinoza] does not have a power to change the meaning of words at pleasure no more than geometricians are permitted to apply the definition of circle to a square, etc. But this is not the only fault we would find in him. He offers definitions that have nothing to do with things, but on such definitions he builds the edifice of subsequent propositions and demonstrations. Definitions must explicate what exists outside the intellect. Therefore, they must be true and not differ from proposition or axiom.[7]

Wittich goes on to criticize Spinoza's definition of *causa sui*, which is "that whose essence involves existence, *or* that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing".[8] According to Spinoza, there is only one *causa sui*, and this is God. Wittich first notes that Descartes also describes God as *causa sui*. According to Wittich, the cause implied here is formal. Therefore, God's being *causa sui* means that his form (or essence) is the cause of his existence. This is possible for God because his essence has immense power, enabling him to self-exist.[9] Wittich acknowledges that some are dissatisfied with Descartes' argument. They insist that God should exist not because his essence has some sort of power but because of its utmost perfection. This is basically a summary of the criticism given by Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694) in the Fourth Objections.[10]

While the issue of *causa sui* has yet to be solved, Wittich does not let Spinoza participate in the debate. Wittich thinks that, to discuss the concept of *causa sui*, which is a second notion, the first notion of God must be properly defined first. Spinoza fails to provide a sustainable definition. To show this, Wittich quotes Spinoza's letter to Henry Oldenburg (c. 1619–1677), in which he argues that God is the cause of created things because he has various commonalities with them *formaliter*.[11] This must have been shocking to Oldenburg. The word *formaliter* had been used to express causal relations within created reality and was not to be applied to relations with God. Only *eminenter* can God be the cause of the created world because the two have different types of existence.[12] Boldly subverting this standard view, Spinoza asserts that God is the formal cause of the world and, thus, he implies that they exist in the same manner. Wittich draws an inevitable consequence of this argument in the following way:

> If we follow these arguments, God will be the cause of created things because he has many things *formaliter* in common with them. Thus, he will be the cause of extended things because he himself is extended. In the same way, the reason why he is the cause of thinking things is because he himself thinks. As a result, since the created things as a whole differ in no way from God, God shall be *causa sui*. This is because the created things exist and God is

> the cause of their existence, so that we must say that God is *causa sui*. Spinoza's entire system brings us to this place: we believe that the universe is God and reject the true God.[13]

Wittich wants to emphasize that while Descartes and Spinoza use the same term *causa sui*, their meanings differ drastically. For Descartes, *causa sui* just means that God's essence causes his existence. In contrast, Spinoza's formal identification of God with the world completely transforms the implication of *causa sui*: now that God is identical to created reality, the divine causation of the universe comes to mean that he is the cause of his own existence. Consequently, Spinoza's *causa sui* underpins his assertion of God as nature, thereby destroying the true God.

Wittich also finds Spinoza's definition of substance problematic. Spinoza defines substance as "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".[14] Wittich admits that this definition is true, but he rejects its interpretation by Spinoza. The Dutch theologian states that the definition requires us to suppose multiple substances, namely God, mind, and body. He also considers "square" and "motion", which exist as certain forms or essences of things, as substances. Unlike mind and body, they do not exist independently because they need some other thing in which to inhere. Yet, still unlike subjective affections, such as hotness or pain, they exist external to the intellect. Thus, Wittich defines God, mind, and body as substances in a strict sense, while forms like squares and motion are defined as substances in a broad sense.[15]

By elaborating on the two types of substance, Wittich appears to combine Cartesian and Aristotelian ways of analysis. If he were to rigidly follow Descartes, he should only admit the strict sense of the term *substantia*. However, he adds the broad sense to accommodate the definitions commonly used in his intellectual context. In fact, he even states that the broad sense is basically the same as Aristotle's concept of form.[16] At the same time, we should not simply trust Wittich's words at face value. Would Aristotle recognize squares and motions as substances? The answer is that he would not because they are mathematical entities devoid of material reality. Therefore, Wittich's integration of Descartes' philosophy with Aristotelianism is a rather forceful move, but this was not so uncommon among his Cartesian colleagues, such as De Raey or Johannes Clauberg (1622–1665).[17]

As Wittich still wants to maintain certain intellectual ties with Aristotelianism, he cannot allow Spinoza to completely transform the definition of substance. He states:

> But we shall not advance this interpretation any further. That is, we should not consider that for a thing to be a substance it [must not] depend on any other thing as its cause. It is clear that Spinoza takes the previous definition [of substance] in this way because he subsequently tries to conclude that God alone is substance and that created things are only certain modes of that substance. This is also clear from the following words found in the page 386 of *The Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellec*t: 'If the thing is in itself (*in se*), *or*, as is commonly said, is the *causa sui*, then it must be understood through its essence alone; but if it is not in itself, but requires a cause to exist, then it must be understood through its proximate cause'. But Spinoza was not allowed to take the phrase *in se* and *per se esse* in a totally different meaning from what is commonly used by other people.[18]

According to Spinoza, because substance exists in itself, it cannot have any external cause for its existence. Therefore, God alone is qualified to be a substance. However, this interpretation is in no way recognized as a valid one, and it lacks wider acceptance. It

is generally considered that, for a thing to exist in itself, it does not have to be causally independent. Instead, it can exist in itself so long as it is not part of other subjects as an accident.[19] Thus, Wittich mocks Spinoza, saying that he is like individuals who "philosophize not on the things that exist in the world but on figments of their brain as they please". [20]

Wittich also takes issue with Spinoza's definition of attributes. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza defines attribute as "what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence".[21] Wittich states that this definition can only be applied to a specific type of attribute that he qualifies as essential. According to his words, an essential attribute "is found uniquely in each substance. It constitutes that substance and distinguishes it from other substances".[22]

Wittich derives his notion of essential attributes from Descartes. In the *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes states that "to each substance there belongs one principal attribute" and "each substance has one principal property which constitutes its nature and essence".[23] As the term "constitutes" (*constituit*) is commonly used in Descartes, Wittich, and Spinoza, it is clear that Descartes' "principal attribute (or property)" means "attribute" for Spinoza and "essential attribute" for Wittich.

Wittich's clarification of the essential attribute is important to refute Spinoza's definition of God. According to the *Ethics*, God is "a being absolutely infinite, i.e. a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence".[24] If this definition were correct, God would have an infinite number of essential attributes. However, this would be impossible, for each substance can only have one attribute. If there is an infinite number of essential attributes, there must be infinite substances and, hence, an infinite number of gods.[25]

Wittich points out that Spinoza's view regarding God's infinite attributes comes from his mistaken understanding of divine infinity. According to Spinoza, God's infinity is expressed in his having the highest reality (*realitas*). This position can also be found in both Descartes and Wittich.[26] According to Wittich, however, Spinoza makes a serious mistake in arguing that God's highest reality consists in his having an infinite number of attributes. The level of an entity's reality is not determined by the number of attributes because any substance can have only one attribute. Wittich instead argues that the level of reality is determined by the degree of each entity's perfection. God has the highest reality because he is without any imperfection.[27]

Wittich also criticizes Spinoza for counting extension as one of God's attributes. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza argues that because God is absolutely infinite, his attributes involve no negation.[28] Wittich counters that extension does not satisfy this condition because it has no activity (*actuositas*) of its own. When an extended thing is in motion, its cause must come from outside. Therefore, extension is negative in some way, and it cannot be God's attribute.[29]

What is God's essential attribute for Wittich? His answer is that it is an infinite thought (*cogitatio infinita*). He substantiates this point in his *Commentary* by elaborating on Descartes' proof of the existence of God. According to Wittich, Descartes proceeds in the *Meditations* as follows: The self recognizes itself as an imperfect thought. This recognition of self-imperfection must presuppose the recognition of perfection. Thus, the thinking self must have some idea of perfection. Yet, this idea cannot originate in the self; rather, it must come from outside and derive from some perfect existence. The

source of the idea is God. What is crucial here is that this Cartesian argument enables Wittich to conclude that God is a thought, for the self's imperfect and finite thought points toward a perfect and infinite thought. This also proves that God has no extension.[30] Wittich writes:

> Therefore, it should be concluded that only an infinite thought belongs to God's essence. So this infinite thought is the most perfect actuality and contains in it all perfections, including that [of extension]. This is because all other things depend on this actuality utterly and exhaustively.[31]

Wittich adds that all other things said about God can be derived from this attribute of infinite thought:

> That God necessarily exists, that he is one, unchangeable, infinite, etc. – all these things do not represent to us different essential attributes, but his unique and simplest essence, considered under various ways and under different names that have arisen therefrom.[32]

It is now clear that Wittich locates the cause of Spinoza's error in his failure to understand that one substance could only have one essential attribute. As we have seen, Wittich learns this principle from Descartes, but he uses it in a way that Descartes did not. Wittich applies it not only to created beings but also to God, stating: "God, like other pure and simple substances, has only one essence. So he has only one essential attribute or property".[33] Thus, he assumes that the relation between substance and attribute works univocally for God and created things. Descartes, on the other hand, does not suppose a univocal relation between them. In fact, there are statements that suggest the contrary. In the *Principles of Philosophy*, for example, he writes that "the term 'substance' does not apply *univocally*, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things".[34] Therefore, it is not so clear whether Wittich is entitled to suppose that God has one essential attribute like created substances.

Thus far, we have observed Wittich's criticism of Spinoza's understanding of substance and attributes. As the culmination of his argument, Wittich explains how these errors have generated Spinoza's idiosyncratic formulation of the relationship between substance, attributes, and modes:

> Spinoza knew that God is infinite, and thence he thought that infinite reality ought to be assigned to God. But he interprets this infinite reality in terms of numbers and thus forms the concept of God's infinitely many attributes. And because Spinoza thought that created things depend on God, he regarded [all] beings as modes. He did not see that for something to be a substance, it was enough that it exists in itself and not in other things, and that its existence does not depend on some other thing as its subject. He did not see that having no other cause is not required for being a substance. From this, since Spinoza knew that all beings depend on another cause, he rejected their being substance and instead argued that they are only modes. Therefore, according to Spinoza, God is the origin of nature and has an infinite number of real attributes. Each of these attributes modifies itself, so that they flow from the divine nature [as modes].[35]

Wittich argues that, although Spinoza distinguishes God from created things here, the distinction is made in an unorthodox way. To demonstrate this, Wittich quotes a letter written by Spinoza to Oldenburg in 1675. In it, Spinoza claims that his God is not the transcendent cause (*causa transiens*) of the universe but, rather, the immanent cause (*causa immanens*).[36] Wittich regards this as proof that Spinoza virtually nullifies the

distinction between God and the universe. An immanent cause, for Wittich, brings its effect in itself. Typically, the mind produces concepts, ideas, and volitions in itself. As these effects are part of the mind, there is only a conceptual distinction between them. In the same way, if God were the immanent cause of the world, the latter would be a mere idea of the former; hence no real distinction could be made between the two.[37]

This is unacceptable, says Wittich. If there were no distinction between God and created things, even a frog, a rat, or an earthworm could become God. Moreover, Wittich argues that, if Spinoza were correct, not only philosophy but also all types of sciences, or even the use of reason itself, would become impossible. This is because they all presuppose the difference between God and created things, as well as the distinctions among the latter.[38]

According to Wittich, the source of Spinoza's error is found in his denial of God's transcendence. Spinoza thinks that if God transcends the world, he must have created it out of nothing, which Spinoza rejects as unintelligible. Wittich warns that we should not regard whatever surpasses our understanding as impossible. Since human beings are finite, and the power of God is infinite, he is able to do things humans cannot understand. With a good dose of irony, Wittich says: "Should we understand everything?"[39] He even asserts that the creation out of nothing was not a mere possibility for God but, because of his omnipotence, it could not have been any other way:

> God's power is wholly executed through his will. Everything was prepared according to his command. The power does not require anything or any matter upon which to act. In fact, if it required, it would not be omnipotent. When it acts, it forms a thing and makes matter, so that it would subsequently act upon them. The power which does not require any matter to act upon is greater than that which does. For the latter is supposed to depend on matter. Therefore, the power which in no way depends on anything can also produce out of nothing whatever it wants.[40]

Wittich finally notes that the creation must be something that took place at some point in the past. He argues for this based on the distinction between essence and existence. At the moment of creation, God willed to bring to existence the essence of created things that had existed eternally in his mind. Therefore, their existence has a temporal beginning, though their essence might be considered eternal. In this way, Wittich rejects Spinoza's philosophy that posits all things as emanating from God's nature.[41]

One premise that Wittich has made in his argument is that God willed the creation. However, Spinoza denies the existence of God's will. To complete his criticism, Wittich must also refute Spinoza on this point.

## The divine will and its indifference

In dealing with the question of the divine will, Wittich focuses on proposition 17 of part 1 of the *Ethics*, which reads: "God acts from the laws of his nature alone, and is compelled by no one".[42] Behind this statement lies Spinoza's rejection of the anthropomorphic understanding of God. He denies the common view that God, like humans, has a will and, therefore, he can choose not to do what he is able to do. Instead, Spinoza asserts that, without any choice being made, everything necessarily follows from divine nature.

Spinoza remarks that if God did not act necessarily, he would not be omnipotent. Let us suppose that God has the ability to do action A and action B. If he wills and chooses action A over the other, this means that God, having an ability to carry out action B, cannot actualize that ability. This would mean that God cannot do what he can. For Spinoza, nothing "would be more absurd than this or more contrary to God's omnipotence".[43]

Wittich takes Spinoza as claiming that God's omnipotence requires every possibility to be simultaneously realized. However, this contradicts our day-to-day observation that something new is being generated in the world. For example, Peter and John, who did not exist yesterday, are born today as new human beings. Indeed, Spinoza admits this and explains it via the distinction between substance and modes. He considers new entities as certain modes of God, the substance. Therefore, even if we follow Spinoza's view, states Wittich, God would not do everything at the same time; hence, he would not be omnipotent.[44]

Where Spinoza fails, according to Wittich, is in his understanding of divine omnipotence. It does not mean that he does everything simultaneously. Instead, it simply affirms that he is able to do all things. The reason they do not become actualized at once is because of the limitation of created things rather than any lack in God's power. Thus, this does not undermine his omnipotence. Wittich concludes that Spinoza's failure consists in his disregard for the distinction between God and created beings and, hence, the limitation on the side of the latter.[45]

Wittich goes on to criticize Spinoza's second argument denying the divine will. According to Spinoza, even if God's nature had something like intellect and will, they must be completely different from those of human beings. This is because God is the one who provides the human will and intellect with their essence and existence, and this is also because a cause that provides the essence and existence of something must be completely different from its effect.[46] Wittich counters that precisely because God causes the human intellect and will, he must have the kind of intellect and will that share something in common with those of humans:

> He [Spinoza] did not understand the relationship between cause and effect. That is to say, unless something first exists in the cause *formaliter* or *eminenter*, there will be nothing in the effect. Therefore, the divine intellect ought to be in some way like ours, at least *eminenter*. And, if the divine intellect agrees with intelligent things only in name and have no real agreements, it can hardly be understood how the divine intellect can produce those intelligent things.[47]

According to Wittich, the divine and human intellects agree in having the essences of things as the object of their cognition. Of course, this does not mean that there is no difference between them. God's intellect generates the essences of things, whereas the human one only recognizes the given essences. Yet, discussing such differences is possible because of the commonality. The same can be applied to the case of will.

Thus far, Wittich has defended the existence of God's will. This is rather unsurprising, as he argued for the will being responsible for creation. Yet, in concluding his discussion, he makes a surprising statement:

> Regarding the rest, I acknowledge that the divine intellect and will are necessary insofar as it is impossible that they could be indifferent. I demonstrated this in the *Commentary on God*.[48]

As Wittich regards both the divine intellect and will to be necessary, his God must fall under some sort of necessity. Does this conclusion not share too much with Spinoza's necessitarianism? On top of this, as we shall see, it flatly contradicts Descartes' position. Therefore, the quotation above shows that Wittich's argument cannot be deemed simply a Cartesian criticism of Spinoza. To further clarify this point, we shall focus on the concept of "indifference".

When Wittich refers to the concept of "indifference", he must have in mind Descartes' Fourth Meditation.[49] There, Descartes understands indifference to be a state of the will, in which it cannot make any definitive choice. This takes place when human beings are uncertain about whether A or B is true or good. This is a type of freedom in that they are able to choose either A or B, but it is the lowest kind of freedom as it stems from their lack of clear understanding. When they overcome this state of indifference, however, a higher form of freedom is achieved: based on their clear and distinct perception of the true and the good, they will make a definitive choice voluntarily and freely.

Descartes is criticized in the Sixth Objections.[50] The anonymous objector protests that Descartes' argument virtually denies God's freedom. If, as Descartes claims, clear understanding removes indifference, God would never be indifferent because he recognizes all things evidently. This consequence, the objector argues, contradicts the Christian faith, which teaches divine indifference to all available choices at the moment of creation: God could choose whether he would create one world or many. He even had the choice of creating it or not creating it. Only by acknowledging this indifferent state can we truly say that he created the world freely.[51]

Descartes responds in the Sixth Replies that, contrary to the objector's anticipation, he does acknowledge God's indifference. According to the French philosopher, the mistake the objector made is to confuse divine with human indifference. On the one hand, human beings must presuppose divinely created truth and goodness, and their failure to grasp such truth or goodness forces them to be indifferent. On the other hand, God has no need to presuppose any truth or goodness, as it was he who created them. Having nothing to determine him, his will was free and indifferent. This state does not imply any insufficiency of knowledge, for the objects of knowledge are the fruit of his creation. Therefore, unlike for humans, God's indifference represents the highest form of freedom, as Descartes also concludes: "[T]he supreme indifference to be found in God is the supreme indication of his omnipotence".[52]

Having examined Descartes' arguments in the *Meditations*, an interesting point surfaces as we return to Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza*. His denial of divine indifference in fact goes against Descartes' view. This, however, does not mean that Wittich had always disagreed with his master. If we turn to chapter 14 of Wittich's *Theologia pacifica*, published in 1671, we can see that he supports Descartes' position in the Sixth Replies regarding God's will as being indifferent in the act of creation. He also approvingly quotes Descartes' letter to Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) of 6 May 1630. In this letter, Descartes explains his theory of the creation of the eternal truths, according to which God's indifferent will has decided all truths to be true.[53]

Why has Wittich retracted his earlier opinion in *Anti-Spinoza*? He does not clearly state the reason, so we must rely on circumstantial evidence. Here, we have one important lead: his arch-enemy from the conservative side, Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), had accused Wittich's *Theologia pacifica* of espousing the anti-trinitarian Socianian

heresy.[54] In the ninth chapter of Mastricht's *Novitatum cartesianarum gangraena* of 1677, he criticizes Wittich for considering God's indifferent will as the cause of the true and the good. His criticism culminates in the following passage:

> Therefore, from this reason, [if Wittich were correct,] God's *natural* justice and holiness, which precede his will, would be wholly denied. This goes against the received teaching of the Reformers.[55]

Here, Mastricht does not explicitly castigate Wittich as a Socinian heretic. However, it was common for the orthodox theologians of this period to attack the Socinians for rejecting the "natural justice of God".[56] Therefore, Mastricht's allusion must have been clear to the readers, including Wittich. This is also why Mastricht could confidently state that Wittich's position was against "the received teaching of the Reformers". In fact, Socinianism was prohibited in the Netherlands by a statute in the 1650s.[57]

Why would the rejection of the natural justice of God imply Socinianism? How does this relate to Wittich's notion of the divine will? We shall first clarify the point of contention between the orthodoxy and the Socinians regarding the issue of divine justice. According to the orthodox standpoint, because God's justice is part of his nature, he cannot but exercise it. Therefore, as humans violate his justice with their sins, he necessarily satisfies it. For this satisfaction, God should punish and sacrifice his only begotten son Jesus Christ because the sins against divine justice, which is of infinite value, can only be redeemed through the death of a being with an equally infinite value. In this way, God's natural and infinite justice necessitates the incarnation of the divine being.[58]

The Socinians deny the incarnation of God's son. To them, his death would not have infinite worth; however, this does not mean that there is no pardon for humanity. For the Socinians, God's justice does not depend on his nature but on his will, so that he is not obliged to satisfy it by punishing an infinite being. Rather, without compromising his justice, God can forgive human beings by simply willing so. Thus, the Socinians debunk the orthodox theory of satisfaction and, hence, even the doctrine of the Trinity, by severing God's justice from his nature.[59]

Mastricht's intention now becomes clear. For him, the Socinians, Descartes, and Wittich are in the same heretical category insofar as they all find the cause of justice and goodness in God's will rather than in his nature. Therefore, Descartes and Wittich, who espouse the indifference of the divine will, are likely candidates for flirting with the Socinian heresy.

Wittich seems to have taken Mastricht's criticism to heart. It must have worried him to be associated with the arch-heresy of this period. He consequently retracted his view regarding the divine will and denied its indifference in *Anti-Spinoza*. We find further evidence to back this supposition in his *Commentary*. At the end of his discussion of divine indifference, Wittich mentions that his view is shared widely among orthodox theologians. He lists works by the English Puritan William Twiss (1578–1646) and Leiden theologian Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669). More importantly, he positively refers to Samuel Maresius' (1599–1673) *Hydra Socinianismi expugnata* (1651) and Johannes Hoornbeek's (1617–1666) *Socinianismus confutatus* (1650), two major works from the orthodox camp refuting Socinianism.[60] Wittich even praises Hoornbeek in rebutting the Socinian attempt to separate God's will from his nature. Wittich's intention is clear in referring to all these works. He poses himself as taking sides with the orthodoxy against the

deviant understanding of the divine will. At the same time, this means that he accepts Mastricht's criticism that Descartes' theory of God's indifference implies Socinianism. Accordingly, we may rightly conclude that a suspicion of heresy pushed Wittich the Cartesian away from Descartes.[61]

How then does Wittich in his *Commentary* reject the indifference of God's will? He gives two main reasons. The first is that, if we admit divine indifference, we end up having to suppose another God:

> Besides, if we think God could from eternity have a different intellect and volition from what he actually had, we will inevitably have to think that God himself could be different from what he actually is. For the intellect and volition that he had from eternity are exactly the same as God's being as we have seen before [ … ]. Therefore, this intellect and this volition are God, who exists from eternity and will exist eternally. Therefore, the different intellect and volition which are here supposed, for the very reason that they are different, are not those which God had from eternity. Consequently, they do not belong to God who [actually] had this intellect and this volition. Therefore, there must be the being of another God because God's intellect and volition are supposed to be God himself. Thus, there will be another God who is different from what he actually is. No wise person can judge that this accords with reason.[62]

Wittich bases his argument on the identification of God's intellect and volition with his being, a supposition that accords well with the orthodox teaching. If the divine volition were indifferent at the moment of creation and, hence, could be different from the one he actually had, his existence could also have been different. This would imply a different god other than the one that exists. Wittich regards this conclusion as absurd.

The second reason Wittich gives is that God's indifference would undermine his perfection.[63] At the moment of creation, by his will and intellect, God decided the order of the universe. Therefore, if we admit the indifference of his will prior to creation, we must also admit that there is a possibility of a world other than the present one. However, this supposition makes it impossible to consider the current order as the best of possible worlds, for other orders, insofar as they are also God's creation, must be at least as good as the current one. Hence, it would entail that God did not create the best of all possible worlds and, on account of this, his perfection would be lost.

According to Wittich, even if we claim that God could only have created the current universe, this does not limit his will and intellect by human measurement. It is rather the expression of God's perfection; as Wittich writes:

> Certainly, God through his infinite intellect saw all possible things. He necessarily saw them. He could not but see them. Indeed, with this very intellect of his he constituted all those possible things. He necessarily saw all things that are the best, which, for the very reason [of seeing the best], he could not but decide [to create them], especially because there exists the supreme identity between his intellect and will.[64]

With his infinite intellect, God necessarily saw the best choice, and with his supreme goodness, he necessarily chose it. Therefore, both his intellect and will were necessary and not indifferent. This conclusion of Wittich is surprisingly close to that of Spinoza. They both think that the infinite God acts by necessity. No doubt, Wittich had long since tried to harmonize orthodox theology with Cartesianism, and it was from this position that he wanted to refute Spinoza. It is therefore ironic that he ended up negating the Cartesian view and embracing the Spinozistic one primarily because of criticism by an orthodox theologian.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we examined Christoph Wittich's criticism of the philosophy of Spinoza. We first focused on his rebuttal of Spinoza's equation of God with the world. Spinoza backs up this thesis by ascribing infinitely many attributes to the single substance of God. Wittich opposes this by reaffirming the Cartesian principle that one substance has only one essential attribute. Unlike Descartes, Wittich shows no hesitation in applying the principle to God. Thus, the divine attribute is limited to thought, and extension is excluded. Consequently, God's transcendence is defended. This shows that Wittich's "Cartesian" critique of Spinoza is not based on the exact replication of his master's arguments. Rather, he builds his Cartesianism by focusing on certain aspects of Descartes' corpus, which in turn provides the doctrinal basis for his refutation of Spinoza.[65]

The discussion does not go so smoothly in the consideration of God's will. In fact, Wittich rejects Descartes' position in such a way that his view ultimately resembles that of Spinoza. This is because, in writing his *Anti-Spinoza*, Wittich could no longer follow his master in securing God's freedom by acknowledging the indifference of his will, for Mastricht had criticized Wittich's earlier work, *Theologia pacifica*, by associating the Cartesian doctrine of God's indifference with Socinian anti-trinitarianism. This, we argued, was why Wittich had to retract his position. He finally rejected the volitional indifference of God and regarded his will as a necessary outcome of the clear and distinct perception acquired by the divine intellect. Accordingly, Wittich's position comes very close to Spinoza's, such that his refutation on this point misses the mark.

The compromise that Wittich had to make provides us with an important insight into the nature of reactions that Descartes' philosophy stirred up in the Netherlands in the late seventeenth century. Negative reactions from orthodox theologians were not simply due to the novelty of his philosophy and its radical break with tradition. Rather, they were primarily due to the fear of theologians who deemed that some Cartesian doctrines would serve the Socinian cause. Without grasping this widespread fear concerning Socinianism, the controversies surrounding the Cartesian philosophy cannot properly be understood.

Among the controversies, the one regarding the divine will played a central role because it was considered to be the core of Descartes' metaphysics and, at the same time, the topic had already been fiercely discussed in theologians' anti-Socinian treatises, even prior to the arrival of Cartesianism. Under such circumstances, it was possible for a Cartesian, though not without some hesitation, to muster Spinoza's view against Descartes' in order to remain theologically orthodox. Wittich's *Anti-Spinoza* helps us to be aware of this now overlooked theological dimension that conditioned the philosophical discourse of the time.

## Notes

1. On Cartesianism in the early modern Netherlands in general, see Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme*; Dibon, "Der Cartesianismus in den Niederlanden"; MacGahagan, "Cartesianism in the Netherlands"; Verbeek, *Descartes and the Dutch*; Ruler, *Crisis of Causality*. On the reception of Descartes' philosophy in theological contexts, see Goudriaan, "Descartes, Cartesianism, and Early Modern Theology". Also on "radical Cartesianism", see Strazzoni, *Dutch Cartesianism*, 105–12. Throughout this article, we use the word

"orthodox" to mean the public subscription to the confessional documents of the Dutch Reformed Church, which consist of the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canon of Dordt.

2. For biographical information on Wittich, we rely on Eberhardt, *Christoph Wittich*. *Anti-Spinoza* has been partly translated into English by Mark Aalderink in his "Christoph Wittich", 132–40. A full Dutch translation was made by Abraham van Poot in 1695.
3. Pape, *Christoph Wittichs Anti-Spinoza*, 11–14; Verbeek, "Wittich's Critique of Spinoza"; Douglas, *Spinoza and Dutch Cartesianism*, 113–46; Eberhardt, *Christoph Wittich*, 374–82; Eberhardt, *Vernunft und Offenbarung*, 386–92.
4. Hirsch, *Geschichte*, vol. 1, 182–8; Hubert, *Les premières réfutations de Spinoza*, esp. 87–90; Aalderink, "Spinoza en Wittichius". For a literature review on Wittich in general, see Eberhardt, *Christoph Wittich*, 22–7.
5. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, sig. A1r–A3v.
6. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 7–8. For more on method and the second notion, see Verbeek, "Wittich's Critique of Spinoza", 104–10; Douglas, *Spinoza and Dutch Cartesianism*, 126–41.
7. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, sig. A3v:

> Verum enim vero vel hoc ipsum excusari non potest: non enim illi haec potestas est concessa, ut possit vocum significationes pro suo lubitu immutare, non magis quam Geometris licet, ut quadrato definitionem, quae est circuli, & sic porro applicent. Neque tamen hoc solum vitium in eo deprehendemus, sed etiam, quod proposuerit definitiones, quae nihil quicquam in re habent veritatis, quibus tamen aedificium sequentium propositionum & demonstrationum superaedificat, quibus propterea debet explicari res, quae est extra intellectum adeoque verae esse, & a Propositione vel Axiomate non differre debent.

8. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, definition 1, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 45; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 408. On *causa sui* in Descartes and Spinoza, see Carraud, *Causa sive ratio*, 266–341; Schmaltz, "*Causa sui*".
9. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 8–9. Cf. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 111, 238.
10. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 212–14.
11. Spinoza, Letter 4, in *Opera*, vol. 4, 14; Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 9.
12. For the distinction between *formaliter* and *eminenter*, see Goclenius, *Lexicon philosophicum*, 697; Schmaltz, *Descartes on Causation*, 64–71.
13. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 9:

> Nam si haec sequamur, Deus propterea erit causa rerum creatarum, quia multa formaliter communia cum rebus creatis habet. Sic erit causa rei extensae, quia ipse est extensus, causa item rei cogitantis, quia ipse est cogitans, & quoniam omnes illae res creatae simul sumtae non differunt a Deo, *Causa* erit *sui*, quia cum creaturae existant, & ille sit earum existentiae causa, eo ipso erit dicendus *Causa sui*. Huc nos ducit totum Systema Spinozae, ut credamus, Mundum esse Deum, sicque verum Deum abnegemus.

14. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, definition 3, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 45; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 408.
15. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 12–14.
16. Ibid., 12.
17. Weier, "Cartesianischer Aristotelismus"; Ruler, "Substituting Aristotle". Of course, this does not mean that Wittich is uncritical of Aristotelianism. See Cellamare, "A Theologian Teaching Descartes".
18. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 14:

> Quod tamen non ulterius est trahendum, quasi ad substantiae conceptum requiratur, ut dependeat ab alio tanquam a causa, quo sensu Spinozam hanc definitionem suam accipere, tum ex eo patet, quod conficere conetur in sequentibus Deum solum esse

> Substantiam, res vero creatas tantum esse istius substantiae quosdam modos, tum ex iis quae legimus in Tractatu de Emendatione intellectus p. 368. *Si res sit* in se*, sive ut vulgo dicitur, causa sui tum per solam suam essentiam debet intelligi, si vero res non sit in se, sed requirat causam ut existat, tum per proximam suam causam debet intelligi*. Sed fas non erat ipsi phrasin illam *in se* & *per se esse* trahere in sensum plane alium, quo sensu ab aliis usurpari non solet.

19. Franco Burgersdijk (1590–1635), for example, strictly warns not to understand "*per se subsistere*" as excluding all entities whose existence causally depends on others. Wittich basically uses the same argument. See Burgersdijk, *Institutionum metaphysicarum*, II.1.4, 227:

> Substantia est Ens per se subsistens. *Per se subsistere* non excludit in hac definitione dependentiam ab omnibus causis (nam hoc sensu nullum Ens dici potest *per se subsistere* quam solus Deus) sed solummodo dependentiam a subjecto: quae dependentia revocatur ad causalitatem materialem. Itaque per se subsistere nihil est aliud quam non esse in subjecto [ … ].

20. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 15.
21. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, definition 4, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 45; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 408.
22. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 15–16: "Alia enim sunt attributa essentialia, quorum in qualibet substantia unum tantum est, quod istam substantiam constituit & ab alia distinguit [ … ]".
23. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 8A, 25; Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, 210. See also Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 8B, 349–50.
24. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, definition 6, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 45; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 409. On attributes in Descartes and Spinoza, see Melamed, "Building Blocks", 90–103.
25. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 18; Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza*, 119–20.
26. Spinoza, Letter 9, in *Opera*, vol. 4, 45; Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 19; Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 165.
27. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 19.
28. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, definition 6, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 46.
29. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 17.
30. Ibid., 337–41.
31. Ibid., 17–18: "Superest, ut ad essentiam Dei nihil aliud dicamus pertinere, quam cogitationem infinitam, quae propterea est perfectissimus actus omnem perfectionem comprehendens, adeoque etiam hanc, quod alia omnia ab illo plane et omnibus modis dependeant".
32. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 20: "Quod enim Deus necessario existat, quod sit unicus, immutabilis, infinitus & c. ea omnia non repraesentant nobis diversa attributa essentialia, sed unam et simplicissimam Dei essentiam, sub variis considerandi modis atque inde ortis diversis denominationibus".
33. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 20: "Deus enim, non minus, quam alia quaevis substantia pura & simplex, prout unicam tantum habet essentiam, ita unum habet tantum essentiale attributum vel proprietatem [ … ]".
34. Descates, *Oeuvres*, vol. 8A, 24; Descates, *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, 210. Descartes even remarks that God has plural attributes, though not calling them "principal". See Descates, *Oeuvres*, vol. 8A, 13, 26; 8B, 348.
35. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 21:

> Novit Deum esse infinitum inde collegit infinitam ei realitatem esse assignandam, hanc autem concepit ut infinitam numero & sic formavit conceptum infinitiorum Dei attributorum; quoniam vero res creatas a Deo dependere cogitavit, consideravit ens ut modos, non attendens, ad substantiam sufficere quod sit in se non in alio, neque ab alio tanquam subjecto dependeat, non vero requiri, ut non sit aliunde tanquam a causa, quia ergo aliunde tanquam a causa denpendere novit, negavit esse substantias, modos esse voluit. Deus ergo juxta ipsum est origo naturae habens infinita attributa realia: horum attributorum unum quodlibet concepit semetipsum modificare, adeoque sic fluere ex divina natura.

36. Spinoza, Letter 73, in *Opera*, vol. 4, 307.
37. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 22.
38. Ibid., 22.
39. Ibid., 23.
40. Ibid., 25:

> Dei potentia omnis exseritur per ejus voluntatem, ad ejus jussum omnia parata sunt, nullam requirit rem nullam materiam, in quam agat, quin imo si requireret, omnipotens non esset; dum agit, rem format, efficit materiam, in quam postea porro agat. Major enim potentia est, quae non praerequirit materiam ad agendum, quam quae requirit. Haec enim supponitur a materia dependere. Quae ergo nullo modo a nulla re dependet, ea etiam potest ex nihilo producere quaecumque voluerit.

41. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 26. On essence and existence in Wittich, see Aalderink, "Spinoza en Wittichius", 85–8.
42. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, proposition 17, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 61; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 425.
43. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, proposition 17, scholium, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 62; Spinoza, *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 426. On this scholium, see Wolfson, *Philosophy of Spinoza*, vol. 1, 308–19.
44. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 70–1.
45. Ibid., 71.
46. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 1, proposition 17, scholium, in *Opera*, vol. 2, 62–3.
47. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 71–2:

> Non etiam cogitavit, causam ita se habere ad effectum, ut nihil possit esse in effectu, nisi quod prius fuerit in causa vel formaliter vel eminenter; igitur si Dei intellectus non ita est, ut noster, formaliter, saltem debet esse talis eminenter, & vix intelligi potest, quomodo Dei intellectus queat rem intelligentem producere, si tantum nomine conveniat & nullo modo in re ipsa habeat convenientiam.

48. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 72: "De caetero fateor Necessariam esse Dei voluntatem & intellectum, quatenus impossible est, Dei intellectum & voluntatem potuisse esse indifferentem prout a me in Commentario de Deo est demonstratum".
49. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 57–8. On the notion of indifference during this period, see Lennon, *Sacrifice and Self-Interest*, 92–109.
50. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 416–17.
51. On this absolute sense of indifference, see Lennon, *Sacrifice and Self-Interest*, 101–4.
52. Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 7, 432; Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2, 292.
53. Wittich, *Theologia pacifica*, XIV.199, 158–9; Descartes, *Oeuvres*, vol. 1, 149. For an overview of *Theologia pacifica*, see Eberhardt, *Christoph Wittich*, 284–304. On the reception of the doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths among theologians, see Goudriaan, *Philosophische Gotteserkenntnis*, 256–7.
54. On Socinianism, see Mulsow and Rohls, *Socinianism and Arminianism*; Daugirdas, *Die Anfänge des Sozinianismus*; Mortimer, "Early Modern Socinianism".
55. Mastricht, *Gangraena*, II.6.5, 252: "Ac proinde hac ratione omnis justitia & sanctitas Dei *naturalis*, quae se antecedenter habeat ad voluntatem ejus, omnino fuerint neganda, quod est adversus receptam Reformatorum sententiam". On Mastricht's criticism of Wittich, see Bizer, "Die reformierte Orthodoxie", 357–62; Goudriaan, *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy*, esp. 297–8; Kato, "Petrus van Mastricht".
56. Voetius, "De jure et justitia Dei", in *Selectarum disputationum pars prima*, 360; Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 376; Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, II.21.9, vol. 1, 222; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, 323.
57. Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch Culture*, 266.
58. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III.19, vol. 1, 236–7, 239; XIII.3, vol. 2, 302; Bruce, *Rights in the Law*, 82–7.

59. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III.19, vol. 1, 236–7; Mortimer, "Human and Divine Justice", 77–81, Daugirdas, *Die Anfänge des Sozinianismus*, 78–91.
60. Twiss, *Vindiciae*, *praefatio*, *sectio* 3, *notio* 1, 23; *liber* 1, *pars* 3, *digressio* 3, 330; *liber* 3, *erratum* 8, *sectio* 7, 77; Cocceius, *Summa theologiae*, XIV.5–7, 199; XIV.30, 203; Maresius, *Hydra socinianismi expugnata*, I.21, 210; Hoornbeek, *Socinianismi confutati tomus primus*, II.4.2, 379.
61. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 368–70. This, however, probably did not take place immediately after the publication of Mastricht's *Gangraena* in 1677. Rather, it might have occurred around the very end of Wittich's life. This is suggested by the following fact: his *Theologia pacifica defensa*, posthumously published in 1689, still espoused the Cartesian view that takes the divine will as the sole cause of the truth. This suggests the possibility that Wittich's departure from Descartes occurred between his completion of the *Defensa* (its exact date we cannot pinpoint though) and his death. See Wittich, *Theologia pacifica defensa*, XVII.393, 614. On the publication of the *Defensa*, see Savini, "La publication de l'*Anti-Spinoza*", 80–1. This fact might also indicate the possibility that Wittich's reading of Spinoza's works convinced him of the logical untenability of Descartes' position. While we cannot exclude this possibility, we do not consider the engagement with Spinoza's texts as the sole cause of Wittich's conversion. The impact of Spinoza alone cannot explain why Wittich refers to the orthodox criticisms of Socinianism in such an elaborate manner in this context. To say the least, he is well aware of the theological-confessional dimension of the issue, and it is Mastricht who first called his attention to this point.
62. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 364:

> Quin imo si concipiamus, Deum potuisse habere aliam intellectionem & volitionem ab aeterno, quam revera habuit, necessario etiam debebimus concipere, potuisse alium esse Deum, quam revera est. Haec enim Intellectio & Volitio, quam Deus habuit ab aeterno, utique eadem est plane cum Dei *Esse*, uti antea vidimus [ … ]. Intellectio ergo haec & Volitio est Deus ille, qui ab aeterno est, & in aeternum erit. At Intellectio & Volitio illa alia, quae hic supponitur, eo ipso quo est alia, non est utique illa Intellectio & Volitio, quam ab aeterno habuit Deus, adeoque non erit Dei istius, qui habuit illam Intellectionem & Volitionem, debet ergo esse alterius Dei, cum Dei Intellectio & Volitio supponatur esse ipse Deus, Poterit ergo esse alius Deus, quam revera est, quod nemo sapiens poterit judicare cum ratione convenire.

63. Wittich, *Anti-Spinoza*, 366–8.
64. Ibid., 367:

> Vidit nempe Deus infinito suo intellectu omnia possibilia, vidit necessario, non potuit non videre, quin imo hoc ipso suo intellectu ea omnia constituit, vidit necessario omnia quae sunt optima, quae eo ipso non potuit non decernere, praesertim cum inter ipsius intellectum & voluntatem summa sit identitas.

65. It must be noted that even this solution would not safely place Wittich's Cartesiasnism within the bound of orthodoxy, for his description of God as the infinite thought also invited the suspicion of Socinianism. See Kato, "Petrus van Mastricht", 140.

## Acknowledgements

We thank Han van Ruler, Wiep van Bunge, Christoph Lüthy, and anonymous reviewers of the journal for their invaluable comments. We are also grateful for Hiro Hirai, without whose encouragement our collaboration would never have started.

## Funding

This work was supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science [grant number: 17K18149, 20K00112].

## Notes on contributors

*Yoshi Kato* (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2013) is an associate professor of Christian Studies at Rikkyo University. His works include "Petrus van Mastricht and Descartes's New Philosophy", in *Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706): Text, Context, and Interpretation*, ed. Adriaan C. Neele (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 127–141.

*Kuni Sakamoto* (Ph.D., University of Tokyo, 2012) is a lecturer at the School of Arts and Letters, Meiji University. His works include *Julius Caesar Scaliger, Renaissance Reformer of Aristotelianism: A Study of His* Exotericae Exercitationes (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

## Bibliography

Aalderink, Mark. "Christoph Wittich, Anti-Spinoza (1690)". In *The Continuum Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Wiep van Bunge, Henri Krop, Piet Steenbakkers, and Jeroen van de Ven, 129–140. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011.

Aalderink, Mark. "Spinoza en Wittichius over essentie en existentie". In *Spinoza en het Nederlands cartesianisme*, edited by Gunther Coppens, 79–94. Louvain: Acco, 2004.

Beck, Andreas. *Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676): Sein Theologieverständnis und seine Gotteslehre*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.

Bizer, Ernst. "Die reformierte Orthodoxie und der Cartesianismus". *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 55 (1958): 306–372.

Bruce, James E. *Rights in the Law: The Importance of God's Free Choices in the Thought of Francis Turretin*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013.

Bunge, Wiep van. *From Stevin to Spinoza: An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Burgersdijk, Franco. *Institutionum metaphysicarum libri duo*. Leiden: Hieronymus de Vogel, 1640.

Carraud, Vincent. *Causa sive ratio: La raison de la cause, de Suarez à Leibniz*. Paris: PUF, 2002.

Cellamare, Davide. "A Theologian Teaching Descartes at the Academy of Nijmegen (1655–1679): Class Notes on Christoph Wittich's Course on the *Meditations on First Philosophy*". *Intellectual History Review* 30 (2019): 585–613. doi:10.1080/17496977.2019.1698874.

Cocceius, Johannes. *Summa theologiae ex scripturis repetita*. Amsterdam: Johannes Ravestein, 1665.

Daugirdas, Kęstutis. *Die Anfänge des Sozinianismus: Genese und Eindringen des historisch-ethischen Religionsmodells in den Universitären Diskurs der Evangelischen in Europa*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016.

Descartes, René. *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Edited by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery. 12 vols. Paris: Cerf, 1897–1913.

Descartes, René. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1991.

Dibon, Paul. "Der Cartesianismus in den Niederlanden". In *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts, 2, Frankreich und Nierderlande*, vol. 1, edited by Jean-Pierre Schobinger, 349–374. Basel: Schwabe, 1993.

Douglas, Alexander. *Spinoza and Dutch Cartesianism: Philosophy and Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Eberhardt, Kai-Ole. *Christoph Wittich (1625–1687): Reformierte Theologie unter dem Einfluss von René Descartes*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018.

Eberhardt, Kai-Ole. *Vernunft und Offenbarung in der Theologie Christoph Wittichs (1625–1687): Prolegomena und Hermeneutik der reformierten Orthodoxie unter dem Einfluss des Cartesianismus*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019.

Frijhoff, Willem, and Marijke Spies. *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1650, Hard-Won Unity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Goclenius, Rudolph. *Lexicon philosophicum*. Frankfurt: Matthias Becker, 1613. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1964.

Goudriaan, Aza. "Descartes, Cartesianism, and Early Modern Theology". In *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800*, edited by Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber, 533–549. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Goudriaan, Aza. *Philosophische Gotteserkenntnis bei Suárez und Descartes: Im Zusammenhang mit der niederländischen reformierten Theologie und Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Goudriaan, Aza. *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy, 1625–1750: Gisbertus Voetius, Petrus van Mastricht, and Anthonius Driessen*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Hirsch, Emanuel. *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie: Im Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des europäischen Denkens*. 5 vols. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1949–1954.

Hoornbeek, Johannes. *Socinianismi confutati tomus primus*. Utrecht: Johannes van Waesberge, 1650.

Hubert, Christiane. *Les premières réfutations de Spinoza: Aubert De Versé, Wittich, Lamy*. Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1994.

Kato, Yoshi. "Petrus van Mastricht and Descartes's New Philosophy". In *Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706): Text, Context, and Interpretation*, edited by Adriaan C. Neele, 127–141. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020.

Lennon, Thomas M. *Sacrifice and Self-Interest in Seventeenth-Century France: Quietism, Jansenism, and Cartesianism*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

MacGahagan, Thomas A. "Cartesianism in the Netherlands, 1639–1676: The New Science and the Calvinist Counter-Reformation". PhD diss., University Pennsylvania, 1976.

Maresius, Samuel. *Hydra socinianismi expugnata*. Groningen: Jan Claessen, 1651.

Mastricht, Petrus van. *Novitatum cartesianarum gangraena*. Amsterdam: Jansson van Waesberge, 1677.

Mastricht, Petrus van. *Theoretico-practica theologia*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Utrecht: W. van de Water et al, 1724.

Melamed, Yitzhak. "The Building Blocks of Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance, Attributes, and Modes". In *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, edited by Michael Della Rocca, 84–113. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Mortimer, Sarah. "Early Modern Socinianism and Unitarianism". In *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800*, edited by Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber, 361–372. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Mortimer, Sarah. "Human and Divine Justice in the Works of Grotius and the Socinians". In *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600–1750*, edited by Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson, 75–94. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Muller, Richard A. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*. 4 vols. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

Mulsow, Martin, and Jan Rohls, eds. *Socinianism and Arminiamism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists, and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Pape, Georg. "Christoph Wittichs Anti-Spinoza". Inaugural-Dissertation., Universität Rostock, 1910.

Ruler, J. A. van. *The Crisis of Causality: Voetius and Descartes on God, Nature, and Change*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Ruler, J. A. van. "Substituting Aristotle: Platonic Themes in Dutch Cartesianism". In *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Douglas Hedley and Sarah Hutton, 159–175. Dordtrecht: Springer, 2008.

Savini, Massimiliano. "Notes au sujet de la publication de l'*Anti-Spinoza* de Christoph Wittich". *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 2 (2000): 79–96.

Schmaltz, Tad M. "*Causa sui* and Created Truth in Descartes". In *The Ultimate Why Question: Why Is There Nothing at All Rather Than Nothing Whatsoever?*, edited by John F. Wippel, 109–124. Washinton, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

Schmaltz, Tad M. *Descartes on Causation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Spinoza, Baruch. *The Collected Works of Spinoza*. 2 vols. Edited and Translated by Edwin M. Curley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985–2016.

Strazzoni, Andrea. *Dutch Cartesianism and the Birth of Philosophy of Science: From Regius to 's Gravesande*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019.
Spinoza, Baruch. *Opera*. 4 vols. Edited by Carl Gebhardt. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925.
Thijssen-Schoute, C. Louise. *Nederlands cartesianisme (avec sommaire et table des matières en français)*. Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche uitgevers Maatschappij, 1954.
Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. 3 vols. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992–1997.
Twiss, William. *Vindiciae gratiae, potestatis, ac providentiae Dei*. Amsterdam: Willem Blaeu, 1632.
Verbeek, Theo. *Descartes and the Dutch: Early Reactions to Cartesian Philosophy, 1637–1650*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.
Verbeek, Theo. "Wittich's Critique of Spinoza". In *Receptions of Descartes: Cartesianism and Anti-Cartesianism in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Tad M. Schmaltz, 103–116. London: Routledge, 2005.
Voetius, Gisbertus. *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars prima*. Utrecht: Johannes van Waesberge, 1648.
Weier, Winfried. "Cartesianischer Aristotelismus im siebzehnten Jahrhundert". *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 14 (1970): 35–65.
Wittich, Christoph. *Anti-Spinoza sive examen Ethices Benedicti de Spinoza et commentarius de Deo et ejus attributis*. Amsterdam: Johannes Wolters, 1690.
Wittich, Christoph. *Theologia pacifica*. Leiden: Arnold Doude, 1671.
Wittich, Christoph. *Theologia pacifica defensa*. Amsterdam: Johannes Wolters, 1689.
Wolfson, Harry Austryn. *The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning*. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.