

On Existence¹

To exist it is necessary that the aggregate of all the requisites be present. A requisite is that without which something cannot be. An aggregate of all requisites is the full cause of a thing. Nothing is without a reason. Because nothing is without an aggregate of all requisites. In bodies there is no reason of existing. As can be demonstrated easily, [since] evidently even if you go back to infinity, you will only multiply bodies; you will not understand why this is so rather than otherwise. The aggregate of all the requisites of any given body is beyond the bodies. The aggregate of all the requisites of one body, and the aggregate of all the requisites of another body is in one and the same. That single thing, whatever it is, is the last reason of things. For what is true concerning bodies, the same is true concerning any other things whatsoever which do not exist by necessity, that is, in which there is no reason of existing in themselves. A necessary being must be unique. A necessary being contains in itself the requisites of all things. A necessary being acts in itself, that is thinks. For thinking is nothing other than perceiving oneself. A necessary being acts through the most simple. For from among infinite possibilities certain ones are most simple, but the most simple ones are the ones which display the most. The reason of this is because there is no reason which determines the others. Harmony is this very thing, a certain simplicity in a multitude. And in this beauty and pleasure consist. And that things exist is the same as that they were understood by God as best or maximally

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harmonic. For we have no idea of existence other than that we understand that things are perceived. Nor could there be another, because existence in is not included in essence itself except of necessary beings. Without perceivers nothing would exist. Without a first perceiver which is also the cause of things, nothing would be perceived. The harmony of things demands that there be in bodies those things which act on themselves. Concerning the nature of a being acting on itself. It acts through the most simple; for in this is harmony, where once begun, it is eternal. Of those things which it perceives and has done there are ideas in it, as in God, except that in God [ideas] are all and at once. The mind forgets nothing ever, because ideas in the mind itself are imperishable. Motion once given is continued necessarily. Thinking or awareness of self (*sensus sui*), that is action upon oneself, is continued necessarily but I do not yet see that action of an agent in a body is necessarily continued in itself; however the fact that it is continued, arises from the harmony of things; that is from God's will. That miracles are done with the help of certain minds. Certain minds can be united singularly to God, those of course which are given perfected action according to reason: and the force of motion of their bodies is so great that they cannot be overcome by surrounding bodies.