I wish to develop and offer evidence for an interpretation of Spinoza's doctrine of the infinite. To accomplish this, I attempt, in part 1, to establish that Spinoza knew well and rejected Descartes' doctrine of the infinite, except for a nonsystematic element Spinoza made his own. I then argue that Spinoza's own doctrine is a synthesis of medieval theories and the above Cartesian element. In part 2, I accept Wolfson's thesis that Spinoza was familiar with theories of 12th- to 14th-century Jewish (and Arabic) thinkers, but I suggest that the medieval theories with which Spinoza constructed his synthesis included those of 14th-century Christian Scholastics. With this as background, I attempt to evaluate, in part 3, the various contemporary solutions to the problem of God's infinite attributes. I conclude that a thinker familiar with 14th-century Scholastic theories of infinity could not have accepted unconditionally an equivalence between "absolutely infinite attributes" and "all attributes, without exception" - the basis of the Wolf-Kline solution to the problem of God's infinite attributes. So, I further conclude that one should accept the solutions of Gueroult and Curley, that unknown attributes are indeed a part of Spinoza's later philosophy, and that these unknown attributes do not entail that God is incomprehensible.

1. Descartes and Spinoza on Infinity

In Meditation III, Descartes considers the idea of God and whether there is something in it that cannot have originated from himself. The answer he gives is that since the idea of the infinite cannot originate from something finite, it has to have been placed in him by something truly infinite. As part of the argument Descartes considers whether he might be something greater than he himself understands. He investigates whether he might have potentially all the perfections he attributes to God, that is, whether it is possible that his faculties might be perfectible indefinitely (AT VII, 46; IX, 37). But he argues that even if he were able to perfect himself indefinitely he could not become infinite (or perfect). True infinity implies absolutely no potentiality; therefore, nothing increasing indefinitely will ever be actually infinite (AT VII, 47; IX, 37). For Descartes, God is the only being in whose perfections we notice no limits (Principles I, 27, AT VIII, 37); he is the only being we positively "intellect" as infinite (To More, 5 February 1649, AT V, 274). But we can see that he is greater than the world (To More, 15 April 1649, AT V, 345), so that the world cannot be called infinite (To Chanut, 6 June 1647, AT V, 52). However, it conflicts with our conception, or it involves a contradiction, that the world should be finite or bounded (To More, April 1649, AT V, 345). Hence we call
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it indefinite;\(^2\) we can say a thing is indefinitely large, provided we have no arguments to prove that it has bounds (\textit{To Chanut, 6 June 1647, AT V, 51 and Principles I, 27}). But that is not the same as knowing that it has no bounds: "I cannot deny that there may be some reasons [for the finiteness of the world] which are known to God though incomprehensible to me."\(^3\)

Descartes' indefinite is therefore to be understood as an epistemic notion, stemming from a limitation of our understanding, and not as a metaphysical notion, arising from the nature of things; our intellectual relations to the finite, indefinite, and infinite reflect this. For Descartes, the infinite is "incomprehensible."\(^4\) Since God is infinite, God is also incomprehensible: "As I have insisted in several places, when God or infinity is in question, we must consider not what we can comprehend - we know that they are beyond comprehension."\(^5\) And since the infinite is incomprehensible, Descartes rejects all disputes about it: "I have never written about the infinite except to submit myself to it and not to determine what it is or what it is not."\(^6\) But we must be able to receive the idea of God in some way, so that we must be able to stand in some intellectual relation to God. Although we cannot comprehend God's infinity and he is properly inconceivable (\textit{To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, AT I, 152}), we can know and perceive that God is infinite (\textit{To Mersenne, 27 May 1630, AT I, 152; AT IX, 210}) and we can have an idea of him (\textit{To Mersenne, July 1641, AT III, 393; To Regius, 24 May 1640, AT III, 64}).

Spinoza knows Descartes' doctrine well and expounds it fully. Initially he seems to accept many of its elements; ultimately he rejects the doctrine. The doctrine he finally formulates echoes the discussions of the medievals on infinity,\(^7\) but it is inserted into a framework Spinoza might have considered as genuinely Cartesian. In his exposition of Descartes' \textit{Principles of Philosophy}, Spinoza refers to the traditional puzzles against actual infinity: "if an infinite is not greater than another, quantity A will be equal to its double, which is absurd," and "whether half an infinite number is also infinite, whether it is even or odd, and the like."\(^8\) He also refers to the traditional argument against potential infinity, that because of God's omnipotence, the impossibility of actual infinity entails the impossibility of potential infinity: "If two quantities, A and its double, are divisible to infinity, they will also be able to be actually divided into infinitely many parts by the power of God."\(^9\) In this exposition, Spinoza answers such problems as would Descartes, namely, that there are things which "exceed our intellect, or grasp, and that we therefore perceive only quite inadequately" (G I/191). This is the case with respect to the infinite and its properties. "For this reason Descartes considers those things in which we do not perceive any limits - like the extension of the world or the divisibility of matter - as indefinite."\(^10\) That is to understand Descartes' doctrine very well.

In the previously written \textit{Short Treatise}, Spinoza had endorsed for himself various portions of Descartes' doctrine, including "that a finite intellect cannot comprehend the infinite" (G I/16) and that man, being imperfect, cannot produce the idea of God (G I/18). But there is a movement in Spinoza's philosophy that draws him away from Descartes' doctrine, toward the complete comprehensibility of God and infinity.\(^11\) Even in the exposition of Descartes'