Journal of the American Philosophical Association (2026) 294–312 © The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the American Philosophical Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.
DOI:10.1017/apa.2026.10026

If God is Existence, the Universe is God

ABSTRACT: *This article articulates and defends an argument for pantheism which has not featured prominently in contemporary philosophy of religion but which is rooted in foundational ideas defended by pantheists and by non-pantheistic theists. It is inspired in part by the idea advocated by some theists that God is existence itself, and in part by the idea associated with pantheistic thinkers such as Śaṅkara that the universe is the "way" that fundamental existence is. Moreover, it is motivated by a simple and attractive view about God's fundamental nature which might be shared by pantheists and non-pantheists according to which God is the asymmetric source of all else. Beginning from this view about God's fundamental nature, it argues that God is existence. It then contends that there is therefore a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God, since the universe is the "way" existence is.*

KEYWORDS: classical theism, existence, pantheism, Sankara, creator theology

Pantheism is the view that the universe is God or is divine, where there is some flexibility regarding the understanding of "is" (Mander 2023). This article articulates and defends an argument for pantheism which has not featured prominently in contemporary philosophy of religion but which draws on foundational ideas associated with pantheists and non-pantheistic theists. The argument is inspired in part by the idea advocated by certain theists that God is existence itself (e.g., de Ray 2023). It is inspired in part by the idea associated with pantheistic thinkers such as Śaṅkara (1992, 1996) that the universe is the "way" that fundamental existence is. Finally, the argument starts from a simple and attractive view about God's fundamental nature which might be shared by pantheists and non-pantheists according to which God is the asymmetric source of all else (Kvanvig 2021). Beginning from this view about God's fundamental nature, it argues that God is existence. It then contends that there is therefore a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God, since the universe is the "way" existence is. I believe the argument is an important yet neglected argument for pantheism that deserves a definitive articulation in the contemporary literature, and I aim to offer that here.

I begin in Section 1 with a brief statement of the full argument and some comments that further contextualize it in the contemporary and historical literature and reinforce its value. Section 2 explains how the first part of it, which defends the sub-conclusion that God is existence, might be defended. Section 3 explains how the second part of it, which argues that if God is existence, the universe is God, might be defended. The concluding Section 4 summarizes the discussion and reiterates some of the significant features of the argument.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1. The Argument Stated and Contextualized

Below is a rough statement of the argument with numbered claims for ease of reference. We might call it "The Argument from Ultimate Sourcehood":

1. God is what gives existence to everything else without deriving existence from anything else.
2. Existence is what gives existence to everything else without deriving existence from anything else.
3. So, God is existence.
4. The universe is the way existence is.
5. If the universe is the way existence is, then there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence.
6. So, there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God.

There are several features to note about this overall statement of the argument.

First, it provides an example of what William Mander (2023) calls an "argument from above" in his field-guiding *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on pantheism. Arguments from above typically begin with some kind of view about the concept or role filled by God which might be shared between pantheists and non-pantheists, and then proceed to argue from this way of thinking about God to a pantheistic conclusion. Here we begin with an idea about God's giving existence to everything that is not God and not receiving God's own existence from anything that is not God, and argue from this claim to the conclusion that the universe in a clear and robust sense "is" God—a pantheistic conclusion. It's because the argument starts from this idea about God's ultimate sourcehood that I give it the title suggested above.

Second, this argument from above seems to be notably absent from contemporary works in mainstream philosophy of religion devoted to arguments for pantheism. For instance, Mander's own survey of arguments from above for pantheism references arguments based on ideas about God's omnipresence (e.g., Aranyosi 2022), continuous creation (Oakes 1983), omniscience (Mander 2000), and necessary substantiality. Of these, it seems clear that the argument presented above is quite different from arguments in the first three categories, having a different starting point from these. It is most similar to the fourth type of argument, which Mander associates with Spinoza (1985), Hegel (1977), Schelling (1978, 1988), and certain British Idealists (e.g., Sinclair 1922). Mander does not unpack how the argument from the necessary substantiality of God is supposed to work for these thinkers. But a brief perusal of the pantheistic arguments articulated by these authors reveals that they almost certainly did not present and defend the argument outlined above in just the way it is presented and will be defended here, even if their arguments do share similar starting points. Pantheistic arguments presented by these authors tend to significantly feature philosophical notions that play little or no role in the argument above, such as notions of infinity and causation in the case of Spinoza (Nadler 2023, sect. 2.1), the becoming of intelligibility for Schelling (Gabriel 2015), consciousness and the historical development of spirit for Hegel (Redding 2020), and the reality of time for British Idealists such as May Sinclair (Thomas 2019). It's not obvious that all of these thinkers even intend to offer

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

arguments for pantheism, and in any event these are not contemporary authors. The value of presenting and developing the above argument lies partly in its being a contemporary statement of an argument for pantheism that will inevitably draw on contemporary categories and ways of explaining things which are bound to differ from its historical antecedents. As I will discuss below, I tend to see the historical antecedents of the argument from ultimate sourcehood more clearly reflected in aspects of the thought of other figures with varying relations to pantheism including Augustine (2012), Aquinas (1975), and Śaṅkara (1992, 1996), though I also note some similarities with Spinoza (1985).

Mander's brief survey is not the only sign that the argument articulated above is not featured in contemporary discussions of pantheism. Pantheism has received comparatively far less attention from contemporary philosophers than non-pantheistic theism has, especially in works written in English. Efforts aimed at correcting this disparity have led to edited books (e.g., Nagasawa and Buckareff 2016) and special journal issues (e.g., Nagasawa & Buckareff 2019a,b) with essays defending versions of pantheism and panentheism. But none of the chapters or papers in these collections has focused on articulating and defending the argument presented above, either. Nor is the argument featured in chapters concerned with pantheism included in survey texts in philosophy of religion (e.g., Levine 2012). Thus, an articulation and defense of this argument should make a welcome addition to contemporary treatments of arguments for pantheism.

Interest in the argument is only further supported by the final general feature I wish to note about it here, which concerns sources of support for what we might think of as the two main parts of the argument. As we will see, the first "part" of the argument—the defence of sub-conclusion (3) which identifies God with existence itself—seems if anything to be undergoing a kind of contemporary resurgence among philosophical theists, and influential historical theists have also seemed to voice sympathy for this sub-conclusion. What seems less common are contemporary arguments that aim to derive a pantheistic conclusion from this conception of God. (This is why I have given the article its selected title.) One of the things I aim to show is that this way of thinking about God as existence itself fits very naturally into a pantheistic view of the relationship between God and the universe. A defence of this conditional claim should be of interest in our contemporary context even if readers ultimately judge that its lesson is that the view of God as existence itself should be abandoned.

I will suggest below that the second "part" of the argument—the argument from (3) to (6)—fits very well with some of the ideas expressed by the classical exponent of Advaita Vedānta, Śaṅkara (8th c.). It is noteworthy that the same sources in mainstream contemporary philosophy of religion noted above make no reference to Śaṅkara. Thus, the argument also takes advantage of an opportunity to reintroduce ideas associated with a somewhat overlooked but important historical figure and advocate their relevance for contemporary discussions.[1] While some

[1] Another recent author who has been concerned to reintroduce ideas from Śaṅkara and to advocate their relevance to philosophers of religion has been Jessica Frazier (2024). Frazier's main focus has been on Śaṅkara's monism and its relationship to contemporary monisms.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

recent authors have endorsed both the view that God is existence itself and pan(en) theism (e.g., Johnston 2009) and others have assessed the compatibility of Advaita Vedānta with classical theism (Baldwin & McNabb 2023), I am not aware of anyone defending the argument developed here.

2. Defending the Claim that God is Existence

I now turn to how the first part of the argument, its defence of the sub-conclusion (3) that God is existence, might be carried out. My aim is to clarify how premises (1) and (2) should be understood, to identify the kinds of considerations they have going for them, and to respond to some sample objections to them.

Start with claim (1) that God is that which gives existence to everything else but does not derive existence from anything else. This is a claim about God we can very easily imagine non-pantheistic theists and not just pantheists affirming. It confirms God's foundational role in explaining the existence of anything other than God, and God's ontological independence or aseity in not having God's own existence explained by anything else more fundamental than God.

But in fact there are multiple ways we might understand what is being claimed by (1). It might be understood as providing a complete theory of God's fundamental nature of the sort that Jonathan Kvanvig (2021) seeks when he engages in the project of metatheology. What is sought in Kvanvig's project is a simple and accurate theory of God's fundamental nature which can serve as an adequately fecund source for developing a full theology. The aim is to identify that minimal set of claims about God's nature required in order to derive all the claims about God we believe must be retained within our full description of God's nature. Kvanvig discusses one account of God's fundamental nature that is very near to (1), "Creator Theology", which characterizes God as the asymmetric source of all else. He argues that from this conception of God's fundamental nature we can derive many of the other attributes commonly ascribed to God, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness—or something near enough to these. But ultimately, he worries that we cannot derive God's worship-worthiness from the view that God is merely the source of all, and so he ultimately opts for an alternative theory of God's fundamental nature which claims that God is the worship-worthy source of all.

Kvanvig's work and other work which has similarly advocated the fecundity of the starting point of Creator Theology provides reason to entertain (1) as offering a complete theory of God's fundamental nature. It is not without reason that Kvanvig gives extended treatment to the characterization of God as asymmetric source of all else as one salient candidate for an adequate theory of God's fundamental nature. The idea of being the ultimate source of all else is certainly central to the way that God's fundamental nature has typically been conceived. Feser (2023, 10), for instance, in the introductory chapter to a recent volume of essays on classical theism, describes "Classical theism" as "the thesis that God is to be conceived *first and foremost* as the ultimate reality in the order of being, and the ultimate explanation of things in the order of discovery" – "first and foremost" here indicating the foundational and controlling influence that this sourcehood conception exerts for the classical theist over what else can be said about God.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Moreover, while Kvanvig is committed to requiring that a complete theory of God's fundamental nature must enable the derivation of God's worship-worthiness in addition to the other attributes noted above, others might doubt whether worship-worthiness or these other attributes must be derivable from God's fundamental nature (see, e.g., Bayne and Nagasawa 2006, Murphy 2025), or they may be more optimistic about the ability to derive worship-worthiness from God's being characterized in accordance with (1). Treating (1) as offering a theory of God's fundamental nature is not at all a non-starter, especially if we have less ambitious goals for such a theory than Kvanvig does. Thus, one way to argue in support of (1) is to view it as offering an attractive complete theory of God's fundamental nature.

Yet, (1) *needn't* be understood as offering a complete theory of God's fundamental nature in order for the argument articulated in this article to get off the ground. Rather, it could instead be understood more weakly as a claim about a role played by God. On this reading, it just says that what in fact gives existence to everything else and doesn't derive existence from anything else is God. If we go out and "find", so to speak, what plays this role, we will have found God. This is true even if God's fundamental nature is not exhausted by playing this foundational role in metaphysical explanation. This reading of (1) allows that it may not be a conceptually necessary truth that anything that gives existence to everything else and doesn't derive existence from anything else is God. It is just that what does in fact give existence to everything else without deriving existence from anything else is God. That which in fact occupies the fundamental position in the order of metaphysical explanation is God. This is a second and less demanding way to argue for (1) which could be accepted, for instance, by a theist who accepted Kvanvig's account of God's fundamental nature.

Defending (1) in this second way would restrict the audience of the argument to theists, since it is only theists who agree that God in fact plays the role specified in (1). But restricting the argument to theists is no major detriment. We are not necessarily aiming to provide an argument both for theism and pantheism (though the first route to defending (1) would do that); an argument from theism to pantheism is interesting enough.

Turn then to claim (2). This claim, associated historically with Platonism, proposes that what in fact plays the role of giving existence to everything else but not deriving existence from anything else is existence itself. If we go out and find what plays the role specified in (1), we'll find that it is existence that plays this role. Existence itself gives existence to everything else that exists without deriving existence from anything else that exists. It occupies the fundamental position in the order of metaphysical explanation.

Cristophe de Ray (2023) gives perhaps the most thorough and compelling defense of this idea in recent scholarship in philosophy of religion. He argues that in order to make sense of the fact that the many things that exist all exist, we should posit that there is something they somehow have in common that accounts for their qualifying as existing things. De Ray argues that we should not succumb to Kantian- or Russellian-inspired skepticism of the reality of existence itself, and instead should posit that there is something real which accounts for that which existing things share in common in virtue of which they are all appropriately described as existing.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Existence itself does this job perfectly. It is because of the presence of existence in existing things that they exist. This much secures the first half of claim (2) – existence gives existence to everything else.

Yet, surely we should not claim both that existence gives existence to everything else and that it derives existence from something else. For suppose we claimed that existence gave existence to everything else and also derived its existence from some other thing, T. Then the explanation of the existence of existence and of T will be circular. T's existence will explain existence's existence, which explains T's existence, and existence's existence will explain T's existence, which explains existence's existence. Insofar as such circular explanations are vicious and we wish to avoid them, we should embrace the entirety of claim (2) if we are to embrace its first half.

It is worth pointing out that these arguments make best sense against a plausible background assumption highlighted by de Ray (2023, 667) that in order for something E to give existence to something else, E must itself exist. Non-existent things can't give existence to anything. This assumption prevents us from saying, for example, that something non-existent (instead of existence itself) gives existence to each existing thing, and also prevents us from saying that something non-existent gives existence to existence itself. In this way, this assumption increases the plausibility that it must be existence (if anything) that gives existence to everything that exists, and that existence cannot also derive its existence from anything else.

The assumption also reinforces what the argument already assumes about existence – that it exists or is real. De Ray (and other exponents of the present view, such as Vallicella 2002) argues that in order to make good sense of how existence can exist, we ultimately need to posit two ways that something can exist. Either a thing can exist by participating in existence, deriving its existence from existence itself, or it can exist by being existence. In the latter case of existence itself, we have that which exists par excellence as the paradigmatic existent.

At this point, we can imagine ways that someone unsympathetic with the sub-conclusion (3) that God is existence might object to (1), (2), or their conjunction. Perhaps most pressing would be the following worry that targets the conjunction. It might be that for some targets of the argument, (1) only comes across as plausible if we understand the way God "gives" existence in terms of efficient causation, whereas the way that existence is claimed to "give" existence to existing things in (2) is not understood in terms of efficient causation. God "gives" existence to existing things in the sort of way that a flying billiard ball "gives" existence to a broken window (though not *exactly* like this of course, given creation *ex nihilo*), whereas existence as just described seems to "give" existence instead by virtue of existing things sharing or participating in it. Effectively, the argument commits equivocation with the term "gives existence".

I'm ultimately prepared to grant that for some targets of the argument, this may be a reasonable way of resisting it. If one already has strong independent reason for thinking that the way God "gives" existence to other existing things must be via efficient causation, this argument may not prove convincing. This is hardly a surprising result, as this way of thinking about God's explanatory relationship with the world seems already to privilege a non-pantheistic version of theism. Insofar as God's explanatory relationship to existing things is thought of in terms

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of an efficient causation which involves positing the sort of "distance" between God and existing things that there is between flying billiard balls and broken windows, it seems that it will be hard to argue from a claim about this explanatory relationship with existing things to a pantheistic conclusion.

While I'm ultimately prepared to grant that the argument might not be persuasive for such targets (it's bound not to be persuasive for some, after all!), I think the class of potential targets for whom it may prove attractive is wider than we might at first think, and wider than this objection would suggest as well. This is for two reasons.

First, there are reasons to resist adopting an efficient-causal construal of God's sourcehood. One might resist it because they think it's unnecessarily specific. According to Kvanvig, it's only if we found that God's sourcing of all else must be understood in terms of efficient causation in order to generate the claims we require of our full theology of God's nature that we should prefer an efficient-causal reading of God's sourcehood to a more liberal reading from the perspective of metatheology. However, Kvanvig derives the theological claims discussed above from an intentionally generic version of the sourcehood view. Thus, insofar as our support for (1) is derived from attraction to theories of God's fundamental nature that include a claim of divine sourcehood, this support may not license an efficient-causal reading of (1). Pearce (2017) goes even further than Kvanvig, arguing that classical theists should reject explaining God's sourcehood in efficient-causal terms, because doing so undermines the force of the cosmological argument. Roughly, his concern is that if God's sourcehood is understood as just one more case of the same kind of causation we find already in the universe, it cannot be appealed to in order to explain all of "history"—all instances of one thing causing another—which provides the best framing of the cosmological argument. It may be then that a wider audience than initially thought either lacks positive reasons to prefer an efficient causal reading of (1) or has positive reasons to reject it.

Second, we might question the way that God's efficient causation is being understood by this objection, as being modelled on the sort of causal relationship that obtains between flying billiard balls and broken windows. A more apt analogy, still describable as a case of efficient causation, can perhaps be found in the case of a person causing their attention to focus on something by willing this. It is in a similar way that God, according to the present suggestion, causes other things to exist by willing them to exist. If this is how God is understood to "give" existence to existing things, it may be that this does not necessarily require disputing (2). As noted above, if we understand the efficient causation whereby God gives existence to existing things as analogous to billiard balls and broken windows, we create distance between God and existing things that is not reflected in distance between existence and existing things, since existence is somehow "in" existing things. However, if we understand God's efficient causation as analogous to a person's causing their attention to focus on something by willing this, the distance between God and God's effects would be shrunk considerably (cf. Pearce's account of God's causation in Oppy and Pearce 2021). If we understood how God "gives" existence in claim (1) in terms of this kind of efficient causation, this may leave room to coherently support claim (2). We could coherently affirm (2) alongside this reading of (1) if we are willing to accept that existence "gives" existence to existing things by

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

willing them. Certainly this is an option that some pantheists have been attracted to. And it might be defended on grounds of ontological simplicity. The simplest way to retain both the claim that God asymmetrically "gives" existence to existing things by willing them and the claim that existence asymmetrically "gives" existence to existing things is to claim that existence is God and that the way it gives existence to existing things is the way God does. This view avoids the consequence that the existence of existing things is systematically overdetermined.

I don't take this as any kind of knock-down defense in response to the worry about equivocation between (1) and (2). But what I hope it illustrates is that a larger group of potential targets may find the unequivocal versions of (1) and (2) jointly plausible.

Additionally, we might consider objections that target (2) independently from its connection to (1). Most prominent here will likely be the Kantian- and Russellian-inspired worries referenced earlier which argue against the reality of existence. While I can't do justice to debates about these (or related, e.g., Aristotelian) objections here, I will briefly indicate how these objections tend to be understood and suggest ways they might be neutralized.

The Kantian worry is perhaps best understood in this context as arguing that it doesn't make sense to treat existence as a feature things can have because for anything to have a feature it already has to exist (Nelson 2020). For a thing to have existence as a feature, it would have to already exist; and so it's having existence couldn't do anything to explain its existing. There is of course extensive discussion of this kind of concern with contemporary authors continuing to be divided about the topic. My own take, briefly, is that the way a thing should be understood as "having" existence is different from the way it is understood as "having" other features by the objector here. In order to "have" existence a thing needn't first exist. Rather, it "has" existence in some other way. The language of "having" can be misleading here, as it can naturally suggest the metaphysical priority of the existing thing over existence. Given the kind of relationship we are looking for between existing things and existence in (2), it would be less misleading to describe existence as "giving rise" to existing things, or as "manifesting" in them. Existing things depend for their existence on existence itself, not the other way around. If anything "has" features in the way the objector is understanding that relation, it only "has" features other than existence that way; existence is manifested in things differently. I return to this idea of manifestation in Section 3.

Russellian-inspired worries are concerned with the seeming inability of views which affirm the reality of existence to yield appropriate truth-values for negative singular existential sentences like "Pegasus does not exist" without endorsing the reality of non-existent objects (Russell 1905). Following de Ray above, we suggested that in order to make good sense of how it is that many things exist, we should posit something, existence, that they somehow have in common. But, Russell and his followers would argue, consistent application of this motivation for the present view would require treating the sentence "Pegasus does not exist" as making a claim about whether Pegasus possesses this shared existence feature as well. But that involves treating the claim as stating that there is something, Pegasus, that does not exist. We must either then say that this is true and there are non-existent things, or we must say it is false and not be able to uphold the appropriate truth-value for this negative

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

existential. Russell and his followers offer an alternative rendering of singular existential statements as statements about whether some descriptive property (e.g., winged horse) is instantiated by anything, seeming to offer a way to secure the correct truth-conditions for negative singular existential sentences but also undermining the motivation for treating existence as a real feature.

Of course, there is an extensive literature on this topic, with contemporary authors divided about it. The descriptivist approach of Russell and followers has come in for a good deal of criticism (e.g., Salmon 1981, Soames 1998), and multiple approaches that aim to retain the view that existence is a genuine feature of things have been developed—some which claim it is a feature of only some things (Zalta 1992), some which claim it is a contingent feature of all things (Adams 1981), and some that claim it is a necessary feature of all things (Williams 2013). My own take, briefly, is that Russell and his followers seem to exemplify an overcommitment to the idea that the truth- (or assertability-, etc.) conditions of sentences with the same surface structure in natural languages must always be given by the same analysis. Rejecting this commitment would allow that while sentences like "Obama exists" are true because Obama has existence, sentences like "Pegasus does not exist" are true (or assertable, etc.) not because there is something, Pegasus, that doesn't exist but for another reason (cf. Griffith 2015). They might be true (or …) because Pegasus is not concrete. They might even be true (etc.) for the reason Russell or his followers might give. We can appeal to existence to explain the truth of positive existential sentences, and needn't appeal to it in the same way to explain the falsehood of negative existentials.

Suppose, then, that we accept (1) and (2). If so, we get sub-conclusion (3) that God is existence. Given the way we have defended this claim here, I think it is plausible to understand the claim as one about numerical identity: God and existence are numerically identical. While the reasoning was of course *a priori*, the argument was not unlike arguments for *a posteriori* necessities, such as the claim that water is H_2O. Just as we can start with an idea about the role that water plays as the stuff of streams and lakes and then identify what it is that plays this role as H_2O, thereby concluding that water is identical to H_2O, here we start with an idea about the role that God plays as asymmetric existence-giver and then identify what it is that plays this role as existence, and conclude thereby that God is identical to existence.

This view that God is existence itself is more common among theists than some readers might appreciate. De Ray cites Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm as apparent advocates of the view. Augustine (2012, ch.7) wrote, "[The] supreme Being makes everything to be that is, which is why he is also called Being". Boethius likewise affirmed that God is "Being itself" in which all beings participate (Klima et al 2007, 318). And Anselm described God as "supreme existence" through whom everything else exists (Davies and Evans 1998, 18). To these we may also add Aquinas, of whom Ventimiglia says that the view that God is "subsistent being itself" has tended to be viewed as "the distinctive trait of his theology" (2018, 163). Among more recent authors, the view is perhaps most closely associated with theologian Paul Tillich (1957). Moreover, it is making a resurgence or at least becoming more visible among contemporary analytic philosophers of religion as well, being defended or at least endorsed, for instance, by Vallicella (2002), Johnston (2009), Davies (2006), Stump

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(2023), Cottingham (2024), Dolezal (2011), Miller (2012), Stenmark (2015), Koons (2023), de Haan (2023), Baldwin and McNabb (2023), and Tomaszewski (2023), among others. It is frequently connected to and motivated by the doctrine of divine simplicity, with Tomaszewski (2023, 235) even saying that the claim that "God is 'simple, uncompounded Being'" is the "core" of the doctrine of divine simplicity.

My defence of the first part of the argument from ultimate sourcehood has been only modestly original. Many of the authors just cited would probably be sympathetic with most of it. It was tempting to skip the argument for (3) and just start with (3) as a premise, noting that it has been affirmed by many theists historically and is experiencing something of a contemporary resurgence. The argument I've given for (3) is not the only way to argue for (3). In fact, de Ray (2023) and Ventimiglia (2018) both offer different arguments for (3). It is possible that some readers may find the argument from (3) to (6) persuasive even if they don't buy my argument for (3), and this is worth keeping in mind. Still, I found it worthwhile to articulate the above argument for (3) to show how a full argument for (7) can be based on an appealing conception of God's fundamental nature. Moreover, as we'll see shortly, some of the ideas appealed to en route to defending (3) will prove useful again when arguing from (3) to (7).

3. Defending the Claim that the Universe "is" God

Suppose, then, that God is identical to existence itself. The remainder of the argument aims to show that if this is the case, then there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God, thereby securing a pantheistic conclusion. It does so via two premises and an application of Leibniz's law of the indiscernibility of identicals:

4. The universe is the way existence is.
5. If the universe is the way existence is, then there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence.
6. So, there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God.

The first premise, (4), claims that the universe is the way existence is. By "universe" here I mean the totality of spatiotemporal reality. If ours is the only universe, then "universe" just refers to it. If instead there is a multiverse of many universes, "universe" refers to this multiverse. I am supposing that universes consist of particular space-time existing things such as you, me, and our belongings, planets, stars, and so on. If time and space are existing things themselves, then universes include them too. If in addition to these space-time existing things, there are existing things that are not space-time things, such as numbers or sets or moral properties, "universes" in my sense include them too. When I say that the "universe" is the way existence is, I intend to be claiming that all the existing things other than existence itself are the way existence is.

This is probably best understood in terms of plural reference, though I won't insist on it. Understood in terms of plural reference, claim (4) says that the many existing things are the way that existence is. Or, if you prefer, each of them is a way that existence is. We might opt instead for a rendering that doesn't employ plural

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reference if we thought that the many so-called existing things aren't real but that the universe, which is real, is just one big thing. On that way of thinking about the universe, claim (4) would say that the one big existing thing there is, the universe, is the way existence is.

Either way, (4) has considerable intuitive appeal. As an initial starting point, consider the question, "What is existence like"? It's very tempting to answer by referring to existing things. "Existence is (at least partly) spatio-temporal." "Existence includes planets and stars." "Existence is like me and you." And so forth. We get closer to an exhaustive description of what existence is like the more existing things we reference. This suggests that existing things are how existence is, the way that it is.

This intuitively attractive view is reinforced by the way that existence and its relationship to existing things is described in (2). What (2) requires is that there be an asymmetric relation of metaphysical explanatory priority running from existence to existing things. If we survey candidates for such a relation, it is tempting to settle on ones that will license the claim that the existing things are the way that existence is. The relation of efficient causation understood along the lines of billiard balls and broken windows, as noted above, doesn't seem a good model of the relationship between existence and existing things. Existence is closer to existing things than this; it is, as we might put it, in them, not without them. But if existence is in all existing things, it seems that what makes the difference from one existing thing to another is just how existence is manifested in each. Existence is one way in one existing thing, and another way in another existing thing. In you it's you-like and in me it's me-like. But, then we have the conclusion we're after: each existing thing is a way that existence is.

When we do our best to explain how existence must be related to existing things so that (2) is true, we land with a view on which (4) is true. The universe and all within it derives its existence from existence itself because existence itself manifests itself in the universe and all within it. The universe and all within it is the way existence is. This view is both supported by (2) and intuitive in its own right insofar as it is tempting to think that existing things are how existence is.

If the universe is the way existence is, this will deliver a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence—claim (5). Here, consider an analogy. Suppose we have Socrates and he sits, making seated Socrates. Seated Socrates is just the way that Socrates is when Socrates sits. And there is a clear and robust sense in which seated Socrates just "is" Socrates. Seated Socrates, it's tempting to say, is nothing over and above Socrates. Socrates, we might say, constitutes seated Socrates, and does so by sitting. Seated Socrates is just Socrates, sat.

Likewise, suppose we have existence, and it manifests in this particular universe—or, to stipulate a term for convenience—suppose existence 'this-universes'. When it does, this makes this universe. This universe is just the way that existence is when it this-universes. And as with Socrates, there is a clear and robust sense in which this universe just "is" existence. This universe is nothing over and above existence. Existence constitutes this universe, and does so by this-universing. This universe is just existence, this-universed.

It is not that existence and this universe are numerically identical, any more than seated Socrates is numerically identical to Socrates. There are things true of seated

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Socrates that are not true of Socrates and vice versa; there are things true of this universe that are not true of existence itself and vice versa. For instance, seated Socrates is essentially sat, whereas Socrates isn't; and this universe is essentially a universe of existing things, whereas existence isn't. So it's not that the universe "is" existence by being numerically identical to it.

Rather, the universe "is" existence in a sense analogous to how seated Socrates "is" Socrates. We might understand this "is" in terms of constitution or manifestation. We might say that by being the particular way this universe is, existence "becomes" this universe, much as Socrates "becomes" seated Socrates when he sits. Being like this universe is a contingent way that existence happens to be.

A similar analogy is used by Śaṅkara in his discussion of the relationship between ultimate reality, *brahman*, and the universe, and is taken by Śaṅkara to support a similar conclusion. In his commentaries on chapter six of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (1992) and chapter two of the *Brahmasūtra* (1996), Śaṅkara compares the relationship between *brahman* and the universe to that between clay and a pot fashioned from this clay. Here it seems that the pot is the way the clay is when it is shaped into a pot. The pot asymmetrically metaphysically depends on the clay. And Śaṅkara takes this to support the view that the pot is nothing more than the clay. The pot in a clear and robust sense "is" the clay. And likewise for Śaṅkara the universe "is" *brahman*. As Dalal (2021) explains the view, *brahman* is "pure undifferentiated existence" which "does not depend on objects, but objects depend on existence. Objects borrow their existence from this metaphysical ground and lack any independent being apart from it. They are not different than their cause" (sect. 2.1). Indeed, the universe as a whole "is not identical to *brahman* (even though reducible to *brahman*), but is not different either—it does not constitute a second reality" (*ibid.*, 2.3). The universe and *brahman* are not two, but one. *Brahman* is all that is ultimately real; the universe is just how *brahman* manifests.

There are of course different ways we could understand Śaṅkara and that interpreters have understood him. On one reading, the universe and *brahman* are both real but in fundamentally different ways, with *brahman* being more real; on another the universe is not real in any way and only *brahman* is real.[2] The second interpretation fits better with some of Śaṅkara's other analogies, such as his analogy of dreams. The appearance of things in dreams depends on real experiences, but things aren't really the way they appear in dreams—the appearance is misleading. In an analogous way, the universe might be viewed as a merely misleading appearance of *brahman*. It is not how *brahman* in fact is, but only how *brahman* appears.

The first reading fits better with the way I have developed the argument here. Existing things are real in some way and are not merely misleading ways that existence appears to be. They are ways existence really is, not just ways it appears to be. This can be affirmed while affirming, as Śaṅkara would want to, that existence is somehow more real than existing things. After all, as noted above, existence exists in a different way than existing things do and gives existence to those things, which can be and is used by Śaṅkara to support its greater comparative reality.

[2] Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of (Dalal 2021) illustrate the interpretive tension well.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

While I have developed the present argument in a way that fits better with the first reading of Śaṅkara, it is certainly worth considering a version of the argument that fits better with the second reading. We might generate such an argument by replacing claims about "giving existence" to existing things in (1) and (2) with claims about "generating the appearance" of existing things, and claims about existing things being "the way existence is" in (4) and (5) with claims about the existing things being "the way existence appears". Here "generation" might be understood as an even more flexible notion than "giving" existence, and the attraction of the argument may again lie in its comparative simplicity. Perhaps the simplest way to explain how it could be both that God asymmetrically generates all appearances and existence does this as well is to claim that God is existence and these appearances are misleading, because all there really is is God/existence.

It is easy to overstress the difference between these two ways of reading Śaṅkara on the relationship between existence and existing things, missing how they are united. Both deliver clear senses in which the universe ultimately "is" existence and in which existence has metaphysical priority over existing things.

We might anticipate at this point various objections that could be raised to (4), (5) or their conjunction. Perhaps chief among these would be an objection to their conjunction which claims that if existing things are ways existence is, as in (4), then it could not be that there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence, as in (5). This contention is particularly attractive if we model our understanding of "ways" something can be on an understanding of properties as universals (Orilia and Paoletti 2020). Suppose we modelled our understanding of how the universe is a "way" that existence is on how redness is a way that several distinct ripe tomatoes are. This understanding of "ways" tends to drive a wedge between "ways" and things. Redness and the tomatoes are very different. They belong to different ontological categories, and it does not appear plausible that redness "is" one or more tomatoes or other red things.

I do tend to agree that if we are going to retain (4) and (5) in conjunction, we are better off not understanding "ways" in (4) as universals, for the reason just given. Understanding existing things, including the universe, as universals that existence exemplifies tends to drive too much of a wedge between them and make it more difficult to maintain that the universe "is" existence. Moreover, it seems to also be a category mistake, insofar as it seems to involve treating particular existing things as universals.

Thankfully, the motivations for (4) seem to support understanding "ways" in (4) differently. For, what leads us to (4) is the affirmation in (2) that there is a relationship of metaphysical priority running from existence to existing things which captures how existence is somehow "in" existing things and thereby explains the existing of particular existing things. Thinking of existing things as ways existence is can help to identify a relation of metaphysical priority running from existence to existing things. But if this relation is also to be one that captures how existence is "in" existing things and thereby explains the existing of particular existing things, it seems the most straightforward approach to doing so is to conceive of "ways" here as particulars. For example, I am a particular way existence is, and it is only because existence is in me that the particular, me, exists. While "manifestation" has not been

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

among the most popular terms for describing the relationship between ways a thing is and the thing, it has been used and defended as a fitting way to characterize the relationship between existence and existing things sought by certain pantheists such as Spinoza (Douglas 2023) and Śaṅkara (Dalal 2021; Frazier 2024) and I think it is heuristically useful here. I am a way existence is because existence manifests as me in me. This kind of manifestation relation delivers what we seek with (2): a relation of metaphysical priority that captures how existence is "in" existing things and thereby explains the existing of particular things. And it also seems to deliver a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence—the same sort of sense in which seated Socrates is Socrates. If existence manifests as the universe, the universe is existence thus-manifested, much as seated Socrates is Socrates sat.

I don't want to insist on this picture, however, or to rule out altogether a way of developing the current view which understands "ways" in (4) as universals. Perhaps one way to develop the view where ways are understood as universals is to draw inspiration from the second reading of Śaṅkara above. Treat so-called particular existing things as appearances, which are themselves universals. While the particular, me, doesn't really exist on this view, existence does exemplify the me-appearance universal. Existence is "in" the appearance universals in the sense that all appearances are appearances of existence. These appearance universals are ways existence is—appearing this way, that way, and so on. Yet, here it does seem that there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence, insofar as the universe is just how existence appears. It is the most comprehensive existence-appearance.

On either of these approaches, then, we seem to have a bit more detailed account of "ways" in (4) which is well-motivated by the reasons given for (2) and which secures a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" existence. Either the universe is the most complete particular way that existence manifests itself, or it is the most comprehensive appearance of existence.

Another objection might target the analogy used to support (5)—the analogy of Socrates and seated Socrates. One salient feature of this analogy is that Socrates has a body. This might seem to raise the theologically significant question of whether the present view requires viewing the universe as God's body in order for the analogy to be preserved, which might be viewed as a drawback.

One thing to say here is that viewing the universe as God's body has of course been one option some theists have been attracted to for understanding God's relation to the universe (e.g., Mawson 2006). It might be a surprising conclusion to draw, but if the argument given above is cogent perhaps this is just where we land. If the account of God's fundamental nature which motivates (1) does not clearly rule out thinking of the universe as God's body and the reasoning above following on from (1) is cogent, then we shouldn't find this conclusion too objectionable on theological grounds.

Yet, I don't think the argument forces this conclusion on us. Suppose that Socrates lacked certain features we tend to associate essentially with having a body, such as sensory perception, but Socrates could still sit. Maybe Socrates is an unsophisticated robot, for example, and Socrates sits. The supposed fact that robot Socrates doesn't have a "body" doesn't otherwise damage the analogy. When robot Socrates sits,

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

seated robot Socrates is the way robot Socrates is, and there is a clear and robust sense in which seated robot Socrates "is" robot Socrates.

We could even imagine structurally similar analogies that reference immaterial things. Suppose 'soul Socrates' is Socrates the Cartesian soul. We just need in the picture some way that souls can be. Maybe they can be searching. If they can, then when soul Socrates searches, we get soul-searching Socrates, which is a way that soul Socrates is when soul Socrates searches. Soul-searching Socrates just "is" soul Socrates, searching.

So, it's not clear that the Socrates analogy need be seen as motivating the view that the universe is God's body, or even the view that God is material as opposed to immaterial. Of course, the ultimate conclusion under discussion (6) is that the universe is God, and this view tends to be understood in such a way as to imply that God is material. But some have thought that the universe is not material. And we have also the second reading of Śaṅkara above which will not clearly imply that God is material; God may be beyond the material/immaterial distinction. Nothing about the Socrates analogy requires us to rule out these pantheistic views.

If we accept (4) and (5), this leads us to the main conclusion (6) that there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God. The sense is of course the same in which it is said that the universe "is" existence in (5). The universe is the most complete manifestation of God or the most comprehensive appearance of God. (6) is derived from (5) and (3) via the indiscernibility of identicals.

I've called (6) a "pantheistic" conclusion. There are two main reasons for this. One is that the view I've sketched here—both main versions of it—is associated with historically significant thinkers who tend to be described as pantheists, such as Śaṅkara and Spinoza.[3] These thinkers tend to describe the relationship between God and the universe using metaphysical machinery and analogies similar to that employed here. Insofar as the conclusion defended articulates a view that accommodates their approaches and they are seen as exemplars of pantheism, it makes sense to regard the conclusion as pantheistic.

The second reason for taking (6) to be pantheistic is the way that pantheistic views tend to be characterized for philosophical purposes today. Mander (2023) describes how pantheistic views are a family of views that can be characterized negatively or positively with a good deal of flexibility. Negatively, they can be characterized in terms of resisting the claim that God and the universe are distinct; positively they can be characterized in terms of affirming the claim that the universe in some sense "is" God, where there are various options available for understanding how to make sense of this "identity" claim, including the one in view here which identifies God with being itself. Pantheism tends to be understood then as a broad tent, with clear examples of views included in the tent that reflect the view defended here.

Could the view defended here be seen as a panentheistic view, rather than a pantheistic view? Panentheistic views maintain roughly that the universe is in God, but that God is more than the universe. There have been some authors who have defended views like the present one and described them as panentheistic, such as

[3] Some might allege that whether Śaṅkara is a pantheist is debateable. I discuss this concern toward the end of this section. Levine (1992) and Sprigge (1997) both interpret Śaṅkara as a kind of pantheist.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mark Johnston (2009). I think this question is somewhat vexed because there is even less agreement about how to characterize panentheism than there is about how to characterize pantheism (see Culp 2023, sect. 5). What I do think can be said is that the present view is less clearly distinct from panentheism than it is from other non-pantheistic theisms.

Whether the view might qualify as a panentheistic view will depend on what we take to be essential or characteristic of panentheism. For example, Brierley (2006) takes three claims to be definitive of panentheism: God is not separate from the cosmos, God is affected by the cosmos, and God is more than the cosmos. These claims may all seem quite plausible when considered in light of the seated Socrates analogy. It does seem that Socrates is not separate from seated Socrates—at least not when Socrates sits. Moreover, Socrates is affected by seated Socrates at least in the sense that the features of seated Socrates transfer to Socrates while Socrates is sat. Finally and perhaps most interestingly it seems very plausible that Socrates is "more" than seated Socrates, since seated Socrates is just the way Socrates happens to be and Socrates could have been otherwise. Similarly, we may expect that clear and robust readings of Brierley's three claims about God may be defensible on the present view. While there is a clear and robust sense in which the universe "is" God on the present view, it is also plausible that there is "more" to God than just the universe. Of course, as noted, this only secures panentheism on one way of characterizing panentheism, and there are others which tend to be more demanding. If the present view is counted as panentheistic, it seems that this will be on account of it being a special subtype of pantheistic view, not because it is non-pantheistic.

Rather than objecting that the present view is not pantheistic because it is panentheistic, one might object that it—or one version of it, at any rate—is not pantheistic because it is acosmic, denying the existence or reality of the universe. Focusing particularly on the adaptation of the second reading of Śaṅkara, it seems that the sense in which the universe "is" God is an eliminative sense in which we ultimately dispense with the universe. Mander says that a view which involves such a "denial of the reality of the world we all experience … hardly seems like a kind of pantheism" (2023, sect. 6). Yet in the same paragraph he describes the idealist tradition, which would be subject to this charge, as one of the most significant pantheistic "traditions". It's probably better, again, to just note that pantheism is a broad tent and that this version of pantheism is importantly different from others. In any event, it is not the only version, or even the main version, supported by the present argument.

4. Conclusion

I have aimed to articulate and defend an argument for pantheism that has not featured in recent mainstream philosophy of religion but which is noteworthy in several ways. It draws upon an idea regarding the relationship between God and existence itself which has been endorsed by leading lights of theism and pantheism and which is experiencing a contemporary upswing. It links this idea with pantheism in a way that is not typically done by contemporary advocates of the view. It draws upon ideas regarding the relationship between fundamental reality and the universe

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which seem to be supported by the historically important philosopher Śaṅkara whose ideas are not as well-reflected in contemporary works in philosophy of religion on pantheism. And it shows how to begin with a simple and attractive account of God's fundamental nature as the ultimate source of all else and to motivate pantheism based on this account.[4]

T. RYAN BYERLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD, UNITED KINGDOM
t.r.byerly@sheffield.ac.uk

References

Adams, Robert. 1981. "Actuality and Thisness." *Synthese* 49: 3–41.
Aranyosi, István. 2022. "Logical Pantheism." *Philosophy Compass* 17, 7: e12857.
Aquinas, Thomas. 1975. *Summa contra Gentiles*, translated by Anton C. Pegis. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
Augustine. 2012. *De Vera Religione*. In *On Christian Belief*, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Series I, Vol. 8, ed. Boniface Ramsey. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press.
Baldwin, Erik and McNabb, Tyler. 2023. "Searching for the Ineffable: Classical Theism and Eastern Thought about God." In *Classical Theism: New Essays on the Metaphysics of God*, ed. Jonathan Fuqua and Robert Koons, 194–208. Routledge Press.
Bayne, Timothy and Nagasawa, Yujin. 2006. "The Grounds of Worship." *Religious Studies* 42, 3: 299–313.
Brierley, Michael. 2006. "The Potential of Panentheism for Dialogue between Science and Religion." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, ed. Phillip Clayton and Zachary Simpson, 635–651. Oxford University Press.
Cottingham, John. 2024. "What is Existence?" *New Blackfriars* 105 (1): 3–12.
Culp, John. 2023. "Panentheism." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism/
Dalal, Neil. 2021. "Śaṅkara." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shankara/
Davies, Brian, and Evans, Gillian. 1998. *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*. Oxford University Press.
Davies, Brian. 2006. *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*. Continuum.
De Haan, Daniel. 2023. "Thomist Classical Theism: Divine Simplicity within Aquinas' *Triplex Via Theology*." In *Classical Theism: New Essays on the Metaphysics of God*, ed. Jonathan Fuqua and Robert Koons, 101–122. Routledge Press.
De Ray, Christophe. 2023. "Existence Exists, and it is God." *Religious Studies* 59, 4: 665–680.
Dolezal, James. 2011. *God without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness*. Pickwick.
Douglas, Alexander. 2023. "Spinoza's Theophany – The Expression of God's Nature by Particular Things." *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 11, 2: 49–69.
Feser, Edward. 2023. "What is Classical Theism?" In *Classical Theism: New Essays on the Metaphysics of God*, ed. Jonathan Fuqua and Robert Koons, 9–25. Routledge Press.
Frazier, Jessica. 2024. "What Kind of 'God' do Hindu Arguments for the Divine Show? Five Novel Divine Attributes of Brahman." *Sophia* 63, 3: 471–495.

[4] I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers and the editor of this journal for comments on previous versions of this paper. I am also grateful for feedback and discussion of the ideas of the article at the British Society for the Philosophy of Religion conference in September, 2025.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gabriel, Markus. 2015. "Aarhus Lectures – Third Lecture: The Prospects of Schelling's Critique of Hegel." *SATS* 16, 1: 114–137.
Griffith, Aaron. 2015. "How Negative Truths are Made True." *Synthese* 192, 1: 317–335.
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Johnston, Mark. 2009. *Saving God: Religion after Idolatry*. Princeton University Press.
Klima, Gyula, Allhof, Fritz, and Vaidya, Anand, eds. 2007. *Blackwell Readings in Medieval Philosophy*. Blackwell.
Koons, Robert. 2023. "Does the God of Classical Theism Exist?" In *Classical Theism: New Essays on the Metaphysics of God*, ed. Jonathan Fuqua and Robert Koons, 26–52. Routledge Press.
Kvanvig, Jonathan. 2021. *Depicting Deity: A Metatheological Approach*. Oxford University Press.
Levine, Michael. 1992. "Monism and Pantheism." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30, 4: 95–110.
Levine, Michael. 2012. "Non-theistic Conceptions of God." In *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan, 272–283. Routledge Press.
Mander, W. J., 2000, 'Omniscience and Pantheism,' *The Heythrop Journal* 41(2): 199–208.
Mander, William. 2023. "Pantheism." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pantheism/
Mawson, Tim. 2006. "God's Body." *Heythrop Journal* 47, 2: 171–181.
Miller, Barry. 2012. *The Fullness of Being: A New Paradigm for Existence*. University of Notre Dame Press.
Murphy, Mark. 2025. "Owing God Worship." In *The Philosophy of Worship: Divine and Human Aspects*, ed. Aaron Segal and Samuel Lebens, 189–208. Cambridge University Press.
Nadler, Steven. 2023. "Baruch Spinoza." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/
Nagasawa, Yujin and Buckareff, Andrei, eds. 2016. *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine*. Oxford University Press.
Nagasawa, Yujin and Buckareff, Andrei, eds. 2019a. "Alternative Concepts of God." *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 11, 2.
Nagasawa, Yujin and Buckareff, Andrei, eds. 2019b. "Special Issue on Pantheism and Panentheism." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 85, 1.
Nelson, Michael. 2020. "Existence." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existence/
Oakes, R., 1983, 'Does Traditional Theism Entail Pantheism?' *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20(1): 105–112.
Orilia, Franceso and Paoletti, Michele. 2020. "Properties." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/properties/
Oppy, Graham and Pearce, Kenneth. 2021. *Is there a God? A Debate*. Routledge Press.
Pearce, Kenneth. 2017. "Foundational Grounding and the Argument from Contingency," in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion, Vol.* 8, ed. Jonathan Kvanvig, 245–268. Oxford University Press.
Redding, Paul. 2020. "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta, available at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/
Russell, Bertrand. 1905. "On Denoting." *Mind* 14: 479–493.
Salmon, N. 1981. *Reference and Essence*. Princeton University Press.
Śaṅkara. 1992. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad With the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, translated by Swami Gambhirananda. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.
Śaṅkara. 1996. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya*, translated by Swami Gambhirananda. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.
Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von. 1978, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, translated by Peter Heath. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von. 1988. *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*, translated by Michael Vater. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
Sinclair, May. 1922. *The New Idealism*. London: Macmillan.
Soames, Scott. 1998. "The Modal Argument: Wide Scope and Rigidified Descriptions." *Nous* 32: 1–22.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Spinoza, Benedictus. 1985. *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*. In *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, Vol. 1, translated and edited by Edwin Curley. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Sprigge, T. L. S. 1997. "Pantheism." *The Monist* 80, 2: 191–217.
Stenmark, Mikael. 2015. "Competing Conceptions of God: The Personal God versus the God beyond Being." *Religious Studies* 51: 205–220.
Stump, Eleonore. 2023. "Aquinas on Being, Goodness, and Divine Simplicity." *New Blackfriars* 104 (1114): 780–795.
Thomas, Emily. 2019. "The Idealism and Pantheism of May Sinclair." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 5, 2: 137–157.
Tillich, Paul. 1957. *Dynamics of Faith*. Harper & Row.
Tomaszewski, Christopher. 2023. "How the Absolutely Simple Creator Escapes a Modal Collapse." In *Classical Theism: New Essays on the Metaphysics of God*, ed. Jonathan Fuqua and Robert Koons, 233–251. Routledge Press.
Vallicella, William. 2002. *A Paradigm Theory of Existence: Onto-Theology Vindicated*. Springer.
Ventimiglia, Giovanni. 2018. "Is the Thomistic of God as 'Ipsum Esse Subsistens' Consistent?" *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10, 4: 161–191.
Williamson, Timothy. 2013. *Modal Logic as Metaphysics*. Oxford University Press.
Zalta, Edward. 1992. "On Mally's Alleged Heresy: A Reply." *History of Philosophical Logic* 13, 1: 59–68.

https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2026.10026 Published online by Cambridge University Press