

Background Info

Conway was interested in religious mysticism and the New Philosophy of Descartes. she Lived during the same time as Spinoza and was debating an illness which caused her to converse to quaker. *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* was her only published work

Mind and Matter

Mind and matter are often understood as irreconcilable in EM (Early Modernity) *How are mind and matter connected?* Conway denies that there is a principle difference between mind and matter; she is a monist
According to her, there is a graded reality: parts of reality can be more or less spiritual or material.
-> and so, creatures can be made up of more and less spiritual parts

Many of the qualities attributed to either spirit or matter in previous literature (Descartes, Spinoza) become more flexible: For example, Matter/body was supposed to be impenetrable whereas spirit was supposed to be fully enetrable. In this way, a spirit could be in a body without any problem, but bodies could never be at the same place at the same time. Now, all is interpenetrable, but, more or less depending on howspiritual something is.

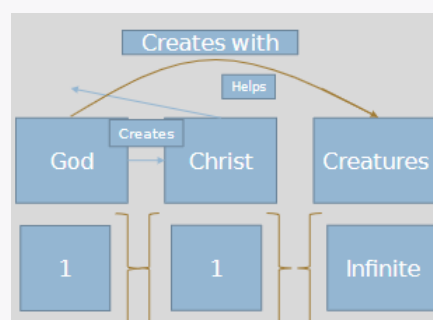
Scala Naturae

According to Conway, Man is not special but only in the gradient of spirituality different from animals (below humans) and angels (above them), everything on the gradient coincides with God insofar as they are spirit. Nothing is a machine

Three Substances

According to Conway, there are three substances: God, Christ, and Creatures.
There is one God, one Christ and an infinite number of creatures.
The substances are Hierarchically ordered: God, the creator, makes a creation: the creatures. But to do so he needs a mediator (Christ) as he himself would be too different from his creation to interact with it directly

Conway's substances



God's relation to creation

There are 2 options:
1. voluntary; therefore, what God will is good
2. necessitated; therefore it is by God's nature to do Good (intellectualism)
Descartes: God freely creates and is not necessitated by anything; creation should could have turned out in many ways
Spinoza: God is creation, there is no other ways thing could've turned out; his nature necessitates him
Conway: God is not free to do otherwise (intellectualism), as his nature fully necessitates him to be a good creature. He is free in the way that it is his own nature (an thus nothing outside of him) which influences him
-> she differentiates between 2 freedoms:
- freedom to do otherwise -> which God does not have

God's relation to creation (cont)

- freedom of external influence -> which God does have

The Attribute

Substances differentiate in their capacity for change/mutability
-> the attribute then is mutability
God is immutable -> there is nothing about him which can change, he is forever the same
Christ is mutable only towards the good -> Christ is the example of eternal perfectibility
Creatures are fully mutable -> a creature can do both good and bad things, in fact, it is essential to it that all options are in some sense open to it

Creatures are eternal becomings, according to Conway, creatures can be differentiated by the different paths of becoming they've taken over time.

Depending on its behavior a creature can take on another form, for example that of a rock, horse, human or angel

Conway's Argument

According to Conway, God is unmutable: since pure spirit cannot interact with anything it cannot change -> God = the pure spirit, the pure spirit = God
God needs to create things, but he cannot create things that share nothing with him at all: a pure body would be devoid of all godly properties.
So, the pure spirit cannot be created by God, as it is God. And since a pure body cannot be creted by God, it cannot exists. This leaves all of creations 'in the middle of'; everything is somewhat spiritual and somewhat bodily