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## Actuality and Necessity: Rereading Spinoza from a Modal Perspective<sup>1</sup>

As noted by Bergson, every great philosopher is possessed with a simple yet original intuition that makes their thoughts singular. In Baruch Spinoza's case, his original intuition was that *everything true is also actual and necessary*. His puzzling prima facie assertions in the *Ethica*, that God is identical with Nature, and that our minds are embedded in God's attribute of absolute thinking, etc., are all best understood as the unfolding of this fundamental intuition. As Spinoza remains an anomaly in the history of occidental philosophy, his writings are all the more inviting today for their unusual contentions, which challenge our thinking.

### 1 Determinism and Necessitarianism

We usually apply the term determinism to Spinoza's system. However, this is not exact, and may be false, for his position is something more than determinism. We may call it *necessitarianism*, though not without qualifications, as we shall see later. Suppose you are a determinist and find yourself arriving safe at the airport after a turbulent flight. You will say you were lucky. Your determinist creed will not hinder you from imagining factors that might have caused your plane to crash on the way. Having narrowly escaped disaster, you will say that an unhappy case was possible. Causal determinism believes that there exists an unbroken causal chain in which every event is the immediate consequence of the prior events that determine events to happen by causal necessity. However, this necessity, as noted by Leibniz, is nothing more than a *hypothetical necessity*.<sup>2</sup> Metaphysically, the causal chain A that comes down to your safe arrival is not the only one possible. Some other chain B that leads to a disaster seems to be equally possible. Deterministic chains A and B are equally possible, so that one cannot tell why A occurred rather than B. So a determinist has no scruples in saying that he was lucky, for he is not contradicting himself by imagining an alternative deterministic chain in which things could have been otherwise.

What Spinoza rules out is this metaphysical possibility that things could have been

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Osamu Ueno, "Genjitsusei to Hitsuzensei – Spinoza wo yohsohteki kanten kara yominaosu" [Actuality and Necessity – Rereading Spinoza from a Modal Point of View], *Philosophy (Tetsugaku)*, No.57, 2006, pp.77-92, and rewritten in English for the present version.

<sup>2</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique*, 13.

otherwise. Spinoza, a decided necessitarian, would assert the contrary: the alternative you imagined was simply impossible, and this is why your plane did not crash. Consider the proposition in the first part of his *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*:

Things could have been produced by God in no other way, and in no other order than they have been produced.<sup>3</sup>

In our example, the only possible causal chain was A, the actual one, and none other was possible. If your plane did not crash, it is because it was impossible for it to crash. This amounts to saying that the actual world is the only possible world. What is characteristic of Spinoza's thought and makes it distinct from any other deterministic system is the total annihilation of possible worlds other than the actual.

It is no surprise that the Amsterdam philosopher has been repellent to many for this unusual tenet, which goes against our modal intuition that things could have been otherwise. Even those who might feel easy accepting Spinoza's pantheistic picture will not readily submit to such an all-encompassing hard necessitarianism. And yet there is much reason to think that his whole system is working according to this unusual modal tenet. Was Spinoza modality-blind? Of course not. Then, how could Spinoza come to affirm that things we believe to be contingent are in fact necessary and that alternatives are plainly impossible?

## 2 Necessity as the intrinsic trait of truth

It is helpful to examine the procedure by which Spinoza comes to identify being true with being necessary in the *Tractatus Intellectus Emendatione*. Spinoza adheres to the Cartesian principle that true knowledge must be certain and indubitable. Descartes, from youth onward, had an ardent zeal for distinguishing *absolute certainty* from *moral certainty*, in order to isolate the former as requisite for philosophical truth. By way of example, he stated: "Those who have never been in Rome have no doubt that it is a town in Italy, even though *it could be* the case that everyone who has told them this has been deceiving them." Belief of this kind has only *moral certainty*, and, though practical in everyday life, has no right to be ranked among philosophical truth. In contrast, *absolute certainty* arises, "When we believe that it is *wholly impossible* that something should be otherwise than we judge it to be." Mathematical

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<sup>3</sup>E 1p33. As for the difference between causal determinism and necessitarianism, see Elhanan Yakira, *Contrainte, nécessité, choix. La métaphysique de la liberté chez Spinoza et chez Leibniz*, Éditions du Grand Midi, Zürich, 1989, pp.15-31; Don Garrett, 'Spinoza's Necessitarianism', in: Yirmiyahu Yovel (ed.), *God and Nature: Spinoza's Metaphysics*, Brill, 1991, pp.191-3.

demonstrations have certainty of this kind, "For we see clearly that it is *impossible* that two and three added together should make more or less than five; or that a square should have only three sides, and so on." According to Descartes, philosophical truths must meet this standard.<sup>4</sup>

Spinoza sides with Descartes in conceiving of truth as "certain and indubitable knowledge." But unlike Descartes, who opens up a universal doubt and calls upon divine sincerity to establish what we perceive clearly and distinctly as truth, his quest starts out from the primitive fact that we have already been given a certain number of true ideas, such as in mathematics. How do I know that what I know is true? In order for me to know, it is not necessary to know that I know, much less necessary to know that I know that I know. For to know that I know, I must first know. There is no sign of certainty except the *objective essence* of a thing that we perceive. In effect, certainty and an objective essence are the same thing, so that, "For the certainty of the truth, no other sign is needed than having a true idea." But how do I know that it is really the objective essence that I perceive? Only a "reflective knowledge" of the true idea will show the requisite quality. It is not the *denominatio extrinseca* or the agreement with its object that, by itself, makes an idea true, as the agreement could be mere coincidence. Something more is needed to make the agreement necessary, which must be intrinsic to the true idea. Spinoza calls this something *denominatio intrinseca*, or the intrinsic trait that designates an idea as a true idea.<sup>5</sup> The most important part of the *Tractatus Intellectus Emendatione* concerns this intrinsic trait, the form of true thought. Spinoza invites skeptics to observe the difference between a true idea and an *idea ficta*, or fictive idea. Skeptics say that things might be otherwise than we believe, but this can be the case only for fictive ideas. For the true idea concerns necessary things, of which being otherwise is impossible, while the fictive idea concerns only possible and not necessary or impossible things.<sup>6</sup> Consider the following:

I call a thing *impossible* whose nature implies that it would be contradictory for it to exist; *necessary* whose nature implies that it would be contradictory for it not to exist; and *possible* whose existence, by its very nature, does not imply a contradiction--either for it to exist or for it not to exist--but whose necessity or impossibility of existence depends on causes unknown to us, so long as we feign its existence. So if its necessity or impossibility, which depends on external causes, were known to us, we would have

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<sup>4</sup>René Descartes, *Regulae ad directionem ingenii*, AT X, p.362; René Descartes, *Principes de la philosophie* AT IX, p.324. We follow the suggestion of the editors Adam and Tannery that the phrases inserted by Pico in the French translation were probably approved by Descartes. Cf. AT IX, Avertissement, p.X. *Ibid.* IV 205, AT IX, p.323. We do not go into the distinction Descartes makes between certainty of the *Cogito* and mathematical certainty. See on this issue Osamu Ueno, "The Certainty of the *Cogito*: A Modal Perspective," *Philosophia Osaka*, No.1, 2006, pp.1-12.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. TIE 69-71.

<sup>6</sup>TIE 52.

been able to feign nothing concerning it.<sup>7</sup>

By way of example, you can doubt "Peter's" visit so long as you can feign either that he is going home or that he is coming to visit you. Even if your imagination turns out to be true, this is only a fluke.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, you cannot feign either that you exist or that you do not exist. Nor, having known the nature of God, can you feign either the existence or nonexistence of God. The necessity of things eliminates the possibility of their being otherwise than we judge them to be. Let there be an omniscient being who knows every truth of "Peter's" existence. He surely can feign nothing.<sup>9</sup> This shows that, "The less the mind understands and the more things it perceives, the greater its power of feigning is; and the more things it understands, the more that power is diminished." So those who interpret a true idea as one that is in doubt are confusing it with a fictive idea, or otherwise they are just pretending something impossible to be possible, even though there is nothing that cannot be put into words.<sup>10</sup> This also reveals the nature of false ideas. For between fictitious and false ideas there is no other difference except that the latter suppose assent,<sup>11</sup> i.e., you assent to *P* without noticing that *P* is impossible. So when things appear *sub specie necessitatis*, or under the aspect of necessity, the false is thereby revealed to be false. We are now at the crux of the matter. According to Spinoza, the trait of truth intrinsic to an idea is nothing but the necessity it contains. A true idea shows the necessity of a thing to be so, and the certainty we have is this necessary thinking itself. This is what the famous phrase of the *Ethica* conveys: "As the light makes both itself and the darkness plain, so truth is the standard both of itself and of the false."<sup>12</sup>

### 3 Nature-God

Reflexive knowledge of true ideas takes Spinoza to his ontological contention that *truth*, *existence* and *actuality* become one *sub specie necessitatis*. The whole concern of the *Ethica* is to demonstrate this congruent whole that he refers to as "God or Nature" (*Deus seu Natura*). The point is to show that it is necessary for God to exist and that God is the only existing substance encompassing everything: the *omne esse*, or the whole being<sup>13</sup> beyond which there is no being. His definition of God encompasses this sole aim: "By God I understand a being

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<sup>7</sup>TIE 53.

<sup>8</sup>TIE 52.

<sup>9</sup>TIE 54.

<sup>10</sup>TIE 58, 59.

<sup>11</sup>TIE 66.

<sup>12</sup>E 2p43s.

<sup>13</sup>TIE 76.

absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence."<sup>14</sup> God is the absolute substance that everything else must be conceived through as its mode. It is expressed in an infinite number of attributes — among which are the attribute of Thought and the attribute of Extension — so that whatever follows necessarily from the Divine nature is infinitely duplicated in God, according to the attributes. This parallelism follows: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things."<sup>15</sup> This brings into conception what we may call an *absolute truth space* where every idea in the attribute of Thought agrees necessarily with its object in all the attributes, and therefore is necessarily true. Hence the mighty corollary:

From this it follows that God's [NS: actual] power of thinking is equal to his actual power of acting. I.e., whatever follows formally from God's infinite nature follows objectively in God from his idea in the same order and with the same connection.<sup>16</sup>

This implies two points:

1) That there is nothing contingently true, and that if there is anything true, it is actually and necessarily true. Since God's "actual power of thinking" parallels "his actual power of acting," the agreement of an idea with its object cannot be contingent. Or rather, they are only two different expressions of one and the same thing.<sup>17</sup> The entirety of objects ("the face of the whole Universe") and the entirety of ideas (the actual infinite intellect of God) agree necessarily with each other to form one and the same reality, so that all ideas, insofar as they are related to God, are necessarily true.<sup>18\*</sup>

This amounts to saying that in nature there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way. For if things could have been otherwise, so that the order of Nature could be different, then God's nature could also have been other than it is now, and therefore that other nature would also have had to exist, and consequently, there could have been two or more Gods, which is absurd.<sup>19</sup> We see how far Spinoza departs from our more usual idea of God the Creator, who chooses a possible world among many, and brings it to actuality. Spinoza's God does not bestow actuality on the possible. He *is* the actuality itself which is the only possible world. So the Spinozan God has no idea of a possible non-Rubicon-crossing Caesar in his

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<sup>14</sup> E 1def6.

<sup>15</sup> E 2p7.

<sup>16</sup> E 2p7c.

<sup>17</sup> E 2p7s.

<sup>18</sup> Ep 64, E 2p32.

<sup>19</sup> E 1p33dem.

infinite intellect while generating a physical Caesar who crosses the Rubicon. Odd as it may sound to someone like Leibniz, it was impossible for Caesar not to cross the Rubicon, and the factual truth of Caesar is a necessary truth. This is what conveys the proposition that "God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things." Putting it another way, "God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself."<sup>20</sup>

2) That our mind is part of God, installed in the *absolute truth space* that is God. Spinoza thinks this explains why every idea that in us is absolute, or adequate and perfect, is true.

When we say that there is in us an adequate and perfect idea, we are saying nothing but that...there is an adequate and perfect idea in God insofar as he constitutes the essence of our Mind, and consequently...we are saying nothing but that such an idea is true, q.e.d.<sup>21</sup>

This was the answer to the question of reflexive knowledge noted above. If we are given true ideas and cannot doubt them, it is because our intellect is part of Divine thinking. It operates according to the sole necessity of truth, like a *spiritual automaton*.<sup>22</sup> This may require more explanation.

#### 4 Three kinds of knowledge

It is well known that Spinoza distinguishes three kinds of human knowledge<sup>23</sup>:

- 1) Knowledge of the first kind, *opinion* or *imagination*.
- 2) Knowledge of the second kind, *reason*.
- 3) Knowledge of the third kind, *intuitive knowledge*.

What is important is that the distinction is not of the faculties of the mind but concerns, instead, how much our mind partakes of Divine necessary thinking. The first kind (opinion or imagination) does not engage in necessary thinking at all, representing things only as possible or contingent. The second kind (reason) perceives something necessarily common to things and thereby develops universal knowledge. The third kind (intuitive knowledge) concerns the eternal truth of singular things. The last two kinds consider things *sub specie aeternitatis*, for necessity cannot be explained by duration or time. The theory of mind in the *Ethics* lays the foundation for this distinction.

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<sup>20</sup> E 1p18, p25cs.

<sup>21</sup> E 2p34dem.

<sup>22</sup> Expression in TIE 85.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. E 2p40s2.

We must be aware that, in Spinoza's system, there is no thinking individuals. The ideas are generated as modes of the attribute Thought according to the causal order of things, to form, all together, the entire intellect of God. The infinite intellect of God is not like a gigantic Mind but is rather an infinite web of ideas, where the idea of a thing *a* depends on the idea of its cause *b*, and this idea of a thing *b* depends on the idea of its cause *c*, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Remember that each idea is a mode of Thought, an act by which God knows. It is not God as infinite but God as modified by the idea of the cause *b* that knows the effect *a*, for, again, the knowledge of *a* depends on the knowledge of its cause *b*. In short, God modified by the idea of *b* perceives *a*, and God modified by the idea of *c* perceives *b*, etc.<sup>24</sup> In general, a thing is always perceived by God as modified locally by the idea of the nearest cause of that thing. Let us call this the rule of percept location R. Suppose that our mind is the idea in God of our body, and that the affected states of our body are to be known by the knowledge of its nearest cause, i.e., the nature of the affecting body and of our affected body. Applying the rule R, we obtain that our mind, which is the idea of our body, or more precisely God as modified by the idea of our body, perceives partially the affections of the same body as its own.<sup>25</sup> The passage below, one of the most difficult, can be construed in this sense:

From this it follows that the human Mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God. Therefore, when we say that the human Mind perceives this or that, we are saying nothing but that God, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he is explained through the nature of the human Mind, or insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind, has this or that idea; and when we say that God has this or that idea, not only insofar as he constitutes the nature of the human Mind, but insofar as he also has the idea of another thing together with the human Mind, then we say that the human Mind perceives the thing only partially, or inadequately.<sup>26</sup>

Perception of the affections of our body is related to the last case above. Ideas of affections, insofar as they are related to the mind, are "like conclusions without premises," which testify to—as they involve the knowledge of the causes—the existence of our body and of the affecting bodies, without, however, yielding adequate knowledge of them. For, applying the rule R again, it is God, as modified by the ideas of the nearest causes of those bodies, who has adequate knowledge of them.<sup>27</sup> This inadequate, partial knowledge of affections is the first kind of knowledge, *opinion* or *imagination*. It is ignorant of causes, hence knows nothing of necessity. A child who has seen "Simon" many times in the evening naturally comes to believe he will see him tomorrow evening. But he lacks certainty. Once he happens to see "Jacob"

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. E 2p11-13. This interpretation relies on Martial Geroult, *Spinoza: l'âme (Ethique, 2)*, Aubier-Montaigne, 1974, p.110.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. E 2p16-26.

<sup>26</sup> E 2p11c.



instead of "Simon" one evening, his imagination will vacillate and, "He will imagine now this one, now that one, with the future evening time, i.e., he will regard neither of them as certainly future, but both of them as contingently future." This is how we represent things to be contingent.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, it is of the nature of Reason "to regard things as necessary, not as contingent."<sup>29</sup> Suppose there is *A*, something common to our body and the affecting body. As *A* is part of the causes of the affection, the knowledge of *A* is involved in the idea of the same affection. Applying the rule R, we obtain that God, insofar as modified solely by the idea of our body invested with *A*, has this knowledge of *A* involved in the idea of the affection. Therefore the knowledge of *A* is necessarily adequate in our mind. Spinoza calls such knowledge "common notions" from which knowledge of the second kind, *Reason*, arises.<sup>30</sup> Spinoza seems to have in mind hypothetical deduction like, "if *p*, then necessarily *q*," which serves for discovering nomological necessities in our bodily experience. The difference between fictitious ideas and scientific hypotheses is that the latter consists of deduction, and deductive knowledge depends on conceptual necessity in counterfactual terms. Spinoza seems to be well aware of this difference.<sup>31</sup>

While the second kind of knowledge concerns universal laws of nature, the third kind, *intuitive knowledge*, concerns the eternal aspect of singular things. According to Spinoza, to conceive things *sub specie aeternitatis* is to conceive things insofar as they involve existence through God's essence.<sup>32</sup> But how can we explain this? Arguably, we can accomplish this by proceeding along the demonstrations in geometric order we see in the *Ethica*.<sup>33</sup> These demonstrations eventually reveal to us that the eternal truth of the body, proven to exist necessarily in God, is our own mind that understands the same demonstrations.<sup>34</sup> They also show that if we were not the eternal mind demonstrated, we surely could not make sense of those demonstrations, as we, in fact, do.<sup>35</sup> This is congruent to the scholium in which Spinoza alludes to the experience of eternity: "We feel and know by experience that we are eternal," for "The eyes of the mind, by which it sees and observes things, are the demonstrations

<sup>27</sup> E 2p28dem.

<sup>28</sup> E 2p44, p44c1s, p31c.

<sup>29</sup> E 2p44.

<sup>30</sup> E 2p37-40, p40s2.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. TIE 19, 28, 101-103. See Osamu Ueno, "Spinoza to shinri" [Spinoza and Truth] in *Shinri no tankyuh [Recherche de la verité]*, Chisenshokan, 2005, pp.167-9.

<sup>32</sup> E 5p30dem.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. E 2p40s2: The third kind of knowledge "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things."

<sup>34</sup> E 5p22, 23.

<sup>35</sup> E 5p31dem.

themselves."<sup>36</sup>

Be that as it may, Spinoza's whole project of intellectual purgation is relevant in the light of modality. As far as our understanding is concerned, "We can want nothing except what is necessary, nor absolutely be satisfied with anything except what is true."<sup>37</sup> It is not surprising that Spinoza rejects the idea of contingent truth. For truth, insofar as it is truth, must for him be necessary truth.

## 5 Necessity and a strong notion of actuality

Nevertheless, it may be tempting to join Leibniz in saying that the fact that Caesar crossed the Rubicon does not eliminate the possibility that he could have changed his mind. This is because a thing, the contrary of which does not involve contradiction, is logically possible, and "everything is held to be possible unless it is proven to be impossible."<sup>38</sup> Spinoza would retaliate by saying that he has proven it to be impossible. You can imagine a non-Rubicon-crossing Caesar to be possible only so long as you ignore the contradiction it involves. For, if it were possible, another world should also exist, which is tantamount to saying that two Gods exist, which is absurd. What is this quarrel all about?

I think it is about the problem of how to settle with the notion of actuality. Let us go back to Descartes. The Leibnizian principle above is also the leading principle of the Cartesian doubt. The doubt proceeds by assuming that everything is possible unless it is proven to be impossible. By way of example, if it is possibly true that I do not have my body and that everything I perceive does not really exist, then there is no obvious reason why it could not be so in reality. Cartesian doubt thus loosens our grip on actuality in the sense that, possibly, you are mixing up your world or, possibly, you have been dreaming and you do not have such a body. You will never know, because any possible world would be an actual world. This reflects a certain inflation of the notion of actuality in our possible-world discussion and, arguably, that is why Leibniz had to resort to a principle totally extrinsic to the possible worlds: i.e., the choice of the best world by God.<sup>39</sup> The reason why this world is the only actual

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<sup>36</sup> E 5p23s. See Osamu Ueno, "Mentis oculi ipsae demonstrationes: jouissance et demonstration dans *l'Ethique* de Spinoza," in *Spinoza: puissance et ontologie*, Editions Kimé, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> E 4appendix32.

<sup>38</sup> Letter to Countess Elizabeth (?), On God and Formal Logic (1678?) in *G. W. Leibniz, Philosophical Essays*, Edited and Translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Hackett Publishing Company Indianapolis & Cambridge, 1989, II.A.1 p. 237.

<sup>39</sup> The possible worlds should not contain in themselves any information about God's choice of the best world. Cf. Robert Merrihew Adams, *Leibniz - Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, Oxford University Press, 1994, p.15.

world among many is that it is the best world chosen by God. But what if this choice was necessary, for God surely could not have chosen a less good option? We know Leibniz tried everything to avoid this supposition, which logically entails the impossibility of the non-Rubicon-crossing Caesar. From this, a question arises. If being possible is equivalent to being true in a possible world, and if a world cannot be proved by its own inhabitants to be the best of all, how do we know we are not in a possible world that has never been chosen by God? If we want to turn down such a bizarre question, we need a notion of actuality stronger than a possibilist notion, which is always associated with possible truth.

All things considered, we may say that the quest for certainty in the text of Descartes and Spinoza, referred to above, concerns this strong notion of actuality. The Cartesian *Cogito* reveals its importance in this light. Descartes discovers an absolute actuality when he comes to the impossibility of denying the proposition "I am, I exist." This proposition is, in that sense, "necessarily true."<sup>40</sup> His originality is clear. Before establishing the possibility of the world, I know my actual existence. Unlike every other thing, I cannot feign that I am not. This impossibility is the absolute marker of actuality, which is the decisive basis for what is in reality. This notion of actuality is so strong that it forces Descartes to determine which possible world should be *his* world. This is why he had to resort to the veracity of God, which, again, is a principle totally extrinsic to the possible worlds.<sup>41</sup>

Spinoza's necessitarianism also contains a strong notion of actuality, although with a different approach. Spinoza would agree with Descartes in that certainty is obtained only when the impossibility of the contrary shows up. But according to Spinoza, impossibility arises solely from the necessity of truth that eliminates any other possibilities. Though we may not be absolutely certain of a factual truth, it is certain that if Caesar truly crossed the Rubicon, it is because he had no other possibilities. For God is the only possible world in which Caesar moves. God is the all-encompassing necessary whole, in which everything is actual and necessarily true. The Spinozan notion of actuality is perhaps the strongest, for it has no need for extrinsic principles.

If actuality and necessity become one in Spinoza's system, we need some qualifications for his necessitarianism. We will be mistaken if we think everything is determined beforehand. Spinoza's God has no *beforehand*. If we take seriously his contention that God's actual power of thinking is equal to his actual power of acting and that there is, whether finite or infinite, no potential intellect but only actual intellect,<sup>42</sup> we must admit that the Spinozan God acts and thinks actually, here and now. At the same time, a Caesar is determined by the necessity of

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<sup>40</sup> R. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, AT VII, p.25.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, The Fifth and Sixth Meditations.

<sup>42</sup> E 2p7c, 1p31c.

Divine nature to cross the Rubicon, and the idea of this very same Rubicon-crossing Caesar, and of no other Caesar, is generated in the infinite intellect. Arguably, Spinoza denies to God's infinite intellect any *memoria* that represents future things as contingent.<sup>43</sup> Foreseeing is therefore alien to God, and this is congruent with the contention that, "Nature has no end set before it," and that, "All final causes are nothing but human fictions."<sup>44</sup>

For we have shown... that the necessity of nature from which he acts is the same as that from which he exists. The reason, therefore, or cause, why God, or Nature, acts, and the reason why he exists, are one and the same. As he exists for the sake of no end, he also acts for the sake of no end. Rather, as he has no principle or end of existing, so he also has none of acting.<sup>45</sup>

So, if an omniscient Being pictures, before the Creation, a possible Caesar crossing or not crossing the Rubicon, it is not the God of Spinoza. Spinoza's God does not know what will be possible until it is *actually* produced of necessity. The *Ethica* gives the name of *Gloria* to the sentiment that one feels oneself to be part of this absolute actuality.<sup>46</sup> It is up to the readers themselves to judge whether this is good news or a terrible announcement of "blind necessity."<sup>47</sup>

## Abbreviations

TIE: *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* with paragraph number.

E: *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*

I: introduction

def: definition

p: proposition

c: corollaire

dem: demonstration

s: scolie

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<sup>43</sup> For *memoria*, see E 2p18s.

<sup>44</sup> E 1appendix.

<sup>45</sup> E 4praef.

<sup>46</sup> This absolute actuality confounded with necessity can be construed as Spinozan eternity. Cf. E 5p30dem. See also Osamu Ueno, "Hitsuzen, eien, soshite genjitsusei – Spinoza no hitsuzenshugi" [Necessity, Eternity and Actuality: Spinoza in light of Necessitarianism], *Spinozana*, No.6, pp.5-21.

<sup>47</sup> Criticism by Leibniz in the *Essais de théodicée*, 172.

Ep: *Epistolae* with numbering in the Gebhardt edition *Spinoza Opera*, IV.

(English translation by Edwin Curley: *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (volume I), Princeton University Press, 1985.)

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