

A Critical Exposition of Baruch Spinoza's Concept of a Miracle

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Abstract: What I intend to do in this article is to expound Baruch Spinoza's concept of a miracle as found in his primary works, namely, *Ethics* and *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. In this particular study, I have employed a variety of ways through which the reader of this article can understand Baruch Spinoza and his concept of a miracle. They are the following: 1) by providing a survey of how the concept of a miracle evolved in the history of mankind; 2) by laying down the background of Baruch Spinoza and how the rationalist thinking of his time had influenced Baruch Spinoza's frame of mind as he crafted his own definition of a miracle; 3) by describing Baruch Spinoza's notion of the Divine; 4) by incorporating the Old Testament in the understanding of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* alongside Spinoza's latent pantheism and his most famous dictum, "*Deus sive Natura*," and; 5) by providing arguments for or against the four theses in the philosophy of Spinoza. The encompassing aim of this article is to shed light into the hidden philosophy of Baruch Spinoza about the concept of miracles. Even if he devoted a chapter of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* for his exposition on the concept of a miracle, philosophers of today do not know well about this "latent" aspect of Spinozan philosophy. I have written this article with the hope of making it easy for students of philosophy to seep through the intricacies of Spinozan philosophy and to understand clearly what Spinoza's concept of a miracle is. This article will conclude that the treatment of the problem of miracles, whether it is existent or non-existent, lies upon what Spinoza calls as "intellectual love of God" or *amor Dei intellectualis*. After all, miracles being unusual works of Nature entail the capacity of a God to perform them.

Keywords: Baruch Spinoza, God, Latent Pantheism, Miracles and Nature

Rationalism in Europe (continental rationalism) had its beginnings through Rene Descartes' excavation of the fundamental truth by way of the methodic doubt. His pronouncement of himself as the "thinking being" or the *cogito* paved the way for budding rationalists to express their philosophy through their positions on certain philosophical

branches, namely, on metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In metaphysics, the rationalists have thought of the world as a rationally ordered whole. This entails that the world can easily be recognized by the mind because of its well-organized structure. Therefore, the rationalists never endorsed their predecessors' view of reality as disjointed and

full of aggregates. Moreover, the rationalists, with the prevailing developments in the physical sciences, were motivated to synthesize their philosophy with those of the sciences. The likes of Isaac Newton and Galileo Galilei, who profoundly revolutionized the science of the 16th century, became the epitome of the rationalists. At some point, they began to aspire being the Newton or the Galileo of philosophy. In short, the study of metaphysics holds its foundation from the paradigm provided by the physical or mechanical sciences prevalent at that time.

In epistemology, the rationalists have thought of knowledge as independent of the senses or of experience. This is in clear contrast with the empiricists who posited that sense perception and experience provide us the first truths or somehow ignite the latent truths in our minds. The rationalists saw it in a different perspective. They believed that foundational truths are already innate in our mind. Also, these foundational truths are universal and can be directly apprehended by the intellect. But the most important thing to highlight is that the rationalists claim that the most certain knowledge is one of *a priori* nature (no intervention of the physical sciences), necessary, and universal. In a whole, the epistemology of the rationalists entailed the innateness of knowledge which cannot be debunked by the knowledge given to us by sense perception and experience.

In ethics, the rationalists argued simply by saying that the norms of human acts come from reason. Feelings, emotions, and other sentiments are not to be credited at this stage. The norms of morality are provided by reason as the ultimate arbiter which is described by the rationalist epistemology as *a priori*, necessary, and universal.

Who were the continental rationalists? Of course, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern philosophy, is one of them. He was inseparable to the concept “cogito.” He was famous for his maxim, “I think, therefore I am.” Also, there was the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) who became famous for his works on the problem of evil which is enshrined in his *Theodicy* and his metaphysical assertion of the existence of the monads found in his opus *Monadology*. Another important rationalist is Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) who became famous for his coined concept of “occasionalism” found in his many works such as *The Search after Truth* and *Dialogues on Metaphysics*. And most importantly is Baruch [or Benedict] Spinoza (1632-1677) who is the subject of this paper. His most famous works were the *Ethics* and the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Theologico-Political Treatise). We will know more about Spinoza in the succeeding discourse. These continental rationalists contained similar takes on metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics in their philosophies.

Baruch Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in the year 1632. A son of Jewish-Portuguese parents, he went on to be trained as a *rabbi* or a teacher in the synagogue. At a ripe age of twenty, he studied the newly founded philosophy of Descartes and scholastic philosophy which was prevalent during that period. Unfortunately, due to his doubts on the immortality of the soul and the existence of angels, Spinoza was excommunicated in 1656 and received the official sentence of eternal damnation for his false beliefs. This ignited the philosophy latent in him. He later on left his homeland and his religion in order to venture out into the philosophical realm of thinking. For twenty years, he wrote opuses which clearly left a mark in the study of philosophy. Two of his best

works were the *Ethics*, his philosophical magnum opus, and the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Theologico-Political Treatise) which was published anonymously in 1670 due to fear of authorities. He died in The Hague, Netherlands in 1677.

The chapter on miracles is found on the *Theologico-Political Treatise* [TTP] of Spinoza. Theo Verbeek describes the book as “difficult to read but... its difficulties are not like those of the *Critique of Pure Reason* [of Kant] or the *Phenomenology of the Mind* [of Hegel].”¹ The hardships to be encountered in the reading of this book is profound yet its product is fulfilment that one has understood Spinoza’s work. Verbeek adds that the treatise “is not clear most of the time what it is all about even if every now and then one stumbles across something familiar and recognizable.”² I humbly accept the challenge of bringing into light Spinoza’s philosophy on miracles found in the TTP. This will be done through the re-reading of the sixth chapter of the TTP and by referencing to Baruch Spinoza’s *magnum opus*, *Ethics*, because in there lies a careful exposition of his metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical biases which are very helpful in understanding the TTP.

I will now proceed to the matter in question. The concept of a miracle will be critically delved upon and exposed in this paper. Philosophers of religion will say that there are two questions to which the traditional approach on the problem of the miraculous is deeply concerned. First, we start by asking “What is a miracle?” and second, “What justification can we have for believing that such things occur or have occurred?”³ It is supposed to be made clear that this problem concerning the miraculous is a problem in the realm of Christian religion. Hence, before I present Spinoza’s notion of

miracles, I would like to present first what the Christian notion of a miracle is through the teachings of the Angelic Doctor, Saint Thomas Aquinas, as written in his *De Potentia Dei* or *On the Power of God*. He writes in his *De Potentia Dei* his own definition of a miracle.

That which is arduous is called a miracle not because of the greatness of a thing produces, but in comparison with the faculty of nature. Consequently, every effect is reckoned to be difficult—and therefore miraculous—no matter how insignificant the effect, if the latter surpasses the powers of nature.⁴

Aquinas said that a miracle entails a laborious task for the spectator to comprehend its greatness. However, this greatness must not be attributed to the effect. Instead, a miracle must be understood in the light of nature. Its contrariness to the laws of nature gives it its wonders. And God, the creator of these laws of nature can also work wonders against it. Thus, there is this divinity in the occurrence of miracles to which Saint Thomas Aquinas rightfully calls a miracle as an event of wonder.

Another influential doctrine on miracles was offered by a former pope and is still followed by the Catholic Church whenever examining the causes for beatification and canonization of holy people and the miracles attributed to them. This former pope was known in history as Pope Benedict XV. Prospero Lambertini (his former name) was a former devil’s advocate.⁵ His dogma on miracles was enshrined in his treatise, *De Miraculis*. He proclaimed in this treatise that not only God can work these wonders which we call miracles. Instead, even angels and very pious men and women can work these marvelous acts.⁶ Another significant qualification modified by Pope Benedict XIV in the definition of a miracle is not that it is contrary to nature but it is something beyond

nature.⁷ This new Catholic doctrine on miracle will stay as is from the 1700s up until today.

The contrariness of a miracle to the universal laws of nature may somewhat authenticate its existence. Yet, Baruch Spinoza offers a different take on the issue concerning the existence of the miraculous. We go back to his metaphysical account of God as substance and as nature because this will be prevalent in the whole of Spinoza's line of thinking concerning miracles. He writes in Proposition 17, Part I of the *Ethics* that "God acts from the laws of the divine nature alone, and is not compelled by anything."⁸ However, the concept of *natura naturans* as the active aspect of nature is, for Spinoza, God Himself. Therefore, if God acts from the laws of divine nature alone, then He is compelled to act and is necessarily acting through His own nature. This will prove influential to the study of miracles as I proceed in this discourse. It is because if miracles are events which are contrary to the laws of nature, then how will they be existent if miracles are contrary to God, being the active aspect of nature and being Nature itself according to Spinoza? It does stir up a controversy among scholars studying Spinozan philosophy.

Spinoza starts the sixth chapter of his *Theologico-Political Treatise* by describing the notion of the divine. He states that the divine is defined by many people of his time as "any work whose cause is unknown."⁹ It is also worth noting in the observations of the Dutch Jewish philosopher that people of his time consider God as someone who is latent, somewhat passive, and somewhat inactive. However, Nature seems to be the active thing of this world. Thereby, Spinoza tells of the clearest possible evidence of God's existence as the deviation of Nature from her laws, from her *logos*.¹⁰ It is obvious that Spinoza hated the line of reasoning of his contemporaries especially in

the field of religion. His metaphysics, as stated in the previous discourse, establishes the notion of God as the same with Nature. Spinoza tells his contemporaries that "they have no idea"¹¹ because they just imagine God with "the rule of some royal potentate and Nature... a kind of force and energy."¹²

He then defines miracles as "unusual works of Nature."¹³ This is not Spinoza's definition. This is still his contemporaries' notion of a miracle. Yet, why was such a phenomenon existent? According to Spinoza, attributing miracles to God is a result of the people's imagination of supernatural events. Because they imagine supernatural events, they consider their passive and latent God as something which is now active and unconcealed.¹⁴ It seems, therefore, that only miracles can make the Christian God alive. Spinoza breaks this paradigm in the subsequent parts of the article. He condemns the early Jews (circumcised) for envying the presence of visible gods in the culture of the Gentiles (uncircumcised).¹⁵ He said that the early Jews only had the proof of miracles in order to prove that their invisible God is present in the world. It "unconceals" their concealed God. Thus, this culture suggests that up to this day, Judaism and other monotheistic religions continue to "invent miracles"¹⁶ as Spinoza would say in order to prove that their God exists.

He then proceeds to lay down his philosophy, thesis by thesis. The same method will be employed in the critical exposition of Spinoza's take on the existence of miracles. Alongside the exposition of each thesis will be my acceptance or criticism of Spinoza's take per thesis. The four theses, according to Spinoza, are as follows:

- 1) That no event can occur to contravene Nature, which preserves an eternal, fixed, and immutable

order. At the same time, I shall explain what is to be understood by a miracle.

- 2) That neither God's essence nor God's existence—nor, consequently, God's providence—can be known from miracles. All these can be far better apprehended from Nature's fixed and immutable order.
- 3) I shall cite a number of passages in Scripture to prove that, by God's decrees and volitions, and consequently God's providence, Scripture itself means nothing other than Nature's order, which necessarily follows from her eternal laws.
- 4) Finally I shall discuss the method of interpreting Scriptural miracles, and the chief points to be noted regarding the narratives of miracles.¹⁷

In the first thesis, Spinoza contests the thoughts of the people of olden times who considered miracles as products of the “understanding of the common people who were quite ignorant of the principles of science.”¹⁸ In Part 2 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza despised ignorance because ignorance brings about falsity and falsity is evil because it entails inadequate knowledge of the nature of the Divine.¹⁹ Evil is not a privation of good, for Spinoza, but it is a privation of knowledge. Henceforth, he gives a proposition regarding the non-existence of a miracle being defined as an unusual work of Nature in order to shed light to what he calls his ignorant readers. Spinoza writes:

So if anything were to happen in Nature contrary to her universal laws, it would also be necessarily contrary to the decree, intellect, and nature of God. Or if anyone were to maintain that God performs some act contrary to the laws of Nature, he would at the same time have to maintain that God acts contrary to his own nature—of which nothing could be more absurd.²⁰

In this discourse, Spinoza gave his readers a glimpse of his pantheistic tendency. In this regard, he believed that “God is intimately connected with all things,”²¹ his modes. Also, it seems that all exist in God. This pantheistic tendency of Spinoza of attributing all things as existing from God and in God leads us to the

fact that miracles are non-existent in the mind of Baruch Spinoza. He affirms it by saying that, “Nothing, then, can happen in Nature²² to contravene her own universal laws, nor yet anything that is not in agreement with these laws or that does not follow from them.”²³ I think that, at this stage, Spinoza has not yet firmly rejected the existence of a miracle or a miraculous event. He had a very light reason for denying such an existence and that is through his pantheistic tendency. Contradicting the existence of a miracle because it is contrary to the Divine is not a good claim. Also, in this sense, Spinoza narrowed down the miracle into a work of ignorant people trying to get famous in the Judaeo-Christian sense. It seems to be blasphemous on the part of Spinoza. How about the beatified and the canonized who worked wonders in the name of God and of Christ during and after their lifetime? Are they worthy of such appellation from Baruch Spinoza? I think not.

Let me proceed to the exposition of the second thesis, i.e., that God's essence and existence cannot be known through miracles [and miraculous events]. Spinoza declares:

Since God's existence is not self-evident, it must necessarily be inferred from axiomatic truths which are so firm and incontrovertible that there can neither be, nor be conceived, any power that could call them into question.²⁴

In this passage, Spinoza affirms his metaphysical notion of God as the only substance in the world which cannot be easily known by man. He even said in his *Ethics* that man must reach the level of intuitive knowledge²⁵ in order to have a good grasp of what God really is and what His essences or attributes are (thought and extension). After all, the three levels of knowledge mentioned in the *Ethics* entails that only one and the same truth are known in three different ways.²⁶ In the

succeeding sentences, Spinoza relates this knowledge of the Divine to how Nature acts. He states:

We know that something agrees with or contravenes Nature only when we can prove that it agrees or contravenes those basic truths. Therefore, if we could conceive that in Nature something could be produced by some power, of whatever kind it be, to contravene Nature, it would contravene those primary axioms.²⁷

Contravention of the natural or regular pattern of Nature, for Spinoza, is breaking the fixed and immutable order provided by God in the course of nature. Therefore, it is imperative that the basic or fundamental truths about God and Nature need not be broken because it would entail a laborious task of deviation from the established axioms of Nature. Henceforth, Spinoza declares that since miracles are described as unusual works of Nature and are said to be ways to prove the presence of the Divine, he concludes that miracles are non-existent and are not ways to prove God's essence and existence.²⁸ By virtue of being a violation of the course of nature, it breaks the pattern of Nature and also the firm and incontrovertible truths coming with it. Also, Spinoza tells of miracles as "events of a limited nature."²⁹ Due to its limitation, a miracle can never describe or tell the essence or existence of something infinite like God, to whom the existence of a miracle is attributed by the contemporaries of Spinoza.

In the second thesis, Spinoza still brought with him his latent pantheistic tendency. Imagine if God and Nature were not the same for Spinoza, miracles, as violation of the laws of Nature, may be a product of the Divine because Nature in this sense is not within the Divine. This 17th century philosophy of Spinoza is indeed a breakthrough in the history of philosophy. Never in various writings of philosophers about

miracles will this philosophy be found. It is absurd yet phenomenal because Spinoza offered a new meaning on miracles. Nevertheless, this is only the second thesis. There are still two theses to go that needs to be exposed. Maybe, Spinoza will forego of his latent pantheism in the next theses.

A verse in Deuteronomy 13 serves as an interlude towards Spinoza's explanation of his third thesis, namely, that the Scripture provides a firm proof of Nature's immutable order. A summary of the said Bible verse will tell that false prophets must be punished even if they should perform miracles. Thereby, miracles can also be done or attested by false prophets. Moses warned of his people against this kind of people that attempt to explain the Divine through miracles. Spinoza follows this line of thought. If false prophets can perform miracles, then the credibility of a miracle is diminished because there may be a tendency that people who believe in such false prophets may entertain the thought of believing in a false god.³⁰ Moreover, Spinoza tells his readers that all the while when the Israelites entertained the thought of miracles, their wisdom seem to be put into shambles. He writes that the prophets of old "found considerable difficulty in reconciling the order of Nature"³¹ with the study of God's providence and the existence of miracles. This will later lead to Spinoza's conclusion of miracles with regard to the Scriptures. He said, "Therefore even Scripture itself makes it evident that miracles do not afford true knowledge of God, nor do they clearly teach God's providence."³²

In the third thesis, Spinoza demonstrated the fixed and immutable order of Nature through certain chapters and verses in the Bible. He mentioned of the first book of Samuel, Psalms, and Genesis. One of the verses, which may also be the most famous for several Judaeo-Christian

believers, tells of the denouement of the story of Noah's ark. Genesis 9:13 states that God told Noah that He will set forth a rainbow in the cloud. Whereas, there is no written explanation in the Bible of how a rainbow is formed, we all know that a rainbow is formed when the rays of the sun are refracted in the water droplets. Prior lectures in theology told me that there are three kinds of truth which can be extracted from the Holy Scriptures. They are: 1) literary truths; 2) historical truths, and; 3) theological truths. Given that there are diverse truths obtained from the Scripture, these must not sway us from believing that God is the ultimate substance of the world and Nature's ways are fixed and immutable. Also, Spinoza adds that anything contrary to Nature which happened in the narratives of the Bible must not dissuade us in order to believe in miracles. He declares:

Therefore there can be no doubt that all the events narrated in Scripture occurred naturally; yet they are referred to God because, as we have already shown, it is not part of Scripture to explain events through their natural causes; it only relates to those events that strike the imagination... So if we find in Scripture some things for which we can assign no cause and which seems to have happened beyond Nature's order, this should not perplex us.³³

Thus, it is clear for Spinoza that the Scriptures can narrate stories regarding supposed miracles but they must not be judged as events really contrary to the laws of Nature. Stories like Moses hitting a rock after which water flowed and the prophet Elisha raising a dead person back to life are circumstances wherein there are alleged miracles. However, Spinoza tells that these incidents are grounded on real events. For instance, water flowing from a rock is a reference to Moses and the Israelites journeying in the desert where they are led by God to springs and oases.³⁴ Elisha's raising of a dead child is a way of saying that the prophet first

lied with the child several times in order for the child to receive warmth and in turn that the child may open his eyes.³⁵ The creative way of narrating stories in the Bible makes the devotees believe. This is in contrast with a factual and historical retelling of events. Spinoza argues that people are not persuaded when they are only confronted with facts. However, when people are told of creative stories and stories which stir up the imagination, then people will easily be persuaded to believe the Christian faith. Spinoza writes:

Indeed, when they see or hear something strange, they will generally be so much influenced by their own pre-conceived beliefs—unless they are strictly on guard against them—that what they perceive is something quite different from what they really see or hear to have happened.³⁶

The downside of literary stories in the Bible is that it entails sentiments or emotions which seeps through the soul of the believer, making him/her passionately believe in the alleged miracles of the Bible.

The last thesis that Spinoza exposes in the sixth chapter of the TTP is that he discusses how Scriptural miracles should be interpreted. He previously defined miracles as unusual works of Nature; yet, Spinoza uses the word miracles alongside the scriptures. For Spinoza, he suggests that miracles only happened inside the chronology of the Holy Scriptures. The same line of thinking is found in the Saint Augustine, Doctor of the Church. He even exclaimed in his *De Vera Religione* (On True Religion) that the time of miracles halted in the Apostolic era.

These miracles were not permitted to last till our times, lest the soul should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which stirred it when they were novel. That is true. When hands are laid on in Baptism people do not receive the

Holy Spirit in such a way that they speak with the tongues of all the nations. Nor are the sick now healed by the shadow of Christ's preachers as they pass by. Clearly such things which happened then have later ceased. But I should not be understood to mean that to-day no miracles are to be believed to happen in the name of Christ. For when I wrote that book I myself had just heard that a blind man in Milan had received his sight beside the bodies of the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. And many others happen even in these times, so that it is impossible to know them all or to enumerate those we do know.³⁷

We have to understand, according to Spinoza, that the Scriptural miracles are indeed part of the fixed and immutable order of Nature in the world. He cited the heart of the Pharaoh hardened by God.³⁸ It is not to be interpreted literally that the Pharaoh had a hard heart after he was punished by God. Instead, the Pharaoh was just obstinate to follow the will of God. In the end, Spinoza would just like to tell his readers that the law of Nature is fixed and immutable and the notion of miracles are no more than strange because of the ignorance of man.³⁹

There are a number of criticisms which can be held against Spinoza's notion of miracles and I highlighted them at the end of every thesis. But there are also a number of good points which can be obtained from Spinoza's exposition of the concept of a miracle. I would like to emphasize three important points. First, on devotion of Judaeo-Christian believers of a miracle. Second, on a different kind of scepticism employed by Spinoza. And third, on the Scriptures being a source of truth and fiction.

Let me proceed with the first point. Verbeek, a foremost scholar of Spinozan philosophy, obtained the meaning of devotion from the *Ethics* as love of one whom we admire.⁴⁰ How

will devotion be powerful over what seems to be a superstitious account of miracles according to Spinoza? If devotion is love for who we admire, then to devote oneself to God is to love Him. And I posit that loving God would entail this certain drive in us in order to fully achieve intuitive knowledge which we need to grasp his essence and existence. Therefore, for Spinoza, it is better that we just devote ourselves to God rather than looking for proofs of God's existence through miracles which he proved to be false in the TTP.

Second, there seems to be a different kind of scepticism which governed the whole philosophy of Spinoza on miracles. Yes, he lived before the time of David Hume, the father of scepticism. However, I would like to emphasize that Spinoza became a sceptic as concerned with the issue on miracles. Obviously, this is because of his latent pantheistic tendency which I highlighted at the beginning of my exposition of Spinozan philosophy. He observed Nature as one with God. Therefore, any concept related to God must not be separated from God. This was the fate of the concept of a miracle. For many years, the treatment of a miracle's existence is that which is something outside God, outside Nature. However, with Spinoza's scepticism, the treatment of a miracle as outside God was revolutionized. But this scepticism, I posit, became easy to understand because of the organization of Spinoza's philosophy. The *logos* in the philosophy of the rationalists made it easy for their philosophies to be understood.

Third, the Scriptures may be a source of truth and fiction. The examples of Scriptural passages stated in the previous discourses always carried with itself a grain of truth. It became fiction when the element of myth or literature was inserted in those verses. Therefore, I conclude that the miraculous is associated with fiction.

Just as Spinoza highlighted the non-existence of miracles in the Holy Scriptures, so he did highlight that the fictional and literary verses in the Bible are just portrayed as the miraculous in order to engage people into the devotion of the Judaeo-Christian faith.

In a nutshell, the problem of miracles has undergone a series of debates which can be traced back during the time of Saint Augustine up until now. Yet, the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza on miracles, which was exposed in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, became a revolution in the history of rationalism, of philosophy of religion, and of the whole realm of philosophy as a whole. Scholars who debate upon Spinoza's latent pantheism may carefully examine the 17th century philosopher's take on miracles because it well speaks of a possible problem of pantheism in his whole philosophy. Nevertheless, the problem will not lie on Spinoza's philosophy. He may be influenced by his excommunication from the Jewish religion and wrote this as part of his rebellion. However, the problem will lie upon us, his readers, who will interpret his philosophy rightly or wrongly. But nonetheless, it is Spinoza who will give us the answer on how we will treat the problem of miracles. That is through devotion, the love of what we admire. If we love God and we admire Him, then we devote ourselves to Him even if miracles are really existent or non-existent.

¹ Theo Verbeek, *Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise: Exploring the Will of God* (London: Ashgate, 2003), 1.

² Ibid.

³ Beverley Clack & Brian Clack, *The Philosophy of Religion: A Critical Introduction* (Great Britain: Polity Press, 2008), 142.

⁴ English Dominican Fathers, "Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei," in dhspriority.org <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/QDdePotentia.htm#6:1>>, 30 July 2013.

⁵ Carol Neiman, *Miracles: The Extraordinary, the Impossible, and the Divine* (London: Boxtree Publishing, 1995), 12.

⁶ Carol Neiman, *Miracles: The Extraordinary, the Impossible, and the Divine*, 12.

⁷ Ibid, 13

⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* [1676] (2010), Prop. 17, Part I, 10.

⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* [1677] found in *Spinoza: Complete Works* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 444.

¹⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 444.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 445

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 445.

¹⁸ Ibid, 446

¹⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. 35, Part II, 38.

²⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* [1670], 445-446

²¹ Maria Imelda Nabor-Nery, *Philosophy of Man* (Mandaluyong City: National Book Store, 2007), 71

²² Author's note: Here, by Nature, I do not mean simply matter and its modifications, but infinite other things besides matter.

²³ Baruch Spinoza, Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 445-446.

²⁴ Ibid, 447

²⁵ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. 42, Part II, 41.

²⁶ Theo Verbeek, 24

²⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 447.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 449.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 451.

³⁴ Ibid, 454.

³⁵ Ibid, 451.

³⁶ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 452.

³⁷ John Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 220.

³⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 454.

³⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, 455.

⁴⁰ Theo Verbeek, 28.

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