

The Deistic God of the First Critique and Spinoza's God

Shohei Edamura

Introduction

In this paper I shall examine Kant's concept of God as *ens entium*, and see whether it substantially undermines the idea of the Spinozistic God. The term "*ens entium*" literally means "being of beings," and with this term Kant wants to express the ultimate resource of the reality of all existing things. Traditionally, the God of Christianity has been considered as the ultimate being, through which all derivative beings are produced. One of the problems is that Spinoza's God, despite being so different from the God of Christianity, also seem to satisfy this condition. My view is that the Spinozistic God actually can satisfy the necessary conditions of *ens entium*. In the first part of paper, I will suggest that Kant proposes two different ideas of God: a god as *ens entium*, and a god as *summa intelligentia*. In the second, I will identify necessary conditions of *ens entium*. This finally leads to the discussion of whether the Spinozistic God can satisfy these conditions.

1. Two Ideas of God in Kant

In the last part of the first section, first book of transcendental dialectic, Kant gives a brief definition of "idea":

A concept made up of notions, which goes beyond the possibility of experience, is an idea or a concept of reason. (A 320/B 377 = GW 399)

So, we can roughly grasp the concept of "the idea of God." The idea of God expresses the supreme being that does not appear in the realm of sensible representations. There are three important ideas in Kant's system: the soul, the whole universe and the God. The idea of God can never be given in the realm of experience. Sensible perceptions give particular physical phenomena, but they do not give the picture of the whole universe, let alone its Creator, that is, God. A careful reading reveals that Kant is not always talking about the exactly same concept of God throughout his works, and in fact, he has two different ideas of God. In the section of "Critique of all theology from speculative principles of reason," Kant introduces the important distinction of deism and theism, which suggests that there are two different theologies, and as a result, two different ideas of God:

Now the first of these thinks its object either merely through pure reason, by means of sheer transcendental concepts (as an *ens originarium*, *realissimum*, *ens entium*) and called transcendental theology, or else

through a concept which it borrows from nature (the nature of our soul) as the highest intelligence, and would have to be called natural theology. Someone who admits only a transcendental theology would be called a deist; but if he also accepts a natural theology, he would be called a theist. The former concedes that we can in any case cognize the existence of an original being through mere reason, but our concept of it is merely transcendental – namely, only that of a being having all reality, but it cannot be determined more closely. The second asserts that reason is in a position to determine the object more closely by analogy with nature – namely as a being containing the original ground of all other things within itself through understanding and freedom. The deist represents this being merely as a cause of the world (whether through the necessity of its nature or through freedom remains undecided), the theist as an author of the world.... Natural theology infers the properties and the existence of an author of the world from the constitution, the order and unity, that are found in this world, in which two kinds of causality and its rules have to be assumed, namely nature and freedom. Hence it ascends from this world to the highest intelligence, either as the principle of all natural or of all moral order and perfection. In the first case it is called physico-theology, in the latter moral theology. (A 631/B 659 = GW 583-4)

From this, we can understand that a theistic god must have set the order of this universe, and he also function as the resource of morality. On the other hand, a deistic god is conceived simply as the cause of the world. A deistic god may not have created this universe by exercising his perfect intelligence and will, and may not give punishments and rewards to rational beings. To see Kant's distinction of two gods more clearly, it is helpful to introduce another terminology for these: "Ens entium" for a deistic god, and "summa intelligentia" for a theistic god. A representative passage in which Kant discusses ens entium is the following:

Thus all the possibility of things (as regards the synthesis of the manifold of their content) is regarded as derivative, and only that which includes all reality in it is regarded as original. For all negations (which are the sole predicates through which everything else is to be distinguished from the most real being) are mere limitations of a greater and finally of the highest reality; hence they presuppose it, and as regards their content they are merely derived from it. All manifoldness of things is only so many different ways of limiting the concept of the highest reality, which is their common substratum, just as all figures are possible only as different ways of limiting infinite space. Hence the object of reason's ideal, which is to be found only in reason, is also called the original being (ens originarium); because it has nothing above itself it is called the highest being (ens summum), and because everything else, as conditioned, stands under it, it is called the being of all beings (ens entium). (A 578-9/ B 606-7 = GW 557)

In this paper, I take these terms "ens entium", "ens originarium", "ens realissimum" and "ens summum" as synonyms. Kant at first understands the idea of God as the concept of the highest reality. That being is a kind of

“substratum,” which underlies all real beings as their resource. According to the traditional scholastic metaphysics, properties and modifications cannot exist without their substratum. Likewise, without the highest reality, all beings would not be able to exist.

After introducing the distinction of deism and theism, Kant explained the concept of *summa intelligentia*:

However, since no one should be charged with wanting to deny something just because he does not have the confidence to assert it, it is gentler and fairer to say that the deist believes in a God, but the theist in a living God (*summa intelligentia*). Now we want to seek out the possible sources of all these attempts of reason. (A 633/B 661 = GW 584-5)

The content of “living God” is not clear enough here, but since He is a theistic god, He must be a god of physico-theology and moral theology. He must have organized the order of nature with a supreme plan, and He must give prize and penalty. Further explanations are available in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

These postulates are those of immortality, of freedom considered positively (as the causality of a being insofar as it belongs to the intelligible world), and of the existence of God. The first flows from the practically necessary condition of a duration befitting the complete fulfillment of the moral law; the second from the necessary presupposition of independence from the sensible world, that is, the law of freedom; the third from the necessity of the condition for such an intelligible world to be the highest good, through the presupposition of the highest independent good, that is, of the existence of God. (Ak 5: 132 = Gregor 246)

Kant states that there are three important postulates of practical reason. Practical reason makes us hope for the perfect correspondence of morality and happiness. Unfortunately, since we cannot conceive any necessary connection between actions in accordance with the laws of morality and happiness, we have to introduce something beyond the realm of sensibility to realize this correspondence. Thus, we conceive ourselves immortal, and God is going to judge our actions so that He can award the highest happiness to righteous people. The idea of *summa intelligentia* deserves a lot of discussions. However, I will focus upon that of *ens entium* in the following.

2. What is Needed to be an *Ens Entium*?

2.1 Absolute Synthetic Unity

For Kant, all ideas come from the function of reason, which tries to transcend the realm of possible experiences. The analysis of judgment and syllogism is a clue to show the table of all pure intellectual categories and ideas:

The transcendental analytic gave us an example of how the mere logical form of our cognition can contain the origin of pure concepts a priori, which represent objects prior to all experience, or rather which indicate the synthetic unity that alone makes possible an empirical cognition of objects. The form of judgments (transformed into a concept of the synthesis of intuitions) brought forth categories that direct all use of the understanding in experience. In the same way, we can expect that the form of the syllogisms, if applied to the synthetic unity of intuitions under the authority of the categories, will contain the origin of special concepts a priori that we may call pure concepts of reason or transcendental ideas, and they will determine the use of the understanding according to principles in the whole of an entire experience. (A 321/B 378 = GW 399)

In brief, for Kant, if we attentively see how our judgments are, we will be able to have a complete table of categories and ideas. Now the three relations of judgment are useful to understand the classification of ideas: categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive (A 70/B 95 = GW 206). Kant explains how we reach the cardinal ideas of soul, world and God by referring to these three relations of judgment:

There are, therefore, only three species of these dialectical syllogisms, as many as there are ideas in which their conclusions result. In the first class of syllogisms, from the transcendental concept of a subject that contains nothing manifold I infer the absolute unity of this subject itself, even though in this way I have no concept at all of it. This dialectical inference I will call a transcendental paralogism. The second class of sophistical inference is applied in general to the transcendental concept of absolute totality in the series of conditions for a given appearance; and from the fact that I always have a self-contradictory concept of the unconditioned synthetic unity in the series on one side, I infer the correctness of the opposite unity, even though I also have no concept of it. I will call the condition of reason with regard to these dialectical inferences the antinomy of pure reason. Finally, in the third kind of sophistical inference, from the totality of conditions for thinking objects in general insofar as they can be given to me I infer the absolute synthetic unity of all conditions for the possibility of things in general; i.e., from things with which I am not acquainted as to their merely transcendental concept, I infer a being of all beings, with which I am even less acquainted through its transcendental concept, and of whose unconditioned necessity I can make for myself no concept at all. This dialectical syllogism I will call the ideal of pure reason. (A 340/B 398 = GW 409-10)

A categorical judgment leads us to think about a constant connection of subject and predicate. In this way, we begin to think about an enduring subject. Thus we conceive ourselves as souls and as persons who are identical in the course of time. A hypothetical judgment makes us to think about the whole series of antecedent and consequence, cause and effect, etc. After seeing two items as cause and effect, we try to find the cause of the cause and the effect

of the effect. Hereafter we conceive the concept of the totality of phenomenal world. Finally, a disjunctive judgment gives us the concept of “the absolute synthetic unity of all conditions for the possibility of things in general.” In a disjunctive judgment, all disjunctive branches are united and belong to the same sentence. Thus we conceive a kind of unity here. By adding many other branches, finally we conceive of the unity of all possibilities. We come to realize that anything, if it is possible, must be grounded by the ultimate being. Now we are able to pick up the first condition to be an *ens entium*: it must be the absolute synthetic unity of everything. In other words, it must systematically unify all the things and events of the world.

2.2 Necessary Being

Succeeding traditional views, Kant claims that whenever we think of the idea of God, we have to conceive him as a necessary being. That is to say, his existence must be necessary, not contingent. In his criticism of proofs of God's existence, first, Kant tries to show the impossibility of an ontological proof (A 592-602/ B 620-30 = GW 563-9). Thus Kant takes note of the traditional view that God is the absolutely necessary being:

In all ages one has talked about the absolutely necessary being, but has taken trouble not so much to understand whether and how one could so much as think of a thing of this kind as rather to prove its existence. Now a nominal definition of this concept is quite easy, namely that it is something whose non-being is impossible; but through this one becomes no wiser in regard to the conditions that make it necessary to regard the non-being of a thing as absolutely unthinkable, and that are really what one wants to know, namely whether or not through this concept we are thinking anything at all. (A 592-3/ B 620-1 = GW 564)

Kant claims that a purely *a priori* (i.e. ontological) proof of the existence of this absolutely necessary being is impossible since the concept of this being at most shows that if he exists, he is the most perfect and real. This hypothetical judgment itself does not establish the truth of the antecedent. Also, Kant rejects the cosmological and physico-theological proofs considering the defect of the ontological proof, since these proofs eventually rely upon the claim that the absolutely necessary being necessarily exists, which in fact cannot be demonstrated. But at the same time, Kant admits that whenever one tries to show these proofs, he has to conceive God as the absolutely necessary being. Thus even in his criticism of the cosmological proof, Kant states:

Such a being exist necessarily, is no longer the modest expression of an allowable hypothesis, but rather the impudent presumption of an apodictic certainty; for if one proposes to cognize something as absolute necessary, then that cognition must also carry absolute necessity with it. (A 612/B 640 = GW 574)

Now before introducing his criticisms of three proofs, in the section of “the transcendental ideal,” Kant

characterizes the transcendental ideal as *ens entium*. So it is reasonable to suppose that in these three criticisms Kant conceives God as *ens entium* (not necessarily *summa intelligentia*). It seems that a god as *ens entium* must be an absolute synthetic unity of all. Then it is natural to suppose that if something exists, we have to think about an *ens entium* as one that must exist as the ultimate cause of its reality. We can go further. If something is possible, then we have to think about an *ens entium* as one that must exist as the foundation of its possibility. This hypothetical judgment can establish the existence of an *ens entium* without referring to an empirical fact, i.e. the actual existence of something.

2.3 Outside the World

Interestingly, for Kant, an absolute necessary being must be outside of the world. Even before examining three proofs of God's existence, Kant suggests that the necessary being must be conceived as a being outside of the world in his discussion of antinomy:

Here this way of grounding an unconditioned existence would be distinguished from the empirically unconditioned causality (of freedom) in the previous article in that in the case of freedom, the thing itself as cause (*substantia phaenomenon*) would nevertheless belong to the series of conditions, and only its causality would be thought as intelligible, but here the necessary being would have to be thought of as entirely outside the series of the world of sense (as an *ens extramundanum*) and merely intelligible; this is the only way of preventing it from being subjected to the law of the contingency and dependence of all appearances. (A 561/ B 589 = GW 547)

Kant states that “if everything perceived in things by us has to be considered as necessarily conditioned, then nothing (which may be given empirically) can be regarded as absolute necessary” (A 617/B 645 = GW 576). The absolute necessary being must be unconditioned. If he is located in the world, he must be determined or conditioned in a certain way in relation to the other things. So we cannot assume that he is located in the world, and thus we have to assume that he is outside of the world. In his critique of the proofs of God's existence, Kant reiterates that the absolute necessary being is supposed to be outside of the world:

From this, however, it follows that you would have to assume the absolute necessary being as outside the world, because it is supposed to serve only as a principle of the greatest possible unity of appearances, as their supreme ground; and you can never reach it within the world, because the second rule bids you at every time to regard all empirical causes of unity as derivative. (A 617/B 645 = GW 576)

The idea of the absolutely necessary being cannot be reached in the realm of sensibility, since it just functions as a regulative principle for us to conceive a collection of phenomena in a coherent way.

3. The Spinozistic God

3.1 Concerning the Absolute Synthetic Unity

Now we are in a position to examine whether the Spinozistic God can satisfy these conditions of *ens entium* proposed by Kant. According to the condition of the absolute synthetic unity, an *ens entium* must be the resource of the reality of everything:

By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence. (Ethica 1D6 = Curley p. 85)

The most emphasized character is infinity. God must be absolutely infinite since He must not have any constraint. In definition, *prima facie*, Spinoza explains God as a kind of substance. But later, he declares that God is the only substance (Ethica 1P14 = Curley p. 93).

As a result, all finite beings cannot be substances. To understand their ontological states, it is better to see Spinoza's concept of mode:

By mode I understand the affections of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is also conceived. (Ethica 1D5 = Curley p. 85)

Spinoza in a sense accepts the Aristotelian framework, and argues that any mode cannot exist independently, and thus exists only in a substance. Since God is the only substance, Spinoza clearly suggests that the existence of finite beings totally depends upon God:

Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God. (Ethica 1P15 Curley p. 94) God is the efficient cause, not only of the existence of things, but also of their essence. (Ethica 1P25 = Curley p. 102)

Also, it should be noted that even the possibility of finite beings depends upon God. To be sure, Spinoza does not introduce the traditional distinction of possibility and actuality, since for him whatever possible must exist. But at least Spinoza has the distinction of existence and essence, and supposes that even the essence of a finite being completely depends upon God, and thus without God any finite being cannot be conceived. Certainly, the Spinozistic God functions as the ultimate resource of the reality.

3.2 Concerning the Necessity of Existence

Spinoza explicitly commits the necessity of God's existence:

P11: God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists. (Ethica 1P11 = Curley p. 91)

This claim depends upon Spinoza's concept of substance. For Spinoza, substance is "what is in itself and is conceived through itself" (Ethica 1D3 = Curley p. 85). Any substance cannot be caused by another since one substance cannot be conceived through another and thus cannot share an attribute in common (Ethica 1P2-6 = Curley pp. 86-7). Thus a substance is the cause of itself and its essence involves existence (Ethica 1D1 = Curley p. 85). Since God is a substance, He exists through his essence, and thus his existence is necessary. In brief, though Spinoza refuses many doctrines of Christianity, at least he accept some component from it: the view that God necessarily exists.

3.3 Concerning the Condition of Being "Outside of the World"

One may suggest that the third condition is inconsistent with Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza is a representative pantheist. For Spinoza, God is immanent (Ethica 1P18 = Curley p. 100). Everything exists within God (Ethica 1P15 = Curley p. 94). Then, it seems that God cannot be outside of the world. Rather, God is the totality of the world itself.

However, it may be an oversimplification of Spinoza's metaphysics of God. We should take note of the distinction between *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*:

Before I proceed further, I wish to explain here – or rather to advise [the reader] – what we must understand by *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. For from the preceding I think it is already established that by *Natura naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, that is (by P14C1 and P17C2), God, insofar as he is considered as a free cause. But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, that is, all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God. (Ethica 1P29Schol = Curley pp. 104-5)

God, as a substance, cannot be conceived as *natura naturata*, or the totality of all produced things. He must be conceived as *natura naturans*, or that which produces everything. Then, even if *natura naturata* or all the finite modes may be in the world, God is not.

When Kant argues that God must be outside of the world, he is trying to suggest that God is unconditioned. If the Spinozistic God is also unconditioned, he satisfies one of the conditions of *ens entium*. Now Spinoza emphasizes that God is not constrained by anything else:

God acts from the laws of his nature alone, and is compelled by no one. (Ethica 1P17 = Curley p. 97)
 It follows, second, that God alone is a free cause. (Ethica 1P17C2 = Curley p. 97)

Since God is not determined by anything outside of himself, God is considered to be a free cause. Anything resulting from him is solely caused or produced by him. Also, God is not in the world in such a way that he is acted upon by things in the world of nature. The causation between God and a mode is essentially different from that between finite modes. God does not produce us in such a way that parents have babies. Also, God is not the first mover of this universe, which is still located in the universe. For Spinoza, the duration of the universe is infinite (both to the past and to the future), and there is no first change.

To be sure, Kant explicitly claims that God cannot have any place in the sensible world, and by doing so Kant refuses a version of pantheism:

Finally, and thirdly, (in regard to theology) we have to consider everything that might ever belong to the context of possible experience as if this experience constituted an absolute unity, but one dependent through and through, and always still conditioned within the world of sense, yet at the same time as if the sum total of all appearances (the world of sense itself) had a single supreme and all-sufficient ground outside of its range, namely an independent, original, and creative reason, as it were, in relation to which we directly every empirical use of our reason in its greatest extension as if the objects themselves had arisen from that original image of all reason. (A 672-3/B 700-1 = GW 606-7)

For Kant, it is absurd to identify the absolute unity or supreme being with the sum total of all finite things. Thus Kant explicitly refutes the position of "Zeno the eleatic," who seems to suppose that God is the only existence, and he is identical to the whole world:

As to the others, if by the word God he understood the universe, then he must of course say that neither is it persistingly present in its place (at rest) nor does it alter its place (move), because all places are only in the universe, hence this universe itself is in no place. If the world-whole includes in itself everything existing, then it is neither like nor unlike any other thing, because there is no other thing outside it, with which it might be compared. If two mutually opposed judgments presuppose an inadmissible condition, then despite their conflict (which is, however, not a real contradiction) both of them collapse, because the condition collapses under which alone either of them would be valid. (A 502-3/B 530-1 = GW 517)

But since Spinoza does not accept the view that God is the universe, this point does not undermine Spinoza's metaphysics. For Spinoza, it is a kind of category mistake to identify God with the sum of all finite beings.

Indeed, Kant once explicitly refers to Spinoza and rejects his idea in the last part of the book 1 of the *Critique*

of Practical Reason:

Hence, if this ideality of time and space is not adopted, nothing remains but Spinozism, in which space and time are essential determinations of the original being itself, while the things dependent upon it (ourselves, therefore, included) are not substances but merely accidents inhering in it; for, if these things exist merely as its effects in time, which would be the condition of their existence itself, then the actions of these beings would have to be merely its actions that it performs in any place and at any time. Thus Spinozism, despite the absurdity of its fundamental idea, argues more consistently than the creation theory can when beings assumed to be substances and in themselves existing in time are regarded as effects of a supreme cause and yet as not belonging to him and his action but as substances in themselves.... If it is now possible to affirm freedom without compromising the natural mechanism of actions as appearances (by taking existence in time to be something that holds only of appearances, not of things in themselves), then it cannot make the slightest difference that the acting beings are creatures, since creation has to do with their intelligible but not their sensible existence and therefore cannot be regarded as the determining ground of appearances... (Ak 5: 101-2 = Gregor 221-2)

Kant's argument is roughly like this: If the ideality of time and space is not adopted, we fall into Spinozism, which is unsustainable. Therefore, we have to support the transcendental ideality of time and space. Though this argument is not the only argument to establish their ideality, it shows an important aspect of Kantian philosophy. It is absurd to deny the objective reality of human freedom. Now if we suppose that space and time are objective forms of things in themselves, as Spinoza does, then whatever takes place in these forms will even determine noumenal beings. Thus even noumenal selves will lose freedom.

But it should be noted that Kant does not fully establish the objective reality of human freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This first critique only shows that human freedom is possible, given that the mechanical causation only holds in the phenomenal realm to which our noumenal selves do not belong. When Kant discusses the concept of *ens entium*, he does not fully prove the objective reality of freedom and thus he cannot show the soundness of the argument given in the second critique.

4. The problem of the Purposive Unity

So far we have seen the idea of Spinozistic God satisfies three necessary conditions of *ens entium*. But before closing the discussion, I would like to consider one important aspect of Kant's view on God. It is true that Kant talks about the plan of God in his discussion of the regulative use of ideas. For Kant, it is possible for us to conceive the universe and the living things as if they are well-organized by the Creator of the highest intelligence:

This highest formal unity that alone rests on concepts of reason is the purposive unity of things; and the

speculative interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason. Such a principle, namely, opens up for our reason, as applied to the field of experience, entirely new prospects for connecting up things in the world in accordance with teleological laws, and thereby attaining to the greatest systematic unity among them. (A 686-7/B 714-5 = GW 614)

The concept of “purposive unity” is different from that of synthetic unity of *ens entium*. The absolute synthetic unity must be the ultimate resource of the reality of all finite beings. Even the possibility of finite beings must be explained on the basis of this unity. However, the concept of the absolute synthetic unity itself does not have any implication about the organization or ordering of the world, while the purposive unity is supposed to realize some plan in the world. The world is conceived as well-tuned by virtue of this purposive unity:

Yet may I regard purpose-like orderings as intentions, by deriving them from the divine will, though of course mediately through presuppositions toward them set up in the world? Yes, you can do that too, but only in such a way that it is all the same to you whether someone says that the divine wisdom has ordered everything to its supreme ends, or that the idea of the highest wisdom has ordered everything to its supreme ends, or that the idea of the highest wisdom is a regulative one in the investigation of nature and a principle of the systematic and purposive unity thereof in accordance with universal laws, even where we are not aware of it... (A 698-9/B 726-7 = GW 620)

Then, is being the purposive unity a necessary condition of *ens entium*? There is a good reason to doubt it. It should be noted that Kant uses the term “supreme intelligence” after his discussion of the purposive unity:

The presupposition of a supreme intelligence, as the sole cause of the world-whole, but of course merely in the idea, can therefore always be useful to reason and never harmful to it. (A 687/ B 715 = GW 614)

Here Kant does not use a latin term. But it seems that “supreme intelligence” and “*summa intelligentia*” refer to the same concept. It suggests that being the purposive unity is not a necessary condition of *ens entium*, while it is necessary for being a *summa intelligentia*. Of course, being the purposive unity is not a sufficient condition of *summa intelligentia*, since a *summa intelligentia* must be a god of morality. If a god as purposive unity does not give punishment and reward to rational beings, then he cannot be a *summa intelligentia*. In this sense, the purposive unity is somewhere between *ens entium* and *summa intelligentia*. It might be an *ens entium* in that it satisfies the necessary conditions of *ens entium*. Also, it might not be a *summa intelligentia* when it does not function as a deity of morality. In this context, it makes sense to talk about the purposive unity as *ens entium*. But still, it is reasonable to suppose that being the purposive unity is not a necessary condition of *ens entium*. Also,

even if we suppose that being the purposive unity is one of necessary conditions of *ens entium*, it might be possible to conceive the Spinozistic God as the purposive unity. Indeed, the Spinozistic God does not intentionally organize the universe on the ground of the supreme ends. Since, he does not have any supreme ends. But it is true that the universe is actually organized by his massive power and intellect. As a result, at least, the Spinozistic God is the cause of the laws of nature. Also, all organic bodies preserve their structures as far as possible provided they can preserve themselves in accordance with the laws of nature, which comes from God. Thus it is reasonable to suppose that the order of nature and the remarkable structure of living things come from God even for Spinoza.

Concluding Remark

It is true that Kant does not consider the Spinozistic God as *summa intelligentia*. The Spinozistic God lacks wills, and does not have any intention to praise or blame actions of rational beings. Thus he cannot satisfy the demands of the practical use of human reason. But Kant also has some ideas about the minimum requirement of what is called “God”. At least in this context, even the Spinozistic God can satisfy the necessary condition of God. In his book *Kant on God*, Peter Byrne wonders if the idea of *summa intelligentia* is the only possible idea of God:

There appear to be two distinct issues here. One is whether such a moral teleology can only be thought of as obtaining through the effect of an intelligence, that is a reality that conceives of goals and is aware of such things as someone’s moral worth. The second issue concerns whether such an intelligence need be thought of as a transcendent creator. On the first issue, we can note that in Eastern thought the concept of karma is precisely that of a moral mechanism in reality that, in at least some systems (such as Theravadin Buddhism), operates independently of gods or a God. On the second issue, we can note that pantheistic systems such as Stoicism have a central place for an intelligent principle that rules the world of nature while yet conceiving of that intelligence as immanent and embodied in nature. (Byrne 2007, p. 93)

First, one might say that a moral teleology can be founded by something without intelligence, such as the law of karma. Second, even if we need an intelligent being for a moral theology, one might say that that intelligence may not be the creator of the universe, given that the intelligent principle of Stoicism is immanent in the universe. Considering these two points, Byrne does not conclude that Kant’s idea of God is only possible idea for supreme being:

In this connection, I have concluded, Kant is much too swift in his contention that only a conception of the God of theism answers to our need to envision how a moral teleology in nature is possible. (Byrne 2007, p. 94)

Byrne does not fully explain the reason of his doubt, but it perhaps comes from his uncertainty concerning whether Kant really needs the idea of *summa intelligentia*, and whether that idea fully establishes the God of the Creator. In

this paper, however, we cannot see how this problem is ultimately settled. I just argue that in the level of entium, Kant cannot totally undermine the idea of the Spinozistic God.

Abbreviation

A / B: Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. References in standard form to the first two editions.

Ak: *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*. 27 vols. Ed. by the Königlich-Preussischen (later Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Reimer (later de Gruyter), 1900-

Curley: *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*. Trans. and ed. by Edwin Curley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Ethica: *Ethica*. Spinoza. Cited by Part and Proposition.

GH: *Kant Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Trans. by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934/1960.

Gregor: *Practical Philosophy* (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant) Trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

GW: *Critique of Pure Reason* (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant) Trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Bibliography:

Byrne, Peter. 2007. *Kant on God*. Burlington VT Ashgate.

England, F. E. 1968. *Kant's Conception of God*. New York NY Humanities Press.

[Kanazawa Seiryo University, Associate Professor]

