

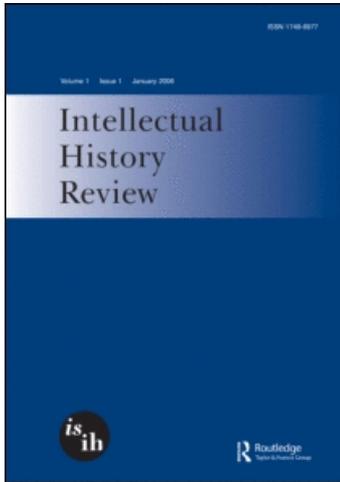
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### Spinoza Today: The Current State of Spinoza Scholarship

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## LITERATURE SURVEY

## SPINOZA TODAY: THE CURRENT STATE OF SPINOZA SCHOLARSHIP

Simon B. Duffy

The history of Spinoza scholarship is marked by a number of renaissances in the reception of his work: from the polemics on atheism during Spinoza's lifetime,<sup>1</sup> to the pantheism debate [*Pantheismusstreit*], which was a prelude to German idealism;<sup>2</sup> from the debate between neo-Kantians and post-Hegelians during the second half of the nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> to the late twentieth-century Marxist-inspired French and Italian Spinozisms.<sup>4</sup> Spinoza has had a marked impact on each of these developments in the tradition of philosophy. It is the open and contestable nature of his philosophy that has contributed to the repeated renewal of its importance. The most recent renaissance in Spinoza studies in the 1970s is represented by the major works of Martial Gueroult, Alexandre Matheron and Bernard Rousset,<sup>5</sup> which aimed to bring out the full richness and diversity of Spinoza's work by means of its internal structural analysis. Their methods were based on determining the order of reasons in Spinoza's work or the architecture of the Spinozist system. The work of Gilles Deleuze and Robert Misrahi<sup>6</sup> should also be included as representative of the resurgence of interest in Spinoza at the time. There has, however, been a decided shift away from employing the methods that characterized the work of the 1970s. The research of the last two decades of the twentieth century largely contributed to a better understanding of the texts and sources of the tradition. The continued interest in Spinoza during the past decade has profited from this research and contributed to it in a number of different ways. The philosophy of Spinoza is increasingly recognized as holding a position of crucial importance and influence in early modern thought, and in recent years it has been the focus of a rich and growing body of scholarship. While still closely following the rich contours of his work, investigations conducted over the past decade have also demonstrated a willingness to relocate engagements with Spinoza within the discipline of the history of ideas and to engage with his thought from the point of view of contemporary philosophy.

What I plan to do in this paper is to provide a survey of the ways in which Spinoza's philosophy has been deployed in relation to early modern thought, in the history of ideas and in a number of different domains of contemporary philosophy, and to offer an account of how some of this research has

<sup>1</sup> See Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (2001); Moreau, *Problèmes du spinozisme* (2006).

<sup>2</sup> See Schröder, *Spinoza in der deutschen Frühaufklärung* (1999); Pätzold, *Spinoza – Aufklärung – Idealismus* (2002); Morfino, *La Spinoza-Renaissance nella Germania di fine settecento* (1998).

<sup>3</sup> See a number of the papers in Pisarek and Walther (eds), *Kontext: Spinoza und die Geschichte der Philosophie* (2001); For investigations into Spinoza's general intellectual legacy, see also Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (2004).

<sup>4</sup> See Montag and Stolze, *The New Spinoza* (1997).

<sup>5</sup> Gueroult, *Spinoza: Dieu* (1968); *Spinoza: L'âme* (1974); Matheron, *Individu et communauté chez Spinoza* (1969); *Le Christ et le salut des ignorants chez Spinoza* (1971); Rousset, *La perspective finale de l'Éthique* (1968).

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (1968); Spinoza, *Philosophie pratique* (1970); Misrahi, *Le désir et la réflexion dans la philosophie de Spinoza* (1972).

developed. The past decade of research in Spinoza studies has been characterized by a number of tendencies; however, it is possible to identify four main domains that characterize these different lines of research: studies of Spinoza's individual works, of its problematic concepts, from the point of view of the history of ideas, and comparative studies of Spinoza's ideas.

## 1. STUDIES OF SPINOZA'S INDIVIDUAL WORKS

### **Ethica**

The *Ethics* has been the subject of a number of recent studies, one of the most notable being that by Pierre Macherey, whose five-volume commentary on the *Ethics*, *Introduction à l'Éthique de Spinoza* (1994–8), marks a turning-point in French Spinoza studies towards a more historical perspective on Spinoza's thought. This is doubly marked by its literal approach to Spinoza's work and its criticism of those interpretations that exceed the letter of the text.

German Spinoza scholarship has a long tradition of research in the history of philosophy, particularly in relation to Spinoza's *Ethics*. Indeed, a new German translation of the *Ethics*, by Wolfgang Bartuschat, was published in 1999. In addition to editing a general introduction to Spinoza's geometrical method with Michael Hampe, *Baruch de Spinoza. Ethik, Klassiker Auslegen* (Hampe and Schnepf 2006), Robert Schnepf has produced an extended study of Part I of the *Ethics*, *Metaphysik im ersten Teil der 'Ethik' Spinozas* (1999). See also Pascal Séverac, *Éthique, Appendice à la première partie, Spinoza* (1999).

There has been an Italian translation of the *Ethics* by Atilano Dominguez (2000), an English translation by G.H.R. Parkinson (2000), and a Hebrew translation by Yirmiyahu Yovel (2003).

The collection *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist* (Yovel and Segal, 2000), the third volume in the *Spinoza by 2000* series, provides a detailed analysis of the arguments of Part III of the *Ethics* and a comprehensive account of Spinoza's rational psychology centred on the concepts of desire and affect. The collection entitled *Fortitude et servitude. Lectures de l'Éthique IV de Spinoza* (Jaquet *et al.*, 2003) explores some of the themes introduced in Part IV of the *Ethics*; as does the fourth volume in the *Spinoza by 2000* series, *Spinoza on Reason and the Free Man* (Yovel and Segal, 2004), which focuses on the question of whether in *Ethics*, IV Spinoza presents a rational ethics, or merely an ethical ideal. The forthcoming fifth volume in the *Spinoza by 2000* series, *Spinoza: Intellectual Love and Beatitude*, will be dedicated to Part V of the *Ethics*.

In *Meaning in Spinoza's Method* (2003), Aaron Garrett maintains that we can only properly understand Spinoza's method in the *Ethics* by viewing it in the light of its ethical goal, to 'transform readers' (6). In addition to Hobbes and Descartes, Garret sees Bacon as a significant figure in the development of Spinoza's geometrical method. Garret undertakes to demonstrate by means of a careful examination of the geometrical form of the *Ethics* that the work is not dogmatic. He also claims that the importance accorded by Spinoza to the third kind of knowledge can be clarified through an understanding of Spinoza's method. See also Francis Kaplan, *L'Éthique de Spinoza et la méthode géométrique* (1998) and Giuseppe Saccaro Del Buffa, *Alle origini del panteismo: genesi dell'Ethica di Spinoza e delle sue forme di argomentazione* (2004).

Steven Nadler has provided an introduction to the *Ethics* (2006) that brings together the main issues of the text with its problems and a range of suggested solutions to them. See also Louis Millet, *Premières leçons sur l'Éthique de Spinoza* (1998). In *Spinoza's inleiding tot de filosofie. Ethiek als verhuiskunde* (2006), Theo Zweerman examines the *Ethics* as Spinoza's introduction to philosophy and to an ethics as the embodiment of knowledge.

### **Tractatus de intellectus emendatione [TIE]**

In addition to work on the *Ethics*, there have been a number of studies oriented to Spinoza's early work which aim to take into account the different stages of the formation of Spinoza's system and its history.

Particular attention has been given to the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, translations of which there has been a recent proliferation, including two French editions by Bernard Pautrat (1999) and Andre Lécrivain (2003), a Greek edition by Bernard Jacquemart and Vasiliki Grigoropoulou (2001); a Dutch translation by Theo Verbeek (2002); and a German edition by Wolfgang Bartuschat (2003). In *Méthode et art de penser chez Spinoza* (2006), Adrien Klajnman investigates the entry points to the work of Spinoza that are determined by reflection on the status of the TIE.

### **Renati Des Cartes principiorum philosophiae; Cogitata metaphysica and Korte Verhandeling**

New work has been undertaken on the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* (Prelorentzos, 1996), the *Metaphysical Thoughts* and the *Short Treatise*. There was a new German translation of *Descartes' Prinzipien der Philosophie* by Wolfgang Bartuschat (2005); a new English translation of the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy and Metaphysical Thoughts* by Samuel Shirley (1998); and, the publication in of *Les pensées métaphysiques de Spinoza* by Chantal Jaquet (2004).

### **Tractatus Theologico-politicus (TTP)**

A significant amount of research has focused on the *Theologico-political Treatise*, which was given direction in France by the publication of a new French translation in 1999 by Jacqueline Lagrée and Pierre-François Moreau. This research has predominantly involved investigating the TTP in itself, independently of its relation to the *Ethics*, and has focused either on (i) its historical roots, (ii) the text as the occasion of Spinoza's public intervention in the civil and religious debates of the time, or (iii) as the focus for the reassessment of the place of the imagination, prophetic knowledge and the exact role of religion in Spinoza's thought. Interest in the TTP has culminated in the recent publication of a number of new English translations, notably that by Jonathan Israel and Michael Silverthorne for the *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* series (2007). Jonathan Bennett's translation of the TTP, *Treatise on Theology and Politics* (2007), which is a version developed in relation to both the Curley (forthcoming) and Israel and Silverthorne (2007) translations, has recently been made available on the Early Modern Philosophy website.

The resurgence of interest in the TTP has been marked by the appearance of a number of collections and volumes that examine the fundamental theses and modes of expression of the text. In *Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise. Exploring the Will of God* (2003), Theo Verbeek claims that the TTP is less an argument for tolerance than a defence of the philosophy of Spinoza. He suggests that the underlying problem of the TTP is the same as that addressed by Hobbes in *Leviathan*, namely 'whether God's revealed will can have any specific "authority" at all, independently of the sovereign' (Verbeek 2003, 9). Verbeek therefore looks to Hobbes, whom he considers to have had a great influence on Spinoza, to find explanations for some of the more intractable ideas in the TTP. See also the two forthcoming works by Susan James, *Spinoza on Politics and Religion. The 'Tractatus Theologico Politicus'* (2009), and Edwin Curley *Notes on a Neglected Masterpiece*, together with the recent collection edited by Yitzhak Melamed and Michael Rosenthal. *Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise: A Critical Guide* (2008).

### **Tractatus politicus (TP)**

Interest in the *Political Treatise* has remained constant since the publication in the 1980s of the books by Antonio Negri (1981), Alexandre Matheron (1986) and Etienne Balibar (1985; see also Balibar, 1997); however, it has been less systematic. Rather than offering a thorough analysis of the *Treatise*, research has focused primarily on the theme of politics, and for this reason will be dealt with in the next section. There has, however, been a new translation of the *Political Treatise* into French by Charles Ramond (2005), and into English by both Samuel Shirley (2000), and Edwin Curley, whose second volume of the collected works of Spinoza, which is eagerly anticipated and expected soon, will include a translation of the *Political Treatise*.

### Collected Works

A number of recent editions of Spinoza's collected works have appeared. Edwin Curley, in the two-volume *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (1985; forthcoming), takes a more rigorous approach to translating the standard critical Gebhardt edition of *Spinoza's works*<sup>7</sup> than Shirley.<sup>8</sup> While Curley is careful to mark all significant variations derived from the *Nagelate Schriften* (NS) that he includes in the main text, and to footnote all others, Shirley only incorporates those Dutch variations that Gebhardt translated into Latin. Curley's translation is therefore considered to be the most thorough scholarly edition of Spinoza's work available in English. Forthcoming from IntelLex is a digital version of the Curley translations, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*.

A new German edition of Spinoza's collected works, *Werke in drei Bänden* (2006), is edited and introduced by Wolfgang Bartuschat. There has also been a recent addition to the standard German collection of Spinoza's work, *Sämtliche Werke, Band. 7. Lebensbeschreibungen und Dokumente*, in which the Gebhardt translation of the biographies has been edited with explanations by Manfred Walther. A digital edition of *Spinoza, Opera* has been produced with parallel German translations, *Spinoza im Kontext. Lateinisch/niederländisch– deutsche Parallelausgabe auf CD-ROM* (2005).

The French *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by Pierre-François Moreau, is in production, and the two volumes that are currently available are the *Traité théologico-politique*, translated by Pierre-François Moreau and Jacqueline Lagrée (1999), and the *Traité politique*, translated by Charles Ramond (2005).

## 2. STUDIES OF THE PROBLEMATIC CONCEPTS IN SPINOZA

While there has been a renewal of interest in textual studies of Spinoza's work, current research has focused more on the examination of Spinoza's work from the point of view of the problematic concepts that challenge its consistency and coherence. Some of the main themes upon which commentators were particularly focused include the following.

### The Concepts of Quality and Quantity

Building upon his earlier work that investigates the Spinozist system from the point of view of the concepts of quality and quantity (Ramond, 1995), Charles Ramond, *Spinoza et la pensée moderne: Constitutions de l'objectivité* (1998), examines the work of Spinoza in relation to the thoughts of Descartes, Pascal, Hobbes and Leibniz on the question of objective quality.

### The Theory of the Imagination

A feature common to the work of a number of researchers has been that the Spinozist theory of the imagination has more theoretical potential than the thematic of deception.

The central issue that is investigated by the collection *Spinoza: puissance et impuissance de la raison* (Lazzeri, 1999) is the pertinence of being interested not only in the content of rational prescriptions, but also in the causes of conflict between these prescriptions and the passions. The collection investigates how the intensity of the passions is implicated in the function and power of reason in Spinoza.

Jean-Pierre Juillet, *Des vues de Spinoza. Arguments et figures de la 'philosophie vraie'* (2001), Salomon Ofman, *Pensée et rationnel: Spinoza* (2003), and Lorenzo Vinciguerra, *Spinoza et le signe:*

<sup>7</sup> The standard critical edition of Spinoza's works, edited by Carl Gebhardt (*Spinoza, Opera 1674–6*. Reprinted in 1973) is based on a careful comparison of Spinoza's Latin texts with the contemporary Dutch translations included in *De Nagelate Schriften* of 1677, which appear at least in part to have been translated from manuscripts, and differ from the surviving Latin at numerous points (see Sutcliffe 2005: 367). A digital version of *Spinoza, Opera* is forthcoming from IntelLex.

<sup>8</sup> All of Shirley's translations have been brought together in one volume, *The Complete Works* (2002).

*la genèse de l'imagination* (2005), examine Spinoza's theory of language, signs and the imagination in their relation to rational thought.

There has been work done on the role of the imagination in relation to various aspects of Spinoza's work. In *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza Past, Present and Future* (1999), Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd reconsider the role of the imagination, as developed in the *Ethics*, both historically and from a contemporary political point of view. The text is divided into two parts. The first, by Genevieve Lloyd, offers an account of Spinoza's theory of the imagination and of its potential for a contemporary reconceptualization of freedom and responsibility that draws upon Spinoza's own reconceptualization of Epicurean and Stoic thought. The second, by Moira Gatens, puts this account to use in a more detailed discussion of contemporary political philosophy; particularly, how truths about the past bear on issues of collective responsibility in the present. In this way, the book demonstrates how an appreciation of Spinoza's philosophy can form the basis of a constructive but critical engagement with contemporary concerns, including concerns about contemporary claims for recognition by Australian indigenous groups. See also *Feminist Interpretations of Benedict de Spinoza*, edited by Moira Gatens (2009).

In *Spinoza et le signe: la genèse de l'imagination* (2005), Lorenzo Vinciguerra undertakes a re-evaluation of the status of the imagination in Spinoza's work that further grounds work of this nature. Vinciguerra points out that the tendency of scholars working in the field of Spinoza studies to consider the hypothesis that the imagination always presupposes a vague experience as a general assumption is problematic. According to Vinciguerra, contemporary semiotics and semiology that engages with this period seems to have ignored or forgotten Spinoza, Foucault's seminal work in this field is no exception (10). Vinciguerra undertakes to develop a definition of signs according to Spinoza's own method, and to thereby determine the constitutive moments of the doctrine of the imagination. See also the collection edited by Laurent Bove, *La Recta Ratio. Criticiste et spinoziste?* (1999); the work by Francis Amann, *Ganzes und Teil: Wahrheit and Erkennen bei Spinoza* (2000); and Paola Grassi's *L'interpretazione dell'immaginario: Uno studio in Spinoza* (2002).

### The Notions of Subjectivity and Self-consciousness

Lia Levy, *L'automate spirituel. La naissance de la subjectivité moderne d'après l'Éthique de Spinoza* (2000), and Syliane Malinowski-Charles, *Affects et conscience chez Spinoza. L'automatisme dans le progrès éthique* (2004), investigate Spinoza's work from the point of view of the notions of subjectivity and self-consciousness.

### The Ontology of Substance and the Question of Finitude

Augustin Giovannoni, *Immanence et finitude chez Spinoza. Études sur l'idée de constitution dans l'Éthique* (1999), and Jean-Marie Vaysse, *Totalité et finitude, Spinoza et Heidegger* (2004), investigate the forms and modes of expression of being in Spinoza, in order better to understand the nature of his ontology of substance and to explore the question of finitude and its constitution. See also James Thomas, *Intuition and reality: a study of the attributes of substance in the absolute idealism of Spinoza* (1999).

### The Theme of Duration and Eternity

Building upon the work of Pierre-François Moreau, *Spinoza: l'expérience et l'éternité* (1994), which analysed the relationship between experience and eternity as different forms of rationality and is also representative of the shift in France to a more historical perspective on the thought of Spinoza, the theme of duration and eternity has attracted the attention of commentators such as Chantal Jaquet, *Sub specie aeternitatis: étude des concepts de temps, durée et éternité chez Spinoza* (1997), Nicholas Israël, *Spinoza, le temps de la vigilance* (2001), and André Tosel, *Durée, temps et éternité chez Spinoza* (1997). Jaquet and Tosel investigate various issues associated with the simultaneity of

eternity and duration; that is, how we can conceive things as existing in two ways: as *sub specie aeternitatis* and as related to a certain time and place. In addition, Israël has applied this question on the forms of time to the notions of power and action in the political field.

### The Notion of Potentia

The earlier work of Gilles Deleuze (1968), Alexandre Matheron (1969) and Antonio Negri (1981) on the notion of *potentia* is extended in relation to reason in the collection *Spinoza: puissance et impuissance de la raison*, edited by Christian Lazzeri (1999), and in relation to the imagination and the concepts of religion and the state in Lazzeri's *Droit, pouvoir et liberté. Spinoza critique de Hobbes, Fondements de la politique* (1998).

### The Mind and Body, and the Affects

Another theme upon which research has focused is the question of the relationship between the mind and body, their problematic unity and the affects that change them. In *L'unité du corps et de l'esprit, Affects, actions passions chez Spinoza* (2004), Chantal Jaquet calls into question the doctrine of mind-body 'parallelism', a term first used in reference to Spinoza by Leibniz, which introduces a certain form of dualism to the distinction, in order to think the equality of the mind and body through changes in their affects. See also Cristina Santinelli, *Mente e Corpo. Studi su Cartesio e Spinoza* (2000); and the papers in *Studia Spinozana*, 14 (1999): 'Spinoza on Mind and Body'.

In *Affekte und Ethik: Spinozas Lehre im Kontext* (2002), Achim Engstler and Robert Schnepf bring together a collection of papers that examine the context of Spinoza's teaching on the affects; and Robert Misrahi, *La place du desir dans la philosophie eudemoniste de Spinoza* (2002), investigates the place of desire in what he characterizes as Spinoza's 'eudaemonistic philosophy'; see also Paolo Cristofolini, *Spinoza edonista* (2002).

The affects offer a variety of resources for the exploration not only of the relationship between mind and body, but also of the variations of the power to act of individuals regardless of their form, that is, as either human or political. In this respect, a number of researchers have worked on the relationship between the transition from passivity to activity, servitude to fortitude, and on the role of the understanding in attaining beatitude. Thomas Kisser examines Spinoza's theory of individuality in *Selbstbewußtsein und Interaktion: Spinozas Theorie der Individualität* (1998). Ferdinand Alquié, *Leçons sur Spinoza* (2003), and a number of collections explore the issue of the affects: *Spinoza et les affects* (1998), edited by Brugère and Moreau; *Fortitude et servitude* (Jaquet et al., 2003); and *Spinoza, philosophe de l'amour*, edited by Chantal Jaquet, Pascal Sévérac and Ariel Suhamy.

Pascal Sévérac, *Le devenir actif chez Spinoza* (2005), investigates the paradox of joyful passivity and introduces the concept of 'distraction' to help resolve it, in order then to re-evaluate the central role of the body in the Spinozist account of becoming active. François Zourabichvili, *Spinoza, une physique de la pensée* (2002), undertakes to analyse a 'physics of thought' in the philosophy of Spinoza by determining the features of the laws of thought which are the correlates of the laws of bodies; and in *Le conservatisme paradoxal de Spinoza* (2002), he undertakes a systematic explication of Spinoza's theory of relations, centred on the much-debated question of the transformation of modes.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

The third main domain of recent research engages with Spinoza from the point of view of the history of ideas, which has not only (i) examined Spinoza's background and sources, but also (ii) gauged Spinoza's relation to his contemporaries and evaluated the impact of the reception of his thought.

<sup>9</sup>See Ramond, 1995; Lazzeri, 1999.

### Spinoza's Background and Sources

A significant amount of recent research in the Netherlands has gone into investigating Spinoza's sources and bringing to light the intellectual context in which Spinoza developed. See, in particular, Wiep van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza, An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (2001); Wim Klever, *Mannen rond Spinoza (1650–1700)* (1997); *The Sphinx. Spinoza Reconsidered in Three Essays* (2000); Alain Billecoq, *Les Combats de Spinoza* (1997); Siebe Thissen, *De Spinozisten. Wijsgerige beweging in Nederland (1850–1907)* (2000); and Michiel Wielema, *The March of the Libertines* (2004).

The essays in *The Early Enlightenment in the Dutch Republic, 1650–1750* (2003), edited by Wiep van Bunge, investigate other Dutch radical republicans and philosophical dissidents of the time. See also Ernst Kossmann, *Political Thought in the Dutch Republic: Three Studies* (2000); Graeme Hunter, *Radical Protestantism in Spinoza's Thought* (2005); and the papers in *Studia Spinozana*, 15 (1999): 'Spinoza and Dutch Cartesianism'.

In *Spinoza to the Letter. Studies in Words, Texts and Books* (2005), Fokke Akkerman and Piet Steenbakkers bring together for the first time a number of papers that deal exclusively with Spinoza's language and style, and with the transmission and editing of his texts. It also includes investigations into the authenticity of Spinoza's texts; and enquiries into his Latinity, lexicon, quotations; his use of the first person singular; the Hebrew words and quotations; and the links between the Latin text and the two Dutch translations of the *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*. See also Fritz Amberger, *Spinoza and Anti-Spinoza literature. The printed literature of Spinozism 1665–1832* (2003); and the publication of an expanded edition of Jacob Freudenthal's 1899 collection of sources relating to the life of Spinoza, *Die Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's*, edited by Manfred Walther (2006).

### Spinoza's Relation to his Contemporaries and the Reception of his Thought

One of the more interesting debates that has emerged in Spinoza studies proper in the past decade, and on which I would like to comment further, is the concept of the 'radical Enlightenment', and more specifically, the central role that Spinoza and Spinozism play in its development. Despite this concept being coined in the early 1980s in the field of intellectual history,<sup>10</sup> it was not until the appearance of Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment* in 2001, and its subsequent translation into French in 2005, before robust debate began as to Spinoza's role in the emergence of what is now accepted as the radical Enlightenment. This debate revolves around the question of whether the most subversive understanding of the 'radical Enlightenment', that championed by Israel, has been successfully implemented and accepted as a historical category, and whether its actual content remains the subject of interrogation and debate among researchers.

In order more accurately to determine the intellectual history of the mid- to late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Israel makes a decided move away from the traditional practices of the discipline of the history of ideas, which he considers to render the effective mechanisms of the history of philosophy opaque. For Israel, historians of the eighteenth century have also failed to understand, or have lost sight of, the social and cultural role of philosophy. Israel puts the accent on the constitutive role of ideas in general and of philosophy in particular, rather than on the point of view offered by a social and cultural perspective on the question. Whatever the importance of the social and cultural context, it is '*l'esprit philosophique*', Israel maintains, that gives rise to and fashions ideas. Without overestimating the function of ideas to the detriment of the collective mechanisms of their production, the invention of new ideas is often the result of only a few thinkers and it is then, via multiple and diverse paths, many of which are unforeseen, that they are spread and have an effect.

<sup>10</sup> See Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment* (1981). The term 'Radical Enlightenment' refers to the ensemble of heterodox currents of thought that 'existed simultaneously and in harsh dialogue with the more dominant and moderate version of enlightened belief and practice' (25).

Israel maintains that the radical Enlightenment was not a peripheral development, but rather, a distinct current of thought that represents an integral and vital part of the broader picture of mainstream Enlightenment. Israel highlights the significance of intellectual radicalism in the Dutch Republic for the subsequent development of the radical Enlightenment. What is innovative about Israel's work, and makes a notable contribution to existing Enlightenment scholarship, is its almost singular focus on the influence of Spinoza. By tracing the local reception of the work of Spinoza and mapping this onto a broader movement that he characterizes as *l'esprit philosophique*, Israel argues that Spinoza played a far more central role in the development of Enlightenment ideas than is generally accepted. What this does is to shift the centre of gravity of the early Enlightenment toward the Dutch Republic and reorient its timing toward the final third of the seventeenth century. One effect of this is to undermine any assumption that the Enlightenment evolved unproblematically out of the Scientific Revolution. Israel further maintains 'that Spinoza and Spinozism were in fact the intellectual backbone of the European radical Enlightenment everywhere, not only in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, and Scandinavia but also Britain and Ireland' (Israel, 2001: vi). What Israel contends is that 'the Enlightenment should be understood as a series of protracted struggles between a host of political and religious authorities, on the one hand, and four competing philosophical systems – Cartesianism, Newtonianism, Leibnizian–Wolffism, and Spinozist–radicalism – on the other. The spectre of Spinozist radicalism at the centre of European culture in this period is treated by Israel not only as an immanent intellectual danger but also as an active philosophical movement. According to Israel, Spinoza became 'the supreme philosophical bogeyman of Early Enlightenment Europe' (Israel, 2001: 159).

*Radical Enlightenment* charts a clandestine network of Spinozist radical thinkers in Europe that emerged out of the radical circles of the early Dutch Republic. It documents the inception and diffusion of the Spinozist movement and of the sometimes brutal attempts by political and religious authorities to suppress it.

The recent collection *Qu'est-ce que les lumières 'radicales'? Libertinage, athéisme et spinozisme dans le tournant philosophique de l'âge classique* (2007), edited by Catherine Secretan, Tristan Dagron, Laurent Bove *et al.*, takes up the debate about the status and history of this 'radicality', and brings sustained scrutiny to the question of whether the emergence of thought and the revolutionary movements that took form after the mid-seventeenth century can be characterized as being continuous or on the contrary as ruptures with the earlier radical developments. Winfried Schröder questions whether the theories developed by Spinoza should indeed be considered the paradigm of radicalism, as Israel proposes, or rather whether in fact there exists a more radical philosophy, that is situated politically to the left of Spinoza. (See also, Schröder, 1999.) Rather than accepting Israel's 'panspinozism' Wiep van Bunge proposes to emphasize the fact that Spinoza constitutes without doubt a significant moment, but should not be considered as the unique origin of radical thought at the end of the seventeenth century. Pierre-François Moreau maintains that it is possible to discern a number of difficulties in Israel's interpretation, however, rather than contest the historical category of the radical Enlightenment as characterized by Israel, he suggests that its content should be understood to be more complex. It is in this light that Moreau maintains that the Spinozism of which Israel speaks is a 'Spinozism without Spinoza' (Secretan *et al.*, 2007: 21, 293). The consensus of the various papers that make up the collection is that rather than there being a single unitary movement of radical thought at the beginning of the modern era, there is, on the contrary, a multitude of 'radicalities' that are asserted, and that these are unified more by their common adversaries than by the contents, methods or principles that they each deploy.

The theme of atheism, which is little treated in itself in the serious analyses of Spinoza's system, has appeared in recent discussions which tend to substitute for the rigour of the system speculations revolving around general philosophical or theological terms. Israel's work is no exception here. I would like to make two general terminological points about the characterization of Spinoza as an atheist and materialist before elaborating on Moreau's assessment that, in *Radical Enlightenment*, Israel speaks of a Spinozism without Spinoza.

Israel effectively draws out the implications of the atheism which Spinoza's critics claimed to see in his writings or in the excerpts that were quoted from his work and disseminated. The only mention

of atheism by Spinoza appears in his correspondence, in the context of a defence or response to an accusation; so it has been argued by some that the question of Spinoza's atheism is effectively external to his philosophy, since Spinoza himself does not pose it. However, the debates about Spinoza's supposed atheism do not draw their origin from these texts, but rather from Spinoza's treatment of God in the first part of the *Ethics* as a principle of Nature. The theory of substance in *Ethics I* does not leave much room for the God of revealed religion. It is only on the basis of refusing this definition of God that Spinoza can be considered an atheist. If being atheist is not to believe in the God of Revelation, it is clear that Spinoza was an atheist. Those who accuse Spinoza of atheism are generally content to deploy this theological understanding of the term. Spinoza did not understand the term 'atheist' in this way. The idea of atheism in the seventeenth century has no bearing on the existence of or belief in God, which is rather the content of the contemporary idea of atheism. When the theologians of the seventeenth century speak of atheism, they are not referring to someone who doesn't believe in God, because for them the existence of God is not subject to question. They are referring rather to someone who does not believe in the God of revelation, or if they do, is not preoccupied with identifying the two. The theologians would also have been referring to someone who denies providence, that is, who does not believe in reward and punishment in the hereafter, or denies God's legislative will, which Spinoza, who rejects this notion as a proper incentive for ethical behaviour, was seen to do.

The problem, therefore, is not with the existence of God as a principle of nature, but with the non-coincidence of this God-principle and the God of revelation, which Israel refers to as non-providential deism (Israel, 2001: 359).<sup>11</sup> Those who are critical of the accusation that Spinoza is an atheist on the grounds that God is positioned at the centre of his system and is active throughout it, miss the point of the accusation. By defending his philosophy against the accusation of atheism, Spinoza should rather be understood to have been defending the moral content of his philosophy, despite its denial of a providential God.

Spinoza was considered to be an atheist by the majority of theologians of his time, even by those contemporaries who were atheists. As of the end of the eighteenth century, however, Spinoza was no longer thought of simply as an atheist, but rather as a pantheist, that is, as a man who Novalis describes as being 'drunk on God'. During the eighteenth century, Spinoza was reclaimed, or, more specifically, what he then represented was. The fact that Spinoza's God founds the order of the world, and has nothing to do with providence is what makes him an atheist in the seventeenth century and what absolves him from the charge in the late eighteenth century.

Another point to keep in mind is that as an atheist, Spinoza is far from being an anti-theist *tout court*, since he considers religion as a necessary means of assuring the moral regulation of the majority of people. What connects Spinoza to the category of atheism rather is the denunciation of the anthropomorphic prejudice that is found at the origin of theism.

Spinoza's metaphysics also includes another supplementary point that is denied by theologians: in addition to being a thinking thing, God is also an extended thing. Hobbes was the only other at this time to consider God as an extended thing, and because of this he too shared the accusation of being an atheist. Because of the claim that God is also an extended thing, one could therefore speak of a 'materialism' in Spinoza; however, only on the condition of not understanding by this the Hobbesian view of the determination of the soul by the body. It also needs to be made clear that according to the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, *Deus sive natura* has nothing in common with contemporary materialist positivism. *Deus sive natura* means less that God is nature, than that the entirety of nature is nothing other than a production regulated by laws.<sup>12</sup> While Spinoza may well be implicated as having had a direct influence on the history of materialist thought, for Spinoza there is no more than a formal resemblance between what are for him the different attributes of thought and extension.

While the term 'Spinozism' serves as a key to Israel's entire project, it is far from clear that the Spinozism of the time is reducible to, or even draws its principle force from the actual arguments of

<sup>11</sup> See also, Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Theory of Divine Providence* (2005) and Genevieve Lloyd, *Providence Lost* (2008).

<sup>12</sup> See Mathias Jung, *Spinoza. Gott ist Natur – Natur ist Gott* (2005).

Spinoza's work. Spinoza's philosophy is therefore much less central to Israel's argument than he claims it to be. Indeed, the resilience of Spinoza's work against criticism and its perceived atheism and materialism are what are of most importance to Israel's project rather than an adequate assessment of the role played by Spinoza's metaphysics itself. In this regard, Israel tends to collapse the distinction between Spinoza and his philosophy, on the one hand, and the Spinozism that characterizes the predominant way in which his work was received at the time, on the other. While Israel accurately documents the atheism and materialism that characterizes the Spinozism of the period, his own assessment of Spinoza's work succumbs to that same characterization; that is, Israel adopts the Spinozism he quite effectively, although uncritically, documents to characterize the work of Spinoza. However, what Israel is actually interested in documenting is the historical reception of certain ideas that can be traced back to Spinoza's work, not necessarily because they find their origin there, but because Spinoza's work represents one of the most systematic presentations of these ideas, even if Spinoza's treatment of them is far more sophisticated than is exemplified in the historical development of these same ideas.

When Israel describes and evaluates the traits that are characteristic of the radical Enlightenment, those thinkers whose work is more directly evoked include Spinoza's teacher, Van den Enden,<sup>13</sup> his known friend Meyer,<sup>14</sup> and the work of Koerbagh. It is in their work that the rationalist reading of the Bible, the violent critique of religion, the exploration of republican democratism, are to be found. Israel does concede that it is principally Bayle's Spinozism which forms the intellectual heart of the early radical Enlightenment. Interpretations of Spinoza's text often relied on the popular presentation of his philosophy by Pierre Bayle in the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the clandestine manuscripts and works of this tradition revitalize their traditional arguments by integrating themes from the TTP or from the appendix of the first part of the *Ethics*, but in doing so, extract them from the context of the Spinozist system. Therefore, Spinoza functions less as a philosopher than as kind of cipher of radical Enlightenment aspirations. One of the results of these various confluences is that Israel tends to overdetermine the nature of the network of radical Spinozists as primarily a unified movement rather than as having had its coherence determined predominantly by the systematic way in which the 'network' became a negative foil to the political and religious authorities.

This is not to say that Israel's arguments are necessarily problematized by the fact that the intellectual history that he presents of Spinoza holds less to what Spinoza actually wrote than to what was said of him by his peers and successors. What Israel is making strong and legitimate claim to is a historical category. The practice of intellectual history should not be confused with a study of the history of philosophy that analyses the internal coherence and the intellectual architecture of the Spinozist system. These arguments would be better served, and the complexity of the history better articulated, if an effort was made to demonstrate that what is said about Spinoza is in line with the development of his own thinking.

Israel's work raises a number of important historiographical and methodological questions pertaining to our understanding of the Enlightenment, specifically the role of the work of Spinoza in determining the status of a radical Enlightenment. Israel characterizes Spinoza as the paradigmatic figure of the radical Enlightenment and also points out the danger of ignoring the role played by these developments in Holland in any account of the developments of the British Enlightenment. Israel continues his reassessment of the Enlightenment in *Enlightenment Contested* (2006), the sequel to *Radical Enlightenment*, where he focuses on the developments of the first half of the eighteenth century.

A number of studies have recently appeared that bring more scrutiny to the relationship between Spinoza's work and the various Spinozisms that have developed in relation to it, including Robert

<sup>13</sup> There is a recent English translation of Van den Enden's *Vrije politieke Stellingen* (1665) by Wim Klewer (2007).

<sup>14</sup> There is a recent translation of Lodewijk Meyer's *Philosophy as the interpreter of Holy Scripture* (1666) by Samuel Shirley (2005).

<sup>15</sup> See the collection *Critique, savoir et érudition à la veille des lumières le 'Dictionnaire Historique et Critique' de Pierre Bayle* (1647–1706), edited by Hans Bots (1998).

Misrahi, *Spinoza et le spinozisme* (1998), Pierre-François Moreau, *Spinoza et le spinozisme* (2003) and Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* (2005).

Popkin (2004) undertakes to reconstruct the details of Spinoza's early life and influences, and traces these through his major works, in order to demystify the 'figure' of Spinoza and the relation that this figure bears to the reception of his philosophy. Two other recent biographical engagements with the work of Spinoza are Margaret Gullan-Whur's *Within Reason: A Life of Spinoza* (1998); and Steven Nadler's *Spinoza: A Life* (1999).

There are also a number of collections that deal more generally with the question of Spinoza's reception. *Lichtgefuge des 17. Jahrhunderts: Rembrandt and Vermeer, Spinoza and Leibniz* (2007), edited by Carolin Bohlmann, Thomas Fink and Philipp Weiss, focuses on Spinoza's seventeenth-century contemporaries and context from the point of view of the philosophy of nature. *Spinoza im Deutschland des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts: Zur Erinnerung an Hans-Christian Lucas* (2002), edited by Eva Schürmann, Norbert Waszek and Frank Weinreich, focuses on Spinoza in the Germany of the eighteenth century. To add to the series of collections analysing Spinoza's reception in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries edited by Olivier Bloch (1990; 1993), is one that focuses on the nineteenth century, edited by André Tosel and Jean Salem (2005).

Two collections explore the wider geographical influence of Spinoza's work: *Spinoza im Osten. Systematische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien* (2005), edited by Werner Röhr, focuses on the history of the reception of Spinoza in the East; and *Spinoza im Norden*, edited by Vesa Oittinen, focuses on Spinoza's reception in Scandinavian countries.

There is a collection edited by Mireille Delbraccio and Pierre-François Moreau dedicated to *Spinoza aujourd'hui* (2005), and another, *Quel Avenir pour Spinoza?*, edited by Lorenzo Vinciguerra (2001) dedicated to speculation about the future of Spinoza studies and the Spinozisms to come.

In 1984, Jonathan Bennett's *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* set the standard for Anglo-American philosophical research on Spinoza, in so far as it considered the problems tackled by Spinoza to be relevant to current philosophical concerns and that Spinoza's metaphysics still had much to offer. The collection, *Spinoza: Metaphysical themes* (2002), edited by Olli Koistinen and John I. Biro, brings together a number of papers that continue this philosophical engagement with the work of Spinoza, particularly with his metaphysics.

Two notable collections that bring together the best of Spinoza scholarship of the past three decades are *Spinoza: Critical Assessments* (2001), edited by Genevieve Lloyd, the four volumes of which bring together a selection of the best critical assessments of Spinoza's philosophy since the 1970s and demonstrate the diversity of philosophical approach and interpretation that characterizes recent Spinoza scholarship; and *Spinoza* (2002), edited by Gideon Segal and Yirmiahua Yovel, which consists of twenty-five articles that treat enduring issues in Spinoza scholarship from metaphysics through psychology to ethics and questions of human existence. The new collection, *Interpreting Spinoza: Critical Essays* (2008), edited by Charlie Huenemann, brings together a number of new and critical examinations of Spinoza's views about a range of issues.

#### 4. COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF THE WORKS OF SPINOZA

There has been an increasing amount of interest among researchers in preparing comparative studies of the work of Spinoza.

##### **Spinoza and the Ancients**

In *Spinoza and the Stoics: Power, Politics and the Passions* (2007), Firmin DeBrabander explores the ways in which the *Ethics* echoes Stoic themes regarding the public behaviour of the philosopher, and the problematic view of the relationship between ethics and politics that Spinoza inherits from the Stoics. See also *Spinoza Classicus. Antieke bronnen van een moderne denker*, by Wim Klever, which discusses the influences of Seneca, Terence, Ovid and others on Spinoza.

### Spinoza and the Baroque

In *Spinoza et le baroque, infini désir et multitude* (2001), Saverio Ansaldi investigates whether the influence of the Spanish authors of the baroque is able to be detected in the work of Spinoza, and whether this should be taken into consideration as an important factor in understanding Spinozism. The collection *Spinoza, Judaïsme et baroque* (2000), edited by Saverio Ansaldi, brings together a number of articles written by the Spinoza specialist Carl Gebhardt (1881–1934), otherwise well known for his editorial work on Spinoza's collected work, *Spinoza, Opera* (1925). Gebhardt characterizes Spinoza's work as the pinnacle of seventeenth-century thought, and the major philosophical representative of the baroque period.

#### Spinoza's Relation to Modern Thought: Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz

Bernard Rousset, *Geulincx, entre Descartes et Spinoza* (1998), offers a thorough explication of the philosophy of Geulincx, as it relates to the work of Descartes and Spinoza. See also the recent English translation of Geulincx's *Ethics* (2006). Tammy Nyden-Bullock, *Spinoza's Radical Cartesian Mind* (2007) traces the development of Spinoza's epistemology in light of its historical and philosophical context. See also Jonathan Bennett, *Learning from Six Philosophers: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (2003); and *La découverte du principe de raison: Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz*, edited by Luc Foisneau (2001).

Christian Lazerri, *Droit pouvoir et liberté, Spinoza critique de Hobbes* (1998), examines Spinoza's relation to Hobbes, see also Thomas Heerich, *Transformation des Politikkonzepts von Hobbes zu Spinoza: das Problem der Souveränität* (2000); and Joachim Kreische, *Konstruktivistische Politiktheorie bei Hobbes und Spinoza* (2000); Charles Ramond, *Spinoza et la pensée moderne* (1998); and Theo Verbeek (2003).

For an account of Spinoza's relation to Leibniz, see Matthew Stewart, *The Courtier and the Heretic. Leibniz, Spinoza and the Fate of God in the Modern World* (2006). Ursula Goldenbaum, *Zwischen Bewunderung und Entsetzen: Leibniz' frühe Faszination durch Spinozas 'Tractatus theologico-politicus'* (2001), investigates Leibniz's early fascination with Spinoza's TTP. See also *Lichtgefüge des 17. Jahrhunderts: Rembrandt and Vermeer, Spinoza and Leibniz* (Bohlmann et al., 2007); and Hubertus Schlenke, *Vermeer mit Spinoza gesehen* (1998).

#### Spinoza's Relation to Jewish Thought

A number of studies have been dedicated to examining the question of Spinoza's Jewish identity, his relation to Jewish thought, and the reception of his work by the Jewish community. Ze'ev Levy, *Baruch Spinoza: Seine Aufnahme durch die jüdischen Denker in Deutschland* (2000), investigates Spinoza's reception by Jewish philosophers in Germany. See also Carsten Schapkow, "Die Freiheit zu philosophieren". *Jüdische Identität in der Moderne im Spiegel der Rezeption Baruch de Spinozas in der deutschsprachigen Literatur* (2001). Philippe Cassuto, *Spinoza et les commentateurs juifs* (1998), examines Spinoza's commentary on the Bible in the first chapter of the TTP. Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy. Immortality and the Jewish Mind* (2001), investigates Spinoza's excommunication. See also the collection organized by Jean-François Révah, *Etudes sur le marranisme, l'hétérodoxie juive et Spinoza* (2000); the collection edited by Heide Ravven and Lenn Goodman, *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy* (2002); and Gebhardt (2000).

#### Spinoza's Relation to German Idealism and Heidegger

There has been increasing interest in the role played by Spinoza in the developments of German Idealism. Recent texts include: Bertrand Dejudin, *L'immanence ou le sublime. Observations sur les réactions de Kant face à Spinoza dans la Critique de la faculté de juger* (2001); Enrique Borrego, *Exaltación y crisis de la razón: lecciones de filosofía; Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant* (2003);

Hermann Fischer-Harriehausen, *Kant und Spinoza* (2004); Saverio Ansaldi, *Nature et puissance. Giordano Bruno et Spinoza* (2006); and Simon Duffy, *The Logic of Expression: Quality, Quantity and Intensity in Spinoza, Hegel and Deleuze* (2006).

In *Totalité et finitude. Spinoza et Heidegger* (2004), Jean-Marie Vaysse maintains that while Heidegger undertakes the deconstruction of metaphysics, Spinoza had proposed an ethics that exceeds its logic. Spinoza therefore seems to short-circuit the historical line of Heidegger's reading of metaphysics, and yet Heidegger speaks very little of Spinoza. Vaysse undertakes to present an account of the philosophy of Spinoza as a silent and incessantly unspeakable current in the philosophy of Heidegger.

### Spinoza, Analytic Philosophy and Linguistics

In *Davidson and Spinoza* (2007) Van der Burg argues the linguistic turn in philosophy, as represented by Davidson, allows for Spinoza's staunch naturalism, even of thought, to be salvaged. Van der Burg's analysis sets up the possibility of developing a Spinozistic ethics of Davidsonian philosophy. See also Karsten Nielsen, *Interpreting Spinoza's Arguments: Toward a Formal Theory of Consistent Language Scepticism: Imitating Ethica* (2002)

### Spinoza and the Theme of Politics

Two translations of notable texts on the relation of Spinoza's work to politics are Etienne Balibar's *Spinoza and Politics*, translated by Peter Snowdon (1998); and Antonio Negri's *Subversive Spinoza: (Un)contemporary Variations*, edited by Timothy S. Murphy (2004).

In *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and his Contemporaries* (1999), Warren Montag makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion of radical democracy by drawing upon Louis Althusser's remarks about the connection between the theory of ideology and Spinoza's philosophy, as well as the work on Spinoza by Antonio Negri, Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey, to formulate the core problem of his analysis, that there can be no liberation of the mind without a liberation of the body, and therefore, that there can be no liberation of the individual without collective liberation. Montag thereby extends Spinoza's materialism in an attempt to characterize the affect of joy as a force of action that leads toward individual liberation.

See also Francesca Bonicalzi, *L'impensato della politica. Spinoza e il vincolo civile* (1999); Riccardo Caporali, *La fabbrica dell'Imperium. Saggio su Spinoza* (2000); Lucia Nocentini, *Il luogo della politica. Saggio su Spinoza* (2001); and Raia Prokhovnik, *Spinoza and Republicanism* (2004).

*Ethik, Recht and Politik bei Spinoza* (2001), edited by Marcel Senn and Manfred Walther, explores Spinoza's naturalistic approach to natural law and suggests various potential applications in the areas of ethics, law and the philosophy of the state. See also Paul Cazayus, *Pouvoir et liberté en politique. Actualité de Spinoza* (2000)

In *Spinoza's Book of Life: Freedom and Redemption in 'The Ethics'* (2003), Steven B. Smith focuses on the issues of human freedom and responsibility in Spinoza. What distinguishes Smith's book from other studies of the *Ethics* is that he treats the geometrical method as a form of moral rhetoric, as a model for the construction of individuality. Smith draws upon Spinoza's political thought in an attempt to characterize a new kind of 'democratic individual' (Smith, 2003: 201).

Vittorio Morfino undertakes the first serious attempt at a theoretical interpretation of the relation between Spinoza and Machiavelli in *Il tempo e l'occasione. L'incontro Spinoza Machiavelli* (2002); and in *Incurioni spinoziste: causa, tempo, relazione* (2002), Morfino extends the project of Pierre Macherey in *Hegel ou Spinoza* (1979) by offering a materialist reading of Spinoza that draws upon the work of Althusser to overturn Hegel's influential critique of Spinoza. Morfino then undertakes to deploy this understanding of Spinoza's philosophy to restore a contemporary conception of non-teleological materialism.

The collection *Sulla scienza intuitiva in Spinoza. Ontologia, politica, estetica* (2003), edited by Filippo Del Lucchese and Vittorio Morfino, explores the intuitive science of Spinoza and the complexity of the third kind of knowledge in relation to ontology, politics and aesthetics.

In *Potenza e beatitudine. Il diritto nel pensiero di Baruch Spinoza* (2003), Roberto Ciccarelli addresses the question of how the relation between power and right can be thought of from a perspective that exceeds the properly legal sphere and draws it into the problematic field of ethics.

Extending the tradition inspired by Althusser and Balibar, and continued by Negri (1981) and Bove (1996), according to which the Spinoza–Machiavelli axis represents a focus of resistance to the current dominant tradition of modernity, Filippo Del Lucchese, *Tumulti e indignatio. Conflitto, diritto e moltitudine in Machiavelli e Spinoza* (2004) presents a comparative study of the political thought of these two figures.

The collection *Die Macht der Menge: Über die Aktualität einer Denkfigur Spinozas* (2006), edited by Gunnar Hindrichs, examines Spinoza's ontology of social being, which allows a non-normative justification of democracy, as applied to a variety of philosophical, sociological, political and legal debates.

### Spinoza and Religion

There has been much recent interest in Spinoza in the domain of the philosophy of religion. While Spinoza's work does not promise to resolve all of the problems that are posed by the relations between different religions, it does provide a critical perspective from which to rethink the present condition of our common history.

The book by Jacqueline Lagrée, *Spinoza et le débat religieux* (2004), restores the intellectual context of the *Treatise*, the polemics that gave rise to it and brings together a number of the basic themes with which it is concerned such as the relationship between reason and Scripture, meaning and truth that culminate in a critique of miracles and a theory of tolerance beyond mere religious toleration. For more on Spinoza's theory of toleration, see Michael Rosenthal, 'Tolerance as a virtue in Spinoza's *Ethics*' (2001); and 'Spinoza's republican argument for toleration' (2003).

Nancy Levene (2004) draws upon the recent proliferation of literature that engages with Spinoza's view on religion to argue for a treatment of religion as a useful and indeed integral dimension of political life. See also Timothy Sprigge, *The God of Metaphysics* (2007); Ami Bouganim, *Le testament de Spinoza* (2000); Sherry Deveaux, *The Role of God in Spinoza's Metaphysics* (2007); and Genevieve Lloyd, *Providence Lost* (2008).

For texts that engage directly with Spinoza's interpretation of the Bible, see James Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (2001); Travis Frampton, *Spinoza and the Rise of Historical Criticism of the Bible* (2006); and Brayton Polka, *Between Philosophy and Religion, Vol. I: Spinoza, the Bible, and Modernity Hermeneutics and Ontology* (2006), and Vol. II: *Spinoza, the Bible, and Modernity Politics and Ethics* (2007).

### Spinoza and Mathematics

Salomon Ofman, in *Pensée et rationnel: Spinoza* (2003), analyses the unity of Spinoza's thought by characterizing the relation between Spinoza's rational system and mathematics. Fabrice Audié, in *Spinoza et les mathématiques* (2005), examines the different mathematical references used by Spinoza, and places them in the context of the controversies of the time. Françoise Barbaras, in *Spinoza: la science mathématique du salut* (2007), argues that Spinoza constructs a science of salvation that is nourished by the upheavals in mathematics at the beginning of the seventeenth century, primarily the introduction of algebra and the reflection on the infinite, and that the analysis of desire exposes a true geometry of human passions in the *Ethics*.

### Spinoza and the Question of Normativity

The collection edited by Jacqueline Lagrée, *Spinoza et la norme* (2002), investigates the normative possibilities of Spinoza's philosophy, See also Matthias Bublitz, *Naturalismus und Normativität bei Spinoza. Versuch einer Vermittlung* (2003); and *Die Macht der Menge* edited by Gunnar Hindrichs (2006).

## Spinoza and Science

The interest in the philosophy of Spinoza remains very strong, not only among philosophers, but in the general scientific community, as evidenced by the appearance of work that examines Spinoza both among neurobiologists (Damasio, 2003), and researchers in economics and the social and environmental sciences (Lordon, 2002; 2006; de Jonge 2004). See also a number of the papers in *Zur Aktualität der Ethik Spinozas: Medizin/Psychiatrie–Ökonomi–Recht–Religion; Spinoza in der Geschichte der philosophischen Ethik* (2000), edited by Klaus Hammacher, Irmela Reimers-Tovote and Manfred Walther.

In *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003), Antonio Damasio draws upon Spinoza to provide an account of the neurobiology of feelings and how they shape human life. Damasio considers Spinoza to have been a ‘protobiologist’, who prefigured some of the views on emotion and feelings that are now taking shape as a result of modern neuroscience. The value of Damasio’s work to Spinoza studies is not its contribution to Spinoza scholarship per se, but its having provided the rudiments of mapping Spinoza’s work onto contemporary neuroscience and thereby opening up avenues for the closer and more careful scrutiny, and therefore further development of this line of research within Spinoza studies.

In *La politique du capital* (2002), Frédéric Lordon, an economist, extends Laurent Bove’s thesis of a strategy of the *conatus* – which, through its power of affirmation and resistance in ethics and politics, is the expression of a dynamic ontology of decisions to problems (*La stratégie du conatus*, 1996) – to the sphere of economics. He argues that the politics of capital is a matter of ‘sovereignty’ – that is, the necessity of persevering in its being in the midst of the confrontation with the power of another. What is at stake in this conflict is nothing other than the survival of capital itself.

In *Spinoza and Deep Ecology* (2004), Eccy de Jonge criticizes existing versions of deep ecology, whose engagement with Spinoza’s metaphysics has typically ignored his political work and therefore committed itself to a highly controversial politics, and proposes a closer examination of Spinoza’s political theory as a solution.

All of these developments testify to the enduring influence of Spinoza’s thought today, which continues to be deployed in a variety of domains of philosophy where it continues to generate effects and provoke debate. In many ways, Spinoza’s thought remains as powerful and active today as it has been at various stages in the development of the tradition of philosophy.

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