Lorenzo Vinciguerra:
SPINOZA IN FRENCH PHILOSOPHY TODAY

In: Philosophy Today / Winter 2009

Es gibt Kein andere Philosophie, als die Philosophie des Spinoza.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

Every philosopher has two philosophies: his own and Spinoza's.

Henri Bergson

In the last few decades, French philosophers have been particularly interested in Spinoza's thought, to the point that it is possible to speak today of the emergence of a "French Spinozism," and even of a "French Spinozist school" that has accompanied the philosophical and political debates of the last thirty years.[1] This "school," which is in no way official and does not pretend to be such, nevertheless has its founding fathers, its institutions, and an increasing output of publications. In large part thanks to this school, Spinoza is finally finding his place among the different rationalist systems of early modern philosophy (Descartes, Malebranche, Hobbes, Leibniz), and as his is a singular place, we have not yet finished evaluating his importance.

Long relegated to the margins of university philosophy programs and banned from official thought, the history of French Spinozism was at first that of an imposed silence, then that of an unclassifiable system of thought. The history of the reception of Spinoza's works bears witness to this. Pierre Bayle thought of a Spinozism before Spinoza, whose traits he found in Greek pagan thought and in the Orient; Hegel made Spinoza "the Oriental" into the very condition for philosophy; Bergson believed in the existence of a Spinozism without Spinoza as the eternal possibility of thought; Deleuze thought most often with Spinoza; and Negri finally brought together Spinoza's untimeliness with that of other "bad-boy" thinkers like Marx, Machiavelli, and Nietzsche. All of these authors considered Spinozism as a contemporary form of thought, seeing in it less a philosophy of the past than a thought that never quite managed to go away.

If we were to parody Bergson's way putting it, we could say that Spinoza gave rise to at least two histories of philosophy - one in which he belongs to the past and is ranked among the Cartesians with his attention turned toward the ancient theologies, one in which he is a member of the avant-garde, rebellious and subversive, polemicizing against the instituted order, resolutely turned towards a thought yet to be constructed. What is undeniable is that by making us better understand Spinoza in his own time, the French Spinozism of the last

few years has also contributed to inserting him into our own time. It is almost as if his thought, taking on the image of an essentially posthumous work, has lost nothing of its a-topical and anachronistic dimension, which makes it be constantly out of step with his own time, so that it can finally deliver its message less to an already existing era than to the possibilities of a future yet to be defined.[2]

Now, after the announced deaths of God and man, after the proclaimed end of the grand foundational narratives of what we now habitually call modernity, after the end of metaphysics, of history, of art, of the book, a few philosophers (Lyotard and Derrida in France, Danto and Searle in the United States, Vattimo in Italy) has tried to piggy-back on Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger in order to be able to think the meaning of these closures in the era of globalization and of the global village. Consequently, there is nothing astonishing about Spinozism's radical anti-finalism finding a voice in the margins of post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-Freudianism, or postMarxism, all of which characterize themselves (sometimes in prophetic tones) as modes of the thought of the end and of the after-the-end. In one sense, then, there is nothing new under Spinoza's sun: contemporary French Spinozism only confirms and extends a history made of cyclical rebirths and eternal returns, which have announced and animated some of the great seasons of modern thought.[3]

The forceful return of Spinozism in France in the last fifty years nonetheless has its specific characteristics and its own reasons. We can say that Spinozism has constituted a certain fold of French thought, whether it be through the bias of Deleuze's philosophy which found in Spinoza a preferred author, or through Lacan and certain aspects of psychoanalysis, or through Macherey and Balibar (students of Althusser, who was himself marked by Spinoza's thought), or even through Negri's political thought. What is more, Spinoza's political thought (the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus and the Tractatus Politicus) is today an important source of inspiration for political reflection that has questioned the nature of totalitarianism, the essence of democracy, and more recently the constitutional powers of human populations on both the local and planetary scales.

The Pre-War Heritage

Before becoming French, Spinozism had first of all been German. It was by progressively freeing itself from this tutelage that French Spinozism claimed a gradually recognizable identity. Before World War I, French Spinoza studies already included several important works. The nineteenth century ended with the work of the young Victor Delbos, Le problème moral dans la philosophie de Spinoza et dans l'histoire du Spinozisme,[4] which offered the first synthesis of

the reception and influence of German Romantic philosophy on French thought, which had previously been marked by Hegelianism and by Victor Cousin's eclecticism. Spinozism for Delbos was the framework that leads us from Leibniz to Hegel, by passing through Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Schleiermacher, and Schelling, finally ending up at a noteworthy confrontation between Kantian morality and Spinozist ethics. The introduction and diffusion of Spinozism in the French university system also owes much to the courses Delbos gave at the Sorbonne in 1912-1913. They have been collected and published in a work much praised for the clarity and perspicacity of its analyses in the service of a synthetic understanding of Spinoza's system.[5]

We must also mention Jules Lagneau's lectures on Spinoza, which were originally inspired by Cartesian philosophy, as were those of his disciple Emile Chartier, better known as Alain (1866-1951), who as professor at the Lycée Henri IV in Paris until 1933 was a charismatic master for his young students, some of whom would subsequently enrich French philosophy. Alain's small but essential book Spinoza was republished many times following its first publication in 1900 and has circulated among several generations of students. The 1 920s also saw several important publications. Carl Gebhardt in Germany had prepared the way by publishing the Opera posthuma in four volumes in 1924, an edition destined to replace Van Vloten's. In France, these Oeuvres appeared in Charles Appuhn's annotated translation, still in use today.[6] These are also the years of the Chronicon spinozanum (five volumes were published between 1921 and 1927), which brought together a number of European Spinozists in an early collaboration. However the interest in Spinoza in France in these early years occurred at the margins of the then dominant school known as spiritualism, where it sometimes served as a counterpoint to the neo-Kantian debates, particularly those regarding epistemological questions. This was the case with Léon Brunschvicg, who showed a particular interest in Spinozism. In his Spinoza et ses contemporains,[7] after a presentation of Spinoza's basic teaching, Brunschvicg's concern was to situate spinozistic rationalism in opposition to its great contemporaries (Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, Fenelon, and Leibniz) in the history of philosophy. Spinoza, Brunschvicg claimed, stands alone, with his "integral rationalism" characterized by an intuition that goes beyond the metaphysical abstractions of classical reason. During this same period, Lachièze-Rey (Les origines cartésiennes du Dieu de Spinoza, 1932) was particularly interested in examining the details of Spinoza's concepts (naturans/ naturata; the active nature of the understanding) in their difference from Cartesian concepts.

After the War

Questioned a few years ago about the state of Spinoza studies in France at the end of the 1950s, Alexandre Matheron declared that it was "practically nil," to the point that any young student who wanted to invest himself in the study of Spinoza was met with a nearly non-existent bibliography.[8] In light of what has happened in the last fifty years, this judgment may seem surprising. But it testifies to a historical and philosophical situation, which in the years immediately after World War II was not terribly favorable to a renewal of interest in Spinozism. Existentialism was mostly deaf to Spinoza, who was not one of Sartre's preferred authors, just as he had not been one of Husserl's or Heidegger's.[9] Some references, indirect or direct, can be found in MerleauPonty's work, but it would be difficult to recognize Spinoza as an important source for his thought. During these years, everything converged if not on a forgetting of Spinoza then at least on a marginalizing of him. If he was cited at all, it was in study guides, and usually just to recall the names of his most important texts. This extended silence was, as we have seen, not new. Apart from a few isolated cases, it was not until the end of the 1960s that the conditions for a veritable rebirth of Spinozism in France were to be established.

In the shadows of the Parisian philosophical scene, the post-war years nonetheless do register some important scholarly work destined to increase with time. I would cite as examples André Darbon 's Essais spinozistes and Paul Vernière's Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution, which is still considered today a standard reference on the topic,[10] as well as the annotated but unevenly translated edition of the Oeuvres completes, the fruit of a collective effort, published in one volume in Gallimard's Pleiade collection in 1954 (reprinted in 1978).[11] Any real philosophical interest in Spinozism nevertheless remained marginal. The subsequent increase in interest was to owe much to Sylvain Zac's teaching at the Sorbonne. Zac's first book, L'idée de vie dans la philosophie de Spinoza (Paris, PUF, 1963) shows the influence of Bergson's thought, while his second book, Spinoza et l'interprétation de l'Ecriture (Paris, PUF, 1965), was the first notable study (along with André Malet's Le Traité théologico-politique de Spinoza et la pensée biblique [Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1966]) to show any significant philosophical interest in the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, considered until then as a secondary work in relation to the Ethics, a judgment no doubt in line with its reception in Germany and perhaps also due to its polemical and militant character. But, despite the undeniable contribution of these pioneering works, it is not here that we must look for the principal source of the renewal of French Spinozism.

The Cartesian Way: Reason versus Experience

The history of French philosophy during these years was to be permanently marked by a quarrel over the interpretation of Descartes' philosophy. This debate would have profound repercussions on the orientations of the Spinoza studies that followed, in that its protagonists were also assiduous readers and interpreters of Spinoza. This quarrel, which reached its peak at the Royaumont conference devoted to Descartes in 1955,[12] will for a long time thereafter influence the study of philosophy in France. It also reflects the state of French philosophy during this period as divided between the influences of the two dominant currents of philosophy: existentialism on one side, structuralism on the other. It opposed Ferdinand Alquié[13] to Martial Gueroult. Alquié, who had notably authored La découverte métaphysique de l'homme chez Descartes (Paris, PUF, 1950), was partisan to an "existentialist" reading of the Metaphysical Meditations, according to which Cartesianism must be understood on the basis of the experience of the thought of the self, the ego, whose concrete existence is irreducible to its thinking. Alquié defended an evolutionary thesis about Descartes work, one that makes it refractory to any logic of an overall system, which is by definition abstract and atemporal, and he sought to inscribe the doctrine in a history of lived experience. This amounted to reading the cogito as revelatory not of a pure mind or an understanding in general, but of a concrete existing ego irreducible to its cogitation.[14]

Martial Gueroult was ferociously opposed to such an approach, preferring to attend only to the "order of reasons" on the basis of which the Meditations unfold their logic in the closed circle of concepts.[15] Two different ways of reading the text, as well as two different philosophical sensibilities, thus confronted each other. Beyond the polemics, we can also see here a resurgence of the ancient Pascalian opposition between a "geometrical mind" attached to the rigor of the forms of thought, here well represented by Gueroult, and a more "delicate mind," better interpreted by Alquié, for whom life at bottom always overflows whatever we can think of it.

We find this opposition at work again in the reading and interpretation that these same authors offer of Spinoza. This confirms that the interest of French historians of philosophy for Spinozism is in no small part born of these Cartesian studies. In fact, subsequent French history of philosophy will as a result bear within itself the frequently posed question about the status of Spinozism: Is it essentially the logical conclusion of those theses already germinally present in Cartesian philosophy, or is it instead characterized by a radical antiCartesianism, the full importance of which we have yet to assess? Caught between these two solutions, Spinoza exegesis has often espoused a

kind of back and forth movement, proposing sometimes a distancing from, and sometimes a return to Descartes.[16] This detour through Descartes was nonetheless a necessary one for a distance from the Romantic version of Spinoza, leftover from German philosophy, to be definitively established.

In this regard, Alquié's reading of Spinoza in the margins of his Cartesianism is symptomatic. In his courses at the Sorbonne in 1958-1959, and again twenty years later in his Le rationalisme de Spinoza, Alquié declared without beating around the bush that he had not succeeded in understanding Spinoza. Without excluding a priori the possibility of the mind acceding to Spinozan intuition, he readily recognized as a Cartesian that he had never been able to experience this third kind of knowledge.[17] It is only a short step from this to thinking that Cartesianism may constitute an epistemologica! obstacle to understanding Spinozism, a step that was to be taken by others in order to celebrate in Spinoza an atypical singularity of the Western tradition containing within it another paradigm of rationality and modernity.

The Spinozistic Turn

The confrontation with Descartes, however necessary and historically grounded it may have been, would have probably not sufficed by itself to inaugurate a new season of Spinozist studies in France. For this, we have to factor in the impulse given by certain heterodox thinkers working at the margins of the dominant Marxism and structuralism of the 1960s.

The year 1968 marks a turning point. Appearing at nearly the same moment were Martial Gueroult's commentary on the first part of the Ethics, Gilles Deleuze's book on Spinoza et le problème de l'expression, and Bernard Rousset's La perspective finale de V Ethique et le problème de la cohérence du spinozisme: l'autonomie comme salut.[18] A few months later Alexandre Matheron's first book on Individu et communauté chez Spinoza came out. These four studies, without having any direct links among them,[19] were the beginning of a veritable renewal of Spinozism, the effects of which are still perceptible today. It would not be an exaggeration even to speak of a new foundation in this regard, if by this we understand the double role that these works were able to play: on the one hand, they furnished new critical bases that would serve as references for more than a generation of researchers; on the other hand, they contributed to relegating the studies that had preceded them to the past. Gueroult, Matheron, and Deleuze, each in his own way, I will say are the authors who have left the greatest imprint on subsequent studies.

Gueroult's "Mysticism without Mystery"

Professor at Strasbourg, then at the Sorbonne, and finally between 1951 and 1963 at the Collège de France where he succeeded Etienne Gilson, Martial Gueroult (1891-1976) devoted the last years of his life to the study of the Ethics. He managed to complete only two volumes of his great project of writing one volume for each of the five parts of the Ethics.[20] This work, interrupted by his death, remains unrivaled today.[21] His unpublished writings also inaugurate a new form of reading, following the text line by line and examining every detail of its explicit and implicit arguments. The letter of the text is questioned and problematized in order to restore the structures of its internal architecture, according to a method called "internalist," which consists in explicating a thought on the bases of its internal coherence. To understand the Ethics juxta propria principia was Gueroult's ambition. This method was at antipodes to the one practiced by Harry Austryn Wolfson (1887-1974),[22] or at least Gueroult was convinced that it was, since he opposed Wolfson's approach in a quasi-systematic manner during his lectures at the Collège de France. After his great monographs devoted to Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz, and Malebranche, Gueroult's commentary shows what a "monadological" conception of the history of philosophy might look like. The great philosophical systems, like monads, are seen as being autonomously constructed on their internal order of reasons, independently of other systems. A monumental work results from this approach, one which is never so at ease as when it has measured a thought that takes geometrical order as its model.

Absolute rationalism and the integral intelligibility of the real are the pillars of the temple of reason that the Ethics represents to Gueroult. His commentary explores its architecture and the play of forces on which its edifice is built, enveloping a series of fundamental theses that together form a unified front:

that, by an idea of adequation, God and man know the nature of things such as it is in itself; that the attributes constitute the very being of substance, which is not beyond them; that we know such as they are in themselves those among them that are known to us; that God is not a creative understanding; that divine understanding and human understanding, which is a part of it, are the same effect of God and are of an identical nature; that substance is indivisible, that the nature of the whole is entirely invested in the part; that cause and effect are commensurate in one sense but not in another; that the part is in every way commensurate with the whole; that true knowledge, that is, adequation, proceeds from the whole to the parts; that it is a genetic and intuitive deduction; that its operation is immediately grasped in genetic geometry; that this geometry is the model for all true knowledge and, as a

result, of all true metaphysics .. . that no true knowledge is unable to be realized outside of a deduction of the geometrical kind, every attempt to understand the Ethics stripping it of its form amounts to wanting to accede to the truth via the negation of the process that makes it possible.[23]

Gueroult's intention was clearly to establish an orthodoxy capable of making room for the true and the false, and to separate out the mistaken interpretations which had become lost in the system like one gets lost in a labyrinth. He proposed to follow the surest of Ariadne's threads, namely, the total intelligibility of God or of the things, assumed as a veritable "article of faith" according to the still famous expression, which amount to a "mysticism without mystery."[24] We are meant to understand that Gueroult took seriously the order of the philosophizing of the Ethics: the geometrical order of its reasons is nothing other than the objective order according to which the real unfolds itself by itself to the extent that it is the very expression of this order. This work of regrounding the principles of interpretation for the Ethics allows for the correction of certain common traditional misunderstandings. This is the case, for example, for the pantheism (all is God) with which Spinozism is usually associated. On the basis of proposition 15 of the first part of the Ethics, Gueroult prefers to speak of a "panentheism" ("all is in God, without being God"), thus saving the ontological difference between the things whose essence envelopes existence, and those whose existence is not enveloped by essence. This is also the case for the thorny question of the relation of substance and attributes, about which Gueroult makes a magisterial point.[25] Taking up again the ancient and never truly extinct quarrel within the history of German philosophy, Gueroult defends and develops the position taken earlier by Kuno Fischer, namely, that of a real constitution of substance by its attributes, and he does so against the formalist interpretations that from a Kantian perspective made attributes into simple forms of the understanding which were then projected on a substance indeterminate in itself. In this same interpretive framework also come the wellknown pages dedicated to a "substance constituted of one sole attribute,"[26] in the margin of propositions I-VIH of the first book of the Ethics, which scan in an unexpected manner the deductive movement through which is constituted the absolutely infinite nature of substance. These pages constitute one of Gueroult's major contributions to the understanding of Spinoza's ontology.

However, despite the respect paid to the letter of the text he had proposed to clarify, a commentary is never exempt from interpretation. From this point of view, Gueroult can be seen to assume (not always consciously) a reading that has sometimes been qualified, and not without reason, as "neo-Platonic." Not in the sense that Spinozism would have to be brought together with the

historically known forms of neo-Platonism - like those of Marcilio Ficino and Nicolas Cusanus, but rather in the sense that his enterprise naturally has the tendency to hypostatize the differences that it encounters, even to sustain them, notably when it is led to operate more or less arbitrarily by cutting into body of the text in order to extract the structure supposedly governing it. This tendency is probably innate to the very nature of any "internalist" commentary, because in wanting to fix the multiple logical articulations of a thought, it cannot completely avoid freezing its movement. It is, for example, in this way that under Gueroult's pen a process very easily becomes a procession, a relation, becomes a transition. More generally, we can say that every reading that gives itself the task of making explicit what is implicit is exposed to the risk of introducing explanatory models that are created as much to calm the interpreter's worry about (in)coherence, as to make the text intelligible.

Nevertheless, with Gueroult's analyses and reconstructions, French history of philosophy definitively breaks away from the authority of the German tradition to which it had long been indebted. Gueroult will be one of the last to cite and discuss the great histories of German philosophy of the latter half of the nineteenth century (Erdmann, Kamerer, Trendelenburg, Fischer). The Spinoza who emerges in his commentary is consequently no longer the "drunkard of God" who had so inspired the Romantics, but rather a "drunkard of Reason," who would be able to resolve the problems of classical metaphysics and its secular conflicts with the theological tradition. In a word, then, Gueroult's commentary profoundly renewed the understanding of Spinozism, inaugurating a method of reading which, inspired by structuralism, became a frequently authoritative school of interpretation.[27] It managed to permanently change the way of reading a text like the Ethics. After him, it was no longer possible to content oneself with a "rapid" reading of a text, which from then on was synonymous with approximation and haste.

The Foundations of Political Science According to Matheron

We find another approach of the structural type as well as one again based upon the principle of an internal reading in Alexandre Matheron's first book, Individu et communauté chez Spinoza (Paris: Aubier, 1969, 1988).[28] However, even though they are often placed together, the kinship between these two authors stops here, because their motivations and orientations are completely different. Matheron begins where Gueroult left off, namely, with the third part of the Ethics?[29] He nonetheless does borrow from Gueroult the principle of the integral intelligibility of the real, to which he adds the principle of the irreducible individuality of things, so that Spinoza's pantheism is understood

from the point of view of the conatus of each thing, moving from it to ground a metaphysical and ethical individualism.[30] Matheron thus makes two principal lines of direction his own: The first one understands the constitution of individuals from the simplest to the most complex according to their physical definition as the union between bodies; the other articulates this same constitution as Spinoza's immanent naturalism (Tractatus Politicus, chapter III, section 3), according to which the power of the conatus is the one and only source of right (jus sive potentia). The path is opened in this way for an analysis of the laws of passionate and rational life with a view toward the constitution of human individuals within different types of society that would define their unions: monarchy, centralized aristocracy, federal aristocracy, democracy.

Matheron's interpretation proposes that eternity is disposed on two different levels. It runs from the ethical foundation and unfolding of eternal inter-human life in order to end up at the still famous thesis of a community of sages understood as a "communism of minds."[31] The eschatological perspective at which this reading ends up therefore represents a meta-historical horizon, which will never be attained, but to which humanity, in what defines it rationally, can hope to draw near. We are meant to understand that such an approach has the effect of grounding the hope that it was possible to draw from Spinoza, well before Marx, and maybe in a more profoundly penetrating manner, the fundamental concepts required to ground a science of social and political practices. Matheron's intention was not so much meant to fix the doctrine in an immutable orthodoxy as to make it live again by extending, if necessary, the deductive work of this thought. Had Spinoza himself not declared at the beginning of the second part of the Ethics that it was virtually infinite? Thinking in Spinoza could thus lead to reading an unexpected and hitherto unknown Spinoza.[32] If Matheron's reading has been taken as magisterial, it is because of his way of reading a text beyond the text without ever giving the impression of having left the text, of exploring the intrinsic productivity of a true "thinking machine."

Matheron's second book better testifies to this step of marrying interpretive rigor and vigor.[33] On the basis of a limited set of texts, he manages to disengage the lines of a Spinozist christology. The questions and rational hypotheses that led Spinoza to discuss the historical and philosophical nature and figure of Christ as well as the understanding of his science are shown to have had repercussions not only for the evaluation of the figure of Christ in Christian scriptural exegesis, they also serve to redraw the limits of Spinozist anthropology. There are numerous people who have seen in Matheron one of the most original interpreters of French Spinozism in the last forty years. Today he is still one of the major references, and not just in France.[34]

Deleuze's Spinoza: A Philosophy of Expression

Spinoza's presence in Deleuze's thought has profound reasons, if it is true that, as Deleuze himself said, he carried Spinoza in his heart well before carrying him in his mind. Already recognizable in Différence et répétition?[35] Deleuze's interest in Spinoza grew into a critical reflection on the dominant structuralism of the 1960s. He also followed independent paths comparable to those of his contemporaries. His most thoughtful work, which represents the work of both a historian and a philosopher, is Spinoza et le problème de l'expression?[36] This reading, which is strongly anti-Cartesian,[37] is organized around an apparently marginal notion, but one that we find at work in some absolutely decisive places in the text, such as the Ethics's sixth definition dedicated to God. Taking up in an original manner the notion of expression, Spinoza, according to Deleuze, transformed the emanationism dear to the neo-Platonic tradition into an immanentism of an unknown type.[38] We are thus offered the key to grasp in one gesture, intuitively, what animates and traverses this thought from one end to another.

This reading certainly has the merit of never recoiling from the challenges and difficulties often judged to be insurmountable. Problems such as the relation of substance to its attributes, of the infinite to the finite, or of the individuation of singular essences, are occasions for Deleuze's genius to exercise itself. His hypotheses, such as that of "intensive quantities," which he creates in order to be able to make sense of the singular essences included in the attributes of God as relative degrees of the power of the divine essence,[39] are really speculative efforts that he tries out in order to come to the end of these "eternal questions" of Spinozism. Likewise, his reprise of the hypothesis of a possible Scotist influence, which is historically drawn from the clues furnished by Pierre Bayle in his Dictionaries, has the merit of trying to clarify a doctrine characterized by a uni vocal conception of substance expressing itself in an infinity of attributes.[40] This book, which doubtlessly participates in one of the most creative periods of French philosophy after the war, is an exemplary synthesis of a work that can call itself philosophy just as easily as history of philosophy.

If Deleuze's Spinoza revisits in its own way all the classical themes of Spinozism, his interpretation is nonetheless marked by the influence that the work of Bergson and Nietzsche had exercised on him. Deleuze ends up bringing Spinoza together with Nietzsche.[41] It is the Spinoza, the thinker of desire and genealogist of morality, who notably reflects on evil and on the final status of sadness in the margins of the correspondence with Bleiberg, who captures Deleuze's attention. The Deleuzian reading remains to this day one of the most

stimulating and speculative ever undertaken. If Spinozism is today perceived as the source for dealing with the most important contemporary questions in philosophy, then we owe this in large part to Deleuze.[42]

Yet it must also be said that Spinoza remained relatively foreign to much of French philosophy in this period. Foucault hardly ever mentions him.[43] Derrida remains hermetically sealed off from Spinozism in the same years, giving it only a late recognition.[44] Levinas's aversion for the Jew of Amsterdam is notorious, while Ricoeur's interest is entirely circumstantial. Bourdieu probably merits a separate consideration, because if there is little doubt that he had read and meditated on Spinoza, or that he was inspired by him for his understanding of social determinisms, it is nonetheless true that the anthropology at the basis of his sociology of practices also shows the influence of Pascalian pessimism and thus tempers the more spinozistic aspects of his thought.

Despite this reticence, or maybe in part because of it, the conditions for a true expansion of Spinoza studies were fulfilled. The 1970s did see the birth of journals and reviews dedicated exclusively to Spinoza studies,[45] the appearance of the first critical bibliographies,[46] the first lexicons,[47] repertoires, indexes, and other major statistical registers of texts.[48] Although surpassed today, these research tools, the first fruit of a great effort, came prior to the computer revolution and the impact it has had on methods and ways of approaching historical texts.

Spinoza Before and After Marx

While the political aspects of Spinozism had left Gueroult and Deleuze largely indifferent, they were for Matheron the starting point from which to orchestrate his reading. Perhaps we should see in this the beginning of a generational change. This new Spinozist wave was to be particularly sensitive to the political reflections in Parisian philosophical milieus that followed from the events of 1968, and it was close to the different radical leftist movements. Spinozism thus became a formidable conceptual tool for the elaborating of a political anthropology inspired by Marx because Spinoza was considered to be a precursor of Marx. Such was the case with Matheron,[49] with Bernard Rousset (1929-1997), as well as with Robert Misrahi,[50] with Althusser's students Pierre Macherey and Etienne Balibar, with André Tosel, and of course with Antonio Negri. Despite this shared Marxist matrix, it is not a question of claiming that the positions of all of these authors are of the same worth or that they should be merged with one another. Far from it. Their evolutions, their personal choices given the great political changes in the world, or simply their different temperaments allowed each of them to develop different, sometimes divergent approaches, always open to confrontation and dialogue.

Though these Marxist-inspired studies had the double merit of bringing a critical rigor to the analysis of texts as well as contributing to a better knowledge of the doctrine by trying to restitute it to its original historical and cultural origin,[51] for the same reasons, the proposed meeting between Marxism and Spinozism could not occur without its share of difficulties and paradoxes. It was not always easy to make of Spinoza a precursor to Marx. For example, it is not clear whether pushing his radicalism to the point of making of it an ardent defense of political revolutions was not a flagrant anachronism, or even a historical counter-sense. Nothing could guarantee that the Spinozan conception of history was compatible with a dialectical materialism, not even a revised version of it. These difficulties, even these contradictions, were finally not resolved. They were, however, the occasion for a growing and fertile effort of historical research and critical reflection on the both the theoretical and interpretive planes. We need only to recall the impact caused by Pierre Macherey's first work, Hegel ou Spinoza (Paris: Maspero, 1978). This book emancipated French Spinozism from the tutelage exercised on it by German idealism while demonstrating the interest in, as well as the difficulties and impasses involved in trying to make Spinoza agree with the dialectical tradition.

On the other hand, if a Marxist sensibility was effectively dominant during these years, it was in no way to the exclusion of other sensibilities, which it knew how to confront and sometimes absorb. These differences finally gave place to open confrontations united by a common love for Spinoza. There have been debates, for example, about the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, in which different positions have been placed side by side. For example, André Tosel's books,[52] which emphasize the radical critique of every religion as a form of superstition, appeared alongside the readings of Stanislas Breton (1912-2005),[53] Jacqueline Lagrée,[54] or even Henri Laux,[55] all of whom share a Christian perspective. Their approaches have been able to show that an enlightened believer may profit from Spinozism and that the hope animating one's faith has nothing to fear from a philosophy long accused of being atheistic and impious.

These years also saw a confrontation of Spinozism with other philosophical systems, notably with Hobbes's atheistic materialism, another source of political reflection. This has had the consequence of marking out a clear distinction between two thinkers, who until then had previously had been thought of together, especially regarding their doctrine of potencies.[56] It is clear that Hobbes and Spinoza both tried to think the absolute power of the State in its relations with the power of individuals, but it is equally clear that on other points they were very different, not to say opposed.

Under Matheron's (and then Negri's) influence, the French Spinozists have often also sought to reread Spinoza's work starting from the end, that is, starting from the last two treatises which correspond grosso modo to the last ten years of Spinoza's life. As a result, apart from some exceptions, the ontology has had a tendency to pass to the second plane. It is read less for itself as divine science, which had been often the case in the past, than in function of what it is supposed to prepare: essentially an anthropology of affects and a political philosophy. This is why the Spinoza who was most often appealed to was the one of the third and fourth parts of the Ethics, of the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus of the Tractatus Politicus, traditionally less studied.

It is within this shared matrix, which we can qualify as Marxist, in a sense that has gradually enlarged with time, that sometimes very different Spinozisms have been able to develop, intersecting on several aspects, opposing each other on others, but all verifying in its neighbor the agreements and divergences of an intellectual trajectory often scanned by an itinerary of political engagements. In this sense, Spinozism has been and continues to be a mode of thought that, while constituting an object of historical study, allows the elaboration of theoretical instruments for a critical work turned towards contemporary problematics. "Spinozist" therefore does not today designate only those who study or are interested in the thought of a philosopher from Holland's golden age, but also and maybe above all, those who make, and sometimes even claim, a certain use of this thinking.

Negri's Savage and Subversive Spinoza

Such is the case with Toni Negri (born in 1933), whose interest in Spinoza goes back to the years before his difficulties with Italian justice for activities linked to the extra-parliamentary radical left and the armed battle in the 1970s. Negri's Spinozism constitutes a source of reflection on the origin, the constitution, and the exercise of power; it accompanies his thinking as much as his political action. During his Parisian period (1983-1997), Negri and others were at the origin of the review Futur antérieur, active in the 1990s, then of the journal Multitudes, active since 1998, which was reborn from the ashes of the early one. His first work, L'anomalie sauvage: puissance et pouvoir chez Spinoza (Paris: PUF, 1 982),[57] was quickly hailed as the most accomplished work in the field of Marxist studies of Spinoza. It was to have large repercussions, and not just in the Spinozist milieu. The force of this book rests as much in the analyses it proposes as in the effects that these analyses led to in the field of the ethical and political reflection which is our own. Spinozist immanentism and antifinalism could be seen as opposing another paradigm of thought within the

history of metaphysics. Whence the idea of an "anomaly" of Spinozism and of Spinoza as a "wild" or "savage" thinker; that is, as rebelling against the onto-theological tradition. This historical hypothesis depends on a relative devaluation of the two first parts of the Ethics to the benefit of the three last parts, which according to Negri had been written first, and which in reality constitute the heart of the original plan of the Ethics. From this point of view, the conceptual apparatus elaborated in De Deo, written after the fact as an introduction to his true thought, enveloped in the clothes of metaphysics, would have been conceived as a war machine against past, present, and future philosophical ideologies. This "subversive" and liberating Spinoza is seen as rejoining another history of thought, in which Democritus, Lucretius, Machiavelli already figure prominently and which extends to Marx and Nietzsche.[58]

During the years when Communism fell in the East, when there was a general crisis of historical Marxism, and a growing awareness of the globalization of political, economic, and social problems, we progressively move from a "Spinoza before Marx" to a "Spinoza after Marx," from a retrospective Spinozism to a prospective Spinozism, which now animates a reflection that I want to call neo-Marxist. It is aided by notions like multitudo, imperium, amor, potentia - concepts which often have their origin in Spinoza's texts (notably the Ethics and the Tractatus Politicus), and which will play in Negri (and in others)[59] a role in the attempt to understand the new political and social stakes which are situated at a planetary level. Such is the case with the much debated notion of multitudo. Directly taken from the text of the Tractatus Politicus, and difficult to translate to the point that some have preferred not to,[60] as if to better underline if not its unexpected character then at least the possibility of investing it with a new theoretical weight and a new programmatic value - the notion of multitudo has been notably erected as a concept for thinking the self-constituting virtues of the power of individuals. Whatever one thinks of the relief and the privilege granted to this term or to the usage made of it, the meaning of which is not unanimous among the specialists despite some consensus,[61] it testifies nonetheless to the theoretical vitality Spinozist conceptuality has lent to the domain of contemporary political reflection.[62]

In this regard, Etienne Balibar has probably been the one who has best interpreted this change in perspective, questioning Spinoza less to find in him a Marxism from the beginning and more to think afresh the anthropological and political principles of concepts such as the "identity" and the "individual," in light of their history and practical and theoretical usages that this history ended up producing.[63] It is also this Spinoza, notably revisited in light of the English tradition, that is seen as coming to the aide of an original elaboration of the

notion of the "trans-individual," something that is supposed to permit the overcoming of the substantial character typically granted to the notion of the individual. It does so against the horizon of a new questioning of the paradoxical essence of democracy, a regime whose stability will depend on its capacity to maintain itself in equilibrium in a state of permanent crisis, assumed as being constitutive and no as longer accidental.[64]

Spinozism in the History of Ideas: The Reasons of Experience

After the readings of Gueroult, Matheron, Deleuze, and Negri, the necessity of yet another approach has nonetheless managed to make itself felt, less concentrated on the virtues of the system but without having to deny them. This is an approach more turned towards the contextual elements of the culture of an era in which it seemed that Spinoza had fully participated. This interest in Spinoza as humanist, philologist, historian, reader of the Latins (Plautus, Terrence, Cicero, Seneca, Lucretius) and the Italians (Petrarch, Machiavelli), meditating on Tacitus, Quintus, and Flavius Josephus, and more generally in Spinoza the wise sage in contact with the republic of letters in his time, has come to be added as a complement to the Spinoza as systematic thinker. It appeared little by little, then more and more, that the power of Spinoza's thought did not consist only in showing the purified lines that reason was able to draw, but also in that it could liberate other treasures when we replace it in the framework of the debates and polemics of his era. And, if Spinozism should be seen as an exception, its originality is all the more apparent after having been evaluated in relation to the setting from which it emerged, namely, at the center, not at the margins, of a humanist and historical culture that Spinoza shared with his contemporaries.

Emblematic of this new tendency is the impulse given by Pierre-Francois Moreau's book Spinoza: L'expérience et l'éternité (Paris, PUF, 1994), which marks a clear evolution in Spinozist studies. It is a matter situation the system in relation to Spinoza's own experience, which one tends to lose sight of when one is content to follow the abstractions of the mathematical procedure. Whether it be Spinoza's own lived experience, which he narrates in the first lines of the Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding,[65] or the experience described in the bookish culture of his times, these are experiences that we have access to through the language or rather languages (demonstrative, narrative, polemic, epistolary, historical) that Spinoza adopts in his work, depending on the case in point and his interlocutors. Experience is also that which shapes history, of which Spinoza makes notable use in his last

treatises. Finally, it is what refers us to the world of the passions in which by definition we are all immerged.

If we have today learned to read Spinoza as a historian, which he was just as certainly as Hobbes and Leibniz were, it is also true that this attention to his own existential and historical experience marks the return of a problematic inherited from the Cartesian exegeses of the 1950s, and that Alquié, as we have seen, had failed to verify for Spinozism, leaving unresolved the question of knowing of what the experience of Spinoza's philosophy consists in. Attempts to answer this question are at present put in service of a double objective. On the one hand, it is a matter of unfolding a historical and critical method of reading that is less rigid, less dogmatic, and at the same time more informed by the state of international research and of the multiplicity of sources and references, a reading more concerned to take account of the different aspects implicated in the concepts, and one more prudent when it is a question of proposing an interpretation, more tolerant when it is a matter of welcoming other points of view.[66] The point is less to write the last word on this or that aspect of the doctrine than it is to allow its opening to the different realities implicated in it.

Moreover, Moreau does not overlook one of the problems that had always been considered as aporetic in Spinozism, the one dealing with the status of the finite in general, and of human finitude in particular. The feeling of eternity that Spinoza gives us in the last part of the Ethics here serves as a testing ground for a new, more measured and balanced interpretation than found in the theses of sensation. Often considered as the other side of necessity, eternity is seen as a lived experience that no reason could replace. If Moreau does not tell us how to have had the experience of the third kind of knowledge (nor does he exclude it), he does try, more modestly perhaps, to clarify the universal meaning of it by relating it to our condition of being finite. We therefore owe to a cultivated mind, fed on the history of ideas, a number of clarifying historical and textual analyses, which help to fill the lacunae left by earlier studies.[67]

Towards a French Spinozist School?

The 1990s have been the theater for a growing internationalization of Spinoza research. The already existing international collaboration among scholars in different countries (France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, the United States) grew, encouraged by new digital technologies, the availability of texts on-line, the acceleration of exchanges, the sharing of data, and work in groups. It was during these years that a new critical edition and new translation of the Oeuvres complètes was initiated by and under the direction of Pierre-Francois

Moreau,[68] and this is in itself symptomatic of a desire to edit these texts in a way that reflected the progress of years of scholarly and critical research. During this period new translations of the Ethics[69] and the Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding[70] have seen the light of day. The project, already broached by Gueroult, of devoting a book of commentary to each of the five parts of the Ethics, has finally been realized by the pen of Pierre Macherey.[71]

Until recently, Spinozism was inseparable from its myths. The progress of scholarly research concerning the cultural milieus with which Spinoza was in contact (Jews, liberal Christians, Cartesians) to a large extent deformed the cardboard image conveyed by the tradition of the virtuous atheist, living retired from the world as an ascetic.[72] We know much more today about the diffusion of Cartesianism in Holland after Descartes' death as well as regarding its influence on the thought of his era, notably through university teaching in towns like Leiden or Utrecht, which were among the first to introduce in their curricula the doctrines of the new philosophy. Following his excommunication, Spinoza chose to live in the suburbs of Leiden where his constituted circle of friends included Cartesians and liberal Christians.[73]

It is also true that the "strong" interpretations of the end of the 1960s have over time ceded place to more precise and more detailed internal debates about this or that part of the doctrine. French Spinozism has in this way gradually become another instance of academic research tending to institutionalize itself, with its sacred places and its calendars, producing a regular rhythm of conferences, theses, and publications.[74] Still, the works of the last fifteen years have allowed certain concepts to receive an unexpected clarification, thus giving us a better understanding of certain aspects of Spinoza's work.[75] Who would complain about such generosity and deployment of forces? Are they not in principle favorable to the expansion of reason, and thus also of Spinozist reason, if it is true that, as its author thought, reason has no better chance of emerging than when it is freely discussed and shared?

No doubt scholarly research on the Cartesian milieu, the Christians without churches, libertine literature, neo-stoicism, neoEpicureanism, and neo-skepticism, and on the history of institutions have all added to our knowledge of the context out of which Spinoza's thought emerged. It is also true that they have not exhausted this context. And even though an already important amount of comparative work studying Spinoza in relation to other leading philosophers has been completed,[76] we can wonder if the understanding of his philosophy has radically changed. After the libertine, atheistic, and materialist Spinoza of the Enlightenment, the pantheistic Spinoza of the romantics, the

rationalist anti-Cartesian Spinoza of structuralism, or the Spinoza as thinker of power and the democracy of postmodernism, what will the Spinoza of the twenty-first century be?

University of Reims and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France

ENDNOTES

1. A previous version of this essay was published in the Italian review Historica philosophica 7 (2009), 133-50. 1 am thankful to Bob Valuer for his help in adapting the text for English-speaking readers.

2. I have edited a work dedicated to the "future" of Spinozism, the result of a collective reflection; see Lorenzo Vinciguerra, ed., Quel avenir pour Spinoza? Enquête sur les spinozismes à venir (Paris: Kimé, 2001).

3. The role played by the later Lessing in the quarrel over pantheism in respect to Spinozism and in the elaboration of German Idealism is a notorious earlier example. More recently, some authors have claimed that Spinozism must have strongly inspired the international movement of the Enlightenment. For example, Jonathan Israel, The Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity (1650-1750) (New York: Oxford University Press, 200 1); this book has been favorably welcomed by the French Spinozist scene, which supported a translation of it: Les Lumières radicales. La philosophie, Spinoza, et la naissance de la modernité (Paris, Amsterdam, 2005), before debating its theses. For these debates, see C. Secretan, T. Dagron, L. Bove, eds., Qu'est-ce que les Lumières radicales? Libertinage, athéisme, et Spinozisme dans le tournant de l'âge classique (Paris, Amsterdam, 2007).

4. Victor Delbos, Le problème moral dans la philosophie de Spinoza et dans l'histoire du Spinozisme (Paris: Felix Alean, 1893; re-ed. Zurich: Hildesheim, 1988). Reprinted with a new preface by Alexandre Matheron in the collection "Travaux et documents du Groupe de Recherches Spinozistes" (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 1990).

5. Victor Delbos, Le spinozisme (Paris: Vrin, 1993). From this period, we should also recall a work that is today often forgotten: G. Huan, Le Dieu de Spinoza (Arras: Schoutheer Frères, 1913).

6. The first edition in 1907 was published by Garnier Frères, and has constantly been reprinted by GFFlammarion; today this translation is the one still used by the majority of French philosophy students, even though, despite the quality of its style, it no longer satisfies the accepted criteria for philosophical translation as it has been practiced these last years.

7. Léon Brunschvicg, Spinoza et ses contemporains (Paris: Alean, 1923); subsequently reprinted several times by PUF.

8. Alexandre Matheron, "A propos de Spinoza. Entretien avec Alexandre Matheron," an interview edited by P.-F. Moreau and L. Bove, Multitudes 3 (November 2000): 169-200. This interview dates from 20 June 1997 and is also available on-line at http://multitudes.samizdat.net/A-propos-deSpinoza.html.

9. This has not impeded some recent attempts at a bringing together two of these authors who seem so opposed; see, for example, Jean-Marie Vaysse, Totalité et finilude. Spinoza et Heidegger (Paris: Vrin, 2004).

10. André Darbon, Essais spinozistes (Paris: PUF, 1946); Paul Vernière, Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution (Paris: PUF, 1954). See also the recent work by Yves Citton, L'envers de la liberté. L'invention d'un imaginaire spinoziste dans la France des Lumières (Paris: Amsterdam, 2006).

11. Like Appuhn's translation, this work, contrary to its title, does not include all of Spinoza's works. The Compendium grammatices linguae Hebraeae is missing, and was translated only in 1968 (reprinted in 1987), when it was published as a separate volume by Vrin. This work, left incomplete by Spinoza, remains largely unknown and little studied today.

12. The acts of the conference are collected in Descartes (Paris: Cahiers du Royaumont, 1957).

13. Ferdinand Alquié (1906- 1985) was professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne. He published numerous works on Descartes, Kant, Malebranche. He was close to André Breton, and is the author of Philosophie du surréalisme.

14. Alquié's influence is still perceptible today. We can find its broad features in his students, notably JeanMarie Beyssade, La philosophie première de Descartes: Ie temps et la cohérence de la métaphysique (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), and Jean-Luc Marion, Sur l'ontologie grise de Descartes: science cartésienne et

savoir aristotélicien dans les Regulae (Paris: Vrin, 1 98 1), who i s more oriented to phenomenology and to Heidegger's philosophy.

15. For a presentation and assessment of this quarrel, see P. Macherey, Querelles cartésiennes, http://stl.recherche.univ-lille3.fr/archivesset/seminaires/sem/ Macherey06112002.html. Macherey writes, "Between 1950 and 1970, Gueroult and Alquié were the two great rival masters who, with one eye fixed permanently on what the other was doing, shared between them university studies on the history of classical philosophy in France."

16. Further light might be thrown on this issue by the systematic study of the Principes de la philosophie de Descartes (1663), which is still a seldom studied text. But it is the only work that Spinoza had published in his own name and that earned him his first critical recognition.

17. "I swear to you that I am Cartesian . . . and no Spinozist, because I always manage to make a certain authentically personal experience respond to Descartes' philosophy, but with Spinoza, I never manage to do it; perhaps, it is true, because I still understand Spinoza poorly." Ferdinand Alquié, Leçons sur Spinoza. Nature et vérité dans la philosophie de Spinoza. Servitude et liberté selon Spinoza (Paris: La Table Ronde), 207; see also his Le rationalisme de Spinoza (Paris: PUF, 198 1), especially the introduction: "L'incompréhensibilité de l 'Ethique," 9-12.

18. Martial Gueroult, Dieu. Ethique I (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1968); Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza et le problème de l'expression (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1968) ; Bernard Rousset, La perspective finale de l'Ethique et le problème de la cohérence du spinozisme: l'autonomie comme salut (Paris: Vrin, 1968).

19. To which we can add the somewhat forgotten study by Jean Préposiet, Spinoza et la liberté des hommes (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

20. Martial Gueroult, Dieu: Ethique /; Spinoza. L'âme: Ethique II (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974). Some have hypothesized that Gueroult encountered difficulty in articulating in a philosophically sound manner the relation of the first two books of the Ethics to the third, leading them to think that the completion of the commentaries stalled less for biographical reasons than for philosophical reasons. Whatever the reasons are, a first sketch of the Commentaire des livres IV et V de l'Ethique de Spinoza in a typed manuscript of about 100 pages left incomplete by Gueroult circulates among the specialists, but one almost never sees this cited in bibliographies. True or presumed, the difficulties met by Gueroult are symptomatic of a great number of readings at odds with the problem of having to take account of a "cut" or "interruption" at this moment in the Ethics. As we shall see, while the German exegeses of the nineteenth century had privileged an ontological Spinozism, French Spinozism, especially after Gueroult, will tend to privilege the last three books of the Ethics.

21. Gueroult's commentary might be compared to those of Lewis Robinson, Kommentar zu Spinoza 's Ethik (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1958), and Harold Joachim, A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), but goes beyond them in ambition and volume.

22. Harry Austryn Wolfson, The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of his Reasoning (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1 934- 1 962); the French translation appeared in 1999 as La philosophie de Spinoza: Pour déméler l'implicite d'une argumentation (Paris: Gallimard, 1999). We can question the reasons for such a late translation. Despite the undeniable improvement these last years, French editors translate relatively little, and always late in comparison to other countries (Italy, for example). In the case of Wolfson's book, Gueroult's judgment, which was truthfully a bit unjust, perhaps carried some weight. While Wolfson was sensitive to the "similarities of writing in the construction of the arguments" between authors of different historical contexts, Gueroult only saw in this a manner of avoiding the demands of understanding the internal logic of the text.

23. Gueroult, Dieu: Ethique I, 12-13.

24. Martial Gueroult, Dieu: Ethique 1, 9.

25. See Appendix I of Volume I.

26. Martial Gueroult, Dieu: Ethique 1, chapter 3, 107-40.

27. As Deleuze put it, "this book grounds the truly scientific study of Spinozism." Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza et la méthode générale de M. Gueroult," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 2 (1969): 426-37.

28. Matheron acknowledged this himself: "from the methodological point of view, Gueroult's remarks on my work have helped me a great deal; and the method he had used in his work on Descartes . . . was for me a truly ideal model: I wanted to work like that!" ("A propos de Spinoza," 171).

29. '"Each thing, according to its potency (quantum in se est) tries to preserve its being.' This is the unique starting point of the entire theory of the passions, the whole of Spinoza's politics and the morality." Such is the beginning Matheron's Individu et communauté chez Spinoza (Paris: Minuit, 1988), 9.

30. Ibid., 21 and 23.

31. Ibid., 612.

32. We often find in Matheron expressions of the type "Spinoza did not actually say it, but he could have said it," which clearly is meant to indicate not something substituted for what the Spinoza says, but rather an authorizing of his text, thereby heuristically extending thinking about it. The amicable nickname of Spinoza redivivus that was sometimes attributed to Matheron by some of his students sufficiently indicates what Matheron's strategy represented for the younger generation of Spinozists.

33. Alexandre, Matheron, Le Christ et le salut des ignorants chez Spinoza (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1971). See also his article "L'anthropologie spinoziste?" in Matheron, Anthropologie et politique au XVIl siècle (Etudes sur Spinoza) (Paris: Vrin, 1986), 17-27; and in the same work, see the oft-cited article on "Spinoza et la sexualité," 209-30.

34. The "analytic" style of Matheron's method made it so that he was relatively welcomed by Anglo-Saxon philosophy, with which he was engaged in dialogue during the 1980s.

35. Gilles Deleuze, Différence et répétition (Paris, PUF, 1968); Difference and Repetition, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, 1995).

36. Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza et le problème de l'expression (Paris: Minuit, 1968). The English translation appeared as Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990). Deleuze devoted another work to Spinoza: Spinoza. Philosophie pratique (Paris: Minuit, 1 98 1); Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988).

37. Deleuze pushes Spinoza's anti-Cartesianism as far as to challenge the terms and notions directly imported from Descartes. This is the case, for example, with the theory of distinction and the conception of the axioms; see Spinoza et le problème de l'expression, 31-32, and especially chapter X: 140-52.

38. See ibid., chapter XI: 153-69.

39. See ibid., chapter XII: 1 73-82; see also Différence et répétition, 314-27.

40. See Spinoza et le problème de l'expression, 52-58; see also Différence et répétition, 52-60.

41. See Spinoza: Philosophie pratique.

42. It is also not rare to encounter among young French Spinozists an interest that is directed as much to Deleuze as it is to Spinoza. An example of this tendency is found in the work of François Zourabichvili (1965-2006), who published Deleuze: Une philosophie de l'événement (Paris: PUF, 1994); Spinoza. Une physique de la pensée (Paris: PUF, 2002); and Le conservatisme paradoxal de Spinoza: Enfance et royauté (Paris: PUF, 2002).

43. In the 3500 pages of the four volumes of Dits et Ecrits, Spinoza's name appears only six times; Foucault dedicates to him only a few lines, all from the period 1958-1975 (volumes 1 and 2), the most interesting of which have political action as a theme. See Michel Foucault, Dits et Ecrits 1954-1988, D. Defert and F. Ewald, eds., with the collaboration of J. Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, 1994). Spinoza's Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding is mentioned in Foucault's L 'Histoire de la folie à l 'âge classique (Paris: Pion, 1961), 175. See the commentary by Macherey, "L'actualite philosophique de Spinoza (Heidegger, Adorno, Foucault)," in Avec Spinoza: Etudes sur la doctrine de l'histoire du spinozisme (Paris: PUF, 1992), 222-36.

44. See Jacques Derrida, Le droit à la philosophie (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 476.

45. See Cahiers Spinoza (Paris: Editions Répliques, 6 volumes since 1977); Bulletin de bibliographie spinoziste (Paris: Archives de philosophie, annually since 1979). In 1985, Studia Spinozana made its initial appearance.

46. See Alain Garoux, Spinoza: Bibliographie 1971-1977 (Université de Reims, 1981); Jean Préposiet, Bibliographie spinoziste: Répertoire alphabétique, registre systématique, textes et documents (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1973). Somewhat forgotten by many critics, Préposiet is also the author of a Histoire de l'anarchisme (Paris: Tallandier, 1993, 2005).

47. See Emilia Boscherini-Giancotli, Lexicon Spinozanum, 2 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970). Professor at the University of Urbino, Emilia Giancotti (1 930-1992) was a central figure of Italian Spinozism. Translator of the Ethics, she had close ties to some of the French Spinozists in the 1970s and 1980s; she is responsible for several communal works (colloquia, publications, etc.).

48. See Michel Gueret, André Robinet, Paul Tombeur, Spinoza: Ethica - Concordances index, liste des fréquences, tables comparatives (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1977).

49. Matheron left the communist party in 1 957, and rejoined it from 1964-1978. As he himself has said, "all my sympathies went in two opposed directions, as much to Althusser as to Labica, and to my students and former students associated with the journal Dialectiques. I remained Marxist in the large sense" ("A propos de Spinoza," 173). With just a few rare exceptions, what Matheron says here could also be said, with respect to each of the French followers of Spinoza in the 1 970s, and also to a large extent of the Italian Spinozists from the same era with whom they had close and enduring relations; for example, the circle of friends linking Paris and Urbino near the end of the 1970s thanks to Emilia Boscherini Giancotti and her students.

50. Born in 1926, Robert Misrahi is a somewhat unique figure in French Spinozism, even though he dedicated his entire career to the study and teaching of Spinoza at the Sorbonne. Among his many works, see especially Le désir et la réflexion dans la philosophie de Spinoza (Paris, London, New York: Gordon and Breach, 1972).

51. See, for example, Etienne Balibar, Spinoza et la politique (Paris: PUF, 1985).

52. See André Tosel, Spinoza ou le crépuscule de la servitude: essai sur le Traité Théologico-politique (Paris: Aubier, 1984); and by the same author, see also Du matérialisme de Spinoza (Paris: Kimé, 1994).

53. See Stanislas Breton, Spinoza: théologie politique (Paris: Desclée, 1977).

54. See Jacqueline Lagrée, Spinoza et le débat religieux: lectures du Traité Théologico-politique: En hommage à Stanislas Breton (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004).

55. See Henri Laux, Imagination et religion chez Spinoza: La potentia dans l'histoire (Paris: Vrin, 1993)

56. For example, at the Urbino colloquium in 1982; see Emilia Giancotti (ed.), Spinoza nel 350e anniversario della nascita, Atti del Congresso di Urbino 4-8 ottobre 1 982 (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1985); see also Emilia Giancotti, Studi su Hobbes e Spinoza, ed. Daniela Bostrenghi and Cristina Santinelli (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1995).

57. Recently republished by Amsterdam Press (Paris, 2007).

58. See Antonio Negri, Spinoza subversif: variations (in factuelles (Paris: Kimé, 1994).

59. See Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, Multitude: guerre et démocratie à l'époque de l'Empire (Paris: La Découverte, 2004). Drawing more or less from the interpretive line opened by Negri, several historical and critical studies have seen the day, especially in Italy (Vittorio Morfino, Filippo Del Lucchese) and in France (Laurent Bove, Saverio Ansaldi).

60. One might say "crowd," "mass," even "people." "Multitude" (as per Negri and Moreau) seems to have imposed itself, and offers close proximity to the Latin (even if this does not guarantee equal fidelity on the semantic plane). This choice has for example allowed putting the emphasis on the quantitative aspects of political practices.

61. For a critical summary of the translation and the interpretation of this term, see P. Cristofolini, "People and Multitude in Spinoza's Political Lexis," Historia philosophica 4 (Pisa-Rome: 2006): 47-57.

62. See Riccardo Caporali, Vittorio Morfino, Stefano Visentin, eds., Spinoza: individuo e moltitudine, Atti del convegno internazionale di Bologna, 17-19 novembre 2005 (Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 2007) ; see also Chantal Jaquet, Pascal Sévérac, Ariel Suhamy, La multitude libre: Nouvelles lectures du Traité politique de Spinoza (Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2008).

63. See Etienne Balibar, La crainte des masses: politique et philosophie avant et après Marx (Paris: Galilée, 1997), and in particular the chapter on "Spinoza L'anti-Orwell." On the notion of the individual, see L. Vinciguerra, "Les trois liens anthropologiques: Prologoménes spinozistes à la question de l'homme," L'Homme. Revue française d'anthropologie 191 (septembre-juillet 2009): 7-25.

64. See Etienne Balibar, Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality (Delft: Eburon, 1997).

65. Moreau dedicates the first two hundred pages of his book to the commentary and prologue of the Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding.

66. Moreau's chapter dedicated to the notion of Ingenium is sufficiently representative of this, since it concentrates and condenses several aspects that characterize experientia in the Spinozist sense; see L'expérience et V éternité, 395-404. Other interpreters (Bove, Ansaldi, Laux, Vinciguerra) have also underlined the importance of this notion in the economy of Spinozist thought.

67. The influence of Moreau's work is measured by the numerous studies carried out by the Groupe de Recherches Spinozistes (GRS-CERPHI) now established at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon.

68. This edition marks a progress in the establishment of the text after the Gebhardt edition of the 1920s. Up until now, the three texts that have appeared are the Traité théologico-politique, Latin text established by Fokke Akkerman, translation and notes by PierreFrancois Moreau and Jacqueline Lagrée (Paris: PUF, 1998); the Traité politique, text established by Omero Proietti, translation and notes by Charles Ramond (Paris: PUF, 2006); and the Premiers écrits, including Traité de la réforme de l 'entendement and Court traité, text established by Filippo Mignini, translated by Michèle Beyssade and Joèl Ganault (Paris: PUF, 2009).

69. Bernard Pautrat's was published by Seuil in 1988 (reedited in 1999), and Robert Misrahi's was published by PUF in 1990 and 1993.

70. The best is the edition with the Latin text and a new translation and notes by Bernard Rousset, published by Vrin in 1992.

71. Pierre Macherey, Introduction à l'Ethique de Spinoza, 5 volumes (Paris: PUF, 1994-1998). This commentary, which has the advantage of covering the entire Ethics, does not have the ambitions of Gueroult's, despite its utility. Let us also note in passing that the transmission by oral commentary is still very much alive. Since 1 99 1 , every Tuesday morning at the Ecole Normal Supérieure in Paris, Bernard Pautrat reads and comments on the Ethics in translation following the order of its propositions. After several years of research and seminars, we are also awaiting the publication of Moreau's commentary on the Traite théologico-politique.

72. Essentially based on Colerus's biographies (in 1 706) as well as on Lucas's (in 1735) and on the information given by Pierre Bayle in his Dictionnaire historique et critique (1697), which we can now read. See Colerus/Lucas, Vies de Spinoza (Paris: Allia, 1999), and P. Bayle, Ecrits sur Spinoza, selections edited by F. Ch. Daubert and P.-F. Moreau (Paris: Berg International, 1983).

73. The best synthesis of this work is Steven Nadler, Spinoza: A Life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

74. The most active today is the Groupe de Recherches Spinozistes within the Centre d'Etudes en Rh’’etorique, Philosophie, Histoire des Idées (http:// www.cerphi.net/grs/spinoza.html), with a great many researchers pursuing studies on Spinoza and Spinozism. See also the Association des Amis de Spinoza (http://www.spinozaeopera.net/categorie1050759.html).

75. This is the case, for example, for the notions of "time" and "eternity" (Chantal Jaquet, Sub specie aeternitatis: Etudes des concepts de temps, durée et éternité chez Spinoza [Paris: Kimé, 1997]), "conatus" (Laurent Bove, La stratégie du conatus: Affirmation et résistance chez Spinoza [Paris: Vrin, 1996]), "activity" (Pascal Sévérac, Le devenir actif chez Spinoza [Paris: Champion, 2005]), and even the idea of the "baroque," (Saverio Ansaldi, Spinoza et le baroque: Infini, désir, multitude [Paris: Kimé, 2001]). Spinozism has moreover led to new approaches to the social sciences (Frédéric Lordon, L'intérèt souverain: Essai d'anthropologie économique spinoziste [Paris: La Découverte, 2006], semiotics and pragmatism (Lorenzo Vinciguerra, Spinoza et le signe: La genèse de l'imagination [Paris: Vrin, 2005]).

76. Here we allude not only of Macherey's already-cited book on Spinoza and Hegel, but also to the works on Spinoza and psychoanalysis (Michèle Bertrand, Spinoza et l'imaginaire [Paris: PUF, 1983]), on Spinoza and German Idealism (Jean-Marie Vaysse, Totalité et subjectivit à Spinoza dans l'idéalisme allemand [Paris: Vrin, 1994]), on Spinoza and Leibniz (Mogens Laerke, Leibniz lecteur de Spinoza, la genèse d'une opposition complexe [Paris: Champion, 2008]); and on Spinoza and Aristotle (Frédéric Manzini, Spinoza: une lecture d'Aristote [Paris: PUF, 2009]).

Colofon

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