

Spinoza, Marx and Democracy

Diogo Pires Aurélio

Diogo Pires Aurélio

is professor at the New University of Lisbon [*Universidade Nova Lisboa*].

E-mail: diogoaurelio@hotmail.com

Translation by Frank Hanson

Editors' Note

The first part of this article, by Diogo Pires Aurélio, was published in number 2, Volume 5 of the *Revista Estudos Políticos*.

Abstract

Democracy is today a system that is expanding around the world or at least, was expanding in the second half of the 20th Century and moreover, is still being demanded by people who are deprived of it, although not in the countries where it is established and seen by a growing number of people as an authentic achievement. What is the cause of this dual and conflicting perception of democracy? To a great extent it is due to the fact that the principle underlying it involves something more than a political system. Throughout the centuries, this was practically the only form in which democracy was conceived and discussed. At odds with the formalist tradition, this article approaches the issue of democracy from the works of Spinoza and Marx.

Keywords

Democracy, Equality, Liberty, Spinoza, Marx.

2. The Law and Freedom

In the work of Spinoza, Marx encountered someone who is perhaps the first and most systematic defender of democracy in the whole history of modern thought. He does not just defend it in rhetorical terms; it is also a necessary conclusion that stems from an ontology which rejects transcendence and finalism and cannot be identified with politics in a rational way, except through a collective undertaking involving individuals to preserve the freedom of everyone and empower them to act. In Ancient Greece, democracy was evidently well known. However, its definition is controversial and fluctuates between the power of the law and the power of the people (even if they oppose the law). Moreover, the question tends to be mired with political systems and usually comes down to the number of citizens with seats in the main square. However, in so far as it is associated with the qualities of a warrior, it means possessing a horse and arms and thus excludes the dispossessed (or in other words, the great majority). The people who make decisions are those who matter in the field of battle. The rest – women, children, the poor and slaves – are either confined to the home and not politics, or else to work and not the defence of the city. And if it is true that in Athens, there was a significant rise in the population, this was only due to the fact that the city had become a maritime power. This meant that the character of a citizen warrior had also been extended to the sailors, while in Sparta they remained restricted to an elite descended from the original clans of the city. In the whole of the Ancient World, Aristotle was perhaps the only author who probed the wound:

The real difference between democracy and oligarchy is between poverty and wealth. Wherever men rule by reason of their wealth, whether they be few or many, that is an oligarchy, and where the poor rule, that is a democracy. But as a fact, the rich are few and the poor are many; for few are well-to-do, whereas freedom is enjoyed by all and wealth and freedom are the grounds on which the two groups lay claims to government.¹

But Aristotle looks on democracy with fear because he is well aware of the extent of its reach. With regard to its resemblance to what would later be said about theories on the “reason of State”, (which advocate that power should keep subjects busy in their own affairs), the stagirite puts democracies into a hierarchy where they are classified by “the greater or lesser extent to which their members are able or willing to take part in assemblies on a regular basis”². At the other extreme, there are those systems in which everybody takes part since for this reason they are prone to “tyrannical inclinations” and “disorderly living”³. Within limits, this is the concern that is echoed by Hobbes with regard to modernity, when he considers freedom to be an obstacle to obtaining benefits that are essential such as security and peace. These are claimed to be impossible without the subordination of everyone to a single sovereign figure, or in other words, a power structure endowed with the ability to judge and punish. The *Theologico-political treatise* of Spinoza states exactly the contrary: early on in the subtitle, he states that his objective is to show that freedom of expression, far from constituting a threat to peace, is its essential condition.

No ideas could be more opposed on the question of what is democracy: Spinoza believes that fostering liberty has exactly the same effects as Hobbes thought would result from its repression. First of all, since the State is powerless to prevent individuals from feeling and thinking about what must be done, it is futile to repress freedom. Second, by setting the opinions and interests of one group against the opinion and interests of others, repression divides the city and manages to seize sovereign power through the group or groups who take sides with it, whereas freedom, by ensuring the rights that nature grants to each person, brings about the union and cohesion of society. Third, even when it is possible to obtain some form of peace through repression and violence, it will always be the peace and tranquility of the herd. Thus it is not surprising that in the last chapter of the *Treatise*, Spinoza baldly states that “the true aim of the republic is de facto liberty”⁴.

If politics is assigned the responsibility for “public affairs”, the institution and preservation of freedom is tantamount to recognizing it as the means for transforming the individual into a *sui juris*, being, that is a being that is master of itself. The real purpose of politics is to retrieve the individual from another domain and draw him closer to “that freedom which nature grants to every man”. It is this that ultimately occurs in democracy. In addition, in a democratic state, “nobody transfers his natural right to another so completely that he is never consulted again, but each transfers it to a majority of the entire society of which he is part so that all men remain equal, as they were before in a state of nature”⁵. Thus, far from being instituted as a means of overcoming nature, politics – and this alone – will be able to reconcile the individual to his natural condition and tear him away from the escapist forms which his weakness inclines him. In other words, he returns to freedom and in this way is placed on an equal footing with his peers. As Spinoza said in his famous Letter 50 what truly distinguished Hobbes is this recognition that nature neither prescribes, nor can be subsumed by any kind of transcendence – whether theological or judicial – for which reason, politics if well understood, can only be its continuation. It is this embedding of politics in the immanence of nature which allows a contract to be made that rests on the assumption that people can completely renounce their natural rights or, in other words, be artificial and unrealistic. As he states early on at the beginning of Chapter XVII of *TPT*, there is an entire index of interiority which is beyond the reach of power and which, however much the parties involved state the contrary, cannot be transferred in a definitive way, since it is an affective and emotive domain which it is impossible to bind or subjugate entirely to the imperatives of reason. And this index prevents politics from being regarded as a crystallized sphere existing in a higher region, since it forms a part of the power of the individual and is bound up with his capacity for assent or rebellion, (which conditions the exercise of power). Thus the best kind of politics is also the most realistic or rather, what is most suited to what people are by nature: free and equal, each person believing he has the best solution without being concerned about defending “usefulness itself” or being restricted by the affections and emotions that make him a distinctive individual. There are clearly other forms where politics draws close to pure domination, forms in which the freedom of the many is hostage to a single individual or small group. But in reality, these can only be said to be political in so far as they also bring together still emerging democratic features, either through a collaboration of councillors and workers or through a collusion of the people themselves, in accordance with the model of what La Boétie called “voluntary servitude”. The truth of politics is in democracy.

This does not mean that the difference between systems of government is becoming entirely irrelevant. It remains of crucial importance for both Hobbes, and for Spinoza.

However, when distinguishing between right and law on the plane of nature, (by assuming that right can and should, in accordance with the natural law as dictated by reason, be exchanged for a greater benefit – tranquility), the author of *Leviathan* is led to conclude that systems of government are not so much distinguished by the kinds of power that they instal as by their greater or lesser “aptitude to produce the peace and security of the people”⁶. In effect, if power is grounded on the contract which assents to the imperatives of natural law, whether they are in the hands of one or the many, all individuals are “authors of everything that their sovereign does”⁷. In contrast, Spinoza, in bringing right and law into alignment, as we have seen, is forced to recognize that there is not only a difference in degree but also a difference in “nature” between the different systems: there are those that are suited to natural law and those that repudiate it – those that are adjusted to a plural and essentially fluid understanding of collective power and those that violate it. This is the reason why democracy is called the most natural of States, the constitution of which is most adjusted to the plural constitution of nature.

When looked at from a Spinozist perspective, the reason for the existence of politics is thus bound up with democracy. This is not because democracy purports to be the domain of reason (as was outlined in many of the ideas of the enlightenment) but because it constitutes a framework where the violence of domination gives way to collective emancipation. In this way, it paves the way for individual emancipation as an expression of “free necessity” in the way that can be found in nature. Early on in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, (where there still predominates what can be called the critical contractualism which Spinoza later departed from), the sovereign appears to be identified with the collective power, inasmuch as, “sovereigns have every interest to protect and preserve their power with an eye to the common good and to govern all his affairs in accordance with the dictates of reason”⁸. In other words, the exercise of power from a strictly realistic standpoint, is determined by the interest of everybody, without allowing an ontological difference between law and right, as Hobbes states. If the right of each person is his power, common rights cannot exist without a collective power through which politics is wholly integrated on the plane of nature and involves people struggling for survival and individual assertion and governed by reason or desire without any place for ontology or teleology. In reality, for most of the time, people are not governed by reason. Each individual experiences in himself the influence and contacts with others which form an emotional network in involving both his individual identity and the identity of the group or nation to which he belongs. For this reason history is always an arena of possible conflict where the struggle for domination and emancipation takes place. Although an intrinsic part of reason, individual freedom constitutes a challenge which calls on politics at all times to uphold common rights in the face of arbitrary rule and freedom in the face of domination.

3. The Single and the Multiple

The idea of democracy is a recurrent theme in Spinoza. However, it is possible to isolate three occasions in which it appears in a particularly impressive way. Two of them belong to *TPT* and represent what can in some way be described as allegories: the allegory of the desert and the allegory of Amsterdam. The third, in contrast is a theoretical essay on politics, based on a reformulation of the concept of the multitude. This only appears (at least in a systematized way) in the *Political Treatise*, a work that the author left unfinished

as a result of his sudden death when he had hardly begun to deal with the question of democratic systems. We will explore in greater detail each of these occasions.

60

The Allegory of the Desert

In a similar way to Machiavelli, Spinoza draws on situations from both the past and present to show his political thinking. However, he does not look at them from the standpoint of a historian. On the contrary, he explores aspects of reality which he knows about through reading or experience and uses them to form an *exemplum*, a particular example which as a result of its liveliness when treated in an intellectual way, can be detached from its historical setting to illustrate a particular stage of his argument on a universal plane. The narrative of the Book of Exodus is one of these cases and is drawn on by the author to illustrate the essence of democracy. The Jewish people, he recalls, ended up by leaving Egypt where they had been in a condition of slavery for centuries. In front of them extended the Sinai peninsula, situated between the Red Sea that the Jewish people managed to cross and the River Jordan, beyond which lay their destination. In normal conditions, the journey would take less than a month to complete, even for a huge crowd of people that took children and animals with them. For the Jews, it took forty years. Moses first made sure that they avoided the least obstacle to their journey since if they took a direct route through the country of the Philistines, they might be compelled to return to their slavery in Egypt. The narrative account of their wanderings is a real initiation rite in a place where, the desert looms like a wilderness of death teeming with snakes, and where there is no bread or water. At the same time, it is like a literally supernatural place, where vast numbers of quails flew in and covered the camp and manna fell in the morning and where after the rocks were struck by Moses' rod, water gushed out in abundance. On the basis of this text, which is already of an allegorical kind, Spinoza creates an allegory about the journey of submission to democracy, a form of independence which the narrative turns into a prototype for democracy.

In the desert of Sinai, the Israelites were released from the fetters which shackled them in Egypt and recovered "their natural right to everything that was in their power" and resolved "to transfer their right not to any mortal man but to God"⁹. Hence it was not a question of a return to a state of nature in the Hobbesian sense, where the right of each person only knows the limits of his own power. The people in the desert continue to be people and their singularity as a collective phenomenon forged by centuries of history, is maintained. Nor was there a movement to a civil state as theorized by Locke, who granted a person the individual freedom to appropriate an unlimited amount of territory provided that he respected the part of what others had appropriated before him. The Israelites decided "as in a democracy", only to obey God, and "by virtue of this pact, everybody remained completely equal". In this sense, from the beginning the desert is for them a space that they occupy as a community and not as private individuals. It is literally a political space in which they not only embark on a recovery of natural freedom for each of them but also its constitution in a common power. The celebrated pact with God is an affirmation of equality since it effectively represents a refusal to return to submission to any single mortal because "people cannot abide serving their equals and being regulated by them"¹⁰. If strictly adhered to, this pact would mean putting a system of politics into effect that did not require any mediation since it was carried out through a free combination of individual forces without any delegated power. However, the viability

of this hypothesis is put into question by the shortcomings of the Hebrews. When they reached the point of knowing what God had ordered them – that is to say, to set out in a concrete form the common right and laws that everyone had to obey, they felt appalled because in their imagination, God had appeared in a blazing fire that threatened to engulf them in flames and they begged Moses to receive the orders on their behalf. As a result, Spinoza added, they handed over all their rights which they had previously possessed and “Moses therefore, remained the sole promulgator and interpreter of the Divine laws (...) who acted among the Hebrews the part of God”¹¹. He was thus constituted as the Hebrew monarch. However, unlike Hobbes, who saw in this passage from Exodus a paradigm of the foundation of the State in the person of the monarch, which is perpetuated by hereditary descent¹², Spinoza preferred to lay emphasis on the period that followed. In this time, Moses founded a constitutionally singular State by not electing anyone as his successor but instead of this, bequeathing to the Hebrews an institutionalized “theocratic” framework. A theocracy is clearly not a democracy, although it is far from being the same as a monarchy, at least in the way it is described by Spinoza. In some way, democracy is represented in the TPT as being extended to a people who are still unable, (like the Hebrews) to determine the laws that should regulate them but who delegate this task to someone with enough wisdom to found institutions that oppose the concentration of power in the hands of one individual and curb the excesses of the powerful. The whole analysis that Spinoza conducts of the Hebraic constitution and customs, thus underlines the fact that “no-one was bound to serve his equal” and that the Hebrews “were free from a human power”¹³.

Before anything else the sovereign power was no longer in the hands of any mortal. The high priest had the power to “consult God” and interpret his reply, that is to decide whether or not a law complied with the divine will. However, this could only be prompted by the prince or military chief who could put forward suggestions about what kind of “consultations” they wanted but were dependent on the reply given by the religious power before they could exercise their own power and promulgate positive laws. In the second place, the army comprised all the citizens and not just men in the pay of the prince, since as Spinoza observed: “there is nothing they [the princes] fear more than the independence of their citizen soldiers who have won freedom and glory for their country by their valour, their toil and their blood”¹⁴.

Finally, social cohesion was ensured both by the institutions that were rooted in religion and also by personal rights. These included the right to property so long as it was subordinated to common rights, and meant that anyone who had to sell some of his goods, was given a guarantee that he or his family would be able to recover them at the height of the Holy Year (Jubilee). Every fifty years, the balance was restored with someone’s property being recovered, since society was renewed on the basis of the original equality that had prevailed in the void of the desert. Everything was thus combined to strengthen social ties and the attachment of each person to territory and common laws (which they obeyed religiously since there was no difference between civil and religious life); thus the laws of the country were the laws of God. By being sanctioned constitutionally, the separation of powers ensured that they would not have to obey anyone similar to themselves. However, this did not mean that equality ceased to be an equality based on powerlessness, and induced by fear and hence, very similar from this standpoint to the situation of subjects in the Hobbesian theory. Although not at the mercy of a pact that bound them to the decisions of one or more people who wielded power, they were

constrained by the the fear that filled their imagination and constrained their freedom. It was this fear that was metamorphosed into a transcendent God which was then converted into a constituent power that determined: a) the source of laws which kept people submissive, b) the means of regulating the space and time in which they led their lives, c) the lay-out of the cities and their forbidden zones, d) the working-days and days of leisure, e) ways of praying and f) ways of eating. The same imagination which had expressed its resistance to any power exercised by human beings and was sharpened by memories of captivity in Egypt, became inveigled by superstition which made them powerless. They were thus beguiled by laws which prevented them from thinking or acting in accordance with their own nature but rather made them mere automatons enslaved by habits and regulations. The great virtue of the mosaic law was that it made the people equal in terms of obedience and feel happy at not having to obey anyone similar to themselves although at the same time, they were condemned to the strictest form of alienation.

Allegory of Amsterdam

As is well known, at the end of the *TPT*, Spinoza speaks warmly of his native city. The tone is of unreserved praise not out of mere patriotic sentiment but for political and economic reasons. The long sequence of arguments in support of freedom of thought and expression which have been discussed throughout the work, culminates in the following words:

“It is enough to see how the city of Amsterdam with its progress and the admiration that all nations bestow on it, reaps the fruits of this freedom”⁶⁰. And Spinoza explains what gives this city its exemplary character: in Amsterdam, neither the courts, the banks, the insurance companies or the Stock Exchange are concerned about the convictions that are freely expressed by everyone, the nation where they originate, the sect they belong to or the temple where they pray. They are only concerned about the trustworthiness and guarantees of the payments it makes. Despite this (or rather, because of it) the Republic lives in harmony, prospers and “flourishes”. In the Amsterdam of Spinoza, freedom is a blossoming tree that bears the fruit of prestige and prosperity.

It is well known how warmly Spinoza praised his native city at the end of *TPT*. The unreserved tone of eulogy is not mere patriotic fervor but based on political and economic reasons. Thus the long sequence of arguments in support of freedom of thought and expression culminates in the comment: “It is enough to see how the city of Amsterdam through its expansion and the praise heaped on it by other nations, had garnered the fruits of this freedom”¹⁵. And Spinoza explains why this city has such an exemplary character: in Amsterdam, neither the courts, the banks, the insurance companies or the Stock Exchange are concerned about the convictions that each person freely expresses or the nation that ensures them, the different sects that people belong to or the temple where they pray. They are only concerned about people’s trustworthiness or guarantees of payment and it is exactly for this reason that the Republic lives in harmony and prosperity and is “flourishing”. In the Amsterdam of Spinoza, freedom is a tree that bears the fruit of prestige and prosperity.

Although the eulogistic tone used by Spinoza resembles that of other visitors to Amsterdam, it clearly operates in a rhetorical manner to endow the reality of the city with an allegorical status. In truth the correlation between freedom and the economic development of the city is much more complex than he suggests, and in the light of history cannot be represented except in a circular way. In addition, Spinoza overlooks the large

number of barriers to freedom that could be found in the city and which could not be ignored. Spinoza for example fails to mention the fact that one of his friends, Adriaan Koerbagh, had been sentenced to prison for ten years, two years before the publication of the *TPT*, (where he was to die a few months later), simply for writing a pamphlet that the authorities regarded as blasphemous. Spinoza himself was alarmed, as shown in a letter written in February 1671, on learning that there was someone in trouble who had already translated the *TPT*, and begged the recipient of the letter, Jarig Jelles to do everything he could to prevent the translation from being printed so that the work would not be banned, as it certainly would have been if it had appeared in Dutch¹⁶. The Dutch writer K. O. Meinsma, in his biography at the end of the 19th Century criticized Spinoza for this and did not hesitate to call him “mephistophelian” and “satanic” for the way he had ended the *Treatise*, and there is some truth in his comments:

This deliberate but hypocritical silence about the New Testament (...), this hymn to the liberalism of Amsterdam, when in no other city of our country does freedom of expression run such risks as there. This submission of the author to the will of the constituted authorities after having said what he had to say, are examples of a tactic which reminds us more than any of his contemporaries of the evil demon himself [i.e. Descartes]¹⁷.

What Meinsma fails to understand however is to what extent there is a strategic aim in the whole analogy at the end of Chapter XXVI of *The Prince*, where the realism of the work gives way to a torrent of biblical allegories. Spinoza does not intend to write history. He only seeks to apply an image that is short but impressive and trumpeted by everybody including his detractors, to the theory that there is a connection between freedom of speech and the prosperity of republics. In truth, it is this vestige of autonomy that lies within each person and resists the monopoly of power – this natural and unavoidable impulse which leads him to judge the decisions and acts of those who govern – which as the *Treatise* explains from Chapter XVII onwards, that constitutes a permanent threat and challenge to those who seek to repress by force. In a theocracy, the minds of the people are stuffed with untruths, and delirious fantasies which when combined with the dam that the institutions build up against the emergence of a unified power, maintain a relative peace even if it is the peace of ignorance and submission. However, the theocratic illusion – which in the Spinozist version managed to keep religious power and military power separate and in this way, leave the place of the “One” undefined – began to be deconstructed. Its body of narratives was split up into various interpretations, each of which sought to have sole authority and the war between them was gradually spread to all the monarchies of Europe. In its place, the desire for profit set in motion a dynamic which characterized the Dutch cities and which proved to be incompatible with the rationale of repression and censorship. This required a unified faith, the homogenization of consciousness and services in the center of the city. Yet it also required tolerance and freedom as a warrant for business on a global scale which made fortunes for the bankers and merchants in Amsterdam. How can Catholicism be repressed, the Calvinist priests asked, if the city is selling wheat to Italy and buying spices from Spain? Or how can the Jews be expelled if their books provide the inspiration for the basis of credit and fixing the interest rates for loans¹⁸, and if they have a network of co-religionists, business partners and informers scattered everywhere from Spain to Istanbul and Amsterdam to Pernambuco? It is preferable to adapt to the institutions, liberalize civil life and lay down rules that give space to the free circulation of ideas. It is this political reformulation that was prevailing at the time and is reflected in the allegory discussed in Chapter XX.

The space in which the author situates this second allegory is confined from a geographical standpoint but it has unlimited cultural and economic horizons. It is certain that there are resemblances between these two spaces which give legitimacy to the latter by invoking the former. It is not by chance that the literature devoted to Amsterdam is often restricted to two subjects drawn from the Old Testament: the representation of the city as underpinned by “carcasses of herring” lifted above the sea as once the Israelite nation saw the Red Sea turned into dry land; the liberation of the Low Countries from the Spanish yoke (and its most emblematic expression, the Spanish Inquisition during the third quarter of the 17th Century), which the emerging Calvinist culture identified with the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. However, in the wilderness of the desert, the unlimited horizon frightened them and its void is rapidly filled by the imagination of men where the infinite of nature is transferred to the beyond and metamorphosed into a transcendent God. Terrified and ignorant, the spirit of the Jews took refuge in the comforting conviction of being the chosen people and the fear of the outside world was turned into a patriotic pride. This led to them being moulded by uniform beliefs and ceremonies which encouraged obedience and served as the ballast that gave stability to theocratic institutions. In contrast, the space of Amsterdam was covered by a network of canals where boats navigated from the houses to the port and from there to the outside world. Nature now extended without any mystery in the avid eyes of the traders and speculators who had representatives in Venice, Stockholm, the Antilles and Japan. As well as merchandise, they bought and sold bonds, shares and securities. Wealth ceased to be a strictly material condition such as an accumulation of objects or coins and became something non-material that was fluid, invisible and capable of infinite expansion. As Paul Zumthor stated: “Credit is the driving-force of this wealth”¹⁹.

In this kind of situation, obedience requires special devices like those that Moses provided for the Hebrews. When they wandered frightened in the desert, through the aggressive forces of a nature that was unknown to them, the Jews imagined a God who threatened them but who could also protect them. They could subdue the random adverse forces through making sacrifices, holding prayers and conducting ceremonies which required them to submit to the law, since this could not be imposed except in their name. In Amsterdam however, nature was dominated by man and this was taken further by the constructors of dykes and embankments. Fear, if it existed, could be covered by securities. Uncertainty and risk, far from representing an inhibitory pressure as it was with the Hebrews, was now viewed as a business opportunity in which infinitude took the material form of capital. Whereas in the desert, the imagination was possessed by religious belief, as a way of warding off fear, and as a result, imposed the duty to obey, in Amsterdam, emotions and interests were spread to the controlling forces of communities, religious sects and commercial companies who competed with each other in the four quarters of the globe. It would be contradictory for them to return to the domination of a monolithic order or to be forced to conform to the convictions and way of life set out in the holy text, as required by the Calvinists. This was not only because memories were still fresh of the resistance of the troops of the Duke of Alba and the spices of the Holy See but also because a society that was essentially organized by a freely-circulating and infinite capital, was removed from any kind of transcendence or teleology. It was only concerned with acquiring capital gains through successive bidding and always poised between contingency and risk. And for this reason, the republican oligarchy, headed by the regents of Amsterdam, resisted any pressure that might come from the priests.

But the danger became evident, as will shortly be shown, when in 1672, after peace negotiations broke down with Louis XIV, the Low Countries were invaded and Jan de Witt, the great statesman, and his brother Cornelis, were lynched and murdered by a mob stirred up by members of the House of Orange. Spinoza is thus of crucial importance in addressing the question of democracy. Without the support of the citizens, the Republic would succumb to fanaticism. However, this did not mean - far from it ! - that the regime abandoned populist solutions such as censorship and the persecution of unorthodox opinions . Hence the strategic line of argument that is employed in *TPT*. In the first place, freedom is in accordance with the nature of mankind and although each individual believes everything can be settled on the basis of his own criteria²⁰ – a desire for domination and lust for power – there is nothing that people can less tolerate than seeing governments criminalize what they believe to have been good²¹ – resistance to domination and a longing for freedom. In the second place, freedom is based on reason since the more the laws of the Republic unnecessarily repress the subjects, the more its sovereignty will be put at jeopardy. This means that to “look to the public good and conduct all affairs in accordance with the dictates of reason” is in the interests of whoever governs, as well as the fact that free discussion reduces the likelihood of error, since it is almost impossible that the general public will agree to anything that is absurd.²² In the third place, the history of Dutch institutions shows that they were moulded by freedom and that the States had never had “kings but only counts who never attained the full rights of dominion”, and the same States “reserved for themselves the authority to keep the counts up to their duties and the power to preserve the authority and liberty of the citizens”²³. In conclusion, both at a general and local level, everyone advised the Dutch authorities to preserve the free powers of the institutions, rather than turn them into mechanisms of oppression which in the short term would be intolerable in the eyes of the subjects. As Spinoza said, “in this manner, a society can be formed without any violation of natural right and the covenant can always be kept, that is if each individual hands over the whole of his power to the body politic”, and it is necessary for it to retain the whole of its sovereign power since “the right of such a society is called democracy”²⁴.

A similar conclusion contradicts the theory of Hobbes although it is still thought to lie within the Hobbesian framework. In reality, Spinoza represents democracy as a political system that is closer to natural freedom than the kind of nature granted to each individual. Hobbes, for his part regards politics as always overcoming the state of nature. Nonetheless, Spinoza states that one can draw near to the society of nature through democratic policies since individuals are able to retain their power in a collective spirit. This will ensure that they are their own masters – *sui juris* –, rather than being placed in the hands of a monarch or a group who will use their power to dominate everyone else with dire consequences. From this standpoint, the *TPT* endows democracy with the legitimate authority to transfer a consensus of individual powers to a community in a way that allows everyone to remain on an equal footing before a common power constituted in this way. A conception of this kind however does not refute the essential theory of Hobbes, according to which it is of no importance how many individuals, either openly or tacitly, are endowed with natural rights, since in whatever situation that prevails, sovereignty is given legitimacy. In the light of the doctrine of the social contract, the sovereign is always chosen “democratically”, even when a democratic sovereign is not chosen. In contrast, whether in a monarchy or democracy, the transfer of power which takes place in the pact, separates the person of the sovereign from a group of subjects and leaves the former with the power to legislate and punish and the latter with the duty

of unswerving obedience. On these two points, Spinoza in the *TPT*, does not distance himself from Hobbes, and underlines that fact that the duty of obedience does not cease, whatever the absurdity of the law. This is because the transfer of power that is effected by the pact, puts the individual in a position of no return that is still rational in so far as it is aimed at fulfilling the common interest. Compared with sedition and the disintegration of the State which disobedience can bring about, obedience is a law which, even if absurd, always represents a lesser evil. And everything with regard to the *TPT* is intended to support this hypothesis, in the certainty that in democracy this is practically impossible²⁵.

However, there are some factors which make it difficult to incorporate contractualism in Spinoza's thinking and this gives rise to the ambiguities that are apparent in the final chapters of the *TPT*. In the Hobbesian version, theory involves the following: a) conceiving each person as an atom governed by will and separated from others, although rational and able to honour their commitments; b) conceiving the absolute renunciation of each one to his right of nature as an act dictated by reason; c) conceiving the sovereign as being in possession of absolute power and absolute legitimacy. In Spinoza, none of these assumptions is accepted without certain provisos: a) the atomized unit is an abstraction since in reality, "individuals are not presented as "subjects" or separate matter nor as a "form" which comes to organize matter nor as a "compound" of matter and form; they are effects or periods of a process of "individuation", according to Balibar, who here resorts to the notion of transindividuation inspired by Simondon²⁶; b) the renunciation of natural right cannot be absolute since "nobody can so completely transfer to another all his right, and consequently his power, as to cease to be a human being"²⁷; c) the holders of sovereign power are conditioned by this reserve of individual power which is not transferable and which is the source of resistance, and within limits, puts the State itself in question because "we can deny even that they can do them with absolute right"²⁸. As a result, the argument of Spinoza appears to be Hobbesian in form and Machiavellian in substance. It is Hobbesian in so far as it theorizes about sovereignty as an absolute power whatever the system of government. But it is Machiavellian in that it reflects on the impossibility of a similar power. The reason for this is that since it is unable to fathom the inner feelings of each of its subordinates, it is condemned to uncertainty and compelled either to legislate in a way that wins their approval or to resort to violence to curb the effects of their negative judgements which if spread, might threaten to turn into a rebellion. In each of these cases, power essentially appears as a balance of forces which must be constantly renewed.

The likely interlocutors of Spinoza – the circle of regents, an intellectual and political elite who had become wealthy in the second half of the century and who feared the mobs headed by the rural aristocracy, the Calvinist priests and the House of Orange – were particularly interested in the idea of an absolute and indivisible State. This would a) ensure the supremacy of political power in the face of the demands of the religious leaders; b) support concentrating power in the Grand Pensioner, in particular in the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and c) ensure freedom of movement and trade which was essential for the Dutch economy. To achieve this, it was enough to reformulate the theory of Hobbes in republican terms, a task that was undertaken by the brothers Johan and Pieter de la Court. It is certain that these also adapted Machiavelli (in whom they found the main source of republican inspiration) for the support of what the Florentine made of the "governo largo"[a broad-based government instituted by Savonarola] as opposed to "governo stretto"²⁹,[a narrower aristocratic style of government] which

supported the control of the regents by public assemblies. However, these assemblies were far from being “multitudinous”. The word ‘people’ in the republican conception of De la Court, did not mean the vulgar crowd since most of the public were excluded from any chance of political participation. It is on this eminently oligarchical basis that Machiavellianism and Hobbesism were combined during the brief republican interregnum of the States of Holland.

Spinoza wholeheartedly supported the Hobbesian sovereignty and at the end of the *TPT*, maintains the absolute duty of obedience to power. However, he also establishes the mutual interdependence of the decisions of the magistrates and the opinions of the subjects. For this reason, the *Treatise* remains, albeit in a critical form, the captive of the same paradox that tarnished the ideology conveyed by De la Court: on the one hand although sovereignty is sophisticated in contractual terms, it finds itself detached from the general public who give it legitimacy. Moreover, even if the system of government is democratic, the sovereign body takes action and makes decisions, without being tied to any form of dependence on the opinion of the subjects. On the other hand, experience shows that the magistrates made decisions that departed from any semblance of judicial proceedings because they feared feelings of the general public and thought it wise not to stir up this unpredictable mass which they either feared or thought was terrible. How then can sovereignty which by definition wishes to be free of conditions, be combined with democracy to determine sovereign power through its citizens? Clearly, Amsterdam fluctuated between one or other of these positions. But in 1672, it did not hesitate long to lean towards one of them, which happened to be monarchy. Following the assassination of the regent Jan de Witt, the position of *stadtholder* [Chief Magistrate] was re-established and conferred on William III of the House of Orange and the post became hereditary in 1747.

Democracy: a Completely Absolute Power

It is said that Spinoza was so disturbed by the lynching of De Witt, at the hands of the populace and the resulting interruption of what had been the first experience of republican democracy in Holland, that it was only with the greatest difficulty that the innkeeper of the boarding house where he lodged, could restrain him from rushing out into the street in the middle of the night to put up a placard with the words *Ultimi barbarorum* (“You are the worst of all barbarians”) ³⁰. Thus he had no illusions about the crowd of underprivileged people whom the powerful deceived with religious belief, “so that they will fight for their servitude as if it was salvation and count it not shame but the highest honour to give their blood and their lives for the glorification of one man” ³¹. However, far from concluding with the traditional claim that there was always the need for some superior being to lead these people, by instilling trust and fear together, Spinoza praised the “most astute” Machiavelli and observed that “nature is a single thing and common to everybody” ³². In terms of vices and virtues, there is no difference between kings, nobles and people. If the sovereign has more rights than his subjects, it is because he has more power than them, “as always occurs in the state of nature”, as Spinoza adds in the famous letter to Jarig Jelles, in which he explains what distinguishes him from Hobbes ³³. This is not to say that politics is necessarily a field in which “the right of the strongest” prevails. On the contrary, in the understanding of Spinoza, it is destined to “to free every man from fear that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work – without injury to himself or others” ³⁴. Yet to what extent, is freedom from fear and the preservation of natural rights compatible with security knowing that, “if [the crowd] is not afraid, it is terrible”? There is no

solution to the problem in the theoretical Hobbesian view, which in global terms is that of the *Theologico-Political Treatise* where the sovereign body requires the renunciation of individual liberty and thus drives a wedge between the sovereign and the subjects. It is true that Spinoza finds a solution by being committed to restricting freedom to the expression of opinion and leaving actions within the remit of the discretionary powers of the sovereign. However, this is a stratagem that lacks consistency since it fails to take into account what the author writes in the same book about imagination, belief and the passions that these stir up and spread or their effects on the rulers, which make it impossible in practice to draw a theoretical line that separates opinions from actions. Hence a reformulation of Spinoza's doctrine is required.

The *Political Treatise* sanctions a break with the classical thinking and theorizing about politics as a science, the principles of which cannot be inferred from religion or even the imperatives of reason but are based on the common experience of men – that is, their passions and interests which stir the general public as much as those who govern. In effect, founding the architecture of the State on the idea that it is rational and for this reason, people have a duty to observe the famous pacts in a voluntary way, is to build castles in the air and perpetuate the idea of a utopia. First this is because “their natural power or right must be defined not by reason but by whatever appetite they are determined to act and by which they endeavour to preserve themselves”³⁵. Secondly, since natural right when viewed as an individual power in accordance with contractualist theories, is more than simply a mere assumption: “it is in vain for one person alone to be the guardian of everybody”, and this is the reason why the law of nature “can hardly be conceived except when men have general rights and combine to defend the possession of lands they can inhabit and cultivate to protect themselves to repel all force and live in accordance with the judgement of the entire community”³⁶. The effective power as well as the security and freedom that emerge from it, can only be constituted in common. And it is for this reason that the right of each one is always what (and only what) the power and common right consent to give. And in the same way, the right of each one equals his power and the common right is only the “power of the multitude”, or in other words, the State (*imperium*)³⁷.

A similar understanding of right not only breaks with the classical idea of natural right but also with the positive right of the moderns. Against the former, he places the source of right in the immanence of nature where the powers of his different modes are combined and confronted and not in the transcendence of a free will, translated into values that correspond to an alleged essence of man. Against the latter (the positive right of the moderns), Spinoza denies the supreme magistrate the position to act as the representative of the power of the multitude, because this is non-representable. In reality, the multitude is not the people, the nation, the mass public or any other kind of aggregate through which individual wills have been blotted out to emerge later as a unified whole. The multitude is not a subject. The multitude is a field of forces, a shifting horizon in constant change and in its core, centres of power are being shaped that are forms of a singular realization of the infinite power of nature. Without doubt, these can give rise to several other kinds of modes, or individuals which result from its agonal interaction, especially those designated by the State which occur when the powers of several individuals are merged as if “a single mind” led them. However, just as the power of each one is the result of the tension between the various elements that constitute them (and increase or diminish depending on their form, in a way that is affected by other modes of nature), in a similar way the power of the multitude results from various forces that operate and are in conflict

within it and thus has the ability to affirm to the outside world that it has been combined. The only way the power of the multitude can be asserted is through its evolution in instituted power – the *potestas* – which enables it to decide “as if it was a single mind”, that is, to have a will which can legislate in the name of everybody. Without this mediation, it will remain a cacophony of opinions and in an informed plurality of interests. Before it can be a body politic, the multitude must have a form a constitution, a law or a common right. But conversely, if this is to be exercised with realism, power cannot be entrusted in the hands of a single one: even when it is called a monarchy, it is shared by a system of institutions which, in some way, take it back to its plural and democratic essence. To some extent, this was the model supported in the *TPT*: the plurality inherent in institutions as an antidote to the obsessive desire of an absolute monarch to wield power over the multitude. However the *TPT* goes much further. In this last work, Spinoza discovers that since the multitude has an entirely natural dynamic and is, as a result affective and passionate, it supersedes the kind of rationality introduced by the institutions. As a result, together with its institutional side, which is necessary to gain access to a political condition, the power of the multitude has another side and does not cease to act in an underhand way by being turbulent, rebellious and resistant to the law and even at times, lead to insurrection. Nature never dictates.

69

Hence it is within these two extremes that the power of the multitude evolves. The constituted power – the *potestas*, or system of institutions – tends to be imposed and operate at one extreme by only interpreting the will or interests of the multitude. This, in turn, tends to resist the law, in which it is never entirely reflected and returns to its natural state of conflict. This leads to the disintegration of the institutions if they are unable to make permanent a state that is always ephemeral and where a multifarious collection of affections and interests, passions and desires are brought together. In the same way, the public sphere in its entirety is not a “subject multitude” that is capable of forming its own laws without recourse to an intermediary. Moreover, there is not a system of institutions lower down that can definitively determine the substance of this same law – that is, the form that should allow the coexistence of the multiplicity of aspirations and desires to remain forever by virtue of the fact that it is in a constant state of fluctuation and turmoil. The sovereign understood as a common power is not embodied in the multitude as such and only has political consistency through a system of institutions. However, he is also not embodied in the institutions if they lack at least the fleeting assent of the multitude to subsist and obtain a permanent standing. It is and remains the constituent power that is continually in a state of becoming – the “becoming” institution on the part of the multitude, and the “becoming” multitude on the part of the institutions. This occurs in an elliptical movement through which, at the same time, the power of each one is manifested together with the collective power, and individual freedom with common freedom. Hence the ambiguous nature of the law: on the one hand, it is the expression of the common will and to this extent, is imposed as a sovereign power with regard to every decision or judgement of value in the public space. On the other hand, it is a simple precept for the person who occasionally holds institutional power (which is essentially the reason why it can be discussed). The common right is this hallucinatory focus in the name of which institutions are established and revolutions are carried out. Moreover, it is represented as transcending individual desires although it only gains access to a fleeting and always controversial chain of normative statements which are recognized as having the “force of law”.

In the light of this, the number of rulers or types of political system becomes of secondary importance, given the evidence of the originally democratic nature of politics. All political systems are configurations that reflect the power of the multitude, including monarchical despotism where it is ultimately confined. Even here, power only nominally belongs to a single one since it always depends on supporters and accomplices to maintain subjects in a state of powerlessness, a long-term objective, however much violence it requires. It is worth noting that to be successful, the laws must be moulded in a way that permanently enshrines the consent of those who are its subjects. Thus, far from being absolute, the power of the monarch (as also the aristocracy) is conditioned by the judgements of the citizenry and by the fear that this inspires. However, in democracy this dialectic between power and counterpower is theoretically removed since the distinction between the rulers and the governed is grounded on the decisions and authorization of the entire citizenry. According to Spinoza, democracy is the “most absolute form”³⁸ of political regime since the power of the multitude is entirely invested in institutions where power literally becomes endless. Endless and faceless, by definition, its center is uninhabited or “hollow”, as it is called by Claude Lefort, and what it contains remains forever in the course of public debates and is not restrained by the fact that it operates through a fragile system of checks and balances and is always under threat. In practice, the place of power, the place where it is stated what is permitted and what is forbidden, and what is in the public interest, is constantly in dispute. No normative statement can exhaust the feeling of the common good and no truth can bring to an end the interminable discussions or conflicting opinions in a way that should take on the form of a law. At any rate, without the assumption of a common good, a similar discussion cannot even have any meaning and the multitude will fall apart in a disarray of individual wills and interests. This unrepresentable process is a kind of democracy which is self-constituted and reconstituted in the immanence of human nature. Its benchmark is a standard that has no *a priori* substance and lacks a model which it can be adapted to or a compass to find its bearings. And despite (or exactly because of) this, it is a regime which draws closer to nature, as Spinoza understands it – a nature which is caused and renewed by the continuous action of its infinite modes.

However, being the most natural of regimes is not the same as being the destiny of mankind. Nothing is stranger to Spinoza than the eschatology which in various forms, predominated in the 19th and 20th Centuries. By rejecting the assimilation of being to an anthropomorphic subjectivity which is identified with the pure action of a substance, the *Ethics* departs from the supposition that there is any kind of intention or higher finality that rules nature and governs the alterations effected by its various modes. In contrast, the ideologies of progress, whether they can be attributed to the evolution of material conditions or the triumph of a political conception, science or technology, assume that there is an underlying rationality in the history of all of them which will ensure that an emancipated, peaceful and perhaps happy society can be achieved. This can be seen in the history of Marxism but equally, it can be found in the liberal tradition, for example, in the character who supports democracy in a work by Sir George Cornewall Lewis, British Chancellor of the Exchequer under Gladstone, which he published in 1863:

Democracy is the natural goal of all civilized society. As men become more intelligent and orderly, the dislike of artificial and legal distinctions increases and the desire of equality is strengthened. You may shut your eyes to the truth but it will force itself gradually upon the convictions of the most reluctant. All the recent movements of society in civilized nations have been from the aristocratic to the democratic type³⁹.

In any of these interpretations, what is clear is the kind of prejudice that Spinoza condemns in the Appendix of the First part of the *Ethics*:

71

Men commonly suppose that all natural things act like themselves with an end in view and since they assert with assurance that god directs all things to a certain end, (for they say that God made all things for man and made man that he might worship God).

A similar prejudice is found rooted in the imagination in such a way that its condemnation seems to be counter-intuitive and this explains the proliferation of ideological or religious fictitious beliefs that have surrounded him. The belief in destiny or evolution is an antidote to the evils of the present. Moreover, it is the reason why at times, democracy ends up serving as a placebo, which is applied without a proper awareness of the means required or the underlying reality and leads to tragic consequences that are well known. Confronting the harsh reality of events and the solitude of a universe (which is the cause of its own being without a shadow of transcendence to beckon it to a destiny) is a task "as difficult as it is rare". But it is this task which Spinoza, as happy as Sisyphus, imposed on himself: "while making no distinction between the imagination and the intellect, we think that what we more readily imagine is clearer to us and also we think that what we imagine we understand". The idea of Spinoza is to view lucidity as a form of salvation, and knowledge as the only remedy that can really free the individual from dominating passions, false mirages or in short, his sorrow. The neuroscientist António Damásio, who clearly detects this attitude of Spinoza's and describes it as "brilliant" while at the same time, finding it "exasperating". "But one reason why I find him exasperating", writes Damásio, "is the tranquil certainty with which he faces a conflict that most of humanity has not yet resolved; the conflict between the view that suffering and death are natural biological phenomena that we should accept with equanimity – few educated human beings can fail to see the wisdom of doing so – and the no less natural inclination of the human mind to clash with that wisdom and feel dissatisfied by it"⁴¹. However, it is exactly here in this refusal to go beyond the borders of reason and ascend the delirious heights of imagination and voluntarism that the intellectual route followed by Spinoza is best defined. Furthermore, it is in circumventing the illusions that confront him in pursuit of a "final happiness", when making progress (and against the impassive backcloth of the desert) that Spinoza unexpectedly emerges as someone much closer to us. This is because we are the inhabitants of a reality for which no ideology is sufficiently credible to offer a rescue or lead to a convincing outcome. Not even the ideology of scientific progress that Damásio remains loyal to:

Some devices of homeostatic regulation have taken millions of years to be perfected, as is the case of appetities and emotions. But other devices, namely systems of justice and sociopolitical organization have hardly existed for thousands of years (...) And it is this same circumstance that gives us an opportunity to make an intervention, an opportunity to make an improvement to human destiny⁴².

There still remain, after everything that civilization has shown on its darker side, conditions that can allow us to think in terms of this destiny, without suspecting that this way of thinking may only be a symptom of the same finalism as ever. Moreover, is there any manifestation of an ideology, (whatever the raiment or tinsel trappings of the real "redeemer" may be), that is beckoning to us? Democracy for Spinoza is, in political terms, a denial of this hallucinatory end which seals the place of the absolute with an opinion and reduces power to a question of following a pathway in the search of a real truth which is

supposedly known and redemptive. Without doubt reason is weighted down with these figments of the imagination which completely distort the way that nature really acts and always risks confusing the vestiges of affections and emotions with the certainties of science. But if this occurs and if imagination usurps reason and denies the citizen the right to hold opinions which are opposed to its wishes, democracy is put at risk

72

To Cite this Article

AURÉLIO, Diogo Pires. Spinoza, Marx and Democracy [Espinosa, Marx e a Democracia]. **Revista Estudos Políticos**: online journal published twice a year by the Laboratory for the Hum(e)an Studies (Laboratório de Estudos Hum(e)anos, Fluminense Federal University, Brazil). Rio de Janeiro, Vol. 6 | N. 1, pp. 45-63, December 2015. At: <http://revistaestudospoliticos.com/>.

Notes

1. *Politics* 1280a 40-45, translated into Portuguese by António Campelo Amaral and Carlos de Carvalho Gomes, Lisboa, Vega, 1998. Cf. Luciano Canfora, *La démocratie, [Democracy]* Ch. I and II, cit.; idem, *Il mondo di Atene, [The world of Athens]* Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2011.
2. *Ibidem*, 1318b 13-14.
3. *Ibidem*, 1319b 26-31.
4. *TTP*, Cap. XX, G III, p. 241, cit., p. 385
5. *TTP*, Cap. XVI, G III, p. 195, cit., p. 332.
6. *Leviathan*, Ch. XIX, ed. C.B. Macpherson, London, Penguin Classics, 1985, p. 241.
7. *Ibidem*, Cap. XVIII, p. 229.
8. *TPT*, Ch. XVI, G III, p. 194, cit., p. 330.
9. *TTP*, Ch. XVII, G III, p. 205, cit., p. 344.
10. *TTP*, G III, p. 74, cit., p. 196.
11. *TTP*, Ch. XVII, G III, p. 207, cit., p. 345.
12. *Leviathan*, Ch. XL.
13. *TTP*, Ch XVII, G III, pp. 215-216, cit., pp. 356-357.
14. 59 *TTP*, Cap. XVII, G III, p. 213, cit., p. 353.
15. *TPT*, Ch. XX, G III, pp. 245-246, cit., p. 390.
16. Carta 44, G IV, p. 227.
17. *Spinoza et son cercle [1896]* [Spinoza and his circle], trad., Paris, Vrin, 1983, p.375.
18. The famous *De usuris liber [1638]*, [Treatise on usury] by Claude Saumaise, was written after the author consulted the rabbi Menasseh ben Israel. Cf. Henry Méchoulan, "Lors- que Saumaise consultait

Menasseh ben Israel: deux lettres inédites du rabin d'Amsterdam à l'humaniste de Leyde", [When Saumaise consulted Menasseh ben Israel: two unpublished letters from the Rabbi of Amsterdam to the humanist of Leyden] in *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIII, n.o 1, Jan 1979, pp. 1-17.

73

19. *A Holanda no Tempo de Rembrandt* [1959], [Holland in the era of Rembrandt] translated into Portuguese., São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1989, p. 313.

20. *TTP*, Cap. XVII, G III, p. 203, cit., p. 341.

21. *TTP*, Cap. XX, G III, p. 244, cit., p. 388.

22. *TTP*, Cap. XVI, G III, p. 194, cit., pp. 330-331

23. *TTP*, Cap. XVIII, G III, pp. 227-228, cit., pp. 369-370.

24. *TTP*, Cap. XVI, G III, p. 194, cit., p. 330.

25. *TPT*, CH. XVI, G III, p. 194, cit., pp. 330-331.

26. Étienne Balibar, «Individualité et transindividualité chez Spinoza», [Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality] in Pierre-François Moreau, *Architectures de la raison. Mélanges offerts à Alexandre Matheron*, [Architectures of Reason. A Miscellany to Alexander Matheron] Paris, ENS éditions, 1996, p. 37.

27. *TPT*, Ch. XVII, G III, p. 201, cit., p. 339.

28. *TPT*, Ch. XX, G III, p. 240, cit., p. 384.

29. The contrast between the two labels goes back a long way in political bibliography, as is noted by Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Politics and history in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (1965), translated into Italian by Turim, Einaudi, 1970, pp. 60 and 135.

30. For further information on these events and the respective sources, cf. Margaret Gullan-Whur, *Within Reason. A Life of Spinoza*, London, Pimlico, 2000, pp. 246-249.

31. *TTP*, Preface, G III, p. 7, cit., p.127.

32. *Tratado Político* [Political Treatise], Ch. VII, 27, G III, p. 329, translated by Diogo Pires Aurélio, Lisboa, Temas e Debates e Círculo de Leitores, 2008, p. 150.

33. Letter 50, G IV, pp. 238-239.

34. *TPT*, Ch. XX, G III, p. 241, cit., p. 385.

35. *TP*, Ch. II, 5, G III, p. 278, cit., p. 81.

36. *Ibidem*, Ch. II, 15, G III, p. 281, cit., pp. 86-87.

37. *Ibidem*, Ch. II, 17, G III, p. 282, cit., p. 87.

38. *Ibidem*, Ch. XI, 1, G III, p. 358, cit., p. 207.

39. *A Dialogue on the Best Form of Government*, London, Parker Son and Bourn West Strand, 1863, pp. 103-104.

40. Spinoza, *Tratado da Reforma da Inteligência*, [Treaty of the Reform

of the Understanding] para. 90, translated by Lívio Teixeira, São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1966, p. 129.

74

41. António Damásio, *Ao Encontro de Espinosa: As Emoções Sociais e a Neurologia do Sentir*, [Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain] Lisboa, Temas e Debates e Círculo de Leitores, 2012, p. 306. On Spinoza and Damásio, cf. Vicente Serrano, *La herida de Spinoza. Felicidad y política en la vida posmoderna*, [The inheritance of Spinoza: Happiness and Politics in post-modern living] Barcelona, Anagrama, 2011.

42. *Ibidem*, p. 321.