



The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy)

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Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza has been one of the most inspiring and influential philosophers of the modern era, yet also one of the most difficult and most frequently misunderstood. The essays in this volume provide a clear and systematic exegesis of Spinoza's thought informed by the most recent scholarship. They cover his metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, psychology, ethics, political theory, theology, and scriptural interpretation, as well as his life and influence on later thinkers.

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Editorial Review

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"I do not presume to have discovered the best philosophy," Spinoza once wrote, "but I know that I understand the true one." Understanding the philosophy of Spinoza is not easy, to be sure, but *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* is intended to help. Aimed at the novice and the specialist alike, it contains 10 essays contributed by scholars who are among the foremost authorities on Spinoza's thought. "Taken as a whole," editor Don Garrett writes, "the essays in this volume present a detailed, coherent, and--I believe--accurate portrait of one of the most original and fruitful thinkers that humankind has yet produced."

The *Companion* is almost certainly the best anthology on Spinoza's philosophy presently available, and his major work, *Ethics*, is naturally at its center. Among the high points in Jonathan Bennett's compendious essay on Spinoza's metaphysics is his discussion of "size neutrality"--the claim that small things differ from large ones only in size--which is memorably described as "a blank check that philosophers wrote on Nature's bank and that did not visibly bounce until late in the 19th century." Other essays on *Ethics* deal with Spinoza's views on epistemology, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of mind, and--unsurprisingly--ethics. Concerning other aspects of Spinoza's work, Edwin Curley's essay, delightfully titled "Kissinger, Spinoza, and Genghis Khan," argues that Spinoza's political philosophy is essentially Machiavellian; Spinoza's contributions to theology and Bible scholarship are carefully dealt with by the late Alan Donagan and Richard H. Popkin. --Glenn Branch

Review

"...a"etailed, coherent, accurate portrait of one of the most original and fruitful thinkers that humankind has yet produced"....useful to beginning students, but helpful to Spinoza scholars as well." Seventeenth-Century News

"The breadth of Garrett's grasp of Spinoza's intellectual context is very impressive...[his] new approach to perennially difficult themes of Spinoza's system is highly enlightening and clearly a valuable addition to Spinoza and Early Modern scholarship Review of Metaphysics

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