

# **Thinking Social Mobility with Spinoza**

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**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to analyse the way in which Spinoza provides conceptual instruments for thinking about social mobility, transclasses and non-reproduction. The aim is to analyse Spinoza's methodological modernity in thinking about the singular, his etiological modernity through the model of causal determinism and his anthropological modernity, through the concept of ingenium or complexion. In return, this contemporary use of Spinoza's philosophy to understand the passage from one social class to another, its causes and effects, allows us to measure the power of his thought, to raise new questions and to question his concepts from a new angle.

**Keywords:** complexion, ingenium, social mobility Spinoza, transclass

If ideas, like any other thing, persevere in their being, their power would be measured in their current efficiency and their capacity to produce real effects beyond their time., Then it becomes possible to conceive Spinoza's modernity by analysing the manner in which his philosophy irrigates contemporary thought and provides operational concepts for new fields of knowledge. In this vein, it is here the aim to consider contemporary continuations of Spinozist thought within social philosophy, particularly, looking at the role it plays in studies in transclass individuals on and non-reproduction.<sup>1</sup>

At first sight, there is little to no relation between reflections on social mobility, class transference, and Spinoza's philosophy for self-evident historical and contextual reasons. The question of social non-reproduction inscribes itself within the question of reproduction as has been rigorously theorised by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, most notably in *The Inheritors* (1964) and *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (1977). It is clear that Spinoza never looked into the phenomenon, despite the concept of class not being absent from his system, and that he alludes to the love or hatred of class in proposition 46 of *Ethics* III.<sup>2</sup> The starting point for reflection here is anchored in the desire to clarify a blind spot of reproduction theory, namely those cases that present themselves as social exceptions, an exception to which Bourdieu himself belongs. It is not the least of paradoxes that reproduction's main thinker escaped its clutches, as he wrestled himself (or has been wrestled), out of his social milieu of origin! Born of a postman, who later became postmaster, and of a mother from an agrarian

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1 Jaquet 2014.

2Yet, this remark does not allow to assimilate Spinoza's very general concept of class with that of Bourdieu's of which the technical and specific signification inscribes itself within a Marxist tradition and refers back to the possession, or the absence thereof, of four different types of capital: economic, cultural, socio-political, and symbolic.

background, Bourdieu achieved a social trajectory that his background wasn't meant to predispose him to. How can it then be explained that individuals like him do not necessarily reproduce the practices of their social class and move from one class to another? The main challenge hiding behind this inquiry is that of the power of human nature and of the extensions of the sphere of liberty. Non-reproduction brings into play the possibility to invent a new existence within the established social order, without its overthrow or revolution having to take place. The objective is therefore to understand the causes that make non-reproduction possible and the effects it elicits for individuals who move from one class to another. The difficulty then lies in conceiving the nature and origin of this *transitio* of transclass individuals, at the heart of non-reproduction.<sup>3</sup>

It's at this point that Spinoza's thought turns out to be of great help, not only to find answers, but to provide a theoretical framework and productive intellectual tools aiming at fostering new philosophical as well as sociological approaches to the problem. It is here not the objective to review all implicit or explicit references to Spinoza, in a lettered mode, but to revise properly operative usages of his thought. It is necessary to distinguish intermittent borrowings without decisive effects on the orientation of knowledge itself, from conceptual borrowings that produce new forms of intelligibility, including those that come at the cost of distortion or unintentional expansions of the system that make it squeak and put its power to the test. In this way, the mobilisation of the definition of ambition, or the reference to *fluctuatio animi* to describe the in-between state of the transclass, corresponds to a usage of the Spinozist lexicon that serves to render explicit ideas that could have been expressed using another grammar of the real. However, the injection of affect theory and affective imitation produces theoretical effects that are invaluable in contemporary thought and offers a serious alternative to rational agent theories and its calculative strategies.

It's specifically this second type of appropriation of Spinoza that I want to look at, using a prospective as well as a retrospective logic. In effect, it's interesting to examine how Spinoza's thought enlightens non-reproduction and how non-reproduction enlightens Spinoza—by examining him in return, leading us to read him differently. The approach will consist in analysing how Spinoza has been explicitly or implicitly mobilised in order to define both issue and methods. Secondly, in order to construct an analysis of the causes of non-reproduction and thirdly

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<sup>3</sup>This neologism was coined modelling itself onto "transsexual," to designate individuals who move from one class to another. It was indeed appropriate to change the language used and to come up with another concept, to move away from pejorative terms, such as "social climber" or "class defectors," as well as any other term using spatial metaphors of social ascension or downgrading that all lead to interpret this change as either a promotion or a degradation. To remain axiologically neutral, it would be more useful to keep all value judgement at bay. The prefix "trans," which signifies "on the other side," does not denote an overcoming or an elevation, but the movement of transition, of a passage to the other side.

to consider its effects on the constitution of individuals—i.e., Spinoza's modernity will be approached from a tripartite angle: methodological, etiological, and anthropological.

**Methodological modernity:  
Towards a Spinozist approach of the singular**

Concerning the nature of the problem of social mobility and the way to consider it, Spinoza firstly allows to break with what Francis Bacon calls the presumption of impossibility, and that constitutes one of the main obstacles to the emergence of novel investigative pathways and the development of new knowledge. Research on transclasses falls over an epistemological obstacle that relates to the nature of the object, namely exceptions to the rule of social reproduction. How can philosophy, tending to think through concepts, explain the existence of singular cases? The concept needs to bring together the diverse and unify by synthesising that which individual cases hold in common, otherwise the concept would dissolve in multiplicity. Is it possible to develop a concept of the singular, of the individual and the particular within that which is the most irreducible, targeting an intimate essence, grasping a certain freedom in its individual manifestations?

And yet, it is precisely this problem that is so central in Spinoza's philosophy, and has been much debated in the literature. If the first kind of knowledge consists of perceiving things and forming universal notions "from particular things represented through our senses to our intellect in a mutilated and confused fashion without any order," (IIp40s2) it means that knowledge of the first kind merely rests on a vague experience and remains inadequate. Far from being known, the singular is an in-between-seen; seen through the fog of the imagination. Reason, certainly, disperses confusion and delivers adequate knowledge but it drives us further away from the singular and remains powerless in capturing it. Knowledge of the second kind relies on common notions, on adequate ideas of the properties of things and thus does not deliver their essence. It forms its notions from "*anything that is common to all things [...] and that is equally in the part and in the whole does not constitute the essence of any particular thing*" (IIp37). Only knowledge of the third kind, or intuitive science, is supposed to grasp things in their singularity and infer their essence from the attribute of God (IIp40). However, this intuitive science, concerning the essence of singular things, is arduous to the extent that a great number of scholars judge it impossible to achieve, and make sure to remind that Spinoza himself indicates, towards the very end of the *Ethics*, that the way to salvation that the third kind of knowledge consists of is "as difficult as [it is] rare" (IIp42s).

Facing this difficulty, many commentators have come to think that Spinoza didn't intend to infer the essence of the singular, of Peter or of Paul, from the attributes of God, but only of a general essence.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to accept this thesis, given the fact that essence reciprocates itself with the thing, because essence is not only that which without the thing can neither be nor conceived, but equally that which can neither be nor conceived without the thing itself (III2). Furthermore, Spinoza stresses that there is an idea in God that expresses *sub specie aeternitatis* “the essence of this or that human body [*hujus et illiuscorporis*]” (Vp22).

Without dwelling on the scholarly debate, it is clear that for Spinoza, the question is not to simply settle for a general understanding of the nature of things and that it is possible to infer singularity from the essence of all beings. Spinoza thus offers a model of intelligibility of the singular through intuitive science. Hence, it becomes possible to think transclasses with him, and no longer as mysterious exceptions. To think them as separate cases, conducive to the emergence of superstitions such as the lucky star, of destiny and good fortune, or to the dissemination of easy ideology, such as that of the genius or the *self-made man*, but as the products of a whole of determinations that are comprehensible with a casual deductive schema. The aim was here to bring to light the body of causes that presides over the creation of transclasses and that explains the reasons for their individual social trajectories.

In order to do so, it is necessary to forge a philosophy of the singular that both combines a deductive method and the analysis of particular cases. This is the reason why it is needed to elaborate a theory of non-reproduction, not only by building upon philosophical concepts, such as transclass or complexion, but also by using thought instruments borrowed from other domains that have in common the aptitude to grasp the singular by giving it a universal scope, like that of literature. Initially, the reflections here presented were inspired by literary fiction that privileges examples of non-reproduction, such as Julien Sorel in Stendhal’s *The Red and the Black* or Jack London’s *Martin Eden*. My initial speculations equally drew on autobiographical narratives of transclass people that blend literary and theoretical approaches, such as Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* or Edgard Wideman’s *Brothers and Keepers*. But instead of privileging these novels that are primarily fictive or autobiographical, narrating personal trajectories, the narratives that stood out most were of an auto-socio-biographical nature, like those of Annie Ernaux,<sup>4</sup> Didier Éribon,<sup>5</sup> or Richard Hoggart.<sup>6</sup> These narratives aim to think the life or the fate of an individual in relation to their milieu as the production of the social and not as the advent of self-isolation from

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4 See, among others, Ernaux 1992 or 1998.

5 See Éribon 2009.

6 Hoggart 1991.

all external determination. Unlike autobiography that has the tendency to impose a reductive image of an author who writes about themselves, the work of auto-socio-biographic writing takes the form of a narrative in which it is the aim to place the “I” within the midst of a larger reality, within a condition in common or a shared social situation.<sup>7</sup>The apparent hiatus between the singularity of the exception and the universality of the concept is blurred as it is through the individual that the human condition expresses itself, sketching an anthropology in the moment. In this way, Annie Ernaux considers that a text can become all the more universal than it is personal, without a doubt because it expresses an intimate experience from which it is possible to recognise yourself, beyond the variety and the particularity of individual stories.<sup>8</sup>The analysis is born from personal experience, but vice-versa also clarifies it and is a witness of the back and forth between theory and individual (hi)stories.

This approach that combines philosophy, literature, history, and sociology can in turn enlighten Spinoza’s notion of intuitive science, giving it substance and leading to a reconsideration of the role singular examples and literary fiction can play within his system. The Spinozist method relies as much on that which reason demonstrates as on that which experience shows. Very often, Spinoza makes use of examples and singular figures that are both historical and literary, such as *Orlando Furioso*, Orestes, Nero, Medea, and Hannibal. He does this, not only to illustrate his arguments but also uses them as thought archetypes that highlight the human conditions’ prominent features of morality or of political organisation. Without a doubt, commentators have looked into one or the other of these figures in need to substantiate their claims with targeted examples, but after the work I’ve carried out in *Les transclasses ou la non reproduction*, (*Transclasses and non-reproduction*) it would be interesting to consider all these singular examples *uno intuitu* and to synoptically and systematically apprehend how Spinoza treats these examples, as to see what they can teach us about intuitive science. Even if it is in a relatively discreet manner, Spinoza will be the guiding threat in the definition of the issue here at hand and the method used.

### **Aetiological modernity: the Spinozist model of causal determination**

Secondly, Spinoza also played a decisive role in the analysis of the causes of non-reproduction, which is discussed in the first part of the book.<sup>9</sup> Spinoza opened up a third way, a way out of the alternative that traps the debate in either ascribing the causes of non-reproduction

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7 Ibid., p. 21.

8 Ernaux 2003, p. 153.

9 Jaquet 2014, p. 23-102.

to the illusion of free will and the all-powerful volition or by relying on some fatalistic theory of destiny. Thinking with Spinoza, the objective was to conceive of a singular and *in situ* power to act and to take into account exterior determinations, such as economic, social, and political conditions; the family novel, family relations, encounters, as well as interior determinations: physical and mental, like the composition of the body, sex, race, desires, and sexual orientations, knowing that the boundaries between interior and exterior are porous because we incorporate the traces of the social world and that we in turn imprint that world with our mark. It's this dynamic of circumstance and the interwovenness of causes that we have to understand .

Non-reproduction doesn't reduce itself to atomistic and individualistic logic, to a singular being facing its milieu. Non-reproduction demands us to apprehend the complex modalities by means of which everyone finds their way in being and defines themselves by identification and differentiation within given spaces, with and against others. Non-reproduction abides to laws and interconnected schemata within which the individual could not be thought as an isolated being seceding from their own class. Even if they are the expression of an exception, they are not islands, an empire within an empire, to use Spinoza's words. They are exceptions only to the extent that their environment permits it, a sort of atypical pathway that does not constitute a deviation. It operates with the help of the middle, at the crossroads of impulse and aversion. It is not the product of reregulation, but of a combination of rules other than those that normally prevail. Transclass people are often less solitary heroes than heralds with personal and collective aspirations, be it those of the family, the village or the neighbourhood, of race or class, of sex or gender.

Non-reproduction is thus not an individual phenomenon but a transindividual phenomenon. It cannot be understood when we separately consider economic, sociological, family, and affective determinations that are at play in everyone's individual histories. Consequently, the aim is not to think the primacy of individual free will or social and material conditions, as if desire wasn't determined by the economy and sociology, and as if the economy and sociology weren't in turn impregnated with affects. The reluctance to take into account the existence of affects which sometimes translates itself into a contemptuous refusal of "psychologism" or an *a priori* suspicion for psychoanalysis in general, (as if there was only one) prohibits us from understanding how emotions shape the social body.

In this regard, Spinoza's theory of affects serves as an antidote that can usefully be reinvested in the philosophical study of the social world in general, and that of the trajectories of transclass people in particular. The analysis of the causes of non-reproduction reveals the necessity to take into account the vital part affects play in the constitution of the

self. The transclass individual is the product of an affective complexio. They are not simply agents who mechanically imitate or rationally calculate a strategy. How to understand their trajectories without shame, desire for justice, pride, anger, and indignation, and all interwoven? How to account for your pain or the joyful strength drawn from romantic encounters and friendships? Affect plays a decisive role, and too often gets side-lined by sociologists in the name of a suspicion towards psychology, as if it weren't part of the social, reducing it to a character given from all eternity.<sup>10</sup> Within a Spinozist vein, affect is on the contrary social through and through. He covers the whole of bodily and mental modifications that touch upon our power to act, which either reinforce or limit it. Produced by the interference between a person's causal power and that of external causes, affect is the expression of interhuman relations and the exchanges with our surrounding milieu. Affect relates the history of our encounters with the external world and integrates itself within a determinism of interactive connections. The aim is however not to reduce behaviour to affective types and to imagine that a said feeling automatically produces a said effect, but to think a particular combination, a node of determinations.

Not a single determination in effect is operational or has efficacy in and of itself; it is only the intersection of determinations and their consolidation that can produce effects. Taken in isolation, determination is one of non-reproduction's possible threads, but it only becomes a real fabric when interwoven with other determinations. In this respect, the existence of alternative models, the establishment of political institutions and economic aid can be necessary conditions, but they are not sufficient—as the extremely divergent trajectories of individuals from the same generation in a family demonstrate. Every time, the interplay of strengths should be grasped, the place of everyone within a given configuration, the singular affects this interplay modifies and combines in a decisive manner, so that it gives way to an ambient model and initiates a different social trajectory. These class transitions should be considered in terms of the nodal form of the *complexio* and not as a mechanical and horizontal causality.

This remark allows to reconsider the proposition XXVIII, of the *Ethics's* part one, <sup>11</sup> having in mind the singular and to think it less in terms of a series or a succession of a waterfall of causes, but rather as a connection of interconnected causes producing effects on the modelled

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10 In this regard, Frédéric Lordon's innovative approach, grounded in Spinozist anthropology, and that introduces the social sciences to affects can only be welcomed. In particular Lordon's 2010 and 2013.

11 "Any particular thing, or anything that is finite and has a determinate existence, cannot exist or be determined to operate, unless it is determined to exist and operate by another cause, which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and this cause in turn is also unable to exist or be determined to operate, unless it is determined to exist and to operate by another thing, which also is finite and has a determinate existence, and so ad infinitum" (Ip28).

of the *complexio*. *Complexio*, composed of the prefix *con*, “with,” and of the stem *plexus*, derived from the past participle of *plectere* (to tie, to weave), clearly conveys the complex interwovenness of the threats that constitute the fabric of an existence and that tie it to those of others.

Non-reproduction does not undo determinism but implies a new arrangement thereof. In this regard, it doesn’t so much put at risk the *genius* as it does *engineering*, because non-production does not rely on a natural disposition to create whatever original, but relies on a complex device operating a synthesis of determinations that constitute an individual in relation to their surrounding milieu. It would thus be appropriate to think the *ingenium* of transclass people rather than the *genius*, understood as an exceptional inventive capacity arising from natural and innate dispositions. Even though originating from the same stem, the idea of the *ingenium* introduces a new inflection in relation to that of the *genius*. By putting an emphasis on habits and ways of being, the *ingenium* stresses the historical dimensions of the nature of a being and how exterior causes shape them, in a way that distinctive singularity is less than constitutive than it is constituted. If there is indeed a capacity for invention and originality, they are not as much the product of some inborn disposition than they are aptitudes developed in accordance with circumstances.

In this sense, the concept of the *ingenium*, as it is defined in Spinoza’s philosophy, makes for a powerful thought instrument. The *ingenium* refers to the unity of singular characteristic traits of an individual that are the product of common history, of their habits, of their encounters with the world.<sup>12</sup> The *ingenium* could be defined as a complex of sedimented affects constitutive of an individual, of their mode of life, of their opinions and their behaviour. It is anchored within bodily dispositions and counts physical and well as mental ways of being. It is constituted by traces things inscribe in us and that the body retains, traces with which we shape images; representations that we either reconfigure by interpreting them as signs, by associating them according to the distinctive logic of our minds and their preceding experiences of thought. This concept expresses the individuality of a human being we all recognise, as well as that of a people.

Spinoza talks in this way of the *ingenium* of the living human being under the conduct of reason which distinguishes itself from that of the ignorant,<sup>13</sup> of the *ingenium* of the Hebrew people, rude and rebellious, a disposition that has formed itself over the course of political and religious history.<sup>14</sup> Within this context, it is clear that the *ingenium* does not refer

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12 On this point see Moreau 1994, p. 379-465.

13 IVp26s

14TTP, V, 10.

back to a natural innate disposition. Spinoza in effect refuses to attribute the Hebrews' rebellious *ingenium* to a certain nature but ascribes it to their laws and habits<sup>15</sup>. The *ingenium* has something that is irreducibly singular and is not easily transferred from one individual to the next. This is typically one of the reasons why Spinoza affirms that “no one is obliged by the right of nature to live according to the views of another [*ingenium*] person,”<sup>16</sup> even if everyone tyrannically aspires that others live according to their views. The *ingenium* allows to think the diversity of individuals without referring to a common nature or to an immutable individual nature. In particular in the preface to the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza insists on this diversity of the *ingenium*, which is at the origin of indefinite variety of opinions and beliefs: “human beings have very different minds [*ingenium*] and find themselves comfortable with very different beliefs; what moves one person to devotion provokes another to laughter.”<sup>17</sup>

If the term *ingenium* is sometimes translated as “spirit,” “disposition,” or “character,” it is without doubt complexion that best translates the Spinozist context because it reconstructs the idea of complex assemblage and singular interconnected physical and mental determinations. Understood in this sense, *ingenium* or complexion designates the chain of determinations that interweave to form the fabric of an individual life. Both terms maintain the notion of the genius, of the original idea, but strip away all transcendental dimensions and traces of the innate, in order to put emphasis on the historical production of industrious weaving in relation with a milieu. Both notions invite us to think transclasses like beings caught up in a node of relational affects that combine and compose themselves as to produce a new configuration.

### **Anthropological modernity: the figure of the transclass individual in light of the *ingenium***

This is why beyond the causes studied in the first part of *Transclasses and non-reproduction*, the concept of the *ingenium* or of complexion could equally be mobilised to clarify the notion of transclasses, a concept that I used, in particular, to study the effects of the transition on the constitution of individuals,<sup>18</sup> even if Spinoza was not the first to have theorised it. The *ingenium* allows to take a critical distance from the concept of identity that is not suitable. Identity, whether it is personal or social, presupposes the existence of individuals that remain the same

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15TTP, VII, 26.

16TTP, preface, 13.

17 Ibid., 12.

18 Jaquet 2014, p. 103-217.

and are reducible to a certain number of persistent character traits despite change. No matter how we define it, identity always implies the recognition of a consistent substratum throughout modifications. Whether this substratum is thought in terms of a substantial self, of the person, of the subject, etc., it always presents itself like an immutable core resistant to change. However, transclass people show us that it is uncertain human beings dispose of an identity like a business card giving us recognition and the attribution of a certain status. It must be acknowledged that individuals who do not reproduce necessarily have a floating or fluctuating identity because it cannot be assigned to their background and demarcates itself of that of their peers. It is change and transformation that govern their existence. They are thus more characterised by a process of disidentification, of dis-engagement, that cuts them off from their families and their class.

This disidentification does not reduce itself to the temporary stage by means of which they gain a new identity, because they are ultimately not assimilable to their milieu of arrival. They undoubtedly carry the traces of their background, even only of those of a past history, in a way that they will never share a common heritage with those with whom they will, nonetheless, share their condition with. In this regard, the transclass person appears as an exemplary figure of the ego's desubstantialisation. They radicalise the experience of the inconsistency of the self and the inconstancy of its qualities, an act to which Pascal invites each and everyone in his *Pensées*. The transclass person can only be understood in this movement of the passage, by means of which they acquire the experience of a transidentity and of the dissolution of the personal and social self. They live a double life of which its unity is very problematic because the change is sometimes so drastic that it is hard to believe they are the same person. Their existence is marked by transformation and mobility, in a way that makes it sometimes difficult to consider the existence of a subject or of a substratum that would remain intact throughout change. More than anyone else, transclass individuals have the feeling of not disposing of a fixed and congealed identity, but to be a floating and flexible complexion that adopts itself to the ambient colour of their milieu, in the manner of a chameleon. Adapting is first of all learning to undo old habits and to break away from previous customs, in order to enter in a new and foreign universe. The trick is to get rid of the ballast of the past, to sell off acquired ways of being, to liquidate a legacy. This is what Annie Ernaux concisely summarises in *A Man's Place*: "now I have finished taking possession of the legacy with which I had to part when I entered the educated, bourgeois world."<sup>19</sup> Adaptation implies a form of deposit or even of dispossession in order to position the self. Adaptation goes through a process of dismissal of old values and old ways of being

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19 Ernaux 1992, p. 100.

and it implies a casting off of a former skin, a stripping away of a self, a difficult operation that does not come naturally. This is why transclasses necessarily will be floating in their new habits, because they cannot pre-emptively adjust to them. They are thus simultaneously an adapted and an unadapted being.

It is this fluctuating posture and its variations of difference, and of a being-torn-between, that the concept of complexion allows to capture by stressing the process of weaving and cultural blending by means of which determinations become tied up and untie themselves. Complexion implies a rupture with identity and invites us to think the trajectory of transclass people as a reconfiguration that cannot be reduced to hybridity or an extension of their habitus. Instead complexion takes the form of a deconstructive dynamics and a permanent reconstruction through transitional tensions.

As such, these reflections on transclasses using the concept of the *ingenium* introduces it in other fields and thereby raises new questions as regards to Spinoza's thought itself. It demands us to refine our reading, as it invites us to reflect on the relation between the notion of complexion, which reintroduces the historical and affective dimension of beings, and that of essence. The articulation between these two notions and their confrontation has rarely been fully addressed. It could indeed be questioned whether essence only includes immutable characteristics, eternal singularity, or whether it can equally encompass ephemeral determinations, habits and aptitudes that alter and modify themselves. In other words, Is complexion expressing a truth that essence cannot express or include? It is self-evident that the two concepts cannot be simply equated but we would need to further our investigation into the extent to which they are related. In this way, it would be possible to conceive of complexion as the expression of essence within a given situation or state. But would this signify that essence, in so far as it is the expression of reality and the power of a being, should be thought as complexion minus the passions? In the case of the wise or the free man, does essence coincide with complexion? All these questions that are raised by non-reproduction invite us to anew explore the potential of Spinoza's thought.

Even though it is not the main objective of non-reproduction theory, it nonetheless gives us a new chance to evaluate Spinoza's modernity, the effectiveness, and contemporaneity of his thought. The mobilisation of concepts of intuitive science, of affects, cause and effect, and the *ingenium* produces heuristic and speculative effects that allow for the renewal of sociological and socio-philosophical categories, offering an alternative to classical ways of thinking social mobility. Spinoza never said anything about transclass people, yet, the whole of his philosophy is a philosophy of passage, of *transitio*: the transition from lesser to greater perfection, from sadness to joy, from passion to action, from servitude

to freedom. By putting an emphasis on the dimension of transition and its spearhead of difficulties, it delivers an important lesson on how to grasp the migratory process of passing-classes who transition between different social spheres. Spinoza never said anything about transclass people, and yet, he even helps to understand their joys, which surely is less related to an *acquiescentia in se ipso*, a self-satisfaction, than to a *gaudium*, the joy that accompanies the thought of a past event arisen against all hope. When not getting lost along the way, transclasses can fully take pleasure in the joy gained through struggle, self-satisfaction that is not the one given, rightfully or not, at birth, to inheritors.

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