

**GÁBOR BOROS – JUDIT SZALAI – OLIVÉR ISTVÁN TÓTH
(eds.): The Concept of Affectivity in Early Modern Philosophy**

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In the Early Modern period, senses and sensory experiences were of great interest to philosophers. The problems and questions of the interaction of body and soul had an impact on the spirituality of the age, and the problems of rationality, knowledge, and morality could not be answered without understanding the affective dimension. The authors of the volume were able to turn the semantic diversity and the versatility of the use of the concept of affections into an advantage, and the papers of the volume provide the opportunity to explore the concept in various contexts.

The volume sheds a new light on affectivity from 1600 to 1781 in Early Modern philosophy, demonstrating the richness of the topic in the philosophical endeavours of the 17th and 18th centuries. The aim of the volume is not to present a systematic survey of affectivity in early modern philosophy, but rather to foster collaboration among researchers working in different countries and different traditions. Methodologically, the tools of analytical philosophy and phenomenology are decisive, and in addition, authors often refer to early modern science works.

Among the thinkers discussed are the neo-Stoic Justus Lipsius, from the 17th century Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, and from the 18th century Berkeley, Hume, Rousseau. Much of the volume is comprised of studies of Spinoza and Cartesian thought, and an 18th-century outlook on the great philosophical themes of French and Anglo-Saxon thought on emotion.

To begin, Ádám Smrcz discusses the revival of stoicism during the Renaissance. The next two chapters by Maximilian Kiener and Jan Forsman discuss Descartes' concept of dubitability and indubitability in *Meditations*. Hanna Vandebussch and Judit Szalai's essays are about emotions: the former compares Descartes' and Pascal's discussions of love, the latter focuses on the philosophical and physical descriptions of the operation of the emotions in the later Descartes and early Cartesians.

This is followed by eight studies in the bulky central section on Spinoza. The first one is by Davide Monaco who provides a new interpretation of the formal-objective distinction in Spinoza. Filip Buyse and Keith Green talk over the consequences of Spinoza's conatus doctrine for his theory of affects. The former focuses on Spinoza's Letter 32 to Oldenburg, the latter negotiates the problem presented by

reflexive affects in Spinoza, especially self-love and self-hatred. Gábor Boros and Olivér István Tóth both discuss Spinoza's concept of death. Boros argues that researchers miss an important layer of Spinoza's text as long as they understand by death simply the decay of the physical body: death is not only the death of the body, but also a radically changed life. Staying on this line, Tóth focuses on the fact that Spinoza cannot prove the necessity of death; this is also evidenced by the seemingly insoluble difficulties of interpretation Spinoza encounters when discussing the necessary finality of human existence. Brian Glenney talks about the relationship between affectivity and epistemology in Spinoza, addressing the example of the idea of the sun. Christopher Davidson turns to Spinoza for an aesthetic purpose; Spinoza's references to art are linked to key concepts in his philosophy that will not determine the basic aesthetic categories of the beautiful and the ugly, but the affective ways that make art's impact on the audience. Zsolt Bagi presents Spinoza's concept of freedom as a philosophy of emancipation: the liberation of the affective body is not by reason, but by the affective integration of man into the political community, and this can lead to political emancipation.

The last section moves into the 18th century: we can read Dávid Bartha's study about Berkeley's theory of emotions, playing an important role in Berkeley's moral philosophy. Dan O'Brien and Hans D. Muller focus on Hume's theory of affectivity, especially the relation between belief and sympathy. Finally, Csaba Olay discusses the notion of alienation from a new perspective: he claims that Rousseau's concept of alienation is not quite the same as the one used by the Marxist tradition.

The volume sheds new light on many topics linked to the concept of affectivity, and demonstrates the rich possibilities of research in this field, providing readers with a useful overview. I encourage scholars to read this well-edited book, offering insights on key dilemmas and conflicting findings and suggesting future research directions.

Virág Véber

Virág Véber
Eötvös Loránd University, Doctoral School of Philosophy
Múzeum krt. 4
1088 Budapest
Hungary
e-mail: veber.virag@gmail.com
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4555-1899>