

Towards a Spinozist Conception of Hope

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The thesis aims to critically analyse Baruch de Spinoza's attitude towards hope as illustrated in *Ethics*, the *Theological Political Treatise (TTP)* and the *Political Treatise (TP)*. The thesis argues that Spinoza presents a nuanced *dualistic conception* of hope in which he, on the one hand condemns hope as a negative force (see *Ethics*), and on the other hand sees hope as a positive force in as much as it can lead to stability within society (see *TTP*). Due to this *dualistic conception* of hope the thesis argues that Spinoza occupies a middle ground between pessimism and optimism by way of his pragmatic attitude towards hope. The argumentation is facilitated by way of four comparative studies. In chapter 2, Spinoza is compared to René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes in order to better understand Spinoza's uniqueness and attitude. In order to better understand Spinoza's position *vis a vis* pessimism and optimism, chapter 3 sees Spinoza compared to the pessimistic thought of Friedrich Nietzsche and the optimistic thought of Ernst Bloch.