

A Critical Study of the Relationship between the Human Reason and Democracy in Spinoza's and Paine's Philosophical Thinking

دراسة نقدية للعلاقة بين العقل والديمقراطية في الفكر الفلسفي لاسبينوزا وبائين

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Abstract:

This article discusses the relationship between the human reason and democracy in Benedictus Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise* (1670) and Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1779). For both philosophers, the human reason is perfect. However, their determination of the relationship between democracy and the human reason discredits their claim about the perfection of the intellect. This study concludes that their premise implies paradoxes on the ability of the human reason to understand democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, the human reason, naturalist philosophy, rational metaphysics, rationalism.

Jel Classification Codes: ..., ..., ...

ملخص:

يهدف هذا المقال إلى دراسة العلاقة بين العقل والديموقراطية من خلال دراسة كتاب رسالة في اللاهوت والسياسة (1670) لاسبينوزا وعصر العقل (1779) لبائين. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة مفهوم العقل و دوره في استنباط مبادئ الديمقراطية. عمد كل من المفكرين إلى القول بأنه لا يمكن بلوغها إلا بالعقل الذي يتميز بالكمال. على الرغم من إقرارهما بكمالية العقل، فإن شرحهما للعلاقة بين العقل والديموقراطية لا تخدم نظريتهما. يستخلص هذا المقال إلى أن نظرية الفيلسوفين تنطوي على تناقضات حول كمال وقدرة العقل في فهم الديمقراطية. كلمات مفتاحية: الديمقراطية، العقل، الفلسفة الطبيعية، الميتافيزيقية العقلانية، العقلنة.

تصنيفات JEL: ..., ..., ...

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1- Introduction:

Defining the ideals of a democratic government is subject to much philosophical disputes in the western political philosophy. Philosophers of the Enlightenment era discussed its origins and principles based on the naturalist philosophy. This article discusses the relationship between democracy and the human reason in two significant works in European and American political philosophy: Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise* (1670) and Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1779). For instance, the Dutch philosopher Benedictus Spinoza and the American Founding Father Thomas Paine defined the bases of a democratic rule with naturalism. They insisted that their naturalist writings introduced a revolutionary interpretation to democracy through rational metaphysics. For them, democracy is rational; therefore, the human reason can attain it through transcendence. In this respect, they argued that rational metaphysics is the philosophical process which leads man to transcend the principles of democracy. Here, they insisted on the firm relationship between the human reason and democracy. Even though both philosophers emphasized the positive role of the human reason in the establishment of a democratic rule, the characteristics which described its rationality put limitations on its ability to understand democracy. In other words, several contradictions can be drawn from their claim about the perfection of the human reason. For this, this study sheds light on the significance of the human reason in Spinoza's and Paine's political philosophy. It basically aims to demonstrate that their definition of the relationship between the human reason and democracy diverges with their premise of the perfection of the human reason.

In fact, Spinoza was the first naturalist philosopher who defined the ideals of democracy with rational metaphysics in the 17th century. Thomas Paine played a significant role to the outbreak of the American War of Independence with his pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776). His book *The Age of Reason* (1791) defines democracy in the post revolutionary United States with Spinoza's style. In addition, both *The Age of Reason* and *Theological Political Treatise* share a similar outline. This reflects Spinoza's influence on Paine's philosophical thinking. To depict the significance of the human reason in both philosophers' understanding of democracy, this study relies on several philosophical works like Benedictus Spinoza's books *Theological Political Treatise* and *Ethics*, Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and Plato's *Timaeus and Critias*. It also relies on the writings of contemporary historians and thinkers like Etienne Balibar's *Spinoza and Politics*, Keith Hossack's *The Metaphysics of Knowledge*, Lee Ward's *Modern Democracy and the Theological Political Problem in Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson*, Jack Fruchtman's *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Paine*, and Walzer, Michael's study "Philosophy and Democracy". This study uses the comparative method to show Spinoza's and Paine's terminology of the relationship between the human reason and democracy. It relies on the interpretative analysis to depict the significance of the human reason in both thinkers' political philosophy.

1. Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise*

The rationalist philosopher Benedictus Spinoza (1632-1677) was the pioneer of the naturalist movement in Europe during the 17th century. He published *Theological Political Treatise* (1670) and *Ethics* (1677) in which he argued democracy with rational metaphysics¹. In his *Ethics*, he defined the characteristics of the human reason with mathematical axioms. He emphasized that abstract phenomena can be examined with mathematical principles². In his *Theological Political Treatise*, Spinoza defined the principles of democracy rationally; he believed that by the study of the laws of nature, man attains to establish an ideal political system. For this, he insisted that kingship regime clashes with nature. Thus, it is a corrupted system of rule. Besides, *Theological Political Treatise* was prevented from publication in Europe because of its criticism of kingship. It was translated from Latin to English by the English naturalist Charles Blount in 1689³.

Theological Political Treatise is divided into three thematic parts: the sources of knowledge, the human reason and the bases of a democratic rule. Spinoza argued that in order to maintain peace and harmony in a country, people had to embrace rational thinking. He avowed that philosophy is the rational intellectual process which leads man to understand his natural rights and democracy as well. Moreover, he accused the monarchical system and the church in Europe for preventing the naturalist philosophy at universities⁴. In this respect, Steven M. Nadler, a professor of philosophy at Wisconsin-Madison University, claimed that philosophy played a significant role in Europe since the early Middle Ages. In his *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age* (2011), he argued that philosophy involved several scientific disciplines like algebra, astronomy and geometry. He added that it was taught in all European universities. He emphasized that during the 17th century, the kings did not hinder scientific thinking and the right to philosophize in Europe⁵.

In addition to his attack on the kings, Spinoza condemned the pontifical gentry for violating people's natural rights by the prohibition of the publication of rationalist writings. He claimed the ecclesiastic system of belief irrational and fallacious. In turn, the church claimed his naturalist thoughts blasphemous. Nancy K. Leven, an associate professor

¹ *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Dean W. Zimmerman, 2004, P 985.

² Spinoza, Benedict, *Ethics*, Wordsworth, England, 2001, P 46.

³ Melamed, Yitzhak Y. and Michael A. Rosenthal, *Spinoza's Theological – Political Treatise: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge UP, New York, 2004, P 37.

⁴ Ibid., P 20.

⁵ Nadler, Steven, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age*, Princeton UP, New Jersey, 2011, P 195.

of religious studies at Indiana University, avowed that Spinoza aimed to present a new reading to religion through his naturalist views. She added that Spinoza recognized the existence of God; however, he only rejected the theological system of faith. In her *Spinoza's Revelation: Religion, Democracy and Reason* (2004), she emphasised that Spinoza intended to correct the alterations in the theological writings. For Spinoza, the clerical system endeavored to spread ignorance, dictatorship and backwardness¹.

For Spinoza, the only role of the democratic state is to protect people's natural rights. In order to set the bases of democracy, man must primarily understand rational metaphysics. Besides, the establishment of a democratic government leads to a political stability and to social and scientific prosperity. Likewise, Thomas Paine defined democracy in his *The Age of Reason*. He also discussed the importance of the human reason in the determination of the principles of a democratic government.

2. Paine's *The Age of Reason*

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an English naturalist thinker. During the American Revolution, he wrote *Common Sense* in which he advocated the colonies' rebellion against the British king George III. He claimed that the separation of the colonies from the British was a natural right. He argued: "It appeared to me that unless the Americans changed the plan they were then pursuing with respect to the government of England and declared themselves independent...It was from these motives that I published ... *Common Sense*... the first of January, 1776. Independence was declared the fourth of July following"².

In 1791, he drafted *The Age of Reason* in which he defended democracy rationally. His books were banned in Europe as well as in the United States because of his attack on theology³. His book *The Age of Reason* is divided into two main parts. Part 1 discusses the importance of the human reason in the political and the scientific advancement of societies. Part 2 is a critical study of the theological books of the church. Moreover, Paine insisted that the establishment of a democratic government entails the exclusion of religious sects from politics⁴.

In addition, Paine emphasised the importance of the European naturalist philosophy in different fields of the human life. He viewed that naturalism is the righteous intellectual process to set the parameters of an ideal rule. Thus, people had to inspire democratic ideals from the natural laws such as the principles of order, hierarchy and empiricism. Through observation, man deduces the laws which rule different natural phenomena. For example, the study of

¹ Leven, Nancy K, *Spinoza's Revelation: Religion, Democracy, and Reason*, Cambridge UP, New York, 2004, P 240.

² Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 301.

³ Claeys, Gregory, and *Thomas Paine: Social and Political Thought*, Unuin Hyman, Boston, 1989, P 189.

⁴ Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 268.

geometry reveals the laws which are implied in the geometric shapes. In addition, the study of astronomy uncovers the laws which run the planets and their movements in the solar system. For Paine, the systematic order of the different natural phenomena constitute the source of the natural laws. The naturalist philosophers apply them to deduce the bases of democracy. For this, Paine viewed that democracy is rational, natural and ideal. In Paine's political thinking, democracy exists in a metaphysical and abstract world. Consequently, the human reason attains to understand it through rational metaphysics¹.

3. The Relationship between the Human Reason and Democracy

In fact, Spinoza and Paine inspired their philosophical approach to the role of the human reason in transcending democracy from the Platonic philosophy. For instance, the Greek philosopher Plato (428 B.C – 347 B.C) asserted in his *Timaeus and Critias* that only through philosophy people transcend the ideals of democracy. For Plato, democracy is a set of principles which exist in a metaphysical world. He distinguished between two rational worlds: the macrocosm and the microcosm. The former is a divine world which is perfect and infinite; the latter is the human reason which is corruptible. Plato believed that the microcosm substitutes democracy from the macrocosm². In the platonic thinking, democracy is a knowledge that pre-existed in the divine intellect. It is the duty of man to transcend it rationally. Indeed, Spinoza and Paine inspired their definition of the metaphysical origins of democracy from Plato's philosophical realms of the macrocosm and the microcosm.

Moreover, rational metaphysics is the study of the different concrete and abstract phenomena. It tends to demonstrate that all the natural phenomena are substituted from one common divine source³. Alexander Bird, a professor of philosophy at Bristol University and Steven Horst, a professor of philosophy at Wesleyan University, discussed the relationship between democracy and rational metaphysics. For instance, Alexander Bird asserted in his *Nature's Metaphysics: Laws and Properties* (2007) that rational metaphysics is a philosophical thinking which interprets different political and social phenomena with naturalist principles. Explicitly, it defines abstract subjects, like democracy, as an infinite knowledge which exists in a divine realm⁴. In his study "Naturalisms in Philosophy of Mind" (2009), Horst asserted that naturalist philosophers believed that all abstract and concrete phenomena on earth submitted to the laws

¹ Ibid., P 305.

² Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, Trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford UP, New York, 2008, P 27.

³ *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Dean W. Zimmerman, 2004, P 141.

⁴ Bird, Alexander, *Nature's Metaphysics: Laws and Properties*, Oxford UP, New York, 2007, P 207.

of nature. For this, they viewed that the human reason and democracy submitted to the natural laws of order and rationality¹.

1. The Natural Law of Order

For Spinoza and Paine, democracy exists in the divine intellect, which is nature. The principles of democracy are implied in nature. For this, they claimed democracy natural; therefore, it is divine. Keith Hossack, a professor of philosophy at King's College, argued in *The Metaphysics of Knowledge* (2007) that all the observable objects in nature share the same characteristics with metaphysical phenomena. Explicitly, he avowed that abstract concepts, like the soul, freedom and democracy, can be studied through experimentation². Lee Ward, a professor of political sciences at Campion University, claimed that rationalist philosophers interpreted abstract concepts, like democracy, with the principles that they substituted from mathematics. In his *Modern Democracy and the Theological Political Problem in Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson*, Ward argued that naturalist philosophers believed that democracy could be examined as a concrete natural phenomenon. Accordingly, they applied the principle of order to define the bases of a democratic rule³. Likewise, Lorraine Daston and Michael Stolleis claimed in their *Natural Law of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy* (2008) that order is the main principle by which naturalist philosophers interpreted concrete and abstract phenomena⁴.

For Spinoza and Paine, all the natural phenomena, like animals, and the solar system were created with an order. The latter existed in the natural laws by which all the creation was made. The natural order is divine because it exists in the divine intellect. For this, they claimed the natural laws divine. Besides, they viewed that by the study of the natural laws, man attains to understand God. However, the terminology of the concept of God in both philosophers' naturalist thinking means nature itself without any religious references. In this respect, Spinoza argued: "And while I entirely agree that all things are determined by the universal laws of nature to exist and act in a fixed and determined manner"⁵.

¹ Horst, Steven (Naturalisms in Philosophy of Mind), *Philosophy Compass*, 1, 2009, P 232.

² Hossack, Keith, *The Metaphysics of Knowledge*, Oxford UP, New York, 2007, P 07.

³ Ward, Lee, *Modern Democracy and the Theological Political Problem in Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, P 45.

⁴ Daston, Lorraine and Michael Stolleis, *Natural Law of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy*, Ashgate, Burlington, 2008, P 06.

⁵ Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 57.

Moreover, the natural laws are implied in the biological, astrological, mathematical and geometrical canons which share one common principle; that is order. Relatively, both thinkers argued that democracy involves a set of principles like the establishment of a social contract between the governor and the governed, the exclusion of the clerics from politics, the support of philosophical studies and the scientific advancement¹. All those principles submit to the law of order which is a law of nature. As a step to understand democracy, man must study the systematic order which relies the governor and the governed. In other words, in order to deduce the parameters of a democratic political system, man had to set rules to shape the relationship between the Sovereign and his subjects².

2. Rationality

For Spinoza and Paine, democracy is rational for it involves three major principles; these are: hierarchy, rational knowledge and the concretization of the laws of nature. Firstly, their rational metaphysical approach is characterized with hierarchy. The latter is a system of thought which defines the principles of democracy through the relationship between different philosophical concepts³. For instance, they argued the relationship between the divine intellect and democracy through a hierarchy between God, the natural laws and man. They asserted that in order to understand democracy, man had to understand the divine intellect; then, he would be able to decipher the laws of nature scientifically⁴.

Secondly, they distinguished between a rational and an emotional knowledge. The former is substituted from the human reason; however, the latter reflects the human desires. The rational thinking is righteous for it submits to the natural laws. Nevertheless, the emotional thinking depends on the sways of the human feelings which are blinded with greed. The first type of thinking is positive for it leads to more harmony and peace between people and their ruler. Jon Miller, a professor of philosophy at Queen's University of Canada, defined Spinoza's understanding of harmony with a mental state of perfection that people would attain in a democratic rule. In his *Spinoza and the Stoics*, Miller claimed that harmony for naturalist philosophers means an intellectual agreement between the governor and the governed not an emotional state of joy⁵. Likewise, in his *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the*

¹ Ibid., P193.

² Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 293.

³ Ibid., P 301.

⁴ Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 202.

⁵ Miller, Jon, *Spinoza and the Stoics*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, 2015, P 202.

Secular Age, Steven Nadler argued: "In a democracy, where the laws are made under the guidance of reason, not only is the will of the sovereign the will of the people, the will of the sovereign represents their rational will"¹.

Besides, emotional knowledge creates misery and usurpation in societies because it leads to the emergence of a tyrant ruler who dominates power and fortunes. Both thinkers illustrated the emotional thinking with kingship. They viewed that kingship regime is emotional because the king relies on his greedy desires to dominate his people and to acquire more power. This would lead to the spread of poverty, injustice as well as to scientific backwardness². Consequently, the king would violate the natural rights of his subjects. The emotional thinking is negative for it clashes with the divine knowledge. Thus, only through the rational thinking man can establish a harmonious system of government³.

Thirdly, Spinoza and Paine claimed that the creation, with the entire species, are bodies which reflect the laws of nature. Those laws are abstract because they exist in the divine intellect. Thus, the biological diversity on earth is a reflection of God. They illustrated their claim with the geometrical shapes. For instance, if someone draws a square on a sheet of paper, the geometric shape that he sees is not original. Because the person drew it according to a certain knowledge that he had in his mind. Then, he reflected the knowledge about the principles of a square mechanically through drawing. Thus, the square that is drawn on the paper is a projection of a certain knowledge in the human intellect⁴. This illustrates the role of the human reason in deducing the principles of a democracy⁵. For both thinkers, democracy is a system of rule which exists in the divine intellect. In order to project it through the establishment of a government, the human reason must depict the democratic principles through transcendentalism. Then, philosophers transmit that knowledge to their people to guide them in establishing a democracy. Accordingly, the democratic government, for Spinoza and Paine, is a projection of a divine knowledge through the human reason.

Several contemporary scholars criticized Spinoza's and Paine's claim on the scientificity of rational metaphysics. The French scholar Etienne Balibar, a professor of philosophy at California University, discussed the

¹ Nadler, Steven, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age*, Princeton UP, New Jersey, 2011, P 195.

² Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 228.

³ Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 284.

⁴ Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 292.

⁵ Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 262.

significance of order and rationality in the naturalist philosophy. In his *Spinoza and Politics* (2008), he asserted that Spinoza's method in defining democracy is unscientific. Balibar argued that rationalist philosophers interpreted Europe's political and social circumstances during the 17th and 18th centuries. Because of their attacks on their kings, their naturalist writings were banned in Europe. This pushed them to defend their philosophical views with naturalist thinking which is not scientific at all¹. In this respect, Lorraine Daston and Michael Stolleis argued that naturalist philosophers were driven by their psychological attitude in their defense of democracy. Their hostility against their kings impelled them to argue their definition of an ideal political system rationally².

4. On Spinoza's and Paine's Premise

Spinoza and Paine discussed in their philosophical works the relationship between the human reason and democracy. For them, democracy is a set of principles by which people organize their political, social and economic matters. Democracy defines the relationship between the ruler and the ruled; citizens agree with their governor on a *pactum* which Spinoza and Paine called "a social contract"³. The sovereign had to rule according to his people's social and cultural norms; the latter constitute, for both thinkers, the natural rights of people. However, if the governor violates any of his subjects' rights, he will be overthrown⁴. Moreover, to define the ideals of their government, people must, basically, rely on the abilities of the human reason. Besides, on the one hand, Spinoza and Paine insisted on the perfection of the human reason to understand the principles of democracy. On the other hand, they emphasized that only philosophers can define the ideals of a democratic government. Hence, both philosophers' premise about the significance of the human reason in understanding democracy is paradoxical. There are two major contradictions in Spinoza's and Paine's claim on the perfection of the human reason; these are: the heroic character of philosophers and the mystic nature of democracy.

To start with, for Spinoza and Paine, philosophers played a significant role in the establishment of their communities' political systems. Michael Walzer, a professor in social sciences at Princeton University, discussed in his article "Philosophy and Democracy" (2003) two types of philosophers: heroic and contemplative. The heroic philosophers intent to have their thoughts embraced on the political and social scales; nevertheless, contemplative

¹ Balibar, Etienne, *Spinoza and Politics*, Trans. Peter Snowdon, Versa, New York, 2008, P 44.

² Daston, Lorraine and Michael Stolleis, *Natural Law of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy*, Ashgate, Burlington, 2008, P 12.

³ Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 253.

⁴ Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 298.

philosophers have no intentions to impose their thoughts on their people¹. According to Walzer's categorization of philosophers, Spinoza and Paine are heroic philosophers. They insisted that only philosophers have intellectual abilities to set the bases of ideal political systems; they viewed that philosophers attain rational thinking; thus, they can guide their societies to establish a democratic state. However, even though Paine and Spinoza emphasized the perfection of the human reason to understand democracy, their claim on the heroic role of philosophers clashes with their premise. In other words, they avowed that only philosophers think rationally and can legislate the bases of a democracy. For them, citizens lack rational reasoning; thus, they are unable to understand democracy. This excludes citizens from contributing to the establishment of their political system. One concludes that Spinoza's and Paine's definition of the abilities of the human reason is paradoxical.

Moreover, the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) criticized the heroic character of philosophers. In his *The Social Contract* (1762), he claimed that only citizens determine their social and political norms and agree on a ruler who would protect their rights. For Rousseau citizens are driven by their intellectual abilities to understand the ideals of a democratic government². Likewise, Michael Walzer viewed that citizens have the absolute authority to establish their government according to their norms without any reference to philosophy. He added that philosophy reflects philosophers' reasoning; therefore, it can never meet citizens' needs³.

Besides, the second contradiction in Spinoza's and Paine's premise on the perfection of the human reason is the mystic characteristic of democracy. For both philosophers, democracy is a set of principles which exist in an abstract realm. It is metaphysical; henceforth, it can be reached only through the human reason. Also, it is divine because it can be substituted from the divine intellect, which is nature. For this, they claimed it infinite; thus, man is unable to alter it⁴. Spinoza and Paine viewed democracy a celestial concept. In fact, their utopian democracy puts limitations on the human reason to understand it. In addition, they claimed democracy a metaphysical concept and neglected the role of people in the shaping of their political systems⁵. In other words, the human reason is not the source which determines

¹ Walzer, Michael, et al., "Philosophy and Democracy", *Philosophy and Democracy: An Anthology*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Thomas Christiano, 2003, P 258.

² Rousseau, Jean- Jacques, *The Social Contract*, Trans. Christopher Betts, Oxford UP, New York, 1994, P 56.

³ Walzer, Michael, et al., "Philosophy and Democracy", *Philosophy and Democracy: An Anthology*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Thomas Christiano, 2003, P 261.

⁴ Spinoza, Benedict, *Theological Political Treatise*, Trans. Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge UP, New York, Ed. Jonathan Israel, 2007, P 202.

⁵ Paine, Thomas, *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, United Kingdom, Ed. and comp. Bruce Kuklick, 2001, P 304.

the ideals of a democratic government. It is only a means to transcend a utopian democracy from a metaphysical world. By their claim, both thinkers limited the abilities of the human reason to understand democracy and to legislate laws as well. Walzer asserted: "The stance of the philosopher is very different. The truths he commonly seeks are universal and eternal, and it is unlikely that they can be found from the inside of any real and historic community"¹.

All in all, Spinoza and Paine defined the metaphysical democracy with the laws of nature. They claimed it an empirical phenomenon that can be studied through observation and experimentation. This, indeed, is paradoxical. In this respect, Philip Kitcher, a professor of the philosophy of science at Columbia University, claimed both thinkers' identification of the celestial democracy with empiricism a scientific fallacy. In his *Science, Truth and Democracy* (2001), he asserted that rational metaphysics is a philosophical thinking which interpreted abstract phenomena according to philosophers' intuitions. However, scientific thinking studies concrete phenomena in nature through direct observation, testing, forming hypotheses and concluding².

5. Conclusion:

This article has discussed the significance of the human reason in Spinoza's and Paine's philosophical thinking. It has depicted the terminology of democracy and the human reason in Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise* and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. For them, democracy is a set of principles which exist in a divine and abstract realm. It can be deduced only through the human reason which is perfect and ideal. As a step to discern both thinkers' premise of the perfection of the human reason, this study has explored the relationship between democracy and the human reason. It has examined the intellectual process by which the human intellect transcends democracy from the divine realm. It has also analyzed the relationship between democracy, the human reason and the natural laws of order and rationality. Finally, it has uncovered the paradoxes in Spinoza's and Paine's claim about the perfection of the human reason.

This study has clearly shown that Spinoza's and Paine's premise is paradoxical. Even though they claimed the human reason perfect, their definition of the intellectual process of the deduction of democracy from a metaphysical realm implies contradictions. For them, democracy is divine, metaphysical and infinite. They emphasized that only philosophers can transcend it through rational metaphysics. Then, they would transmit their knowledge to their people

¹ Walzer, Michael, et al., "Philosophy and Democracy", *Philosophy and Democracy: An Anthology*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Thomas Christiano, 2003, P 266.

² Kitcher, Philip, *Science, Truth and Democracy*, Oxford UP, New York, Ed. Paul Humphreys, 2001, P 90.

to guide them to establish a government. In other words, Spinoza's and Paine's utopian vision to democracy puts limitations on people's ability to understand its principles for two major reasons. Firstly, they claimed democracy a metaphysical principle that only philosophers can decipher. Secondly, they asserted that democracy is a pre-existed principle that the human intellect can deduce through the natural laws of order and rationality. Hence, the human reason does not define the bases of democracy; it only deduces them from a pre-existed knowledge in a metaphysical realm. It is crystal clear that their assertion on the intellectual inability of people to understand democracy clashes with their claim about the perfection of the intellect. This study has concluded that Spinoza's and Paine's definition of the relationship between democracy and the human intellect is paradoxical with their premise of the perfection of the human reason.

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