

Andrzej Serafin Spinoza and the quest for certainty

Zbigniew Herbert's poem *Mr Cogito Tells of the Temptation of Spinoza* can be regarded as the poet's attempt to interpret the philosophy of Benedictus Spinoza, one of the most important figures for Herbert's beloved teacher Henryk Elzenberg. The poem contains an implicit interpretation of the philosophical oeuvre of Spinoza, therefore a proper hermeneutics must be engaged in order to reconstruct it. An intertextual application of the Biblical text as well as the relevant philosophical sources reveals a surprisingly modern interpretation of the philosopher's worldview. The text of the poem creates a pathway leading smoothly from Spinoza's personal experience of the transcendental, through modern Kierkegaardian existentialism, towards contemporary Levinasian dialogism.