

Despite his reputation as a heretic, Baruch Spinoza was one of the major heroes of the Jewish cultural Renaissance in Weimar Germany. This study traces Weimar Jewry's infatuation with Spinoza as it was manifested in scholarship, the popular press, and novels. It tells of how Jews, who found themselves oscillating between the social pressures to both assimilate and remain authentic, sought refuge in a thinker who epitomized both the rationality and liberalism of the Weimar Republic's enlightened defenders as well as the mysticism of its neo-romanticist challengers. In recapturing this forgotten chapter in the history of Spinozism this book sheds an original light on Weimar Germany's reknown Jewish culture.

DAVID J. WERTHEIM, Ph.D. (2005) in History, Universiteit Utrecht, Netherlands, is director of the Menasseh ben Israel Institute for Jewish social and cultural studies in Amsterdam. He has published extensively on the reception of the iconic figures Spinoza and Anne Frank.