"Adequacy and Innateness in Spinoza"

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1. Introduction

Adequate ideas are a perennial topic of debate among Spinoza scholars. Questions abound: What are they? Can the human mind contain an adequate idea? If so, from where does the human mind acquire these ideas? Opinions differ on each of these questions. Some scholars argue that adequate ideas, being infinite, seem to be unavailable to the human mind. Others believe them to be cognizable through reflection and intuition.

This question may also be approached in a different way, by seeing that adequate ideas are innate in the mind. Adequate ideas are either of infinite modes, or of the divine essence, or of the essences of finite things. As each of these is discussed in turn, it will become clear how the human mind can be said to contain instances of each of them.

There is one important related issue that shall *not* be addressed in this essay, however, namely, what Spinoza might have taken a *conscious* awareness of an adequate idea to be. Instead, this essay will attempt to show only that, according to Spinoza, the human mind does in fact contain adequate ideas innately; this is distinct from the further endeavor of showing how he held these latent innate ideas to become patent, however. For one thing, the task of explaining the nature and origin of adequate ideas is already almost more than an article of reasonable length can contain; this further issue would require more space than is available here.

Second of all, any attempt to explain Spinoza's thoughts on how or whether adequate ideas come to human consciousness must first have something to say about what human consciousness is, for Spinoza. This would be a difficult task, because Spinoza offered little to

nothing in his writings on this topic. It is likely that he would have agreed with Leibniz, against Descartes, that there can be ideas in a person's mind of which the person is not consciously aware, yet the details of a Spinozist account of consciousness are elusive.

This lacuna does not render the project moot, however. For the topics taken up, namely, what Spinoza took adequate ideas to be and how they become *available* to the mind, have a value in themselves. Indeed, the issues discussed below are necessary preconditions for answering the posterior, perhaps more difficult question of how (or whether!) we come to have adequate ideas in consciousness. If we can understand just what these ideas are and how they become available to the mind, therefore, we will have accomplished something worthwhile.

Yet even this modest enterprise has formidable obstacles to overcome. In addition to the daunting task of divining an account of adequacy from Spinoza's text, one must also address whether Spinoza is even entitled to say that the human mind could contain such ideas. To be sure, Spinoza suggests that the human mind contains adequate ideas in a variety of passages. Yet one scholar has argued that, given Spinoza's other commitments, he is not entitled to say that the mind may contain adequate ideas at all. In what follows, this challenge shall be presented, followed by Spinoza's discussion of adequate ideas in the *Ethics*. The goal throughout this section will be to establish that the aforementioned challenge fails – that the human mind can and does have adequate ideas. In the final section of this paper, it will be argued that these adequate ideas are in fact innate in the mind.

2. The Challenge

In a footnote in his book, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza,* Michael Della Rocca raises what could be called "the problem of adequate ideas:"

> In 2p29s…and in many other passages, Spinoza asserts that the human mind has some adequate ideas. Given the strictures of Spinoza's account of adequacy as I have just presented them, it seems difficult

> if not impossible for the human mind to have adequate ideas. In order for a certain idea that the human mind has to be adequate, the human mind must include all the ideas that are the causal antecedents of this idea. How could the human mind, in any particular case, have all these ideas? This is an important problem for Spinoza's theory of adequate ideas…[1]

As Della Rocca says, Spinoza asserts that we have adequate ideas. These adequate ideas include the common notions, which are ideas of properties that are shared by all finite modes under a particular attribute,[2] and the idea of God's essence.[3] Spinoza also implies that we are capable of having adequate ideas of the essences of finite things.[4]

According to Della Rocca, however, Spinoza's requirements for possessing adequate ideas preclude our ever having them. In other words, though Spinoza asserts that we have adequate ideas, his theory of adequate ideas makes our having them impossible. Della Rocca returns to this problem of adequate ideas in passing in a recent article, but again leaves the issue unresolved, only saying, "it is difficult to see how the mind can acquire adequate ideas. This is a large problem in understanding Spinoza's epistemology."[5]

As mentioned above, Della Rocca attributes the following claims to Spinoza, which he describes as the "strictures of Spinoza's account of adequacy." Together, these strictures seem to entail Della Rocca's "problem for Spinoza's theory of adequate ideas." These strictures are:

(a) Having an adequate idea of something requires ideas of all its causal antecedents;

(b) Every finite mode (i.e., every particular thing or event) has an infinite chain of causal antecedents;[6]

(c) No human mind can have ideas of an infinite chain of causal antecedents.

These three seem to entail Della Rocca's conclusion:

(d) Therefore, no human mind can have an adequate idea.

Attributing (c) to Spinoza is not controversial because the mind is a finite idea.[7] As such, it cannot include an infinite idea, or infinite series of finite ideas, as a proper part.[8] Spinoza seems to assert (b) explicitly[9] and affirms (a) as well, as I will discuss below. If these are the case, it seems that Spinoza indeed cannot consistently hold that we can have adequate ideas.

Della Rocca does not resolve this problem, since it is only incidental to his focus in both the aforementioned book and article. It is a serious problem for Spinoza, however, because these adequate ideas are central to his larger system. In fact, without an account of adequate ideas, Spinoza's entire epistemology falls apart.

In the following discussion, I shall offer two replies to this problem. First, the argument above is invalid because the premises warrant only the following conclusion:

(e) No human mind can have an adequate idea *of a finite mode*.

If one accepts premises (a)-(c), one must accept only (e), not (d). By adopting (e), one allows for Spinoza's claim that we can have some adequate ideas, because at least some adequate ideas *are not of finite modes*. Common notions are of *infinite modes* and the idea of God's essence is of substance, as conceived under a certain attribute, as will be discussed below.[10] Further, Spinoza holds that human minds necessarily have these ideas, because they are common to all things.

Second, premise (b) may be false because the subject is incompletely specified. By this I mean that (b) refers to finite modes *simpliciter*, whereas only finite modes considered *as existing in duration* have an infinite chain of causes. Finite modes considered solely with regard to their *essences*, however, do not have an infinite chain of causes, since those essences follow directly from the divine attributes. When properly understood, Spinoza's theory of adequate ideas allows for humans to have adequate ideas of the essences of things; this allows us to conclude that this "problem of adequate ideas" is not a problem at all.

This is not simply a consideration and rejection of a problem Della Rocca finds in Spinoza, however. For, in the process of offering a reply to that perceived problem, the nature of adequate ideas will be established, as well as their presence in the human mind. Indeed, several of the most important yet difficult doctrines in all of Spinoza's corpus will be investigated, namely, those that concern adequate ideas, the common notions, and the three kinds of knowledge. Over and above the reply to Della Rocca's concern, then, this investigation will offer a new interpretation of Spinoza's epistemology, one that bears wide-ranging implications for his psychology and theory of emotion.[11]

3. The Account of Adequate Ideas

As we shall see, Spinoza seems to present *two* criteria for adequacy, so it will useful to determine the details of these two before proceeding. Our attention, however, will be limited to the *Ethics,* since he does not present an account of adequacy in the *Short Treatise*[12] and only employs the adjective *adaequatus* unevenly in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*.[13]

In the *Ethics,* Spinoza offers a definition of adequate ideas.[14] The definition alone does not take us far in determining whether such ideas are available to the human mind, however, so we must look to how Spinoza subsequently uses the term. He offers an explanation of adequacy that relies upon his doctrine of monism[15] at 2p11c, where he says:

> From this it follows that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God. Therefore, when we say that the human mind perceives this or that, we are saying nothing but that God, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he is explained through the nature of the human mind, *or* insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea; and when we say that God has this or that idea, not only insofar as he constitutes the nature of the human mind, but insofar as he also has the idea of another thing together with the human mind, then we say that the human mind perceives the thing only partially, *or* inadequately. (Curley, 456; Geb II/94-95)

By the doctrine of monism, the human mind is a part of God's infinite intellect. Being infinite in Spinoza's sense, God's intellect contains all ideas. But the human mind itself is just an idea,[16] so God's intellect includes it and its contents as well.

Consider two ideas *x* and *y* in God's mind. Say that *y* is the idea that constitutes some human mind; say, further, that *x* is some other idea. If God's idea *x* is a proper part of God's idea *y*, then we may say that mind *y* has adequate idea *x*. However, if God's idea *x* is only partially within his idea *y*, then we may say that mind *y* has idea *x* only inadequately, or partially.[17] Call this the *containment* sense of adequacy:

(CON) Idea *x* is adequate in mind *y*, itself a complex idea, iff *x* as a whole is a part of *y*.[18]

Thus, in 2p11c, Spinoza seems to equate an idea's being adequate in a mind with its being completely contained in that mind.[19] Functionally, this is the same as saying that an idea is adequate in a mind just when the mind *has* that idea in its entirety.

Elsewhere, however, Spinoza employs a different notion of adequacy, according to which an adequate idea of *x*'s cause is necessary for an adequate idea of *x*.[20] At 2p24d, Spinoza says:

> The idea, *or* knowledge, of each part [of the body] will be in God (by P3), insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing (by P9), a singular thing which is prior, in the order of Nature, to the part itself…And so, the knowledge of each part composing the human body is in God insofar as he is affected with a great many ideas of things, and not insofar as he has only the idea of the human body, that is (by P13), the idea which constitutes the nature of the human mind. And so, (by P11C) the human mind does not involve adequate knowledge of the parts composing the human body. (Curley, 468-9; Geb II/111)

Each part of our body has another, prior body as its cause; similarly, each bodily event has another, prior bodily event as its cause. Often, these prior, causing bodies are distinct from our own body. So, for God to have an idea of each part of our body, he must also have ideas of things besides our body. Thus, God's ideas of our bodily parts are not wholly contained within

the idea in God's mind that constitutes our mind.[21] Therefore, *our* ideas of the parts of our bodies are incomplete, and hence inadequate, even though God's ideas are not inadequate.

Similarly, in 2p25d, Spinoza argues that an idea of an external body is inadequate in the mind because that mind does not contain ideas of the external body's causes. He says:

> We have shown (P16) that the idea of an affection of the human body involves the nature of an external body insofar as the external body determines the human body in a certain fixed way. But insofar as the external body is an Individual which is not related to the human body, the idea, *or* knowledge, of it is in God (by P9) insofar as God is considered to be affected with the idea of another thing which (by P7) is prior in nature to the external body itself. So adequate knowledge of the external body is not in God insofar as he has the idea of an affection of the human body, *or* the idea of an affection of the human body does not involve adequate knowledge of the external body. (Curley, 469; Geb II/111)

In this quotation, the idea in question is of an affection of the human body caused by an interaction with an external body – i.e., a bodily sensation of an external object. Because this kind of bodily state involves both our body and an external body, its idea also involves ideas of both bodies. That is, our bodily state is determined by the nature of our body and the nature of the external body; similarly, our mental state is determined by idea of our body and the idea of the external body. But an external body, or its motion, are generally *caused* by some third body not related to us; thus we do not have an idea of the cause of the external body involved in our sensation. Because of this lack, Spinoza says, our idea of these kinds of sensations cannot be considered adequate ideas.

In both of the preceding propositions, Spinoza implies that having an adequate idea of something requires having an adequate idea of its cause.[22] This suggests what I will call the *causal requirement*, which is:

(CR) Idea *x* is adequate in mind *y* iff *y* also has an adequate idea of *x*'s cause.[23]

The argument for CR relies implicitly on 1a4, which says, "the knowledge of an effect depends upon, and involves, the knowledge of its cause." This means that a mind that has knowledge of *x* must also have knowledge of *x*'s cause. But Spinoza generally uses 'has knowledge of' and 'has an idea of' interchangeably.[24] So, having an idea of *x* depends upon and involves having an idea of *x*'s cause. Indeed, CR could be seen as an elucidation of the nature of this dependence and involvement.

CR is similar to proposition (a), above, which was:

(a) Having an adequate idea of *x* requires having ideas of all its causal antecedents.

But (a) demands not just an idea of *x*'s cause, but ideas of *all* of its causal antecedents. Once again, consider 1a4 and the causal requirement (CR), especially as it is used in 2p25d. Knowledge of a sensation, say, requires knowledge of an external mode that caused the sensation. But that cause itself is also an effect of some prior cause. So, to understand the external mode, one must understand some prior thing, and so on. This suggests that one cannot have knowledge of a mode unless one has knowledge of a long series of causal antecedents. This iterated application of 1a4 seems to be employed in 2p9, when Spinoza says,

> The idea of a singular thing which actually exists has God for a cause not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing which actually exists; and of this [idea] God is also the cause insofar as he is affected by another third [idea], and so on, to infinity. (Curley, 453; Geb II/91-92).

Della Rocca interprets this passage as warranting the following claims: "…the idea of a certain thing is caused by God insofar as God *has* infinitely other ideas of particular things…God is the cause of the idea of certain things insofar as God has the infinitely many ideas that are the causal antecedents of the idea in question."[25] In other words, each singular thing, or finite mode, has an infinite series of causes and we should consider *this entire series* as the cause of that mode. So,

Della Rocca suggests, a human mind can have an adequate idea of a singular thing only if that mind also has an idea of each of its causal antecedents, which is equivalent to (a). He also suggests (b), that each finite thing has an infinite series of causal antecedents.[26] So, adequate knowledge of any finite mode requires knowledge of an infinite series of causal antecedents; therefore, Della Rocca seems to be correct in saying that we cannot have adequate knowledge of finite things.[27]

Spinoza has offered two related criteria for adequacy – the containment requirement (CON) and the causal requirement (CR). In what follows, it will be shown that the common notions and the idea of God meet *both* of these criteria for adequacy.

4. Common Notions

Spinoza's theory of adequacy as just explained does not preclude human possession of adequate knowledge. As mentioned, Spinoza asserts that human beings have adequate ideas. Among those that he affirms we possess are common notions and the idea of God.[28] Spinoza introduces the common notions at 2p38, saying, "those things which are common to all, and which are equally in the part and in the whole, can only be conceived adequately."[29] The common notions are adequate ideas that take certain things, or properties, as their objects.[30] These objects are found universally, "equally in the part and in the whole;" further, they can only be conceived adequately.

Spinoza refers to 2Lem2 as an example of such a common property. 2Lem2d says, "all bodies agree in that they involve the concept of one and the same attribute (by D1), and in that they can move now more slowly, now more quickly, and absolutely, that now they move, now they are at rest." The capacity for motion and rest found in all bodies is a common property, as

are the motion and rest themselves. Therefore, the ideas of this capacity and this motion or rest are common notions.

Motion and rest are also play a fundamental role in Spinoza's quasi-Cartesian physics. In discussing the nature of bodies, Spinoza begins with the following two axioms: "all bodies either move or are at rest" and "each body moves now more slowly, now more quickly."[31] Therefore, at least some of the common notions are of fundamental principles of physics.

Spinoza speaks of these principles in a somewhat different way in a letter to Georg Hermann Schuller, who has asked on behalf of Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus the following question, "I should like to have examples of those things immediately produced by God, and of those things produced by the mediation of some infinite modification,"[32] to which Spinoza replies, "…the examples you ask for of the first kind are: in the case of thought, absolutely infinite intellect; in the case of extension, motion and rest."[33] This exchange refers to the doctrine of infinite modes, which is sketched at 1p21-23, where Spinoza says, "all the things which follow from the absolute nature of any of God's attributes have always had to exist and be infinite, *or* are, through the same attribute, eternal and infinite."[34] Put briefly, infinite modes are properties or characteristics that follow directly from a divine attribute. Spinoza says explicitly that motion and rest is a fundamental feature of Extension. As such, it is an infinite mode, following directly from the nature of the attribute of Extension.

Common notions are of common properties, which are those found equally in the part and in the whole; that is, they are found in their entirety in every mode of an attribute. The capacity for motion and rest is one such common property. This common property is an infinite mode, something that follows immediately from the nature of Extension itself.[35] Thus, at least

some of the common notions are ideas of infinite modes under Extension, which themselves are fundamental principles of Spinoza's quasi-Cartesian physics.[36]

This interpretation of the common notions is borne out in the demonstration to 2p38, where Spinoza says:

> P38 Dem.: Let A be something which is common to all bodies, and which is equally in the part of each body and in the whole. I say that A can only be conceived adequately. For its idea (by P7C) will necessarily be adequate in God, both insofar as he has the idea of the human body and insofar as he has ideas of its affections, which (by P16, P25, and P27) involve in part both the nature of the human body and that of external bodies. That is (by P12 and P13), this idea will necessarily be adequate in God insofar as he constitutes the human mind, *or* insofar as her has ideas that are in the human mind. The mind, therefore (by P11C), necessarily perceives A adequately, and does so both insofar as it perceives itself and insofar as it perceives its own or any external body. Nor can A be conceived in another way, q.e.d. (Curley, 474; Geb II/ 118)

Take A to be the capacity for motion and rest. Being a fundamental law of Spinoza's physics, this capacity is present in every part of Extension. Because the common property is involved in every mode of Extension, that is, in every part and affection of body, it follows that the common notion will be involved in every idea of those parts or affections.[37] Further, since the common property is completely and wholly present within each mode of Extension, the common notion is complete within the human mind and its ideas of its bodily affections. In other words, the idea of the common property is a proper part of the idea of the human body and its affections and, as such, is wholly contained within the human mind. Such containment, it has been established, is one criterion for adequacy.

Given that all our ideas are of affections of our own body, and given that there are certain fundamental laws of physics that hold universally of all bodies, we can come to know these

fundamental laws whenever we consider our body or its physical interactions.[38] Because these laws are wholly instantiated in the objects of our ideas, we can form adequate ideas of them.[39]

But containment (CON) is only one criterion for adequacy. According to the causal requirement (CR), an idea of something is complete in the mind only when that mind also contains ideas of that thing's causal antecedents. According to Della Rocca's premise (b) from above, every finite mode has an infinite chain of causal antecedents. Infinite modes, however, do not. Some follow directly from God's essence conceived under a certain attribute, while others follow immediately from some infinite mode. Thus, at least some infinite modes have finite chains of causal antecedents. Indeed, some have only a one-step chain, following directly from the attribute itself. The capacity for motion and rest is one of these *immediate* infinite modes.[40]

Thus, the common notions meet the containment criterion for adequacy (CON). If our idea of a common property is to be adequate, then it must also meet the causal requirement (CR); that is, we must also have an adequate idea of its cause. The capacity for motion and rest is an infinite mode that has, as its cause, God's essence conceived under the attribute of Extension. Thus, for this common notion to be adequate in a mind, that mind must also include an adequate idea of the attribute of Extension. In order to show this, we must determine whether the mind also has an adequate idea of the common notion's cause, namely, the idea of God.

5. The Idea of God's Essence

Concerning the idea of an attribute, Spinoza says, "by attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence."[41] The idea of the attribute of Extension is just the idea of the divine essence as conceived under that attribute. If we have this idea, then our common notions of the infinite modes of extension are adequate.[42]

Spinoza asserts that we do in fact have an adequate idea of the essence of God. In 2p45d, Spinoza says,

> …singular things (by IP15) cannot be conceived without God – on the contrary, because (by P6) they have God for a cause insofar as he is considered under the attribute of which the things are modes, their ideas must involve the concept of their attribute (by IA4), that is (by ID6), must involve an eternal and infinite essence of God. (Curley, 482; Geb II/127)

Whenever one forms an idea of any thing or event, one must form that idea under a certain attribute. In other words, the idea of Thought in general is involved in one's idea of something mental, while the idea of Extension is involved in one's idea of something bodily; one cannot consider a particular body without assuming the general idea of Extension. But, Spinoza says, having an idea of Extension just is having an idea of the divine essence.[43]

Then, in 2p47, Spinoza says, "the human mind has an adequate knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence."[44] This is so because the mind necessarily has ideas of itself, under Thought, and of its body and external bodies, both under Extension. Further, given 2p45d, these ideas – of our own body and mind, for example – necessarily involve the ideas of the attributes of Thought and Extension. Thus, every human mind necessarily has an idea of God's essence, as conceived under those two attributes.

Further, Spinoza says, this idea of God's essence is adequate.[45] The demonstration for this claim is important, as it echoes the justification behind the common notions:

> Dem.: The demonstration of the preceding proposition [2p45] is universal, and whether the thing is considered as a part or as a whole, its idea, whether of the whole or of a part (by P45), will involve God's eternal and infinite essence. So what gives knowledge of an eternal and infinite essence of God is common to all, and is equally in the part and in the whole. And so (by P38) this knowledge will be adequate. (2p46d; Curley, 482; Geb II/127-8)

Spinoza has argued that the idea of every mode must involve the idea of its attribute. Necessarily, as we do have some ideas, we therefore do have some idea of an attribute. What's more, this necessary connection between the idea of a mode and the idea of its attribute is a property common to *all* modes. Thus, Spinoza claims, we all have an adequate idea of the divine essence for the same reason that we all have adequate common notions.

Let me reiterate. The human mind is just the idea of its body and its bodily interactions. There are certain common properties in all bodies, which are involved in every body and bodily interaction. When we form ideas of bodies and bodily interactions, as we must, our ideas necessarily involve ideas of these common properties. Because these properties are equally in the part as in the whole, our ideas of these properties, the common notions, are wholly contained within our minds. Further, when we form ideas of bodies or of our own mind, we must conceive of these things under certain attributes. When we do so, our ideas necessarily involve an idea of these attributes. Like the common notions, the ideas of the attributes are equally in the part as in the whole. As such, we necessarily form an idea of these attributes that is wholly contained within our minds. Thus, both the ideas of the attributes, which are just our conceptions of God's essence, and the common notions satisfy the containment criterion (CON), above.

What's more, both common notions and our idea of God's essence meet the causal requirement (CR) as well. As quoted above, Spinoza asserts that our idea of God's essence is adequate, but there is another reason for thinking this is so. Concerning God, or Substance, Spinoza says:

> A substance cannot be produced by anything else (by p6c); therefore it will be the cause of itself, that is (by d1), its essence necessarily involves existence, or it pertains to its nature to exist. (1p7d; Curley, 412; Geb II/49)

> God, *or* a substance consisting of infinite attributes, ...necessarily exists. (1p11; Curley, 417; Geb II/52)

God, which Spinoza equates with Substance, necessarily exists; for Spinoza, this means that God is *self-caused*.[46] Therefore, in having an idea of God, one also has an idea of the *cause* of God.[47] And Spinoza has defined the attributes as the divine substance as perceived by the mind. Thus, the attributes are self-caused as well, just as the divine substance itself is.

So, in having any idea whatsoever, the human mind thereby also has an idea of an attribute. But an attribute is just a conception of the divine essence. And when one conceives of the divine essence, one also conceives of the cause of the divine essence, since God is a cause *per se*. Thus, in having any idea whatsoever, the human mind necessarily contains an idea of God *and* an idea of the cause of God. And so, in having any idea whatsoever, the idea of God in the human mind meets both the containment criterion (CON) and the causal requirement (CR). Thus, the idea of God in the human mind is adequate.

It has also been established that the human mind contains certain common notions. Further, these common notions have God as their cause. And so, since we have an adequate idea of God, the common notions also meet both criteria, CON and CR. Thus, the common notions are also adequate in the human mind.

Another way to understand this is to consider the principle of *simplicity*. In Letter 12 and elsewhere, Spinoza holds that the divine attributes are not divisible into parts, even though they are infinite; that is, the divine attributes are not aggregates or sums of things. On the contrary, he claims, this infinity is a simple and uniform infinity, as opposed to a numerical infinity. If something is simple, it cannot break down into parts and, thus, cannot undergo corruption. Thus it is indestructible and eternal. If the attributes are ontologically simple,

however, it may be reasonable to assume they are conceptually simple as well, especially given Spinoza's doctrine of a parallelism between bodily modes and ideas.

Now, if something is conceptually simple, one cannot grasp it only in part, for it is not so composed. Instead, one must grasp it completely, that is, adequately, or not at all. For example, self-evident notions often are said to display this characteristic of simplicity. And this seems to be exactly how Spinoza takes the idea of the attributes – self-evident truths of the highest simplicity. Given these ideas of the attributes, common notions follow. These common notions themselves have a kind of qualified simplicity and eternity of a hypothetical or dependent form, for example, "*given Extension, then certain common notions follow*." And what is this simple idea we have of the divine attribute? I suggest we take seriously what Spinoza says at 1p34: "God's power is his essence itself."[48] In other words, God's essence just is power. So, when we conceive of an attribute, which is said to be God's essence as conceived in a certain way, we are conceiving *power in Extension* or *power in Thought*.[49] The idea of a uniform, infinite power, for Spinoza, is a simple idea, one that is not composed of simpler ideas. As such, it can only be known adequately or not at all.

Now recall the propositions which jointly constitute the problem of adequate ideas, as explained above:

(a) Having an adequate idea of something requires having ideas of all its causal antecedents;

(b) Every finite mode has an infinite chain of causal antecedents;

(c) No human mind can have ideas of an infinite chain of causal antecedents.

(d) Therefore, no human mind can have an adequate idea.

As one can see, (b) refers only to finite modes and so does not apply to infinite modes or ideas of attributes. Further, it cannot refer to those ideas, as infinite modes and attributes do not have an infinite chain of causal antecedents. Instead, (at least some) infinite modes follow immediately from the nature of a *causa sui* God. Thus, though (a) may hold in the case of all ideas and (c) is not disputed, (b) does not apply to common notions and ideas of attributes and, thus, the conclusion (d) does not follow; with regard to infinite modes and attributes, there is no problem of adequate ideas.[50]

6. Adequate Ideas of Particular Essences

As mentioned above, Spinoza claims that we can have several kinds of adequate ideas, namely, common notions, ideas of the divine attributes, and even adequate ideas of particular things. Having shown that the mind has adequate ideas of common notions and the divine attributes, let us now turn to whether the mind may have adequate ideas of finite things. Indeed, Della Rocca's problem of adequate ideas still seems to preclude this kind of knowledge. Given what has been said of adequate ideas so far, such an achievement is doubtful, to say the least. Remember (b), above:

(b) Every finite mode has an infinite chain of causal antecedents.

If this is true, then adequate ideas of finite modes are impossible. However, (b) is ambiguous, because finite modes can be considered *in two ways*. If we consider finite modes as things in duration, then (b) is true. If we consider finite modes as timeless essences, however, (b) is false, because such essences follow from the divine attributes through the infinite modes and, thus, do not have an infinite chain of causes. Therefore, the problem of adequate ideas does not entail (d), but in fact entails this new conclusion:

(e) No human mind can have an adequate idea of a finite mode *as it exists in duration*.

But Spinoza neither asserts nor ought to assert that we can have adequate ideas of finite modes with regard to their existence in duration.[51] In fact, Spinoza himself explicitly accepts (e).[52] Thus, there is no problem of adequate ideas at all.

Consider what Spinoza says concerning non-existent modes, an issue he first raises in 1p8s2. He says, "this is how we can have true ideas of modifications which do not exist; for though they do not actually exist outside the intellect, nevertheless their essences are comprehended in another in such a way that they can be conceived through it."[53] Because these modes do not exist, Spinoza says, they must be understood as being in something else, so that they can be conceived through that thing. That is to say, we must get a conception of non-existing things from something other than the objects themselves, because they do not exist. Instead, we must form a conception of something non-existent from something larger, or prior, that contains the essence of the non-existing thing.

Spinoza echoes this point in 2p8, where he says, "the ideas of singular things, or of modes, that do not exist must be comprehended in God's infinite idea in the same way as the formal essences of the singular things, or modes, are contained in God's attributes."[54] These two passages suggest that the essences of singular things, whether existing or not, are contained in God's attributes and are conceived through those attributes.[55] That is, we may understand essences only by understanding the attributes from which they follow.[56]

In 2p8, Spinoza states that the essences of finite modes are conceived through an attribute. In the corollary to that proposition, Spinoza makes a distinction between conceiving of the essence of a finite mode and conceiving of that mode as existing in duration. He says:

> …when singular things are said to exist, not only insofar as they are comprehended in God's attributes, but insofar also as they are said to have duration, their ideas also involve the existence through which they are said to have duration. (2p8c; Curley, 452; Geb II/91)

This passage strongly suggests that we can conceive of singular things, that is, finite modes, in two ways: insofar as they are in the attributes, or essentially, and insofar as they exist in duration. When we conceive of finite modes without regard for their existence in duration, we conceive of their *essences* contained in, or following from, the relevant attribute.[57] When we conceive of finite modes as existing in duration, however, we must conceive of some *further* thing, namely, that 'existence' through which they are said to have their duration. That through which an existing finite thing has its duration, or existence, is *another finite thing*.[58] So, when we conceive of a finite mode in terms of its essence alone, we conceive of an attribute as its cause; when we conceive of a finite mode as existing in duration, however, we also conceive of another finite mode as its cause.[59]

This distinction between two ways of conceiving a finite mode reappears in several places in the *Ethics*.[60] Significantly, just after discussing this distinction in 2p8, Spinoza says in the next proposition, "the idea of a singular thing which actually exists has God for a cause not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing which actually exists."[61] In other words, when we conceive of a finite mode as existing in duration, we conceive of it as having another finite existing mode as a cause.

Spinoza repeats this theme at 2p45s. After discussing ideas of existing things that involve the ideas of God, Spinoza says,

> I am speaking, I say, of the very existence of singular things insofar as they are in God. For even if each one is determined by another singular thing to exist in a certain way, still the force by which each one perseveres in existing follows from the eternal necessity of God's nature. (Curley, 482; Geb II/127)

Spinoza again seems to distinguish between two ways of considering an existing finite mode – insofar as it exists in duration and insofar as it exists in God, that is, as its essence is in God.

When Spinoza refers to the force by which each thing perseveres in existing, he refers to its essence.[62] Even though each existing finite mode has another finite mode as the cause of its existence *in duration*, God's nature is the cause of the essence of the singular thing.

Much later in the *Ethics,* Spinoza make this distinction explicit. In 5p29s he says:

> We conceive things as actual in two ways: either insofar as we conceive them to exist in relation to a certain time and place, or insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature. But the things we conceive in this second way as true, *or* real, we conceive under a species of eternity, and their ideas involve the eternal and infinite essence of God (as we have shown in 2p45 and 2p45s). (Curley, 610; Geb II/298-99)

Here Spinoza says quite explicitly that we can conceive of a finite mode either as existing in duration or as contained in the divine nature.[63] When we conceive of finite modes without regard for their existence in duration and instead conceive of them in an attribute, we conceive of them *sub specie aeternitatis*, or under a species or kind of eternity. To conceive of finite modes in this way is to conceive them truly and as they really are – that is, *adequately*.[64]

This may appear to be a *third* distinct criterion for adequacy, but in fact it is not distinct from the previous two. To conceive of the essence of a finite mode *sub specie aeternitatis* is to conceive of that essence as following from the divine attribute, which is its cause. In other words, to conceive of the essence of a finite mode *sub specie aeternitatis* is just to conceive of a thing as following from its cause, of which we also have an adequate idea. So, this is not a distinct sense of adequacy but only another way of understanding the causal requirement, CR.

This interpretation of an adequate idea of the essence of finite things matches Spinoza's definition of the third kind of knowledge, of which he says, "this knowledge proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the

essence of things."[65] The account of adequacy being offered here, then, is consistent with Spinoza's definitions of the three kinds of knowledge.[66]

Spinoza often speaks as though our ideas of finite things are inadequate. Those instances of inadequacy that Spinoza does mention must concern finite modes considered as existing in duration.

Concerning the idea that constitutes the human mind, Spinoza says, "the first thing which constitutes the *actual existence of* a human Mind is nothing but the idea of a singular thing which *actually exists*."[67] The human mind is the idea of an actually existing finite thing – the human body. But we may consider the body as existing in duration or we may consider it as a timeless essence contained in an attribute. In the cases where we have inadequate ideas of the body, its parts, and its affections, we have ideas of those things only as existing in duration.

Consider 2p19, where Spinoza says,

> The human mind does not know the human body itself, nor does it know that it exists, except through ideas of affections by which the body is affected.
>
> Dem.: For the human mind is the idea itself, or knowledge of the human body (by p13), which (by p9) is indeed in God insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing, or because (by Post. 4) the human body requires a great many bodies by which it is, as it were, continually regenerated… (Curley, 466; Geb II/107-8)

The human mind does not know the body except through its affections. This is so because the parts of the body change over time, as the body is regenerated. With its talk of continual regeneration, 2p19 can only be construed as concerning a body existing in duration. Next, look at 2p23, which says, "the mind does not know itself, except insofar as it perceives the ideas of the affections of the body." If we take 2p19 to concern the idea of the human body as existing in

duration, then we ought to take 2p23 as concerning the body as existing in duration as well, since 2p23 parallels and depends on 2p19.

Next, consider 2p24 and its demonstration, where Spinoza says:

> The human mind does not involve adequate knowledge of the parts composing the human body.
>
> Dem.: The parts composing the human body pertain to the essence of the body itself only insofar as they communicate their motions to one another in a certain fixed manner…and not insofar as they can be considered as individuals, without relation to the human body. For (by Post. 1) the parts of the human body are highly composite individuals, whose parts (by L4) can be separated from the human body and communicate their motions…to other bodies in another manner, while the human body completely preserves its nature and form. And so the idea, or knowledge, of each part will be in God (by p3), insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing…(Curley, 468-9; Geb II/110-111)

The human mind lacks adequate ideas of the parts of the human body because those parts are not a part of the *essence* of that human body.[68] As Spinoza has mentioned in 2p19, the human body regenerates itself while particular bodily parts may change over time. One part may leave the body, only to be replaced by another, meaning that none of these particular parts belong to the essence of the body. Therefore, when we consider the body's parts, we necessarily must consider the body as an existent in duration; that is, we must consider the body as it is composed at a particular time if we wish to consider any particular parts of which it is composed. In other words, the ideas of finite modes involved in 2p24 must be finite modes considered as things existing in duration.[69]

Finally, there is 2p30 and its demonstration. Spinoza says:

> We have only an entirely inadequate knowledge of the duration of our body.
>
> Dem.: Our body's duration depends neither on its essence (by A1), nor even on God's absolute nature (by 1p21). But (by 1p28) it is determined to exist and produce an effect from such other causes as are

> also determined by others to exist and produce an effect in a certain and determinate manner, and these again by others, and so on to infinity…(Curley, 471; Geb II/114-5)

Spinoza says that we lack an adequate idea of our body's duration because its duration is determined by an infinite series of finite causes. Further, Spinoza explicitly excludes our essence *and* God's absolute nature from considerations concerning the body's duration, again suggesting that any idea that involves a body's duration is to be distinguished from the idea of its essence, which follows from God's absolute nature – i.e., an attribute.[70]

In short, those passages of Part 2 where Spinoza says that we do not have adequate ideas of finite modes all concern finite modes considered as existing in duration.[71] Those propositions do not seem concerned with finite modes *sub specie aeternitatis* – or rather, finite modes as considered as essences in the divine attributes. Spinoza offers a final piece of evidence for this interpretation later in Part 5, where he says:

> Whatever the mind understands under a species of eternity, it understands not from the fact that it conceive the body's present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the body's essence under a species of eternity. (5p29; Curley, 609; Geb II/298)

The propositions involving inadequate ideas of finite modes concern the mind as it understands the body's present actual existence. Because the mind generally only considers the body in this way, its ideas are usually inadequate. But the mind can understand the body *sub specie aeternitatis*; when it does so, it conceives of the body's essence. Further, as we have seen above, to conceive of the body in this way is to conceive of it as contained in, or following from, the divine attribute. So, only finite modes considered as actually existing in duration are said to have an infinite series of finite causes. Finite modes considered *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is, as timeless essences, however, have the divine attribute as their cause.[72]

Therefore, the human mind, which possesses an adequate idea of the divine attributes, also has the capability of forming an idea of the essence of at least one finite thing, in that it may consider its own body *sub specie aeternitatis*.[73] If the mind contains such an idea, it must also contain the *cause* of that essence in its idea of the divine attribute. Further, the mind's idea of this essence satisfies all criteria for adequacy. Indeed, Spinoza states that this result *does* in fact occur. In 5p23s, he says:

> There is, as we have said, this idea, which expresses the essence of the body under a species of eternity, a certain mode of thinking, which pertains to the essence of the Mind, and which is necessarily eternal….our mind, insofar as it involves the essence of the body under a species of eternity, is eternal…(5p23s; Curley, 607-8; Geb II/296-7)

Spinoza claims here that our mind involves an idea of the body considered under a species of eternity. Thus it seems that the human mind contains the idea of the essence of the body, as well as an adequate idea of its cause, the divine essence. Therefore, the human mind contains adequate ideas of God, the common notions, and at least one finite mode – its own body.

Of course, this does not mean that we are *aware* of these adequate ideas, just as many are not aware of the adequate idea of God, even though their minds contain it. It is interesting to note that the only adequate knowledge of finite things that Spinoza explicitly affirms is self-knowledge. Yet if all finite essences follow from the divine attributes and the infinite modes, it is not clear why we could not form adequate ideas of *all* finite things.[74] This is an odd result, perhaps. Yet it is no more odd than the standard rationalist position that all of the laws of mathematics and nature are available to us through extended introspection and intuition. Spinoza merely adds to the already infinite catalogue of intuitively deducible eternal truths. Indeed, he may countenance the same number as Descartes, who refers to the essences of things as *eternal truths*, placing these essences into the same class as the laws of math, nature, and logic.[75]

7. From Adequacy to Innateness

To accept that there is a problem of adequate ideas is to attribute to Spinoza an inconsistency, where he claims we have certain adequate ideas while giving us a system that disallows them. This internal tension arose because it was believed that having adequate ideas required that we also have an infinite series of other ideas, a feat of which human minds are not capable.

We need not attribute this problem to Spinoza, for two reasons. Firstly, the common properties and the attributes do not have an infinite series of causes, so our adequate ideas of those things do not require ideas of an infinite series. Thus, the problem of adequate ideas does not reach to the common notions and the idea of God, which are the second kind of knowledge. Secondly, finite modes may be considered in two ways. When considered as timeless essences, these finite modes do not have an infinite series of causes either, so they too escape the problem of adequate ideas. In this way, the third kind of knowledge is allowed as well. In the end, only knowledge of finite things as they exist in duration remain subject to the problem of adequate ideas. Spinoza never claims this knowledge to be adequate, however, since it is only knowledge of the first kind. Thus, there is no problem of adequate ideas.[76] So it seems that the challenge raised at the beginning of this essay fails.

In addressing that challenge, however, other questions arise. For example, the argument above suggests that all minds contain adequate ideas of the laws of nature, math, and logic, as well as at least some finite essences. If this is so, are these ideas innate in the mind? Yet only a subset of all minds – namely, we persons – may come to know these things when we have certain experiences. Thus it seems that only some minds may come to have these ideas, not that all minds necessarily have them.

To answer these concerns, let us return to Spinoza's understanding of the relation between the mind and its ideas. Since the mind is itself nothing but a complex idea, any idea in the mind stands in a part-whole relation to that mind. In other words, if a mind has an idea, then we may say that the idea is a *part* of that mind, one of the simpler constituents of the complex idea constituting the mind. From this understanding of the mind, it follows that adequate ideas are innate.

According to CON and CR, above, if mind *y* has adequate idea *x,* then *y* contains *x* as well as an adequate idea of *x*'s cause. Call the adequate idea of *x*'s cause idea *c*. So, if *y* has adequate idea *x,* then *y* must also contain adequate idea *c*. Since *y* contains adequate idea *c,* we can say that a part of *y* is the cause of adequate idea *x*. Spinoza explains the nature of mental causation involved in adequate ideas at 3p1d, where he says, "if…an idea that is adequate in someone's Mind, is the cause of an effect, that same Mind is the effect's adequate cause."[77] Therefore, since mind *y* contains adequate idea *c*, which in turn is the cause of idea *x,* it follows that mind *y* is the *adequate cause* of idea *x*.

Spinoza defines "adequate cause" at 3d1, when he says, "I call that cause adequate whose effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it. But I call it partial, or inadequate, if its effect cannot be understood through it alone."[78] In short, an adequate cause is a complete cause, as opposed to a partial cause. So, if mind *y* is the adequate cause of idea *x,* then mind *y* is the total cause of idea *x,* which can be clearly and distinctly perceived through mind *y*. In other words, the explanation for idea *x* lies in mind *y*. Spinoza makes this point clearer in 3d2d, saying, "I say we act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e. (by d1), when something in us or outside us follows from our nature, which can clearly and distinctly be understood through it alone."[79] So, if mind *y* has adequate idea *x,* then mind *y* acts

as the adequate cause of *x*, which means that idea *x* follows from the nature of mind *y* and can be understood through mind *y* alone.

Thus, when a mind has an adequate idea, the mind is the complete cause and explanation of that adequate idea. Call this statement the *mental causation* principle:

> (MC) If mind *y* has adequate idea *x,* then *x* follows wholly from the nature of *y* and is fully explained through the nature of *y*.

Note also that MC follows from Spinoza's concept of mind and his theory of adequacy. Thus, if idea *x* meets the containment criterion (CON) and the causal requirement (CR), it will also meet the mental causation principle (MC).

Common notions and the idea of God are adequate in the human mind, because these ideas meet both criteria for adequacy. Further, the idea of the essence of the body is adequate in the human mind as well. Thus, these adequate ideas must follow wholly from the nature of the mind in which they are present. In short, the mind is the complete cause and explanation of adequate ideas in that mind.

Given what has been said above, then, the innate nature of these ideas can be established. To see that this is so, consider the following. Say I see a hockey puck before me. In forming the sensory idea of this puck, I necessarily form certain common notions of extension. For example, implicit in my idea of the puck is the idea that it must be either at motion or at rest. Further, in order to form such ideas, I must presuppose the idea of extension itself. These ideas, Spinoza says, are adequate ideas and my mind is their adequate cause. Therefore, though these common notions come to my mind when I see the puck, they are not caused by the puck and I *do not learn them from the sensation*. Instead, they are a result of my mental activity, wholly caused by the mind, though occasioned by the sensory experience. These common notions are present in my

mind, which acts to form them whenever I have a sensation of a body. In other words, these common notions are latent in the mind, yet innate, until I have some experience that occasions my mind's production of these ideas.

8. Some Skepticism Concerning Innateness in Spinoza

As innate ideas have been presented, their relevant characteristic is their being wholly caused by the mind itself and not caused from the outside. What makes an idea innate, essentially, is its originating in and being explained by the nature of the mind itself. As opposed to this understanding, R.J. Delahunty claims that we cannot attribute a doctrine of innate ideas to Spinoza because no ideas are caused by external *bodies*.[80] This is the case for Spinoza because of his doctrine of parallelism, according to which there is no causal interaction across attributes; in other words, bodily events cannot explain mental events and vice versa. Because of this explanatory barrier, Delahunty seems to reason, the distinction between innate idea and adventitious idea is inapplicable. Delahunty says, "since all ideas are modifications of the attribute of Thought, and since no interaction between Thought and Extension is possible…, no idea can be caused by the workings of bodies; hence it follows that no idea can be 'derived' from experience; hence *all* ideas are innate."[81]

This argument employs a notion of innateness different from the one I have introduced above. For Delahunty, it seems, an idea is innate if its cause is mental and not innate if it is caused by a body. Since Spinoza does not countenance the latter, *all* ideas are innate for Spinoza, and thus the category is not useful, Delahunty argues.

This is mistaken. The relevant characteristic of an innate idea is *not* that it results from mental causation. Instead, an idea is innate when it originates in the activity of the mind that

entertains the idea, as opposed to being caused by something external to the mind, regardless of whether that source is mental or physical.[82]

If the mind is the sole cause of one of its ideas, then the idea is innate. If the mind has an idea, the cause of which is at least partially outside the mind, then the idea is not innate. It therefore follows that Spinoza's inadequate ideas are ones in which the mind passively receives an idea from an external source. Adequate ideas, on the other hand, involve the mind actively producing an idea. The former are adventitious, in that they arise from the vagaries of experience [*experientia vaga*], which is for Spinoza the first kind of knowledge. The latter are the adequate ideas, including the common notions, the idea of God, and the idea of the essence of the body. Only the latter three are appropriately described as innate. This understanding better captures the concept of innateness than Delahunty's understanding.[83]

9. Spinoza Vis-à-vis Leibniz on Innate Ideas

In fact, this Spinozist notion of innateness is precisely the same notion of innateness that Leibniz employs in the *New Essays*. In an attempt to rebut Locke's virulent criticisms of innate ideas, Leibniz presents a theory of innate ideas that is startlingly similar to Spinoza's common notions. For example, Leibniz says, "the fundamental proof of necessary truths comes from the understanding alone, and other truths come from experience or from observations of the senses. Our mind is capable of knowing truths of both sorts, but it is the source of the former."[84] For Leibniz, like Spinoza, there are two kinds of truths. Those that are caused externally are sensations or, as Spinoza calls them, the inadequate ideas of the first kind of knowledge. Those ideas that are innate in the mind, which Leibniz here calls necessary truths, are Spinoza's adequate ideas. Indeed, Leibniz's necessary truths seem to be very close to Spinoza's common notions.

Leibniz also says, “the mind is not merely capable of knowing them [necessary truths], but also of finding them within itself. If all it had was the mere capacity to receive those items of knowledge – a passive power to do so…it would not be the source of necessary truths.”[85] Similarly, Spinoza claims that the mind is active in forming ideas of universal and necessary truths, while it is passive in its receipt of the inadequate ideas of the first kind of knowledge. For Spinoza, the common notions often concern the basic principles of the natural sciences. And likewise are the innate ideas for Leibniz, as is evident when he says, “some innate principles are common property, and come easily to anyone. Some theorems are also discovered straight away; these constitute natural sciences...”[86]

Spinoza's common notions are not caused by external stimuli, though they arise from such stimuli. Similarly, Leibniz’s innate ideas require some external stimulus to occasion their formation in the mind, as he explains in his famous marble analogy.[87] In that analogy, Leibniz claims that innate ideas exist in the mind like the grain of a piece of marble. When a hammer strikes the marble, it crumbles, taking on certain shapes. Yet the nature of these shapes is not explained by the external stimulus, but by the grain of the marble itself. Similarly, innate ideas may require an external stimulus to occasion their appearance in the mind, but their nature is wholly determined by the mind, not the external stimulus. And this description could be given for Spinoza's common notions as well.

Spinoza and Leibniz even take innate ideas and adequate ideas to be truth-preserving in the same way. This is Spinoza's intent when he says, “whatever ideas follow in the Mind from ideas that are adequate in the mind are also adequate.”[88] Similarly, Leibniz says, “any truths which are derivable from primary innate knowledge may also be called innate, because the mind

can draw them from its own depths, though often only with difficulty. But if someone uses terms differently, I would not argue about words."[89]

Perhaps we should follow Leibniz's lead and recognize the remarkable parallels between Spinoza's common notions and Leibniz's innate ideas. As the quotes above show, both are caused solely by the mind and not by external stimuli, though they may be occasioned by some such stimuli. Both are universal or necessary truths that the mind actively forms, as opposed to passively receiving them. Both the common notions and innate ideas concern the fundamental principles of the natural sciences as well. Both innate ideas and common notions function similarly in reasoning, in that they are both foundational and truth-preserving. Spinoza's common notions, indeed, his adequate ideas generally, strongly resemble Leibniz's innate ideas.

10. Conclusion

According to Spinoza, adequate ideas include knowledge of the second and third kinds, which are ideas of infinite modes and the divine essence, as well as ideas of finite essences perceived to follow from the divine essence. And these adequate ideas are innate, latent in the mind. The path to this conclusion has led us through the common notions and three kinds of knowledge as well. Despite all of this, however, this discussion has not shown us whether the human mind may ever contain a *conscious* awareness of these ideas, nor has it shown us what such an awareness might be like. The essay shall conclude with a speculation that suggests how that might come about.

The human mind – indeed, *every* mind – contains every adequate idea innately. Of course, this is not to say that these ideas are in every mind *in the same way.* For surely the mind of the philosopher contains some adequate ideas in a way distinct from the way adequate ideas would be contained in the "mind" of a tree. The important distinction is *power*. For the

adequate ideas that play a causal role in our actions and those of which we are consciously aware have a greater power than those that still lie only latently in our minds. So, the key to improving one's mind is not to *gain* adequate ideas, since we already have them, but to make them *more powerful*. And in so doing we may become aware of them.[90]

Having shown what adequate ideas *are,* and having established that they are innate in the mind, this discussion has laid the ground for answering those difficult questions. In addition to this benefit, I hope that the above discussion has also clarified what I take to be some of Spinoza's most difficult concepts. Indeed, based on the above investigation, one could say without a doubt that Spinoza's epistemology is striking in its systematic complexity and creativity.[91]

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[1] Michael Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 183, note 29.

[2] "…there are certain ideas, *or* notions, common to all men…which (by P38) must be perceived adequately, *or* clearly and distinctly, by all" (2p38c; Curley, 474; Geb II/119). By 'finite mode,' Spinoza means finite things or events. By 'attribute,' Spinoza means a fundamental way of being, such as being a body or being a thought.

[3] "The human mind has an adequate knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence" (2p47; Curley, 482; Geb II/128.)

[4] "In addition to these two kinds of knowledge, there is (as I shall show in what follows) another, third kind, which we shall call intuitive knowledge. And this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the *adequate idea of the essence of things*" (my italics; 2p40s2; Curley, 478; Geb II/122). See also 2p29s.

[5] Michael Della Rocca, "The Power of an Idea: Spinoza's Critique of Pure Will," *Noûs* 37, no. 2 (2003): 205. Della Rocca raises the problem here in the context of a discussion about activity. That is, given that all finite modes are passively determined, and given that adequate knowledge is an activity, how can we ever be active and, thus, how can we ever possess adequate knowledge? For a reply we could look to G.H.R Parkinson, who suggests that we

understand any rational behavior as active: “insofar as the act is rational, it is the act of a free man.” See G. H. R. Parkinson, "Spinoza on the Power and Freedom of Man," *Monist* 55 (1971): 547. R.J. Delahunty protests, however, claiming that this does not address the issue; all finite modes are necessarily caused from without. See R. J. Delahunty, *Spinoza*, *Arguments of the Philosophers* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 219. But Lee Rice provides an interpretation of activity that acknowledges Spinoza’s determinism while nonetheless offering a Spinozist understanding of activity. According to Rice, one is active just when one is determined in a way that is consistent with one’s conatus; rather, if one’s behavior can be understood solely in terms of one’s conatus, then that behavior can be called an activity, *even if the conatus is only the partial or proximate cause.* See Lee C. Rice, "Action in Spinoza's Account of Affectivity," in *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist (Papers Presented at the Third Jerusalem Conference)*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel (New York: Little Room Press, 1999), 155-68.

[6] An anonymous referee astutely points out that this claim is controversial. I agree – Spinoza is not one to shy away from the infinite, by any means, and there is no reason to believe he would deny that the human mind could contain an infinite series of ideas. I am not advocating this view, however, but reporting Della Rocca’s argument. The point of my work here is to grant Della Rocca this premise and yet still show that adequate knowledge is possible.

[7] The idea that constitutes the human mind is not of an infinite thing, but of a finite thing, namely, the human body (see 2p11d). The human body is not infinite, so the idea of the human body cannot be infinite either, according to the doctrine of parallelism as expressed in 2p7 and 2p7s.

[8] The relation between a mind, which is itself an idea, and those ideas it is said to ‘have’, is a part-whole relation.

[9] “Every singular thing, *or* anything which is finite and has a determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause, which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and again, this cause can also neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another, which is also finite and has a determinate existence, and so on, to infinity” (1p28; Curley, 432; Geb II/69).

[10] Spinoza claims in 2p47 that we have an adequate idea of the essence of God. By this he means that we have an idea of God’s essence as expressed by a divine attribute – in our case, either Thought or Extension. 2p45d, on which 2p47 is based, makes this clear.

[11] This interpretation also results in novel insights into his ethics, his politics, and his notion of salvation, though those will not be explored here.

[12] Spinoza seems to have a related concept in mind in several places, e.g., *Short Treatise,* II, xv, 5-6 (Curley, 120-121; Geb I/79-80).

[13] The first use of it is at *TdIE,* §19: "est perceptio, ubi *essentia rei ex alia re concluditur*, sed non adaequate" (Geb II/10). Here Spinoza describes the "third mode of perception," which roughly corresponds to the second kind of knowledge in the *Ethics*. Spinoza also employs it in describing the fourth mode of perception, which roughly corresponds to the third kind of knowledge, when he says: "solus quartus modus comprehendit essentiam rei adaequatam, et absque erroris periculo" (*TdIE,* §29; Geb II/13). In this case, *adaequata* modifies *essentiam,* suggesting not that the knowledge is comprehended adequately but that the essence comprehended is adequate. Again, this usage does not map clearly onto anything in the *Ethics*, though Spinoza's description of the fourth mode of perception as "without danger of error" does match his later notion of adequate knowledge. The other two instances of *adaequatus* in the *TdIE* suggest certainty (§35) and truth (§73).

[14] "By adequate idea I understand an idea that, insofar as it is considered in itself without relation to the object, has all the properties or intrinsic denominations of a true idea. I say intrinsic, so that I may exclude that which is extrinsic, specifically the agreement of an idea with its object" (2def4; Curley, 447; Geb II/85). In Letter 60 to Tschirnhaus from January 1675, Spinoza says: "between a true and an adequate idea I recognize no difference but this, that the word 'true' has regard only to the agreement of the idea with its object (*ideatum*), whereas the word 'adequate' has regard to the nature of the idea in itself. Thus there is no real difference between a true and an adequate idea except for this extrinsic relation" See Spinoza, Letter 60; Benedictus de Spinoza, *Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 2002), 912-13. In short, then, the definition in Part 2 tells us that adequate ideas are true; that to call an idea adequate is to refer to an intrinsic denomination and not to refer to its correspondence to its object; and that an adequate idea has *all* the properties of a true idea. For help on the last point, one must look to 1ax6, which states, "a true idea must agree with its object" (Curley, 410:Geb II/47). Spinoza establishes how an idea agrees with its object by the doctrine of parallelism, which requires that the order and connection of ideas agree with the order and connection of causes.

[15] "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God" (1p15; Curley, 420; Geb II/56). In the following passage, Spinoza simply applies this doctrine to the human mind. Since the mind is a mode of thought, it is in God as God is understood under the attribute of thought.

[16] "The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, or a certain mode of extension which actually exists, and nothing else" (2p13; Curley, 457; Geb II/96).

[17] Note that I move from talk of mind *y* having idea *x* or mind *y* perceiving idea *x* to mind *y* containing *x*. One anonymous referee has protested at this formulation. Yet I follow Spinoza in this move. The human mind is nothing but an idea and it is a part of God's infinite idea – one idea contained within another in a part-whole relationship. Though Spinoza does not use the term 'containment,' he does describe this relationship among ideas as part-whole. In 2p11c, quoted above, Spinoza states that the human mind is a *part* of God's mind. He then concludes from this that when the human mind *has* or *perceives* an idea, it is God who has or perceives the idea, insofar as he constitutes the human mind. In other words, insofar as the human mind is a *part of* God's mind, God has our ideas. Insofar as our mind is in God's mind, our ideas are also in God's mind. Thus I take this containment talk to be warranted. In any event, the causal sense of adequacy changes the notion of adequacy below.

[18] This could also be stated as follows: Idea *x* is adequate in mind *y* iff God's idea *x* is a proper part of God's idea *y*. Idea *x* is *inadequate* in mind *y* iff God's idea *x* is only *partially* in *y*. This may be why Spinoza sometimes refers to inadequate ideas as mutilated. Further questions remain; for example, is that *part* of *x* that is wholly contained in *y* adequate? Spinoza does not provide answers, in part because he expands his notion of adequacy shortly after 2p11c. For more on the view of adequacy as containment, see Margaret Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (New York: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1996), 99-100.

[19] The containment thesis as expressed in 2p11c may be more complex than CON admits, however, since 2p11c can be understood in two distinct ways, so that idea *x* is adequate in mind *y* iff either (1) mind *y* wholly contains idea *x* or (2) the body of mind *y* wholly contains the object of idea *x*. One might expect these two to be equivalent, by parallelism, but the picture is not so simple. Spinoza does *not* identify the body with its *parts*, but with a ratio of motion and rest, that is, an organization, among the parts; doing so allows the body to gain and lose parts yet retain its identity. This principle of bodily individuation leads Spinoza at 2p24 to say that the mind has *inadequate* ideas of its own parts, even though those parts are contained in the body. Clearly, then, given this account of the body, something's being contained in the body is not sufficient for our having an adequate idea of it in the mind. So, sense (2) of the containment thesis is rejected. But sense (1), I believe, may be retained, depending on how one construes the mind-body relationship. Any more investigation into this issue would take us too far afield, however.

[20] The source of this doctrine can be found in 2p9, which states, "the idea of a singular thing which actually exists has God for a cause not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he is considered to be affected by another idea of a singular thing which actually exists" (Curley, 453; Geb II/91-92). That is, the idea of each finite mode is an affect caused by the idea of another finite mode. Spinoza continues this line of thought at Axiom 1'' (following Lemma 3), where he states, "all modes by which a body is affected by another body follow both from the nature of the body affected and at the same time from the nature of the affecting body…" (Curley, 460; Geb II/99). Whenever two bodies interact, a bodily affection occurs; the nature of this affection follows from the nature of the bodies that caused it. Further, by parallelism, the idea of that bodily affection will involve the ideas of both bodies that caused the affection.

[21] See also 2p13 and its demonstration.

[22] For more on this causal requirement for adequacy, see Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," 105-7.

[23] Jonathan Bennett believes that this causal notion of adequacy is the reigning sense of adequacy found in the *Ethics* and the containment sense expressed in 2p11c is dropped after it. See Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* ([Indianapolis, IN]: Hackett Pub. Co., 1984), 177f. I agree that Spinoza generally relies on the sense of adequacy presented in 2p24d, but the two are not unrelated, in my opinion. According to CON, the mind must contain the entire idea of *x* in order to have adequate knowledge of *x*. According to CR, the mind must contain an idea of *x*'s cause in order to have adequate knowledge of *x*. If the nature of *x*'s cause were a constituent part of the nature of *x*, then it would follow that CON entails CR. For example, see 3p1d, where Spinoza relies on 2p11c to explain adequacy. For the connection between causes and essences, see Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, chapters 4 and 5.

[24] See 2p12 and 12d, for example, where Spinoza equates the mind's perceiving *x,* the mind's having an idea of *x,* and the mind's having knowledge of *x*.

[25] Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 55.

[26] 1p28; see note 9, above.

[27] According to Della Rocca, the use of 2p9 in 2p24d and 25d suggests that the infinite series of causes behind every finite thing prevents us from having adequate ideas *of any sort* about them*,* but I am not so sure this claim is warranted. Certainly our ideas of the *duration* of singular things are in principle inadequate due to the infinite complexity of the causes of duration, as Spinoza says in 2p31d and I will discuss below. However, neither 2p9 itself

nor Spinoza's use of it in 2p24d and 25d seem to require knowledge of the infinite series of causal antecedents in the case of sensation, but only knowledge of its *proximate* cause; the fact that this proximate cause is not contained in the human body is sufficient for the idea's inadequacy. It may also be the case that knowledge of only the proximate cause is necessary for adequate knowledge. I agree with Della Rocca's conclusion that ideas of sensation must be inadequate, but I am not convinced that this is so because of the mind's inability to grasp an infinite series of causes. Instead, these ideas are inadequate because a single necessary idea – the idea of the proximate cause – is outside our minds. I will grant this point, however, since it is irrelevant to my aim in this essay.

[28] Before Spinoza, the phrase "common notions" was used in conjunction with geometry, as mentioned. Additionally, Edward Herbert, Baron of Cherbury, argued in his *De Veritate* (1624) that human reason contains innate common notions that the mind may discover if it employs its faculties correctly; we will know these common notions by our natural instinct, the light of nature, he says. Only from these common notions, Herbert argues, may we derive certainty. Further, these rational common notions are the fundamental principles of science and religion. Interestingly, Herbert held that the same five common notions underlie all true religions, though Christianity matches them the best, he said. See Edward Herbert of Cherbury, *De Veritate, Prout Distinguitur a Revelatione, a Verisimili, a Possibili, Et a Falso*, Editio tertia. ed. (Londini: [s.n.], 1645). Similarly, Descartes held certain notions to be universal and innate, such as the idea of God and substance, as well as the laws of logic. See, for example, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind,* Rule §12 (CSMK I, 44-45; AT X/419-420) and *Principles of Philosophy,* Part I, §13 (CSMK I, 197; AT VIIIA/9).

[29] 2p38; Curley, 474; Geb II/118. Of the common notions, Bennett says, "the enormously obscure p38d has defeated me;" Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*.

[30] I will speak of the objects of the common notions as "properties." In this usage I follow Spinoza himself, who describes modes held in common among bodies as properties in 2p39 and refers to properties in 2p40s2, among other places. I intend the term in as unobtrusive a way as possible and will try not to rely on any particular metaphysical account of properties in my argument.

[31] 2ax1' and 2ax2'. For more on the Cartesian dimension of Spinoza's physics, see Alan Gabbey, "Spinoza's Natural Science and Methodology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (New York: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1996), 101 and 09.

[32] Letter 63, 25 July 1675. See Spinoza, *Complete Works*, 917.

[33] Letter 64, 29 July 1675. Ibid., 919.

[34] 1p21; Curley, 429; Geb II/65.

[35] Edwin Curley argues that the common notions are of the infinite modes, which are the laws of physics. See *E. M. Curley, Behind the Geometrical Method : A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 45f.* Bennett affirms this view as well; see Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 107. See also Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 161.

[36] Not only are Spinoza's first principles of physics Cartesian, but they are also derived in a Cartesian way. In Principle 37 of Part 2 of his *Principles,* Descartes says, "*the first law of nature: each and every thing, in so far as it can, always continues in the same state; and thus what is once in motion always continues to move.* From God's immutability we can also know certain rules or laws of nature, which are the secondary and particular causes of the various motions we see in particular bodies." *Principles of Philosophy,* II, §37 (CSMK I, 240; AT VIII/A, 62). Note that, according to Descartes, we *infer the laws of nature from God's nature.* This is exactly what Spinoza suggests we do when he claims we may infer motion and rest from Extension, which is the divine essence conceived in a certain way. I would not say that Spinoza's physics are *completely* Cartesian, however, because Spinoza attributes *power* to bodies, which Descartes does not.

[37] Note that I say that the common notion is involved both in the idea of each part of the body *and* in the idea of each affection in the body. Spinoza says we do not know the parts of the body, except through ideas of its affections. See 2p19. According to Spinoza, in sensation, we know more about the modes of our own bodies than those of external bodies (2p16c2); thus our knowledge of those external bodies is woefully incomplete. In Ch. 6 of his book, Della Rocca gives a novel account of falsity in Spinoza, arguing that we err in sensation because we conflate two different things in one idea. That is, we identify our own sensations – the way things seem to us – with the external object, when these two are really distinct. When we consider the common property of motion and rest that arises from our body interacting with an external body, however, this problem does not occur, because the common property is the *same* both in our bodies and in the external body. So, if we identify the property in our body and the property in the external body, we do not err, for our idea is an accurate representation of the property in both bodies. Further, we thereby have both an idea of a property of an affection of our own body *and* an idea of that property in the cause of our affection, even though the cause is an external body.

[38] In the letter to Schuller quoted above, Spinoza also refers to infinite modes of Thought. There is no reason to believe that we cannot form common notions about fundamental laws of psychology as well as of physics. In this discussion I refer primarily to laws of physics and motion and rest because Spinoza himself primarily discusses common notions in terms of Extension, not Thought.

[39] This is another way in which Spinoza follows Descartes. Both thinkers believe that the laws of physics are deducible from common experience. Wilson also notes this similarity; see Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," 116.

[40] 1p23: "Every mode which exists necessarily and is infinite has necessarily had to follow either form the absolute nature of some attribute of God, or from some attribute, modified by a modification which exists necessarily and is infinite." Spinoza here refers to *two* kinds of infinite mode, one that follows immediately from God's attribute and one the follows in turn from this immediate infinite mode. This distinction and between the mediate and immediate infinite modes is obscure and irrelevant for our purposes.

[41] 1d4; Curley, 408; Geb II/45.

[42] By parallelism, our common notions of thought – our ideas of the fundamental laws of psychology – are grounded in the attribute of Thought; so, if we have an idea of that attribute, our common notions of the infinite modes of thought would also be adequate.

[43] This is not to say that we are consciously aware of the idea of Extension when we consider a body, though this idea must be implicit, Spinoza believes. Only through analysis of our concepts and similar cognitive labor are these ideas made explicit. Descartes exemplifies the kind of labor that Spinoza might have in mind in his discussion of the wax in Meditation Two. This theme will recur again below.

[44] 2p47; Curley, 482; Geb II/128.

[45] "The knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence which each idea involves is adequate and perfect" (2p46; Curley, 482; Geb I/127).

[46] For a discussion of God as a *causa sui*, see Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 73-4.

[47] It should be apparent at this point that the argument that we have adequate ideas of the divine attributes of God is structurally very similar to the argument that we have adequate common notions. But the common notions are the paradigms of Spinoza's second kind of knowledge. I believe that the adequate ideas of the divine essence/attributes also should be considered as knowledge of the second kind (only when we consider finite essences in relation to that

idea of the divine essence do we have knowledge of the third kind). Edwin Curley agrees; see E. M. Curley, "Experience in Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," in *Spinoza: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Marjorie Grene (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), 57.

[48] Curley, 439; Geb II/76.

[49] For more on this understanding the divine essence, see Sherry Deveaux, "The Divine Essence and the Conception of God in Spinoza," *Synthese: An International Journal for Epistemology, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* 135, no. 3 (2003).

[50] A vexing problem related to this discussion concerns how we become aware of these ideas. What I have attempted to establish here is that we have adequate ideas in the mind. This is *not* the same claim as saying that we have conscious awareness of these ideas. Wilson notes this problem as well – Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," 137n37. Delahunty addresses this seeming contradiction, suggesting that adequate ideas may be like intuitions available only after hard mental labor; see Delahunty, *Spinoza*, 23f. One place where Spinoza discusses this issue is at 2p47s. After having asserted that all humans have an adequate idea of God, Spinoza then states that most people lack clear knowledge of God. Spinoza claims this is so because they have associated the word 'God' with anthropomorphic images, for example. Thus, though all people have an adequate idea that corresponds to God, i.e., the idea of absolute power, most people do not recognize that idea to be *of* God. In other words, all have an adequate idea of God, but for most people that idea is not associated with the term 'God,' which gets associated with some anthropomorphic image. Part of Spinoza's program of rational self-improvement, I imagine, would be to connect the term 'God' to that adequate idea of God in our minds. I am not sure more can be said on this topic without some account of consciousness in Spinoza, however, with which we could explain the status of ideas in the mind of which we are not aware. On the absence of an account of consciousness in Spinoza, also see Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 188-91.

[51] Spinoza allows that we may have *some* knowledge of finite modes as they exist in duration. Such knowledge is sensation and called knowledge of the first kind. It is not adequate, however, and is subject to error and uncertainty. Spinoza acknowledges it is the most practical and useful kind of knowledge, though, at *TdIE* §20.

[52] "We can only have an entirely inadequate idea of the *duration* of our body" (2p30; Curley, 471; Geb II/114) & "We can only have an entirely inadequate knowledge of the *duration* of the singular things which are outside us"

(my italics in both; 2p31; Curley, 472; Geb II/115). I know of nowhere that Spinoza asserts we have adequate ideas of finite modes insofar as they exist in duration.

[53] 1p8s2; Curley, 414; Geb II/50.

[54] 2p8; Curley, 452; Geb II/90. "The infinite idea" is the attribute of Thought. 2p8 should be understood as an extension of 2p7 where the doctrine of parallelism is applied to non-existent modes. Thus, if a non-existent mode of extension is contained in the attribute of Extension, then, by parallelism, the non-existent idea of that mode is contained, or 'comprehended', in the attribute of Thought. This point of interpretation is not necessary to my argument, however.

[55] Spinoza speaks of essences as being "contained" in their attributes, but says that our ideas of those essences "involve" the ideas of the attributes. He also says that an essence is conceived through or comprehended in the attribute. I take 'contain' to refer to the relation between a mode of extension and the attribute of Extension, whereas 'comprehended in', 'involve', and 'conceived through' all refer to the relation between a mode of thought and the attribute of Thought.

[56] In 1d5, Spinoza defines modes as: "*in* another through which it is also conceived." This relation of substance to mode, this 'in' relation, is causal, yet also explanatory. Not only are the finite modes caused by God, but they are also known through God. This is an example of Spinoza's conflation of explanation and causation. Della Rocca discusses this issue; see Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 12f.

[57] Spinoza does not give us much help in understanding the exact nature of the relation between a finite essence and its attribute. One possible model may be geometric – just as we can deduce certain properties of a triangle from its definition, so too can we deduce certain essences from our idea of the attribute. Another model might be a part-whole relation – see Guttorm Floistad, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge and the Part-Whole Structure of Nature," in *Spinoza on Knowledge and the Human Mind*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel (Leiden: Brill, 1994). Finally, the relation may require only that one recognize certain general metaphysical truths, such as the doctrine of monism, and then apply them to particulars considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. See Ronald Sandler, "Intuitus and Ratio in Spinoza's Ethical Thought," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 13, no. 1 (2005). See also Henry E. Allison, *Benedict De Spinoza : An Introduction*, Rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 35-6.

[58] See 1p28. See also note 9, above.

[59] This distinction between essence and existence is necessary if one is to make sense of a passage in 1p17s, where Spinoza says, "…a man is the cause of the existence of another man, but not of his essence, for the latter is an eternal truth" (Curley, 427; Geb II/63). Eternal truths, I would argue, have the divine essence (or perhaps some infinite mode) as their cause, as opposed to the existence of a finite mode, which has other finite existing modes as its cause. This distinction is intimated in *TdIE* §101, where he says, "the essences of singular, changeable things are not to be drawn from their series, or order of existing, since it offers us nothing but extrinsic denominations, relations, or at most, circumstances, all of which are far from the inmost essence of things. That essence is to be sought only from the fixed and eternal things, and at the same time from the laws inscribed in these things, as in their true codes…" (Curley, 41; Geb II/36-37). I take the fixed and eternal things here to be divine essences and the "laws inscribed in these things" to be the common properties and notions. For related discussion, see Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 90.

[60] Yovel also makes the claim that finite modes may be considered as effects of two distinct causal paths. He speaks of "vertical" versus "horizontal" causality, where vertical causality involves attributes and infinite modes as causes of essences and horizontal causality involves an infinite series of other finite modes as causes. See Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, 157ff.

[61] 2p9; Curley, 453; Geb II/91-92. 2p9d clearly bears this interpretation out as well.

[62] "The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing" (3p7; Curley, 499; Geb II/146).

[63] Ultimately, of course, *all* finite modes are contained in the divine attributes (see 1p15). Because of this, an idea of the attribute is necessary for having an idea of a finite mode. In the case of finite modes existing in duration, however, the idea of the attribute is necessary but not sufficient to have an adequate idea of the finite mode in question. An idea of that attribute as affected in a particular way – *i.e.,* as a finite mode – is also necessary.

[64] In 2p41 and 2p44c1, Spinoza identifies adequate ideas, true ideas, and knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis*.

[65] 2p40s2; Curley, 478; Geb 122.

[66] A word about the three kinds of knowledge. On my interpretation, the first kind is knowledge of finite modes *considered as existing in duration*. The second kind of knowledge concerns common notions and the idea of God's essence. The third kind of knowledge concerns the essences of finite things – that is, finite things considered without regard for their existence in duration. Such a conception requires seeing the essences as following immediately from

the divine essence. I recognize that this description leaves the exact nature of the third kind of knowledge somewhat mysterious. To speak more clearly, however, one would need an account of Spinozist *essences*, which I do not have, unfortunately. Margaret Wilson expresses a similar regret; see Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," 132-3.

[67] 2p11, my italics; Curley, 456; Geb II/94. See also 2p13, where the mind is again defined in terms of the body's actual existence.

[68] Note also that Spinoza implies that the essence of the body is *fixed*, which seems reasonable, given the atemporal nature of essences (they are known *sub specie aeternitatis*, after all). For more on the atemporality of finite essences, see Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 235f.

[69] A similar explanation could be given for 2p25, which concerns external bodies. 2p26 and 2p27, which concern the mind and its ideas, are relevantly similar to 2p24 and 2p25 as well.

[70] And similarly for 2p31. The arguments for 2p30 and 2p31 mirror those for 2p25 and 2p26.

[71] I could offer similar explanations of those propositions in Parts 3 and 4 that also concern inadequate ideas, but to multiply such instances would be otiose.

[72] Distinguishing between the essence and the existence of a finite mode may afford us certain other interpretive advantages as well. Bennett and Della Rocca both argue that Spinoza implicitly relies on some distinction between essential and non-essential properties, even though Spinoza does not explicitly assert such a distinction. See Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, 233ff, Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 95ff. With my interpretation, those characteristics of a finite mode's timeless essence would be essential properties and those concerning its existence in time would be non-essential properties. This seems consistent with the text and philosophically commonsensical.

[73] The mind likely also has an idea of its *own* essence; that is, the mind may consider itself *sub specie aeternitatis.* In 5p23, quoted below, Spinoza claims that the essence of the mind is an idea of the essence of the body. Further, in 2p21s, Spinoza claims that the idea of the mind and the mind itself, which is the idea of the body, are identical. Thus it seems that, if we may have an adequate idea of the body, we may also have an adequate idea of the mind. Therefore it is likely that we have *two* adequate ideas of finite things available to us, those of our body and of our mind.

[74] Thanks are due to an anonymous referee for making the relevance of this result clear.

[75] See, for example, Descartes' *Principles* I.48. See also his Fifth Replies, where he says, "I do not think that the essences of things, and the mathematical truths which we can know concerning them, are independent of God. Nevertheless I do think they are immutable and eternal, since the will and decree of God willed and decreed that they should be so." [AT VII/380; CSMK II, 261] And in a letter to Mersenne from 27 May 1630, he says: "You ask me by what kind of causality God established the eternal truths. I reply: by the same kind of causality as he created all things, that is to say, as their efficient and total cause. For it is certain that he is the author of the essence of their created things no less than their existence; and this essence is nothing other than the eternal truths." [AT I/152; CSMK III, 25]

[76] I should make one qualification here, however. In the Appendix, I explain that adequate ideas are not only possible, but in fact necessarily present in the mind as innate ideas, according to Spinoza. I do not, however, explain how the mind might become aware of such ideas. As already mentioned, to explain just how one could go about acquiring such ideas would require a discussion of just what ideas one would be acquiring. In other words, one would have to offer a robust theory of essences in Spinoza. Further, if one were able to explain just how the mind grasps such ideas, one would thereby have accomplished what Spinoza sets out as the goal of his entire work. And that would be a great accomplishment indeed, especially given that Spinoza considers the third kind of knowledge to be akin to the highest blessedness of the soul and even *salvation*. After all, Spinoza says, "and of course, what is found so rarely must be hard. For if salvation were at hand, and could be found without great effort, how could nearly everyone neglect it? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare" (5p42s; Curley, 617; Geb II/308).

[77] Curley, 493-4; Geb II/140.

[78] Curley, 492; Geb II/139.

[79] Curley, 493; Geb II/139.

[80] Delahunty, *Spinoza*, 24.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Delahunty implies that an idea's having a mental cause means that the idea is innate. If this accurately captures our understanding of innateness, then we should consider Berkeleyan ideas of sense innate in the mind that has them as well, because those ideas have a mental cause in God. In the receipt of ideas of bodies, however, the Berkeleyan human mind is absolutely passive, those ideas originating from God's mind, not ours. As such, they could not properly be called innate and Delahunty's understanding is misguided. See, for example, *Principles of Human*

Knowledge, Part I, §29 in George Berkeley, *Works of George Berkeley*, trans. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (London: Thomas Nelson, 1948-57).

[83] Henry Allison seems to reason in a way similar to Delahunty, claiming that Spinoza's notion of innateness is significantly different from Descartes, on account of Spinoza's doctrine of parallelism. Unlike Delahunty, however, Allison finds Spinoza's common notions to be like Cartesian innate ideas in many other important respects. Allison, *Benedict De Spinoza : An Introduction*, 113-4. Margaret Wilson mentions innate ideas in a footnote, roughly agreeing with what I say here. See Wilson, "Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge," 137n36. Gueroult recognizes that the common notions are *a priori* truths, but does not investigate further. See Martial Guéroult, *Spinoza* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1968), Vol. 2, 331.

[84] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

[85] Ibid., 79-80.

[86] Ibid., 78.

[87] Ibid., 52, 80.

[88] 2p40; Curley, 475; Geb II/120.

[89] Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, 78. Strictly speaking, I have only discussed a parallel between Leibniz's innate ideas and Spinoza's common notions; yet I have implied that the parallel actually exists between Leibniz's innate ideas and Spinoza's *adequate* ideas, which is a broader category, since it includes the third kind of knowledge. I believe that the broader parallel is justified, though I have not the room to do more than show the narrower here, because the third kind of knowledge is an exceedingly difficult subject. My goal in this section, however, is to demonstrate that Spinoza *has* a doctrine of innate ideas, such that he can be placed in dialogue with Leibniz and other of his contemporaries, a goal which I feel I have accomplished here.

[90] This final speculation as to what may occur when we become aware of adequate ideas is inspired by Don Garrett's interpretation of consciousness as a feature of the *power of thinking* a mind possesses. Garrett agrees that adequate ideas are innate in the mind and that what matters for our well-being is simply making them more powerful, which is the subject matter of 5p1-5p20.

[91] My thanks to Steven Nadler, Daniel Garber, Don Rutherford, and especially Michael Della Rocca for their comments on this essay.