

THESIS

THE POWER OF *SCIENTIA INTUITIVA* AND THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD
OVER AKRASIA

Submitted By

Kyle Barnes

Department of Philosophy

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2026

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Domenica Romagni

Elizabeth Tropman

Peter Erickson

Copyright by Kyle Barnes 2026

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

THE POWER OF *SCIENTIA INTUITIVA* AND THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD OVER AKRASIA

In this thesis, I consider the role of Spinoza's third kind of cognition, *scientia intuitiva* and its corresponding affective state, the intellectual love of God, in combating the passions, and more specifically, preventing *akrasia*. For Spinoza, human servitude consists in one's vulnerability to experience passions, or ideas and its affective states that are caused by external bodies and force one to undergo things. Despite the attention that the relationship between reason, the passions, and *akrasia* has received in contemporary scholarship, only relatively recently has more attention been directed towards *scientia intuitiva* and the passions. I argue that investigating *scientia intuitiva* and its respective affective state is fundamental, not only in understanding how *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason and not susceptible to *akrasia*, but also in understanding the project of the *Ethics* as a whole; that is, to understand human freedom, blessedness, and human perfection.

In chapter one, I explain some of Spinoza's metaphysical, ontological, epistemic, and ethical commitments. In particular, I discuss Spinoza's view on substance, God, and modes. I then discuss his axiology, where I argue adequate modal cognition perceives the vertical causal chain, or the ontological relationship modes share with substance and God. Then I discuss Spinoza's notion of affectivity, particularly the relationship between one's ideas, both adequate and inadequate, correspond to actions and passions, and the three kinds of cognition; imagination, reason, and *scientia intuitiva*. The final part of chapter one centers on Spinoza's unique view of *akrasia*.

In chapter two, I begin by raising some motivation for interpreting *scientia intuitiva* as not susceptible to *akrasia*. I then consider a competing interpretation, which becomes my target of

refutation. After discussing Spinoza's cartesian influences, I spend the rest of the chapter arguing that *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*, whereas reason, the second kind of cognition, is. My argument, in contrast to literature which suggests the content of *scientia intuitiva* is essential yet somehow different than reason, holds that the immediacy of *scientia intuitiva* is crucial to understanding its power. It is in this immediacy's conjunction with its content that *scientia intuitiva* is to be caused by God or substance, and thereby gains an infinite power over the passions, and thereby is not susceptible to *akrasia*.

In the final chapter, I consider some objections to my argument. I also discuss the epistemic feasibility of *scientia intuitiva*; it turns out that, under my view, *scientia intuitiva* is much more attainable than other commentators have suggested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to extend my sincerest appreciation to Domenica Romagni, my thesis advisor, for her help and direction in working through this thesis. Over the past year, I have seen this project develop in ways that I could have not done merely by my own means. She has been a wonderful Spinoza and philosophical mentor. I'd also like to thank my committee, Beth Tropman and Peter Erickson, for their help in the completion of this project.

With love, I extend great gratitude to my mother and father, whose support cannot be under said. I doubt I would have had the confidence to move out, no less complete a master's program in philosophy, without their support. My appreciation goes to my brothers, Davis and Owen, and other family and friends.

My gratitude can also be extended to my partner, Grace, who has been with me completely along the way. Grace has been a model to base my own work on, and has provided useful feedback in developing my thoughts and ideas.

PREFACE

Spinoza's *Ethics* proceeds in an unusual style. In particular, the *Ethics* is structured quite similarly to Euclid's *Elements* insofar as it is divided into parts, and the constitution of each part consists of definitions, axioms, propositions, demonstrations (or proofs), corollaries, scholia, etc. For this reason, citing Spinoza does not consist of page numbers; rather, citations consist of citing the part of the *Ethics*, the axiom, definition, or proposition, and then, if there is a scholium, corollary, or lemma, that is cited if needed. For example, if I wanted to cite the seventh proposition of part 1 of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza argues "it pertains to the nature of a substance to exist", that proposition would be cited as (1p7), where the '1' indicates the part of the *Ethics*, 'p' indicates the proposition, and '7' indicates which proposition is being referred to. If I wanted to cite the scholium to proposition 45 of the fourth part of the *Ethics*, it would be cited as (4p45s), where '4' is the part, 'p' is the proposition, '45' indicates the forty-fifth proposition, and 's' indicates the scholium. Sometimes a given proposition may have two or more corollaries or scholia; consequently, the scholium being considered may be specified after the 's' (or 'c'); for example, (2p40s2). Unless otherwise noted, I use quote Spinoza from Curley, *Collected Works of Spinoza*.

For usefulness, I outline what abbreviation I use for the varying elements of the *Ethics*. I use 'A' to refer to an axiom, alongside some number; 'D' to refer to a definition, alongside some number; 'p' to refer to a proposition, alongside some number; 'dem' to refer to a demonstration; 's' to refer to a scholium, alongside some number; 'c' to refer to a corollary, alongside some number; 'post' to refer to a postulate, alongside some number; 'L' to refer to a lemma, alongside some number; 'DOA' to refer to the Definition of the Affects, alongside some number; and 'app' to refer to the appendix of some part of the *Ethics*, alongside some number.

On occasion, Spinoza cannot be cited with specificity through this format, like in the

appendix. For specificity, I cite passages in the appendix using the Gebhardt numbers, referring to the standard edition in Latin. For example, “(II/53)” refers to the second volume of the Gebhardt edition, page 53. Modern translations generally include this Gebhardt marginal pagination alongside the text.

DEDICATION

For David West

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
PREFACE	v
DEDICATION	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 1.1 – SPINOZA’S ONTOLOGY.....	2
SECTION 1.1.1 – SUBSTANCE, GOD, AND MODES	2
SECTION 1.1.2 – REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION.....	8
SECTION 1.1.3 – THE CAUSAL NEXUS.....	12
SECTION 1.2 – THE AFFECTIVITY OF IDEAS AND KINDS OF COGNITION	15
SECTION 1.2.1 – THE AFFECTIVITY OF IDEAS	15
SECTION 1.2.2 – IMAGINATION, THE FIRST KIND OF COGNITION	22
SECTION 1.2.3 – REASON, THE SECOND KIND OF COGNITION	25
SECTION 1.2.4 – SCIENTIA INTUITIVA, THE THIRD KIND OF COGNITION	27
SECTION 1.3 – AKRASIA	32
CHAPTER TWO	35
SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION	35
SECTION 2.1 – BASIC MOTIVATIONS	36
SECTION 2.2 – SOYARSLAN’S APPROACH	37
SECTION 2.3 – SPINOZA’S CARTESIAN INFLUENCE.....	42
SECTION 2.4 –THE AFFECTIVE STATES OF REASON AND SCIENTIA INTUITIVA	51
SECTION 2.4.1 – THE RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD	51
SECTION 2.4.2 – THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD.....	56
SECTION 2.5 – DEMOTING REASON AND PROMOTING SCIENTIA INTUITIVA...67	
CHAPTER THREE	80
SECTION 3 – OBJECTIONS, CONSIDERED.....	80
SECTION 3.1 – 1P25 AND RELATED	81
SECTION 3.2 – 5P36: THE “INsofar AS” [QUATENUS] CLAUSE	86
SECTION 3.3 – NOTHING IN NATURE... WHICH CAN TAKE IT AWAY?	90
SECTION 3.4 – PARALLELISM.....	94

SECTION 3.5 – THE EPISTEMIC FEASIBILITY OF SCIENTIA INTUITIVA	99
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105

CHAPTER ONE

“An experimental ontological proof. I have not the principle of rising in me. I cannot climb to heaven through the air. It is only by directing my thoughts towards something better than myself that I am drawn upwards by this something. If I am really raised up, this something is real. No imaginary perfection can draw me upwards even by the fraction of an inch. For an imaginary perfection is automatically at the same level as I who imagine it-neither higher nor lower.”
(Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, 99).

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I outline some basic ideas underlying Spinoza’s thought. Spinoza’s metaphysics and ontology have received significant attention in the literature on Spinoza. This is for good reason, as much of the later ideas in the *Ethics* depend upon Spinoza’s metaphysics and ontology. He is, after all, a rationalist, and understanding the second part of the *Ethics*, for example, depends upon understanding the first part. After discussing Spinoza’s ontology, I move to discuss his views on representation and misrepresentation. For Spinoza, one’s representative states are intimately tied to their affective states and ethical action. Because *akrasia* pertains to these affective states, it is important to understand the nature and content of representation and misrepresentation. After laying this groundwork, I move to discuss the affectivity of ideas and Spinoza’s three kinds of cognition (imagination, reason, and *scientia intuitiva*). As we will see, whereas imagination gives rise to the passions, reason and *scientia intuitiva* give rise to actions. I argue that ideas are coextensive with the affects; if we imagine, then we necessarily experience passions. The content of our representations, then, is intimately connected to our affects. I develop these varying kinds of cognition because it is important to understand their nature and abilities. In the final section, I outline Spinoza’s understanding of *akrasia*.

SECTION 1.1 – SPINOZA’S ONTOLOGY

Before diving into some of Spinoza’s claims regarding representation and misrepresentation, the three kinds of cognition, and akrasia, it is useful to understand his metaphysics and ontology. The *Ethics* is such that each part is dependent upon and built upon the previous part (the axioms and propositions in part 1, for example, will be used to develop arguments and propositions made in part 2, 3, 4, and 5). For this reason, in order to make sense both of my arguments (that *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*) and the *Ethics*, we must understand Spinoza’s ontology and how it connects to the kinds of cognition (which get developed in part 2), the affects (part 3), *akrasia* (part 4), and *scientia intuitiva*’s affective state, the Intellectual Love of God (part 5). For this reason, in section 1.1, I discuss some of the relevant parts of his ontology. There are significant aspects of his ontology that I gloss over - for reasons of space, I do not delve too deeply into any particular feature of his ontology, nor the debates present in the literature.¹ For my purposes below, I will first sketch out Spinoza’s conception of substance and its identification with God. I then discuss modes, or modifications of substance. Following this, I discuss attributes and their relationship with substance and modes, respectively.

SECTION 1.1.1 – SUBSTANCE, GOD, AND MODES

Spinoza defines substance as “what is in itself and conceived through itself, i.e., that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed” (1d3). This is to say that substance - unlike its counterpart, modes - exists both conceptually and ontologically independent of anything else. In fact, as we will see shortly, whereas substance is ontologically independent of anything else, the other class of things, modes, are all ontologically dependent on substance. Moreover, substance has a special status of priority; it is conceptually, ontologically, and

¹ See Melamed, “The Building Blocks of Spinoza’s Metaphysics,” and Lin, “Substance, Attribute, and Mode in Spinoza,” for a history and more in-depth explanation of these concepts.

causally prior to anything else. While some of Spinoza's predecessors (e.g., Aristotle, Descartes) hold that there are a variety of substances, Spinoza, being a substance monist,² holds there is only one substance (1p14), God,³ "a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence" (1d6). Spinoza maintains a strong commitment to the principle of sufficient reason (PSR), which holds that everything must have a cause. Because substance is independent of anything else, substance cannot be said to be caused by anything else, and so, not only is substance its own cause, but the only absolutely free cause (1p17c2), and its essence necessarily involves existence (1p7). Since it pertains only to a substance to necessarily exist, it follows that God necessarily exists.⁴ Similarly, because God is infinite, prior, and necessary, "from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in finite many modes" (1p16) and God is the cause of all things (1p16c).

On the other hand are modes, "the affections [*modifications*] of a substance [God], or that which is in another through which it is also conceived" (1d5). Since there are only two categories of things – substance and modes – anything that is not a substance is a mode. Consequently, people, objects, ideas, dreams, food – literally everything that is not God or substance – is a mode.

Modes depend ontologically on substance/God. An initial way to picture this is etymologically; modes, or *modifications*, must be *modifying* something, namely the one actual thing, substance/God. Were there no substance/God, there would be nothing to modify, and so one way

² For an explanation of Spinoza's commitment to substance monism, see Della Rocca, "Spinoza's Substance Monism"; Schmidt, "Substance Monism and Identity Theory"; Barry, "Spinoza and the Logical Limits of Mental Representation"; Stetter, "Spinoza's Argument for Substance Monism"; and Garrett, "Nature and Necessity in Spinoza's Philosophy".

³ See Lin, "Spinoza's Arguments for the Existence of God"; Stetter, "Spinoza's Argument for Substance Monism"; Whiting, "Spinoza, the No Shared Attribute Thesis, and the PSR".

⁴ As a brief note, there is a seeming logical issue with 1p7, namely that it appears hypothetical, yet its antecedent is not affirmed. As such, it concludes the necessary existence of God without affirming that substance exists in the first place. 1p7 reads: "it belongs to the nature of a substance to exist", which can be translated into "if there is a substance, then necessary existence". But it does not seem that Spinoza ever proves the truth of the sentence, "there is a substance".

to see this dependency relationship just is to consider that the existence of modifications of a thing depend on there being a thing in the first place. Lin provides a few nice examples:

A dent is, for example, a tin can insofar as its surface is dented. A wrinkle is the carpet insofar as it is warped. A fist is a hand insofar as it is closed. Modes of God, on this understanding of the term, stand to God as dents, wrinkles, and fists stand to cans, carpets, and hands respectively. (Lin 2013, 136)

The existence of modes, whether actual, possible, finite or infinite, depend ontologically on the existence of God or substance. As Spinoza puts it, in virtue of substance being that which is in itself and conceived through itself (1d3) and modes just being affections of a substance, it follows that “a substance is prior in nature to its affections [modes]” (1p1). Consequently, because all which is, is either God or modifications of God, everything else is *in* God: “whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be conceived without God” (1p15). For Spinoza, this entails a certain dependency that implies an inherence relationship between substance and modes. This is to say that all modes *inhere* in God.

In addition to depending on substance ontologically, modes also depend on God causally. There are two different senses in which we can say God/substance causes modes. First is along the aforementioned ontological lines. The second way is more obviously causal. In order to flesh out this second way, it is necessary to note the distinction between *natura naturans*, which is related to considering things under a species of eternity, and *natura naturata* which is related to considering things under a species of duration.

By *Natura naturans*, or “nature naturing”, Spinoza understands that which is “in itself and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, i.e., God, insofar as he is considered a free cause” (1p29s). The translation of *natura naturans* into “nature naturing” might be helpful in fleshing out this vertical sense of God as cause of modes. In particular, nature – God – takes an active role in doing its action, or ‘naturing’. That is, God, as if he were considered a free cause, produces in virtue of his infinite nature an infinite number of attributes which express his essence. This is to say that certain things will follow necessarily from the

mere consideration of God's nature and essence in an active sense, such as the infinite number of attributes, all of which express God's essence but in a different way.

Natura naturata, or “nature natured”, refers to those things which “follow from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, i.e., all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God” (1p29). In considering things qua *natura naturata*, we are indicated, in contrast to the active sense in the case of *natura naturans*, that nature is passive. It should be noted that while “nature” in the sense of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* is numerically identical, it is not necessarily qualitatively identical: whereas in the case of *natura naturans*, the object, nature, is God or substance considered as absolutely infinite and acting, in the case of *natura naturata*, the object still is nature/God, but in the sense of God being affected by each of the modes as acted upon by an infinite number of other modes. This ontological relationship between substance and modes will link up to my discussion of the three kinds of cognition, the affects, and *akrasia*, as we will see in chapter 2.

An attribute, for Spinoza, is “what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence” (1d4), or “whatever can be perceived by an infinite intellect as constituting the essence of substance” (2p7s).⁵ Occasionally, scholars refer to attributes as the essence of a substance expressed in different ways, and, because Spinoza claims that substance has an infinite nature and essence, there will i) be an infinite number of attributes, and ii) the attributes themselves will express the infinite and absolute nature of substance.⁶ This is all to say that the attributes are just the infinite and absolute essence of a substance expressed in different ways. What are those ways? As humans, we only have access to two attributes, those of thought and extension (2a5), but per Spinoza there are

⁵ See Melamed, “Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought,” for discussion on why the definition of ‘attribute’ includes a notion of the intellect.

⁶ It is important to consider the contrary substantialism reading of Spinoza, here. See Marshall, “The Mind and the Body,” and Lin, “Substance, Attribute, and Mode”.

indeed an infinite number of them.⁷

In introducing attributes, it is important to highlight their connection with modes and with substance/God. First, let's look at the connection between attributes and modes. Consider one's idea, such as of the Sun. Our idea of the Sun has certain relationships with other ideas. For example, we could not conceive of our solar system were it not for the idea of the Sun being involved. Or, in order to properly understand the idea of solar flares, one must understand the Sun insofar as it is an idea. Because the idea of the Sun is an idea, and ideas are just modes within the attribute of Thought, then one's idea of the Sun is a mode under the attribute of Thought. Similarly for all other ideas one has. And because the attribute of Thought just expresses the essence of God (infinite), God has each and every idea we could possibly have (and more).

Things work similarly under the attribute of extension. Our idea of the Sun corresponds to an actually extended physical thing, namely the Sun. Under the attribute of Extension, the Sun will also bear certain relationships with other extended things. For example, the Sun as an extended thing is necessary for the gravitational orbit of each of the planets. Similarly, the Sun is involved in the physical phenomenon of solar flares.

Moreover, the attributes are both conceptually and causally closed. This means that the modes considered under a particular attribute are affected by other modes within that *particular* attribute and no other. In other words, there is neither a conceptual link nor a causal link between a body and an idea; that is, a body cannot cause an idea, nor can an idea cause a body. In fact, they are conceptually distinct, insofar as to speak of one's idea of something causing something under the attribute of Extension would be tantamount to a category mistake. It is wrong, according to Spinoza, to say that an idea (or mode of thought) causes a body (or mode of extension), or a body causes an

⁷ Some interpret Spinoza as actually saying that God has all of the attributes, meaning he has just two, Thought and Extension. I think there are serious interpretative problems with this interpretation, but I do not discuss it much more here.

idea; we cannot even coherently think of ideas and bodies in a way that they interact or influence each other.

As I noted above, loosely, what happens under the attribute of Thought is similar to what happens under the attribute of Extension. But in fact, they work exactly the same. This is because of Spinoza's infamous parallelism doctrine, which he argues for in Part 2; he says, "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (2p7). This is to say that, in God's intellect, for an idea of any given thing, there is an extended version of that thing, and for any extended thing, there is necessarily an idea of that thing. This works for both what happens in the common order of nature and in the order of the intellect; while no modes under the attribute of thought can affect modes under the attribute of extension, and vice versa, for any interaction of modes considered under one particular attribute there will be the same interaction of those modes considered under a different attribute. Hence, ideas within God's intellect will track those and only those extended things of which his ideas have as their objects.

As for the connection between attributes and substance/God; as Melamed notes, "the attributes are distinct and adequate concepts of one and the same entity" (Melamed 2013b, 96), or as Spinoza puts it, "one and the same thing which is explained through different attributes" (2p7s). This is just to say that the attributes express the essence of God in different ways. An attribute, therefore, just is God and God's essence expressed in a specific way, such as through extension or thought. Keeping in mind the Sun example, because God is the cause of everything, and attributes are just expressions of God's infinite essence, all modes, such as the idea of the Sun, exist under God's attributes and therefore are caused by God.

In this section, we have seen that, for Spinoza, substance, or God, necessarily exists, has a special sense of priority in terms of its dependency, and is the ultimate cause of all things. We have also found that everything that is not substance is a mode, or a modification of substance, depends

on God, both ontologically and causally. Attributes, for Spinoza, express the infinite essence of substance in an infinite number of ways. Because we, as humans, are not substance, we are therefore modes. And we perceive only two attributes of substance; Thought and Extension. For Spinoza, one attribute cannot affect another attribute, so ideas do not, strictly speaking, affect bodies, nor vice versa. Finally, for any mode that is expressed under a particular attribute (like the idea of the Sun), there is a corresponding mode that is expressed under a different attribute (like the actually extended and physical Sun). With this, I hope to have made clear some of Spinoza's ontological commitments, namely with regard to substance, modes, and attributes. These things are necessary as groundwork for what comes in later parts of this thesis.

SECTION 1.1.2 – REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION

In this section, I present Spinoza's claims regarding the nature of representation and misrepresentation and how commentators have responded to it. Understanding the nature of representation is important because all mental states for Spinoza consist in ideas, or representations, including the affects. The affects can be roughly understood as the emotions, though there are good reasons for distinguishing the more common and contemporary understanding of the emotions from what Spinoza means by the "affects".⁸ For Spinoza, the affects, or the affective character of ideas, are rather intimately tied to one's representational states. The affects are just affections of a thing, either under the attribute of Thought or Extension, which can be caused internally or externally, such that when one has adequate representations, they are said to act, and when they have misrepresentations, they are said to have passions. I will explain the difference between adequate representation and misrepresentation, as well. I should note that I use adequate representation and misrepresentation to mean the same thing as adequate and inadequate ideas. And so, as an initial sketch, an adequate idea is a true idea which correctly represents its object, and an inadequate idea is

⁸ See, additionally, Rice, "Emotion, Appetition, and Conatus in Spinoza".

an idea that does not correctly represent its object.

In understanding one's ability to represent and misrepresent, it is important to start first with the relationship the human mind has to God. Recall earlier two claims. First is that all modes are in God, caused by God, and depend on God. The second claim is that each mode is just an expression of God, either under species of duration or under a species of eternity. In 2p11, Spinoza argues that "the first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human Mind is nothing but the idea of a singular thing which actually exists" (2p11), and that singular thing which actually exists turns out to be the body: "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). 2p11 is used to prove the following corollary:

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 constituted 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. (2p11c)

This proposition is incredibly important both to Spinoza's *Ethics* and my project. It relates because of how the mind acquires knowledge and provides a remedy for the affects. I do not wish to jump the gun—so I will return to this important proposition below. From the above, it is important to note two things; first, that when we say that we cognize something, we are saying that God, insofar as he constitutes/explain the nature of the human Mind, is cognizing that thing; and second, that we perceive affections of the human body.

As for the content of what we know, Spinoza holds axiomatically that "the knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its causes" (1a4). Because of Spinoza's commitment to the principle of sufficient reason (see my comments above, or 1p11dem II/53), for any given thing, there is necessarily a cause of that thing. Moreover, Spinoza endorses the even more radical claim that not only do all things have a cause, but they also have effects. This can be seen in

1p36, where he argues “nothing exists from whose nature some effect does not follow” (1p36). His reasoning is that because all modes express the nature or essence of God in a specific and determinate way, they express the (infinite) power of God. And because, by 1p16, infinite things must follow in infinite ways, it follows that all things, in addition to having causes, will also have certain effects.

In terms of representation and misrepresentation, then, our ideas will also have certain causes and effects, and similarly the things that they represent will have causes and effects. Note that there is a distinction between the related concepts of adequacy and truth. In the case of an idea’s adequacy, one must represent (adequately) the causes of the object of the idea. Spinoza defines an adequate idea as “an idea which, insofar as it is considered in itself, without relation to an object, has all the properties, or intrinsic denominations of a true idea” (2def4). By “intrinsic denominations” here, Spinoza is indicating those necessary features of an idea that, if the idea is true, then those features must obtain; similar to the Cartesian clear and distinct perception of the object. For example, the idea of a thing’s essence will have certain intrinsic denominations, i.e. those properties that are logically necessary for an idea without relation to anything else. For example, in winning a chess game via checkmate, then the opponent’s king must be in check. So that the opponent’s king is in check is an intrinsic denomination of someone winning a game of chess.

A true idea, on the other hand, in addition to representing those intrinsic denominations of an idea, will have certain extrinsic denominations. An extrinsic denomination has to do with certain properties that can be attributed to an object in virtue of its relationship to another object. For example, that the CSU Rams football team is worse than the UofSC Gamecocks’ team is an extrinsic denomination due to the fact that the proposition “worse than” makes sense only with reference to an object other than the CSU Rams, which in this case is the UofSC Gamecocks. Unfortunately I am not aware of the truth of this. But were the Rams in fact worse than the Gamecocks, one who

has this idea can be said to have a true idea (so long, of course, that they also have an adequate idea of this). From the above, it follows that if our ideas represent the object of ideas in terms of their true causes, then that idea can be said to be adequate. An inadequate idea, then, *may* occur when one misrepresents the causes of the object of the idea.⁹

This, however, is not the only salient part of the adequacy and inadequacy of ideas. The distinction between adequate and inadequate causes is also relevant. This is because, for Spinoza, we are the adequate causes of our adequate ideas, and the inadequate cause of our inadequate ideas. A cause is said to be adequate “if its effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it [the cause]” (3p1), and a cause is said to be inadequate if its “effect cannot be understood through itself alone” (3p1). In the case of inadequate causes, those other things that explain the effect are broadly categorized as external causes. Now, we can understand an adequate idea, first, to be an accurate representation of an object (here an effect) and its causes, and second, that the cognizer is the adequate cause of the adequate idea. An inadequate idea, then, may arise from misrepresenting the causes of any given effect, or that there is an external cause other than the cognizer at play in a representation.

This is, of course, a rough sketch of the picture of Spinoza’s distinction between adequate and inadequate ideas. In the discussion below, more detail will be provided regarding the distinction of adequate and inadequate ideas. In particular, I first discuss some views regarding the nature of the causal nexus that is represented by a cognizer. This is necessary in order to establish certain claims regarding the nature of reason and *scientia intuitiva*, which I will explicate in the next section of the chapter. Following this, I present the case that, for Spinoza, all ideas are affective in some capacity.

⁹ I should note that this is not the only way in which one can come to have an inadequate idea – one might, for example, simply misrepresent the nature of an external body. Spinoza provides an example in 2p35s regarding our imagination of the sun as about two hundred feet away. I think it is plausible to think that in this case one is not misrepresenting the causes of the idea of the distance of the sun, but something different.

SECTION 1.1.3 – THE CAUSAL NEXUS

Interpreters have generally understood the representation of an effect's causes in one of two ways. On one hand, one might understand the causal nexus *horizontally*, in terms of the common order of nature, and on the other hand, it can be understood *vertically*, in terms of the order of the intellect. I call the first of these views the horizontal causal nexus view and the second the vertical causal nexus view.

Recall the distinction between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans* mentioned above. I brought this up earlier in order to distinguish between the ways in which God is the cause of things – he can either be the absolute cause of an effect, by which we mean those things that necessarily follow from his infinite natures and attributes (*natura naturans*), or he can be the cause of things insofar as he is the cause of an infinite series of finite causes. To highlight this difference, Spinoza argues

God cannot properly be called the remote cause of singular things, except *perhaps* so that we may distinguish them from those things that he has produced immediately, or rather, that follow from his absolute nature. For by a remote cause we understand one which is not conjoined in any way with its effect. But all things that are, are in God, and so depend on God that they can neither be nor be conceived without him. (1p28s2)

I should emphasize that God is still the cause of all things and that all things are in God. The point is just that God can be considered the cause of things in a vertical sense, i.e., an immanent (or internal) cause, such that things follow from his nature insofar as he is the cause of the infinite series of the ways in which finite modes affect other finite modes, and so on, and all of these things exist as a *part* of God. This is to be understood in contrast to previous philosophers that hold God as a transitive cause (i.e., God is the external cause of event A, which causes event B, and event C, and so on, such that God is the cause of any event n which follows from event A or what it causes). God is not the direct or proximate cause of any finite thing insofar as it results from the effect of another finite mode.¹⁰ This plays an important role in understanding the difference between what Spinoza

¹⁰ It should be noted that finite modes carry the same necessity as effects of other finite modes as do those effects which follow from God's absolute nature.

calls the “common order of nature” and the “order of the intellect”. Roughly, the common order of nature tracks the order of things, qua *natura naturata*, under a species of duration (such as when doing philosophy all day makes one mentally tired), whereas the order of the intellect tracks the order of things, qua *natura naturans*, or from the connection of ideas by which the Mind perceives things through their first causes (such as that God is necessarily the only substance) (2p18s). The horizontal causal nexus view holds that adequate ideas consist primarily in adequately representing the common order of nature,¹¹ and gains its interpretative force most strongly from 2p11 and 2p16, where Spinoza claims

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, and so on, to infinity. (2p11)

and

the idea of any mode in which the human Body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human Body and at the same time the nature of the external body. (2p16)

Because knowledge of an effect consists in representing the effects’ actual causes, and external modes can be the cause of an effect, in order to have an adequate idea of something, one ultimately needs to adequately represent both the external causes and the infinite chain of finite causal antecedents of the effect.¹²

A major concern with this view is that humans end up incapable of having adequate ideas. As I mentioned above, the object of a person’s ideas is the body and its affections (2p13). The worry is that we cannot know the nature of external bodies, nor can we have adequate ideas of the whole

¹¹ For views that suggest the horizontal causal view, see Rice, “Action in Spinoza’s Account of Affectivity”; Delahunty, “Spinoza”; Bidney, “The Psychology and Ethics of Spinoza”; Della Rocca, “Representation and the Mind-Body Problem”; Huenemann, “Interpreting Spinoza”; Kisner, “Spinoza on Human Freedom”; Marshall, “Adequacy and Innateness in Spinoza”; Garver, “Spinoza and the Cunning of the Imagination”.

¹² Of course, it might also be the case that there are multiple external causes at play in causing an effect. For example, in a game of chess, while it is ultimately one piece that delivers the checkmate, other pieces are needed in order to rid the king of squares to move to, and to the extent that they are involved in the effect of one’s checkmate they are considered a cause.

of the common order of nature. Spinoza argues “the idea of any affection [idea] of the human Body does not involve adequate knowledge of an external body” (2p25) and “the human Mind does not perceive any external body as actually existing except through the ideas of the affections [ideas] of the human body” (2p26). Further, “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” (2p19). So, we have a very inadequate idea not only of external bodies and, therefore, their causes, but also of our own bodies. If this is true, according to the horizontal causal nexus view, then humans lack the ability to have an adequate idea of the external causes by which any idea or effect comes to be.

As Robinson (2022) notes, however, Spinoza attributes adequate ideas to humans all over the place in the *Ethics*. For example, Spinoza says “the human Mind has an adequate knowledge of God’s eternal and infinite essence” (2p47). The result is that either Spinoza is contradicting himself or something more along the lines of the vertical causal nexus view is going on. I am inclined to think that this contradiction is not what Spinoza intended, and so we have reason to doubt the horizontal causal nexus view, at least insofar as the claim is that adequate ideas consist *only* in knowledge of the infinite chain of finite causes.

Rather, this gives more credence to the vertical causal nexus view, which can be developed in one of (at least) two ways. On one view, it could be held that no representation of the horizontal causal chain is at play in having adequate ideas, and knowledge consists *only* in representing the vertical causal nexus. On a different view, one could hold that adequately representing the vertical causal nexus yields adequate ideas, and that adequate representation of the horizontal causal nexus also yields adequate ideas. On this latter approach, humans and other finite modes still fail to represent the finite causal chain, and to that extent will necessarily have inadequate ideas – but God, for example, will necessarily have adequate ideas, and this extends to ideas of the horizontal causal

chain.¹³ I am inclined to follow this approach – while God may have adequate ideas of both the horizontal causal chain and the vertical causal chain, when finite modes such as humans have adequate ideas, we are representing ideas only in terms of their vertical causal chain, in accordance with the order of the intellect. In the next section, I will discuss the three kinds of cognition and some competing views on the affectivity of ideas. I ultimately argue that all ideas carry some, even if very minimal, affective force.

SECTION 1.2 – THE AFFECTIVITY OF IDEAS AND KINDS OF COGNITION

Having fleshed out some of the core ontological and representational commitments of Spinoza's, I now move to discuss some more pertinent matters to my goals in this project, which is to argue that Spinoza's conception of *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*. Of course, I've yet to define what *scientia intuitiva* and *akrasia* are. The former will be elaborated in the sections directly below, whereas an explanation of Spinoza's conception of *akrasia* and its possibility is saved for the final section of this chapter, section 3. For my present purposes, I am concerned with expanding on Spinoza's three kinds of cognition, imagination (or cognition from the first kind), reason, and *scientia intuitiva* and the affectivity of these kinds of cognition. I also need to discuss the affectivity of ideas. The affectivity of ideas will be important to understanding Spinoza's theory of motivation, and this is a crucial element of understanding *akrasia*. This section is structured as follows. In section 1.2.1, I discuss the affectivity of ideas. In sections 1.2.2 -1.2.4, I discuss cognition of the first kind, reason or the second kind of cognition, and *scientia intuitiva*, or the third kind of cognition.

SECTION 1.2.1 – THE AFFECTIVITY OF IDEAS

Due to the unique nature of Spinoza's philosophy of representation and misrepresentation and its relation to his ethical system, understanding the affectivity of ideas is quite important.

¹³ The problem of the mind-relativity of content, widely discussed in the secondary literature, is relevant here. See Della Rocca, "Representation"; Hübner, "Representation and Mind-Body Identity"; McAllister, "Adequate and Inadequate Ideas"; Noorloos, "Spinoza's Really Confused Ideas" for good discussion on this topic.

Moreover, the affectivity of ideas is what substitutes what notions of the will does in other philosophical systems – because Spinoza denies the existence of a free will and identifies the will with the intellect (2p49c), one question that stands in need of explanation is how humans or other finite modes act. The affectivity of ideas substitutes this use of the will. My goal in this subsection, then, is to argue that all ideas are affective. This grounds some of my main arguments regarding the three kinds of cognition I discuss in the next three subsections. It is especially pertinent for my core claims regarding *scientia intuitiva* and its power over akrasia, as I discuss in the next chapter. Before I discuss the affectivity of ideas, it is important to get clear on the nature of the affects.

Spinoza's ethical system, as opposed to more contemporary understandings of ethics consisting in duties or consequences, centers around what he terms the affects [*affectus*]. One way to understand the affects is by terming them in a more colloquial sense as “emotions”.¹⁴ Spinoza defines the affects as “affections of the Body by which the Body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections” (3d3). When our body's power of acting is decreased, we are said to experience the affect of sadness, and when it is increased, we experience joy. Joy and sadness, for Spinoza, make up two of the three essential types of the affects, with the third being desire.¹⁵ All other affects, such as love, hope, fear, etc., are derivative of these basic affects.

In order to more clearly understand how this ethical system works, it is important to note the distinction between actions [*actio*] and passions [*passio*]. According to Spinoza, we act “when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e., when something in us or outside us follows from our nature which can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone” (3d2). More specifically, we act when we are the adequate cause of those affections which

¹⁴ See, for instance, Shapiro, “Spinoza on Imagination and the Affects”.

¹⁵ Some hold that there is only two, joy and sadness. I do not discuss this debate here.

increase our power of acting (we cannot be said to act when we experience sadness or its derivatives; see 3p59). We experience passions, i.e., are acted upon, “when something happens in us, or something follows from our nature, of which we are only a partial cause” (3d2). Passions, unlike actions, are capable of *both* increasing and decreasing our power of action. The affects, for Spinoza, are rather expansive – indeed, while they can be exemplified by the emotions, as we will see shortly, because all ideas are affective, i.e., changing our power of action either positively or negatively, it turns out that all ideas carry with it an affect. And so, even in cases where it seems there are no accompanying affective states, like that of a mathematical equation, Spinoza holds that there in fact is *some* affective state.

With this, I move to argue that all ideas are affective. I follow Shapiro (2012) in this; consequently, I will provide a sketch of her argument here. Shapiro notes an initial confusion with this account; when Spinoza first uses the phrase “affect” in part 2, it seems to be in a different context than the sense of “affect” Spinoza describes in part 3, i.e., the affects in the sense of joy, sadness, and desire. In part 2, Spinoza argues

If the human body is *affected* with a mode that involves the nature of an external body, the human mind will regard the same external body as actually existing, or as present to it, until the body is *affected* by an *affect* that excludes the existence or presence of that body. (2p17)

I should note briefly that this proposition and its scholium are where Spinoza defines imagination and imaginings. I provide a more detailed discussion of imagination in the next subsection, but briefly, “imagination” can be understood as an inadequate idea, and in the context of 2p17, it is an inadequate idea that registers to the mind an external body as present when it in fact is not. This supports the claim that representations or ideas of the body as affected by an external mode just are themselves the affect.

Continuing with Shapiro’s position; despite the usage of “affects” being used prior to its definition in part 3, she notes that “Spinoza himself does not explicitly identify imaginations and

those affects that are neutral with regard to our *conatus*, and there is no good reason to presuppose he implicitly does so” (Shapiro 2012, 95-96). As I understand her, we have on the one hand our *conatus*, or our striving, i.e., “the given, or actual, essence of the thing itself” (2p7), and on the other, the external body that our imagining regards as present, or the passion/imagination. Since those imaginings are not adequate ideas and do not follow from only ourselves as adequate knowers, the increase or decrease of our power of acting can come only from the imagination, and so, “it must be the case that the imaginative dimension of these affects *itself* impacts our power to act” (Shapiro 2012, 96). Moreover, Shapiro notes that the discussion of the passions in part 3 is intrinsically tied up with imaginings;¹⁶ in fact, apart from joy, sadness, and desire, all of the other passions are *defined* as involving an imagination. In contrast to these inadequate ideas and their respective passions, actions and adequate ideas can be the cause only of joy and desire. In fact, Spinoza notes this explicitly in 3p59; “among all the affects that are related to the Mind insofar as it acts, there are none that are not related to Joy or Desire” (3p59). Considering 3p12, where Spinoza argues “the mind as far as it can, strives to imagine those things that increase or aid the body’s power of acting” (3p12) provides more evidence for this. Occasionally, we strive to imagine things which increase our power of action. Were the increase associated only with our *conatus*, it would be an adequate idea. But we are imagining – that is, recalling an external body as present – and it is the representation of the external body as present which carries with it the increase in our power of acting. Shapiro notes that this reverses the standard order of explanation; rather than taking things to exist and then being affected by them, we instead understand things to exist in virtue of how we are affected by them.

Imaginings, then, are necessarily affective; they are affective insofar as an imagining is just the inadequate representation of an external body causing certain affectations within the person’s body,

¹⁶ Shapiro seems to use ‘affect’ and ‘passion’ interchangeably; but insofar as we act, we experience affects, and we do not have imaginings when we act. Consequently, ‘affect’ can refer to actions, and while part 3 of the *Ethics* focuses mostly on the passions, it is important to note that actions are also affects.

and these affectations are nothing other than the passions. The affectivity of an imagining consists in the representation a person has of their body being causally affected in some way by the external body, and this is what a passion is.

Note first that Spinoza allows for some affects which have no differential impact on our power of acting. He says, “the human body can be affected in many ways in which its power of acting is increased or diminished, and also in others which render its power of acting neither greater or less” (3post1). Insofar as an imagining will neither increase nor decrease one’s the power of acting, the ideas still carry some force insofar as they have causal power as modes.

Given that joy is defined as an increase in one’s power of acting, and sadness as a decrease of one’s power of acting, one might question my general argument by mentioning that Spinoza allows for some affections of the body which neither increase nor decrease one’s power of action. That is, one’s body may interact with an external body in some way or another without there being an accompanying affect like joy or sadness. While this is true, even in cases whereby a body interacts with an external body without an accompanying affect, the body is still being affected – causally – by the external mode. Were there were no causal relation between a person and an external body, there would be no representation. One can have a representation of an external body only when one is affected, either merely causally or insofar as there is an accompanying affect like joy or sadness.

Note second that this covers the bases only for passions and imaginations. I intended to show how *all* ideas are affective. But this only shows how imaginative or inadequate ideas are affective, so an account of how adequate ideas are affective is warranted, as well.

Why would Spinoza use the term “affect” in the same sense as he will later use it in part 3? One might think that, contrary to Shapiro, Spinoza advances an entirely different position. According to these theorists, such as Steinburg (2017), our ideas of our bodies being affected in the sense of 2p17 are neutral with regards to our power of acting, and it is only when we come to have

an affect in the sense of part 3, i.e., with joy, sadness, and desire, that those ideas attach to our affects. Steinburg cashes this interpretation out in terms of an ideas “doxastic power”, or how much force an idea has in causing one to “believe” that idea as true, and its “affective power”, or how much power the idea has in causing certain affects. I do not have enough space to dive too deeply into Steinburg’s interpretation. I do note, however, that, according to Steinburg, if his interpretation is correct, then the attribution of *akrasia* to Spinoza’s system insofar as myself and other Spinoza scholars do is mistaken. Apparently, there is a weak form of *akrasia* wherein one merely thinks “that at the time of one’s action it would be better to do otherwise than what one actually does” (Steinburg 2017, 272), and Spinoza allows for this phenomenon, but not a stronger, more “strict” formulation that I believe exists in the text. Such a formulation, according to Steinburg, consists in “cases in which one acts contrary to one’s overarching, or all-things-considered, practical judgment” where the judgment reflects “the agent’s deepest doxastic commitments” (Steinburg 2017, 273). In Spinozistic language (to be honest, I think it more confusing to import this contemporary language to Spinoza), I take Steinburg to be understanding this “stricter” sense of *akrasia* to be a situation where, when a human understands the most essential things about their essence (and in particular their essence insofar as it is caused by God), there are certain things, of which they are cognizant of, that can be said to be “good” for them, i.e., actions and those things which increase their power of acting, or joy, and acts contrary to these ideas/actions. If I understand Steinburg correctly, he holds that there is nothing in 4p17 (where Spinoza most explicitly refers to *akrasia*) or any preceding propositions that support this interpretation.¹⁷

Perhaps there is not much in support of this stricter sense of *akrasia* literally in 4p17; however, there are very good reasons to believe that Spinoza intends this stricter sense. For starters, it seems Steinburg is committed to a durational sense of understanding what is good for an

¹⁷ I will say more about *akrasia* in section 1.3.

individual, as opposed to thinking that something be “universally” good for a person. In fact, while Steinburg reads *akrasia* most into 4p17, I think it is most obvious in 4p6: “the force of any passion, or affect, can surpass the other actions, or power, of a man, so that the affect stubbornly clings to the man” (4p6). What would be one’s best course to take, for Spinoza, would be one that increases (or perfects) a person’s power of acting, and per 4d1, what is certainly (i.e., adequately) known to be useful to a person is good. And by 4p6, a passion can be more powerful than the actions of a person. This results in the stronger, “stricter” sense of *akrasia* that Steinburg wishes to reject. Since I maintain the possibility of *akrasia* in Spinoza’s *Ethics*, and in fact argue that it is essential to Spinoza’s project, I reject Steinburg’s interpretation.

Similarly, it might be objected here that in 3post1 Spinoza says we can experience affections by which our power of acting neither increases nor decreases. This postulate is said to rest on 2post1, 2L5, and 2L7. If we consult those references, we can understand how the ideas are affective and yet our power of acting remains unchanged. In this part of the *Ethics*, referred to as the “Physical Interlude”, Spinoza explains how extended bodies interact. In explaining their interactions, Spinoza notes that we can individuate a body through its fixed ratio of motion and rest (2L1). Despite bodies often impressing upon one another such that those impressions alter a body’s fixed ratio of motion and rest, we can consider a case where two bodies interact with a third in such a way that the third is affected by the other two, one positively affecting the third, and the second negatively affecting the third, so that the ratio of motion and rest of the third body remains unchanged. This, I think, is what Spinoza intends in 2L5 and 2L7. So understood, the particular affections of the first body on the one hand and the second body on the other each are by themselves affective, giving rise to certain affections and individually altering the third body’s power of acting, but when taken as a whole, there is no alteration of the power of acting.

In fact, I think this case is simpler than that of imaginings. In 3d2, Spinoza defines action as

“when something happens in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause, i.e., (by 3d1), when something in us or outside us follows from our nature, which can be clearly and distinctly understood through it alone” (3d2). In order to see how adequate ideas are necessarily affective, consider a person who at some point in time has an amount, x , of power of action. This person then gains an adequate idea, of which they are the cause, which is accompanied by an increase in their power of action. And this increase in their power of action just is the affect they are experiencing, i.e., joy, or, per Spinoza, “that passion [affect] by which the mind passes to a greater perfection” (3p11s). It is affective, then, insofar as an action is an adequate idea that a person has “gained” insofar as they are the cause of that adequate idea. The affectivity consists in their generation of the adequate idea, which just is the action.

With this, I think I have shown that ideas are necessarily affective. I now move to outline the three kinds of cognition.

SECTION 1.2.2 – IMAGINATION, THE FIRST KIND OF COGNITION

I start first with Spinoza’s conception of the first kind of cognition. It should be emphasized that ideas of the first kind of cognition are the only source of falsity and typically themselves false (albeit not always, for we can form adequate ideas using some representations inherent in imagination). According to Spinoza, just as with the case of reason, ideas from the first kind of cognition often relate to perceiving many things and more importantly forming universal notions. The difference between reason, or the second kind of cognition, and the first kind of cognition is that, whereas of the first kind ideas are inadequate, ideas of reason are always adequate. Surprisingly, Spinoza includes subjective experience in this sort of cognition; our daily experiences, consisting of certain visual, olfactory, auditory, etc., are all imaginings.

Another thing to note about the first kind of cognition is that it seems to have a sort of taxonomy. In particular, there seems to be a difference between having an idea from what Spinoza

calls random experience, i.e., “from singular things which have been represented to us through the senses in a way that is mutilated, confused, and without order for the intellect” (4p20c2) and from opinion/imagination, or ideas from “signs, e.g., from the fact that, having heard or read certain words, we recollect things, and form certain ideas of them, which are like them, and through which we imagine the things” (4p20c2).

Imagination stems from Spinoza main claims in 2p17, where he argues

if the human Body is affected with a mode that involves the nature of an external body, the human Mind will regard the same external body as actually existing, or as present to it, until the body is affected by an affect that excludes the existence or presence of that body. (2p17)

In fact, we imagine in a variety of ways; because we only cognize the body through our perception of it being affected (2p23), and that “the ideas which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies” (2p16c2), any idea of an external body will necessarily be an imagining. Another way is by regarding certain things as present when they do not exist, or are not present. This happens because external bodies leave certain impressions on our bodies and we may come to recall those previous impressions. A scar from falling from a height might make one more careful when they are in a similar situation; of course, their fall is not present to them, but because of the impression (the scar and the phenomenological experience of falling), they alter their behavior. Spinoza says imagination is “the affections of the human Body whose ideas present external bodies as present to us, we shall call images of things, even if they do not reproduce the figures of things” (2p17s).

Random experience on the other hand relies on 2p18s. In particular, because imagination represents affections of the body which coincide with the common order of nature, and people exist at different times with different experiences, we can see how two people may have an idea of some particular thing and pass to two totally different and unrelated ideas. Spinoza references how, upon seeing the traces of a horse in some sand, a soldier will go from the thought to a horse, to a

horseman, and finally to a war, whereas a farmer might go from the thought to a horse, to a plow, to a field, and finally to labor (2p18s). This point can be made more clear by considering that humans lack the knowledge of our body's duration and often due to our ignorance we lack a horizontal causal explanation for why certain things happen. For these reasons, why things happen, either to oneself or to others, may appear random. That a particular car just drove by, for example, was determined to happen by the common order of nature, but it appears to be random to me because I am not aware of all of the previous causes that were involved in my being in this certain spot and that car driving by at that particular time and place.

Recall some of my claims made in section 1.1 about inadequate ideas. As I mentioned above, any idea from the first kind of cognition will be an inadequate idea. One way in which it might be inadequate is because we are not the adequate cause of that idea. Spinoza gives a relatively unhelpful example in 2p40s2:

Suppose there are three numbers, and the problem is to find a fourth which is to the third as the second is to the first. Merchants do not hesitate to multiply the second by the third, and divide the product by the first, because they have not yet forgotten what they heard from their teacher without any demonstration, or because they have often found this in the simplest numbers. (2p40s2)

Spinoza's thought seems to be that those merchants, in figuring out that the fourth proportional, rely on habit or imitation, both of which are determinations from cognition of the first kind. In this case, we can see that the merchants are not the adequate cause of their ideas about the correct answer because they rely on something external to them – namely their teacher or their memory. They might also rely on particular signs or sensory perceptions of which they cannot be said to be the adequate cause, or they cannot represent the cause of those signs or sensory perceptions. In the next two sections on reason and *scientia intuitiva* we can see how someone can be the adequate cause of these ideas.

SECTION 1.2.3 – REASON, THE SECOND KIND OF COGNITION

Reason [*ratio*] is the second kind of cognition for Spinoza.¹⁸ Ideas from reason, or rational ideas, are necessarily adequate ideas. Just as the object of the first kind of cognition can be universal notions, ideas of reason seem strictly tied to forming universal ideas. Spinoza says reason occurs when we form universal notions “from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things (see 2p38c, 2p39, 2p39c, and 2p40)” (2p40s2).

One thing to note is how Spinoza understands “universals” under the second kind of cognition differs from the sense of “universals” in the first kind of cognition. In the case of imaginative ideas, whatever ideas of “universals” are formed will necessarily be inadequate ideas. Spinoza references the causes of certain terms under the class of “Transcendental”, such as ‘Being’, ‘Thing’, and ‘something’. According to Spinoza, these terms arise because they are attempts at identifying a property that is common to a variety of particular things, but the representation of that property is an image, and thus inadequate (2p40s1). This is not the case for reason. Here, we infer or deduce from adequate ideas of certain common notions to an adequate idea of the properties of things. For example, in the Physical Interlude, Spinoza claims “all bodies agree in certain things” (2L2), namely that they are extended; so for any body, it will have the property of being extended. As opposed to imagination forming universals on the basis of images, reason constructs universals from certain adequate ideas, such as the adequate idea of the attribute of extension. Thus, reason gives rise to general truths.

The “common notions” Spinoza speaks of are notoriously difficult to understand with significant depth, in part because he set aside an explication of these so-called common notions for a future treatise that was never written. The most Spinoza speaks about common notions in the *Ethics*

¹⁸ For more fleshed out accounts of reason, see Soyarslan, “The Distinction”; “The Susceptibility”; Sharp, “Nemo Non Videt”; Ayalon “Spinoza on the Power of Reason”; Sandler, “Intuitus and Ratio”; Marshall “Spinoza on Destroying the Passions”; Newstead, “Knowledge Beyond Reason”.

pertains to 2p37-2p39; that “what is common to all things (on this see 2L2) and is equally in the part and in the whole, does not constitute the essence of any singular thing” (2p37), “those things which are common to all, and which are equally in the part and in the whole, can only be conceived adequately” (2p38), and “if something is common to, and peculiar to, the human Body and certain external bodies by which the human Body is usually affected, and is equally in the part and in the whole of each of them, its idea will also be adequate in the Mind” (2p39). Spinoza concludes his discussion of the common notions here, saying “with this I have explained the cause of those notions which are called *common*, and which are the foundations of our reasoning” (2p39s1). 2p37 will prove significant when I come to differentiate reason from *scientia intuitiva* in the next chapter. Finally, Spinoza claims that the common notions are not only common to all, but clearly and distinctly perceived by all (humans).

We can see from this that the notion of agreement [*agere*] is fundamental to understanding reason. In particular, an object can be said to have a common property when it *agrees* with the common notions. Spinoza draws heavily from Euclidean geometry on this point; in particular, common notions are called common because they pertain equally to things regardless of whether they are of a different kind. The only relevant feature, under Euclidean geometry, is that they take up space, and if they do, then what can be said geometrically about an object can be said about another object (for example, Euclid says that things which equal the same thing also equal one another” (Euclid, Elements, Part I). For Spinoza, in addition to those Euclidean considerations, he seems to allow more than just geometric common notions. For Spinoza, if a property *x* is common to a given thing, then both the whole of that thing and each and every individual part must also share that property. One way to see this is by considering a physically extended object, like a desk. The desk, as a whole, is extended, just as each and every part of the desk is extended. Similarly, all minds are constituted by certain ideas, just as the infinite Intellect is constituted by an infinite number of ideas.

Or, conversely, all things agree insofar as they are caused by God.

Finally, let's consider the relationship between reason and that aforementioned third proportional example. Considering the example of the fourth proportional, Spinoza says we can solve it "the force of the demonstration of P19 in Book VII of Euclid, namely, from the common property of proportionals." (4p20s2). As I mentioned above, for Euclid, all geometric objects share in certain common properties, such as existing and taking up space, being divisible, that the whole is greater than the part, and so on. In the case of the fourth proportional example, according to Euclid, all proportionals share a common property such that regardless of what numbers (negative, positive, etc.) are used, the same rule or principle will apply to them.

I will save you from my reciting Euclid's proof, but in the hopes that geometric proofs are a familiarity to the reader and are similar to how Spinoza carries out the *Ethics*, it is useful to consider the fundamental importance of proofs to reason. Reason, therefore, has a particular methodology, namely from making certain inferences from adequate common notions to other adequate ideas.

SECTION 1.2.4 – SCIENTIA INTUITIVA, THE THIRD KIND OF COGNITION

Scientia intuitiva is the third kind of cognition for Spinoza, and, as I will argue in chapter two, the path to freedom, blessedness, and the escape from akrasia. According to Spinoza, "the kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [NS: formal] essence of things" (2p40s2). Unsurprisingly, the third kind of cognition is infamously difficult to interpret. Accordingly, I will sketch some of the views regarding *scientia intuitiva*; namely, Primus (2024), Garrett (2018), and Soyarslan (2013; 2014).¹⁹ There is a lot of conceptual baggage at play with regards to the "*formal* essence of certain attributes of God" and the adequate knowledge of the *essence* of (particular) things, which I aim to highlight in

¹⁹ For other accounts, see Rorty, "Spinoza's Ironic Therapy"; Sandler, "Intuitus and Ratio"; Sharp, "Nemo Non Videt"; Nadler, "Eternity and Immortality"; Primus, "Spinoza's Infinite Modes"; "Part V of Spinoza's Ethics".

developing these accounts. I start first with Garrett's (2018) account of *scientia intuitiva*. Before I begin, it is important to note that most interpreters highlight the immediacy of *scientia intuitiva* as contrasted with reason; whereas reason is procedural, durational, and obviously step-based, *scientia intuitiva* delivers an immediate insight into either the nature of the thing being considered or the relationship it has with God.

Garrett's interpretation focuses on a particular understanding of the nature and content of *scientia intuitiva*. In particular, the nature of *scientia intuitiva* depends on a certain understanding of the distinction between a thing's supposed 'formal essence' versus its 'actual essence', and its content is markedly different from the content of the other kinds of cognition, namely from reason.

Regarding the formal/actual distinction, some scholars, such as Garrett, prefer to distinguish 'formal essences' from 'actual essences'. According to Garrett,

The distinction between actual and formal essences arises, then, because an essence can be "given," and a thing can be "posited," in more than one way. An actual essence is something such that when it is given as actually existing, the thing itself is posited as actually existing. A formal essence, in contrast, is something such that (i) when it is given as actually existing, the thing itself is posited as possible; and (ii) when it is given as instantiated, the thing itself is then posited as actually existing. Since a singular thing actually exists if and only if its actual essence does, we may also think of the actual essence of a singular thing as itself being the actualization or instantiation of the thing's formal essence, and hence as that which renders the thing itself actual. Thus, the instantiation of the formal essence of a singular thing produces the singular thing by constituting that singular thing's actual essence. (Garrett 2018, 204)

While such distinction collapses in the case God, it is relevant in the case of particulars such as humans. Thus, for Garrett, *scientia intuitiva* proceeds from an adequate idea of God's essence as self-causing and self-caused, insofar as it is expressed as constituting the essence of either the attribute of thought or extension, to an understanding of the effects (as properties) of God's infinite essence, i.e., infinite modes, (according to Garrett) such as the laws of nature and the formal essences of singular things. In addition, they are also finite, actually existing singular things. Thus, in order to understand an actually existing thing is to understand its essence and the cause by which it was brought into existence, which is nothing other than God. Thus, "*Scientia intuitiva* proceeds by its nature from adequate cognition of the necessarily-existing divine attributes to adequate cognition of

both the formal essences and the actual essences of singular things, essences that follow from and are caused by the divine attributes.” (Garrett 2018, 205).

As for its content, Garrett notes that it seems Spinoza makes a strong distinction between the properties of a thing and a thing’s essence. According to Garrett,

In the Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect (TdIE §§ 95– 96), Spinoza distinguishes a thing’s essence [*essentia*] from its properties [*proprium* or *proprietas* indifferently]. The essence of a thing makes it what it is and is captured by a satisfactory definition of it, whereas its properties (in this technical sense, henceforth always intended by the English term) follow from this essence without themselves constituting it. (Garrett 2018, 202)

Because a thing’s essence differs from and is not constituted by its properties, the content of *scientia intuitiva*, according to Garrett, is different than that reason. Whereas reason yields adequate ideas about the *properties* of things, *scientia intuitiva* yields adequate ideas about the particular and unique *essences* of particular things. In spite of Garrett’s claims that *scientia intuitiva* ends in knowledge of the essence of singular things, he is not solely committed to the claim that there are no general truths at play in *scientia intuitiva*. Garrett includes the knowledge of certain seemingly general truths or properties, such as the knowledge of the laws of the nature. This is because *scientia intuitiva*, in proceeding to the formal essences of things, must follow the “proper causal order” and therefore grasp the infinite modes which make up the laws of nature. That one grasps these laws of nature occurs because, in understanding the essence of a singular thing, one may grasp certain properties which are common to the essence of that thing and other things (2p37-2p40). If this is so, then because the laws of nature affect all things, equally in the part and in the whole, *scientia intuitiva* will grasp the infinite modes which make up the laws of nature as an extension of one’s grasping the essence of a singular thing.

Soyarslan (2013) emphasizes the content point, arguing that there is a significant difference between the content of reason and *scientia intuitiva*. On her account, particular things have a particular and unique ‘actual essence’ which is unshared with anything else, and a more general essence which is shared with other things. For Soyarslan, the shared essence of things is derived

from and grounded in the definition of reason. This is because

reason enables us to understand things through their shared aspects. That reason relates to one shared essence in particular—namely, human nature—is explicitly seen in the Part IV of the Ethics, where (as we saw in the previous section) Spinoza invokes the notion of human nature in connection with his account of interpersonal morality. In virtue of the power of reason to comprehend human beings through their shared nature, we understand not only the essence of Adam insofar as he is human, but also that Adam and I and all other human beings share the very same essence, which involves the capacity to reason or to be determined by adequate ideas. (Soyarslan 2013, 24-25)

In contrast to this shared essence thesis that reason purports, Soyarslan argues that *scientia intuitiva* reaches a unique and otherwise unattainable cognition of the ‘actual essence of things’. For her, *scientia intuitiva* entails a particular relationship between God and the person cognizing. She argues that a person’s *conatus* or actual essence is the power by which a particular thing strives to persevere, and this is the power itself of God, but in a particular finite form, i.e., the actual essence of a singular thing is a particular expression of God’s power. She makes this case referencing 3p6d, that singular things “express in a certain and determinate way, God’s power, by which God is and acts” and therefore “God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself”. From this, she calls attention to 4p4d, where Spinoza argues

The power by which the singular things (and consequently, [any] man) preserve their being is the power itself of God or Nature (by 1p24c), not insofar as it is infinite, but insofar as it is explained through the man’s essence (by 3p7). The man’s power, therefore, insofar as it is explained through his actual essence, is part of God or Nature’s infinite power, that is (by 1p34), of its essence. (4p4d)

Just as for Garrett, Soyarslan gives *scientia intuitiva* a unique place in the content it yields. That is, reason cannot give rise to the sort of cognition that *scientia intuitiva* gives rise to.

Primus (2024), on the other hand, departs from this formal essence/actual essence distinction that Garrett uses, and instead understands formal essence as a shoehorn to emphasize the Cartesian sense of a thing’s formal reality (as opposed to its objective reality).²⁰ Moreover, Primus deviates from both Garrett and Soyarslan in holding that the content of *scientia intuitiva* is not really

²⁰ In Cartesian thought, the formal reality of a thing refers to the actual reality of some thing independent of one’s idea of it; conversely, the objective reality of a thing refers to the reality of a thing in one’s thought, or the thing’s representational content of one’s idea of the thing. See AT:VII 41–42.

different from reason. On Primus' account, *scientia intuitiva* consists of two intuitions, deemed intuition A and intuition B. Intuition A, on her account, is an extension of Descartes' ontological argument for the existence of God. In addition to intuiting the existence of God, according to Primus, Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* also carries with it the claims that "[1] that all of God's effects are necessary, infinite, eternal modes; [2] that perceived finite, enduring things and infinite, eternal modes are one and the same essences conceived in different ways; and [3] that everything can be conceived under different attributes." (Primus 2024, 359). Each of these intuitions can be demonstrated from reason, but in the case of *scientia intuitiva*, they are intuited with a certain immediacy and self-evidency. For her, "*scientia intuitiva* is a confluence of an intuitive understanding of fundamental ontology proceeding from an "adequate idea of the formal reality of certain attributes of God" and a cogito-like intuitive understanding of one's own existence (Intuition B)" (Primus 2024, 377). This cogito-like intuition is the identification of oneself from a first-personal experience of having intuition A and understanding oneself as an infinite and eternal mode of God. For this reason, Primus deems *scientia intuitiva* as a way of "finding oneself in God" or a "metaphysically self-locating" thought, since it shines light with immediacy on the specific relationship oneself, as an infinite mode, bears with God as the infinite intellect. More importantly, according to Primus,

scientia intuitiva necessarily comes with a radical reassessment of the very being or reality of this or that thing. One realizes that things that one had hitherto taken to be really real— one's own enduring body and the many other enduring bodies one feels affected by (2A4)—aren't real at all; the formal reality of enduring things is not formal reality that can be conceived as in and caused by an infinite, eternal God. Given this realization, one's responses to one's feelings of one's enduring, finite body being affected by other enduring, finite bodies will surely be tempered. (Primus 2014, 381)

For the sake of this thesis, I will follow Primus' view of *scientia intuitiva*, with the exception of her acosmist reading and endorsement of "infinite modes". First, Primus' view provides an adequate view about the content of *scientia intuitiva*; specifically that it is a "metaphysically self-locating thought", i.e., that one recognizes their place within God/substance. This view distances itself from

the debate regarding the content of *scientia intuitiva* as perception of singular essences.²¹ Second, her view emphasizes the immediacy of *scientia intuitiva*, which, as we will see, is crucial to understanding *scientia intuitiva*'s respective power over the affects. I passively suggest more reasons for this interpretation in chapter two.

SECTION 1.3 – AKRASIA

In this section, I outline the account of *akrasia* I will be working with. In order to understand how *akrasia* works for Spinoza, it is important to understand first what gives ideas their power. I will follow Soyarslan (2014) and Lin (2006) in my working account of *akrasia*.

Before I introduce Spinoza's conception of *akrasia*, it is useful to consider how others understand *akrasia*. For many, both contemporary and historical, *akrasia* can be understood as weakness of the will (recall that I mentioned above that Spinoza rejects this "will", identifying it with the intellect). Weakness of the will more generally has to do with one's recognition of there being a correct, moral, or otherwise better course of action to take, i.e., what they should do, and yet refrain from doing so. For example, in Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates formulates *akrasia* as a situation wherein one would continue on a particular course of action in spite of the fact that they know of a better course of action that they could follow. Socrates, as other historical and contemporary figures do, ultimately rejects the possibility of *akrasia*, arguing,

if the pleasant is the good, no one who either knows or believes that there is another possible course of action, better than the one he is following, will ever continue on his present course when he might choose the better. To 'act beneath yourself' is the result of pure ignorance; to 'be your own master' is wisdom. (358b-c)

For an example of *akrasia*, consider a student who, rather than staying home to study for their upcoming exam for which they know they should, decides to go out to a party in which no good can come, that is, the worser of the two options. Spinoza endorses a relatively unique formulation of it,

²¹ I suggest, though do not elaborate further, that even if *scientia intuitiva* perceives the essence of singular things in a way that reason cannot, this only helps my argument.

which he describes as situations wherein, quoting Ovid, “I see and approve of the better, but I follow the worse”.

To get us started, for Spinoza, *akrasia* consists in a situation by which a person follows what a passion determines them to do as opposed to what an action, insofar as they have the respective adequate idea, would cause them to do. In order to understand how this is possible, it is crucial to understand how ideas derive their power. In part 5 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza claims that “the power of an effect is defined by the power of its cause(s), insofar as its essence is explained or defined by the essence of its cause” (5a2). Accordingly, for adequate ideas or actions, the power of an idea is defined by the power of its causes; and since the cognizer is the adequate cause of their adequate ideas and actions, the power of the action is defined by the essence of the cognizer. According to Spinoza, a thing’s (including a human’s) essence is their *conatus*: “the striving [*conatus*] by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing” (3p7).²²

I noted earlier that passions are the affective state of inadequate ideas; and not only are we the inadequate cause of our inadequate ideas, but we are also the inadequate cause of our passions. In other words, in coming to have a passion or inadequate idea, something external to us must be involved in our forming of the inadequate idea/passion, i.e., that external thing must be involved as a cause in our passion/inadequate idea. This is why Spinoza claims, “the force and growth of any passion, and its perseverance in existing, are not defined by the power by which we strive to persevere in existing, but by the power of an external cause compared with our own” (4p5). Following 5a2, we can see that the power of an inadequate idea or passion is defined by the power of the external body, and more specifically the essence of the external body (according to 2p16c2, the person or thing being affected is also involved in determining the power of that idea). When

²² Spinoza’s *conatus* doctrine and how to interpret it is famous and controversial, and I hope to avoid delving into it. What is relevant here is that the power of a person’s actions will be defined by their essence.

compared with the power of oneself, the power of the external body, i.e., its essence, might be greater than the power of oneself. In this way, the external body will have more causal power over a person than that person has over themselves. Note that the power of an idea in both the cases of actions and passions does not depend on the epistemic qualities (e.g., the truth/falsity, adequacy/inadequacy, or subjective representation) of the idea, but it depends instead on the causes of the idea, i.e., whether a person is the adequate cause of their ideas or not.

We are now in a position to understand *akrasia*. *Akrasia* consists in a situation whereby a passion has more power than an action. One clear proposition that grounds *akrasia* is the aforementioned 4p6: “the force of any passion, or affect, can surpass the other actions, or power, of a man, so that the affect stubbornly clings to the man” (4p6). This is possible because, as Spinoza remarks,

there is no particular thing in nature than which there is no other that is more powerful and stronger... rather, for any given thing, there is another more powerful one by which the given thing can be destroyed. (4a1)

That is, no matter how powerful an action or one’s essence is, there will be external objects whose essence is greater than the power of ourselves as the cause of actions/adequate ideas, and these external objects can affect us in such a way that we are determined to do what the passion forces us to do, as opposed to what the action would determine us to do. Since the force and growth of a passion is defined by the power of an external cause compared with our own (4p5), in the case that the external cause has more power than us (as the cause of the adequate idea), we are therefore determined to follow the passion, not the action, and so we are in a situation where we “see the better, yet follow the worse”. This conception of *akrasia* is in line with other commentators, who hold that the *akrasia* consists in situation where, “a) reason and passion are both fully on display, and b) we end up doing what the passionate idea determines us to do, since it is in that situation more powerful than the rational one” (Soyarslan 2014, 728).

CHAPTER TWO

SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I argue that *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*. In particular, I argue for a specific interpretation of *scientia intuitiva*'s affective states, the Intellectual Love of God and *mentis acquiescentia*. As I will show, these affective states are the result of one's recognition of their unique relationship with God. Moreover, these states can be contrasted with the active affective states generated by reason. I argue that, unlike the affective states of *scientia intuitiva*, the rational actions are necessarily related to the common order of nature, in spite of the fact that reason yields adequate ideas which must be conceived under a species of eternity. In developing my argument, I will outline some of the ways in which Spinoza's conception of *scientia intuitiva* and reason are related to Descartes. Before I advance my argument, I discuss a competing interpretation of the power of *scientia intuitiva* over *akrasia* advanced by Soyarslan (2014).

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In section 2.1, I will present some basic motivations for believing that *scientia intuitiva* and its respective affective states are not susceptible to *akrasia*. In section 2.2, I will present Soyarslan's view that *scientia intuitiva*, while more powerful than reason, is nevertheless susceptible to *akrasia*. In section 2.3, I demonstrate Spinoza's Cartesian influence, noting how Spinoza shares some of Descartes' concerns regarding reason. In section 2.4, I discuss the affective states of reason and *scientia intuitiva*; in section 2.4.1, I elaborate on the rational love of God, and in section 2.4.2, I provide my interpretation of the Intellectual Love of God. Finally, in section 2.5, I argue that *scientia intuitiva*, because of its immediacy and presentation of the relationship between oneself and God *qua* substance, is necessarily more powerful than reason and demonstrate that reason, because of its temporal aspect, is susceptible to *akrasia* while *scientia intuitiva* is not.

SECTION 2.1 – BASIC MOTIVATIONS

In this section, I present some initial considerations for understanding *scientia intuitiva* to be insusceptible to *akrasia*.

One reason for thinking this is the location in the *Ethics* where Spinoza treats reason and *scientia intuitiva*. Reason is discussed in part 2 of the *Ethics*, and *akrasia* is introduced in part 4 of the *Ethics*, titled “On Human Bondage, or the Powers of the Affects”. The limited power of reason and its active affects over the passions gets developed in terms of “remedies” for the passions in the first half of part 5, and even there the powers of reason do not rise above the power of some passions. *Scientia intuitiva*, on the other hand, is developed in the second half of part 5, which, perhaps uncoincidentally, is titled “On the Power of the Intellect, or On Human Freedom”. It is, therefore, in the context of human freedom where *scientia intuitiva* and its related affective state, *amor dei intellectualis* (the Intellectual Love of God), is developed. The sense of “human freedom” involved in the naming of the fifth part is related to the sense of “bondage” at play in the title of the fourth part, i.e., bondage to the passions; and so the human freedom Spinoza speaks of is, in particular, the freedom from the passions. Spinoza offers a definition of freedom at the outset of the *Ethics*, by which he understands “that... which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone. But a thing is called necessary, or rather compelled, which is determined by another to exist and to produce an effect in a certain and determinate manner” (1d7). Since adequate ideas are accompanied by an action, and the cognizer is the adequate cause of their adequate ideas/actions, the existence of one’s actions is dependent on one’s causal power in forming adequate ideas, i.e., determining themselves to act and produce effects by their nature as minds.

Secondly, in elaborating on *scientia intuitiva* in 5p36, Spinoza identifies it with impressive ethical ideals, such as “our salvation, blessedness, or [*sive*] Freedom..., Glory” (5p36s). While Spinoza mentions a “love of God” derived from reason, Spinoza never suggests that reason or any

of its respective affective states give rise to this salvation, blessedness, freedom, etc., as they are saved only for *scientia intuitiva* and the Intellectual Love of God (I say more about reason's love of God below). This can be seen by Spinoza's claim in 5p36s that *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful and can accomplish more than reason:

I thought this worth the trouble of noting here, in order to show by this example how much the knowledge of singular things I have called intuitive, or knowledge of the third kind (see 2p40s2), can accomplish, and how much more power it is than the universal knowledge I have called knowledge of the second kind. (5p36s)

Indeed, Spinoza ends the *Ethics* on the note that the blessedness of *scientia intuitiva* just is virtue,²³ and that "the power to restrain lusts arises from blessedness itself" (5p42s).

Given these relatively compelling reasons, it is worthwhile to consider a competing interpretation about the susceptibility of *scientia intuitiva* to *akrasia*. In the next section, I consider Soyarslan's argument that *scientia intuitiva*, while more powerful than reason in combating the passions, is nevertheless still susceptible to *akrasia*.

SECTION 2.2 – SOYARSLAN'S APPROACH

Soyarslan (2014) explores the question of the susceptibility of *scientia intuitiva* to *akrasia*. She argues that, while *scientia intuitiva* is more capable of combating the passions than reason, *scientia intuitiva* nevertheless is not necessarily more powerful than the passions, and so is in fact susceptible to *akrasia*. In this section, I will highlight Soyarslan's reasons for thinking so.

Soyarslan embraces an understanding of *akrasia* quite similar to mine, where the power of a passion exceeds the power of oneself as the cause of their actions. For Soyarslan, the power of an idea rests on 5a2, which states that "the power of an affect is defined by the power of its cause, insofar as its essence is explained or defined by the essence of its cause" (5a2). Consequently, the power of oneself as the cause of their actions is their essence, striving, or *conatus* (recall that "the

²³ 'Virtue' [*virtus*] has significant historical meaning. In one sense, *virtus* means "manliness" or "manhood". In another, more philosophically accurate sense it means something along the lines of "excellence". *Virtus* is the Latin translation of the Greek *arete*, dating back to Plato and Aristotle. See Kisner, "Virtue".

striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing” (3p7). With regards to the power of the passions, Soyarslan holds that the power of the passions is determined by the power of the external cause(s) of the passion; “the power of a passion is a function of the ratio of the power of the external thing that causes the passion to our own power of persevering in existence” (Soyarslan 2014, 731). The power of reason, then, is a function of the power of our *conatus*, because “we are the adequate cause of a rational idea, a rational idea can be clearly and distinctly perceived through our essence alone, which, in turn, means that the essence of a rational idea can be defined by our essence alone” (Soyarslan 2014, 729-730). Because “there is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger” (4a1), i.e., there may be some external body in nature which is more powerful than a person, or, “the force by which a man perseveres in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes” (4p3). Thus, for Soyarslan, the power of a rational idea consists in the power of a person’s essence, or their striving/*conatus* insofar as they are the adequate cause of their action. *Akasia* arises when the power of a passion, which is defined by the power of an external cause when compared with our own, exceeds the power of our essence.

An initial concern for Soyarslan is that Spinoza claims, as I mentioned above, *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason. But if a person’s power is defined by their essence or *conatus*, and since we are the adequate cause of adequate ideas derived from reason and *scientia intuitiva*, it is not entirely clear how *scientia intuitiva* can be more powerful than reason. Soyarslan now has two tasks: she needs to both explain how it is that *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason and to explain how *scientia intuitiva* is still susceptible to *akasia*. But how exactly does Soyarslan understand *scientia intuitiva*?

Soyarslan notes three features of *scientia intuitiva* which differ from reason; its foundation, methodology, and content. The foundation of *scientia intuitiva* differs from reason insofar as *scientia*

intuitiva begins from “an adequate knowledge of the essence of God itself” and infers, from this foundation of the knowledge of the essence of God, adequate knowledge of the essence of things (Soyarslan 2014, 733). The foundation of reason, on the other hand, is provided by common notions, “which represent those properties that are ‘common to all things’ and of which we have adequate ideas” (Soyarslan 2014, 733).²⁴

Scientia intuitiva’s methodology, according to Soyarslan, is immediate and direct, whereas reason’s methodology consists in a procedural process of applying one’s understanding of what is common to a variety of things to another. Soyarslan points to the aforementioned mathematical example of the fourth proportion to demonstrate this point. Under *scientia intuitiva*, “one has an immediate insight into the solution without any demonstration required” (Soyarslan 2014, 734). But reason requires a step-by-step approach where the cognizer walks through each individual premise in order to arrive at the conclusion.

Finally, Soyarslan understands the content of *scientia intuitiva* to differ from reason.²⁵ For *scientia intuitiva* is said to yield “adequate knowledge of the essence of things” (2p40s2), whereas reason yields “universal knowledge” (2p40s2). Motivation for this view comes from 2p44s2, where Spinoza says reason does not “explain the essence of any singular thing” (2p44c2). As we will see, in explaining the power of *scientia intuitiva*, Soyarslan focuses on this difference in content.

The above is Soyarslan’s working account of *scientia intuitiva*. But I raised two explananda for Soyarslan; to explain how it is that *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason and to explain how *scientia intuitiva* is still susceptible to *akrasia*. In navigating this first point about how *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason, Soyarslan asks us to remember that

for Spinoza, the power or striving that constitutes our essence does not remain unmodified during our

²⁴ See 2p36-2p40 for Spinoza’s discussion of these “common notions”.

²⁵ For arguments that the content differs in this respect, see Gueroult, “Spinoza II”; Carr, “Spinoza’s Distinction”; Bennett, “A Study”; Lloyd, “Part of Nature”; Della Rocca, “Representation and the Mind-Body Problem”; Soyarslan, “The Susceptibility”; “The Distinction”; Renz, “The Explainability of Experience”.

lifetime: it is constantly subject to change, in that it can enjoy an increase or it can suffer a decrease. What is particularly important for our purposes is that the power of our *conatus* reaches its peak as we attain intuitive knowledge... (Soyarslan 2014, 733)

The important thing to focus on, according to Soyarslan, is a person's essence or *conatus* and their modal status. In particular, a person's essence is the power or "striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being" (3p7), which is, in turn, "God's very power manifested in a finite form" (Soyarslan 2014, 735; 4p4d). *Scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason, according to Soyarslan, because intuitive knowledge and its corresponding (and unique) affective state, the Intellectual Love of God, lets one reach the pinnacle of one's power or *conatus*. It is in this way that the content difference between *scientia intuitiva* and reason is important. According to her, *scientia intuitiva* is an "intuitive grasp(ing) of the relation of God's essence to their (singular) essences", whether the latter singular essence is "a partial expression of God's infinite and eternal expression" (Soyarslan 2014, 735). It is because *scientia intuitiva* grasps this relationship between singular essences on the one hand and God's essence on the other, "the knowledge of singular things is directly correlated to the knowledge of God" (Soyarslan 2014, 735). And this, consequently, explains why the mind's greatest virtue is to understand things by *scientia intuitiva*:

When I intuitively grasp my power as an expression and consequence of God's power, I achieve a deep causal understanding, which is marked by an experienced character. In other words, then, I see 'in one glance' (2p40s2) that '[I am] in God and [am] conceived through God' (5p30), and experience my being as a modal expression of God. This is a non-discursive experience of the self's being in God. This immediate experience of our very modal status moves us, and thereby increases the power of our *conatus*, in a way that no discursive rational knowledge can. This is because, it enables us to become directly aware of how we are related to God, which Spinoza considers as 'the greatest thing the mind can understand' (4p28d). (Soyarslan 2014, 735-736)

Thus, according to Soyarslan, *scientia intuitiva* is more powerful than reason because of these delineating futures.

In relating the power of *scientia intuitiva* to *akrasia*, Soyarslan shifts to discussing its corresponding affective state, the Intellectual Love of God. In order to make most sense of her argument, I will consider her interpretation of the Intellectual Love of God. As I discussed in the previous chapter, ideas are necessarily affective. Since *akrasia* makes most sense in the context of the

affects, it is sensible to discuss the susceptibility of *scientia intuitiva* to *akrasia* in terms of its unique affective state. For this reason, Soyarslan's discussion of the Intellectual Love of God is important, and I too will use it to consider the susceptibility of *scientia intuitiva* to *akrasia*.

The Intellectual Love of God [*Amor Dei Intellectualis*] is introduced in 5p32. Spinoza says, "whatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge we take pleasure in, and our pleasure is accompanied by the idea of God as a cause (5p32). In the corollary, Spinoza writes,

from the third kind of knowledge, there arises (by p32) joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e., (by DOA6), Love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as present (by 5p29), but insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call the intellectual love of God. (5p32c)

This Love, per Spinoza, is eternal (5p33), and God loves himself with an infinite Intellectual Love (5p35). Importantly, we share with God the Intellectual Love, albeit with some qualification:

The Mind's intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity; i.e., the Mind's intellectual Love of God is a part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself. (5p36)

A particularly striking feature from this proposition is Spinoza's claim that "the Mind's intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves himself, *not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence... the Mind's intellectual Love of God is a part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself*" (5p36, emphasis mine). This can be contrasted with the previous proposition, where Spinoza argues that "God loves himself with an infinite Intellectual Love" (5p35). In this way, Spinoza seems to limit the human mind's Intellectual Love of God through the "insofar as" [*quatenus*] clause. That is, the "insofar as he [God] can be explained by the human Mind's essence" seems to demote the cognition and affective status when compared to that God, who, qua substance, "loves himself with an infinite Intellectual Love". Because of this apparent limitation, Soyarslan argues that *scientia intuitiva* will be susceptible to *akrasia*. In order to make this point, she references 1p25c and 2p11c, which are propositions involved in the proof of 5p36.

According to her, 1p25c introduces the concept of finite modes, or modes by which God's

power is expressed in a certain and determinate way. 2p11c supposedly identifies the human mind as “a part of the infinite intellect of God”, and is in turn,

the infinite understanding by which God knows its eternal and infinite essence and everything that follows from this essence. Even though our mind’s knowledge of God is the very same knowledge by which God knows himself, this is not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human mind’s essence. (Soyarslan 2014, 739)

Now, according to Soyarslan, by 1p25, the human mind has been identified as a finite mode, and it is in virtue of this modal status that the human mind’s greatest power, intuitive knowledge, is necessarily limited, as it is not numerically identical with God’s infinite power. It is our modal status as finite and durational beings that the power of the mind cannot be “boundless”, and the power of one’s essence, their *conatus*, “is nothing but God’s very power manifested in a *finite* form (4p4d). It is for this reason, in addition to the axiom in the fourth part of the *Ethics* “there is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger” (4a1) that *scientia intuitiva* is susceptible to *akrasia*. Because the power of an external body can overcome the power of our *conatus*, even when our *conatus* reaches its pinnacle under *scientia intuitiva*, the passions may be more powerful than any of our actions. The consequence is the situation of *akrasia*, and so *scientia intuitiva* is susceptible to *akrasia*.

SECTION 2.3 – SPINOZA’S CARTESIAN INFLUENCE

Before developing Spinoza’s account of the rational love of God and the Intellectual Love of God, I discuss Descartes’ view of intuition [*intuitus*] and deduction. Recall that in the previous chapter I argued that the affects just are certain representations or ideas considered in terms of their affective quality. Thus far, I have omitted much discussion of Descartes. For, while his influence on Spinoza cannot be unsaid, many of the ways in which Descartes has influenced Spinoza have not necessarily been in the scope of this paper.²⁶ On this point, however, it is worthwhile to note that

²⁶ Indeed, the only published work of Spinoza’s was his presentation of Descartes *Principles*, “The Principles of Cartesian Philosophy”.

Descartes had a form of intuition and deduction which he elaborated most clearly on in his *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* [*Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii*] (hereafter shortened to *Rules*). As we will see, many of Descartes concerns regarding deduction – specifically its temporal nature and reliance on memory – are shared with Spinoza,²⁷ and just as intuition for Descartes is superior in this respect, so too for Spinoza.²⁸

Descartes introduces deduction and intuition in Rule 3. As we will see, Spinoza's second kind of cognition, reason, seems heavily reliant or inspired by this Cartesian deduction, and his third kind, *scientia intuitiva*, seems at the very least similar in some respects to Cartesian intuition – namely in its immediacy. Descartes defines deduction as follows: “the inference of something as following necessarily from some other propositions which are known with certainty” (AT10:370). Relatedly, Spinoza defines reason as a kind of cognition by which we form universal ideas “from the fact that we have common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things” (2p40s2). As I have discussed above, reason consists in inferences from certain axioms and definitions, which we do in fact know with certainty (according to Spinoza), to other adequate ideas which necessarily follow from those axioms, definitions, and adequate ideas. And we know that whatever follows from adequate ideas will also be adequate (2p40). Thus Spinoza's conception of reason seems quite similar to the Cartesian deduction.

Descartes also defines intuition:

By ‘intuition’ I do not mean the fluctuating testimony of the senses or the deceptive judgment of the imagination as it botches things together, but the conception of a clear and attentive mind, which is so easy and distinct that there can be no room for doubt about what we are understanding. Alternatively, and this comes to the same thing, intuition is the indubitable conception of a clear and attentive mind which proceeds solely from the light of reason. Because it is simpler, it is more certain than deduction, though deduction, as we noted above is not something a man can perform wrongly. Thus everyone can mentally intuit that he exists, that he is thinking, that a triangle is bounded by just three lines, and a

²⁷ It is relevant to note that Descartes never published the *Rules*, and so it is unclear if Spinoza has direct access to it.

²⁸ It is worth mentioning that there is a pre-Cartesian tradition of intuition. For Aquinas (*De Veritate*, q10, a11, c, q9, a15c, q10, a8.2; and *Summa Theologica* q101, a2, c), intuition consists, in part, of an intellectual “vision of God” enjoyed by the blessed in the afterlife and an apprehension of first principles. Duns Scotus (*Lectura II*, dn3) also has another view of intuition. See Paul, “Cartesian Intuition”.

sphere by a single surface, and the like. (AT10:368)

Clearly, Descartes wants to distance himself from understanding intuition as a sort of sensory representation which depends on imagination. Instead, it's a kind of indubitable clear and distinct cognition which, because of its simplicity, is more certain than deduction.²⁹ We also can intuit certain truths, such as the *cogito* and the three-sided nature of a triangle. A few rules later, in Rule 11, Descartes places two conditions on intuition. He says, "two things are required for mental intuition: first, the proposition intuited must be clear and distinct; second, the whole proposition must be understood all at once [*tota simul*], and not bit by bit" (AT 10:407). The Cartesian influence on Spinoza's ideas of *scientia intuitiva* is becoming clearer. Spinoza seems to endorse a similar view, at least about the indubitability of *scientia intuitiva* and that it is more powerful than reason (5p36s); though Descartes cashes this latter clause as intuition providing more certainty than deduction, and Spinoza as being more powerful than reason. Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* can be understood as a development of Descartes' intuition and the indubitability it affords.

Elliot Paul (2022) provides an excellent summary of Descartes' account of intuition, so I will present his interpretation. Paul identifies seven features of intuition, all of which differ but are co-constitutive of intuition; intuitions are perceptions (or 'conceptions'), intellectual, clear and distinct, synchronic, indubitable, infallible, and finally provide a special kind of knowledge or "grasping" [*cognitio*]. I focus on two of these as fundamental to understanding the historical precedent for Spinoza's account of *scientia intuitiva*; namely its status as synchronic and indubitable. Of course, I think all seven are likely somewhat influential in Spinoza's account of *scientia intuitiva*, but these two are most pertinent to the discussion here.

That Descartes' account of intuition is synchronic follows from Rule 11, where he says that

²⁹ Though both are described as "clear and distinct" perceptions by Spinoza. See 2p36. Moreover, while deduction is clear and distinct for Descartes, it gains its certainty after God is proven to not be a deceiver in the *Meditations*.

“the whole proposition must be understood *all at once* [*tota simul*], and not bit by bit” (AT10:407).

This is similar to the immediacy point of Spinoza’s *scientia intuitiva*; he holds that *scientia intuitiva* “proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [NS: formal] essence of things” (2p40s2) wherein one infers “in one glance [*uno intuito*]” (2p40s2) the knowledge of the essence of things. As many commentators (e.g., Primus 2024, Soyarslan 2014) note, a striking feature of *scientia intuitiva* is its immediacy. In contrast to intuition, Descartes’ deduction is differentiated in the form of presenting an argument. In fact, according to Paul, “with longer arguments involving multiple inferences, however, you typically cannot grasp the whole argument at once, at least not initially, and so you have to hold earlier steps [in] memory while you turn your attention to later steps one after another, diachronically” (Paul 2022, 10). Cases of deduction like this, where one cannot intuit the propositions all together as involved in the deduction, are referred to by Descartes as “enumeration” [*enumeration*], in order to “emphasize that it involves a *number* of inferences transpiring successively rather than a single inference performed all at once” (Paul 2022, 10). Spinoza’s *Ethics* may be understood as a kind of enumeration, either in its parts or as a whole. These enumerations are “less certain than intuition to the extent *that they involve memory* which is not a form of clear and distinct perception and which is “weak and unstable”. (Paul 2022, 10). This is why, for Descartes, in the case of enumerations, he must

run over them again and again until I can pass from the first to the last so quickly that memory is left with practically no role to play, and I seem to be intuiting the whole thing at once. (Rule 11, AT10:408-9)

As we will see below, I find Spinoza likely to have been influenced by, or at least aware of, and referring to this point.³⁰

Interestingly, Descartes comments that he must distinguish deduction and intuition because

we are distinguishing mental intuition from certain deduction on the grounds that we are aware of a movement or a sort of sequence in the latter but not in the former, and also because immediate self-

³⁰ See, for example, Lloyd and Della Rocca, “Part of Nature”; Nadler, “Spinoza’s Ethics”; Ellsiepen, “The Types of Knowledge”.

evidence is not required for deduction, as it is for intuition; deduction in a sense gets its certainty from memory. It follows that those propositions which are immediately inferred from first principles can be said to be known in one respect through intuition, and in another respect through deduction. But the first principles themselves are known only through intuition, and the remote conclusions only through deduction. (AT10:370)

We can see that Descartes thinks intuition entails an “immediate self-evidence” and that deduction “in a sense gets its certainty from memory”. I take Spinoza to draw heavily on this distinction and the Cartesian notion of enumerations, in particular. Remember that Spinoza defines memory as “nothing other than a certain connection of ideas involving the nature of things which are outside the human Body—a connection that is in the Mind according to the order and connection of the affections of the human Body” (2p18s). Indeed, for Spinoza, memories are necessarily inadequate since they track the common order of nature and not the order of the intellect. In performing a Spinozistic deduction, or reason, then, Spinoza councils one to not rely on memory in forming a premise. When one deduces that, because all humans are mortal and they are a human, it follows that they are mortal, they need to have an adequate idea of each of the premises and then and only then will the conclusion adequately follow. If one were to rely on memory for any of the premises of an argument, then one’s idea of the conclusion is inadequate, as they are no longer the adequate cause of that idea. Thus, Spinoza’s notion of reason, unlike Descartes, cannot rely on memory to any extent.

Indeed, this problem can be made even stronger when we consider the Cartesian enumeration. Spinoza seemingly does not have a term for this, but it is present, nevertheless. For Descartes, his goal is certain, clear, and distinct knowledge; what he terms *scientia*. In order to arrive at this knowledge, the deduction “sometimes requires such a long chain of inferences that when we arrive at such a truth it is not easy to recall the entire route which led us to it. That is why we say that a continuous movement of thought is needed to make good any weakness of memory” (Rule 7, AT10:388). Indeed, this sort of deduction, or enumeration, can be quite difficult and there are multiple obstacles in the way. For example, in an enumeration, the movement from premise to

premise can nowhere be interrupted; for, without due consideration and attention to each premise and movement of mind, one might too quickly pass from a premise to a conclusion which does not follow. As Descartes puts it, “whenever even the smallest link is overlooked the chain is immediately broken, and the certainty of the conclusion entirely collapses” (Rule 7, AT10:388, AT10:390). For Descartes, just as for Spinoza, the human intellect can be hindered by imagination, sense-perception, and memory (Rule 8, AT10:399). In performing an enumeration, then, one need be careful not to allow their enumeration to be hindered by imagination, sense-perception, nor memory.

Spinoza has the same sort of concern about chains of reasoning as Descartes, here. Spinoza also worries about the involvement of the imagination and memory.³¹ As I have mentioned elsewhere, imagination and memory receive their representational content through the body’s involvement in the common order of nature. At the same time, adequate ideas are also representational. For example, they might represent (abstract) bodies, like triangles; but these ideas do not represent something insofar as they affect the cognizer in the common order of nature, but as a representation of the body, or triangle, under a species of eternity. Representing external bodies insofar as they affect us in the common order of nature, per Spinoza, “indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the eternal bodies” (2p16c2). If the operation of reason involves some idea which has for its cause some external body, insofar as it affects a person in the common order of nature, the idea – whether a premise, consequent or conclusion – cannot be said to be an adequate idea. And so, for Spinoza, one must ensure that they are always the adequate cause of their adequate ideas when operating through reason. Memory cannot at all be used in constructing an argument or propositions if one is to gain a rational idea.

Keeping this point in mind, one may look at a part of the *Ethics*, or even the whole of the *Ethics* itself, as a sort of Cartesian enumeration. Each part of the *Ethics* entails a Euclidean proof of

³¹ Of course, Spinoza reduces sense-perception to imagination, or cognition of the first kind.

various propositions which relate not just to each other but to other parts of the *Ethics*. Obviously, this is a very difficult task for one to do as an enumeration without having to rely on memory to any extent. If the cognizer relies on their memory, even for just one small proposition, as Descartes put it, the “entire chain is broken and the certainty of the conclusion collapses” (Rule 7, AT10:388). For this reason, in the context of remedying the passions, Spinoza suggests “the Mind can bring it about that all the Body's affections, or images of things, are related to the idea of God” (5p14). In doing this, the rational love of God may arise (5p10); but this is a kind of heuristics which does not rely on memory, nor is it nearly as cognitively demanding as knowing the *Ethics* in its entirety would require. The rational love of God, in other words, occurs when one recognizes that some passion necessarily inheres in, and therefor is related to, the idea of God. But this sort of process does not involve a Cartesian-like enumeration or long chain of reasoning; indeed, it is rather short. In proving this, Spinoza cites nothing but that the Mind can form an adequate idea of its (bodily) affections, and that the Mind must understand all these affections to be related to God insofar as they inhere in God by 1p15. In order to form this link, one must form an adequate idea of the passion (5p3, 5p4) and connect this ultimately back to God.

Contrary to performing this kind of heuristic, one can walk through each relevant proposition to gain an adequate idea about their passion, starting perhaps with part 1 of the *Ethics* and ending around part 4. However, there is around 210 propositions (excluding corollaries, scholia, definitions and axioms). In order to do this, one would need to have an adequate idea of each and every relevant proposition to the deduction. Clearly, then, this deduction is significantly more difficult than the heuristic Spinoza recommends above.

As we will see, *scientia intuitiva*, on the other hand, not only is similar to a lengthy enumeration in virtue of its content (i.e., what ideas *scientia intuitiva* and reason give rise to), but it is an immediate cognition of the entire content of that enumeration, as adequate, and so does not rely

on memory in any way.

Reason, on Spinoza's account, will face another problem in performing these sorts of enumerations insofar as it appears temporal. As I said above, rational ideas represent their objects under a species of eternity. However, one *gains* rational ideas temporally; one at this time adequately knows this proposition, and at a later time deduces this other proposition which necessarily follows from that previous proposition. This point is just the procedural or step-by-step point that I have raised for reason in the previous chapter. But because the *operation* of reason is temporal, the mind is necessarily related united to the body in the common order of nature.³² And the body, for Spinoza, is the source of the passions, insofar as it is subject to the common order of nature and through which we perceive external bodies as affecting oneself. For this reason, the power of rational ideas will necessarily have to compete with the power of the passions. All ideas will have, for their object, the human body (as Spinoza shows in 2p13), and whatever the Mind perceives as happening in the body, the Mind will have an accompanying idea of (2p12, 2p13). That this is true of reason can be seen by Spinoza's discussion of the common notions of reason in 2p37-2p40. That is, it is through affections of the body that one can recognize, say, properties which are common to all and both in the part and in the whole (2p37). Similarly, insofar as the Mind perceives affections of external bodies, it can perceive things its body has in common with other bodies, and therefore gain adequate ideas. As Spinoza puts it, "from this it follows that the Mind is the more capable of perceiving many things adequately as its Body has many things in common with other bodies" (2p39c). Rational ideas, however, are conceivable under a species of duration, i.e., insofar as it is temporal and procedural process, and under a species of eternity, insofar as its truths are eternal. And so the human Mind, *qua* temporal or existing within duration, will experience passions insofar as it is

³² One may express a concern about parallelism given this claim and some others I make later in this chapter. I address the parallelism concern in chapter 3.

affected by external ideas, and will act insofar as it perceives its object, the body, under a species of eternity.

Moreover, one might understand the knowledge of properties yielded by reason to involve external bodies. Consider the propositions where the common notions are said to be developed the most: 2p36 to 2p40. 2p37, for example, asks the reader to consider the Physical Interlude in demonstrating that “what is common to all things and is equally in the part and in the whole, does not constitute the essence of any singular thing” (2p37). In 2p38, Spinoza argues that “those things which are common to all, and which are equally in the part and in the whole, can only be conceived adequately” (2p38). Because the first thing that constitutes the object of the human Mind is nothing but a body, we can experience other bodies in the common order of nature, from which we can find properties that are shared amongst all other bodies (for example, that they are extended in varying degrees). And this is just what the common notions consist in, namely that one represents those properties which are shared with other bodies as experienced in the common order of nature. As we will see, *scientia intuitiva* does not concern itself with common notions, nor with the unification of the human Mind with the body.

Given this Cartesian influence, we can move to discuss the Intellectual Love of God. These Cartesian influences are important to understanding how Spinoza conceives of reason and *scientia intuitiva*, specifically insofar as intuition is understood as immediate and certain. As I argued in chapter one, ideas correspond to affective states.³³ So, we can understand these Cartesian influences as they affect Spinoza’s accounts of the rational love of God and the Intellectual Love of God. As we will see, the temporal aspect of reason will affect the power of reason and the rational love of God; the immediacy of *scientia intuitiva* will also affect the power of the Intellectual Love of God.

³³ This position is not mirrored by Descartes; it is something Spinoza introduces.

SECTION 2.4 – THE AFFECTIVE STATES OF REASON AND SCIENTIA INTUITIVA

In this section, I will develop the affective states of *scientia intuitiva* and reason. I start with the “love of God” [*Amor Dei*] (conversely; love toward God [*erga Deum Amor*]) that Spinoza attributes to reason. As we will see, Descartes’ notions of “deduction” and “intuition” are influential on Spinoza, and so I spend time discussing the similarities between Descartes and Spinoza on these concepts. Then, I move to develop my account of the Intellectual Love of God [*Amor Dei Intellectualis*]. Distinguishing the mere rational love of God from the Intellectual Love of God will prove quite important. I will also comment on *acquiescentia*, and some other affective states related to *scientia intuitiva*.

It is important to remember that all the affects are derived from the three basic affects of joy, sadness, and desire, and that I consider only joy and sadness in the context of this thesis. For the sake of this section, however, the mere rational love for God and the affective states of *scientia intuitiva* (e.g., the Intellectual Love of God, blessedness, *mentis acquiescentia*) follow from adequate ideas, and as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, adequate ideas can come to yield only joy and not sadness. Consequently, I discuss joy as an affect only insofar as one is the adequate cause of an adequate idea which can be said to cause one’s affect of joy, i.e., an action which constitutes a person’s passing to a greater perfection and therefore an increase in their power of acting. Recall, finally, that joy “is a man’s [person’s] passage from a lesser to a greater perfection” (DOA2). From this basic affect of joy, Spinoza defines “love” considered on its own without following from reason nor *scientia intuitiva*, as “a joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause” (DOA6).

SECTION 2.4.1 – THE RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD

It is essential to my argument to understand how the Intellectual Love of God, as constitutive of *scientia intuitiva*, differs from the rational Love of God. Consequently, before I develop my account of the Intellectual Love of God, I first consider the rational love of God. The

rational Love for God, a species of joy, gets explicated in the first half of book five. It is introduced first where Spinoza says that “he who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly loves God, and does so the more, the more he understands himself and his affects” (5p15). In the demonstration, Spinoza references the previous proposition, where he argues that because the human mind can form a clear and distinct concept of any affection of the Body, and because whatever is, is in God (1p15), “the Mind can bring it about that all the Body’s affections, or images of things, are related to the idea of God” (5p14). For this reason, one’s rational love for God consists in the joining of one’s affects with the idea of God, such that this love is an active joy,³⁴ accompanied *by the idea of God*.³⁵ As Spinoza states, this love for God is “the highest good” we can want from the dictate of reason (I return to this “from the dictate of reason” clause later). Spinoza’s discussion of this rational love for God culminates in 5p20. In 5p20, Spinoza notes that envy or jealousy cannot taint one’s love toward God, and in the scholium, that

we can show that there is no affect which is directly contrary to this Love and by which it can be destroyed. So we can conclude that this Love is the most constant of all the affects, and insofar as it is related to the Body, cannot be destroyed, unless it is destroyed with the Body itself. (5p20s)

The rational love for God, then, appears intimately connected with the union of the human mind and body, such that it ceases only when the body ceases. Indeed, Spinoza will consider the nature of this love insofar as it is related *only* to the mind later, when he discusses the Intellectual Love of God, or the affective state constitutive of *scientia intuitiva* and only *scientia intuitiva*.³⁶

³⁴ Love can be active, despite involving an external cause. Nadler puts it eloquently; “As one comes to understand oneself and one’s own affections clearly and distinctly, the ideas of the body and its affects are detached from the ideas of external causes and attached to the idea of God. When ideas in the intellect are properly ordered, the idea of God is the ultimate and adequate ground of all the other ideas, that is, it is the cause of our knowledge itself... And this joy is accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, insofar as the idea of God is the foundation of the adequacy of the knowledge. But joy together with an awareness of the object that is the cause of joy is a love of that object. Thus, knowledge of oneself leading toward knowledge of God brings about a love of God” (Nadler 2013, 300-301).

³⁵ As we will see, the language of the rational love for God as a joy accompanied by the “idea of God” and of the Intellectual Love of God as a joy accompanied by the “idea of God *as cause*” will be important.

³⁶ See Melamed, “Spinoza’s Metaphysics of Thought,” and Hübner, “Spinoza on the Limits of Explanation,” for a discussion of the attribute of Thought.

Spinoza offers some particularly interesting yet important remarks about the rational love for God in 5p20. First, it seems he qualifies this rational love for God:

this Love toward God [rational love of God] *is the highest good which we can want from the dictate of reason* (by 4p28), and is common to all men (by 4p36); we desire that all should enjoy it (by 4p37). And so (by DOA23), it cannot be stained by an affect of Envy, nor (by 5p18 and 3p25s) by an affect of Jealousy. On the contrary (by 3p31), the more men we imagine to enjoy it, the more it must be encouraged. (5p20d, emphasis mine)

Spinoza's language of the rational love for God as "the highest good" might seem problematic considering my claim that a person's Intellectual Love of God is human perfection and the highest ethical state attainable for a person. It is important to note that Spinoza *immediately* qualifies this claim about the "highest good" with the particular claim that this is the highest good "we can want *from the dictate of reason*". In other words, it is through the *rational* organization of the relationship between one's affects, their mind, and God as substance that the love for God arises, and the rational love for God, *only* insofar as it is derived from reason, is the highest ethical state. That is, the love for God is the highest good, or *summum bonum*, that one can strive for, but only from the dictates of reason. Yet, for the affective states of *scientia intuitiva*, there is an even higher ethical state, the Intellectual Love of God.³⁷ After all, Spinoza argues that "the greatest satisfaction of Mind there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge" (5p27) and "the greatest striving of the Mind, and its greatest virtue is understanding things by the third kind of knowledge" (5p25).

Second, there is a seemingly conclusory sense of 5p20's scholium. In particular, Spinoza claims, puzzlingly, that "it is now time to pass to those things which pertain to the Mind's duration without relation to the body" (5p20s). Nadler (2013) interprets this as a move away from our existence under a species of duration and towards us as under a species of eternity:

the statement also tells us that the love of God he has been discussing up to this point is something that pertains to us only insofar as we are temporal existents who, in this present life full of affective interactions with other bodies, are in bondage to the passions. The ordinary love of God is about moderating the emotions we experience as durational beings and thus fostering a temporal increase in

³⁷ Recall that one and the same idea can be construed either in terms of its representations, as an idea, or in terms of its affections, as an affect (depending on the content and causes of the representation, as a passion or action).

power. The Intellectual Love of God, on the other hand, is something that transcends this immediate therapeutic project, and the benefits that attend it are superior to the relief of current emotional turmoil. (Nadler 2013, 303)

Consequently, according to Nadler, the rational love for God is necessarily tied to our bodies under a species of duration. This reiterates a point I made earlier in this subsection – that the rational love for God is intimately tied to the union of the human mind with the human body, and it seems to cease when the body ceases. Spinoza unifies the human mind with the body in order to describe the rational love for God because the human body, insofar as it exists in the common order of nature, will experience the causal forces of external bodies, and consequently the passions. Thus the rational love for God will necessarily relate our images of the common order of nature to our understanding of God. Of course, Spinoza will claim that rational ideas are conceived under a species of eternity: e.g., “It is of the nature of Reason to perceive things under a certain species of eternity” (2p45c2). But this is just to say that the human Mind, insofar as it understands through reason, does so, not without its bodily element, but in spite of it. That is, while subject to the common order of nature, the human Mind can both at once experience passions and gain adequate ideas insofar as the human Mind and body are unified (2p13s).

Related to the rational love of God is Spinoza’s conception of *acquiescentia*. *Acquiescentia* often is translated as “contentment” and “self-esteem”.³⁸ To be as accurate as possible, I will provide the senses of *acquiescentia*, but I will not stick to a strong English translation of the term. Instead, I will just refer to *acquiescentia* as *acquiescentia*. Spinoza has varying conceptions of *acquiescentia*. As Soyarslan (2024) notes, *acquiescentia* signifies, etymologically, a kind of stillness [*quies*], acceptance [*acquiescere*], and occasionally as a self-love [*acquiescentia in se ipso*]. *Acquiescentia* can be active or passive, much like many of Spinoza’s affects. For the sake of my discussion, I focus mostly on the active sense of *acquiescentia*, since both reason and *scientia intuitiva* are actions. Moreover, another sense of *acquiescentia*

³⁸ See, for example, the difference translations between Curley and Kisner of ‘*acquiescentia*’. See also Rutherford, “Salvation as a State Of Mind”.

Spinoza provides is *mentis acquiescentia* and *animi acquiescentia*, which Spinoza ascribes only to *scientia intuitiva*. Since I am discussing the rational love of God, I will spend some time fleshing its *acquiescentia* here. Below I will return to speaking of *scientia intuitiva*'s unique *acquiescentia*.

Spinoza defines *acquiescentia* as a “Joy born of the fact that a man considers himself and his own power of acting” (DOA25). *Acquiescentia in se ipso* is defined as “joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause” (3p30s). That *acquiescentia* is a joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause makes sense in the context of Spinoza’s sense of action. For one acts insofar as they have adequate ideas, and a necessary condition of one’s adequate ideas is their being an adequate cause, i.e., the adequate idea can be understood through the essence of the one who is having the idea. Thus, one way to understand this *acquiescentia* is a kind of joy accompanied by the idea of oneself as cause of their adequate idea, and so as an active cause of this *acquiescentia*. In 4p52, Spinoza says “self-esteem [*acquiescentia in se ipso*] can arise from reason, and only that self-esteem [*acquiescentia in se ipso*] which does arise from reason is the greatest there can be” (4p52). Some puzzle over how distinctive *acquiescentia in se ipso* is from the *acquiescentia* Spinoza attributes to *scientia intuitiva* (i.e., *mentis/animi acquiescentia*),³⁹ especially because Spinoza describes both *acquiescentia in se ipso* and *mentis/animi acquiescentia* as the greatest *acquiescentia* there can be. On the contrary, I think *acquiescentia in se ipso* links up well with Spinoza’s discussion of the rational love of God and how the rational love of God is the highest virtue that a human can want, *but from the dictates of reason*. The *acquiescentia in se ipso* involved in reason is the greatest kind of *acquiescentia* which can arise, but, again, *from reason*. And as I mentioned above, reason occurs insofar as the human Mind is in union with the body.

On the other hand, when discussing *scientia intuitiva* and the Intellectual Love of God, Spinoza makes claims like “the human Mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the Body, but something of it remains which is eternal” (5p23), and according to Spinoza, eternity cannot be

³⁹ See, for example, Rutherford, “Salvation”; Carlisle, “Spinoza’s Acquiescentia”.

explained by duration (1d8). As we will see, Spinoza does not use this language of “remedying the passions” or the mind’s unification with the body when referring to *scientia intuitiva*. Indeed, it is after 5p20s that Spinoza shifts to his discussion of *scientia intuitiva* and the Intellectual Love of God, but not before claiming that “it is now time to pass to those things which pertain to the mind’s duration without relation to the body” (5p20s). Spinoza intends to consider the mind not as unified with the body, at least as it relates to the common order of nature. Moreover, it is not coincidental that the rest of the *Ethics* is a detailing of the Intellectual Love of God. We can see this mostly clearly when Spinoza claims that “whatever the Mind understands under a species of eternity, *it understands not from the fact that it conceives the Body’s present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the Body’s essence under a species of eternity*” (5p29, emphasis mine). As we will see, this union of the mind and body under reason and the way Spinoza treats *scientia intuitiva* as only intellectual will affect both reason and *scientia intuitiva*’s susceptibility to *akrasia*. For the time being, however, it will be useful to consider Spinoza’s Cartesian influence in his understanding of *scientia intuitiva* and reason; I suggest that to some extent Spinoza draws on Descartes’ deduction and intuition, albeit he goes past Descartes in certain respects.

SECTION 2.4.2 – THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD

In this section, I develop my account of the human Mind’s Intellectual Love of God, i.e., “the very Love of God by which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind’s essence, considered under a species of eternity; i.e., the Mind’s intellectual Love of God is part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself” (5p36). Above, I presented Soyarslan’s interpretation of this proposition, especially with focus on two propositions involved in its proof, 1p25 and 2p11c. The proof runs:

This Love the Mind has must be related to its actions (by 5p32c and 3p3); it is, then, an action by which the Mind contemplates itself, with the accompanying idea of God as its cause (by 5p32 and 5p32c), i.e. (by 1p25c and 2p11c), an action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human Mind, contemplates himself, with the accompanying idea of himself [as the cause]; so (by 5p35), this Love the Mind has is part of the infinite love by which God loves himself. (5p36d)

In understanding why the human Mind's Intellectual Love is "part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself", Soyarslan focuses on 1p25c and 2p11c. As we will see, I understand the Intellectual Love of God differently from Soyarslan in significant ways. In particular, I understand the human Mind in the context of the Intellectual Love of God to be an infinite and eternal mode as following from the nature of substance ontologically, per 1p25c.⁴⁰ Moreover, the human Mind, by perceiving things adequately (whether through reason or *scientia intuitiva*), is an expression of God/substance's absolute nature in a particular and determinate way, by 2p11c. Bearing these two propositions in mind, we can see that *scientia intuitiva* is, in particular, an intuition of the relationship substance bears to the particular eternal mode that the human mind is. For this reason, *scientia intuitiva* will achieve the power of substance/God, not insofar as God is infinite, but insofar as the human Mind understands God to be infinite, and so will not be susceptible to *akrasia*. For these reasons, I focus on 1p25 and 2p11c as they relate to 5p36 and its proof. Before I begin, recall that the Intellectual Love of God is a particular type of pleasure, "accompanied by the idea of God as a cause" (5p32). Love, for Spinoza, is "a joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause" (DOA6).

I start with 1p25 and its corollary, but, before I begin, it is important to recall the distinction between Spinoza's notions of *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*. In particular, I demonstrated how *natura naturata* relates to considering things as affected durationally, or within the common order of nature with emphasis on *passivity*, and how *natura naturans* relates to considering things under a species of eternity, or within the order of the Intellect, with a particular emphasis on God, as *active* infinite substance/cause. I argue that 1p25 and its corollary relate specifically to *natura naturans*, or as considering things as a part of the order of the Intellect insofar as God, qua substance, is its cause.

⁴⁰ Relatedly, the human mind can also be considered a finite mode under the common order of nature, or under a species of duration. This is similar to the point Primus makes in claiming that "perceived finite, enduring things and infinite eternal modes are one and the same essence conceived in different ways" (Primus 2024, 359).

Of course, conceiving of something qua *natura naturans* can be done under reason or *scientia intuitiva*. Doing so rationally is constitutive of a procedural process by which one moves from common notions to adequate cognition. With *scientia intuitiva*, one infers immediately the relevant cognition.

With that, we can consider 1p25. According to 1p25, “God is the efficient cause, not only of the existence of things, but also of their essence” (1p25). The proof makes reference to the fact that, for Spinoza, modes depend on God for their conception (1p15). Moreover, per 1a4, “the knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its cause” (1a4). Were God not the cause of the essence of things, those things, or knowledge thereof, could be conceived without God, but this is absurd. And so God is the cause of the essence of things.

Now, I argue that 1p25, its scholium, and its corollary highlight the ontological dependence of all things, and for my purposes specifically the human mind, on God. The scholium references 1p16, where Spinoza claims, “from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, (i.e., everything which can fall under an infinite intellect” (1p16). Here, Spinoza says it is from this proposition (1p16) that it follows that “from the given divine nature both the essence of things and their existence must necessarily be inferred, and in a word, God must be called the cause of all things *in the same sense* in which he is called the cause of himself” (1p25s, emphasis mine). That Spinoza claims that God is the cause of all things *in the same sense* as he is the cause of himself is evidence that we should consider this proposition along the lines of *natura naturans*. And in what sense is God the cause of himself? According to 1p25s, God is cause of himself as specified by 1p16. Its proof does not pertain to anything durational, but rather, from the fact that,

provided [they] attend to the fact that the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing a number of properties that really do follow necessarily from it (i.e., from the very essence of the thing); and that it infers more properties the more the definition of the thing expresses reality, i.e., the more reality the essence of the defined thing involves. But since the divine nature has absolutely infinite attributes (by D6), each of which also expresses an essence infinite in its own kind, from its necessity there must follow infinitely many things in infinite modes. (1p16d)

Recall that God's essence is infinite and eternal, that God has infinite power in virtue of God's essence, and finally that God necessarily exists. Because of God's infinite essence and necessary existence, an infinite number of properties follow from this essence. God, in this way, will necessarily be cause of himself, not in terms of duration, but as a matter of necessity in virtue of the nature of God. Thus, from the essence of substance, there are infinitely many things, or modes, and these modes are but properties of God/substance, caused by, or following from, God, non-durationally. For, if these properties or modes follow from God in the same sense that God is cause of himself, then they follow in virtue of the nature of God, i.e., as caused by God's infinite and eternal essence as substance. Moreover, insofar as things follow from the absolute nature of God, they will be eternal and infinite, according to 1p21. It follows, finally, that the human Mind follows from the absolute nature of God, and so it will be eternal and infinite. And so, in this way, all things including the human Mind, ontologically depend on God. And this is the sense of the human Mind as a mode that Spinoza has in mind in 5p36 as pertains to the human Mind's Intellectual Love of God, i.e., the human Mind, under a species of eternity, is an infinite and eternal mode which follows from the absolute nature of God *qua* substance.

Contrary to this, Soyarslan understands 1p25 as asserting the human mind is something finite in the sense of the common order of nature, i.e., as affected by other finite (external modes). Interpreting 1p25 in this way allows Soyarslan to quantifiably and categorically limit the power of the human mind by understanding it to be finite mode. My interpretation, on the other hand, by emphasizing the ontological dependence of the mind (and all else) on God, gets, accurately, to the bottom of the relationship between 5p36 and 1p25c. Under my interpretation, the human mind, as an infinite and eternal mode in the sense of 1p21 (that is, as following from, or as caused by, the absolute nature of God), is taking part in the Intellectual Love of God (which is not mentioned in 1p21), not the human mind as a finite mode as Soyarslan suggests. More specifically, when one

cognizes through *scientia intuitiva* and gains its respective Intellectual Love of God, this Intellectual Love of God arises through an immediate understanding of oneself as following from the absolute nature of God/substance (1p21) and through which one is caused by God in the same way that God is cause of himself (1p25s).

More support for my interpretation stems from 5p41s, where Spinoza writes,

These are the things I have decided to show concerning the Mind, insofar as it is considered without relation to the Body's existence. From them—and at the same time from IP21 and other things—it is clear that our Mind, insofar as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on, to infinity; so that together, they all constitute God's eternal and infinite intellect. (5p41s)

Spinoza's reference to 1p21 is crucial. He writes, “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” (1p21). I argue that Spinoza is identifying the eternal part of the human Mind as following from the “absolute nature” of God *qua* substance; that is, not insofar as an external mode affects another mode within the common order of nature, but rather, that the modification of God that is the eternal part of the human Mind follows from substance as cause, in addition to all other Minds which are capable of the third kind of cognition.⁴¹

In chapter 1 of this thesis I briefly discussed but postponed 2p11c. For my purposes here, I take 2p11c to establish that the human Mind is an expression of God/substance's absolute and infinite nature in a particular and determinate way. To contextualize, Spinoza argues that, from the proposition that “the first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human Mind is nothing but the idea of a singular thing which actually exists” (2p11) it follows

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

⁴¹ Primus, “Spinoza's Infinite Modes”; “Finding Oneself in God”; Robinson, “Spinoza and the Possibility of Adequate Ideas” agree with this, though they hold the human Mind (insofar as its eternal part is considered) to be an infinite mode in addition to being an eternal mode.

inadequately. (2p11c)

2p11c has not received the attention it deserves in Spinoza scholarship.⁴² In her paper, Malinowski-Charles is concerned with categorizing our subjective experience – our temporal selves, experiencing various external bodies affecting us in various ways – as real. Her project, then, is contrary to so-called “intellectualist” readings of Spinoza, which hold that our affective selves are mere “illusions”. She maintains that the sense of the “I” insofar as we are durational or capable of experiencing passions has a place within Spinoza’s system as real, in addition to the sense of ‘I’ that God has an idea of. She holds, according to 2p11c, that “I am in God in two ways, one temporal, the other eternal” (Malinowski-Charles 2011). For her purposes, she focuses mostly on the inadequacy part of 2p11c, i.e., “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” (2p11c).

However, in 5p36 (where Spinoza supposedly limits the mind’s Intellectual Love of God, per Soyarslan), we are concerned with perception under a species of eternity, or insofar as we are concerned about truth, adequacy, and action. Thus, we need to consider the part of 2p11c that pertains to the eternity of the mind, i.e., “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” (2p11c), and its relationship to 5p36 and the Intellectual Love of God. I say “pertains to the eternity of the mind” because it is adequate cognition, and, as Spinoza argues later, it is the nature of Reason to regard things as necessary” (2p44) and it is therefore “of the nature of

⁴² See Malinowski-Charles, “Rationalism Versus Subjective Experience” on this proposition, especially as it contrasts with the growing acosmist reading of the *Ethics*.

Reason to perceive things under a certain species of eternity” (2p44c2).⁴³ This proposition, of course, will work equally for *scientia intuitiva* insofar as both *scientia intuitiva* and reason deal with adequate ideas under a species of eternity. What I take to be important, here, is this relationship of a human mind with God; though, of course, this is not God qua substance, but God “insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human mind”.

Consider the demonstration of 2p11:

The essence of man (by 2p10c) is constituted by certain modes of God’s attributes, viz. (by 2a2) by modes of thinking, of all of which (by 2a3) the idea is prior in nature, and when it is given, the other modes (to which the idea is prior in nature) must be in the same individual (by 2a3). And therefore an idea is the first thing that constitutes the being of a human Mind. But not the idea of a thing which does not exist. For then (by 2p8c) the idea itself could not be said to exist. Therefore, it will be the idea of a thing which actually exists. But not of an infinite thing. For an infinite thing (by 1p21 and 1p22) must always exist necessarily. But (by 2a1) it is absurd [that this idea should be of a necessarily existing object]. Therefore, the first thing that constitutes the actual being of a human Mind is the idea of a singular thing which actually exists, q.e.d. (2p11d)

2p11 aims to prove that the idea of an actually existing singular thing – Spinoza demonstrates this to be the body in 2p13 – constitutes the essence of the human mind. *Qua* finite modes, i.e., beings conceived under the species of duration, we observe (inadequately) certain modifications of our bodies in virtue of the body’s affections caused by other external bodies. *Qua* eternal modes, i.e., conceiving ourselves under the species of eternity, we understand ourselves as sharing a particular ontological relationship with substance, one where we understand ourselves as inhering in God/substance and being (vertically) caused by God/substance. Thus, *qua* conceiving ourselves as eternal modes, we understand God as ontologically prior to us (though, of course, God is actually ontologically prior to us regardless of whether we perceive under either conception). On the other hand, when we perceive that which constitutes our essence as being modified by external bodies, inadequate ideas, imagination, etc., we are perceiving ourselves durationally. For this reason, when

⁴³ “Dem: It is of the nature of Reason to regard things as necessary and not as contingent (2p44). And it perceives this necessity of things truly (by 2p41), i.e., (by 1a6), as it is in itself. *But (by 1p16) this necessity of things is the very necessity of god’s eternal nature.* Therefore, it is of the nature of Reason to regard things under this species of eternity” (2p44c2, emphasis mine).

Spinoza says,

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 (2p11c)

what is meant is that our idea is not an idea derived directly from the idea of God as substance, or from God's attributes, but an idea of ourselves in relation to duration and consequently other external modes. Our idea in this sense will still be related to God as substance, but expressed inadequately through the representation of a series of external modes affecting each other in time. Conversely, when we gain an adequate idea, we, as modifications of God, understand ourselves and our relationship with God (*qua* substance) as modifications of God; we, therefore, are a part of God, and ultimately nothing other than God, though God only insofar as he constitutes our essence. Thus, we can identify ourselves within God *qua* substance – while ultimately only a mode and a particular and determinate expression of God, we are intimately and ontologically connected with substance, depending on it not only for our essence but also for our existence.⁴⁴

We can now connect these interpretations of 2p11c and 1p25c to 5p36. As I said above, in 5p36, we are concerned with the human Mind under a species of eternity. Indeed, in discussing the human Mind's Intellectual Love of God, Spinoza himself says that the human Mind's essence is considered under a species of eternity. If God, *qua* infinite substance, has by his very absolute nature an infinite number of properties, and adequate ideas are among these properties, God is necessarily cause of these adequate ideas. And those things that follow (ontologically) from God's absolute nature follow from God *in the same sense* that God is cause of himself, and so adequate ideas are infinite and eternal modes. Now, insofar as we have adequate ideas, the human Mind is a particular

⁴⁴ I take it to be relatively clear that 2p11c is clearly the source of the phrase "not insofar as he [God] is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity" (5p36).

and determinate expression of God – in other words, a property of God – insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind. In 5p36, Spinoza specifies further that, under *scientia intuitiva*'s affective state, the human Mind's Intellectual Love is God's Intellectual Love insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence, *considered under a species of eternity*.⁴⁵ But what is perceived under a species of eternity is understood as following ontologically from God *qua* infinite substance. And so, the human Mind's Intellectual Love of God, then, constitutes *scientia intuitiva* as an active affective state in which we love ourselves, not insofar as we conceive ourselves as subject to the passions and existing in duration, but rather insofar as our essence and idea of ourselves are an eternal mode considered under the species of eternity that ontologically depends on God as infinite substance and is ultimately nothing other than God. This is why Spinoza claims that the Intellectual Love of God is “an action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human Mind [conversely, insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind], contemplates himself, with the *accompanying idea of himself as cause*” (5p36d, emphasis mine). That is, the Intellectual Love of God is a person's love for (i) God as substance, (ii) oneself as a modification of God, or God, insofar as he constitutes their essence, and (iii) the ontological (i.e., causal and inherence) relation between substance and themselves as modifications of substance.

Now, we can understand the following corollary: “From this it follows that insofar as God loves himself, he loves men, and consequently that God's love of men and the Mind's intellectual Love of God are one and the same” (5p36c). Insofar as God, *qua* infinite substance, loves himself, he will love all aspects of himself, including that part of a person that God constitutes the essence of; and insofar as we have the Intellectual Love of God, we love ourselves as modifications of God,

⁴⁵ Of course, the mind's rational love for God is a love for God under a species of eternity, but, as I have said above, the rational love for God must be explained durationally, insofar as reason is a temporal and procedural process (whereas *scientia intuitiva* is an immediate cognition which alone gives rise to the Intellectual Love of God).

God as substance, and as God ultimately related to God. And these two acts of loving – God loving himself insofar as he loves the eternal part of his modifications on the one hand and our Intellectual Love for God *qua* substance as modifications of God on the other – are perhaps the same, albeit not numerically identical, per Spinoza.⁴⁶

Because of this, I think we can begin to see why *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*. Recall that *akrasia* is a situation wherein the power of a passion exceeds the power of one's action. The power of a particular thing is a function of that thing's essence and causes; because the power of an external body can exceed the power of one's essence or *conatus*, reason is necessarily susceptible to *akrasia*. What is different in the case of *scientia intuitiva*, at least so it seems from my discussion up to this point, is that *scientia intuitiva* is accompanied by the idea of God (*qua* substance) as cause (5p36).⁴⁷ If God, as infinite substance with infinite power, is a cause of our Intellectual Love of God, and the power of an idea is a function of its causes, it follows that the power of our Intellectual Love of God is infinite. And no external body's essence, nor power, can exceed the power of infinitude. Thus, *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*.

Related to the Intellectual Love of God is *scientia intuitiva*'s unique *acquiescentia*. As I have suggested elsewhere, *scientia intuitiva*, concerns itself with those matters that pertain to the Mind, but “without relation to the body” (5p20s). In this context, Spinoza develops the affective states of *scientia intuitiva*, including its respective and unique *acquiescentia*. The *acquiescentia* that Spinoza refers to in the context of *scientia intuitiva* gets described as *mentis acquiescentia* and *anima acquiescentia*. *Mentis acquiescentia* is introduced, just as for the Intellectual Love of God, only after Spinoza switches to consider the power of the mind, specifically independent of the body. He says, “the greatest

⁴⁶ Indeed, we can revisit 2p11c with this in mind, and formulate the following corollary: it follows that insofar as God (as substance) has knowledge/adequate ideas, he knows people, and consequently that God's knowledge of people and the human Mind's knowledge/adequate ideas of God are one and the same.

⁴⁷ As we will see below, one might object here that one's rational ideas are also ultimately caused by God/substance.

satisfaction of Mind [*mentis acquiescentia*] there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge” (5p27). Moreover, *anima acquiescentia* is specifically introduced in the context of the Intellectual Love of God. he says, “this Love [Intellectual Love], or blessedness, is called Glory in the Sacred Scriptures—not without reason. For whether this Love is related to God or to the Mind, it can rightly be called satisfaction of mind [*anima acquiescentia*]” (5p36s). Clearly, Spinoza holds that *anima acquiescentia* is, if not identical to, at the very least coextensive with the Intellectual Love of God. As I said above, *acquiescentia* signifies a kind of stillness [*quies*], acceptance [*acquiescere*], and occasionally as a self-love [*acquiescentia in se ipso*]. In the context of *scientia intuitiva*, this kind of *acquiescentia* makes great sense. For, as a kind of stillness and acceptance, it does not concern itself with the affairs of the body as it is affected by external bodies in the common order of nature. Indeed, it is a kind of self-love, but a self-love where the self is understood as ontologically related to God in the way that I have been describing in discussing the Intellectual Love of God.

We can construe my argument as follows. The power of an idea, whether adequate or inadequate, determines a mode to act. *Akrasia* is a situation in which the power of a passion or inadequate idea is greater than the power of an adequate idea or action. Thus, *akrasia* is a situation wherein a mode is determined to act by an inadequate idea or passion in spite of having an adequate idea or action. *Scientia intuitiva* carries with it an active pleasure [*acquiescentia*] caused by God, i.e., the Intellectual Love of God (5p32), which is not concerned with, nor represents, any of the affairs of the body within the common order of nature. Pleasure is an idea/emotion (DOE6). There is no cause in nature which is more powerful than God (1appendix). There is no cause in nature which has more power than the idea of God (2p46). The Intellectual Love of God (of which God is the cause) is as infinitely powerful as God is (5a2 and 5p36). Therefore, there is no external cause which is more powerful than the Intellectual Love of God. Therefore, insofar as one has *scientia intuitiva* and therefore the Intellectual Love of God, they cannot suffer from *akrasia*.

There is a strong concern to this initial formulation. Adequate ideas, as I have argued, are caused by God. But reason gives rise to adequate ideas; thus, just as *scientia intuitiva* and the Intellectual Love of God have God for its cause, so too should rational ideas. But I have said that rational ideas and their corresponding affective states, like the rational love for God, are susceptible to *akrasia*. So, if God is the cause of *scientia intuitiva* and reason, and *scientia intuitiva* supposedly has infinite power in virtue of being caused by God, why does reason not also have infinite power? In order to respond to this objection, I return to the distinction between reason and *scientia intuitiva*, ultimately resolving this concern, and demonstrating once and for all that reason is susceptible to *akrasia* and that *scientia intuitiva* is not.

SECTION 2.5 – DEMOTING REASON AND PROMOTING SCIENTIA INTUITIVA

Above, I showed that *scientia intuitiva* and reason are distinct for various reasons. *Scientia intuitiva*, as I have discussed, is an immediate cognition. My goal in this section is to flesh out this immediacy point before ultimately turning to my argument that *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*.

Before doing so, recall that in the early part of Part 3 to the *Ethics*, Spinoza outlines the relationship between adequate and inadequate ideas and actions and passions (actions correspond to adequate ideas, and passions correspond to inadequate ideas). There, Spinoza said that “by affect I understand affections of the Body by which the Body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections” (3d2). In other words, when we are the adequate cause of an increase in our power of acting, we do so in virtue of an adequate idea, and therefore we act. When we are the inadequate cause of our passing to either a greater or lesser perfection, we do so in virtue of an inadequate idea, and therefore we experience a passion. However, Spinoza argues that, because a human acts insofar as it has adequate ideas and experiences passions insofar as it has inadequate ideas (3p1), it follows that “the Mind is more liable to passions

the more it has inadequate ideas, and conversely, is more active the more it has adequate ideas” (3p1c). This last bit is important; insofar as we have more and more adequate ideas, our power of acting correspondingly increases. Because of this, a person without very many adequate ideas will have less of an ability to combat the various passions than will one who has more adequate ideas. In other words, it is by gaining more and more adequate ideas that one can combat more and more passions. As I have said elsewhere, the operation of reason yields adequate ideas. Indeed, Spinoza argues that “whatever ideas follow in the Mind from ideas that are adequate in the mind are also adequate” (2p40). Because rational ideas are adequate, whatever one infers from those adequate ideas rationally will also be adequate. And I said just above, it is by gaining adequate ideas that one increases their power. So through the operation of reason, i.e., gaining more and more adequate ideas through reason, that one can increase their power over the passions.

Now we can ask about reason’s temporal aspect and power with respect to *scientia intuitiva*.⁴⁸ In order to develop this, I focus on the temporal aspect of reason and relatedly comment on the immediacy of *scientia intuitiva*. By noting that reason is in a sense temporal, we can limit the power of reason in a way that we cannot for *scientia intuitiva*. Above, I gave various arguments positing reason, because it is a step-by-step process, as necessarily temporal or durational. I develop these arguments below.

First, *qua* rational beings, we reason insofar as our minds are necessarily in union with our body, and it is our body which is ultimately responsible for our experience of the passions (whereas Spinoza speaks about *scientia intuitiva*, in 5p20s, as “pertaining to the Mind’s duration without relation to the body”).⁴⁹ While *scientia intuitiva* necessarily has the body for its object (5p29), according to

⁴⁸ It is worthwhile to recall those views regarding the content I referenced in chapter one.

⁴⁹ While using “duration” in this context, I suggest that Spinoza is using this here to suggest i) that he is shifting gears to speaking of the Mind in the context of *scientia intuitiva*, and ii) in various parts of part 5 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza speaks metaphorically.

Spinoza's parallelism doctrine, the body is considered without relation to any durationally existing thing. Rather, the body, as involved in *scientia intuitiva*, has existence only insofar as it is related to God, as following as a property from his infinite and necessarily existence and essence *qua* substance. Reason, however, has a twofold relationship with the body. On the one hand, like *scientia intuitiva*, its ideas exist under a species of eternity. On the other hand, however, because of its temporal and procedural aspect, is necessarily related to the body in the common order of nature.

Second, and relatedly, reasoning is a temporal process; at one time we have this and that adequate idea, and later we come to deduce a third adequate idea as necessarily following from those two. Indeed, at this time I may have adequate ideas x and y, but not know that z follows adequately from x and y. Later, upon reflection, I determine that z can properly be inferred from x and y by attending to each proposition and their relationship. But this attention is necessarily durational; I cannot know that x, y, and z are related in this way at once.

Third, it is often hard to perform lengthy deductions/enumerations; the *Ethics* can be understood as a series of proofs between varying propositions which require significant time, energy, and effort in order to cognize, and, in order to see the force of this proof, according to Spinoza, one must represent each and every proposition adequately without relying on imagination or memory. Because reason is temporal in this respect, it is often easy to rely on memory or imagination in order to reason, especially when our rational operation is lengthy, i.e., an enumeration, as in the case of the *Ethics*. In order to arrive an adequate idea, especially at this scale, one must be the adequate cause of their adequate ideas in this operation, without relying on memory or imagination.

Reason is durational in another respect. Its content may come from experience, or the common order of nature, though not necessarily – one may make a deduction based on innate ideas alone.⁵⁰ Consider 2p39. Spinoza says that,

⁵⁰ That one might make a deduction based on innate ideas does not necessarily affect my argument

If something is common to, and peculiar to, the human Body and certain external bodies by which the human Body is usually affected, and is equally in the part and in the whole of each of them, its idea will also be adequate in the Mind. (2p39)

In other words, if some property is shared by various bodies, insofar as the human Body is affected by external bodies, *in the common order of nature*, and that property is equally in the part and in the whole, the human Mind can form an adequate idea of that property. For example, the property of the extension of things may be one that we can form an adequate idea of, through the affections of external bodies. In this way, the common order of nature may provide the fodder, i.e., modes of extended bodies, for our adequate ideas, through the common order of nature or duration.

At the same time, as I discussed above, reason does have for itself an active affective state, i.e., the rational love of God. Through the rational love of God, one forms an adequate idea of a passion, which then ceases to be a passion (5p3),⁵¹ and then relates this adequate idea to the idea of God (1p14). This rational process gives rise to the active rational love of God.

Now, these difficulties pose significant problems for the power of reason and the rational love of God. Indeed, because reason in these respects is durational, according to Spinoza, the highest active affective state a person can seek *from the dictates of reason*, that is, the rational love of God, cannot be eternal. For Spinoza says that “only while the Body endures is the Mind subject to affects which are related to the passions” (5p34) and that it “follows from this [5p34] that *no Love except Intellectual Love is eternal*” (5p34c). We can see from what I just said that the rational love of God is necessarily related to the passions (for it is by forming an adequate idea of a passion that the rational love of God arises). Moreover, as I suggested above, just as imagination and the passions exist only while the body endures, so too for reason; because reason, insofar as it is a temporal and procedural process which operates under the common order of nature, indicates the present

negatively. My other points about the durational aspects of reason stand, even if one deduces some conclusion from innate and adequate ideas alone.

⁵¹ This proposition is notoriously difficult to understand and interpret, as figures like Bennett express concerns with this view. I respond to these concerns in the next chapter.

constitution of the body (2p19; 5p34).⁵² And so, the rational love for God is not eternal, and its power, then, is determined by the power of finite causes, which can always be surmounted by something in nature (4a1). Of course, one can gain more and more adequate ideas through reason, and correspondingly increase their power of action to a greater and greater extent.

In order to see more clearly why this rational love of God is susceptible to *akrasia*, it might be useful to explain an example. As I have said, the rational love of God is the highest affective state one can wish for, from the dictates of reason. If it turns out that the rational love of God is susceptible to *akrasia*, then we needn't worry about any other affects (apart from the Intellectual Love of God) in terms of their susceptibility to *akrasia*, because, as the highest active affective state one can wish for from the dictates of reason, the rational love of God necessarily has the most power over the passions. Recall that *akrasia* occurs when one individual has both an adequate idea (and therefore an action) and an inadequate idea (and therefore a passion), and the power of the passion is greater than the power of one's action. The power of an idea, generally speaking, is determined by the power of its causes. Thus, the power of a passion is a function of the power of some external body when compared with oneself, and the power of an action is a function of one's essence in producing that adequate idea/passion.

Suppose I am afflicted with the passion of fear (though any passion works for *akrasia*). Spinoza defines 'fear' as "an inconstant Sadness, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we to some extent doubt" (DOA13). Sadness is a decrease of one's powering acting. Now, I am afraid of performing poorly in law school. To Spinoza, when I consider my future time in law school, I am affected with a decrease in my power of acting, or a sadness, which is the result of my questioning—indeed, my imagining—that I will perform poorly in law school.⁵³ The power of this

⁵² See also DOA II/204 5-15.

⁵³ Spinoza also has some interesting insights on the relationship between Hope and Fear. See DOA13Exp.

passion—here, fear—will be determined by the power of that which causes my fear, like, for example, the general social atmosphere of law school and those who speak about it (negatively).

Now, suppose that, in addition to this fear, I also know that I am a good student and have been taught (by incredibly smart and wonderful teachers!) various skills that are quite relevant to the study of the law, like reasoning, critical thinking, and writing. I can also, then, have an adequate idea (insofar as I am the adequate cause) and an action, such as a self-esteem (“a Joy born of the fact that a man considers himself and his own power of acting”, per DOA25) or Favor (“a Love toward someone who has benefited another”, per DOA29). The power of these actions (self-esteem and favor) will be determined by the power of its causes, and because a necessary condition of there being an adequate idea is one being the adequate cause of that idea, it follows that, in this example, I am the adequate cause of these actions. And so the power of these ideas is a function of my own power.

However, I am still susceptible to *akrasia*. While I can increase my power of acting more and more through gaining more adequate ideas, according to Spinoza, “there is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger” (4a1). Because reason, as I have argued, is necessarily tied to the common order of nature, there can always be some affect or external body which is more powerful than my power. In the present example, it may be the case that, while I can accurately be said to have an active self-esteem and favor (as I am the adequate cause of these ideas), my representations, or imaginings, of the atmosphere of law school, i.e., the cause of my fear, may be greater or more powerful than my own power of acting insofar as I have these actions of self-esteem and favor. And so, in this case, I am in a situation of *akrasia*, where these passions (like fear) make me undergo certain things (maybe a feeling of imposter syndrome or social anxiety) rather than I act.

To extend the example to the rational love of God, suppose I recognize that I am in this

kind of Bondage (Spinoza defines Bondage as one's lack of power to moderate and restrain the affects), and realize that I have these inadequate ideas and imaginings causing me to be in this state. I can, according to Spinoza, consult his remedies for the passions; which, among these remedies, is the rational love of God. According to Spinoza, the rational love of God consists in relating the idea of bodily affections to the idea of God *qua* substance. So, I can consider this fear and realize that it is the product of some affection of an external body on myself, which is, in truth, in God and caused by God (per 1p15). And it is through relating my passions to God *qua* substance in this way that the rational love of God arises. However, this rational love of God, too, is susceptible to *akrasia*; for, while it is indeed more powerful than my actions of self-esteem and favor are in and by themselves (because an action is an increase in one's power of acting, and having the rational love of God with self-esteem and favor has a greater power of acting than the latter two), it is ultimately the product of the operation of reason. That is, because reason is necessarily temporal and related to the common order of nature in the ways that I have described, its power must necessarily be tied to the common order of nature, as well, and therefore limited. It may be the case that, upon reflection, I realize that while my fear of poor performance in law school is caused by the social atmosphere of law school, this imagining is in God and related to God, just as everything else is. And so, it may be the case that some of my fear is destroyed, but I may nevertheless still feel fearful of my performance. Of course, it may be the case that in gaining the rational love of God what once was a situation of *akrasia* is no longer, since the rational love of God carries with it an increase in Joy, or power of acting. However, it is not an infinite increase. In this way, while I have a new action, the rational love of God, whose power is certainly greater than my power of acting insofar as I have merely self-esteem and favor, it may not necessarily be greater than the power of my passions, here fear. Thus, my situation of *akrasia* may persist, even with the rational love of God. But, as we will see, *scientia intuitiva* is not limited in this way, and, indeed, attains an infinite power over the passions.

As I have discussed, *scientia intuitiva* is an immediate cognition. In particular, its content consists of some relationship between substance, other modes, and oneself. Following Primus (2024), one intuits through *scientia intuitiva* that: God necessarily exists, that all of God's effects are necessarily, infinite, and eternal modes, that finite enduring things and eternal modes are the same essences conceived in different ways, that everything can be conceived under (an infinite number of) different attributes, and that *scientia intuitiva* is a self-locating thought (Primus 2024, 381).⁵⁴ This self-locating thought, which Primus cleverly deems a *cogito*-like intuition, occurs when “one intuits that one's own mind, insofar as it has the first-personal experience of intuition A, exists as an infinite, eternal mode” (Primus 2024, 379). Such truths can be attained via close attentive reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*. But to grasp them all at once is something that reason nor this close attentive reading cannot afford; while it may indeed come about from the repeated process of reasoning and reading (as it does for Descartes), *scientia intuitiva* is a unique and yet immediate cognition that bears something along the lines of intuiting almost the entirety of the *Ethics*. As an immediate cognition, the cognizer necessarily does not have to rely on any bodily element⁵⁵—memory, time, the body itself—and instead does so according solely to the order of the Intellect insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind. Moreover, for the sort of cognition that *scientia intuitiva* is, while it may indeed consist of these various intuitions, it does not necessarily appear that the content is necessarily propositional.⁵⁶ Because it is an immediate intuition of the ontological and causal relation substance bears to modes and to oneself, rather than being propositional, it is rather a sort of presentation of these relationships; one presents the ontological dependence that they have with respect to God and substance and understand themselves as inherently tied to and caused by God in

⁵⁴ Primus adds another point leaning into the acosmist reading, that the passions/enduring body are not real. I do not follow Primus on this point.

⁵⁵ Again, I will address concerns regarding Spinoza's parallelism doctrine in chapter 3.

⁵⁶ For many early modern figures, basic mental content is not propositional; Spinoza may intend for *scientia intuitiva* to be difficult to attain, albeit basic in its content.

one act of cognition. Whereas reason is necessarily discursive; i.e., the content is necessarily propositional, deduced from previous adequate propositions to other adequate propositions. The presentation of *scientia intuitiva* may be worked out into propositions, of course; one can flesh out these causal and ontological relationships into a deduction or rational argument.

We can now consider what this discussion bears on the power of *scientia intuitiva*. In the case of reason, one increases their power by gaining more and more adequate ideas. However, under *scientia intuitiva*, one immediately attains all that one needs to know, i.e., the entire vertical causal chain insofar as one cognizes the relationship between substance, modes, and oneself, in order to combat the passions. I argue that this is the most amount of power a person could have. But it is not just the most power a person could have *qua* person, but an infinite power, since it is not just a person involved as cause, but God, insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind, involved as cause. Whereas I have said that reason, while its ideas exist necessarily under a species of eternity, is itself procedural and therefore temporal or durational; eternity cannot be explained in terms of duration. Reason suffers to the extent that it is quite difficult to grasp the confluence of intuitions Primus describes, adequately and at once, over the course of the constantly changing world; but *scientia intuitiva*, on the other hand, is eternal and does not need to be explained by duration at all, since it is immediate.

As I show, *scientia intuitiva*, in immediately grasping the cognition that from the necessary existence and nature of God oneself is inferred as following as an eternal mode, gains infinite power, insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind. In order to see this, recall that I am suggesting *scientia intuitiva* is a grasping of the relationships between the very first axioms in part 1 of the *Ethics* and each and every proposition as it relates to oneself. Relatedly, for Primus, this is the way in which *scientia intuitiva* is a “metaphysically self-locating” thought; by

linking one’s first- personal experience of understanding to a non-perspectival conception of monist metaphysical structure: one realizes that one’s own understanding mind is an infinite, eternal mode

necessarily caused by God. (Primus 2024, 379)

Insofar as this proposition relies on another proposition (and so on), ontologically and causally (vertically and as a matter of dependence, in terms of proof in the logical sense), *scientia intuitiva* gains the causal efficacy of those propositions and relationships. As I said above, one increases their power by gaining more and more adequate ideas through reason; one can infer x, y, and z, from *and as caused by* propositions p and q, and these propositions, taken together, results in a greater power than merely knowing p and q. Because the power of an idea is a function of its causes, it follows that the power of propositions p and q are involved in the power of one who knows x, y, z, p, and q. Through *scientia intuitiva*, one immediately recognizes these propositions and their relationship, attaining at once the causal power of each proposition and their relationship to each other. Moreover, *scientia intuitiva* uniquely grasps these relations both immediately and in a single act of cognition. Were one to accomplish this through reason, their power would be quite immense (remember that one's power increases by gaining more and more adequate ideas), but not infinite. From the cognition of *scientia intuitiva*, however, one immediately cognizes these relations, and so they attain human perfection, freedom, and blessedness (as Spinoza claims in 5p36s). Indeed, it is for this reason that the human Mind is eternal and insofar as a part of the human Mind has cognition of this sort, that part is eternal (5p40).

Indeed, the content of our cognition, however, is important, too; for it, as a plethora of adequate ideas, or eternal modes, expressed in one act of cognition, expresses, albeit not exhaustively, God's eternal and infinite essence. As Spinoza puts it,

these are the things I have decided to show concerning the Mind, insofar as it is considered without relation to the Body's existence. From them—and at the same time from 1p21 and other things—it is clear that our Mind, insofar as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on, to infinity; *so that together, they all constitute God's eternal and infinite intellect* (5p41s, emphasis mine).

Scientia intuitiva, as I have said, is an immediate understanding of the relation substance bears to modes and to oneself under a species of eternity without any reference to time or duration (unlike

reason), and so, each idea, if we can speak about them as a plurality, expresses an eternal idea or mode of thinking, as caused by and affected by another eternal idea or mode of thinking, and so on. And this, for Spinoza, is the expression of God's infinite essence, insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind.

Now, because our Intellectual Love of God is an immediate cognition of the relationship substance bears to modes and to oneself, i.e., eternal modes of thought, as proceeding from God/substance as cause in the sense of 1p21 (see my discussion of 1p25c and 2p11c above), God is cause of our Intellectual Love (5p32). As Spinoza puts it, "this intellectual Love follows necessarily from the nature of the Mind insofar as it is considered as an eternal truth, through God's nature" (5p37d). And God is, and understood to be, infinite. Recall that the power of an effect (in terms of a cognizer causing some idea), here affect (insofar as that idea has an affective component), is "defined by the power of its cause, *insofar as its essence is explained or defined by the essence of its cause*" (5a2, emphasis mine). In other words, the power of the Intellectual Love of God is defined by the power of God insofar as the essence of God is explained by the human Mind, or insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind (2p11c). For this reason, i.e., because the Intellectual Love of God is caused by God, whose essence we understand to be infinite, it follows that the human Mind's power of the Intellectual Love of God is infinite and so attains infinite power over the passions. Because there is no thing in nature which is more powerful than God, or our cognition of God as infinite and as cause of our Intellectual Love, there can be no thing in nature whose power is greater than our Intellectual Love. Now, recall that *akrasia* occurs when the power of an external body which affects one in such a way as to cause a passion is greater than one's power in acting. But, if the power of *scientia intuitiva*, or its affective state, the Intellectual Love of God, is infinite, then there can be no passion greater than one's power of acting. And for this reason, *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*. Moreover, it is one's blessedness, perfection, and freedom. Spinoza makes this

point. Recall that Joy is defined as one's increasing their power of action. The Intellectual Love of God, according to Spinoza, is a joy, but, qualified; he says, "for insofar as it is related to God (by 5p35), it is Joy (*if I may still be permitted to use this term*)" (5p36s, emphasis mine). It is to some extent questionable whether Spinoza can in fact use that term; for it is not an increase of one's power of acting, but rather, a perfect power of acting. As Spinoza says, "if Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself" (5p33s).

Recall my example earlier of *akrasia*. There, I demonstrated how *akrasia* may arise in the case where I can be said to have two actions, like self-esteem and favor, and a passion, fear, regarding my possible poor performance in law school. I also showed how the rational love of God may succumb to *akrasia*, too; for it, being necessarily durational, or related to the common order of nature, in various ways, has for itself a limited power. We can now consider this situation as if I were to grasp things through *scientia intuitiva*. As I have said, *scientia intuitiva* is an immediate understanding of one's ontological relationship to God *qua* substance. I have suggested that the affective state of *scientia intuitiva*, the Intellectual Love of God, has God, *qua* substance, as cause. Moreover, the nature of *scientia intuitiva* is such that it is eternal in its very nature and cannot be explained through duration or the common order of nature (unlike reason). By understanding myself, in a single act of cognition, as a modification of God and caused by God, without involving myself at all with the common order of nature, I attain an infinite power—not God's power insofar as God is infinite substance, but God's infinite power insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind—over the passions. In this way, when I understand things through *scientia intuitiva*, I realize that I am intimately related to God, and achieve an Intellectual Love of God. And so, while my enduring body may experience this fear regarding poor performance in law school, which may indeed be quite powerful, it is nothing compared to the active blessedness of the Intellectual Love of God, whose power is infinite. Indeed,

it is through *scientia intuitiva* that I attain that *mentis acquiescentia*—true peace of mind (5p42s)—which express no concern for the bodily states in the common order of nature, but rather a representation of myself under a species of eternity, in line with the order of the Intellect, such that I understand my relationship to God, as an eternal modification of God caused by God. That is, if my Intellectual Love does not entirely take away this fear, it at the very least ensures that it does determine me and my behavior accordingly; instead, I experience a state of blessedness and am entirely free from these determinations via the passions.

CHAPTER THREE

SECTION 3 – OBJECTIONS, CONSIDERED

In the previous chapter, I presented my argument for why *scientia intuitiva* and its affective state, the Intellectual Love of God, are not susceptible to *akrasia*. I also argued that reason, in virtue of its temporal aspect, is susceptible to *akrasia*. The goal of this final chapter is to consider and then diffuse some objections. I also discuss the epistemic feasibility of *scientia intuitiva* and defend Spinoza's view from some objections. As we will see, I argue that *scientia intuitiva* is in fact feasible, albeit difficult.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In section 3.1, I discuss 1p25 and some related propositions. In the previous chapter, I argued that, in the context of the Intellectual Love of God, 1p25 needs to be interpreted as establishing all things as eternal modes insofar as they follow from God's absolute nature *qua* substance, i.e., as something that can be conceived by the infinite intellect. In 3.1, I consider some objections regarding this interpretation. In section 3.2, I discuss the “insofar as” [*quatenus*] clause of 5p36, where Spinoza suggests that the Mind's Intellectual Love of God is a “part” of God's infinite Intellectual Love. Some scholars point to this clause as suggesting that the human Mind's Intellectual Love of God is limited and therefore susceptible to *akrasia*. I therefore defend my view from that objection. In section 3.3, I discuss a concern regarding 5p20s and the rational love of God. In that scholium, some might understand Spinoza's remarks to suggest that no passions can arise when one has the rational love of God, which would forbid the possibility of *akrasia*. In 3.4, I defend my view from concerns regarding Spinoza's parallelism doctrine. Finally, in section 3.5, I argue for the epistemic feasibility of *scientia intuitiva* and the rational love of God. Some commentators believe that part 5 of the *Ethics* is nonsense and “devoid of value” (Bennett 372, 1984). My goal there is to diffuse this perspective and suggest *scientia intuitiva* is more feasible—yet

certainly still difficult!—to achieve.

SECTION 3.1 – 1P25 AND RELATED

In the previous chapter, I argued that 1p25 and its corollary ought to be read as asserting all things, including the human Mind, are conceivable as eternal and infinite modes insofar as they follow from the absolute nature of God/substance. While I think my argument is clear and evident as presented there, it is worthwhile offering some supporting evidence.

One might object to my interpretation of 1p25 by highlighting the corollary to 1p25, where Spinoza claims that “particular things are nothing but affections of God’s attributes, or modes by which God’s attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way. The demonstration is evident from 1p15 and 1d5” (1p25c). Later, as in 1p28, Spinoza will go on to say that all singular/particular things which are finite and have a determinate existence are determined to do so by a previous finite mode, and so on, and that these things do not follow from God’s absolute nature. Consequently, 1p25 might not be able to be read as discussing *natura naturans*; rather, it is related to *natura naturata*.

I cannot help but wonder whether this point needs to be debated. Insofar as all things depend on God, we can consider the human mind as a mode only insofar as this dependence relationship exists. Insofar as the human mind is affected by other modes, externally, we can consider the human mind as finite; giving rise to passions or actions, giving rise to certain things in the common order of nature, increasing or decreasing one’s power of action, and so on. On my interpretation of 1p25, Spinoza is considering the mind and other modes only insofar as they relate to God as ontologically dependent on God, both for their existence and their essence. This is to say that we are considering the mind *sub specie aeternitatis* as opposed to *sub specie duratio*. But we can nevertheless consider the mind in either respect. Moreover, it is clear that in the context of 5p36 that Spinoza wants to consider the human mind as an infinite and eternal mode; he says throughout part 5 of the *Ethics* that the mind with the Intellectual Love of God is eternal. Indeed, even in 5p36,

Spinoza says that the Mind's Intellectual Love is the Intellectual Love that God loves himself with, not insofar as he is infinite, but, specifically, *insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity*. *Qua* finite, we cannot understand the human Mind's essence under a species of eternity. Indeed, insofar as we are durational modes, we can only ever have inadequate ideas of the human body itself apart from its affections (2p19), of the parts constituting the human body (2p24), nor the duration of the human body (2p30). But, insofar as we understand ourselves as being caused by God in the vertical sense, we are perceiving our ideas of ourselves under a species of eternity, without reference to duration or the common order of nature. And in order to understand ourselves in this way, we must understand our modal status in terms of following from the absolute nature of the essence of God, and this just is as an infinite and eternal mode.

In the scholium to 1p25, Spinoza claims that 1p25 follows from 1p16. In particular, he writes that, "For from that [1p16] it follows that from the given divine nature both the essence of things and their existence must necessarily be inferred; and in a word, God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself" (1p25s). Looking at 1p16c1, Spinoza says "from this it follows that God is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under an infinite intellect" (1p16c1).⁵⁷ In particular, the qualifying "which can fall under an infinite intellect" might raise an eyebrow. Something that might not fall under an infinite intellect, for example, are inadequate ideas or subjective experience; God/substance only has adequate ideas, and the infinite intellect only perceives those adequate ideas. Now, recall that "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" (1p21). 1p25, then, should be taken as relating to things *natura naturans*, because what Spinoza is claiming in this proposition and related

⁵⁷ That is, "from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes" (1p16)

(1p16, 1p21) is not that God is the cause of the common order of nature, or duration, and so we are finite modes; rather, all things that can be thought of by the infinite intellect are properties of God and are caused by God *qua* substance. Of course, God is in fact the cause of the common order of nature; I just do not take him to be speaking of that sort of causal relationship here. God is not the remote cause, so-to-speak, of the common order of nature by which we as modes are caused to be (indeed, he is the immanent cause of all things per 1p18); rather, so far as our eternal part is considered, we are inferred, by the intellect, from the definition of God as a property of God.

It is important to recall that in the first chapter I claimed that whereas humans cannot have adequate cognition of the common order of nature, God may nevertheless adequately conceive the horizontal causal chain. God will, of course, be the cause of the horizontal causal chain and have knowledge of it. But the claim that, “from the given divine nature *both the essence of things and their existence must necessarily be inferred*” (1p25, emphasis mine), especially in conjunction with the claim that God is “the cause of all things in the same way he is called the cause of himself” (1p25s) seems to suggest that their (referring to modes, or that which follows from God’s absolute nature) existence is not durational, at least not yet (I discuss the introduction of duration in 1p28 below).

In fact, Soyarslan’s suggestion that 1p25 introduces the horizontal causal chain, and not the vertical causal chain, must focus, in part, on 1p25 itself. Perhaps this interpretive move comes from the fact that Spinoza says here that God is the efficient cause of the existence of things. And, perhaps “existence” here is interpreted as durational existence rather than as infinite insofar as God *qua* substance is said to produce all things. However, “existence” cannot have that sense here. In 1def8, Spinoza claims that, “by eternity I understand existence itself, insofar as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the definition alone of the eternal thing” (1def8). Even putting aside the clear identification of eternity with existence, we just saw that 1p25 follows from 1p16; i.e., God is the cause of both the essence and existence of things insofar as those things follow from God’s

absolute nature. If the ontological (causal, conceptual, and inherence) relationship between substance and modes is required in order to know a thing (1a4), one must understand how God's absolute nature is the cause of all things. But this just is the fact that all things follow from God's absolute nature in the sense of the vertical causal chain, and not the horizontal chain.

Relatedly, 1p24, the immediately preceding proposition, might be used to reject this view I am proposing. According to 1p24, "the essence of things produced by God does not involve existence". This might suggest that the claim that things follow from God in this eternal way I have been describing does not entail that they necessarily exist. Its truth, apparently, follows from that by which Spinoza understands the "cause of itself", or "that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing" (1def1).

What I take Spinoza to be getting at, here, is that if it belonged to the essence of things to exist, they would be cause of themselves and therefore a substance, or that which is cause of itself; but Spinoza has already proven there can only be one substance, and so, "their essence can be the cause neither of their existence nor of their duration" (1p24c). We can revisit 1def8 again, here. Properly understanding a thing requires understanding its relationship to substance as a modification of substance. This entails understanding that modes inhere in and are conceived through substance. In this way, one understands their existence as eternal insofar as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the definition of God *qua* infinite and necessary substance. Because all things apart from substance are necessarily modifications of substance/God, their essence and existence must be produced by God (1p25). Spinoza reaffirms this view later; *speaking directly of 1p24c*, he says,

by existence here I do not understand duration, i.e., existence insofar as it is conceived abstractly, and as a certain species of quantity. For I am speaking of the very nature of existence, which is attributed to singular things because infinitely many things follow from the eternal necessity of God's nature in infinitely many modes (see 1p16). 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. Concerning this, see 1p24c.* (2p45s, emphasis mine)

And so, while it may very well seem that Spinoza aims to distinguish essence from existence in 1p24,

this is an ontological distinction pertaining to the difference between substance and modes, not duration and eternity. Specifically, existence does not pertain to the nature of modes in the way that it does to the essence of substance. Even though this is true, this does not undermine the claim that modes are caused by God in the same way that God is called the cause of himself. For this reason, I understand 1p24 as no threat to my claims regarding 1p24.

My interpretation of 1p25 as considered under the species of eternity, or qua *natura naturans*, or finally under the order of the Intellect, also gains support by considering the fact that, as I mentioned in chapter 1, the common order of nature, or duration, does not get developed until 1p28, three propositions later than 1p25. In 1p28, Spinoza argues that,

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 also can 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)

Surely Spinoza would not be speaking of things under the common order of nature in 1p25 before he developed the account of the common order of nature. And, indeed, the phrase “common order of nature” does not appear until part 2 of the *Ethics*. At the very least, it is not obvious that Spinoza has in mind in 1p25 the sense of modes as being affected by other modes and so on, i.e., the common order of nature. Consequently, I think the better interpretation of 1p25 is that Spinoza is considering the human mind, as a mode, as being caused by God qua substance, at least insofar as the mode can be said to depend on God.⁵⁸

To summarize, I do not intend to claim that one perceives only under a species of eternity or under a species of duration. Rather, one can shift between viewing oneself under a species of eternity or under a species of duration. To some extent, Spinoza’s project is largely committed to

⁵⁸ It is also worth considering that the relationship between finite and infinite modes is notoriously problematic, and, even if there is a distinction, understanding it is fraught. See Primus, “Spinoza’s Infinite Modes,” and Youpa, “Spinoza on the very Nature of Existence”.

explaining how this is possible. On the one hand, we experience passions and imagine, and to that extent we consider ourselves durationally, as affected by this horizontal causal chain. On the other hand, though gaining adequate ideas and acting, we understand ourselves and our ideas under a species of eternity, either through reason (i.e., grasping common notions in relation to the shared properties of things) or immediately through *scientia intuitiva* (as a modification of God *qua* substance through the vertical causal chain). 1p25 and its corollary, under my interpretation, highlight the vertical causal or ontological relationship between modes and God. In the context of 5p36, Spinoza wants to draw attention to the fact that the human Mind is also a mode sharing this ontological relationship with God. Because of this, the adequate intuition that the human mind follows causally from God *qua* substance explains how the Intellectual Love of God has God as a cause.

SECTION 3.2 – 5P36: THE “INsofar AS” [QUATENUS] CLAUSE

In this section, I consider an objection centering on 5p36, the very proposition Spinoza develops his understanding of the Intellectual Love of God and its relationship to human blessedness, perfection, and freedom. Regarding 5p36, one might concern themselves with my identification of God’s power, *qua* substance, with the power of the human Mind’s Intellectual Love, when Spinoza suggests that the human Mind’s Intellectual Love of God is somehow limited or different than the Intellectual Love of God that God has for himself, especially with the “insofar as” [*quatenus*] clause. Indeed, Spinoza suggests this in 5p36, where he says

The Mind’s intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human Mind’s essence, considered under a species of eternity; i.e., *the Mind’s intellectual Love of God is part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself* (5p36, emphasis mine).

How can the human Mind’s Intellectual Love of God have the same infinite power as substance when it is only a part of the infinite Intellectual Love that God loves himself with?

The resolution to this concern rests in understanding the difference between God’s idea of substance and our idea of God as substance. Recall that, according to 2p11c, when we adequately

perceive something, it is nothing other God than perceiving that thing, not insofar as he is infinite (or substance), but insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind. Conversely, when we have an inadequate idea, God has that idea, not insofar as he is infinite, nor insofar as he *only* constitutes the essence/nature of the human Mind, “but insofar as he also has the idea of another thing together with the human Mind” (2p11c).⁵⁹ In having an inadequate idea, then, God is a cause of the idea insofar as an external body, as a modification of God, affects a person in such a way as to cause that idea. But this, as I argued in chapter 1, is insufficient for one being the adequate cause of an idea. In having an adequate idea, however, we therefore have an adequate idea which is caused by God; but our idea of that thing and God’s idea qua substance of that thing may differ. Of God himself, God qua substance will understand himself infinitely, under an infinite number of attributes, with an infinite number of entailments. Our idea of God, which is in truth adequate (2p47), understands God as infinite and eternal essence. But this idea may not necessarily be the same idea of God that God qua substance has of himself. We can see this in two ways.

First, recall that God has and understands himself as infinite, eternal, and necessary essence expressed in an infinite number of attributes. We, as humans, perceive only two of these attributes, namely Thought and Extension. The content of those other attributes therefore are something we do not perceive or grasp. If God understands himself as infinite expressed in an infinite number of attributes, and we have an idea of God as infinite expressed in only two of these attributes, our idea of God and God’s idea of God are not identical. However, we still are understanding his nature as consisting of an infinite number of attributes; but, unlike us, who can represent only two of these attributes, God understands himself as having an infinite number of attributes and at the same time has an idea of the infinite number of attributes and their content. It should be noted that, according to Spinoza, each attribute expresses God’s complete (infinite) essence, and so, while we can come to

⁵⁹ See, related to this point, 2p47s.

know God's essence as infinite through the attributes of Thought and Extension, we cannot know the entire content of God insofar as his essence may be expressed in different attributes we do not know.

Second, we can understand Spinoza to be making a point similar to Descartes in his *Third Meditation* – that, while we might understand God to be infinite in some respect, God's idea or representation of himself will be greater and more complete or perfect. In the *Third Meditation*, Descartes questions whether he can use his method of doubt and reasoning from first principles to arrive at perfect knowledge of God. Descartes claims that this is impossible, because

though it is true that there is a gradual increase in my knowledge, and that I have many potentialities which are not yet actual, this is all quite irrelevant to the idea of God, which contains absolutely nothing that is potential; indeed, this gradual increase in knowledge is itself the surest sign of imperfection. What is more, even if my knowledge always increases more and more, I recognize that it will never actually be infinite, since it will never reach the point where it is not capable of a further increase; God, on the other hand, I take to be actually infinite, so that nothing can be added to his perfection. And finally, I perceive that the objective being of an idea cannot be produced merely by potential being, which strictly speaking is nothing, but only by actual or formal being. (AT7:49)

Indeed, God has a particular representation of himself, and presumably of everything else, with utmost perfection and an infinite number of properties which follow from his representations. We cannot, according to Descartes, understand God's infinity, but we can understand him as infinite. The content, then, in terms of God's representation of himself and our representation of God differ. Moreover, God has infinite cardinalities, whereas ours are limited and lower. Spinoza might be understood as drawing on this point, too, albeit by understanding the attributes differently. While Spinoza understands by 'attribute' those infinite things which express God's essence, 'attributes', for Descartes, follow a rich traditional conception of attributes which are expressed through concepts like benevolence, power, and wisdom. For Descartes, God is infinitely benevolent, powerful, and wise. For Spinoza, God's idea of himself is unique, and consists in an infinite number of infinite attributes, such as Thought and Extension. Just as for my first point that we lack an idea of the content of God's infinite attributes, so too do we lack an understanding of God as infinite that God has

of himself.

In either of these two cases, this will not be the infinity by which God understands himself with; but it will nevertheless be an adequate representation of God as infinite, insofar as we can understand the concept of infinity as constitutive of the essence of God *qua* substance; that is, insofar as God constitutes the essence of the human Mind understands God as substance.

This framework of one's idea of God and his attributes is equally true of external bodies. Our entire perception of anything is nothing but God's perception; when we adequately perceive something, it is God perceiving that thing insofar as he constitutes our essence, and when we inadequately perceive something, it is God perceiving that thing, not insofar as he infinite, and not only insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind, but insofar as he has an idea of another thing together with the human Mind. Thus, we can see here that our relationship with God *qua* substance on the one hand and with external bodies, passions, and duration on the other hand are conditioned on the adequacy or inadequacy of our ideas. We can understand ourselves as durational creatures capable of being affected by external bodies without thereby representing any particular external body; in fact, so far as part 4 of the *Ethics* is concerned, it seems to me that Spinoza does just this. He understands, through reason (and therefore under a species of eternity), how external bodies may affect a person or be affected by a person. But representing external bodies as they affect us in the common order of nature is necessarily inadequate (see, for more on this point, 2p31-2p33). For this reason, our representation of the power of some external body insofar as it affects us in the common order of nature may not reflect the power the external body actually has, nor the representation that God has of the external body's power. And so, our perception of these external bodies as affecting us through some amount of power may not correspond to the power that the external object perceives itself to have, or the power that God *qua* substance perceives the external object to have. This is ultimately a reason why Spinoza claims in 2p16c that "the ideas

which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the eternal bodies” (2p16c).

For this reason, while the “insofar as” clause does issue a difference in kind, it is not a difference such that the power of the human Mind’s Intellectual Love will be diminished. Rather, it will be a kind of infinite power, which, while not numerically identical to the power of God, is infinite insofar as we can understand infinity.⁶⁰ Thus, I take this objection to be resolved.

SECTION 3.3 – NOTHING IN NATURE... WHICH CAN TAKE IT AWAY?

Another concern focuses on 5p20s, the proposition and scholium where I claim Spinoza moves away from discussing matters pertaining to reason and the unification of the mind and body. In 5p20s, when discussing the rational love of God, Spinoza says, that “we can show that there is no affect which is directly contrary to this Love and by which it can be destroyed” (5p20s). Recall that in discussing *akrasia*, I argued that the power of a passion must be greater than the power of an action (for *akrasia* to arise). If there is no affect (including, presumably, the passions) contrary to the rational love of God, nor by which it can be destroyed, it might seem that when one has the rational love of God, *akrasia* cannot occur; for the possibility of *akrasia* depends upon the presence of a passion whose power exceeds that of an action. But, per 5p20s, no passion is directly contrary to the rational love of God, nor one which can take it away.

In order to resolve this, it is important to consider first the distinction between what is conceived under a species of eternity and under a species of duration. As I have suggested, 5p20s signifies a shift from considering the human Mind as both durational and eternal to considering the Mind’s only eternal part, without relation to the body. Insofar as the human Mind represents the common order of nature, its representations necessarily relate to duration and the passions.

⁶⁰ This “insofar as” clause is equally true of our perception of external bodies, such that our representation of the external body may not necessarily reflect the external body as God perceives or as the external body itself perceives.

Conversely, by representing the order of the Intellect, the human Mind represents things under a species of eternity. As I have argued, because reason is necessarily durational in certain respects (despite it representing things under a species of eternity), its power is determined to some extent through duration. Additionally, recall that, for Spinoza, a human's (actual) essence is their *conatus*, or striving. Spinoza argues that "both insofar as the Mind has clear and distinct ideas, and insofar as it has confused ideas, it strives, for an indefinite duration, to persevere in its being and it is conscious of this striving it has" (3p9) and because the power of an idea is a function of the power of its causes, the power of one's actions is determined by their *conatus*, which I have just shown to consist of inadequate ideas (but not exclusively). Because it consists in part of inadequate ideas, it is necessarily durational, i.e., involved in the common order of nature. In this way, the rational affects, including the rational love of God, and their power, will be determined through the common order of nature, as well. This is why Spinoza says, "insofar as it [the rational love of God] is related to the Body, cannot be destroyed, unless it is destroyed with the Body itself" (5p20s). As I have argued elsewhere, passions and their power also arise from the common order of nature.

With this, we can turn to see how Spinoza understands the remedies for the passions. Suppose that one experiences a passion, such as hate. The power of a person's hate is determined to some extent by the power of its causes, which, *qua* passion, must be the representation of some external object insofar as it affects them. This hate may be persistent (through duration), and so, for this reason, Spinoza develops what he calls "remedies for the passions". He presents five remedies for the passions. The power of the human Mind over the affects, for Spinoza, consists:

- i. In the knowledge itself of the affects;
- ii. in the fact that it separates the affects from the thought of an external cause, which we imagine confusedly;
- iii. in the time by which the affections related to things we understand surpass those related to things we conceive confusedly, or in a mutilated way;
- iv. in the multiplicity of causes by which affections related to common properties or to God are encouraged;
- v. finally, in the order by which the Mind can order its affects and connect them to one another. (5p20s)

Insofar as these are “remedies” for the passions, they are necessarily durational; they involve, after all, the experience of some passion which persists in an individual and, through these remedies, one comes to, in one way or another, destroy or remove the passion. In this way, the passions are prior to the remedies for the passions. I suggest that the rational love of God, in fact, is one of the ways by which a person can remedy the passions, namely that fifth remedy, or in “order[ing] its affects and connect[ing] them to one another” (5p20s). By understanding the rational love of God in this way, I defuse this objection about contrary affects to the rational love of God.

Recall that, in chapter 1, I argued that common notions ground Spinoza’s account of reason. The rational love of God gets part of its power in representing that which is common in one’s actions and passions. It is by relating one’s inadequate ideas and passions to the idea of God (5p14) that the rational love of God arises (5p15). In other words, the rational love of God identifies affects (both passions and actions) of the body which are common to all,⁶¹ and, because they are common to all (2L2, 5p4) one can form an adequate idea of them. In recognizing those parts of the passions which are common, one can relate the idea of that part to God/substance and the order of the Intellect. And, in doing so, they gain a clear and distinct, or adequate, idea of the passion, here the rational love of God. It is for this reason that Spinoza says “that there is no affect which is directly contrary to this Love and by which it can be destroyed” (5p20s). Passions cannot be contrary to the rational love of God, nor destroy it, because the rational love of God picks out that which is common to the passions and relates that to God.

But this is not to say that the rational love of God cannot be involved in *akrasia*. First, as I have argued, reason (and therefore the rational love of God) is durational and operates within the

⁶¹ I understand the passions to be common to all insofar as people may experience a particular passion. For example, consider the passion, fear; for Spinoza, “fear is an inconstant Sadness, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we to some extent doubt” (DOA13). While the (external) cause of my fear and Grace’s claustrophobia differ, the passion of fear is common to both of us insofar as our passions align with this definition of ‘fear’.

common order of nature. The rational love of God, moreover, consists in the reordering of passions into actions via connecting what is common in the part and in the whole of the passion to the idea of God *qua* substance. This, then, results in an adequate idea, or action. However, this does not necessarily entail that one's power in acting is therefore greater than the power of the passion. While it may be the case that in gaining the rational love of God one's power increases, it is still entirely possible for the power of the external body to be greater than one's own power, even with the rational love of God. In this way, the rational love of God may still be susceptible to *akrasia*.

Moreover, because the rational love of God is temporal, it is possible that I have the rational love of God insofar as I have adequately reflected on the nature of my fear of bears, but not insofar as I am despondent (see DOA29) because of some kind of imposter syndrome. In this way, I can still experience certain passions even with the rational love of God. And this is possible because the rational love of God is a remedy for the passions that works by the reordering of particular images in such a way as to connect them to the idea of God (5p14). But this process does not necessarily entail that a person does this for all of their passions, and so they can still experience other passions. Thus, while there is no affect directly contrary to the rational love of God, this affective state is not all-encompassing in ridding one of the passions; other passions may persist even if one has the rational love of God.

We can contrast this understanding the rational love of God with Spinoza's description of the Intellectual Love of God. It is by way of this discussion that we can understand why Spinoza claims that "no love but the Intellectual Love [of God] is eternal" (5p34s). As Spinoza argues, "only while the Body endures is the Mind subject to affects which are related to the passions" (5p34). Because the rational love of God is necessarily tied to the common order of nature, both insofar as it is a remedy and also insofar as it is the product of something (reason) durational, the rational love of God is necessarily related to the passions.

Spinoza also argues that because of the Intellectual Love of God's status as the only eternal love, "there is nothing in nature which is contrary to this intellectual, Love, or [*sive*] which can take it away" (5p37).⁶² Recall that the first axiom to the fourth part of the *Ethics*, "concerns singular things insofar as they are considered in relation to a certain time and place" (5p37s), or insofar as the human Mind is understood as in union with the body, and by which it exists under the common order of nature or durationally (5p29s). Reason, as I have suggested, is necessarily durational in virtue of its procedural nature. Because the rational love of God is a remedy for the passions consisting in both recognizing what is common to a passion and relating that to God, the rational love of God has no "directly contrary" affect or passion. With respect to *scientia intuitiva*, on the other hand, we are concerned with the Mind and the Mind alone, first to the extent that it involves the infinite and eternal essence of God, and second to the extent that we can consider the human Mind as eternal (5p31s) and without relation to the body (5p20s). And so, for *scientia intuitiva*, its power arises not from its susceptibility to anything bodily, unlike reason. But this (susceptibility to the body) was required for *akrasia* to arise; and so, for this reason, *scientia intuitiva* and its affective state, the Intellectual Love of God, are not susceptible to *akrasia*. And it is for this reason that the Intellectual Love of God, or *scientia intuitiva*, is human perfection and blessedness. Moreover, it is for this reason that the Intellectual Love of God, or human blessedness, "is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; nor we do not enjoy it because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, because we enjoy it, we are able to restrain them" (5p42).

SECTION 3.4 – PARALLELISM

Up to this point, I have described reason and imagination as consisting in the unification of the human Mind with the body, and that *scientia intuitiva* somehow deals with matters without

⁶² I take or [*sive*], to be understood as an inclusive or (contrary to Soyarslan). See Curley, "*Sive*" and Steenbakkens, "*Sive*". For example, Curley suggests that Spinoza uses [*sive*] "to signify that the terms or phrases so disjoined are equivalent or can be used for one another indifferently" (Curley, "*Sive*", 488).

reference to the body. This may appear to violate Spinoza's parallelism doctrine, or his claim that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (2p7) and his claim that the Mind and the Body are "one and the same thing" (2p21s). According to the parallelism doctrine, a mode conceived under the attribute of Thought has a necessarily parallel mode under the attribute of Extension, and the etiology of this mode is paralleled in every attribute (except according to Melamed). In describing *scientia intuitiva* as dealing with matters independent of the body, it might seem that I or Spinoza are violating this doctrine; if parallelism is true, how can there be something pertaining only to the attribute of Thought and not Extension?

While it may seem that my (and Spinoza's) discussion of *scientia intuitiva* has in fact considered the human Mind without relation to the body in a way that seems to violate Spinoza's parallelism doctrine, I do not think this is quite right. I suggest that Spinoza frequently speaks about the body in order to signify what occurs under the common order of nature; after all, it is through representation of the body that one perceives the affections of external bodies upon oneself and consequently forms inadequate ideas and undergoes the passions. In contrast, when speaking about adequate ideas, I have noted that they exist necessarily under a species of eternity and represent the vertical causal structure.

In order to resolve this concern regarding parallelism, it is important to note that the claim has not been that the body has no existence under a species of eternity. Rather, the body has an existence under a species of eternity; but it is not the corporeal reality *qua* extended in the common order of nature. Indeed, the body is associated with the common order of nature because it is through affections of the body that we come to represent (inadequately) external bodies (2p16). In discussing the eternity of the body, then, Spinoza cannot talk about any particular representation of the common order of nature, nor how external bodies might affect one's body. Moreover, the eternity of the body cannot be understood as actually experiencing any affect or effecting any

particular modes; one's body would affect or be affected by other bodies in the common order of nature, and, because the body is constantly changing, external modes need to be supplied in explaining the striving or *conatus* of some particular action insofar as it manifests durationally (which would involve the common order of nature). In this way, the body, conceived under a species of eternity, does not regard any particular thing as present to it.

Spinoza argues that 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” (2p19), nor does it have an adequate idea of that which constitutes the parts of the human body (2p24). Moreover, the body, as discussed in the physical interlude, is constantly changing (2post1-6), specifically in accord with the common order of nature. We might, then, wonder what exactly the body and subjective experience look like when conceived under a species of eternity, rather than under a species of duration. As I said above, Spinoza frequently speaks of the body as coextensive with the common order of nature. Indeed, it is because of the frequent perceptions of the body insofar as it is affected by other external body's that the passions and inadequate ideas arise; and so, by speaking of the “duration of the Mind without relation to the Body”, Spinoza is not intending to literally discuss the Mind without relation to the body, but instead aiming to speak about the ‘duration’ of the human Mind insofar as it is conceived only with respect to its eternal part. He does so because the body supplies representations of external bodies, subjective experience, and the passions. Considered only under a species of eternity, then, there can be no representations of this sort, and consequently it is difficult to understand the body and the content of the idea representing it under a species of eternity, unlike the human Mind. This is why Spinoza claims that “whatever the Mind understands under a species of eternity, it understands not from the fact that it conceives the Body's present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the Body's essence under a species of eternity” (5p29). In other words, the human Mind's perceptions from *scientia intuitiva*

perceive the body's essence under a species of eternity as an effect of God's absolute nature *qua* substance.

Spinoza actually hinted at this view in part 2 of the *Ethics*. He argues, “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” (2p8). Just as things that do not exist within the common order of nature must be understood by God's intellect, so too must the idea of things that do. God, then, has an idea of all that can and could ever exist, not insofar as those things may at some point come into durational existence, but rather, insofar as the idea of that thing follows from the absolute nature of God as conceivable by the infinite intellect. In the present context of *scientia intuitiva*, the human Mind understands the body's existence under a species of eternity in this way; not as if it ever existed durationally, but just as the idea of the formal essences of things are understood by God, i.e., as following from God's nature.

Relatedly, Spinoza comments in part 5 on this point. 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. And though it is impossible that we should recollect that we existed before the Body—since there cannot be any traces of this in the body, and eternity can neither be defined by time nor have any relation to time—still, we feel and know by experience that we are eternal. For the Mind feels those things that it conceives in understanding no less than those it has in the memory. For the eyes of the mind, by which it sees and observes things, are the demonstrations themselves. (5p23)

The idea, here, is that we have existed, and always will (albeit not necessary existence in the way that God *qua* substance does), insofar as we have adequate ideas. We do not recollect such existence, however, and we will not after our body dies (in the common order of nature), because it is the body's durational existence which accounts for and is necessary for memory and imagination.

The reason for his speaking of matters pertaining to the human Mind's duration without relation to the body is not because the body has no eternal part which parallels the human Mind or intellect; rather, it is because the body is most easily understood as durational and sharing in the common order of nature. Relatedly, Spinoza speaks about the relative ease of representing things

through the imagination, especially when compared with representing things under a species of eternity. Indeed, our bodies are continuously and constantly affected by external bodies in nature, and this accounts for how frequently we imagine. He makes this point in this way;

but that men do not have so clear a knowledge of God as they do of the common notions comes from the fact that they cannot imagine God, as they can bodies, and that they have joined the name God to the images of things which they are used to seeing. Men can hardly avoid this, because they are continually affected by bodies. (2p47s)

Imagination, for Spinoza, can also be used to the benefit of ourselves. Before discussing the eternity of the human Mind without relation to the body, Spinoza claims,

the best thing, then, that we can do, so long as we do not have perfect knowledge of our affects, is to conceive a correct principle of living, or sure maxims of life, to commit them to memory, and to apply them constantly to the particular cases frequently encountered in life. In this way our imagination will be extensively affected by them, and we shall always have them ready. (5p10s)

The idea here is that, by imagining certain maxims which can benefit ourselves with affects we deem good, we can habituate ourselves to recall the maxim when the situation requires it.

For these reasons, in part 5, Spinoza argues that “the human Mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the Body, but something of it remains which is eternal” (5p23), signifying the distinction between conceiving things under a species of eternity versus under a species of duration. The body, as an actually existing corporeal thing by which we imagine and form inadequate ideas in the common order of nature, will cease to exist insofar as its temporal aspect is concerned; in other words, the body no longer persists in time and experiences changes which can be understood only through the common order of nature. But, per the passage of 5p29 that I pointed to above,⁶³ we can conceive the body under a species of eternity, through which the body can be said to exist, not durationally, but “necessarily from the definition alone of the eternal thing” (1def8). That is, as following from the absolute nature of God *qua* substance. In this way, the body, too, can be conceived under a species of eternity.

⁶³ That is, “whatever the Mind understands under a species of eternity, it understands not from the fact that it conceives the Body's present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the Body's essence under a species of eternity.” (5p29)

When speaking about the human Mind, however, Spinoza can avoid these concerns since its eternal aspect is more easily understood; we have seen how the mind can form adequate ideas by itself as an adequate cause, and therefore act. And Spinoza has shown that adequate ideas clearly exist under a species of eternity (2p45), which represent the vertical causal structure. Spinoza demonstrated in Part 2 that, because the object of the human mind's representations is the body (2p13), and that we perceive affections of the body (2p12), we necessarily imagine and remember. But this indicates the common order of nature. The human Mind, however, can form adequate ideas and consequently act, not from representations of this sort, but because it can properly order its representations in accord with the order of the Intellect (5p10). But this is just to understand the mind as conceived under a species of eternity.

SECTION 3.5 – THE EPISTEMIC FEASIBILITY OF SCIENTIA INTUITIVA

In this section, I consider the epistemic feasibility of *scientia intuitiva*. I do so for two reasons: first, many commentators take Spinoza's discussion of remedying the passions and actually attaining *scientia intuitiva* to be rather difficult, if not impossible, and second, if I am right about the power of *scientia intuitiva* over the passions in the way I have described, not only is it more powerful than reason, but it is a strange sort of cognition which proves both useful to oneself but also rather rare. Thus, I aim to show that, while *scientia intuitiva* is difficult to attain, it is nevertheless achievable.

Many hold that *scientia intuitiva* and the ability to remedy the passions according to reason is fraught.⁶⁴ Among those commentators is the widely influential Bennett (1984). Regarding reason's ability to remedy the passions, he believes it necessary to somehow go back in time and be the adequate cause of their idea. For example, Bennett writes,

If x now exists and is a passion in me, then its cause y was outside my body; so I(y) was outside my mind, and thus I(x) is inadequate in my mind. And that's that! I can no more make I(x) adequate by bringing it about that I(y) was inside my mind than I can become royal by altering who my parents were. The absurdity remains if we set aside adequate ideas and attend merely to the notion of turning a passion into an action. That means making a change in what the cause of the event was, and once the event has

⁶⁴ See also Della Rocca, "Spinoza"; Lin, "The Power of Reason"; and LeBuffe, "Change and the Eternal Part".

occurred it is too late for that. (Bennett 1984, 364)

Apparently, Bennett's concern has to do with time-travel; he believes that 5p3 suggests one become the adequate cause of some previous event in time, and only by "making a change in what the cause of the event was" could one make a passion into an action or adequate idea. But this is obviously ridiculous, and so he concludes this way of remedying the passions is equally ridiculous. Regarding *scientia intuitiva*, the Intellectual Love of God, and the eternity of the Mind, Bennett writes that these doctrines cannot be rescued from criticism, and that, regarding this part of the *Ethics* rather pessimistically (and wrongly, might I add), it "has nothing to teach us and is pretty certainly useless" (Bennett 372, 1984).⁶⁵

Other figures have different views about the possibility of *scientia intuitiva*, yet agree with its impossibility, or at least difficulty. Many of these views regarding the possibility of *scientia intuitiva* (not to mention its corresponding ethical benefits!) suggest that *scientia intuitiva* is unattainable. I argue that this seemingly problematic aspect of attaining *scientia intuitiva* presents because of their understanding of the content of representation (which focuses on causes, since knowledge is knowledge of causes for Spinoza, by 1a4). Garrett (2010), for example, argues that *scientia intuitiva* is a deduction of one's formal essence *in the common order of nature* through the knowledge of divine attributes and a sense of (the controversial) infinite modes. Recall the distinction between the horizontal causal nexus and the vertical causal nexus that I explained in the first chapter. The horizontal causal nexus view holds that knowledge consists in adequate representation of causes in the common order of nature; i.e., representing how this finite mode affects this other finite mode in duration, and so on, to infinity. Understanding representation to consist in the horizontal causal nexus gives rise to the difficulty of attaining *scientia intuitiva*, especially for interpretations like

⁶⁵ For other responses to Bennett, see Marshall, "Spinoza on Destroying the Passions with Reason", and Krut-Landau, "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Time".

Garrett's and Bennett's. If understanding the horizontal causal chain is a necessary component constitutive of *scientia intuitiva*, then of course *scientia intuitiva* appears unattainable. As I have argued, Spinoza believes it impossible for humans to attain adequate knowledge of the affairs of the common order of nature. Moreover, under such a view, the common order of nature consists of an infinite regress of modal interaction, which at least *prima facie* appears outside human capacities. If this is Spinoza's view, *scientia intuitiva* appears quite difficult, if not impossible.

Wilson's (1996) view, on the other hand, requires an understanding that may appear beyond the confines of human understanding in a different way. For her, because God is infinite substance, *scientia intuitiva* requires a grasping of the infinite complex causal structure of Nature, which she calls "infinite understanding". In fact, this understanding of *scientia intuitiva* is identified with the actual infinite intellect of God *qua* substance in 1p16; she argues "this definition [of *scientia intuitiva*] fits exactly the role ascribed to infinite understanding in 1.16 [1p16]" (Wilson 1996, 168). So, for her, a human who understands via *scientia intuitiva* has the exact same ideas as God *qua* substance does. This view is problematic, however, because as I have argued, we do not have an identical understanding of things to God's understanding. While 1p16 is important to understanding Spinoza's conception of *scientia intuitiva*, we do not get this infinite understanding of God's. Understanding *scientia intuitiva* in Wilson's way, too, makes *scientia intuitiva* seemingly impossible to attain. From the perspective of common experience, when, if ever, does a person have God's knowledge?

In contrast, I believe my interpretation of *scientia intuitiva* resolves these worries. While *scientia intuitiva* is certainly a difficult sort of cognitive achievement, it is not impossible. As I suggested above, core issues plaguing the attainability of *scientia intuitiva* center on either understanding the causal nexus incorrectly or identifying the view with some form of God's view of things. But, under my interpretation, *scientia intuitiva* does neither of these things. Instead, *scientia intuitiva* is an

immediate grasping, or a presentation, of the vertical causal chain or ontological relationship between God, *qua* substance, and oneself. It is somewhat similar to grasping the entirety of the *Ethics*, Euclid's *Elements*, or some other large yet graspable philosophical text, just through an immediate presentation. Consequently, it does not have the sort of infinite regress that Bennett's view suggests. It is also not identical with God's infinite intellect. As we have seen, we cannot conceive of everything in the way that God *qua* substance does. For example, we cannot grasp the common order of nature, God's infinite attributes apart from Thought and Extension, nor the infinity of God that God understands himself with. Our understanding, by *scientia intuitiva*, is an understanding of one's relationship with God insofar as God constitutes our essence. We can, in fact, understand the causal structure, without understanding things in the same way as God. On this view, *scientia intuitiva* appears more attainable. It relies on no infinite regress of chains of causes (which, moreover, appears necessarily propositional) nor a claim about some intellectual identification with God or the infinite intellect of God.

Instead, *scientia intuitiva* is the best that we can get, according to Spinoza. It is the source of human blessedness, perfection, and freedom. As Spinoza puts it, this "blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; nor do we enjoy it because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, because we enjoy it, we are able to restrain them" (5p42). It is not a sort of remedy for the passions, as this inversion of causal relationship implies.⁶⁶ *Scientia intuitiva* is an attainable cognitive state that is in fact achievable. But that is not to say that it is easy. It does require an adequate familiarity with God *qua* substance, God's attributes, and core doctrines that Spinoza posits. Understanding even these doctrines have been widely discussed and debated within the secondary literature on Spinoza's

⁶⁶ I have in mind that, for the rational affects, e.g., the rational love of God, we can restrain the passions because we enjoy the rational love of God. But, through *scientia intuitiva*, because we enjoy *scientia intuitiva* we can restrain the passions. *Scientia intuitiva* in this way seems prior to the passions, whereas the passions appear prior to the rational affects.

Ethics. Moreover, it requires one to bear in mind how the various parts of the *Ethics* relate to each other, and the perhaps most difficult part of all is accomplishing this sort of cognition in spite of the fact that we live in continuous change; of ourselves, our ideas, and our worldviews. I suggest that this is why Spinoza, in the concluding lines of the *Ethics*, says

if the way I have shown to lead to these things now seems very hard, still, it can be found. 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)

It is by way of grasping things through *scientia intuitiva* that Spinoza understands one's blessedness and love for oneself and God in the most perfect way, in addition to living the best and most virtuous of lives. With this, I take *scientia intuitiva*, and its respective affective states, to be attainable, though nevertheless difficult.

With this, I take *scientia intuitiva* and its affective state, the Intellectual Love of God, to withstand the power of any passion, such that it is not susceptible to *akrasia*. As we have seen, the power of an idea is a function of the power of its causes. I have suggested that *scientia intuitiva* and the Intellectual Love of God not only have oneself as a cause, but God, too. Because we understand God to be infinite, with infinite power, it follows that the power of *scientia intuitiva* is infinite, too. Of course, not infinite in the way that God *qua* substance is infinite; but insofar as God, insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human Mind, understands God to be infinite. In this way, *scientia intuitiva* is not susceptible to *akrasia*. Moreover, reason, unlike *scientia intuitiva*, in various ways has been shown to be durational. While its content perceives things under a species of eternity, the operation of reason itself is not eternal; rather, it is a procedural, and therefore durational, process by which one comes to understand things, this at one time, and because of that, this other thing follows which can now be grasped at this other time. For this reason, reason does not get the infinite power of God insofar as we understand God to be infinite.

In this thesis, I have argued that *scientia intuitiva* and its corresponding affective state, the

Intellectual Love of God, is not susceptible to *akrasia*. In chapter 1, I provided an interpretation of Spinoza's metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, and ethical commitments, with a nod towards the relationship between these views and *akrasia*. In chapter 2, I presented an interpretation of the power of *scientia intuitiva* which I attempted to refute; in particular, by drawing on the historical precedent for intuition on the one hand and concerns about reason on the other hand, I argued that *scientia intuitiva* gains an infinite power over the passions. In chapter 3, I responded to some objections and concluded with a discussion about the epistemic feasibility of *scientia intuitiva*. In particular, I hold that while *scientia intuitiva* is in fact difficult to attain, it is easier to attain than other philosophers have suggested.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aquinas, Thomas. *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, Opera Omnia / iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P.M. edita*. Ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1882.
- Ayalon, Noa L. “Spinoza on the Power of Reason over the Passions.” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 31, no. 5 (2023): 665–88.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2023.2300826>.
- Ayalon, Noa L. “The Intellectual Love of God in Spinoza.” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 30, no. 4 (2022): 420–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2022.2136734>.
- Barry, Galen. “Spinoza and the Logical Limits of Mental Representation.” *Journal of Modern Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.32881/jomp.19>.
- Bennett, Jonathan. *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*. Hackett Publishing, 1999.
- Bidney, David. *The Psychology and Ethics of Spinoza: A Study in the History and Logic of Ideas*. Russell & Russell, 1962.
- Broad, C. D. *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. Routledge, 1930.
- Carlisle, Clare. “Spinoza’s Acquiescentia.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 55, no. 2 (2017): 209–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2017.0027>.
- Carlisle, Clare. “The Intellectual Love of God.” In *A Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119538349.ch41>.
- Carr, Spencer. “Spinoza’s Distinction Between Rational and Intuitive Knowledge.” *The Philosophical Review* 87, no. 2 (1978): 241–52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2184754>.
- Carriero, John. “The Highest Good and Perfection in Spinoza.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, edited by Michael Della Rocca. Oxford University Press, 2013.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335828.013.017>.

- Delahunty, R. J. *Spinoza-Arg Philosophers*. Routledge, 1999.
- Descartes, René. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Edited by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 3 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1985–91.
- Della Rocca, Michael. “Rationalism Run Amok: Representation and the Reality of Emotions in Spinoza.” In *Interpreting Spinoza: Critical Essays*, edited by Charlie Huenemann. Cambridge University Press, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511487200.004>.
- Della Rocca, Michael. *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Della Rocca, Michael. *Spinoza*. Routledge, 2008. <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780203894583>.
- Della Rocca, Michael. “Spinoza’s Substance Monism.” In *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, edited by Olli I. Koistinen and John I. Biro. Oxford University Press, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.1093/019512815x.003.0002>.
- Della Rocca, Michael. “Striving, Oomph, and Intelligibility in Spinoza.” In *Judgement and the Epistemic Foundation of Logic*, edited by Maria van der Schaar. Springer Dordrecht, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5137-8_5.
- Della Rocca, Michael. “The Power of an Idea: Spinoza’s Critique of Pure Will.” *Noûs* 37, no. 2 (2003): 200–231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0068.00436>.
- Duns Scotus, John. *Opera Omnia*. Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–.
- Ellsiepen, Christof. “The Types of Knowledge (2P38–47).” In *Spinoza’s Ethics*, edited by Michael Hampe, Ursula Renz, and Robert Schnepf. Brill, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004194250.i-380.42>.
- Garrett, Don. *Nature and Necessity in Spinoza’s Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Garrett, Don. “Representation, Misrepresentation, and Error in Spinoza’s Philosophy of Mind.” In *Necessity and Nature in Spinoza’s Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

- Garrett, Don. "Spinoza on the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind That Is Eternal." In *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, edited by Olli Koistinen. Cambridge University Press, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol9780521853392.014>.
- Garrett, Don, "Spinoza's Theory of *Scientia Intuitiva*." In *Necessity and Nature in Spinoza's Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Garver, Eugene. *Spinoza and the Cunning of Imagination*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226575735.001.0001>.
- Gueroult, Martial. *Spinoza II: L'Âme*. Aubier, 1997.
- Hübner, Karolina. "Representation and Mind-Body Identity in Spinoza's Philosophy." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 60, no. 1 (2022): 47–77. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2022.0002>.
- Hübner, Karolina. "Spinoza on the Limits of Explanation." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 103, no. 2 (2020): 341–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12711>.
- Hübner, Karolina, and Justin Steinberg. *The Cambridge Spinoza Lexicon*. Cambridge University Press, 2025.
- Huenemann, Charlie, ed. *Interpreting Spinoza: Critical Essays*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Kisner, Matthew J. *Spinoza on Human Freedom: Reason, Autonomy and the Good Life*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Kisner, Matthew J. "Virtue." In *The Cambridge Spinoza Lexicon*, edited by Karolina Hübner and Justin Steinberg. Cambridge University Press, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108992459.192>.
- Krut-Landau, Raphael. "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Time." In *A Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021. <https://doi-org.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/10.1002/9781119538349.ch14>.
- LeBuffe, Michael. "Change and the Eternal Part of the Mind in Spinoza." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91, no. 3 (2010): 369–384. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0114.2010.01372.x>.

- Levy, Lia. "Spinoza on Ideas of Affections." In *A Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119538349.ch27>.
- Lin, Martin. "Spinoza's Arguments for the Existence of God." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 75, no. 2 (2007): 269–297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2007.00076.x>.
- Lin, Martin. "The Power of Reason in Spinoza." In *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics*, edited by Olli Koistinen. Cambridge University Press, 2009. <http://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521853392.013>.
- Marshall, Colin. "Spinoza on Destroying Passions with Reason." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85, no. 1 (2011): 139–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2011.00533.x>.
- McAllister, Blake A. "Adequate and Inadequate Ideas in Spinoza." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2014): 119–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43488092>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. "Spinoza and Some of His Medieval Philosophers on the *Summum Bonum*." In *The Pursuit of Happiness in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Thought*, edited by Yehuda Halper. Brepolis, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1484/m.patma-cb.5.122280>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. "Spinoza's Deification of Existence." *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2012): 75–104. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199659593.003.0003>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. "Spinoza's Metaphysics of Thought: Parallelisms and the Multifaceted Structure of Ideas." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 86, no. 3 (2012): 636–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2011.00549.x>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak. "The Building Blocks of Spinoza's Metaphysics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, edited by Michael Della Rocca. Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335828.013.006>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. "The Causes of Our Belief in Free Will: Spinoza on Necessary, 'Innate,' yet

- False Cognition.” In *Spinoza’s Ethics: A Critical Guide*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316339213.007>.
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y. “The Enigma of Spinoza’s Amor Dei Intellectualis.” In *Freedom, Action, and Motivation in Spinoza’s Ethics*, edited by Noa Naaman-Zauderer. Routledge, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429350962-11>.
- Nadler, Steven. “Eternity and Immortality in Spinoza’s Ethics.” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2002): 224–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4975.261064>.
- Nadler, Steven. *Spinoza’s Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Nadler, Steven. “The Intellectual Love of God.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, edited by Michael Della Rocca. Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335828.013.007>.
- Newstead, Anne. “Knowledge beyond Reason in Spinoza’s Epistemology: *Scientia Intuitiva* and *Amor Dei Intellectualis* in Spinoza’s Epistemology.” *Australasian Philosophical Review* 4, no. 3 (2020): 250–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24740500.2021.1962652>.
- Noorloos, Ruben. “Spinoza’s Really Confused Ideas.” *Journal of Spinoza Studies* 3, no. 2 (2024): 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.21827/jss.3.2.41256>.
- Paul, Elliot. “Cartesian Intuition.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (2022): 693–723. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2142197>.
- Plato. *Plato: Complete Works*. Edited by John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson. Hackett Publishing, 1997.
- Plato. “Protagoras.” In *Plato: Complete Works*. Translated by S. Lombardo and K. Bell. Edited by John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson. Hackett Publishing, 1997.
- Primus, Kristin. “Finding Oneself in God.” In *Spinoza: Reason, Religion, Politics: The relation between the Ethics and the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, edited by Daniel Garber, Mogens Lærke, Pierre-

- François Moreau, and Pina Totaro. Oxford University Press, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/9780191882722.003.0015>.
- Primus, Kristin. “Part V of Spinoza’s *Ethics*: Intuitive Knowledge, Contentment of Mind, and Intellectual Love of God.” *Philosophy Compass* 17, no. 6 (2022).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12838>.
- Primus, Kristin. “*Scientia Intuitiva* in the *Ethics*.” In *Spinoza’s Ethics: A Critical Guide*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316339213.009>.
- Rommelzwaal, Christiaan. “Spinoza on Emotion and Akrasia.” PhD diss., Université de Neuchâtel, 2019. <https://philpapers.org/archive/REMSOE-2.pdf>.
- Renz, Ursula. *The Explainability of Experience: Realism and Subjectivity in Spinoza’s Theory of the Human Mind*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199350162.001.0001>.
- Renz, Ursula, and Barnaby R. Hutchins. “Spinoza on Human and Divine Knowledge.” In *A Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119538349.ch24>.
- Rice, Lee C. “Action in Spinoza’s Account of Affectivity.” In *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist*, edited by Yirmiyahu Yovel. Little Room Press, 2000.
- Rice, Lee C. “Emotion, Appetition, and Conatus in Spinoza.” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 31, no. 119/120 (1/2) (1977): 101–16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23944184>.
- Robinson, Thaddeus. “Spinoza and the Possibility of Adequate Ideas.” *Journal of Modern Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.32881/jomp.185>.
- Rorty, Amélie O. “Spinoza’s Ironic Therapy: From Anger to the Intellectual Love of God.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (2000): 261–76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27744855>.

Rutherford, Donald. "Salvation as a State of Mind: The Place of *Acquiescentia* in Spinoza's Ethics."

British Journal for the History of Philosophy 7, no. 3 (1999): 447–73.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608789908571039>.

Sandler, Ronald. "Intuitus and Ratio in Spinoza's Ethical Thought." *British Journal for the History of*

Philosophy 13, no. 1 (2005): 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0960878042000317591>.

Schmidt, Andreas. "Substance Monism and Identity Theory in Spinoza." In *The Cambridge Companion*

to Spinoza's Ethics, edited by Olli Koistinen. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol9780521853392.005>.

Shapiro, Lisa. "Spinoza on Imagination and the Affects." In *Emotional Minds*, edited by Sabrina

Ebbersmeyer. Brill, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110260922.89>.

Sharp, Hasana. "'Nemo Non Videt': Intuitive Knowledge and the Question of Spinoza's Elitism." In

The Rationalists: Between Tradition and Innovation, edited by Carlos Fraenkel, Dario Perinetti, and

Justin E. H. Smith. Springer, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9385-1_7.

Soyarslan, Sanem. "From Ordinary Life to Blessedness." In *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory*, edited

by Matthew J. Kisner and Andrew Youpa. Oxford University Press, 2014.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199657537.003.0013>.

Soyarslan, Sanem. "The Distinction Between Reason and Intuitive Knowledge in Spinoza's *Ethics*."

European Journal of Philosophy 24, no. 1 (2013): 27–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12052>.

Soyarslan, Sanem. "The Susceptibility of Intuitive Knowledge to *Akasia* in Spinoza's Ethical

Thought." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (2014): 725–47.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2014.954520>.

Spinoza, de Baruch. *Spinoza: Ethics: Proved in Geometrical Order*. Edited by Matthew J. Kisner.

Translated by Michael Silverthorne. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Spinoza, de Baruch. *Spinoza Opera*, ed. Carl Gebhardt, Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925

- Spinoza, de Baruch. *The Collected Works of Spinoza*. Edited and translated by Edwin Curley. 2 vols. Princeton University Press, 1985-2016.
- Steenbakkers, P. “Sive.” In *The Continuum Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Weip van Bunge, Henri Krop, Peit Steenbakkers, and Jeroen van de Ven. Bloomsbury, 2011.
- Steinberg, Justin. “Two Puzzles Concerning Spinoza’s Conception of Belief.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2017): 261–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12218>.
- Stetter, Jack. “Spinoza’s Argument for Monism.” *Revista Seiscentos* 1, no. 1 (2023): 65–80. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781978728707.ch-4>.
- Viteri, Juan Manuel. “Spinoza’s Ontology of Power.” In *A Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119538349.ch20>.
- Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. Translated by Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr. Routledge, 2002.
- Wilson, Margaret. “Objects, Ideas, and ‘Minds’: Comments on Spinoza’s Theory of Mind.” In *Ideas and Mechanism: Essays on Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Margaret Wilson. Princeton University Press, 1999. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400864980.126>.
- Wilson, Margaret. “Spinoza’s Causal Axiom (*Ethics* I, Axiom 4).” In *Ideas and Mechanism: Essays on Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Margaret Wilson. Princeton University Press, 1999. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400864980.126>.
- Wilson, Margaret. “Infinite Understanding, *Scientia Intuitiva*, and *Ethics* I.16.” In *Ideas and Mechanism: Essays on Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Margaret Wilson. Princeton University Press, 1999. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400864980.126>.
- Whiting, Daniel. “Spinoza, the No Shared Attribute Thesis, and the Principle of Sufficient Reason.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19, no. 3 (2011): 543–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2011.563526>.

Youpa, Andrew. "Spinoza on the Very Nature of Existence." *Midwest Studies In Philosophy* 35, no. 1 (2011): 310–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4975.2011.00221.x>.