



MIDWEST STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

*Early Modern Philosophy Reconsidered*

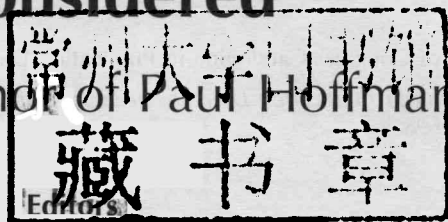
EDITORS PETER A. FRENCH AND HOWARD K. WETTSTEIN

GUEST EDITOR JOHN CARRIERO

VOLUME NO. XXXV

**Midwest Studies  
in  
Philosophy  
Volume  
XXXV  
Early Modern Philosophy  
Reconsidered**

Essays in Honor of Paul Hoffman



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Wiley Periodicals, Inc.  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148 USA

Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.  
9600 Garsington Road  
Oxford OX4 2DQ  
United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

*Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for, and is available at the Library of Congress.*

ISBN 978-1-4443-3446-3  
ISSN 0363-6550

**Midwest Studies in Philosophy**  
**Volume XXXV**



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# MIDWEST STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

## Volume XXXV

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## Introduction

JOHN CARRIERO

**T**his issue is dedicated to the memory of our colleague, teacher, and friend Paul Hoffman.

Paul died after an early morning swim workout in May 2010. (He was a serious competitive swimmer: In 2009, he ranked in the top ten in his age group in the 200-meter fly; and in 2007, he placed third in the United States and seventh in the world.)

Paul was born in 1952, in Anderson, IN. He attended Phillips Academy in Andover, MA. He spent his freshman year at Brown University and then transferred to the University of Michigan, where he began his study of philosophy. He took up graduate studies at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1974 and wrote a dissertation under Robert Adams on Descartes's concept of matter, which won a campus-wide award. Paul held faculty positions at Harvard, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and at the University of California at Riverside; he was also a Mellon Fellow at Cornell. Paul was an extraordinary teacher at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, providing just the right mixture of encouragement and no-nonsense criticism. Those who worked closely with him (and I am one of them) felt extremely fortunate to have his mentorship and friendship.

A collection of his papers, *Essays on Descartes*, appeared in 2009. (A list of Paul's publications can be found at the end of this introduction.) Paul's work on Descartes tended to focus on the metaphysical, as opposed to the epistemological, side of his philosophy. He believed that in order to understand Descartes, one needed more than a casual acquaintance with the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition that served as background to his thought. Paul was one of the first scholars trained



in the analytic tradition to appreciate the importance of the historical context for understanding Descartes's philosophy. Rather than focusing on Descartes's revolutionary departures from the thinking of his predecessors, Paul, somewhat unusually, emphasized the neglected continuities (this comes out clearly in the introduction to his book).

Paul was especially interested in questions involving free will and action theory. He did historical work on Plato, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Locke, and Reid on this topic. A paper Paul wrote relating Descartes's position on the will to Rogers Albritton's was the subject of a Pacific American Philosophical Association symposium, with Vere Chappell and Gary Watson commenting. The paper, the comments, and Paul's response were published in *Philosophical Studies*. His "Freedom and Weakness of the Will" grew out of this discussion. Paul also wrote, with John Fischer, a note to a contemporary controversy, "Alternative Possibilities: A Reply to Lamb."

Paul did not publish a great deal, but what he did publish is deeply original, carefully thought-out, and clearly argued. He thought of his work as austere, and there is some truth to that. But its austerity belies a richness that provoked many of the best historians of early modern philosophy to engage with his ideas (several of the papers included in this issue bear witness to that engagement). It is work that repays reading and rereading. Paul may be gone, but we are still learning from him.

## PAUL HOFFMAN'S PUBLICATIONS

### Book

*Essays on Descartes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). This collection includes two previously unpublished essays, "Passion and Motion in the New Mechanics" and "Descartes and Aquinas on *Per Se* Subsistence and the Union of Soul and Body."

### Articles

"Reasons, Causes, and Inclinations," in *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Lisa Shapiro and Martin Pickavé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2012).

"Hume on the Distinction of Reason," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19 (2011): 1131–41.

"Final Causation in Spinoza," in *Final Causes and Teleological Explanations*, ed. Dominik Perler and Stephan Schmid (Paderborn: Mentis, 2011), a special issue of *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy* 14 (2011): 40–50.

"Descartes," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Action*, ed. Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 481–89.

"Does Efficient Causation Presuppose Final Causation? Aquinas versus Early Modern Mechanism," in *Metaphysics and the Good: Themes from the Philosophy*

of Robert Merrihew Adams, ed. Larry Jorgensen and Samuel Newlands (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 295–312.\*

“Freedom and Weakness of Will,” *Ratio* 21 (2008): 42–54.

“The Union and Interaction of Mind and Body,” in *A Companion to Descartes*, ed. Janet Broughton and John Carriero (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 390–403.

“Descartes’s Watch Analogy,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15 (2007): 561–67.\*

“Thomas Reid’s Notion of Exertion,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44 (2006): 431–47.\*

“Locke on the Locked Room,” *Locke Studies* 5 (2005): 57–74.\*

“Aquinas on Threats and Temptations,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 86 (2005): 225–42.\*

“Aquinas on Spiritual Change,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* (accepted November 2004), forthcoming.\*

“Plato on Appetitive Desires in the *Republic*,” *Apeiron* 36 (2003): 171–74.

“The Passions and Freedom of Will,” in *Passion and Virtue in Descartes*, ed. André Gombay and Byron Williston (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003), 261–99.

“Direct Realism, Intentionality, and the Objective Being of Ideas,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 83 (2002): 163–79.\*

“Descartes’s Theory of Distinction,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 64 (2002): 57–78.\*

“Cartesian Composites,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 37 (1999): 251–70.

“The Being of Leibnizian Phenomena,” *Studia Leibnitiana* 28 (1996): 108–18.\*

“Descartes on Misrepresentation,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996): 357–81.\*

“Responses to Chappell and Watson,” *Philosophical Studies* 77 (1995): 283–92.\*

“Strength and Freedom of Will: Descartes and Albritton,” *Philosophical Studies* 77 (1995): 241–60.\*

“Alternative Possibilities: A Reply to Lamb” (with John Fischer), *Journal of Philosophy* 91 (1994): 321–26.\*

“Three Dualist Theories of the Passions,” *Philosophical Topics* 19 (1991): 153–200.

“Cartesian Passions and Cartesian Dualism,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1990): 310–33.

“St. Thomas Aquinas on the Halfway State of Sensible Being,” *Philosophical Review* 99 (1990): 73–92.\*

“The Unity of Descartes’s Man,” *Philosophical Review* 95 (1986): 339–70.\*

“Kripke on Private Language,” *Philosophical Studies* 47 (1985): 23–28.\*

## Spinoza on the Human Mind

LILLI ALANEN

This paper grew out of a longer essay on Mind in the seventeenth century. As it is now, it starts in *media res*, and I need to add some context.

Mind or reason was, since Antiquity, the highest human capacity—the power of moral deliberation constituting the ultimate condition for responsible action, and thereby for autonomous agency. It was also, both in the Platonist and the Aristotelian tradition, the source and instrument of the highest kind of perfection—understanding—that came with the highest kind of bliss or happiness. My concern is the transformation undergone by the traditional conception of reason in the sense of a power for practical deliberation and intellectual understanding—power whose good exercise was seen as the highest possible human perfection. While philosophy of nature underwent radical changes during the seventeenth century, this is not obviously the case for philosophy of mind or moral psychology. Yet the mechanistic worldview challenged philosophers to revise, or, as the case may be, break loose from inherited conceptions of mind and its relation to the world that did not really fit in with it. Descartes, who was the first to meet this challenge, pretty much created the conceptual framework within which subsequent discussions of mind and nature were conducted. The continuities between his philosophy of mind and scholastic philosophical psychology are greater than his terminological innovations may seem to—and certainly have been taken to—suggest. None has shown this more thoroughly than John Carriero in his *Between Two Worlds*. Spinoza, who by and large rejected the compromises Descartes made to save traditional intuitions about mind and its powers, developed a very different way of adjusting the ancient ideal of reason with an infinite physical

plenum in motion, or, in the Cartesian terminology he uses, the world of mind or thinking intellect with that of extended nature. In the process, the very concepts of mind and agency are thoroughly transformed—but what exactly the picture of the human mind that comes out of Spinoza's *Ethics*, or indeed, if there is such a thing, is a matter of debate.

What I will do here is to look closely at Spinoza's account of mind and reason in the second part of the *Ethics*, and discuss some of the bewildering consequences that have been imputed to Spinoza.

## 1. MIND IN NATURE

Using the famous example with the worm in the blood, Spinoza explains, in Letter 32 (to Oldenburg), how the human body is part of and dependent on the rest of nature. The first quote is from this letter:

As regards (1) the human mind, I maintain that it, too, is a part of Nature; for I hold that (2) in nature there also exists an infinite power of thinking (3) which, in so far as it is infinite, contains within itself the whole of Nature objectively, and whose thoughts proceed in the same manner as does Nature, which is in fact the object of its thought.

Further, I maintain that (4) the human mind is that same power of thinking, not in so far as that power is infinite and apprehends [*percipientem*] the whole of Nature, but (4.1) in so far as it is finite, apprehending [*percipit*] the human body only. (5) The human mind, I maintain, is in this way part of an infinite intellect. (Shirley, *Letters* 194–95 [cf. *Ethics* E2p14–p22])

These startling claims deserve careful examination. The human mind—defined in E2p11 as the idea of the actually existing human body—is part of the infinite intellect or God, that is of Nature considered under the attribute of thought. How should this be understood? The infinite intellect, being perfect and omniscient, has true or adequate ideas of all things, and so there must be an idea of this or that human that is adequate in God's eternal thinking. For to say that “the divine power of thinking contains within itself the whole of nature objectively” is to say that it contains ideas of all things there are and that these ideas represent objectively the very same reality that the things represented contain actually or formally. There is a perfect match between each idea and what it represents—indeed, they *are* the very same thing and they follow the same order of causes considered under different attributes (2p7). The human mind, however, does not know the body whose idea it is adequately, nor does it have any adequate idea of itself or its place in the infinite order of ideas (deductions) in the infinite intellect (2p25–2p27). To have adequate ideas of things requires knowing their causes adequately (by Ia4), but the finite mind has no access to the infinite chain of causes acting on the body whose idea it is. The human body is constantly interacting with and acted on by other finite bodies, and the changes caused in it by external bodies—Spinoza calls them “affections” or “images”—are at best registered as inadequate or confused ideas in the mind. They are confused because they represent the things causing them

only partially, as they affect the body and not as they are in themselves.<sup>1</sup> These confused ideas are the basis of the first and imperfect kind of cognition that Spinoza calls imagination or opinion, also random experience.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the fact that the human mind, as the idea of the human body, is part of God's infinite intellect, gives it, as we will see, surprising resources: it instantiates, within its own limits, God's power of thinking, so whatever obscure and truncated thoughts that are found within its limited horizon, it also has the means, if not to fully understand them, at least to make them clearer by comparing and arranging them in an orderly fashion, connecting them with other ideas (in God's mind that it is part of) corresponding to the true (and necessary) order of causes in nature.<sup>3</sup>

The rest of the paper seeks to clarify the original view expressed in claims 4–5 in the second part of the passage quoted near the beginning of this section. The human mind seems to have a double identity as, on the one hand, the idea of this or that actually existing finite body, apprehending this body only, and on the other hand, as part of God's eternal intellect and infinite power of thinking where this same body is instantiated as an adequate and complete idea. I will briefly touch on the ensuing view of ideas and cognition, and the role of adequate knowledge in Spinoza's ethical project. I will end by reflecting on some more mundane aspects of the radical view of mind that emerge from this doctrine, with its new account of ideas or beliefs foreshadowing that of Hume.

## 2. THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUATION AND SINGULARITY

According to 2a5, singular things that can be objects of human perception are either bodies or modes of thought. Neither has any substantial unity of its own but depend both for their being and their being understood on the substance whose modes they are and of whose infinite power they are definite and determinate temporal expressions (1p25c).<sup>4</sup>

1. For Spinoza's notion of representation, see Michael Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 57–64; Don Garrett, "Representation and Misrepresentation in Spinoza's Philosophy of Mind," in *Oxford Handbook of Spinoza*, ed. Michael Della Rocca (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

2. It is random because it is wholly determined by fortuitous encounters according to the "common order of nature" (2p40s). Yet it is of great importance. It is only through "random experience" that we know the existence of contingent things, including our own body: "The human body, as we feel it, exists" (*Hinc sequitur. Corpus humanum, prout ipsum sentimus, existere*; 2p13c).

3. I will get back to this below in Section 8, although discussing Spinoza's theory of knowledge and its many obscurities is beyond the scope of this essay—it is considered here only for what it tells us about his original conception of mind and its nature as part of God's infinite intellect.

4. So in Spinoza's ontology, singular things, including those perceived by the human mind, like this or that particular body—the barking dog, the steaming bath, your impatient mood, or his idea of a triangle—are but different modes or "affections of the attributes of God" (1p14c2). Attributes are defined in 1d4 as what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence. God consists of infinite attributes, each of which express an infinite essence (1p11) and each of which must be understood through itself (1p10). Of these infinite attributes, the human mind knows only two, thought and extension. This yields Spinoza's so-called parallelism, which, because the attributes are conceptually independent, comes with strict explanatory dualism. Cf. notes 18 and 24 later.



In explicating the nature and origin of the human mind—the idea of the human body—Spinoza devotes a long digression on physics following 2p13 to elucidating the nature and condition of the finite human body that is its object. This has led many commentators to think that Spinoza simply joins those who individuate the human mind through the human body. I do not think this is a very fruitful option—at least unless one also thinks there is some unproblematic nonambiguous way of individuating the body. The individuation of the human body is, for Spinoza, at least as problematic as that of the mind since he treats both as modes so cannot rely, in either case, on the traditional notion of finite substantial being. Finitude, for Spinoza, is tied to temporality and contingency. By singular thing (*res singulares*),<sup>5</sup> he means a finite thing with a determinate temporal existence and a definite degree of causal force. The concept of singularity at work here is relative and defined through the effects that many things concur in bringing about: if several “individuals” (*individua*) act together in causing simultaneously one effect, they are considered, according to 2def7, “all to that extent a singular thing.”<sup>6</sup> Think of the constituent parts of a body or engine causing its movement, or what goes into the fire producing the heat. Or think of singular things under the attribute of thought, that is, particular ideas: causality here must be understood in terms of explanatory power. The more adequate ideas are, the more effects or consequences they account for. Strictly speaking, since there is only one infinite substance, there is only one genuine cause of all things, the infinite power of God or Nature (1p34–36)—so the individuality and causal power of finite modes is relative and a matter of more or less. Let us consider Spinoza’s terminology for mental modes before getting back to the question of individuation and the role played by the modes of extension in this context.

### 3. PERCEPTION, IDEAS, AND OTHER MODES OF THINKING

Spinoza’s use of the term “thinking” (*cogitatio*) follows Descartes’s in that it is not well defined and covers all sorts of psychological acts and states, from concepts and ideas to perception and sensations (“affections”), and emotions (“active” and “passive affects”), including desires or strivings. Yet perception or sensation have an even wider general use in Spinoza, as when he asserts (2p12) that nothing can happen in the human body that is not necessarily perceived by the human mind. The complex idea constituting the mind includes perceptions of whatever goes on in its object, and this holds generally for all things in nature. One consequence of this thought extension parallelism seems to be not only that there are ideas of all singular things in nature, but also that all things are animate, and sense or perceive “albeit in different degrees” (2p13s). I will not dwell on this extraordinary thesis or

5. I take “individual” and “singular” to be largely overlapping for Spinoza. See Garrett, “Representation and Misrepresentation,” note 5. Contingency, again, for Spinoza, is tied to temporality and lack of necessary, self-caused existence: any finite thing depending on other external finite and determinate causes the totality of which are not adequately known, would in this sense be contingent.

6. For a clarifying discussion of Spinoza’s view of bodily and mental individuality, and its problems, see Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem*, 26–43.

its interpretation here.<sup>7</sup> At least Spinoza does not claim, to my knowledge, that all things including oysters and rocks *think*. On the contrary, he seems to single out thinking as a characteristic of human being, and it is thinking, in this narrower sense, that interests me here. What does Spinoza understand by thinking and what precisely is the human mind—the idea of the human body—*qua* thinking thing? We have to look closely at some of the definitions and axioms of Part Two where Spinoza proceeds to explain the things following from God's essence that will lead us to know "the human mind and its highest blessedness" (p. 446).

Axioms 1 and 2 inform us, first, that human nature does not involve necessary existence (2a1), and second, that "Man thinks (*cogitat*)" (2a2).<sup>8</sup> Some take "thinking" here in a broad allegedly Cartesian sense of consciousness, but I will not follow that route (cf. note 8 earlier). Thinking, presumably, must involve at least some degree of understanding, which for Spinoza presupposes the capacity of *forming* adequate ideas and inferring other adequate ideas from them (cf. also TdIE II/38–9). I here rely on the definition 2d3 of idea as "a concept of the Mind that the Mind forms because it is a thinking thing (*res cogitans*)." The term "concept" is said to be more suitable here than "perception" because it "seems to express an action (*actio*) of the mind." Perception to the contrary indicates that the mind is "acted on by the object" so passive. Let me note in passing that throughout *Ethics* Parts 3 and 4, Spinoza uses "idea" for the mental counterpart of affections too, and these ideas are, by definition, inadequate, passive perceptions. So he seems to use idea in two senses: idea-concepts and idea-perceptions. The human mind, in forming ideas in the sense of concepts is active, whereas its perceptual ideas, that is ideas of sensory impressions or images are, or at least seem to be, passively received.

Activity or action is defined in Part 3 in terms of adequate causation and understanding (3d2). The activity that comes with the conceptual capacity must involve the ability to recognize true adequate ideas, and hence to distinguish truth from falsity. An idea is said in 2d4 to be "adequate" when it is intrinsically true, that

7. See, for example, Don Garrett, "Representation and Consciousness in Spinoza's Naturalistic Theory of the Imagination," in *Interpreting Spinoza*, ed. Charles Huenemann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4–25. I have problems though with Garrett's identification of power of thinking with degrees of consciousness and his account of the generality of representation in terms of degrees of consciousness but think it should be understood in terms of the identity of God and Nature. From the point of view of nature as an infinite whole, whatever happens in its minutest parts affects its thinking, so is "perceived" in some sense. The difference between divine thinking and human then is precisely this: the first perceives everything at once, the other only what affects the finite body constituting its object, without perceiving how its successive local perceptions are connected with the rest. Any physical affection comes with a perception of it, but all perceptions are not distinctly or even clearly available to the human mind. So Spinoza like Leibniz seems committed to the idea of a continuum of perception and awareness. I am indebted to Peter Myrdal for helpful discussions of this last point. For an original and interesting reading, see Ursula Renz, "The Definition of the Human Mind and the Numerical Difference Between Subjects (2P11–2P135)," in *Spinoza's Ethics. A Collective Commentary*, eds. Michael Hampe, Ursula Renz, and Robert Schnepf (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99–118.

8. So human beings are finite instantiations of God's infinite thinking nature (God considered under the attribute of thought), that is, they are ideas constrained by the finite bodies constituting their object.

is, when it is such that “considered in itself without relation to its object”<sup>9</sup> it has all the characteristics of truth (2def4 and 2def4expl). Ideas, as we learn later in 2p49, come with affirmations of their own (2p49), as opposed to being passively received “mute tablets” in the mind, and conceiving as Spinoza stresses is more than merely receiving and contemplating ideas (2p49s). Affirmation, according to this doctrine, belongs to the essence of a (true) idea. Ideas then are not merely had or entertained; rather, they seem formed so as to be akin to what Descartes calls judgments, although they do not, as Spinoza argues in explicit opposition to Descartes, depend on any separate act of the will. Will and intellect for Spinoza are one and the same, that is they are nothing but singular volitions or ideas, and singular volitions or ideas are the same (2p49cd). So insofar as thinking involves forming and affirming ideas, thinking, one might conclude, is essentially for Spinoza judging or believing. This, it seems to me, is also supported by the axioms that follow where other aspects or modes of thinking are introduced.

Having asserted in 2a2 that man thinks, 2a3 suggests that ideas are basic to thinking since there are no other modes of thought without ideas:

There are no modes of thinking (*modi cogitandi*), such as love, desire or whatever the name affects of mind can designate, unless there is in the same individual the idea of the thing loved, desired and so on. But the idea can be given without any other mode of thought. (2a3)

Thinking is a representative affair<sup>10</sup>: there are no modes of thought—no current acts of thinking—without an idea which is of and affirms something of its object; for instance, if I am thinking of Cephalus, my idea of Cephalus affirms that this horse has wings. No mode or act of thinking comes without an idea, but, as Spinoza explains, an idea can be given “without any other mode of thinking” (2a3). Affirmation, as we saw, is not a separable mode but an essential part of the idea, so this suggests that the mode of thought that an idea primarily instantiates (i.e., a judgment or rather belief) can be given in an individual mind without any *other* mode of thinking such as those listed in 2a3, namely affects like love, desire, etc.

One wonders: Does “some individual” in 2a3 mean some given mode (act) of thought or perception (my occurrent idea of Cephalus), or does it refer to me, to the agent or mind (the complex idea of my body) in which it is formed and whose mode of thought it is?<sup>11</sup>

9. This could be understood in terms of the notion of idea of idea, taking the idea of the idea to be the same as the idea but considered merely under the attribute of thought, without regard to its (extended) object, as what Spinoza (following Descartes here?) calls the form of thought, that is, the actual thinking or cognition of the idea, which comes with reflexive awareness. I do not think this is the right way to go though. Rather, the point is that an adequate idea is self-evident and comes with the mark of its truth in itself.

10. I agree with Della Rocca that all ideas represent but not that representation is the essence of mind. See Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 90. As we have just seen, there is more to ideas than mere representation.

11. The question arises because of the relative nature of individuality and the ambiguities of the term *idea* as Spinoza uses it. An interesting reading of 2p11c is defended by Ursula Renz, “The Definition of the Human Mind,” who challenges usual interpretations by arguing that *mens* is

In the next two axioms, the subject of sentience and perception is referred to with a personal pronoun:

- (i) “We feel (*sentimus*) a certain body to be affected in many ways” (2a4); and
- (ii) “We do not feel or perceive any other singular things except bodies and modes of thinking” (2a5).

This is the first time a subject of thinking is introduced, and it is natural to think of “we” here as referring to the mind considered as the patient subject to externally caused sensory perceptions. If the human mind is the idea of the human body, this idea, or rather the collection of ideas constituting it at any given moment, is shaped by the affections of the body whose idea it is. As subject to passions or “passive affects” that are a subclass of affections—Spinoza’s term for sense impressions—we are conditioned by external causes acting on our body and its sensory organs. The account given of the passive affects in Part Three ends with this vivid picture of our predicament: “we are driven about in many ways by external causes”, and “like waves on the sea, driven by contrary winds, we toss about, not knowing our outcome and fate” (3p59s).

Is this to say that we—our minds—are personal subjects primarily *qua* sentient and passionate, when most dependent on external circumstances? Are “we” not also epistemic subjects striving to form distinct ideas of the objects or causes of the affections and passions tossing us about? Spinoza’s salvation project clearly requires this: that “we,” who are subject to our passive affects, also have the power to as it were rise above them to think and reason about their causes and the laws governing them.

All affections of the body are represented as ideas in the mind, but they are not all strong enough to be distinctly perceived within that mind, that is, their ideas are not strong or clear enough to be individually perceived by the mind that is affected by them. The ideas of affections, moreover, involve ideas that are not immediately attended to. For instance, they involve what Spinoza calls “common notions” (2 p40s1) that are always adequate and serve as the tools of reason that alone can set us free from the bondage of passions. *Qua* common these notions are equally in the part and the whole, so are as it were at hand at all times in the human mind too, without, however, being the objects of the thoughts currently occupying it. The point of 2a3 may then be that the individual mind contains many ideas that are not objects of its current thoughts or attention. But if they are not attended

mostly used by Spinoza with reference to the human mind, and that the idea of the human body that constitutes the human mind is, for Spinoza, the individual singular subject rather than an idea in God’s intellect. It seems to me that *mens* can be used by Spinoza for any idea of a finite determinate thing insofar as it perceives (or is perceived by God). He often does not distinguish between reason and intellect when talking of the human mind (e.g., 5pref), but clearly, the human mind, insofar as it understands, that is, uses the intellect, is part of God’s infinite intellect (see e.g. 5p39s–40c). In 5p40c, Spinoza states that the intellect is the eternal part of the (human) mind and that it is through the intellect “alone that we are said to be active,” and 5p40s “that our mind, in so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on ad infinitum, with the result that they all together constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God.”