Discussions of 1P5 in Spinoza's *Ethics* and the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation in the English-Speaking World

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0. Introduction

In the first two sections of this survey article, I will introduce the interpretation made by Martial Guéroult and Louis Loeb that for Spinoza, all the attributes are simple substances and God is the supreme substance which is composed of these simple substances. I also introduce relevant interpretations in the English-speaking world. In the third section, I summarize the interpretations made by Donald Garrett, Michael Della Rocca, and John Carriero. Any of these notable interpretations is not consistent with the "Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation,"[(1)] but especially Carriero's seems to present the most serious problem to the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation.

1. 1P5 and its Demonstration

1P5 occupies an important position in Spinoza's system since the proof of pantheism of 1P14 depends upon this proposition. However, its content is not perfectly clear. Though it says that "in nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute" (Curley, 1994, p. 87), the expression "two substances of the same attribute" is ambiguous. At least, two interpretations are possible. First, it may mean two substances that are different in their attributes, but share one attribute. Suppose that substance c has extension and thought, while substance d only has extension. In the first interpretation, the possibility of the existence of these two substances is denied in 1P5. Second, it may mean two substances that have only one attribute. In this case, any of these two substances does not have other attributes. For instance, substance e_1 and substance e_2 exist at the same time, and both of them only have extension as their attribute. In accordance with this second reading, 1P5 just denies the possibility of the existence of numerically different but qualitatively identical substances, such as e_1 and e_2, but it does not deny the coexistence of c and d. One may be tempted to reject one of these interpretations considering the demonstration of 1P5 since otherwise 1P5 is ambiguous:

> Dem: If there were two or more distinct substances, they would have to be distinguished from one another either by a difference in their attributes, or by a difference in their affections (by P4). If only by a difference in their attributes, then it will be conceded that there is only one of

> the same attribute. But if by a difference in their affections, then since a substance is prior in nature to its affections (by P1), if the affections are put to one side and [the substance] is considered in itself, that is (by D3 and A6), considered truly, one cannot be conceived to be distinguished from another, that is (by P4), there cannot be many, but only one [of the same nature *or* attribute]. (Curley, 1994, p. 87)

Spinoza explicitly considers two cases: first, the case in which two substances are different in their attributes, and second, the case in which two substances are different in their modes. Now some commentators suppose that since Spinoza considers the case in which two substances are different in their attributes, 1P5 certainly excludes the possibility that two substances are different in their attributes sharing the same attribute (Bennett, 1996, p. 64; cf. Curley, 1994, pp. xxii-iii). So according to this reading, by 1P5, Spinoza denies the possibility of the existence of two substances that have the same attribute, and *also* the possibility of the existence of two substances that are different in their attributes.

2. The Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation

However, in this section, I will introduce another reading of 1P5. According to that reading, 1P5 is just excluding the possibility that two substances share the same attribute and they are only numerically different. This reading admits that in the statement that "[i]f only by a difference in their attributes, then it will be conceded that there is only one of the same attribute," Spinoza explicitly considers the case in which two substances are different in their attributes sharing one. According to that reading, by this brief statement Spinoza wants to state that 1P5 only rejects the case in which two substances are numerically different sharing the same attribute or attributes, since for the demonstration of 1P5 we do not have to consider another case in which two substances are different in their attributes. In other words, the case in which two substances are different in their attributes is clearly out of the consideration.

Some distinguished commentators have already proposed interpretations that are consistent with this reading of 1P5. For example, Guéroult and Loeb suggest that God is composed of the infinite number of simple substances, each of which consists in only one attribute (Guéroult, 1968, pp. 47ff; Loeb, 1981, pp. 161-6).(2) According to this new interpretation, 1P5 does not exclude the coexistence of substance c that has both extension and thought as its attributes, and substance d that has only extension as its attribute. For Guéroult and Loeb, in this case, substance d is a simple

substance that is identified with the attribute of extension. Also, in accordance of their interpretation, there is another simple substance which is identified with the attribute of thought (say, substance f), and substance c is a compound substance which consists in simple substance d and simple substance f. Thus this interpretation in a sense admits that two substances can be different in their attributes sharing the same attribute.(3) Moreover, God is understood as the absolutely infinite substance that has the infinite number of simple substances as his components. Mark Kulstad summarizes this view concisely by introducing a simple substance Ed, which consists solely in the attribute of extension: (4)

> To see how the Guéroult-Loeb interpretation might lead to a resolution of the contradiction problem, let us return to the test case of God and Ed (our substance having exactly one attribute, that of extension). An assumption of the argument for contradiction above is that God and Ed are "distinct" substances. For many this will be seen as a well-grounded assumption: God is a substance who has multiple attributes; Ed is a substance who, having exactly one attribute, does not have multiple attributes; therefore, God and Ed are "distinct" substances. But on the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, things take on a different look, suggesting a reconsideration of some central concepts. (Kulstad, 1996, p. 304)

One may be worried if it is consistent with 1P14 translated as the statement that "[e]xcept God, no substance can be or be conceived" (Curley, 1994, p. 93). If there must be only one substance, namely God, then there cannot be so many simple substances, even if they are components of God. Concerning this point, I will suggest that 1P14 can be translated differently. The original statement is "praeter Deum nulla dari, neque concipi potest substantia." The term "praeter" can be translated in two ways. First, it can be translated as "except," as Edwin Curley does (Curley, 1994, p. 93). But it can also be translated as "outside of." Furthermore, the second translation "outside of" nicely fits with the statement in the demonstration of 1P14 "Adeoque nulla substantia extra Deum dari potest, et consequenter non etiam concipi." Generally speaking, it is natural to translate "extra" as "outside of" rather than "except." So we can understand this demonstration as showing that no substance can be given outside of God, and it cannot be conceived outside of God, either. With the new translation, 1P14 suggests that even if any substance cannot exist "outside of" God, some may exist in God. This suggestion is totally consistent with the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, which claims simple substances do not exist outside of God. Rather, they exist within God as constituents (Loeb, 1981, p. 165). So far, this interpretation of 1P5, which holds that 1P5 only excludes the possibility that two

substances are numerically different but qualitatively identical, is not undermined. It nicely fits with the fact that Spinoza's explanation of the case in which two substances are different in their attributes is so short. Furthermore, it does not necessarily violate 1P14, since it can be translated in two different ways, and only one of these contradicts the second interpretation of 1P5. However, as I suggested, some notable commentators do not accept this reading of 1P5. Instead, they introduce different readings, which are not consistent with the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation.

3.1. Garrett's Interpretation

As Kulstad suggests, Garrett introduces a most detailed discussion of 1P5 (Kulstad, 1996). Garrett argues that in 1P5 Spinoza rejects the possibility that two substances share the same attribute even if they have different attributes. To show that two substances cannot share the same attribute, Garrett claims that there are two subalternatives if two substances, x and y, share the attribute A_1. In the first subalternative, "the affections of A_1 in x are numerically identical with the affection of A_1 in y," while in the second "the affections of A_1 in x are not numerically identical with the affections of A_1 in y but qualitatively identical with them in a way that results in no difference of affections of that attribute" (Garrett, 1990, p. 96). Thus, the affections of A_1 in x and those in y are either numerically identical or qualitatively identical.

Garrett excludes the first possibility by claiming that "[i]f we read 1D5 and 1A1 as indeed requiring that no affection can be in more than one substance, then substances x and y cannot share numerically identical affections" (Garrett, 1990, p. 97). Suppose that Af_1, Af_2, Af_3… belong to x, and all of them are affections of A_1. Since these affections are numerically identical to the affections of y, Af_1, Af_2, Af_3 … must be in y as affections of y. Now according to 1D5, a mode is an affection of "a substance." This suggests that an affection cannot pertain to two substances. Also, Spinoza states that "whatever is, is either in itself or in another" (1A1; Curley, 1994, p. 86). This suggests that something cannot be in itself and in another at the same time. Thus an affection cannot be in x and in y, and the numerical identity of the sets of affections of A_1 in x and in y is not possible.

As for the second subalternative in which the set of affections of A_1 in x and the set in y are qualitatively identical but numerically distinct, (I) Garrett argues that it is impossible to suppose that a set of affections cannot be conceived through x or y (Garrett, 1990, p. 97). By definition, any affection is in another entity through which it is conceived. Any affection of x is in x and conceived through x, and any affection of y is in y and conceived through y.

(II) Garrett examines the case in which "both sets of modes can be conceived through a given

substance" (Garrett, 1990, p. 97). In this case, both sets are conceived through one of two substances. So for instance, the set of modes or affections of A_1 in x as well as the set in y can be conceived through y. Garrett also denies this possibility. In light of the definition of affection, the set of affections of A_1 in x must be conceived through x. So this set can be conceived through both x and y. However, Spinoza suggests that something is in x if and only if it is conceived through x (e.g., 1D3 and 1D5). So, if the set of affections of A_1 in x is conceived through y, then this set is in y. But a set of affections cannot be in two substances at the same time (1A1). Thus the supposition that the set of affections of A_1 in x can be conceived through y is impossible.

(III) Garrett considers the case in which the set of affections of A_1 in x is qualitatively identical to the set in y, but they are conceptually distinguishable and the set in x cannot be conceived through y. Garrett examines whether the qualitatively identical sets of affections of A_1 in x and y are conceptually indistinguishable. First, by definition, these qualitative identical sets cannot be distinguished from one another by their qualitative and intrinsic properties. Second, for Garrett, they cannot be distinguished from one another by extrinsic properties, either. To show this, Garrett considers three extrinsic properties: (1) the relationship between two sets of affections, (2) the relations among the members (or affections) of a set, and (3) the relation to affections of other attributes (Garrett, 1990, p. 98). First, the sets are indistinguishable on the basis of (1), since the relation of the set of affections in x to the set in y has no conceptual difference with respect to the relation of the set in y to the set in x. They are in a sense symmetrical. Second, the two sets are indistinguishable on the basis of (2), since any affection of A_1 in x (say Af_1x) has a correspondent affection of A_1 in y (say Af_1y). So, for instance, the relation between Af_1x and Af_2x is indistinguishable from the relation between Af_1y and Af_2y if Af_2x and Af_2y are qualitatively identical. Third, the two sets are indistinguishable on the basis of (3), since "any reason for conceiving of one set of affections as related to a set of affections of another attribute would equally be a reason to conceive of the other set as so related as well" (Garrett, 1990, p. 98). So, for example, if there are another affection of attribute A_2 in x (say Af'x) and a correspondent affection of attribute A_2 in y (say Af'y), then the relation between Af_1x and Af'x cannot be distinguished from the relation between Af_1y and Af'y. Thus all of the three possibilities are undermined and the qualitative identity entails the conceptual indiscernibility. Thus both of the subalternatives are denied, and if we suppose that two substances share A_1 we have a contradiction.

This sophisticated commentary of 1P5 by Garrett may not completely undermine the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, however. According to the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, the modes of

the attribute A_1 in substance x are numerically identical to the modes of the attribute A_1 in substance y. To be sure, Garrett argues that if the modes of the attribute A_1 in substance x are numerically identical to the modes of the attribute A_1 in substance y, these modes belong to both x and y, which is not consistent with 1D5 and 1A1. However, first, 1D5 only says that a mode is an affection of "a substance." This does not completely deny the possibility that a mode is an affection of any of the two substances. Though it may be ridiculous to suppose that one accident belongs to two really distinct substances, this worry is unnecessary in the framework of the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, since for instance, substance c (consists in extension and thought) and substance d (consists in extension alone) are not really distinct. Rather, d exists as a component of c, and as a result, any mode of d is also a mode of c.

3.2. Della Rocca's Interpretation

Della Rocca introduces different arguments against the possibility that two substances are different in their attributes sharing one, which are not introduced in Kulstad's article in 1996. For both arguments Della Rocca introduces the case in which substance c has only two attributes (extension and thought) and substance d has only two attributes (extension and another attribute z) (Della Rocca, 2002, p. 17). According to Della Rocca, in this case, substance c is not conceived through extension alone. The attribute of extension alone cannot explain how substance c is different from d (Della Rocca, 2002, p. 17). From this, Della Rocca concludes that substance c is conceived as extended substance through extension and thought. However, for Della Rocca, if a given extended substance is conceived through thought, then the conceptual separation between the attributes will be violated (Della Rocca, 2002, p. 18). Della Rocca claims any substance, if it is conceived as extended, must be conceived through extension (cf. Della Rocca, 2008, pp. 38-40; p.43). Della Rocca's first argument can be formulated as the following:

Della Rocca's First Argument

(1) Substance c shares the attribute of extension with substance d. (Premise)

(2) If two substances share the same attribute, their difference cannot be conceived through that attribute. (Premise)

(3) The difference between c and d cannot be conceived through extension. (1 and 2)

(4) Without the difference between c and d substance c cannot be conceived. (Premise)

(5) Substance c cannot be conceived through extension. (3 and 4)

(6) If substance c cannot be conceived through extension, substance c cannot be conceived as extended through extension, either. (Premise)

(7) Substance c cannot be conceived as extended through extension. (5 and 6)

(8) For any extended substance, extension is sufficient to conceive it as extended. (Premise)

(9) Substance c is an extended substance. (Premise)

(10) Substance c can be conceived as extended though extension. (8 and 9)

From (7) and (10), we have a contradiction.

Della Rocca tries to show the falsehood of (1), or that the case in which c and d exist is impossible. When he introduces the second argument, he also notifies that substance c cannot be conceived through the attribute of extension alone since "there is something else besides c: d, which has the attribute of extension" (Della Rocca, 2002, p. 17). We have to add something here to understand Della Rocca's point. It seems that Della Rocca presupposes that conceiving of a substance must involve its extrinsic denominations, that is, relations to other beings (if they exist outside of that substance). So, for Della Rocca, we cannot conceive both substance c and substance d through the attribute of extension. To conceive substance c, we have to tell how c is different from d. Once we accept this premise, we can reformulate his argument to show a contradiction:

Della Rocca's Second Argument

(1) Substance c shares the attribute of extension with substance d. (Premise)

(2) If two substances share the same attribute, their difference cannot be conceived through that attribute. (Premise)

(3) The difference between c and d cannot be conceived through extension. (1 and 2)

(4) Without the difference between c and d substance c cannot be conceived. (Premise)

(5) Substance c cannot be conceived through extension. (3 and 4)

(6) Each attribute of a substance, independently of any other attribute of that substance, is sufficient for conceiving of that substance. (Premise: Della Rocca 2002, p. 18)

(7) Extension, independently of any other attribute of c, is sufficient for conceiving of substance c. (from 6)

(8) Substance c can be conceived through extension. (from 7)

Now we see that both arguments require the premise (4), which may be doubted. It seems to be

possible that conception of substance c only involves the intrinsic properties of c, but not extrinsic properties such as the difference between c and d (cf. Carriero, 2002, p. 39).

3.3. Carriero's Interpretation

Though Carriero does not present a detailed interpretation of 1P5 as Garrett and Della Rocca, he introduces a more serious problem for the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation on the basis of 1P12, 1P13 and Spinoza's earlier texts. This problem is not examined in Kulstad's article in 1996. In brief, Carriero emphasizes the simplicity of Spinozistic God, which is not consistent with the view that God is a composed substance.

Carriero introduces many passages from Spinoza's earlier works which suggest that God is simple and therefore he cannot be composed of many simpler substances. For instance, in a letter to Huygens, Spinoza tries to show a "demonstration of the unity of God, on the ground that His nature involves necessary existence" (Geb. IV, 179; Carriero, 1994, p. 627). For Spinoza, it seems unreasonable to suppose that God, as an infinite substance whose essence necessarily involves existence, is composed of other substances. Also, in the following letters to Huygens, Spinoza tries to show that only a single being subsists by his own sufficiency or force (Geb. IV, 181; Carriero, 1994, p. 627). For Spinoza, the number of God(s) cannot be specified by any external reason since he is a self-cause (cf. Carriero, 1995, p. 250). Also, any specific number cannot be determined by the internal nature of self-cause. Though for Carriero this argument does not show why the number of God needs to be *one*, Carriero introduces another argument from Spinoza's letters. According to this argument, the simplicity and indivisibility are considered as perfections of God, and he cannot exist without these perfections (Carriero, 1994, p. 629). God is supposed to have all the perfections whatsoever, so he cannot lack any perfection (cf. Bennett, 1984, p.28).

To be sure, as Guéroult notes, the *Ethics* was written after these letters. So it seems that we do not necessarily take these letters as evidence to interpret the *Ethics* since Spinoza may have changed his view. Guéroult's suggestion is that though Spinoza held the simplicity and indivisibility of God before, he comes to hold the view that God is an aggregate of many simple substances in the *Ethics* (Guéroult, 1968, pp. 233ff.; pp. 446ff.; Schmidt, 2009, p. 86).

However, Carriero also notes that we can find an introduction of God's simplicity even in the *Ethics*. Carriero takes 1P12 and 1P13 to be evidence for the indivisibility of God (Carrierro, 1994, p. 630; cf. Wolfson, 1934, p. 113). For instance, 1P13 suggests that an absolutely infinite substance is indivisible:

> P13: *A substance which is absolutely infinite is indivisible.*
> Dem: For if it were divisible, the parts into which it would be divided will either retain the nature of an absolutely infinite substance or they will not. If the first, then there will be a number of substances of the same nature, which (by P5) is absurd. But if the second is asserted, then (as above [NS: P12]), an absolutely infinite substance will be able to cease to be, which (by P11) is also absurd. (Curley, 1994, p. 93)

Carriero argues that Spinoza rejects the possibility of the destruction of substance in 1P13 by considering the threat that "the substance might cease to exist through the *separation* of its parts" (Carriero, 1994, p. 632; cf. Bennett, 1984, p. 29; Delahunty, 1985, p. 118). If God is separated to two sets of attributes, any of these sets is not an infinite substance that has all the attributes. So Gods as an infinite substance ceases to exist. According to the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation, God is the absolutely infinite substance that is composed of many simple substances. But in this view, since God is composed of these substances, it seems that he is divided into them. This seems to contradict the indivisibility of an absolutely infinite substance. Thus any supporter of the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation needs to explain what Spinoza means by "indivisible" in 1P13. In other words, she needs to explain how God can be indivisible whereas he is composed of many simple substances at the same time. Moreover, not only God, but any composite substance in the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation seems to be divisible into simple substances, which conflicts with 1P13. If substance c has only two attributes (extension and thought), then c seems to be divided into two simple substances. But according to 1P13, any substance cannot be divisible and c is not qualified as a substance.

Furthermore, in relation to his interpretation of 1P12 and 1P13, Carriero notes Guéroult's account of God's simplicity and criticizes it. According to Guéroult, "there is one and the same causal act responsible for the modal structure found under each attribute" (Carriero, 1994, p. 631; Guéroult, 1968, p. 218). For instance, there is a perfect parallel relationship between the causal act of the mind as a mode of thought and that of the body as a mode of extension. But for Carriero, even this parallel relationship is given, still different attributes function as distinct causes. Though each attribute is considered as a self-cause (or *causa sui*), this does not explain that God is the single cause behind the attributes.

Notes

(1) This term is introduced by Mark Kulstad. See Kulstad (1996, p. 303).
(2) Edwin Curley also proposes a similar approach, and argues that Spinoza identifies substances with attributes (Curley, 1969, pp. 16-8; Viljanen, 2009, p. 62 n. 13).
(3) Some commentators argue that 1P5 implies that if two substances are different, they must be different in essential properties or attributes, so they cannot be different in nonessential properties or affections (Charlton, 1981, pp. 513-5; Carriero, 1995, p. 251).
(4) Also, Kulstad suggests some version of monism is consistent with Spinoza's metaphysics in the line of the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation. In relation to this point, Kulstad introduces four different version of monism:

> (A) Monism_{ND} is true [if and only if] there exists an x such that x is substance and there exists no y such that y is substance and x is numerically distinct from y.
> (B) Monism_{MD} is true [if and only if] there exists an x such that x is substance and there exists no substance y such that y is mereologically distinct from x.
> (C) Monism_{CD} is true [if and only if] there exists an x such that x is substance and there exists no substance y such that y is constituentially distinct from x.
> (D) Monism_{RD} is true [if and only if] there exists an x such that x is substance and there exists no substance y such that y is really distinct from x. (Kulstad, 2003, pp. 79-80)

Spinoza's monism presented by the Guéroult-Loeb Interpretation is considered as (C) since according to this interpretation Spinoza holds that though there are many simple substances none of them is constituentially distinct from God. In other words, any simple substance is a constituent of the absolutely infinite substance in this framework.

Abbreviation

Geb. = Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Spinoza Opera* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925), in 4 vols.

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Spinoza's *Ethics* is cited by book and axiom (A), definition (D), or proposition (P), followed by a page number from Curley(1994). Translations are from Curley's book.

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