

Spinoza on Contemporary Monism: A Further Discussion

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Abstract

This paper seeks to reveal a formal similarity between Jonathan Schaffer's argument for monism and Benedict de Spinoza's argument for substance monism. Since Spinoza was referred to as a "priority monist" in Schaffer (2010), some scholars have discussed the validity of this interpretation. Among these, Mogens Lærke's criticism is the most important and critical. According to his criticism, Spinoza is not even a "monist" because substance cannot be counted as one. In this paper, I argue that the "tiling constraint," which Schaffer introduces for inquiring what the basic actual concrete objects are, does not depend on counting, *pace* Lærke. Schaffer invokes it to give directions to monism. Furthermore, I show that the indivisibility of substance is Spinoza's counterpart of one of two conditions which constitute the tiling constraint. He argues that the substance cannot be divided into substantial parts. In conclusion, Spinoza's position is allowed to be at least formally considered as a monism in Schaffer's sense.

Key words: Indivisibility, Mereology, Priority Monism, Spinoza, Tiling constraint

Introduction: Is Spinoza an Alternative Monist?

Monism is a philosophical view that has seemed to be almost ignored in the history of philosophy. However, in contemporary metaphysics, Jonathan Schaffer defends a kind of monism in the paper, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole" (Schaffer, 2010) by arguing that it is supported by common sense and physics. Consequently, the modern school of metaphysics has begun to take monism seriously. In this context, *Spinoza on Monism* (ed., Goff, 2011) was edited to clarify the relationship between contemporary monism and Benedict de Spinoza, who is often referred to as a monist. Certainly, Spinoza famously states in *Ethics* that "in Nature there is only one substance" (E1P14C1)¹, namely God, and that "[w]hatever is, is in God, and nothing

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¹ The following abbreviations are used: E: Ethics, P: Proposition, S: Scholium, C:

can be or be conceived without God” (E1P15). Such a statement is called “substance monism” by Spinoza scholars.² However, like other monistic views, this thesis is often not taken seriously. As such, the recent reevaluation of monism may lead us to take also Spinoza’s substance monism seriously. Putting substance monism into Schaffer’s framework, should provide us a new approach to consider its validity.

Unfortunately, *Spinoza on Monism* does not apparently discuss much of how contemporary monism relates to substance monism. The book has two parts: the first consists of articles written by contemporary metaphysicians and the second by Spinoza scholars. However, despite the editor’s hope,³ the dialogue between metaphysicians and Spinoza scholars is not seemingly fully succeeded.⁴

In the appendix of Schaffer (2010), he considers Spinoza as one of the proponents of the view he defends. This is an attempt to put Spinoza into Schaffer’s own framework. Schaffer makes a distinction between two kinds of monism. One is called “priority monism,” which indicates that there is exactly one basic concrete object with many non-basic concrete objects as proper parts of it. Another view is called “existence monism,” according to which there is only one concrete object. Schaffer regards Spinoza as a priority monist based on textual interpretation.⁵

In contrast, the Spinoza scholars that contributed to *Spinoza on Monism* (ex-

Corollary, L: Lemma, Ax: Axiom, Def: Definition, D: Demonstration, Post: Postulate. Thus, for example, E4P39S indicates Ethics, Part 4, Proposition 39, Scholium. For other works, see below. Ep: Letters. KV: *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*. DPP: Descartes’ *Principles of Philosophy*. CM: *Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts*. All quotes from Spinoza’s works are from Curley’s translation (Spinoza, 1985 and 2016).

² Definitions of substance monism may often seem to be ambiguous. Sometimes, the term simply expresses the thesis that there is exactly one substance in nature. Other times, it includes the thesis that everything other than the substance, is immanent to it.

³ “By beginning with a critical discussion of monism as it exists today, and against this background re-examining monism as it was understood and defended by Spinoza, I hope some light will be shed on what place, if any, monism will occupy in metaphysics going forward” (Goff, 2011, 2).

⁴ One of the causes seems to be as follows: no Spinoza scholar writing in the book discussed monism on the basis of Schaffer (2010) except for Ghislain Guigon, but based their discussions just on the entry “Monism” in *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*. At this edition, the tiling constraint was not yet provided and the label “priority monism” means simply the view that there is one basic object, which does not determine the mereological structure of the basic. It is a strictly different view than the same term in Schaffer (2010). The tiling constraint and the view corresponding to the “priority monism” in Schaffer (2010) is provided in the entry “Monism” since *the spring 2014 version*, and it is named “priority monism (*cosmic*).”

⁵ However, his interpretation does not seem to be successful. See Guigon (2011) and sec. 4 in the present paper.

cept for Ghislain Guigon) did not mention Schaffer (2010), which is included in the anthology. Even the literature that considers Spinoza’s monism in Schaffer’s framework, focuses only on counting the basics and the non-basics.⁶ As far as the number of basic objects is concerned, Spinoza would be a priority monist. Spinoza argues that there is exactly one absolute infinite⁷ “substance,” namely God, and it is prior to the other all objects, namely “modes.”⁸ Thus, substance monism is not existence monism that states there is only one concrete object. Additionally, God is the world. Therefore, like a priority monist, Spinoza affirms that his one basic object covers the world as it were, and that — unlike an existence monist — it has many non-basic objects as its modes.

Certainly, when considering Spinoza’s monism, it is suggestive to focus on the numbers of basic objects and non-basic objects separately. It would be exactly what Spinoza scholars learned from Schaffer. However, one could not truly evaluate Schaffer’s monism without focusing on his framework, including mereological structure, metaphysical structure, and what brings them together. Unless these features are not taken into account, the comparison between the two monisms will remain superficial. Furthermore, more serious criticism already has been made from the viewpoint of Spinoza’s conception of numbers. According to this criticism, Spinoza’s monism does not argue that the number of the basics is “one.” As far as only the number matters, Spinoza’s position cannot be “monism.” It must be better to go beyond the number of the basics if we want to learn more from Schaffer.

This paper explores a formal similarity between Spinoza and Schaffer from a different perspective than the number, “the question of fundamental mereology” (Schaffer, 2010, 38). I attempt to find Spinoza’s counterpart in fundamental mereology. I will show that the indivisibility of substance, which Spinoza demonstrates explicitly, is a counterpart of one of the two conditions that constitute “the tiling constraint,” a constraint on answers to the question of fundamental mereology. He invokes it to give directions to monism. If we find a counterpart for the other condition, Spinoza’s

⁶ Cf. Della Rocca (2012); Guigon (2011); Newlands (2018). They are not satisfied with Schaffer’s treatment of Spinoza and classify Spinoza as Existence Monism (Della Rocca) or Priority Monism (Guigon and Newlands) with reservations.

⁷ Spinoza uses “infinite” in two ways. First, it means not being limited by the other. It follows from the definition of the finite: “[t]hat thing is said to be *finite* in its own kind that can be limited by another of the same nature” (E1D2). Second, it means an infinite number of objects. However, these two meanings are connected in the absolutely infinite substance, called “absolutely infinite” because it has an infinite number of attributes, and so, it cannot be limited by anything else with any attributes.

⁸ Spinozistic modes are entities though they are not independent. Most scholars defend the reality of modes. For the comprehensive discussion, see Lin (2019). From this perspective, modes are objects or “things” (*res*) to fit it in Spinoza’s terminology because it can apply to both substance and modes.

monism can be considered as a monism in Schaffer’s sense.

In the following, I will focus only on substance and its mode as explained by the attribute of extension. Spinoza thinks that God has an infinite number of attributes, including attributes which we cannot recognize. We can recognize only the attributes of extension and thought. I will discuss only the attribute of extension because Schaffer is only concerned with actual concrete objects when he discusses monism. The world he talks about is “the material cosmos and its planets, pebbles, particles, and other proper parts” (Schaffer, 2010, 33). These bodies in particular naturally correspond to modes of the substance insofar as it is considered as an extended thing. In other words, they are the modes considered under the attribute of extension. It is naturally given that both extended substance and its mode must be extended in *three dimensions*.⁹ Still, Spinoza argues that there is strictly only God, that is, the substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes including extension and thought. And he argues that extended substance (or to put it too simply, the aspect of extension of the substance) is not discernible to it. Of course, such is a complicated matter in research for Spinoza.¹⁰ However, there is no more need for discussion on this particular topic.

1. Monism and Number

This section briefly outlines Mogens Lærke’s discussion that Spinoza’s monism cannot be appropriately called “monism” in Schaffer’s sense, and shows that it is not fatal to attempt to put Spinoza into Schaffer’s framework. For those who want to connect Spinoza to monism in contemporary metaphysics, Lærke’s suggestion seems to be most critical. He argues that Spinoza is not a “monist” because he does not count substance as “one”, according to his conception of numbers, referring to *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the fall 2008 version*.

A brief description of Spinoza’s conception of numbers is the following: to count something as one, for Spinoza, is to consider it as one of the plural things. Here, to be one of the plural things is to share the same nature with the other things. In a letter, Spinoza shows this idea as follows:¹¹

[W]e don’t conceive things under numbers unless they have first been brought under a common genus. For example, someone who holds a penny and a

⁹ However, this is still controversial. For an objection to this, see Peterman (2015); Manning (2016).

¹⁰ About this matter, I follow Gueroult’s interpretation basically (Gueroult, 1968). For the recent reevaluation of the interpretation in the English-speaking world, see Smith (2014).

¹¹ Gottlob Frege also focuses on this letter (Frege, 1974, sec. 49). For Frege’s treatment of Spinoza’s conception of number, see Gueroult (1968, 578–584).

dollar in his hand will not think of the number two unless he can call the penny and the dollar by one and the same name, either “coin” or “piece of money.” For then he can say that he has two coins or two pieces of money, since he calls not only the penny, but also the dollar, by the name “coin” or “piece of money.” (Ep. 50)¹²

According to Lærke, this argument “rather turns on the status of the number *one* in relation to *other numbers*. More precisely, it turns on the assumption that the number one does *not* have a special status different from that of other numbers: it is nothing but a *relation* between ideas” (Lærke, 2011, 254–5). Thus, to count something as one, we must assume the others that have the same nature.

However, for Spinoza, if there is one substance, there are no other substances that share the same nature as the former has. Spinoza provides a thesis, which Della Rocca called “the no-shared attribute thesis,” in E1P5: “[i]n Nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute.” Thus, though there are substances, they do not have the same nature in common. For example, although (as far as we can perceive) there are extended substance and thinking substance, the two do not have the same nature because the former is conceived in the attribute of extension and the latter in the attribute of thought. There are no others of the same nature as the extended substance, and the same is true for the thinking substance. However, for Spinoza, “it’s evident that nothing is called one or unique unless another thing has been conceived which (as they say) agrees with it” (Ep. 50). Therefore, given such a notion of counting, substances cannot be even counted, and so cannot be counted as one (or many).¹³

Certainly, Spinoza also clearly writes that “God is unique” in the *Ethics* (E1P14C), but notably, this statement is immediately followed as a corollary from this proposition: “[e]xcept God, no substance can be or be conceived” (E1P14). Elsewhere, Spinoza says, “God is only improperly called one [unum] and unique [unicum].”¹⁴ Therefore, God — or the absolute substance — may be said to be unique, but only by improper means. Spinoza may be a monist but, according to himself, only an improper monist.

Thus, Spinoza’s substance monism has nothing to do with Schaffer’s framework of monism as outlined in the entry “Monism” in *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, which states that all monisms “share that they attribute oneness” (Schaffer, 2018).¹⁵ Schaffer goes on to say that monisms differ only in “what they attribute

¹² See also E1P8S2 and Ep. 34.

¹³ For the extended discussion, see Della Rocca (2019).

¹⁴ CM1, 6. See also Ep. 50.

¹⁵ The same idea has already appeared in the 2008 version: “There are many monisms. What they have in common is that they attribute oneness” (sec.1). Lærke cites this passage in his paper.

oneness to (the target), and how they count (the unit)” (Schaffer, 2018, sec. 1.1). To consider monisms as such, substance monism is not included in the monisms in Schaffer (2018): Spinoza does not count God as one and thus does not attribute to him oneness. In this sense, Lærke concludes that Spinoza is not a “monist” in Schaffer’s sense.¹⁶

However, the connection between their monisms can still be defended for two reasons. First, attributing oneness is not necessary for a monism. The formulation at the beginning of Schaffer (2018) is not for defining his monism, but for distinguishing a specific kind of monism he is interested in from the other monisms. According to Schaffer, for example, the following monisms can be conceived: genus monism, which targets categories and uses highest type as its unit (the doctrine that there is a highest category), and property monism, which targets properties and uses highest type as its unit (the doctrine that all properties are of a common type). In this formulation, the Cartesian dualism is the view that targets the category of the concrete object and uses the highest type as its unit, where concrete objects fall under the two highest types: extension and thought (cf. Schaffer, 2018, sec. 1). In contrast, priority monism targets concreta and uses basic tokens as its unit. At least, Schaffer (2010) discusses monism and pluralism without that formulation. Therefore, even if Spinoza’s substance monism does not fall under this formulation, this does not rule out that Spinoza is a monist in Schaffer’s sense.

The second and more important reason for defending the connection between their monisms is that Schaffer formulates the debate between monism and pluralism without counting the number of basic objects. Answers to *the question of fundamental mereology* entail either side of the debate, according to his formulation in Schaffer (2010). The fundamental mereology concerns just “what is fundamental (ultimately prior) among actual concrete objects,” not but how many of the basic objects are present. Schaffer explicitly writes on fundamental mereology, “the numerical thesis that the number of basic concreta is one turns out equivalent to the holistic thesis that the basic concretum is mereologically maximal” (Schaffer, 2018, sec. 3.1.3). He provides this idea in Schaffer (2010).¹⁷ Unfortunately, Lærke did not refer to it in

¹⁶ Moreover, it should be noted that although Spinoza is often called *the* monist, many scholars have avoided his metaphysics to be labeled as such. In fact, monistic readings of Spinoza constitute a more recent movement than one would imagine. This occurred in England in the early 20th century, under the influence of Hegelian interpretation, and maybe here now including Schaffer’s interpretation (of idealist monistic reading of Spinoza, see Newlands (2011)). However, many scholars—in particular, French scholars including Pierre Macherey (1994)—have taken a stand against monistic readings; Lærke is among those of this mindset.

¹⁷ It does not mean that Schaffer (2010) is superior to Schaffer (2018). Rather, the former sheds new light on monism.

his paper.¹⁸ I will show that this question is independent of the question of how to attribute oneness in the next section.

2. Fundamental Mereology

Fundamental mereology is not dependent on the conception of number. If one can find something like fundamental mereology in Spinoza’s system, one can also recognize the path for thinking substance monism with Schaffer’s monism. Before discussing Spinoza’s counterpart in fundamental mereology, this section shows that fundamental mereology is independent of the notion of counting. To answer “the question of what are the basic actual concrete objects” (Schaffer, 2010, 38), Schaffer introduces a constraint on possible answers. “This constraint is the tiling constraint, which is that the basic actual concrete objects collectively cover the cosmos without overlapping” (ibid.).

Fundamental mereology is about two relations that Schaffer assumes: parthood relations and metaphysical priority relations. It is on the tiling constraint that the mereological and metaphysical structures of the world are connected. To compare monism and pluralism on the question of fundamental mereology, these assumptions must be neutral to both sides. First, it is assumed that there is a maximal actual concrete object (the cosmos). It has all actual concrete objects as its parts. Here, being an actual concrete object is defined in terms of being a part of the cosmos.¹⁹ Second, it is assumed that there is the relation of metaphysical priority, which determines what is basic. Here, being a basic actual concrete object is defined as being a part of the cosmos and not depending on anything concrete. Schaffer assumes that priority relation is a well-founded partial ordering, which satisfies the following axioms: ir-reflexivity, transitivity, asymmetry, and well-foundedness. Consequently, “there must be a ground of being. If one thing exists only in virtue of another, then there must be something from which the reality of the derivative entities ultimately derives” (Schaffer, 2010, 37), which may be called *ontological foundationalism*.²⁰

The tiling constraint is constituted of the covering condition and the no overlap condition. This constraint connects mereological and metaphysical structures in virtue of these two conditions and renders priority monism and priority pluralism to be exhaustive and exclusive doctrines. Two conditions are formulated as follows:

¹⁸ See note 4.

¹⁹ In Schaffer (2010), being actual concrete objects is derived from the cosmos introduced as a primitive item. In contrast, being actual concrete objects is a primitive in Schaffer (2018): He introduces “a predicate ‘C’ that denotes the property of being a concrete object,” and thus adds “[t]he notion of being a concrete object is natural and useful, so this should be clear enough to work with” (sec. 2. 1).

²⁰ Note that this parthood relation is neutral to priority relation. If the relation entails that a whole is dependent on its parts, then pluralists win the debate at the beginning.

Covering: $\text{Sum}:x(Bx) = u$

No Overlap: $(\forall x)(\forall y)((Bx \& By \& x \neq y) \supset \sim (\exists z)(Pzx \& Pzy))$

Here, $\text{Sum}:x(Bx)$ is the mereological sum of all things Bx , by which Schaffer expresses a predicate B to denote the property of being a basic concrete object. Given the ontological foundationalism, a basic concrete object is a concrete object that has no concrete object prior to it. Moreover, he introduces u as a dedicated constant for the cosmos, which is mereologically related to concrete objects. Here, he uses P to express the relation of parthood. Taken together, the covering condition means that “the requirement that the sum of all the basic entities is the cosmos as a whole.”²¹ The no overlap condition suggests “the requirement that the basic entities be mereologically disjoint, having no common parts.” (Schaffer, 2018, sec. 3.1.3)

In the following, I use the no parthood condition instead of the no overlap condition. Schaffer says, “[t]he No Overlap condition will turn out to be strictly stronger than anything I will need.” (Schaffer, 2010, 40) This weaker condition means that “no basics are related as whole to part.” It is formulated as follows:

No Parthood: $(\forall x)(\forall y)((Bx \& By \& x \neq y) \supset \sim (Pxy))$

Schaffer takes *the argument from economy* to support the condition. He gives the two premises for the argument. Firstly, “the basic objects should not be *merely complete*, they should be minimally complete, in having no proper subplurality that is complete.” (Schaffer, 2010, 40) Secondly, he characterizes such minimal completeness as avoiding redundancy of part for the whole. Thus, basic objects cannot have a basic part at all. Consequently, having no basic parts is a necessary condition for a constraint on answers to the question of fundamental mereology.

Given the tiling constraint, priority monism becomes equivalent to Bu and priority pluralism becomes equivalent to $\sim Bu$. Thus, the debate between monism and pluralism becomes equivalent to the question as to whether or not the whole cosmos is fundamental. The fundamental mereology does not depend on the conception of numbers. Now, one can consider monism and pluralism without counting the number of basic objects. Rather, one can make a judge in the debate between monism and pluralism to show whether the cosmos is basic or not.

For the purpose of this paper, it should be noticed that Schaffer says that the tiling constraint can be understood in another way, that is, as a “partitioning constraint,” described in the following:

²¹ Notice that the covering condition is supported by *the argument from completeness*. Basic objects must be complete, in the sense that duplicating them suffices to duplicate the cosmos and its contents. In other words, if all of such objects are determined, everything else also must be determined. Covering the cosmos is just one way to characterize completeness. For details, see Schaffer (2010, 39).

Consider all the ways that one may slice a pie. One might leave the whole uncut, or slice it in half, or cut it into quarters, and so forth. One cannot leave any part out. However one cuts, one divides the whole. And one cannot serve any part twice. Each part belongs to one and only one slice. In place of the pie, consider the cosmos. Different answers to the question of fundamental mereology can be seen—in light of the tiling constraint—as different ways of carving up the cosmos into basic pieces. The question of fundamental mereology can be seen as presupposing that there is a metaphysically privileged way to carve up the cosmos, provided by the notion of a basic piece (Schaffer, 2010, 41–2).

Here, the number of the basics is not involved in the discussion. Rather, what matters is how to carve up the cosmos, that is, how to *divide it into basic pieces*. Monist leaves the whole uncut, while pluralist divides it into certain basic pieces. On the monistic side, Bu can be interpreted as “the cosmos is not divided into the basics and thus is the basic”. And likewise on the pluralistic side, $\sim Bu$ can be interpreted as “the cosmos is divided into the basics and thus it is not the basic.” If this understanding was not the case, we could not compare monism and pluralism.²²

3. Indivisibility of Substance

This section interprets Spinoza’s argument for the individuality of substance as a counterpart of the no parthood condition of the tiling constraint. Spinoza demonstrates the indivisibility of substance in two propositions in the first part of the *Ethics*. In E1P12, he argues that substance cannot be divided by attribute, which constitutes its essence. In E1P13, he argues that the absolutely infinite substance, which has an infinite number of attributes, is indivisible. In the following, I consider only the first proposition because we are concerned only with actual concrete objects, that is, one-attribute substances in Spinoza’s terminology. E1P12 is concerned with the indivisibility of such a one-attribute substance.²³

In E1P12D, Spinoza attempts to show that both of two consequences that could result from the divisibility of substance are absurd (this procedure is the same in E1P13D). Here, he supposes that “the parts into which a substance so conceived would be divided either will retain the nature of the substance or will not” (E1P12D). Only the first case, in which parts retain the nature of the substance, is important

²² For Schaffer, if it is assumed that the cosmos is the basic, then monism wins from the beginning because by the no parthood condition, the cosmos cannot have parts as the basic.

²³ Actually, Spinoza also thinks that there are infinite attributes besides two attributes, extension and thought, and God is the substance consisting of infinite attributes. E1P13 is concerned with the indivisibility of the absolutely infinite substance.

to us here. This case has to do with whether the substance can have a “substantial part,” which is itself a substance.²⁴ It is the same as considering whether the basic has a part being basic. In contrast, the second case, in which parts will not retain the nature of the substance, is concerned with the possibility of destruction. Here, Spinoza assumes that an object is destroyed when it is divided and only the parts that lost the original nature remain.²⁵ At any rate, it is not concerned with the parthood relation between the basics; thus, I will focus only on the first case.

If parts retain the nature of the substance, “then (by E1P8) each part will have to be infinite, and (by E1P7) its own cause, and (by E1P5) each part will have to consist of a different attribute. And so many substances will be able to be [constituted] from one, which is absurd (by E1P6)” (ibid.).²⁶ Here, that a substance undergoes some operation and so divided into substances with the same nature, is considered as that the substance constitutes these substances (E1P5, E1P7, and E1P8 all show the characteristics of substantial parts as substance). Although Spinoza’s way of writing is unclear, it is understandable from the reference of E1P6: “One substance cannot be produced by another substance.” Here, he understands the division of substance into substantial parts, as the production from a substance to substances. However, this contradicts that “one substance does not cause another” (E1P6D). Spinoza himself gives proof of that, but I will accept it here as an assumption. If we do not affirm the causal relationship between substances, then any substance cannot produce its substantial parts as an effect. Therefore, a substance cannot be divided into substantial parts.

Furthermore, Spinoza also gives another argument to this case. He says, “the parts (by E1P2) would have nothing in common with their whole, and the whole (by E1Def4 and E1P10) could both be and be conceived without its parts, which is absurd, as no one will be able to doubt” (E1P12D).²⁷ This is often interpreted as follows: if a substance were divided into substantial parts, then the whole would exist

²⁴ I borrow the useful term from Heil (2011). He suggests that priority monism, when understood as the view that there is just one substance as the world and its parts are not “substantial parts,” is Spinoza’s view (cf. Heil, 2011, 169).

²⁵ For Spinoza, the division is a process, while decomposition is not. As Guigon noted, “[b]y dividing a whole into parts, the whole ceases to exist,” and “it is logically possible that some whole is composed of parts and yet indivisible” (Guigon, 2011, 202). He goes to on argue that a substance is not only indivisible but also has no parts.

²⁶ E1P5: “In Nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute.” E1P7: “It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist.” E1P8: “Every substance is necessarily infinite.” For E1P6, see the same paragraph in the text.

²⁷ E1P2: “Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common with one another.” E1Def4: By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence. E1P10: “Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself.” Here, the attribute is identified as a one-attribute substance.

without parts, which is absurd. Some scholars find here the implicit axiom, which Spinoza uses elsewhere, that “the whole depends on its part both in nature and in our knowledge.”²⁸ If the substance as a whole was divided into substantial parts, then because the substance as a whole does not depend on anything else insofar as it is substance, this violates the axiom. Thus, given the interpretation that the implicit axiom is assumed here, we can say that if we accept the mereological assumption that the whole depends on parts, a substance cannot be divided into substantial parts.²⁹

In conclusion, every substance cannot be divided into its substantial parts. So, a substance is not composed of substances as parts. Here, just like on the no parthood condition, it is excluded that the basic objects are in the relation of whole and parts. Now, we can see Spinoza’s argument for the indivisibility of substance is a counterpart of the no parthood condition.

4. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that Spinoza’s conception of number does not rule out the possibility of positioning his substance monism within Schaffer’s framework for monism. For Spinoza, that substance is exactly one does not mean to count it as one from plural substances of the same nature. Although Schaffer frames monism, in Schaffer (2018), by what they attribute oneness to and how they count, Spinoza would think that it is not suitable for his monism to count substance as one in the same way as counting two or three. However, it does not mean that Schaffer’s framework is useless for clarifying what Spinoza’s monism is. Schaffer also frames monism differently, that is, by the tiling constraint in Schaffer (2010) independent of counting. Thus, we are still allowed to continue trying to position Spinoza in Schaffer’s framework by finding a counterpart in Spinoza’s arguments for monism. This paper has shown that his

²⁸ Cf. DPP, I, proposition 17; MC, II, 5; KV, I, 2; Ep. 35. See Melamed (2013, 47). He also added E1P12D to this list.

²⁹ The goal of this section is to show that the indivisibility of substance holds in Spinoza. For this purpose, a widely accepted interpretation suffices (cf. Guigon 2011, 187–8; Melamed 2013, 47). Although I follow it here for simplicity, I think that this interpretation is still problematic. According to this interpretation, firstly, Spinoza uses implicit assumptions here. Secondly, Spinoza leads to the stronger consequence that a substance has no “parts” to show that substance has no “substantial parts.” Thirdly, because this assumption can lead to the indivisibility of substance by simply connecting it with the characteristic of a substance that does not depend on anything else, most of the arguments given by Spinoza become redundant. Instead, I think that Gueroult’s interpretation is better (cf. Gueroult, 1968, 209). According to his interpretation, Spinoza’s proof lies in the following points: if a substance could be divided into substantial parts “with the same nature,” because the whole and its parts are independent of each other, the parts must have a different nature than the whole in order to have the same nature as the whole (on the hypothesis). Gueroult’s interpretation also suffices for the present purpose.

argument for the indivisibility of substance is similar to the no parthood condition of the tiling constraint. While further exploration of the covering condition is required, Spinoza can be considered as a monist in Schaffer’s sense at least formally.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to find Spinoza’s version of the covering condition, which expresses “the requirement that the sum of all the basic entities is the cosmos as a whole,” (Schaffer, 2018, sec. 3.1.3) because Spinoza does not accept assumption of mereology in Schaffer’s formulation. One serious problem is that, as many scholars point out, substance and its mode are not in the relation of whole and its parts. The statement that the substance is indivisible is often considered the same as saying that the substance has no parts. At least Spinoza thinks that even if all finite modes are collected, they do not compose the substance. In the appendix of Schaffer (2010), to find a mereological conception of Spinoza, he relies on the letter to Oldenburg. There, Spinoza discusses the belief that we are a part of nature, provides his notion of part and whole, and talks about “the whole universe” (Ep. 32). Schaffer interprets it as “the world as an integrated system,” an idea in favor of priority monism (Schaffer, 2010, 68). However, this text does not support his interpretation. For Spinoza, “the whole universe” is a mode, which is not independent. Therefore, it is not a basic object.³⁰

However, we might find another path to obtain Spinoza’s counterpart of the covering condition. Schaffer’s reason for requiring Covering is *the argument from completeness* (see note 21). He characterizes completeness as covering the cosmos so that there are no gaps. It is just one way to accomplish it. Thus, we may fulfill the requirement in a different way. For example, Spinoza’s statement to fulfill such a requirement could be found in E1P16: “[f]rom the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many ways.” In other words, Spinoza argues that from the basic object, there must follow all non-basic objects *necessarily*, that is, we may think of completeness in terms of modality instead of mereology.³¹ Anyway, without Spinoza’s version of the two conditions, it seems to me, we cannot seriously consider the relationship between Spinoza and Schaffer.

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³⁰ For more detailed studies, see Guigon (2011); Laveran (2014).

³¹ The rough idea is as follows. Spinoza claims that everything follows from the nature of the infinite substance and the latter necessitates the former. Thus if the substance is determined, everything also must be determined.

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