Distinguishing Leibniz’s System of Pre-Established Harmony from the System of Occasional Causes

**Abstract** One of the more persistent interpretations of Leibniz’s system of pre-established harmony is as a temporal dislocation of occasionalism: whatever God is always doing on the occasionalist account he need only have done once – at creation – on Leibniz's. In accordance with this interpretation, the difference between the systems of La Forge, Cordemoy, and Malebranche, on the one hand, and Leibniz’s pre-established harmony, on the other, is one of how involved God is in the world.

Here, I show the difference between these systems has *nothing to do with* how involved God is in the universe. Rather, the basic difference between the systems must ultimately found in their differing accounts of the nature of substance.

Keywords: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz; Nicolas Malebranche; Baruch de Spinoza; Louis de La Forge; Geraud de Cordemoy, Arnold Geulincx; Rene Descartes; occasionalism; pre-established harmony; early modern theories of substance; causation in early modern physics; intersubjectivity; mind-body problem.

# 1 Introduction

One of the more persistent interpretations of Leibniz’s system of pre-established harmony is as a temporal dislocation of occasionalism: whatever God is always doing on the occasionalist account he need only have done once – at creation – on Leibniz's.[[1]](#endnote-1) In accordance with this, the difference between occasionalism and Leibniz’s pre-established harmony is one of how involved God is in the world. Thus for Russell, Malebranche ‘held that, since matter is essentially passive, the changes in matter corresponding to those in mind must be effected by the direct operation of God in each case. In Leibniz, on the contrary, only one original miracle was required to start all the clocks […]—the rest was all effected naturally.’[[2]](#endnote-2) Nadler contrasts his reading of Malebranche, where ‘Malebranche’s God is personally, directly, and immediately responsible’[[3]](#endnote-3) for changes in nature with a Leibnizian one where ‘God originally [establishes] such a correspondence once and for all by means of a few general volitions.’[[4]](#endnote-4) For Clarke, no difference is to be found between the systems concerning God’s activity, and so Malebranche and Leibniz’s disagreements reduce to a verbal dispute.[[5]](#endnote-5) Scott contrasts the ‘force of independence’ given to Leibnizian monads at creation with a Malebranchian view on which ‘creatures are entirely dependent on God from moment to moment.’[[6]](#endnote-6) Additional variations on this theme have been advanced by Jolley,[[7]](#endnote-7) Detlefsen,[[8]](#endnote-8) Stuart Brown,[[9]](#endnote-9) and others.[[10]](#endnote-10)

That occasionalism and the pre-established harmony differ foremost in degree of divine activity has been assumed both as an account of the genuine difference between occasionalism and the pre-established harmony, and as one of what Leibniz himself took the difference to be. The interpretations of Russell, Nadler, and Detlefsen both attribute this interpretation to Leibniz and broadly agree with it; those of Clarke, Jolley, Scott, and Lee take the pre-established harmony to be closer to occasionalism than Leibniz himself realized or cared to admit. Though there is lively debate on what Malebranche’s actual position was and how/whether it differed from Leibniz’s, that Leibniz characterized the difference between his and Malebranche’s systems in the above way is generally not contested. The effects of this assumption have been striking.

In scholarship on Malebranche, it has abetted a dispute between ‘generalist’ and ‘particularist’ interpretations of Malebranche’s claim that God only acts by general volitions.[[11]](#endnote-11) The *generalist* interpretation holds that with the exception of miracles, God only acts by willing general laws of nature; the *particularist* interpretation, by contrast, takes the immediate object of God’s volitions to be particular events, albeit events in accord with general laws. Nadler, whose work is most prominently associated with the particularist interpretation, first introduced it as a defense of a ‘traditional’ reading he attributes to Leibniz,[[12]](#endnote-12) and maintains the alternative description ‘more closely resembles Leibniz’s preestablished harmony.’[[13]](#endnote-13) Many of his opponents have agreed.[[14]](#endnote-14)

In scholarship on Leibniz, its effect has been to assimilate Leibniz’s disagreements with the occasionalists to debates over methodological naturalism in the history and philosophy of science, occasionally culminating in the charge that Leibniz was secretly a *metaphysical* naturalist besides being a methodological one. This reading of Leibniz’s critique has been used to distinguish between an ‘esoteric’ and ‘exoteric’ Leibniz;[[15]](#endnote-15) and more mundanely, to promote a more disjoint view of Leibniz’s development than plausible, one on which Leibniz makes a series of concessions to occasionalism before dropping the contrast altogether.[[16]](#endnote-16)

In the following, I show the basic difference between occasionalism and the pre-established harmony must be found in their accounts of substance:[[17]](#endnote-17) not only does the ‘Leibnizian’ way of distinguishing Malebranchian occasionalism from the pre-established harmony fail; but *Leibniz himself never intended to distinguish his own system from occasionalism in this way*. In untying this small knot, three larger goals may be attained:

1. By undercutting the historical roots of the current paradigm of scholarship on occasionalism, we reset the terms of discussion around which that scholarship has revolved.
2. We arrive at an integral account of the systems of occasional causes and the pre-established harmony *as systems*, thereby reinstating the status of both Malebranche and Leibniz as systematicphilosophers. In the latter case, this further prepares the ground for a deeper and more unified appreciation of Leibniz’s development.
3. We achieve a deeper understanding of the *differences* between Leibniz and Malebranche’s systems, and thereby an improved taxonomy of the places of these systems within early modernity more generally.

I begin with a summary of current thinking on the defining marks of the system of occasional causes and contrast it with a more restricted account better supported by the texts of the main occasionalist authors themselves. Following this, I present Leibniz’s two-clocks analogy, along with a summary of its fullest treatment in the secondary literature, that of David Scott. Lastly, I explain how Leibniz’s different uses of the analogy clarify both the systematic character of Leibniz’s pre-established harmony, as well as its differences from occasionalism on the issues Leibniz sought to directly contrast the systems on: the nature of substance, the communication of substances, and mind-body union.

# 2 The defining marks of the system of occasional causes

Occasionalism was one of several philosophical traditions growing out of the philosophy of Descartes. Besides occasionalism, Descartes’ philosophy was received in other ways by figures like Arnauld and Geuilincx, having its most radical reception in the thought of Spinoza. Scholars generally agree Descartes himself was not an occasionalist, though the degree to which he held occasionalist tendencies is disputed.[[18]](#endnote-18) Rather, the systems of the above figures arose from applying Cartesian principles either to matters Descartes did not apply them to, or in ways different from his own application.[[19]](#endnote-19) Furthermore, because Descartes admitted withholding aspects of his thinking from his published works, it was possible to read these extensions of Cartesian principles back into Descartes’ own work, thereby giving them added weight.[[20]](#endnote-20)

We begin by situating occasionalism among several resolutions to two problems in Cartesian philosophy: i) the individuation of substances; [[21]](#endnote-21) and ii) the relation between the mental and the physical. On the first, one might take Descartes’ claim that ‘substance’ only strictly applies to God to the conclusion that individuation is merely apparent, as Spinoza did*.*[[22]](#endnote-22) Given a commitment to the individuation of substances of the same type being merely formal, one might then ask about beings of different types. Cartesian ontology famously only allows for two types: mind and body. Spinoza took the difference between these to be merely formal or conceptual.[[23]](#endnote-23) A different approach maps the Cartesian distinction between mind and body as types onto a real distinction between two different *things*: God and creation.[[24]](#endnote-24) This view was held by Geulincx.[[25]](#endnote-25) A third approach accepts both the existence of particular substances and a real distinction between particular souls and their bodies. This was the starting point for the occasionalist hypothesis. The relations between these views are sketched in figure 1.

But while occasionalism provides answers to the problems of individuation and the mind-body relation, these provide occasionalism with neither its most characteristic doctrines nor its essential motivation. Rather, one better understands the development of occasionalism as a gradual expansion of the doctrine of continuous creation. According to this doctrine, creatures depend on God for their being not merely in that God must have created them, but also in that God must conserve them in being at each and every instant.[[26]](#endnote-26) The earliest occasionalist accounts insist God not only conserves material creatures in being, but also must conserve them in a specific *place* in doing so (since it is impossible to preserve a material object in existence without also preserving somewhere).[[27]](#endnote-27) Given that motion is simply change of place on the Cartesian account, it follows that God, being immediately and solely responsible for the successive positioning of material objects, is likewise responsible for their motion. Thus material objects do not move themselves. And given the only way material objects could act on each other would be by contact, itself a function of relative position, it follows, the occasionalist maintains, that material objects are causally inert.

This argument establishes nothing about the causal status of *minds*, nor about whether they are active or passive. However, recent scholarship holds occasionalist minds to be passive as well as bodies. Nadler defines occasionalism as the joint acceptance of the following theses:

1. Natural objects, both minds and bodies, have no causal efficacy
2. God alone is a true efficient cause.[[28]](#endnote-28)

That the second of these is constitutive of occasionalism is uncontroversial. Whether the first should be so regarded depends in great part on what is meant by ‘causal efficacy’. The occasionalist admits both minds and bodies are causes in a loose sense: they are occasional causes, i.e. both the volition of a mind and bodily contact serve as occasions whereupon God must exercise his causal efficacy. On the other hand, the second thesis entails minds other than God are not efficient causes. Since efficient causation is traditionally associated with production, a restricted reading of this entailment would imply creatures are not *productive*. A broader reading, drawing from a similarly traditional association of efficient causation with agency, would further hold neither minds nor bodies are *active*[[29]](#endnote-29). The broader reading is cemented in a terminological distinction between full and partial occasionalists, the latter being those who ascribe activity to the mind.[[30]](#endnote-30) But while the broader assumption that activity presupposes productivity plays an important role in Leibniz’s polemic against occasionalism,[[31]](#endnote-31) all major occasionalist figures explicitly describe the mind as active.

In *On Nature Itself*, Leibniz describes occasionalism as follows:

But now let us consider a little more closely the opinion of those who removetrue and proper action from created things, which […] now certain Cartesians [advance], who judge not things to act, but God at the presence of things and according to the aptness of things; and thus [judge] things to be occasions, not causes, and to receive, not to effect or elicit. When Cordemoy, La Forge, and other Cartesians set forth this doctrine, Malebranche especially adorned [it] with certain rhetorical lights on account of his acumen; but brought forth (as far as I can tell) no solid reasons. Surely, if this doctrine leads to the point of even taking the *immanent actions* of substances away […], then it appears foreign to reason like nothing else.[[32]](#endnote-32)

Here, Leibniz names Cordemoy, La Forge, and Malebranche as leading occasionalists, describes occasionalists as being led to the conclusion that not even minds are active, and calls this ‘foreign to reason.’ But if they are so led, it will be against their own explicit commitments. La Forge, for instance, holds that

the essence of this faculty [i.e. the will] consists firstly in the fact that it is the active principle of all the mind’s actions which chooses from itself and by itself, and determines itself to accept or reject what the understanding perceives or remain suspended when something is not yet perceived clearly enough.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Elsewhere, La Forge assumes the mind is the cause of its own ideas:

Although our thoughts follow one another and although it is the external objects or the first thoughts which provide an occasion for the will to determine itself and form the idea of subsequent thoughts, that does not imply that one should not say that it is the will which is the principal and proximate cause of the idea. Otherwise one would have to say that it is the external objects which produce the ideas that we have of them *and not the mind* [..].[[34]](#endnote-34)

But in spite of this, La Forge is clear the mind produces nothing *material*.

[T]here is no creature, spiritual or corporeal, which can cause change in [matter] or in any of its parts, in the second moment of their creation, if the Creator does not do so himself.[[35]](#endnote-35)

Cordemoy likewise ascribes willing to the mind:

Just as the body is a substance to which extension naturally belongs, so much so that, as for physical effects, it would cease to be a body if it ceased to be extended; in the same way the mind is a substance to which the power of determining itself belongs so naturally, that it would cease to be a mind if it ceased to will.[[36]](#endnote-36)

And like La Forge, he describes willing as the mind’s activity: ‘[God] made minds […] capable of action; they will.’[[37]](#endnote-37) Thus with Cordemoy as with La Forge, neither the activity of God nor the absence of real production by the mind suffices to deprive the mind of its essential activity.

We find this same commitment to the active character of mind in Malebranche. And at least in his earlier works, Malebranche does not explicitly rule out the mind being the productive cause of its own ideas. Like Cordemoy, Malebranche describes the soul as ‘pushed ceaselessly toward the good in general’ by God.[[38]](#endnote-38) He describes the consent to this good as an act, albeit ‘an immanent act that produces nothing *material* in our substance,’[[39]](#endnote-39) and elsewhere, states the same point differently: minds ‘do not […] produce in themselves a reality, or a modification that *physically* changes their substance.’[[40]](#endnote-40) But this is consistent with the mind being the efficient cause of its own ideas, assuming ideas are immaterial (or, alternatively, that eidetic production is not a case of efficient causation *simpliciter*).

But while the *Search after Truth* and the *Elucidations* on that text offer no clear rejection of the mind’s productive power with respect to its own ideas, this sort of production *is* ruled out in the later *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*.[[41]](#endnote-41) In the person of Theodore, Malebranche states:

If [ideas] are eternal, immutable, necessary, in a word, divine […] surely they will be more considerable than that matter which is inefficacious […]. Be careful. If it is you who give being to your ideas, it is by willing to think of them. Now, pray tell, how can you will to think of a circle, if you do not already have some idea of it, from which to form and complete it? Can something be willed without being known? Can you make something from nothing?[[42]](#endnote-42)

However, even here, Malebranche’s argument does not proceed from anything about *occasionalism*; rather, the denial of the mind’s productivity with respect to its ideas follows from i) the dependence of willing on knowledge; and ii) the eternity of the ideas themselves: the human mind cannot produce them because *nothing* produces them. Hence, leaving aside whether the passivity of minds might be an untoward consequence of occasionalist tenets, this assumption was not itself among those tenets. Instead, we can understand occasionalism in terms of the claims that i) God is the only efficient cause, and ii) consequently, neither human minds nor extended bodies are efficient causes.[[43]](#endnote-43)

# 3 The uses of the two clocks example in the Leibnizian corpus

Clocks hold an important place in the early modern philosophical imaginary, much like that held by computers today; and like computers, clock analogies were put to a wide variety of uses by early modern authors with often disparate philosophical views. Descartes compares a well-made and badly-made clock in that both equally follow the laws of nature.[[44]](#endnote-44) The use of the clock example to express the harmony of creation occurs in Geulincx.[[45]](#endnote-45) Malebranche compares a God who wills by particular volitions rather than general laws to ‘a watchmaker with a watch which would stop at each moment without his aid.’[[46]](#endnote-46) Fontenelle used the analogy of a watchmaker in a design argument for the existence of God,[[47]](#endnote-47) and the analogy was later employed to the same purpose by – and contested in – Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Berkeley mentions the clockmaker analogy in connection with Dominican scholastic Durandus of St. Pourçain, ‘who held the world to be a machine like a clock, put in motion by God, but afterwards continuing to go of itself.’[[48]](#endnote-48) Abraham Gaultier, criticizing Descartes’ association of truth with clarity and distinctness, holds human matter can spontaneously take on higher functions in a broader cultural context, just as the parts of a clock give rise to an instrument used to tell the time; later, the same theme was picked up in different ways by La Mettrie and Diderot.[[49]](#endnote-49)

Scott argues Leibniz’s infelicitous use of the two-clocks analogy ‘fails adequately to distinguish these two doctrines’[[50]](#endnote-50) of occasionalism and pre-established harmony, and examines four cases put to three different uses: the first two contrast the pre-established harmony and the system of occasional causes; the third concerns the nature of Leibnizian souls; the last, Leibniz’s solution to the mind-body problem.[[51]](#endnote-51) Scott construes Leibniz’s variant applications of the example as a series of implicit concessions ultimately ending with Leibniz abandoning the metaphor altogether, and concludes Leibniz's pre-established harmony ‘is, after all, not so different from occasionalism.’[[52]](#endnote-52)

Given the widespread association of the example with limitations on God’s activity – with Malebranche, to hold God doesn’t act by particular volitions; with Fontenelle, Berkeley, and Hume, in association with Deism; and in Gaultier, La Mettrie, and Diderot, with materialism – it is perhaps unavoidable Leibniz’s employment of the example would be located along this trajectory. But taken on their own terms, Leibniz’s uses don’t suggest this. Here is Leibniz’s use of the analogy in a letter to Basnage de Beauval:

Consider two clocks or watches in perfect agreement. Now this can happen in *three ways*: the *first* is that of a natural influence […]. *The second way* to make two faulty clocks always agree would be to have them watched over by a competent workman, who would adjust them and get them to agree at every moment. *The third way* is to construct these two clocks from the start with so much skill and accuracy that one can be certain of their subsequent agreement.[[53]](#endnote-53)

# 4 The unity of the Pre-Established Harmony as a System

While it is true the analogy does not receive the sustained treatment it does in earlier works after 1705, Leibniz continues to allude to it to his death.[[54]](#endnote-54) In the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence in particular, Leibniz pursues a strategy of assimilating the errors of the Newtonians to occasionalism, a sensible one given the popularity of his *Theodicy* with Princess Caroline of Wales, who initiated and mediated the correspondence.[[55]](#endnote-55) But the polemical point of the above use would not have been lost on Leibniz’s readers: *Occasionalist substances don’t work.* Leibniz’s bodies and minds, by contrast, intrinsically follow the laws of efficient and final causes, respectively.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Furthermore, that Leibniz’s three uses of the analogy are not mutually exclusive may be recognized simply from the title of the work wherein Leibniz contrasts the two systems most fully — the *Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l’union qu’il y a entre l’âme et le corps*.[[57]](#endnote-57) According to the title, Leibniz is proposing a new system, the pre-established harmony, to replace an old system: occasionalism, which Leibniz calls ‘the Cartesian system,’[[58]](#endnote-58) or more frequently, the ‘system of occasional causes.’[[59]](#endnote-59) The two clocks example is meant to explicate the difference between these two systems. Each, while being one system, attempts a unified solution to three different problems: the nature of substance, the communication of substances, and the union of soul and body. Hence, far from backpedaling, Leibniz’s use of the example of the two clocks in these various ways confirms the essential unity of his thinking about these topics.

## 4.1 The nature of Leibnizian substances

In explicating the difference between the two systems, it will be useful to follow the order Leibniz himself marks out for us. According to the full title of the *New System*, the problem that gets top billing, so to speak, is the nature of substance.

The occasionalist responds to this problem by adopting the Cartesian division of substance into *res extensa* and *res cogitans*.[[60]](#endnote-60) It is on account of this ontological thesis that the other two problems, the communication of mind and body and the interaction of substances, arise. Occasionalism accepts the ontological thesis and appeals to God to solve the other two problems. Leibniz will call for a modification of the ontological thesis itself.

Leibniz begins the *New System* critiquing the Cartesian concept of body as *res extensa* as incapable of designating *what* it is thatis extended. Consequently, this notion can neither distinguish one body from another, nor individuate any body as *one*. ‘It is impossible to find the principles of a true unity in matter alone or in what is only passive; since the whole here is nothing but a collection or mass of parts to infinity.’[[61]](#endnote-61) Leibniz’s description of the problem thus hints at his solution: *res extensa* cannot be the ultimate building block for everything else, but must itself be subordinated to a principle of unity: ‘an atom of substance,’ a ‘real and living point,’ ‘substantial form,’ ‘first entelechy,’ ‘primitive force.’[[62]](#endnote-62) Leibniz's solution to the problem of the nature of substance consists in determining the character of this unifying principle.

The unity of substantial form is a unity of duration. Leibnizian substantial forms are not spatial unities, since spatial unities are unities of matter, which is always in principle divisible.[[63]](#endnote-63) Supporting the thesis that substantial forms were created at the creation of the world, Leibniz writes, ‘We give to our forms only duration, which the Gassendists grant to their atoms.’[[64]](#endnote-64)

Leibniz states his notion of force is ‘very intelligible,’[[65]](#endnote-65) and takes rational souls as models of the kind of unity he ascribes to forms: ‘I found, then, that the nature [of substantial forms] consists *in force*, and that from this follows something analogous to sentiment or appetite; and also that it would be necessary to conceive of them on the pattern of the notion we have of souls.’[[66]](#endnote-66)

This seems unhelpful if the notion of soul itself is insufficiently intelligible. But this difficulty only arises from a failure to understand what Leibniz means by ‘soul’. Leibniz’s starting point in the *New System* is a critique of one half of the Cartesian idea of substance, i.e. *res extensa*. But Leibniz does not critique the second half of the Cartesian dichotomy – *res cogitans*, which Descartes explicitly identifies with soul.[[67]](#endnote-67) Instead, Leibniz follows Descartes in this identification: ‘Moreover, by means of the soul or form, there is a true unity which answers to what we call *I* in us’[[68]](#endnote-68) Thus, in spite of his differences with Descartes, Leibniz grants a kind of privileged status to the *cogito* as the *terminus a quo* of his metaphysics.

One might take this to imply the core of Leibniz’s metaphysics is a kind of anthropomorphic projection.[[69]](#endnote-69) But doing so would be to conceive the *cogito* simply as a stratum of human experience abstracted from corporeal elements. But it is precisely this conception, without which the objection of anthropomorphism does not arise, that the *cogito* seeks to challenge. The ‘*donc*’ of ‘*je pense, donc je suis*’ does not say: ‘I think. But only existing things can think. Therefore, I must exist.’ Instead, it says my whole being consists in thought.[[70]](#endnote-70) On this picture, it is only from within this sphere of the *cogito* that one can, for instance, differentiate one portion of what is cogitated as being one’s own body, and hence come to the judgment, ‘I am a human being,’ and not, e.g. a cockroach.[[71]](#endnote-71)

While Leibniz avoids the charge of anthropomorphism, one may object that he engages in a sort of psychomorphic characterization of all beings. Within certain limits, this sort of analogical predication seems intuitively acceptable, e.g. I assume the interior life of other adults is similar to my own. One can also apply this, as Malebranche had before Leibniz,[[72]](#endnote-72) to the souls of animals, granting a difference of proportion. But to see a germ of the structure of one’s own ego in all things, far from letting substances be mirrors of the universe, seems to make them mirrors of oneself.

This complaint would be legitimate but for the following: substantial forms are not kinds of souls; rather, souls are kinds of substantial forms. The reason Leibniz is able to state this as more than a philosophical sleight of hand is – and here is where Leibniz’s real originality lies – via an analysis of the essential structure of consciousness itself.

It is in light of the above that Leibniz’s designation of substance as force must be understood. For Leibniz, the soul is a kind of substantial form, the most prominent characteristic of which is indivisibility.[[73]](#endnote-73) It is a ‘true unity,’ a ‘real unity,’ a ‘substantial unity’; a ‘real and living point,’ a ‘metaphysical point’; an ‘atom of substance.’[[74]](#endnote-74) These descriptions contrast Leibnizian forms with two different kinds of points: a) mathematical points, which are exact but not real, and b) physical points, which are real but not strictly points or unities at all, since they are always in principle divisible.[[75]](#endnote-75) The unity of Leibnizian substances is a unity of duration – a unity through time, experienced in the case of the soul as the unity of consciousness.[[76]](#endnote-76)

By using the term ‘atom’, Leibniz indicates not only that these forms are unities in themselves, but also that they serve as building blocks in a larger structure. Leibniz indicates this in three ways: by stating ‘without true unities, there would be no multitude’[[77]](#endnote-77); by claiming the continuum is unable to be composed of mathematical points;[[78]](#endnote-78) by holding metaphysical points express the universe.[[79]](#endnote-79) These remarks show these unities, as unities, are engaged in constituting the unity-in-multiplicity that is the universe. By this, we can see Leibnizian souls must be the kinds of things that can belong together in their nature, not like atoms in a heap but intrinsically. Hence, the communication of substances must be a problem for Leibniz akin with that of their nature.

If the above comments have illuminated something of the structure of Leibnizian forms, they have mainly served to ward off certain false solutions to the question of their nature. In answering this question, recall Leibniz, here taking his cue from Spinoza,[[80]](#endnote-80) holds ‘their nature consists in *force* and [...] from this follows something analogous to sentiment or appetite.’[[81]](#endnote-81) Thus, returning to the soul as our guiding example, we see its nature *qua* substantial form must consist in force or activity.

To specify what this means, Leibniz provides several figures: some peculiar to rational souls, some common to substantial forms as such. Among the latter are the descriptions ‘first entelechy’ and ‘primitive force,’ as well as the ascription of an ‘original activity,’[[82]](#endnote-82) all stressing the non-derivative character of these forces.

Among the former, Leibniz characterizes the force of substances as analogous to ‘sentiment’ and ‘appetite’[[83]](#endnote-83); put otherwise, that which corresponds to force in us is sentiment – sense, feeling, consciousness—and appetite; even more simply, Leibniz conceives appetite/sentiment as force. And elsewhere he writes metaphysical points ‘have something of the vital and a kind of perception.’[[84]](#endnote-84) Capitalizing on the occasionalist depiction of the soul’s perceptual activity as God’s pushing the soul towards the highest good, [[85]](#endnote-85) Leibniz views perception not as merely passive, but as an act of striving forward, a desire tending towards its fulfillment.[[86]](#endnote-86) Thus, Leibniz highlights the temporal structure of consciousness by seeing each new perception as unfolding from the last. Each impression leads to the next, in the same way a masterful painting – one might, for instance, think of Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* – leads the eye across the canvass, so that it might be taken in fully, and yet is taken in as a unity in spite of the mind’s inability to encompass it in a single perception.[[87]](#endnote-87)

Thus, every being *qua* substance is a kind of this ‘pressing forward;’ the characteristics of this force will change from creature to creature – e.g. human perception will have a rational character not shared by beasts – but the analogy of force or activity remains constant even in the lowest beings. Thus, if Descartes constitutes being as the disjunction of thinking or extension, Leibniz constitutes thinking as appetition, and appetition as force.

## 4.2 Their communication

How, then, does this ontology overcome the problems of the interaction of substances? To answer, recall that the problem of the communication of substances is, for Leibniz, precisely the problem of how any such thing as a shared universe can be possible. Given this description, combined with the above remarks regarding the nature of Leibnizian substances, we can see that the problem can be reinterpreted as one of how substances, in their essence as force, express each other. Leibniz’s thinking provides two reasons why the problem of the constitution of the world cannot be thought of as separate from that of the constitution of substances: first, because the universe does not admit a more ‘objective’ materialistic solution, since material unity is derivative;[[88]](#endnote-88) second, because partitioning off the objective world as something separate and distinct from conscious subjects only raises anew all of the problems of mind-matter interaction, instead of solving them.

So Leibniz believes the problem of the interaction of substances can be solved by the idea of substance as force, which he conceives as analogous to perception. But there is another aspect of perception as force, apart from its already-mentioned ‘forward-looking’ character, to which we have yet to give due attention: namely, its character as ‘expression.’[[89]](#endnote-89) Leibniz means this quite literally: the world, as stream of *cogitationes*, is the expression of thought. Leibniz makes the same point by referring to perception as a kind of production.[[90]](#endnote-90) What is expressed or produced by the substance is the universe: the phenomenal world shared by the different substances, who each express it from their own ‘point of view.’[[91]](#endnote-91) Thus, in expressing this same universe from its own standpoint, each creature also expresses every other. Leibniz holds creatures do not act on each other, not mainly to dismiss the entry of an occult ‘influx’ into the realm of physics, but rather because the preceding point ensures substances are already radically interconnected, and no influx could make them more so. This is the source of Leibniz’s famous designation of substances as ‘mirrors of the universe.’[[92]](#endnote-92) Thus, Leibniz’s answer to the problem of the nature of substances also serves to unravel the problem of their communication.

## 4.3 The Union of Mind and Body

### 4.3.1 The Relation of Mind to Body Generally

Lastly, we move to the problem of mind-body interaction, Leibniz’s solution to which has already been prefigured by the above remarks. Each Leibnizian nature, as force, expresses every other nature from its own viewpoint. It does this by producing phenomena, which are, through the harmonious laws by which they follow each other, perceived as a universe, a continuum, a manifold. From this standpoint, the problem of mind-body interaction cannotbe thought of as one of finding a medium by which two ontologically distinct kinds of beings interact, since the dualist ontology giving rise to the problem has been undercut. But the problem *can* manifest itself in a somewhat surprising way, directly related to that of the communication of substances, and posed thusly: the entire universe is expressed through my perceptual activity; given this, the whole perceived world is, properly speaking, mine, no more and no less than that portion referred to as *my* body. I am, as my *cogito*, all things. Hence, the purported interconnectivity of substances transforms itself into Spinozism.

As Russell already recognized, Leibniz’s solution to the mind-body problem will have more in common with Spinoza than with Malebranche.[[93]](#endnote-93) In this connection, we return to Leibniz’s remark that ‘it is impossible to find the principles of a true unity in matter, or in that which is only passive.’[[94]](#endnote-94) Here, Leibniz identifies matter with passivity in contrast with form, which has the character of activity, specifically of an activity analogous to appetition or perception, conceived as the production of the stream of *cogitationes*. It is precisely as these *cogitationes* – i.e. as the product of the activity of perception – that matter as passive must be conceived; as the complement of the activity of form, which results in a complete substance. Hence Leibniz must classify body as *phenomenon*.[[95]](#endnote-95)

This is why in the *New System*, immediately after his discussion and rejection of the occasionalist hypothesis on mind-body interaction, Leibniz states:

And our interior sentiments […] being nothing besides phenomena consequent on external things, or better, true appearances, like well-ordered dreams – it is necessary that these internal perceptions in the soul itself come to it by its own original constitution – that is, by its representative nature […] which was given to it from its creation, and which give it its individual character.[[96]](#endnote-96)

Here, the antecedent remarks clarify some points about the communication of substances, from which are derived (beginning at ‘it is necessary’) certain insights into the solution to the mind-body problem. Other beings are only ever directly encountered as material beings by us – as ‘phenomena,’ ‘appearances,’ or more provocatively, ‘dreams.’ What distinguishes these from mere dreams is twofold: first, they are consequent on external beings, second, they are ‘well-regulated.’ The first restates Leibniz’s claim that substances express each other; the second emphasizes their ontological separateness: substances are solitary dreamers, and it is only by the contingent master plan of God that they actively express the same dream. Thus against Spinozistic monism, the contingency of beings is secured simultaneously with their individuation via the morally certain claim[[97]](#endnote-97) that these phenomena are, by analogy with one’s own *cogito*, the expressions of other vital beings from their own respective viewpoints.[[98]](#endnote-98)

From the separateness and intersubjectivity of substances, Leibniz concludes the perceptions of the soul come to it via its own constitution, and ‘give it its individual character.’[[99]](#endnote-99) This is obscure at first sight. But given Leibniz’s identification of matter with passivity, phenomena, *cogitationes*, it is actually nothing other than an old scholastic adage drastically reworked from a Cartesian viewpoint: that matter is the principle of individuation.[[100]](#endnote-100)

### 4.3.2 The Union of Particular Minds and Bodies

The above considerations show how the concrete substance, as a union of the active and passive, form and matter, *cogito* and *cogitatum* is formed; but they do not explain the connection of the substance to that which within perception is recognized as its *own* body. But given the impossibility of an influx of the soul into the body, one should not and cannot hope for some *tertium quid* serving as a surety by which to secure their union. The union of soul and body cannot be something other than the harmony of their mutual laws. To make this point clearer, we can consider Leibniz’s remarks on another problem: skepticism.

Leibniz insists that the problem of which phenomena count as real or true can only be answered by recourse to those phenomena themselves and cannot be answered in any ‘higher’ manner. We judge the reality of a phenomenon ‘both from the phenomenon itself and from antecedent and consequent phenomena’[[101]](#endnote-101) Leibniz states:

Indeed, even if this whole life were claimed to be nothing but a dream, and the visible world, nothing but a phantasm, I would call this – whether a dream or phantasm – real enough, if using reason well, we could never be deceived by it. [[102]](#endnote-102)

Like the question of which phenomena are real, that of which body is ‘mine’ must be ascertained on the basis of those phenomena. Leibniz will agree with the occasionalists that, when considered closely, the experience of moving one’s hand is nothing other than the conjunction of one’s volition with the datum of the moving hand, which, for Leibniz, is nothing other than the harmony of the laws of my mind with those of the infinitely many substances that make up my body. The *phenomenal* union of mind and body cannot be something added to this harmony; and Leibniz’s system was never meant to explain anything more than this.[[103]](#endnote-103) This is Leibniz’s point when he ascribes, without further elaboration, one solution to the two problems of mind-body interaction and the communication of substances, writing ‘It is this mutual rapport, ordered in advance in each substance of the universe, that produces what we call their *communication*, and that uniquely effects *the union of soul and body*.’[[104]](#endnote-104)

# 5 Conclusion

With the system of pre-established harmony now having been unfolded in its proper order, we are able to summarily contrast it with Malebranche’s system of occasional causes.

The primary difference is in their accounts of the nature of substance. While Malebranche accepts Cartesian ontology, Leibniz reforms this ontology from within through his designation of perception as force or activity. Leibnizian substances have natures able to account for their action, whereas Malebranche’s, like clocks in need are of perpetual supervisor, are intrinsically unable to do this. It is in connection with this complaint that Leibniz presses the point of occasionalism entailing a perpetual miracle: ‘It does not suffice to say that God has enacted a general law, for besides the decree, there also must be a natural means of executing it.’[[105]](#endnote-105)

On the interaction of substances, occasionalists have recourse to God when they should have instead ascribed to Him the creation of creatures whose natures were able to account for this interaction. Leibnizian substances do this by being ‘mirrors of the universe,’ expressing the universe and each other from their own points of view in perfect harmony.

On the mind-body problem, occasionalists reject mind-body interaction and require God to move our bodies in accord with our volitions. Leibniz answers this problem on two levels – first by, a la Spinoza, reading the mind-body relation as one between activity and passivity;[[106]](#endnote-106) second, by rejecting the terms of the debate according to which the communication of mind and body could be some *tertium quid* other than their concordance consequent on the harmonious agreement of the laws of the substances themselves.

In sum, Leibniz avoids the harrowed natures of the occasionalists via a Cartesian adaptation of Spinoza’s distinction between mind and body as one between activity and passivity, adding his own designation of the *cogito* as force. Leibniz avoids Spinozistic monism by agreeing with the occasionalists that the causal interaction of substances is only inferred from conjunction, and not proven in metaphysical rigor. This effectively secures Leibniz a space in which he can postulate a multitude of substances all acting in harmonious accord with each other simply by following their proper laws – which is just to say it secures Leibniz a space in which he can reach toward one of the main goals of his philosophy: the reconciliation of knowledge with piety.

# Abbreviations

AG = Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Philosophical Writings*. Ed. R. Ariew and D. Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

AT = René Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, vols. 1-12, ed. Adam and Tannery, revised edition. Paris: Vrin/CNRS, 1964-76.

C = *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*. Ed. by L. Couturat. Paris: Alcan 1903. Reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms 1961.

CSMK = *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vols. 1-3, trans. J. Cottingham,, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and A. Kenny. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985-1991. Vols. 1 and 2 cited as CSM.

E = Benedictus de Spinoza, *Ethica*. In Opera quotquot reperta sunt. Ed. J. Van Vloten and J. P. N. Land. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. Tomus Primus. pp. 35-273.

GP = Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1875-90. Reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1960.

*In Metaph.* = Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics*. Trans. John P. Rowan. Html-edited by Joseph Kenny, O. P. with addition of Aquinas’s Latin and and Aristotle’s Greek text. <http://dhspriory.org/thomas/metaphysics5.htm>

JS = *Nicolas Malebranche: Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*. Ed. Nicholas Jolley and David Scott. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

L = *G. W. Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*. Ed. and trans. by L. E. Loemker. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969.

*Med.* = René Descartes. *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*.

*Med.* *chr.* = Nicolas Malebranche. *Méditations Chrétiennes*.

NG = Nicolas Malebranche. *Treatise on Nature and Grace*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Patrick Riley. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

*OC* = *Oeuvres Complètes de Malebranche*. Directeur A. Robinet. 20 volumes. Paris: J. Vrin, 1958-1967.

*Réponse* = Abraham Gaultier. *Réponse en forme de dissertation à un théologien, Qui demande ce que veulent dire les sceptiques, qui cherchent la verité par tout dans la Nature, comme dans les écrits des philosophes; lors qu’ils pensent que la Vie et la Mort sont la même chose*. Ed. Olivier Bloch. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, coll. Encre Marine, 2004.

*ST* = Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, trans. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1948/1981.

T = Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*. Trans. E. M. Huggard. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985.

*Treatise* = Louis de La Forge, *Treatise on the Human Mind (1664)*. Translation with an introduction and notes by D. M. Clarke. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997.

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1. The problem of distinguishing Leibniz’s system from occasionalism was first raised by Arnauld; see GP II. 84-90. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Russell 1951, 137. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Nadler 1993, 32. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 31 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Clarke 1989, 121; 1995, *passim*; cf. Black 1997, 39. Likewise, for Sukjae Lee, ‘the key difference [between Leibniz and Malebranche’s systems] is that Leibniz accepts the force of reasons as a genuine type of causation while Malebranche does not.’ (2004, 230). Lee goes on to claim the difference ‘is not merely terminological,’ but his argument is not entirely convincing. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Scott 1997, 452. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Jolley 2002 takes Leibniz to describe Malebranche’s system as one on which ‘the occasionalist God is a busybody God.’ (246); cf. 1990, 106-107. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. ‘Leibniz […] makes clear that occasionalism is miraculous because it posits God’s constant activity in the so-called natural world.’ Detlefsen 2003, 449. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. ‘Leibniz took [Malebranche’s thought] a step closer to what is commonly referred to as ‘deism,’ in which miracles and particular providence is denied outright.’ Brown 2000, 273. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. McCracken 1983, 101; Brown 2007 suggests Leibniz could have accounted for Newtonian gravitation—described by Leibniz as a ‘perpetual miracle’—by rolling it ‘into that initial, mega-miracle of creation.’ (147). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Two of the best treatments of the general will in Malebranche are Schmaltz (2008b) and Wahl (2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. ‘[Leibniz] accuses Malebranche of introducing ‘continuous miracles’ into the course of nature at every moment, and of having God ‘intervene’ with the laws of bodies and of thought […] Now I shall argue that we ought to keep to this traditional reading of Malebranche’s occasionalism.’ (Nadler 1993, 32). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Nadler 1993, 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. See esp. Clarke 1995 and Scott 1997. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Russell 1951; cf. Shields 1986; Wilson 1989, 277-281. More recent work has largely rejected Russell’s distinction. See Mercer 2001, 4-9; Rateau 2008, 420-426; Antognazza 2009. For a more measured account of Leibniz’s use of exoteric writing, see Whipple 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Scott 1997. This has been part of a broader trend away from holistic accounts of Leibniz’s philosophy and towards views emphasizing its development. See Garber 2008, 78; 2009, 388; 2014, 223-32; Wilson 1999, 373. Though Leibniz’s views on various topics certainly developed, and though the exoteric/esoteric distinction of Russell and others is somewhat cruder than more recent developmentalist work, the *function* of developmentalist hypotheses in Leibniz scholarship has been much the same as Russell’s earlier distinction: fragmentation at the service of manageability. While paying verbal respects to the complexity of Leibniz’s thought, such readings, in failing to respect the *integrity* of that thought, reduce that complexity to confusion. For a more positive assessment of Leibniz’s systematicity, see Rescher 1981. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. That Leibniz critiques Malebranche’s view of substance, albeit as one critique among others, has been recognized by Rutherford 1993, 140; Garber 1995, 299-301; 2009, 193-94; Brown 2000, 280-81, fn. 16. The clearest statement of the centrality of this difference for Leibniz comes from Russell Wahl:

    Leibniz’s real problem with Malebranche’s view should not have been expressed in terms of miracles or the role of secondary causes at all. His real problem is with Malebranche’s concept of substance. (Wahl 2011, 237; see also Whipple 2010)

    Wahl, however, makes this remark in the broader context of defending a generalist account of Malebranche’s view of the will, and so does not purse the issue in its own right. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. For Descartes’ views on causation, see Schmaltz 2008a. Hatfield 1979 and Garber 1992, 299-305 regard Descartes as a partial occasionalist. This reading is contested in Platt 2011a and 2011b. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. Sangiacomo 2014, 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Both Descartes’ reserve as well as his concern for proper reception are on display in an August 1649 letter to Henry More. He writes:

    The transfer which I call ‘motion’ is no less something existent than shape is: it is a mode in a body. The power causing motion may be the power of God himself preserving the same amount of transfer in matter as he put in it in the first moment of creation; or it may be the power of created substance, like our mind, or any other such thing to which he gave the power to move a body. In a created substance this power is a mode, but it is not a mode in God. Since this is not easy for everyone to understand, I did not want to discuss it in my writings. I was afraid of seeming inclined to favor the view of those who consider God as a world-soul united to matter. (*Letter to More, August 1649* = AT 403-4/CSMK 381).

    Here, Descartes both leaves the question of whether God or created substances cause motion undecided, and recognizes the Spinozistic interpretation of his thought as one possible interpretation, even while attempting to distance himself from it. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Cf. Sowaal 2004. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See AT VIIIA 24 = CSM I 210; cf. E I. prop. 5; GP VI. 582. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. E II. Prop. 21; cf. GP I. 151. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. the following passage from the Synopsis of Descartes’ Meditations:

    First, we need to understand that all substances, or things which must be created by God in order to exist, are by their nature incorruptible and cannot ever cease to exist unless they are reduced to nothingness by God’s denying his concurrence to them. Secondly, we need to recognize that body, taken in the general sense, is a substance, so that it never perishes. (AT VII. 14 = CSM II. 10)

    A view like that of Geulincx could be arrived at by denying the appropriateness of the derivative use of ‘substance’ in the first part of the passage, while still allowing that body in general is a created being distinct from God, as accepted in the second part. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. On Geulincx, see Cooney 1978, Nadler 1999. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. See Thomas Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 104, art. 1, res; cf. Descartes, AT VII. 369. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. See La Forge, *Traité de l’esprit de l’homme*, in *Oevres philosophiques*, ed. Pierre Clair (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 240-41. Cf. Malebranche, *Entretiens* VII, par. 10 = OC XII. 160; Nadler 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Nadler 2005, 39. Similar conceptions have been assumed by Pyle 2003, 45-46; Battail 1973, 174; Winkler 2011, 288. A different conception, on which minds need not be wholly passive, is assumed in Radner 1993, 358. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Cf. Aquinas, *in Metaph.* Bk. 5, lec. 2-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. This broader reading is accepted by Nadler (2005); cf. Winkler 2011, 288. Nadler accepts that La Forge holds the mind is active, but for this reason regards him as only a partial occasionalist. See Nadler 1998, 227. The distinction between partial and full occasionalism can also be found in Radner 1993, Garber 1987, Clarke 2000, Bardout 2002, and Kolesnik-Antoine 2006. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. See esp. Rutherford 1993. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. GP IV. 509-510. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. *Treatise* ch. XI, 97. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. *Treatise* ch. X, 94. Emphasis added. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. *Treatise*, 147. Though he does not say so explicitly here, La Forge likely assumes the production of ideas, though an activity, is not production in the proper sense, since the production of an idea by the will is not the production of a real substance or quality, but only of a being of reason (*ens rationis*). Cf. Klima 1993. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. *Discours physique,* CG 255, trans. taken from Nadler 2005, 47. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. *Traité de métaphysique,* CG 283, trans. taken from Nadler 2005, 52.

    Nadler argues Cordemoy is a ‘full-blown’ occasionalist from his remarks to the effect that ‘it is just as impossible for souls to have new perceptions without God as it is for bodies to acquire new motions without him.’ (*Discours physique*, CG 255. Trans. from Nadler 2005, 50). But these and Cordemoy’s other remarks to the same effect establish neither that the mind is not active nor that it does not cause its own ideas. Rather, such passages can be harmonized with those above on the assumptions i) that Cordemoy, like many of his contemporaries, was a compatibilist about divine and human willing, and ii) that because ideas are not real beings, but beings of reason, the production of ideas does not provide an instance of real causation. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. *NG* III. VII, 172; cf. Cordemoy, *Traité de Metaphysique*, CG 284. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. *Éclaircissement* 1 to *De la recherché de la vérité* OC III, 25. Trans. from Nadler 2005, 52. Emphasis mine. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. *Réponse à la Dissertation* = OC 7, 568, Trans. from Nadler 2005, 52. Emphasis mine. Cf. OC IX, 1129. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. The *Search* was first published in 1674-5; the *Elucidations*, in 1678 as a supplement to the third edition of the *Search*. The *Dialogues* were first published in 1688. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. *Dialogue* I. VII. = JS 12-13. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Cf. Platt 2011a, 625-626; Gouhier 1926, 101. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. *Med.* VI. 17 = AT VII. 84 = CSM II. 58. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Cooney 1978, 168. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. *Med. chr.*, OC X, 78. Trans. from Wahl 2011, 235. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Durant and Durant 1963, 618. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Letter to Johnson, Nov. 25, 1729. In Winkler 2011, 291. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Gaultier, *Reponse*, 85-86; see Kaitaro 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Scott 1997, 446. Loemker too regards this as an unfortunate example—cf. L 461, n.20. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. GP IV. 498; 520, 522; VI. 540-41. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Scott 1997, 462. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. GP IV. 498 = AG 147-148. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. See GP VII. 352 = AG 320-21; GP VII. 417-418 = AG. 345-46. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. See [name omitted]. On the importance of Caroline’s role in the correspondence, see Bertoloni-Meli 1999. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Cf. GP VII. 417-418 = AG. 345-46. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. GP IV. 677. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. GP IV. 520. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. GP IV. 483, 520. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. See JS I. ii, 6; III. x-xi, 39-40. Cf. Bardout 2000; Pessin 2004, 247-249. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. GP IV. 478. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. GP IV. 478-79. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Cf. GP IV. 478 [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. GP IV. 479. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. GP IV. 478. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. GP IV. 479. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Cf. *Med.* II. 6 [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. GP IV. 482. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Indeed, Malebranche himself tells Leibniz the analogy of the I is a non-starter in considering the nature of substance: ‘We have no clear idea of the nature of the soul.’ 12 Aug 1678, Malebranche to Leibniz, GP I. 375. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Cf *Med.* II. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. It is the posteriority of this kind of judgment to the *cogito* itself that serves as the condition for so many fruitful imaginations to the contrary—e.g. Descartes’ dream, Putnam’s brains in vats, Kafka’s Metamorphosis. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. See GP I. 331 [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. See GP IV. 479 [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. GP IV. 478, 482. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. GP IV. 483. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Cf. T. 384. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. GP IV. 483 [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. GP IV. 478. Cf. Arthur 1998:

    Of course, if the composition of the continuum is understood as a purely mathematical problem, one may well wonder what bearing physical considerations could have on it. But for Leibniz and his contemporaries, the problem was not restricted to the composition of purely mathematical entities--such as whether a line is composed out of points or infinitesimals or neither--but was understood as applying to all existing quantities and their composition. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. GP IV. 483. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Cf. E III. *propositiones* 6-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. GP IV. 479 [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid. 483. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Cf. Malebranche, *NG* III. VII, 172; Cordemoy, *Traité de Metaphysique*, CG 284. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Cf. Jorgensen 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. The same point may be made by way of analogy with the temporal unity of a beautiful piece of music—an analogy suggested by Leibniz’s very decision to refer to his system as a harmony. See esp. GP II. 95. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. GP IV. 478. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. GP IV. 483, 485. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. GP IV 485. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. GP IV. 483 [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. Cf. GP IV. 434. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. Cf. Russell 1951, 139. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. GP IV. 478. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. This identification of matter and phenomenon is already present in Geulincx. See Cooney 1978, 179. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. GP IV. 484. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. See GP VII. 320. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. GP IV. 483. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. GP IV. 484. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Cf. GP II. 118-120. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. G VII. 319. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. G VII. 320. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. Hence, Leibniz remarks ‘it would have been very wrong of me to object to the Cartesians that the agreement God immediately maintains, between soul and body, according to them, does not bring about a true union, since, to be sure, my pre-established harmony would do no better than it does. But since the metaphysical union one adds is not a phenomenon, and since no one has ever given an intelligible notion of it, I did not take it upon myself to seek a reason for it.’ GP VI. 595-96 = AG 197. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. GP IV. 484-85. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. GP IV 520. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Cf. E I. Prop. 14, Scholium; II. Prop. 5, demonstratio. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)