

Leibnizian Meditations on Monism, Force, and Substance, in relation to Descartes, Spinoza and Malebranche

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Introduction

This paper will examine some very different positions that Leibniz held or explored on monism, force, and substance during his long philosophical life. For reasons to be explained, positions drawn from Leibniz's youth as well as his maturity will be considered. It will prove useful to consider these Leibnizian positions on these issues in relation to some of the leading alternatives of his age, in particular, those of Descartes, Spinoza and Malebranche. A guiding idea of this paper is that by meditating seriously on some key ideas explored by Leibniz on our topics, one can gain new insight into the philosophical options of his era. A few introductory remarks on Descartes, followed by an overview of the main divisions and aims of the present paper, will help set the stage for these Leibnizian meditations.

A well-known moment in the history of philosophy, and an important one for our purposes, comes in Part One of the *Principles of Philosophy*. In section 51, Descartes turns to the question of substance, provides an explicit definition of the term and notes a consequence of it. Descartes says, "By *substance* we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence." The consequence that Descartes notes is this: "there is only one substance . . . namely God,"¹ which satisfies the definition. That is, on the definition of 'substance' Descartes has just provided, monism is true: there is just one substance. To be sure, it appears that neither Descartes nor his readers (except perhaps Spinoza) were much unsettled by this. In the following section of the *Principles*, and even in the same section, we find a weaker definition of 'substance', which Descartes applies to creatures. That definition, not stated as formally as the first, comes to this, that substances are those things that "need only the concurrence of God in order to exist."² Descartes thinks, and so did his followers, that this allows for the existence of a great many substances in the world, not just one, so that, given the presumed features of this world, pluralism, not monism, would be true on this definition. These Cartesian moves highlight an important if obvious point for the present project, namely, that a commitment to monism or pluralism made by a particular philosopher is relative to that philosopher's conception (or conceptions) of substance.

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Descartes provides a useful entrée for our third concept, force, as well as for the concepts of substance and monism just considered. For present purposes, Descartes' exchange with Henry More on force, or more exactly, on moving or motive force in bodies, is a key text. On one reading of what Descartes says in that exchange—and admittedly there is dispute here, even if Descartes' followers seem to have been very much inclined to go in the direction of the reading about to be given—the moving force of most bodies³ is the will of God, rather than any force or principle of motion in the bodies themselves.⁴ Despite this view, or something close to it, Descartes is committed to the idea that there is bodily substance, distinct from God and indeed distinct from any mind. That is, Descartes is seen by some not to take the possession of force or a principle of motion as essential to being a created substance—the opposite of what we shall find in Leibniz. Most, nonetheless, see Descartes as granting force, or the power of initiating action, to finite minds.⁵ Pulling together these various points from Descartes, we can say that he offers us interesting juxtapositions of the concepts of force and substance, mind and body, created substance and non-created substance—juxtapositions that provide an illuminating context for much of what follows.

Before beginning the examination of relevant Leibnizian texts in the context of rival views of Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche, let's provide a brief overview of the divisions and aims of this paper, of what is, and what is not, attempted in this work. The paper begins with a short section introducing two of the three Leibnizian texts that will serve as the focal points of these meditations. The first quotation is a famous one from "De Ipsa Natura" of 1698, presenting a key sample of Leibniz's mature views on monism, force, substance. An additional feature of this text is that Leibniz's views are set out in clear opposition to the rival positions of Spinoza and Malebranche. The second quotation, from Leibniz's Paris Period, is currently one of the most controversial texts in connection with monism and Leibniz. Some, including myself, have held that in this 1676 text, the young Leibniz appears to endorse monism, however briefly.⁶ For present purposes, it may be sufficient to claim that the passage explores monism.

In the second, much longer section—really the heart of the paper—I consider another youthful text, this time from approximately 1668, "On Transubstantiation." This text presents still another perspective on issues related to substance, force, and monism, somewhere between the extremes apparently represented by the first two passages considered and having interesting relations to the views of Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche. Given the complexity of the issues involved, the section is divided into several subsections, which will be explained in section

two itself.

It is worth inserting at this point that in both of these sections my aim is not so much to set out a definitive interpretation of each passage as to isolate several quite different approaches to the problems of monism, substance, and force that Leibniz either endorsed, entertained, or opposed. This is why I call the paper “Leibnizian meditations” on these three concepts. Leibniz explored—most notably in his youth—a surprising number of different positions on an extraordinary number of intellectual topics. This adds a special richness to the philosophy of Leibniz, for it means that not infrequently positions that Leibniz attacks sharply in his mature period are ones that he explored with some interest or even adopted in his youth.⁷ With respect to our current topics, this richness allows for the possibility of a deeper understanding not only of the philosophical options available to him, but also to his near contemporaries in seventeenth-century philosophy.

To return to the paper’s specific structure, in the third section of this paper I take the meditations of section two as a basis for a return to the two texts of section one and a better-informed discussion of some key aspects of these than would have been possible without the concurrent examination of “On Transubstantiation.” I also provide a taxonomy of views on monism, substance, and force arising fairly naturally out of the discussions of the previous sections.

It should be emphasized that the approach taken in this paper is rather different from a more typical one, which would be interested primarily in the position of Leibniz’s maturity on our three topics. To be sure, I too am interested in what the mature Leibniz has to say about these topics, but I am also interested in what the young Leibniz has to say, and not just for the light it may shed on the later Leibniz. On the present, less typical approach, there is an emphasis on Leibniz as a window into some of the seventeenth-century currents on force, substance and monism. For this purpose, the mature Leibniz is useful but somewhat limited. The young Leibniz, on the other hand, is diverse and exploratory. Both taken together provide the fullest range of insight. Finally, and in a related vein, it is worth mentioning that I will not generally offer historical or philosophical explanations of the transitions from the views and explorations of Leibniz’s youth to those of his maturity. Certainly, I view these transitions as important. Indeed, one use of this paper would be to lay the foundation for possible explanations of them. But such an effort is not part of the present investigation.

1.0 Two quotations

1.1 "De Ipsa Natura," 1698

We begin our examination of important Leibnizian statements relevant to monism, force, and substance with a famous text from Leibniz's maturity. In this text, from "De Ipsa Natura" of 1698, Leibniz addresses these topics in the course of attempting to separate himself forcefully from two of the major philosophers of his era, Spinoza and Malebranche. Here is what Leibniz says, a bit after having identified Malebranche and his "system of occasional causes" as problematic:

[T]he substance of things itself consists in the force of acting and being acted upon; hence it follows that no enduring thing can be produced if no force that long endures can be impressed upon it by the divine power. Then it would follow that no created substance, no identical soul, would be permanent, and hence that nothing would be conserved by God, but everything would reduce to certain evanescent and flowing modifications or phantasms, so to speak, of the one permanent divine substance. And, what reduces to the same thing, God would be the nature and substance of all things—a doctrine of most evil repute, which a writer who was subtle indeed but irreligious, in recent years imposed upon the world, or at least revived. Surely if corporeal things contained nothing but matter, they could most truly be said to consist of a flux and to have nothing substantial, as the Platonists long ago recognized.⁸

Spinoza is not mentioned explicitly here, but it seems clear that he is the "subtle indeed but irreligious" writer to whom Leibniz refers⁹—no doubt in order to emphasize his point about the potential dangers of Malebranche's ways. As indicated above, we will make only a few comments on this well-known passage at this point but will return to it later for further discussion, after having considered two other, less well-known passages from Leibniz's youth.

Perhaps the single most important comment, obvious though it is, is that Leibniz here explicitly links substantiality and force. Without force, the finite things of this world could not strictly be said to endure or be permanent, and hence would "reduce to certain evanescent and flowing modifications . . . of the one permanent divine substance." If creatures had no enduring force impressed on them by God, they would not be substances, but rather modifications of God.

Interestingly, Leibniz draws this consequence with occasionalism, not Spinoza, primarily in mind. If the only force there is is the will of God, then God will be the only substance there is and all else will be modifications of God. To be sure, Leibniz goes on to link his comments to Spinoza also, but not in the precise way one might expect. He does not simply say, "And this is just the system of Spinoza."

Rather, he says that Spinoza's view "reduces" to this, and he states Spinoza's view as follows: "God [is] the nature and substance of all things."

Many questions arise here, but for present purposes—and looking ahead to what will come later in the paper—we focus on just these three: 1) Just what sort of position does Leibniz have in mind in characterizing Spinoza's views in this unusual way? 2) Whose view is Leibniz thinking of when he suggests that Spinoza is merely reviving an earlier position here? 3) Why does Leibniz think that the view he links to occasionalism (one substance, everything else modifications) is linked so closely to the view he ascribes to Spinoza (that God is the substance of all things)? To be sure, answering these questions is not the main purpose of this paper. But the three questions will provide a convenient focus when we return to this quotation from Leibniz's maturity at the end of the paper. They will also provide a kind of test case of whether an examination of youthful texts can help shed light on this familiar mature position.

1.2 De Summa Rerum, 1676

To get the suggestion of a quite different perspective on monism and pluralism in the writings of Leibniz, we now move back in time, to the end of Leibniz's Paris Years and roughly (we do not have an exact date for our next text) the time of his personal meeting with Spinoza in the Hague, in late 1676. The passage I am about to present is controversial. Does it show Leibniz endorsing monism, despite the just-seen position of his maturity? Commentators have differed on this question. In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that I have been one of those who has taken this passage as serious evidence that Leibniz did endorse monism.¹⁰ Robert Adams is another, and his treatment of this passage and closely related issues in the section, "Is Leibniz's Conception of God Spinozistic?" of his *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*,¹¹ may be recommended as the best current treatment on the side of a monistic interpretation of the passage and its context, ending with a discussion of how and why Leibniz moved away from a monistic view shortly thereafter. Christia Mercer has made use of her own extensive historical and textual research in arguing generally against the possibility that Leibniz would have endorsed monistic or pantheistic views in his youth, and she has also argued specifically against a monistic reading of the passage about to be presented. When her book on the development of Leibniz's metaphysics appears, it will be the place to look for the best current treatment opposing monistic interpretations of the writings of the young Leibniz.¹²

Such debates, in association with more general questions about the relation of the views of Leibniz and Spinoza, are likely to continue.¹³ I want to make it clear

that they are not my concern here—especially not the question of a Spinozistic influence on Leibniz. The main reason for turning to some texts of Leibniz’s youth in the present context is to use a Leibnizian lens to gain insight into ideas in the air surrounding the issues of substance, force, monism and pluralism in late seventeenth-century philosophy. Whether Leibniz is here endorsing, or opposing, a monistic view, or experimenting with philosophical possibilities, or even merely coming close to the expression of a monistic view, his statement provides access to a position that is worthy of consideration in a survey of a variety of views possible within the late seventeenth-century context.

Here is the monistic-sounding passage, which I shall sometimes refer to as “the *De Summa Rerum* passage,” since it comes from those late Paris period texts that have been assigned this name by the Academy editors. The specific paper involved is “That a Most Perfect Being is Possible.”

It can easily be demonstrated that all things are distinguished, not as substances (i.e., radically) but as modes. This can be demonstrated from the fact that, of those things which are radically distinct, one can be perfectly understood without another; that is, all the requisites of the one can be understood without all the requisites of the other being understood. But in the case of things, this is not so; for since the ultimate reason of things is unique, and contains by itself the aggregate of all requisites of all things, it is evident that the requisites of all things are the same. So also is their essence, given that an essence is the aggregate of all primary requisites. Therefore the essence of all things is the same, and things differ only modally If only those things are really different which can be separated, or, of which one can be perfectly understood without the other, it follows that no thing really differs from another, but that all things are one.¹⁴

2.0 “*On Transubstantiation*,” ca.1668

As indicated, the passage just considered is controversial and has in any case been discussed at some length elsewhere. I would prefer to put emphasis on a second text from the early Leibniz, taken from his paper, “*On Transubstantiation*.” This text has at least three advantages for our purposes over the “*De Summa Rerum*” passage just presented. First, it emphasizes, as that passage does not,¹⁵ one of our main themes, namely, force. Secondly, it highlights something like a dualistic dichotomy between mind and body that will be of value in making connections with dualistic positions like those of Descartes and Malebranche. Thirdly, there has been less controversy about the interpretation of the passage from “*On Transubstantiation*,” so our discussion can take place in a less contentious con-

text.¹⁶

Here is the relevant passage, from about 1668. It is a bit long, but we will be discussing most of it, so it seems important to present it in some fullness at the outset.

1. *Substance* is being which subsists in itself.
2. *Being which subsists in itself* is that which has a principle of action within itself. Taken as an individual, being which subsists in itself, or substance (either one), is a *suppositum*. In fact, the Scholastics customarily define a *suppositum* as a substantial individual. Now actions pertain to *supposita*. Thus a *suppositum* has within itself a principle of action.... Therefore a being which subsists in itself has a principle of action within it. Q.E.D.
3. If that which has a principle of action within itself is a body, it has a principle of motion within itself. Every action of a body is in fact motion....
4. No body has a principle of motion within itself apart from a concurrent mind....
5. Therefore no body is to be taken as substance, apart from a concurrent mind.
6. Whatever is not substance is accident or appearance [Species].
7. Hence body is accident or appearance apart from a concurrent mind.
8. Something is substance when taken together with a concurrent mind; something taken apart from concurrent mind is accident. Substance is union with mind. Thus the substance of the human body is union with the human mind, and the substance of bodies which lack reason is union with the universal mind, or God. The idea is the union of God with creature.
9. Thus the substance of body is union with a sustaining mind.
10. That whose substance is in its union with a concurring mind is transubstantiated when its union with the concurring mind is changed.
- 12.¹⁷ Hence bread and wine as bodies, when the concurrent mind is changed, are substantiated into the body of Christ, or taken up by Christ (inasmuch as the special concourse of the mind of Christ which takes on the bread and wine, in addition to its body, is substituted for the general concourse of the universal or divine mind with all bodies).¹⁸

2.1 Preliminary points

Whereas the two previous passages, from “De Ipsa Natura” and *De Summa Rerum*, were introduced only briefly, we are now at a point where more detailed exegesis is in order, exegesis that will lay the foundation for a more informed return later to those two passages. Several preliminary points are in order.

First, in part to put things in context a bit, I want to develop the distinction between mind and body in connection with force or action as these appear in this text.

Consider Leibniz's two statements, "Every action of a body is in fact motion," and "No body has a principle of motion within itself apart from a concurrent mind." It follows from these two that no body has a principle *of its own action* within itself apart from a concurrent mind. And almost certainly Leibniz would endorse something one step stronger, namely, that no body has a principle of action within itself more generally (neither for itself nor for others) apart from a concurrent mind. It also seems clear, although Leibniz does not say it explicitly in this place, that on his view mind, in contrast to body, *does* have a principle of action within itself, since it is a concurrent mind that makes a body a substance, i.e., something which subsists in itself because it has a principle of action within itself (see 1 & 2). Given all this, it is clear that for Leibniz at this stage body, taken in itself, apart from a concurrent mind, is quite different from mind. Body and mind differ precisely on a point critical for the present paper: body taken in itself does not have a principle of action within itself; mind does.

Secondly, turning from force or action to substance, if we consider body in itself, apart from the concurrent mind, we see that as a consequence of its not having a principle of action within itself, it cannot be a substance (sec. 1, 2, and 5). And, since "Whatever is not substance is accident or appearance," (sec. 6) body considered in itself, apart from a concurrent mind, is accident or appearance. Indeed, in sec. 8, Leibniz puts this more simply: "something taken apart from concurrent mind is accident." For simplicity, I will adopt this form of speech, leaving discussion of appearance (or, as the Latin has it, "*Species*") to one side.

Thirdly, if we consider body, now not simply in itself, but together with concurrent mind, so that it has a principle of action via this concurrent mind, that is, so that it now counts as substance, we need to open the question of the relationship of this substance to God. We shall assume that God is a substance.¹⁹ Again, we know that body taken in itself, apart from a concurrent mind, is an accident. But what about the relationship of a body together with a concurrent mind, which union is a substance, and the substance that is God? Perhaps Leibniz's clearest single statement on this in "On Transubstantiation"—though hardly yet clear—is that "the substance of bodies which lack reason is union with the universal mind, or God. The idea is the union of God with creature." (sec. 8) We shall return to this point later when we have a bit more information at our disposal.

Fourthly, we need to face up to a feature of this document that complicates our discussion but is quite important. Leibniz seems to be working with two different senses of 'substance'. In the one sense, more familiar in twentieth-century history of seventeenth-century philosophy, a substance is an individual concrete thing

meeting certain conditions that separate it from things falling into the categories of accident or property or modification. But in another sense, highlighted, for example by Robert Sleigh, in his *Leibniz and Arnauld*, ‘substance’ refers to the “nature or essence” of a thing.²⁰ Leibniz, as Sleigh shows, clearly distinguishes these senses of the term ‘substance’ himself.²¹ In “On Transubstantiation” the distinction is not as clearly drawn as in some other texts, but it seems clearly present nonetheless. Leibniz makes use of the former sense in “On Transubstantiation” when he says, for example, “Taken as an individual, being which subsists in itself, or substance (either one), is a *suppositum*.” (A vi I 508; L. 115) and then clarifies later, “[A] *suppositum* is a substantial individual—as, for instance, a person is a rational substantial individual—or a certain substance in particular.” (A vi I 511; L. 117) Leibniz makes use of the latter sense of ‘substance’ when he says, for example,—something we noted before,— “The substance of bodies which lack reason is union with the universal mind, or God.” (A vi I 509; L. 116; sec. 8)²²

2.2 Malebranchean Mental Pluralism

What we have just considered are, as indicated preliminary points, important to be sure, but not yet the central issue. As a way of getting closer to the meat of things in connection with this text of Leibniz’s youth, it will be useful to widen our scope a bit by returning briefly both to Malebranche and the mature Leibniz. Malebranche is (some might say) notorious for the tension between two of his leading doctrines: on the one hand, that God is the only real cause and, on the other, that human freedom is not illusory but real. Many have felt that Malebranche cannot have it both ways. They contend that real human freedom, by Malebranche’s own statements, implies that the human will is at least sometimes a real cause, so that God’s will cannot be the only real cause if there is to be real human freedom.²³

Although this is a contentious matter, we need not settle things here. For the present purpose of gaining a better understanding of the philosophical options available in the late seventeenth century, we may simply make use of this tension to raise the following question: how would Leibniz have responded if he had become convinced that Malebranche’s views on human freedom genuinely and consistently led Malebranche to a doctrine on which minds but not bodies were at least sometimes real causes?²⁴ The answer, I think—unexpected though it may be—is that Leibniz would probably have retracted his criticism of “*De Ipsa Natura*” that Malebranche is committed to a monistic position with God as the only substance and with everything else as mere modifications of God. For human minds, as real causes in the present picture, would no longer fail to meet the key condition

of substancehood: they would now *have* a force or power of acting; they would be, at least sometimes, real causes.²⁵

But of course nothing would change on this picture in connection with the relation of God and bodies. So Leibniz's conclusions about them would presumably still follow: having no force or principle of action within themselves, bodies could not be substances but would be only modifications of God, whose will would provide the real cause of all motion in the bodily world. Assuming, then, that human minds would count as substances on this picture,²⁶ really distinct from God and from each other, we would have a pluralist view, but an intriguingly distinctive one. It would share with Spinozistic monism the notion that individual bodies are only modifications of God, while granting human minds the status of substances rather than mere modifications. At the same time, it would seem quite different from Berkeleyan idealism, in that there would be no hint that bodies are merely collections of ideas. The point is important enough to restate in somewhat different terms. On this view, which I will call Malebranchean Mental Pluralism,²⁷ there would in fact be minds and bodies in the world, but only the minds (the divine mind and human minds, for example) would be substances. Bodies would be, not illusory, nor collections of ideas, but rather modifications of substance. More specifically, they would be modifications of what provides the force of action (motion) in them, which, in the present case, would be God. So they would be modifications of God. To borrow from the language Leibniz ascribes to that "subtle but irreligious" philosopher, Spinoza,²⁸ Leibniz would very likely take this view to entail that God is the substance of all *bodily* things, even if not any longer the substance of *all* things,²⁹ since minds would now qualify for substantial status in their own right.

2.3 *Is God the substance of all (bodily) things in "On Transubstantiation"?*

2.3.1 *First pass*

Let us return now to "On Transubstantiation" and to the core of what I have to say about this text. Oversimplifying a bit, my view is that in this early text, Leibniz himself endorses the quasi-Malebranchean view just laid out, but denies the final entailment. That is, he holds that finite minds are substances, and bodies are only accidents or modifications, but in the end denies that God is the substance of bodies, and this for two reasons, which will become apparent in what follows.

Qualifications will be necessary in connection with this oversimplification, of course, but let us not get lost in the details just yet. It is easy to believe that Leibniz asserts, or is committed to, the following four points in "On Transubstantiation": (1) bodies taken in themselves have no principle of action within themselves; (2)

bodies are, consequently, taken in themselves, not substances but accidents; (3) the force of action that makes possible bodily action, i.e., motion, is in God; (4) so the substance of bodily things is in God. A reader might even say, especially if he or she restricts attention to what we have quoted above, that Leibniz commits himself in this early text to the final move to (5), that God is the substance of all bodily things.

Is all this saying too much? Almost certainly the last sentence, (5), does say too much. And a modest qualification, specifically, a restriction, will be necessary in connection with (3) and (4). But for the rest, we need reexamine only a few of the sections quoted earlier to see the strength of the supporting evidence:

1. *Substance* is being which subsists in itself.
2. *Being which subsists in itself* is that which has a principle of action within itself. . . .
4. No body has a principle of motion within itself apart from a concurrent mind. . . .
8. Something is substance when taken together with a concurrent mind; something taken apart from concurrent mind is accident. Substance is union with mind. Thus . . . the substance of bodies which lack reason is union with the universal mind, or God. The idea is the union of God with creature.³⁰

That these lines confirm (1) and (2) is, I think, clear. As we move to (3) and (4), one of the qualifications mentioned earlier needs to be brought in. Leibniz in “On Transubstantiation,” in opposition to both the later Leibniz and to Malebranche, held that a human mind could provide a principle of action for what happens in the human body, that is, he allowed for real mind-body causation.³¹ As Leibniz clearly states, the substance of the human body lies in its union with human mind,³² not, as in the case of “bodies which lack reason,” in “union with the universal mind, or God.” (see above) And it is the substance of a body that provides the principle of action for the body. So we need to restrict both (3) and (4), saying, (3’) the principle of action that makes possible action, i.e., motion, in bodies which lack reason is in God, and also saying not quite that in God is the substance of all bodily things, but rather that (4’) in God is the substance of each of the “bodies which lack reason.”

Some might still be doubtful in connection with (4’), and, indeed, in strictness we need to add one more piece to the puzzle to support the claim that Leibniz is committed to this. We already know that Leibniz says, “the substance of bodies which lack reason is union with the universal mind, or God,” and that he endorses

the view that, “The idea is the union of God with creature” (see above). So it should follow—and in fact Leibniz makes this point explicitly—that, “The ideas of God are the substances . . . of things.”³³ Leibniz also states that these ideas are “in God.” (A vi I 512; L. 118)³⁴ So he is clearly committed to (4′)—again, that in God is the substance of each of the “bodies which lack reason.”

2.3.2 *Second pass*

But what about that final claim, (5) that in “On Transubstantiation” Leibniz is committed to the view that, as in the case of our hypothetical Leibnizian reaction to Malebranchean Mental Pluralism, God is the substance of all bodies? This is what we promised to return to above, and this question is the gateway to the fascinating final paragraphs of “On Transubstantiation.”

First, there is the obvious piece of tidying up to be gotten out of the way. As before, we have to qualify things because of the difference between the view of “On Transubstantiation” on the one hand and that of the mature Malebranche and Malebranchean Mental Pluralism on the other concerning the causal relation between a human mind and a human body. The Leibniz of “On Transubstantiation” believes that the human mind provides the principle of action (or moving force) for the human body; Malebranche (along with Malebranchean Mental Pluralism) holds that there are no real causal relations between the human mind and body.³⁵ So the question needs to be restated slightly: Is God the substance of all bodies lacking reason?³⁶

It turns out that Leibniz addresses almost exactly this question in the later stages of “On Transubstantiation,” although using slightly different terminology and with what is perhaps just one among several different possible readings of the question. The different terminology arises after Leibniz introduces a terminological equivalence, “*formam substantialem seu Substantiam*”—substantial form, that is, substance.³⁷ It is reasonably clear that he is using the term ‘substance’ here in the sense of the substance or nature of a thing³⁸ rather than in the sense of a concrete individual thing or substance. (Recall our discussion of this distinction above.) This is confirmed when Leibniz notes, shortly after giving the equivalence, that “Aristotle himself, and the noblest of his followers, agreed that substantial form is nature.”³⁹ The terminological circle is closed when he proceeds immediately to the statement, “Nature is the principle of rest and motion. Therefore, even in Aristotle’s sense, substantial form is the principle of rest and motion.”⁴⁰ This brings us back to the “principle of action” that is essential for substance, as explained in the early lines of “On Transubstantiation,”⁴¹ so that we move from substance to substantial form to nature to principle of action and then return to sub-

stance. Leibniz is treating these all as equivalent at this point.

With the terminological complexities dealt with, we can return to the question itself, namely, whether God is the substance of all bodies lacking reason. Invoking the terminological equivalence, the question would become, is God the substantial form of all bodies lacking reason? To repeat, Leibniz considers almost exactly this question himself, and has a quite interesting, *negative* answer. Here is the question, put by Leibniz in the form of a possible objection to his theory of the relationship of God to bodies—or, as I take him to mean, bodies “lacking reason”:

A[n] . . . objection [about the relationship of God and bodies] will perhaps be made which is not to be despised, namely, that it follows from this hypothesis that there is one substantial form for all bodies, the concurrent divine mind.⁴²

If we take the “concurrent divine mind” here as the divine mind or God—and certainly this was suggested by Leibniz’s earlier statement about “the general concurrence of the universal or divine mind with all bodies”⁴³—then the question and the objection would be talking about the very same thing. It is, however, a moot point whether the question and the objection are about exactly the same proposition or very similar ones, since Leibniz proceeds to explain a view which separates his position from both formulations. He says,

[T]his does not follow. For although the divine mind is the same, the concurrent divine mind is not. For the divine mind consists of the ideas of all things. Therefore, since the idea of thing *A* is one thing, the idea of *B* another, the result is that one idea of the divine mind concurs with *A*, another with *B*. . . . From this it is apparent that there is not one substantial form for all bodies but a different one for different bodies. . . . The substance of each thing is not so much mind as it is an idea of a concurrent mind. In God there are infinite, really diverse, ideas, yet God is indivisible. The ideas of God are the substances . . . of things.⁴⁴

There is more here than I can hope to untangle in detail in the present context. The main point for present purposes is this: Leibniz resists the claim that God is the substance or substantial form of all bodies lacking reason and also the claim that the substance or substantial form of all bodies lacking reason is one, even if not God. His alternative position is that the substances or substantial forms of such bodies are many, even though they, as the ideas of God (“The ideas of God are the substances . . . of things”), are in the one, indivisible God. We may put this another way, again following Leibniz’s language. If the substance of bodies lacking reason were indeed the divine mind (God, I shall assume), then, since “the divine mind is the same,” the substance of all bodies lacking reason *would* be the

same, and God would be the substance of all such things. But “although the divine mind is the same, the concurrent divine mind is not.” Leibniz cashes out this seemingly paradoxical statement in terms of divine ideas: “since the idea of thing *A* is one thing, the idea of *B* is another, the result is that one idea of the divine mind concurs with *A*, another with *B*. . . . From this it is apparent that there is not one substantial form for all bodies but a different one for different bodies. . . . The substance of each thing is not so much mind as it is an idea of a concurrent mind.”

The key point to take away from our discussion is the following: on the model being presented in “On Transubstantiation,” in the case of ordinary bodies of this world, bodies “lacking reason,” there are principles of their action, or motion, and these principles are not in the bodies themselves, viewed in separation from concurrent mind, but rather in God. While this suggests the view that one and the same God is the principle of action of all such bodies, and hence the substance of all such bodies, Leibniz clearly resists this, concluding that while the ideas, which he calls the substances of things, are in God, these ideas (and substances?) are “really diverse,” and so there is not just one substance or substantial form of all these bodies, but many. The picture that emerges, albeit not explicitly, is of a pluralism similar to, but one step more complicated than, Malebranchean Mental Pluralism: we are presented with God and finite minds as distinct substances, but also with really distinct substantial forms of bodies lacking reason, which substantial forms are in God.

It will be helpful, both in the present context and in the final section of this paper, if we introduce one more item from “On Transubstantiation” into the present discussion. Leibniz, in trying to forestall criticisms by “Scholastics,”⁴⁵ lays out various ways in which he has adhered to basic scholastic principles. One of these ways is given in the following passage: “I demonstrate the numerical identity of substance from the numerical identity of substantial form, in conformity with the principles of the noblest Scholastic and Aristotelian philosophers, those for whom substantial form is the principle of individuation.”⁴⁶ Let us take this to imply that Leibniz here adopts the principle that for every individual substance *A* and *B* having substantial forms, substance *A* and *B* are numerically identical if, and only if, the substantial forms of *A* and *B* are numerically identical.

This additional item from “On Transubstantiation” helps make better sense of one of the points we have just considered. The objection “not to be despised” was that, given Leibniz’s model, there would appear to be just one substantial form for all bodies which lack reason: the concurrent divine mind. Although Leibniz did not develop this objection further before answering it, the principle of individua-

tion just given would enable one to do so. For given this principle, and the thesis that there is one substantial form for all bodies lacking reason, it would follow that all bodies which lack reason would be numerically identical. In other words, all such bodies would be one. Quite possibly Leibniz viewed such a consequence as problematic and worked to avoid committing himself to the premise which led to it, namely, that there is just one substantial form for all such bodies.

3.0 *The first two passages seen in light of the third*

We are now ready to apply the insights gathered from the investigation of “On Transubstantiation” to the two passages from later in Leibniz’s life that we presented in section one. Recall that these two passages stated, or at least suggested, positions about as antithetical to one another as possible, monism on the one hand, and emphatic pluralism on the other.

3.1 *The De Summa Rerum Passage*

Let us return first to the writings of the *De Summa Rerum*, where Leibniz appears (to some eyes, at least) to endorse monism. Recall that Leibniz says in *De Summa Rerum*,

It can easily be demonstrated that all things are distinguished, not as substances (i.e., radically) but as modes. . . . [T]he essence of all things is the same, and things differ only modally It follows that no thing really differs from another, but that all things are one.⁴⁷

This *condensed* quotation abstracts from the particular, and distinctive, line of argumentation present in the passage. That particular line of argumentation is admittedly very different from anything we have seen in “On Transubstantiation.” Nonetheless, the arguments and principles of this earlier text suggest a reason why the basic conclusions of the 1676 text would not have been completely foreign to Leibniz.

In this passage from *De Summa Rerum*, Leibniz has turned from talk of the substance or nature of things, as emphasized in “On Transubstantiation,” to talk of the essence of things. But if we assume that Leibniz now means basically the same thing by these three terms (no longer writing in the demanding context of the theological subtleties of transubstantiation), we might make use of the principle of individuation of “On Transubstantiation.” If, as Leibniz says in *De Summa Rerum*, “the essence of all things is the same,” then, if this means that the substance, or nature, i.e., the substantial form, of all things is the same, then by the principle of individuation of “On Transubstantiation,” all things would be one—which matches quite well with what Leibniz says at the end of this *De Summa Rerum* passage: “all things are one.”

3.2 The “*De Ipsa Natura*” Passage

Let us return now to Leibniz’s maturity, and the passage with which we began from “*De Ipsa Natura*.” We mentioned three questions about this passage. Perhaps the examination of “*On Transubstantiation*” will shed some light on these.

The first question asked just what doctrine Leibniz had in mind in ascribing to Spinoza the doctrine that God is the substance or nature of things. The suggestion to be drawn from our investigation of “*On Transubstantiation*” is that he had in mind a view in which God provides the principle of action for each thing in the world (since on the view being considered in “*De Ipsa Natura*” there is no principle of action in the world except God) and is thus the substance or nature of each thing in the world. To be sure, “*On Transubstantiation*” makes it clear that subtle distinctions can be introduced in an attempt to block such an inference. But it also makes clear the basic path such an inference would take in the absence of such subtleties (in the objection “not to be despised” and what leads up to this). No such subtleties are being ascribed to Spinoza, and by extension to Malebranche, in “*De Ipsa Nature*.” The principle of action of a thing is the substance or nature of the thing. God is the principle of action of all things. So God is the substance or nature of all things.

The second question, a more historical one, asked for clarification of Leibniz’s suggestion that Spinoza did not originate this view but merely revived it: who, in that case, espoused the view earlier? It turns out that “*On Transubstantiation*” provides assistance here also. For in a defective section of the text (one that Loemker skips over in his translation), Leibniz presents a fascinating list of philosophical forebears apparently in an attempt on his part to provide some supportive historical context for the views presented in that early work. All are of interest (they include Plato, Aristotle, and Averroës), but the reference most immediately relevant is the Stoics, who are said to propound the view that God is the nature of the world. It appears Leibniz has in mind the Stoics in suggesting that Spinoza is reviving the view that God is the substance or nature of all things in the world.

The third question raised was why Leibniz felt he could draw the inference from a first thesis, namely, that God is the one substance and all the things of this world are modifications of this one substance, to a second thesis, namely, that God is the substance or nature of all things. “*On Transubstantiation*” provides us with several principles of relevance here. The first, which in basic terms, is also clearly present in “*De Ipsa Natura*,” is that something is a substance if and only if it has a principle of action within itself. Since the occasionalist thesis that Leibniz is dealing with in “*De Ipsa Nature*” is that God, or God’s will, is the only real cause, the

move to the conclusion that God is the only substance is not a surprising one. And if anything that is not a substance is a modification (“On Transubstantiation” would say “accident”), and if only that is a substance which has a principle of action in it, then, on an occasionalist view, the things of this world must be modifications. But just this much would not answer how Leibniz could make the step from this thesis to the other, that God is the substance of all things. And here another principle of “On Transubstantiation” comes into play—as it did in connection with the first question. It is, roughly speaking, that that which supplies the principle of action of a thing is the substance or nature of the thing. If, then, God supplies the sole principle of action of all things, God will be—barring subtleties—the substance or nature of all things.

3.3 A Taxonomy of Possible Positions on God's relations to things, with special focus on bodies

It may prove useful to construct a concluding taxonomy of some possible theses about relations between God and things, with brief commentary, starting with the quite radical one that Leibniz ascribes implicitly to Spinoza, and working down to a less radical one, at least in Leibniz's eyes, namely, the position Leibniz himself champions against the Malebranchean and Spinozistic alternatives in “De Ipsa Natura”:

1. God is the nature and substance of all things.⁴⁸

This is the position Leibniz ascribes to “a writer who was subtle indeed but irreligious” in “De Ipsa Natura.” In “On Transubstantiation” he ascribes it—more precisely, the view that God is the substance of the world—to the Stoics: “Stoici Substantiam Mundi Deum statuentes.”⁴⁹

2. There is one substance, God, and the things of this world are only modifications of God.

This, of course, is the position typically ascribed to Spinoza. In “De Ipsa Natura” Leibniz claims it is the position that occasionalism commits one to. The commitment hinges on a thesis that in Leibniz goes back thirty years before “De Ipsa Natura,” the thesis of “On Transubstantiation” that substance is that which has a principle of action within itself.

3. God is the real cause of all that happens.

This is the position that Leibniz sees in Malebranche, and he believes that it has the consequence that nothing of this world is permanent and substantial, and hence, that all things of this world are simple modifications of the one substance, God (2), which, in turn, he thinks, reduces to (1) above. Malebranche, of course, would deny both inferred claims, and so would separate (3) from (1) and (2). But now

we can see in more detail why Leibniz would incline to affirming both inferences.

4. God is the real cause of all that happens in bodies, but not of all that happens in human minds. Thus God is the substance or nature of all bodies. With respect to human minds, these, in contrast to bodies, have a principle of (causal) action within themselves, a principle of action that is in some sense distinct from the real causal force of God's will, so they count as separate substances. God is not the substance of human minds.

This is a development of the position I described as "Malebranchean Mental Pluralism." The basic position on real divine causation and creaturely causation presented in the first sentence of (4), abstracted from any statement that God is the substance of all bodies, is sometimes ascribed to Descartes and/or Malebranche. It is highly doubtful, however, that either of these philosophers would grant that this position on causation entails either that God is the substance or nature of all bodies, or that bodies are not substances but modifications. Still, for reasons indicated above, such inferences would seem quite natural to Leibniz, given various additional principles he often maintained.

There are two Leibnizian variants of this fourth position, the first more radical than the second. Only the second is one that Leibniz specifically affirmed at one point in his life, but his reflections, examined in this paper, bring both clearly to the surface as philosophical options. Each involves a basic restriction of (4) to a certain class of bodies, namely, bodies lacking reason.

- 4a. God is the real cause of all that happens in bodies which lack reason (as opposed to human or angelic bodies). Because of this God is the substance or nature of all these bodies, but not of human or angelic bodies, whose principle of action is supplied by finite minds. Thus, human beings and angels count as substances separate from God, while bodies lacking reason, separate from the concurrent divine mind, are only modifications.

This position is the reading that Leibniz, in "On Transubstantiation," seems to anticipate from potential opponents, ones raising the "objection . . . not to be despised" about there being just one substantial or substantial form for all bodies without reason.

- 4b. God is the real cause of all that happens in bodies which lack reason (as opposed to human or angelic bodies). But, for reasons having to do with Leibniz's subtle distinction between the divine mind and the concurrent divine mind, it is neither the case that God is the substance or nature of all these bodies nor that the substance or substantial form of all these bodies is one. As in (4a), in the case of human or angelic bodies, their principle of

action is supplied by finite minds. Thus human beings and angels count as substances separate from God, while bodies lacking reason, separate from the concurrent divine mind, count only as modifications.

This appears to be the position of Leibniz in the later portion of “On Transubstantiation.” It is a position that shares with the mature Malebranchean system the idea—only a part of the full Malebranchean system, of course—that the principle of action for bodies lacking reason is in God, not in the bodies taken in themselves. But whereas Leibniz later equates Malebranche’s full position with the view that God is the substance of all things (in “De Ipsa Natura”), in his own case (in “On Transubstantiation”), he is ready to allow for a way to avoid a similar consequence—that God is the substance of all bodies that lack reason—again, even while placing the principle of action of those bodies (as Malebranche later would do also) in God.

5. The principles of action of bodies, as well as those of finite minds, are to be found in the things of this world themselves, not simply in God.

This is the position of the mature Leibniz. To be sure, it is complicated by what is usually taken to be his view that bodies are phenomenal entities, not substances. But even given this complication, Leibniz’s bodies are not simply phenomena; they are well-founded phenomena. And what they are well-founded on are finite substances, each of which in turn bases its substancehood on precisely this fact, that each has its own principle of action, an enduring force distinct from the power of God. How Leibniz worked his way from early, very different views, to this mature position is of course an extremely important matter. But that will not be discussed here. Our project has been a different one, namely, the isolation, analysis and comparison of a diverse range of views on pluralism and monism, substance and force, in the mature and the young Leibniz, set in the context of the major alternative positions of the age—those of Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche.

That Leibniz should have thought long and hard about God and creatures in relation to substancehood and force is not surprising. That he endorsed, or seriously explored, views so different from those of his maturity is perhaps surprising. But surprising or not, this difference provides us with an opportunity to look more deeply into the philosophical complexities, and advantages and disadvantages, Leibniz might have seen in the major systematic alternatives of his day.⁵⁰

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Notes

¹ Both quotations from *Principles of Philosophy*, I, 51. (AT IX B 24; CSM I 210) An alphabetical list of abbreviations follows, for the citations just given and for future references to some basic texts: AT = *Oeuvres de Descartes*, edited by Ch. Adam and P. Tannery (revised edition, Paris: Vrin/C.N.R.S., 1964-76), cited by volume; CSM = *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, translated by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff and D. Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, cited by volume; Parkinson: DSR = *G.W. Leibniz, De Summa Rerum: Metaphysical Papers, 1675-1676*, translated with an introduction and notes by G. H. R. Parkinson, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992.

² *Principles of Philosophy*, I, 52. (AT IX B 25; CSM I 210)

³ Here, as below, we have to take into consideration the complications introduced by mind-body interaction. The bodies referred to are those not acted on by finite minds at a given moment.

⁴ See Descartes's letter of August 1649. (AT V 401-05; translation in *Descartes: Philosophical Letters*, Anthony Kenny, trans. and ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1981, pp. 256-58) See also R. S. Woolhouse, *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth Century Metaphysics*, London & New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 136-37. Woolhouse is cautious but presents some evidence for this reading.

⁵ As a representative of this view, Daniel Garber might be mentioned. See his "Descartes and Occasionalism," in *Causation in Early Modern Philosophy: Cartesianism, Occasionalism, and Pre-established Harmony*, edited by Steven Nadler, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993, pp. 9-26, esp. p. 25. His challenging reexamination of the traditional theory of Cartesian interactionism and of Descartes's relation to occasionalism is relevant also to the question of force and bodily substance in Descartes's philosophy. See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 20

⁶ References to my own work and to that of others devoted to this question are provided below.

⁷ See my “Roads Not Taken: Radical Suggestions of Leibniz’s *De Summa Rerum*,” in *G.W. Leibniz: Perspektive und Actualität*, edited by Concha Roldán, a special issue of *Synthesis Philosophica*, vol. 12, fasc. 2, 1997, pp. 403-413.

⁸ G IV 508-09; L. 502.

⁹ Elsewhere, Leibniz ascribes this same basic view to Spinoza. In a comment on Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Leibniz says that Spinoza’s own view is “that God is not a soul but is the nature of things, which I do not accept.” (see A vi III 269-70, brought to my attention by G. H. R. Parkinson’s, “Leibniz’s Paris Writings in Relation to Spinoza,” *Studia Leibnitiana Supplementa*, vol. 18, Tome II, Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978, p. 88)

¹⁰ Mark A. Kulstad, “Did Leibniz Incline towards Monistic Pantheism in 1676?” *Leibniz und Europa: VI. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress*, Teil I, Hanover, 1994, pp. 424-28.

¹¹ Robert M. Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 123-34.

¹² Christia Mercer, *Leibniz’s Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development*, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

¹³ With respect to questions of a possible Spinozistic influence on Leibniz, the two poles are perhaps best represent by Ludwig Stein, who talked of this period, extending up to 1678, as a “Spinoza-friendly” period, and Georges Friedmann, who argued vigorously against Stein and the idea of an influence of Spinoza on Leibniz. See Stein’s book, *Leibniz und Spinoza*, Berlin (Georg Reimer, 1890), esp. chapter V, “*Die Spinoza freundliche Periode (1676-1679)*,” pp. 60-110, and Friedmann’s, *Leibniz et Spinoza*, rev. ed., Paris, 1962, especially Appendix II, “*Note sur le livre de Ludwig Stein*,” and pp. 276-279.

¹⁴ A vi III 573; Parkinson: DSR, pp. 92-95.

¹⁵ At least not explicitly.

¹⁶ To be sure, there is a potential disadvantage in using this text also, namely, that it might be viewed as so imbedded in a specific context of theological controversy and the irenic project of “Catholic Demonstrations” that its statements could not be trusted as reflecting Leibniz’s personal philosophic views. Without attempting to settle this issue, we can say that this is less a problem for the current project—aiming primarily at providing a better sense of the philosophical options available on our topics in the late seventeenth century—than it would be for some others.

¹⁷ For whatever reason, there is no section 11 in the manuscript. See L. 120, n. 13, and A vi I 509.

¹⁸ A vi I 508-09; L. 115-16.

¹⁹ This is precisely what Leibniz had asserted two years earlier in *De Arte Combinatoria*: “Deus est Substantia incorporea infinitae virtutis.” (A vi I 169; L. 73) And God seems clearly to satisfy the definition that begins our quotation.

²⁰ Robert Sleigh, *Leibniz and Arnauld: A Commentary on their Correspondence*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale, 1990, p. 97, quoting from A i VII 248-49.

²¹ A i VII 248-49, again, quoted by Sleigh.

²² One of the complications mentioned earlier is that in the text we are focusing on, Leibniz does not identify, but rather distinguishes, essence and nature. So he is not, as elsewhere, identifying ‘substance’ in the second sense with both of these. To see this, please follow me through a bit of the terminological prolixity of Leibniz in this piece. He equates the substance of a body and the substantial form of a body. (sec. 14) He then says that the “substantial form is nature,” adding that “nature is the principle of rest and motion.” Finally, he says that “the ideas of God [recall that Leibniz was quoted above as saying these were the union of God with creature, which, in the case of body, is the substance of body (sec. 8)] are the substances, but not the essences, of things.” (A vi I 512; L. 118) So the substances of things, which are the natures of things, are not the essences of things in the *Catholic Demonstrations*. Consequently, we must here drop an equivalence which Leibniz maintains elsewhere, between ‘nature’ and ‘essence’. Perhaps the reason for the present distinction is that in this text we are dealing with the rarefied topic of transubstantiation. A sample of this, and of the connection with our present distinctions among ‘the substance of things’, ‘nature’, and ‘essence’, comes in Leibniz’s statement in the text that “Bread and wine are not transubstantiated but transubstantiated.” (A vi I 512; L. 118)

²³ For one treatment of this tension, see Louis Loeb, *From Descartes to Hume: Continental: Metaphysics and the Development of Modern Philosophy*, Ithaca and London: Cornell, 1981, Chapter 5, section 23.

²⁴ Note the similarity between this view and the one tentatively ascribed to Descartes in the “Introduction” of this paper.

²⁵ To be sure, the philosophic dialectic might not end here. Leibniz is well-known for insisting that substances act always, just as Descartes insisted that minds think always. Certainly, Leibniz would grant that something that never acts cannot be a substance. But he might not admit the possibility of a substance, like the sort of mind at least suggested here, that sometimes acts (by being a real cause) and sometimes does not. (I assume that free acts are taken to be occasional rather than continual occurrences, and that, on a Malebranchean view, thoughts and perhaps even some acts of will are passions rather than actions.) In this case, a mind, even

though being sometimes but not always a real cause of something, still might not qualify as a substance on Leibniz's view. Perhaps Leibniz would find a resolution here by insisting that if a mind at least sometimes acts, it always acts. This would eliminate a potentially awkward middle entity between substance and modification. Unfortunately, we cannot follow the dialectic further here.

²⁶ And Leibniz says that his principle, that "actions belong to substances [*actiones esse suppositorum*] . . . is a reciprocal proposition," so there is reason to think that he would draw this conclusion.

²⁷ Here 'Malebranchean' is not intended to indicate that Malebranche actually held the view, or even was committed to it, but only that the view might be suggested by some of the things Malebranche says, and is developed from a Malebranchean basis. (In the same way we might call a twentieth-century view "Kantian," not meaning thereby that it is something Kant himself would actually have endorsed, but that there is something about the view that is Kantian in spirit.)

²⁸ Without naming him explicitly.

²⁹ Cf. "De Ipsa Natura," sec. 8, GP IV 509; L. 502.

³⁰ A vi I 508-09; L. 115-16.

³¹ Please note that I am only talking about the human mind acting on or through the human body, not about body-mind causation. Even with this qualification, however, the statement may be shocking to an ear tuned only to the mature Leibniz. The mature Leibniz denies intersubstantial causation among creatures while endorsing intrasubstantial causation. On most accounts (Dan Garber's "Middle Years" is an exception—see his influential paper, "Leibniz and the Foundations of Physics: The Middle Years," in Kathleen Okruhlik and James Robert Brown (eds.), *The Natural Philosophy of Leibniz*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985, pp. 27-130), a human mind and a human body together do not count as a single substance in the mature Leibniz. So no real mind-body causation could count as merely intrasubstantial causation, the causation of one state of a substance by another prior state of that same substance. But "On Transubstantiation" is written well before a denial of intersubstantial causation becomes a clear part of Leibniz's views. (Exactly when this denial appears in Leibniz's thought is a disputed matter. For my tentative arguments for 1679, see "Causation and Pre-established Harmony in the Early Development of Leibniz's Philosophy," *Causation in Early Modern Philosophy: Cartesianism, Occasionalism, and Pre-established Harmony*, edited by Steven Nadler, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993, pp. 93-118, especially pp. 105-10.) In any case, it is not implausible to see in "On Transubstantiation" a theory in which the union of the human mind and

body does constitute a single substance, with the mind serving as the principle of action within the whole, which I take as including exerting causal influence on the body. Without arguing for this in detail, I provide text that suggests such an argument: “No body has a principle of motion within itself apart from a concurrent mind. . . . Therefore no body is to be taken as substance, apart from a concurrent mind. . . . Something is substance when taken together with a concurrent mind. . . . Substance is union with mind. Thus the substance of the human body is union with the human mind.” (A vi I 508-09; L. 116)

³² A vi I 509; L. 116.

³³ A vi I 512; L. 118. Or rather, the ideas of God are the substances of those bodily things lacking reason. For the substance of the human body is union with the human mind, we have been told. (A vi I 509; L. 116)

³⁴ There is an error in translation by Loemker that obscures this point. He translates ‘*Ideae*’ of A vi I 512, l. 10 (in its first occurrence) as ‘substances’. (L. 118) But the point is clear for anyone who consults the original.

³⁵ Even if human freedom brought with it in a Malebranchian scheme that a human mind were a real cause, that real cause would surely be, to coin a term, intramental—that is, involving only causation *within* the mind in question.

³⁶ Conceivably, the qualifications need to be taken even further. Suppose, on Leibniz’s position, that a human mind is the principle of action (motion) in the corresponding human body, and further that the motion of this human body in turn appears to cause a motion in another body (say an expensive vase), a motion of falling to the floor and shattering. Is the principle of this falling motion of the second body—one of those “bodies which lack reason”—in God, in the human, or somewhere else? I shall not try to unravel this here, but simply note it for those considering a fuller elaboration than we are now undertaking.

³⁷ A vi I 509; L. 116.

³⁸ It is worth noting that a bit later Leibniz makes this and other terminological complexities more perspicuous by informing us also “that substantial form is itself a principle of action,” and that “substantial form is nature.” (A vi I 511; L. 117-18)

³⁹ A vi I 511; L. p., 118.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ A vi I 508; L. 115. The ambiguity in the term ‘substance’ makes things a bit complicated here, more so than the statement just given suggests. My own view is that Leibniz is not completely consistent in the terminology he uses on the difficult topic of transubstantiation, perhaps not surprisingly, since he is trying to reconcile Aristotle, more modern philosophy, and scholastic theologians, along with adher-

ents of warring Christian factions. I suggest, however, that the most obvious way to integrate the implicit distinction between individual concrete substance and substance as the nature of a thing with the explicit statements of “On Transubstantiation,” is as follows: an individual concrete *substance* is a being that subsists in itself, that is, that has a principle of action within itself. This principle of action in turn counts as the nature or substantial form or *substance* of the individual thing. In other words, the *substance* (nature) of an individual thing is its principle of action. And insofar as an individual thing has such a principle of action, it counts as an individual *substance* (an individual concrete thing, subsisting in itself). This, however, at least tends in the direction of taking Leibniz’s definition of ‘substance’—“*Substance* is being which subsists in itself”—as a definition of substance as individual concrete being. And it may be that Leibniz is trying to formulate a definition broad enough to apply to substance taken in either of the two senses. This is suggested by his statement that, “*Taken as an individual*, being which subsists in itself, or substance (either one), is a *suppositum*” (both quotations from A vi I 508; L. 115; italics mine in the initial phrase). The suggestion is that Leibniz thinks it would be possible to take being which subsists in itself, that is, substance, as something other than an individual. The obvious candidate is substance as the substance of an individual thing, or the nature of an individual thing, rather than the individual thing itself. Even in this case, however, the integration I proposed above could stand. It would just not give the whole story, a story in which, on a more expansive reading, Leibniz’s definition of ‘substance’ could do service both for ‘substance’ taken as an individual thing and for ‘substance’ taken as the nature of an individual thing.

⁴² A vi I 511; L. 118. Here Leibniz uses the phrase, “all bodies [omnium corporum],” when a more restricted phrasing, along the lines of his earlier, “bodies which lack reason [corporum ratione carentium],” (A vi I 509; L. 116) would seem to be in order. But he is, after all, formulating an objection to his position rather than stating his own view. Perhaps he felt that such extra detail in an objection that he was about to dispose of anyway was unnecessary.

⁴³ A vi I 509; L. 116.

⁴⁴ A vi I 511-12; L. 118. This translation differs in one word only from Loemker’s. See n. 34 above.

⁴⁵ A vi I 511; L. 117.

⁴⁶ A vi I 511; L. 117.

⁴⁷ A vi III 573; Parkinson: DSR, pp. 93, 95.

⁴⁸ GP IV 509; L. 502.

⁴⁹ A vi I 510.

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