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ARTICLE

WHAT KIND OF IDEALIST WAS LEIBNIZ?

Michael K. Shim

INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of Montgomery Furth's groundbreaking 1967 essay, 'Monadology',[1] discussions of Leibniz's *phenomenalism* have been one of the main staples of Anglo-American Leibniz-scholarship. By no means, however, has any consensus been reached with regard to this issue. I think one important reason for this failure in agreement has to do with how one goes about understanding a related concern in Leibniz: namely, Leibniz's idealism. In the present essay, I propose to interpret Leibniz's idealism in contrast to two extreme versions of idealism. What I would like to suggest is that Leibniz promoted arguments in favour of a kind of idealism that may be described as 'conceptual', but wound up with an unusual brand of idealism that may be considered neither conceptual nor phenomenal. Another reason for the failure in consensus is a perceived incompatibility between Leibniz's phenomenalism and his aggregatum-theory of corporeal substances. I will deal with this perceived incompatibility in Section II by emphasizing Leibniz's epistemological account of how what he calls 'clear *but confused* perceptions' may be resolved into distinct perceptions. In Section III, I will pursue a conceptualist interpretation of Leibniz's idealism with recourse to his conception of unity. In Section IV, I will examine the limits of the conceptual idealist approach.

I. APPERCEPTION

Peter Loptson has recently suggested that Leibniz should not be considered an idealist at all. Instead, Loptson proposes to interpret Leibniz as a kind of Platonic 'pan-dualist'.[2] Though Loptson does offer good textual evidence in

[1] Furth, Montgomery, 'Monadology', *Leibniz: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. H. Frankfurt (New York: Anchor, 1972), pp. 99–136.

[2] Loptson, Peter, 'Was Leibniz an Idealist?' *Philosophy*, vol. 74, no. 289 (July 1999), pp. 373–8. In contrast to a Cartesian dualist, according to Loptson, a pan-dualist does not assert a

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support of his view, his rejection of the standard idealist interpretation follows from a mistaken (though rather common) conflation of idealism with phenomenalism. According to Loptson, because Leibniz 'affirms the reality... of moving extended bodies in space',[3] Leibniz could not have been a phenomenalist; and, since for Loptson a phenomenalist just is an idealist,[4] Leibniz could not have been an idealist either. However, as Nicholas Jolley has sagaciously pointed out, though a phenomenalist is always an idealist, an idealist need not always be a phenomenalist.[5] In accepting Jolley's distinction, I see very little reason for allowing Loptson his rejection of the idealist interpretation. Regardless, because – as I will argue below – Leibniz's curious version of idealism winds up generating the optical illusion of some sort of dualism to which Loptson points, we need to figure out just what kind of idealist Leibniz really was.

In the context of the history of modern philosophy, one may speak of two extreme versions of idealism. Berkeley, of course, represents one extreme, which I will simply refer to as 'phenomenal idealism'. At the other extreme is someone like Hegel, whose position may be described as a 'conceptual idealism'.[6] As strong idealists, both have in common the belief that the fundamental units of knowledge and the fundamental units of nature (*an sich*) are the same. The difference lies in what can count as a fundamental unit of knowledge: a phenomenal perception (Berkeley) or a conceptual cognition (Hegel). What I would like to suggest is that Leibniz, like Kant, occupies a (weaker) middle ground between these two extremes. In Sections III and IV, I will contrast Leibniz's idealism with the conceptual variety. In this section, I will focus on the more familiar contrast to Berkeley's phenomenalism.[7]

In her well-known study of Leibniz and Berkeley, Margaret Wilson brings out the contrast along two basic lines. First, Leibniz partially preserves Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities by treating the latter as more subjective and more relative than the former. Berkeley, on the other hand, conflates the distinction on epistemological grounds (for instance, one cannot imagine a colour without at the same time imagining extension[8]), thereby vindicating 'the reality of the world as presented in

distinction (per first-person methodological doubt) between the thinker and the extended, but a distinction between idea- or soul-like bits and extended or material bits in things regardless of whether the thing can be said to think.

[3] Ibid., 'Was Leibniz an Idealist?' p. 364.

[4] Ibid., 'Was Leibniz an Idealist?' p. 363.

[5] Jolley, Nicholas, 'Leibniz and Phenomenalism', *Studia Leibnitiana*, Band XVIII/1 (1986), p. 39.

[6] Cf. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner (Stuttgart: 1927–30), vol. VIII, §234; Taylor, Charles, *Hegel* (Cambridge, 1975), esp. pp. 297–301, 315–20, 328–39, 350–5.

[7] Throughout the following, I will narrow the application of the term 'phenomenalist' to the sort of idealism promoted by Berkeley.

ordinary sense experience, against the abstractions of the philosophers and scientists of the time'.[9] Second, this time against Locke, Leibniz dismisses even primary qualities as *merely* phenomenal, as 'unreal or abstract in relation to some still more remote and basic concrete metaphysical truth'.[10] In contrast, for Berkeley the inference from phenomenal perceptions to anything more 'real' than those perceptions themselves is an illusion enabled by misleading linguistic conventions and commerce.[11]

That 'basic concrete metaphysical truth', which leads Leibniz to maintain such a 'pejorative'[12] stance towards phenomena, refers to what Leibniz in the *Monadology* calls the two 'essential qualities of the monad: namely, 'perception' and 'appetition'.[13] For the Leibniz of the *Monadology* period, 'perception' is a blanket term that covers much of the ground reserved for 'concepts' in the *Discourse on Metaphysics* period and 'ideas' in the period of the *Nouveaux essais*. Consequently, when Leibniz speaks of 'perception', he could be meaning 'representation', 'cognition', as well as the more empiricist-sounding 'sensation' or 'impression'. Thus one can easily sympathize with Wilson's trepidation about dealing with this issue head-on.[14] However, even in the period of the *Monadology*, Leibniz does offer a distinction between 'perception' and 'apperception'. Accordingly, one may think of 'apperception' as perception of distinct ideas that 'accompany' the perceptions enjoyed by rational creatures. Once we allow ourselves this contrast, we may take advantage of distinctions Leibniz does draw in the *Discourse* and *Nouveaux essais* periods to refine our understanding of what Leibniz means by 'perception'.

In *Meditations on Cognition, Truth and Ideas*, Leibniz complains that it is 'not always safe to turn to ideas, and many have abused this specious term to satisfy their own fancies'.[15] Leibniz seems to have taken his own advice, and the term 'idea' is seldom used by him.[16] Instead, Leibniz prefers the related terminology of 'notio' or 'concept'.[17] However, it is a mistake to simply equate 'ideas' with 'concepts', as suggested by some commentators.[18]

[8] Cf. Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. C. M Turbayne (New York: Macmillan 1965), §§ 7, 8, 10, 12, 21–4.

[9] Wilson, Margaret, 'The Phenomenalisms of Leibniz and Berkeley', *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, ed. E. Sosa (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1987), p. 12.

[10] M. Wilson, 'The Phenomenalisms of Leibniz and Berkeley', pp. 12–13.

[11] *Principles Intro*. §§ 6, 11, 14–15,18–20, 23; Pt. I §§ 5, 13, 18, etc.

[12] M. Wilson, 'The Phenomenalisms of Leibniz and Berkeley', p. 12.

[13] I will not deal with 'appetition' in this paper.

[14] M. Wilson, 'The Phenomenalisms of Leibniz and Berkeley', p. 9.

[15] Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Scriften von G. W. Leibniz*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin: Weidman, 1875–90), p. 425. References to this edition appear in the remainder of this paper as made to G. All translations from G are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[16] The big exception is, of course, the *Nouveaux essais*, where Leibniz assimilates Locke's talk of sensual and reflective ideas.

In *Discourse*[19] §27, Leibniz is most explicit on the distinction to be drawn between 'ideas' and 'concepts': 'the expressions which are in the soul, whether conceived or not, can be called *ideas*, but those which are conceived or formed can be called *notions* or *concepts*'. Accordingly, at least one crucial difference between 'ideas' and 'concepts' rests on active, conscious thinking. As made clearer in *Discourse* §26, an 'idea' is a 'quality' of the 'soul, in so far as it expresses some nature, form or essence', and this idea 'is always in us, whether we think it or not'. In contrast, a 'concept' is the basic unit of propositional content that is consciously thought in a judgement.

It may then appear as though both 'ideas' and 'concepts' are mental representations with the respective adjectives of, say, 'potential' and 'actual' making up the difference. However, what is often overlooked is the Cartesian origins of Leibnizian 'ideas'. As is well known, Descartes in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* works with two diverse conceptions of 'ideas': namely, a 'material' or 'formal' conception and an 'objective' conception.[20] Descartes's objective conception of ideas conforms to scholastic usage and simply means what we generally understand as mental representation; thus lending itself to intentionalist interpretations.[21] When Leibniz relates ideas to concepts, he is largely conforming to Descartes's objective conception of ideas.[22]

In contrast, Descartes also uses the term 'ideas' in a 'material' sense. Taken materially, an idea denotes the 'form' of 'thought' or the mental 'operation' – for example, thinking, doubting, willing, imaging, sensing and so on.[23] According to Descartes, in the unique case of reflection by the mind on its own operations, there is a 'clear and distinct' conformity between the

[17] I follow English convention in translating '*notio*' consistently with 'concept'. The following citation makes this equivalence clear, though Leibniz otherwise rarely uses the term '*conceptus*'.

[18] For example, see Ishiguro, Hide: *Leibniz's Philosophy of Logic and Language* (London: Duckworth, 1972), p. 24: 'Leibniz does not make the distinction, drawn by many empiricists, between concepts or notions on the one hand, and ideas on the other'. See also, Brandom, Robert: 'Leibniz and Degrees of Perception', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, XIX (Oct. 1981), esp. pp. 451–9.

[19] Leibniz, 'Discourse on Metaphysics', *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (Darmstadt/Berlin: Berlin Academy 1923-), series 6, vol. 4, §27. All translations are mine.

[20] Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897–1913), Vol. 7, p. 8: '. . . in saying idea: it can be taken either materially, as an intellectual operation. . . or taken objectively, as the thing represented by the operation'. Further references made to AT. All translations from AT are mine.

[21] For example, see Chappell, Vere: 'The Theory of Ideas', *Essays on Descartes' Meditations*, ed. A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 177–98. When I see a horse, I have the image of that horse in my head, regardless of whether that horse really exists independent of my perception of it. That image of the horse in my head is my idea of that horse in the 'objective' sense.

[22] Cf. *On How to Distinguish real from imaginary phenomena* (esp. G Vol. VII, pp. 319–20) for Leibniz's version of this intentionalist line of argumentation.

'objective reality' of an idea and its 'formal reality'.[24] Leibniz not only takes over Descartes's 'objective' conception of ideas, but Descartes's material or formal conception as well.[25] To his notes on Foucher's critique of Malebranche from 1676, Leibniz adds: 'when the soul thinks of being, identity, thought, or duration, it has a certain immediate object or nearest cause of its perception'.[26] In Cartesian terms, one might say that by reflecting on its own operations, the soul turns the forms of its own intellectual operations into objects for its own intellectual operations.[27] The products of such a reflective procedure that Locke calls 'ideas of reflection', Leibniz calls 'intellectual ideas' or 'ideas which are due to the reflection of the mind that reflects on itself'.[28]

Now, in *Principles of Nature and of Grace*, Leibniz draws the following distinction between 'perceptions' and 'apperceptions' 'perception... is the state of the monad representing external things, and apperception... is consciousness, or the reflective knowledge of that internal state' (*G* Vol. VI, p. 600). Accordingly, it certainly does appear as though 'apperception' may be equated with 'reflection' or reflective perception as illustrated above. And given the equation made in the *Principles* between 'apperception' and 'consciousness', [29] the implication is that whenever I am conscious I reflect. However, in the *Nouveaux essais*, 'apperception' and terms related to it are circulated quite copiously without always a clear connection to what we would normally think of as 'reflection' (*NE* p. 33). Instead, in the *Nouveaux*

[23] In the 'Second Set of Replies' to Marsenne, Descartes says an 'idea' is the 'form of any such thought, through whose immediate perception I am conscious of this same thought' (*AT* Vol. VII, p. 160). Of 'thought', Descartes says: 'all operations of the will, the intellect, the imagination and senses are thoughts' (ibid.). Accordingly, 'idea' in this sense just means 'form' of any intellectual operation.

[24] To Marsenne, Descartes says: 'Whatever can be said to exist formally in objects of ideas, when they are in themselves exactly as they are perceived' (AT Vol. VII, p. 161). Similarly, in the *Third Meditation*, Descartes writes: '... the nature of such an idea is that, it demands no other formal reality out of itself except that which is derived from my thought' (*AT* Vol. VII, p. 41).

[25] Thus, in his notes on Foucher's critique of Malebranche from 1676, Leibniz writes: an 'idea is that by which one perception or thought differs from another with respect to its object' (Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd edn, ed. L. Loemker [Dordrecht/Boston: Reidel, 1969], p. 154. Further references made to L.). In *De Summa rerum*, Leibniz repeats this view almost verbatim: 'Idea is a differentia of thoughts with respect to objects' (Leibniz. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* [Darmstadt/Berlin: Berlin Academy, 1923-], p. 518: my translation). And from *Discourse* §26, we know that what Leibniz means by 'differentia' just is 'form' of thought.

[26] *L*, p. 155.

[27] This is what Leibniz seems to mean when he tells De Volder in a letter from June 1699 that the soul 'is the source of ideas for itself and in itself' (*G* Vol. II, p. 184/L p. 520).

[28] Leibniz. *Nouveaux essais, Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (Darmstadt/Berlin: Berlin Academy, 1923-), series 6, vol. 6, p. 81. Further references made to *NE*. All translations from *NE* are mine.

[29] The equation is more famously rendered in Leibniz, 'Monadology' §14, in *L* 644.

essais Leibniz often contrasts apperceptions to what he calls '*petites perceptions*'. For instance, Leibniz writes: 'Perception of light or of colour... which we apperceive is composed by a quantity of petites perceptions, which we do not apperceive' (*NE* p. 139). Elsewhere in the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz claims: 'We are never without *perceptions*, but it is necessary that we are often without *apperceptions*, such as when there are no distinguished perceptions at all' (*NE* p. 132). In this sense, one is encouraged to interpret 'apperceptions' as simply distinct perceptions.

So is apperception simply equivalent to reflection or is it a kind of high-grade perception without any stipulated reflective procedure? What Leibniz seems to suggest is that it is not entirely one or the other. Rational creatures – and only rational creatures – enjoy not only perceptions but apperceptions of distinct ideas and concepts, and *can* (but *need not*) conduct reflective acts to gain intellectual ideas.[30] Viewed in this way, we may say that distinct ideas are paradigmatic for apperceptions, and intellectual ideas (of reflection) are just special sorts of distinct ideas.

For rational creatures, perceptions otherwise shared with non-rational creatures (animals and plants) are 'accompanied' ('*comitare*', '*accompagner*') by distinct ideas and concepts. Even as early as *On Universal Synthesis and Analysis* from circa 1679, Leibniz writes: 'the technique of handling confused concepts reveals the pertinent distinct or per se understood or resolvable [concepts], which accompany the confused ones' (*G* Vol. VII, p. 293) By 'confused concepts' in this passage, Leibniz means what Locke calls 'ideas of secondary qualities'. In *Meditations on Cognition, Truths and Ideas*, Leibniz discusses clear but confused cognitions with explicit recourse to secondary qualities: 'we recognise colours, odours, flavours, as well as other objects of the senses clearly enough and we discern between them, but only by the testament of the senses, but not by discursive marks' (*G* Vol. IV, p. 422) In contrast, Leibniz goes on to say in the *Meditations* that distinct cognitions are enjoyed of 'concepts common to several senses, such as numbers, magnitudes, figures' – in other words, Locke's primary qualities. Turning to the *Nouveaux essais*, we witness Leibniz say the following: 'colours furnish only the material for reasoning in so far as one finds them [colours] accompanied by some distinct ideas, but where the connection with their proper ideas do not appear at all' (*NE* p. 372). In this light, we are led to a rather trivial conclusion: some (confused) perceptions of secondary qualities are accompanied by (distinct) perceptions of (some) primary

[30] This ability to reflect, which need not be exercised whenever apperceptive or conscious, is best captured in the following from the *Nouveaux essais*: 'when it comes to man, his perceptions are accompanied by the power to reflect, which turns to act on occasion' (*NE* p. 139; and later: 'we apperceive to ourselves many things within and without us, that we do not understand' – yet, when we do understand what we formerly only apperceived – 'we have distinct ideas of them within us, with the power to reflect and of deriving necessary truths' (*NE* p. 173).

qualities. Passages like these definitely make Leibniz sound like a phenomenalist of an almost Bekeleyian stripe.

However, for Leibniz, ideas of primary qualities are not the only sorts of ideas that may count as 'distinct'. In fact, what is 'distinct' may serve as cognate for what Leibniz also calls 'innate'. Thus, in the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz offers the following slogan: 'those that are in us before we are aware of them as such have something distinct about them' (*NE* p. 111) What is distinct about what is 'in us before we are aware of them' are innate ideas. And when it comes to innate ideas, Leibniz is anything but parsimonious. At various times, Leibniz's inventory of such innate ideas include: being, unity, substance, duration, change, action, perception, pleasure; (*NE* p. 51) one, same, reasoning; (ibid., p. 111) existence, power; (ibid., p. 129) tautological identity propositions and related 'truths' of mathematics and geometry;[31] cause, effect, similitude, the ego and the understanding itself (*G* Vol. VI, p. 502). Therefore, if apperception or consciousness just is some distinct perception, then as long as my otherwise confused perceptions are accompanied by some of these ideas (expressed as distinct concepts),[32] I count as conscious and apperceptive in a way enjoyed only by rational creatures – regardless of whether I perform some overtly reflective procedure. Given Leibniz's emphasis on these admittedly abstract concepts, categories and intellectual ideas as somehow more 'real' than both primary and secondary qualities, the phenomenalist interpretation of Leibniz starts to weaken. Correlatively, the dualist option begins to appear more attractive.

The optical illusion of a dualism to which Loptson points begins to appear when we follow Leibniz from his talk of 'accompaniment' to his talk of '*resolutio*' or, less frequently, '*reductio*'. By reading 'resolution' as meaning paying attention to the distinct bits that accompany the confused ones (while forgetting about those confused bits), we are taking the metaphysical research track, whose purview is what Leibniz often calls the 'kingdom of grace' and final causes. On this track, we are encouraged to move on to ever more abstract concepts, categories and intellectual ideas until we reach the metaphysical concept of substance.[33] Alternatively, by reading 'resolution' as meaning something closer to the contemporary meaning of 'reduction', we are pursuing the natural scientific research track,

[31] *G* Vol. IV, p. 424, and: Leibniz, *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*, L. Couturat (Hildesheim: Olms 1966), pp. 519–21. Further references made to OF. All translations from *OF* are mine.

[32] For example, I see a tree as one tree; thus the distinct concept of 'unity' accompanies what is otherwise a confused perception of a sensual manifold.

[33] The force of what I am getting at is best delivered to us by Leibniz in *Monadology* §30:

> It is also by the knowledge of necessary truths and by their abstractions that we rise to *reflective* acts, which enable us to think of what is called *I* and to consider this or that to be in us; it is thus, as we think of ourselves, that we think of being, of substance, of the simple and the compound, of the immaterial, and of God himself, conceiving of that which is limited in us to be without limits

whose disciplines are concerned with the 'kingdom of nature' and efficient causes. And it is this latter option that produces the optical illusion of a dualism. Regardless, what is clear at this point is that if he was an idealist, Leibniz could not have been a phenomenalistic idealist of the Berkeleyian kind.

II. CORPOREAL SUBSTANCE

It is commonplace to think of Leibniz's 'monad' as a cognate for 'soul', 'substantial form' or 'entelechy'. At face value, the *Monadology* even encourages such an interpretation.[34] However, when the term 'monad' is initially introduced in the late 1690s, Leibniz offers the alternative, dualist-sounding view that the monad is in fact the *unity* of the soul or entelechy *with* passive primitive force or materia prima.[35]

When we ask how such unity of soul with matter is achieved, Leibniz generally directs us to his doctrine of 'pre-established harmony', especially as it is presented in the final draft of the *New System*.[36] However, Leibniz occasionally offers an alternative account, notoriously culminating[37] with the doctrine of '*vinculum substantiale*' in his exchanges with Bartholomew

> in him. These reflective acts provide us with the principal objects of our reasonings'.
>
> (L p. 646)

[34] The monad is 'simple' and 'without parts' (§1), involves no 'extension, or figure, or divisibility' (§3), etc.

[35] In *Of Nature Itself*, for instance, Leibniz says that the monad is the 'substantial principle... a soul... or substantial form... inasmuch as it truly constitutes one substance with matter, or a unit in itself' (*G* Vol. IV, p. 511). In a letter to De Volder from June 1703, Leibniz writes that the monad is 'formed' by the combination of 'the primitive entelechy or the soul' with 'materia prima or primitive passive power' (*G* Vol. II, p. 252/L p. 530).

[36] According to the account offered in *Discourse on Metaphysics* of God's perfection vis-à-vis the creation of the best of all possible, since God is omnipotent and omniscient, the 'most perfect order' must always already be chosen for actualization (*Discourse* §§6–7). In arguing against the occasionalists in the *New System*, Leibniz writes,

> God has created from the beginning the soul, or all other real unities of such sort, such that everything must be born from its own basis by a perfect spontaneity with regard to itself, and with a perfect conformity to things without.

Furthermore, 'it is this mutual rapport regulated in advance in each substance of the universe, which produces that which we call their communication, and uniquely makes up the union of soul and body' (*G* Vol. IV, pp. 484–5). What in the *New System* Leibniz calls 'hypothesis' will later come to be known as 'pre-established harmony', and it is this doctrine of pre-established harmony that is to guarantee the unity (for 'l'union') between body and soul.

[37] For reasons I cannot go into in greater detail, I am inclined to believe that Leibniz's doctrine of *vinculum substantiale* is the end product of a line of theoretical development that precedes the official introduction of this term in Leibniz's exchanges with Des Bosses. In a number of instances in his letters to Des Bosses (e.g., *G* Vol. II, pp. 503–4) , the *vinculum substantiale*

des Bosses. And, as Robert M. Adams highlights in his book,[38] on at least one occasion Leibniz even disavows pre-established harmony as explanation of the union between body and soul.[39] Both the alternative account and the disavowal are historically exceptional; and I agree with Adams that especially the disavowal should be treated with suspicion.[40] Nevertheless, the way Leibniz sets up his theory of corporeal substance naturally motivates the quest after an account of unity other than pre-established harmony, and even Adams seems to have found this temptation irresistible.[41] In Sections III and IV, I will urge the thesis that an alternative account emerges as a result of Leibniz's attempt to reconcile his doctrine of corporeal substance with his epistemological conception of what I will call 'apperceptive unity'. In the present section, however, I will focus on how Leibniz sets up his theory of corporeal substance.

Now, while insisting on Leibniz's idealism, Nicholas Jolley expresses doubts about Leibniz's phenomenalism as follows. According to Jolley, there is a fundamental incompatibility between phenomenalism and Leibniz's so-called 'aggregatum-thesis'.[42] As Jolley has it, the entire debate revolves around to what corporeal 'bodies' may be 'reduced' – phenomenal perceptions or 'aggregates' of monads.[43] For Jolley, since Leibniz more frequently endorses the latter position, which is also more consistent with Leibniz's metaphysics as a whole, the 'aggregatum-thesis' is the preferable interpretative approach; consequently, the phenomenalist approach must be given up.[44] In contrast, Robert M. Adams has offered a convincing dissolution of the incompatibility by subordinating the aggregatum-thesis under a more expansive phenomenalist account. I want to claim, however, that this ostensible conflict between Adams and Jolley can be mitigated by translating what Adams calls 'phenomenalist' with what I have been calling 'conceptualist'.[45] For Adams, a Leibnizian 'phenomenon' is 'primarily' the

behaves the way 'elastic forces' behave in Leibniz's dynamics (cf. Leibniz, *Leibnizens mathematische Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt [Berlin: A. Asher, 1849–63], Vol. VI, pp. 240–1, 251. References made to *GM*. All translations from *GM* are mine.)

[38] Adams, Robert Merrihews, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 295–6.

[39] Cf. G Vol. VI, pp. 595–6.

[40] Adams, Robert M, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance in Leibniz', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 8, (1983), p. 218; Adams, *Leibniz*, pp. 296–9, 305.

[41] Cf. Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', pp. 236–43. For objections to Adams's spatial-continuity thesis, see Hartz, Glenn A., 'Leibniz's Phenomenalisms', The Philosophical Review, vol. 101, no. 3 (July, 1992), pp. 527–43.

[42] Jolley, 'Leibniz and Phenomenalism', pp. 44–5.

[43] Ibid., pp. 41–3.

[44] Ibid., p. 46.

[45] The reason why I feel compelled to translate what Adams calls 'phenomenal' into 'conceptual' is due to how Adams goes about interpreting what Leibniz means by 'phenomenon'. Amplifying Furth's intentionalist interpretation (Furth, Montgomery, 'Monadology', pp. 103–4), Adams proposes to interpret 'phenomenon' as an 'intentional

'intentional object' of a perfectly adequate scientific narrative, which I construe to be entirely conceptual. In short, Adams and Jolley are agreed in their preservation of Leibniz's idealism, and may be reconciled with one another by viewing their defences of idealism as conceptualist in design.

In his letter to De Volder from June 1703, Leibniz makes evident not only his conception of the monad as 'unity' of entelechy and materia prima, but also his conception of the 'unity' of 'animal or corporeal substance' by what he calls 'dominating monad' (*G* Vol. II, p. 253/*L* pp. 530–1). Taking up an example offered by Adams of a kitten jumping off a chair to pounce on a string[46] I would like to illustrate what Leibniz means by 'corporeal substance' and 'dominating monad' as follows. The soul of the kitten cum its materia prima is the dominant monad of what otherwise appears to us as its living body. Placed under a microscope, a tissue-sample of this kitten would reveal to us a number of 'subordinate' life forms – for example, parasites, viruses, microbes, etc. – which I would construe as further unities. That is, scientific instruments like the microscope help us resolve aspects of the phenomenal living body of the kitten – that would otherwise appear confused to the naked eyes – into distinct, mathematically calculable (for example, blood cell counts) relations and concepts. What such scientifically refined enterprises enable is a mereological reduction of the phenomenal whole (i.e. of the kitten's living body) into its constituent physical and micro-physical parts. Staying on such a reductionist scientific research track, the kitten's living body will be resolved into an aggregatum of constituent living bodies, which are in turn resolvable as aggregata of even smaller living bodies, ad infinitum.[47] And Adams's perfectly adequate scientific narrative would be a storehouse of concepts exhaustive of this reduction, accounting for each instance of the kitten's activity.

Of course no one (save God[48]) would be apperceptive of all 'these perceptions and appetitions of the subordinate monads'[49] at any given time, but we (rational creatures) would be 'at least unconsciously' perceptive of them. And the scientific 'progress'[50] we historically make would be the steps

object' of a 'story – a story told or approximated by perception, common sense, and science' (Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 218). As Adams later makes clearer, Adams really has 'primarily' in view the kind of story told not by sensational perception of common sense, but by a science – and, in fact, by what Adams calls a 'perfected' science (ibid., p. 223). As I understand it, what Adams means by a 'perfected physical science' is one whose 'story' would provide an exhaustive (i.e. infinite) set of reasons why any phenomenon is as it is (ibid., pp. 244–7). Since such a perfect scientific narrative must involve (for both Adams and Leibniz) what Berkeley would consider derivative abstractions (ibid., pp. 222–3), Adams's conception of 'phenomenalism' is anything but the Berkeleyian sort I have been reviewing.

[46] Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 231.

[47] Cf. *OF* p. 522; *G* Vol. II, pp.118, 409–12; *G* Vol. IV, pp. 482, 557; *G* Vol. VI, pp.543, 599; *Monadology* §§61, 66–70.

[48] While nothing that Adams works around the theological implications for adopting (even if only as a kind of regulative idea) such a perfectly adequate scientific narrative (Adams,

towards ever greater resolution of what we are unconscious at any given historical juncture. Briefly put, Adams's hypothetically perfect scientific narrative would be the resolution of all our unconscious, insensible or minute perceptions into conscious and distinct apperceptions. And that is what makes Adams's a hard reductive – but also a hard conceptualist – thesis: the confusions of sensual phenomena would be explained away by the propositions[51] of Adams's perfected scientific narrative.

However, for Leibniz, no matter how much progress we achieve in such scientific reduction of aggregate phenomena we will never attain a strictly physical scientific explanation of why or how my soul is united to my body.[52] To provide such explanations one must make use of what Leibniz frequently calls the 'architectonic' principles of metaphysics, with which one may provide teleological reasons.[53] And pre-established harmony is one such principle. So why does Leibniz ever mention an alternative account of corporeal-substantial unity like the '*vinculum substantiale*' at all? I propose to address this question by referring to one particular item from the inventory of intellectual ideas I furnished in Section 1: namely, 'unity'.

III. UNITY

For Leibniz, even if we do not pay attention to the category of 'unity' *per se*, when we are conscious we perceive various 'unities': for example, I see my *one* computer on my *one* table, *a* bunch of papers around me, and so forth. Of course none of the examples just offered may count as unities in themselves for Leibniz since the items of the example are inorganic. The fact that I apperceive these inorganic items as unities has to do with the constitutive nature of apperception and not with the inorganic item *an sich* apperceived. Consistent with its mathematical origin, unity generally means the numerical identity of the monad 'through this soul or spirit, which makes the I in those [substances] which think' (*NE* pp. 231–2). However, Leibniz offers nothing like the transcendental deduction of the categories

'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 245), I think it inevitable (especially in the context of a Leibniz interpretation) to conclude that such a 'story' can be told and enjoyed only by God.

[49] Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 231.

[50] My use of the term 'progress' is in reference to G Vol. VII, p. 308.

[51] In further support of Adams's view, I cite the following overlooked by Adams: '*Phenomena are propositions*, which must be proven by experience' (*OF* p. 33: my italics).

[52] In fact, I would be encouraged to give up the metaphysical talk of substances altogether, thus relieving myself from commitment to account for corporeal-*substantial* unity. For example, Leibniz writes in the *New System*: 'it is impossible to find the *principle of true unity* in matter alone or in that which is merely passive, since everything there is but a collection or congregation to infinity' (*G* Vol. IV, p. 478). Compare *G* Vol. II, p. 281, *G* Vol. VI, pp. 595–6.

[53] Cf. *Discourse* §§17, 19, 21; G Vol. VII, pp. 270–3.

and, thereby, provides an account of something like Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. For Leibniz, it is somehow just obvious that one can experience one's own unity when reflecting upon oneself.[54] As an 'object of intellectual ideas' like 'existence' and 'substance', unity is 'immediate to the understanding and always present' (*NE* p. 52) and, in so far as 'immediate', unity counts as a primitive idea (ibid., p. 434). Nevertheless, we can trace Leibniz's theory of the constitutive function of apperceptive unity by examining a related issue: namely, a very specialized conception of 'relations' from the period of the *Nouveaux essais*.

The issue of relations occupies an especially problematic place in Leibniz scholarship,[55] since Leibniz denies their 'reality' apropos his law of the 'identity of indiscernibles'. One reason for Leibniz's denial of the reality of relations is that relations are not properties of substances *an sich* nor even of their complete concepts. Instead, the relation of one substance to another is an 'extrinsic denomination'[56] imposed on the related substances by a third-party observer; thus, a relation for Leibniz is 'a merely mental thing' (*G* Vol. II, p. 486) or a 'being of reason' (*NE* p. 227). And the 'reality' of relations, Leibniz later adds, is 'dependent on the mind' (*NE* p. 265). In the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz furnishes two different kinds of relation. There are relations of 'comparison', like 'resemblance, equality, inequality' and there are relations of 'concurrence', like 'cause and effect, of wholes and parts, of situation and order [i.e. space and time' (ibid., p. 142). Moreover, in his letter to Sophie Charlotte from 1702, Leibniz suggests that relations as such are obtained only upon reflection by the mind on itself, such that relations as such are only intelligible.[57] And, like the understanding itself, what is only intelligible must be counted as entirely abstract. In short, it is the 'understanding' which 'adds relations' (*NE* p. 145) and, thereby (at least partially), enables the conceptual representation of phenomenal episodes. In the case of Adams's hypothetically perfect scientific narrative we would have an exhaustive and, thus, infinite conceptual representation of phenomenal events and experiences.

Keeping this specialized conception of relation in mind, we would now like to draw attention to the following formulation of 'unity' from the *Nouveaux essais*

[54] Cf. *NE* pp. 236—7.

[55] Cf. Kulstad, Mark A, 'A Closer Look at Leibniz' Alleged Reduction of Relations', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 18 (4) (1980): 417–32; Ishiguro, *Leibniz's Philosophy*, pp. 101.

[56] *G* Vol. II, pp. 240, 250; *G* Vol. VII, p. 344; *NE* p. 231; *OF* p. 520.

[57] I.e. neither sensible nor imaginable. In the letter to Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz writes that it is the 'consideration of myself' that 'furnishes the other concepts of metaphysics, such as *cause*, *effect*, action, *similitude*' – the highlighted concepts are 'relations' of, respectively, 'concurrence' and 'comparison' (*G* Vol. VI, p. 502).

> This *unity* of the idea of aggregates is very true, but fundamentally it must be admitted that this *unity of collections* is only a rapport or a *relation* whose foundation is in *that which finds itself in each singular substance taken a part*. Thus these 'beings by aggregation' have *no other achieved unity than the mental*; and consequently, their entity is also in some fashion *mental or phenomenal*, like that of the rainbow.
>
> (*NE* p. 146)

In the corresponding paragraph of the *Essay*, to which Leibniz's 'unity of the idea of aggregates' refers, Locke offers the example of 'an army of men'. According to the above cited passage, Leibniz advises us to think of the unity of an army as a 'relation' and, *therefore*, as merely 'mental or phenomenal'.[58] We may thus explain the unity of the army as constituted by the apperceptive observer. However, there would be no other unity – in a strong ontological sense – to the army as such that would correspond to the unity I am ascribing to it.[59] In this sense, the army as such is not much different from *a* computer or *a* desk. Hence, one may add that it is this lack of a corresponding ontological unity that renders the unity of that army merely 'mental or phenomenal'.

In contrast, unlike an entirely inorganic item, the members of the aggregatum 'army' are indeed unities in themselves. Like Adams's kitten, each member of the army has an entelechy, a monad and walks around with a unified corporeal substance. Why do I think this? Assuming a member of the aggregatum 'army' is rational, the member may assert his own apperceptive unity just as I can. In the letter to Sophie Charlotte from 1702, Leibniz writes: 'since I conceive that other Beings can also have the right to say I, or that one could say that for them, it is by this that I conceive that which one calls substance in general' (*G* Vol. VI, p. 502). In *On How to Distinguish real from imaginary phenomena*, cognitively compatible witnesses serve as a 'most valid' criterion for establishing phenomenal reality; (*G* Vol. VII, p. 320) and, 'since it would be easy to think, people who converse with us can have just as good a cause to doubt us as we have to doubt them, nor does a greater reason work for us, they also exist and will have minds' (*G* VII, p. 322) Yet, in the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz concedes that such cognitively compatible witnesses themselves appear only as 'phenomena to one another' (*NE* p. 374). What thus phenomenally appear to me are not, of course, the monads of the witnesses but their bodies. The analogical argument bases the ascription of compatible rationality to the witness on

[58] Compare NE p. 424: 'The spirit, which likes unity in multiplicity, brings together a number of inferences in forming intermediate conclusions and that is the use of maxims and theorems'. For a more detailed discussion of such 'mental' phenomena, cf. Hartz, 'Leibniz' Phenomenalisms', pp. 513–16, 523–5.

[59] If only because of Leibniz's nominalism: Cf. Mates, Benson, *The Philosophy of Leibniz* (Oxford: 1986), pp. 171–3. See also, NE pp. 145, 150, 217.

something like – let us say – empathized resemblance of her phenomenal body with my own.[60]

In this light, when Leibniz says that the 'foundation' of what is otherwise a merely mental or phenomenal unity 'is in that which finds itself in each singular substance taken a part', the 'singular substance' can be interpreted to refer to each particular member of the mere aggregatum 'army' who enjoys apperceptive unity just the way I do. Of course, for Leibniz, the ontological scope designated by 'other Beings' who 'can also have the right to say I, or' on behalf of whom 'one could say that', includes not only cognitively compatible (i.e. apperceptive) entities but any organic entity whatsoever (animals and plants, but also parasites and microbes). And these are the entities on behalf of whom an apperceptive observer would say 'I'.

On this account, Leibniz's inclusion of non-rational organic creatures among ontologically real unities presents certain problems of cognitive compatibility. Real ontological unity is ascribed to the soldier because, as a rational entity himself, the soldier apperceives distinct concepts like 'unity' and can assert his own numerical identity upon reflection. In contrast, a non-rational creature cannot apperceive; yet Leibniz nevertheless stipulates such entities to be real ontological unities as well. To preserve cognitive compatibility as *a* criterion for establishing real ontological unity, while allowing the scope designated by 'other Beings' to be generous enough to include non-rational organic creatures, I propose the following amplification of the experience of apperceiving one's own unity. When Leibniz talks about apperceiving one's own unity the experience should not be restricted to the experience of the soul's numerical identity, but should be enlarged as the experience of the metaphysical union of mind and body[61] – that is, the unity of the monad as well as the unity of the corporeal substance.

[60] Adams suggests something similar. Adams writes:

> Every monad expresses everything in the whole universe... but each monad expresses, and is expressed by, its own organic body in a special way... So, if each monad is an especially good expression of its body, the organic body will be, reciprocally, an especially good expression of its dominant monad'
>
> (Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 231)

As I understand it, Adams is making a kind of functionalist argument for epistemic substitution for the terms appropriate to the monad with those appropriate to the monad's corporeal substance.

[61] I use the term 'body' just because Leibniz does. What Leibniz must mean by 'body' is either materia prima – which is itself unextended – or, more likely, the whole corporeal substance, which is a phenomenally extended aggregate of unextended monads. As it will become clearer below, I am not claiming that the mind–body union itself is ontologically primitive; I am only arguing for the *epistemological* primitiveness of the experience itself of the unity. In this light, I think the following from the *New System* may be invoked as textual evidence for my interpretation: '... the soul has its seat *in the body by an immediate presence*, which could not be greater' (*G* Vol. IV, p. 485: my italics).

The advantage of my proposed interpretation may be tested by how well it accounts for certain otherwise problematic claims in Leibniz's philosophy. To begin with, Leibniz says that the corporeal substance is – despite everything – a unity *per se* (*G* Vol. III, p. 657). In so far as the corporeal substance appears extended, the corporeal substance must be construed as divisible. Moreover, let us recall that Leibniz himself says explicitly that the corporeal substance is an *aggregate* of monads. So in what way can it be considered a unity *per se*? On my account, my corporeal substance is a unity *per se* just because whenever I apperceive my own unity I am apperceiving the union of my soul with its materia prima and with the subordinate monads of my corporeal substance. Since I am insinuating no distinction between the experience of the unity of my soul and the experience of the unity of my corporeal substance, the corporeal substance is indeed a unity *per se* in so far as I apperceive my own unity at all. But this would only be true of my *subjective* experience of *my* corporeal substance. In contrast, when I perceive a corporeal substance (including my own) as an object, it appears to me as a divisible piece of extension and as an aggregate. Only when we then ask to what the corporeal substance as object is reducible do the distinctions between soul, materia prima, monads and aggregation of monads become relevant. That is, regarded objectively as a piece of extended mass, a corporeal substance for Leibniz must always be reducible to an ideal unity – namely, the soul. And this is what I meant earlier by the *optical illusion* of a dualism: though the *subjective* experience *itself* of corporeal substantial union is primitive, the corporeal substantial union of itself is not. For Leibniz, any piece of extended mass is infinitely reducible to ideal soul-like things,[62] thus an ontological dualism (for example, as proposed by Loptson) simply cannot be accepted.

By imposing such a subjective–objective intentional distinction between, respectively, the experience of one's own mind–body unity and the apperception of the unity of corporeal substance as intentional object, I would like to propose the following interpretation of Leibniz's *vinculum substantiale*.[63] The *vinculum substantiale* is what corresponds in the corporeal substance regarded as an object to the *subjective* experience *of the unity* of *my* corporeal substance. Regarded in this way, it becomes possible to provide an at least partial explanation of why Leibniz felt an account of mind–body union other than pre-established harmony might be warranted.

[62] A thesis introduced in 1671 (*G* Vol. IV, pp. 227–32) and consistently maintained by Leibniz: Cf. *G* Vol. II, pp. 170, 269, 339; *G* Vol. III, p. 363, *G* Vol. IV, p. 589, *G* Vol. VI, p. 584–5.

[63] Cf. *G* Vol. II, pp. 435, 438, 485–6, 504, 516. For a recent informative and detailed historical discussion of the '*vinculum substantiale*' in Leibniz, see Look, Brandon, 'Leibniz and the Substance of the *Vinculum Substantiale*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 38:2, (April 2000), pp. 203–220.

If the experience of my own unity were nothing more than the experience of my own soul, entelechy or 'substantial form', then the ontologically real unity I ascribe to another organic entity would be nothing more than the ascription of numerical identity. But Leibniz insists there is something more than the substantial form which is holding together the organic machinery: namely, the *vinculum substantiale*, that is 'super-added' by God[64] above and beyond the monads.[65] My explanation may be characterized in terms of an epistemological distinction between *experiencing that* and *knowing how*. I know *that* my mind is united to my body from an immediate and self-evident experience of this unity; but – as we will discuss in greater detail in the next section – I cannot know with the same sort of certainty *how* or *why*. I think the *vinculum substantiale* is the objective intentional correlate of this immediate experience. In that case, when I immediately apperceive the unity of my corporeal substance, I am experiencing my *vinculum substantiale*. Consequently, should I ascribe to other organic entities (rational and otherwise) the sort of unity I myself experience, I am of course ascribing to them their *vinculum substantiale*[66] – but without commitment to the claim that all these other entities can also apperceive their own unity. In contrast, were I to restrict what I experience in experiencing my own unity to the numerical identity of the soul, I would be compelled to the Cartesian denial of souls to non-rational organic creatures on precisely such epistemological grounds – a denial Leibniz repeatedly criticizes.[67] Otherwise, I would wind up having to ascribe soul-like numerical identity to inorganic entities stipulated to be without souls, which Leibniz also explicitly rejects (*G* Vol. VI, p. 539).

None of this is to deny that Leibniz thought the soul or entelechy distinct from both monad and corporeal substance, nor that he thought of the soul as numerically identical. All I am saying is that (1) the experience *itself* of the unity should also be considered simple and irreducible, and that (2) this simple experience itself should not be restricted to pertaining just to the soul but enlarged to pertain to the union of mind and body. Maintenance of (1) helps us avoid objections based on the complexity and mutability of the body.[68] And by insisting on (2), we may at least exculpate (if not justify) Leibniz's introduction of something like the *vinculum substantiale* as what unifies the corporeal substance (regarded as object), while nevertheless distinguishing the *vinculum substantiale* from soul or 'substantial form'.[69]

[64] *G* Vol. II, pp. 435, 444, 451, 474; L p. 600.

[65] Cf. Look, Brandon, 'Substance of the *Vinculum Substantiale*', pp. 211–13.

[66] Leibniz suggests this in a letter to Des Bosses from May 1716, where he discusses relations constituted by the mind finding a correlate in a 'real vinculum or something substantial, which would be the common or conjunctive subject of predicates and modifications' (G Vol. II, p. 517).

[67] Most famously in *Monadology* §14.

[68] Cf. *G* Vol. II, pp. 120, 193; *OF* p. 16, *NE* p. 238.

IV. LEIBNIZ'S IDEALISM

By insisting on the intentional diversity between the object of a narrative and the narrative itself,[70] Adams is highlighting a crucial epistemological point. Adams's perfected scientific narrative would have resolved even the confused perceptions of the corporeal universe into clear and distinct concepts. On this view, there would be nothing like a fundamental piece of extended matter left unaccounted for by ideal concepts. Consequently, it certainly looks as though we have a very hard *conceptual* idealist interpretation. However, the intentional diversity Adams maintains also tells us that not even such an exhaustive conceptual narrative furnished by a 'perfected physical science' can serve as substitute for the object of the narrative. As Leibniz himself puts it, 'even if someone were to explain' (to those who have never experienced heat) 'the innermost secrets of nature and even interpret perfectly the cause of heat, they would still not recognize heat from this description' (*L* p. 285). It is this epistemological divide[71] that keeps Leibniz from total commitment to a conceptual idealism.

In support of Adams's conceptual intentionalist interpretation, I would like to cite the following from the *New System*:

> In turn the body has also been accommodated to the soul, for encounters where it is conceived as acting on the outside: this is all the more reasonable, *that bodies are made only for spirits capable of entering into society with God*,[72] and of celebrating His glory. Thus when one sees the possibility of this hypothesis of accord, one sees also that it is most reasonable, and that it

[69] Cf. *G* Vol. II, p. 435 as cited and discussed in Look, 'Substance of the *Vinculum Substantiale*', pp. 211–12.

[70] Adams, 'Phenomenalism and Corporeal Substance', p. 218.

[71] Leibniz makes this distinction most systematically in *Of the Radical Origination of Things* (*G* Vol. VII, pp. 302–8), which may be summarized by the following from the *Nouveaux essais*: '*cause* in things corresponds to *reasons* in truths. That's why cause itself is often called reason' (*NE* p. 475). Accordingly, Leibniz maintains a basic ontological distinction between a 'cause' in the realm of actual things and 'reason' that represents this cause in the realm of discourse; and this corresponds to the distinction, respectively, between *causal* substances and *rational* concepts. Now compare the following from Leibniz's letter to De Volder in June 1699: '. . . it is not about concepts but about the objects of concepts that we say entities are either real or rational' (*G* Vol. II, p. 182/*L* p. 518). In the greater context of Leibniz's metaphysics, this distinction is related to a number of other metaphysical distinctions drawn by Leibniz – e.g. between *necessity* and *contingency*, *knowing* and *willing*, *reasons* and *causes*, *existence* and *essence* – each of which are drawn in different (though related) philosophical contexts; respectively the contexts of logical, theological, epistemological and ontological discourse. For a good discussion of these distinctions in defence of Leibniz's insistence on the contingency of God's will, see Blumenfeld, David, 'Leibniz's Theory of the Striving Possibles', *Studia Leibnitiana*, 5 (2) (1973): 163–77.

[72] Compare beginning of *NE* p. 195.

> provides a marvellous idea of harmony of the universe and the perfection of the works of God.
>
> (*G* Vol. IV, p. 485: my italics)

By 'spirits' Leibniz of course means creatures capable of apperception.[73] And when Leibniz writes above that 'bodies are made only for spirits', Leibniz means that the body is the intentional object 'for spirits'. Why does God make bodies for spirits at all? When we juxtapose 'spirits capable of entering into society with God' with select passages from *Discourse on Metaphysics*,[74] the suggestion seems to be that spirits are uniquely capable of appreciating the perfection of the world created by God and, therefore, of 'celebrating' God's 'glory'. How are they capable of such appreciation? In the *Discourse*, Leibniz warns repeatedly against philosophers who are 'too materialistic',[75] since they risk the danger of mitigating God's teleological role in the design of the universe. Thus, it cannot be merely the spirits' ability to invoke efficient causes in materialist explanations that endears them to God; instead, it is the ability of spirits to conduct metaphysical speculations. Accordingly, if 'bodies are made only for spirits' so that spirits can conduct metaphysical speculations, it cannot be merely because of spirits' ability to tell reductive scientific narratives about the body. There must be a further theoretical motivation in possessing the body that leads to metaphysical speculations. My interpretation provides an answer to what that further theoretical motivation may be: it is the immediate experience of the metaphysical union of mind and body in the apperception of one's own unity – that is, the experience of one's own *vinculum substantiale*, which is 'super-added' by God.

Even Adams's perfectly adequate scientific narrative cannot provide an explanation of the union of mind and corporeal substance.[76] As I discussed in Section II, the concepts involved in such a narrative would furnish an exhaustive inventory of every unity involved in the construction of the universe but could not explain *how* (nor *why*) any phenomenally manifest

[73] Cf. *Discourse* §§35–7, *G* Vol II, p. 124, *G* Vol. VI, pp. 506, 604, *Monadology* §82, NE p. 490, etc.

[74] I have in mind *Discourse* §§1, 4–5; but §35 is worth citing at length:

> For assuredly the spirits are the most perfect, and they express best the divine. Since all nature, end, virtue and function of substances are only to express God and the universe, as it has been explained enough, there is no room for doubt that substances which express with knowledge of what they do, and who are capable of knowing the great truths with regard to God and the universe, express him better without comparison.

[75] Cf. §§18–22.

[76] 76 Cf. *G* Vol. VI, pp. 595–6, and Leibniz's letter to De Volder from January 1706, where he writes:

> [Tournemine] gave general approval to my pre-established harmony, which seemed to him to supply a reason for the agreement which we perceive between soul and body, but said that he still desired one thing – to know the reason for the *union* between the two, which he held to differ from their agreement. I replied that this metaphysical 'union'... is not a phenomenon and that there is no concept and therefore no knowledge of it.
>
> (*G* Vol. II, p. 281/*L* pp. 538–9)

ontological unity should be a monadic and corporeal-substantial unity. Yet the very idea of a unity is immediately available to us upon reflection. And if my interpretation is correct, what is thus immediately available to us is the experience of my monadic as well as my corporeal-substantial unity. Metaphysical hypotheses like the pre-established harmony are intended by Leibniz to close off such epistemological gaps between *knowing that* (mind is united to my body), and the failure of reductionist natural scientific narratives to explain *why that* should be the case at all. Accordingly, not even God can explain mind–body union with solely the concepts of a reductionist scientific narrative.

Yet, compelled to observe the principle of sufficient reason, God must have had a reason for establishing what I claim is for Leibniz the simple fact of mind–body union. Now, precisely because scientific narratives cannot explain *why* there should be such immediately available experiences, Leibniz calls the reasons for them 'ultra-' or 'extra-mundane'.[77] For example, why there is perception and appetition, (*G* Vol. II, p. 271) why the world was created (*G* Vol. VII, p. 302) refer to 'ultra-' or 'extra-mundane' reasons; and, in Book IV of the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz writes: 'there is only God who sees how these two terms, I and existence, are connected; that is, why I exist' (*NE* p. 411). If our interpretation is correct, I see no reason why something similar cannot be said for the experience of mind–body union: like my own existence, I know with the 'immediacy of sentiment' (*NE* p. 367) *that* but not *why* that is the case. Now, if it is a 'sentiment', the experience of one's own unity may be a confusion. However, the resolution of this confusion by an even perfectly adequate scientific narrative cannot tell us why I experience this sentiment, since the reason for what I experience is stipulated to be 'ultra-' or 'extra-mundane'. Thus, at least with regards to creatures, Leibniz cannot endorse a purely conceptual idealism.

Of course in the context of a Leibniz interpretation the cognitive limitations of finite creatures cannot serve as the ultimate grounds for judging whether Leibniz was a conceptual idealist or not. God is stipulated to *know* what is (for finite creatures) the inscrutable metaphysical reasons *why* He created the universe, allowed me to exist and established the union between my mind and body. Thus, for God, what for finite creatures registers as a 'sentiment' may be entirely conceptual after all. However, if this sentiment or feeling is the experience of one's *own* mind–body union, in so far as God is stipulated to be unique among monads in *not* having a body,[78] even if He knew *why* my mind and body are always united – and willed that this be the case – He cannot enjoy the same epistemologically primitive experience of unity.[79] Like a blind scientist of colours, God knows the reasons for (and wills the creation of) what He Himself cannot experience. And because even at the theological level there appears to be

[77] Cf. *G* Vol. II, p. 271; *L* p. 530; *G* Vol. VII, p. 302.

[78] *NE* p.114, *Monadology* §72.

[79] After all, if God could experience His own mind–body union, God would have deceived Himself, since He lacks a body. And if He should deceive Himself, God would not be God.

such a sliver of the *extra*-conceptual, Leibniz's idealism cannot be considered entirely conceptualist.

CONCLUSION

If the experience of one's own mind–body union – like the experience of one's own existence – is primitive, then no one except God can explain *why* and *how* that should be the case. Thus, when Leibniz talks about a 'dominating monad' holding the whole corporeal machinery together, he is stating a simple fact of the subjective experience of mind–body union and not offering an explanation.[80] When he then introduces the talk of a *vinculum substantiale*, he seems to be making a methodological claim – a claim about what 'super-additional' element motivates my metaphysical speculations above and beyond the concepts of reductionist scientific narratives. Since – lacking a body – God Himself would feel no such motivation, the experience *itself* should be construed as *extra*-conceptual.

In this light, I cite from Leibniz's reply to Tournemine's critique of the pre-established harmony: 'since the metaphysical union [between mind and body] that one stipulates is not a phenomenon, and since one will not find given for it an intelligible concept, I have not taken it upon myself to look for a reason' (*G* Vol. VI, p. 595). If my interpretation is correct, then I feel encouraged to read this passage as follows. The experience of one's own mind–body union cannot be regarded as an experience of something phenomenal. Thus, since this experience remains nevertheless fundamental, the phenomenalist interpretation proves inadequate. Moreover, despite the immediacy and self-evidence of the experience, since no 'intelligible concept' is to be found for it, the purely conceptualist interpretation also proves incomplete. And – despite its appeal – any dualist interpretation that stakes a strong ontological claim seems to rest on confusing the simplicity of experiencing mind–body union with the simplicity of the union itself. For Leibniz, no piece of corporeality can be allowed an ontologically fundamental role, thus no mind–body union can of itself be considered an ontologically simple unity. In other words, the fact that the experience *itself* of this union appears epistemologically primitive warrants no inference of an ontologically primitive dualism. Having barred these other exegetical options, I would like to interpret Leibniz's idealism as '*extra-conceptualist*' without further specifying explicitly what may make up that '*extra*-' portion.[81]

Fordham University, New York

[80] Cf. Hartz, 'Leibniz's Phenomenalisms', pp. 540–2.

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