

## ***Leibniz and the De-Partitioning of the Soul***

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### ***1. Introduction***

The papers of this volume motivate partitions of the soul, present ancient and medieval accounts, and display some of their consequent problems. Seventeenth-century philosophers like Descartes, Leibniz, Malebranche, and Berkeley rejected the partitions of the soul and argued for more simplified metaphysics of soul, with varying degrees of success. In her paper for this volume, “Complications for Descartes’ Simple Soul,” Marleen Rozemond offers an account of some of the problems facing Descartes’ attempt to forge an adequately simple soul. Against this background, it is particularly striking that Leibniz proposes his famously original metaphysics grounded in simple, undivided souls and their powers.

In order to properly situate Leibniz’s de-partitioning of the soul, it will be useful to begin with the introduction to Dominik Perler’s paper, “How Many Souls Do I Have?: Late Aristotelian Debates on the Plurality of Faculties.” Perler presents the problems as follows:

“Any satisfactory theory of the human soul has to take into account the simple fact that human beings are capable of performing a large variety of actions. Thus, I am able to see objects around me, to think about them, to like or dislike them, to make deliberations and to come up with plans about how to use them. Why am I able to do all these remarkable things? The Aristotelian answer looks quite simple: it is because I have many faculties which can all be activated under appropriate circumstances. In fact, the soul is nothing but the ‘first actuality of a natural body,’ as Aristotle famously said, and this actuality is to be understood as a set of faculties, powers or capacities that can be used to bring about many acts. Of course, Aristotle did not restrict the faculties to what is nowadays called ‘the realm of the mental’ but included everything that is necessary for the functioning of a living being, including the capacities to digest food and to move one’s limbs. That is why he distinguished different levels of faculties, assigning some to plants, others to animals, and still others to human beings only. Yet, what is important for all these levels is the fact that they do not consist of distinct substances but of faculties, present in living things and making them the very things they are.”<sup>1</sup>

The Aristotelian answer to the question, “Why am I able to do all these remarkable things?” seems complicated. By comparison, the Leibnizian answer is simple. There are

incorporeal souls or mind-like substances. These substances have no parts. If they had parts, they would not be simple. Strictly speaking, there are neither animals nor vegetables nor extended bodies of any kind. So, questions about “different levels” of souls and faculties do not arise.

If Leibniz’s response to the tradition seems simple, the metaphysics of which it is a part does not. In the *Discours de métaphysique* §9 of 1686, he explains:

“[E]very substance is like a complete world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe, which each one expresses in its own way, somewhat as the same city is variously represented depending upon the different positions from which it is viewed. Thus the universe is in some way multiplied as many times as there are substances, and the glory of God is likewise multiplied by as many entirely different representations of his work. It can be said that every substance bears in some way the character of God’s infinite wisdom and omnipotence and imitates him as much as it is capable. For it expresses, however confusedly, everything that happens in the universe, past, present, or future – and has some resemblance to an infinite perception or knowledge. And since all other substances in turn express this substance and accommodate themselves to it, one can say that it extends its power over all the others in imitation of the creator’s omnipotence.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite the complications of some of these metaphysical claims, Leibniz’s account of the soul and its powers is impressive. As this passage makes clear, it constitutes a radical shift from an Aristotelian world of organic, embodied souls to a world of mind-like perceiving substances. There is an enormous divide between the sorts of living things discussed by the Aristotelians and those described here. He avoids their sundry problems by elegant means: he insists that the soul is simple and can have no parts. He does not have to explain how different kinds of souls relate because they do not. In answer to Perler’s question, “Why am I able to do all these remarkable things?” Leibniz responds: “I do them because I have a mind-like soul that acts constantly, contains the sufficient reason for everything it does, and whose sole relation to the world is through thinking its thoughts and having its perceptions.

In this paper, I want to emphasize the elegance of Leibniz’s solution to the problems faced by the Aristotelian account of soul. In response to Perler’s question about how the various Aristotelian powers or souls are supposed to be coordinated and made to cohere in living things, Leibniz’s response is strikingly straightforward. There are no vegetative souls (or powers) for, strictly speaking, there are no vegetables. There are no sensitive souls (or powers) for, strictly

speaking, there are no animals. Rather, the white-asparagus whose color and taste I love and the dog whose fur I stroke is each a well-founded phenomenon that my mind produces out of its own spontaneous nature and that stands in perfect preestablished harmony with an infinitely complex and perfectly coordinated set of simple substances. When I peel, cook, eat, and digest the asparagus or when I stroke the dog and listen to it purr with satisfaction, each of these acts is a perception caused by my simple substance. As well-founded phenomena, these perceptions do correspond neatly with changes in things outside my perceptions, but the things are, strictly, neither vegetables nor animals. Rather, they are harmonized collections of mind-like substances acting out their preestablished natures. Each substance itself “represents” or “expresses” everything in the world, though the white asparagus does so a bit less clearly than do I.

In the *Nouveaux Essais sur L'Entendement* of 1703-5, Leibniz writes:

“For what I do is to attribute perception to all this infinity of beings: each of them is like an animal, endowed with a soul (or some comparable active principle which makes it a true unity), along with whatever the being needs in order to be passive, and endowed with an organic body. Now, these beings have received their nature, which is active as well as passive (i.e., have received both their immaterial and their material features) from a universal and supreme cause; for otherwise, as our author [John Locke] has so well said, their mutual independence would have made it impossible for them ever to have produced this order, this harmony, this beauty that we find in nature. But this argument, which appears to have only moral certainty, is brought to a state of absolute metaphysical necessity by the new kind of harmony which I have introduced, namely the pre-established harmony. Here is how: each of these souls expresses in its own manner what occurs outside itself, and it cannot do so through any influence of other particular beings (or, to put it a better way, it has to draw up this expression from the depths of its own nature); and so necessarily each soul must have received this nature - this inner source of all the expressions of what lies without - from a universal cause, upon which all of these beings depend and which brings it about that each of them perfectly agrees with and corresponds to the others.”<sup>3</sup>

Leibniz reconfigures the nature of soul, rids it of partitions, construes all the differences among souls as a function of their particular expressions, each of which God creates and maintains in perfect harmony with all the others. It is tempting to leave it at this. But it does seem worthwhile to consider three obvious questions: 1. What might have motivated the great Leibniz to de-partition souls, 2. What philosophical good does it do him, and 3. What exactly does he put in the

place of all the faculties, powers, and multiple souls (or parts of souls) that so concern the other philosophers discussed in this volume? Let's turn to the first questions first: what might have motivated Leibniz to de-partition the soul and what philosophical good does it do him?

## **2. *The New Mechanical Physics and the Problem of "Incorporeals"***

It is now well known that the development of the new scientific paradigm in the seventeenth century was both more complicated and more interesting than it was once taken to be.<sup>4</sup> When Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600, philosophers were still inclined to offer natural explanations in Aristotelian terms. For those philosophers watching the demise of Bruno in the Campo dei Fiori in Rome, the burning of the wood and its subsequent effects would have been explained adequately in terms of matter and substantial form. For such Aristotelian philosophers, all natural objects are constituted of matter and form, and natural events are explained in terms of the actualization of the potency of these two "principles of nature." Seventy years later, by the third quarter of the seventeenth century, there was a new explanatory model available to explain such events, one that had greatly diminished the power of the scholastic model.

According to the main early proponents of the mechanical philosophy, nature is composed of matter – whether the *res extensa* of Descartes, the atoms of Gassendi, or one of the many less popular accounts of corporeity – whose actions and movements cause and explain all the phenomena of nature. For the mechanist, therefore, all physical phenomena are to be explained in terms of some kind of matter and motion. For the sake of convenience, a distinction will help. A *first-wave mechanist* is someone like Descartes, Galileo, Hobbes, or Gassendi who proposed a version of the mechanical explanatory model (roughly) before 1650, where the latter offers an account of natural phenomena by appealing to matter and motion. That is, an explanation of physical phenomena is consistent with the mechanical explanatory model just in case it appeals to some sort of matter, the features of that material stuff, and its motion. A *second-wave mechanist* is a philosopher working in the second half of the seventeenth century who accepts the mechanical explanatory model.

Given my concerns to contextualize Leibniz's de-partition of the soul, I want to make some (rather grand) historical claims about the first wave mechanists and the development of their thinking about souls. First, the original mechanists complained bitterly about the use of substantial forms to explain the phenomena of nature. They shared the same rhetorical language: the schoolmen used "empty words," assigned "occult powers" to substantial forms, and explained

nothing.<sup>5</sup> In short, they all agreed that the substantial forms of the schoolmen must be stripped from nature. And many insisted that their own philosophy undermined the entirety of the Aristotelian philosophy. As Descartes writes: “for I see that it [the Aristotelian philosophy] is so absolutely and so clearly destroyed by means of the establishment of my philosophy alone, that no other refutation is needed.”<sup>6</sup> Second, having rid the world of substantial forms, they disagreed significantly about the nature of incorporeal beings and the causes of activity and motion in nature. Third, despite the significant differences among the first-wave mechanical philosophers, second-wave mechanists often lumped them together. In particular, second-wavers complained about their predecessors’ views about “incorporeals” and souls.<sup>7</sup>

Consider, for example, the views of the English Platonist, Anne Conway (1631-1679) in her *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, written in the 1670s. Although Conway is keen to note the dissimilarities between “Cartesianism and Hobbesianism,” the differences that interest her concern their views about “incorporeals” and “spirits.” Distinguishing clearly between her “fundamental principles” and their “false philosophy,” she nonetheless admits “the remarkable and ingenious things concerning the mechanical aspects of natural processes” which are proposed by these philosophers. As Conway makes perfectly clear, the mechanical explanations are “ingenious” and helpful, but based on utterly “false principles.” Such philosophers, insists Conway, “have generally erred and laid a poor foundation from the beginning... From such an absurd foundation, many other most crass and dangerous errors have arisen, not only in philosophy but also in theology with great injury to the human race, to the detriment of true piety, and in contempt of the most glorious name of God.”<sup>8</sup> Leibniz is in fundamental agreement with Conway that the mechanical philosophers offer ingenuous accounts of the particular phenomena and yet fail to offer a proper account of “incorporeals.” For example, in *Discours de métaphysique* §10, he applauds the mechanists use “of geometric and mechanical demonstrations” to explain the particulars of nature, but insists that ultimately the “proper” philosopher “must return to metaphysics.” Not only is “knowledge of incorporeal natures” necessary to understand “the first principles,” but also to elevate our minds to “the wonders of God” (A Vi iv [B] 1542-3: AG 42-3). For second-wave mechanists like Conway and Leibniz, the first-wavers erred significantly (and dangerously) on the topic of incorporeals. Thus, despite the doctrinal dissimilarities among Descartes, Hobbes, Galileo, and Gassendi and despite the fact that they saw themselves as very different, second-wave mechanists were prepared to criticize them for their failure to grasp the nature of incorporeality.

### 3. *Platonism to the Rescue*

Many second-wave philosophers turned to Platonist notions of mind in attempt to create a metaphysics that would ground the mechanical philosophy and save the world for incorporeals. For those second-wavers who were tempted by the new mechanical physics but who could not ignore the metaphysical and theological problems generated by the first-wave mechanists, it was necessary to rethink the metaphysical foundations of the mechanical physics. This two-fold process – accepting the new physics while seeing the need to reconstruct its metaphysical foundations – had a fascinating result: philosophers like Leibniz (Conway and many others) turned to Platonist ideas about the soul and its nature.

What did they borrow from the Platonists? It is noteworthy that they did not adopt the tripartite division of the soul as presented by Plato. Rather, the second-wavers assumed the simplicity, self-sufficiency, and divinity of souls. Here are some standard Platonist texts that will set the context.

In the *Phaedo*, Plato explains that “the soul is most like the divine – deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself – whereas the body is most like that which is human – mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same” (80e). Later in the same dialogue, he notes that “the soul must be proved to be indestructible and immortal...; it has great vitality and a godlike nature” (95c).<sup>9</sup>

According to Plotinus (204/5-270 CE) in the *Enneads*: “there must be something simple before all things, and this must be other than all the things which come after it, existing by itself, not mixed with the things which derive from it.... For if it is not to be simple, outside all coincidence and composition and really one, it could not be a first principle, and it is the most self-sufficient, because it is simple and the first of all: for that which is not the first needs that which is before it, and what is not simple is in need of its simple components so that it can come into existence from them.”<sup>10</sup>

For the great Renaissance Platonist, Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) in his *Theologia Platonica, de immortalitate animorum* (early 1470s) explains that “between those things that are exclusively eternal and those that are exclusively temporal, there is a soul.” Moreover, this soul is always “alive,” and is such that it “causes life to be diffused among bodies.” Ficino says that he is following “the Platonists” when he maintains that an entity is “most perfect when its constituent

parts cohere” so that “it is one [unum] in all respects, consistent with and in harmony with itself [sibi constet et consonet]”).<sup>11</sup>

A number of seventeenth-century thinkers turned to Platonism in response to the failures of the first-wave mechanists. Platonist views about the simplicity, unity, self-sufficient, and divinity of souls inspired many second-wave mechanical philosophers.<sup>12</sup>

#### ***4. The Activity, Simplicity, and Unity of the Soul***

Leibniz was one of them.<sup>13</sup> From the very beginning of his long and varied career, he endorses the views of Plato (quoted above) and takes human souls to be fundamentally active, vital, and indestructible. In 1664, at the age of eighteen, he was committed to the notion that the human soul “remains one,” is a “fountain of life,” and “cannot be destroyed.”<sup>14</sup> He soon extends these features to all souls. That is, by the 1670’s, Leibniz commits himself to the view that the world is full of mind-like entities, each with its own unstoppable source of activity. In some notes on Plato’s *Phaedo* of 1676, he continues to equate what is alive with what is active and unstoppable: “what has life cannot be destroyed.”<sup>15</sup> Nearly forty years later, in the *Nouveaux Essais* of 1703-05, he claims: “For I maintain that in the natural course of things no substance can lack activity.”<sup>16</sup> Like Conway, Leibniz chose to solve the “problem of incorporeals” that faced the first-wave mechanical philosophers by filling the created world with souls that fundamentally act and constitute their own “fountain of life.”

The development of Leibniz’s views about activity and life parallel his account of thinking. As a young man, he endorses the views of Plato and other Platonists and models the activity of human minds and souls on that of the divine. In a note of 1671, we find: “Just as God thinks things... because they follow from his nature, so does Mind.... Mind and God do not differ except that one is finite and the other infinite.”<sup>17</sup> Within a few years, Leibniz has applied this account of mind to all souls in the sense he claims every soul thinks and what it thinks follows from its nature. In 1686, he explains in *Discours de métaphysique* §14: “it is very evident that created substances depend upon God, who preserves them and who even produces them continually by a kind of emanation, just as we produce our thoughts.”<sup>18</sup>

Leibniz’s response to problem of incorporeals generated by the first-wave mechanists is dramatic. He has filled the world with active mind-like substances that think continually. In the 1680s, he begins to emphasize more fully Plotinus’ assumption (see §3) that simplicity and unity are marks of what is active, self-sufficient, and real. In a letter to Arnauld of 1686, he explains:

“Substantial unity requires a being that is complete, indivisible, and naturally indestructible, since its concept embraces everything that is to happen to it” and is found “in a soul or substantial form after the example of what one calls self. These are the only truly complete entities, as the Ancients had recognized, especially Plato.”<sup>19</sup>

His views about the unity of incorporeals have important implications for his account of corporeality. In the *Definitiones notionum metaphysicarum atque logicarum* of 1685, he writes: “the ancient philosophers correctly attributed substantial forms, such as minds, souls, or primary entelechies, to those things that they said made up a *Unum per se*. And they denied that matter by itself is a single entity [*Unum Ens*]. Certainly those things that lack these [substantial forms] are no more a single entity [*Unum Ens*] than a pile of sticks.... Certainly, these things do not remain the same more than a moment, whereas, by contrast, true substances remain through changes.”<sup>20</sup> For Leibniz, all these traditional terms are used to designate the same active and unified realities. As he announces to Arnauld in 1687: ‘I maintain that one cannot find a better way of restoring the prestige of philosophy and transforming it into something precise than by distinguishing the only substances or complete entities, endowed with true unity.’<sup>21</sup> As he summarizes the point in a related letter: “I conceive no reality without a true unity” (G II 97: AG 86).<sup>22</sup> Since extended bodies, whether constituted of atoms or *res extensa*, are not so unified, they are not real. Leibniz writes in 1704: “Therefore I feel that the bodies that are popularly regarded as substances are nothing but real phenomena, and are no more substances than are... rainbows” (G II 262).

The unified simplicity of his souls allows Leibniz to fill the world with active incorporeals and thereby solve problems facing the first-wave mechanists. But his account of souls also allows him to avoid the metaphysical untidiness of the Aristotelian partitions. He proudly explains to Queen Sophia Charlotte that he can distinguish among souls (and their powers) without need for partitions:

“I also recognize degrees in activities, such as life, perception, reason, and thus [recognize] that there can be more kinds of souls, which are called vegetative, sensitive, rational, [and] that there are kinds of bodies that have life without sensation and others that have life and sensation without reason. However, I believe that the sensitive soul is vegetative at the same time, and that the rational soul is sensitive and vegetative at the same time, and that the rational soul is sensitive and vegetative, and that thus one single soul in us includes these three degrees, without its being



necessary to conceive of three souls in us, of which the lower would be material in relation to the higher; and it seems that would be multiplying beings without necessity.”<sup>23</sup>

In his typical fashion, Leibniz both sees with clarity the difficulty recreated by partitioning the soul and solves it with quirky finesse. Whether the soul is rational, sensitive, or vegetative, its function reduces to the same basic activities of life and perception. All souls do the same thing, namely, sustain themselves and perceive. They differ only in the clarity of their perceptions or what he sometimes calls their “expression.”

We have answers to the first two questions posed at the end of §1, namely, “what might have motivated the great Leibniz to de-partition souls” and “what philosophical good does it do him”? When the first-wave mechanists stripped the world of substantial forms and therefore removed its “incorporeals”, they had a difficult time explaining (at least to the satisfaction of many philosophers) the activity in nature. Leibniz responds to that problem by filling the world with fundamentally active and self-sustaining mind-like souls. Although he often uses ‘substantial form’ to designate these mind-like entities, he blithely avoids the traditional problems facing Aristotelians.<sup>24</sup> Rather than explain “the remarkable things” that souls do by means of partitions, he does so by means of perceptual clarity.

In short, Leibniz is motivated to de-partition the soul in order to fill the world with simple, active, and unified realities that both ground the metaphysics of preestablished harmony and explain the remarkable things that souls do.

### ***5. The Case of Leibniz: The De-Partitioning of the Soul***

We have answers to our questions about the motivations behind and the philosophical benefits of Leibniz’s de-partitioning of the soul. But what about our third question, namely, “What exactly does he put in the place of all the faculties, powers, and multiple souls (or parts of souls) that so concern the other philosophers discussed in this volume?”

The answer to this question has two parts. The first concerns what there is. As Leibniz summarizes his late metaphysics: “there is nothing in things except simple substances, and in them perception and appetite.”<sup>25</sup> In §1, I quoted Perler: “I am able to see objects around me, to think about them, to like or dislike them, to make deliberations and to come up with plans about how to use them. Why am I able to do all these remarkable things? The Aristotelian answer looks quite simple: it is because I have many faculties which can all be activated under appropriate

circumstances.” In order to explain the variety of actions that organic beings perform, the tradition turned to the variety of powers and faculties in the soul. As Perler puts it, “Aristotle did not restrict the faculties to what is nowadays called ‘the realm of the mental’ but included everything that is necessary for the functioning of a living being, including the capacities to digest food and to move one’s limbs. That is why he distinguished different levels of faculties, assigning some to plants, others to animals, and still others to human beings only.”

The brilliance of Leibniz’s position is that it manages to keep the soul simple, avoid multiplying types of souls, and yet explain the relevant activities. All souls are fundamentally the same: each is a self-sufficient active entity that perceives the world. But each differs from every other on account of what it perceives. And what a soul perceives – how it perceives the world that God made – is a more or less clear perception or what he often calls the “expression” of the world. He summarizes the point in *Discours de métaphysique* 28: “Now, in rigorous metaphysical truth, there is no external cause acting on us except God alone, and he alone communicates himself to us immediately in virtue of our continual dependence. From this it follows that there is no other external object that touches our soul and immediately excites our perception. Thus we have ideas of everything in our soul by virtue of God’s continual action on us, that is to say, because every effect expresses its cause, and thus the essence of our soul is a certain expression, imitation or image of the divine essence, thought, and will, and of all the ideas comprised in it. It can then be said that God is our immediate external object and that we see all things by him” (A VI iv 1573: AG 30).<sup>26</sup>

Every soul perceives everything thing that has happened, is happening, and will happen. To make sense of this claim, Leibniz explains that each mind contains an infinity of insensible perceptions. In the *Nouveaux Essais*, he writes: “It is also through insensible perceptions that I account for this marvelous pre-established harmony ... amongst all the monads or simple substances, which takes the place of an untenable influence of one on another and, in the opinion of the author of the finest of dictionaries [Bayle], exalts the greatness of divine perfection beyond anything previously conceived.” (VI vi 55-56).<sup>27</sup> Each mind-like soul or monad contains an infinity of perceptions, some of which are insensible and which stand in perfect preestablished harmony with the perceptions of all the others. Although each soul perceives the same world, it does so from its “own point of view” or its own “degree of clarity.” It is these differences among perceptions or points of view that constitutes the difference among souls. There are no two souls exactly alike in the world. As Leibniz makes the point in the *Nouveaux Essais*: “These insensible

perceptions also indicate and constitute the same individual, who is characterized by the vestiges or expressions which the perceptions preserve from the individual's former state, thereby connecting these with his present state. Even when the individual himself has no sense of the previous states, i.e., no longer has any explicit memory of them, they could be known by a superior mind" (VI vi 55).<sup>28</sup> Leibniz insists: "I have also pointed out that in consequence of imperceptible variations no two individual things could be perfectly alike, and that they must always differ more than numerically" (VI vi 57).<sup>29</sup> In short, as he writes: "This knowledge of insensible perceptions also explains why and how two souls of the same species, human or otherwise, never leave the hands of the Creator perfectly alike, each of them having its own inherent relationship to the points of view which it will have in the universe. But that follows from what I have said about two individuals, namely that the difference between them is always more than numerical" (VI vi 58).<sup>30</sup>

Leibniz's account of the sameness and difference among souls offers a neat way of explaining the activities of the soul and accounting for their differences. All souls act and express the same world, but they do so differently, sometimes radically so. The asparagus that is growing to be white and the dog that is being stroked expresses the same world as do I, but they express and perceive that world in radically different way. My expression is much clearer than the dog, which is itself dramatically clearer than the vegetable and yet my vegetative powers are like those of the asparagus and my sentient powers like the dog's. Leibniz can have his vegetables and eat them too: souls are everywhere simple and without parts, but they nonetheless can be distinguished. Leibniz makes the point succinctly in a letter to Queen Sophie Charlotte (quoted in §3) where he distinguishes among "vegetative, sensitive, rational" souls by means of their degrees of clarity and insists "that the sensitive soul is vegetative at the same time, and that the rational soul is sensitive and vegetative at the same time, and that the rational soul is sensitive and vegetative, and that thus one single soul in us includes these three degrees, without its being necessary to conceive of three souls in us."<sup>31</sup>

When I eat the white asparagus and stroke the dog, I stand in preestablished harmony with real mind-like souls. When I taste the sweet flesh of the vegetable and hear the satisfied purr of the animal, I am experiencing "well-founded phenomena." In 1705, Leibniz explains that such experiences "are not so much substances or things as the phenomena of perceivers, whose reality is located in the harmony of perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with the other perceivers" (G II 270: L 537). As he summarizes this part of his system: "[E]very *real aggregate*

[or experienced body] presupposes *simple substances* or *real Unities*. And when one considers further what belongs to the nature of these real unities, that is to say *perception* and its consequences, one is transported, so to speak, into another world, that is to say into the *intelligible World* of substances, whereas previously one was only among the *phenomena of the senses*. And this knowledge of the interior of matter makes visible enough what it is naturally capable of, and that every time that God gives it appropriate organs for expressing reasoning, the immaterial substance that reasons will not fail to be given to it too, in virtue of that harmony which is also a natural consequence of the substances. Matter [and corporeal things generally] could not subsist without immaterial substances, that is to say without Unities.... And if these substances did not have the correspondence or harmony among them of which I just spoke, God would not be acting according to the natural order” (G II 92-94).

Nor does Leibniz leave it at that. He uses his account of the activities and perceptions of souls to explain the “remarkable” activities of appetite and digestion. He writes in the *Nouveaux Essais*:

“That emerges also in the difference between appetite and hunger, for when the disturbance of the stomach becomes too strong it causes discomfort. So this is another case requiring our doctrine about perceptions which are too minute for us to be aware of them; for if what goes on in us when we have appetite and desire were sufficiently amplified it would cause suffering. That is why the infinitely wise Author of our being was acting in our interests when he brought it about that we are often ignorant and subject to confused perceptions – so that we could act the more quickly by instinct, and not be troubled by excessively distinct sensations of hosts of objects which, necessary though they are to nature's plan, are not entirely agreeable to us” (VI vi 164).<sup>32</sup>

The answer to our third question is surprisingly straightforward. Instead of multiplying souls and powers, Leibniz explains the various of souls in terms of mind-like entities and their perceptions. He manages to de-partition the soul and deftly explain all “the remarkable things” that souls do.

## **6. Conclusion**

The success and power of Leibniz’s de-partitioning the soul is striking. He rejects the Aristotelian world of organic, embodied souls and replaces it with a world of mind-like

perceiving substances. He does not become lost in the labyrinth of the parts and powers of the soul because he does not enter it. Rather, he fills the world with simple, active, and unified realities that can both ground the metaphysics of preestablished harmony and adequately explain the diverse tasks souls perform. In the end, he offers a metaphysics based on simple mind-like substances that manages to keep souls simple while deftly explaining their various activities. The metaphysical power of these simple souls is impressive.

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<sup>1</sup> Dominik Perler, “How Many Souls Do I Have?: Late Aristotelian Debates on the Plurality of Faculties,” in *Soul and Body: Aristotle’s de Anima in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. J.-M. Counet and R. Friedman (Leuven: Peeters), in press.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923-) [hereafter A]. Cited by volume, series and page numbers; *G.W. Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, eds. and trs. R. Ariew and D. Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989. *G. W. Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*, trans. Daniel Garber and Daniel Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991) [hereafter cited as AG]. “[T]oute substance est comme un monde entier et comme un miroir de Dieu ou bien de tout l’univers, qu’elle exprime chacune à sa façon, à peu près comme une même ville est diversement représentée selon les différentes situations de celui qui la regarde. Ainsi l’univers est en quelque façon multiplié autant de fois qu’il y a de substances, et la gloire de Dieu est redoublée de même par autant de représentations toutes différentes de son ouvrage. On peut même dire que toute substance porte en quelque façon le caractère de la sagesse infinie et de la toute-puissance de Dieu, et l’imite autant qu’elle en est susceptible. Car elle exprime, quoique confusément, tout ce qui arrive dans l’univers, passé, présent ou avenir, ce qui a quelque ressemblance à une perception ou connaissance infinie ; et comme toutes les autres substances expriment celle-ci à leur tour, et s’y accommodent, on peut dire qu’elle étend sa puissance sur toutes les autres à l’imitation de la toute-puissance du Créateur” (A VI iv [B] 1542).

<sup>3</sup> G. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. P Remnant and J, Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The pagination of the Remnant-Bennett translation mirrors that of the Academy edition. “Car en effet je donne de la perception à tous ces Etres infinis, dont chacun est comme un animal, doué d’Ame (ou de quelque principe actif Analogique, qui en fait la vraie Unité), avec ce qu’il faut à cet Estre pour être passif et doué d’un corps organique. Or ces Etres ont reçu leur nature tant active que passive (c’est à dire, ce qu’ils ont d’immatériel et de matériel) d’une cause generale et supreme, parce qu’autrement, comme l’auteur le remarque très-bien, étant independans les uns des autres, ils ne pourroient jamais produire cet Ordre, cette Harmonie, cette Beauté qu’on remarque dans la nature. Mais cet argument qui ne paroît être que d’une certitude morale, est poussé à une nécessité tout à fait metaphysique, par la nouvelle espece d’harmonie, que j’ai introduite, qui est l’harmonie préetablie. Car chacune des ces Ames exprimant à sa maniere ce qui se passe au dehors et ne pouvant l’avoir par aucune influence des autres Etres particuliers, ou plutôt, devant tirer cette expression du propre fonds de sa nature; il faut necessairement que chacune ait reçu cette nature (ou cette raison interne des expressions de ce qui est au dehors) d’une cause universelle, dont ces Etres dependent tous, et qui fasse que l’un soit parfaitement d’accord et correspondant avec l’autre. Ce qui ne se peut sans une connoissance et puissance infinies, et par un artifice si grand par raport sur tout au consentement spontané de la machine avec les actions de l’ame raisonnable” (A VI vi 440).

<sup>4</sup> Important contributions to this shift include Charles B. Schmitt, "Towards a Reassessment of Renaissance Aristotelianism," *History of Science* 11 (1973): 153-94 and *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983; Dennis Des Chene, *Physiologia: Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996 and *Physiologia: Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996; L. W. B. Brockliss, "Aristotle, Descartes, and the New Science: Natural Philosophy at the University of Paris, 1600 - 1740," *Annals of Science* 38 (1981): 33-69; Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996; Roger Ariew, *Descartes and the Last Scholastics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999; Philip Beeley, *Kontinuität und Mechanismus*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996; C. H. Leijenhorst, C. Lüthy, and J.M.M.H. Thijssen, (eds.), *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2002 (= *Medieval and Early Modern Science*, vol. 5), 413-40; C. Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism: The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes's Natural Philosophy*, Leiden: Brill, 2002; and C. Lüthy, J. Murdoch, and W. R. Newman, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Corpuscular Matter Theories*, Leiden: Brill, 2001; Pamela H. Smith, *The Business of Alchemy: Science and Culture in the Holy Roman Empire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 and *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004; and my "Mechanizing Aristotle: Leibniz and Reformed Philosophy," *Oxford Studies in the History of Philosophy*, vol. 2., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, 117-152. Important reconsiderations of the period continue. See, e.g., *Tradurre Filosofia: Esperienze di Traduzione di Testi Filosofici del Seicento e del Settecento*, ed. Pino Totaro, Florence: Leo S. Olschki and Lessico Intellettuale Europeo e Storia delle Idee, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> About the rhetorical flair of the scholastics in arguing against their scholastic predecessors, see Charles Schmitt, "Aristotle as Cuddfish," *Aristotle as a Cuttlefish: The Origin and Development of an Image*, *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 60-72 and my "The Vitality and Importance of Early Modern Aristotelianism", *The Rise Of Modern Philosophy: The Tension Between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz*, ed. Tom Sorell, Oxford University Press, 1993, 33-67. Paperback edition, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> René Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 11 vols. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1983), III 470.

<sup>7</sup> For a more complete account of the distinction between the first- and second-wave mechanists and Leibniz's complaints about the former, see my *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origin and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, chapters 2-4, and "Platonism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy: The Case of Leibniz and Conway," *Neoplatonic Natural Philosophy*, eds. Christoph Horn and James Wilberding, Oxford University Press, in press.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, trans. Allison Coudert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 63 Conway-, *Principles*, 63-4.

<sup>9</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. Arthur H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), V.4.1.6-15. See also V.1.6.37-39; IV.3.10.32-42; V.5.9.1-10.

<sup>11</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia Platonica, de immortalitate animorum* (Paris, 1559; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995) [hereafter 1559].; Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, ed. James Hankins, trans. Michael J. B. Allen, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001-2006) [hereafter HA]. "Sed inter illa quae sunt aeterna solum atque illa quae solum sunt temporalia esse animam quasi quoddam vinculum utrorumque. Cui quidem hac in re similes quodammodo sunt partes corporis mundani praecipuae. Sunt et qui caelum empyreum tamquam prorsus immobile in aeternitate ponant, ceteras vero sphaeras in aeternitate simul et tempore, composita denique in tempore tantum; similiter quoque puros intellectus in gradu primo, sed intellectus animales in secundo, tandem animas corporales in tertio" (1559 43r-43v: HA Bk 3, Ch. 2).

<sup>12</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the role of Platonism in early modern natural philosophy, see my “Platonism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy: The Case of Leibniz and Conway,” *Neoplatonic Natural Philosophy*, eds. Christoph Horn and James Wilberding, Oxford University Press, forthcoming. For a recent discussion of the influence of Ficino’s *Theologia platonica* in the early modern period, see Errico Vitale, “Tradurre la *Theologia platonica* di Ficino,” in *Tradurre Filosofia: Esperienze di Traduzione di Testi Filosofici del Seicento e del Settecento*, ed. Pino Totaro, Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2011, pp. 279-290.

<sup>13</sup> For a more thorough account of Leibniz’s debt to the Platonist tradition, see my *Leibniz’s Metaphysics*, esp. chapters 5-8.

<sup>14</sup> *Specimen Quaestionum Philosophicarum ex Jure Collectarum* (1664): “[E]t quomodo vivens unum maneret.... Et negandum etiam est fieri unquam, ut homo omnes partes amittat, certe probabile est, certis partibus animam quasi firmiter implantatam esse, ut alibi vitae fons sit, alibi rivuli discurrant, eas vero semper permanere. Judæorum vero Rabbini lepide habitaculum animae struxerunt in certa parte corporis, quod nulla vi, nullo malleo dijici possit, atque illa in aula mortuo etiam homine regnare jusserunt” (VI i 91).

<sup>15</sup> “Deum et ipsam vitae formam; et si quid aliud est immortale, etiam indissolubile esse.... Sed hoc mea sententia demonstrandum restabat, quicquid vitae sit particeps, non posse extinguui” (VI iii 295).

<sup>16</sup> “Car je soutiens que naturellement, une substance ne sauroit estre sans action.”

<sup>17</sup> “Et uti DEUS cogitat ea quae nullo sensu percipit, quia ex sua natura sequuntur, ita et Mens.... Mens et Deus non differunt nisi ut finitum et infinitum” (VI ii 287-88).

<sup>18</sup> “il est premierement tres manifeste que les substances creées dependent de Dieu, qui les conserve, et même qui les produit continuellement par une maniere d’emanation, comme nous produisons nous pensées” A Vi iv [B] 1549: AG 46.

<sup>19</sup> “L’unité substantielle demande un estre accompli indivisible, et naturellement indestructible, puisque sa notion enveloppe tout ce qui luy doit arriver, ce qu’on ne sçauroit trouver ny dans la figure ny dans le mouvement ..., mais bien dans une ame ou forme substantielle à l’exemple de ce qu’on appelle moy. Ce sont là les seuls estres accomplis veritables comme les anciens avoient reconnu, et sur tout Platon, qui a fort clairement monstré que la scule matiere ne se suffit pas pour former une substance” (G II 76: AG 79).

<sup>20</sup> “[P]hilosophi veteres his rebus, quas Unum per se facere dixerunt, tribuerunt formas substantiales, ut Mentis, Animas seu primas Entelechias, et negarunt Materiam per se aliquod Unum Ens esse. Certe quae his carent, non magis unum Ens sunt quam strues lignorum... Certe nec momento amplius eadem perseverant, cum tamen verae substantiae maneant sub mutationibus” (VI iv [A] 627).

<sup>21</sup> “Au lieu que je tiens, qu’on ne sçauroit mieux retablir la philosophie, et la reduire à quelque chose de precis, que de reconnoistre les seules substances ou Estres accomplis, doués d’une veritable unité avec leur differens estats qui s’entresuivent, tout le reste n’estant que des phenomenes, des abstractions ou des rapports” (G II 101: AG 89).

<sup>22</sup> There is a lot of literature on the importance of Leibniz’s views about unity. For a discussion of this and other ideas in his important correspondence with Arnauld, see R. C. Sleight, Jr., *Leibniz and Arnauld: A Commentary on their Correspondence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. For a discussion of the development of his views about unity, see my *Leibniz’s Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; paper back, 2006 and “Leibniz and Sleight on Substantial Unity,” *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, eds. Donald Rutherford and J.A. Cover, Oxford University Press, 2005. For a recent discussion of some of these issues, especially as they relate to Leibniz’s conception of body and for citation to recent discussions, see Daniel Garber, *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> G. W. Leibniz, *Mathematische Schriften*, ed. C.I. Gerhardt, 7 vols, 1848-63 (Berlin: A. Asher/Halle: H.W. Schmidt; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962) [hereafter G]. G VI 521.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout his life, Leibniz is keen to announce that he is returning the philosophy of Aristotle and “rehabilitating substantial forms.” E.g., He writes in a letter of 1679: “There is another important thing in my philosophy which will give it access to the Jesuits and theologians. This is my restoration of

substantial forms, which the atomists and the Cartesians claim to have exterminated.” But Leibniz insists that, unlike what the Aristotelians have said about them, his account of substantial forms is “as intelligible as anything that the Cartesians have ever proposed” (II i 490: L 261). For a discussion of Leibniz’s use of Aristotelian ideas, see my *Leibniz’s Metaphysics*, esp. chapters 2-5. For a slightly different reading of this rehabilitation, see Garber, *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*, passim.

<sup>25</sup> G II 270: G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. and trans. L. E. Loemker (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969) [hereafter L], L537.

<sup>26</sup> “Or dans la rigueur de la verité Metaphysique, il n’y a point de cause externe qui agisse sur nous, excepté Dieu seul, et luy seul communique avec nous immediatement en vertu de nostre dependance continuelle. D’où il s’ensuit qu’il n’y a point d’autre objet externe, qui touche nostre ame, et qui excite immediatement nostre perception. Aussi n’avons nous dans nostre ame les idées de toutes choses, qu’en vertu de l’action continuelle de Dieu sur nous, c’est à dire parce que tout effect exprime sa cause, et qu’ainsi l’essence de nostre ame est une certaine expression, imitation ou image de l’essence, pensée et volonté divine, et de toutes les idées qui y sont comprises. On peut donc dire, que Dieu seul est nostre objet immediat hors de nous, et que nous voyons toutes choses par luy....”

<sup>27</sup> “C’est pour celà que la mort ne sauroit estre qu’un someil, et même ne sauroit en demeurer un, les perceptions cessant seulement à être assez distinguées et se reduisant à un état de confusion dans les animaux, qui suspend l’apperception, mais qui ne sauroit durer toujours. C’est aussi par les perceptions insensibles que j’explique cette admirable harmonie préestablie de l’ame et du corps, et même de toutes les Monades ou substances simples qui supplée à l’influence insoutenable des uns sur les autres, et qui au jugement de l’auteur du plus beau des Dictionnaires exalte la grandeur des perfections divines au delà de ce qu’on a jamais conçu. Après celà j’ajouterois peu de chose, si je disois que ce sont ces petites perceptions qui nous déterminent en bien des rencontres sans qu’on y pense.”

<sup>28</sup> “Ces perceptions insensibles marquent encore et constituent le même individu, qui est caracterisé par les traces, qu’elles conservent des estats précédens de cet individu, en faisant la connexion avec son estat present, qui se peuvent connoistre par un esprit superieur.”

<sup>29</sup> “J’ay aussi remarqué, qu’en vertu des variations insensibles deux choses individuelles ne sauroient estre parfaitement semblables, et qu’elles doivent toujours differer plus que numero.”

<sup>30</sup> “Cette connoissance des perceptions insensibles sert aussi à expliquer pourquoy et comment deux ames humaines, out autrement d’une même espece, ne sortent jamais parfaitement semblables des mains du Createur, et ont toujours chacune son rapport originaire aux points de veuë, qu’elles auront dans l’univers. Mais c’est ce qui suit déjà de ce, que j’avois remarqué de deux individus; savoir, qui leur difference est toujours plus que numerique.”

<sup>31</sup> G VI 521. My emphasis.

<sup>32</sup> “On voit aussi cela par la difference, qu’il y a entre l’appetit et la faim, car quand l’irritation de l’estomac devient trop forte elle incommodé, de sorte qu’il faut encore appliquer ici nôtre doctrine des perceptions trop petites pour être apperçûës, car si ce qui se passe en nous lorsque nous avons de l’appetit et du desir étoit assés grossi, il nous causeroit de la douleur. C’est pourquoi l’Auteur infiniment sage de nôtre être l’a fait pour nôtre bien, quand il a fait en sorte que nous soyons souvent dans l’ignorance et dans des perceptions confuses, c’est afin que nous agissions plus promptement par instinct, et nous ne soyons pas incommodés par des sensations trop distinctes de quantité d’objets, qui ne nous reviennent pas tout à fait, et dont la nature n’a pû se passer pour obtenir ses fins.”