

LEIBNIZ AND THE TWO SOPHIES

*The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe:  
The Toronto Series, 10*

The Other Voice in  
Early Modern Europe:  
The Toronto Series



**SERIES EDITORS** Margaret L. King *and* Albert Rabil, Jr.

*Recent Publications in the Series*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1<br>MADRE MARÍA ROSA<br><i>Journey of Five Capuchin Nuns</i><br>Edited and translated by Sarah E. Owens<br>2009  | 6<br>PERNETTE DU GUILLET<br><i>Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition</i><br>Edited by Karen Simroth James<br>Translated by Marta Rijn Finch<br>2010   |
| 2<br>GIOVAN BATTISTA ANDREINI<br><i>Love in the Mirror: A Bilingual Edition</i><br>Edited and translated by Jon R. Snyder<br>2009   | 7<br>ANTONIA PULCI<br><i>Saints' Lives and Bible Stories for the Stage:<br/>A Bilingual Edition</i><br>Edited by Elissa B. Weaver<br>Translated by James Wyatt Cook<br>2010                   |
| 3<br>RAYMOND DE SABANAC AND SIMONE<br>ZANACCHI<br><i>Two Women of the Great Schism: The<br/>Revelations of Constance de Rabastens<br/>by Raymond de Sabanac and Life of the<br/>Blessed Ursulina of Parma by Simone<br/>Zanacchi</i><br>Edited and translated by Renate<br>Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Bruce L. Venarde<br>2010 | 8<br>VALERIA MIANI<br><i>Celinda, A Tragedy: A Bilingual Edition</i><br>Edited by Valeria Finucci<br>Translated by Julia Kisacky<br>Annotated by Valeria Finucci and Julia<br>Kisacky<br>2010 |
| 4<br>OLIVA SABUCO DE NANTES BARRERA<br><i>The True Medicine</i><br>Edited and translated by Gianna Pomata<br>2010   | 9<br><i>Enchanted Eloquence: Fairy Tales by<br/>Seventeenth-Century French Women<br/>Writers</i><br>Edited and translated by Lewis C. Seifert<br>and Domna C. Stanton<br>2010                 |
| 5<br>LOUISE-GENEVIÈVE GILLOT DE<br>SAINCTONGE<br><i>Dramatizing Dido, Circe, and Griselda</i><br>Edited and translated by Janet Levarie Smarr<br>2010   |   |

# Leibniz and the Two Sophies: The Philosophical Correspondence



*Edited and translated by*

LLOYD STRICKLAND



Iter Inc.  
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies  
Toronto  
2011

Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance

Tel: 416/978-7074 Fax: 416/978-1668

Email: [iter@utoronto.ca](mailto:iter@utoronto.ca)

Web: [www.itergateway.org](http://www.itergateway.org)

CRRS Publications, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies

Victoria University in the University of Toronto

Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7 Canada

Tel: 416/585-4465 Fax: 416/585-4430

Email: [crrs.publications@utoronto.ca](mailto:crrs.publications@utoronto.ca)

Web: [www.crrs.ca](http://www.crrs.ca)

© 2011 Iter Inc. & the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies

All Rights Reserved

Printed in Canada

We thank the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for a generous grant of start-up funds for The Other Voice, Toronto Series, a portion of which supports the publication of this volume.

Iter and the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies gratefully acknowledge the generous support of James E. Rabil, in memory of Scottie W. Rabil, toward the publication of this book.

### **Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, Freiherr von, 1646-1716

Leibniz and the two Sophies [electronic resource] : the philosophical correspondence / edited and translated by Lloyd Strickland.

(The other voice in early modern Europe : the Toronto series ; 10)

Co-published by: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Issued also in print format.

ISBN 978-0-7727-2084-9

1. Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, Freiherr von, 1646-1716—Correspondence. 2. Sophia, Electress, consort of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, 1630-1714—Correspondence. 3. Sophie Charlotte, Queen, consort of Frederick I, King of Prussia, 1668-1705—Correspondence. I. Sophia, Electress, consort of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, 1630-1714 II. Sophie Charlotte, Queen, consort of Frederick I, King of Prussia, 1668-1705 III. Strickland, Lloyd, 1973- IV. Victoria University (Toronto, Ont.). Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies V. Iter Inc VI. Title. VII. Series: Other voice in early modern Europe. Toronto series ; 10 B2597.A4 2011a

193

C2011-902789-5

Cover illustration: XPH 330614 Credit: Sophie Charlotte von Preussen, c.1690 (oil on canvas), Romandon, Gedeon (c.1667-97) / Maerkisches Museum, Berlin, Germany / The Bridgeman Art Library International

Cover design: Maureen Morin, Information Technology Services, University of Toronto Libraries

Typesetting and production: Iter Inc.

Dedication

*For Vicky*



## Contents

---

Acknowledgments	xi
Manuscript Sources	xii
Introduction	1
The Other Voice	1
Personal Relations: Sophie, Sophie Charlotte, and Leibniz	5
A Brief Overview of the Correspondences	30
Leibniz's Presentation of His Philosophy in the Correspondences	34
Sophie and Philosophy	49
Note on Texts and Translations	64
Translation	69
1. Sophie to Leibniz (5/15 October 1691)	69
2. Sophie to Anna Katharina von Harling for Leibniz (8/18 October 1691)	71
3. Sophie to Anna Katharina von Harling for Leibniz (10/20 October 1691)	74
4. Leibniz to Sophie (13/23 October 1691)	75
5. Sophie to Leibniz (15/25 October 1691)	81
6. Leibniz to Sophie (16/26 October 1691)	82
7. Sophie to Leibniz (20/30 October 1691)	84
8. Leibniz to Sophie (23 October/2 November 1691)	86
9. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (10/20 February 1692)	95
10. Leibniz: Summary of a conversation with Sophie (29 December 1692/8 January 1693)	98
11. Leibniz to Sophie (3/13 September 1694)	101
12. Sophie to Leibniz (4/14 September 1694)	114
13. Leibniz to Sophie (second half of September (?) 1694)	116
14. Elisabeth Charlotte to Sophie (2 August 1696)	119
15. Leibniz to Sophie (4/14 August 1696)	122

16. Leibniz to Sophie and Elisabeth Charlotte (6/16 August 1696)	125
17. Francis Mercury van Helmont: A Résumé of Philosophy (September 1696)	127
18. Sophie to Leibniz (early October 1696)	132
19. Leibniz: Thoughts on van Helmont's Doctrines (first half of October (?), 1696)	134
20. Sophie to Leibniz (early November 1696)	141
21. Leibniz to Sophie and Duchess Elisabeth Charlotte of Orléans (28 October/7 November 1696)	143
22. Leibniz to Sophie and Elisabeth Charlotte (4/14 November 1696)	150
23. Sophie to Leibniz (8/18 or 9/19 May 1697)	156
24. Leibniz to Sophie (9/19 May 1697)	158
25. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (9/19 May 1697)	159
26. Marie de Brinon to Sophie (2 July 1697)	162
27. Leibniz to Sophie (July 1697)	165
28. Sophie to Marie de Brinon (13/23 August 1697)	167
29. Leibniz to Sophie (10/20 September 1697)	169
30. Leibniz to Sophie (fall (?) 1697)	173
31. Leibniz to Sophie (5/15 August 1699)	182
32. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (22 August/1 September 1699)	184
33. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (28 November/8 December 1699)	185
34. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (9/19 December 1699)	188
35. Sophie to Leibniz (2 June 1700)	189
36. G. W. Molanus: The soul and its nature (1 or 2 June 1700)	191
37. Leibniz: The soul and its operations (12 June 1700)	197
38. Sophie to Leibniz (16 June 1700)	203
39. Leibniz to Sophie (middle-end June 1700)	204
40. Sophie to Leibniz (26 June 1700)	206
41. Leibniz to Sophie (19 November 1701)	207
42. Sophie to Leibniz (21 November 1701)	210
43. Leibniz to Sophie (30 November 1701)	212
44. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (end of March 1702)	214
45. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (29 March 1702)	216



46. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (22 April 1702)	218
47. Leibniz: On what is Beyond the External Senses and Matter (March–June (?) 1702)	220
48. Leibniz: Letter on what is Beyond the Senses and Matter (March–June (?) 1702)	225
49. Leibniz: Letter on what is Independent of Sense and Matter (mid-June (?) 1702)	237
50. John Toland to Sophie Charlotte (late July–early November 1702)	248
51. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (August–early November (?) 1702)	257
52. Leibniz: Reflections on the Doctrine of a Single Universal Spirit (August–early November (?) 1702)	278
53. Leibniz to Sophie (9 September 1702)	291
54. Sophie to Leibniz (13 September 1702)	292
55. Leibniz to Sophie (mid-September 1702)	293
56. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (first half of November (?) 1702)	295
57. Leibniz to Sophie (18 November 1702)	298
58. Sophie to Leibniz (27 November 1702)	300
59. Sophie to Leibniz (13 December 1702)	301
60. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (5 August 1703)	302
61. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (14 August 1703)	304
62. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (17 November 1703)	305
63. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (4 December 1703)	306
64. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (7 December 1703)	308
65. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (8 May 1704)	310
66. Sophie Charlotte to Louise von Hohenzollern (summer 1704 (?))	318
67. Leibniz: The Principle of Uniformity (summer 1704 (?))	319
68. Leibniz to Sophie (31 October 1705)	321
69. Leibniz to Sophie (6 February 1706)	344
70. The Duke of Orléans to Leibniz (21 February 1706)	352
71. Leibniz to Sophie (early? March 1706)	354
72. Louise Hollandine to Sophie (14 November 1707)	361
73. Leibniz to Sophie (29 November 1707)	362
74. Leibniz to Sophie (25 September 1708)	365

75. Leibniz to Sophie (April 1709)	395
76. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle to the Marquis de La Fare (c. 1700–1711?)	401
77. Leibniz to Sophie (26 June 1711)	406
78. Sophie to Leibniz (27 April 1713)	410
79. Leibniz to Sophie (6 May 1713)	412
80. Sophie to Leibniz (16 May 1713)	414
81. Leibniz to Sophie (1714?)	415
 Appendix 1: Fragmenta	 418
1. Sophie to Leibniz (4/14 May 1691)	418
2. Leibniz to Sophie (early August (?) 1697)	419
3. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (29 December 1697/8 January 1698)	420
4. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (May 1698)	422
5. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (27 April/7 May 1699)	423
6. Leibniz to Sophie (12/22 July 1699)	425
7. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (August (?) 1702)	427
8. Sophie to Leibniz (10 January 1705)	428
9. Leibniz to Sophie (4 January 1707)	429
 Appendix 2: Supplementary Texts	 430
1. Robert Scott to Sophie (9/19 November 1691)	430
2. Leibniz (and Francis Mercury van Helmont?): “Preface to the Second Edition of Boëthius’s <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> ” (9 June 1696)	433
3. [Unknown author] to Sophie: Thoughts on the Fleming-Leibniz-Toland Debate (August–November (?) 1702)	436
 Bibliography	 439
 Index of Persons	 455
 Index of Names	 460

## Acknowledgments

---

This book has benefited considerably from the advice and assistance of others. In particular I would like to thank:

Harry Parkinson and Geert de Wilde, both of whom provided invaluable assistance with a number of the texts in this volume.

Philip Beeley and Michael Pickles for looking over some of my translations; their suggestions greatly improved the end result.

Stuart Brown and Dan Cook for making helpful comments on the introductory essay.

Vernon Pratt, not only for his useful comments on the introductory essay, but also for his insightful discussions on some of the topics discussed in it.

The delegates of the conference *Lectures et interprétations des Essais de Théodicée de G. W. Leibniz*, held at the Sorbonne, Paris, in June 2010, for their comments on my paper “Leibniz’s presentation of his theodicy in his correspondence with Sophie and Sophie Charlotte,” parts of which were used in the introductory essay.

The Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek, Hanover, and the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hanover, for allowing me to study a number of manuscripts held in their archives, and for granting me permission to publish my translations of them.

The Akademie Verlag, for granting me permission to use my translations of various extracts from the edited volumes in the first series (Erste Reihe) of *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*.

The publisher of *Hypatia*, for allowing me to reuse material from my article “The Philosophy of Sophie, Electress of Hanover” in the introductory essay. The article appeared in *Hypatia* 24 (2009), 186–204.

David Morgans and David Cockburn, for their friendship and academic support during the time the book was being completed.

## Manuscript Sources

---

For each of the manuscripts cited in this volume I have provided the name of the holding archive and the signature under which the manuscript is held. Details of the relevant holding archives are as follows:

*British Library*, St. Pancras, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB, United Kingdom

*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, Waterloostraße 8, 30169 Hannover, Germany

*Herzog August Bibliothek*, Postfach 1364, D-38299 Wolfenbüttel, Germany

*Niedersächsische Landesarchiv*, Am Archiv 1, D-30169 Hannover, Germany

### KEY

When describing the manuscript sources of the texts in this volume, the following terms are used:

**Draft**—A version of a letter or text not intended for dispatch, usually with additions, deletions, and corrections.

**Fair copy**—A neatly written version of a letter or text, usually made from an initial draft, and usually intended for dispatch.

**Copy**—A copy of a dispatched letter or text made for the author's own private use.

**Extract**—A partial copy of a dispatched letter intended for the author's own private use.

### ABBREVIATIONS

References to the published works of Leibniz are abbreviated as follows:

A     *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Akademie der Wissenschaften, multiple volumes in 8 series (Berlin:

- Akademie Verlag, 1923-). Cited by series (reihe) and volume (band).
- AG *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989).
- C *Writings on China*, ed. and trans. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont Jr. (Chicago: Open Court, 1994).
- CP *Confessio Philosophi*, ed. and trans. Robert Sleigh Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- E *Opera Philosophica*, ed. J. E. Erdmann (Berlin: Eicher, 1839–40).
- FC *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits de Leibniz*, ed. Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil (Paris: Ladrangé, 1854).
- G *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, 7 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1875–90).
- GM *Mathematische Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, 7 vols. (Berlin: A. Asher, 1849–63).
- Grua *Textes inédits*, ed. Gaston Grua, 2 vols. with successive pagination (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948).
- H *Theodicy*, ed. Austin Farrar, trans. E. M. Huggard (Chicago: Open Court, 1990).
- Klopp *Die Werke von Leibniz*, ed. Onno Klopp, 11 vols. (Hanover: Klindworth, 1864–84).
- L *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Leroy E. Loemker (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969).

- LA *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*, ed. and trans. H. T. Mason (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967).
- LNS *Leibniz's 'New System' and Associated Contemporary Texts*, ed. and trans. R. S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- NE *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- P *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1973).
- R *The Political Writings of Leibniz*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- SLT *Shorter Leibniz Texts*, ed. and trans. Lloyd Strickland (London: Continuum, 2006).
- W *Leibniz Selections*, ed. and trans. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Scribner, 1951).

In addition to the above, the following historical sources are abbreviated as follows:

- Bod *Aus den Briefen der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans an die Sophie Kurfürstin von Hannover*, ed. Eduard Bodemann, 2 vols. (Hanover: Hahn, 1891).
- LDB Louis des Bans, *L'art de connoistre les hommes* (Paris, 1702).
- SP *State Papers and Correspondence*, ed. John M. Kemble (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1857).

LEIBNIZ AND THE TWO SOPHIES



Königin Sophie Charlotte und Leibniz (1846)



## Introduction

---

### *The Other Voice*

It is a commonplace view among scholars who relate the history of early modern philosophy that in this history, both Sophie, Electress of Hanover (1630–1714), and her daughter, Queen Sophie Charlotte of Prussia (1668–1705), qualify for a footnote, which in both cases reads: patron and correspondent of the great philosopher Leibniz.<sup>1</sup> More munificent scholars expand this entry to include the claim that both women had an interest in philosophy.<sup>2</sup> By that what is usually meant is that they read philosophical works and encouraged others to do the same. The roots of such a view go back a long way. John Toland, who met Sophie in 1701 and 1702, wrote of her: “She has bin long admir’d by all the Learned World, as a Woman of incomparable Knowledge in Divinity, Philosophy, History, and the Subjects of all sorts of Books, of which she has read a prodigious quantity.”<sup>3</sup> Two hundred years later, Adolphus Ward painted much the same picture:

Beyond a doubt, Sophia was distinguished by an intellectual curiosity that was still uncommon, though much less so than

1. See, for example, Marilyn Bailey Ogilvie, *Women in Science: A Biographical Dictionary with Annotated Bibliography* (London: MIT Press, 1986), 166–67; Patricia Fara, “Leibniz’s Women,” *Endeavour* 28 (2004): 146–48; Stuart Brown and N. J. Fox, *Historical Dictionary of Leibniz’s Philosophy* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 213.

2. Ethel M. Kersey, *Women Philosophers: A Bio-Critical Source Book* (London: Greenwood Press, 1989), 189–90; Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, eds., *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2: 1464; Jacqueline Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16, 126–27. Some do not even grant Sophie and Sophie Charlotte the status of a minor footnote: in one large volume on the history of women philosophers, for instance, Sophie gets only a single, passing mention, as someone who may have had a conversation with George Burnet about Catharine Trotter’s *Defence* of Locke. See Mary Ellen Waithe, ed., *A History of Women Philosophers*, vol. 3, 1600–1900 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 123.

3. John Toland, *An account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover; sent to a minister of state in Holland by Mr. Toland* (London, 1705), 67. See also John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (London, 1704), preface §7.

## 2 Introduction

is often supposed, among the women of her age... She certainly had a liking for moral theology and philosophy, which were, in general, more in the way of the ladies of the period than the historical sciences.<sup>4</sup>

And a contemporary writer tells us that Sophie “expressed an interest in philosophy” and “was extremely curious about intellectual matters, and encouraged the philosophical interests of her daughter, Sophie-Charlotte.”<sup>5</sup> Such remarks give the impression that the extent of Sophie’s involvement with philosophy was to keep abreast of the philosophy of others and encourage others to do the same. Such an interest in philosophy would be, of course, essentially a passive one.<sup>6</sup>

The same story is told of Sophie Charlotte. Her enthusiasm for philosophy was legendary in her own time; for instance, John Toland wrote after meeting her: “Her Reading is infinit, and she is conversant in all manner of Subjects; nor is She more admir’d for her inimitable Wit, than for her exact Knowledg of the most abstruse parts of Philosophy.”<sup>7</sup> Stories of her genius were also passed down to her grandson, Frederick II, who wrote of her:

She was a princess of distinguished merit, who combined all the charms of her sex with the graces of wit and the lights of reason... This princess brought to Prussia the spirit of good society, true politeness, and the love of arts and sciences... She summoned Leibniz and many other learned men to her court; her curiosity wanted to grasp the first principles of

4. Adolphus William Ward, *The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession* (London: Goupil & Co., 1903), 191–93.

5. Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*, 16 and 126–27.

6. At times Leibniz himself likewise portrays Sophie’s interest in philosophy as essentially passive, for example when he claims that “Madam the Electress is a great genius. She loves rare and extraordinary thoughts in which there is something fine, curious and paradoxical.” Leibniz to Gabriel D’Artis, July 1695, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Akademie der Wissenschaften, multiple volumes in 8 series (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923–), I 11: 547 (cited hereafter as A, followed by series and volume).

7. Toland, *An account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 33. Toland also gushes in his *Letters to Serena* that Sophie Charlotte is a “Mistriss of a vast Compass of Knowledge.” Toland, *Letters to Serena*, preface §9.

things. One day she pressed Leibniz on this subject, and he said to her; “Madam, there is no way to satisfy you: you want to know the reason for the reason.”<sup>8</sup>

The picture painted by both Toland and Frederick II has long since become part of the philosophical landscape. For example, one contemporary writer describes Sophie Charlotte as “a ‘philosopher-Queen’ with a passion for learning,”<sup>9</sup> while another opts for the blunt characterization as “German patroness and disciple of Leibniz.”<sup>10</sup> As for her association with Leibniz, it has also been claimed that Sophie Charlotte “helped him by stimulating his philosophical thinking.”<sup>11</sup>

It is of course true that both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte provided Leibniz with friendship, patronage, and intellectual stimulation. It is also true that both had an interest in philosophy. But it does both a disservice to suppose that their place in the history of philosophy can be secured only through the services they rendered to Leibniz. Likewise, it does both a disservice to depict (intentionally or otherwise) their interest in philosophy as a passive one, since there is clear evidence that both actively engaged in philosophical discussion proper, and had contributions to make to the philosophical debates of their day. This evidence is to be found in their respective writings for Leibniz, but unfortunately nowhere else.<sup>12</sup> By restricting their philosophical writing to their letters for Leibniz, Sophie and Sophie Charlotte elected to keep their philosophical views private. While it is

8. Frederick II, King of Prussia, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de Brandebourg* (Berlin, 1750), 177–78.

9. Myriam Yardeni, “Huguenot Traces and Reminiscences in John Toland’s Conception of Tolerance,” in *The Religious Culture of the Huguenots 1660–1750*, ed. Anne Duncan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 175.

10. Kersey, *Women Philosophers*, 190.

11. Beatrice H. Zedler, “The Three Princesses,” *Hypatia* 4 (1989): 58.

12. In choosing to restrict their philosophical writing to their letters to Leibniz, Sophie and Sophie Charlotte took after Sophie’s sister, Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia (1618–80), who wrote philosophy only in her correspondence with René Descartes (1596–1650). Sophie had a minor role in the Elizabeth-Descartes correspondence, being the intermediary for several of the exchanges while Elizabeth was in Berlin. For the correspondence see Princess Elizabeth and René Descartes, *The Correspondence between Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*, ed. and trans. Lisa Shapiro (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007).

often true that letters were a semi-public form of communication in early modern times, this is not the case with the letters the two women wrote for Leibniz. These were personal, not for wider circulation, and certainly not for publication. On this matter they could count on Leibniz's discretion: their letters for him remained in his private collection, to which he alone had access. This effectively meant that their voices were not heard by anyone other than Leibniz until the latter half of the nineteenth century, when their letters to him were published for the first time.<sup>13</sup> Yet the publication of their letters still did not lead to their voices being heard: scholars who studied the correspondences in depth, and wrote of them in detail, elected not to mention, let alone discuss, the philosophical contributions of the two women.<sup>14</sup> No doubt part of the reason for this is the fact that scholarly interest in the contributions of women in early modern philosophy has developed only comparatively recently. Another factor is that the philosophical writings of Sophie and Sophie Charlotte are but a very small part of their respective correspondences with Leibniz, which are mostly filled with political news and court gossip. To find the philosophical material requires combing through volumes and volumes of writings, most of which are of no interest to philosophers. As a result, the voices of Sophie and Sophie Charlotte are much harder to detect than those of, for example, Anne Conway or Margaret Cavendish, who composed entire philosophical treatises. Nevertheless they are there. Sophie's voice is undoubtedly louder than that of her daughter, who lived less than half the years of her mother and so had considerably less time and opportunity to philosophize; for this reason, Sophie will occupy more of our attention in what follows.

13. In *Die Werke von Leibniz*, ed. Onno Klopp, 11 vols. (Hanover: Klindworth, 1864–84) (cited hereafter as Klopp). The correspondence with Sophie is to be found in vols. 7–9 (all published 1873), while the correspondence with Sophie Charlotte is to be found in vol. 10 (published 1877). In neither case is the correspondence complete, however.

14. See for example, Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil, *Leibniz et les deux Sophies* (Paris: G. Bailliere, 1876); George MacDonald Ross, "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte," in *Sophie Charlotte und ihr Schloß*, ed. S. Herz, C. M. Vogtherr, and F. Windt (London: 1999), 95–105; Michel Fichant, "Leibniz et Toland: philosophie pour princesses?" *Revue de Synthèse* 116 (1995): 421–39.

*Personal Relations: Sophie, Sophie Charlotte, and Leibniz*<sup>15</sup>

Among Anglophones, Sophie is and has always been best known as the German princess who was almost Queen of Great Britain. When she was born in 1630, Sophie's prospects did not seem particularly bright. She was the twelfth of thirteen children born to the exiled "Winter King" Frederick V (1596–1632), Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and Elizabeth Stuart (1596–1662). She relates in her memoirs that her name was chosen by lot, a method resorted to once it was realized that "all the kings and princes of consideration had already performed this office [i.e., finding a name] for the children that came before me."<sup>16</sup> She was educated by private tutors in Leiden and then the Hague, her city of birth (brought up, she says, "according to the good doctrine of Calvin,"<sup>17</sup> though her education also included history, philosophy, mathematics, and law), before going to live with her brother, Karl Ludwig (1617–80), following the restoration of the Palatinate. After a broken engagement to a Swedish prince and numerous marriage proposals from various nobles, in 1658 Sophie married Ernst August, son of George, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1582–1641). She had been briefly courted by Ernst August six years earlier but had not considered him a desirable match at the time because he was the youngest of four brothers and consequently had little prospect of inheriting a domain.<sup>18</sup> She had instead become engaged to his elder brother Georg Wilhelm, but he quickly got cold feet, and in an effort to extract himself honorably from his betrothal he made a pact with Ernst August: should Ernst August marry Sophie in his place, Georg Wilhelm promised never to take a wife and so produce any legitimate heirs, ensuring that all land and titles due to him would instead devolve to Ernst August,<sup>19</sup> an arrangement deemed acceptable both by Ernst August and Sophie. Four years after the marriage Ernst August was appointed

15. For full biographical details, I refer the reader to the bibliography.

16. Sophie, Electress of Hanover, *Memoirs*, ed. and trans. H. Forester (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1888), 2.

17. Sophie, *Memoirs*, 4.

18. Sophie, *Memoirs*, 46.

19. A copy of Georg Wilhelm's renunciation of marriage, including these promises, can be found in Sophie, *Memoirs*, 72–75.

bishop of Osnabrück; by this time he had fathered two children with Sophie, Georg Ludwig (1660–1727), and Friedrich August (1661–90). Five more children were to follow: Maximilian Wilhelm (1666–1726), Sophie Charlotte (1668–1705), Karl Philipp (1669–90), Christian Heinrich (1671–1703), and Ernst August (1674–1728). The status of the bishop prince once thought to be without prospects improved considerably with the death in 1679 of his elder brother, Johann Friedrich (1625–79), who had since 1665 ruled the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg (often referred to as Hanover after its principal town). As Georg Wilhelm had voluntarily relinquished his hereditary claim to the domain, Ernst August took over as duke upon Johann Friedrich's death. Three years earlier, Johann Friedrich had employed the services of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) as court counselor and librarian, and Leibniz's services, like those of other low-ranking officials, were retained by the incoming duke. Although relieved to have retained his job, the position was not the one that the young Leibniz had hoped for, or felt that his achievements deserved. And by the time he came into Hanover's employ his achievements were not inconsiderable: he had been awarded a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1662, a master's degree in 1664, and a doctorate in law in 1666, and in 1668 began work on legal reform for the Elector of Mainz. In 1672 he was dispatched to Paris on a diplomatic mission on behalf of the elector. When his employer died shortly afterward, Leibniz decided to remain in France to take advantage of the superior opportunities for intellectual development and networking, and while there he started to attract attention for his writings on jurisprudence and mathematics, as well as for his calculating machine. Despite all this promise, job offers were few and far between, and when it became clear that no possibility of a position in Paris would emerge Leibniz accepted the only offer on the table—counselor and librarian at the court of Hanover.<sup>20</sup>

Almost as soon as Ernst August had assumed the reins of power, Leibniz—keen to impress his new employer—bombarded him with various practical proposals, most of which would involve his promo-

20. For more information on Leibniz's early years in Hanover, see Nicholas Rescher, "Leibniz Finds a Niche (1676–1677)," in Nicholas Rescher, *On Leibniz* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 162–98.

tion from mere court counselor.<sup>21</sup> While the majority of these proposals met with indifference, two in particular caught the new elector's eye: the first was to continue with efforts to improve mining technology so as to increase the output of the Harz mines;<sup>22</sup> with various suggestions up his sleeve as to how this could be achieved, Leibniz assumed a role as mining engineer, which led him to spend almost three years in the Harz mines between 1680 and 1686, though success in the endeavor eluded him. The second proposal to meet with Ernst August's approval was the writing of the history of the House of Guelph (or Welf),<sup>23</sup> a European dynasty that included many monarchs and nobles from England and Germany, and detailing its links with the House of Este, an earlier European dynasty dating back to the time of Charlemagne. As a member of the Guelph line himself, and eager to establish his pedigree, albeit for dynastic rather than personal reasons, Ernst August saw the value of a well-researched Guelph history and needed little encouragement from his court counselor to give his blessing to the project.<sup>24</sup> From 1685 onward, writing the Guelph history was Leibniz's chief task for the Hanoverian court, and one that proved to be a burden under which he would labor for the rest of his life.

The duchy of Hanover and an eager young Leibniz were not the only things inherited by Ernst August from his predecessor: he also co-opted Johann Friedrich's desire to promote church reunion efforts. In the late 1670s Johann Friedrich had given a warm reception to the bishop of Tina, Cristobal de Rojas y Spinola (c.1626–95), who had met with Germany's various territorial leaders to gauge the possibility of church reunification. As the Hanoverians had been receptive to the idea, Spinola returned to the duchy again in 1683 and held further talks with a Protestant delegation headed by Gerhard Wolter Molanus (1633–1722), the Abbé of Loccum. As the negotiations proceeded other interested parties joined the fray, such as France's chief theologian and Bishop of Meaux Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704),

21. See for example, A IV 3: 332–40, and 370–5, both from 1680.

22. See "Resolution," Duke Ernst August for Leibniz, 14/24 April 1680, A I 3: 47–48.

23. See Leibniz for Franz Ernst von Platen?, end January (?) 1680, A I 3: 20, and Leibniz to Ernst August, May 1680, A I 3: 57.

24. See "Resolution," Duke Ernst August for Leibniz, 31 July/10 August 1685, A I 4: 205–6.

but Spinola's attempts to generate wider support among the heads of German states were coolly received.

Aside from hosting reunion efforts, European politics dominated the attention of Ernst August and Sophie throughout the 1680s. In 1684, the political need for closer ties with the court of Brandenburg resulted in the marriage of their daughter, Sophie Charlotte, to the recently widowed Electoral Prince Friedrich of Brandenburg (1657–1713). Four years later Friedrich became Elector Friedrich III of Brandenburg, with Sophie Charlotte correspondingly elevated to electress. An even more prestigious elevation of rank seemed to bode for Sophie, following negotiations in the English parliament to name her as future heir to the throne of England and Scotland. As a daughter of Elizabeth Stuart (who was in turn daughter of James I England/VI of Scotland), Sophie had some claim to the throne, though with Queen Mary II and King William III, as well as Princess Anne—all of whom were young enough to produce male heirs—standing between her and the crown, the likelihood of Sophie ever being heir apparent, let alone crowned queen, seemed slim at best. The lack of promise in such a prospect was underlined in 1689 when Anne gave birth to a son, William, Duke of Gloucester. As if to ensure that the prospect of Hanoverian rule over England remained a dim one, Parliament subsequently passed the Bill of Rights (1689) which laid down the succession to the English throne but made no mention of Sophie or her children.

While Sophie's chances of becoming queen of England were being thrashed out by Parliament, Leibniz was away collecting documents pertaining to the Guelph history. After setting out from Hanover in October 1687, his grand tour took him through Southern Germany, Austria, and Italy, where he combed the libraries of Rome, Venice, Modena, and Florence, eventually returning in June 1690. By then the talks aimed at reuniting the Catholic and Protestant churches had resumed. The initial promise of the reunion effort had faded until Spinola returned to Hanover in 1688 to breathe new life into it. Leibniz himself had no official role in any of the proceedings or in the documents they produced, and his input in the reunion effort was limited to behind-the-scenes advising and counseling, and attempting to generate support for the enterprise through his acquaintances and cor-



respondents. Sophie likewise had no official role in the proceedings, but she was also able to claim some minor involvement as the hostess to the negotiating parties, and (more importantly) as their occasional intermediary, which led her to draw a light-hearted parallel between Mary—from whom Christianity had originated—and herself, through whom, she hoped, the reunion of the churches could be effected.<sup>25</sup> (Sophie's initial hope for the enterprise gradually faded, however, as she believed that there would always be some on both the Catholic and Protestant sides who would impose obstacles to reunion.)<sup>26</sup> Leibniz's time away from Hanover ensured that he remained on the fringes of the discussions, having to make do with second-hand reports, but upon his return in 1690 he assumed a more active role, albeit still an unofficial one. In the fall of that year, Sophie's sister, Louise Hollandine (1622–1709), sent a copy of a book by the court historian of Louis XIV, Paul Pelisson, *Reflexions sur les différends de la religion* (Paris, 1686) to Sophie, in the hope that it would inspire her to convert to Catholicism. It had no such effect, however, and Sophie merely passed the book to Leibniz together with an instruction that he draw up a response.<sup>27</sup> Leibniz obliged, and a cordial correspondence with Pelisson ensued, conducted through the channels of Sophie and Marie de Brinon, Louise Hollandine's secretary. A year later Bossuet joined in the epistolary exchanges, which until then had largely concerned matters of Catholic doctrine, giving Leibniz the opportunity to press the case for reunion. Bossuet, however, was unsympathetic to Leibniz's suggestion that the Council of Trent be superseded by a new council acceptable to all sides,<sup>28</sup> insisting that Trent was not up for negotiation.<sup>29</sup> The impasse could not be broken, and further setbacks, such as Pelisson's death in January 1693, Spinola's death in 1695, and Bossuet's with-

25. "As Christianity came into the world through a woman, it would be glorious for me if the union occurred through me." Sophie to Leibniz, 27 January/6 February 1689, A I 5: 401.

26. See Sophie to Louise Hollandine, 10 September 1691, in G. W. Leibniz, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ludovic Dutens (Geneva, 1768), 1: 512.

27. See Leibniz to Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels, 3/13 October 1690, A I 6: 114.

28. See Leibniz's "Remarks on the authority of the Council of Trent," 15 June 1693, A I 9: 116–45.

29. See Bossuet to Leibniz, 15 August 1693, A I 9: 153.

drawal from the correspondence with Leibniz the same year, turned church reunion into little more than a distant hope once again.<sup>30</sup>

Although Sophie and Leibniz were unable to celebrate any progress on the matter of church reunion, they did find some cheer in the elevation of Hanover to the status of an electorate with the Empire. Leibniz had championed Hanover's cause in this regard for many years, and had authored a series of documents that detailed various arguments in favor of Hanover becoming an electorate (the most pressing of which was the need for greater balance in the Electoral College, which at the time comprised three Protestant electors and five Catholic).<sup>31</sup> Emperor Leopold granted Hanover the status of an electorate of 23 March 1692, and Ernst August was officially invested on 19 December of the same year, following which he took the title of elector and his wife, Sophie, that of electress.

At this time Leibniz's stock was rising almost as fast as the court for which he worked. In May 1691 he received an offer to work for Louis XIV. Although tempted, Leibniz ultimately turned it down, partly due to his belief that taking a position in Louis' court would require him to convert to Catholicism. Although Leibniz had maintained friendly relations with many prominent Catholics, among them Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels (1623–93), he had held firm against all attempts to lure him away from Lutheranism.<sup>32</sup> Sophie had likewise faced pressures to change her religion, most notably from her sister, Louise Hollandine, who had long wished for Sophie to convert to Catholicism, and took every opportunity presented to her to press her case. In September 1679, during a visit to her sister at Maubisson (the abbey to which Louise Hollandine had fled following her own conversion in 1658), Sophie remained steadfast in the face of

30. The correspondence between Leibniz and Bossuet resumed in 1699, but again foundered on the differing views of the two men on the validity of the Council of Trent. For more information on the reunion effort, see Karin Masser, *Christobal de Gentil de Rojas y Spinola O. F. M. und der lutherische Abt Gerardus Wolterius Molanus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Unionsbestrebungen der katholischen und evangelischen Kirche im 17. Jahrhundert* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2002).

31. See, for example, his document "Considerations sur les interests de Bronsvic," A IV 4: 338–58.

32. See for example, Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels to Leibniz, 11 September 1687, A II 2: 226.

a sustained conversion attempt mounted by her sister in tandem with Bossuet and Prince William of Fürstenberg.<sup>33</sup> Louise Hollandine's desire for Sophie to convert was also shared by her secretary, Marie de Brinon, who expressed her wish to see Sophie Catholic during the exchanges surrounding church reunion in the early 1690s.<sup>34</sup> In the summer of 1697 de Brinon tried her hand at converting Sophie once more, insisting that her salvation could only be assured if she chose the path of Rome,<sup>35</sup> but with a practiced hand Sophie diplomatically and gracefully deflected de Brinon's overtures.<sup>36</sup>

It is not unlikely that de Brinon's repeated conversion attempts were galvanized in part by the common perception of Sophie as one "sitting lightly in her religion."<sup>37</sup> Although ostensibly a Calvinist, certain aspects of Sophie's behavior led others to doubt her convictions. For one thing, she was tolerant of other Protestant confessions: her husband was a Lutheran, as were many members of the court, and she regularly attended Lutheran ceremonies with Ernst August.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, in the early 1680s she was reported to have been of the view that, as far as she was concerned, her daughter Sophie Charlotte, then a teenager, was not yet of any religion, and which religion she would

33. "I enjoyed their conversation, but thought little of their arguments for my conversion." Sophie, *Memoirs*, 238.

34. See Marie de Brinon to Leibniz, 5 October 1691, A I 7: 159, and 16 July 1691, A I 6: 231, 232. See also Marie de Brinon to Sophie, 18 December 1698 in *Œuvres de Leibniz*, ed. Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1858–75), 2: 214.

35. See Marie de Brinon to Sophie, 2 July 1697.

36. See Sophie to Marie de Brinon, 13/23 August 1697. Sophie's diplomacy in this matter is all the more remarkable given her personal view of the Roman Church. In the matter of religions, she confided to the Earl of Strafford, "There is none that I abhor so much as the Popish: for there is none so contrary to Christianity." Sophie to the Earl of Strafford, 4 August 1713, in James Macpherson, ed., *Original Papers; containing the Secret History of Great Britain, from the Restoration, to the Accession of the House of Hannover* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1775), 2: 500.

37. Quoted in Maria Kroll, *Sophie, Electress of Hanover: A Personal Portrait* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973), 156, and in a slightly different form in Hester W. Chapman, *Privileged Persons* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), 171. Kroll attributes the quotation to James Stuart.

38. See Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 56.

eventually adopt would be determined by whether she married a Protestant or a Catholic.<sup>39</sup>

Further question marks over Sophie's religious convictions were raised as a result of her willingness to associate with heterodox thinkers such as Francis Mercury van Helmont and, later, John Toland. Van Helmont, a Quaker turned proponent of the Kabbalah, had been held by the Inquisition for more than a year in the early 1660s for teaching metempsychosis (the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul) and universal salvation, and was widely considered to be a heretic. In 1696 he visited Hanover twice, and on both occasions was welcomed by Sophie and by Leibniz, who had met him at least twice before. During both these visits both Sophie and Leibniz had extensive discussions with van Helmont about the latter's philosophy, several of them taking place in Sophie's apartments in the palace of Herrenhausen.<sup>40</sup> Such was Sophie's interest in van Helmont's ideas that she included reports of them in her regular correspondence with her niece, Duchess Elizabeth Charlotte of Orléans, who in return ventured her own thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines and arguments.<sup>41</sup> Yet the time both Sophie and Leibniz devoted to van Helmont during his stay was due more to the quality of the man than to that of his thought; both Leibniz and Sophie admired van Helmont's character, but neither found his philosophy particularly convincing, or at times even intelligible.<sup>42</sup> Leibniz was, however, happy to arrange at van Hel-

39. "One day I asked the Duchess what the religion of her daughter [Sophie Charlotte] was, who may be thirteen or fourteen years old and was very obliging. She replied that she did not yet have one, that it would be a case of waiting to see what would be the religion of the person she married in order to instruct her in the religion of her husband, whether he be Protestant or Catholic." Jean-Herault de Gourville, *Mémoires de Gourville*, tome second 1670–1702, ed. Léon Lecestre (Paris: Renouard, 1895), 127.

40. See Leibniz to Thomas Burnett, 7/17 March 1696, A I 12: 478.

41. See Elizabeth Charlotte to Sophie, 2 August 1696.

42. See Leibniz, "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines," first half of October (?), 1696. After reading van Helmont's book *Two Hundred Queries concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls* (London, 1684), which contains numerous proofs of metempsychosis drawn from scripture, Sophie instructed Leibniz to ask van Helmont to come up with a similar number of proofs based on reason: "As nearly all of your two hundred queries are based on Holy Scripture, Madam the Electress, who would rather see how your views could be confirmed even further by reason, would like one or two hundred proofs based on reason,

mont's request the reprinting of a German translation of Boëthius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*,<sup>43</sup> which van Helmont had originally published in 1667 and which had won the admiration of both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte; Leibniz even added a preface to the new edition extolling the virtues of Sophie and Sophie Charlotte as much as those of the translator's work.<sup>44</sup> Although van Helmont did not return to Hanover again before his death in December 1698, he did pay a visit to Sophie Charlotte in Berlin in the spring of his final year, where he expounded his Kabbalistic interpretation of the first four chapters of Genesis,<sup>45</sup> much to Sophie Charlotte's bemusement.<sup>46</sup>

As it happened, 1698 was also the final year of Sophie's husband and Leibniz's employer, Ernst August. He had been sick since the previous fall, and in spite of Sophie's devoted care he died on 23 January/2 February 1698.<sup>47</sup> As her eldest son, Georg Ludwig, took over the reins of power, Sophie began to spend more time in the palace of Herrenhausen to restore her spirits, taking long walks through the gardens. Georg Ludwig's accession to the pinnacle of government also marked a change in Leibniz's fortunes: whereas Ernst August had indulged

---

order and experience." Leibniz to Francis Mercury van Helmont, 18 October 1696, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek* LBr. 389, 53. Van Helmont did not oblige.

43. Boëthius, *Christlich-vernunftgemesser Trost und Unterricht in Widerwertigkeit und Bestürzung über den vermeinten Wohl- oder Übelstand der Bösen und Frommen*, ed. and trans. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (Sulzbach, 1667). The reprinted version was published as Boëthius, *Des fürtrefflichen hochweisen Severini Boetti Christlich-vernunftgemesser Trost and Unterricht in Widerwertigkeit und Bestützung über dem vermeinten Wohl- oder Uebelstand der Bösen und Frommen verteutschet, und mit beygefüigten kurzen Anmerkungen über etliche Ort desselben, zum andermahl aufgelegt*, ed. and trans. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (Lüneburg, 1697).

44. See Leibniz (and Francis Mercury van Helmont?), "Preface to the Second Edition of Boëthius's *Consolation of Philosophy*," 9 June 1696.

45. The work in question is *Quaedam praemeditatae et consideratae cogitationes super Quatuor priora Capita Libri primi Moysis Genesis nominati* (Amsterdam, 1697). Leibniz had ghost-written this book for van Helmont during the latter's stay in Hanover in 1696. For more information on Leibniz's role in this work, see Anne Becco, "Leibniz et François-Mercure van Helmont: bagatelle pour des monades," in *Magis Naturalis und die Entstehung der modernen Naturwissenschaften*, ed. Albert Heinekamp (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1978): 127–29.

46. See Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, May 1698.

47. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 2/12 February 1698, A I 15: 21.

Leibniz's penchant for taking on numerous outside projects, Georg Ludwig was keen for Leibniz to focus on the task for which he was being paid, namely, producing the Guelph history. That the reins had been tightened became increasingly clear to Leibniz when opportunities and invitations to travel came his way, as they increasingly did. In the years immediately following Ernst August's death, many of these invitations came from Sophie Charlotte. In October 1697 Leibniz received word that she proposed to construct an observatory in Berlin.<sup>48</sup> Leibniz took the opportunity to urge her to pursue a more ambitious plan—the establishment of a scientific academy.<sup>49</sup> Leibniz had nursed hopes of founding such an academy for years, even proposing the establishment of an imperial scientific academy in Germany, but all of his plans and appeals had fallen on deaf ears. Seizing the opportunity Sophie Charlotte had presented to him, Leibniz offered whatever assistance was required, which resulted in her issuing numerous invitations for him to visit Berlin, and just as many refusals from his new employer, Georg Ludwig, for permission to undertake such a trip. Undeterred, Leibniz made what contributions he could from a distance, one of the most important of which was a recommendation that the fledgling academy be funded by a monopoly on the production of calendars, to tie in with the switch from the Julian to Gregorian calendar due to take place in Germany's Protestant states on 1 March 1700.<sup>50</sup> With a source of funding now identified, in March 1700 the Elector of Brandenburg decided to approve the founding of what was to be the Berlin Society of Sciences, and invited Leibniz to assist in its establishment.<sup>51</sup> Now able to cite business rather than pleasure as his motive for travel, Leibniz once again approached his employer for permission to take “a short trip” to Berlin.<sup>52</sup> This time Georg Ludwig relented, and in April 1700 Leibniz made the first of what would turn out to be many visits to Berlin, staying in the palace which Sophie Charlotte dubbed “Lustenburg,”<sup>53</sup> i.e., castle of pleasures, a name which Leibniz thought

48. See Johann Jacob Julius Chuno to Leibniz, 2/12 October 1697, A I 14: 597.

49. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, end November 1697, A I 14: 771–73.

50. See Leibniz's paper to the Academy of Sciences of 8 February 1700, A I 18: 346.

51. See Daniel Ernst Jablonski to Leibniz, 23 March 1700, A I 18: 467–68.

52. Leibniz to Georg Ludwig, 28 March 1700, A I 18: 41.

53. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, 4 August 1700, A I 18: 179.

fitting not least because of the presence there of Sophie Charlotte herself.<sup>54</sup> This marked the start of an especially close relationship with Sophie Charlotte, which was to last until her death five years later.

For several months in the spring and summer of 1700 Leibniz played a key role in drawing up the charter for the newly formed Berlin Society of Sciences. The Society itself was officially founded on 11 July 1700, with Leibniz appointed president for life. At its inception, however, and for some time thereafter, it was little more than an institution that existed on paper, and Leibniz's energies often focused on the matter of how the society would be funded, since no contributions would be forthcoming from the Elector of Brandenburg. Leibniz often enlisted Sophie Charlotte's help in the matter of the Society's funding, for example requesting a patent, i.e., exclusive rights of production, on silk.<sup>55</sup> Although this request was granted, Leibniz's other schemes, such as imposing taxes on wine and paper and seeking donations from the church, were less successful.<sup>56</sup>

While attempting to ensure the financial security of the fledgling Society, Leibniz received word that Princess Anne's last surviving child, William, the Duke of Gloucester, had died, which at that time left only William III and Anne herself between Sophie and the English throne.<sup>57</sup> This prompted Leibniz to consider how best the Hanoverian succession could be secured, and to this end he drew up various documents detailing not only the right of the House of Hanover to inherit the English throne, but also the strategy to achieve it.<sup>58</sup> Yet Leibniz's

54. See Leibniz to Bartolomeo Ortensio Mauro, 10 August 1700, A I 18: 800.

55. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 18 May 1704, Klopp 10: 246.

56. For further information on the Berlin Society of Sciences and Leibniz's role in its establishment, see Jürgen Mittelstrass, "Der Philosoph und die Königin – Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte," in *Leibniz in Berlin, Studia Leibnitiana Sonderheft 16*, ed. Hans Poser and Albert Heinekamp (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990), 21–24. Ayval Ramati, "Harmony at a Distance: Leibniz's Scientific Academies," *Isis* 87 (1996): 430–52.

57. See Leibniz to Sophie, 21 August 1700, A I 18: 192. Sophie was already aware of the death of William, the Duke of Gloucester, as she had notified Leibniz of it several days earlier; see Sophie to Leibniz, 18 August 1700, A I 18: 190.

58. See, for example, his "Reflexions sur un écrit anglais," 2 January 1701, A I 19: 24–31, and "Considerations sur le droit de la Maison de Bronsvic, à l'égard de la succession d'Angleterre," 17 (?) January 1701, A I 19: 37–48.

enthusiasm for a Hanoverian succession did not rub off on Sophie,<sup>59</sup> who in his view needed cajoling from courtiers to make a more vigorous assertion of her claims.<sup>60</sup> Unlike Leibniz, Sophie was aware that asserting her claims too forcefully would likely be counterproductive, and although she did not share Leibniz's view that the English throne was a prize to be secured at any cost, neither did she consider herself to be indifferent to it; in fact she felt aggrieved at what she perceived to be indifference on the part of her son, Georg Ludwig, with regard to Hanover's claims.<sup>61</sup>

Although it is a commonplace to refer to Leibniz's involvement in the matter of succession, it is important not to overstate the part he played. At no stage did he have an official role in the proceedings, and the contributions he did make to the Hanoverian cause were, at best, in the capacity of unofficial advisor, and at worst, the well-intentioned interventions of a behind-the-scenes busybody eager to assist in any way he thought he could.<sup>62</sup> In the 1690s, when Sophie's path to the throne was by no means certain, Leibniz actively promoted her claims via his English correspondents, and when prospects for the Hanoverian succession had brightened, following the death of Queen Anne's son, he suggested the dissemination of pro-Hanover pamphlets in England and if required, his journeying to London to argue the Hanoverian cause.<sup>63</sup> Leibniz was advised by the Hanoverian Resident in London that such schemes were unnecessary, since

59. "[I]f I were younger I would have good reason to flatter myself with a crown, but now, if I had the choice, I would prefer to increase my years rather than my grandeur." Sophie to Leibniz, 18 August 1700, A I 18: 190. In her letter Sophie actually wrote "I would prefer to decrease my years"; Leibniz corrected her mistake on his copy of her letter.

60. See Leibniz to George Stepney, 18 January 1701, A I 19: 354.

61. See Sophie to Baron von Schüß, 22 April 1701, in Richard Doebner, ed., *Briefe der Königin Sophie Charlotte von Preußen und der Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover* (Leipzig: Preußischen Staatsarchiven, 1905), 147 (hereafter cited as Doebner).

62. The fact that Leibniz was not a key player is given weight by the contents of Macpherson, *Original Papers*, which in two large volumes rounds up the key letters and papers connected with the Hanoverian succession. It is telling that Macpherson includes not a single letter of Leibniz's. For an analysis of many of the key papers relating to the Hanoverian succession, see Percy Thornton, "The Hanover papers," *The English Historical Review* 1 (1886): 756–77. Leibniz is not mentioned once in this paper.

63. See Leibniz's letter to George Stepney, 18 January 1701, A I 19: 355.



England was already sufficiently well-disposed toward the prospect of Hanoverian succession.<sup>64</sup> This proved to be correct, and events in England unfolded to the outcome Leibniz desired without need for his planned intervention.

While Leibniz busied himself with ways to further the Hanoverian cause, moves were afoot that would ultimately result in Sophie Charlotte attaining the same rank in Prussia as Leibniz hoped Sophie would attain in England, namely, that of queen. In the fall of 1700 Sophie and Sophie Charlotte journeyed to Aachen, and then to Brussels and Holland, where they intended to press the case for the latter's husband, Friedrich III, to be elevated to the status of King in his territory of Prussia. Although mother and daughter had invited Leibniz, he had already made plans to travel to Töplitz,<sup>65</sup> and therefore missed out on the lobbying that resulted in Friedrich being crowned Friedrich I, king in Prussia, on 18 January 1701.

That events could take a positive turn without Leibniz's involvement was demonstrated again six months later when, in June 1701, the English parliament passed the Act of Settlement, which named Sophie as the rightful heir to the English throne should either William III or Anne not bear further issue. On 14 August of that year, Sophie received the English delegation led by Lord Macclesfield, who delivered to Sophie a copy of the Act of Settlement, which was to secure her dynasty. Arriving just ahead of the main delegation was the Irish-born freethinker John Toland,<sup>66</sup> who had caused much consternation in England with his *Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1696). Toland had booked his ticket to Hanover by openly supporting the Hanoverian succession to the English throne in his book *Anglia Libera*,<sup>67</sup> a copy of which he personally presented to Sophie during his stay. By all accounts Toland appears to have made a good impression

64. See George Stepney to Leibniz, 1 May 1701, A I 19: 640.

65. See Leibniz to Johann Jacob Julius Chuno, 31 December 1700, A I 19: 319, and Leibniz to Johann von Besser, 4 January 1701, A I 19: 324.

66. See Leibniz to Claude Nicaise, 24 August 1701, in *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin: Weidmann, 1875–1890), 2: 593 (hereafter cited as G).

67. John Toland, *Anglia Libera: or, the Limitation and Succession of the Crown of England explain'd and asserted* (London, 1701).

on both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, having met the latter during a trip to Berlin later the same year,<sup>68</sup> and he often accompanied Sophie during her walks in the garden of Herrenhausen.<sup>69</sup> Yet when Toland's travels brought him back to Germany in July 1702, Sophie's willingness to associate with him had cooled: although she had personally enjoyed Toland's company during his earlier visit, she had subsequently been advised that, for the sake of her own reputation in England and of not jeopardizing the Hanoverian succession, it would be better to give a wide berth to someone widely suspected to be, at best, a man of questionable character, and at worst, an atheist.<sup>70</sup> Sophie reluctantly heeded this advice, and let it be known that Toland was no longer welcome in her court.<sup>71</sup> Toland acquiesced to Sophie's wishes, and when his travel plans took him through Hanover in November of 1702, he ensured that his path did not cross that of the court, leading Sophie to quip that by avoiding anyone he had done her a kindness.<sup>72</sup> Sophie

68. "I always find his intention to be right and proper, despite the fury of his enemies." Sophie to Leibniz, 29 October 1701, A I 20: 51. See also A. N., "Some Memoirs of the Life and Writings of John Toland in a letter to S\*\*\* B\*\*\* L\*\*\*, May 26th 1722," in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland now first publish'd from his Original Manuscripts: with some memoirs of his life and writings*, ed. Pierre Desmaizeaux (London: J. Peele, 1726) 1: lvi–lvii.

69. "As Madam the Electress likes conversing with intelligent people, she took pleasure in hearing Mr. Toland's discourses and in walking with him in the garden of Herrenhausen in the company of other Englishmen, some of whom, unfamiliar with the nature of Madam the Electress, imagined that they spoke together of important matters of State and that Her Electoral Highness took him into her trust, whereas I, who very often witnessed their discussions, know that they usually talked about sublime and curious matters." Leibniz to Thomas Burnett, 27 February 1702, A I 20: 809.

70. See for example an official report on Toland's character prepared at the end of May 1702 by Ludwig Justus Sinold, *Niedersächsische Landesarchiv* Hann. 93, 485, 3–4. According to the report, both the Archbishop of Canterbury (Thomas Tenison) and the Bishop of Salisbury (Gilbert Burnet) had warned against associating with Toland.

71. "I received so many letters against Toland as being a person whose conversation could do me harm in England, that I found myself obliged to make him know through Braun that I think it would be better for him not to come, although his conversation pleases the Queen as well as me." Sophie to Hans Caspar von Bothmer, 24 June 1702, Doeberner 219. The warning letter to Toland was written by Georg Christoph von Braun, groom of the chamber to Sophie.

72. See Sophie to Leibniz, 27 November 1702, Klopp 8: 402.

was nevertheless bemused at the fuss surrounding Toland, which in her view he had done little to deserve.<sup>73</sup>

Toland found a warmer welcome in Berlin, where Sophie Charlotte invited him to stay as her guest. Sophie was there when he arrived, on 26 July 1702,<sup>74</sup> though she was careful not to grant him a private audience.<sup>75</sup> Leibniz too was present in Berlin at the time of Toland's arrival, having himself traveled there a little over six weeks earlier at Sophie Charlotte's request.<sup>76</sup> Sophie Charlotte wasted little time in getting Leibniz and Toland to dazzle her with their philosophical insights, and in pitting the two philosophers against each other in debates,<sup>77</sup> though Toland's conduct in them was sometimes a source of exasperation for Leibniz.<sup>78</sup> But despite (or perhaps because

73. "I...do not have any commerce with him since such a fuss has been made over him. Yet when I ask what he has done that is so horrible, only his religion is mentioned. It would be good if he were the only one in England without one." Sophie to Hans Caspar von Bothmer, 5 August 1702, Doebner 220. See also Sophie to Baron von Schüß, 23 May 1702, Doebner 157, and 12 September 1702, Doebner 164.

74. See Leibniz to Franz Ernst von Platen, 29 July 1702, Klopp 8: 357–58, and Sophie Charlotte to Hans Caspar von Bothmer, 29 July 1702, Doebner 16.

75. "He has come here [Berlin], and seeing Madam the Electress in the garden, he immediately went to present her with a harangue printed by the Archbishop of York, written for the coronation of the Queen [Anne], and said that this prelate had given it to him for this purpose... Afterwards he walked around the promenade with the Queen [Sophie Charlotte] and Madam the Electress, and the rest of the company. Madam the Electress seems in no way inclined to speak very much to him in private, for she rightly thinks that he will not be able to give her any great insights or be of much help any more, and that putting much trust in him would be injurious to some people." Leibniz to Franz Ernst von Platen, 29 July 1702, Klopp 8: 358. The "harangue" Leibniz refers to here is John Sharp's *A Sermon Preach'd at the Coronation of Queen Anne, in the Abby-Church of Westminster, April XXIII, MDCCII* (London, 1702).

76. "I assure you that it would be an act of charity to come here, for the Queen has no living soul with whom she can speak." Henriette Charlotte von Pöllnitz to Leibniz, 2 May 1702, Klopp 10: 146.

77. "Mr Leibniz is the only company I have here at present. I make him argue a bit with Toland." Sophie Charlotte to Hans Caspar von Bothmer, 30 September 1702, Doebner 21.

78. For example, in a report to Sophie of Toland's denial of cannibalism in America (reports of which had been invented by the Spanish, according to Toland), Leibniz expressed bewilderment that such an apparently intelligent man could deny such a well-established fact, which led him to the conclusion that Toland was only interested in advancing paradoxes and contradicting received wisdom. See Leibniz to Sophie, 29 September 1702, Klopp 8: 371–72.

of) the differing views of the two men, this was a very productive time for both Leibniz and Toland, in no small part due to the encouragement of Sophie Charlotte, who frequently asked both men to commit their thoughts to writing for her benefit. A number of the essays Toland wrote at Sophie Charlotte's behest during his stay in Berlin were later collected together and published under the title *Letters to Serena* (London, 1704),<sup>79</sup> in the preface to which he praised Serena (i.e., Sophie Charlotte) as "Mistriss of a vast Compass of Knowledge."<sup>80</sup> Many of Leibniz's essays from this time were a mixture of written-to-order responses to Toland's work,<sup>81</sup> and pieces written in response to views Toland had aired.<sup>82</sup> However, Toland was not the only stimulus Leibniz had to take up his pen. Shortly before his departure for Berlin he had received a copy of the second edition of Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1702), which contained a critique of the philosophical doctrine for which he was most widely known at the time—that of pre-established harmony, which holds that soul and body do not causally interact but independently follow parallel courses pre-established in the beginning by God. Following his arrival in Berlin Leibniz occupied himself with preparing a response to Bayle's critique.<sup>83</sup> The content of Leibniz's response provided material for discussion during his audiences with Sophie Charlotte, though

---

For her part, Sophie mused that it was little surprise Toland would take the side of cannibals, as he had made so many enemies that one day cannibals would be the only supporters he had left. See Sophie to Leibniz, 4 October 1702, Klopp 8: 376.

79. Another pairing of essays written while Sophie Charlotte's guest in Berlin was later published as *An account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover; sent to a minister of state in Holland by Mr. Toland* (London, 1705). These were written in August and September 1702, though not for Sophie Charlotte, as is clear from the title.

80. Toland, *Letters to Serena*, preface §9.

81. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–early November (?) 1702.

82. See Leibniz, "Reflections on the Doctrine of a Single Universal Spirit," August–early November (?) 1702.

83. "Réponse aux réflexions contenues dans la seconde édition du Dictionnaire critique de M. Bayle, article Rorarius, sur le système de l'harmonie préétablie." Although the paper was completed in 1702, it did not appear in print until 1716, when it was published in the journal *Histoire critique de la République des lettres* 11 (1716): 78–114. Reprinted in G 4: 554–71. English translation in *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Leroy E. Loemker (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969), 575–85 (hereafter cited as L).

other topics from Bayle's *Dictionary*, chiefly on free will and the problem of evil, were widely discussed and debated in the Berlin court at this time too.<sup>84</sup>

Like her daughter, Sophie was also keen to elicit the views of others regarding Leibniz's philosophical ideas. On a number of occasions she passed on details of Leibniz's doctrines to her niece, Elizabeth Charlotte, and her sister, Louise Hollandine, both of whom ventured their opinions, albeit in brief. When the opportunity presented itself Sophie was even happy to put Leibniz's ideas to the test. One incident, which Leibniz was fond of recalling, occurred in the gardens of Herrenhausen where Sophie challenged a member of the court, Carl August von Alvensleben, to find two leaves exactly alike after he had scoffed at Leibniz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles (which states that if two things have exactly the same properties and are hence indiscernible, then they are in fact one and the same thing, i.e., identical, a corollary of which is that there cannot be two different things exactly the same in all respects). Alvensleben failed to meet Sophie's challenge despite his best efforts, a fact that Leibniz sometimes recalled in his work as empirical evidence for his principle.<sup>85</sup>

But while Sophie, Sophie Charlotte, and their wider circle of friends and courtiers were keen to treat Leibniz as almost a philosopher-in-residence, his employer, Elector Georg Ludwig, was not. The elector had little time for any of Leibniz's outside projects, and frequently complained about what he considered to be Leibniz's sluggish progress on the Guelph family history. Much of his concern centered

84. Unfortunately very little on these topics was ever committed to paper, if surviving manuscripts are any indication. Leibniz made some rough notes on certain parts of the *Dictionary*, though the bulk of these are comprised of passages of interest that Leibniz copied out for himself, together with some occasional remarks of his own. See *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits de Leibniz*, ed. Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil (Paris: Ladrangé, 1854), 174–86 (hereafter cited as FC).

85. See Leibniz to Sophie, 31 October 1705; also *New Essays on Human Understanding*, 1703–5, A VI 6: 231. English translation: *New Essays on Human Understanding*, ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 231 (cited hereafter as NE). See also Leibniz to Samuel Clarke, June (?) 1716, G 7: 372. English translation in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1973), 216 (cited hereafter as P).

on Leibniz's frequent trips to Berlin, often made at the invitation of Sophie Charlotte.<sup>86</sup> Ironically when Sophie Charlotte suddenly died on 1 February 1705 while in Hanover attending the carnival there, Leibniz was still in Berlin. He had seen her just three weeks earlier, and although aware that she had been suffering from a cold and diarrhea, did not think her condition serious.<sup>87</sup> She worsened while in Hanover, however, and ultimately succumbed to pneumonia. While both the Hanover and Berlin courts went into mourning (with Sophie unable to leave her apartment for many weeks), Sophie Charlotte's husband, fearing that his wife's correspondence contained negative reports about him, gathered himself long enough to issue the instruction that her letters be burned. Leibniz's own grief over Sophie Charlotte's death was palpable,<sup>88</sup> and it interrupted his various intellectual endeavors for months.<sup>89</sup> He was consoled in his grief by two reports about the queen's last moments:

first, that the Queen died a peaceful death, as Monsignor the Elector told me that she herself said to him: *ich sterbe eines gemächlichen Todes* [I die a gentle death]; second, that she died with a wonderfully serene mind and with great feel-

86. "I showed your letter to my son, the Elector, whose response to it was that he [Leibniz] should at least tell me where he is going when he goes away; I never know where to find him." Sophie to Leibniz, 19 October 1701, A I 20: 42. "The Master [Georg Ludwig] seems to complain that your merit, which he esteems infinitely, is of no use to him, that he sees you rarely, and of the history you have undertaken to write, he sees nothing at all." Sophie to Leibniz, 20 September 1704, Klopp 9: 101–2.

87. Leibniz to Princess Caroline of Ansbach, 18 March 1705, Klopp 9: 116.

88. See his letters to Henriette Charlotte von Pöllnitz, 2 February 1705, Klopp 10: 264–65, and to Baron von Görtz, 7 February 1705, Klopp 10: 265.

89. "The death of the Queen of Prussia has caused a long interruption in my correspondence and my meditations... When she left for Hanover I was due to follow her soon after, for she was very often kind enough to ask for me, but what a shock it was for me, and for the whole of Berlin, when we learned of her death! It was like being struck by lightning, particularly for me since my personal loss was the greatest in this public misfortune. I thought I would fall ill over it, since sensibility does not depend on reasoning. Consequently I have been terribly distressed by this death, but have finally returned to myself and my friends." Leibniz to Damaris Masham, 10 July 1705, Klopp 10: 287–88.

ings of a soul at peace, resigned to the orders of the supreme providence.<sup>90</sup>

When the clouds of grief finally dissipated, Leibniz's attention turned once more to the matter of the British succession, not least because, following the death of King William III and the accession of Queen Anne in 1702, he (like many others at court) perceived there to be less favorable winds blowing Hanover's way. Although Anne had personally assured Sophie that she favored the Hanoverian succession, and had bestowed the title Duke of Cambridge on Georg Ludwig's son, Georg August, she had quietly abandoned a number of William's plans designed to bring England and Hanover, or rather Sophie, closer together, such as issuing an invitation for Sophie to come to England, and obtaining for her an annual income from public revenues. Faced with such uncertain signals from England, Sophie's inclination was to wait and see how events would unfold, an attitude not shared by Leibniz, who as ever championed a more proactive approach. Yet in his desire to press the Hanoverian claim he succeeded only in putting British noses out of joint. The furor began with a letter from Sophie to the Archbishop of Canterbury, written in November 1705,<sup>91</sup> in which she expressed her willingness to travel to England, if it was wished of her, in order to better establish her position as heir to the throne.<sup>92</sup> It

90. Leibniz to Princess Caroline of Ansbach, 18 March 1705, Klopp 9: 117. Years later, a (probably apocryphal) story was told that her final words were "Do not pity me... for I am now going to satisfy my curiosity about the principles of things, which Leibniz was never able to explain to me, and about space, infinity, being, and nothing." Frederick II, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Brandebourg*, 178.

91. Dated either 5 November 1705 (according to Klopp 9: 177–79) or 3 November 1705 (according to the published English translation of the letter).

92. "I am ready to do anything my friends demand of me, supposing that Parliament thinks it would be necessary for me to cross the sea." Sophie to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 5 November 1705, Klopp 9: 178. The published English translation of this passage is very free: "I am ready and willing to comply with what ever can be desired of me, by my Friends, in case that the Parliament think, that it is for the Good of the Kingdom, to Invite me into England." *A letter from Her Royal Highness, the Princess Sophia, Electress of Brunswic and Luneburg, to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. With another from Hannover, written by Sir Roland Gwynne to the Right Honourable The Earl of Stamford* (London, 1706), 1. The French is: "je suis preste à faire tout ce que mes amis exigeront de moy, supposé que le Parlement jugeât qu'il seroit necessaire que je passasse la Mer."

has long been doubted that Sophie composed the letter herself, with both the sentiment and style suggesting it had been Leibniz's hand guiding Sophie's pen. Leibniz's hand was also responsible for penning a letter ostensibly from Roland Gwynne, England's Resident in Hanover, to the Earl of Stamford, defending the sentiments in Sophie's letter to the Archbishop.

Not satisfied with having authored two letters guaranteed to annoy many parliamentarians, Leibniz proceeded to have them translated into English then printed and circulated in England, where Gwynne's letter was singled out for condemnation by a parliamentary motion, with a recommendation that those responsible for its dissemination be identified and punished. Once it became clear that the letter had burned more bridges than it had built, Leibniz was quick to deny all knowledge regarding its translation and publication.<sup>93</sup> Sophie herself had little time for all of the intrigue, especially when it produced no tangible results, and as a result her interest in English affairs cooled.<sup>94</sup>

With the publication in 1707 of the first volume of documents pertaining to the Guelph history, the *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium*,<sup>95</sup> tangible results were one thing Leibniz was finally able to offer Sophie's son, Georg Ludwig. This did not, however, lead to a thawing of relations between the two, largely due to Leibniz's repeated absences from his desk in Hanover. His trips to Berlin in 1707, Vienna in 1708, and Berlin again early in 1709 put further strains on his relationship with Georg Ludwig.<sup>96</sup> In spite of this, Leibniz continued his travels, and his unauthorized trip to Berlin in 1711 angered not only his master in Hanover, but also members of the Prussian court, who suspected him of engaging in espionage.<sup>97</sup> Even the publication of two further volumes of the Guelph history in 1710 and 1711 did little to assuage Georg Ludwig's irritation over Leibniz's frequent

93. See Leibniz to Thomas Burnet, 26 May 1706, Klopp 9: 215–16.

94. See Sophie to Leibniz, 21 December 1706, Klopp 9: 258.

95. G. W. Leibniz, ed., *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium* (Hanover, 1707).

96. "The Elector said that he wanted to offer a reward in the newspapers to whoever found you, and it only became clear some days later that you were in Berlin." Sophie to Leibniz, 23 January 1709, Klopp 9: 294.

97. See Sophie to Leibniz, 25 March 1711, Klopp 9: 328.



disappearing acts, despite Leibniz's reports to Sophie that his historical researches continued even while he was away.<sup>98</sup>

Yet it was clear that Leibniz's attention was not focused solely on writing the Guelph history. Late in 1710 he published the longest treatment of his philosophy to date, the *Theodicy*. Ostensibly a reply to Bayle's *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial*,<sup>99</sup> the *Theodicy* contained a sustained defense of Leibniz's view that the world's evil does not detract from God's goodness or justice, and that in fact God has created the best possible world. The book won approval from theologians of all sides,<sup>100</sup> and to some extent mitigated his public reputation in Hanover as a non-believer, which he achieved through scanty church attendance and a refusal to take communion.<sup>101</sup> Leibniz variously claimed that the *Theodicy* had developed out of his discussions with Sophie Charlotte in Berlin on Bayle's *Dictionary*,<sup>102</sup> or from papers he had composed for her there,<sup>103</sup> though evidence for the latter claim is scant at best.<sup>104</sup>

98. See Leibniz to Sophie, 21 March 1711, Klopp 9: 327.

99. Pierre Bayle, *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* (Rotterdam, 1706).

100. See Leibniz to Friedrich Wilhelm Bierling, 14 January 1712, G 7: 503.

101. "Mr. Leibniz has done well to prove how people have done him an injustice by calling him 'glaubenichts.'" Elizabeth Charlotte to Sophie, 22 October 1711, Bod 2: 292. In the Hanoverian dialect, "Glaubenichts" [one who believes in nothing] was pronounced "glöwewenix," which gave rise to the pun on Leibniz's name common in Hanover at the time: "Leibniz glöwewenix" [Leibniz believes in nothing].

102. See Leibniz, "Letter on the difficulties sparked by reason with regard to the compatibility of the attributes of God with evil," before May 1708, in *Textes inédits*, ed. Gaston Grua (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), 2: 498 (cited hereafter as Grua).

103. See Leibniz to John Toland, 30 April 1709, *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 388; Leibniz to Thomas Burnett, 30 October 1710, G 3: 321; Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Austin Farrar, trans. E. M. Huggard (Chicago: Open Court, 1990), 62–63 (cited hereafter as H).

104. Although some of Leibniz's notes on Bayle's *Dictionary* have survived, they are all very rough and seem to be written for his own use only. See for instance his notes on the entries from "Origen" to "Paulicians" in FC 174–86. By all accounts, the *Theodicy* appears to have grown out of Leibniz's thoughts on two of Bayle's later works, the *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial* (1706) and the *Entretiens de Maxime et de Thémiste* (Rotterdam, 1707), both being discussed at length in Leibniz's book, most notably the former. Indeed, a great proportion of the *Theodicy* serves as a straightforward point by point reply to Bayle's *Réponse*, with Leibniz's personal reading notes on that book (made in January/February 1706) serving as

In any case, by the time of the *Theodicy* Leibniz had developed international renown, not just for his philosophy but also his mathematical and scientific discoveries, as well as his historical work, keen political mind, and juridical insights. In 1712 these latter qualities won him a nomination to the imperial council, inducing Leibniz to make his way to Vienna to press his claim. His stay would last almost two years, in spite of repeated calls from his employer to return to Hanover and, in October 1713, the Hanoverian court stopping his stipend in the hope that this would tempt him back to work. The lure of Vienna was great, however, and not even an outbreak of plague could tear him away, much to Sophie's bemusement.<sup>105</sup> Leibniz had scarcely arrived in Vienna when he began drawing up plans for an Imperial Society of Sciences, which he later supplemented with a charter and a considerable amount of lobbying at the imperial court. Although the emperor Charles VI agreed to the formation of such a society, and indicated that Leibniz was to be its director, official indifference and other calls on the imperial purse ensured that the institution remained a paper one only. Nevertheless, Leibniz did all the petitioning, promoting, and cajoling he could, ignoring Sophie's repeated calls for him to return to Hanover in the process (it was only in August 1714 that Leibniz realized that any chance of an Imperial Society of Sciences getting off the ground had evaporated).<sup>106</sup> In the spring of 1714, the last year of Leibniz's stay in Vienna, Sophie developed an almost obsessive interest in the health of Queen Anne, now queen of Great Britain following the Act of Union in 1707.<sup>107</sup> As Sophie was well aware, Anne's health was

---

the basis on which the *Theodicy* was constructed. This being so, it is unclear what role—if any—Sophie Charlotte could have played in Leibniz's writing of the *Theodicy*, as what seems to be its direct stimulus, Bayle's *Réponse*, was published only after her death. Leibniz's reading notes on Bayle's book have been published in part in Grua 2: 491–94.

105. "it seems that a pestilent air is dearer to you than that of Hanover." Sophie to Leibniz, 8 December 1713, Klopp 9: 415.

106. See Sophie to Leibniz, 28 December 1713, Klopp 9: 419, 4 January 1714, Klopp 9: 420, and 20 May 1714, Klopp 9: 448.

107. "Queen Anne is wonderfully well. She would have to hurry up and die if I should be Queen, as you want." Sophie to Leibniz, 7 March 1714, Klopp 9: 432. "Queen Anne, who is only 50, is no longer in danger, and I think I am more poorly than she is, although, by the grace of God, I have only the miserable illness of being old, which is without cure." Sophie to Leibniz, 2 April 1714, Klopp 9: 433. "...the Queen is well enough and, according to the

the only thing now standing between her and the British throne. This heightened interest was not, however, the result of any belated feeling of enthusiasm for attaining the rank of queen herself,<sup>108</sup> but rather a desire to secure the crown for her son and his descendants. This desire eventually got the better of her, and early in 1714 she wrote to the Hanoverian envoy in England, Ludwig von Schütz, inquiring why her grandson, Georg August, the Duke of Cambridge, had not been issued a writ of summons to take his seat in the House of Lords.<sup>109</sup> Interpreting Sophie's inquiry as an implied instruction, as it appears to have been, despite Sophie's subsequent denials, Schütz demanded that the writ be served. (Leibniz, kept informed of events from a distance, heartily approved of Schütz's action.)<sup>110</sup> Reluctantly, Anne and her cabinet agreed (the request could not legally be denied), but in retaliation she denied Schütz further access to the court, and dispatched a letter to Sophie in which she expressed her concern at what she saw as disaffected and seditious elements attempting to establish a Hanoverian court in England, and her suspicion that Sophie at least approved of the project. Such maneuverings could only pose a danger to the Hanoverian succession, Anne warned, which was secure only if the authority of the reigning sovereign—that is, Anne herself—was not undermined.<sup>111</sup> Similar letters were dispatched to Georg Ludwig and the man at the center of the affair, Georg August, the Duke of Cambridge. Sophie and her immediate circle were understandably agitated by what they perceived to be a reprimand from the queen, and the veiled threat contained within it. Sophie resolved to have the

---

Flemish proverb: *Krakende Wagens gân lang* [creaking wagons go far]. As for me, I consider my age much more dangerous, having passed 83 years, although I am wonderfully well in accordance with that." Sophie to Leibniz, 20 May 1714, Klopp 9: 447–48.

108. "If I were only 30, I would be very interested in it [viz. the British throne], but now I only think about having a tranquil mind in order to conserve my body as long as is possible." Sophie to Leibniz, 4 January 1714, Klopp 9: 421.

109. "I beg you to tell Chancellor Harcourt that we are very surprised here that a writ has not been issued to my grandson, the Electoral Prince [Georg August], to enable him to enter parliament as the Duke of Cambridge as is due to him through the authority of the Queen." Sophie to Ludwig Von Schütz, 12 April 1714, Doebner 213.

110. See Leibniz to Sophie, 24 May 1714, Klopp 9: 448–49.

111. See Princess Anne to Sophie, 19 May 1714, in Beatrice Curtis Brown, ed., *The Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne* (London: Cassell, 1968), 413.

letters printed and circulated to expose what was perceived to be Anne's anti-Hanoverian stance, but in the days that followed Sophie remained deeply troubled by the thought that years of patient diplomacy for the Hanoverian cause may have been undone. "This affair will assuredly make me ill," she confided to the Countess of Buckenburg: "I will succumb to it."<sup>112</sup> And succumb she did. On Friday 8 June 1714, two days after the arrival of Anne's letters, Sophie suddenly collapsed and died while taking her usual evening tour of the gardens of Herrenhausen.<sup>113</sup> It was widely suspected at the time that the grief caused her by Anne's letters had contributed to, if not actually caused, Sophie's demise.<sup>114</sup> In any case, Sophie's death was not surprisingly a great blow for Leibniz, who had lost not only a true friend but his last remaining champion at court.<sup>115</sup> Yet Leibniz's distress at Sophie's death did not spur him to leave Vienna straight away, and he remained there almost three more months, eventually returning to Hanover in September 1714. A month beforehand, and barely two months after Sophie's death, Queen Anne died, and the loss of her earthly crown meant that a Hanoverian finally ascended the British throne, not Sophie, as Leibniz had wished, but her son Georg Ludwig, as Sophie had wished. By the time Leibniz arrived back in Hanover many members of the court had departed for England, including Georg Ludwig, now styled King George I of Great Britain. Leibniz nursed hopes of following them, and suggested that, due to his expertise in historical researches he might be made

112. Countess of Buckenburg to Louise Raugrave, 12 July 1714, Klopp 9: 459.

113. Details of Sophie's last moments are to be found in a letter from the Countess of Buckenburg to Louise Raugrave, 12 July 1714, Klopp 9: 457–62.

114. See Schulenburg to Leibniz, 2/13 June 1714, Klopp 9: 481, and 5/16 June 1714, Klopp 9: 485.

115. "The death of Madam the Electress has upset me deeply. It seems to me that I see her expiring between the arms of Your Royal Serenity. This death was the one she wished for. It is not her, it is Hanover, it is England, it is the world, it is I who have lost by it." Leibniz to Princess Caroline of Ansbach, 7 July 1714, Klopp 9: 462. Leibniz was correct in saying that Sophie's death "was the one she wished for," as in an earlier letter to Leibniz she had written: "I hope to be able, when the time comes, to expire in the same way as the King of Prussia, who only died from weakness and without any pain." Sophie to Leibniz, 11 March 1713, Klopp 9: 389.

historiographer of Great Britain.<sup>116</sup> But George was unmoved by this suggestion, and in refusing it he reminded Leibniz that he still had not seen the fruits of Leibniz's historical labors on the Guelphs, which had begun three decades before.<sup>117</sup> Ordered to remain in Hanover, Leibniz's final years were spent feverishly attempting to finish his historical work as well as dealing with other irritations such as the so-called priority dispute with Newton over the invention of the calculus.<sup>118</sup> On 6 November 1716 he became bedridden through gout and arthritis; he died eight days later, on 14 November. His last words were reported to be "about the way in which the famous Furtenbach had changed half of an iron nail into gold."<sup>119</sup>

By the time of his death, Leibniz had become an isolated figure in Hanover. With Sophie dead, and most of the rest of the court residing in England, Leibniz was left to work on his (never-to-be-completed) history of the Guelphs without courtly distractions or support. His funeral was scantily attended, with members of the court for which he had worked for forty years conspicuous by their absence. The reaction to Leibniz's death was also muted in the wider, scholarly community, the most notable exception being the eulogy prepared by Fontenelle (albeit at the behest of Sophie's niece, Elizabeth Charlotte) and delivered to the Royal Academy of Sciences in 1717. The eulogy ends with a tribute to Leibniz's conduct toward women:

He conversed willingly with all sorts of people, gentlemen of the court, craftsman, farmers, soldiers... He even conversed often with ladies and did not count as wasted the time that he devoted to their conversation. With them he completely shed

116. See Leibniz to Princess Caroline, undated, Klopp 11: 20, and Leibniz to Andreas Gottlieb von Bernstorff, 8 December 1714, Klopp 11: 22–24.

117. See "Rescript König Georg I an die Regierung zu Hannover," 21 February 1716, in Richard Doebner, ed., *Leibnizens Briefwechsel mit dem Minister von Bernstorff und andere Leibniz betreffende Briefe und Attenstücke aus den Jahren 1705–1716* (Hanover: Hahn, 1882), 158–60.

118. For further information on the priority dispute, see Alfred Rupert Hall, *Philosophers at War: The Quarrel between Newton and Leibniz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

119. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, "Elogé de M. Leibnitz" (1717) in *Choix d'éloges français les plus estimés* (Paris: D'Hautel, 1812), 176.

the character of the savant and philosopher, characters which are almost indelible, however, and whose slightest traces ladies notice very shrewdly and with much distaste. This ease of communicating made everyone love him.<sup>120</sup>

While Leibniz conversed and corresponded with numerous women throughout his life, it was undoubtedly Sophie and Sophie Charlotte who were the most important to him, as is reflected by the sheer amount of time spent with them and the number of papers and letters written for them.

### *A Brief Overview of the Correspondences*

Indeed, the extant correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie reveals it to be one of his most extensive, comprising approximately 600 items (letters, drafts, other variants, and other writings), while the extant correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie Charlotte comprises around 150 items (letters, drafts, other variants, and other writings). In neither case do we have the complete correspondence. Some of the letters and texts from the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie have simply been lost, as is clear from the fact that certain extant letters and texts refer to items that can no longer be found. No less unfortunate is the fact that none of the final, dispatched copies of Leibniz's letters to Sophie Charlotte have survived; these were presumably burned along with many other papers in Sophie Charlotte's possession shortly after her death in 1705. Much of what does survive from these two correspondences is largely due to Leibniz's obsessive hoarding of letters he received and his drafts of letters he sent. Yet even though neither correspondence comes down to us complete, the surviving items are numerous enough for us to be able to get an accurate view not only of the character of the two correspondences, but also of the characters behind them.

The earliest (extant) written communication between Leibniz and Sophie is a poem written by Leibniz to Sophie on 9/19? January 1680 following the death of Johann Friedrich.<sup>121</sup> In it, Leibniz not only

120. Fontenelle, "Elogé de M. Leibnitz," 178–79.

121. A I 3: 8–11.

takes the opportunity to praise the qualities of his former master, but also those of his new master and mistress. The following lines, which are about Sophie, give a good idea of the poem's content:

Princess whose spirit and greatness of soul  
Is an outpouring of a heavenly fire...  
Your soul, almost alone in these corrupted times  
Is the very yardstick of high virtue.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the obsequiousness of this early contact, Leibniz's correspondence with Sophie did not begin in earnest until the spring of 1688, when he was abroad in search of materials for the Guelph history; before then, only a handful of letters were exchanged.<sup>123</sup> The correspondence soon became regular and continued right up until Sophie's death in 1714. As one writer aptly observes: "Their ... correspondence covers all possible subjects."<sup>124</sup> And it is indeed broad in extent; for example, some of the topics that came up in the correspondence were a man who had a sex change,<sup>125</sup> whether the eighteenth century would begin in 1700 or 1701,<sup>126</sup> and whether a large tooth dug up in Brunswick constituted evidence for the former existence of giants.<sup>127</sup> Other themes of the correspondence were, as one would expect, connected with the social and political events of the day, the Hanoverian succession especially. There was also much exchanging of news, such as births, deaths, and marriages, details of visitors, journeys undertaken, acquaintances made, and so on. As the texts in this volume demon-

122. Leibniz to Sophie, 9/19 (?) January 1680, A I 3: 9.

123. Moreover, Leibniz is not mentioned at all in Sophie's autobiographical *Memoires*, which records her life from birth until 15/25 February 1681. In all likelihood, Leibniz did not become an important part of Sophie's social and intellectual circle until later in the 1680s.

124. Dirk van der Cruysse. See Sophie de Hanovre, *Mémoires et Lettres de voyage*, ed. Dirk van der Cruysse (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 15. Cf. F. E. Baily, *Sophia of Hanover and Her Times* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1938), 119.

125. Leibniz to Sophie, 30 May/9 June 1697, A I 14: 8–9.

126. Leibniz to Sophie, 4/14 January 1699, A I 16: 75. The issue of when the eighteenth century would begin was hotly debated at the time. See Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 15. Leibniz correctly noted that it would begin in 1701.

127. Leibniz to Sophie, 5 July 1692, A I 8: 30.

strate, however, a fair part of the correspondence was also concerned with philosophical topics.

It might be wondered whether these topics were also those that Leibniz and Sophie discussed when in each other's company. Leibniz leaves enough clues for us to conclude that there was a significant overlap; for instance, in a letter to Sophie on ethical matters he notes that she had not been displeased by his ethical views,<sup>128</sup> suggesting that they had been the subject of a previous discussion. In another letter, Leibniz reveals that his doctrine of substance, i.e., unities, and the immortality of the soul, were also topics of conversation.<sup>129</sup> But it is also clear that Leibniz and Sophie discussed in person a number of other matters that did not subsequently appear in their correspondence. One such example is a conversation in late 1692 about a proof of God's existence. Leibniz wrote some notes on this conversation for himself,<sup>130</sup> but neither he nor Sophie mention the matter in any of their extant letters for each other. Similarly, in a letter to Wilhelm Tentzel, Leibniz remarks that he and Sophie had discussed "whether marine elephants then [i.e., in ancient times] were closer to terrestrial elephants than now."<sup>131</sup> And to Sophie Charlotte he explained that he had had "a conversation with Monsignor the Elector in the presence of Madam the Electress on the nature of goodness and justice and whether it is an arbitrary thing or whether it is founded in eternal reasons."<sup>132</sup> As none of these subjects is treated in the extant correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie,<sup>133</sup> it is difficult to disagree with Gerda Utermöh-

128. See Leibniz to Sophie, fall (?) 1697.

129. See Leibniz to Sophie, 31 October 1705.

130. See Leibniz, "Summary of a conversation with Sophie," 29 December 1692/8 January 1693.

131. Leibniz to Wilhelm Ernst Tentzel, 17/27 June 1696, A I 12: 661.

132. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 5 August 1703.

133. In other letters, we learn of further topics that Leibniz and Sophie discussed in person but did not treat in their correspondence, for instance whether Elijah was fed by ravens, as is related in I Kings 17.4, or by men: "But her most serene Electress has justly said that men were more likely than ravens to have fed Elijah for so long." Leibniz to van der Hardt, 23 July 1706, in G. W. Leibniz, *Verfasser der Histoire de Bileam*, ed. Wilhelm Brambach (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1887), 16.



len's assertion that this correspondence represents only a very small part of what was predominantly an oral exchange.<sup>134</sup>

The same can also be said of the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie Charlotte. Certainly there is evidence therein of matters discussed in person but not put down in writing; for example, Leibniz's doctrine of substance, which in 1702 Sophie Charlotte claimed to understand thanks to Leibniz's efforts,<sup>135</sup> efforts that must have been made during personal audiences, given that the doctrine is not mentioned in any of Leibniz's writings for her prior to 1702. Then of course there is Bayle's *Dictionary* and its key topics of reason and religion, God, evil, and human freedom, which according to Leibniz were the subject of much discussion between Sophie Charlotte and himself in 1702; their correspondence is, however, silent on these matters.

Like that between Sophie and Leibniz, the correspondence between Sophie Charlotte and Leibniz is wide ranging, even if it does not cover all of the subject matters the two discussed in person. Their correspondence did not begin in earnest until 1697; prior to that there are only a handful of letters, mostly on Leibniz's side. As already mentioned, the final, dispatched copies of Leibniz's letters to Sophie Charlotte have not survived, so the bulk of what remains of Leibniz's side of the correspondence with Sophie Charlotte is the various drafts he prepared of (some or all of) his letters and papers for her. There is thus no way to compare the draft(s) of many of Leibniz's letters to the finished versions to see what, if anything, he changed or left out.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless we can be reasonably certain that the correspondence between Sophie Charlotte and Leibniz was, like that between Sophie and Leibniz, predominantly concerned with gossip, political news, and philosophy.

134. Gerda Utermöhlen, "Die rolle fürstlicher Frauen im Leben und Wirken von Leibniz," in *Leibniz in Berlin*, 46.

135. See Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, end of March 1702.

136. Moreover, we cannot always be sure that Leibniz's draft letters to Sophie Charlotte were ultimately made into fair copies and sent to her.

*Leibniz's Presentation of His Philosophy  
in the Correspondences*

The philosophical exchanges with Sophie and Sophie Charlotte differ from those found in most of Leibniz's well-known philosophical correspondences (e.g. with Antoine Arnauld, Bartholomew des Bosses, and Samuel Clarke) in that there seems to be no specific agenda, or principal topic of concern, around which the exchanges are based.<sup>137</sup> In fact, at first glance Leibniz's philosophical contributions to the correspondence with the two Sophies seem broad and unfocused. He discusses various books he has read, prepares reports on the ideas of others, weighs in with his thoughts on contemporary debates and events, responds to requests for greater detail of his philosophy, etc. This leads him to treat diverse philosophical matters such as prophecy and miracles, order and justice, human nature, the mind and the soul, the source of our ideas, and the natures of love, God, and substance, among many others. Yet within many of his contributions to the correspondence it is possible to detect two main threads, the second of which is often entwined around the first. The first is that of substance, that is, the basic constituents of reality; the second is that of theodicy. Both are recurring themes in Leibniz's side of the correspondence with the two Sophies, and because of this, in what follows I shall not draw a distinction between Leibniz's writings for Sophie and his writings for Sophie Charlotte, as I believe that in both cases the same loose agenda lies behind many of his contributions, the agenda being to show that with the right philosophy one can achieve contentment in this life. In other words, there are grounds to suppose that in each of the two correspondences Leibniz is promoting what we might call a philosophy of contentment, or philosophy of satisfaction. This philosophy and its presentation shall be our concern in this section, along with the two themes that underpin it, namely, substance and theodicy.

137. With Arnauld, the principal subject matter was the section headings of Leibniz's "Discourse on Metaphysics," in particular no. 13, which states that "the individual notion of each person contains once and for all everything that will ever happen to him" (A II 2: 6). The correspondence with des Bosses chiefly concerned the metaphysical union of human beings, and Leibniz's doctrine of the "substantial bond." And with Clarke, the correspondence largely focused on space, time, and God's role in the universe.

As is now widely acknowledged, Leibniz's views on substance changed considerably over the course of his career. By the time he came to discuss his notion of substance in his correspondence with Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz had settled on the notions of unity (i.e., being truly one) and simplicity (i.e., having no parts) to characterize substances.<sup>138</sup> When the topic of substance first emerges in a record of a conversation he had with Sophie on the matter, the "Summary of a conversation with Sophie" written in late 1692, Leibniz is happy to characterize substance solely in terms of unity and simplicity, though in neither case does he explain what he means by these terms.<sup>139</sup> (This, as it happens, is a failing common to many of Leibniz's discussions of his doctrine of substance in his correspondence with the two Sophies, and one which ultimately caused some people—including Sophie—to misunderstand the doctrine, as we shall see below.) What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that Leibniz does not draw any obvious distinction between a unity and a simple, treating them as more or less interchangeable terms. This is not just a feature of his treatment in the "Summary of a conversation...": it is in fact characteristic of how he presents his doctrine of substance throughout his correspondence with both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte.<sup>140</sup> The basic

138. Although Leibniz had made use of both notions when characterizing substances during the latter half of the 1680s, they only started to assume center stage in Leibniz's thinking from 1690 onward. Compare, for example, Leibniz's letter to Arnauld of 28 November/8 December 1686, A II 2: 121, with "On body and substance truly one" from March 1690, A VI 4: 1672–73; English translation in *Shorter Leibniz Texts*, ed. and trans. Lloyd Strickland (London: Continuum, 2006), 52–54 (hereafter cited as SLT). Although the title of section 35 of Leibniz's seminal 1686 work "Discourse on Metaphysics" refers to "simple substances" (A VI 4: 1584), research indicates that the word "simple" was added by Leibniz much later, suggesting that Leibniz did not take simplicity to be a key feature of substance at that time. See Anne Becco, "Aux sources de la monade: Paléographie et lexicographie leibniziennes," *Les Études Philosophiques* 3 (1975): 279–94.

139. For further information on unity and simplicity in Leibniz's thought, see Samuel Levy, "On Unity and Simple Substance in Leibniz," *The Leibniz Review* 17 (2007): 61–106.

140. To illustrate, Leibniz variously refers to "this simple substance, this unity of substance" ("The soul and its operations," 12 June 1700), "unities or simple substances" (Leibniz to Sophie, middle–end June 1700), "simple substances or unities" (Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–early November (?) 1702), "Unities or simple things" ("Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit," August–early November (?) 1702), "simple substance or unity" (Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706), and "unities or simple substances" (Leibniz to Sophie,

argument for unities/simples that Leibniz presents to Sophie in 1692 (as recorded in his “Summary of a conversation...”), and which he goes on to repeat time and again in later writings both for her and her daughter, is this: there must be unities/simples because there are compounds (i.e., composites/multitudes/pluralities), which can be nothing other than the aggregation of unities/simples.<sup>141</sup> More formally:

Premise 1: There are compounds.

Premise 2: Compounds are nothing other than heaps or aggregates of unities/simples.

Conclusion: Therefore there are unities/simples.

The very same argument is to be found in a number of Leibniz’s well-known writings, such as the “Monadology” and the “Principles of Nature and Grace.”<sup>142</sup> According to the “Summary of a conversation...,” the sorts of things that qualify as unities/simples, and therefore as true substances, are human beings and God; in contemporaneous writings we are told that animals qualify also.<sup>143</sup> By 1696, however, Leibniz is telling Sophie that “unities are souls,”<sup>144</sup> a claim repeated in numerous letters thereafter,<sup>145</sup> though Leibniz does on occasion indicate that souls are not the only things that qualify as unities. In fact he identifies different sorts of unities, arranged according to a hierarchy of nobility, with minds at the top, then souls, and lastly an unspecified sort of unity which Leibniz elsewhere describes

---

March 1706). In each case, Leibniz is most naturally read as claiming that “unities” and “simple substances” are just different names for the same thing. See also Leibniz to Sophie, 31 October 1705.

141. “Now it is evident that there could not be composites without simples, nor pluralities without unities.” Leibniz, “Summary of a conversation with Sophie,” 29 December 1692/8 January 1693. See also Leibniz, “Thoughts on van Helmont’s doctrines,” first half of October (?) 1696, Leibniz to Sophie, 19 November 1701, 31 October 1705, March 1706, and Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–November (?) 1702.

142. Leibniz, “Monadology” §2, P 179; “Principles of nature and grace” §1, P 195.

143. See for example “On body and substance truly one,” March 1690, A VI 4: 1673/SLT 53.

144. Leibniz, “Thoughts on van Helmont’s doctrines,” first half of October (?) 1696.

145. See Leibniz to Sophie and Duchess Elizabeth Charlotte of Orléans, 28 October/7 November 1696, 4/14 November 1696, and Leibniz, “The soul and its operations,” 12 June 1700, Leibniz to Sophie, 19 November 1701, 31 October 1705, 6 February 1706, and March 1706.

as “soul-like,” on the grounds of its immateriality.<sup>146</sup> The three grades in this hierarchy roughly correspond to Aristotle’s division of souls into rational, sensitive, and vegetative:<sup>147</sup> for Leibniz, soul-like unities are alive, but have the barest of faculties, namely, confused perceptions of external things,<sup>148</sup> while souls proper have sensations, that is, distinct perceptions that involve attention and memory.<sup>149</sup> Minds likewise have sensations, but what distinguishes a mind from a soul is the former’s capacity for understanding, i.e., a priori reasoning.<sup>150</sup> Minds are therefore a particular kind of soul (the kind endowed with rationality), and in this category Leibniz places human souls as well as the souls of angels. Leibniz sometimes characterizes a mind not just as a mirror of the universe, which is a feature of all unities by dint of their ability to perceive (distinctly or otherwise), but also as a mirror of God.<sup>151</sup> This esoteric claim has a little more import than the assertion that minds are rational, as in saying that minds “mirror” God Leibniz means not only that they imitate or resemble him through their use of reason, but also that they are morally accountable for what they do: minds are capable of receiving punishments or rewards, while other kinds of unity are not.<sup>152</sup>

Why, though, does Leibniz identify souls and minds as unities rather than some kind of material atom? The answer lies in a second

146. “among unities, souls excel, and among souls, minds—such as are rational souls—excel.” Leibniz, “The soul and its operations,” 12 June 1700. See also Leibniz, “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter,” mid-June (?) 1702.

147. In one letter to Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz explicitly adopts the Aristotelian categories of souls: “I also recognize degrees in activities, like life, perception and reason, and that therefore there can be three or more kinds of souls, which are called vegetative, sensitive, and rational, and that there are bodies which possess life without sensation and others which possess life and sensation without reason.” Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, first half of November (?) 1702.

148. See Leibniz to Sophie, 19 November 1701.

149. See Leibniz, “On the souls of men and beasts,” G 7: 330/SLT 65: “sensation is perception that involves something distinct and is joined with attention and memory.”

150. See Leibniz to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte, 4/14 November 1696, Leibniz, “The soul and its operations,” 12 June 1700, Leibniz, “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter,” mid-June (?) 1702, Leibniz to Sophie, 29 November 1707.

151. See Leibniz to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte, 4/14 November 1696.

152. See Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706, 29 November 1707.

argument, which builds on the previous one by borrowing its conclusion that there are unities/simples and utilizing it as a premise:

Premise 1: There are unities/simples.

Premise 2: No material thing is a unity/simple, as all material things are divisible.

Conclusion: Therefore unities/simples must be immaterial.

Leibniz rarely states the argument as explicitly as this, usually contenting himself with giving it in incomplete form, or even just affirming the conclusion without any preceding argument, though there are a number of exceptions. For example, in a paper to Sophie from 1700, he first establishes that there must be simple substances, using the argument outlined earlier, then continues to assert that “matter has parts,” which entails that unities cannot be made from matter “otherwise they would still be multitudes and certainly not true and pure unities, such as are ultimately needed to make a multitude from them.” This then allows him to wrest out the conclusion that “souls, like all other unities of substance, are immaterial.”<sup>153</sup> (Leibniz holds all material things to be divisible, i.e., containing parts, on account of the fact that all have some size, so that they can be divided into things of a smaller size, and so on; since every material thing has some size, by dint of the fact that it is extended, there can be no ultimate, indivisible material particle or atom.)<sup>154</sup>

Leibniz sometimes arrives at the conclusion that unities or simple substances are immaterial by claiming that the alternative account is lacking in explanatory force. He tells both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte that immaterial substances need to be invoked because the notion of matter, which consists only of extension and impenetrability, does not in itself contain anything that could explain perception or activity.<sup>155</sup> It would therefore not do to suppose that unities or simple substances, which are the building blocks of everything else, are material.

153. Leibniz, “The soul and its operations,” 12 June 1700.

154. See, for example, “Logical-metaphysical principles,” A VI 4: 1647–48/SLT 52.

155. See Leibniz, “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter,” mid-June (?) 1702, Leibniz to Sophie, mid-September 1702, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–November (?) 1702, and 8 May 1704.

Having obtained the conclusion that unities/simples are immaterial, Leibniz very often proceeds to draw out a number of implications, the most important of which for our purposes is that unities must be indestructible. Leibniz accepts without question the ancient Greek view that a thing is destroyed only when it is broken down into its component parts (dissolution).<sup>156</sup> But as he has established that unities do not have any component parts, it follows that they cannot be destroyed by being broken into parts; there simply are no parts into which they can be broken up. Consequently they are naturally indestructible, or imperishable: once they exist they will always exist.<sup>157</sup> But while it would be correct to say that souls and soul-like unities are indestructible or imperishable, Leibniz thinks that with minds it is more proper to say that they are immortal. Minds, after all, are of a nobler order: they are morally accountable, mirrors of God. Unlike other imperishable unities, minds thus retain their memories and personality, features that render them capable of receiving punishment or reward.<sup>158</sup> What is commonly taken to be death is variously described as sleep, or a state akin to dizziness or a fainting fit where one's perceptions are confused.<sup>159</sup> By eliminating death altogether, Leibniz is well placed to urge that minds should not live in fear of it, though for the most part he does not do so. After all, the fact that minds are immortal is not, in itself, sufficient to bring about true peace of mind or comfort;

156. See Leibniz, "The soul and its operations," 12 June 1700, Leibniz to Sophie, 19 November 1701, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–November (?) 1702.

157. See Leibniz, "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines," first half of October (?) 1696, "The soul and its operations," 12 June 1700, "Letter on what is independent of sense and matter," mid-June (?) 1702, "Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit," early November (?) 1702, Leibniz to Sophie 18 November 1702, 31 November 1705, 6 February 1706, and 29 November 1707. Although Leibniz does allow that unities can be destroyed by a special act of God—annihilation (a literal deletion from existence)—he also thinks that this will never happen because God, being good, will not annihilate them. See A VI 6: 68/NE 68.

158. See for example, Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706, 29 November 1707. See also Leibniz to [Unknown recipient], 1679, A II 1 (2nd ed.): 779–80, *Theodicy*, 1710, G 6: 151/H 171.

159. See Leibniz to Sophie, 3/13 September 1694, 4/14 November 1696, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–early November (?) 1702, "Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit," August–early November (?) 1702, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, first half of November (?) 1702, 8 May 1704, "The principle of uniformity," summer 1704 (?), Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706.

it can only do so if accompanied by a belief that their continued existence will be a pleasant one. For this reason, Leibniz does not hinge his call for contentment on his metaphysics of unities alone, but on a combination of that and his theodicy.

There are, as noted earlier, two main threads in Leibniz's philosophical writings for the two Sophies—substance and theodicy. When Leibniz discusses substance in these writings he invariably tries to show that all substances are indestructible, and that our souls, being substances themselves, are immortal. And it is at this point where the first main thread of Leibniz's philosophical writings for the two Sophies becomes entwined with the second, where the issue of substance links in with, and perhaps feeds in to the issue of theodicy. And so it is to the issue of theodicy that we now turn.

When Leibniz discusses theodicy with the two Sophies, he focuses on two claims in particular: first, that God has ordered the universe providentially, that is, for the best; second, that God is concerned for the welfare of the citizens of the universe, especially minds.<sup>160</sup> The first claim was defended by the Stoics, who reasoned that as things have been divinely ordained for the best, an enlightened mind can attain tranquility by submitting to the will of providence. The second claim Leibniz identifies as a Christian addition to the Stoic position; Stoicism, he declares in the *Theodicy*, offers only the prospect of tranquility, whereas the Christian position gives grounds for true contentment or satisfaction:

It is true that the teachings of the Stoics... can only impart a forced patience, whereas our Lord inspires more sublime thoughts, and even teaches us the way of gaining contentment when he assures us that as God is perfectly good and wise, and has care of everything to the point of not neglecting one hair of our head, our confidence in him ought to be absolute. So much so that we would see, if we were capable of understanding it, that it is not even possible to wish for anything better (both in general and for ourselves) than what he does. It is as if men were told: do your duty and be content

160. For further details, see Donald Rutherford, "Leibniz and the Stoics: The Consolations of Theodicy," in *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Elmor J. Kremer and Michael J. Latzer (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2001), 138–64.



with what shall come of it, not only because you cannot resist divine providence, or the nature of things (which may suffice to be tranquil, but not to be content), but also because you are dealing with<sup>161</sup> a good master.<sup>162</sup>

According to Leibniz, a Stoic-like tranquility can be achieved solely by conforming one's will to divine providence, that is, by accepting that events unfold as they do on account of God's providential ordering of things. But such acceptance does not constitute true contentment; for that, a recognition of God's justice is required too. In Leibniz's view, the fact that God is just entails that no virtuous person will go unrewarded and no sinner will be left unpunished. Such balancing of the books will not always be possible in this life since the best order of the universe does not permit it, but because of God's supreme justice it is certain that all imbalances will eventually be corrected, if not in this life then in the next. The virtuous can therefore draw satisfaction from the thought that, no matter what the trials and tribulations of this life, a better future awaits.<sup>163</sup> Similar thinking can be found throughout the correspondence with both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte. In 1694 Leibniz writes to Sophie:

I content myself with knowing in general that because of the wisdom and immense goodness of the author of things, everything is so well ordered, and will go so well, even after this life, for those who love God, that they could wish for nothing further.<sup>164</sup>

161. Reading "affaire à" (Janet) in place of "faire à" (Gerhardt). See *Oeuvres philosophiques de Leibniz*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris: Ladrance, 1866), 2: 8.

162. G 6: 30–31/H 54–55. Translation modified.

163. It goes without saying that Leibniz himself achieved contentment this way: "I know no one happier than I am, because God gave me this understanding, as a result of which I envy no king; and I am certain that God takes special care of me, that is, that he has destined my mind for immense joys, in that he has opened to me such a certain and easy way of happiness." Leibniz, "On the secrets of the sublime, or on the supreme being," 11 February 1676, A VI 3: 477. English translation in *De summa rerum*, ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 31. See also Leibniz to Marie de Brinon, 15/25 May 1699, A I 17: 200.

164. Leibniz to Sophie, 3/13 September 1694.

Leibniz repeated and/or developed these claims in many of his subsequent writings for Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, often stressing the need for satisfaction or contentment. For example, in 1702 he writes to Sophie Charlotte:

one should always be convinced that God does everything for the best, although in our present state, in which we see only a small part of things, it is impossible for us to judge what best suits the universal harmony. And this trust in God... makes us content, and makes us believe that he makes everything happen for the greatest good of good people.<sup>165</sup>

Leibniz is often upfront about our currently being unable to see or understand exactly how the universe has been ordered for the best,<sup>166</sup> but he typically balances this with a claim that our current lack of understanding is only temporary:

God, who is the sovereign substance, immutably maintains the most perfect justice and order that can be maintained. So much so that I believe that if we knew the order of providence well enough, we would find that it is capable of meeting and even surpassing our wishes, and that there is nothing more desirable or more satisfying, not even for us personally.

But just as the beauty of a landscape is not appreciable when the eye is not properly situated for looking at it, it should not be thought strange that the same happens to us in this life, which is so short in relation to the general order. Yet there is reason to believe that we will one day be nearer to the true point of view of things in order to find them good...<sup>167</sup>

In other writings, however, Leibniz suggests that the order of the universe as a whole is discoverable now, and can be inferred from the order discovered by scientists:

165. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August (?) 1702.

166. For example: "we already have a reason for being satisfied; not only because everything that will be, must be, but also because everything that happens is so well ordered that, if we understood it correctly, we would not wish it to be better." Leibniz, "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines," first half of October (?), 1696.

167. Leibniz to Sophie, 4/14 August 1696.

And since every time we penetrate into the heart of things we find there the most beautiful order that could be wished for, beyond even what we imagined in it, as all those who have gone deeply into the sciences know, we can conclude that it is the same with everything else...<sup>168</sup>

As for God's concern for the welfare of individuals rather than just for the universe as a whole, Leibniz sometimes appeals to scripture,<sup>169</sup> but more often than not simply asserts it without argument.<sup>170</sup> No doubt he felt no pressing need to provide a wholesale philosophical defense of the claim to either Sophie or Sophie Charlotte given that it is not theologically contentious, at least within the Christian tradition accepted by all three. In any case, the upshot is that virtuous individuals have grounds to feel satisfied or contented, for not only has everything been ordered in the best way possible, but ultimately also in the best way possible for them.

Leibniz was of course mindful of the fact that things often appeared otherwise: "[T]he brevity and everyday evils of human life, and a thousand apparent disorders that present themselves to our eyes" mean that often "it seems that everything occurs by chance."<sup>171</sup> To this Leibniz offers two broad responses. The first is that humans are simply not yet in a position to see the whole picture; evils and disorders are present because they are necessary in the best order of things, although this is not apparent from our current perspective.<sup>172</sup> The second, and perhaps more substantial response, builds on the first by stressing that things will not always be the way they are now, at least for virtuous minds, which can look forward to a better future marked by progress both in their knowledge of the order of things (which will become ever more apparent) and in their happiness.<sup>173</sup> When writ-

168. Leibniz, "Letter on what is independent of sense and matter," mid-June (?), 1702.

169. See Leibniz to Sophie, April 1709.

170. See for example, Leibniz to Sophie, 4/14 August 1696, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 28 November/8 December 1699, August (?) 1702, and 8 May 1704.

171. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 9/19 May 1697.

172. See for example, Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 9/19 May 1697.

173. Such advancements are not unconnected either, since Leibniz holds that greater knowledge and understanding promotes greater happiness. For more details, see Lloyd Strickland,

ing to Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz often adverts to a better future for souls, though his assertion that “souls advance and ripen continually,” made to Sophie in 1696,<sup>174</sup> is later replaced by the claim that their progress may sometimes temporarily stall or even go into reverse. On occasion Leibniz employs simple analogies to make this point: for example, progress is similar to climbing a mountain, which often involves occasional falls onto lower ledges,<sup>175</sup> or the need to take a step back in order to make a better jump.<sup>176</sup> To Sophie he also draws a parallel between the soul’s progress and that of a grain of corn, which “seems to perish in the earth in order to be able to push up a shoot.”<sup>177</sup> While such analogies pick out clear cases in which retrograde steps do not ultimately impede progress, and perhaps even make it possible, Leibniz does not go beyond them to explain why such steps are necessary for souls to progress, and is thus content to let the analogies do all of the work. Yet whether progress is depicted as smooth or as occurring in fits and starts, Leibniz repeatedly asserts that it is what lies ahead for the souls of the virtuous.<sup>178</sup> As such, he urges that the virtuous have every reason to feel contentment and satisfaction in this life, even if they suffer inconveniences or come up against other troubles. Moreover, this contentment is able to eclipse the happiness gained from worldly things by those whom fortune has favored, such that “when one is well imbued with the great truths of God’s providence and of the immortality of our souls, one counts as insignificant the pleasures, honors and utilities of this life... The great future is more capable of affecting us.”<sup>179</sup>

The promise of future well-being and progress is thus the final step in a philosophy of contentment or satisfaction that begins with Leibniz’s metaphysics of unities (which affirms the indestructibility of all unities and the immortality of minds), and is supplemented by two

---

*Leibniz Reinterpreted* (London: Continuum, 2006), 29–31.

174. Leibniz to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte, 4/14 November 1696.

175. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, 8 May 1704.

176. See Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706.

177. Leibniz to Sophie, 6 February 1706.

178. Although in one letter he makes the lesser claim that progress is something to be hoped for; see Leibniz to Sophie, 9/19 May 1697.

179. Leibniz to Sophie, 25 September 1708.

key planks of his theodicy, namely, that God has secured the best possible order for the universe as a whole and is concerned for the welfare of individuals. I have suggested that the promotion of this philosophy of contentment can be seen as Leibniz's agenda for a considerable part of his correspondence with Sophie and Sophie Charlotte, a claim supported by the sheer number of writings in which Leibniz presents it (or parts of it) to them. To the best of my knowledge, there is no other correspondence or set of writings in which Leibniz makes such a concerted effort to push this part of his thought. Moreover, that it was his agenda to so push it is supported by the fact that, in some cases, he deliberately reworked a particular letter to weave it in, having not mentioned it in earlier drafts.<sup>180</sup> Why, though, did he choose to make it a recurring theme in his correspondence with the two Sophies? One scholar has suggested that as Leibniz's female correspondents "had only an amateur interest in philosophy," what interested them was "a popular philosophy which would serve as a guide to life."<sup>181</sup> Such a claim may well be true, though the evidence that Sophie and Sophie Charlotte actively sought such a philosophy from Leibniz is slim at best.<sup>182</sup> Moreover, it is doubtful that Leibniz saw his philosophy of contentment as "popular" in the sense of being an exoteric, easily accessible version of his philosophy (a "philosophy-lite" perhaps), fit only for amateurs or those lacking a university education. Far from it in fact: Leibniz presents his philosophy of contentment in numerous other writings, and while some of these were aimed at a popular audience, others certainly were not; indeed in some cases the writings were not intended for anyone other than Leibniz himself. His philosophy of contentment can be found, for instance, in "popular" writings such as "On the happy life" (1676),<sup>183</sup> "Dialogue between Theophile

180. See Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte, August–November (?) 1702. Also compare "On what is beyond the external senses and matter" with the two later drafts.

181. Ross, "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte," 103.

182. Moreover, by no means did Leibniz espouse his philosophy of contentment to all of his female correspondents; it is not mentioned, for instance, in his correspondence with Damaris Masham. See G 3: 336–43 and 348–75.

183. A VI 3: 668–89/SLT 166–67.

and Polidore” (1679),<sup>184</sup> the *Theodicy* (1710),<sup>185</sup> and the “Principles of Nature and Grace” (1714),<sup>186</sup> as well as in writings intended for a more “learned” audience, or even just himself, such as “Towards a system of a general science” (1682),<sup>187</sup> “Discourse on Metaphysics” (1686),<sup>188</sup> *An Examination of the Christian Religion* (1686),<sup>189</sup> “On the ultimate origination of things” (1697),<sup>190</sup> and various others.<sup>191</sup> It can also be found in letters to male correspondents such as André Morell.<sup>192</sup> What we can glean from all this is that Leibniz considered his philosophy of contentment to be an integral part of his overall philosophical system, not a pale popularized version of it or even a popular spinoff.<sup>193</sup> It was in essence what much of his philosophy was all about, the practical upshot of his metaphysical and philosophical thought. His keenness to promote the practical import of his system to anyone who would listen, amateur or otherwise, is therefore unsurprising.

In all likelihood, Leibniz repeatedly pitched his philosophy of contentment to Sophie and Sophie Charlotte not because they were women, or lacked a university education, or were “amateur philosophers,” but simply because they were receptive to it; there is scarcely

184. A VI 4: 2238–39.

185. G 6: 30–31/H 54–55, G 6: 267–68/H 282–83. See also “Memoir for enlightened persons of good intention,” 1692, A IV 4: 614. English translation in *The Political Writings of Leibniz*, 2nd ed., ed. and trans. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 105 (cited hereafter as R).

186. G 6: 606/L 641.

187. A VI 4: 485.

188. A VI 4: 1535–36/L 305.

189. A VI 4: 2357/SLT 202.

190. G 7: 307–08/SLT 37–38.

191. See for example, “On wisdom,” 1690s (?), G 7: 89–90/L 427–28; “Remarks on the journal of the voyage made by William Penn,” 1696, A IV 6: 362–65; “On destiny or mutual dependence,” undated, in *Leibniz’s Deutsche Schriften*, ed. Eduard Guhrauer (Berlin: Veit und Comp, 1840), 2: 52. English translation in *Leibniz Selections*, ed. and trans. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Scribner, 1951), 573 (cited hereafter as W).

192. See Leibniz to André Morell, 1/11 October 1697, A I 14: 548, and January 1698 (?), A I 15: 265.

193. Moreover, not only does Leibniz present his philosophy of contentment in numerous works, popular and otherwise, the style and content in which it is presented in those works is substantially the same as when expounded in his writings to Sophie and Sophie Charlotte.

a better inducement, and both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte certainly gave Leibniz all the encouragement he could wish for in this matter. For example, having read one of Leibniz's letters containing an exposition of part of his philosophy of contentment, Sophie Charlotte responded that she found his reasoning so convincing "that you may henceforth consider me as one of your disciples."<sup>194</sup> In a follow-up letter, the disciple thanked her teacher for his "instruction" and credited it for her own contentment,

since you remind one that one must be content and even feel happy with one's own state. You have so well convinced me of this, Sir, that I will be obliged to you for my peace of mind.<sup>195</sup>

A subsequent reference to her "tranquil temperament" and having no fear of death indicates that Leibniz's instruction continued to be heeded,<sup>196</sup> and if a letter from 1703 suggests some wavering on Sophie Charlotte's part,<sup>197</sup> her final moments do not. As mentioned above, when Sophie Charlotte was suffering from a terminal case of pneumonia, her attitude toward her approaching death was one of equanimity: Leibniz relates that, having returned to Hanover two weeks after her death,

I learned two things which gave me a great deal of consolation; first, that the Queen died a peaceful death, as Monsignor the Elector told me that she herself said to him: *ich sterbe eines gemächlichen Todes* [I die a gentle death]; second, that she died with a wonderfully serene mind and with great feelings of a soul at peace, resigned to the orders of the supreme providence.<sup>198</sup>

194. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, 22 August/1 September 1699.

195. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, 9/19 December 1699.

196. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, end March 1702.

197. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, 4 December 1703.

198. Leibniz to Princess Caroline of Ansbach, 18 March 1705, Klopff 9: 117. The alternative (and probably apocryphal) account of Sophie Charlotte's last words is no less suggestive of her equanimity: "Do not pity me ... for I am now going to satisfy my curiosity about the

Sophie's attitude appears to have been no different from her daughter's: to Marie de Brinon she reports a "tranquility of mind" with regard to the fate of her soul (which suggests a state of mind more akin to Leibnizian contentment or satisfaction than Stoic tranquility),<sup>199</sup> while to Leibniz she credits her contentment to the fact that she does not "dwell too much on the accidents which can happen," i.e., the world's disorders.<sup>200</sup> But perhaps the best evidence of Sophie's serenity is given by John Toland, who reveals that "Death, on which she accusom'd her self to meditate daily in the course of so many years, the immortal SOPHIA neither desir'd nor fear'd, wholly resigning her self to the disposal of Divine Providence." The explanation for this, Toland goes on to explain, was that "her Understanding was ... irradiated by Philosophy."<sup>201</sup> It is of course impossible to determine if it was Leibniz's philosophy of contentment that had such a profound effect, but if not it must have been one that was very similar.<sup>202</sup>

We will never know the extent to which Sophie and Sophie Charlotte were affected by Leibniz's philosophy of contentment, or if indeed they were genuinely affected by it at all, but the very fact that both reported contentment, and others reported it of them, indicates at the very least that their state of mind approached that which Leibniz claimed his philosophy was able to induce. I suspect that we need look no further than that to explain Leibniz's repeated attempts to promote this part of his thought.

---

principles of things, which Leibniz was never able to explain to me, and about space, infinity, being, and nothing." Frederick II, *Mémoires pour servir a l'histoire de Brandebourg*, 178.

199. Sophie to Marie de Brinon, 13/23 August 1697.

200. Sophie to Leibniz, 21 November 1701.

201. John Toland, *The Funeral Elogy and Character, of her Royal Highness, the late Princess Sophia: with the Explication of her Consecration-Medal* (London, 1714), 8.

202. Recall that both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte were admirers of Boëthius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Leibniz's philosophy of contentment shares a number of common themes with that of Boëthius.



## *Sophie and Philosophy*

Of course to suggest, as I have, that Sophie was receptive to certain aspects of Leibniz's philosophy, implies at the very least that Sophie was serious about philosophy and possessed a certain amount of philosophical competence. Both implications challenge received wisdom about Sophie. While the possible philosophical basis for her avowed contentment has not been the subject of scholarly investigation to date, certain elements of what we might term her positive philosophy, i.e., the philosophical positions she adopted as a result of argument, have attracted the attention of a handful of commentators. However the few scholars who have acknowledged that Sophie did dabble in such philosophy are generally dismissive of her efforts. For example, F. E. Baily insinuates that Sophie's attitude toward philosophy was less than serious:

A perusal of this correspondence [i.e., with Leibniz] leaves the reader with the impression that Sophia looked upon religion and philosophy in the abstract as the mental equivalent of a physical daily dozen exercises. She was neither deeply religious nor deeply philosophical but she was an epistolary chatterbox, and philosophy and religion were two of Leibniz' pet subjects.<sup>203</sup>

Others state, explicitly or otherwise, that Sophie's philosophical abilities were very limited, citing some of her remarks that suggest that she had difficulty grasping basic philosophical ideas. For example, Beatrice Zedler writes that

Leibniz tried to show Sophie that thought and souls cannot be material, but Sophie will later say that she does not understand what is meant by "thought" and by "immaterial," adding, "I confess that surpasses me, perhaps because I do not comprehend the terms well enough ... to be able to penetrate to the truth."<sup>204</sup>

203. Baily, *Sophia of Hanover and Her Times*, 119.

204. Zedler, "The Three Princesses," 49. Cf. Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*, 135.

The passage Zedler has in mind comes from Sophie's letter to Leibniz of 27 November 1702:

I do not understand very well what thought is, and how the immaterial is passive, for I do not know what the immaterial is nor how the material-active forms a body with the immaterial. I confess that this is beyond me. Perhaps I do not understand the terms of art well enough to be able to penetrate to the truth of the matter.<sup>205</sup>

Zedler's partial quotation of this passage strongly suggests that Sophie was utterly out of her depth when it came to philosophy, as she struggled to grasp the sort of relatively simple concepts central to philosophical debate. However, when this passage is considered in its entirety, such a reading is not so obvious. For what exactly is meant by the immaterial being passive, and the material-active forming a body with the immaterial? As with all things, of course, the context is important. In this case, the context is a paper or set of papers written by Jakob Heinrich von Fleming (1667–1728), a Saxon nobleman who visited the court of Berlin in the fall of 1702. Unfortunately it is difficult to piece together Fleming's views with any precision as his writings from this time have since been lost. Probably the most enlightening exposition of Fleming's views appears in Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 18 November 1702. In that letter, Leibniz explains that Fleming had written a paper

in which he says that the immaterial is active, and the material passive. And that an inferior activeness, having formed a body with its passiveness, is very often subject to another superior activeness, that in this way simple life forms a living body; but that a higher activeness, to which this living body serves as matter, forms an animal. And that the animal itself serves as matter with regard to the activeness which forms man. And that even man is like matter compared to the supreme activeness that is the divinity.<sup>206</sup>

205. Sophie to Leibniz, 27 November 1702.

206. Leibniz to Sophie, 18 November 1702.

One of the few things that is clear from this passage is that Fleming had developed a very abstruse metaphysics; another is that Leibniz expounds it in much too compressed a fashion to make its claims easily intelligible. There does exist another paper on Fleming's views, written by an unknown author and sent to Sophie sometime late in 1702, but it is no more illuminating of Fleming's doctrines than Leibniz's exposition.<sup>207</sup> In fact the anonymous author of this paper also had some difficulty in grasping Fleming's views: the paper begins with the author stating that it is not possible to come to a judgment about Fleming's philosophy without further clarification. However neither this paper nor Leibniz's letter of 18 November contains any mention of thought or "material actives," which were two of the things that flummoxed Sophie in Fleming's philosophy. It must therefore be the case that the source of Sophie's confusion was another paper, either by Fleming or by someone else writing about Fleming's views. This paper has unfortunately been lost, so there is no way of knowing how lucidly it discussed the terms Fleming used and the philosophy he developed. Without this paper, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about Sophie's philosophical abilities from the fact that she was unable, by her own admission, to understand the things discussed in it.

Another oft-cited reason for casting doubt on Sophie's philosophical competence is that she apparently could not understand Leibniz's doctrine of unities. On various occasions Sophie informs Leibniz that she cannot understand his demonstration regarding unities,<sup>208</sup> that she still does not understand unities,<sup>209</sup> and that she may have an insufficient understanding of them.<sup>210</sup> Such remarks have been seized upon by a number of scholars as evidence that Sophie's philosophical aptitude was relatively poor.<sup>211</sup> But as with the previous case, such a conclusion is shown to be somewhat hasty when the context of Sophie's remarks are considered. As noted above, in his letters

207. See [Unknown author] to Sophie, "Thoughts on the Fleming-Leibniz-Toland Debate," August–November (?) 1702.

208. Sophie to Leibniz, 16 June 1700.

209. Sophie to Leibniz, 9 November 1701.

210. Sophie to Leibniz, 21 November 1701.

211. See, for example, Foucher de Careil, *Leibniz et les deux Sophies*, 15; Ward, *The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession*, 193. Cf. Zedler "The Three Princesses," 49.

to Sophie on the topic of unities, Leibniz rehearses the same argument time and again: there must be unities because there are multitudes, which can be nothing other than the aggregation of unities. Moreover, in writing to Sophie, Leibniz is clear enough that unities are simple (in that they lack parts), that they are souls, and that in aggregation they compose bodies (multitudes/pluralities). What Leibniz does not explain, however, is how an aggregate of souls gives rise to a body. The answer Leibniz offers elsewhere involves treating material bodies as phenomenal, but nowhere in his correspondence with Sophie does he see fit to divulge it.<sup>212</sup> This means that, so far as Sophie could tell from what Leibniz had written on the subject, material things are quite literally composed of immaterial souls. Given the obvious difficulty inherent in that view, it is perhaps not surprising that Sophie was so uncertain as to whether she had properly understood what a unity was supposed to be.

As it happens, Sophie's suspicion that she had misunderstood Leibniz's doctrine of unities was well placed, as is clear from her concern about Leibniz's claim that there are many unities (in fact infinitely many). On one occasion she informed Leibniz that "one should not speak of unities where there are several of them," and in an attempt to understand his doctrine she resorted to interpreting a Leibnizian unity as the world-soul, "which one could, in my view, call a unity."<sup>213</sup> Sophie evidently considered "unity" to mean "unique," or at least to entail "uniqueness," which was not Leibniz's understanding at all. However, to construe a "unity" in the way Sophie did was not in any way out of step with the French of her day, since according to the 1694 edition of the *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, "unité" at the time meant "singularité" (647), which in turn meant "qualité de ce qui est singulier" (480), and "singulier" meant "unique" (480). The problem, I suspect, was that Leibniz had failed to inform Sophie that he was using the term "unité" in a technical, philosophical sense; without that important piece of information, Sophie's belief that he was using the term in its everyday sense seems far from censurable.

212. As has been noted by other scholars. See for example André Robinet, "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte," in *Leibniz and Berlin*, ed. H. Poser and A. Heinekamp (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990), 38.

213. Sophie to Leibniz, 21 November 1701.

In fact Sophie was not alone in failing to grasp Leibniz's unities. The Duke of Orléans, son of Sophie's niece, the aforementioned Elizabeth Charlotte, also failed to do so, notably after reading Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 31 October 1705. After reading this letter, the duke wrote some comments for Leibniz in which he construed the latter as advocating the existence of "soul unities" and "material unities."<sup>214</sup> Not only did Leibniz not attempt to correct the duke's misunderstanding, but in a subsequent letter to Sophie he also praised the duke's "sublime mind" and frothed that the duke "enters so well into the heart of the matter, and goes so much beyond what gave him occasion to discuss it."<sup>215</sup> From that, one would be tempted to conclude that the duke had in fact *developed* Leibniz's doctrine of unities rather than misunderstood it! In any case, the duke's misconception of Leibniz's view is less a reflection of his insight and philosophical acumen than it is of Leibniz's unwillingness to provide (or his carelessness in not providing) sufficient information about his doctrine of unities to make that doctrine easily intelligible from the outset.

It seems to me that Sophie's only failing in this matter is her honesty in admitting that she could not understand Leibniz's doctrine which, I submit, was at best incompletely stated to her, and at worst misleadingly stated. Consequently in neither this case, of Sophie's avowed inability to grasp Leibniz's unities, nor the one previously mentioned, of Sophie's avowed inability to grasp Fleming's notions of immaterial and material-active etc., are there sufficient grounds to draw any negative conclusions about Sophie's philosophical abilities.

Having examined and undermined the popular misconceptions concerning Sophie's lack of philosophical understanding, we turn now to some of Sophie's positive writings on philosophy. If nothing else, these writings reveal that Sophie was a very independent thinker. It might be thought that given Leibniz's frequent access to Sophie, and his willingness to expound his doctrines to her both in person and in letter, that Sophie would have emerged as one of Leibniz's disciples. But the evidence suggests that, however receptive she may have been to his philosophy of contentment, Sophie was no blind follower of Leibniz. In fact it is interesting to note just how little influence Leibniz appears

214. The Duke of Orléans to Leibniz, 21 February 1706.

215. Leibniz to Sophie, March 1706.

to have had on Sophie's philosophical opinions: on a number of issues on which Sophie voices her opinion, she takes a diametrically opposite view to Leibniz. For instance, on the thorny issue of whether God saves all or condemns some to eternal punishment, Sophie writes:

Thank God I trust in God's goodness; it has never occurred to me that he created me to do evil. Why call him the good Lord if he made us to damn us eternally?<sup>216</sup>

I amused myself by reading a book about the island of Formosa where 18 children a year were sacrificed in order to please a single God. It is much more reasonable for us to think that the good Lord gave his [son] for us all.<sup>217</sup>

In contrast to Sophie's universalist stance, Leibniz was an advocate of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and consistently rejected the doctrine of universal salvation.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, Leibniz did not conceal his view from Sophie.<sup>219</sup> Similarly, the two disagreed on the doctrine of optimism, i.e., the doctrine that this world is the best one possible. As is well known, Leibniz repeatedly argued in favor of this doctrine. Yet Sophie's sympathy for the idea of divine providence did not translate into sympathy for optimism; as she saw it, God could have made a better world by creating only meritorious people.<sup>220</sup> As he didn't, ours couldn't be the most perfect world possible.

So on the matters of optimism and universal salvation, Sophie adopted positions that she knew to be contrary to those taken by Leibniz. But nowhere is the lack of Leibniz's influence more pronounced than in Sophie's position on the ontological status of the mind. As

216. Sophie to Marie de Brinon, 23 December 1698/2 January 1699, *Œuvres de Leibniz*, 2: 228.

217. Sophie to Leibniz, 10 January 1705. See also Elizabeth Burnet's travelogue entry for 19 September 1707, in which Burnet records details of a conversation with Sophie. Among other things, Burnet notes Sophie's belief that God will not punish anyone eternally. See Burnet's *Travelogue*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS D. 1092, fol. 126v.

218. For further information see Lloyd Strickland, "Leibniz on Eternal Punishment," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2009): 307–31.

219. See Leibniz to Sophie, 3/13 September 1694.

220. See Sophie to Leibniz, 4/14 May 1691.

Foucher de Careil correctly reports, Sophie “was a materialist . . . , and it is known that Leibniz was unable to convert her to the idea of the immaterial soul.”<sup>221</sup> What led Sophie to reject the idea of an immaterial soul in favor of a materialist conception of the mind was her own reflection on the nature of mind and thought. In the course of this reflection, she developed several arguments in favor of a materialist understanding of the mind, and it is to these that we now turn.

Sophie’s first two arguments for the materiality of the mind emerge from a debate she had with the Abbé of Loccum, Gerhard Wolter Molanus, in late May or early June 1700. In the debate, Sophie argued for the materiality of the mind, while Molanus argued for its immateriality. Sophie subsequently asked Molanus to put down his arguments in writing, which he did, and Sophie then sent Molanus’s paper to Leibniz together with a letter containing a summary of her own views and a request that Leibniz act as arbiter:

I will ask you to think about the dispute that my son the Elector [Georg Ludwig] had on thoughts which, against him [Molanus], my son the Elector maintained are material inasmuch as they are composed of things which enter into us through the senses, and inasmuch as one cannot think of anything without making for oneself an idea of things which one has seen, heard or tasted, like a blind man who was asked how he imagined God and said “like sugar.”<sup>222</sup>

This passage contains two distinct arguments, but before examining them we should consider Sophie’s claim that these arguments are those of her son, Georg Ludwig. For whatever reason, this appears to be an embellishment on Sophie’s part. Indeed, Molanus prepared (for Leibniz’s benefit) his own report on his debate with Sophie, and this report makes no mention of the presence or input of Georg Ludwig, and instead identifies all the resistance to the conception of the mind as immaterial as coming from Sophie:

When our most serene Electress [Sophie] who, as you know, is never able to refrain from paradoxes, interrupted me dur-

221. Foucher de Careil, *Leibniz et les deux Sophies*, 52.

222. Sophie to Leibniz, 2 June 1700.

ing lunch recently, she provoked me to a discussion about the definition of the soul and its real distinction from an extended thing. She then asked me to write down my thoughts on this matter; I wrote them and sent them to her. The most serene Electress attacked them and did not even respond to my arguments, but multiplied questions, as she is in the habit of doing,<sup>223</sup> some of which were irrelevant while others were very easy to answer. In the end, she said that she would make you be the arbiter of this dispute, and to that end would send my paper to you, which she has done I'm sure.<sup>224</sup>

We can only speculate as to why Sophie would credit her son with authorship of the arguments mentioned in her letter of 2 June, but whatever the reason may have been there is little doubt that the arguments in that letter are Sophie's.

As mentioned above, Sophie's letter contains two distinct arguments for the materiality of the mind. The first one is that "thoughts ... are material inasmuch as they are composed of things which enter into us through the senses." The argument can be expressed thus:

Premise 1: All of our thoughts are composed of things which enter into us through the senses.

Premise 2: Only material things enter into us through the senses.

223. "ut fieri solet." In his book *Leibniz et les deux Sophies*, Foucher de Careil provides a French translation of Molanus's letter to Leibniz, which was originally written in Latin, and for some reason elects to translate Molanus's "ut fieri solet" [as she is in the habit of doing/as she is accustomed to do] as "comme c'est l'habitude des gens étrangers à ces matières" [as is the habit of people who are unfamiliar with these matters] (53). Foucher de Careil's French translation is problematic, since it goes beyond what Molanus actually wrote; in his letter to Leibniz, Molanus merely complains that Sophie is by nature somewhat inquisitive and argumentative, but Foucher de Careil's French translation has Molanus say that Sophie's inquisitive and argumentative nature is a result of her ignorance of philosophical matters, which is not a thought to be found in the Latin letter that left Molanus's pen. In a more recent discussion of Molanus's letter, Beatrice Zedler unfortunately elects to translate not Molanus's Latin but Foucher de Careil's faulty French translation of Molanus's Latin, and hence incorrectly quotes Molanus as saying that Sophie multiplied questions "as is the habit of people who are strangers to these arguments." See Zedler, "The Three Princesses," 49.

224. Molanus to Leibniz, 4 June 1700, A I 18: 696.



Conclusion: All of our thoughts are composed of material things.

The second premise, which is suppressed in Sophie's account of her argument, would not have been seen as contentious by many in her day (nor in fact would it be deemed so today). The conclusion says only that our thoughts are composed of material things, but if that holds good then it is reasonable to infer that thoughts must themselves be material along with the minds in which they inhere.

In his response to this argument, Leibniz wrote:

as for the material that enters into the brain through the senses, it is not this very material that enters into the soul, but the idea or representation of it, which is not a body, but a kind of effort or modified reaction.<sup>225</sup>

Such a claim was very common in the early modern period, on account of the corpuscular hypothesis in vogue at the time. This hypothesis holds that material objects emit, or transmit, or reflect tiny material particles that are then picked up by a person's sense organs. Many corpuscularians believed that these particles then caused motion of the subtly material "animal spirits" running through the nerves, motion which was subsequently carried to the animal spirits in the brain. And it was the motion in the animal spirits there that was said to somehow produce a perception in the person's mind, with both the perception and the mind generally considered to be immaterial.<sup>226</sup> Where this account gets hazy is in the detail of how motion of the material animal spirits in the brain gives rise to a perception or thought in the immaterial soul, as corpuscularians generally supposed it did.

Although Sophie does not offer any remarks on the corpuscular philosophy, she clearly accepts something akin to the first part of the account just discussed, namely, that what enters into our senses is material. But that is where the agreement ends. For instead of claiming that the matter entering through the sense organs ultimately produces an immaterial perception via the excitation of the animal spirits, So-

225. Leibniz, "The soul and its operations," 12 June 1700.

226. For a classic treatment of this account, see John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1690), II.I.23, II.VIII.4, and II.8.12.

ophie supposes that the resulting perception would itself be material in nature. In fact the most natural reading of her argument is that a perception or thought is composed of the very matter that enters through the sense organs. There are various reasons why she may have thought this. It could be, for instance, a straightforward appeal to the simplest explanation; Sophie's account of thought is after all very direct and parsimonious, requiring neither animal spirits nor immaterial minds. Alternatively, she may have shared the concern, widespread in her day, that it was not clear exactly how a material thing could cause an immaterial effect, i.e., how there could be causal influence between the material and immaterial. Leibniz's response does nothing to assuage that concern.

Sophie's second argument for the materiality of the mind is this:

thoughts ... are material ... inasmuch as one cannot think of anything without making for oneself an idea of things which one has seen, heard or tasted, like a blind man who was asked how he imagined God and said "like sugar."

This argument requires a certain amount of unpacking. To begin with, what exactly does Sophie mean by saying that we cannot think of anything without making ideas of things that we have sensed? In the French of the time (which was the language Sophie used when writing to Leibniz), the word "idée"—"idea"—had three meanings. It could mean an image (i.e., a mental picture), a concept (i.e., a notion, a broad understanding), or a representation (i.e., a mental stand-in for something, which includes but is not limited to images). We can work out which of these meanings Sophie has in mind by looking at her example of a blind man who can only think of God in terms of sugar. It is clear enough that in this example Sophie isn't thinking of images, as the blind man presumably couldn't visualize sugar even if he wanted to. Likewise, the blind man presumably wouldn't be thinking of the concept of sugar when he imagines God. Instead, what the blind man seems to be doing is trying to form a representation of God, and the closest he can get is sugar (and in all likelihood it is the taste of sugar that the blind man thinks of, rather than its smell or how it

feels to the touch). So from that we can establish that when Sophie refers to “ideas” she means representations, i.e., mental stand-ins for whatever is being thought about. Her example of the blind man also gives us a further clue as to how her argument is supposed to work, because the blind man is imagining God. Since God is traditionally thought to be immaterial, Sophie’s example involves a blind man attempting to form a representation of an immaterial thing—God. The best he can do is think of the taste of sugar, but presumably if he wasn’t blind he would think of something along the lines of the way God is traditionally depicted—as an old man with a beard, for instance. This certainly ties in with Sophie’s claim that we cannot form an “idea,” i.e., a representation of anything unless it’s something we have sensed, something material.

Although none of this comes across as being especially controversial, neither does it obviously lead to Sophie’s conclusion that thoughts and minds are material in nature. So where does her argument go from here? The crucial thing, I think, is her view that we can form representations of material things alone. Sophie seems to take that point as establishing her conclusion about the materiality of our ideas, which makes sense only by supposing that Sophie assumed the truth of a principle along the lines of: “that which represents is always of the same nature as what it represents.” If we feed such a principle back into Sophie’s argument and treat it as a suppressed premise, which I think is reasonable, this is the resulting argument:

Premise 1: Our ideas represent material things alone.

Premise 2: That which represents is always of the same nature as what it represents.

Conclusion: Therefore our ideas are material.

The second premise, which is unstated but clearly assumed in Sophie’s letter of 2 June, is undoubtedly inspired by or derived from the principle, in currency with many Greek, medieval and renaissance thinkers, that “like is known by like,” or at least from something very similar. Interestingly, this principle has been used throughout the his-

tory of philosophy to guarantee the immateriality of what is known by or represented in the mind.<sup>227</sup> For as the mind is immaterial (according to many Greek, medieval, and Renaissance thinkers), and like is known by like, consequently that which is known by or represented in the mind (usually taken to be forms or species) must be immaterial too. With her variation of the principle that “like is known by like,” Sophie turns this argument on its head by wresting out the conclusion that our ideas must be material because they represent material things alone. Of course on the basis of this conclusion Sophie claims that thoughts (and therefore minds) are material too. To ground this claim, Sophie has to treat representations as the primary or most fundamental form of thought, such that all thoughts are either themselves representations or are built up from them, which is little more than a good empiricist principle. And having already established that representations are material, it is not unreasonable to suppose that any other form of thought that they underpin would be material too, in which case all thoughts (and hence minds) must be material.

It is interesting to note Molanus’s response to Sophie’s second argument:

[this argument states that] it is impossible to think of something without forming a corporeal idea of it. For example, if one thinks of an angel, one imagines a boy who has wings; if one thinks of God, one imagines an old man with a long and grey beard. I reply that if the majority of men form ideas like these it is because we are accustomed from our youth to having only corporeal things represented in our imagination. Nevertheless, when I think of God, I leave behind the images by which we are accustomed to represent him as ideas that are not only false, but also contradictory, and I consider God as a spiritual being which has no dependence at all on any other being, or as a being possessing all the perfections.<sup>228</sup>

Molanus here attempts to undercut Sophie’s argument by providing a counter-example to her claim that “one cannot think of any-

227. For more details see Albert G. A. Balz, “Dualism and Early Modern Philosophy II,” *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 15 (1918): 228.

228. Molanus, “The soul and its nature,” 1 or 2 June 1700.

thing without making for oneself an idea of things which one has seen, heard or tasted,” namely, God. Molanus’s characterization of God as “a spiritual being which has no dependence at all on any other being, or as a being possessing all the perfections,” is intended to show that at least some of our ideas do not depend on what we have sensed. That it succeeds in doing so is questionable, since it is not clear that the key notions of dependence and perfection are not in fact derived from the corporeal things of sense-experience. Likewise, it is not clear that the idea of a spiritual being does not have a corporeal basis. Molanus assumes otherwise, but by basing his opposition to Sophie on such an assumption his objection is insufficiently forceful to undermine Sophie’s argument.<sup>229</sup>

Sophie’s third argument for the materiality of the mind is to be found in her letter to Leibniz of 21 November 1701:

I am not entirely persuaded that thoughts do not occupy place; for I find my imagination so full that I remember the past and that I have no more room for the present, in which I even forget what people look like. It therefore has to be that something material wears out or fills up, which produces the memory and which forms the ideas.<sup>230</sup>

229. One can, alternatively, construe Sophie as offering a single argument in her letter of 2 June. The argument would be this:

Premise 1: Thoughts that come from the senses are material in nature.

Premise 2: All thoughts come from the senses.

Conclusion: Therefore all thoughts are material in nature.

I think it is perfectly legitimate to read Sophie’s letter of 2 June as containing just this one argument. However, doing so does not sit easily with Molanus’s response in “The soul and its nature,” in which he construes Sophie as offering various whole arguments against the immateriality of the soul rather than various premises of one single argument. Since he was present at the debate that prompted Sophie to write her letter of 2 June, and as his paper “The soul and its nature” summarizes his and her contributions to that debate, I think it is reasonable to follow his lead in supposing Sophie to be offering distinct arguments rather than distinct premises of one argument.

230. Sophie to Leibniz, 21 November 1701.

In early modern times it was very common to think of the mind as a sort of cabinet, i.e., a container of thoughts.<sup>231</sup> This is precisely the conception of the mind that Sophie assumes in this passage, as is clear from her remarks about the imagination being “full,” having “no more room” for new memories, and that something material “fills up.” It might be thought that her remark that “something material wears out” is at odds with the cabinet view of the mind, but this is in fact not the case since a cabinet could wear out just as it could fill up (either of which would reduce its capacity).<sup>232</sup>

It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that Sophie conceived the mind as essentially a cabinet or container. Now what Sophie does is highlight the fact that the human mind has a limited capacity, as there are only so many memories and ideas that it can hold. This leads her to suppose that the mental cabinet must be material in nature. Her reasoning here is presumably something like this: suppose that the mind is a material container and the ideas and memories it contains are material too. This would mean that there is only a certain amount of space in the mind, and as each idea and memory takes up some of the available space, we couldn't just keep adding them ad infinitum, as eventually a point would be reached where there is no more room in the mental cabinet to add any more. So if we think of the mind as a material container then it's clear why it has the limited capacity it does. But if the mind were an immaterial container, then it is not at all obvious why it should even have a capacity. After all, the notion of a capacity, i.e., a limit to how much a thing can contain within itself, is very much a material notion, as it trades on the idea of space and things that occupy space. This, I think, is the thrust of Sophie's argument.

What Sophie's argument does is present the materialist hypothesis as the best explanation of certain mental phenomena, like

231. See, for example, Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, I.II.15. This is not to suggest, however, that Sophie was influenced by Locke. As far as I am aware, there is no evidence that she ever read Locke, or knew of his philosophy.

232. If Sophie's remark that “something material wears out” is thought to be inconsistent with the cabinet model of the mind, then the only other obvious way of interpreting it, to my mind, is as a reference to a wetware model of the mind, where mental processes and functions are thought to be embedded or implemented in the structures of the brain. But it stretches credibility to think that Sophie held such a modern view.

forgetfulness. Given the basic assumption that the mind is a container of thoughts, her argument is not without merit. Leibniz's response to this argument was to appeal to his theory of pre-established harmony, which in its popular form holds there to be a parallelism between events in the (immaterial) mind and the (material) body, without there being any interaction or direct causation between them. Hence he tells Sophie:

Regarding the soul's thoughts, as they must represent what happens in the body they could not be distinct when the traces in the brain are confused. So it is not necessary that thoughts have a physical location in order to be confused.<sup>233</sup>

Leibniz holds that the states of soul and brain mirror or represent each other, so that what happens in the brain is represented in the soul, and vice versa. A consequence of this is that when the brain deteriorates, as it does with age, the soul experiences a corresponding deterioration in abilities, which parallels but is not caused by the deterioration of the brain. Leibniz perhaps does enough to show that certain mental phenomena like forgetfulness are consistent with his own theory of pre-established harmony, but he does nothing to show that his immaterial conception of the mind is preferable to Sophie's materialistic one. In fact Leibniz's response is far from satisfactory for another reason. As is well known, Leibniz believed that his theory of pre-established harmony "gives a wonderful idea of ... the perfection of God's works,"<sup>234</sup> and admirably demonstrates the extent of God's wisdom and power (the attributes that conceived and effected such a scheme). But Sophie could easily retort that Leibniz's theory is in fact disadvantageous to creatures endowed with minds, for, by making mental events parallel brain events and vice versa, God has ensured that any deterioration in key parts of the brain must go hand in hand with a deterioration in the mind's abilities, even though the mind itself has not deteriorated in any way (which it couldn't for Leibniz, given his belief that it is an immaterial—and hence indestructible—soul). Leibniz's theory may well highlight God's skills as an artisan, but it

233. Leibniz to Sophie, 30 November 1701.

234. G 4: 485/SLT 75.

does so by allowing the corrosion of mental abilities even when there is and can be no corrosion in the immaterial mind proper. This anomaly is, I should think, an unfortunate corollary of the pre-established harmony, and one which his theory would struggle to explain away.

On the whole, Sophie's arguments hold up well to the objections raised against them by Molanus and Leibniz, and when placed in their proper context can be seen as respectable and original contributions to the early modern debate about the ontological status of the mind. Moreover, in arguing for a materialist conception of the mind, a hypothesis widely considered to be unfashionable and even heretical in her own day, and in defending it against the objections of Leibniz and Molanus, Sophie reveals herself to be an independently-minded thinker prepared to follow her own philosophical instincts, undeterred by the concerns of others.

### *Note on Texts and Translations*

In preparing this translation I have relied as much as possible on the manuscripts held in the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek and Niedersächsische Landesarchiv. Two things necessitated this: first, the fact that neither the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie nor that between Leibniz and Sophie Charlotte has yet been published in full; second, the fact that there are faults and omissions in many of those parts of the two correspondences that have been published. The most complete presentation of the two correspondences is that published by Onno Klopp in volumes 7–10 of G. W. Leibniz, *Die Werke von Leibniz* (vols. 7–9 contain the Sophie-Leibniz correspondence, volume 10 the Sophie Charlotte-Leibniz correspondence). Unfortunately Klopp's edition suffers from numerous faults: the transcriptions of Leibniz's writings are very often defective, and so unreliable; a number of key letters and texts are omitted; and Leibniz's annotations, deletions, marginalia, etc. are not recorded.<sup>235</sup> Fortunately

235. A number of letters and texts from the correspondence have also appeared in volumes 3, 6 and 7 of C. I. Gerhardt's *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*. For the most part, Gerhardt seems to have copied the transcriptions of certain letters or texts previously published by Klopp, as very often the same errors can be found in Klopp's and Gerhardt's transcriptions. Gerhardt does, however, offer three further texts overlooked by



Klopp's work is being superseded by the Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften's critical edition of Leibniz's writings, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. The correspondence between Leibniz and the two Sophies is to be found in series 1 of this work ("General and Historical Correspondence"), of which there are, at the time of writing, 21 volumes covering the period from the mid-1660s to 1702. Further volumes in this series are in preparation and will be published in future years. As befits a critical edition, the standard of presentation is high: annotations, deletions, and marginalia are usually recorded, and the transcriptions are generally very accurate. However the series is currently incomplete and contains no text from either correspondence written after 1702. It is likely to be at least another two decades before the series is completed.<sup>236</sup>

As has been noted above, the two correspondences between them comprise approximately 750 items in total—letters, drafts, other variants, and other texts. Many of these writings are concerned with passing on gossip, court news, and political news. In preparing this volume my concern has been only with the philosophical parts of the correspondence, so I have focused solely on those texts with substantial philosophical content, i.e., those which throw light on the philosophical views or leanings of their author(s).<sup>237</sup> Some of the writings with such content also contain gossip and news, and in

---

Klopp. A handful of other texts missed by both Klopp and Gerhardt have been published in Gaston Grua's *Textes inédits* and Alexandre Foucher de Careil's *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits de Leibniz*. Neither is especially reliable, however.

236. Mention may also be made of a Spanish edition of some of the key philosophical texts from the two correspondences, *Filosofía para princesas*, ed. and trans. Javier Echeverría (Madrid: Alianza, 1989).

237. Aside from the texts included in this volume, there are various other writings from the correspondence that can be said to be about philosophy but which do not in themselves have any substantial philosophical content. For example, between September and November 1702 Sophie and Leibniz exchanged several letters in which an ongoing topic of discussion was Isaac Jaquelot's book *Dissertation sur l'existence de Dieu* (The Hague, 1697). Yet during the course of this exchange neither Sophie nor Leibniz writes anything that throws any light on their respective philosophical views, and for this reason I have not selected these letters for inclusion in the present volume. For these letters see Klopp 8: 367–68, 368–70, 373–74, 377–79, and 385–86. Ironically, the one letter in this exchange that does seem to have had substantial philosophical content, a letter from Leibniz to Sophie from the end of September 1702, is no longer extant.

these cases I have elected not to translate the entire text, omitting the non-philosophical material. Similarly, on the question of which of the deletions and marginalia in Leibniz's drafts should be included and which should be omitted, the deciding factor has been the philosophical significance of the material. By focusing only on the material with substantial philosophical content, my aim has been to extract the philosophical narrative between Leibniz and the two Sophies from their correspondence as a whole. So presented, it is a narrative unlike most others found in philosophical correspondences, which tend to serve as a written to-and-fro, with each letter responding to and building upon the ideas in the last, thus driving forward the discussion. The correspondence between Leibniz and the two Sophies rarely fits this pattern: often the philosophical content of one letter or text does not elicit a response from its recipient, and so the exchange of philosophical views is cut short almost as soon as it has begun. While this may seem unfortunate, it is the nature of the correspondence between the figures in question. It should not be overlooked that both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte met Leibniz often during the course of their respective correspondences, and this no doubt led to many face-to-face discussions that carried on where their letters left off. Moreover, both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte had many official duties that would have restricted the time available to think about philosophical matters and respond to philosophical letters.

To round out the narrative I have included two appendices. The first collects together fragmentary philosophical remarks from both correspondences, while the second consists of three texts, which, although not part of either correspondence proper, nevertheless throw light upon certain parts of them. Although the narratives contained within the two correspondences are atypical in many ways, this does not detract from their importance. They are, as has been noted, the only source of the philosophical views of both Sophie and Sophie Charlotte. And in recent years, numerous scholars have stressed the value and importance of Leibniz's side of the correspondence. For example, Leibniz's letters to Sophie of 31 October 1705 and 6 March 1706 have been described as "philosophical jewels,"<sup>238</sup> his letter to

238. Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 473.

Sophie of 4 November 1696 as containing “his entire philosophy reduced to its first principles,”<sup>239</sup> his letter to Sophie Charlotte of 8 May 1704 as “perhaps the most comprehensible summary of his philosophy he ever produced,”<sup>240</sup> and his “Letter on what is independent of sense of matter,” composed for Sophie Charlotte, as “a tiny summa of much Leibnizian doctrine.”<sup>241</sup> In a natural extension of these thoughts, in recent years it has even been claimed that Leibniz’s writings for Sophie and Sophie Charlotte are “among the best introductions to his philosophy in his own words.”<sup>242</sup> Despite the recognition of the philosophical value of the two correspondences (or at least Leibniz’s side of them), only a tiny fraction of them has been published in English to date.<sup>243</sup> In each case the translations have been made from unreliable sources (usually the editions by Klopp or Gerhardt), and I have therefore not consulted them in preparing this volume.

It should be noted that those texts written before March 1700 have two dates: the first follows the Julian calendar, the second the Gregorian calendar, which was finally adopted in Protestant Germany on 1 March 1700 (on the Julian calendar).

239. Foucher de Careil, *Leibniz et les deux Sophies*, 20.

240. Ross, “Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte,” 100–101.

241. Patrick Riley, *Leibniz’s Universal Jurisprudence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 70.

242. Brown and Fox, *Historical Dictionary of Leibniz’s Philosophy*, 60.

243. Leibniz’s “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” has been published in W 355–67, in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 186–92, and L 547–53. His letter to Sophie Charlotte of 8 May 1704 has been published in *Leibniz’s ‘New System’ and associated Contemporary Texts*, trans. and ed. R. S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 220–25. And his “Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit” has been published in L 554–60.



## 1. Sophie to Leibniz (5/15 October 1691)<sup>1</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 74.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 139–40 (following M).

A: A I 7: 29 (following M).

In the fall of 1691, word began to spread in court circles of the abilities of a young woman from Lüneberg called Rosamund Juliane von der Asseburg (1672–1727?).<sup>2</sup> From an early age, Asseburg had claimed to have visions of Christ, and also that he dictated things for her to write down, some of which were prophetic in nature. Asseburg eventually came to the attention of the superintendent of the churches of Lüneberg, Johann Wilhelm Petersen (1649–1727), who was so impressed with her abilities that in late 1691 he published a book—*Sendschreiben*<sup>3</sup>—in which he recounted details of her visions and dictated writings. This put Petersen’s position in jeopardy, as the book contained details of Asseburg’s prophecies concerning the coming millennium, that is, the 1,000-year reign of Christ on Earth. Petersen shared Asseburg’s millenarian sympathies, and had openly preached millenarian doctrines until May 1690, when his superiors formally banned him from defending or even mentioning such doctrines in public. Concerned that the inclusion of millenarian doctrines in his book on Asseburg contravened this ban, in late 1691

1. From the French. Incomplete; a brief opening remark about Leibniz’s correspondence with Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, has not been translated.

2. For more information on Asseburg, see E. J. Aiton, *Leibniz: A Biography* (Bristol: Adam Hilger Ltd, 1985), 186–89; Daniel J. Cook, “Leibniz on Enthusiasm,” in *Leibniz, Religion and Mysticism*, ed. A. Coudert, R. Popkin, and G. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998), 121–23; Maria Rosa Antognazza and Howard Hotson, *Alsted and Leibniz on God, the Magistrate and the Millennium* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 170–77.

3. J. W. Petersen, *Sendschreiben* (Lüneburg, 1691). This book was subsequently translated into English as J. W. P., *A Letter to Some Divines... With an Exact Account of what God hath bestowed upon a Noble Maid, from her Seventh Year, until Now, MDCXCI*, ed. and trans. Francis Lee (London, 1695).

the consistory initiated proceedings to remove Petersen from his post.<sup>4</sup> While visiting Ebsdorf in October 1691, Sophie became aware of all these events and related them to Leibniz in a series of letters, of which the following is the first.

Ebsdorf, 5/15 October 1691

You have doubtless heard of a new sect in Wolfenbüttel,<sup>5</sup> but not of a young lady of quality to whom our Lord appears in all his glory,<sup>6</sup> and who dictates to her writings which are admirable, splendid, and magnificent, and which contain prophesies; when she is sent a sealed letter containing questions, she responds to them positively without opening it, by the direction of Christ. We will try to go to see her incognito when she will be in Lüneburg with the Superintendent,<sup>7</sup> where she almost always makes her home.<sup>8</sup> This is still a secret, but too wonderful not to be passed on to a man of your curiosity.

Sophie

4. Petersen was eventually dismissed from his post as superintendent of the churches of Lüneburg on 21 January 1692.

5. The Pietists.

6. Rosamunde von der Asseburg.

7. Johann Wilhelm Petersen.

8. At the time, Asseburg and her sisters lived with Petersen and his wife.

## 2. Sophie to Anna Katharina von Harling, for Leibniz (8/18 October 1691)<sup>9</sup>

Versions:

M: Copy, made from dispatched letter: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 106–7.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 140–42 (following M).

A: A I 7: 30–31 (following M).

The following letter from Sophie to Anna Katharina von Harling (1624?–1702), former governess to Sophie’s children, contains further details about the abilities of Rosamunde von der Asseburg as well as Sophie’s first recorded assessment of them. The contents of this letter, if not the letter itself, were passed on to Leibniz at Sophie’s request.

Ebsdorf, 8/18 Oct. 1691

Because of his illness my son<sup>10</sup> has neglected to visit the three sisters of Mrs. Bothmer.<sup>11</sup> It is to the middle one, who is called Rosamunde, that Our Lord Jesus appears, and she has seen him for as long as she can remember.<sup>12</sup> But it was only after she had turned ten and he came to her and put his hand on her head that she became afraid. After that she told her mother, who told her that, if it should happen again, she should say, “What do you order your handmaiden?” which she did. And ever since then he comes to her often, and dictates things for her to write down, which she does. And she writes a stack of wonderful things that must be admired. I have little con-

9. From the German, and translated jointly with Geert de Wilde. Complete.

10. Prince Maximilian Wilhelm (1666–1726).

11. Sophie is referring to Sophie Ehrengard von der Asseburg, who died in 1688. She was the wife of Hans Kaspar von Bothmer (1656–1732), envoy of Brunswick-Lüneburg in Vienna. She had three sisters: Rosamunde Juliane, Auguste Dorothee, and Helene Lucretia.

12. According to Petersen, Asseburg’s visions began at the age of seven. See Petersen, *Send-schreiben*, §3; J. W. P., *A Letter to Some Divines*, 3 (§3).

sideration for all this because it may well be a fancy, and since she is constantly reading the scriptures and religious books, she may well have copied their style.<sup>13</sup> However, when Dr. Scott<sup>14</sup> asked her three questions in English—the piece of paper on which they were written having been folded and placed into an envelope—she answered them (without opening the piece of paper) quite pertinently (in the way, she says, Christ dictated them to her).<sup>15</sup> I have seen the piece of paper folded up, and the answer in German next to it. I confess that this seemed strange to me. She and her younger sister look the same as Mrs. Bothmer; the eldest is marred by smallpox, but she is still as happy as the others. And the two who do not have visions admire Rosamunde, and say that they experience the same joy in Christ. The other day they went for dinner with the Lutherans, and Rosamunde, always seeing Christ and always strangely joyful, then prophesied that Christ would reign on earth for a thousand years, as Jurieu believes.<sup>16</sup> Petersen, the superintendent of Lüneburg, and his wife are also of that opinion. The three sisters from Lüneburg live in the same house, and were with her here, and as a result people want to depose this good and simple man, which I find a pity. Could you please pass all this on to privy councilor Bussche,<sup>17</sup> Mr. Molanus,<sup>18</sup>

13. In a subsequent letter to von Harling of 16/26 October 1691, which Sophie asked to be passed on to Leibniz, Sophie claimed that “what she [Asseburg] writes is almost in the style of the *Apocalypse* of St. John” (A I 7: 40–41). Leibniz later adopted this observation, informing a correspondent that Asseburg “talks in the style of the *Apocalypse*.” See Leibniz’s letter to Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels, 13/23 November 1691, A I 7: 190.

14. Dr. Robert Scott, court physician at Celle.

15. Scott’s sealed-question test was conducted on 1/11 August 1691, with further tests being conducted during August and September 1691. For further information on the questions put to Asseburg on 1/11 August, see Robert Scott’s letter to Sophie of 9/19 November 1691, Appendix II no. 1.

16. Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713), French Protestant theologian who fled to Holland in 1681, where he became pastor of the Walloon Church of Rotterdam. Sophie is referring to Jurieu’s *L’Accomplissement des propheties* (Rotterdam, 1686), in which Jurieu predicted that the millennial reign of Christ would begin between 1710 and 1715.

17. Albrecht Philipp von dem Bussche (1639–98).

18. Gerhard Wolter Molanus was Abbé of Loccum in Lower Saxony, and the principal Protestant representative during the negotiations for church reunion, which took place in Hano-



and Mr. Leibniz? Duke Anton Ulrich<sup>19</sup> left for Wolfenbüttel early this morning as he did not feel well and was afraid he might also catch the measles. Yesterday he was in Lüneburg and ate with Spöricken, but the brother of Mrs. Schulenburg<sup>20</sup> ate with the superintendent and the three sisters of his cousins, who were seated at a large table with other young ladies and men and were very happy in their own way. The table was very lively, and of course they were talking about devotion all the time. They think Christ will come in all his glory in the year 1693,<sup>21</sup> so I hope I will still be around to see it. The other things which Rosamunde prophesied are too detailed to describe. She has foreseen the death of her two sisters, and seen Mrs. Bothmer dressed in white clothes and with laurel branches in her hands and on her head, who said to her: God has allowed her to show himself to her. She was standing next to Christ, as she was telling her.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise, she and her youngest sister are looking quite sweet and still very young. They behaved very nicely and in a cheerful and modest way, to repeat the words of the Countess von Greiffenstein. Enough about this.

Sophie

---

ver in the 1670s and 1680s. He corresponded with Leibniz from 1679 until Leibniz's death in 1716.

19. Anton Ulrich (1633–1714), Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and one of Leibniz's numerous correspondents.

20. Ehrengard Melusine von der Schulenburg (1667–1743), Duchess of Kendal and Munster.

21. Sophie corrected this report in a subsequent letter to von Harling, of 10/20 October 1691 (see no. 3).

22. That is, as the apparition of the late Mrs. Bothmer was telling Asseburg.

**3. Sophie to Anna Katharina von Harling, for Leibniz (10/20 October 1691)<sup>23</sup>**

Versions:

M: Copy of dispatched letter: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 106–7.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 142 (following M).

A: A I 7: 32 (following M).

Sophie's follow-up to her letter of 8/18 October 1691 (see no. 2). The contents of this letter, if not the letter itself, were passed on to Leibniz at Sophie's request.

Ebsdorf, 10/20 October

Last time I informed you incorrectly about the time Christ should come, when I said 1693,<sup>24</sup> as such a thing was printed by a man called Sandhagen,<sup>25</sup> but Superintendent Petersen and his prophetess have taken offense at this because, as they say, God alone is aware of the actual time. Could you please pass this on to Mr. Bussche, Mr. Molanus, and Mr. Leibniz? My husband is quite happy to see that Mr. Molanus would like to examine the case concerning Rosamunde von Asseburg, because it really is so strange that her loved ones as well as myself and more intelligent people have no idea what they should say about it. She is quite happy to come to me here or in Hanover. However, I do not want this dear person to be laughed at, as could happen here, and we will not be coming to Hanover any time soon. Mr. Molanus may well come to Lüneburg; it is quite worth the effort, because nothing stranger has happened in our times.

23. From the German, and translated jointly with Geert de Wilde. Complete.

24. Sophie is referring to her earlier letter to von Harling, of 8/18 October 1691 (see no. 2).

25. Kaspar Hermann Sandhagen (1639–97), Petersen's predecessor.

#### 4. Leibniz to Sophie (13/23 October 1691)

Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 70–72.  
 M2: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 4–6.

Transcriptions:

- K: Klopp 7: 144–49 (following M1).  
 A: A I 7: 33–37 (following M2).

The following is Leibniz's response to Sophie's reports about Rosamunde von der Asseburg (see nos. 1, 2, and 3).

[M2: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>26</sup>

Madam

Your Serene Highness did me a very special favor by informing me of the history of a local young prophetess. There are people who judge this very offhandedly and think that she should be sent to the waters of Pyrmont instead.<sup>27</sup> For my part, I am firmly convinced that all this is completely natural, and that there must be some embellishment in the matter of the English note sealed by Dr. Scott, to which, it is claimed, she replied perfectly well, without opening it, because our Lord supposedly dictated the response to her. It would be good to have more details of her life and some examples of what was dictated to her.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless I admire the nature of the human mind, all the workings

26. From the French. Incomplete; a brief closing remark about having been delayed in responding to Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, has not been translated.

27. This was the view of Molanus, who supposed that Asseburg's visions were a result of her being constipated. Molanus informed Leibniz in his letter of 12/22 October 1691 that Asseburg should be taken as soon as possible to the waters of Pyrmont in order to cleanse her mesentery (i.e., her intestines). See A I 7: 406. Bad Pyrmont is a small town in Lower Saxony and is famous, even today, for its spring waters.

28. This sentence is not present in M1.

of which we do not know well. When we come across such persons, far from reproaching them and wanting to make them change, we should instead preserve them in this beautiful state of mind, just as one keeps a rarity or a cabinet piece.<sup>29</sup> We have only two means of distinguishing imaginations (by which I mean visions and dreams) from true perceptions. One is that true perceptions have a connection with general affairs, which dreams do not have in sufficient measure; for those who are awake are all in a common world, whereas those who are dreaming each have a private world. The other way of distinguishing them is that the present impressions of true objects are livelier and more distinct than the images that come only from a remnant of past impressions. However, a person who has a very strong imagination can have apparitions lively enough and distinct enough to seem to him to be truths, especially when the apparitions have a connection with the things of the world or reality, or are taken for such. This is why young people raised in cloisters, where they hear a thousand little stories of miracles and ghosts, are prone to have such visions if they have a very active imagination, because their head is filled with them, and the confidence they have that spirits or people from another world often communicate with us does not allow them to entertain the doubts and scruples that we others would have in a similar encounter with them. It is also notable that visions usually relate to the nature of those who have them. And that even holds good with regard to true Prophets, for God adapted himself to their particular talents because he does not perform superfluous miracles. I sometimes think that Ezekiel had learned architecture or was an engineer of the Court because he has magnificent visions and sees beautiful buildings.<sup>30</sup> But a prophet of the fields, such as Hosea or Amos, sees only landscapes and rustic scenes,<sup>31</sup> while Daniel, who was a man of state, rules the four kingdoms of the world.<sup>32</sup> This young lady that Your Serene Highness has seen should not be compared with these prophets, however; she believes she has

29. Leibniz repeated the recommendation that Asseburg “should be preserved as a rarity, and as a cabinet piece” in a letter written one month later (13/23 November 1691) to Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels, A I 7: 190.

30. An allusion to Ezekiel 40–43.

31. An allusion to Hosea and Amos 4–9.

32. An allusion to Daniel 7.

Jesus Christ in front of her eyes because another Saint would hardly be accepted among Protestants. This love, so ardent, that she carries for the Savior, excited by sermons and by reading, has finally brought about in her the grace to see the image or appearance of him. For why would I not call it a grace? It does her nothing but good, it fills her with joy, she conceives the finest sentiments of the world with it. Her piety is reinvigorated by it at all moments. We have some authentic enough Acts of the martyrdom of St. Perpetua and of St. Felicity,<sup>33</sup> who were martyred in Africa at the time of the Romans. It is clear that similar apparitions drove them to suffer.<sup>34</sup> These were therefore graces, and perhaps many saints had no other graces. We should not imagine that all of God's graces have to be miraculous. When he uses the natural dispositions of our mind and the things which surround us to bring light to our understanding, or the fervor to do the right thing to our heart, I hold it to be a grace. This multitude of prophets of the people of Israel was apparently not of another nature. Also, despite being fine Prophets, those who prophesied against Micah were mistaken on that occasion; their nature having acted in them in an ordinary way, but on an occasion in which the external events did not correspond to it, because providence had ordered otherwise.<sup>35</sup> I am afraid that it will end up being much the same with this virtuous young girl if she meddles too closely in events, and that will bring her tremendous grief.

However, I admit that *the great Prophets*, that is, those who can teach us the detail of the future, have to have supernatural graces. And it is impossible that a limited mind, however penetrating it may be, can succeed in this. A seemingly small thing can change the whole course of general affairs. A lead bullet travelling low enough will encounter the head of an able general, and this will ensure that the battle

33. Leibniz is referring to *Passio Perpetuae*, often attributed to Tertullian. English translation available in Michelle Thiébaux, ed. and trans., *The Writings of Medieval Women: An Anthology* (New York: Garland, 1994), 8–20. Both Perpetua and Felicity were killed during the persecution of Septimius Severus in Carthage, 203 C.E.

34. For details of their visions, see Thiébaux, *The Writings of Medieval Women*, 11 and 13–15.

35. Leibniz here confuses the prophet Micah with the prophet Micaiah. He is alluding to an event related in I Kings 22, in which around 400 prophets claimed that Ahab and Jehoshaphat would be victorious if they attacked Ramoth in Gilead, while Micaiah prophesied their defeat, a prophecy that was fulfilled.

is lost. A melon eaten at the wrong time will kill a King. A certain prince will not be able to sleep one night because of the food he ate in the evening; this will give him despondent thoughts and will lead him to take a violent resolution on matters of state. A spark will jump to a shop, and that will lead to Belgrade or Nice being lost. There is no devil or angel who can foresee all these small things which give rise to such great events, because nothing is so small which does not arise from a great variety of even smaller circumstances, and these circumstances from others again, and so on to infinity. Microscopes show us that the smallest things are enriched with variety in proportion to the great. Moreover, all the things of the universe have such a close and remarkable connection between themselves that nothing happens here which does not have some insensible dependency on things which are a hundred thousand leagues from here. For every corporeal action or passion, in some small part of its effect, depends on the impressions of the air and of other neighboring bodies, and these again on their neighbors further away, and this carries on through a continuous chain, irrespective of distance. So every particular event of nature depends on an infinity of causes, and often the springs are set up as in a rifle, where the slightest action that occurs makes the whole machine discharge. Therefore one could not be certain of the detail of any future event through the consideration of causes or through foresight unless one is endowed with an infinite mind. I speak of detail, since we do not have to be psychic to say that the sun will rise tomorrow, and that the Pope will die at some point. One can even predict an uncertain future very easily, but by chance, like for example whether such and such a pregnant princess will deliver a boy or not. For since there are only two possible outcomes, it is as easy to get it right as to get it wrong, and two men who agree between them to predict—one to a Prince who desired a son, the other to his brother who had reason to wish only for a girl—to each what he wished, could not fail to get the reward that they secretly agreed to share between them. But when it is a matter of a detail, it is something completely different. And as *Prophecy* is in effect *the history of the future*, I believe that any prophet who could genuinely give us the history of the forthcoming century would without doubt be inspired by God. Mr. Huet, a very learned man who had been made responsible for educating the Dau-

phin and who is now bishop of Avranches, has written a fine book in favor of the Christian religion,<sup>36</sup> the purpose of which is to show that the prophets of the Old Testament have amazingly foreseen the detail of the new, since prophecy of detail is a miracle the devil himself could not imitate. But this is enough philosophizing on prophets, true or imaginary. The ancients understood poets and prophets under the same name, calling them *Vates*.<sup>37</sup> As for judicial astrology and other so-called sciences of this kind, they are just pure nonsense.

I have just received *l'Horoscope des Jesuites*.<sup>38</sup> It is a certain Mr. Carré, a French minister in England, who has gone to the trouble of basing it not on the stars, but on the words of the *Apocalypse*.<sup>39</sup> Apparently he wanted to imitate Mr. Jurieu.<sup>40</sup> This is his argument: The Jesuits are the locusts which emerged from the land of the abyss.<sup>41</sup> This is something that should not be doubted unless one is a disciple of the Antichrist. Now these locusts are due to torment men for five months.<sup>42</sup> Five months are a hundred and fifty days, at 30 days a month. The prophetic days are years. Thus the Jesuits are only due to exist for a hundred and fifty years. The author gets into a little difficulty about when this period starts. Finally he decides that it began with the Council of Trent, but as this Council lasted from 1545 to 1563 the fall of the Jesuits is due to occur between 1695 and 1713. Alas, poor people. They will all be plunged into the pit of the abyss, that is, into hell. That displeases me. I do not like tragic outcomes. I would prefer everyone to be at ease. Neither would I want those who are called Chiliasts or Millenarians to be persecuted for an opinion to which the *Apocalypse* appears so favorable. The Augsburg Confession

36. Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721), prelate and scientist. He was appointed assistant tutor to the Dauphin, Louis XIV's son, in 1670, and became bishop of Avranches in 1685. Leibniz is referring to Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica ad Serenissimum Delphinum* (Paris, 1679).

37. As Leibniz notes, the Latin word "vates" means "poet" or "prophet."

38. Louis Carré, *L'Horoscope des Jesuites, ou Lon découvre combien ils doivent durer, et de quelle maniere ils doivent cependant tourmenter les Hommes* (Amsterdam, 1691).

39. That is, the book of Revelation.

40. Leibniz is referring to Jurieu's *L'Accomplissement des propheties*, in which Jurieu predicted the overthrow of the Antichrist—identified as the Pope—in 1689.

41. Cf. Revelation 9:2.

42. Cf. Revelation 9:5.

seems only to be against Millenarians destructive of the public order.<sup>43</sup>  
But the error of those who wait patiently for the Kingdom of Jesus  
Christ seems quite harmless...<sup>44</sup>

I am with devotion

Madam, to Your Serene Highness

Your very humble and very obedient servant

Leibniz

Hanover, 13 October 1691

43. Leibniz is mistaken in his interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, §17 of which clearly condemns millenarianism on doctrinal grounds with no distinction between millenarians who are a public nuisance and those who are not. For further information on Leibniz's attitude towards millenarianism see Antognazza and Hotson, *Alsted and Leibniz*, 127–214; Daniel J. Cook and Lloyd Strickland, "Leibniz and Millenarianism," in *Pluralität der Perspektiven und Einheit der Wahrheit im Werk von G. W. Leibniz*, ed. Friedrich Beiderbeck and Stephan Waldhoff (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010).

44. harmless. | It would be a charity to prevent the disgracing of this honorable man [i.e., Johann Wilhelm Petersen]. Although I only know him by reputation, and am not completely informed of his conduct, if there is only that [i.e., his public support of millenarianism] to find fault with, one is entitled to take his side. | M1.



## 5. Sophie to Leibniz (15/25 October 1691)<sup>45</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 63–64.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 150 (following M).

A: A I 7: 37–38 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's letter of 13/23 October 1691 (see no. 4).

Ebsdorf, 15/25 October 1691

I found everything you wrote to me to be so much in keeping with my judgement that I am glad to have had the same thoughts, as Mr. Causacau and others can attest,<sup>46</sup> though I did not explain them as agreeably as you did. So I have made a trophy of your letter, all the sentiments of which are so sound and without preoccupation that they gave me the greatest pleasure in the world, and I think that your letter deserves to be published much more than those you have addressed to Mr. Pelisson.<sup>47</sup> As I see my name in this publication, I greatly feared that the trifles I often wrote to my sister<sup>48</sup> to amuse myself would also be in it, which is why I have read it again up to the end.

Sophie

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

45. From the French. Complete.

46. Joseph de Causacau, a Hanoverian courtier.

47. Paul Pelisson-Fontanier (1624–93), a Catholic convert and official historian to Louis XIV. Leibniz and Pelisson corresponded between 1690 and 1693, mostly about issues concerning the reunion of the churches. Sophie is here alluding to Paul Pelisson-Fontanier's *Reflexions sur les différends de la religion. Quatrième partie. Ou Réponse aux Objections envoyées d'Allemagne, sur l'unité de l'Eglise, et sur la question si elle peut tolérer les Sects* (Paris, 1691). This book contains a number of Leibniz's letters to Pelisson, all of which were written between August 1690 and January 1691.

48. Louise Hollandine, Abbess of Maubisson.

## 6. Leibniz to Sophie (16/26 October 1691)

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I, 20, 7–8.

M2: Copy of M1: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 102.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 151–53 (following M2).

A: A I 7: 38–40 (following M1)

Leibniz's reply to Sophie's letter of 15/25 October 1691 (see no. 5).

[M1: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>49</sup>

Madam

I am very happy to learn that my thoughts on the young lady proph-  
etess bore some relation to what Your Serene Highness had already  
concluded about her. Maybe the Dukes who are or were in Ebsdorf,<sup>50</sup>  
as well as Madam the Duchess of Celle,<sup>51</sup> will not be very far removed  
from them. For the best thing is to let these good people be, as long  
as they do not interfere in anything that can be of consequence. I find  
throughout history that sects are ordinarily born by an excessive op-  
position to those who had some peculiar opinion, and under the pre-  
text of preventing heresies one gives rise to them. These things usually  
fade out of their own accord, when the virtue of novelty wears off;  
but when one tries to oppress them by making a big fuss of them, by  
persecutions, and by refutations, it is as if one tried to extinguish a fire  
with a bellows. It is like a torch which is dying out, but is rekindled

49. From the French. Incomplete; a paragraph concerning a text written for Marie de Bri-  
non and part of a postscript concerning greetings from Mr. de la Loubere have not been  
translated.

50. Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel; Ernst August (1629–98), Duke of  
Hanover and Sophie's husband.

51. Eleonore d'Olbreuse (1637–1722).

because of agitation. Out of fear that there are no heretics, theologians sometimes do all they can to find them; and to immortalize them, they give them derogatory names, like Chiliasts, Jansenists, Quietists, Pietists, and Payonists. Often a man obtains the honor of being a heresiarch without knowing it, like the late Mr. Payon,<sup>52</sup> very able Minister in France, whose disciples and supporters are now styled “Payonists” by Mr. Jurieu and others...<sup>53</sup>

I am with devotion  
 Madam, to Your Electoral Highness  
 Your very obedient and very faithful servant  
 Leibniz

P.S. ... I think one would do well not to put the young lady prophetess to the test with sealed notes any more. I would like to know what Mr. Causacau says about her.

52. Claude Payon/Pajon (1626–85), French Protestant divine.

53. Pierre Jurieu, *Traité de la nature et de la grâce, ou du concours général de la Providence & du concours particulier de la Grace efficace: contre les nouvelles hypothèses de M. P & de ses disciples* (Utrecht, 1687).

7. **Sophie to Leibniz (20/30 October 1691)**<sup>54</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 61–62.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 153–54 (following M).

A: A I 7: 43–44 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's letter of 16/26 October 1691 (see no. 6).

Ebsdorf, 20/30 October 1691

Marshal Bülow<sup>55</sup> is my witness that I said the same to him as what you recently wrote to me, namely, that the more one makes the effort to suppress an opinion the more it spreads. However I find myself embarrassed more than ever by the responses of our Saint to the sealed letters. Duke Anton brought one of them to her from one of his friends, who allowed him to open it when he had the response. This response surprised me, so pertinent is it. However the thought occurred to me that as the mother, when pregnant with this girl, dedicated her to the Lord, the force of this mother's imagination had an effect on the girl, who thought she saw him as soon as she was able to believe in him, according to what Mr. Alvensleben<sup>56</sup> told me, and who thought that Christ told her to write early on as she could still not paint very well. The originals of her writings still exist. There is evidence of the extraordinary effects of what a mother can give to her child by the force of her imagination that it is amazing, like Mr. du Til who fainted when he saw a pin which wasn't fastened to anything (the late Madam the Electress of Brandenburg almost killed him by testing this). If he felt

54. From the French. Complete.

55. Joachim Heinrich von Bülow (1650–1724), an officer and counselor in the Hanoverian court.

56. Carl August von Alvensleben (1661–97), a court counselor in Hanover.

well, he could make a resolution to pull out the pin when he saw it, just as when it was fastened to a ribbon or something else he was not affected by it. All three of the saints say that they would very much like to come to Hanover to see their relative, Countess Platen,<sup>57</sup> during the time that Superintendent Petersen will be in the inquisition at Celle, which is as far as he could accompany them. The Duke does not know whether Mr. Molanus and our Superintendent<sup>58</sup> will find it appropriate but I myself cannot doubt it since these are three very nice, cheerful, and well-raised girls. I am sending you a note for Madam Bellomont,<sup>59</sup> which I received open.<sup>60</sup> I have informed Maubisson and Berlin of your letter about our Saint.<sup>61</sup> I don't think you will be angry about that. Mr. Causacau has suspended his judgement. Be that as it may, it is always a very strange effect of nature, since I do not understand anything which surpasses it. I believe that everything that happens is natural even if we do not know the cause of it.

S.

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

57. Klara Elizabeth von Meisenburg. She was the wife of Franz Ernst von Platen (1631–1709), a Hanoverian courtier.

58. Hermann Barckhausen (1629–94), general superintendent of Calenberg.

59. Frances Bard (1646–1708), who was widely known as Lady Bellomont. For more information on her and her relationship with Sophie, see J. F. Chance, "A Jacobite at the Court of Hanover," *The English Historical Review* 11 (1896): 527–30.

60. The Akademie editors report that this note cannot now be found.

61. Sophie is referring to Leibniz's letter of 13/23 October 1691 (see no. 4). Evidently Sophie informed her sister, Louise Hollandine (in Maubisson), and her daughter, Sophie Charlotte (in Berlin), of this letter. However, neither Sophie's letter to Maubisson nor her letter to Berlin appears to have survived.

## 8. Leibniz to Sophie (23 October/2 November 1691)

### Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 95–96.  
 M2: Draft, expanded version of the second half of M1, incomplete: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 96.  
 M3: Draft, expanded version of M2, incomplete: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Cal.Br. 84 A 180, 97–98.  
 M4: Fair copy, made from M1 and M3, unsent: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 103–04.  
 M5: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 9 and 12.  
 M6: Copy of M5: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 93–94.

### Transcriptions:

- K1: Klopp 7: 154–59 (following M4).  
 K2: Klopp 7: 159–62 (following M6).  
 A1: A I 7: 45–50 (following M4).  
 A2: A I 7: 50–52 (following M5).

Leibniz's reply to Sophie's letter of 20/30 October 1691 (see no. 7).

[M4: Fair copy, unsent]<sup>62</sup>

Madam

Your Serene Highness's opinion has to be, for me, a good guarantee of the opinion of others. So although I am not too satisfied with my opinion on a matter as delicate as that of prophecies, I nonetheless believe it will be tolerable since Your Serene Highness looks favorably on it. If it is true that Miss Asseburg has seen the apparition of Jesus Christ from her childhood, there is every reason in the world, according to the astute judgement of Your Serene Highness, that it came from the imagination of her mother, all the more since it is said that the mother dedicated her to our Lord when she was still carrying her in her belly.

62. From the French. Incomplete; a brief postscript about Molanus has not been translated.

What Your Serene Highness said to support this sentiment is excellent. I remember that Mr. de Longueil<sup>63</sup> also spoke a while back of Mr. du Til, whom he had seen in Holland and who was unable to look at unfastened pins without fainting.<sup>64</sup>

There are countless examples of the strange power of the imagination, not on external things, as the late Mr. Helmont<sup>65</sup> (whose *Paradoxical Discourses* was published recently, translated from the English),<sup>66</sup> the son, imagined, but on the body of the person imagining, and on that which is attached to it, just as the child is attached to the mother before delivery. It also happens that an accident which befalls a small child who has traces of the brain which are still tender, upsets his imagination for the rest of his life. A certain insect (for example, a cricket) falls into his gruel and gives him an aversion to them; this child, without remembering the cause, will retain the impression, just as I have seen a man who faints at the sight of crickets. Thus the thoughts of the pregnant mother, just as much as the impressions given to young children, can give rise to the aversion for one thing and the affection for another. It is said that there are people who have a sort of sympathy with us. It is perhaps that in our childhood or youth we had affection for a person, to whom those for whom we have this sympathy have some connection. It is true that the love of

63. Johann Friedrich de Longueil, Master of the Horse in Hanover.

64. fainting. | There is an infinity of similar examples of these effects of the imagination. And books have been written expressly about them, just as the observations of doctors inform us that some melancholic and naturally morose people believe they have seen devils by the power of the imagination, and imagine themselves to be damned, making horrible movements of which they were cured by natural remedies. It can likewise be believed that people of a cheerful nature can receive a disposition to see the appearance of our Lord and of angels; it is not necessary that they be cured of this. I don't know if what I say of several saints, whose graces and apparitions were only natural or at least had something to do with their nature, will be approved everywhere. Nevertheless I do not think that this offends received principles, even those of the Roman church. For I do not say this in general, and I speak only of more ordinary visions or prophecies. | M1.

65. Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–98), alchemist, philosopher, and student of the Kabbalah. It is noteworthy that at the time of writing this letter Leibniz was evidently under the mistaken impression that van Helmont was dead.

66. Francis Mercury van Helmont, *The Paradoxical Discourses concerning the Macrocosm and Microcosm* (London, 1685).

God has a spiritual object, which could not come from images of the imagination, but the humanity of Jesus Christ, the phrases of Scripture, and the manners which ordinarily accompany devotion—all can leave traces in the brain. I rather suspected that the mother of the young lady had played a large part in her extraordinary behavior, as much through hereditary inclinations or through passing emotions, carried from the mother to the child, as through the power of education, which is like a second nature. Thus we see that all the sisters have the same inclination, although they do not have an equally lively imagination for having apparitions. What will Monsignor Duke Anton Ulric say about the note to which the response was so pertinent? In my opinion, however, it is an effect of chance and of the generality of the expressions. Otherwise this young lady would be a new Sybil of Lüneburg, whose oracle would have to be consulted on all important and difficult matters.<sup>67</sup>

There is another important point in Your Serene Highness's letter,<sup>68</sup> when she says that there are in truth some very strange effects of nature, but that nevertheless there is nothing that surpasses it, everything that happens being natural, even if we do not always know its cause. That is very sound, provided that it is explained properly. It is therefore very true that everything that happens is always natural to the one who did it, or to the one who helped him to do it. So what a man does with the assistance of God, if it is not entirely natural to the man it will at least be natural to God, in as much as he assists in it, and it could not surpass the divine nature, nor consequently the whole of nature in general. But usually when people talk about nature they mean the nature of finite substances, and in this sense it is not impossible that there be something supernatural that surpasses the power of every created being. This is when an event could not be explained by the laws of motion of bodies, or by other similar rules which are observable in finite substances. And I have shown in a previous letter<sup>69</sup> that such things are encountered every time one finds a series of true

67. This paragraph is not present in M1.

68. Of 20/30 October 1691 (see no. 7).

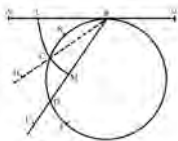
69. Of 13/23 October 1691 (see no. 4).



prophecies that go into detail. It is true that they are rare, as are all other supernatural things.<sup>70</sup>

70. things. | We should not find it strange that there is one substance infinitely more perfect than the others, to the nature of which we can attribute effects that we call supernatural with regard to the natures of finite substances, since among the modalities, that is, the ways of being, or accidents (which one can call demi-beings in comparison with substances), there are cases in which one is infinitely more perfect than the other. For example a certain angle between two lines is infinitely greater than an angle between two other lines. And one corporeal force is infinitely greater than a certain other corporeal force. This is something which can be shown by mathematics, which is supremely helpful for familiarizing our mind with infinity and for raising it above mundane thoughts through clear and accurate knowledge. The problem is that a little attention is needed, which is however well rewarded by the important considerations gained from it, although ordinarily mathematicians are not aware of them, because they are like craftsmen who do not go beyond their subject matter. But when a person who has other areas of expertise by chance acquires the knowledge of some skills of artisans, he can draw from it knowledge of which the artisan was not aware. So when a man who has more general knowledge also joins mathematics to it, he can draw wonderful consequences from it, especially with regard to the knowledge of infinity. Mr. Descartes said in one of his letters that aside from Princess Elizabeth, he had not met anyone who had been able to understand his metaphysical meditations and his geometry equally well. I believe that if this Princess's two incomparable sisters whom God has preserved for us, and especially Madam the Duchess, had considered it worthwhile to make the effort to understand these treaties of Mr. Descartes, they would have likewise understood them, but perhaps they would not have likewise approved them. For the metaphysics of this author are far from being as valid as his geometry. Nevertheless it is important to give a moment of attention to geometry, which is not always in the full view of the professionals who need it for the accuracy of their work, because of the general openings the mind finds in it, and especially because of the traces of infinity one discovers in it, which are shadows of an infinite substance. It is said of a King Ptolemy that he asked a famous mathematician if there was any royal way (this is, an easy way) to attain knowledge of geometry. The mathematician replied that there was not, but if he had known what is known about it today he would have made a different judgement. At least I am assured with regard to Your Serene Highness that if she were able to have the patience to examine these examples of infinity with attention, she would understand them easily.

Here is one: Euclid (an ancient geometer) has shown that the ordinary angle ABE is infinitely greater than the touching angle ABNCDF. To understand this, we have to consider that the angle ABE has two branches, AB and BE, which are straight lines,



which have a certain opening in the same corner, B, and this opening is called the size of the angle. And likewise the angle ABNCDF has two branches, namely, the straight line AB and the

We should not find it strange that there is one substance infinitely more perfect than the others: that even seems to be in keep-

---

circular line BNCDF, which also have an opening in corner B, and as the opening of the angle or of the corner does not depend on length of the branches, it is for that reason that one can take these branches to be as short and as near to corner B as one sees fit. For example the angle ABE is the same as the angle LBM, for there is the same opening in the corner. And also the angle ABNCDF is the same as the angle LBNC, for the same reason. Now since the circular line BNC falls between the two straight lines LB and BM, it is for that reason that it is said that the opening of the angle LBM, or ABE, is greater than the opening of the angle LBNC, or ABNCDF. For although the circular line BNCDF does not fall wholly between the straight lines AB and BE, nevertheless, moving closer to corner B from quite short parts of those three lines, namely, LB, BNC, and BD, one finds BNC between the other two, and that is sufficient to say that the angle ABNCDF, or LBNC is less than the angle ABE, or LBM. It is now a question of proving that the ordinary angle LBM (contained between the straight lines or straight branches) is infinitely greater than the touching angle LBNC, which is so-called because it is contained between a circular line BNC and a straight line LB, which touches this circle, that is, which touches it only on the outside, without intersecting it. For the straight line AB or LB continued toward G, does not enter into the circle, and does not intersect it, whereas the straight lines BDE and BCH intersect it at C and D, and are part inside it, part outside it. In order to prove the matter in question, it is sufficient to prove that no matter how small a part of the ordinary angle ABE that is taken, for example the thousandth, the hundred-thousandth, the millionth, and so on to infinity, it will always turn out to be bigger than the touching angle AB[N]C[D]F and consequently the ordinary angle ABE will not only be a thousand times, or a hundred thousand times, or a million times greater than the touching angle A[BN]C[D]F, but it will be infinitely greater. For let us put an arm of the compass on point B, and the other on point C, and around the center B let us trace the arc of the circle LCM, which will serve to measure the angles of the straight lines. It is evident that even if the arc LC were the hundred thousandth or the millionth part of the arc LCM, and in a word no matter how small we suppose it (for the diagram would not be able to represent it as small as it could be), it is always evident that the circular line BN will fall between the straight lines LB and BC, since BC is wholly within the circle. So the touching angle LBNC, (or L[B]NCD, or L[BN]CDF) is less than the angle contained in the straight lines, namely, ABC, which being the millionth part (or even less) of the angle LBM, it is evident that the touching angle L[BN]CDF will be less than the millionth, or hundred-millionth etc. part of the angle LBM or ABE, that is, the touching angle will be infinitely smaller than the angle between the straight lines alone. Which is what had to be demonstrated. I could even give other examples from geometry, and I could prove by means of the rules of motion that there is a force, which I call "living," that is infinitely greater than the one I call "dead," although both are nonetheless measurable by reasons and by experiences. Therefore, since there is an infinite proportion of accident to accident, it is very easy to conclude that there will be one of substance to substance too, and consequently that the infinite substance is in keeping with reason. | M3. Version M3 ends here. The geometrical example used in this passage is from Euclid's *Elements* III, proposition 16.

ing with reason. And even among the accidents, or the ways of being of substances (which one can call demi-beings), there are cases in which one is infinitely greater than the other. There is an angle infinitely greater than another such angle; there is a corporeal force that is infinite in comparison with some other corporeal forces, and nevertheless one is discoverable by reason and by experience as much as the other. Even more so should that be thought about substances. The mathematical sciences are remarkably helpful for giving us accurate and sound knowledge of the infinite itself. And if (for example) Your Serene Highness were to desire me to make her understand how an angle or corner, produced by the coming together of two lines at the point of encounter, can be infinitely greater than another such angle, so that the opening of the branches of the one is infinitely greater than the opening of the branches of the other, even though one as much as the other with its branches is enclosed within a finite space, I am sure that I could accurately demonstrate it to Your Serene Highness, and if she had the time she would find a great satisfaction in it because of the importance of the matter. Mr. Descartes said in one of his letters that aside from Princess Elizabeth, he had not met anyone who had been able to understand his metaphysical meditations and his geometry equally well.<sup>71</sup> I believe that if this Princess's two incomparable sisters whom God has preserved for us,<sup>72</sup> and especially Your Serene Highness, had considered it worthwhile to make the effort to want to understand these treaties, they would have likewise understood them, but perhaps they would not have likewise approved them. For the metaphysics of this author are far from being as valid as his geometry. Nevertheless we must acknowledge that it is important that one have some general insights on mathematics, not as craftsmen have for the accuracy of their works, but because of the openings that one finds

71. René Descartes (1596–1650), scientist, philosopher, and mathematician. In attempting to establish a new philosophy from first principles, thereby undermining the teaching of the Scholastics, he became probably the most influential figure in seventeenth-century philosophy. Leibniz is referring not in fact to any letter written by Descartes as part of his correspondence, but to the dedicatory letter to Princess Elizabeth at the start of his *Principles of Philosophy*. See *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. C. Adams and P. Tannery (Paris: J. Vrin, 1976), 8 A: 3–4. English translation in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, ed. and trans., J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1: 192.

72. Leibniz is here referring to Sophie and her sister, Louise Hollandine.

in it for elevating the mind to thoughts that are beautiful and sound in equal measure. For without that the items of human knowledge are only vague and superficial. This is clearly seen with regard to the system of the visible universe, about which the previous century and ours have made wonderful discoveries, and what the ancients knew of it was mere juvenilia compared to what is known about it now. This system or structure of the visible world is of an admirable beauty, which gives true ideas of the grandeur and harmony of the universe, far removed from popular opinions. We must acknowledge that this knowledge requires an attention that people of high society could not easily have. But because of that they find themselves deprived of a great satisfaction of the mind. It is true, however, that there are those who have from elsewhere such great and such beautiful insights on other, more important things, that they can do without the insight of which I have just spoken. They are not very many in number, but Your Serene Highness is of the first rank amongst them. I am fortunate to be able to know her closely and I am with devotion,

Madam, to Your Serene Highness

Your very humble and very obedient servant  
Leibniz

[M5: Fair copy, dispatched]<sup>73</sup>

Madam

I would be almost of a mind to establish a gazette of devotion, or rather some *Theological Mercury*. If the word “Mercury,” which signifies a pagan divinity, is displeasing, it will be called “Raphael.” The notes of the young Sybil of Lüneburg<sup>74</sup> will provide the material for it, or rather Mr. Petersen could publish from time to time his *Pastoral Let-*

73. From the French. Incomplete; a lengthy discussion about acts of devotion in France, and about how much deference the French people have for their leaders, has not been translated.

74. Rosamunde von der Asseburg.

ters, which could include what Mr. Jurieu would not accept in his.<sup>75</sup> Your Serene Highness will see that it is not without some reason that I think of such a gazette, since it seems that the spirit of devotion is becoming a spirit of the court...

If it is true that Miss Asseburg has seen the apparition of Jesus Christ from her childhood, there is every reason in the world, according to the astute judgement of Your Serene Highness, that it came from the imagination of her mother, all the more since it is said that the mother dedicated her to our Lord when she was still carrying her in her belly. What Your Serene Highness said about that is excellent. I rather suspected that the mother of the young lady would have played a large part in her extraordinary behavior, in as much as all the sisters have the same inclinations. I do not believe, like the late Mr. Helmont, the son (whose *Paradoxical Discourses* was published recently),<sup>76</sup> that the imagination can have great effects on external bodies, but I do believe that it can on the body of the person imagining and on that which is attached to it, just as the child is attached to the mother before delivery. Moreover, as education is a second nature, it is by means of education that the mother will have intensified the impressions she had given to this child. Children, having fibers of the brain which are still very tender and susceptible, receive very easily the dispositions which they keep during their life. I had a friend who fainted at the sight of crickets, and perhaps such an insect had made him feel extraordinarily uncomfortable when he was a child. Sometimes this is also the cause of the sort of sympathy we have with certain people, because one will perhaps have had affection in his childhood for a person who had some connection with those people. Although the love of God has a spiritual object, which could not come from images of the imagination, nevertheless the humanity of Jesus Christ represented in paintings, the phrases of Scripture, and the manners which usually accompany devotion—all can leave traces in the brain. What will Monsignor Duke Anton Ulric say about the sealed note to which he received such a pertinent response? In my opinion, however, it is an effect of chance, and of the generality of the expressions, otherwise the

75. Leibniz is referring to Jurieu's *Lettres pastorales adressées aux fidèles de France*, 3 vols. (Rotterdam, 1686–87).

76. Van Helmont, *The Paradoxical Discourses concerning the Macrocosm and Microcosm*.

oracle of this new Sybil of Lüneburg would have to be consulted on all difficult and important matters.<sup>77</sup>

Your Serene Highness said with her usual soundness that everything is natural, and that nothing surpasses nature. But this must be explained. It is very true that everything is natural to the one who did it or to the one who helped him to do it. So what a man does with the assistance of God, if it is not entirely natural to the man it will at least be natural to God, and will not surpass the divine nature. But when people talk in an ordinary way about what surpasses nature they mean the nature of finite substances. Now there are reasons which lead us to conclude that there is an infinitely perfect substance. And the mathematical sciences are very helpful for having accurate thoughts about infinity. I am with devotion,

Madam, to Your Serene Highness

Your very humble and very faithful servant

Leibniz

Hanover, 23 October 1691

77. Reading “matieres” in place of “manieres.”

## 9. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (10/20 February 1692)<sup>78</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 1–2.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 165–68 (following M).

A: A I 7: 101–4 (following M).

The abilities of Rosamunde von der Asseburg continued to be a theme of the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie until the Spring of 1692,<sup>79</sup> but after Leibniz's letter of 23 October/2 November (see no. 8) the discussion concerned only news and gossip about Asseburg and her abilities. However the young prophetess and the events surrounding her were also of interest to Sophie Charlotte, which led Leibniz to write the following remarks in one of his earliest letters to her. Sophie Charlotte did not respond.

To her Electoral Highness, Madam the Electress of Brandenburg

Hanover, 10 Feb. 1692

Madam

...Now that the proceedings against the Superintendent of Lüneburg (with whom was the young lady Asseburg) have been concluded against him,<sup>80</sup> he has withdrawn to Wolfenbüttel with one of his friends,<sup>81</sup> from where, it is claimed, he will go further. It is reported that he had contravened repeated orders to refrain from preaching his opinion on the kingdom of a thousand years, and that he alleged for his excuse that he had not preached it in express terms, but only in

78. From the French. Incomplete; a paragraph of flattery, another containing an update on Leibniz's correspondence with Bossuet, and another on the current fashion for devotion in France, have not been translated.

79. See, for instance, Sophie's letter to Leibniz of 2/12 March 1692 (A I 7: 106–7).

80. Petersen was dismissed from his post as superintendent of Lüneburg on 21 January 1692.

81. Barthold Meier, general superintendent of Wolfenbüttel.

a covert way understandable by those who had the same views as he did. There were also complaints about the fact that he had published a work on the visions of the young lady Asseburg,<sup>82</sup> in which he openly claims that it is Jesus Christ who personally speaks to this young lady, and who establishes this Kingdom. The consistory concluded that the publication of such a work is of even greater consequence than the short-lived sermons delivered in the flesh which were forbidden him, since these writings give rise to public controversies and spread their effect much further. So it is no small undertaking to want to propose to us a new word of God based on the report of a young lady who thinks she speaks with Jesus Christ. The Abbé of Loccum,<sup>83</sup> whose opinion had been sought by this Superintendent, responded that, aside from the fact that the expressions which our Lord uses toward this person (my queen, you little dove) are not in keeping with the celestial chancellor (insofar as it is known to us), it seems that there are errors of faith, and that this so-called “our Lord” is not entirely orthodox, since it seems that he guarantees a universal election (something Lutherans reject as much as do the Reformers), and that he said we receive in Holy Communion the spirit of the body of our Lord, which seems to offend the ears of theologians.<sup>84</sup>

I believe that the celebrated Mr. Spener,<sup>85</sup> who suspended his judgement when he wrote to Your Electoral Highness,<sup>86</sup> will now be in a position to give it, after no doubt having seen the Report on the aforementioned Superintendent. It seems to me that he had a penchant, from then on, to attribute the cause of it<sup>87</sup> to a blessed imagination fortified by reading and meditation, which can give a person good and fine ideas without God being involved in an extraordinary way. We see poor wretched people of low birth, badly treated from their youth, fed on dreadful tales and dark fantasies of sorcerers, imagine

82. Petersen, *Sendschreiben*.

83. Gerhard Wolter Molanus.

84. Leibniz is referring to Molanus's *Antwortschreiben* ([no location], 1692).

85. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), German theologian, often credited with being the founder of pietism.

86. Leibniz is referring to Spener's letter to Sophie Charlotte of 15/25 December 1691, which was published as *Theologisches Bedenken über einige Puncten* ([no location], 1692).

87. That is, the cause of Asseburg's visions and dictated writings.



themselves to be at a Sabbat with demons,<sup>88</sup> so why would contrary causes not have a contrary effect in a girl who is well born and well raised, who had perhaps received at birth dispositions appropriate for having fine visions? Thus it is said that her mother had similar sentiments, and that her sisters have them a little...

I am with devotion,

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness

Your very submissive and obedient servant

L.

88. That is, a witches' Sabbath, a midnight meeting of witches for the purpose of practicing sorcery and of honoring the devil.

**10. Leibniz: Summary of a conversation with Sophie (29 December 1692/8 January 1693)<sup>89</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 8.

Transcription:

A: A I 9: 14–16 (following M).

Leibniz occasionally made a record of conversations he had, and these usually took the form of documenting what both he and his interlocutor had said during the conversation.<sup>90</sup> The following text is ostensibly a record of a conversation with Sophie, but it documents only Leibniz's contribution to the conversation, which might suggest that Sophie had been more of an attentive listener than interlocutor.

Summary of what I said in a conversation with Madam the Electress of Brunswick-Lüneberg, in Hanover 29 X<sup>br</sup> 1692.

The principle of motion is one of the ways of leading us to the divinity. It is true that every body which is in motion is pushed by another body which, being in motion itself, is also pushed by another. And it always continues like this to infinity, or rather until a first motion is reached.<sup>91</sup> But this first motion could not have its origin in bodies, since a body only ever pushes after having been pushed. We must therefore have recourse to a higher cause. But even if there was no first motion, and even if it were supposed that the chain of causes, or of bodies which push each other, continues to infinity, we would still be obliged to look for the true cause of motion in something incorporeal, which must be found outside the infinite sequence of bodies. In order to understand

89. From the French. Complete.

90. See, for example, the records Leibniz made of his conversations with Steno (A VI 4: 1375–83/CP 113–31), Dobrzensky (Grua 361–69/AG 111–17) and Gabriel Wagner (Grua 389–99).

91. reached. | But even if it were supposed that this should carry on to infinity, one would not find any sufficient reason | *deleted*, M; this deletion is not noted in transcription A.

it better, let us employ a fiction and imagine not only that the world is eternal, but also that there is a monarchy or eternal commonwealth in this world, and that in the archives of this commonwealth a certain sacred book has always been kept, the copies of which have been renewed from time to time. It is evident that the reason why this book says what it does is that it has been copied from another book which is identical but older, and the one which is the source of the latter is itself the copy of another, even older copy, and this carries on forever without there ever being an original, but always copies of copies. With this supposed, it is evident that one will never find in all these copies any sufficient reason for what is found in the book. Now in place of the fiction of the book, one only has to take a species, for example that of birds, and, supposing it to be eternal, it is clear that every bird is a copy of another one, and nevertheless in the whole sequence of birds one never finds the reason why there are birds rather than some other species, and I mean a sufficient reason.<sup>92</sup> And in place of birds or of some other species, one has only to take the motions which actually exist, which are also in some way the copy or consequence of some preceding motions, and so on to infinity, without there ever being found, in the whole of this infinite sequence of effects or copies, a sufficient or original reason. However nothing ever happens without there being a sufficient reason for it. Therefore the sufficient reason for the whole sequence of mutable things is found outside of this sequence and must consist in something immutable, which also has so much influence on all these copies that it is, properly speaking, the perpetual original of them, and this could only be found in the divinity.<sup>93</sup>

92. reason | beyond which there is nothing further to ask for | *deleted*, M; this deletion is not noted in transcription A.

93. Compare Leibniz's formulation of this argument in a paper written on 23 November 1697, "On the ultimate origination of things": "Let us imagine that the book of the elements of geometry has always existed, one always copied from another; it is evident that, even if a reason can be given for the present book from a past one, from which it was copied, nevertheless we shall never come upon a full reason no matter how many past books we assume, since we would always be right to wonder why such books have existed from all time, why books existed at all, and why they were written in this way. What is true of books is also true of the different states of the world; for a subsequent state is in a way copied from a preceding one (although according to certain laws of change). And so, however far back you go to

Every body, being composed of parts, is not truly a being, but several beings; it is a being in name, rather like an army, or like a flock, or like a tank full of fish. The army is not literally one thing, but several things taken together; its unity is only in name, it is a fictitious being. The soldiers are true beings, but the army is only a plurality of beings. A machine is not a being either, strictly speaking, as it is only a collection of wheels and springs arranged to work together for certain ends. The same may be said of an animal's body. We consider a body, a bit of flesh, or a bone, as a being, but this is because we are short-sighted; if we had keen enough sight to see the mass of worms or other animals, plants or other species which compose this bit of flesh, we would see that it is no more a true being than an army or a flock. Hence it is an imaginary being. And one can say as much of all composite things: that they are only pluralities, or an accumulation of several beings. It is only a simple being which is a true being, strictly speaking, that is, a being without the help of the imagination. I speak of a simple which is a true unity. Now it is evident that there could not be composites without simples, nor pluralities without unities, nor finally imaginary beings without true beings, strictly speaking. Unities could not be destroyed, since destructions are only the dissipations of pluralities. A man or any other true substance is a unity, but the body of a man is a plurality. Each unity, however, has some subordinated pluralities which it makes use of, just as a human soul makes use of the body, although this body is itself again composed of parts which contain animals, but the soul or unity of these is not that of man. The first and universal unity is the divinity, to which everything else is subordinated. Yet it is not the soul of the universe, for the universe does not constitute a whole since it is infinite. This universal first unity is the sufficient reason for everything, which could not be said about particular unities with regard to the other unities which are subordinated to them.

So knowledge of the divinity and of the immortality of the soul depends upon these two axioms: that nothing happens without there being a sufficient reason for it, and that there are true unities, or rather, beings which are truly real.

---

earlier states, you will never find in those states a full reason why there should be any world rather than none, and why it should be such as it is." G 7: 302/SLT 31.

## 11. Leibniz to Sophie (3/13 September 1694)

### Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 5, 2, 3–4.  
 M2: Fair copy, dispatched, made from M1 but without the corrections marked in M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 9–10.  
 M3: Copy of M2, but revised with the corrections marked in M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 5, 2, 7–12.  
 M4: Copy of M3, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 5, 2, 5–6.  
 M5: Copy of M4, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 5, 2, 13–14.

### Transcriptions:

- FC: FC 249 (following M5, part only)  
 K: Klopp 7: 301–6 (following M2).  
 A1: A I 10: 58–62 (following M2).  
 A2: A I 10: 62–65 (following M5).

Sometime between 1644 and 1648, Sophie met alchemist and philosopher Francis Mercury van Helmont. The two became friends, and in the decades that followed there was occasional contact between them. In 1694, van Helmont sent Sophie copies of two books, *Verhandeling van de Helle*,<sup>94</sup> and *Het*

94. Anon., *Verhandeling van de Helle* (Groningen, 1694). The Akademie editors credit this book to van Helmont (see A I 10: 764), but this would appear to be a mistake. I have been unable to obtain a copy of *Verhandeling van de Helle*, but there is strong evidence from elsewhere that it is in fact a Dutch translation of (some or all of) a book by Samuel Richardson entitled *A Discourse of the Torments of Hell* (London, 1657) rather than an original van Helmont composition. Leibniz made detailed notes on *Verhandeling van de Helle* in 1694 (*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I, 5, 2, 30), and these notes refer to nothing that is not in Richardson's book. Moreover, they closely follow the order of Richardson's book, the claims made within it, and its principal citations. Further, in a letter from van Helmont to Leibniz of October 1696 (*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr 389, 49r), van Helmont writes "you will find enclosed...the promised English title of the book about hell with the name of the author," and enclosed with van Helmont's letter are two copies of the title page of Richardson's book (*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr 389, 51r and LBr 389, 52r).

*Godlyk Weezen*,<sup>95</sup> which had been penned by Paul Buchius “according to the principles of F. M. B. of Helmont.”<sup>96</sup> Sophie passed these books on to Leibniz, presumably with a request for his opinion though there is no extant letter from the former to the latter containing such a request. Nevertheless, Leibniz ventures his opinion on the books in the following letter.

[M2: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>97</sup>

Madam<sup>98</sup>

I read with pleasure and profit the two books that Mr. van Helmont sent to Your Electoral Highness.<sup>99</sup> He would not have been able to present in a better way the sublime thoughts found in them. I wish he had enclosed the third, entitled *Aanmerkingen over den Mensch*,<sup>100</sup> quoted in Mr. Buchius’s book on the divinity.<sup>101</sup>

I find in them several things which please me enough, but there are also some into which I do not enter at all, for want of seeing sufficient proofs of them. Some people only notice in books what they think they can correct in them, but it is completely the opposite for me: I give all my attention<sup>102</sup> to what appears to me the most solid.

I am delighted that Mr. van Helmont has found in Mr. Buchius a man who explains his views in an intelligible way. I often wished

95. Paulus Buchius, *Het Godlyk Weezen* (Amsterdam, 1694). An English translation was published a year earlier: Paulus Buchius, *The Divine Being*, trans. Philanglus (London, 1693). Leibniz made notes on the Dutch version of this book late in 1694; see Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek, LH I, 5, 2, 30v–32r.

96. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, title page.

97. From the French. Complete.

98. At the bottom of the page, the amanuensis wrote “To Madam the Electress of Brunswick.”

99. The books were *Verhandeling van de Helle* and *Het Godlyk Weezen*. See notes 94 and 95 for details.

100. Francis Mercury van Helmont, *Aanmerkingen over den Mensch* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1692). Translated into English as *The Spirit of Diseases; or, Diseases from the Spirit: laid open in some Observations concerning Man, and his Diseases* (London, 1694).

101. That is, quoted in Buchius’s *Het Godlyk Weezen*.

102. attention | only to what appears to me the best demonstrated and the most appropriate for instruction. | M1.

that the late Mr. Knorr of Sulzbach,<sup>103</sup> who was such a clever man, had wanted or been able to take the trouble to do it, as he had started to do in his book on the Kabbalistic science of the Jews.<sup>104</sup> But I would wish even more that someone preserve for posterity some of the fine discoveries that Mr. van Helmont must have made on several arts and sciences in particular.<sup>105</sup>

As for the two books, I see that the one does not bear the name of its author.<sup>106</sup> This is why I doubt whether Mr. van Helmont will want to claim it. It is true that the eternity of punishments, a view which is refuted in it, is not in keeping with the ancient theology of the pagans, and is not entirely received among the Jews. And even among Christians, the great Origen did not believe it.<sup>107</sup> It seems that St. Gregory of Nyssa even leaned toward the Platonists, who believed that all God's punishments are only medicines,<sup>108</sup> and only have amendment for their goal. St. Jerome and some other Fathers were not far from believing that all Christians would ultimately be saved, after having passed through fire;<sup>109</sup> so hell became to them a purgatory. In the past century a learned man (Celsius Secundus Curio) wrote a book on the grandeur of the heavenly Kingdom, in which he claimed to prove that the number of the saved is incomparably greater than that of the

103. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–89), an intimate of Francis Mercury van Helmont and translator of many Kabbalistic texts.

104. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala Denudata* (vol. 1: Sulzbach, 1677, vol. 2: Frankfurt, 1684).

105. particular. | For it is easier to rediscover the knowledge which depends on reasoning and general principles than the knowledge which rests on experience and meditations or the particular knowledge which chance and occasions sometimes gives us, and which is not easily rediscovered when it is lost. | M1.

106. *Verhandeling van de Helle*, which was published anonymously.

107. See Origen, *De principiis*, I.6.1–3; English edition: *Ante-Nicene Christian Library vol. X: The Writings of Origen*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Frederick Crombie (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869), 53–58.

108. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica magna*, chap. 26; English edition: Gregory of Nyssa, *The Catechetical Orations*, ed. and trans. J. H. Srawley (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1903), 80–83.

109. St. Jerome, *In Isaiam commentarii*, 18.16.24.

damned, notwithstanding what is said about the narrow path.<sup>110</sup> In our time Pierre Serrarius, who was from Amsterdam, already wanted to announce to men this so-called new Gospel, or this good news of the extinction of hell.<sup>111</sup> It is said that St. Louis (if I am not mistaken) met a girl, who carried a lit torch in one hand, and a pitcher full of water in the other. The King asked her what that meant. She responded that it was to burn paradise, and to extinguish hell, so that men would henceforth serve God without servile fear, and without mercenary hope.<sup>112</sup> It is one thing to have a fear of hell, but to fear paradise is something else. For since it will consist in the vision of God, how can one love God with all one's heart without wishing to see him as much as is possible? It is said that when the Swiss deliberated about whether purgatory ought to be kept, one of the company got up and proposed that, since they were on the subject, they should even abolish the devils with the whole of hell. But to speak seriously, my view is that<sup>113</sup> punishments would only be eternal because of the eternity of sins. Those who will always sin will always be justly punished.<sup>114</sup>

But I pass to the other book, the subject of which is more extensive since it contains the principles of Mr. van Helmont's theology, organized by Mr. Buchius. I was delighted to see that those who separate theology from philosophy are put right in the preface. That

110. Coelius Secundus Curio, *De amplitudine regni coelestis* (Frankfurt, 1617). The reference to the "narrow path" is an allusion to Matthew 7:13–14: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Cf. Luke 13:23–24.

111. Pierre Serrurier, *Assertion du règne de mille ans, ou de la prospérité de l'Eglise de Christ en la terre* (Amsterdam, 1657).

112. hope. | But as true paradise must consist principally in the perfection of the soul and in the sight of God, how can one love God with all one's heart without wishing to see and know him as much as is possible? | M1.

113. that | to maintain the eternity of punishments one must also maintain the eternity of sins. | M1.

114. Less than a month after writing this letter, Leibniz wrote to another of his correspondents about van Helmont and *Verhandeling van de Helle*: "Mr. van Helmont has sent to Madam the Electress a work against hell. Mr. Bekker chased the devils out of this world, but Mr. Helmont goes even further since he claims that there is no hell at all. But I fear the devil catches those who make fun of him like this." Leibniz to Lorenz Hertel, 2/12 October 1694, A I 10: 73.



sufficiently vindicates Mr. van Helmont against those who accuse him of giving into enthusiasm. For the enthusiasts have this in common with the Libertines, that they say injurious things about reason.

I am again of Mr. van Helmont's sentiment when he puts right the Gassendists and the Cartesians who merely attach themselves to the corpuscular philosophy, which explains all the things of nature by matter or by extension.<sup>115</sup> And I myself have shown that we also have to bring the principle of force into it, in which consists, so to speak, the connection between spiritual and corporeal things. For I hold that the laws of nature and the principles of physics could only be explained by employing metaphysical principles, which are needed in order to understand properly what force is.

I agree, once again, that all substances always endure and could not perish.<sup>116</sup> I hold this to be true not only with regard to human souls, but also with regard to those of other animals.<sup>117</sup> I have robustly argued this point in an exchange of letters with the famous Mr. Arnauld.<sup>118</sup> It

115. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), scientist, philosopher, and mathematician. He was an early exponent of the mechanical philosophy, the key plank of which for him was a slightly modified form of the ancient Epicurean doctrine of atomism. Leibniz is presumably here thinking of the preface to Buchius's *The Divine Being*, in which it is stated that “the Modern corpuscular Philosophy is nothing else but a heap of words” because it fails to explain “Distempers” and cannot show “how it is possible, that Bodies should operate without their Life or Spirit.” Buchius makes it clear, however, that in raising these complaints he is stating his own view. Moreover, he does not mention either Descartes or Gassendi in the preface or anywhere else in the book.

116. In Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 39 (§24), and 39–40 (§25), it is stated that creatures are without end or beginning. In 148ff (§84f), it is stated that the soul or life is immortal. Buchius/van Helmont does not, however, use the word “substance.”

117. animals. | There are ancients who have already believed that there is no production or extinction, taken in a rigorous sense, but only transformations, like with regard to silkworms, according to whether the substances are more or less developed. As for man and his soul, however, it is difficult to enter into the detail of what must happen to it through the principles of reason alone, and if Mr. van Helmont gives us some insights on this matter we will be under a great obligation to him for that. | M1.

118. Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), one of the leading philosophers and theologians of the early modern period. Leibniz corresponded with Arnauld in 1686–87; an earlier attempt to initiate a correspondence in 1671 was ignored, as was a later attempt in 1690. For Leibniz's claim that he “robustly argued” for the persistence of both human and animal souls, see his letter to Arnauld from 28 November/8 December 1686, A II 2: 117–27, especially 119–20.

is not that I believe in the transmigration of souls; but I believe in the transformation of one and the same animal, which sometimes becomes big, sometimes small, and takes various forms, as we see happen with silkworms when they become moths.<sup>119</sup> It therefore seems that there is neither generation nor death, strictly speaking, but that the animal is only ever enveloped and developed, the soul always remaining united to an organic body, although this body can become incomparably more subtle than the objects of our senses. This is what the ancient author of a book attributed to Hippocrates has already said.<sup>120</sup> And even the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews said that visible things are produced from the non-visible.<sup>121</sup> However I do not want to extend this doctrine to man, nor to the human soul, being persuaded that, as it possesses in itself the image of God, it is governed by very special laws, the detail of which could only be learned by revelation.

And as it seems that Holy Scripture did not want to explain this point as much as we would like, I doubt we could hope to attain in this life as much detail of the state of the other life as Mr. van Helmont seems to give us.

I am very much of his sentiment when he refutes those who believe that our soul loses itself in the universal spirit.<sup>122</sup> It seems that this is the opinion of some mystics and Quietists. But it is a chimera which has no sense at all; besides which it is contrary to immortality.

When he composes everything from fire and water, and takes them for spiritual principles,<sup>123</sup> I think he means it allegorically, and that he wanted to signify by that the active principle and the passive principle.

I especially approve of his opinion on the infinity of things,<sup>124</sup> and I have already said in the *Journal des sçavans* that as each part has

119. moths. | This is more in keeping with order than transmigration. | M1.

120. The reference is to *De diaeta*, attributed to Pseudo-Hippocrates.

121. An allusion to Hebrews 11:3: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

122. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 151–52 (§85).

123. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 161 (§90).

124. Possibly an allusion to Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 166 (§94), where Buchius/van Helmont claims that "Bodies proceed from the same principles whereof the Soul consists" and

parts to infinity, there is no small portion of matter which does not contain an actual infinity of creatures, and apparently of living creatures.<sup>125</sup> It is on account of this that nature everywhere bears the character of her creator.<sup>126</sup> And it is reasonable enough to think that each of these creatures, no matter how small it is, will have its time to reach a greater perfection.<sup>127</sup> He even speaks of the envelopment of all things in the first man, and of the distinctive individual humanity of Adam united to the Messiah, as well as of our present dependency on Adam, and of his formation from the blood of the Earth, or of earthly life.<sup>128</sup> Likewise,

---

therefore “the Body hath its own Life besides the Soul or general Life.” However there is no obvious passage in *The Divine Being*, which corresponds to Leibniz’s belief that each creature contains an infinity of others. In fact, late in that work (220), Buchius/van Helmont denies that there was an infinity of creatures in Adam, in whom (according to Buchius/van Helmont) all creatures were originally contained.

125. “Réponse de Mr. de Leibniz à l’*extrait de la letter de Mr. Foucher Chanoine de Dijon, inserée dans le Journal du 16 Mars 1693*,” *Journal des sçavans* 21 (3 August 1693): 527–29. Reprinted in G 1: 415–16.

126. creator. | As for the perfection of things, if we just use reason to consider the matter, it is uncertain whether the world always increases in perfection or whether it increases and decreases in perfection over periods of time, or whether it does not instead remain in the same perfection with regard to whole, even though it seems that the parts exchange perfection among themselves, and that there are times when some things are more perfect (or less perfect) than they are at other times. It is therefore debatable whether all creatures always advance in perfection, at least at the end of their time, or whether there are some which lose it and always decrease, or even whether some or all souls always retreat as much as they have advanced; just as there are some lines which always advance, like the straight line, others which turn without advancing, or which move back, like the circular, others which turn and advance at the same time, like the spiral, and lastly others which move back after having advanced, or advance after having moved back, like oval lines. | M1. The remarks here about whether the world increases in perfection are remarkably similar to those found in a short Latin paper entitled “An mundus perfectione crescat” [“Whether the world increases in perfection”] (Grua 95/SLT 196–97), which was very probably written around the same time as this letter to Sophie.

127. perfection. | But if we just use reason to consider the matter, it is uncertain whether creatures always increase in perfection and whether there are some which decrease, or which have certain periods of increase or of decrease. It is true, however, that everything happens with the best order of the world, although it is difficult for us to recognize it since we see only a small part of things. | *deleted*, M1; after deleting this passage, Leibniz then wrote the lines mentioned in the previous note (no. 126), which were a late addition to M1.

128. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 193 (§112).

that Adam and Eve were each man and woman, and consequently four in all, and that it is for this reason that the Messiah came at the end of four thousand years in the fullness of time.<sup>129</sup> And how men will all be reunited in Adam when at the consummation of the world each will come to his perfection and will have spiritualized and even perfected with him the corporeal creatures which are attached to him, and finally the revolutions of the next worlds:<sup>130</sup> as for all that, and a number of other extraordinary thoughts and perhaps allegories which Mr. van Helmont gives to us, I will avoid entering into it.<sup>131</sup> I think that a part of these dogmas is based on traditions of the Cabalistic Jews rather than on incontestable reasons. But before judging them, we must wait for some greater clarifications from him, while assuring him of our docility in everything that is not contrary either to reason or to Scripture, or to the perpetual tradition of the Catholic church. I content myself with knowing in general that because of the wisdom and immense goodness of the author of things, everything is so well ordered, and will go so well, even after this life, for those who love God, that they could wish for nothing further. But if Mr. van Helmont can teach us more about this, we will be delighted. And I have no doubt at all that he thinks Your Electoral Highness as worthy as anyone in the universe to be instructed in these mysteries. I am with devotion

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness

Your very humble and very faithful servant  
Leibniz

129. These views are stated in an appendix to Buchius's *The Divine Being* entitled "An appendix of several questions with their answers concerning the hypothesis of the revolution of humane souls." See Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 214–15.

130. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 221–22.

131. it. | It seems that a part of these dogmas is based on the traditions of Kabbalistic Jews rather than on demonstrations. These ancient traditions should not be completely scorned, but I do not know whether one ought to defer to them too much either. Demonstrations drawn from reason are much better, and if Mr. Helmont has any, we must pray that he informs us of them. In any case, before judging them, we should wait for some greater clarifications from him, while assuring him of our docility in everything that is not contrary either to reason or to Scripture, or to the perpetual tradition of the church. | M1.

From Hanover, 3 September 1694

The following copy of Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 3/13 September differs in part from the version sent to her, and was possibly intended to be forwarded to van Helmont. In version M1, Leibniz wrote: "Madam. Here are two letters together which I wrote for Your Electoral Highness. The one that I enclose here is a little long, but I wrote it to give you a partial account of Mr. van Helmont's books, the greatest part of which I have already leafed through. And as I am rather naturally inclined to give a good sense to things, I have written in a way I believe even Mr. van Helmont could be informed about, to thereby encourage him to send other things to us again."<sup>132</sup> Perhaps with the aim of encouraging van Helmont to send more of his work, the following copy of Leibniz's letter omits a number of passages from the dispatched version which are critical of van Helmont, and thus the copy gives the impression that Leibniz was much more sympathetic to van Helmont's doctrines than he actually was. There is no evidence, however, that this copy was even sent to Sophie, let alone that she passed it on to van Helmont.

[M5: revised copy of dispatched letter]<sup>133</sup>

Copy of the letter which I took the liberty of writing to Madam the Electress of Brunswick, 3 September 1694, on the occasion of the books Her Electoral Highness received from Mr. van Helmont.

I read with pleasure and even profit *the two books* that Baron van Helmont sent to Your Electoral Highness.<sup>134</sup> He would never have been able to present in a better way the sublime thoughts found in them than to you. I wish he had even enclosed the *third* entitled *Aanmerkingen over den Mensch*,<sup>135</sup> quoted in the book on the divinity.<sup>136</sup> I find in them several things which please me enough, but there are also some into which I do not enter at all, for want of seeing sufficient proofs of them. Some people only notice in books what they think they can correct in them, but it is completely the opposite for me: I give all my

132. *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 5, 2, 4r.

133. From the French. Complete.

134. *Verhandeling van de Helle* and *Het Godlyk Weezen*.

135. Van Helmont, *Aanmerkingen over den Mensch*.

136. That is, in Buchius's *Het Godlyk Weezen*.

attention only to what appears to me the best demonstrated and the most appropriate for instruction.

I am delighted that Mr. van Helmont has found in Mr. Buchius a man capable of explaining his views properly. I wish that the late Mr. Knorr of Sulzbach, who was so clever, had wanted or been able to take the trouble to do it, as he had started to do in his book on the Kabbalistic science of the Jews.<sup>137</sup> But I would wish even more that someone preserve for posterity some of the fine discoveries that Mr. van Helmont must have made on several arts and sciences in particular. For it is easier to rediscover the knowledge which depends on reasoning and general principles than that which rests on the particular knowledge which chance and occasions sometimes gives us, and which is not easily rediscovered when it is lost.

As for the two books that were sent to Your Electoral Highness, I see that the one does not bear the name of the author.<sup>138</sup> It is true that the eternity of punishments, a view that is refuted in it, is not in keeping with the ancient theology of the pagans, and is not entirely received among the Jews. And even among the Christians (to say nothing of the Socinians), the great Origen did not believe it.<sup>139</sup> It seems that St. Gregory of Nyssa even leaned toward the Platonists, who believed that all God's punishments are only medicines,<sup>140</sup> and only have amendment for their goal. St. Jerome and some other Fathers were not far from believing that at least all Christians would ultimately be saved, after having passed through fire.<sup>141</sup> So hell became to them a purgatory. In the past century a learned man (*Celius Secundus Curio*) wrote a book on the grandeur of the heavenly Kingdom, in which he claimed to prove that the number of the saved is incomparably greater than that of the damned, notwithstanding what is said about the narrow path.<sup>142</sup> In our time *Pierre Serrarius*, who was from Amsterdam, already wanted to announce to men this so-called new

137. Von Rosenroth, *Kabbala Denudata*.

138. *Verhandeling van de Helle*, which was published anonymously.

139. See Origen, *De principiis*, I.6.1–3.

140. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica magna*, chap. 26.

141. St. Jerome, *In Isaiam commentarii*, 18.16.24.

142. Curio, *De amplitudine regni coelestis*. The reference to the “narrow path” is an allusion to Matthew 7:13–14. Cf. Luke 13:23–24.

Gospel, or this good news of the extinction of hell.<sup>143</sup> It is said that St. Louis (if I am not mistaken) met a girl, who carried a lit torch in one hand, and a pitcher full of water in the other. The King asked her what that meant. She responded that it was to burn paradise, and to extinguish hell, so that men would henceforth serve God without the servile fear of one, and without the mercenary hope of the other. But as true paradise must consist principally in the possession of the highest virtue and in the sight of God, how can one love God with all one's heart without wishing to see and know him as much as is possible? So paradise should not be considered a reward as much as a perfection. It is said that when the Swiss deliberated about whether purgatory ought to be kept or rejected, one of the company got up and said: gentlemen, since we are on these matters, I would be of the opinion that we should even abolish the devils with the whole of hell. But to speak seriously, my view is that the eternity of punishments is founded on the eternity of sins. Those who will always sin will always be justly punished.

I pass to the other book, the subject of which is more extensive since it contains the principles of Mr. van Helmont's theology, organized by Mr. Buchius. I was delighted to see that those who separate theology from philosophy are put right in the preface. That sufficiently vindicates Mr. van Helmont against those who accuse him of giving into enthusiasm. For the enthusiasts have this in common with the Libertines, that they say injurious things about reason.

I am again of Mr. van Helmont's sentiment when he puts right those who merely attach themselves to the material, as do the Cartesians and the Gassendists, for it is still necessary to employ a principle of life or force, in which consists, so to speak, the connection between spiritual and corporeal things. For the laws of nature and the principles of physics could only be explained by employing higher principles, which are needed in order to understand properly what force of acting is.

I agree, once again, that all substances endure and could not perish.<sup>144</sup> There are ancients who have already believed that there is no

143. Serrurier, *Assertion du règne de mille ans, ou de la prospérité de l'Eglise de Christ en la terre*.

144. In Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 39 (§24), and 39–40 (§25), it is stated that creatures are without end or beginning. In 148ff (§84f), it is stated that the soul or life is immortal.

production or extinction, taken in a rigorous sense, but only transformations, like those of silkworms, according to whether the substances are more or less developed. As for man and his soul, however, it is difficult to enter into the detail of what must happen to it through the principles of reason alone, and if Mr. van Helmont gives us some insights on this matter we will be under a great obligation to him for that.

I am very much of his sentiment when he refutes those who believe that our soul loses itself in the universal spirit.<sup>145</sup> It seems that this is also the opinion of some mystics and Quietists. But it is a chimera which has no sense at all; besides which it is contrary to immortality.

When he composes everything from fire and water, and takes them for spiritual principles,<sup>146</sup> I think he means it allegorically, and that he wanted to signify by that the active principle and the passive principle.

His opinion on the infinity of things is not to be scorned,<sup>147</sup> for as each part has parts to infinity, there is no small portion of matter which does not contain an actual infinity of creatures, and apparently of living creatures. It is on account of this that nature everywhere bears the character of her creator. As for the perfection of things, if we just use reason to consider the matter, it is uncertain whether the world always increases in perfection or whether it increases and decreases over periods of time, or whether it does not instead remain in the same perfection with regard to whole, even though it seems that the parts exchange perfection among themselves, and that there are times when some things are more perfect (or less perfect) than they are at other times. It is therefore debatable whether all creatures always advance in perfection, at least at the end of their time, or whether there are some which lose it and always decrease, or lastly whether there are some which always have periods after which they find that they have neither gained nor lost; just as there are some lines which always advance, like the straight line, others which turn without advancing, or which move back, like the circular, others which turn and advance at

---

Buchius/van Helmont does not, however, use the word "substance."

145. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 151–52 (§85).

146. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 161 (§90).

147. Possibly an allusion to Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 166 (§94).



the same time, like the spiral, and lastly others which move back after having advanced, or advance after having moved back, like oval lines.

He even speaks of the envelopment of things in the first man, of the distinctive individual humanity of Adam united to the Messiah, of our present dependency on Adam, and of his formation from the blood of the Earth or from earthly life.<sup>148</sup> Likewise, that Adam and Eve were each man and woman, and consequently four in all, and that it is for this reason that the Messiah came at the end of four thousand years in the fullness of time.<sup>149</sup> And that men will all be reunited in Adam when at the consummation of the world each will come to his perfection and will have spiritualized and even perfected with him the corporeal creatures which are attached to him, to say nothing of the revolutions of the next worlds.<sup>150</sup> As for all that, and a number of other extraordinary thoughts and perhaps allegories which Mr. van Helmont gives us, it seems that a part of these dogmas is based on the traditions of Cabalistic Jews rather than on demonstrations. These ancient traditions should not be completely scorned, but I do not know whether one ought to defer to them too much either. Demonstrations drawn from reason are much better, and if Mr. Helmont has any, we must pray that he informs us of them. In any case, before judging them, we should wait for some greater clarifications from him, while assuring him of our docility in everything that is not contrary either to reason or to Scripture, or to the perpetual tradition of the church. For my part, I content myself with knowing in general that because of the immense wisdom and goodness of the author of things, everything is so well ordered, and will go so well, even after this life, for those who love God, that they could wish for nothing further. And I have no doubt at all that he thinks Your Electoral Highness as worthy as anyone in the universe to be instructed in these mysteries. I am with devotion etc.

148. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 193 (§112).

149. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 214–15.

150. Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 221–22.

## 12. Sophie to Leibniz (4/14 September 1694)<sup>151</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 174–75.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 306–7 (following M).

A: A I 10: 67–68 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's letter of 3/13 September 1694 (see no. 11).

Linsburg, 4/14 September 1694

Sir, you have obliged me with the long letter that you took the trouble to write to me about the books van Helmont sent to me. I think you found that he rightly aimed them at me, since I am not scrupulous, and among all the varieties which proceed from this great being of which he speaks so well, I admire the different ideas which it has produced in men, especially of things which one cannot understand. As Helmont makes it [this being] always the same,<sup>152</sup> one could say that he argues in accordance with his opinion much less than we do, and it seems that he finds this a perfection in our soul, which he would find an imperfection in his. But it seems to me that it is difficult to understand how, after the separation from the body, we would be able to think, as we no longer have any organs. But as he cites Holy Scripture, which he thinks is in his favor, I can also say that our joys will be

151. From the French. Incomplete; several items of news have not been translated.

152. Sophie is here presumably thinking of passages from Buchius's *The Divine Being* such as, "And seing the Immutability of this Being is proved §. 10. and its Perfection in §. 11, it follows, that it is not only always Operative, but also that it must always Operate or work the same thing: That is, that God does not only never cease to work, *but also, that he does not change his Working; because if God did not always work the same thing*, it must be either that he might make his Work better or worse." (24–25) Buchius/van Helmont goes on to say (26), "because God is every way unchangeable,...his Working must also be so, and...it can never cease to be the same," and also "*God must needs be always working the same thing.*"

what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor what has ever entered into the thought of man.<sup>153</sup> So he can conclude as little from this as we can, if he holds the Bible to be the word of God, but we prefer to believe everything than actually experience it, until this misfortune occurs...

Sophie

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

153. A paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 2:9: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."

### 13. Leibniz to Sophie (second half of September (?) 1694)<sup>154</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 210–11.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 298–300 (following M).

A: A I 10: 68–70 (following M).

Leibniz's reply to Sophie's letter of 4/14 September 1694 (see no. 12).

To Madam the Electress of Brunswick

Madam

Mr. de Bussche told me that he would send to Your Electoral Highness *le monde enchanté* by Mr. Bekker,<sup>155</sup> formerly Pastor or Minister in Amsterdam.<sup>156</sup> These books are excellent for disabusing the world of popular prejudices, although one cannot be of his sentiment in all things. He relegates the devil to hell, without ever wanting to grant him the slightest access to roam in our world. It is as if he denied the devil completely. Rather like when Epicurus said that he admitted the gods,<sup>157</sup> while he denied them all commerce with us, relegating

154. From the French. Incomplete; a passage in which Leibniz expresses his wishes for the good health of Sophie and her husband has not been translated, nor an addition to the postscript about the possible arrival of Lord Lexington in Hanover.

155. Balthasar Bekker, *De Betoverde Weereld*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1691–93). Leibniz made reading notes on this book in 1691; see *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 38–41 and 43. In the letter to Sophie, however, Leibniz may well be referring to the French translation of this work, which was published in Amsterdam in 1694 as *Le Monde enchanté ou examen des communs sentiments touchant les Esprits, leur nature, leur pouvoir, leur administration, et leurs opérations*.

156. Bekker (1634–98) was Pastor of Amsterdam between 1679 and 1692.

157. See Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2.59; English edition: Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 68. See also Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 3.18ff and 5.146ff; English edition: Lucretius, *De Rerum Nature | The Nature*

them to certain empty spaces that he had arranged for them between worlds, without remembering that the debris from the worlds could inconvenience them.

The chief basis of Mr. Bekker's view is that minds could not act on bodies, nor bodies on minds. But this principle is not sufficiently certain, in as much as neither the nature of the body nor that of the mind is perfectly known as yet. And as Mr. Bekker could not deny that there is a commerce between the soul and the body, one will thereby be able to infer that certain detached minds, whose nature is unknown to us, perhaps also have the means, which are proportioned to them, to act on bodies, especially if they are granted subtle bodies in accordance with the opinions of the ancients (pagans as well as Christians), who believed that angels are composed of soul and body, just as we are, although their bodies are incomparably more subtle and more active than ours. Indeed, nothing prevents, or rather everything obliges us to believe that there are substances and even animals that surpass us by far.

His arguments based on the principles of morals appear to me more solid. For it is an opinion that is scarcely in accordance with the wisdom and power of God to believe of the devil everything that the common man imagines. And the stories that are customarily churned out are not only false, but absurd. It was not safe to say these things 80 years ago. One passed for a sorcerer when one did not believe the tales that were told about sorcerers. And that sufficed to put a man under suspicion. The world is beginning to wise up, thanks to God. It is about time, since it is already so old...

P.S. As for the opinion of Mr. Helmont, who maintains that God always acts in the same way, it can be given a good sense. He would not be able to deny that there is a great variety in God's productions. *Per variar natura è bella.*<sup>158</sup> But it is like in a song where, despite all

---

*of Things*, ed. and trans. David R. Slavitt (London: University of California Press, 2008), 96 and 195.

158. "Through variety nature is beautiful." The original Italian phrase—*Et per tal natura è bella* [And through such variety nature is beautiful]—was first used by Serafino Aquilano (1446–1500), a Spanish poet. It became a popular expression in medieval times.

the varieties of tones,<sup>159</sup> the harmony consists in the agreement or in the consonances, or else like there is a point of view in the perspective, and like the authors who wrote on the poetic art require the unity of the design in a tragedy. It can therefore be believed that the universe's changes are consistent with the uniformity of the divine action, because the same law of change always subsists.

159. Reading "tons" (manuscript M) in place of "sons" (transcription A).

#### 14. Elizabeth Charlotte to Sophie (2 August 1696)

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Hann. 91 Kurf. Sophie I, VI 138–42.

M2: Partial copy of M1, in Leibniz's hand: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 3, 8 1–2.

Transcriptions:

Bod: Bod 1: 250–51 (following M1, partial transcription only).

A: A I 13: 705–6 (following M2).

Following a short visit to Hanover in March 1696, Francis Mercury van Helmont made another stay there from early August until late September 1696. On both occasions van Helmont had regular meetings with both Sophie and Leibniz,<sup>160</sup> and the views he expressed during these meetings, particularly that of metempsychosis, were obviously of interest to at least one member of Sophie's wider circle, as Sophie sent reports of what van Helmont said in these meetings to her niece, Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orléans (1652–1722).<sup>161</sup> In response to one of these reports, which is no longer extant, Elizabeth Charlotte wrote the following to Sophie.

[M2: partial copy of dispatched letter]<sup>162</sup>

Port Royal, 2 Aug. 1696

I cannot get my head around Mr. Helmont's view, because I cannot understand what the soul is and how it can get into another body. According to my poor sense of logic, I would rather be inclined to believe that everything returns to the earth when we die and nothing remains, and each of the elements which compose us claims back its share in

160. For example, Leibniz wrote to Thomas Burnett on 7/17 March 1696: "Mr. Helmont has been here with us for a few days; he and I meet every morning around 9 o' clock in the study of Madam the Electress." A I 12: 478.

161. Elizabeth Charlotte was and still is sometimes referred to by her nickname of Liselotte.

162. From the German, and translated jointly with Geert de Wilde. Complete.

order to make something else in turn, be it a tree or a plant or something else which in turn serves as nourishment for living creatures. I believe that it is only God's grace which can make us believe that the soul is immortal. Naturally, such an idea would not enter our heads, especially when we see what becomes of people once they have died.

Almighty God is so incomprehensible that I think it would be contrary to and demeaning to his omnipotence if we were to enclose him within the bounds of our own order. We humans, who have rules, can be either good or evil, to the extent that we adhere to these rules or break them; but who can lay down rules for the almighty? Another obvious sign that we do not understand God's goodness is that our faith teaches us that he first created two humans to whom he then gave the impulse to fall. For why was it necessary to forbid one tree, and afterward to put a curse on all those who had not sinned, in that they had not yet been born? By our reckoning this is precisely the opposite of goodness and justice; the opposite of goodness, in that he could have prevented the evil, and the opposite of justice, in that those punished are not at fault and have not sinned. Furthermore, we are taught that God the Father has given us his only son, which is unjust too, by our reckoning, for the son had never sinned and could not sin. Therefore I think that it is impossible to understand what God does with us, and consequently we can merely admire his omnipotence without being able to reason about his goodness and his justice.

I have taken the liberty, and recently informed Your Grace of my opinion about the question posed by Christ's disciples regarding the blind-born man.<sup>163</sup> However I would like to add that I do not find that this is proof that the soul goes into another body, for as the Jews and the Christians believe that we are lost because of Adam, who was the father of us all, the disciples could have easily believed that men carry the sins of their forefathers too, and therefore every man is born sinful. However, our Lord Christ denies that the man had sinned be-

163. The letter from Elizabeth Charlotte to Sophie referred to here is no longer extant. The reference to the "blind-born man" is an allusion to John 9:2-3: "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'"



fore he was born, for he says that neither the blind-born man nor his father have sinned, but that it has happened so God's works could be seen and his glory praised. Thus Lord Jesus's answer destroys Mr. Helmont's opinion.

I am in complete agreement with Your Grace that this view is not very comforting, since one is only aware of how one dies, and has no knowledge of the next life. I also find it less than ideal that one would not know anything about one's early youth. However, I would rather forget how it was inside my mother's womb, for that would be a disgusting thing to think about. Mr. Helmont's contented and calm nature is something I would love to learn.

**15. Leibniz to Sophie (4/14 August 1696)**

## Versions:

- M1: Draft, in French: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 3, 8, 5–6.  
 M2: Draft, in German: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 3, 8, 1–2.

## Transcriptions:

- FC: FC 248–51 (following M1).  
 Gr: Grua: 378–380 (following M1).  
 A1: A I 13: 10–12 (following M1).  
 A2: A I 13: 12–14 (following M2).

On 3/13 August 1696, Sophie showed to Leibniz Elizabeth Charlotte's letter of 2 August (see no. 14).<sup>164</sup> What follows is Leibniz's response to it. Leibniz wrote French and German versions; the French version was written for Sophie, and the German version for the benefit of Elizabeth Charlotte, who preferred to correspond in German even though she was married to the brother of Louis XIV and was long resident in France.

[M1: draft]<sup>165</sup>

164. Leibniz's diary entry for 3/13 August summarizes the contents of Elizabeth Charlotte's letter: "The Electress gave me a letter to read from Madam the Duchess of Orléans. In it, occasioned by Mr. Helmont's thoughts about the soul, she reasons and supposes that we accept its immortality only from faith, when according to natural reasoning it would seem that everything returns to the elements in order to be reborn. Therefore from the rules of justice one cannot form any opinion about God's actions, since such rules are for men; the highest being is not bound by them. I should give my thoughts on this. The occasion for this letter came from Mr. Helmont's speculations, which the Electress sent to Madam, so that although she does not agree with him, she still praises him and wishes for his contentment." G. W. Leibniz, *Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Gesammelte Werke*, ed. G. H. Pertz (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 184.

165. From the French. Complete. The Akademie editors date the letter to mid-August 1696, but note an entry from Leibniz's personal diary on 4/14 August 1696 in which he writes: "have put down some brief thoughts for the Electress on the letter from Madam [i.e., Elizabeth Charlotte]." This suggests that at least the French version of Leibniz's letter was written

I admit that it initially appears very natural and very reasonable, according to the letter of the 2nd of August which Your Electoral Highness has just received, to say that our soul is mortal by nature and immortal by grace, following what faith teaches us. For it seems that the parts of things return among the elements, in order to be employed in other generations.

It also seems not unreasonable to want to judge the actions of God by the laws or rules of justice and order that we conceive, and consequently it seems that the justice of God does not prove that there are punishments or rewards after this life.

Nevertheless, if one takes the trouble to meditate with more attention, one will find that the dissipation of parts of our corporeal mass is not sufficient for us to conclude that the soul dissipates also.

And as for order and justice, I would think that there are universal rules that must apply as much with regard to God as with regard to intelligent creatures.<sup>166</sup> For truths are of two sorts: there are truths of sense and truths of understanding. The truths of sense are for the one who senses them,<sup>167</sup> and for those whose organs are disposed like his. And it is for this reason that it is right to say that we should not dispute about tastes.

But I think that the truths of understanding are universal, and that what is true about them with regard to us is also true for the angels and for God himself. These eternal truths are the fixed and immutable point on which everything turns. Such are the truths of numbers in arithmetic and those of figures in geometry and those of motions or weights in mechanics and in astronomy. It is for this reason that it is rightly said that God does everything by number, measure and weight.<sup>168</sup>

That established, it is right to consider that order and harmony are also something mathematical which consists in certain propor-

---

on that date. For the relevant entry from Leibniz's diary, see Leibniz, *Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Gesammelte Werke*, 185.

166. creatures. | It is rather like in the doctrine of numbers, lines, and other mathematical sciences; the truths which are truths for us, are truths | *deleted*.

167. them, | like for example when we find that the bittersweet is agreeable. | *deleted*.

168. An allusion to Wisdom 11:21: "you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight."

tions; and that as justice is nothing other than the maintaining of order with regard to the evil and good of intelligent substances, it follows that God, who is the sovereign substance, immutably maintains the most perfect justice and order that can be maintained. So much so that I believe that if we knew the order of providence well enough, we would find that it is capable of meeting and even surpassing our wishes, and that there is nothing more desirable or more satisfying, not even for us personally.

But just as the beauty of a landscape is not appreciable when the eye is not properly situated for looking at it, it should not be thought strange that the same happens to us in this life, which is so short in relation to the general order. Yet there is reason to believe that we will one day be nearer to the true point of view of things in order to find them good, not only through faith, nor only through this general knowledge that we can have of them at present, but through the very experience of the detail, and through the lively feeling of the beauty of the universe, even in relation to us. This would be a good part of the happiness that is promised.

As for the difficulties which seem to originate from some passages of Holy Scripture and our articles of faith, I would venture to say that if we find there something contrary to the rules of goodness and justice, we should thereby conclude that we do not employ the true sense of these passages from Scripture and of these articles of faith.

## 16. Leibniz to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte (6/16 August 1696)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 3, 8 4r.

M2: Fair copy, made from M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 3, 8 3.

Transcription:

A: A I 13: 15 (following M2).

Leibniz wrote a second response to Elizabeth Charlotte's letter of 2 August 1696 (see no. 14), this time attempting to give van Helmont's answers to her concerns. Although van Helmont was in Hanover at the time the following text was written, it seems that it did not benefit from his input, as Leibniz's diary entry for 6/16 August 1696 suggests that just he and Sophie were present when it was written, with him being responsible for composing it: "With the Electress in her study at Herrenhausen. Pointed out what she could answer to Madam [Elizabeth Charlotte] about the soul; likewise about van Helmont. Have kept a copy."<sup>169</sup>

[M2: fair copy]<sup>170</sup>

- 1) If it is asked what the soul is, then Mr. Helmont replies that it is a mind.
- 2) How does the soul get into another body? Answer: according to his opinion, since each and every soul is in the center of all things, and therefore near to all bodies at the same time, it thus unites itself with the body which it is most comfortable with.
- 3) That which returns to the elements is the body and not the soul.
- 4) That God's grace alone could make us believe that the soul is immortal: to that it should be replied that God's grace is always in accordance with natural reason.

169. Leibniz, *Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Gesammelte Werke*, 188.

170. From the German, and translated jointly with Geert de Wilde. Complete.

- 5) What one sees of people when they die is only the body.
- 6) That God's order and our order are the same should be concluded from the fact that we originate from God, and that he has given us our order. Therefore there is no other order than his.
- 7) As for the blind-born man: when Christ answered his disciples and said that neither he nor his father had sinned, but that he is born blind, Christ did not therefore deny that the father had sinned, nor therefore that he had not sinned, but Christ only denied that he was born blind for that reason, since there was another reason for it, i.e., that God's works would become evident.
- 8) As for the remaining texts and articles of faith, Mr. Helmont says that it would lead him too far to answer those, because they are not understood in the correct way by the general public.

## 17. Francis Mercury van Helmont: A Résumé of Philosophy (September 1696)<sup>171</sup>

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, in Dutch: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, MS XLII 1989 (Autographensammlung Molanus) 1, 183–84a.

M2: Copy of M1, in French, translated by Leibniz: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I, 5, 2, 15–16.

M3: Copy of M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 7–8.

Transcriptions:

A1: A I 13: 707–10 (following M1).

A2: A I 13: 710–12 (following M2).

The following piece is a summary by van Helmont of some of his own views, and was written near the end of his second stay in Hanover during 1696, which lasted from early August to 23 September. As both Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte had taken a keen interest in his ideas, van Helmont most probably wrote the summary for them. It was certainly circulated to both, probably through Leibniz, who made a French translation of the piece (presumably for the benefit of Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte), which van Helmont had originally written in Dutch.<sup>172</sup>

[M2: Leibniz's translated copy of van Helmont's original]

### Some of Mr. Helmont's thoughts<sup>173</sup>

171. Editor's title. From the French. Complete.

172. I have elected to translate Leibniz's French translation rather than van Helmont's Dutch original as the former is almost certainly what was sent to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte. However, Leibniz's French translation is not always faithful to van Helmont's Dutch, so I have noted the most significant differences between the two documents in the notes below. All translations from the Dutch version of this text were made by Geert de Wilde.

173. The title given to this piece by van Helmont was, somewhat improbably, "What a good government should be like." In his translation (i.e., in M2), Leibniz borrowed from this title in his opening line—"In order that there be a good government, what follows must be the case"—which he deleted in favor of "Some of Mr. Helmont's thoughts," which was

- 1) The higher part of man governs that which is lower.
- 2) Heaven governs the earth.
- 3) The higher would not be able to exist without the lower. One would not be able to be regent without having subjects.
- 4) The higher part would not be able to govern without a perfect and general communication with the lower, just as a wise and good general must be informed of all his army.<sup>174</sup>
- 5) The spirit of man, which is<sup>175</sup> general and indeterminate, needs, in order to subsist individually and to work for itself, to be clothed in a mortal and changeable body, in order to make it immortal and spiritual as it is itself.
- 6) This subtle body could be called *soul*, and man always works to make this soul more perfect by the killing and repeated consumption of foods until they are converted into it, and reunited with it.
- 7) The soul, in uniting itself with some creature, for the melioration of its body, could not annihilate it, since this creature has its own spirit and its own changeable and mortal body; but its soul is subject to the human soul.<sup>176</sup>
- 8) We have before our eyes this living clock, which is universal, immortal, and perfectly well set, which is given to us to serve as a sign, and to mark the times, the days, and the years, because we are a part of it and could not be separated from it.
- 9) The Wise King Solomon knew this clock well when he said in his *Ecclesiastes* that there is nothing new under the sun,<sup>177</sup> that one cannot

---

clearly intended to serve as the title of the translation. This emendation is not recorded in transcription A2.

174. Leibniz neglected to translate the whole of article 4 from the Dutch version of this text, which reads: “The higher part would not be able to govern the lower without having a general and perfect communication with all the lower parts, just as a wise and good general must have with all his army, and in the same way as a soul [must have] with the subordinate and complete body, which is part of the entire Universe.”

175. is | universal | *deleted*; this deletion is not recorded in transcription A2. In fact Leibniz’s original translation was more accurate, as in the Dutch version of this text, van Helmont merely describes the human spirit as “universal.”

176. In the Dutch version of the text, this sentence continues: “in order to honor it.”

177. *Ecclesiastes* 1:9–10: “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, ‘Look! This is something new’? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.”



say “here is a new thing,” since it already existed in the centuries before us, of which there is no more memory. What was is the same as what will be; a generation goes and a generation comes, the earth remains; the sun rises and sets, the wind also makes its turn and returns in a circle, the rivers flow into the sea and the sea does not rise at all; and the waters of the rivers return from where they have come in order to flow again. The same applies to animals: the sea always generates fish but it is never full of them; the fact is that the same ones return too.<sup>178</sup>

10) It cannot be denied that all bodies undergo a continual change; nothing is able to rest, in an unchanging state, otherwise it would only consist in itself, which is not possible.

11) It seems that we could attain a more detailed understanding to determine how the same generation, which is dead in body and by no means in the spiritual and immortal soul, returns again and not another one in its place.

12) It is well known that in big cities such as Naples,<sup>179</sup> for example, in which more than 300,000 persons have died of the plague, it was afterward observed that almost all the women were pregnant and that the number of the dead was replaced in only a short time.<sup>180</sup>

13) The reason for this is that love is a strong impression which brings about conception, and that the apprehension about the death of a woman’s loved ones, like her father, mother, husband, child, as well

178. Leibniz’s translation of article 9 includes material not found in van Helmont’s Dutch, which reads: “The wise King Solomon knew this clock very well, because he writes in his book *Ecclesiastes* that there cannot be anything new under the sun, of which it can be said ‘this is new’; whatever comes has been before etc.

A human generation goes away, the same generation returns etc.

The sun goes away, and returns from wherever she comes etc.

The wind goes away and returns etc.

The rivers run toward the sea and return to the sea, and the sea does not get filled; the [number of] fish does not decrease or increase, the same fish return.”

179. In the Dutch version of this text, van Helmont mentions Vienna too.

180. In the Dutch version of this text, van Helmont writes that, after plague had struck a city, “all the women became so fertile that within a short time just as many children were born, and this many more in number than [that of] those who had died.” The obvious contradiction here does not appear in Leibniz’s translation.

as the impression of them, can contribute toward making them be reborn.<sup>181</sup>

14) Of the hare it is often said, and it has even passed into proverb, that the more of them are caught, the more of them are found. Notwithstanding the fact that the hare looks for its food near to men, that it is small and timid, and that it has no defense but its escape.

15) Thus this very fear of dogs and hunters makes it very fertile.<sup>182</sup>

16) But in big cities where there has not been extraordinary mortality, we do not find that the number of men noticeably increases or decreases.

17) It is also a proverb or common view of experienced women that a woman who has lost her first child straightaway conceives anew that which comes from the great impression and love carried for the dead child, which makes it come back to life and be reborn.<sup>183</sup>

18) Sleep is the death of our food, serving to renew our bodies and to give new forces and a new life to our soul,<sup>184</sup> for if meats did not die they would remain what they are, but through their death they became suitable to be united to our life, which is in part the purpose of sleep, which is like a death of a part of our body.

19) The great sleep of the dead who are buried has for a goal nothing but a complete renewal of our changeable body, whereas ordinary sleep was only a partial renewal; nevertheless both tend to one and the same end and perfection. And as the nightly sleep does not remove

181. Van Helmont's point is somewhat clearer in the Dutch version of this text, because he claims there that it is the apprehension caused by the death of a father, mother, husband, or child which "makes such a strong and lively impression of the aforesaid deceased loved ones in the conceiving woman, that the same person is born [again] from her." The connection, evident here, between the pregnant woman's apprehension and the strong impression it makes on her, is entirely absent in Leibniz's translation.

182. Again, van Helmont's point is somewhat clearer in the Dutch version of this text, because article 15 there reads: "Those very same hares are so fertile that the more one catches in a particular place, the more one will catch again in the very same place; it must be the result of the fear that the hunters cause them with their dogs."

183. Leibniz's version of van Helmont's text once more obscures van Helmont's point. In the Dutch version of the text, van Helmont states that it is "the first great impression of love for the dead child [which] causes the same...soul to be revived by the mother and to be reborn."

184. In the Dutch version of this text, the opening part of article 18 reads thus: "Sleep is the death of the food one eats, serving to renew our body and to give new life forces to our soul."

the memory, and as forgetfulness is nevertheless necessary in order to be able to begin something anew and to correct what is bad, it must be that the sleep of the dead constitutes this office of our deliverance.

20) Love and life are the same thing and only different in name.

21) Hate and envy also go together, and are only a disturbance of love, which death can rectify and turn into true love.

22) These things properly considered can make us understand that the same generation returns, and not another one.<sup>185</sup>

185. Leibniz neglected to translate the last two articles of van Helmont's Dutch text, which are:

"23) Ask the wild animals and birds why they allow their lives to be taken for the sake of their young and not for the sake of any others. They will answer that every one must do so for their own, so that the young of each one would be reborn as new, etc.

24) People will be able to do the same, it seems to us, [but] in a more extensive and more intelligent way, as they possess the quality of having power over themselves and other creatures; something which the animals do not need, because they have enough to provide a continuity for themselves and their breed."

**18. Sophie to Leibniz (early October 1696)<sup>186</sup>**

Versions:

M: Copy of dispatched letter: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 3, 8, 9.

Transcription:

A: A I 13: 712–13 (following M).

Having received van Helmont's "A Résumé of Philosophy" (see no. 17), Elizabeth Charlotte wrote a number of comments on it in her letter to Sophie of 30 September 1696.<sup>187</sup> Sophie then copied out these comments and sent them on to Leibniz.

Fragment from Madam's letter.

"I have read through Mr. Helmont's Philosophy twice, since there are things in it which are very difficult to understand, namely, the seventh article and also the eighth, from which it seems as if we are a part of the sun. The example of the hares is completely the opposite—I have seen it in Versailles: over a short period of time many were caught, and in places where over fifty a year were caught scarcely three have been found since then.<sup>188</sup> I also cannot understand how love can be the result of death. Everything else I understand more or less, but what I also do not understand is how a soul can perfect itself in a new body, because it will do everything the same as it did in the first, and would

186. From the French and German, and translated jointly with Geert de Wilde. Complete.

187. This letter is transcribed, albeit only partially, in Bod 1: 257–58.

188. Leibniz passed this objection on to van Helmont in a letter to him of 18/28 October 1696: "Madam the Duchess of Orleans advances against your example of hares the contrary experience in places known to her, where they have been destroyed through hunting. But everything should be understood with moderation. The Spanish have certainly destroyed the men of some islands of America. The question is merely whether it is true, according to your opinion, that when enough of some species is left to propagate the race, births are more frequent after a great number of deaths. This is something which deserves to be verified more exactly." See *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr 389, 54v; cf. the draft version of this letter, LBr 389, 49v. Van Helmont seems not to have responded to this objection.

therefore apparently not become perfected, unless it is the case that one considered dying to be a perfection, which seems rather horrible to me. It is unfortunately only too true that all our reasonings have no effect, and that everything happens as God wills.”

### 19. Leibniz: Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines (first half of October (?), 1696)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 3–4.

M2: Fair copy, made from M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 3, 8, 7–8.

M3: Copy of M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 1–2 and 5–6.

M4: French translation, revised and edited from M2: manuscript no longer extant.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 8–11 (following M4).

G: G 7: 539–41 (following K, part only).

A: A I 13: 46–51 (following M2).

Leibniz's response to Elizabeth Charlotte's comments of 30 September 1696, as detailed in Sophie's letter of early October 1696 (see no. 18). This response was sent to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte.

[M2: fair copy]<sup>189</sup>

In<sup>190</sup> my view, it is not unreasonable to say that many of the things in the thought of our aforementioned friend<sup>191</sup> are still obscure and

189. From the German, and translated by G. H. R. Parkinson. Complete. Editor's title; the title is derived from a description scribbled on M3: "Leibniz's kind opinion on the doctrines of Francis Mercury van Helmont."

190. In M1, Leibniz began with the following remarks which were subsequently deleted: "I myself find that Mr. Helmont's ideas are still a bit obscure in a few places, and in part have not been sufficiently proved. There is probably nobody else in this country who has had as much patience as I have had not only to listen to him and to put objections to him, but also to wait for his answer and then to spend as much time on this all over again, until it seemed that no further progress could be made. And I also took up the pen on various occasions when with him for the sake of a greater correctness, and wanted to sketch out the separate points of his evidence together with my replies, but usually was not able to in the end."

191. Francis Mercury van Helmont.

confused. This is particularly true of his main thesis about the soul's change of body—namely, that souls proceed immediately from dead bodies into new bodies, and that therefore souls of a certain kind must always play a role in this theater of ours.

What he means is this: that there always remain on earth roughly the same number of human beings, and that the same can be said of every other species of animal. But I had to doubt this on the basis of histories, and had to believe that the world has not always been equally densely inhabited.<sup>192</sup> It is also to be found, from the printed registers of births and deaths in the City of London, that after the end of the Great Plague numbers were made up not only by the addition of an extremely large number of births, but also by the addition of new inhabitants. Further, it is not unreasonable to say that afterwards, in such cases, more and much earlier marriages occur; for, after such a great clearance, people find more space in which to grow food, and consequently multiply themselves once again.

Nevertheless, I agree with him in many things in which I cannot agree either with commonly held doctrines, or with the new opinions of the Cartesians. The generally held view is that the animals have soul and body, but that such souls perish with the destruction of their body. Human beings alone are excepted, which seems to many to be suspicious—especially if, to establish this, reliance is placed upon faith alone, which seems like a subterfuge.

The Cartesians see this, and are afraid that if the souls of animals are mortal, the souls of human beings must run the same risk. So they have postulated that human beings alone truly have a soul, whereas the animals are nothing but artificial machines, driven by fire and wind, and without any sensation. So, in their opinion, when animals cry out they feel no more than an organ pipe does. But the Cartesians are strongly contradicted by nature, which in many ways makes us recognize that the animals too have sensation, and are not merely dolls or marionettes.<sup>193</sup> One also sees clearly that the Cartesians base

192. inhabited. | And for the very same reason I do not know whether it is right to say that more wolves emerged elsewhere because in England they became extinct. | M1.

193. marionettes. | The Cartesians are afraid that if one also attributes souls to animals, and yet wants to consider such souls to be mortal, the human soul may be in danger of being considered mortal too. Who cannot see by himself that such a conclusion is nothing other

their opinion, not on reason or experience, but on their own self-love, in that they flatter themselves and are willing to accept only that which greatly exalts human nature, just as if that must be true which one would like to be true. However (in passing) they are not wrong if they take all souls as agreeing in the fact that they must either all be mortal, or all be immortal.<sup>194</sup>

Accordingly, I agree with the common doctrine view in this respect: that animals genuinely have souls and sensation. Indeed I hold, in common with many of the ancient sages, that everything in the whole of nature is full of power, life, and souls. Further, I hold that just as microscopes display countless living creatures that are otherwise invisible, so also souls are incomparably more numerous than all grains of sand, or all the particles that are in the sun. Besides this, my position is close to the ideas the Plato already had, and that Pythagoras before him had brought back from the Orient: namely, that

---

than their own self-love (α), and to arrange one's opinions as one wants. (β). There may also be some who, by following Epicurus, could easily allow the same of our souls. (γ), in which they are nevertheless completely mistaken. | (δ). But who told them that the soul of animals has to be mortal? A famous teacher, called St. Thomas Aquinas, has already realized that all souls are indivisible; now if they are indivisible then they cannot be | *deleted*, M1.

194. The French version of this letter, M4, contains none of the material in the first four paragraphs of M2. However it begins with the following paragraph not found in M2: "Mr. Francis Mercury Baron de Helmont, son of the famous medical doctor of that name, was an old acquaintance of the Electress of Hanover. He was a Roman Catholic, then he became a Quaker, and called himself a seeker during the time he was in Hanover. The Electress had the custom of saying, when talking about him, that he did not understand himself. He dressed in an outfit of brown material in the style of the Quakers. He also wore a coat of the same color, and a hat without any conspicuous features, so that people would take him for a craftsman rather than a Baron. He was seventy-nine years old, and at the same time was very lively and alert. He knew several trades, and even worked in them, for example as a wood turner, a weaver, a painter, and similar things. He also had a perfect understanding of chemistry and medicine. He was well versed in Hebrew, and he was an intimate friend of Mr. Knorr, Chancellor of Sulzbach, author of the *Kabbala denudata*. He provided him with several Jewish texts on this matter. Translations from English into German have been made of Mr. Helmont's *Paradoxes* from *Macro- and Microcosmo*, and they have been published in Hamburg. The principal view that he defended is *metempsychosis*, namely, that the souls of dead bodies immediately pass into the bodies of newborns, and that thus the same souls always play their character in this theater of the world" (Klopp 8: 8–9). Following this short biography, version M4 continues as per the fifth paragraph of M2.



no soul—not even the soul of an animal—perishes. Our friend also agrees with me in this matter, even though I cannot as yet see sufficiently the proof or reason that he brings for this.

As for my reason for this: long ago I exchanged letters on this topic with the famous Arnauld, formerly the head of the Jansenists, and I relied principally on this: that all bodies have parts, and that therefore they are no more than heaps or pluralities, like a flock of sheep, or a pond full of drops of water and of fish, or a mechanism full of wheels and of accessories.<sup>195</sup> However, just as all numbers consist of one and one, all pluralities must consist of unities. Consequently, unities are the real root and seat of all being, all power, and all sensation: and these unities are souls. Therefore one has in this an irrefutable proof, not only that souls exist, but also that everything must be full of souls, and of what a soul really consists, and finally why every soul is indestructible. For unities have no parts, otherwise they would be pluralities; but that which has no parts is indestructible. Arnauld himself, for all his acuteness, had nothing to say against this once he had grasped it properly, but could only say that the matter seemed to him to be wonderful, strange, and novel.<sup>196 197</sup> But I find that similarly, a famous doctor of the Roman Church, called St. Thomas Aquinas, was not so very far from this. For he says that the souls of animals too are indivisible, from which their immortality follows.<sup>198</sup> Perhaps he did

195. See, for example, Leibniz's letters to Arnauld of 28 November/8 December 1696, A II 2: 117–27/LA 91–101, especially A II 2: 120–21/LA 94, and of 30 April 1687, A II 2: 175–93/LA 113–29, especially A II 2: 184–88/LA 120–26.

196. This sentence is not present in M4.

197. The Akademie editors suppose that this is a reference to Arnauld's letter to Leibniz of 28 August 1687, but this seems unlikely given that in that letter Arnauld argues *against* the indestructibility of souls/substantial forms. See A II 2: 223f/LA 135f. In fact he does so in other letters of the correspondence too, e.g., in his letter of 4 March 1687, A II 2: 151–56/LA 105–12, especially A II 2: 154/LA 109. In saying that Arnauld “had nothing to say” against the doctrine of indestructible animal souls, Leibniz appears to have erred.

198. Aquinas affirms the indivisibility of animal souls in *Summa contra Gentiles* II.65. However he evidently would not have accepted Leibniz's reasoning that such indivisibility entails immortality, as he denies that animals have immortal souls in *Summa contra Gentiles* II.82. See Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, Book Two: Creation*, ed. and trans. James F. Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 200–201 and 267–72.

not wish to proclaim this so clearly, but contented himself with laying down the basis for it.<sup>199</sup>

One might make a further objection to this: namely, that, granted that all I say is true, yet it gives us little comfort. For although our souls and other souls endure, yet the memory of what is present is lost. But I have another view about this, and one which it is not unreasonable to assert. This is, that although we do not perhaps recollect, immediately after death, an action that is now present—which is neither in accordance with nature nor seemly—yet we must take the view that everything that we have ever experienced remains eternally impressed upon the soul, even though it does not occur to us immediately on every occasion. In the same way, we know many things that we do not recollect, unless someone puts us on the right track, or a special cause makes us think of them.<sup>200</sup>

However, just as in nature nothing happens in vain and nothing is lost, but everything comes to its perfection and maturity, so every image received by our soul will at some time make a whole with what lies in the future, with the result that one will finally see everything as in a clear mirror, and will be able to derive from it what will be the best for our greater satisfaction. From this it follows that the more virtues a man has, and the more good things he has done, the greater will be his joy and satisfaction. From this I could bring yet more grounds for the conclusion that we already have a reason for being satisfied; not only because everything that will be, must be, but also because everything that happens is so well ordered that, if we understood it correctly, we would not wish it to be better.

And herein lies the distinction between rational and other souls: namely, that our souls, being capable of knowledge and control, do in some degree, in our region and our little world, what God does in the whole world. Consequently we are like little gods and cre-

199. In version M1, in the margin next to this paragraph and without any indication of where in the paragraph it was supposed to be inserted, Leibniz wrote and then deleted the following: “Meanwhile, it still remains the case that the human soul is a much higher being, with a capacity for knowledge and control, therefore [doing] in some degree [in our] region what God does in the whole world, and consequently other souls are subjected to the control of intelligent souls, and to their...”

200. them. | For who can remember everything? | *deleted*, M1; M4.

ate worlds which perish or go astray as little as does the great world of which they are images. Rather, as time goes on they approach the object of their aim just as the great world does. Consequently souls other than ours, and all bodies, must serve the happiness of rational souls, which alone stand to the great God in a kind of society or union. These other souls, and bodies, themselves approach greater perfection through this service of theirs. For the whole universe is like a body which, if not hindered, advances toward its aim. For nothing can be hindered by itself alone, and there is nothing outside the universe which can hinder it.<sup>201</sup>

As to what concerns the sun, it is not unreasonable to say that we are conceived as being within its region; for it is now established that the earth itself, which we inhabit and rule, is simply one of the planets that go round a stationary sun. The belief of the heathens that the sun is the seat of the supreme being was a mistake, for they did not understand the structure of the universe. We now know that every fixed star is a sun, and (to all appearances) has its own planets or associate worlds, like our sun. So also we may not doubt that all suns are at the same time subject to a higher rule, and that all such rulers are themselves ruled, so that all eventually are under the supreme ruler. It is only in our time that we are beginning to recognize the secret of both the little and the great world, by the discovery, on the one hand, of the circulation of the blood in ourselves, and on the other hand (by means of telescopes) of the true movements of the heavenly bodies. If human beings continue to make progress as they have within the past hundred years, many things of wonderful beauty will be displayed by nature, and will give us yet more cause to esteem their creator, and to take pleasure in his acts.

One could have wished that the great King of France, some twenty years ago, instead of waging a war which has made Europe wretched,<sup>202</sup> had either wanted or been able to increase the happiness of human beings through the cultivation of the sciences, as he had

201. Version M4 ends here.

202. The reference to "some twenty years ago" suggests that Leibniz is referring to the year 1672, when the forces of Louis XIV invaded the Netherlands. This war was ended by the Peace of Nijmegen in 1678; but it was followed in 1688 by the War of the League of Augsburg, still being waged when Leibniz wrote.

begun by doing.<sup>203</sup> If this had happened, we would already have lived to see and experience much that is fine which, as things are, only our descendants will see. Nevertheless I am of the opinion that exalted personages who can create much that is good should not cease to do so, even though the usefulness of such actions can appear only after a long time. They should do so, not just on account of the fame that it brings, but also for this reason: that those who plant something good and yet do not wait for their plants to come up here on earth, will at some time enjoy the fruits of their acts to their own greater glory, in that this is what the unchangeable highest order brings with it.<sup>204</sup>

203. Leibniz is perhaps thinking of the Academy of Sciences, founded in Paris in 1666 by Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83), the finance minister of Louis XIV.

204. Leibniz seems to be saying, in a somewhat veiled way, that those who work for the benefit of future generations will have their reward in heaven.

## 20. Sophie to Leibniz (early November 1696)

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 55–56.

M2: Copy of M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 57.

Transcription:

A: A I 13: 80–81 (following M1).

Leibniz's "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines" (see no. 19) did not provoke a response from Sophie, but it did from its other recipient, Elizabeth Charlotte, whose letter to Sophie of 30 October 1696 contained a series of remarks on Leibniz's letter.<sup>205</sup> Sophie copied out these remarks and sent them on to Leibniz.

[M1: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>206</sup>

Fragment from Madam's letter.

"I beg Your Grace to thank Mr. Leibniz on my behalf; I find what he has composed to be very well written and I admire the way in which he is able to write with so much clarity and ease about such a difficult matter. The fact that animals do not die comforts me very much, on account of my dear dogs.<sup>207</sup> Descartes' view about the clock is not at

205. This letter is transcribed, albeit only partially, in Bod 1: 259–60.

206. From the French and German. Complete.

207. Leibniz's view that animals have imperishable souls clearly made an impression on Elizabeth Charlotte, as she made reference to it in two of her later letters to Sophie. However, Elizabeth Charlotte apparently did not understand the subtlety of Leibniz's position on this matter, and mistook his claims that animals had *imperishable* souls for the claim that they had *immortal* souls like humans. She therefore wrongly construed Leibniz as saying that animals would be revived, personality and all. For example, on 20 April 1702, Elizabeth Charlotte wrote the following to Sophie: "Mr. Leibniz...holds...that animals have intelligence, that they are not machines as Descartes maintained, and that their souls are immortal. In the next world, I will be very pleased to see not only friends and relations again, but also all my animals. But the joke would be on me if it should mean that my soul should become

all to my liking. I once embarrassed a bishop,<sup>208</sup> who was entirely of Descartes' opinion. The said bishop is jealous by nature, and I said to him, 'Since you are jealous, are you a machine or a man? For after you I know of no one more jealous than my dogs, and so I should like to know if it is a movement of a machine or a passion of the soul?' He became very angry and went away without answering," etc.

I hope to see you since I often take a walk in this fine weather.

Sophie

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

---

as mortal as theirs, and that all of us will be no more. I would rather believe the other view, because it is much more comforting." And on 22 May 1707, she wrote (again to Sophie): "I know some clergymen here who are of Mr. Leibniz's opinion and believe that animal souls go to the other world. I would like that, for I should very much like to find all my little dogs in that world; if I could believe that, their death would pain me less." Bod 2: 42 and 160.

208. Here Leibniz wrote on the manuscript: "This is the Archbishop of Rheims." At the time, the Archbishop of Rheims was Charles Maurice le Tellier (1642–1710).

**21. Leibniz to Sophie and Duchess Elizabeth Charlotte of Orléans (28 October/7 November 1696)<sup>209</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 62–63.

Transcription:

A: A I 13: 84–89 (following M).

Elizabeth Charlotte's comments (see no. 20) on Leibniz's "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines" (see no. 19), prompted Leibniz to compose the following response, though ultimately it was not sent. For the sent version, composed and sent a week later, see no. 22.

Hanover, 28 October 1696

To Madam the Electress<sup>210</sup>

I<sup>211</sup> am infinitely delighted with the approval that one of the greatest princesses<sup>212</sup> gives to<sup>213</sup> some meditations that I had sketched in a short piece I wrote in German.<sup>214</sup> That reinforces what I said in it much more than if 20 doctors had endorsed its contents. Nevertheless I admire how a Princess so attached to high society, in which she is such a major figure, has been able to enter into such abstract thoughts, which almost require an act of contemplation similar to that of the Quietists. Now this is what I call having a universal mind. The truth, even though it is too little adorned, has the advantage of finding an

209. From the French. Incomplete; the final passage, which concerns Bossuet's apparent evasiveness in the matter of church reunion, has not been translated.

210. Directly underneath this Leibniz wrote: "This was not sent, but some other shorter discourse, which contains something of this one, but which is different from it for the most part."

211. Leibniz began writing this letter in German; after writing almost 3 lines he crossed out what he had done and started again in French.

212. Elizabeth Charlotte.

213. to | some thoughts that I wrote in haste | *deleted*.

214. "Thoughts on van Helmont's doctrines" (see no. 21).

entrance into elevated souls. The late Mr. Arnauld,<sup>215</sup> great mind of another sort and a follower of Cartesianism, having learned something of my thoughts through the late Landgrave Ernst,<sup>216</sup> and having taken them the wrong way, as easily happens, he attacked them.<sup>217</sup> But upon receiving a clarification via this Prince,<sup>218</sup> he wrote me a letter expressly to retract his objections,<sup>219</sup> a very rare thing in a great doctor and leader in the field, and he admitted to me that there were some things in my response by which he had been struck. Something similar happened with an excellent Italian philosopher and mathematician whom I had seen in passing during my journey, for he admitted to me that I had changed in one go his entire system of philosophy.<sup>220</sup> And now he is working on a book, in which he pushes these notions even further.<sup>221</sup> I am delighted about this, being too distracted myself to cultivate sufficiently the seeds of all the thoughts I have conceived, and having had the same good fortune in mathematics of giving to others the opportunity to perfect the science. For when I found some new devices in the art of reasoning mathematically, or of counting as

215. Antoine Arnauld.

216. Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels. On 1/11 February 1686 Leibniz sent a summary of his “Discourse of metaphysics” to the Landgrave, and asked him to forward it to Arnauld (A II 2: 3–8/LA 3–8). The Landgrave acted as intermediary between Leibniz and Arnauld during their subsequent correspondence of 1686–87.

217. Arnauld to Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels, 13 March 1686, A II 2: 8–9/LA 9–10.

218. Leibniz to Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels for Antoine Arnauld, 12 April 1686, A II 2: 14–21/LA 11–17.

219. The Akademie editors suppose that this is a reference to Arnauld’s letter to Leibniz of 13 May 1686 (A II 2: 31–38/LA 24–34), but this is a mistake because in that letter Arnauld merely develops his objections to Leibniz’s ideas and does not retract them. He does, however, apologize profusely for the harsh remarks made in an earlier letter (A II 2: 8–9/LA 9–10), but this is a retraction only of the terms in which the objections were put, not to the content of those objections. Instead, Leibniz may well be referring here to Arnauld’s letter of 28 September 1696 in which Arnauld claimed that he was “satisfied by the way you explain what had at first shocked me...” (A II 2: 94/LA 77). However that remark is quickly followed by a number of other objections. In fact, Arnauld continued to make objections right up to the end of his correspondence with Leibniz.

220. Michael Angelo Fardella (1650–1718). Leibniz met him in Venice during his stay there in February and March 1690 while gathering materials for his history of the Guelph family.

221. *Animae humanae natura* (Venice, 1698).



Mr. Helmont calls it, I published some small examples of it,<sup>222</sup> and a number of excellent minds, even some in France and England, were so pleased by these examples that they were very willing to build upon them, and the Marquis de l'Hospital<sup>223</sup> has just published a book expressly on them, in which he gives me more honor than I deserve.<sup>224</sup>

The way of counting I proposed is based on infinity. And it is a strange thing that one can calculate with infinity as with counters, and that nevertheless our philosophers and mathematicians have recognized only inadequately the extent to which infinity is found in everything.<sup>225</sup> For there is not a single drop of water, speck of dust, or atom, which does not contain a world of an infinity of creatures. Moreover, the whole universe, although it be without limits, is nevertheless all of a piece, like the water in a large vase. And just as in a vase full of water, no matter how large, the least movement extends to the edges, although it becomes insensible over distance, likewise in this great vase of the universe, which has no edges, it must be that the slightest movement extends and expands to infinity. This same infinite propagation holds not only with regard to places but also with regard to times. For every motion that occurs now, no matter how weak, is conserved for all eternity, without ever being able to be destroyed naturally. All that can happen to it is that, being mixed with an infinity of other motions, which are no less conserved than it is, it can become insensible. Consequently there is an appearance of rest, although in fact nothing is ever entirely at rest. It is only the composition of two contrary motions which makes things appear to rest. If a ship on the Seine went from east to west and if a man in the ship went in the opposite direction with a speed precisely equal to that of the ship, the man at this moment would appear to rest to one who saw

222. Leibniz is referring to his invention of the calculus. See his paper "Nova methodus pro maximis et minimis, itemque tangentibus, quae nec fractas nec irrationales quantitates moratur, et singulare pro illis calculi genus." First published in the *Acta eruditorum* 3 (October 1684): 467–73. Reprinted in GM 5: 220–26.

223. Guillaume François Antoine l'Hospital, Marquis de Sainte-Mesme (1661–1704), mathematician and popularizer of the calculus.

224. *Analyse des infiniment petits, pour l'intelligence des lignes courbes* (Paris, 1696).

225. everything. | For nothing is so small in nature which is not a world of an infi | *deleted*; this deletion is not recorded in transcription A.

him from the shore. So one action is not contrary to the other, nor incompatible with it. This eternal conservation of all actions means not only that all souls subsist, but also that all their impressions remain and that nothing is completely erased. Which means that we do not forget anything entirely, although we cannot always think of everything, because the multitude of new thoughts envelops and hides the old ones, which nonetheless sometimes come back in accordance with the occasions that can make us remember them again. Death itself is nothing other than a decrease and a gathering in, by which an animal is only reduced to a small volume and stripped of the increases that birth and nourishment have given it; this is why death would not be able to remove the traces of past actions, and even if the animal were reduced to the smallness of an atom, this atom will still be a kind of world, and will still represent everything in miniature. The difference is only that the perceptions at that time may be less distinct, somewhat as they are in sleep. But as everything has its turn and its time, it must be the case that every sleep is followed by its awakening, and as the whole of nature is governed by a wonderful order, it should not be doubted that this awakening occurs at the right time to mature and perfect those very things which reawaken.<sup>226</sup> It is somewhat as our visible sleep aids our digestion and bodily strength. The order of nature is to bring things to maturity. It is true that in the visible life one matures and then grows old, which is because one must come closer to death. But in the entire and perpetual life (of which this sensible life is only a

226. Leibniz made numerous attempts, subsequently deleted, to get the next part of the letter right. Many of these aborted attempts are difficult to decipher, and only some of them are recorded in transcription A. Among the many deletions was this: "For this order that nature observes to make creatures mature and which is observed in the short life of animals, is observed much more in the entire life in which the short lives are only changes of theater. So it is true that nothing is neglected or lost in the universe, not even Madam's dogs. After having matured, one must decline and grow old, but as the entire life is not subject to any death, one must mature more and more without growing old, otherwise the universal nature would not have any plan, or would fail to execute it." Squeezed in alongside and between the lines of the above passage is the following, which Leibniz also deleted: "For this order that nature observes in the visible life must be observed even more exactly in the entire life, in which, not being subject to any death, the soul with the quintessence of body, of which the soul is never entirely deprived, matures and always becomes more perfect, whereas in the visible life followed by death, one grows old after having matured."

fragment, and a simple change in theater, as it were), just as there is no death, there is no growing old either, and one always advances without stepping back, but also without ever arriving at the greatest perfection, by the very nature of infinite progress. And if one did not advance, despite the appearances which seem to make us step back, the universal nature<sup>227</sup> would not have any plan, or would fail to execute it.

So it is true that nothing is neglected or lost in the universe, not even Madam's dogs, which are without doubt machines, as are all animals, but<sup>228</sup> machines each animated by their always subsisting unity, which is called the soul, and which is like a center in which every perception is brought together, or rather without which there would not be any perception in the machine, any more than there is in a clock. Nevertheless this soul is never entirely detached from its body—there remains a kind of quintessence of it in the body, and that quintessence always keeps enough of it to constitute an animal, no matter how small the animal may be, and despite all the world's upheavals. For the machines of nature are superior to artificial machines in that they have that wondrous quality of being indestructible, which is because their author, who is himself infinite, made them resistant to all accidents and gave them an infinity of organs and members enveloped one inside the other, rather like the skins in onions and in pearls, and like Harlequin's great number of clothes—I saw him take off one set immediately after the others so often that I started to wonder whether he would ever finish.<sup>229</sup> So as life and apparent death are only envelopments and developments of one true and continual life, animals thought to have been destroyed have in fact only become compressed. This is why the late Mr. Kerckring, Tuscany's Resident in Hamburg, a Dutch national and doctor by profession, whom Your Electoral Highness knew, said very well that it was difficult to establish when an animal is actually dead.<sup>230</sup> For that which is worn out

227. nature | would be lacking either the intelligence to form its plan properly, or the power to execute it. | *deleted*.

228. but | animated machines, for otherwise there would be no unity. | *deleted*.

229. A reference to a character in Fatouville's play *Arlequin, empereur dans la lune* (1684). In later writings for Sophie Charlotte (see no. 65 and no. 67), Leibniz used a catchphrase from this play—"it is all as it is here"—as a summary of his principle of uniformity.

230. Theodor Kerckring (1640–93), physician and anatomist.

revives itself, and that which is cooled warms itself up again, in order to make ordinary movement come back: life and feeling would return at the same time. Also Scripture says that Lazarus did nothing but sleep, although his corpse had already started to become corrupted and to smell bad.<sup>231</sup> When I was a small boy I took pleasure in seeing drowned flies revived, by burying them under powdered chalk. If we knew what this is due to, we would make them revive when much further gone. This is why a doctor of antiquity whose writings are sufficiently well thought of to be attributed to Hippocrates, has already said that, strictly speaking, there is no death at all.<sup>232</sup>

I touched on these things in a little essay I placed in the *Journal des sçavans* of Paris.<sup>233</sup> And some very perceptive people have judged that I may well have said the truth.<sup>234</sup> But I understand that there are some among the Cartesian gentlemen of France who grumble about it and believe that one does wrong<sup>235</sup> to men in not granting to them the exclusive privilege of having souls. But it is to have a very mean idea of the richesses of nature to confine them to such narrow boundaries. Also some who had threatened me with objections gave them up, or at least began to doubt them. And I hope that one day philosophers will be surprised that people were able to give in to an opinion as scarcely apparent as that of the mechanical sect. This jealous Cartesian scholar who was of that opinion, finding himself embarrassed by this question of Madam, if in his jealousy he was man or machine, was definitely neither animal nor machine when leaving the discussion, for what reply could he give that would be any good?

231. John 11:11–39.

232. Leibniz is referring to Pseudo-Hippocrates' *De diaeta*.

233. "Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l'union qu'il y a entre l'âme et le corps," *Journal des sçavans* 25 (27 June 1695): 294–300 and 26 (4 July 1695): 301–6. Reprinted in G 4: 477–87/SLT 68–77.

234. Marquis de L'Hospital. See his letter to Leibniz from 3 September 1695 in A III 6: 489/LNS 57.

235. wrong | to man, when the privilege of having souls is also granted to animals | *deleted*, M; this deletion is not recorded in transcription A.

In this matter, I have found that the bishop of Avranches<sup>236</sup> as well as the late Mr. Pelisson<sup>237</sup> did not approve Cartesianism any more than I did, but the bishop of Meaux<sup>238</sup> gives a small advantage to it, and I say this because, having invited me to tell him my views, he then passed over them in silence in his responses.<sup>239</sup> But I have noticed more than once that it is this illustrious prelate's manner to move on to something else and to avoid giving a response when<sup>240</sup> the matter does not furnish him with enough that is in accordance with his views...

236. Pierre Daniel Huet. Leibniz is referring to Huet's *Censura philosophiae Cartesianae* (Paris, 1689). English translation available in Pierre Daniel Huet, *Against Cartesian Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Thomas M. Lennon (New York: Humanity Books, 2003).

237. Leibniz is thinking of Paul Pelisson-Fontanier's letter of 23 October 1691; see A I 7: 166–73.

238. Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, who became Bishop of Meaux in 1685. He was involved, on the Catholic side, in the church reunion efforts of the 1670s and 1680s, and briefly corresponded with Leibniz in 1679 on this matter. Their correspondence resumed in 1691 following attempts to resurrect the reunion issue.

239. Leibniz is possibly thinking of Bossuet's short paper "Sur l'essence des corps" [On the essence of bodies], sent to Leibniz in the summer of 1693; see A I 9: 149–50.

240. In transcription A, the Akademie editors suppose that Leibniz omitted a word here and conjecture that he meant to write "si" [if]. In doing so, they overlook the word "quand" [when], which is not crossed out.

## 22. Leibniz to Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte (4/14 November 1696)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 64–65.

M2: Copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 66–70.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 14–18 (following M1).

G: G 7: 541–44 (following M1).

A: A I 13: 89–93 (following M2).

Although Leibniz's letter of 28 October/7 November 1696 for Sophie and Elizabeth Charlotte was never sent (see no. 21), Leibniz drew heavily on the topics in it when, one week later, he wrote the following letter for them, which this time he did send.

[M2: copy]<sup>241</sup>

Hanover, 4 November 1696

I am infinitely delighted with the approval that one of the greatest princesses<sup>242</sup> gives to some meditations which Your Electoral Highness had been so good as to send to her. That is better than the judgement of a whole group of doctors. I did insert some thoughts of this nature in the *Journal des sçavans* of Paris last year,<sup>243</sup> and some people possessing great penetration have informed me that I may well have said the truth.<sup>244</sup> Even the late Mr. *Arnauld*, although a leader in the

241. From the French. Complete. At the top of the first page, Leibniz's amanuensis wrote, "Letter from Mr. *Leibniz* to Madam the Electress on the approval that Madam of Orléans gave to his opinion that beasts are not mere machines."

242. Elizabeth Charlotte.

243. "Système nouveau," G 4: 477–87/SLT 68–77.

244. The Marquis de L'Hospital. See his letter to Leibniz from 3 September 1695, in A III 6: 489/LNS 57.

field and also a defender of Cartesianism, admitted to having been struck by some of my arguments when I was in communication with him about these matters through letters.<sup>245</sup> There have been able Cartesians who have grumbled about the fact that I have attempted to re-establish the right for beasts to have souls, that I go so far as to grant a kind of duration to those souls, and that I even show that all bodies, far from being only simple extended masses, contain some vigor and life. But I have learned that the success of my other discoveries has lessened the desire that some people had to make objections to me, since one is obliged to acknowledge that even in mathematics, which was Mr. *Descartes*' strength, the method I proposed goes well beyond his, which is what the Marquis de l'*Hospital* has just acknowledged in a significant work published recently.<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, knowing how important it is to combine the thoughts of some with those of others, I shall always be delighted to benefit from the reflections and insights of enlightened and moderate people, of which there is no shortage in France.

My fundamental meditations turn on two things, namely, on *unity* and on *infinity*. Souls are *unities* and bodies are multitudes, but *infinite* ones, such that the smallest grain of dust contains a world of an infinity of creatures. And microscopes have revealed more than a million living animals in a drop of water. But unities, even though they are indivisible and without parts, nonetheless represent the multitudes, in much the same way as all the lines drawn<sup>247</sup> from the circumference are united in the center of the circle, which alone faces it from all sides even though it does not have any size at all. The admirable nature of the sentiment consists in this reunion of infinity in the unity, which also makes each soul like a world apart, representing the larger world in its way and according to its point of view, and consequently each soul, once it begins to exist, must be as durable as

245. Presumably a reference to Arnauld's remark that he was "especially struck by the argument that in every true affirmative proposition, necessary or contingent, universal or particular, the concept of the attribute is in a sense included in that of the subject: *praedicatum inest subjecto* [the predicate belongs to the subject]." Arnauld to Leibniz, 28 September 1686, A II 2: 94/LA 77.

246. *Analyse des infiniment petits, pour l'intelligence des lignes courbes* (Paris, 1696).

247. Transcription A here omits the word "tirés."

the world itself, of which it is the perpetual mirror. These mirrors are likewise universal, and each soul exactly expresses the universe in its entirety, because there is nothing in the world that does not experience the effect of everything else, although the effect is less noticeable in proportion to distance. But of all souls there are none more elevated than those which are capable of understanding the eternal truths, and of not only representing the universe in a confused manner, but also of understanding it and of having distinct ideas of the beauty and grandeur of the sovereign substance. This is to be the mirror not only of the universe (as all souls are), but also of what is best in the universe, that is, of God himself; and this is what is reserved for minds or intelligences,<sup>248</sup> and makes them capable of governing other creatures in imitation of the creator.

Therefore, as every soul faithfully represents the whole universe, and as every mind also represents God himself in the universe, it is easy to see that minds are something greater than is thought. For it is a certain truth that each substance must attain all the perfection of which it is capable, and which is already enveloped within it, rather like in the way, discovered in our time, that the moth is already concealed in the silkworm. It is also right to consider that in this sensible life we grow old after having matured because we approach death, which is only a change of theater; but the perpetual life of actual souls, being exempt from death, must also be exempt from old age. That is why souls advance and ripen continually like the world itself, of which they are images. For there being nothing outside the universe, and consequently nothing that is able to hinder it, it must be that the universe advances without interruption, and develops with all the regularity possible.

One will be able to object that this universal advancement of things is not apparent, and that it even seems that there is some disorder which instead makes them<sup>249</sup> go into reverse, so to speak. But this is only in appearance; we see that through the example of astronomy. The movement of the planets appeared a confused thing to us who

248. intelligences, | which consequently have responsibility for the government of everything else by a natural right | *deleted*, M1.

249. Reading “les” (manuscript M2) in place of “le” (transcription A).



are<sup>250</sup> on the globe of the Earth. It seems that these stars are wandering and move without any rule, because sometimes they move forward and then they move backward, and also because they almost stand still from time to time. But when, with Copernicus, we placed ourselves in the sun, at least with the mind's eye, we discovered a wonderful order in this. So not only does everything proceed in an orderly way, but even our minds must notice it more and more in proportion as they make progress.

I come back to animals, because nothing goes to waste or is neglected in the universe, not even Madam's dogs, so jealous of the kindnesses of their mistress, to the point that they seem to have some resemblance to men.

I hope that in France they will come back little by little from the mechanical sect, and from those faint notions that people have of the limited generosity of nature, as if she had only granted to us the privilege of having souls. Those who have come up with that very much wanted to flatter themselves or others. And when people have a better understanding of the thoughts that they ought to have on infinity, they will have a wholly different idea of the majesty of nature than that of believing that it is simply nothing but machines, and that it is nothing greater than the shop of a workman, as the otherwise able author of the *entretien de la pluralité des mondes* believed, while speaking with his Marchioness.<sup>251</sup> The machines of nature are infinitely beyond ours. For besides the fact that they have sensation, each contains an infinity of organs, and what is even more remarkable, it is for that reason that each animal is resistant to all accidents, and can never be destroyed, but only changed and strengthened by death, just like a snake sheds its old skin. Even with regard to sensible life, an animal could be resuscitated if its organs could be repaired, just as<sup>252</sup>

250. Reading "sommés" for "somes."

251. Leibniz is referring to Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), man of letters, secretary of the French Royal Society, and sometime journal editor. Fontenelle's *Entretien de la pluralité des mondes* (Paris, 1686) was written in the form of a series of discussions between an unnamed male philosopher and the Marchioness de G. English translation: *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, ed. and trans. H. A. Hargreaves (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

252. Reading "comme" for "come."

in the case of the drowned flies I took pleasure, being a small boy, to bring back to life. But absolutely speaking, birth and death are only developments and envelopments in order to take in a new nourishment and then to leave it behind, after having taken its quintessence, and above all after having received in itself in its way the traces of sensible perceptions, which always remain and are never erased by a complete forgetfulness. And although one does not always have the opportunity to remember them, these ideas will not fail to come back at the right moment and be useful in the course of time. It can also be demonstrated mathematically that every action, no matter how small, extends to infinity as much with regard to places as with regard to times, radiating so to speak throughout the entire universe, and being conserved for all eternity. So it is not only souls but also the actions of souls which are always conserved, and even the action of each soul is conserved in each soul because of the conspiracy and sympathy of all things, the world being fully complete in each of its parts, albeit more distinctly in some than in others. And it is in this that consists the advantage of minds, for which the sovereign intelligence has made everything else, so as to make itself known and loved, multiplying itself so to speak in all these living mirrors which represent it.

Although Sophie did not respond to any of the points in Leibniz's letter, she did send it on to Elizabeth Charlotte, who made the following comments on it in her letter to Sophie of 29 November 1696: "I understand Mr. Leibniz's last letter less well than his German letter,<sup>253</sup> since there is a lot of mathematics in it, and I do not understand a word of it. But I will give it to some learned men and ask them to respond to it."<sup>254</sup> Some weeks later, on 16 December 1696, Elizabeth Charlotte informed Sophie that she had "still not found a suitable person to show Mr. Leibniz's letter."<sup>255</sup> Leibniz was apprehensive about Elizabeth Charlotte's plans to pass his letter on to others, and in a letter to Sophie from mid-January 1697 he wrote the following remarks, obviously in the hope that Sophie would pass them on to Elizabeth Charlotte: "If the paper which Your Electoral Highness was kind enough to send to Madam [Elizabeth Charlotte] has to be passed on to someone, I hope that it be to a

253. That is, the text written in the first half of October 1696 (see no. 19).

254. Bod 1: 264.

255. A I 13: 83.

person who is able to provide some insight into it. Otherwise, it's better that it remains where it is, since it has already served its purpose enough, having been read by this great princess, who judges things so soundly. The little bit of mathematics which it seems to contain has not prevented her from penetrating to the heart of the matter, however lofty it is. Therefore she knows more than her catechism. However, those who are pushed into their theological or philosophical path are even less suitable to judge of these things than those who know nothing but their catechism. For at least the catechism does not fill the mind with as many hollow thoughts as does the course of ordinary studies. And yet those who have followed this course believe themselves to have the right to speak seriously on all things and to establish themselves as censors of it. So in these matters, I will always prefer the judgement of a spiritual and receptive person to a stubborn, learned one. Where matters of argument are concerned, good sense is sufficient, whereas the discussions of the learned are necessary in those matters of fact where we must have recourse to antiquity and history."<sup>256</sup> Shortly afterwards, on 18 January 1697, Leibniz wrote in his diary: "What I sent to Madam was possibly communicated to Mr. de Dangeau."<sup>257</sup> That appears to have been the last word on the matter, however, and there were no further communications on the subject of Leibniz's letter.

256. A I 13, 130–31. Sophie did pass these remarks on to Elizabeth Charlotte, who was very taken with Leibniz's assessment of her intellectual prowess. See her letter to Sophie from 30/31 January 1697 in Bod I: 276.

257. Leibniz, *Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Gesammelte Werke*, 221. The reference is to Philippe de Courcillon, Marquis de Dangeau (1638–1720), officer and diplomat under Louis XIV.

**23. Sophie to Leibniz (8/18 or 9/19 May 1697)<sup>258</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 191–92.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 26–27 (following M).

A: A I 14: 3 (following M).

During his stay in Hanover in March 1696, van Helmont had discussed Boëthius's *The Consolation of Philosophy* with Sophie, and found her to be, like him, an ardent admirer of the book. Almost thirty years beforehand, in 1667, van Helmont had been involved in publishing a German translation of it, by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth,<sup>259</sup> and when visiting Hanover in March 1696 he learned that copies were scarce, he enlisted Leibniz's help in getting the book reprinted. Leibniz ordered a second printing and even ghostwrote a preface on van Helmont's behalf, in which he praised Rosenroth's skills as a translator.<sup>260</sup> The following letter was written upon the receipt of 100 copies of the reprinted book from the bookseller.

I see you so seldom, Sir, that I have not stopped here to say much to you about Boëthius, pressed as I have been to find the Elector, whom I have still not seen this morning since I read the bookseller's invoice, which was accompanied by 100 copies [of the book]. I think Mrs. Harling will have paid the invoice already or will do so today or tomorrow if she didn't have enough money with her. Please send half of the copies to my daughter by a valet I have seen here of the young Electoral Prince called Hamersten, who comes from France and who will apparently leave here tomorrow with the post for Berlin, and who brought us Madam's game of solitaire. The other 50 books will come in useful for Mr. Helmont and those who will want to have them free of charge in order to clear them from my library. Since they reveal my

258. From the French. Complete.

259. Boëthius, *Christlich-vernunftgemesser Trost und Unterricht*.

260. For the full text of this preface, see Appendix II, no. 2.

daughter's piety and my own,<sup>261</sup> they ought to be widely distributed rather than kept here. The Duke of Celle will leave tomorrow, and the Margrave has not yet arrived.

S.

To Mr. Leibniz

261. The piety of Sophie and Sophie Charlotte is praised in the preface (see Appendix II, no. 2), written by Leibniz but credited to van Helmont in the published book.

**24. Leibniz to Sophie (9/19 May 1697)<sup>262</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft or copy: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 191–92. The letter is written on the back of Sophie's letter to Leibniz of 8/18 or 9/19 May 1697 (see no. 23).

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 27–28 (following M).

A: A I 14: 4 (following M).

Leibniz's response to Sophie's letter of 8/18 or 9/19 May 1697. Sophie did not respond to any of the following remarks.

Your Electoral Highness will be able to take around 20 or 30 copies [of Boëthius's book]. She will be able to have these bound, if she finds it appropriate, in order to distribute them to people who can develop an appreciation for it, and who are capable of understanding the true theology, the beginnings of which are contained in Boëthius's book.<sup>263</sup> Those who are too philosophical, or are not philosophical enough, are equally distant from it; the latter because they do not think deeply, the former because they think deeply about false principles. One would have cause to pity human kind, and the ignorance noticeable in it, which is so universal and so catholic, if one did not have cause to hope that our souls will advance in their knowledge, and will always get better and better, notwithstanding the apparent eclipses which interrupt their progress in it...

262. From the French. Incomplete; a short passage in which Leibniz expresses his interest in the game of *solitaire* has not been translated.

263. For Leibniz's personal notes on Boëthius's book, see FC 265–73. These appear unconnected with the German version he helped to get printed.

**25. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (9/19 May 1697)<sup>264</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 Cal. Or. A. 63 F VI 31, 189–90.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 28–30 (following M).

G: G 7: 544–46 (following M).

A: A I 14: 195–97 (following M).

Following the arrival of 100 copies of the German translation of Boëthius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*, which had been printed at Leibniz's request, Sophie instructed Leibniz to send copies of the book to Sophie Charlotte (see no. 23), which he did. The following letter accompanied around 25 copies of the book.<sup>265</sup> Sophie Charlotte did not respond.

To Madam the Electress of Brandenburg

Hanover. 9 May 1697

Madam

It is by an order of Madam the Electress of Brunswick<sup>266</sup> that I dare to take the liberty of sending this package of books to Your Electoral Serenity. Mr. Helmont, before leaving here, charged me to obtain a new printing of the very well-written German version of the famous book by Boëthius, Roman consul in the time that the Goths were masters of Rome. Although this book, entitled *The Consolation of Philosophy* (copies of which will be delivered with this letter) always had the general approval of the most able people, Mr. Helmont nevertheless justifiably believed that it would be even better received in the world at

264. From the French. Complete.

265. In her letter of 8/18 or 9/19 May 1697, Sophie asked Leibniz to send 50 copies to Sophie Charlotte. See no. 23.

266. Sophie.

present if it had the approval of two great Electresses,<sup>267</sup> whose mind is no less elevated than their position, and who appear to possess, by a unique gift of heaven, the ability to judge soundly of these sublime matters which are beyond the capacity of common and secular souls. Mr. Helmont is especially fond of this book, because he believes he notices traces of Pythagorean sentiments in it. But putting that aside, it must be acknowledged that the author says some very fine and very sensible things about the order of the universe. For with regard to the successes of bad people, the misfortunes of good people, the brevity and everyday evils of human life, and a thousand apparent disorders that present themselves to our eyes, it seems that everything occurs by chance. But those who examine the interior of things find everything so well ordered there that they would not be able to doubt that the universe is governed by a sovereign intelligence, in an order so perfect that, if one understood it in detail, one would not only believe but would even see that nothing better could be wished for. So the apparent disorders are only like certain chords in music which sound bad when one hears them by themselves, but which a skillful composer leaves in his work because by combining them with other chords they increase one's enjoyment, and render the whole harmony more beautiful. And just as what we see now is only a very small portion of the infinite universe, and as our present life<sup>268</sup> is only a small fragment of what must happen to us, we should not be surprised if the full beauty of things is not initially discovered there; but we will enter into it more and more, and it is for precisely this reason that it is necessary that we change our situation. It is somewhat as the movements of the stars appear irregular to those who only look at them for a few years, yet the order of centuries has revealed that there is nothing so beautiful or so well ordered. This is why the common man does not conceive these things, he does not raise himself to the general order, he does not even know his own religion, and having only false ideas of the divinity, he

267. Leibniz means Sophie and Sophie Charlotte.

268. life | ( $\alpha$ ) is only a very small fragment of our entire life ( $\beta$ ) is almost nothing in comparison with the whole of eternity which we have to live | *deleted*; these changes are not recorded in transcriptions K, G, or A.



drifts between superstition and the always unfounded libertinism,<sup>269</sup> depending on whether he fears evil or whether he fears nothing. But what is the point of talking more about these things which Boëthius explains much better, and which your sublime spirit conceives even better than Boëthius would be able to say? I only thought it was appropriate that I gave some idea of the book that I am sending, being with an ardent devotion etc.

269. libertinism | ( $\alpha$ ). If he avoids doing evil, it is because of an unfounded fear ( $\beta$ ), and whether he abandons himself to evil or avoids it, he is always in a bad mood because he fears | *deleted*; these changes are not recorded in transcriptions K, G, or A.

**26. Marie de Brinon to Sophie (2 July 1697)**

Versions:

M1: Copy of dispatched letter, in the hand of Sophie's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 11–12.

M2: Copy of dispatched letter, in the hand of an unidentified amanuensis: *British Library*, Kings 140, 16v–17v.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 31–32 (following M1).

A: A I 14: 889–90 (following M1).

Leibniz had been in regular correspondence with Marie de Brinon (1631–1701), secretary of Sophie's sister, Louise Hollandine, the Abbess of Maubisson, since the early 1690s. The correspondence largely concerned the matters of church reunion, which Leibniz was engaged with for much of his life, and Catholic doctrine. In 1697 de Brinon instigated a short-lived correspondence with Sophie, who passed on a copy of the following letter to Leibniz.

[M1: copy of dispatched letter]<sup>270</sup>

Letter from Madam de Brinon to Madam the Electress of Brunswick

2 July 1697

I beg you, Madam, to allow me to declare to Your Electoral Highness with what joy I have received from Madam de Maubisson one of the medals that she has had the kindness to take from the valuable artifacts which are in Hanover.<sup>271</sup> This has renewed my desire to see you Catholic,<sup>272</sup> and a saint of sufficient stature that in time to come

270. From the French. Complete.

271. The medal carried Sophie's portrait.

272. De Brinon had expressed this desire in earlier letters to Leibniz. For example, she told Leibniz in a letter of 16 July 1691 that she would like to see Sophie convert to Catholicism and that she prays for Sophie "to see the light" (A I 6: 232). And in a letter to Leibniz of 31 August 1691, she stated that she "sincerely desires her [Sophie's] conversion" (A I 7: 133).

your medal will be seen at the end of the rosaries of the nuns of Maubisson along with the one of Madam your sister, who will not avoid [the honor] despite her profound humility at being in the Catalogue of Saints of her order. Most certainly, Madam, the honors that the church bestows on its true children after their death are what concerns her the least. She would be much more sensitive to the hope of rejoining you in Paradise, and of you enjoying together the honors and inefable pleasures that God reserves for his elect in eternity, although it is easier to imagine and depict the joys of Paradise when one has not seen it than when God has shown something of it, as he did to St. Paul who, having only gone as far as tasting the delights of the third heaven,<sup>273</sup> teaches us that eye has never seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,<sup>274</sup> everything in that place being beyond all our thoughts and infinitely beyond worldly forms of happiness. Our senses cannot speak of what they cannot conceive, but at least we can conceive of the infinite pains from which the blessed are exempt, and this is enough, Madam, to create a longing for heaven in those who believe in the promises of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit calls paradise *the Holy City* in the second chapter of the Apocalypse,<sup>275</sup> in which St. John paints a wonderful picture of this residence of the saints, although he adjusts it to the capacity of the human mind. What is very certain is that one could not exaggerate the happiness of the saints. However we look at it, it will certainly be beyond all our ideas. I pray to God with all my heart, Madam, that he enlighten your spirit with his divine lights and that you submit yours to the simplicity of the children of the church in order to ensure the salvation of Your Electoral Highness, whom I always hope will be disabused from some errors she has been brought up on, if she wants to join her vows to ours and ask God to put her on the path to the truth. It is to you especially, Madam, that these words

273. An allusion to 2 Corinthians 12:2: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." The man Paul is referring to here is himself.

274. 1 Corinthians 2:9: "as it is written: 'What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him.'"

275. Revelation 21:2.

of the Gospel are addressed: seek and you shall find.<sup>276</sup> The respect and attachment I have for Madam de Maubisson, and the esteem I have for the merit of Your Electoral Highness, have made me respectfully take the opportunity offered by the medals which she has sent to Madam, her sister, to renew my profound respects for her.

de Brinon, Nun at Maubisson

P.S. We pray every day for the health of the Elector.

276. Matthew 7:7 and Luke 11:9.

## 27. Leibniz to Sophie (July 1697)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 Cal. Or. A. 63 F VI 31, 111–12.

M2: Copy, revised from M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 Cal. Or. A. 63 F VI 31, 113.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 32–34 (following M1).

A: A I 14: 37–38 (following M2).

Leibniz's response to Marie de Brinon's letter to Sophie of 2 July 1697 (see no. 26).

[M2: copy]<sup>277</sup>

Madam

Your Electoral Highness must be obliged to the good will of Madam de Brinon, who opens up paradise to you if her advice is heeded. She supposes that one only enters paradise by the path of Rome. But to attach his graces to these sorts of conditions that human politics has invented to validate itself is to have some very strange ideas of God, and I do not see how, with such opinions of the divine nature that degrade its perfections, one can have a true love of God. The more I honor and I esteem this lady, the more I pity her state and fear for her salvation, for when one moves away from the love of God which is based on the view of his beauty and of his perfection, one is not on the true path to paradise. More than once I had the thought of writing to her a very strong and very moving letter in order to make her see the danger in which she finds herself, much more than Your Electoral Highness, who has more Catholic sentiments than her since Your Electoral Highness attributes nothing to God that is unworthy of him and loves

277. From the French. Incomplete; a short passage about a medal of the king of Poland has not been translated.

her fellow man; whereas the bitter Zealots who give to the Devil all those who do not enter into all their whims are truly sectarian and heretics. For they hate and scorn their fellow man, and make God a tyrant, and something lower, by attributing to him designs as cruel as they are ridiculous. And when they are made aware of these horrible objections they rail against reason, that is, against the eternal truth which is God himself. After the impious and the wicked by profession, there are no people more in need of being converted than them. I hope God will have mercy on their error, but as this error causes great evils I fear that they will be obliged to suffer greatly before being received in grace. I do not know how I ended up becoming a converter; but the fact is that I am very concerned to see that a soul as fine as that of Madam de Brinon is caught up in these great distractions...

I am with devotion  
Madam, to Your Electoral Highness

Your very submissive and  
very obedient servant  
Leibniz

July 1697  
To Madam the Electress of Brunswick

**28. Sophie to Marie de Brinon (13/23 August 1697)<sup>278</sup>**

Versions:

M1: Copy of dispatched letter, in the hand of Sophie's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 13 and 15.

M2: Copy, in the hand of unknown amanuensis: *British Library*, Kings 140, 17v–18v.

M3: Copy, in the hand of unknown amanuensis: *Herzog August Bibliothek*, 56 Extrav., 90.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 34–35 (following M1).

A: A I 14: 904–05 (following M1).

Sophie's reply to de Brinon's letter of 2 July 1697 (see no. 26). Sophie forwarded a copy on to Leibniz.

[M1: copy]

Letter from Madam the Electress of Brunswick to Madam de Brinon

Herrenhausen, 13/23 August 1697

It gives me a very great joy, Madam, to have been able to contribute in something to your satisfaction. The reward would be disproportionate if it showed me a better way to reach Paradise than the one which was shown to me by divine providence, at which it seems to me that one ought to stop, when one does not have enough wit to make a better choice, or the time to read everything which has been written for and against it. And I think that the tranquility of mind which the good Lord has given me on this subject is a blessing so great that he would not have wanted a person whom he had not chosen to be among his elect to be favored with it. David only wished to

278. From the French. Complete.

be a doorkeeper in the House of God,<sup>279</sup> and I do not lay claim to a more important charge. Those who are more enlightened than I am will perhaps have more distinguished places. For Jesus Christ said that in the house of his father there are many mansions.<sup>280</sup> When you will be in yours, and I in mine, I will not fail to make you the first visit; and we will apparently be very much in agreement, for it will no longer be a matter of disputing about religion. And I do not believe that the good Lord will let the devil have the glory of having the greatest and finest court, which would apparently be the case if he had only saved those who are under the thumb of the Pope and of his council, which is not composed of very saintly people. Thus I have heard it said that any of them can be damned, but that when all of these damned come together, what they approve of comes from God. This surprises me, as I am not accustomed to believe it, which does not prevent me from only finding it good that you have some consolation in it; I even admire it, as I do everything which comes from your pen. For one cannot better express one's opinion than you do. I am sorry, my dear Madam, to respond so poorly to it. I will always do it better when it will be a matter of serving you, and of showing you the affection and esteem I have for you.

279. An allusion to Psalms 84:10: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

280. An allusion to Jesus's statement, recorded in John 14:2, that "In my Father's house there are many mansions."



**29. Leibniz to Sophie (10/20 September 1697)<sup>281</sup>**

Versions:

M: Copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis, with some additions and minor corrections in Leibniz's hand: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 16–17.

Transcriptions:

Gr: Grua: 205–07 (following M).

A: A I 14: 71–73 (following M).

Leibniz's response to Sophie's letter to Marie de Brinon of 13/23 August 1697 (see no. 28).

Madam

In truth, there could be nothing better than what Your Electoral Highness wrote to Madam de Brinon, and you did me a great favor by keeping a copy of it for me. Some great truths are expressed there in such an agreeable and penetrating way that it seems Madam de Brinon herself has been touched by them. God wanted the fine twist that Your Electoral Highness manages to give to things to make the impression on the mind of this lady that the strong and zealous expressions that my good will dictated to me were not able to make. The strange prejudice on the part of Rome is the reason why offense is taken at our zeal, as if it only pertains to them to have any. Thus what ought to win them over repels them. Your Electoral Highness has found the true secret to soften these hardened hearts. And if the Holy Spirit works through her means the conversion of a person so worthy of our cares, by making her a fairer-minded person and one less inclined to condemn, then what joy among the angels in heaven! What thanks would we not be entitled to give to the master of hearts! Indeed it is up to<sup>282</sup> Your Electoral Highness to convert people since she truly supports

281. From the French. Complete.

282. to | us to set ourselves up as converters, to us, I say, who truly support God's cause. | *deleted.*

the cause and the glory of God. For I do not concern myself here with those sectarian controversies which distinguish Luther or Calvin from the Pope. I only want to speak at present of the essential truths of religion and piety, disfigured in an appalling manner by the sectarian spirit of those inclined to condemnation, which goes as far as to pervert the idea of God, to whom are attributed qualities unworthy of him but worthy of his enemy. People want God to commit to eternal flames and to infinite miseries all those who are not attached to a certain cabal of men, and who do not recognize for their leader the bishop prince of the city of Rome; while this bishop demands of them things that are not in their power, since he wants to make them believe opinions which appear completely untenable. Is it possible that people can have an idea of God so low and so bad as to believe him capable of the most ridiculous of whims and the most glaring of injustices? To attribute to the sovereign Master of the universe a government which is as irrational as it is tyrannical is to come close to blasphemy. Thus by dint of religions, the most fundamental religion, which is to honor and to love God, is being destroyed. And it is to be feared that those who alone believe themselves happy, and alone loved or chosen by God, are tricked the most by making God complicit in their vanity. I have said it before, and I say it again: we send missionaries to the Indies to preach the revealed religion. That's all very well. But it seems that we would need the Chinese to send us missionaries in return, in order to teach us the natural religion that we have almost lost.<sup>283</sup> For indeed the government of China would be incomparably better than that of God if God were such as he is depicted by the sectarian doctors, who link salvation to the chimeras of their party.

It is clear to me that the most evident truths have an air of novelty and of paradox to people reached by flattering opinions. For it is nice to believe oneself to be in the only party favored by God, and by that very approach one imagines oneself loving him, since one thus believes that one has grounds to do so. But people are not aware that there is only self-love in that, which makes us attribute to God a

283. Cf. §10 of Leibniz's "Preface to the *Novissima Sinica*," 1697, C 51, and Leibniz's letter to Toinard of 9 May 1697 in *Fragments Philosophiques pour faire suite aux cours de l'histoire de la philosophie: Correspondence de Leibnitz et de l'abbé Nicaise* (Paris: Ladrangé, 1847), 139. See also note 907 below.

preferential treatment of persons that is as contrary to his justice as to his goodness. As if God had his favorites in the manner of rather unenlightened Princes who do good to some without discretion and without grounds. It would not please God if the celestial court was governed so poorly. Your Electoral Highness thinks and speaks admirably well in her letter of the grandeur and beauty of this supreme court; and if she only had to act as gatekeeper, on the basis of what she says she would do it apparently as St. Peter does, in order that people obtain entry to it. For he was the Prince of the Apostles, and Your Electoral Highness is a truly apostolic Princess, since she teaches superbly well the greatest truths of religion which are entirely oppressed by our sects, almost as they were by the Pharisaism and paganism at the time of the apostles.

Your Electoral Highness's sublime qualities of spirit together with the authority of her rank contributes much to re-establishing these truths among men; she will one day assume the brightness of one of those suns that the prophet Daniel ascribes to those who will have enlightened others here below.<sup>284</sup> I wish, however, that it happen as late as will be possible, and I am with devotion,

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness,

your very submissive and very obedient servant,  
Leibniz

Hanover 10 September 1697

To Her Electoral Highness, Madam the Electress of Brunswick

Given the tone, it is perhaps surprising that Sophie sent a copy of the above letter to the subject of it, Marie de Brinon,<sup>285</sup> who was clearly bemused by Leibniz's claim in it that he wished to see her convert from Catholicism. De

284. An allusion to Daniel 12:3: "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."

285. It is possible that Sophie also sent de Brinon a copy of Leibniz's letter from July 1697 (see no. 27), which is also critical of the latter, though de Brinon is not clear about whether Sophie passed on one or more than one of Leibniz's letters. See A I 14: 567.

Brinon wrote to Leibniz on 14 October 1697 suggesting that he had only made the claim to amuse Sophie, and he did not really want to see her change religion.<sup>286</sup> On 19/29 November Leibniz drafted a very bitter response, insisting that his desire to see her converted was serious, on account of de Brinon's penchant "of sending to hell everything which is not Roman,"<sup>287</sup> which Leibniz believed betrayed a serious lack of charity on her part. In all likelihood he did not send that letter to de Brinon, as there exists another version which is more moderate in tone although it is still critical of her; in it, Leibniz expresses concern that she holds "opinions dangerous to salvation, and hardly compatible with the love of God in Jesus Christ"<sup>288</sup> and intimates—albeit guardedly—that she lacks a true idea of God, acknowledging his attributes only in "a theoretical and general way."<sup>289</sup> Leibniz appears not to have informed Sophie of what he wrote to de Brinon, at least by letter, and there were no further exchanges between Leibniz and Sophie on this matter.

286. A I 14: 567.

287. A I 14: 743.

288. A I 14: 744.

289. A I 14: 745.

**30. Leibniz to Sophie (fall (?) 1697)**

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 4, 5 1–2.

M2: Copy of M1, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 4, 8, 7–10.

M3: Copy of M2, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis, dispatched?: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV 4, 8, 3–6.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 56–62 (following M3).

G: G 7: 546–50 (following M1).

A: A I 14: 54–60 (following M3).

In 1697 a dispute erupted in France over the concept of love and how it applies to God. On 27 January 1697, François Fénelon (1651–1715), Archbishop of Cambrai, published a book entitled *Explication des Maximes des Saints*, in which he argued that the true end of the human soul was a wholly disinterested love of God, i.e., a love untainted by any self-interest such as

fear of punishment or desire for reward.<sup>290</sup> This brought him into conflict with his former friend, Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, who published six weeks later his *Instructions sur les états d'oraison* (Paris, 1697) in which he argued that a true love of God was and could only be motivated by one's own desire for personal happiness.<sup>291</sup> The debate became increasingly acrimonious and quickly descended into a war of letters and pamphlets, the most notable and infamous of which was Bossuet's *Relation sur le quiétisme* (Lyon, 1698), before it was finally halted by the condemnation by Pope Innocent XII on 12 March 1699 of Fénelon's *Explication des Maximes des Saints*, the book which had triggered the whole dispute two years earlier. In the following letter, Leibniz gives his view on the issue of the love of God. The provenance of this letter is uncertain. Certainly there is no extant letter in which Sophie asks Leibniz for his thoughts on the debate between Fénelon and Bossuet, though judging by the first paragraph of the following letter, Leibniz did receive such a request from her, whether by letter or in person. It appears that Sophie did not respond to any of the points in Leibniz's letter.

[M3: copy, dispatched?]<sup>292</sup>

290. Fénelon did not deny that humans do desire rewards such as salvation and did not deny that such desires are natural and proper, but he argued that such desires are the object of *hope* rather than love. In Fénelon's view, it was perfectly possible (and desirable) for humans to love God without any considerations for personal happiness or salvation while at the same time hoping for such happiness and salvation.

291. Bossuet had in fact written his book first and even sent a draft copy of it to Fénelon for his approval in 1696. Fénelon, however, refused to approve Bossuet's book, and decided to write *Explication des Maximes des Saints* as a sort of reply to it. So although Fénelon's book appeared in print first, it was to some extent a response to Bossuet's *Instructions sur les états d'oraison*.

292. From the French. Complete. I have tentatively dated this letter to the fall of 1697. It cannot have been written earlier than mid-May 1697, which is when Leibniz was first made aware, by Thomas Burnett (in his letter to Leibniz of 4/14 May 1697, see A I 14: 182), of a debate about disinterested love that had occurred in England between John Norris and Mary Astell, which is briefly alluded to in our letter, albeit confusedly (see notes 297 and 298). And it cannot have been written any later than the spring of 1699, which is when Leibniz became aware that the debate between Fénelon and Bossuet—which is discussed in our letter—had ended (see, for example, G 1: 357–58). The tentative date of fall 1697 is reached on the basis that in our letter, Leibniz claims that he has read “two or three” documents relating to the dispute between Fénelon and Bossuet (see note 293): in a short paper which Leibniz enclosed in a letter to Claude Nicaise from 9/19 August 1697 (G 2: 576–80, partial

Madam

I have only read two or three documents of the dispute between the two renowned prelates of France;<sup>293</sup> but even if I had read them all I would take care not to get involved in judging it. Let us leave this matter to the Pope. For my part, I will only give here the ideas that I have had before on this subject, some of which have not been displeasing to Your Electoral Highness. Of all the matters of Theology there are none about which ladies have more right to judge than this one, because it concerns the nature of love. Although to form a judgement it is not necessary that they possess the great insights of Your Electoral Highness, whose penetration goes almost beyond that of the most profound authors, I would also not want them to be as Madam Guyon is depicted,<sup>294</sup> that is, ignorant devotees. I would want them to resemble Miss de Scudéry,<sup>295</sup> who has clarified the characters and the passions very well in her novels and

---

translation in W 564–66), Leibniz mentions and discusses two such documents, as well as an account of Fénelon's book in the journal *Histoire des ouvrages des sçavans*. It is therefore likely that our letter was written not long before, or not too long after, Leibniz's paper to Nicaise from 9/19 August, i.e., at some point during the fall of 1697. There is, however, no further evidence to enable a more precise dating. The Akademie editors tentatively date our letter to mid-August 1697 for two reasons: (1) it treats of the same subject (that of the dispute between Fénelon and Bossuet) as the paper Leibniz wrote for Claude Nicaise on 9/19 August 1697, and (2) it might be connected to a short postscript written to Sophie on 8/18 August 1697 (Klopp 8: 35–36; A I 14: 60–61). Against (1) it should be pointed out that there is no evidence in either our letter or the paper for Nicaise to suggest that they were written in the same week, which is what the Akademie editors effectively suppose. (Indeed, the two documents are very different in terms of content, despite treating the same themes.) And against (2) it need only be pointed out that there is nothing in our letter that would connect it to the stray postscript from 8/18 August, or vice versa.

293. Fénelon and Bossuet. The “two or three documents” Leibniz had read were most likely letters by the Bishop of Noyon and Abbé de la Trappe (see G 2: 576) and possibly a review of Fénelon's book in the *Histoire des ouvrages des sçavans* (March 1697). So at the time of writing this letter Leibniz had almost certainly not read the two books, those by Fénelon and Bossuet, which were at the center of the debate.

294. Jeanne Bouvier de La Mothe Guyon (1647–1717) was renowned for endorsing Quietism, which led to her being imprisoned twice for teaching heretical doctrines. She befriended Fénelon in the 1690s, and it was partly in an effort to defend her reputation that he wrote his *Explication des Maximes des Saints*.

295. Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701), novelist and correspondent of Leibniz between 1697 and 1699.

in her *Conversations about Morals*,<sup>296</sup> or at least like the English Lady Miss Norris,<sup>297</sup> of whom it has been said that she has recently written so well on disinterested love.<sup>298</sup> But let us come to the point.

*To love* is to find pleasure in the perfections or advantages of others, and especially in their happiness. It is in this way that one loves beautiful things, and especially intelligent substances whose happiness gives us joy and to whom, consequently, we wish well, since it would give us nothing but pleasure to see them happy. In the same way, those who have the good fortune to know the incomparable virtues of Your Electoral Highness find themselves enlivened.

*To love above all things* is to find so much pleasure in the perfections and in the happiness of someone that all other pleasures count as nothing, so long as that one remains.

From which it follows that, according to reason, the person whom one should love above all things should possess perfections so great that the pleasure they give can efface all other pleasures. And that property can only belong to God.

It is therefore not possible that we could have a love of God above all things entirely separate from our own good, because the pleasure that we find in the contemplation of his perfections is essential to love.<sup>299</sup>

But supposing that<sup>300</sup> beatitude involves pleasures that are not essential to this love, one can love God above all things without being touched by these unfamiliar pleasures.

296. *Conversations morales*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1686).

297. Mary Astell (1666–1731). Here Leibniz appears to have confused Astell with her opponent in the debate, John Norris (1657–1711).

298. Leibniz is here referring to Astell's letters to John Norris, which Norris published in his *Letters concerning the love of God between the author of the Proposal to the ladies and Mr. John Norris, wherein his late discourse, shewing that it ought to be intire and exclusive of all other loves, is further cleared and justified* (London, 1695). The letters contained in this book were written during the course of 1693–94. For more information on the Norris-Astell debate, see Catherine Wilson, "Love of God and Love of Creatures," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21 (2004): 281–98, especially 281–85.

299. love. | But it is possible that one can have a love of God above all things detached from every pleasure which is not essential to this love. | *deleted*, M1.

300. that | future beatitude | *deleted*, M1.



One can therefore have divine love even if one believes that one is due to be deprived of every other pleasure than the one of this love; and what is more, even if one believes that one is due to suffer great pains.

But to suppose that one continues to love God above all things and is nevertheless in eternal torments, is to suppose something that will never happen.

If someone were to make this supposition, he would be in error, and he would make it clear that he does not have sufficient knowledge of God's goodness, and consequently that he does not yet love him enough.<sup>301</sup>

The Saints who doubtless would have agreed that God will not damn one who loves him above all things, and who have nevertheless said that they would love God even if they should have to be damned, intended to mean, by this false supposition, that the motives of *the love arising from benevolence*, or from the virtue of charity, are entirely different from the motives of the virtue of hope or *the love arising from greed* (which does not properly deserve the name of love).

Theologians have always distinguished love arising from benevolence from the kind that arises from concupiscence, as they call it in the idiom of the School; the first is disinterested<sup>302</sup> and, to be precise, only consists in the pleasure which derives from the sight of the perfection and happiness of the object loved, without considering any other good or profit which we can get from it. The second is self-interested, but in a way that can be permitted, and consists, to be precise, in the sight of our own good, without consideration for the happiness and advantage of others. They relate love of the first

301. enough | , although he nevertheless could love him above all things through other motives. But while agreeing that this case cannot happen, and in saying nevertheless that one would love God even if one should be damned | . But it is possible to love God above all things at the present time even if one were to believe that one should stop loving him, and that one should be damned eternally. For the change that may occur in me does not prevent me finding pleasure now in what is lovable. And even if I were to find that his perfections lead him to damn me one day because of what I will be then, will they be less great and less lovable? Supposing that I should become blind one day, I will nonetheless be struck at the present time by the beauty of the object that I see. | *deleted*, M1.

302. disinterested | and only comes from the sight of the perfection of the object loved; but the second comes only from our good, without | *deleted*, M1.

kind to the virtue of charity, and love of the second kind to the virtue of hope.

It is true, however, that even the assurance of the other goods that God prepares for those who love him can enter into the motives of a disinterested love, in the sense that the assurance enhances the brilliance of the divine perfections and makes God's goodness better known. But that is done without distinguishing whether he will have this goodness for us or for others. Otherwise, if it were only by a kind of gratitude, it would be an act of cupidity rather than one of disinterested love: however, nothing prevents the actions of these two virtues, of charity and hope, being exercised jointly.

There is, moreover, a great reflection of one of these two virtues upon the other. For when we are not satisfied with our present love, and we ask God for a greater knowledge in order to have more love, we carry out an act of hope, in as much as our own good is the motive for it. But it is an act of benevolence in as much as the pleasure that we experience in seeing that God is so perfect makes<sup>303</sup> us wish that he be better known by his creatures, in order to be more loved by them and so that his glory is more conspicuous, without, preferably, letting the motive of our own good become involved.

It is true that one could not procure any good for God, but nevertheless the benevolence we offer him makes us act as if it could be possible. One of the strongest indications of a love of God which is sincere and disinterested is being satisfied with what he has already done, in the assurance that it is always the best: but also trying to make what is yet to happen as good and in keeping with his presumptive will as is possible for us. In order to love him, we must commend his known will which is apparent from the past, and try to satisfy his presumptive will with regard to the future: for although the Kingdom of God comes just as well without us, nevertheless our good intention and ardent will to do good is what makes us share in it the most. And without that, we are entirely lacking in benevolence.

I wanted to go further into this matter some years ago, before it became stirred up in France. And it was some time before that that I talked about it in the preface of a book on right, where, recognizing

303. Reading "fait" in place of "fiat."

that charity, properly understood, is the foundation of justice, I talked about it in such a way, and gave the following definitions:

*Justice* is charity conforming to wisdom.

*Wisdom* is the science of happiness.

*Charity* is a universal benevolence.

*Benevolence* is a habit of loving.

*To love* is to find pleasure in the good, perfection, and happiness of others.

And by means of this definition one can resolve (I added) a great difficulty, important even in Theology, of how it is possible that there be a non-mercenary love, detached from hope and from fear, and from all concern for self-interest.

The fact is that the happiness or the perfection of others, by giving us pleasure, immediately forms part of our own happiness.

For everything that pleases is desired for itself, and not through interest.

It is a good in itself, and not a useful good.

It is thus that the contemplation of beautiful things is agreeable in itself, and that a painting by Raphael affects him who looks at it with enlightened eyes, although he derives no profit from it.<sup>304</sup>

And when the object, the perfection of which pleases us, is itself capable of happiness, then the affection that one has for it becomes that which properly deserves to be called love.

However, all loves are surpassed by the one which has God for an object, and only God can be justifiably loved above all things.

For nothing could be more successfully loved, because there is nothing happier, and nothing which more deserves to be so.<sup>305</sup>

Consequently there is nothing more beautiful and more capable of giving pleasure and satisfaction to those who love him and who take pleasure in his happiness.

And what's more, with his wisdom and his power being extended to the highest degree, they do not merely form part of our happiness as a part forms part of the whole, or as other pleasures or

304. it. | Now things which are beautiful but incapable of happiness are not so properly loved. | *deleted*, M1.

305. so | and which is more beautiful, and more capable of giving every pleasure to those who | *deleted*, M1.

loves form part of our happiness, but they constitute the whole of our true happiness.

This is the sense of what I published in Latin in 1693.<sup>306</sup> But I have been formulating these ideas since my youth. A great prince, who at the same time was a great prelate,<sup>307</sup> contributed a lot to this, by recommending to me the German book by Father Spee on the three Christian virtues, published and republished more than once in Cologne.<sup>308</sup>

This Father was one of the great men of his kind, and he deserves to be better known than he is. The same prince told me that this Father was the author of the famous book on the precautions that should be taken in witch trials—a book which caused such a commotion in the world that it was translated into several languages, from the original which was Latin, under the title of *Cautio criminalis*,<sup>309</sup> and which has seriously alarmed the burners without them having been able to know where it came from.

His book on the three Christian virtues is in my opinion one of the most solid and moving books on devotion that I have ever seen. In the main, the only thing I would wish is that the verse had been cut, because Father Spee did not have any idea of the perfection of German poetry and apparently did not have the ear to talk about the incomparable Opitz,<sup>310</sup> to whom we owe it. Consequently we find even now that Roman Catholics almost do not know what a good German verse is, so that we could say that they are as little reformed with regard to our poetry as they are on the matter of religion, and that this difference in our verse is a mark of the church for them.

306. “Praefatio codicis juris gentium diplomatici,” A IV 5: 50–79. Partial English translation in SLT 149–52.

307. Johann Philipp von Schönborn (1605–73), Archbishop of Mainz and Bishop of Würzburg and Worms.

308. Friedrich von Spee (1591–1635), Jesuit and poet. Leibniz is referring to Spee’s *Göldenes Tugend-Buch* (Cologne, 1646).

309. Friedrich von Spee, *Cautio criminalis* (Rinteln, 1631).

310. Martin Opitz von Boberfeld (1597–1639), German poet.

But that has nothing to do with the present matter. It seems from the dedication of the bookseller that the author must have died in the odor of sanctity.<sup>311</sup>

This Father's preface contains a beautiful dialogue, in which the difference between disinterested love and hope is developed in a way as intelligible as it is profound. Although faults can still be found in it, I have the habit of dwelling only on the good, which greatly prevails in it, and I thought that Your Electoral Highness would not be displeased to see enclosed here the translation that I made of this dialogue some time ago.<sup>312</sup>

I am with devotion

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness,

your very humble and very obedient servant

Leibniz

311. Leibniz is referring to the dedication in the second edition of Spee's book (1656), written by Wilhelm Friessem. Cf. G 6: 156–77/H 176–77.

312. Leibniz's translation of Spee's preface can be found in A VI 4: 2517–29.

**31. Leibniz to Sophie (5/15 August 1699)**

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A Nr. 180, 18–19.

M2: Copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A Nr. 180, 208–9.

M3: Partial copy: *British Library*, Special Collection King 140, 56–57.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 140–43 (following M1).

A: A I 17: 51–54 (following M1).

The following remarks, near the end of a letter to Sophie which was otherwise filled with news and gossip, arose out of a brief reference to Charlotte Felicitas, Duchess of Modena (1671–1710), whose first child had been a daughter, Benedicte, born in 1697. Leibniz informed Sophie that he wished Charlotte Felicitas's sister, Queen Wilhelmine Amalie (1673–1742), who was pregnant at the time, would give birth to a son first. The realization that his wishes could have no effect, not least because the sex of the child would already have been determined at the time he wrote to Sophie, prompted Leibniz to make the following remarks.<sup>313</sup> Sophie did not respond to them, though the letter was passed on to Sophie Charlotte.

[M1: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>314</sup>

...I believe that what is done is done, and that it's no use hoping and praying for something which is already decided. It is true that in some way the same can be said of all future things, namely, that they are already conceived before they happen, just as a child is formed before being born. For, to get on my metaphysical high horse a bit, every action and every event extends its connection to infinity, as much with

313. Ironically, Leibniz's point that hopes and prayers have no effect was later underlined by the fact that his own particular wish, that Wilhelmine Amalie's first child be a son, was not granted; her first child was a daughter, Maria Josepha (born on 8 December 1699).

314. From the French. Incomplete; five paragraphs of news and gossip have not been translated.

regard to places as with regard to times; so just as a faraway thing is linked with a nearby one, likewise the future is linked with the past, so that it can be said that the present is pregnant with all future things which the world will deliver in time. Vows and prayers doubtless do not change anything with regard to what is decided, but they are useful in that they demonstrate the good will of those who pray, and it has been laid down for all time that a good will would be useful, even if it is not always precisely in the way that we want. However our ignorance makes us think of the future as something still to be decided, and this is what excites our passions, whereas we will be more tranquil if we give sufficient consideration to the interconnection of things. Be that as it may, I hold that even the misleading ideas of common men have their usefulness, as do the passions, and that nature did not give them these things for nothing. And just as it is good that our eyes are not too sharp, otherwise we would see that everything is full of worms, frogs, spiders, and other animals, it is also good that our reason is not always mindful of the great truths, and that it sometimes lets itself be pleasantly deceived, somewhat as Mr. Molanus is sometimes accustomed to read his breviary on the order of the Cistercians,<sup>315</sup> and at other times some novel; or, to give a stronger example, as Madam the Electress of Brandenburg<sup>316</sup> sometimes converses with Mr. Stepney<sup>317</sup> about common errors and regards the common man from on high, and at other times, leaving aside these lofty thoughts, starts listening to Gutjahr sing,<sup>318</sup> with whom it is said that she is rather pleased...

315. Molanus was Abbé of Loccum, which was a Cistercian monastery.

316. Sophie Charlotte.

317. George Stepney (1663–1707), British envoy to Brandenburg and correspondent of Leibniz between 1692 and 1704.

318. Sophie Gutjahr was an opera singer in Sophie Charlotte's court. See Rashid Sascha Pegah, "Hir ist nichts als operen undt commedien": Sophie Charlottes Musik- und Theaterpflege in den Jahren 1699 bis 1705," in *Sophie Charlotte und ihr Schloß*, 85.

**32. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (22 August/1 September 1699)**<sup>319</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 18–19.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 54 (following M).

A: A I 17: 438 (following M).

A copy of Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 5/15 August 1699 (see no. 31) was forwarded to Sophie Charlotte, who shared her thoughts on it in the following letter.

Lutzenburg, 22 August

In thanking you, Sir, for remembering me, I will tell you at the same time that your letters are a great pleasure for me. I have not been able to prevent myself from reading out to Mr. Stepney the copy of the letter you wrote to Madam the Electress,<sup>320</sup> and he was delighted by your sound and coherent reasoning about the interconnection of worldly things. For my part, it has so convinced me that you may henceforth consider me as one of your disciples, as one of those who holds you in high regard and respects your merit. For a long time I have been, and I shall always remain devoted to serving you, and I pray that you remain persuaded of this.

Sophie Charlotte

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

319. From the French. Complete.

320. Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 5/15 August 1699 (see no. 31).



**33. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (28 November/8 December 1699)<sup>321</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 20–21.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 54–56 (following M).

A: A I 17: 676–79 (following M).

When Leibniz met with George Stepney during the latter's visit to Hanover in November 1699, one of the topics of discussion was Leibniz's views on the interconnection of things. Afterward Stepney wrote to Sophie Charlotte about this discussion and Leibniz, fearing that Stepney had misunderstood him, wrote the following to Sophie Charlotte to put right Stepney's misunderstandings.

321. From the French. Incomplete; the opening paragraph about Stepney's plan to work on the history of Moses, and Leibniz's comments on that, has not been translated.

...<sup>322</sup> Mr. Stepney told me that he wrote to Berlin concerning some discussion we had on the interconnection of things,<sup>323</sup> but it seems to me that he slightly exaggerated my opinions. I was careful not to say that everything which happens is necessary, since something else could happen (because there is an infinity of possible things that do not happen). Instead I said only that everything is determined and con-

322. Moreover, Mr. Stepney told me that he wrote to Berlin about our discussions on the interconnection of things, but it seems to me that his letter slightly exaggerated my opinion. I did not say that everything which happens is necessary, for something else could happen since there is an infinity of possible things which do not happen, but I did say that everything is determined and interconnected, and that the future is as determined as the past. However this does not in any way prevent us from having choice, in accordance with how it will seem to us, which is what is ordinarily meant by “freedom,” and very far from predetermination being contrary to choice, we can say that we make a choice because we are determined to it by some reason or passion.

But there is no need at all to contrive a chimerical freedom which is not connected with anything, as the common man does. So I am careful not to say that we do not have any freedom. And even taking things in another sense, we are free insofar as we act by reason, and we are unfree insofar as the passions dominate us. But this bondage does not in any way exempt us from blame and punishments, under the pretext that we were not free enough or indifferent enough. On the contrary, the more we have a tendency to evil, the more we are blameworthy and even punishable. For punishments have three purposes: first, to amend the criminal; second, to serve as an example to amend or protect others; and third, the satisfaction of the offended party, and all this always holds good, notwithstanding this predetermined inevitability of the future. And since everything is connected, the punishment and the crime will be so too, and very often the fear of punishment will also be connected with the avoidance of sin. So this doctrine changes nothing in the practice of useful things, and it raises us above common people, while giving us the peace of mind and even the satisfaction that arises from the knowledge of the admirable connection of the universe, and of the care that the author of the things has taken to make everything the best that was possible, not only for itself, but also for the minds which are made in the image of the divinity, insofar as they use reason. Which means that one ought to be very content when one is reasonable. But how content would one not be when one has an elevated mind and noble sentiments, and when one has even been filled with so many perfections and goods as has Your Electoral Highness, whom heaven seems to have taken pleasure in forming in order to demonstrate its power? When all this grandeur is accompanied by happiness, it approaches heaven on earth the most, and even promises what our theologians call the election. It is true that evil is only evil for those who commit it... | *deleted*.

323. In his letter to Leibniz of 25 November 1699 (see A I 17: 662–63), Stepney does not say that he has written to Berlin (i.e., to Sophie Charlotte), so presumably Stepney told Leibniz about his letter to Berlin when the two met in Hanover earlier in November 1699.

nected, and that the future is as determined as the past. And far from that removing choice from us, it can be said that we choose because we are determined to it by some reason or passion. And although it is true that evil is not evil absolutely, it does not fail to be so with regard to those who take part in it. So I will not say that there is neither good nor evil, otherwise there would be no pleasure or pain either. However I do hold that evils always exist for a greater good and that one always has grounds to praise the government of the world when one has the good fortune to understand these mysteries correctly.

This doctrine elevates us above the common man while giving us peace of mind and even the satisfaction that arises from the knowledge of the admirable connection of the universe and of the care that the author of the things has taken to make everything the best that was possible, not only for the world in general, but also for minds in particular, insofar as they use reason, in which they are made in the image of the divinity. This means that one ought to be very content when one is reasonable. But how content would one not be when one has not only enlightened reason, but also an elevated mind and noble sentiments and, in a word, when one has also been filled with all the perfections and advantages that are noticeable in Your Electoral Highness? But however happy she is for herself, I would like her to be more so for us. And nevertheless I am with devotion.

**34. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (9/19 December 1699)<sup>324</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 32–33.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 56–57 (following M).

A: A I 17: 705 (following M).

Sophie Charlotte's reply to Leibniz's letter of 28 November/8 December 1699 (see no. 33). Leibniz did not respond.

Berlin, 9 December

Your letter gave me an enormous amount of pleasure because it contains obliging things as well as instruction, since you remind one that one must be content and even feel happy with one's own state. You have so well convinced me of this, Sir, that I will be obliged to you for my peace of mind. I would also like to be able to contribute something toward your satisfaction, for I will be delighted to show you how much I am devoted to serving you.

Sophie Charlotte

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

324. From the French. Complete.

### 35. Sophie to Leibniz (2 June 1700)

Versions:

M1: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A Nr. 180, 272–74.

M2: Extract, made from M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 30–31.

M3: Copy of M2: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A Nr. 180, 641.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 162–64 (following M1).

G: G 7: 551 (following M1, partial transcription only).

A1: A I 18: 90–92 (following M1).

A2: A I 18: 92 (following M3).

The following was prompted by a debate that Sophie and her son, Elector George Ludwig, had had with Abbé Molanus.

[M1: fair copy, dispatched]<sup>325</sup>

I will ask you to think about the dispute that my son the Elector<sup>326</sup> had on thoughts which, against him [Molanus], my son the Elector maintained are material inasmuch as they are composed of things that enter into us through the senses, and inasmuch as one cannot think of anything without making for oneself an idea of things that one has seen, heard, or tasted, like a blind man who was asked how he imagined God and said “like sugar.” I am sending you what Abbé Molanus responded to all that,<sup>327</sup> although in it he does not really reply to our viewpoint. For I am of my son’s opinion.

325. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

326. Georg Ludwig.

327. Sophie is referring to Molanus’ paper “The soul and its nature” (see no. 36).

[M3: copy of extract]<sup>328</sup>

Extract from a letter of 2 June 1700

I ask you to think about the dispute we have had here concerning the question of whether the soul or thought is material or not. Our \*\*\*<sup>329</sup> maintained that it is immaterial. But it was objected to him that thoughts are composed of things which enter into us through the senses, and that one cannot think of anything without making for oneself an idea of things which one has seen, heard, or tasted. A blind-born man asked how he imagined God, replied that he was like sugar. I am sending you what \*\*\* responded to all that, although in it he does not really reply to our viewpoint.

Two days later, on 4 June 1700, Molanus wrote to Leibniz to explain how the debate with Sophie had come about: “When our most serene Electress who, as you know, is never able to refrain from paradoxes, interrupted me during lunch recently, she provoked me to a discussion about the definition of the soul and its real distinction from an extended thing. She then asked me to write down my thoughts on this matter; I wrote them and sent them to her. The most serene Electress attacked them and did not even respond to my arguments, but multiplied questions, as she is in the habit of doing, some of which were irrelevant while others were very easy to answer. In the end, she said that she would make you be the arbiter of this dispute, and to that end would send my paper to you, which she has done I’m sure. For my part, I dare to hope and pray that you think like I do in this regard, namely, that the soul is a thinking thing and is really distinct from an extended thing; if this is not granted, what will become of the immortality of the soul? However if, contrary to my every expectation, you should think otherwise, our most serene Electress must surely not be aware of it, and I therefore beg you that you will think it right to help me with your response, or, if this is too difficult, at least you will not decide to harm me with it. I am confident that our friendship requires that you do this. I am persuaded that your feelings toward me demand that you will not do otherwise.”<sup>330</sup>

328. From the French. Complete.

329. Molanus.

330. A I 18: 696–97. Leibniz replied to Molanus on 22 June 1700. In his reply, Leibniz wrote: “The most serene Madam Electress has sent me what you discussed in the French con-

**36. G. W. Molanus: The soul and its nature (1 or 2 June 1700)<sup>331</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A Nr. 180, 252–57.

Transcriptions:

K1: Klopp 10: 63–68 (following M).

A1: A I 18: 92–96 (following M).

The following is Molanus's contribution to his debate with Sophie and her son. In this text, which was written at Sophie's request, he defends the Cartesian distinction between the immateriality of minds (and their thoughts) and the materiality of bodies.<sup>332</sup> Sophie sent it on to Leibniz with her letter of 2 June (see no. 35).

When Christianity started, a vexing question often discussed between the Christians and the pagans was this: is the soul of man immortal, or not? But there has never been any doubt that man has a rational soul, for as the essence of the definition of man consists in that, one can deny it no more than one can deny that a triangle has

versation. Obviously I approve of your opinion that the body is extended and the soul is thinking, and that each is distinguished from the other, although I think that the Cartesian proof of this has some difficulties. For in order to conclude that extension and thought are incompatible in one and the same subject, the Cartesians must put forward a definition of both. Therefore I do not so much disagree with you or the Cartesians about this as attempt to resolve matters which they have left unexplained and insufficiently well-founded. For I define both extension (which involves plurality, continuity, and coexistence) and thought, which is of the multitude expressed in a single thing, and so to speak the *Iliad* in a nutshell. For souls are true unities or simple substances, lacking plurality or parts. Consequently, no natural way of destroying them can be imagined," A I 18: 718.

331. From the French. Complete. Editor's title.

332. At least two scholars have mistaken this text to be the work of Leibniz. See Aiton, *Leibniz*, 257; George MacDonald Ross, "Leibniz's Exposition of His System to Queen Sophie Charlotte and Other Ladies," in *Leibniz in Berlin*, 66, and George MacDonald Ross, "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte," 99.

three angles and as many lines, both being included in the definition of a triangle.

Therefore the matter is only concerned with the following questions:

1. What is the soul of man?
2. Is there or is there not a real distinction between the body and the rational soul?
3. In what way does the soul carry out its operations?

I understand by the word “body” everything that has an extension according to its length, width, and depth.<sup>333</sup>

No one doubts the truth of this definition, because not only can one understand the extension of one’s very own body, but also see it and feel it when it comes to the external parts.

I understand by the word “soul” a thing or a being which thinks.<sup>334</sup> No one could know exactly what a soul is if we ourselves did not have one. But when we realize, by a manifest experience, that in our machines there is, besides extension, something which thinks, that is, something which has understanding, which wants one thing and does not want something else, which desires, which asserts or denies, which judges and decides, which doubts one thing and thinks it knows something else by certain knowledge—when we realize that, I say, we can be certain that the soul is a being which thinks, or at least is capable of thinking, unless it is prevented from doing so by accidental reasons.

2. In order to become clear about whether the soul is a being which has a real distinction from extension, we ought to be aware that it has to be the case either that philosophy and natural reason furnish us with a certain and infallible sign through which one thing is truly distinguished from another, or that all the sciences cease along with conversation itself; for if everything were the same thing, and there was no real distinction between anything at all, we could not prove anything, reason about anything, or talk about anything; for if we wanted to talk about a tree, for example, it would be the same as

333. This characterization of body derives from Descartes, e.g., *Principles of Philosophy* II.4 and *Meditations* II and VI. In fact many of the principles and arguments Molanus adopts in this paper are Cartesian in origin, as the notes below show.

334. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations* II.



talking about a mountain, about water, air, the sky, the earth, a castle, a steeple, or about anything we like.

I therefore assert, according to the rules of philosophy, as a true and unique mark of a real distinction, that one thing is really distinguished from another when we can clearly and distinctly understand the one without needing to think, at the same time, of the other.<sup>335</sup> In this way a triangle is really distinguished from a circle, water from fire, wood from rocks, a ship from a cave, and a man from a pyramid, because we can clearly understand a triangle, and give an exact definition of it, without needing to think of a circle, and so on.

Therefore of all the things which are really distinguished, it can be said truthfully that one is not the other, but that these are two different things; for example, if one can form a clear and distinct idea of a plate, without thinking of a bottle, it thereby follows that a plate is not a bottle, and that a bottle is not a plate.

In order to apply these incontestable maxims to the case under discussion, I say that because we can conceive the body of man in general, and all its parts in particular, and give the definition of it without giving the slightest consideration to whether, for example, the finger, the arm, or the stomach actually thinks, or if the body is at least capable of thinking, we can thereby demonstratively conclude that our *body*, and what I call *thinking*, are two genuinely distinguished things, and that it can truthfully be said that our body is not our soul, and that our soul is not our body.<sup>336</sup>

Let us see at this point what objections or scruples could be raised against this demonstration.<sup>337</sup>

The first is: if a man's thoughts were something really distinguished from the man's body, they would be nothing, pure and simple.

My response to this: each person knows through his own experience that it is an action to think. This is so obvious, because one can get tired as much as from thinking as from plowing the earth, or

335. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations* VI.

336. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations* VI, *Principles of Philosophy* I.8.

337. It is likely that the objections Molanus now goes on to discuss were those raised by Sophie in the debate he had with Sophie. Certainly the second and third objections Molanus discusses are mentioned by Sophie in her letter of 2 June (see no. 35).

threshing the wheat. Therefore: thinking is not a simple nothing, but a true being.

The second objection is, if that by which man thinks were something really distinguished from the body, it would have to be the case that the object of thinking is something really distinguished from extension too, which is nevertheless not so, because we can only think of things that have some shape.

I reply: the object of a thought can be not only an extended or corporeal thing, but also a thing that is non-physical, or at least something abstracted from extension. For example, when one thinks of God, or of the angels, if one thinks of what time is, what necessity or freedom in general is, in what consists the essence or the definition of a being in general, what a contradiction is, and an affirmation, negation, the sovereign good, prosperity, contentment, a syllogism, etc.

The third objection is that it is impossible to think of something without forming a corporeal idea of it. For example, if one thinks of an angel, one imagines a boy who has wings; if one thinks of God, one imagines an old man with a long, gray beard. I reply that if the majority of men form ideas like these it is because we are accustomed from our youth to having only corporeal things represented in our imagination. Nevertheless, when I think of God, I leave behind the images by which we are accustomed to represent him as ideas which are not only false, but also contradictory, and I consider God as a spiritual being that has no dependence at all on any other being, or as a being possessing all the perfections. One can in any case very well conceive God's attributes, like his omnipotence and omniscience, without any shape.

That is so true that I also find it possible to conceive certain corporeal things clearly and distinctly, of which it is impossible to form an idea, that is, to represent such a shape in our fancy or imagination. For example, I can perfectly contemplate a thousand-angle regular shape and even give an exact definition of it, namely, that it is a shape that has a thousand equal lines, each of a certain length, and a thousand equal angles, each of a certain number of degrees, but it is impossible to represent in my imagination the thousand-angle shape.<sup>338</sup> There is no man in the world, however vivid his imagination,

338. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations* VI.

who alone is capable of faithfully visualizing a twenty-angle regular shape.

3. There still remains the question of the way in which the soul carries out its operations when it considers corporeal things.

To which I artfully reply, with the great philosopher Descartes,<sup>339</sup> that because there is not the slightest proportion between the mind and a corporeal thing, it is as impossible for human reason to understand the union of the soul with the body as it is to give the reason why and by what means our soul can form an idea of corporeal things, not only of those that we see, but also of those that are marked by simple shapes, and even less can we understand the way in which we are able to remember that there is a God, an angel, a monster, when our eyes see and read these characters: GOD. ANGEL. MONSTER.<sup>340</sup>

Yet this argument by no means follows: we would not be able to explain the operation of the soul with regard to corporeal representations, therefore there is no real distinction at all between the mind and body in general, or between the soul and the human body in particular, therefore there is just mind, soul. We do not know how a small acorn can produce a tremendous oak, we do not know how magnetism works either, or the cause of the ebb and flow of the sea, and when we go into the detail of natural things we know almost nothing about them, but for that reason we cannot call into doubt and still less deny the workings of nature.

To all these philosophical arguments I add lastly the authority of Holy Scripture. Jesus Christ, the truth itself, expressly said in Matthew 10 v. 28: “Do not fear those who kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear the one who is able to destroy the soul and the body in Gehenna.” *Therefore*: the soul is a true being, really distinguished from the body of man, of which one can be killed, the other not.

In the Wisdom of Solomon 3 v. 1: “The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment will touch them.” *Therefore*: there is

339. Cf. Descartes, letter to Princess Elizabeth 28 June 1643, in Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, III: 691–92. English translation in *The Correspondence between Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*, 69–70.

340. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations* VI.

difference between the soul and the body, of which one is in the tomb, the other in the hand of God.

I end with our Lord, John 17 v. 17:

“My father sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.”

### 37. Leibniz: The soul and its operations (12 June 1700)

#### Versions:

- M1: Partial draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 268–69.  
 M2: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 30–31.  
 M3: Partial copy: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 640–41.  
 M4: Copy of M2, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 124–27.

#### Transcriptions:

- K1: Klopp 10: 69–70 (following M1).  
 K2: Klopp 8: 173–78 (following M2).  
 G: G 7: 552–55 (following M2).  
 A1: A I 18: 111–13 (following M1).  
 A2: A I 18: 113–17 (following M4).

Leibniz wrote the following paper in response to Molanus's "On the nature of the soul" (see no. 36), and enclosed it with his letter to Sophie of 12 June 1700. In that letter, Leibniz wrote: "I have had some thoughts on the question treated by Abbé Molanus [in "On the nature of the soul"], and I have put them down in a separate paper. I by no means disapprove of his opinion, understood properly, but I thought I had to take another route [to it]."<sup>341</sup> Leibniz also sent the following paper, together with the one by Molanus (see no. 36), to Sophie Charlotte's lady-in-waiting, Henrietta von Pöllnitz (1670–1722), on 14 June 1700. In the accompanying letter to Pöllnitz, however, Leibniz indicated that he did not consider some of his own paper to be suitable for showing to Sophie Charlotte: "I take the liberty of sending to you, for Madam the Electress [Sophie Charlotte] both a paper by Abbé Molanus and some of my reflections on the question Madam the Electress of Brunswick [Sophie] proposed to me. I do not think the second part of what I said about that too suitable to be presented before our incomparable Princess. For although the mind of Her Electoral Serenity [Sophie Charlotte] is marvelously perceptive, and although nothing escapes her when she puts her mind to it, nevertheless it seems that it is inappropriate to offer her complicated ideas which involve numbers and shapes unless she expressly commands it."<sup>342</sup> Whether Sophie

341. Leibniz to Sophie, 12 June 1700, A I 18: 110.

342. Leibniz to Henrietta von Pöllnitz, 14 June 1700, A I 18: 710–11.

Charlotte ever got to see the following paper is unclear. At any rate, she did not make reference to it or any of the points raised in it in any of her subsequent letters to Leibniz.

[M4: copy]<sup>343</sup>

Extract from the response of 12 June

I approve of the opinion of the learned Mr. \*\*\*<sup>344</sup> but I take another route to establish it, his being thoroughly Cartesian, in which for a long time now I have found some difficulties. However I think he will agree with me that we think not only about what comes to us from the senses, but also about thinking itself, which does not come to us from the senses at all; and that among the notions which come to us with those of material things, there are ideas of things which accompany matter without thereby being corporeal: such as, for example, the notions of force, action, change, time, same, one, true, good, and a thousand others. And as for the material which enters into the brain through the senses, it is not this very material which enters into the soul, but the idea or representation of it, which is not a body, but a kind of effort or modified reaction. Now it is obvious that efforts do not occupy any place at all, and an infinity of efforts or tendencies can be located in one and the same subject without becoming mixed up. That may be sufficient for those who are not fond of a long discussion, but I will add what follows for those who want to go further into things.

In order to judge by reason whether the soul is material or immaterial, we need to understand what the soul is and what matter is. Everyone agrees that *matter* has parts and consequently is a *multitude* of many substances, as would be a flock of sheep. But because every multitude presupposes *true unities*, it is clear that these unities could not be made from matter, otherwise they would still be multitudes<sup>345</sup>

343. Editor's title. From the French. Complete.

344. Molanus.

345. multitudes | . So unities are separate substances, which are neither divisible nor, consequently, perishable. However there has to be force and perception in these unities themselves, for without that there wouldn't be any force or perception in anything which

and certainly not true and pure unities, such as are ultimately needed to make a multitude from them. So unities are, strictly speaking, separate substances, which are not divisible, nor, consequently, perishable. For everything which is divisible has parts that can be distinguished in it even before separation. However since it is a matter of *unities of substance*, it must be the case that there be some force and perception in these unities themselves, for without that there wouldn't be any force or perception in anything which is formed from them, which can only contain repetitions and relations of what is already in the unities. Therefore in bodies which have sensation there must be *unique substances*, or unities which have perception, and it is this simple substance, this unity of substance, or this Monad,<sup>346</sup> that we call *soul*; and consequently souls, like all other unities of substance, are immaterial, indivisible, and imperishable; every destruction of *substantial things* can only be a dissolution. And if these unities are ever alive, they must be immortal and always be alive. These unities actually constitute substances, and each unity uniquely constitutes a single substance; all other things are only beings by aggregation, or multitudes. Or rather they are accidents, that is, enduring attributes or fleeting modifications which belong to substances.

Now among unities, souls excel, and among souls, minds—such as are rational souls—excel. So unities, although they are all indefectible, are not all equally noble, and in an organic body there is only a single dominant and principal unity, which is its soul. It is *the “self”* in us, which is still some way above the majority of other souls, because it is a mind, and because it reasons by means of truths which are universal, necessary and eternal, not based upon the senses, nor upon induction from examples, but upon the internal and divine light of ideas, which constitute right reason. For when we have learned some truth through experience, the senses or our experiences can rightly

is formed from unities, and which can only contain repetitions and relations of that which is already in the unities. Now by *the soul* we mean a unity or single substance which has perception, and consequently souls, like all other unities, are immaterial, indivisible, and indefectible, and if they are ever alive, they must be immortal and always be alive. | M2.

346. This is the only occasion Leibniz uses the term “monad” throughout his entire correspondence with Sophie and Sophie Charlotte. The term does occur in a draft of a later letter to Sophie (see no. 68), but was not used in the version he dispatched.

make us presume that it will always continue to be thus in the examples we have not yet experienced, but we will never be certain of the necessity of the matter without calling to our aid the demonstrative reasonings based upon the internal light, independent of the senses. This is what few people notice, even among the philosophers, because it is rare for one to be a philosopher and a mathematician at the same time, and demonstrations are almost only ever seen in mathematics.

It is good to give an example. Let us take in order

the numbers: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 etc.

and then their squares: 0 1 4 9 16 25 36 49 64 81 100 etc.

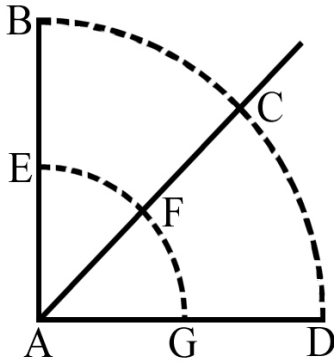
and the differences between these squares: 1 3 5 7 9 11 13 15 17 19 etc.

We find that the differences between the squares of the numbers taken in order are the odd numbers, again in order; and after having tested a long sequence of numbers, and found that this holds good, we justifiably presume that it will always continue to hold good to infinity; but we do not thereby see either the necessity or the cause of it, which depends on certain demonstrative reasons taken from the source, or *a priori*. Souls capable of these reasonings are called “minds,” and it can be rightly said of them that they are made in the image of God, and that there is a society between God and them, so that with regard to them God is not only what an architect is to his building, but also what a Prince is to his subjects.

As for the objection made against the immortality of the soul and of thought, although it is already possible to resolve it through what we have just said, it will nevertheless be useful for us to clarify it still further. It is true that the material that comes to us through the senses enters into our internal organs, such as the brain, and the subtle spirits or fluids contained in it; but the material could not enter into a true unity which has no holes or doors, otherwise it would not be a unity at all, but a composite. Therefore what is in the unity is not material at all, but the species or the representation of the material, which represents what is extended, without itself having extension. It will be asked how this is possible: but apart from the fact that it must be thus, even if we understand nothing about it, it can still be explained by an



example taken from mathematics, but particularly from geometry, by using the comparison of the angles or inclinations between two lines.



For example let there be two straight lines  $A B$  and  $A D$  which form what is called a right angle  $B A D$ , that is, an angle of 90 degrees, or of an opening of a quarter of the circle. Now it is clear that this angle is not only measured by the large arc  $B C D$ , but also by the lesser arc  $E F G$ , however small it may be, and the opening begins, in a word, from point  $A$ , which is the center.

Consequently it is in this very center that the angle or the inclination of the two lines  $B A$  and  $D A$  is located, and consequently in the center itself, indivisible though it may be, begins the same opening or the same number of degrees which is in the arcs  $E F G$  and  $B C D$ . So it can be said that these arcs—so far as their degrees are concerned—are represented or expressed in the center through the relation of the inclination to the center, which is in the lines as they go out from it. The same applies to the half right angle  $B A C$ , which is 45 degrees, or the eighth part of the circle; for this opening of degrees is likewise also in the large arc  $B C$ , and in the lesser arc  $E F$ , however small it may be, down to point  $A$ , in which begins the inclination of the two lines  $B A$  and  $C A$ , which, from the start and from point  $A$ , or the center, is only half of the inclination of the lines  $B A$ , and  $D A$ . It is therefore clear that, just as the degrees are represented in the center, so it is with unities of substance, and consequently souls, which are like centers, represent in themselves what happens in the multitudes which concern them, according to the point of view of each unity or soul, without souls or centers thereby ceasing to be indivisible and without extension.

After having established my view, I want to add some reflections on the Cartesian argument of our learned Mr. \*\*\*. I agree that our souls think, and that our body has extension. I also grant that when two things have such different attributes that we can perfectly

understand one without thinking of the other, then the things themselves are of a different nature. But what there are grounds to doubt is whether thought can be understood without thinking of extension. I also agree that there are thoughts for which the mind has no images or shapes at all, and that some of these thoughts are distinct. But I do not acknowledge all the examples that the Cartesians give, since a shape of thousand angles invoked here is not understood distinctly any more than the idea of some large number—it is a surd thought, just like in algebra where one thinks about symbols instead of things. So to make things easier, we often employ words while thinking, without analyzing them, because analysis is not necessary at that point.

Lastly, I do not agree that it is impossible for human reason to conceive in what the union of the soul with the body consists. I would rather believe that this problem is now completely resolved by a system explained elsewhere,<sup>347</sup> to which what has just been said here may also be useful. And this very system confirms and explains better than any other the immortality of the soul.

347. Leibniz means his own system of pre-established harmony. See Leibniz, “Système nouveau,” G 4: 477–87/SLT 68–77.

**38. Sophie to Leibniz (16 June 1700)<sup>348</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 262–63.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 178–79 (following M).

G: G 7: 555–56 (following M, partial transcription only).

A: A I 18: 119–120 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's paper "The soul and its operation" (see no. 37).

Herrenhausen, 16 June 1670<sup>349</sup>

I have enough spare time to meditate on the soul, but not enough ability to understand your demonstration properly. In matters of money, one unity is not worth as much as thousands, although in us you want this to be everything. But if this unity were all alone, whatever it might be, it seems to me that it has in common with the divinity that it always acts on various things. But let us leave the speculations there...

348. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

349. Upon receiving this letter, Leibniz crossed out "1670" and wrote "1700" in its place.

**39. Leibniz to Sophie (middle-end June 1700)<sup>350</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 276. The draft is written on the back of one of the sheets of Sophie's letter to Leibniz of 12 June 1700 (printed in A I 18: 118–19).

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 180–82 (following M).

G: G 7: 556 (following M, partial transcription only).

A: A I 18: 125–27 (following M).

Leibniz's reply to Sophie's letter of 16 June 1700 (see no. 38).

I am infinitely obliged to the goodness of Your Electoral Highness for thinking about matters concerning my health. I have led here a life that Madam the Electress<sup>351</sup> calls after me “a neglected life.” And yesterday I returned here from Lutzenburg at three o'clock in the morning. I claim that the waters will mend all.

As for unities or simple substances, they are certainly not worth as much as the substances which are composed of them, for two écus<sup>352</sup> are worth more than one alone, and two souls more than one soul. However, just as one eye often sees as much as two others, and sometimes more, and just as a whole world is contained within a small space such as an eye or a mirror, although only by representation, the same applies with regard to souls by a much stronger reason. It is also for this reason that unities are never alone and without company, for otherwise they would be without function and would have nothing to represent. The divinity is also a unity from the number of minds, and the soul or mind is in turn an example of the divinity; for the divinity represents the universe from its source, in that the universe is such as the divinity made it and is adapted to the divinity, which is its germ

350. From the French. Incomplete; five paragraphs of court news and pleasantries have not been translated.

351. Sophie Charlotte.

352. An écu was a French coin with a shield as its main motif.

or origin. And consequently God represents the universe distinctly and perfectly, but souls represent these things afterward, and adapt themselves to what is outside of them, and as a result of this God is entirely free and we are partly in bondage, insofar as we depend on other things, and insofar as our perceptions or representations are confused. He is the universal center, and he sees the world as I would see a city from a courtyard within it, that is to say, he sees it well; we are only individual centers, and at present we only see the world through two holes in our head, or as I would see a city from one side.

Moreover, I do not see an objection about souls and thoughts that would not be easy to resolve. And I would like it if we could understand the means to preserve our health just as well as we know what the soul is and what thought is. The apparent obscurity only emerges when one scarcely makes the effort to reason about abstract things with the attention that they require.

**40. Sophie to Leibniz (26 June 1700)**<sup>353</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 288–89.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 189–90 (following M).

A: A I 18: 130–31 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's letter of middle-end June 1700 (see no. 39). Leibniz did not respond to any of the following remarks.

As the waters of Pyrmont have done Mr. Görtz a great deal of good,<sup>354</sup> I think after your neglected life you will find them good too, since the soul of which gave a very clear description has a great need of healthy organs. It will be a fine undertaking to send missionaries to the Indies, [though] it seems to me that we should initially make good Christians in Germany without going so far to produce them.<sup>355</sup>

353. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

354. Friedrich Wilhelm von Görtz (1647–1728), a Hanoverian official.

355. This remark may refer to a no longer extant text Leibniz sent with his letter to Sophie of 26 June 1700.

**41. Leibniz to Sophie (19 November 1701)**

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 339–40.

M2: Extract: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 648.

Transcriptions:

FC: FC 192–94 (following M2).

K: Klopp 8: 310–12 (following M1).

G: G 7: 556–57 (following M1, partial transcription only).

A1: A I 20: 72–74 (following M1).

A2: A I 20: 74–75 (following M2).

In early November 1701, Leibniz met an old friend, Heinrich Heino von Fleming (1632–1706). During their discussion, Fleming apparently informed Leibniz that he had revised his philosophical views. Leibniz reported the content of the discussion in a letter to Sophie written in early November 1701, noting that whereas before Fleming had been of the opinion that everything is corporeal, “he now recognizes that force comes from another source, so that he has rather entered into my principles and sentiments on the nature and the perseverance of unities and on the nature of bodies which are only multitudes or assemblages of true substances.”<sup>356</sup> In her reply of 9 November 1701, Sophie wrote: “I would have liked very much to be present at the conversation you had with Mr. Fleming. I would have learned what a unity is, which I still do not know.”<sup>357</sup> This prompted Leibniz to discuss unities once more.

[M1: draft]<sup>358</sup>

356. A I 20: 58.

357. A I 20: 62.

358. From the French. Incomplete; four paragraphs of court news have not been translated.

...As for the unities of which we have spoken together,<sup>359</sup> Your Electoral Highness understands them insofar as they are intelligible,<sup>360</sup> if she takes the trouble to do so. For she rightly concludes that everything which is corporeal and composite is a multitude and not a true unity, and that every multitude must nevertheless be formed and composed by an assemblage of true unities which, consequently, being neither composite nor subject to dissolution, are perpetual substances, although they always change. Now what has neither parts nor extension also has no shape, but it can have thought and force, or effort, the source of which we also know could not come from extension or shapes, and consequently we must look for this source in unities, because there are only unities and multitudes in nature...

[M2: extract]<sup>361</sup>

Extract from a letter written in Berlin, 19 November 1701

As for unities, Your Electoral Highness will understand them insofar as they are intelligible, if she wants to take the trouble to do so. For she rightly concludes that everything which is corporeal and composite is a multitude and not truly a unity, and that every multitude must nevertheless be formed and composed by an assemblage of true unities which, consequently, being neither composite nor subject to dissolution, are perpetual substances, although their modes of being

359. together, | since every body is in effect a multitude, and since there is no multitude which is not composed of unities, that is, of true unities, which are no more multitudes or compositions | *deleted*; this deletion is not noted in transcriptions K, G, or A1.

360. intelligible | to us, for she sees well enough that every body is a composition or multitude of several ingredients. It is also very clear that every multitude is composed of unities. That is, of true unities, which are not further composed of any other things, for if that were not the case they would in effect be multitudes, and unities only in appearance. So there are everywhere beings without parts and without composition which are the true and real basis of all composite beings. And as they cannot be reduced into parts (which they do not have), they cannot be destroyed either. As the whole of reality is reduced to them, however, everything else being only that which results from their composition, it must also be the case that the foundation of | *deleted*; this deletion is not noted in transcriptions K, G, or A1.

361. From the French. Complete.



always change. Now what has neither parts nor extension also has no shape, but it can have thought and force, or effort, the source of which we also know cannot come from extension or shapes. Consequently we must look for this source in unities, because there are only unities and multitudes in nature. Or rather there is nothing real but the unities; for every assemblage is only the mode and appearance of one being, but actually it is as many beings as it contains true unities. And just as in a flock of sheep, the beings are the sheep while the flock itself is only a mode of being, it can be said that in rigor of the truth the body of each sheep and every other body is itself a flock, and that being itself is only found in the perfect unity which is no longer a flock. It can be concluded from this that there are unities everywhere, or rather that everything is unities. And every unity has a mode of life and of perception, and can have only that. But in the regular assemblages of nature, that is, in the organized bodies like those of animals, there are dominant unities whose perceptions represent the whole; and these unities are what are called "souls," or what each person means when he says "I." And just as the body of an animal can be composed of other animals and plants, bodies have their souls or their own unities. It is clear that these animals, these unities, or these primitive forces, are dominant in their little sphere, although they are subjugated in the larger body in which they work together to form the organs, and from which they can be detached, because bodies are in a continual motion and flux. However there are grounds to think that every soul always retains a sphere that is fitting for it.

**42. Sophie to Leibniz (21 November 1701)**<sup>362</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 306–07.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 313–14 (following M).

G: G 7: 557 (following M, partial transcription only).

A: A I 20: 78–79 (following M).

Sophie's response to Leibniz's letter of 19 November 1701 (see no. 41).

Hanover, 21 November 1701

One can give whatever name one wants to things, but in a language which is not that of a philosopher. It seems to me that one is not several, and that one should not speak of unities where there are several of them; for the thoughts which do not seem material are infinite, rather than unique. I say this to excuse myself in case I have insufficiently understood what unities are. For one alone which is God, and which works in every thing, we see it without understanding it. I am not entirely persuaded that thoughts do not occupy place, since I find my imagination so full that I remember the past and yet have no more room for the present, in which I even forget what people look like. It therefore has to be that something material wears out or fills up, which produces the memory and which forms the ideas. That which breathes into these vessels seems to me to be the universal soul, which one could, in my view, call a unity for something other than it. I could not produce an idea of it myself, but each has his own way.

362. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

...Your secretary<sup>363</sup> demonstrated his worth with the monster he showed us, which is horrible.<sup>364</sup> It is not known how it was able to bite the woman who carried it, since the opening of the mouth of this ugly beast cannot be seen. It is very sad that man is subject to such accidents. I think that stupid people like me are the happiest and healthiest. We do not dwell too much on the accidents which can happen, since this is harmful to the good health that I always wish for you as the greatest good one can have in this world. And good health depends on good humor, just as good humor depends on health, for one rarely exists without the other...

S.

To Mr. Leibniz in Hanover

363. Johann Georg Eckhart (1664–1730).

364. According to Eckhart's letter to Leibniz of 26 November 1701 (A I 20: 83), the "monster" was in fact a worm, probably a tapeworm.

**43. Leibniz to Sophie (30 November 1701)**<sup>365</sup>

Versions:

M: Copy of dispatched letter, possibly incomplete: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 346.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 314–15 (following M).

G: G 7: 557–58 (following M).

A: A I 20: 85–86 (following M).

Leibniz's response to Sophie's letter of 21 November 1701 (see no. 42). Sophie did not respond, thus ending the exchange on unities.

Berlin, 30 November 1701

Madam

Your Electoral Highness has all the reasons in the world to say that one is not several, and it is also for that reason that the assemblage of several beings is not one being. However, where there are several, or a multitude, it must be the case that there are unities too, since the multitude or number is composed of unities. So if there were only a single unity, that is, God, then there would not be any multitude in nature, and God would exist on his own.

Regarding the soul's thoughts, as they<sup>366</sup> must represent what happens in the body, they could not be distinct when the traces in the brain are confused. So it is not necessary that thoughts have a physical location in order to be confused. But it is beyond doubt that corporeal images interpenetrate and intermix, like when several stones are thrown into water at once, for each would make its own circles which do not interfere with each other in reality, although they would appear mixed-up to a spectator, who would have trouble distinguishing them.

365. From the French. Complete. In the upper right corner of the manuscript, Leibniz wrote: "When it is said that one multitude is one, it is like when it is said that a dead man is a man."

366. Reading "elles" in place of "elle."

There is no example more suitable for clarifying the nature of corporeal images which form in our heads, and the tablet analogy Plato uses does not seem to me to be as fitting.<sup>367</sup>

With regard to the universal soul, or rather this general Mind which is the source of things: since Your Electoral Highness conceives that it is a unity, why can she not also conceive individual unities? For being individual or universal makes no difference so far as unity is concerned, or rather, it seems easier to conceive individual unities etc. etc.

I hope that Your Electoral Highness will see the entire resolution of the present chaos, and that for lack of objects taken from public disorders we instead be subject to using our reason on unities and on the monsters which are badly arranged multitudes etc.

367. An allusion to Plato's *Theaetetus*, 191c–195a; English edition: Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. various (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 212–16.

**44. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (end of March 1702)<sup>368</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 39–41.

Transcriptions:

SP: SP 313–14 (following M).

K: Klopp 10: 136–37 (following M).

A: A I 20: 854–55 (following M).

During her stay in Hanover early in 1702, Sophie Charlotte induced Leibniz to read a letter, no longer extant, written by someone she identified only as “Guenebat’s friend.”<sup>369</sup> The topics of this letter became the focus of the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie Charlotte for the spring and summer of 1702, beginning with the following letter from Sophie Charlotte.

You will see by this note, Sir, the impatience I have to see you here, and how much I esteem your conversation, seeking it with all imaginable eagerness...

You will, I hope, also develop opinions for me on Guenebat’s friend, for I look upon this matter as an agreeable amusement, but it does not disturb me since my tranquil temperament inspires me to think that I have a lot less to fear for the future than for the present. For as long as I have a body I sense by experience that it is prone to sufferings and when I will no longer have it I cannot frame an idea of the inconvenience that the soul will have which is as depressing as people of certain order want to make us think, and all the fear that Mr. d’Osson<sup>370</sup> tries to give me of the devil has still not made me fear death. I hope it will be a long time before you know what the truth of the matter is, and that we will nevertheless merrily reason about a

368. From the French. Incomplete; several items of news and gossip have not been translated.

369. A I 20: 859. In a letter to Sophie Charlotte of 12 April 1702, Leibniz refers to the author of the letter in question as Mr. Montejean (Klopp 10: 140 and 142).

370. F. d’Ausson de Villarnoux, Master of the Horse and Senior Chamberlain in Berlin.

matter which seems too solemn to everyone but you, who goes further into things...

Another pressing reason for you to come is a work of charity, for Pöllnitz<sup>371</sup> has bought a book about mathematics which she wants to study, and the terms and the meaning are so difficult for her that she will lose her mind if you do not come to help her. For my part, I am happy to look at the diagrams and numbers without reading, since all that is Greek to me. There is only one unity of which I have an inkling, thanks to your efforts.

371. Henrietta von Pöllnitz, Sophie Charlotte's lady-in-waiting.

**45. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (29 March 1702)<sup>372</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, not dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 36–37.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 10: 138–40 (following M).

A: A I 20: 856–58 (following M).

The following was written in response to Sophie Charlotte's letter written at the end of March (see no. 44). It was not sent, however, and Leibniz composed a more detailed response in his letter of 22 April 1702 (see no. 46).

...When Your Majesty made me read this nice letter on the senses, in which there was assuredly much good, I started at once to jot down in writing certain thoughts on this subject,<sup>373</sup> which in my opinion could serve to make up for what the author of the letter had overlooked. For it is commonplace for ingenious persons to embellish that which is more easily presented to the mind, but not to touch on what requires more research: more often than not this satisfies readers, but it is sometimes at the expense of the truth. Therefore I wanted to read to Your Majesty what I had written on this, but the time of her departure was hardly appropriate for that.<sup>374</sup> So I wanted to defer it, and

372. From the French. Incomplete; various items of political news and court gossip have not been translated.

373. Leibniz is referring to his "On what is beyond the external senses and matter" (see no. 47), which was eventually reworked into his "Letter on what is independent of sense and matter" (see no. 49).

374. In his letter to Sophie Charlotte of 12 April 1702, Leibniz wrote: "I had intended to make some reflections on the letter that the late Mr. Guenebat had received a while ago in Osnabrück from a friend (Montejean as I believe) who spoke to him quite ingeniously on profound questions, a letter which Your Majesty made me read in her presence a little before her departure." Later in that letter, Leibniz noted that his "reflections...on the letter from Mr. Montejean were still not finished." *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 735, 4–5/ Klopp 10: 140–41 and 142.



although one is better able to resolve difficulties when one is present at the reading of one's work, nevertheless I will venture to send this paper, if it can serve to amuse Your Majesty for some moments. For I try to clearly explain things which are obscure by their nature, although it is true that what can neither be imagined nor vividly described does not satisfy the imagination...

**46. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (22 April 1702)**<sup>375</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 44–45.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 10: 143–45 (following M).

The following is a more detailed response to Sophie Charlotte's letter from the end of March 1702 (see no. 44).

...Your Majesty has good grounds for holding that fear and hope should not be our motive in the search for the truth. It is truth itself which deserves a disinterested love.

Guenebat's friend has made a game and an amusement of it a little too much. And I do not think that his opinions much deserve to be clarified. I do not know if he said that there will be a time when the soul will be without body, but if he did I think he is mistaken. It is true that this is the opinion of the School. But the ancients, without excepting the fathers of the church, were of another view, and believed that the angels themselves were composed of body and soul, and that only the sovereign principle is incorporeal.

Although one cannot enter into as great a detail on the other life as the one which Mr. Helmont gave, nevertheless mathematics shows that one can know things without seeing them, and Miss de Pöllnitz doubtless will already know how one assesses inaccessible territory...

Miss de Pöllnitz not only has a penetrating mind, but she also likes to exercise it on difficult things. With this talent, mathematics will be an amusement for her. And I hope that this will contribute toward building the observatory in Lutzenburg, or rather toward having it stocked with instruments. For it is all built, and I wish we had such a one in Berlin. The unity of mathematicians and the unity of

375. From the French. Incomplete; three paragraphs of court news have not been translated.

philosophers are different in that the first has parts and the other does not, because it is a simple unity, unadulterated by multitude. If it were likewise with the unity of the arithmeticians, one could do without fractions, which would very much suit schoolchildren. One day I took pleasure in inventing a pleasant kind of arithmetic, in which there are only unities and zeroes, that is, in which all numbers are written by 0 and 1.<sup>376</sup> I attach here an example for Miss de Pöllnitz,<sup>377</sup> which I myself will shortly explain, being with devotion etc.

376. Leibniz is of course referring here to the binary system of arithmetic, which he developed in the 1670s.

377. The paper on the binary system enclosed with this letter has now been lost.

**47. Leibniz: On what is beyond the external senses and matter (March–June (?) 1702)**<sup>378</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 69a–70a.

Transcriptions:

G: G 6: 488–91 (following M).

The following is most likely the response to the letter written by “Guenebat’s friend” Leibniz referred to in his letter to Sophie Charlotte of 29 March 1702 (see no. 45), though it was not sent with that letter. After writing this paper, Leibniz subsequently made heavy revisions to the manuscript, the revised version being retitled as “Letter on what is beyond the senses and matter” (see no. 48).<sup>379</sup> The following text is presented without any of these subsequent revisions, and is therefore as Leibniz initially wrote it.

On what is beyond the external<sup>380</sup> senses and matter

Our *external senses* make us know their particular objects, as are colors, sounds, odors, tastes, and certain tactile qualities called hot, cold, etc. It is commonly believed that we understand these *sensible qualities*, but they are precisely what we understand the least. For example, the color red and a bitter taste are things for which we have no explanation; they are an “I know not what,” the reason for which we do not see at all.

378. From the French. Complete.

379. It is worth noting that some scholars have erroneously claimed that it was a letter from John Toland to either Sophie or Sophie Charlotte which induced Leibniz to write his “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (and its drafts, of which the present text is one). See for example, Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, AG 186; Stuart Brown, “Toland’s clandestine pantheism as partly revealed in his neglected ‘Remarques critiques sur le systeme de M. Leibniz...’ and partly concealed in the last of his *Letters to Serena*,” in *Scepticisme, Clandestinité et Libre Pensée*, ed. G. Paganini and M. Benitez (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 348; Antognazza, *Leibniz*, 419; Patrick Riley, “Review of Academy Edition I, 20,” *The Leibniz Review* 18 (2008): 172.

380. Transcription G omits “externes.”

But there are other *more intelligible notions* which we attribute to the *common sense*, because they do not have an external sense to which they are uniquely associated and characteristic of. Such is the idea of *numbers*, which are discovered likewise in colors, sounds, and tactile qualities.<sup>381</sup> It is in this way that we also<sup>382</sup> perceive *shapes*, which are common to colors and tactile qualities, but which we do not detect in sounds. And as our soul compares the numbers and shapes that exist in colors with the numbers and shapes<sup>383</sup> found by touching, it must be the case that there is a common sense in which the perceptions of these different external senses are reunited. It is also evident that particular sensible qualities are susceptible of explanation and reasoning only insofar as they contain what is common to the objects of several external senses, and belong to the internal sense.<sup>384</sup>

However there are also *objects of our understanding* which are not included at all in the objects of the external senses, and such is the object of my thought when I think of myself. This “I” and my action adds something to the objects of the senses. For<sup>385</sup> color is something different from the self who thinks about it. And as I conceive that other beings are also entitled to say “I,” or that one can think in such a way on their behalf, I thereby conceive what is called *substance*. So it can be said that there is nothing in the understanding that did not come from the senses except the understanding itself.

*Being* itself and *truth* are not grasped entirely through the senses. For it would not be impossible that a creature have long and well-ordered *dreams*, so that everything it thought it perceived through the senses were nothing but sheer *appearances*. Therefore there has to be something beyond the senses which makes us distinguish the true from the apparent. For as able ancient and modern philosophers have already rightly pointed out, even if everything I think I see were only a dream, it would still be true that I, who thinks while dreaming, would be something, and would indeed think in many ways, for which there will always have to be some reason. And if I were to discover some

381. Transcription G here adds “Et” despite this word not being present in manuscript M.

382. Transcription G here omits “aussi.”

383. Transcription G here omits “qui sont dans les couleurs, avec les nombres et figures.”

384. Transcription G here omits this sentence.

385. Transcription G here omits “Car.”

demonstrative mathematical truth while dreaming, it would be just as certain<sup>386</sup> as I were not asleep.

This conception of being and truth is therefore found in this “self” or in the internal sense rather than in the external senses. We also discover there what it is to affirm, to deny, to doubt, to will, and to act. But above all we discover there the force of the *consequences* of reasoning, which are what is called the *natural light*. For example, from this premise, that “no wise man is vicious,” we can, by inverting the terms, derive this conclusion, that “no vicious man is wise.” Whereas from this premise, that “every wise man is praiseworthy,” it cannot be concluded, by inversion, that “every praiseworthy man is wise,” but only that “some praiseworthy man is wise.” Even though particular affirmative propositions can always be inverted, for example, if some wise man is rich, it must also be the case that some rich man is wise, this does not hold good in the case of particular negative propositions. For example, it can be said that there are charitable men who are not just, which happens when charity is not regulated very well, but we cannot infer from this that there are just men who are not charitable, since charity and reason are included at the same time in justice.<sup>387</sup>

It is by this<sup>388</sup> *natural light* that we recognize the whole is greater than its<sup>389</sup> part, likewise that when two things are equal, if the same quantity is deducted from them, the things that remain are equal too; likewise that if everything is equal on both sides of a balance, neither side will incline, which we see beforehand without ever having experienced it. And it is upon such foundations that arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, and other demonstrative sciences are established.

It is also by this natural light that we recognize the *necessary truths* in general. For the senses (supposing that these are not dreams) can make us know what is, but not what is necessary or must

386. Reading “certainé” (manuscript M) in place of “vraye” (transcription G).

387. In transcription G, the previous two sentences (“Even though ... in justice.”) are treated as a marginal addition to the text, even though they are quite clearly not written in the margin nor a later addition.

388. Transcription G here adds “même” despite this word not being present in manuscript M.

389. Reading “sa” (manuscript M) in place of “la” (transcription G).

be or cannot be otherwise. For example, even if we have experienced a million times that blue and yellow mixed together (without being altered)<sup>390</sup> make green, we are not certain that this is necessary while we do not understand the reason for it. For perhaps in the universe there is a kind of yellow or blue which produces a different composition. It is in this way that experience convinces us that all numbers which are exactly divisible by nine, without any remainder, are made up of digits whose sum is also exactly divisible by nine. For example, the number 37107 divided by nine does not leave any remainder; and if we put together and add up this number's digits, namely, 3, 7, 1, 0 and 7, we find that their sum, which is 18, is also exactly divisible by nine, without leaving any remainder. This is the basis of the arithmeticians' Abjection Novenaire test.<sup>391</sup> However, if one were to test it a hundred thousand times, one may plausibly conclude that this will always be the case, but in spite of all that one never has absolute certainty of it unless one learns the reason for it. So *inductions* never give a perfect certainty.

Indeed there are *experiments* that succeed innumerable times, and normally succeed, and nevertheless we find extraordinary examples or instances in which they fail. For example, normally if two straight or curved lines continually approach each other, we find that these two lines finally meet, and many people will be ready to swear that this could never fail to be the case. And yet geometry provides us with extraordinary curved lines called *asymptotes* for the reason that,<sup>392</sup> when extended to infinity, they continually approach each other and yet never meet.<sup>393</sup>

This consideration also shows that there is an *innate light within us*. For since the senses and inductions could never teach us true universalities, nor what is absolutely necessary, but only what is, and what is found in particular examples, and since we nevertheless

390. Transcription G here omits "sans y s'alterer."

391. Reading "l'epreuve" (manuscript M) in place of "la preuve" (transcription G). Leibniz is referring here to the method known as "casting out nines" (*abjectio novenarii*).

392. Transcription G here omits "pour cela."

393. Leibniz's suggestion that asymptotes are so called because they do not meet is correct: "asymptote" derives from the Latin "asymptota" (meaning "not meeting"), which in turn is derived from the Greek "asumptōtos" (meaning "not falling together").

do know some universal and necessary truths of the sciences, a matter in which we are privileged over the beasts, it follows that we have derived these truths in part from what is inside us. Thus one can lead a child to them<sup>394</sup> by simple questions,<sup>395</sup> in the manner of Socrates,<sup>396</sup> without telling him anything, and without making him experiment on the matter. However I agree that the external senses are necessary for us to think, and that, if we hadn't had any, we wouldn't think. But what is necessary for something does not thereby constitute its essence. To us, air is necessary for life, but our life is something other than air.<sup>397</sup>

Finally, to better rise above the senses, we need only consider that there is an infinity of possible modes that the universe could have received instead of this sequence of variations which it actually received; the planets, for example, were able to move in an entirely different way, since space and matter are indifferent to every kind of shape and motion. Therefore it must be the case that the reason that things are and have been thus rather than otherwise, is outside matter, and that therefore there is an incorporeal substance in the universe.

And as force and<sup>398</sup> action generally could not come from extended mass alone, we can conclude that there is also something immaterial in individual creatures, unless one wants to say with certain people<sup>399</sup> that God acts in them by a kind of perpetual miracle, which is not very fitting.

394. Transcription G here omits "y."

395. Reading "interrogations" (manuscript M) in place of "demandes" (transcription G).

396. Leibniz is referring here to the example in Plato's *Meno* (82b–84a) in which Socrates elicits complex mathematical information from a slave boy by asking the boy simple questions. See Plato, *Complete Works*, 881–83.

397. In transcription G, the previous three sentences ("However I agree ... than air.") are mistakenly placed at the end of the actual text, despite the fact that Leibniz neither wrote them at the end of nor gave any indication that that was where they were supposed to go.

398. Reading "et" (manuscript M) in place of "ou" (transcription G).

399. Transcription G here omits "dire avec quelques uns."



#### 48. Leibniz: Letter on what is beyond the senses and matter (March–June (?) 1702)<sup>400</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 69a–70a (The draft is written on the same manuscript pages as no. 47, “On what is beyond the external senses and matter,” and uses some of the text of that piece.)

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 147–54 (following M).

G: G 6: 491–99 (following M).

At some stage after writing the draft “On what is beyond the external senses and matter” (see no. 47), Leibniz returned to the manuscript and revised it into the following piece. A further draft was made later still (“Letter on what is independent of sense and matter,” see no. 49), this time on different paper.

Madam<sup>401</sup>

400. From the French. Complete.

401. Madam | The letter that was sent a little while ago from Paris to Osnabrück for Madam the Electress, and which Your Majesty made me read recently in Hanover, struck me as truly fine and ingenious. It treats these important questions, namely: whether there is something in our thoughts that does not in any way come from the senses, and whether there is something in nature that is not material. I would like to be able to explain myself with the same charm in order to satisfy Your Majesty’s curiosity. The author has said as much as an imaginative man can say without taking the trouble to go further into the matter. And I, who have become a bit meditative by dint of wanting to go deeper, am afraid of doing a disservice to what I believe to be the truth, because I am only too well aware that I am not capable of putting it in its best light.

Our *external senses* make us know their particular objects. We use them as a blind man uses his stick; the ray of light is an impression in a straight line which carries to us, by the force with which the sun or a luminous object beams around itself, a very agitated matter. The way in which these rays are broken by passing through transparent bodies, which are pierced like an attic, produces colors. Sounds are carried towards us by means of a cruder matter called air, which does not pass through glass and which is like loads of iron-wire. The tremblings that these threads received, like a plucked string, and communicated to the neighboring threads, finally reach the ear, which is made in a way suitable for imitating the same tremblings. Odor is carried to our nostrils by a kind of smoke or evaporation, and

The letter that was sent a little while ago from Paris to Osnabrück for Madam the Electress, and which Your Majesty made me read recently in Hanover, struck me as truly fine and ingenious. And as it treats these two important questions: *whether there is something in our thoughts that does not in any way come from the senses, and whether there is something in nature that is not material*, on which, I admit, I am not entirely of the author's opinion, I would like to be able to explain myself with the same charm as his, in order to obey your commands and to satisfy Your Majesty's curiosity.

We use the external senses as a blind man uses his stick, and they make us know their particular objects, which are colors, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactile qualities. But they do not make us know what these sensible qualities are, and in what they consist; for example, whether red is a swirling of certain small globules which, it is claimed, produce light; whether heat is a whirling of a very fine dust, whether sound is produced in the air as circles are in water in which a stone is thrown, as certain philosophers claim: this is what we do not see, and we couldn't understand how this swirling, these whirlings, and these circles, even if they were real, would produce exactly these perceptions we have of red, heat, and noise. So it can be said that *sensible qualities* are in effect *occult qualities*, and that therefore there

---

in touching, the object itself is applied to our membranes and makes changes, quite different in several ways. But taste has that more than simple touch, since one draws from the body touched by the tongue a quintessence or essential salt through the liquid of the mouth, assisted by the grinding of teeth. And just as in smell one is aware of this part drawn from the object whose air is imbibed, there is in taste the perception of what the water draws from it. In simple touching, which constitutes the tactile sense, one would be able to distinguish several kinds, for if the letter's author is entitled to establish a sixth sense, dedicated to the most beautiful of goddesses, he would even be able to establish one for her husband, that is, for hot and cold, since it must be admitted that this way of touching makes us sense something quite different from what we notice when it is only a matter of judging whether a body is quite smooth, like an eel skin, or rough like mule-skin. Now hot and cold, odors, sounds and tastes and generally all sensible qualities which make us sense something other than the shape, movement and resistance of a body, can be called "occult," and although we discover something of their reasons, by dint of experience and reasoning, there still remains something obscure. So whereas it is commonly believed that we understand these sensible qualities and that we understand only them, they are precisely what we understand the least.  
| *deleted.*

must be other<sup>402</sup> manifest qualities which make them explicable. And far from it being the case that we understand sensible things alone, as some people suppose, it is precisely these things that we understand the least.<sup>403</sup> And although they are familiar to us, we do not understand them better for that, just as a pilot does not understand better than anyone else the nature of the magnetic needle that turns toward north, even though it is always in front of his eyes in the compass and consequently it hardly surprises him any more.<sup>404</sup>

I by no means deny that we have discovered many things about the nature of these occult qualities, like, for example, that blue and yellow mixed together always make green; likewise we know what refractions make blue and yellow.<sup>405</sup> But for all that we cannot understand how the perception we have of green results from the perceptions we have of the two colors which compose it. This is true to such an extent that we could not even give nominal definitions of them which would enable us to explain the terms. And<sup>406</sup> if I said to someone “you should know that ‘green’ means a color mixed from blue and yellow,” he could not thereby use this definition to recognize green when he comes across it, which is nevertheless the purpose of nominal definitions. For the blue and yellow that are in the green are neither distinguished nor recognized there, and it is only by chance, so to speak, that we have discovered this, by noticing that this mixture always makes green. So in order that a man may recognize green in the future, there is no other way than to show it to him now, which is not necessary at all in the case of more distinct notions<sup>407</sup> that a person can make known to others<sup>408</sup> by description, even if he does not possess them.

402. Transcriptions K and G here add “plus” [“more”] despite this word not being present in manuscript M.

403. Reading “le moins” (manuscript M) in place of “moins” (transcription G).

404. more. | But we have other more intelligible concepts which are attributed to the common sense, because there is no external sense to which they are particularly associated. | *deleted.*

405. Transcription K here omits “item quelles refractions font le bleu et le jaune.”

406. Transcription K here omits “Et.”

407. Reading “notions” (manuscript M) in place of “motions” (transcription K).

408. Reading “gens” (manuscript M) in place of “sens” (transcription K).

There are therefore other *more*<sup>409</sup> *distinct notions* which are attributed to the *common sense*, because there is no external sense to which they are particularly associated and characteristic of. It is here that we can give definitions of the terms or words that we use. Such is the idea of *numbers*, which are discovered likewise in sounds, colors, and tactile qualities. It is in this way that we also perceive *shapes*, which are common to colors and tactile qualities but which we do not detect in sounds. And as our soul compares, for example, the numbers and shapes that exist in colors with the numbers and shapes that are found by touching, it must be the case that there is a *common and internal sense* in which the perceptions of these different external senses are reunited. And these ideas are the objects of the pure and abstract mathematical sciences. It is also evident that particular sensible qualities are susceptible of explanations and reasonings only insofar as they contain what is common to the objects of several external senses, and belong to the internal sense. For those who try to explain them intelligibly always have recourse to the ideas of mathematics.

However there are also objects of another nature which are not included at all in what we observe through the external senses individually or together, and this is what is properly called *intelligible, the object of the understanding alone* as it were. And such is the object of my thought when I think of myself. This thought of *myself*, who is aware of sensible objects and of my action which results from it, adds something to the objects of the senses. To think of color and to consider that one thinks about it are two very different thoughts, just as color is something different from the “self” who thinks about it too. And because I conceive that other beings are also entitled to say “I,” or that it can be said on their behalf, I thereby conceive what is called *substance* in general.<sup>410</sup> So it can be said that there is nothing in the understanding that did not come from the senses except the understanding itself, or the one who understands.

Being itself and *truth* are not grasped entirely through the senses. For it would not be impossible that a creature have long and well-ordered *dreams* resembling our life, so that everything it thought it perceived through the senses were nothing but sheer *appearances*.

409. *more* | *intelligible* | *deleted*.

410. In transcription K, the words “en general” are mistakenly placed in the next sentence.

Therefore there has to be something beyond the senses which<sup>411</sup> distinguishes the true from the apparent. But the truth of the demonstrative sciences is exempt from these doubts, and must even serve to judge the truth of sensible things. For as able ancient and modern philosophers have already rightly pointed out, even if everything I think I see were only a dream, it would still be true that I, who thinks while dreaming, would be something, and would indeed think in many ways, for which there will always have to be some reason.<sup>412</sup>

So what the ancient Platonists have said is very true and very<sup>413</sup> worthy of consideration, namely, that the existence of intelligible things, and especially of this “self” which thinks and which is called the mind or soul, is incomparably more certain than the existence of sensible things, and that therefore it would not be impossible, speaking in metaphysical rigor, that there should ultimately be only these intelligible substances, and that sensible things should be nothing but appearances. Whereas our inattention makes us take sensible things for the only real things. It is also right to note that if while dreaming I were to discover some demonstrative truth, mathematical or otherwise, it would be just as certain as if I were not asleep, which shows the extent to which intelligible truth is independent of the truth or the existence outside of us of sensible and material things.<sup>414</sup>

This conception of being and truth is therefore found in this “self,”<sup>415</sup> and in the understanding rather than in the external senses and in the perception of external<sup>416</sup> objects. We also discover there what it is to affirm, to deny, to doubt, to will, and to act. But above all we discover there the force of the *consequences* of reasoning, which are

411. which | makes us distinguish the true from the apparent | *deleted*.

412. reason. | And if I were to discover some demonstrative mathematical truth while dreaming, it would be just as certain as if I were not asleep. | *deleted*.

413. Transcription G here omits “tres.”

414. This paragraph was written on the top of a page, and Leibniz did not indicate where in the text it was to go. In transcription G, Gerhardt places it immediately before the paragraph beginning “*Being* itself and *truth*...” while it is omitted altogether in transcription K. My grounds for placing the paragraph where I have is the location of a similar paragraph in the later draft “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (see no. 49).

415. “self” | or in the internal sense | *deleted*.

416. Reading “extérieurs” (manuscript M) in place of “intérieurs” (transcription K).

what is called the *natural light*. For example, from this premise, that “no wise man is vicious,” we can, by inverting the terms, derive this conclusion, that “no vicious man is wise.” Whereas from this premise, that “every wise man is praiseworthy,” it cannot be concluded, by inversion, that “every praiseworthy man is wise,” but only that “some praiseworthy man is wise.” Even though particular affirmative propositions can always be inverted, for example, if some wise man is rich, it must also be the case that some rich man is wise, this does not hold good in the case of particular negative propositions. For example, it can be said that there are charitable men who are not just, which happens when charity is not regulated very well, but we cannot infer from this that there are just men who are not charitable, since charity and<sup>417</sup> the rule of reason are included at the same time in justice.

It is by this *natural light* that<sup>418</sup> the axioms of mathematics are recognized, like<sup>419</sup> for example that, if the same quantity is deducted from two equal things, the things that remain are equal too; likewise that if everything is equal on both sides of a balance, neither side will incline, which we see beforehand without ever having experienced it. And it is upon such foundations that arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, and<sup>420</sup> other demonstrative sciences are established.

It is also by this natural light that we recognize the *necessary truths* in general. For the senses<sup>421</sup> can, in some way, make us know what is, but they cannot make us know what is necessary or must be or cannot be otherwise. For example,<sup>422</sup> even if we have experienced

417. and | ( $\alpha$ ) wisdom ( $\beta$ ) reason | *deleted*.

418. that | we recognize that the whole is greater than the part, likewise that when two things are equal, if | *deleted*.

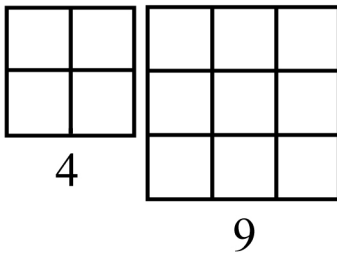
419. Transcription K here omits “comme.”

420. Transcription K here adds “les” despite this word not being present in manuscript M.

421. senses | , supposing that these are not dreams | *deleted*.

422. example, | even if we have experienced a million times that blue and yellow mixed together (without being altered) make green, we are not certain that this is necessary while we do not understand the reason for it. For perhaps in the universe there is a kind of yellow or blue which produces a different composition. It is in this way that experience convinces us that all numbers which are exactly divisible by nine, without any remainder, are made up of digits whose sum is also exactly divisible by nine. For example, the number 37107 divided by nine does not leave any remainder; and if we put together and add up this number's digits, namely, 3, 7, 1, 0 and 7, we find that their sum, which is 18, is also exactly divisible by nine,

innumerable times that every heavy body falls toward the center of the earth and does not support itself in the air, we are not certain that this is necessary while we do not understand the reason for it.<sup>423</sup> So on this point we cannot be certain that the same thing would happen at a higher altitude, a hundred or more leagues above us, for there are philosophers who imagine that the magnetic force of the earth does not extend so far, just as we see that a magnet often does not attract a needle only a little way away from it. It is in this way that experience convinces us that the odd numbers continually added together in order produce in order the square numbers: 1 + 3 make 4, that is, 2 times 2. And 1 + 3 + 5 makes 9, that is, 3 times 3. And 1 + 3 + 5 + 7 makes 16, that is, 4 times 4. And 1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9 makes 25, that is, 5 times 5. And so on.



However, even if one were to test it a hundred thousand times, by continuing the calculation quite some way, one may very plausibly conclude, and even wager whatever one likes, that this will always be the case, but in spite of all that one never has absolute certainty of

it unless one learns the demonstrative reason for it, which mathematicians have discovered. So *inductions* never give a perfect certainty. And it is on this basis, albeit pushed a little too far, that an Englishman has recently wanted to maintain that we are able to prevent ourselves from dying, because (he said) the consequence of this argument does not hold: my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, and all the others who have lived before us, have died, therefore we will die too. For their death has no influence on us at all.<sup>424</sup> The problem is that

---

without leaving any remainder. This is the basis of the arithmeticians' Abjection Novenaire test. | *deleted*.

423. it. | And indeed, an iron pot which is thin enough in proportion to its capacity can be made in such a way that it floats. | *deleted*.

424. An allusion to a book published by John Asgill (1659–1738), entitled *An Argument Proving that according to the Covenant of Eternal Life revealed in the Scriptures, Man may be translated from hence into that Eternal Life, without passing through Death, altho the Humane Nature of Christ himself could not be thus translated till he had passed through Death* (London, 1700). Leibniz's summary of Asgill's argument is largely correct. Asgill wrote: "Suppose my Mother died in Childbed, must I therefore do so too? Or that my Father was hang'd,

we resemble them a little too much, in that the causes of their death also subsist in us. For the resemblance would not be sufficient to draw certain consequences without the consideration of the same reasons.

Indeed there are *experiments* that succeed innumerable times, and normally succeed, and nevertheless in some extraordinary cases we find that there are *instances* in which the experiment does not succeed. For example, even when we have experienced a hundred thousand times that iron placed all by itself on water sinks to the bottom, we are not certain that it must always happen like this. And without appealing to the miracle of the prophet Elisha, who made iron swim,<sup>425</sup> we know that an iron pot can be made that is so hollow that it floats, and that it can even carry a considerable load, as do<sup>426</sup> boats of copper and tin. And even the<sup>427</sup> abstract sciences like geometry provide cases in which what normally happens no longer happens. For example, we generally find that if two straight or curved lines continually approach each other, they finally meet, and many people will be ready to swear that this could never fail to be the case. And yet geometry provides us with extraordinary curved lines called *asymptotes* for the reason that, when extended to infinity, they continually approach each other and yet never meet.

This consideration also shows that there is an *innate light within us*. For since the senses and inductions could never teach us truths that are entirely universal, nor what is absolutely necessary, but only what is, and what is found in particular examples, and since we nevertheless do know some universal and necessary truths of the sciences, a matter in which we are privileged over the beasts, it follows that we have derived these truths in part from what is inside us. Thus one can

---

must I therefore be drown'd? Abraham is dead, and the Prophets are dead. What then? ... Nor did Abraham die, because the Prophets died; nor did the Prophets die because Abraham died. Then if their Deaths had no effects upon one another, *Why should they have any effect upon me?* And as the Life or Death of one Man, is no cause of the Life or Death of another; so the multitudes of Examples don't alter the case. The Life or Death of all the World except one Man, can be no cause of the Life or Death of that one Man." (12). Leibniz was first made aware of the book by Thomas Burnett; see his letter to Leibniz of 20 November/1 December 1700, A I 19: 270.

425. A reference to 2 Kings 6:6.

426. Reading "font" (manuscript M) in place of "sont" (transcription K).

427. the | demonstrative sciences | *deleted*.



lead a child to them by simple questions, in the manner of Socrates,<sup>428</sup> without telling him anything, and without making him experiment on the matter, and even without him needing to use the experiences that he has already had, but which could never show him the necessity that he recognizes in these truths through his reason. However I agree that the external senses are necessary for us to think, and that, if we hadn't had any, we wouldn't think. But what is necessary for something does not thereby constitute its essence. To us, air is necessary for life, but our life is something other than air.<sup>429</sup>

As for the second question, whether there are immaterial substances, we must first explain ourselves. Until now people have understood by "matter" that which includes only purely passive and indifferent notions, namely, extension and impenetrability, which need to be determined to some form or activity by something else. So when it is said that there are immaterial substances, what is meant by that is that there are substances which include other notions, namely, perception and the principle of activity or change, which could not be explained either by extension or by impenetrability. When these beings have sensation they are called "souls," and when they are capable of reason they are called "minds." So if someone says that force and perception are essential to matter, he takes "matter" for the complete corporeal substance, which consists of form with matter, the soul with the organs. It is as if he said that<sup>430</sup> there are souls everywhere<sup>431</sup> which could be true, and would not be contrary to the doctrine of immaterial substances. For it is not claimed that these souls are outside matter, but merely that they are something more than matter and are not produced or destroyed by the changes that matter undergoes, nor subject to dissolution, since they are not composed of parts.<sup>432</sup>

428. A reference to Plato's *Meno* 82b–84a. See Plato, *Complete Works*, 881–83.

429. air. | Finally, to better rise above the matter and to move on to the second question, namely, whether there are immaterial substances | *deleted*.

430. Reading "C'est comme s'il disait" (manuscript M) in place of "de sorte" (transcription G).

431. everywhere | in matter | *deleted*.

432. This paragraph was written on the right hand side of the last page of the manuscript and Leibniz did not indicate where in the text it was to go. In transcription G, Gerhardt places it at the end of the actual text, while it is omitted altogether in transcription K. My grounds for

However it must be acknowledged that there is some substance separate from matter too, and to see this we need only consider that there is an infinity of possible modes that<sup>433</sup> all matter could have received instead of this sequence of variations which it actually received. For it is clear that<sup>434</sup> the stars, for example, were able to move in an entirely different way, since space and matter are indifferent to every kind of shape and motion. Therefore it must be the case that the reason, or universal determining cause, that things are and have been thus rather than otherwise, is outside matter<sup>435</sup> because the very existence of matter depends on it, and because we do not find in the notion of matter that it carries its existence with it. We must therefore look for the reason of things outside of matter, and because of the connection between all the parts of nature, this ultimate reason of things will be common to all and universal, and it is what we call *God*.

And as<sup>436</sup> the laws of force depend upon some remarkable metaphysical reasons or upon intelligible notions, without being explicable by material or mathematical notions alone, which belong to the sphere of the imagination, and<sup>437</sup> are reduced to more sublime reasons as perception could not be explained<sup>438</sup> mechanically, and could not come from<sup>439</sup> extended mass alone, that is, from the passive notions of magnitude and impenetrability that we conceive,<sup>440</sup>

---

placing the paragraph where I have is the location of a similar paragraph in the later draft "Letter on what is independent of sense and matter" (see no. 49).

433. that | the universe | *deleted*.

434. that | the planets | *deleted*.

435. matter | and therefore there is an incorporeal substance in the universe. Such a substance could not have parts, otherwise it would be corporeal, and would also be an accumulation of substances, for each part would have one. From this it is obvious that what is truly a substance and not an assemblage of several, must be without parts, and it cannot be better represented than by the center point, or the center in a shape | *deleted*.

436. as | force and action generally, as well | *deleted*.

437. Transcription K here omits "dependent de quelques raisons merveilleuses de la metaphysique ou des notions intelligibles sans pouvoir estre expliquées par les seules notions materielles ou de la mathematique, qui sont de la jurisdiction de l'imagination et."

438. Reading "expliquée" (manuscript M) in place of "expliquer" (transcriptions K and G).

439. Transcription G here omits "ne sauroit venir de."

440. Transcription K here omits "c'est à dire des notions passives de la grandeur et de l'impenetrabilite qu'on conçoit."

and as activity is found everywhere just as we ourselves experience it in ourselves, we can conclude that there is also something immaterial everywhere in<sup>441</sup> creatures and especially in us, in whom this force or this effort is accompanied by a perception that is sufficiently distinct, and even by that light of which I have spoken above. This makes us resemble the divinity in miniature, as much through knowledge of order as through the order that we ourselves have given to things within our power, in imitation of the order God gives to the universe.<sup>442</sup> And it is also in this that our virtue and perfection consists, just as our happiness consists in the pleasure we take in it.<sup>443</sup> And through that we acquire, so to speak, the right of the bourgeoisie in this city of which God is the monarch, in which we prosperously enter into society with him if<sup>444</sup> we devote ourselves to order or to the true good, that is, to God himself. Now every immaterial substance always subsists because, being simple and without parts, it is not in any way subject to dissolution.

We should even say that it will always subsist in a manner conforming to order, everything being so well ordered, as people notice with surprise every time something profound is discovered in the sciences, that we have every reason to think that what we have not yet looked into is no less so, and<sup>445</sup> that we would find, if we could know it enough, that nothing better could be wished for, such that all our complaints arise from our ignorance, somewhat like King Alphonse, to whom we owe the astronomical tables, found fault with the system

441. in | individual creatures, unless one wants to say with certain people that God acts in them by a kind of perpetual miracle, which is not very fitting. | *deleted*. Leibniz is thinking here of occasionalist philosophers like Malebranche, whom he often accused of promoting a philosophy of perpetual miracles; see for example his remarks in the “Système nouveau” of 1695: G 4: 483/SLT 74.

442. Reading “univers” (manuscript M) in place of “universel” (transcriptions K and G).

443. Reading “nous y prenons” (manuscript M) in place of “nous en recevons” (transcription K).

444. Reading “si” (manuscript M) in place of “où” (transcription K).

445. Transcription K here omits “comme on le remarque avec surprise toutes les fois qu’on découvre quelq chose profonde dans les sciences qu’on a tout lieu à juger que ce que nous n’avons pas encor approfondi ne l’est pas moins, et.”

of the world because he lacked knowledge of the Copernican system,<sup>446</sup> which alone is capable of making us judge soundly about the grandeur and beauty of God's work. From which it follows that our contentment principally consists in this knowledge of the perfection of the supreme substance who does everything for the best, not only in general, but also in particular, so that we need only want to<sup>447</sup> share in it. And to trust his goodness, his wisdom, and his power is the faith that reason already teaches us, and<sup>448</sup> the natural religion that Jesus Christ himself has also taught so effectively, by recommending to us the love of God above all things and charity toward others in order to best imitate him, and by assuring us in turn of his grace and infinite goodness.

446. Upon receiving an account of the Ptolemaic world-system with all its epicycles, King Alphonse of Castille (1221–84) is said to have claimed that God ought to have consulted him before embarking on creation as he would have advised something simpler. The story may be apocryphal, though is reported in Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1695–97), art “Castille (Alfonse X du nom roi de)” note H.

447. Transcription G here omits “pour.”

448. Reading “et” (manuscript M) in place of “ou” (transcription G).

**49. Leibniz: Letter on what is independent of sense and matter  
(mid-June (?) 1702)**

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 46–51.

M2: Fair copy, made from M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 52–67.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 154–67 (following M2).

G: G VI: 499–508 (following M2).

The following is the final version of the letter to Sophie Charlotte that Leibniz had begun several months earlier (see nos. 47 and 48). It was probably written shortly after Leibniz arrived in Berlin on 11 June 1702. Although Sophie Charlotte did not respond to it in writing, she did show it to John Toland during his stay with her in Berlin later in 1702.

[M2: fair copy]<sup>449</sup>

Letter on what is independent of sense and matter

Madam

Berlin 1702

The letter that was sent a little while ago from Paris to Osnabrück,<sup>450</sup> and which I recently read in Hanover at your command, struck me as truly fine and ingenious. And as it treats these two important questions: *whether there is something in our thoughts that does not in any way come from the senses, and whether there is something in nature that is not material*, on which, I admit, I am not entirely of the opinion of the letter's author, I would like to be able to explain myself with the

449. From the French. Complete.

450. Osnabrück | for Madam the Electress, and which Your Majesty made me read recently in Hanover | *deleted*, M2.

same charm as his, in order to obey your commands and to satisfy Your Majesty's curiosity.

We use the external senses as a blind man uses his stick, following the comparison used by one of the ancients,<sup>451</sup> and they make us know their particular objects, which are colors, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactile qualities. But they do not make us know what these sensible qualities are, or in what they consist; for example, whether red is a swirling of certain small globules which, it is claimed, produce light; whether heat is a whirling of a very fine dust, whether sound is produced in the air as circles are in water when a stone is thrown into it, as some philosophers claim: this is what we do not see, and we couldn't even understand how this swirling, these whirlings, and these circles, even if they were real, would produce exactly these perceptions we have of red, heat, and noise. So it can be said that *sensible qualities* are in effect *occult qualities*, and that there must be other *more manifest qualities* which can make them explicable. And far from it being the case that we understand sensible things alone, it is precisely these things that we understand the least. And although they are familiar to us, we do not understand them better for that, just as a pilot does not understand better than anyone else the nature of the magnetic needle that turns toward north, even though it is always in front of his eyes in the compass, and consequently it hardly surprises him anymore.

I do not deny that many discoveries have been made about the nature of these occult qualities, like for example we know by what kind of refraction blue and yellow are made, and that these two colors mixed together make green. But for all that we still cannot understand how the perception we have of these three colors results from these causes. Also, we do not even have nominal definitions of such qualities which would enable us to explain the terms. The purpose of nominal definitions is to give sufficient marks by which things may be recognized; for example, assayers have marks by which they distinguish gold from every other metal, and even if a man had never seen gold he could be taught these marks for recognizing it without fail should he encounter it one day. But it is not the same with these sensible quali-

451. Possibly a reference to Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 7.7, in which he criticizes the Stoic belief "that we see by means of the surrounding air as with a walking stick." See Galen, *Opera Omnia*, ed. C. G. Kühn (Leipzig, 1821–33), 5: 642.

ties, and one could not give, for example, marks for recognizing blue if one has not seen it. So blue is its own mark, and in order for a man to know what blue is, it must necessarily be shown to him.

It is for this reason that it is customary to say that the *notions* of these qualities are *clear*, for they help us to recognize the qualities, but that these same notions are not *distinct*, because we could neither distinguish nor unpack what they contain. It is *an I know not what*, of which we are aware but are unable to explain. Whereas we can make another person understand what a thing is when we have some description or nominal definition of it, even when we do not have this thing to hand to show him.

However we must acknowledge this fact about the senses—that aside from these occult qualities, they make us know other qualities which are more manifest and which furnish us with more distinct notions. And these are the notions that are attributed to the *common sense* because there is no external sense to which they are particularly associated and characteristic of. It is here that we can give definitions of the terms or words that we use. Such is the idea *of numbers*, which is discovered likewise in sounds, colors, and tactile qualities. It is in this way that we also perceive *shapes*, which are common to colors and tactile qualities but which we do not detect in sounds, although it is true that, in order to conceive numbers and even shapes distinctly, and to form sciences of them, we must arrive at something which the senses could not provide, and which the understanding adds to the senses.

Therefore, as our soul compares (for example) the numbers and shapes that exist in colors with the numbers and shapes that are found by touching, it must be the case that there is an *internal sense* in which the perceptions of these different external senses are reunited. This is what we call *the imagination*, which includes both the *notions of the individual senses*, which are *clear but confused*, and the *notions of the common sense*, which are clear and distinct. And these clear and distinct ideas<sup>452</sup> which are subject to the imagination are the objects of the *mathematical sciences*, namely, of arithmetic and geometry, which are *pure* mathematical sciences, and of the application of these sciences to nature, which makes *mixed* mathematics. It is also evident that particular sensible qualities are susceptible of explanations and

452. ideas | which constitute the object of the imagination | *deleted*, M1.

reasonings only insofar as they contain what is common to the objects of several external senses, and belong to the internal sense. For those who try to explain sensible qualities distinctly always have recourse to the ideas of mathematics, and these ideas always involve *magnitude* or multitude of parts. It is true that the mathematical sciences would not be demonstrative, and would consist in a simple induction or observation—which would never assure us of a perfect generality of truths found there—if something higher, and which *the intellectual faculty* alone can provide, did not come to the aid of the *imagination* and *senses*.

Therefore there are also objects of another nature which are not included at all in what we observe in the objects of either the senses individually or together, and which, consequently, are<sup>453</sup> not objects of the imagination either. So aside from *the sensible* and *the imaginable*, there is what is only *intelligible*, being as it were the object of the understanding alone, and such is the object of my thought when I think of myself.

This thought *of myself*, who is aware of sensible objects and of my own action which results from it, adds something to the objects of the senses. To think of some color and to consider that one thinks about it are two very different thoughts, as much as color itself differs from the self who thinks about it. And as I conceive that other beings are also entitled to say “I,” or that it could be said on their behalf, I thereby conceive what is called *substance* in general, and it is also the consideration of myself that provides me with other *metaphysical notions*, such as cause, effect, action, similarity, etc., and even those of *logic* and *ethics*. So it can be said that there is nothing in the understanding that did not come from the senses except the understanding itself, or the one who understands.

There are therefore three grades of notions: *the sensible only*, which are the objects assigned to each particular sense; *the sensible and intelligible together*, which belong to the common sense, and *the intelligible only*, which are characteristic of the understanding. The first and second are both imaginable, but the third are beyond the imagination. The second and third are intelligible and distinct, but the first are confused, although they are clear or recognizable.

453. are | known neither through the senses nor through the imagination | *deleted*, M1.



*Being* itself and *truth* are not grasped entirely through the senses. For it would not be impossible that a creature have long and well-ordered dreams resembling our *life*, so that everything it thought it perceived through the senses were nothing but sheer *appearances*. Therefore there has to be something beyond the senses which distinguishes the *true* from the *apparent*. But the truth of the demonstrative sciences is exempt from these doubts, and must even serve to judge the truth of sensible things. For as able ancient and modern philosophers have already rightly pointed out, even if everything I think I see were only a dream, it would still be true that I, who thinks while dreaming, would be something, and would indeed think in many ways, for which there will always have to be some reason.

So what the ancient Platonists have said is very true, and very worthy of consideration, namely, that the existence of intelligible things, and especially of this self which thinks and which is called the mind or soul, is incomparably more certain than the existence of sensible things, and that therefore it would not be impossible, speaking in metaphysical rigor, that there should ultimately be only these intelligible substances, and that sensible things should be nothing but appearances. Whereas our inattention makes us take sensible things for the only real things. It is also right to note that if while dreaming I discovered some demonstrative truth, mathematical or otherwise (as can indeed be done), it would be just as certain as if I were not asleep. This shows the extent to which intelligible truth is independent of the truth or the existence outside of us of sensible and material things.

This conception of *being and truth* is therefore found in this “*self*” and in the understanding rather than in the external senses and in the perception of external objects.

We also discover there what it is to affirm, to deny, to doubt, to will, and to act. But above all we discover there the *force of the consequences* of reasoning, which are a part of what is called *the natural light*. For example, from this premise, that “no wise man is vicious,” we can, by inverting the terms, derive this conclusion, that “no vicious man is wise.” Whereas from this premise, that “every wise man is praiseworthy,” it cannot be concluded, by inversion, that “every praiseworthy man is wise,” but only that “some praiseworthy man is wise.” Even though particular affirmative propositions can always be

inverted, for example, if some wise man is rich, it must also be the case that some rich man is wise, this does not hold good in the case of particular negative propositions. For example, it can be said that there are charitable men who are not just, which happens when charity is not sufficiently regulated, but we cannot infer from this that there are just men who are not charitable, since charity and the rule of reason are included at the same time in justice.

It is by this *natural light* that *the axioms* of mathematics are also recognized, for example that, if the same quantity is deducted from two equal things, the things that remain are equal; likewise that if everything is equal on both sides of a balance, neither side will incline, which we see beforehand without ever having experienced it. And it is upon such foundations that arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, and the other demonstrative sciences are established, in which, in truth, the senses are somewhat necessary for having certain ideas of sensible things, and experiences are necessary for establishing certain facts, and even useful for verifying reasonings by a kind of test, as it were. But the strength of demonstrations depends upon intelligible notions and truths, which alone are capable of making us determine what is necessary, and in the conjectural sciences they are even capable of demonstratively determining the degree of probability upon certain given suppositions, which allows us to choose rationally between conflicting appearances the one which has the greatest probability, even though this part of the art of reasoning has still not been cultivated as much as it ought to be.

But to return to *necessary truths*, it is generally true that we only know them by this natural light, and certainly not by sense-experiences. For the senses can, in some way, make us know what there is, but they cannot make us know what must be or cannot be otherwise. For example, even if we have experienced innumerable times that every heavy body falls toward the center of the earth and does not support itself in the air, we are not in any way certain that this is necessary while we do not understand the reason for it. So on this point we cannot be certain that the same thing would happen at a higher altitude, a hundred or more leagues above us. And there are philosophers who imagine that the earth is a magnet, and just as an ordinary magnet does not attract a needle a little way away from it,

they think that the attractive force of the earth does not extend very far either. I am not saying that they are right, but it just shows that one cannot safely proceed beyond one's experiences when one is not aided by reason.

This is why geometers have always considered that what is only proved by *induction* or by examples in geometry or in arithmetic is never perfectly proved. For example, experience teaches us that the odd numbers continually added together in order produce in order the square numbers, that is, those which emerge by multiplying a number by itself. So *1 and 3* make 4, that is, 2 times 2; and *1 and 3 and 5* make 9, that is 3 times 3. And *1 and 3 and 5 and 7* make 16, that is, 4 times 4. And *1 and 3 and 5 and 7 and 9* makes 25, that is, 5 times 5. And so on.

However, even if one were to test it a hundred thousand times, by continuing the calculation quite some way, one may reasonably conclude that this will always be the case, but in spite of all that one never has absolute certainty of it unless one learns the demonstrative reason for it, which mathematicians discovered a long time ago. And it is on the basis of the uncertainty of inductions, albeit pushed a little too far, that an Englishman has recently wanted to maintain that we are able to prevent ourselves from dying, because (he said) the consequence of this argument does not hold: my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, and all the others who have lived before us, have died, therefore we will die too. For their death has no influence on us at all.<sup>454</sup> The problem is that we resemble them a little too much, in that the causes of their death also subsist in us. For the resemblance would not be sufficient to draw certain consequences without the consideration of the same reasons.

Indeed there are *experiments* that succeed innumerable times, and normally succeed, and nevertheless in some extraordinary cases we find that there are *instances* in which the experiment does not succeed. For example, even when we have experienced a hundred thousand times that iron placed all by itself on water sinks to the bottom, we are not certain that it must always happen like this. And without

454. Asgill, *An Argument Proving that according to the Covenant of Eternal Life revealed in the Scriptures*.

appealing to the miracle of the prophet Elisha, who made iron swim,<sup>455</sup> we know that an iron pot can be made that is so hollow that it floats, and that it can even carry a considerable load, as do boats of copper and tin. And even the abstract sciences like geometry provide cases in which what normally happens no longer happens. For example, we ordinarily find that two lines which continually approach each other finally meet, and many people will be ready to swear that this could never fail to be the case. And yet geometry provides us with extraordinary lines that are called *asymptotes* for the reason that, when extended to infinity, they continually approach each other and yet never meet.

This consideration also shows that there is an innate light within us. For since the senses and inductions could never teach us truths that are entirely universal, nor what is absolutely necessary, but only what is, and what is found in particular examples, and since we nevertheless do know some necessary and universal truths of the sciences, a matter in which we are privileged over the beasts, it follows that we have derived these truths in part from what is inside us. Thus one can lead a child to them by simple questions, in the manner of Socrates,<sup>456</sup> without telling him anything, and without making him experiment about the truth of what is asked of him. And this can be carried out very easily with numbers, and other similar matters.

However I agree that, in the present state, the external senses are necessary for us to think, and that, if we hadn't had any, we wouldn't think. But what is necessary for something does not thereby constitute its essence. To us, air is necessary for life, but our life is something other than air. The senses provide us with material for reasoning, and we never have thoughts so abstract that something sensible is not mixed in with them. But reasoning also requires something other than what is sensible.

As for the second question, whether there are *immaterial substances*, in order to resolve it we must first explain ourselves. Until now people have understood by "matter" that which includes only purely passive and indifferent notions, namely, extension and

455. A reference to 2 Kings 6:6.

456. A reference to Plato's *Meno* 82b–84a. See Plato, *Complete Works*, 881–83.

impenetrability, which need to be determined to some form or activity by something else. So when it is said that there are immaterial substances, what is meant by that is that there are substances which include other notions, namely, perception and the principle of activity or change, which could not be explained either by extension or by impenetrability. When these beings have sensation they are called *souls*, and when they are capable of reason they are called *minds*. So if someone says that force and perception are essential to matter, he takes "matter" for the complete corporeal substance, which consists of form and matter, or the soul with the organs. It is as if he said that there are souls everywhere, which could be true, and would not be contrary to the doctrine of immaterial substances. For it is not claimed that these souls are outside matter, but merely that they are something more than matter and are not produced or destroyed by the changes that matter undergoes, nor subject to dissolution, since they are not composed of parts.

However it must be acknowledged that there is some *substance separate from matter*. And to see this, we need only consider that there is an infinity of possible modes that all matter could have received instead of this sequence of variations which it actually received. For it is clear that the stars, for example, were able to move in an entirely different way, since space and matter are indifferent to every kind of motion and shape. Therefore it must be the case that the reason, or universal determining cause, that things are and have been thus rather than otherwise, is outside matter. And even the existence of matter depends on it, since we do not find in its notion that it carries with it the reason for its own existence.

Now, this ultimate reason of things, which is common to all and universal because of the connection between all the parts of nature, is what we call *God*, who must necessarily be an infinite and absolutely perfect substance. I am inclined to think that all finite immaterial substances (even the genii or angels, according to the opinion of the old Church Fathers) are joined to organs and accompany matter, and even that souls or active forms are found everywhere. And matter, in order to constitute a complete substance, could not do without them, since force and activity are found everywhere, and since the laws of force depend upon some remarkable metaphysical reasons

or upon intelligible notions, without being explicable by material or mathematical notions alone, or by those which belong to the sphere of the imagination. Perception likewise could not be explained by any machine whatsoever. We can therefore conclude that there is also something immaterial everywhere in creatures, and especially in us, in whom this force is accompanied by a perception that is sufficiently distinct, and even by that light of which I have spoken above. This makes us resemble the divinity in miniature, as much through knowledge of order as through the order we ourselves can give to things within our power, in imitation of the order God gives to the universe. And it is also in this that our *virtue* and perfection consists, just as our *happiness* consists in the pleasure we take in it.

And since every time we penetrate into the heart of things we find there the most beautiful order that could be wished for, beyond even what we imagined in it, as all those who have gone deeply into the sciences know, we can conclude that it is the same with everything else, and that not only do immaterial substances always subsist, but also that their lives, progress, and changes are adjusted in order to lead them to a certain goal, or rather, adjusted in order to approach it more and more, as asymptotes do. And although we sometimes move backwards, as do lines that inflect, the advance still ultimately prevails and wins. The natural light of reason is not sufficient for knowing the detail of this, and our experiences are still too limited for us to catch a glimpse of the laws of this order. In the meantime the revealed light guides us through faith, although there are grounds to think that in time we will know more of this order by experience itself, and that there are minds which already know more of it than we do.

However philosophers and poets, through a lack of this knowledge, have thrown themselves into the fictions of metempsychosis or the Elysian Fields in order to come up with some ideas which might make an impact on ordinary people.<sup>457</sup> But the consideration of the perfection of things, or (what is the same) of the sovereign power, wisdom, and goodness of God, who does everything for the best, that

457. In Homeric tradition, the Elysian Fields were the abode of the heroic and virtuous. They were situated in the distant west, at the edge of the world. In later tradition, as well as in Virgil, the Elysian Fields were considered to be part of the underworld and a pleasant resting place for the righteous dead.

is, in the greatest order, is sufficient to bring contentment to all those who are reasonable, and to convince them that contentment should be greater to the extent that we are disposed to follow order or reason.

**50. John Toland to Sophie Charlotte (late July–early November 1702)<sup>458</sup>**

Versions:

M: Copy: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 68–75.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 167–77 (following M).

G: G 6: 508–13 (following K).

Arriving ahead of the party led by Lord Macclesfield which made the trip to Hanover in July 1701 to present Sophie with a copy of the Act of Settlement, which named her and her children as successors to the English throne, was John Toland (1670–1722). In 1702, Toland paid another visit to Germany, from 24 July to the middle of November, and for much of that time was a guest of Sophie Charlotte in Berlin.<sup>459</sup> At some point during this stay, she showed him Leibniz’s “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (see no. 49), and asked for his response, which he dutifully gave in this letter.<sup>460</sup>

Madam

I read and reread with much attention the letter that Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me, concerning the source of our ideas. A master’s hand is recognizable in it throughout, and if one does not come across this obvious fact which brings about agreement from the outset, it is the fault of the subject matter and not that of the author.

458. From the French. Complete.

459. Sophie Charlotte invited him to stay as her guest on 28 July 1702. He left her court in early November.

460. According to Stuart Brown and N. J. Fox, Leibniz’s “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” was “one of his [Leibniz’s] contributions to a debate the queen [Sophie Charlotte] encouraged between Leibniz and John Toland,” *Historical Dictionary of Leibniz’s Philosophy*, 210. Although Sophie Charlotte did manage to whip up a debate between Leibniz and Toland by using this letter as a catalyst (see nos. 50 and 51), it would be incorrect to say that Leibniz’s letter was written as a contribution to such a debate. For an explanation of what prompted Leibniz to write this letter, see nos. 44, 45, and 46.



(1) For a long time this question has exercised great philosophers, about whom I could well say without being blasphemous what John the Baptist said of our Lord—that I am not worthy to untie the strap of their shoes.<sup>461</sup> However in order to respond, insofar as I am capable, to the honor that Your Majesty does me in wanting me to explain my thoughts or rather my conjectures on it, I will first of all begin by setting down the state of the question, and will do so in exactly the same terms as the letter.

(2) The issue is therefore this: *whether there is something in our thoughts that does not in any way come from the senses*. This is what concerns us, and I do not want to lose sight of it for fear that I happen to get sidetracked, as can imperceptibly happen with abstract questions, and as indeed I myself finally noticed that the learned author of the letter had imperceptibly *got sidetracked*<sup>462</sup> and would have caused me to do the same if I had not been very mindful of it.

To show this, I will reduce all the letter's arguments to three points on the question under discussion. The first is that it is through the senses that we discover external things. The second is that we have the power of reasoning in an infinity of ways on the discoveries that we make by means of our senses. And the third is that our reasonings are something different from the very things about which we reason. To my mind, there is nothing in the letter which cannot be reduced to these three propositions. All three are incontestable, but either I am very much mistaken or none of them concerns the question; nor can one legitimately draw the conclusion from them that there is something in our thoughts which does not come from our senses.

(3) It is not a matter of ascertaining whether, in order to think and reason, we need something other than sensible things. Everyone very well knows that there must be a faculty on which sensible things act, irrespective of the nature of this faculty, though this is not the issue either. Instead, it is a matter of ascertaining whether there are things other than sensible things which determine this faculty to act, *whether it has other materials for its reasonings*,<sup>463</sup> and whether, even though it reasons about things utterly removed from the body, like

461. An allusion to Mark 1:7 and John 1:27.

462. Leibniz underlined these words.

463. Leibniz underlined these words.

about God for example, it is not the senses that have made these things accessible to it. It is well known that to build a house there must be something other than a place, stone, wood, lime, sand, iron, slate, and other similar materials, for there must be an architect who draws up a plan and who follows the rules of architecture. But who does not<sup>464</sup> see that, if there had never been any wood, or stone, or lime, or sand, or slate, or materials, in a word, if there had not been any place to build, who does not<sup>465</sup> see, I say, that both architects, considered as architects, and the rules of architecture and houses, would have been pure nothings? It is more or less the same thing here. I know perfectly well that the reasonings I perform on sensible qualities like on yellow or red, on sweet or bitter, on a good or bad odor, on the sound of a bell or a violin, on a shape round or square, are different from all those things. But the question is *whether I could ever have performed any sort of reasoning*<sup>466</sup> supposing that there had never been either yellow or red, or soft or bitter, or good or bad odor, or harsh or agreeable sound, or round or square, or any such thing, or what comes back to the same thing, *whether, with all of those things existing, I had come into the world without any senses.*<sup>467</sup>

(4) There are only two ways of shedding light on that: one is to examine the nature of this faculty that we have of reasoning on sensible things, and ask whether it is capable of determining itself and without any external cause; in a word, whether it is capable of acting completely on its own or not. The other way of shedding light on the matter is experience, which involves considering what happens in us when we think of something, whatever it may be, what is the cause when we think, and what is the cause when we no longer think.

(5) The first of these ways, which consists in examining the nature of the soul in itself, *is entirely impracticable*,<sup>468</sup> and the reason for that is quite clear. The fact is that what we call *the soul* is an “I know not what” which does not in any way fall under our senses, which are,

464. In manuscript M, there is no closing “pas” after the “ne,” but the sense clearly requires one.

465. Again, in manuscript M there is no closing “pas” after the “ne,” but it is clearly required.

466. Leibniz underlined these words.

467. Leibniz underlined these words.

468. Leibniz underlined these words.

if not the only sources of our knowledge—since the question is not yet decided—at least the most common sources of it. *One of the most able philosophers of our times*<sup>469</sup> and the one who at the same time has been the most convinced that the soul thinks independently of the senses, since he has located its essence in thought, has nevertheless admitted that *we do not know it through its idea, but through consciousness or inner sensation*,<sup>470</sup> that is, confusedly, and it is from this very thing that I derive a proof to my liking, very much of the opposite sentiment to the letter about which I am writing: for if we were capable of some knowledge which was independent of the senses, this would assuredly be knowledge of our soul, since nothing is more intimate to us than the soul, and since every time it were to withdraw within itself and wanted to take leave of sensible things, it would know itself perfectly and would see itself with a view all the more clear since it would see itself without any intermediary. For I beg you to pause for a moment to consider this remarkable fact, which is that among a thousand million thoughts of a being whose essence it is to think and which since its creation has done nothing other than roll around in its thoughts, just as the sun turns around its center, it has never had any which have made it know its own nature. So true is this that, in order to explain the nature of the soul, *Descartes*<sup>471</sup> himself was obliged to have recourse to the body, and was only able to know his soul, Cartesian though it may be, by means of the senses and sensible things. For the whole of his demonstration on the nature of the soul consists in this: having not found anything that had the slightest relation to thought in the properties of the body, in shapes, or in the movements of which the body is susceptible, he concluded that the soul was not corporeal. For now I am not going to examine whether this conclusion is right or not, since I do not want to leave my subject. I draw from it only this

469. Leibniz underlined these words.

470. Leibniz underlined these words. Toland is referring to Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), who was one of the leading philosophers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. For Malebranche's claim that the soul is not known through its idea but through consciousness, see his *De la recherche de la vérité* (Paris, 1674–75), III.II.VII.4 and VI.II.VII. English translation: Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, ed. and trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

471. Leibniz underlined this word.

conclusion, which is that the soul is not known through itself, but only through the body, and consequently through the senses and sensible things.

(6) As this way of deciding the question *a priori*<sup>472</sup> (that is, through the consideration of the soul itself) is therefore entirely hopeless, as I believe everyone will agree, we must necessarily have recourse to the other way, that is, to experience. Now experience will convince us with such obviousness that we do not know anything except by the means of the senses and sensible things, that the only inconvenience is of choosing between the great number of proofs it furnishes us. We already know that we only obtain our knowledge gradually, that our ideas increase in number, and that our power of reasoning expands and increases according to the more external things we know, the more we see of the world, and the more we associate with men of various characters and from various countries, in a word, our power of reasoning expands and increases to the extent that all our senses obtain a greater experience of all their objects. A child has only a very few ideas because it has only experienced few things, and it is clear that the strength of its reasoning more or less follows the strength of its body and organs.<sup>473</sup> It would be pointless to reply that this happens by virtue of the laws of the union between the soul and body, and by virtue of the dependency one has on the other during this life. For this would be to suppose what is in question, namely, that the soul and the body are two substances, which come about in two ways, one by the way of nature, the other by the will of some power to whom it pleases to join them together under certain conditions, and by certain laws. But as there are no natural proofs of this supposition at all, *there are grounds to conclude from these common progressions of the soul and the body that it is through the body, and through corporeal things, that the soul is what it is, that it thinks what it thinks, and that it does everything it does.*<sup>474</sup> Of course if there was in us some thought independent of sensible things and the ministry of the senses, a child would be as susceptible to this thought as a man, and perhaps more so than a

472. Leibniz underlined this term.

473. In transcription G, this sentence is mistakenly treated as the start of a new paragraph and the start of point (7).

474. Leibniz underlined this passage.

man since the great number of sensible things with which the latter is obliged to be engaged with distracts him from spiritual thoughts and from purely intelligible objects. Likewise a peasant usually has a lesser intellect and reasoning ability than people raised in the cities and in the courts, since he is restricted to a very small sphere, and has less worldliness, less instruction, in a word, less of this education which is only acquired through the senses.

(7)<sup>475</sup> And to gradually work our way up to the high point of human reasoning, I maintain that the greatest genie, and the most learned man in the world, had he displayed his intellect through works worthy of immortality, would not be able to recall in him the history of his knowledge and of his reasonings without giving credit to his senses, and to the objects he has received through their ministry. I know perfectly well, as I have already said, that all the reasonings that he makes on sensible things, the principles that they furnish him, the consequences that he draws from them, and the systems that he builds on them, are different from sensible things themselves; but once more I maintain that, without sensible things, every reasoning, every principle, every consequence, every system would have been a pure nothing so far as he is concerned.

(8) Finally, to complete this account, we can only properly understand what death is through the idea of a man who no longer has any senses, and if one gives serious thought to this one will find that the deprivation of all the senses, however it happens, is the only dividing line between the soul and body, and the complete extinction of the “*self*.” From which I conclude that, very far from it being the case that there is nothing in our thoughts which does not come from our senses, and that *the self* is of this number as the letter claims, on the contrary, the self is nothing other than the result of the impression that sensible things make on the brain. And this impression has infinitely various degrees, which are only properly known through experience. There are brains in which the impression of sensible things could not produce anything other than sensation, such as in the brain of insects. In others it produces a degree of judgement appropriate for the preservation of the animal being, such as we see in beasts. In others this same impression of sensible things produces a certain amount

475. Transcriptions K and G here omit “(7).”

of knowledge which, being cultivated, brings forth beings that are rational and capable of society. Finally there are privileged brains, in which this same impression produces the admirable effects spoken of so well in the letter.

(9) So sensible things and that which their activity produces are not really the same thing, because cause and effect are always different things, but it is also in my view the only difference there is between them, unless we wish to say more than we know, in the same way that the fire made with wood is different from the wood, although if there were neither wood nor combustible matter there would not be any fire at all, or like when one makes sparks from two stones, but if one had not beaten the stones there would not have been any sparks.

(10) I imagine that out of the blue appears a man who is organized as we are, and that while arriving a general obstruction occurs in all his senses, before he had been able to make contact in the land of sensible things. In this case, will there be a *self*? I very much suspect that there will not be a self, because the source of the self was affected before the meeting between the brain and sensible things had been able to occur, from which the *self* results. Let us look at the matter from a different angle. Since there are philosophers who *suppose the void*,<sup>476</sup> I am quite able to suppose it too. Therefore let us suppose that this same man, having all senses present and correct and the organs in proper working order, is initially located in the void, where there is nothing sensible—he will certainly be a shape, but he will not be a man. There will not be any “self” here, because according to the experience of all the centuries, there can only be one through the correspondence that our senses maintain between the brain and sensible things.

(11) After what I have just said I do not believe there is need to enter into the detail of these operations of the understanding, in which the learned author of the letter believes that the senses have no part at all, since I have shown, as much as is possible in a matter so obscure, that without the senses not only is the understanding incapable of any operation, but even that there is no understanding at all.

There are only two or three things at the end of the first part of the letter which still deserve some reflection. “Being itself and

476. Leibniz underlined these words.

truth,” says the letter’s author, “are not grasped entirely through the senses. For it would not be impossible,” he continues, “that a creature have long and well-ordered dreams resembling our life, so that everything it thought it perceived through the senses were nothing but sheer appearances. Therefore,” he concludes from that, “there has to be something beyond the senses which distinguishes the true from the apparent.”<sup>477</sup> To that it can be said: 1. That a man who had never had any senses would not think of anything while sleeping any more than while awake, and that, when we dream, the fact is that the store of ideas is already filled, the<sup>478</sup> materials are in the brain, in which the sensible objects one has seen externally come together again in miniature. So no-one ever dreams of pure appearances—the original of the dream necessarily is or was somewhere, although it may not be in the same order, or rather in the same disorder, as in the brain of a dreaming man. For among impossible things there is perhaps none which is more so than to have the idea—either while awake or while sleeping—of something which does not exist, or which has not existed, which is said in passing against the eternal ideas of Plato and the Platonists, unless one also admits eternal realities. I say that on these occasions it is also through the means of the senses that we distinguish the true from the apparent. For when everyone else’s senses agree with mine in saying that a man is dreaming, this for me is the greatest of all proofs. And I do not believe that anyone would hesitate to regard as mad anyone who, hearing the discourses of master Simon<sup>479</sup> and the witness that the whole town bears to him, would still believe that he does not exist. Be that as it may, as dreams always turn on the appearance of sensible things, I do not think that there is any occasion in which the senses are more necessary for distinguishing appearance from reality.

(12) But I notice rather late that I have just made a rather pointless argument. In essence the author of the letter agrees with me,

477. This is a direct quote from Leibniz’s “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (see no. 49).

478. Reading “les” (manuscript M) in place of “des” (transcription G).

479. Possibly a reference to a character in Molière’s play *The Miser* (1668), or perhaps to Maître Simon de Tournay, a thirteenth-century theologian whose public discussions drew great crowds. See Matthew Paris, *Grande Chronique de Matthieu Paris* (Paris: Paulin, 1840), 12: 341.

since he says toward the end “that, in the present state, our senses are necessary for us to think, and that, if we hadn’t had any, we wouldn’t think.”<sup>480</sup> I admit I thought that it was a question of the *present state* and not any other, and I would wager that the person who wrote from Paris to Osnabrück understood it thus when he asked the question. For it would be a rather peculiar question to ask how we shall think when we shall no longer exist. I said: when we shall no longer exist, and I do not withdraw from it. For if, after my death, I am a soul, it will no longer be me, since I was a soul and a body, that is, a man, which cannot be said of a soul. And if, after having been a soul for a long time, I become<sup>481</sup> a man again through the resurrection, every argument I have given until now persists in all its force. It is therefore a matter of the present state, otherwise the question is pointless. Perhaps after that I would be invited to explain what this something is which, by the ministry of the senses and on the first encounter with sensible things, produces so many arguments and has just written this letter. I reply: 1. That I know absolutely nothing about it; 2. That I am not obliged to answer, because it is not what is in question. It is a matter not of the nature of the thing, but of the manner in which it acts. 3. That on this point I undertake to satisfy anyone who will explain to me very clearly how the earth produces a mushroom.

Here, Madam is everything that can be expected on this subject from a mind as engaged in the matter as mine. And yet I will add that, when I reflect on certain rare and superior geniuses similar to that of Your Majesty, I am tempted to withdraw from everything I have said and plead against the senses in favor of the intellective faculty.

480. This is a slight misquotation from Leibniz’s “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (see no. 49).

481. Transcriptions K and G here add “ne...que” which is not in manuscript M.



**51. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (August–early November (?) 1702)<sup>482</sup>**

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 73a and 74a.

M2: Draft, revised and expanded from M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 78–80r.

M3: Draft, revised and edited from M2: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 80v.

M4: Draft, revised and expanded from M3: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 77 and 81.

M5: Draft, revised and expanded from M4, unfinished: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 75a–76

M6: Draft, revised from M4 and M5: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 82–90.

Transcriptions:

K1: Klopp 10: 178–81 (following M5).

K2: Klopp 10: 181–88 (following M6).

G1: Gerhardt 6: 514–19 (following K2).

Toland's response (see no. 50) to Leibniz's "Letter on what is independent of sense and matter" (see no. 49) was forwarded to Leibniz by Sophie Charlotte, which prompted Leibniz to respond in turn. That Leibniz took his response very seriously is clear from the number of drafts he composed. The first three drafts see Leibniz take a confrontational approach to the views expressed by Toland, while the latter three are much more conciliatory in tone.

482. This letter may have been written as late as 9 December 1702, as in two of the drafts (M4 and M5) Leibniz mentions that he has received a manuscript of an Italian translation of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, and there is evidence that he had received this on or before 9 December (see note 525). I suspect an earlier date is more likely, however, since Leibniz developed an excised postscript from one of this letter's drafts (M4, see note 541) into the paper "Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit," which was almost certainly written while Toland was staying in Berlin (see note 543). It is therefore likely that both that paper and this letter were written no later than early November 1702, which is when Toland left Berlin; unfortunately there is insufficient evidence to enable a more precise dating.

[M1: draft]<sup>483</sup>

Madam

I have read the 4 half-leaf pages in quarto which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me.

I am afraid that if I wanted to respond to all the passages in this letter wherein I find something worthy of comment, I would have to go too far and repeat myself too much. I should therefore content myself with showing that the author<sup>484</sup> has not sufficiently concerned himself with my proofs. Sensation, thought, even the will and also the one who thinks, along with other<sup>485</sup> points of this nature are among the objects or materials of our thoughts, and yet these are not objects of the external senses. And this is all I had claimed about that. But I agree that they always are and must be here accompanied by objects of external senses<sup>486</sup> and that even in another state we always have to have objects which have some analogy with sensible objects. But even though these external objects are conditions of thought, it does not follow that they are causes of it.

The author also passed over my proof of<sup>487</sup> necessary truths which are intellectual in nature and are not in any way established by experiences of the external senses, but by something independent of matter, that is, by the internal light, since a number of experiences, no matter how many, never proves that what has succeeded until now has to succeed always, although I admit that it is very probable.

Generally, I agree that to have distinct thoughts, that is, thoughts which have some relief or something which is distinguished, we need experiences which make us attend more to certain notions. But the soul would subsist, and would contain distinct notions, even if it were to have only confused thoughts in which there was noth-

483. From the French. Complete.

484. John Toland. Leibniz impersonally refers to the "letter's author" throughout every one of his drafts, suggesting that he may not have known that Toland was the author of the letter to which he was replying.

485. other | notions | *deleted*.

486. senses | and that without these objects we would not now think | *deleted*.

487. of | intellectual truths | *deleted*.

ing that stood out or was capable of being distinguished, and consequently where there was neither reflection nor memory for that time. The error of those who do not distinguish this state from that of the cessation of thoughts is a source of many other considerable errors on this matter.

I do not think that the examination of the soul in itself is as impracticable as is claimed here. The examination of the senses is much more difficult, being less immediate to us. We know the soul through its idea, but we do not know it through an image. He invents difficulties where there are none, since he would like to imagine what does not have any image. This is to want to see sounds and hear colors.

To say that the self, or what a person conceives through reflection on himself, can come<sup>488</sup> from sensible things or from the body is something for which there is no probability: supposing whatever traces, machines, or motions you like in the brain, one will never find the source of perception or of the reflection on oneself, which is a truly internal action, any more than one could find it in a watch or in a mill.<sup>489</sup> For crude or subtle machines differ only in degree.

A skeptic who denies that there are bodies cannot be refuted by what the letter says against him; the skeptic will say that these are only appearances. But he cannot deny that he thinks. So thought is more certain than everything that is said of the senses, and the truth of the senses is only justified by thoughts. This is what Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes, and others have rightly pointed out.<sup>490</sup> But things are often turned upside down because people follow the imagination rather than reason.

The soul is never entirely separated from body any more than are angels.<sup>491</sup> And in that, the present state does not in any way differ

488. come | only | *deleted*.

489. This is an early statement of Leibniz's famous mill argument. See also *New Essays*, 1703–5, A VI 6: 67–68/NE 67–68; “On the souls of men and beasts,” 1710, G 7: 328–29/SLT 63–64; and “Monadology,” 1714, G 6: 609/P 181.

490. See Plato, *The Republic*, 514a–517b, in Plato, *Complete Works*, 1132–35; Augustine, *Civitas Dei contra paganos*, XI.26, in Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 484; Descartes, *Meditations* II and III. Cf. Leibniz's remarks in the *New Essays*, A VI 6: 367/NE 367.

491. angels | and angels themselves are not pure intelligences. | *deleted*.

from the future; the difference is only in the subtlety, crudeness, envelopment, and development of organs and objects.<sup>492</sup>

The turn of mind apparent in the letter leans toward joking somewhat. I find that pleasing and suitable for livening up the matter. I would only wish that when it comes to searching for the truth, the joking is not based on false thoughts like the one here of the mushroom. He says that he will undertake to explain the nature of the soul when someone else explains how a mushroom grows. That is good for the pulpit or for popular speeches, but ultimately it is unjustified. He must have thought the nature of the soul very obscure and that of the mushroom very easy. But the nature of the smallest vegetable or animal is a hundred million times more<sup>493</sup> difficult than that of the soul and all the intellectual notions of numbers, geometry, metaphysics, etc. These intellectual researches are in our power. They are in some way in us. Only attention and order are required for them, but those researches into the characteristics of nature, such as the precise structure of a plant,<sup>494</sup> are not in our power: these are facts which depend on experiments we haven't performed.

[M2: draft, revised and expanded from M1]<sup>495</sup>

Madam<sup>496</sup>

The author of the letter which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me is doubtless very learned and clever, and I could have benefited from his reflections if he had wanted to restrict himself to examining my opinions. But instead of that, he throws himself into

492. objects. | The turn of mind which appears in the letter leans a bit toward joking. I find that pleasing and suitable for livening up the matter. But Your Majesty will be kind enough to permit me not to imitate it. | *deleted*.

493. more | involved than that of the soul | *deleted*.

494. plant, | require keener senses than ours | *deleted*.

495. From the French. Complete.

496. Madam | While rereading the four-leaf letter which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me, I see that it was written by Your Majesty's order. I therefore find myself obliged to reply to it, although it seems that it is directed against the opinions that the author already had in mind rather than against mine, which are passed over, as will be apparent now and again. | *deleted*.

those of some modern philosophers which he attributes to me out of prejudice, as will be apparent now and again.<sup>497</sup>

The first question is whether there is something in our thoughts that does not in any way come from the senses, that is, whether our thought has objects which are not included in the objects of the external senses. The letter's author says in §2 that I got sidetracked, and he attributes to me three propositions which in his view do not get to the point. But it seems to me that he got sidetracked himself, and that I said something more than what is said in these three propositions, namely, that everything that is in the understanding was in the senses except the understanding itself,<sup>498</sup> the subject, faculty, and action of which are not just responsible for thought, but are also the objects of thought, since we think of them. So among the objects of thought are thought itself, reasoning, the will, etc., and even the substance that thinks. Now all these things are not objects of any of the<sup>499</sup> external senses, since they can't be seen or heard etc.<sup>500</sup> Therefore the soul has other materials for its thoughts, contrary to what the letter's author says in §3. He even passed over an important proof I had put forward for the internal light, which is the principle of necessary and eternal truths which cannot be fully established by induction from examples or by any number of experiments that a person may perform. For although it is probable that the experiments that have not yet been performed would generate the same results, there is no necessity in it. And yet we do have necessary and demonstrative truths. This light is therefore something that the senses do not provide, and yet, since we think about it, it must be counted among the materials of thought.

The letter's author says in the same §3 that the question is whether I could ever have performed any reasoning in the event I had come into the world without any senses. It is here that he has

497. again. | It is rather as there are people who respond not to what one says, but to what they imagine that one should say on their behalf. | *deleted*.

498. itself | . So one of the objects of the understanding is thought itself, and the one who understands | *deleted*.

499. the | five senses | *deleted*.

500. etc. | He says in §3 that it is a matter of knowing whether there is anything other than the sensible things which determine the faculty of reasoning, and whether this faculty has other | *deleted*.

truly become sidetracked, and he exempts himself from responding to what I had said in favor of refuting something completely different. I do not know how he was able to take it into his head to think that I had this question in mind. It will most definitely not be found in my letter, and if he had wanted to do me the honor of inquiring into my opinions, since he purports to refute them, he would have found that I believe that everything which happens in the soul is always expressed by what happens in the body, and vice versa, and that the soul is never without organs or without some sensation through the organs. But he had his sights not on what I said, but on what is ordinarily said by certain authors, which I myself try to refute very carefully in my parallelism of the soul and the body. So I wouldn't need to respond to everything objected to in the letter. I do, however, want to follow its thread because there are definitely things in it which differ from my views, although they do not in any way serve as a response to the arguments in my letter.

The author claims in §5 that the way which attempts to examine the nature of the soul in itself is entirely impracticable. I am not of his mind at all in this. But he goes on to prove it through the fact that the soul is an "I know not what" (according to what he says) which does not fall under the senses. He therefore supposes that we only really know that which falls under the senses, but it is completely the opposite: sensible things are what we know the least, and intellectual things are a thousand times better known. They are susceptible to demonstrations<sup>501</sup> or necessary proofs, and this is the mark of a<sup>502</sup> distinct knowledge. But the objects characteristic of the external senses, like light, color, etc., are only known confusedly.

The letter's author objects again in the same §5 that the soul is not known through itself. But this is also something I do not grant, and I think that what is immediately known to us is known through itself.

He also claims that one of the more able philosophers of our times has admitted that we do not know the soul through its idea but through consciousness, or inner sensation. As if these two kinds of knowledge were opposed. It is rather because we know the soul

501. demonstrations | whereas the objects of the external senses, like color, and | *deleted*.

502. a | good understanding | *deleted*.

through an immediate or inner sensation that we know it properly, that is, distinctly or through its idea. But it seems that he here confuses the idea with the image, inventing difficulties where there are none, because he would like to imagine what does not have any image. This is to want to see sounds and hear colors. The able philosopher about whom he claims to speak is, I think, Father Malebranche, but I do not think it necessary to go into what he says here.

There is yet another objection found in §5, namely, that Descartes, in order to prove that the soul is not corporeal, was obliged to examine bodies, from which the author wishes to conclude that the soul is not therefore known through itself. This is not a valid argument. To prove that the soul is not corporeal, he had to examine what body is. To compare one thing with another (the soul with the body), both have to be considered.<sup>503</sup> Moreover, there is nothing that can be known through itself to such an extent that there is no need to consider other things with it,<sup>504</sup> because there is nothing in the world that does not have an essential relation to other things. And the soul has an essential relation to the body, of which the soul essentially provides the representation.<sup>505</sup>

What follows in §6 and §7, of the need we have for the senses, is not in any way contrary to my views. I grant that to have distinct thoughts, that is, thoughts which have some relief and are distinguished from others, we need experiences which make us attend more to certain notions in the soul than to others. Without these experiences, and without the organs which are adapted to the objects, and so to speak collect the rays and impressions of the objects to make them stronger, we would be forever stupefied like young children, or like a man stunned by a loud noise, in which he cannot discern anything, the loud noise being nothing other than a confused mass of many small perceptions nearly equal to each other.<sup>506</sup> And this shows that

503. considered. | We know the circle through itself, but in order to compare it with the square we have to know the square too. | *deleted*.

504. it | for the perfection of this knowledge. | *deleted*.

505. representation | in the unity. | *deleted*.

506. other. | The letter's author will perhaps object to this by saying that I thereby suppose that the soul and the body are two substances. But I am entitled to suppose it since I have given proofs of it, which he passed over. | *deleted*.

experience of the way in which we acquire our knowledge does not in any way prove that there is nothing in the soul except what the senses provide. We have in ourselves before experience and independently of experience this internal light, from which there results intellectual ideas and truths, but if experience does not provide us with the occasion to exercise this light and to make reflection on these ideas and truths, we will be forever stupid. But it by no means follows, as the letter's author says, that there are grounds to conclude from these common progressions of the soul and the body that it is through the body and through corporeal things that the soul is what it is and does everything it does.

I have demonstrated completely the opposite, that body in itself would be nothing but an appearance like the rainbow, and that it is through beings which are simple, such as the soul, and which are without extension, that it is everything it is. But it is sufficient to have shown here that what he puts forward does not prove anything about what is in question, namely, that all the objects of thought are provided by the senses. The other question, about whether the soul is distinct from the body and naturally immortal, ought to be treated separately.

But since the letter's author passes insensibly to it, we ought to follow him. The reason for the error many people make is that they have not considered the difference between the complete cessation of the soul's functions and the cessation of distinct functions which have some relief. This is what leads them to conclude, as the letter's author does here in §8, that<sup>507</sup> in death there is a complete extinction of the self. Whereas it can be explained by the envelopment of organs in the body and by the confusion of perceptions in the soul. This confusion produces all the effects noticeable in death, which is nothing other than a very deep sleep in which the organs are relaxed, or like a fainting fit or dizzy spell in which the perceptions are confused, for it should not be imagined<sup>508</sup> that the soul stops acting when we are in this state, and that it only resumes action when it recovers from the fainting fit or from drowsiness. This is to be ignorant of the nature of actions and impressions, which are never lost, not even in matter,

507. that | the cessation of sensation is a complete extinction of the self. | *deleted*.

508. imagined | that one stops acting and having functions | *deleted*.



even if they become confused like the great number of circles in water when a number of stones are thrown into it all at once. Even less so are substances lost, and least of all simple substances. But I go further, and hold that not only does the soul always subsist, but also the animal and organs, which were only developed in generation and, being enveloped by death, can be redeveloped in their turn and as it were restored to life sooner or later, according to a certain order of nature which always tends to the most perfect, although often by great detours.<sup>509</sup> I challenge those who believe in the extinction of the soul, or who believe it to be at least defensible by reason, to bring forward anything taken from experience or reason that cannot be explained very well as I have just done. I even challenge them to give explanations which are more satisfactory. It is easier for them to contradict than to examine things with attention and to offer no reasonable counter-argument, but they do not even contradict properly when they do not respond to the arguments that have been put forward.

Everything that is said in §10 against the thoughts of a soul without organs is not contrary to my views, for there is no such soul in nature, or substance separated from body, excepting God alone, who is the author of souls and bodies. Moreover,<sup>510</sup> when one is in the midst of a dizzy spell, or when one is without distinct perceptions from the senses, one does not think distinctly of *oneself* either. Even this abstract thought has to be accompanied by something in the organs that is related to it. For I have shown elsewhere that the most abstract thoughts have something in the organs which corresponds to them, and that without that we would not have them.

The state of drowsiness or being dazed that the letter's author compares to the void should not be taken as an Epicurean-style void, in which there is no matter at all, but as the void of other philosophers, in which space is not truly empty but only in appearance, being filled with a matter so thin and so uniform that it does not offer any noticeable resistance; or as would be the apparent rest of a vessel whose motion happens uniformly and without the slightest jolt, such that one would think it to be at rest since there would be no sign of its mo-

509. detours. | There is no substance which perishes | *deleted*.

510. Moreover, | when the organs are enveloped and reduced to something more subtle, that is, when | *deleted*.

tion. It is in this way that nature has voids or cessations, in thought as in motions and spaces, that is, only in appearance. It does not make such extreme jumps which would make it proceed to cessation.<sup>511</sup> It is too well ordered, and too united or harmonic to ever act like that. But often people are insufficiently informed of its orders and laws, and even have a very low idea of them. And those who have meditated in a very everyday way, that is, rashly, without being satisfied, imagine that one could have nothing better, and that it is as easy for them to refute what is said by a man who has meditated as what is said by people who have paid no more attention than they have. This is what makes them settle the matter in the way they do, without a necessary examination.

§ 10 says also that the *self* results from sensible things. Does he therefore believe that the *self* which thinks is formed only through sensations? It is true, as I have just said, that if I had no other distinct thoughts, which make me pay attention to my operations, I would not think distinctly about myself. But to say that this notion of the self in itself can come from sensible things or from the body, is something for which there is no probability: whatever machines, traces, or motions are supposed in the brain, one will never find the source of perception or of the reflection on oneself, which is a truly internal action, any more than one could find it in a watch or in a mill.<sup>512</sup> For crude or subtle machines differ only in degree.

(11) The letter's author then says in §11 that one could not dream without a body.<sup>513</sup> I agree with that, and I even hold that one never has thoughts which are not accompanied by traces in the body. But those who deny bodies, as some of the ancients did, and as some moderns have done in imitation of them, maintain that all our appearances of external things could be no more real than dreams. For the argument taken from dreams is *ad hominem*. You grant me, the skeptic will say, that there are very distinct appearances which are nevertheless false, such as when you said that you dream. Perhaps,

511. This is an application of Leibniz's law of continuity, which holds that nature never makes leaps. See, e.g., G 3: 52/SLT 131; G 4: 375/L 397–98; GM 6: 248/L 447; A III 6: 624; G 2: 168/L 515; FC 227/SLT 137.

512. See note 489.

513. This is a rather careless gloss of Toland's point that a person without any senses could not think while awake or asleep.

then, everything that appears to you is precisely the same, that is, false as well. If it is a little better united, he would say, it is only a matter of degree. And indeed, these people could not be refuted by sense experiences alone. To have<sup>514</sup> proofs against them, one has to come to internal experiences like the one which says “I think therefore I am,”<sup>515</sup> and to the intellectual truths as are the laws of reasoning. Here is something for which skepticism itself is useful, since it shows the shortcomings in what the senses provide. And Mr. Descartes is rightly used in this respect.

The letter’s author also claims in the same passage (§11) that we would never dream about anything if we had not had some original experiences. But the skeptic could reply to him that perhaps this life is also just a dream left over from some original experience of an earlier life, or that we could be given all our appearances without any original experiences by some superior genie, or by our very own nature or by any other cause you like, without representing any true objects. He will never be refuted unless we have recourse to intellectual truths, which are not established by sense experiences and which will always be found to be true whether they are thought about while dreaming or while awake.

There is a little teasing in §12 when I am asked how we shall think when we shall no longer exist. I had said that in our present state the senses are necessary for us to think, and that, if we hadn’t had any, we wouldn’t think. Do I therefore grant that we no longer exist when we are no longer in the present state? Very far from it, in my view—we will always have some thought and even some kind of sensation after this life, even if we do not have precisely the sensations that we have now. But says the letter’s author: after death it will not be me; it is as if he said: after drowsiness it will no longer be me and it is not me who wakes up or who comes around.

There are even more passages in the letter which show a turn of mind which is not only playful, if the desire is there to use it, but also light-hearted and which lean toward joking somewhat. I find that very pleasing, and suitable for livening up the matter. I would only

514. have | some proof against them, one has to come to intellectual truths | *deleted*.

515. See Descartes, *A Discourse on Method*, IV, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* Vol. 1, 127.

wish that when it comes to searching for the truth, the humor is not based on some false thought, as is the one here of the mushroom. He says at the end of paragraph §12 that he will undertake to explain the nature of the soul when someone explains how a mushroom grows. That is good for the pulpit or for popular speeches, since common folk imagine that what is low is easy to explain. But this is unjustified. He must have thought the nature of the soul very obscure and that of the mushroom much easier to know. But it is completely the opposite: the nature of the smallest vegetable or animal is a hundred million times more difficult than that of the soul and all the intellectual notions of numbers, geometry, and metaphysics. These intellectual researches are in some way in us and in our power—only attention and order are required for them, but those researches into the characteristics of nature, such as the precise structure of a plant, are not in our power: these are facts which still depend on many experiments in physics, in which good fortune often plays a part.

I think I have carefully worked through all of the letter written against me. But for the satisfaction of Your Majesty and for the clarification of the truth, I would like its able author to be able to recover from his prejudices which have three drawbacks. First, they are completely unfounded, as I have just shown. Second, they take us away from all the beautiful and magnificent views, leaving nothing real except the base motives of a present self-interest in the body. It is true that even when good-natured persons have this bad theory they nonetheless have a better practice. But they must have some virtue in order to support themselves against a doctrine that they believe true and that they nevertheless do not follow. The third drawback is that these opinions are worrying, as they make man and the whole of nature contemptible, and also disjointed and unsatisfactory to a mind which is lofty and harmonic, like that of Your Majesty. The letter's author almost makes us hope at the end that on another occasion he could plead against the senses in favor of the intellective faculty. I would be delighted by it. This would be the opposite of what Carneades did, who having pleaded in favor of justice, railed against it the next day,<sup>516</sup>

516. The story is related in Lactantius' *The Divine Institutes*, 5.14. English translation in Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes books I–VII*, ed. and trans. Sister Mary Francis McDonald O.P. (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 362–63.

or of what Cardinal du Perron did, who promised to refute the immortality of the soul that he had established.<sup>517</sup> I have no doubt at all that the truth could provide this learned man with a thousand fine considerations capable of enriching our knowledge and elevating our mind, whereas the way he has taken is not satisfying in any way and tends only to belittle us. As Your Majesty's insights have already made him waver, I hope that they will turn him entirely toward the right side, and that then he will work wonders.

I am etc.

[M3: draft, revised and edited from M2]<sup>518</sup>

Madam

I find that the learned author of the letter which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me undertakes to prove against me what I do not deny, namely, that we have need of sense-organs. If he had done me the honor of inquiring into my opinions he would have found that I establish a precise connection between what happens in the soul and in the body, and that I believe that even the most abstract thoughts are represented by some traces in the body by means of characters, and could not hold good without that. But I also think that the soul could never be without organs or their impressions, and never has been without them, although it can often be in a state of drowsiness in which it has many little perceptions which are almost equal and mutually balanced, where there is nothing which has any relief and which is distinguished enough to draw the attention and which can be remembered. And this happens either in the relaxation or in the

517. Leibniz's anecdote about du Perron is slightly inaccurate. The event to which he is referring took place on 25 November 1583. During a dinner with Henri III, du Perron is said to have related several proofs for the existence of God. After receiving the King's approval, the cardinal then claimed that, if he was to be invited to dinner again the following night, he would relate several proofs for the non-existence of God that were just as good. The King, not impressed with du Perron's point about the weakness of human rationality, promptly threw him out. See Pierre de L'Estoile, *Memoires-journaux Tome 2: Journal de Henri III, 1581-1586* (Paris: Tallandier, 1982), 140-41.

518. From the French. Complete.

envelopment of organs, death being nothing other than that, just as it is known that generation is only a development, such that not only the soul but even the animal always subsists, although in different states.

Yet whatever connection there is between the soul and the body, there are materials in the soul that the external senses do not provide, namely, thought itself and the substance which thinks, and the letter's author in effect agrees with this. For he makes use of the comparison with an architect, where the objects of the senses are like the materials of a house, and the faculty which understands and uses them with its reasonings, like an architect with its rules. And one should be distinguished from the other. Very well, but it should be known that, in the soul, the architect with its rules should itself be counted among the materials, that is, among the objects of thought, since we think about ourselves and about our thoughts and rules. And these rules are this internal light which establishes the necessary truths that sense-experiences could never prove.

As for the other question, namely, if there is something<sup>519</sup> immaterial, the author of the letter does not examine it, although he seems to be inclined toward a negative answer. He says a number of things in passing about which I<sup>520</sup> don't know whether we would agree, if I understand him right, and some time would be needed to go into these things thoroughly,<sup>521</sup> and I do not know if the letter's author would take great pleasure in that. We must suppose that ultimately he is of the same opinion as me. And we would also have to see some appearance of progress and some intention of seriously seeking after the truth. And he would be very capable of shedding light on the truth furnished by the right side; at the end it seems that he makes us almost hope that on another occasion he will argue in favor of the intellective faculty against the senses. And he openly reveals that if we score this victory by winning him over, it will be entirely through the insights of Your Majesty. He will do the opposite of what Carneades once did, who, having praised justice, railed against it the next day,<sup>522</sup> or of what Cardinal du Perron did, who promised to disprove the immortality

519. something | distinct from matter, that is, from what has | *deleted*.

520. I | am not of his view | *deleted*.

521. thoroughly | , but I think him ultimately to be of the same opinion as me | *deleted*.

522. See Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, 5.14.

that he had just established.<sup>523</sup> But as for him, he will join a better side by abandoning the one which, if it were taken too far, would establish nothing except matter alone, and confusion, chance, and the vanity of virtue and, in a word, disjointedness, which, fortunately, good-natured souls which could be accused of this in theory do not follow in practice. Abandoning, I say, the side that he apparently only wanted to support as an exercise, to join the side of the understanding, of order, of the immortality of the soul, and of the divinity itself—this would be to recognize in the universe the perfections whose traces we could not better recognize than in the elevated and harmonic mind of Your Majesty.

I am etc.

[M6: draft, revised from M5]<sup>524</sup>

Another letter in defense of the preceding one.

I<sup>525</sup> find that the learned author of the letter which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me undertakes to prove against me what

523. See L'Estoile, *Memoires-journaux Tome 2*, 140–41.

524. From the French. Complete.

525. In versions M4 and M5, Leibniz opened with the following paragraph (I translate from M5; M4 is almost identical): “Madam. I have finally received the translation of Lucretius entirely in Italian verse, and I enclose it here for Your Majesty. The beginning is what the late Mr. Palmieri had already read to us. This translation seems excellent; the verses of the original are even more so, and they also contain many very good thoughts with regard to the mechanical explanation of physical things. But as the source of motive action and of the wonderful order that is apparent in the laws of motion, according to what I have shown in my meditations on dynamics, i.e., the principles of mechanism itself, could not themselves be explained mechanically, and as, moreover, the source of the internal action, or of the perception of the order, could be explained that way even less, this is where Lucretius and all the others lost the plot—one must have recourse to higher notions, beyond extension, or images, and to immaterial beings, as much with regard to the entire universe as with regard to individual animated things.” Leibniz is referring here to a manuscript of Alessandro Marchetti’s translation of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, which he had apparently received on or before 12 December 1702; in a letter to Leibniz of 29 December 1702, Johann Casper von Bothmer writes that, in response to two of Leibniz’s letters, from 5 and 12 December (both now lost), he is happy to learn that Leibniz has received the manuscript. See *Gottfried*

I by no means deny, that is, that we need sense-organs in order to have our thoughts. If he had done me the honor of inquiring into my opinions he would have found that I establish a precise connection between the soul and the body, and I believe that even the most abstract thoughts are represented by some traces in the brain, in accordance with the way I have explained elsewhere; just as I likewise believe that the least voluntary movements of the body nonetheless make impressions upon the soul, even though we do not notice them because they are too uniform, or make impressions that are too confused and to which we are too much accustomed.

But since the soul has so much need of senses, and since the order of nature demands that the soul must always subsist, as will soon be explained, it follows that the soul can never be without organs more or less expressive, in order to be more or less sensitive according to its different states. So although it could find itself in a state of drowsiness, it will, even then, still have some sensations and some use of certain organs which do not receive impressions which are strong enough or orderly enough. The soul too will only have perceptions that are either confused or too faint, and almost identical or indistinguishable, in which there will be nothing which has any relief and which is distinguished enough to draw the attention, and which, consequently, could be remembered. Such is the state of infancy and of the time before that. It is also the state of a deep sleep, of a fainting fit,<sup>526</sup> and even of death.

It is somewhat like when one is stunned by a loud noise, composed of several faint sounds which cannot be discerned, and in which there is no noticeable order or harmony. It is in this way that we hear the noise of the waves in the sea, yet which we wouldn't hear if we didn't have some small perception of each wave.

---

*Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 97, 20–21. In fact Leibniz is likely to have received it earlier than 12 December, as on 9 December 1702, Sophie Charlotte wrote to Hans Caspar von Bothmer: “Apparently Mr. Leibniz will already have given an account, Sir, of what concerns Lucretius, so I am not going to speak to you about it.” Sophie Charlotte to Hans Caspar von Bothmer, 9 December 1702, Doebner 26. The translation by Marchetti (1633–1714) was entitled *Della natura delle cose* and published posthumously in 1717.

526. Version M5 has “dizzy spell” in place of “fainting fit.”



But if the noise were always to continue in our ears, if we were to hear nothing else, and even if the rest of our organs and also our memory were to provide us with nothing more to notice, the noise itself would no longer be noticeable and we would be completely stupefied, even if the confused perception were nonetheless to continue:<sup>527</sup> it is in this way that a person is stunned by a shot from a cannon, dazzled by a bright light, or seized by epileptic convulsions, the violence multiplying too much and confounding the motions of the organs.

It is the same when organs<sup>528</sup> which are too relaxed do not give strong enough impressions, too many and too few being equally harmful. It is possible, however, that what we do not find especially noticeable now that we are accustomed to being affected only by very strong impressions, could become more noticeable to us in the silence of some of our senses, just as those who are accustomed to spicy meats find that other kinds are almost tasteless until they have abandoned the over consumption of the first.

Now when this confusion of perceptions is universal and of some duration, during which nothing can be distinguished, it passes in common opinion for a complete cessation of functions, and even for an extinction of the animal,<sup>529</sup> and among some for an extinction of the soul itself, among others for a separation of soul and body. But as for the separation, it is never completely from all body; even after death<sup>530</sup> the soul still remains united to something organic, although very subtle, and every time the machine can be repaired the soul makes itself noticed too. The soul and even the animal are not extinguished either, and the cessation of the soul's functions is only apparent, because there are no noteworthy perceptions, as I have just explained. There is here a great source of errors, like taking the cessation or rather suspension of distinct thoughts for a cessation of all thoughts, and instead of considering an explanation such as the one I have just given, many people<sup>531</sup> have been inclined to favor the mortality of the soul. It is the same mistake as the common man makes when

527. even if the confused perception were nonetheless to continue | *not present in M4 or M5.*

528. Version M5 has "motions" in place of "organs."

529. and even for an extinction of the animal | *not present in M4.*

530. even after death | *not present in M4 or M5.*

531. Version M5 ends here with Leibniz adding "This letter was not finished."

he believes that there is a void wherever there is<sup>532</sup> a uniform motion, like that of the Earth, which happens smoothly.

Those who think deeply about the laws of nature find that no impression is ever lost, even in matter. It is somewhat like when several stones are thrown into water all at once, each of which makes circles that intersect without destroying each other, but when the number of stones is too high, the eyes become confused by it. Even less so are substances lost, and least of all simple substances or unities, in which souls are included. For simple substances are not subject to any dissolution, and it is undeniable that there are some, because all the reality of composites is only the result of constituents, or rather, composites are only apparent beings and do not constitute a true substance at all. All the reality of a society or a flock exists only in the individual men or sheep, without there being in the assemblage anything more than the relation, the reality of which, beyond its foundation, exists only in the mind which thinks of it; so insofar as the constituents are only composites, we do not arrive at what has a proper reality, nor at genuinely real substances. Therefore either there will be nothing real, or else we have to come to simple substances: this is also the reason why composite beings can perish—because they are not true substances—even though complete annihilation is inconceivable.

But I go even further, and I hold that not only the soul but also the animal is preserved, even though its machine is a composite which seems dissoluble. In this lies one of the greatest secrets of nature, since every natural, organic machine (such as can be seen in animals), having infinite recesses, is indestructible, and always has an entrenchment of reserve against whatever violence there might be. So much so that it subsists and remains the same throughout the developments, envelopments, and transformations, just as the silkworm and the moth are the same animal, according to the observations of Mr. Swammerdam,<sup>533</sup> who has demonstrated that the parts of the moth were already enveloped in the caterpillar, and just as the little plant which exists in seed or the little animal, while transforming and enlarging through

532. is | a material thing which does not noticeably resist, or when he thinks that there is rest wherever there is a | M4.

533. Jan Swammerdam (1637–80), physician and naturalist. He was one of the first to use the microscope.

generation and nutrition, nevertheless remains the same animal or the same plant.<sup>534</sup> For although the same matter does not remain, because it is in a continual flux, there always remains the basis of the structure.

And the experiments of very competent observers, particularly those of Mr. Swammerdam and Mr. Leeuwenhoek,<sup>535</sup> tend to make us conclude that what we call the generation of a new animal is only a transformation developed by the growth of an animal already formed, and that the animated and organized seed is thus as old as the world. This assumed, there are grounds to conclude that what does not begin in the world does not end either, and that death is only a transformation enveloped by diminution, and will even be followed in its time by a redevelopment. In this, nature, doubtless following her custom, preserves some beautiful order which tends to mature and perfect things. I leave aside<sup>536</sup> the order that God observes with regard to rational souls, or to men made in his image and capable of a society with him, whom he considers not only as parts of the machine of the universe, of which he is the prime mover, but also as citizens of the most perfect state, of which he is the monarch; a state in which there is reason to think that not only the animal but also the citizen, that is, the personality and consequently the memory of this life, is preserved or restored.

Those who are in favor of the extinction of the soul according to its nature, and in favor of its materiality, believe they triumph when they show that the soul needs organs in order to think, that it is perfected by sense-experiences, and that it seems not to think of anything when the organs of our senses are disturbed. And indeed those who support the idea that there are thoughts which the senses have no part in, and that through death the soul is separated from the body and thinks without organs, go somewhat too far, because they speak of things that are very far removed from the order of nature, which we are able to observe. As also do those who think that the beast is a simple automaton without soul or sensation, or who think

534. or the same plant | *not present in M4.*

535. Antony van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), tradesman and microscopist. With the aid of the microscopes he made, he discovered spermatozoa. Leibniz met him during his time in Paris, and the two later corresponded.

536. aside | the laws of grace, that is, | M4.

that the souls of beasts are incorporeal but that they perish regardless. But the opponents of the immortal nature of the soul are thwarted when it is demonstrated to them that what they endeavor to prove with so much effort, and in which they think they work wonders, does not help them at all, and agrees perfectly with immortality, and even shows it in its greatest light, by granting it even to animals.

The letter's author makes use of their arguments but (I believe) for a different purpose, because I do not notice him directly attacking the immateriality of the soul, apparently recognizing that the notions of matter, that is, extension and impenetrability, being purely passive, could not supply a principle of activity,<sup>537</sup> and that the modifications of these material notions, that is, shapes and motions, and, in a word, the machine, could not produce perception or thought. Indeed he also agrees with me that there are materials in the soul which the external senses do not provide. For he makes use of the comparison with an architect. For him, the objects of the senses are like the materials of a house, and the faculty which understands sensations and uses them in its reasonings is like an architect with its rules. And one (according to him) should be distinguished from the other. Very well, and that is all I ask for. But it should be considered that, in the soul, this architect with its rules should itself be counted among the materials, that is, among the objects of thought, since we think about ourselves, and about our faculties, rules, thoughts, and reasonings. And these rules are this internal light which establishes consequences and all the necessary truths I have spoken about in my letter.

So after having considered the letter which seemed opposed to mine, I find that in the main it can be given a sense conforming to mine. It is true that, if I wanted to go into detail, I would have something to say, but I do not know if this would be fruitful, unless there was a great application on both sides, and I do not think that this learned man who wrote the letter<sup>538</sup> would take great pleasure in that; also, he reveals that he has only written upon command.

Moreover, attacking him without necessity would not be the way to win him over, and yet there is something about which I may

537. Ironically, Toland later wrote a paper for Sophie Charlotte in which he argued that motion was essential to matter. See the fifth of Toland's *Letters to Serena*, 163–239.

538. who wrote the letter | *not present in M4*.

flatter myself, for he makes us hope that on another occasion he will argue in favor of the intellective faculty against the senses, and he openly reveals that if we score this victory for the right side, we would only be indebted to the illuminations of Your Majesty for it. He will do the opposite of what Carneades once did, who, having praised justice to widespread approval,<sup>539</sup> railed against it the next day; or of what Cardinal du Perron apparently did, who offered to disprove the immortality of the soul that he had just established in a speech made in the presence of Henri IV.<sup>540</sup>

In his case, he will go from one extreme to the other, if he takes sides with us and if he himself attacks (as he is able to do very effectively) the opinion of materialists, whose doctrine, if it were taken too far and exaggerated, would establish nothing except confusion and chance, and would destroy, together with intelligence and order, not only the natural immortality of the soul, but even the existence of the divinity. I suppose that he is far removed from these opinions, and he is careful not to believe that humankind and even the universe is devoid of perfections, such beautiful traces of which we recognize in the elevated mind of Your Majesty.

I am with devotion etc.<sup>541</sup>

539. to widespread approval | *not present in M4.*

540. in a speech made in the presence of Henri IV | *not present in M4.* As mentioned in note 517, du Perron's speech was made before Henri III, not Henri IV as Leibniz claims here.

541. etc. | P. S. There have often been ingenious people among the ancients and the moderns who have thought that there is only a Universal spirit which acts in every part of matter according to the organs that it finds there, just as the very same air makes different organ pipes sound differently; and that after the death or destruction of the organs this drop, so to speak, returns to the ocean of the divinity or of the universal spirit. But if this universal spirit is a material thing, it comes from nothing and does not provide the source of action and perception. If it is immaterial, how can it divide itself up into individual souls like so many drops? For to say that the same spirit is at the same time one soul here, and another one there, or at least that it thinks, believes, and wants one thing here, and that it thinks, believes, and wants completely the opposite there, is a manifest absurdity which eliminates any way of differentiating one thing from another. Different individual actions thus require different individual active beings. Now to admit individual active beings and to want them to be annihilated afterward—that is contrary to nature, for what subsisted at one time always continues to subsist. To preserve and reunite them in the ocean of the universal spirit is to make this universal spirit a mass of spirits, souls, or individual active beings, just as the

## 52. Leibniz: Reflections on the Doctrine of a Single Universal Spirit (August–early November (?) 1702)<sup>542</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 1, 12, 1–6.

Transcriptions:

E: E 178–82 (following M).

G: G 6: 529–38 (following E).

In one of the drafts of his final letter of the short epistolary debate with John Toland, Leibniz included a postscript on the topic of a single universal spirit (see no. 51, note 541). The following paper is a much-expanded treatment of that postscript and was, in all likelihood, composed in response to comments made by Toland during his time in Berlin, or possibly a (now lost) paper read by Toland in the presence of Sophie Charlotte.<sup>543</sup> Leibniz later remarked in a letter to Sophie of 18 November 1702 that he had written a paper “in order to give Mr. Toland the opportunity to show off his fine mind, if he had wanted to reply to it” (see no. 57); it is likely that this is a reference to the following paper, which was composed for Sophie Charlotte during the time that Toland was staying at her court. Neither Sophie Charlotte nor Toland responded to it, though she did show it to a Saxon nobleman, Jakob Heinrich von Fleming (1667–1728), whom Leibniz often referred to as a Count.

---

ocean is a mass of drops. Indeed, it would be to reduce the universal spirit to nothing, and to admit only individual active beings, for there is nothing real in an accumulation such as a flock of sheep, for example, except the sheep, or the things of which it is the accumulation. So it must be said that individual active beings are truly the effects of the universal spirit, but are not the spirit itself, nor its parts. These are subsisting effects as all the things of nature must be; and these souls are all the more subsistent since the animal itself always exists, although under a form which is more or less apparent. | M4. The ideas raised in this postscript were subsequently developed in the paper “Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit” (see no. 52).

542. From the French. Complete.

543. A conclusion made plausible by the fact that Leibniz first raised the subject of a single universal spirit in a letter intended as a reply to Toland, even though Toland had not mentioned it in his letter (see no. 47). Toland was of course a noted pantheist, which makes it not unreasonable to suppose that he had discussed the idea of a world-soul with Sophie Charlotte, and that word of this reached Leibniz.

1702. In Lutzenburg, near Berlin.

Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit

Some astute people have believed, and still believe today, that there is only one single Spirit, which is Universal and animates the whole universe and all its parts, each one according to its structure, and according to the organs found in it,<sup>544</sup> just as the same current of wind makes different organ pipes sound differently. And in the same way they hold that when an animal has properly functioning organs this spirit produces the effect of an individual soul in it, but that when the organs are corrupted, this individual soul reduces to nothing or returns, so to speak, to the ocean of the universal spirit.<sup>545</sup>

Aristotle has seemed to some to have held a similar opinion, which was revived by Averroes, a celebrated Arabian philosopher. He believed that there was in us an *intellectus agens*, or active intellect, and also an *intellectus patiens*, or a passive intellect, and that the former, coming from outside of us, was eternal and universal for all, but the passive understanding, particular for each, withdrew at man's death. This was the doctrine held two or three centuries ago by some Peripatetics, like Pomponazzi, Contarini, and others,<sup>546</sup> and traces of it are found in the late Mr. Naudé,<sup>547</sup> as is evidenced by his letters and

544. Transcriptions E and G here omit "y."

545. spirit. | . There is something similar to this doctrine in the Platonists' world-soul | *deleted*. It should be noted that none of Leibniz's deletions are recorded in transcriptions E or G.

546. Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) was a Scholastic philosopher, while Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542) was a student of Pomponazzi's and later made cardinal under Pope Paul III. However both rejected the Averroist doctrine of a single active intellect, Pomponazzi in his *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (Bologna, 1516) and Contarini in his reply, *De immortalitate animae adversus Petrum Pomponatium* (Bologna, 1571). For more information on the thought of both men in this issue, see Elizabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini, Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 76–80. According to Ernst Cassirer, in attributing the Averroist doctrine to these men, Leibniz was led astray by Sponde's *Annales ecclesiae*. See Leibniz, *Hauptschriften zur Gründung der Philosophie*, ed. E. Cassirer, trans. A. Buchenau (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924), 2: 49.

547. Gabriel Naudé (1600–53), physician to Louis XIII and later librarian of Cardinal Bagni, Cardinal Barberini, and others.

recently printed *Naudaeana*.<sup>548</sup> These men taught the doctrine in secret to their closest and ablest disciples, whereas in public they were shrewd enough to say that this doctrine was indeed true according to philosophy, by which they meant that of Aristotle especially, but that it was false according to faith. This finally resulted in the disputes about the twofold truth, an idea which was condemned in the last Lateran Council.<sup>549</sup>

I have been told that Queen Christina had a great fondness for this opinion, and as Mr. Naudé, who was her librarian, was imbued with it, appearances are that he gave her the information that he had about these secret opinions of famous philosophers, about whom he had read a great deal while in Italy. Spinoza, who admits only one single substance,<sup>550</sup> is not far removed from the doctrine of a single universal spirit, and it is even established—albeit unwittingly—by the modern Cartesians, who claim that only God acts. Appearances are that Molinos and some other modern quietists—among others a certain author who calls himself John Angelus Silesius, who wrote before Molinos, and some of whose works have recently been republished, and even before these, Weigel—have fallen into this opinion of a Sabbath or a repose of souls in God.<sup>551</sup> This is why they believed that the cessation of particular functions was the highest state of perfection.

548. *Naudaeana et Patiniana ou singularitez remarquables prises des conversations de Mess. Naudé et Patin* (Paris, 1701). The book is a collection of discussions between Naudé and Guy Patin (1601–72), who was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris though is now best known for his correspondences.

549. The doctrine of twofold truth was condemned in session 8 (held 19 December 1513) of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17).

550. Baruch de Spinoza (1632–77), Dutch philosopher of Jewish descent. Leibniz and Spinoza briefly corresponded in 1671, and met in The Hague in November 1676. Spinoza's most important philosophical work, *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata* (1677) was published posthumously. The claim that there is only one single substance—which Spinoza identifies as God or nature—can be found in *Ethica*, I. prop. XIV. English translation: Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

551. Miguel de Molinos (1628–97), a Spanish divine whose book *Guida spirituale* (Rome, 1675) ultimately fell foul of the Inquisition and led to his imprisonment. Angelus Silesius was the pseudonym of Johannes Scheffler (1624–77), a German poet. Valentin Weigel (1533–88), a German theologian and philosopher, wrote numerous works on mysticism, which were only published posthumously.



It is true that the Peripatetic philosophers did not make this spirit completely universal, for aside from the intelligences which in their view animated the stars, they recognized an intelligence for this world here below, and held that this intelligence served as the active intellect in the souls of men. They were led to this doctrine of a universal immortal soul for all men by a false argument. For they supposed that an actual infinite multitude is impossible and that therefore it was impossible that there be an infinite number of souls, but that it would nevertheless have to follow that there were an infinite number if individual souls were to subsist. For as the world is eternal, in their view, and the human race too, and as new souls are always being born, there would now have to be an actual infinity of them if they were all to subsist.

To them, this reasoning passed as a demonstration. But it is full of false suppositions. For they cannot assume the impossibility of an actual infinite, or that the human race has eternally endured,<sup>552</sup> or the generation of new souls, since Platonists teach the pre-existence of souls, and Pythagoreans teach metempsychosis, and claim that there always remain a certain determined number of souls which undergo their revolutions.

The doctrine of a Universal Spirit is good in itself, for all those who teach it actually accept the existence of the divinity, whether they believe that this Universal Spirit is supreme, for then they hold that it is God himself, or whether they believe, with the Cabalists, that God created it, which was also the opinion of the Englishman Henry More and of other modern philosophers, particularly of certain chemists who believed in a universal *Archeus*, or rather a soul of the world.<sup>553</sup> And some have maintained that it is this spirit of the Lord

552. endured, | or the generation of new souls, since the Pythagoreans teach pre-existence, as do the Platonists, to say nothing of the metempsychosis of Peripatetics, who teach the revolution of the same souls and | *deleted*.

553. Henry More (1614–87), philosopher and theologian. For More's views on the Spirit of Nature (which he calls the "inferior soul of the world"), see his "An Appendix to the Forgoing Antidote against Atheism" (1655) in *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*, 2nd ed. (London, 1662), 180–81, and also *The Immortality of the Soul* (London, 1659), 449–58 (III.12).

which moved over the waters, about which the beginning of Genesis speaks.<sup>554</sup>

But when someone goes so far as to say that this universal Spirit is the only spirit, and that there are no individual souls or spirits at all, or at least that these individual souls cease to subsist —this, I think, is<sup>555</sup> to exceed the bounds of reason and to unjustifiably advance a doctrine of which we have not even a distinct notion. Let us briefly examine the apparent arguments upon which people want to support this doctrine which destroys the immortality of souls and demotes the human race, or rather all living creatures, from the level at which they belong and which has commonly been ascribed to them. For it seems to me that an opinion of such importance ought to be proved, and it is not enough<sup>556</sup> to have an imagined idea of it which is in fact only based on a very weak comparison with the wind animating musical organs.

I have shown above that the so-called demonstration of the Peripatetics, who maintained that there was only one spirit common to all men, has no force and is merely based on false suppositions. Spinoza claimed that he demonstrated that there is only one single substance in the world, but his<sup>557</sup> demonstrations are pitiful or unintelligible. And the modern Cartesians, who believed that only God acts, have hardly given a proof of this, and this is aside from the fact that *Father Malebranche* seems to admit at least the internal action of individual spirits.

One of the most obvious arguments that has been put forward against individual souls is the difficulty concerning their origin. The philosophers of the school have greatly disputed about the origin of forms, among which they included souls. Their opinions were sharply

554. An allusion to Genesis 1:2: “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Stuart Brown has argued that Leibniz’s remarks here refer not to Henry More but to Francis Mercury van Helmont. As Brown notes, van Helmont was a chemist who believed in an archeus and he also interpreted Genesis in the way Leibniz describes. For that interpretation see van Helmont’s “A paraphrastical exposition of the first chapter of Genesis,” in his *A Cabalistical Dialogue* (London, 1682), 20. See also Brown’s paper “Leibniz and More’s Cabalistical Circle,” in *Henry More (1614–1687) Tercentenary Studies*, ed. Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), 82.

555. is | to speak without any basis | *deleted*.

556. enough | to form a seemingly pleasing idea of it | *deleted*.

557. Reading “ses” (manuscript M) in place of “ces” (transcriptions E and G).

divided on whether there was an eduction of power from matter, as a figure is worked out of marble, or whether there was a traduction of souls, so that a new soul is born from a preceding one, just as one fire is lit from another fire, or whether souls existed beforehand and only made themselves known after the generation of the animal, or finally, whether souls were created by God every time there was a new generation.

Those who denied individual souls believed that by doing so they had avoided the whole problem, but their solution is to cut the knot rather than untie it, and there is no force at all in an argument which is constructed like this: There are different explanations of a doctrine, therefore the whole doctrine is false. This is the way skeptics reason, and, if it were acceptable, there would be almost nothing which could not be rejected. Experiments of our own time lead us to believe that souls and even animals have always existed, although minute in size, and that generation is only a kind of augmentation. In this way, all the difficulties concerning the generation of souls and forms disappear. However we do not deny God the right to create new souls, or to give a higher degree of perfection to those already in nature; but we are talking about what is ordinary in nature, without entering into God's particular economy with regard to human souls, which may be privileged because they are infinitely above those of animals.

Something which, in my opinion, has also contributed much to drive astute men toward the doctrine of the Single Universal Spirit is that the common run of philosophers churned out a<sup>558</sup> doctrine concerning souls separate from and functions of the soul independent of the body and its organs, which they could not sufficiently justify. They had good grounds for wanting to maintain the immortality of the soul as in keeping with the divine perfections and true morality; but seeing that the organs observed in animals were disrupted through death and finally corrupted, they considered themselves obliged to return to separate souls, that is, to believe that the soul subsisted without any body, and nonetheless had its thoughts and functions at that time. And to better prove this, they tried to show that in this life the soul already has thoughts which are abstract and independent of ideas of material things. But those who rejected this separate state and this

558. a | poorly founded and scarcely plausible doctrine | *deleted*.

independence as contrary to experience and reason, were thus led to believe all the more in the extinction of the individual soul and the conservation of the single universal spirit.

I have examined this matter carefully and have shown that there really are in the soul some materials of thought or objects of the understanding which the external senses do not provide at all, namely, the soul itself and its functions (*nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse intellectus*),<sup>559</sup> and those who are in favor of the universal spirit will gladly accept this, since they distinguish it from matter. I find, however, that every abstract thought is always accompanied by some images or material traces, and I have established a perfect parallelism between what happens<sup>560</sup> in the soul and what occurs in matter. For I have shown that the soul with its functions is something distinct from matter, but that it is nevertheless always accompanied by material organs, and also that the soul's functions are always accompanied by organic functions which must correspond to them, and that this is reciprocal and always will be.

And as for the complete separation of the soul and the body, although I can say nothing beyond what the Holy Scriptures say about the laws of grace and about what God has ordained with respect to human souls in particular, since these are things which cannot be known through reason and are dependent on the revelation of God himself, I nevertheless see no reason from either religion or philosophy which compels me to abandon the doctrine of the parallelism of soul and body, and to admit a perfect separation. For why couldn't the soul always retain a subtle body, organized in its own way, which one day could even reclaim as much of its visible body as is necessary in the resurrection, since the blessed are granted a glorified body, and since the ancient Fathers have granted a subtle body to angels?

And this doctrine is, moreover, in keeping with the order of nature established by experience, for the observations of very capable observers make us conclude that animals do not begin when the com-

559. "there is nothing in the understanding which was not in the senses except the understanding itself." This is a variation of an expression popular in Leibniz's day—*nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu* [there is nothing in the understanding which was not previously in the senses].

560. Transcriptions E and G here omit "se" before "passé."

mon man thinks they do, and that seminal animals or living seeds have subsisted from the beginning of things. Both order and reason demand that what has existed since the beginning should not have an end either, and therefore, as generation is only an enlargement of an animal which is changed and developed, death will be nothing but the diminution of an animal which is changed and enveloped,<sup>561</sup> although the animal itself will always remain throughout these transformations, just as the silkworm and the butterfly are one and the same animal. And it is right to remark here that nature has the skill and goodness to reveal its secrets to us through some small examples in order to make us infer the rest, since everything corresponds and is harmonic. This is what nature shows us in the transformation of caterpillars and other insects, for flies also come from worms, to make us deduce that there are transformations everywhere. And experiments on insects have destroyed the common view that these animals are spontaneously generated in food, without propagation. It is thus that nature has also shown us, in birds, an example of the generation of all animals by means of eggs, which the new discoveries have now made us accept.

There are also observations with the microscope which have shown that the butterfly is only a development of the caterpillar, but above all that seeds contain the plant or animal already formed, although it still needs transformation<sup>562</sup> and nutrition, or growth, in order to become an animal which our ordinary senses can perceive. And as the smallest insects are also engendered by the propagation of their kind, the same must be concluded of these little seminal animals, namely, that they themselves come from other, even smaller seminal animals, and so began at the same time the world did. This is sufficiently in accordance with Holy Scriptures, which insinuate that seeds have existed from the beginning.

In sleep and in fainting fits, nature has also shown us an example which should lead us to conclude that death is not a cessation of all functions, but only a suspension of some of the more noticeable functions. Elsewhere I have explained an important point which, not hav-

561. Reading "enveloppe" (manuscript M) in place of "developpe" (transcriptions E and G).

562. transformation | and nutrition. In sleep and in fainting fits, nature has also shown us | *deleted*.

ing been adequately considered, has driven men toward a more ready acceptance of the soul's mortality; the point is that a large number of little perceptions which are the same and balanced out among themselves, with no relief or anything to distinguish them from each other,<sup>563</sup> are not noticed at all, and cannot be remembered.<sup>564</sup> But to want to conclude from this that the soul is utterly without function at that time is the same as the common view that there is a void, or nothingness, wherever there is no noticeable matter, and that the earth is stationary because its movement is unnoticeable, being uniform and smooth. We have an infinity of little perceptions which we cannot distinguish: a great deafening roar, like for example the murmur of a large crowd of people, is composed of all the little murmurs of the individual persons, which we would not notice separately, although we nevertheless have a sensation of them otherwise we would not sense the whole. So when an animal is deprived of the organs capable of giving it sufficiently distinct perceptions, it does not follow that it does not have any smaller and more uniform perceptions, or that it is deprived of all its organs and all its perceptions. Its organs are only enveloped and reduced to a small volume, but the order of nature requires that everything redevelop and one day return to a noticeable state, and that there be a certain, well-regulated progress in its changes which serves to make things mature and become perfect. It seems that Democritus himself was wise to this resuscitation of animals, for Pliny<sup>565</sup> claimed that he taught a doctrine of resurrection.<sup>566</sup>

All these considerations show how not only individual souls but even animals themselves subsist, and that there is no reason to believe in a complete extinction of souls or a complete destruction of the animal. Consequently there is no need to have recourse to a single universal spirit and to deprive nature of its particular and subsisting

563. other, | or which can attract the attention like many small noises which compose a great deafening roar; | *deleted*.

564. remembered. | This is why the soul, when in this state, appears to be without funct | *deleted*, M.

565. Reading "Pliny" (manuscript M) in place of "Plotinus" (transcriptions E and G).

566. See Pliny, *Historia naturalis* VII.55; English edition: *The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History Book 7*, ed. and trans. Mary Beagon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 101.

perfections, which indeed would also be to have insufficient regard for its order and harmony. There are also many things in the doctrine of a single universal Spirit which cannot be maintained and which are burdened with much greater difficulties than the common doctrine.

Here are some of them.<sup>567</sup> It is obvious from the outset that the comparison with the wind, which makes different pipes sound differently, flatters the imagination but explains nothing, or rather that it implies the exact opposite. For as this universal wind in the pipes is merely the sum of a number of individual winds, each pipe is thus filled with its own air, which can even pass from one pipe into another; consequently this comparison instead supports individual souls, and would even favor the transmigration of souls from one body to another, as the air can change pipes.

And if it is imagined that the Universal Spirit is like an ocean composed of an infinity of drops, which are detached from it when they animate some particular organic body but reunited to the ocean after the destruction of the organs, one again forms a materialistic and crude idea which is not at all fitting for the subject and is entangled in the same difficulties as those of the wind. For just as the ocean is an accumulation of drops, God would be an assemblage of small animals, so to speak, much as a swarm of bees is an assemblage of those small animals. But as this swarm is not itself a true substance, it is clear on this basis that the universal spirit would not itself be a true being either, and instead of saying that it is the only<sup>568</sup> Spirit, we would have to say that it is nothing at all in itself, and that in nature there are only individual souls<sup>569</sup> of which the universal spirit is the aggregate.

In addition, the drops reunited to the ocean of the universal spirit after the destruction of the organs would in fact be souls which would subsist separated from matter, and we would thus fall back into what we wanted to avoid, especially if these drops retain some remnant of their former state or still have some functions and are even

567. them. | First of all, (α) it is not in any way obvious how individual souls, imagined as briefly existing (β) when it is supposed that this Universal Spirit operates in an organized body, it does not follow that we should say either that no new effect results from it, or that there results a true | *deleted*.

568. only | immaterial substance | *deleted*.

569. souls | , the aggregate of which would be called "God." | *deleted*.

able to acquire more sublime ones<sup>570</sup> in this ocean of the divinity or of the universal spirit.

But if it were claimed that these souls reunited to God are without any functions of their own, we fall into an opinion which is contrary to reason and to all good philosophy, as if any subsisting being could ever reach a state in which it is without any function or impression. For one thing joined to another does not cease to have its individual functions, and these joined to the functions of others result in the functions of the whole, since if the parts had no function the whole would not have any.

Besides, I have shown elsewhere that each being perfectly preserves all the impressions which it has received, even if these impressions are no longer separately noticeable because they are joined with so many others. Hence the soul, reunited to the ocean of souls, would always remain the individual soul which it had been separately.

This shows that it is more reasonable and more in keeping with nature's custom to allow individual souls to subsist in animals themselves, and not outside them in God, and hence to conserve not only the soul but also the animal, as I have explained above and elsewhere. And so it is more in keeping with nature's custom to allow individual souls to always remain active, that is, to retain particular functions which are fitting for them and which contribute to the beauty and order of the universe, instead of reducing them to the quietist's Sabbath in God, that is, to a state of idleness and uselessness. For with regard to the beatific vision of blessed spirits, it is compatible with the functions of their glorified bodies, which will not cease to be organic in their own way.

But if someone wants to maintain<sup>571</sup> that there are no individual souls at all, not even now, when the functions of sensation and thought take place with the aid of organs, he will be refuted by our experience, which teaches us, it seems to me, that we are something individual which thinks, which is aware, and which wills, and that we are distinguished from another something which thinks and which wills something else. Otherwise we fall into the opinion of Spinoza or of some like-minded authors who claim that there is only a single

570. Transcriptions E and G here omit "en."

571. maintain | like Spinoza | *deleted*.



substance, namely, God, which thinks, believes, and wills one thing in me, but which thinks, believes, and wills completely the opposite in another, an opinion which Mr. Bayle has rightly made the object of ridicule in some passages of his *Dictionary*.<sup>572</sup>

Or rather, if there is nothing in nature but the universal Spirit<sup>573</sup> and matter, we shall have to say that if it is not the universal Spirit itself which believes and wills contrary things in different people, it is matter which is different and acts differently. But if matter acts, of what use is the universal spirit? If matter is only prime passivity, or rather, a purely passive being, how can one attribute these actions to it? So it is much more reasonable to believe that, aside from God, who is the supreme active being, there are a number of particular active beings, since there are a number of particular and contrary actions and passions, which could not be ascribed to one and the same subject, and that these active beings are nothing other than individual souls.<sup>574</sup>

It is also known that there are degrees in all things. There is an infinity of degrees between any kind of motion and perfect rest, between hardness and perfect fluidity, which is without any resistance, between God and nothingness. So there is likewise an infinity of degrees between a being which is active as can be, and a purely passive being. And consequently it is unreasonable to suppose only a single active being, that is, the Universal Spirit, together with a single passive being, that is, matter.

We should also consider that matter is not something opposed to God, but that it should rather be opposed to a limited active being, that is, to the soul or to the form. For God is the supreme being, opposed to nothingness, and from him comes matter as well as forms.

572. Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), journal editor and man of letters whose numerous writings—chief among them the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*—were very influential in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Leibniz is thinking of passages to be found in note N of the article “Spinoza” in Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, in which Bayle ridicules the idea that two opposites could be affirmed of one and the same subject. For an English translation, see Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, ed. and trans. Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 308–11.

573. Spirit | , or the prime activity, and matter, or the prime passivity | *deleted*.

574. souls. | It is also known that there are degrees in all things. There is no perfect motion or a highest speed any more than there is a perfect rest. There is no perfect hardness like that which Epicurus attributed to his atoms. | *deleted*.

And pure passivity is something more than nothingness since it is capable of something, whereas nothing can be attributed to nothingness.<sup>575</sup> So with each particular portion of matter we should include individual forms, that is, souls and spirits, which are fitting for it.

I have no desire to return here to a demonstrative argument, which I have used elsewhere, drawn from Unities or simple things, among which individual souls are included. This argument inevitably forces us not only to accept individual souls but also to affirm that they are immortal by their nature and as indestructible as the universe; and what is more, that each soul is in its way a constant mirror of the universe, and contains in its depths an order corresponding to that of the universe itself; and that souls vary and represent the universe in an infinity of ways, all different and all true, and so to speak multiply it as many times as is possible, so that in this way they approach the divinity as much as is possible according to their different degrees, and give to the universe all the perfection of which it is capable.<sup>576</sup>

As a result of all that, I see no reason, true or apparent, for resisting the doctrine of individual souls.<sup>577</sup> Those who do resist it agree that what is in us is an effect of the Universal Spirit. But the effects of God subsist, not to mention that even the modifications and effects of created beings are enduring in some way, and that their impressions merely join together without destroying each other. Therefore, if it is, as has been shown, in keeping with both reason and experience for the animal to subsist always, together with its more or less distinct perceptions and certain organs, and if, consequently, this effect of God always subsists in these organs, why would it not be permissible to call it the soul and to say that this effect of God is an immaterial and immortal soul which imitates the universal spirit in some way? Especially since this doctrine removes all difficulties, as seems to be the case from what I have just said here and in other papers I have written on these matters.

575. nothingness | and nothingness should be opposed to the supreme being | *deleted*.

576. capable. | And since there is no difficulty which one can put forward against this demonstrable doctrine | *deleted*.

577. souls. | For, granting that they are an effect of the universal Spirit, it is sufficient that it has been shown that all the effects of God subsist always, and | *deleted*.

### 53. Leibniz to Sophie (9 September 1702)<sup>578</sup>

Versions:

M: Extract from dispatched letter: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 378.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 8: 361–63 (following M).

During his stay in Berlin in 1702, John Toland was frequently invited by Sophie Charlotte to present papers to her. In early September 1702, Toland presented a paper in which he argued that the soul, along with everything else in the universe, is material in nature.<sup>579</sup> Leibniz appears to have been present at this reading, and in the following he offers his verdict on Toland's paper to Sophie.

Mr. Toland would do well to put the new things that he has to say in fewer words. But he likes to make grand discourses; in a word, he wants to be an author. He read a discourse to the Queen on the soul, which is more or less based on Lucretius's doctrine, that is, on the concourse of corpuscles; but he does not say how it comes to pass that matter has motion and order, nor how there is sensation in the world. Instead of dabbling in philosophy, which is not his forte, he would do better to restrict himself to the search for facts. But I am afraid that what he wants to pass off as history is just a story.

578. From the French. Incomplete; three paragraphs of court news have not been translated.

579. Robert E. Sullivan claims that this paper was "Motion essential to matter," later published as the fifth of Toland's *Letters to Serena*, 163–239. See Sullivan's *John Toland and the Deist Controversy* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 179–80.

**54. Sophie to Leibniz (13 September 1702)<sup>580</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 374–75.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 8: 363–64 (following M).

Sophie's response to Leibniz's letter of 9 September 1702 (see no. 53).

In everything I have heard of Toland until now there is nothing new, but as you very well said, he ought to say why matter has movement and order, and how there is sensation in the world, which would be strange, and about which he apparently knows nothing.

580. From the French. Incomplete; various items of political news and court gossip have not been translated.

## 55. Leibniz to Sophie (mid-September 1702)<sup>581</sup>

Versions:

M: Extract: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 375. The extract is written on the back of Sophie's letter to Leibniz of 13 September 1702 (see no. 54).

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 8: 364–65 (following M).

G: G 6: 519–20 (following K).

Leibniz's response to Sophie's letter of 13 September 1702 (see no. 54). Sophie did not respond to any of the points raised here.

(Extract from my letter to Madam the Electress.)

Mr. Toland has declared his opinion to Her Majesty, which is precisely that of Hobbes, that there is nothing else in nature than its shapes and motions, which was also the opinion of Epicurus and of Lucretius, except that Epicurus and Lucretius allowed the void and Atoms, or hard particles, whereas Hobbes wants everything full and soft, which is also my opinion.<sup>582</sup> But I believe that we must look beyond matter for the origin of action, perception, and order, which is to say beyond that which is purely passive and indifferent to motion. Also, Your Electoral Highness has already remarked that Toland, reasoning correctly, could not explain these three things, which should not exist at all [if his view were correct]. And in order to make him aware of this, I wrote a sort of a letter to the Queen, in which, without mentioning

581. From the French. Complete.

582. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), English philosopher, today best known for his political writings *Leviathan, or, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London, 1651), and *De corpore politico. Or the Elements of Law, Moral & Politick* (London, 1652). Hobbes became notorious in the early modern period on account of his fully mechanistic account of nature which involved the claim that only bodies (i.e., material things) exist, and as a result he was often denounced as an atheist. Leibniz is referring to Hobbes, *De corpore* (London, 1655).

him, I elaborated a little on the necessity of allowing something more than what he says.<sup>583</sup> But he has not wanted to reveal his doubts about my letter, and when I pressed him to tell me them at least verbally, so that I could try to give him clarification, he told me that he no longer had the paper, and that, consequently, he no longer remembered his objections, even though he had read it only two or three days beforehand. I told him, among other things, that there are mathematical demonstrations, about which the most excellent mathematicians of the time agree; by means of these demonstrations it is clear that there are<sup>584</sup> different concepts of motion, but he avoided going into that, apparently because he is not sufficiently versed in those doctrines. I therefore asked him at that point whether he had a demonstration for his opinion, in which case, I declared, it would be possible to avoid examining the reasoning of others contrary to him. But since he admitted to me that he had not, I told him that he should therefore not claim that his opinion was true, and that he could only say that he provisionally believed it until someone proved to him the contrary. All this has convinced me that he is hardly concerned about the truth, and that he only wants to distinguish himself by novelty and peculiarity. Because when someone loves the truth and has some spare time, they enter willingly into a meticulous discussion.

583. Leibniz may have been thinking here of his “Letter on what is independent of sense and matter” (see no. 49); this is the view of Michel Fichant, “Leibniz et Toland: philosophie pour princesses?” 425, n20. If it is correct, then Leibniz had evidently forgotten what had originally prompted him to write that letter (for which, see notes 369 and 374). Alternatively Leibniz may have been referring to his letter for Sophie Charlotte which served as a response to Toland’s letter (see no. 51), or his paper “Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit” (see no. 52). It may even be the case that the letter to which Leibniz refers is no longer extant.

584. Transcriptions K and G here omit “demonstrations de mathematique, dont les plus excellens mathematiciens du temps conviennent; par les quelles on voit qu’il y a des.”

**56. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (first half of November (?) 1702)<sup>585</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 73a.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 193–94 (following M).

G: G 6: 521–22 (following K).

During a visit to Berlin in the fall of 1702, Jakob Heinrich von Fleming became involved in the philosophical discussions with Leibniz, Toland, and Sophie Charlotte. The latter showed Fleming one of Leibniz's papers, "Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit" (see no. 52), and Fleming wrote a response to it, now lost, which Sophie Charlotte passed on to Leibniz. The following is Leibniz's response to Fleming's letter. Sophie Charlotte did not reply to it.

I have read the<sup>586</sup> paper which Your Majesty was kind enough to pass on to me on the subject of my letter. It is very much to my liking, as it says that the immaterial is active, and that the material is passive. This is precisely my idea.<sup>587</sup> I also recognize degrees in activities, like life, perception, and reason, and that therefore there can be three or<sup>588</sup> more kinds of souls, which are called vegetative, sensitive, and rational, and that there are bodies which possess life without sensation and others which possess life and sensation without reason. Nevertheless I believe that the sensitive soul is vegetative at the same time, and that the rational soul is vegetative and sensitive, and that therefore in us one single soul consists of these three degrees, without it being necessary to conceive as it were three souls in us, of which the inferior is

585. From the French. Complete.

586. the | two papers | *deleted*; it should be noted that none of Leibniz's deletions are recorded in transcriptions K and G.

587. idea. | But aside from God, from whom all things continually emanate, I do not think that one active thing can act on another, except through the body | *deleted*.

588. Transcriptions K and G here omit "trois ou."

material in relation to the superior, and it seems that this would be to multiply beings without necessity.

I also doubt whether it can be said that one soul acts on another, or on the active part of another substance.<sup>589</sup>

Since every created substance is composed of the active and the passive, it is sufficient that it is acted upon through its passive part. As for God, his operation<sup>590</sup> is of an entirely different kind, because it is a continual production, and thus our soul is not strictly speaking acted upon in this respect.

In death, or rather the appearance of death, since I take it only for an envelopment, we do not lose life, sensation or reason, but what prevents us from noticing that for a time is the confusion, that is, the fact that<sup>591</sup> at that time we have an infinity of little perceptions all at once, in which there is no single one which is clearly distinguished from the others. That is why in a dream that is barely distinct, and in a fainting fit, we remember nothing.

Moreover, the order of degrees in the suspension of activities is not always observed in the way that has been indicated, as if it was up to reason to stop first; for we sometimes reasons in dreams, when we sense nothing at all—I mean distinctly,<sup>592</sup> since we always sense confusedly.

But these minor remarks do not destroy the heart of the idea in the letter, in which I find something solid and original.

This doctrine is thoroughly ingenious. It does have some difficulties, however. I grant that, aside from God, several other kinds of active beings or souls can be conceived. But there remains a question about which I do not know if I can be entirely of the<sup>593</sup> opinion of the illustrious author of this piece. He conceives a body being formed when the vegetative soul is joined to its matter. This body, that is, these two things together, can be the matter to a more elevated soul, i.e., a sensitive soul, to form an animal, which is a different body. And this new body can again serve as matter to the rational soul, to form man.

589. substance. | It is only on the body, or on the material part, that one can act. | *deleted*.

590. operation | on us is | *deleted*.

591. that | we have an infinity of little perceptions | *deleted*.

592. Transcriptions K and G here omit “j’entends distinctement.”

593. the | ingenious opinion | *deleted*.



And it seems that he even wants to say that man is a body which serves as matter to the divinity,<sup>594</sup> to make a new subsisting thing, such as is attributed to the man-God, namely, to the messiah. Thus it seems that he inadvertently establishes the incarnation of God. But it seems that he conceives something similar in all men, elsewhere [he conceives something similar] in creatures. The divinity, as the prime active being, acts on primary matter or on the final passivity through all these degrees and through intermediate souls.<sup>595</sup>

594. divinity | . I don't know if he understands this of every man | *deleted*.

595. Leibniz wrote this paragraph on the right-hand side of the first side of the page without indicating where in the main body of the letter it was supposed to go. This paragraph is not recorded in transcriptions K and G.

**57. Leibniz to Sophie (18 November 1702)**

Versions:

M1: Extract: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 36.

M2: Partial copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 575.

Transcriptions:

K1: Klopp 8: 396–97 (following M1).

K2: Klopp 10: 192 (following M2).

G: G 6: 520–21 (following K2).

The following was written to keep Sophie up to date with the philosophical activities in Berlin following the arrival there of Jakob Heinrich von Fleming.

[M1: extract]<sup>596</sup>

Count Fleming, having read my paper,<sup>597</sup> which was written in order to give Mr. Toland the opportunity to show off his fine mind, if he had wanted to reply to it, wrote a rather nice letter to the Queen about it, in which he says that the immaterial is active, and the material passive. And that an inferior activeness, having formed a body with its passiveness, is very often subject to another superior activeness, that in this way simple life forms a living body; but that a higher activeness, to which this living body serves as matter, forms an animal. And that the animal itself serves as matter with regard to the activeness that forms man. And that even man is like matter compared to the supreme activeness that is the divinity. I wrote a few words about that to the Queen,<sup>598</sup> where I said that Count Fleming inadvertently establishes the incarnation of God. For just as activeness joined to the

596. From the French. Incomplete; various items of political news and gossip have not been translated.

597. "Reflections on the doctrine of a single universal spirit" (see no. 52).

598. Leibniz is referring to his letter to Sophie Charlotte from first half of November (?) 1702 (see no. 56).

animal makes man, so the divinity joined to man would make<sup>599</sup> the man-God. It is true that ultimately the divinity is joined, albeit less closely, to all creatures, and that all creatures<sup>600</sup> have their degree of activity and order, which makes them imitate the divinity, and even that all true or<sup>601</sup> simple substances, which is to say those that are not an assemblage of other things, must always subsist, etc.

599. make | man into God | M2.

600. Transcription K1 here omits “les creatures.”

601. Reading “ou” (manuscript M1) in place of “et” (transcription K1).

**58. Sophie to Leibniz (27 November 1702)<sup>602</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 402–3.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 8: 401–2 (following M).

Sophie's response to Leibniz's letter of 18 November 1702 (see no. 57).

I do not understand very well what thought is, and how the immaterial is passive, for I do not know what the immaterial is nor how the material-active forms a body with the immaterial. I confess that this is beyond me. Perhaps I do not understand the terms of art well enough to be able to penetrate to the truth of the matter. I have not seen what you wrote to the Queen on this subject.

602. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

**59. Sophie to Leibniz (13 December 1702)<sup>603</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 412–13.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 8: 404–5 (following M).

Sophie's response to a no longer extant letter from Leibniz, which was likely a reply to her letter of 27 November 1702 (see no. 58). Leibniz did not respond to the following remarks, thus ending the exchange on Fleming's philosophy.

Hanover, 13 December 1702

To assure me of General Fleming's friendship is always a nice thing to say to me, although his philosophy is beyond me. What consoles me is seeing that finer minds than mine do not understand it either...

603. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

**60. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (5 August 1703)<sup>604</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 116–17.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 10: 212–13 (following M).

The following remarks seem to have been written by Leibniz in an attempt to keep Sophie Charlotte up to date with his philosophical enterprises.

I have had some new philosophical discussions. A French Benedictine, author of the book *De la connaissance de soi-même*,<sup>605</sup> who follows the principles of Father Malebranche, produced some objections against me in his work, an extract of which was sent to me from Paris. I have written a response to support my system of unities and the union of the soul and body, the obvious simplicity of which he admits struck him.<sup>606</sup> He wanted to drag me into the dispute on freedom, which is a good way to tarnish people; but I am much too informed in this matter to fall for it.

Having also had a conversation with Monsignor the Elector in the presence of Madam the Electress on the nature of goodness and justice, and whether it is an arbitrary thing or whether it is founded in eternal reasons, like numbers and shapes, I wrote a

604. From the French.

605. François Lamy (1636–1711), theologian and philosopher who wrote numerous works following his forced resignation as prior of Rebais in 1687. The edition of *De la connaissance de soi-même* that discussed Leibniz's philosophy was published in Paris in 1699. Leibniz made notes on it on 30 November 1702, G 4: 577–90/LNS 152–64.

606. Leibniz's response—"Reponse de M. Leibnitz aux objections que l'auteur du livre de la Connoissance de soi-même, a faites contre le système de l'harmonie préétablie"—was not published until 1709, in a supplement to the *Journal des sçavans*. English translation in LNS 165–70. Woolhouse and Francks date the writing of Leibniz's response to 1704, though as is clear from this letter to Sophie Charlotte, the response was written in or before August 1703.

small discourse on the subject, and I do not know if I will dare to put these<sup>607</sup> trifling matters under the eyes of Your Majesty one day.<sup>608</sup>

607. Reading “ces” (manuscript M) in place of “les” (transcription K).

608. Patrick Riley claims that this is an allusion to at least the first part of Leibniz’s “Meditation on the common concept of justice,” which treats of the themes mentioned here. See Patrick Riley, “Leibniz’s *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, 1703–2003,” *The Leibniz Review* 13 (2003): 67–68. An English translation of Leibniz’s text is available in R 45–64.

**61. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (14 August 1703)<sup>609</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 118 and 120.

Transcriptions:

SP: SP 318–19 (following M).

K: Klopp 10: 216–17 (following M).

Sophie Charlotte's reply to Leibniz's letter of 5 August 1703 (see no. 60).

I beg you to send me the discourse you have written for the Elector. As I am of your view on this subject, I would be delighted to see it reinforced by good arguments.

609. From the French. Incomplete; several items of news have not been translated.



## 62. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (17 November 1703)<sup>610</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 124–25.

Leibniz appears to have written the following in order to keep Sophie Charlotte up to date with his principal philosophical project of the time, the book-length *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1703–5).

... There is a French translation of the book entitled *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* written by a renowned Englishman called Mr. Locke.<sup>611</sup> As his philosophy does not agree too well with mine, such as when he thinks that the soul is not imperishable, and as he nevertheless shows a great deal of insight, I have written some remarks on it while reading a part of his work when I went to Brunswick and Wolfenbüttel, and when I have the time I will finish the rest. It will be an occupation for a while, which will give me the advantage of making my court at Lützenburg. His opinions are quite popular, and will win the approval of many who do not go deeply into things. This is why it seems important to me to respond to them.

610. From the French. Incomplete; several paragraphs of gossip and political news have not been translated.

611. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The French translation referred to by Leibniz was made by Pierre Coste, and published as *Essai philosophique concernant l'entendement humain, où l'on montre quelle est l'étendue de nos connoissances certaines, et la manière dont nous y parvenons* (Amsterdam, 1700).

**63. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (4 December 1703)<sup>612</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 126–27.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 10: 219–20 (following M).

Sophie Charlotte's reply to Leibniz's letter of 17 November 1703 (see no. 62).

Berlin, 4 December

Sir, I am reading Mr. Locke's book which you mentioned in your letter,<sup>613</sup> and I am up to the part on innate principles which seem to me so well combated that it makes me much more curious to see what you say to the contrary. One would be too happy if philosophical speculations could distract from the bad news that one receives from all sides. But as we both cannot remedy it, it seems to me that it is right to get over it and leave it to these able ministers of state and army generals to worry about the blunders they have made which cause all these wretched consequences.<sup>614</sup> They do not give overly apparent ideas of the beautiful order of the universe, or at least I feel sorry for those who depend on such people since their suffering has to serve the good of the universe, which is not consoling at all. Father de la Tour knows a much more agreeable and happier profession.<sup>615</sup> I was sorry to see him

612. From the French. Complete.

613. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

614. Sophie Charlotte may be referring here to some news reported by Leibniz in his letter of 17 November 1703: "It is thought that the King of Poland will recall the troops which are under the command of Mr. de Schulenburg, having no other infantry. But I fear that the best part of those troops have perished, and that they will all perish before they are able to join up with him, for they are in want of everything." *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 125.

615. Pierre-François d'Arèze de la Tour (1636–1733), General of the Oratory in Paris.

leave, as I respect him in his way as much as I do Father Vota.<sup>616</sup> If I do not come to Hanover, although I hope to do so, I hope to see you here, Sir, and to assure you that I am wholly devoted to serving you.

Sophie Charlotte

616. Carlo Maurizio Vota (1629–1715), Jesuit priest and confessor of the Elector of Saxony.

**64. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (7 December 1703)**<sup>617</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 129–30.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 10: 220–24 (following M).

Leibniz's reply to Sophie Charlotte's letter of 4 December 1703 (see no. 63).

Hanover, 7 December 1703

Madam

Although Mr. Locke's book is well written,<sup>618</sup> I fear that it will seem too dry to Your Majesty, as this author, while very clever, is not enough of a mathematician to know the nature of demonstrations. The upshot of this is that he did not know enough to distinguish the sources of the universally or eternally necessary truths and the truths of fact (or particular and contingent truths), which are not bound to be true and are not of an absolute necessity at all. Sense-experiences teach us truths of fact, but they are never able to teach us what is necessary; for even if a thing has happened a million times it does not follow that it will always happen for all eternity. For example, the sun always returns before 24 hours have passed, and this has been true for several thousands of years, but a time may come when it fails to be true, whereas necessary truths cannot fail to be true. Knowledge of facts is called empirical, because it does not come from knowledge of reasons, which are required in mathematics. For example, experience shows that the odd numbers are consecutively the differences between the square numbers taken in succession.

617. From the French. Incomplete; several paragraphs of political news and court gossip have not been translated.

618. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

Numbers multiplied	1	2	3	4	5	6	etc.
by themselves,	1	2	3	4	5	6	etc.
squared		—	—	—	—	—	—
	1	4	9	16	25	36	
	.	..	..	..	..	.	
	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Differences		3	5	7	9	11	

and continuing like that for a long time the experience is that it succeeds, so that it is very probable that it would always succeed if continued to infinity; but one is not absolutely assured of it until one knows the reason for it. As, then, the reasons or eternal truths cannot be proved by experiences alone or by the external senses alone, it follows that they draw their source only from the innate light, or from natural reason. And these truths are also known before experience. For example, everyone will accept this principle of Archimedes before having experienced it, namely, that if in a balance everything was equal on both sides, like the weights, the form of the balance, external impression, etc., nothing would move because there is no reason why one side should incline rather than the other, and they cannot both incline. Therefore these sorts of truths are only known by the assistance of the natural light. However it is very true that the external senses give us the occasion to think effectively about these truths, and that without them we wouldn't think about the truths, and they would only be potentially and habitually in our mind, that is, by the disposition that it has to yield to them in the event that we come to think of them.

Your Majesty has all the reasons in the world to say that forgetting disagreeable things (for a time at least), such as the bad news of which she speaks, is one of the useful things about the search for truth. This only confirms what I have always thought, and what I maintained in Herrenhausen and Linsburg...

**65. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (8 May 1704)**

## Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 141–42.  
 M2: Draft, revised from M1, incomplete: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 612, 7r. This draft is written on the back of the last page of a draft of a letter to Damaris Masham, from early May 1704.  
 M3: Fair copy, made from M2, incomplete: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 143.

## Transcriptions:

- K: Klopp 10: 237–45 (following M1).  
 G: G 3: 343–48 (following K).

In December 1703, Lady Damaris Masham (1658–1708), daughter of the English philosopher Ralph Cudworth (1617–88), initiated a correspondence with Leibniz by sending him a copy of Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1678).<sup>619</sup> In her second letter to Leibniz, of 29 March 1704,<sup>620</sup> Masham enquired of Leibniz what he meant by “forms,” and also how he intended to respond to Pierre Bayle's criticisms of his work in the second edition of the *Dictionary* (article “Rorarius”). Leibniz responded to Masham in early May 1704,<sup>621</sup> and shortly afterward wrote the following letter to Sophie Charlotte, in which he repeats much of the material from his letter to Masham, but also enlarges on it so that the following letter serves

619. Leibniz in fact had studied this book in the spring or summer of 1689 and made reasonably extensive notes on it; see A VI 4: 1943–55.

620. G 3: 337–38.

621. G 3: 338–43. Partial English translation in LNS 204–7. For more information on the Leibniz-Masham correspondence, see Rita Widmaier, “Damaris Masham,” *Studia Leibnitiana* 18 (1986): 211–27, especially 218–24; Pauline Phemister, “All the time and everywhere everything's the same as here: The Principle of Uniformity in the Correspondence between Leibniz and Lady Masham,” in *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, ed. Paul Lodge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 193–213; Robert C. Sleight Jr., “Reflections on the Masham-Leibniz Correspondence,” in *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter and Metaphysics*, ed. Christia Mercer and Eileen O' Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 119–26. For the whole of the Leibniz-Masham correspondence, see G 3: 336–43 and 348–75. English translations of parts of the correspondence are available in LNS 203–20.

more as an outline of Leibniz's philosophy as a whole than as a response to the questions that Masham had asked.

[M1: draft]<sup>622</sup>

Hanover, 8 May 1704<sup>623</sup>

Madam

I am delighted to learn that Miss Pöllnitz's illness is not what we feared,<sup>624</sup> and that she soon will be, or already is, with Your Majesty.

An English lady, called Lady Masham, gave me the gift of a book by her late father, called Mr. Cudworth, which is in folio,<sup>625</sup> entitled *The Intellectual System*; the thanks I gave for that enticed a very obliging reply, in English, in which she asked me for some clarification of what she had read about me in Mr. Bayle and in the *Journal des sçavans*. I was obliged to write her recently a rather long letter about that, in which I explained to her that my great principle of natural things is that of Harlequin, Emperor of the Moon (whom I did not, however, do the honor of quoting)—*that it is always and everywhere in all things just as it is here*.<sup>626</sup> That is, that nature is fundamentally uniform, although there is variety in the greater and the lesser and in the degrees of perfection.<sup>627</sup> This gives us the simplest and most intelligible philosophy in the world. Firstly I compare other creatures with ourselves. We find bodies, like human bodies for example, in

622. From the French. Complete.

623. In the top right corner of the first page, Leibniz wrote: "To her majesty the Queen of Prussia."

624. In an earlier letter, Sophie Charlotte reveals that she had feared Pöllnitz had developed cancer, but that her fears turned out to be unfounded. See Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz, 3 May 1704, Klopp 10: 231.

625. Versions M2 and M3 omit "in folio."

626. A reference to Fatouville's play *Arlequin, empereur dans la lune* (1683), in the final act of which the characters Colombine, Isabelle, and the doctor (and, at one point, all of the characters together) use the phrase "C'est tout comme icy" [It is all as it is here].

627. Version M3 ends here.

which there is perception.<sup>628 629</sup> But that small part of matter which composes these bodies would be much too privileged if it alone had an advantage that would distinguish it utterly and even essentially from all the others around it.<sup>630</sup> We must therefore conclude that there is life and perception everywhere. But as our own perceptions are sometimes accompanied by reflection, and sometimes not, and are more or less clear and distinct, it is easy to conclude that there will be living beings whose perception will be obscure and confused, and who are even without reflection, which is in us the mother of the sciences. This same uniformity of nature, but accompanied by richness and ornament, makes me think that we are not the only beings with reflection in the universe, and that there will even be some that surpass us magnificently, and it is in this way that we conceive what we call “genies.” Ultimately, however, *it will still be as it is here*, and these genies, in my opinion, would still be accompanied by organic bodies worthy of them, of a subtlety and force proportionate to the knowledge and power of these sublime minds.<sup>631</sup> And in accordance with this principle there will never be separate souls, nor intelligences entirely detached from matter, except the sovereign mind, author of everything and of matter itself.

628. Reading “perception” (manuscript M1) in place of “perfection” (transcription G).

629. perception. | But this part of matter which composes these bodies would be too privileged if it alone had this advantage; thus I hold that there is life and perception everywhere, although this perception is not accompanied by reflection in all animals and in all other living things since we ourselves could not think about all our perceptions. And as our soul has an organic body, I conclude that other souls have them too, and what is more, that the soul has had and always will have an organic body, so that it is thereby still the case that *all is as it is here*. Death can only be an envelopment of the organs which makes perception less distinct, like when we are stunned by a great blow or a loud noise, that is, by too great a multitude of insufficiently distinguishable little perceptions. I say as much of genies, which must also have their body. Finally, as we experience distinctly that the soul is led to thought by the perception of good and evil, and that in the actions of bodies dependent on their | M2. Version M2 ends here.

630. it. | It would be as though there were only three or four blooms in a huge field. | *deleted*; it should be noted that none of Leibniz’s deletions are recorded in transcriptions K or G.

631. minds. | And in general, until now we have surpassed the other creatures with us | *deleted*.



So far I have compared creatures together, which I find all to be basically the same. Let us now compare their past and futures states with their present state. And on that I say that since the beginning of the world, and for all the time to come, it always is and will be fundamentally *all as it is here* and all as it is at present, not only with regard to different beings, but also with regard to one being compared with itself. That is, each being which is alive or endowed with perception will always remain that way, and will always keep<sup>632</sup> proportioned organs.<sup>633</sup> As perception and matter are universal with regard to places, they will also be universal with regard to times, which is to say that not only will each substance have perception and organs, but also that it will always have them. I speak here of a *substance*, but not of a simple *assemblage of substances*, as might be a herd of animals or a pond full of fish, where it suffices that the sheep and the fish have perception and organs, although we should conclude that in the spaces, such as in the water of the pond between the fish, there will again be other living things, but smaller, and it will always be thus, without any empty space. Now it is not conceivable how perception, any more than matter, can begin naturally. For any machine we can imagine will always be nothing but the impact of bodies, size, shape, and motion, which we will conceive as produced through its means, which we rightly understand to be something other than perception; so not being able to begin naturally, it should not end naturally either. And the difference between one substance and itself cannot be greater than that between one substance and another. That is, the same substance can only have perception sometimes more lively, sometimes less lively, and accompanied by more or less reflection. And nothing will be able to destroy all the organs of this substance, as it is essential to matter to be organic and full of artifice throughout, since it is the effect and continual emanation of a sovereign intelligence, although these organs and artifices must more often than not be located in the small parts that are invisible to us, as it is easy to judge from what we see. Here the maxim that *all is as it is here*, in the invisible as well as in the visible, still holds good. From which it again follows that naturally, and speaking according

632. keep | organs proportioned to its perception | *deleted*.

633. organs. | For a thing as universal and as essential as perception cannot be removed | *deleted*.

to metaphysical rigor, there is neither generation nor death, but only development and envelopment of the same animal. Otherwise there would be too much of a leap, and nature would deviate too much from its character of uniformity through an inexplicable change of essence. Experience confirms these transformations in some animals, where nature herself has shown us a small sample of what she hides elsewhere. Observations also make the most industrious observers conclude that the generation of animals is nothing other than growth together with transformation, which strongly suggests that death can only be the opposite, the difference being only that in one case the change happens gradually, and in the other it happens suddenly and by some violence. Moreover, experience even shows that too many barely distinguishable little perceptions, such as those that follow a blow to the head, stuns us, and that in a blackout it happens that we remember, and should remember, so few of these perceptions that it is as if we had not had any. Therefore the rule of uniformity should not lead us to make another judgement about death even in animals, according to the natural order, since the matter is easy to explain in this way, which is already known and experienced, and is inexplicable in any other manner. It is impossible to conceive how the existence or the activity of the perceptive principle begins or ends, nor is it any more possible to conceive its separation. Moreover it is easy to conclude that the sequence of these changes in an animal will doubtless still have a very beautiful order, and one very capable of giving satisfaction, since there is order and artifice everywhere. In order to give some slight idea of it, I would compare those beings with men who try to climb a high mountain, covered with greenery, but steep as a rampart which has some places to rest or steps at various points, where after having climbed and neared a place to rest or sit, they sometimes suddenly fall back onto another lower ledge, and are obliged to start all over. Nevertheless they do not fail to gradually overcome one step after another. And sometimes one has to step back for a better leap. But the order of providence treats beings with reflection in a very special way, and which is doubtless the most fitting and even the most desirable way.

But, it will be asked, how can matter act on the soul or on a being with perception,<sup>634</sup> and how too can the soul act on matter? For

634. perception | since they are two different things | *deleted*.

we notice in our own case that the body often obeys the will of the soul, and that the soul is aware of the actions of bodies, and yet we do not conceive any influence between those two things. The ancient philosophers abandoned the difficulty as hopeless, for we find that, in effect, they do not say anything about it. The moderns have wanted to cut the Gordian knot with the sword of Alexander, and they have done so by introducing a miracle into a natural thing, like the divinities of the theater at the dénouement of an opera: for they claim that God at every moment adapts the soul to the body and the body to the soul, and that he obliges himself to do that by virtue of a pact or a general will. But that directly goes against the principle of the uniformity of nature. Ordinarily, bodies will produce their effects on each other according to laws that are mechanical and intelligible, but suddenly, when the soul wills something, a divinity will come to disrupt this order of bodies, and divert their course? How likely is that? Yet this is the opinion of Father Malebranche and of modern Cartesians, and Mr. Bayle, clever as he may be, has made a great effort to return to it, although it seems to me that I have unsettled him.<sup>635</sup> What are we going to do though? The solution lies entirely in our principle of the ordinary. When we see the bodies in some machine follow the mechanical laws of collision, and the soul follow moral laws of apparent good and evil in some deliberation, let us say that it is the same in other cases that we do not see or make out so well, and *that all is as it is here*. That is, let us explain those things of which we have only a confused understanding by those of which we have a distinct understanding, and let us say that everything happens mechanically in the body, or in accordance with the laws of motion, and everything happens morally in the soul, or in accordance with perceived good and evil, so that even in our instinctive or involuntary actions where the body alone seems to have a role, there is in the soul an appetite for good or an aversion to evil that drives it, although our reflection is unable to make it out in the confusion. But if soul and body follow their own laws separately in this way, how do they connect up, and how is it that

635. Leibniz is here referring to the doctrine of occasionalism, or at least his own interpretation of it. For a discussion on the accuracy (or lack thereof) of Leibniz's interpretation of occasionalism, see David Scott, "Leibniz and the Two Clocks," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 445–63.

the body obeys the soul and that the soul feels the effects of the body? To explain this natural mystery we have to have recourse to God, as we do when it is a matter of giving the primordial reason for the order and artifice in things. But this explanation is only once and for all, and it is not as if he disturbed the laws of bodies<sup>636</sup> to make them correspond to the soul, and vice versa. Instead, he made bodies in advance so that, following their laws and natural tendencies to movement, they will come to do what the soul will ask at the appropriate time; and he also made souls so that, following the natural tendencies of their appetite, they will also always come to the representations of the states of the body.<sup>637</sup> For just as motion leads matter from shape to shape, the appetite leads the soul from image to image. So the soul is made dominant in advance, and is obeyed by bodies<sup>638</sup> inasmuch as its appetite is accompanied by distinct perceptions, which makes it think of suitable means when it wants something; but it is also subjected to the body in advance in as much as has confused perceptions. For our experience is that all things tend to change, the body by the motive force and the soul by the appetite which leads it to distinct or confused perceptions, depending on whether it is more perfect or less perfect. And we should not marvel at this primordial agreement of souls and bodies, as all bodies have been arranged following the intentions of a universal mind, and all souls are essentially representations or living mirrors of the universe, according to the scope and the point of view of each, and consequently are as enduring as the world itself. It is as if God had varied the universe as many times as there are souls, or as if he had created as many universes in miniature, ultimately agreeing in content and diversified by appearances. There is nothing so rich as this uniform simplicity accompanied by a perfect order. And we can conclude that each separate soul must be perfectly well adjusted, since it is a certain expression of the universe, and a concentrated universe as it were, which is confirmed again by the fact that each body, and consequently ours as well, is somehow affected by all the others, and consequently the soul takes part in it too.

636. bodies | at every moment | *deleted*.

637. The doctrine outlined here is Leibniz's own theory of pre-established harmony.

638. bodies | insofar as it has voluntary actions accompanied by distinct perceptions | *deleted*.

Here, in a few words, is all my philosophy; quite popular without a doubt, since it does not contain anything which does not correspond with what we experience, and which is based on two sayings as common as this one from the Italian theater: *that it is elsewhere just as here*, and this one from Tasso: *che per variar natura è bella*,<sup>639</sup> which seem to contradict each other, but are reconciled by understanding that one concerns the foundation of things, the other manners and appearances. That seems good enough for people who love the search for truth, and who are capable of penetrating it; but I do not know whether it will seem too low or too simple<sup>640</sup> for those of the highest order, as is Your Majesty, which I do not mean on account of her rank but her mind. I fear that it would have been necessary either to say nothing to you of such things, Madam, or to propose more sublime things,<sup>641</sup> which someone else will find easier than me. Nevertheless these<sup>642</sup> trifles will perhaps be able to amuse for a little while. And if they are at least useful for that I will be pleased with them, being with devotion,

Madam, to Your Majesty  
Your very submissive and obedient servant  
Leibniz

Sophie Charlotte's only comment on the above letter was made in her letter to Leibniz of 7 June 1704, in which she wrote: "I have not replied to you, Sir, about your learned and profound letter,<sup>643</sup> but I no less admired it, as you make a matter as abstract as that one so simple that it seems to me that I understand it."<sup>644</sup>

639. "that through variety nature is beautiful." See note 158.

640. Reading "uni" (manuscript M1) in place of "vil" (transcriptions K and G).

641. things | . But with regard to this sublime and less common knowledge, I shall keep on searching for it without flattering myself that I have found it. | *deleted*.

642. Reading "ces" (manuscript M1) in place of "les" (transcriptions K and G).

643. Upon receiving this letter, Leibniz wrote here: "This is the one of 8 May, in which I passed on to the Queen what I had written to Lady Masham."

644. *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 148/Klopp 10: 248.

**66. Sophie Charlotte to Louise von Hohenzollern (summer 1704 (?))<sup>645</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 198.

The following note by Sophie Charlotte most likely postdates Leibniz's letter to her of 8 May 1704 (see no. 65).<sup>646</sup> It was sent to Louise von Hohenzollern (1666–1709),<sup>647</sup> who passed it on to Leibniz.

Mr. Leibniz deals with metaphysical matters in an easily intelligible way and in accordance with *the new principle of uniformity*, about which I would like clarification.

645. From the French. Complete.

646. In the Akademie's Ritterkatalog, this text is given the date of 1703. A later date is more plausible, however, as the text concerns the principle of uniformity, which Leibniz first seems to have mentioned to Sophie Charlotte in his letter of 8 May 1704 (see no. 63). I have tentatively dated the text to summer 1704, but it may be slightly later. At any rate, it must have been written prior to Sophie Charlotte's death in February 1705.

647. The note itself, written in Sophie Charlotte's hand, does not name the intended recipient. However immediately beneath Sophie Charlotte's words Leibniz added "Madam, the Princess of Hohenzollern," presumably to indicate its recipient.

## 67. Leibniz: The Principle of Uniformity (summer 1704 (?))<sup>648</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 198. The draft is written on the same paper as the short note from Sophie Charlotte to Louise von Hohenzollern (see no. 66).

Leibniz's response to Sophie Charlotte's note written in the summer of 1704 (see no. 66). It did not earn Leibniz a response from her.

The principle of uniformity holds that nature is always the same in its fundamentals, although it makes use of a great variety in its ways. This is why I am accustomed to say, like in *Harlequin, Emperor of the Moon*, that it is all as it is here,<sup>649</sup> among the angels and among the animals as among us, among the dead as among the living, and in that which concerns the constitutive principles, for I hold that souls are always and everywhere accompanied by organic bodies, that our souls will never be entirely separated from all body, that angels also have bodies which are appropriate for them and which suit their excellence and function, and that God alone is pure spirit. I also hold that animals have inextinguishable souls as we do, and that in us as in them not only the soul but the animal itself remains, sometimes small, enveloped, and less sensible, sometimes, large, developed, and awake; that death is nothing other than a sleep, as Jesus Christ already defined it,<sup>650</sup> that one always has some *perceptions* when asleep (even if there isn't any dreaming), or in a fainting fit, a dizzy spell, apoplexy, or in death, but there is not always *awareness*. That is, one does not always notice what happens when perceptions are too united and uniform, so that there is nothing to distinguish them. So there is even uniformity in that. And generally, I explain insensible things by analogy with the sensible, observing only the difference from great to small, from

648. From the French. Complete.

649. See note 626.

650. See Jesus's statements in Matthew 9:24, Mark 5:39, and Luke 8:52.

the more perfect to the less perfect.<sup>651</sup> There is also, as a result of the uniformity that I always maintain (in the ordinary course of natural things), a perfect observance of the laws of nature. And whereas philosophers ordinarily conceive that the course of bodies is disrupted by souls, and that souls are diverted from their function by bodies, I hold that bodies always follow their own laws without souls being able to disturb them, and that souls are not disturbed at all by bodies, but that one is in agreement with the other, since souls are made in order to represent bodies and even the universe according to their point of view. So there is uniformity in the constitutive principles and in the laws of nature.

651. perfect. | It is also for this reason that I always recognize the operation of the laws of nature | *deleted*.



**68. Leibniz to Sophie (31 October 1705)**

## Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 503–4.  
 M2: Fair copy, revised and edited version of M1, unsent: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 505–6 and 509–10.  
 M3: Fair copy of M2, incomplete: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 71–72, and *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 507–8.  
 M4: Draft, revised and edited from M2: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 501–2.  
 M5: Draft, revised from M4: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 499–500.  
 M6: Copy of dispatched letter, made from M5, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis, with a few additions in Leibniz's hand: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 52–53.

## Transcriptions:

- K: Klopp 9: 145–55 (following M2).  
 G: G 7: 558–65 (following K).

This letter sees Leibniz return to the topic of unities, prompted by reading an extract from a book entitled *Éléments de Géométrie de Mgr le duc de Bourgogne*<sup>652</sup> in the September issue of the *Amsterdam Journal des sçavans*. The book in question was a compilation of notes written by Louis, Duke of Burgundy (1682–1712) of the mathematics lessons given by his tutor, Nicolas de Malézieu (1650–1727). By his own admission, Leibniz had not read this book at the time he wrote the following letter, and his remarks are based on the extract from it published in the *Journal des sçavans*. Leibniz produced various versions of this letter; the initial draft is lengthy and weaves together metaphysics, physics, and mathematics, while subsequent versions get progressively shorter as Leibniz revised and edited the material. The version of the letter Leibniz actually sent to Sophie is the shortest of all, and considerably shorter than the earlier versions, and much less mathematical in tone. Sophie does not appear to have replied to it, though she did send a copy of it

652. *Éléments de Géométrie de Mgr le duc de Bourgogne*, ed. Nicolas de Malézieu (Paris, 1705).

to her niece, Elizabeth Charlotte, who in turn showed it to her son, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723).

[M1: draft]

Madam

Your Electoral Highness doubtless remembers that<sup>653</sup> when your curiosity and that of the Queen, your daughter, made me talk about philosophy and of the basis for the soul's immortality, I brought *unities* into the discussion, by maintaining that<sup>654</sup> souls are true unities, that is, simple substances, into which no other substances enter in order to compose them, but that bodies are only multitudes, and that consequently bodies perish through the dissolution of their composite parts, but that souls are imperishable. Very different judgments have been made about this. Some said that, by talking of unities, I wanted to make this word fashionable in a new usage in order to obfuscate people. Your Electoral Highness asked for further clarification, not so much for herself as for others; the Queen was struck<sup>655</sup> by the examples I gave of points in a line and of moments in time, which show what it is to be simple and without parts. I also showed her that it was necessary to come to simple substances, because otherwise there wouldn't be any composites, since there is no multitude without true unities. This debate provided us with a pleasant diversion in Charlottenburg,<sup>656</sup> when I had the honor of being with the Queen, and when Her Majesty, who liked to go deeper into things, found some ruminative man, she steered him onto the subject of unities. This went so well that even people of another profession took an interest in it, and Mr. d'Obdam

653. that | I have occasionally spoken of unities, by saying that bodies are only multitudes and that souls are true unities. | *deleted*.

654. that | bodies are only multitudes | *deleted*.

655. struck | by this idea, especially when I showed her through the example of extremities, as are points in a line and moments in time, that there are ( $\alpha$ ) things which are simple and without parts among the modalities or ways of being, and that therefore it was also permitted to conceive them among substances ( $\beta$ ) simple things, and that therefore it was also permitted to conceive simple substances | *deleted*.

656. Formerly Lutzenburg. It was renamed Charlottenburg following Sophie Charlotte's death.

wanted me to give him a note on this to take with him to Holland, since he is the curator of the university of Leiden there.<sup>657</sup>

You will ask me, Madam, why I have started to talk about unities again, but when Your Electoral Highness learns of the good fortune I have had of an encounter on that subject with one of the most renowned authors of our times, as I have recently discovered him to be, she will not be surprised about this heartfelt outburst which makes me talk about my favorite unities.<sup>658</sup> This author reinforces me all the more since he is not a philosopher, nor even a scholar by profession, although he is a great genius and born under a lucky star.<sup>659</sup> It seems that nature and genius have spoken in him, and I infinitely prefer their judgement to that of reading or education. Your Electoral Highness will ask me, so who is this author about whom I make such a fuss? You will never guess, Madam, I see it well, which is why I will tell you, in a few words, that it is the Duke of Burgundy.<sup>660</sup> It seems to me, Madam, that I have completely surprised you, but you can be sure that I am telling you the whole truth. It is true that I have not yet seen this author's book, but I have seen an extract from it in last September's issue of the *Journal des sçavans* of Amsterdam, on page 356. Here is what is said there about the occasion which gave rise to this book: "When the Duke of Burgundy was very young he was taught mathematics, and as much insight was seen in him it was suggested that every day he should write down, in his own hand, what he had been taught the day before, so that (it is said) by repeating to himself what he had learned and going over the sequence of geometrical truths in order and at his leisure, he would get accustomed to going more slowly and more surely." I add that this was the way of focusing his attention and of ensuring that it was his own thoughts which he put in writing. In addition to that, the success gave him pleasure, and motivated him to continue. These meditations put together have given rise to the *El-*

657. Jakob van Wassenaer (1635–1714), Dutch diplomat and correspondent of Leibniz between 1700 and 1709.

658. unities. | This author is of the noblest possible extraction. | *deleted*.

659. Leibniz's claim that the Duke of Burgundy was "born under a lucky star" may be intended literally, as a comet was apparently visible in the sky over Paris and Versailles at the time of his birth. See the report in the *Journal des sçavans* 24 (31 August 1682): 289.

660. Louis, Duke of Burgundy.

*emens de Geometrie de Monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne*, which has just been published, in 220 quarto pages. But here is what concerns my *unities* in it.<sup>661</sup>

This Prince starts to explain incommensurables on page 33 of his book. Suppose, for example, a perfect square, each side of which is one foot. The diagonal, which is a straight line drawn from one corner to the opposite other corner, will be incommensurable with the side, that is, this diagonal could not be expressed by any number of feet or parts of a foot, like halves, thirds, fourths, tenths, hundredths, thousandths, etc., or others. But the smaller the part taken as a measure, the closer the true value will be approached, and so on to infinity. From this it follows that a line can be divided to infinity, that countless points can be taken from it, and that nevertheless it is not composed of points. On the other hand, *when the existence of Beings is considered attentively* (these are the actual words from the extract of the book) *it is very clearly understood that existence belongs to UNITIES, and not to*

661. it. | This Prince starts to explain what *incommensurables* are on page 33 of his book. This is a long word, Madam, of which you will have already heard me speak. (α) It signifies something like Plato and Aristotle (which is said without comparison). (β) The word signifies that in nature there is no measurement suitable for accurately measuring all lines, and that therefore lines cannot always be exactly expressed by the numbers of the measure, or by equal parts of the measure. The smaller the measure one takes, however, the less error there is, although there are always errors. The fact is that it is not possible to find (for example) an expressible number, whether whole or a fraction, which multiplied by itself makes 2. And yet there is a line in nature which would have to be expressed by such a number. For suppose a perfect square, of which all four sides are equal at, say, a foot in length; if I conceive a straight line drawn from one angle of the square to the opposite angle (which is called the diagonal), the length of this line will be more than one foot, and less than two feet, but one can only express it accurately by saying that it is a number which multiplied by itself makes two. And even if one were to take the millionth part of a foot, no number of such parts will ever express the diagonal. And to draw ever closer to an accurate measure, one has to continue to take a smaller measure *ad infinitum*. Geometry proves this, along with other, similar truths, to the great surprise of philosophers. So these are the incommensurables of geometers, namely, two lines which cannot both be expressed in numbers although one draws ever closer to the truth the more one takes smaller and smaller parts—to infinity—to use as a measure, for example, hundredths, millionths, which shows that a line, finite though it may be, truly contains an infinity of parts, and that an infinity of points can be taken from it, but that it is not composed of them. After having explained this, the author points out that, on the other hand, when the existence of beings is considered attentively (these are the actual words from the extract of the book) | *deleted*.

numbers (or to MULTITUDES). *Twenty men exist only because each man exists. Number is only a repetition of unities, to which alone existence belongs. There cannot be numbers if there are no UNITIES. This being rightly conceived* (says the renowned author of this book), *I ask you: is this cubic foot of matter a single substance, or is it several of them? You cannot say that it is a single substance, for quite simply* (in that case) *you could not divide it in two. If you say that it is several substances, because there are several of them in it, this number, whatever it is, is composed of UNITIES. If there are several existing substances, it must be the case that there is one of them, and this one cannot be two of them. Therefore matter is composed of indivisible substances. Here is our reason* (adds this insightful prince) *reduced to strange extremes. Geometry shows us the divisibility of matter to infinity, and we find at the same time that it is composed of indivisibles.*

I have read all this with admiration, and I find my idea of *unities* wonderfully well expressed. But what shall we say about the problem the Prince notices in it, where it seems that we destroy with one hand what we have built with the other? I therefore have to tell you, Madam, that it is in the solution of this difficulty that I believe I have again rendered some service to science, and have contributed to establishing the true philosophy and the knowledge of incorporeal substances. The late Mr. Cordemoy,<sup>662</sup> teacher of Louis the Great, was quite embarrassed about this in his book on the discrimination of the body and soul.<sup>663</sup> And the late Mr. Arnauld made me remember this book when I communicated to him my doctrine of *unities*.<sup>664</sup> So Mr. Cordemoy, seeing that composite things had to be the result of simple things, was forced, Cartesian though he was, to have recourse to atoms, thereby deserting his master, which is to say that he was forced to accept small bodies of an insurmountable hardness, which he took for the first elements or for the simplest substances which

662. Géraud de Cordemoy (1626–84), a prominent seventeenth-century Cartesian philosopher and adherent of atomism and occasionalism. As Leibniz goes on to note, Cordemoy was also employed by Louis XIV as a teacher, responsible for instructing the Dauphin.

663. Géraud de Cordemoy, *Le discernement du corps et de l'âme* (Paris, 1666).

664. See, for example, Leibniz's letters to Arnauld of 28 November/8 December 1686, A II 2: 119–21/LA 94–96, and 30 April 1687, A II 2: 184–87/LA 120–23.

exist in matter. But aside from the fact that<sup>665</sup> hard bodies also have actual parts, even if they are not detached from each other, he failed to consider that this perfect and insurmountable hardness would have to be miraculous, and that, naturally, every body, big or small, actually has parts detached from each other, which exert internal movements in it according as it is pushed by other bodies: otherwise there would be impassive bodies, not to mention many other reasons which show that matter is actually divided to infinity. And those who are of a different opinion are quite some way from knowing the variety and the extent of the works of the infinite author, whose characteristics are found throughout. There would be many things to say on that subject, but that would lead us too far astray.

Now as for the problem, I answer that it is true that matter is divisible to infinity, but this does not prevent it from being composed of simple or indivisible substances, because the multitude of these substances or of these unities is infinite. However, even though matter consists in an accumulation of simple substances, and even though duration like actual motion consists in an accumulation of momentary states, space is not composed from points, nor time from moments.<sup>666</sup> Points and moments are not the parts but the extremities of parts of space and time,<sup>667</sup> extremities which are conceived there by dividing them.<sup>668</sup> Things existing and real should be distinguished from things intellectual or ideal, like number, space, and time. Substances which are real consist in unities, that is, in substances which are simple and indivisible, the result of which makes corporeal masses or accumulations. Matter is actually divisible in a determinate way, but space or continuity marks only an indeterminate possibility to divide as one likes. So in matter and in realities, the whole is a result of the parts, but in notions or in possibles the entire indeterminate whole

665. that | atoms actually have existing parts | *deleted*.

666. The following words, which were written on the other side of the page without any indication of where they should fit, seem to belong here: "nor time from instants, nor mathematical motion from moments. These points, or moments."

667. time, | that is, parts which are conceived there as continuous and uniform in certain respects | *deleted*.

668. them. | So matter, which is a real thing, results from parts before one thinks of them, but time and space, which are ideal things | *deleted*.

is anterior to divisions, just as the notion of the whole is prior to that of fractions. To better conceive the varieties and the actual, already-determinate divisions of matter, when one takes a piece of stone one will find it composed of certain granules, and taking a microscope one finds that these granules are like mountains, in which there are a thousand varieties. And if our power of sight were continually increased, it would always find something on which to exercise itself. There are actual varieties everywhere and never a perfect uniformity in anything, nor two pieces of matter completely similar to each other, in the great as in the small. Your Electoral Highness knew this well when she told the late Mr. D'Alvensleben in the garden of Herrenhausen to see if he could ever find two leaves whose resemblance was perfect, and he did not find any.<sup>669</sup> Therefore there is always actual division and variation in the masses of existing bodies, however small we go.<sup>670</sup> This essential difference between space and matter also means that it can even be

669. Leibniz recalled this episode in a number of other texts. For example in the *New Essays* (A VI 6: 231/NE 231): "I remember a great princess [Sophie], of lofty intelligence, saying one day while walking in her garden that she did not believe there were two leaves perfectly alike. A clever gentlemen who was walking with her believed that it would be easy to find some, but search as he might he became convinced by his own eyes that a difference could always be found." (Alfred Langley mistakenly identified this "great princess" as Sophie Charlotte; see *New Essays concerning Human Understanding*, 3rd ed., ed. and trans. Alfred Langley (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1949), 239 n2.) And in his fourth letter to Samuel Clarke (G 7: 372/P 216): "A clever gentleman, a friend of mine, when conversing with me in the presence of Madam the Electress in the garden at Herrenhausen, thought he would certainly find two leaves exactly alike. Madam the Electress challenged him to do so, and he spent a long time running about looking for them, but in vain." In both of these cases, as in this letter to Sophie, Leibniz mentions the episode as empirical support for one of his most famous principles, that of the identity of indiscernibles, which states that if two things have exactly the same properties or predicates, and hence are indiscernible, then they are in fact one and the same thing, that is, identical. A corollary of this is that there cannot be two things exactly the same in all respects. The "clever gentleman" who ran around the gardens of Herrenhausen trying to disprove this principle was Carl August von Alvensleben. The leaf-hunt is widely believed to have taken place circa 1685, though at least one scholar has claimed that it took place "about the year 1695." See Paul Pescic, "Leibniz and the Leaves: Beyond Identity," *Philosophy Now* 30 (December 2000/January 2001): 18.

670. go. | Perfect uniformity and continuity exists only in ideal or abstract things, as are time, space, and lines, and other mathematical beings in which the divisions are not conceived as all done, but as indeterminate and still feasible in an infinity of ways. | *deleted*. However Leibniz did not cross out this sentence from "in which" onward.

demonstrated that, really speaking, there is no perfect uniform line in nature, whether straight, circular, or another kind, which entirely preserves the same rule for some assignable time or through some assignable space, or which is explicable by a definition a finite creature can understand. But by concealing the small inequalities (which is required when abstracting, in order to be able to reason), the mind puts perfect uniformities into nature.<sup>671</sup> For although they exist only in idea, we come across them enough in practice, the irregularities being insensible. Now in a perfect uniformity and continuity, there is no determinate part. This is why a thing which is continuous, either in itself or in abstract, such as an hour, a straight or circular line, etc., can be divided, but the only actual parts one should recognize in it are those that one actually makes in it. So all the parts one makes in it have extremities, which are points or moments, but these continuous things are not in any way a result of points.<sup>672</sup> In ideal things in which in certain respects there is uniformity, which is the source of continuity, the whole is prior to the part, but in realities, where there is always discrete quantity, unities are prior to the multitudes, or results. The unities of substance are real, but the unities of arithmetic are ideal. The real ones are indivisible and without parts. The ideal ones represent a whole which is not a perfect unity, but which our understanding takes as one thing, even though it is an accumulation of several, in order to have the convenience of reasoning about several things all at once, and that which is common to them and which has a connection not only to nature but also to existence. The ideal or arithmetical unity is common to perfect and real unities and to unities which only obtain their unity through the mind. It is a whole with respect to fractions even though, in a continuity, whatever fractions or parts one wants to make is indeterminate, but it is a part in discrete quantities where the

671. nature | , just as we say in masonry that such and such an angle is a right angle, even though it is only approximately so. | *deleted*.

672. points | ( $\alpha$ ) , just as number is not a composite or a *multitude* of fractions of the utmost smallness, which is never found. ( $\beta$ ) . And a line has no elements of the utmost simplicity any more than does number. For number, like 10 for example, can be divided to infinity, by going to fractions: its tenth part is 1, but the millionth is  $1/1000000$  and so on to infinity, and one will never find the smallest possible fractions which constitute the measure of all numbers, such that their multitude composes number. Strictly speaking, each fraction is a separate relation, although certain fractions taken together often equal another one. | *deleted*.



division is all done. Now as for continuous things, it is obvious that time is not a substance because an hour never exists in its entirety. It is only a principle of relations, a basis of the order of things<sup>673</sup> which are conceived as existing but not existing together. The same must be true of space, which is the basis of the order or of the relation of things, but which are conceived as existing together. Both of these bases are true, although they are ideal. Uniformly ordered continuity, although it is only a supposition, forms the basis of eternal truths and necessary knowledge, and is the object of the divine understanding,<sup>674</sup> whose rays illuminate our understanding too. It is no more a substance or actual thing outside the mind than is abstract and ideal number, and yet time and space ground sciences made up of<sup>675</sup> truths which act as rules for existing things, since the divine understanding, whose objects they are, is the source of existing things. Moreover, these truths never deceive us, since they are, like number, hypothetical or conditional, but we are deceived in fact when we suppose, through lack of practice or circumspection, more regularity in matter than there is in it. It must also be considered that time and space are indeterminate, that they are adapted not only to the divisions and varieties which actually occur in nature, but also to all the other possibles which can be conceived in them. A good story is as well ordered with regard to time as a true history, whereas real things have their actual divisions to infinity all done, and thus consist in Monads or *unities*, the multitude of which is infinite, however. Matter appears to us as a continuum, but it only appears so, just like alabaster dust appears as a continuous fluid when it is made to bubble on the fire, or like a toothed wheel appears continuously transparent where the teeth are when it turns very quickly. And it can be said that a mass of matter is not a substance, but a result of an infinity of substances, a well-founded phenomenon, never contradicting the rules of pure mathematics but always containing something more. And it can also be concluded that the duration of things, or the multitude of momentary states, is an accumulation of an infinity of bursts from the divinity, each of which at each instant is a creation or reproduction of all things, which strictly speaking do not have any

673. things | which do not exist together | *deleted*.

674. understanding, | which illuminates us with its rays | *deleted*.

675. of | eternal truths | *deleted*.

continuous passage from one state to another. This proves precisely that famous truth of theologians and philosophers, that the conservation of things is a continual creation, and offers a very special way of verifying the dependence of mutable things on the divinity, or on the primitive and necessary substance. This, it seems, is the best use that one could make of the labyrinth of the composition of the continuum.

Now at last I come to the question Your Electoral Highness has sometimes asked, namely, what are these *unities* or these simple substances? They are not mathematical points, although these points serve to represent their situation and what is passive in them. They have neither size, nor shape, nor parts, otherwise they would be a multitude. So what do they have? I say<sup>676</sup> that we can conceive both the features noticeable in the results, and what is peculiar to simple substances. With regard to what is apparent through the results or the corporeal masses, there is passive and active. The passive consists<sup>677</sup> in resistance, and makes the body withstand both penetrability and motion. And this resistance to motion is what some people have termed the inertia of matter. The active is both the primitive force, which is perpetual, and the derivative, which is the modification of it. This is what I have considered in my dynamics. And all that, which is apparent in the phenomena of bodies or results through the movements which happen in accordance with the laws of mechanics, must have its basis in simple elements. But these simple substances have something else which is peculiar to them, and to understand it I say that only internal actions can be conceived in them, that is, perception and appetite. So it can be said that all simple substances contain soul, or something analogous to the soul. And it is an ill thought-out philosophy which gives to a small part of matter, such as our body, a physical privilege which distances it infinitely from all analogy with others. There is perception and appetite everywhere in the whole of nature, but only minds or rational souls have understanding and will. And elsewhere I have thoroughly explained how the understanding

676. say | that aside from the passive, which is impenetrability and resistance to motion, or the inertia of matter, there is activity. This activity and this resistance are apparent in phenomena through the movements in accordance with the laws of mechanics. But in simple substances, to conceive what is peculiar to them one must | *deleted*.

677. consists | in impenetrability | *deleted*.

and the will are beyond the perception and appetite of other corporeal substances, whose perfection is infinitely inferior to ours, and which makes us resemble God's image. But souls ought not to be considered as if they were ever completely detached from matter; naturally, they are always in organic bodies,<sup>678</sup> more or less subtle, more or less perfect. So the whole of nature is full of animals, of plants, or of other living organic things, the varieties of which are unknown to us. And this, strictly speaking, is what I call *corporeal substance*, in which there is a dominant principle of unity, and then the organs which result from other unities. For the organs of an animal or living thing are composed of other living things again. I think this truth would have been recognized a long time ago if people had not been afraid of admitting that these principles of unity<sup>679</sup> and life of other living things are as imperishable as ours. But what harm is there in that? Don't the Gassendists give the same privilege to their atoms? On the contrary, nothing is more fitting to underline the immortality of our soul than to be able to say in general: *morte carent animae*.<sup>680</sup> Humankind will not easily be persuaded that beasts have neither souls nor sensation, and if they are thought to die the Cartesians are right to say that the subsistence of the rational soul will be put in jeopardy. So I hold that, naturally, these souls or these principles of unity and life—found everywhere in nature—have begun with the world, and do not end even by death. It can also be said that the animal itself always remains, enveloped or developed, and transformed in different ways. I am not in any way dogmatic about whether God created minds, and if the order he holds with respect to them is supernatural, or if nature itself is suitably arranged to produce what the order of government requires in their regard, which is more to my liking. At any rate, I conceive all natural things, even the invisible and those far away, just as one conceives those which are visible and nearby, the difference being only in the degrees of grandeur and perfection. This makes my system very

678. bodies | . And I believe, with the ancient fathers of the church, that angels themselves have them. | *deleted*.

679. unity | are as imperishable in other bodies as in | *deleted*.

680. "souls are exempt from death" or "souls are deathless." See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV.158; English edition: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. E. J. Kenney, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 356. The saying is attributed to Pythagoras.

straightforward, since everything is understood in proportion to what we see. For I hold that angels themselves have bodies, although their structure is infinitely different from ours, and more variable, and that there are separate souls only with regard to crude bodies. It can always be said *that it is all as it is here*, perfections aside. So the system is as fecund as it is simple. It can be judged so from what Mr. Bayle said about it in his *Dictionary*, article<sup>681</sup> “Rorarius,” and from the passages of the *Journal des sçavans* of Germany, France and Holland that he quotes in it. But I do not know how the desire to tell you, Madam, that I found my unities admirably well explained by such a great and distinguished author, has carried me so far. It was unnecessary to say so much about it to Your Electoral Highness, who enters into truths almost before she can be told about them. I am with devotion, Madam, to Your Electoral Highness.

[M2: fair copy, unsent]<sup>682</sup>

Madam

Your Electoral Highness doubtless remembers that when your curiosity and that of the Queen, your daughter, made me talk about philosophy and of the basis for the soul's immortality, I brought *unities* into the discussion, by maintaining that souls are true unities, that is, simple substances, into which no other substances enter in order to compose them, but that bodies are only *multitudes*, and that consequently bodies perish through the dissolution of their composite parts, but that souls are imperishable. Very different judgments have been made about this. Some said that, by talking of unities, I wanted to make this word fashionable in a new usage in order to obfuscate people. Your Electoral Highness asked for further clarification, not so much for herself as for others; the Queen was struck by the examples I gave of points in a line and of moments in time which show what it is to be simple and without parts. I also showed her that it was necessary to come to simple substances, because otherwise there wouldn't be any composites, since there is no multitude without true unities.

681. Reading “article” in place of “articles.”

682. From the French. Complete.

This debate provided us with a pleasant diversion in Charlottenburg, when I had the honor of being with the Queen, and when Her Majesty, who liked to go deeper into things, found some ruminative man, she steered him onto the subject of unities. This went so well that even people of another profession took an interest in it, and Mr. d’Obdam wanted me to give him a note on this to take with him to Holland, since he is the curator of the university of Leiden.

You will ask me, Madam, why I have started to talk about unities again. But when Your Electoral Highness learns of the good fortune I have had of an encounter on that subject with one of the most renowned authors of our times, as I have recently discovered him to be, she will not be surprised about this heartfelt outburst which makes me talk about my favorite unities. This author reinforces me all the more since he is not a philosopher, nor even a scholar by profession, although he is a great genius and born under a lucky star. It seems that nature and genius have spoken in him, and I infinitely prefer their judgement to that of reading or education.

Your Electoral Highness will ask me, so who is this author about whom I make such a fuss? You will never guess, Madam, I see it well, which is why I will tell you, in a few words, that it is the Duke of Burgundy. It seems to me, Madam, that I have completely surprised you, but you can be sure that this is the whole truth. It is true that I have not yet seen this author’s book, but I have seen an extract from it in last September’s issue of the *Journal des sçavans* of Amsterdam, on page 356. Here is what is said there about the occasion which gave rise to this book. “When Monsignor the Duke of Burgundy was very young he was taught mathematics, and as much insight was seen in him it was suggested that every day he should write down, in his own hand, what he had been taught the day before, so that (it is said) by repeating to himself the things he had learned, and going over the geometrical truths again at his leisure—and doing so in order and following their connections—he would get accustomed to going more slowly and more surely.” I add that this was the way of focusing his attention and of ensuring that it was his own thoughts which he put in writing. In addition to that, the success gave him pleasure and motivated him to continue. Now these meditations put together have given rise to the *Elemens de Geometrie de Monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne*,

which has just been published, in 220 quarto pages. But here is what concerns my unities in it.

This Prince starts to explain incommensurables on page 33 of his book. Suppose, for example, a perfect square, each *side* of which is one foot. *The diagonal*, which is a straight line drawn from one corner to the opposite corner, will be incommensurable with the side, that is, this diagonal could not be expressed by any number of feet or parts of a foot, like halves, thirds, fourths, tenths, hundredths, thousandths, etc., or any others. But the smaller the part taken as a measure, the closer the true value will be approached, more so through the thousandth part than through the hundredth part, and so on to infinity. From this it follows that a line can be divided to infinity, that countless points can be taken from it, and that nevertheless it is not composed of points. But after having made us envisage these kinds of truths, he points out that, on the other hand, *when the existence of Beings is considered attentively* (these are the actual words from the extract of the book) *it is very clearly understood that existence belongs to UNITIES, and not to numbers* (or to MULTITUDES). *Twenty men exist only because each man exists. Number is only a repetition of unities, to which alone existence belongs. There cannot be number if there are no unities. This being rightly conceived* (says the renowned author of this book), *is this cubic foot of matter a single substance, or is it several of them? You cannot say that it is a single substance, for quite simply* (in that case) *you could not divide it in two* (if the substance was not in the body before the division, you would give rise to new substances at every moment). *If you say that it is several substances, because there are several of them in it, this number, whatever it is, is composed of unities. If there are several existing substances, it must be the case that there is one of them, and this one cannot be two of them. Therefore matter is composed of indivisible substances. Here is our reason* (adds this insightful prince) *reduced to strange extremes. Geometry shows us the divisibility of matter to infinity, and we find at the same time that it is composed of indivisibles.*

I have read all this with admiration, and I find my idea of unities wonderfully well expressed. But what shall we say about the problem the Prince notices in it, where it seems that we destroy with one hand what we have built with the other? I therefore have to tell

you, Madam, that it is in the solution of this difficulty that I believe I have rendered some service to science, and have established the true philosophy which concerns knowledge of incorporeal substances. The late Mr. Cordemoy was quite embarrassed about this in his book on the discrimination of the body and soul. And Mr. Arnauld made me remember this book when I communicated to him my doctrine of *unities*. So Mr. Cordemoy, seeing that composite things had to be the result of simple things, was forced, Cartesian though he was, to have recourse to atoms, thereby deserting his master, which is to say that he was forced to accept small bodies of an insurmountable hardness, which he took for the first elements or for the simplest substances which exist in matter. But aside from the fact that all bodies also have actual parts, even if they are not detached from each other, he failed to consider that this perfect and insurmountable hardness would have to be miraculous, and that, actually, every body, big or small, has parts detached from each other, which exert internal movements in it according as it is pushed by other bodies: otherwise there would be impassive bodies, not to mention many other reasons which show that matter is actually divided to infinity. And those who are of a different opinion are quite some way from knowing the variety and the extent of the works of the infinite author, whose characteristics are found throughout. There would be many things to say on that subject, but that would lead us too far astray.

Now as for the problem, I answer that it is true that matter is divisible to infinity, but that this does not prevent it<sup>683</sup> from being composed of simple and indivisible substances, because the multitude of these substances or of these unities is infinite. However the same is not the case with mathematical body, or space, which is something ideal, and which is not composed of points, just as number, abstract and taken in itself, is not composed of extreme fractions, i.e., fractions of the ultimate smallness. And we do not even have a conception of the smallest of fractions, or whatever it is in number which corresponds to the points or extremities of space, because number does not represent any situation or any relation of existence. It is true that mathematicians sometimes take a certain fraction as the ultimate one, because it is in

683. Reading “la matiere est divisible à l’infini, mais que cela ne l’empêche point” (manuscript M2) in place of “que cela n’empêche point la matiere” (transcriptions K and G).

their interests not to go any further in subdivision, and to disregard, for example, errors which do not exceed  $1/1,000,000,000,000,000$ . That's the way, I remember, that Cavalieri used a certain logarithmic element.<sup>684</sup> Whereby it is also evident that number (be it whole, broken up, or surd) is not, in relation to fractions, a discrete quantity (as is the *multitude* in relation to *unities*), but a continuous quantity,<sup>685</sup> like a line, time, and the degree of intensity in velocity. So even though matter consists in an accumulation of simple substances without number, and even though the duration of creatures, just like actual motion, consists in an accumulation of momentary states, it nevertheless has to be said that space is not composed of points, nor is time composed of instants, nor is mathematical motion composed of moments, nor is intensity composed of extreme degrees. The fact is that matter, the course of things,<sup>686</sup> and ultimately every actual composite is a discrete quantity, but that space, time, mathematical motion, the continuous intensity or increase conceivable in speed and in other qualities, and ultimately everything which involves an estimate which comes down to possibilities, is a quantity which is continuous and indeterminate in itself, or indifferent to the parts which can be taken from it, and which are actually taken from it in nature. The mass of bodies is actually divided in a determined way, and nothing in it is genuinely continuous; but space, or the perfect continuity which exists ideally, only signals an indeterminate possibility of dividing as one sees fit. In matter and in actual realities the whole is a result of the parts; but in ideas or in possibles (which includes not only this universe, but also every other universe which can be conceived, and which the divine understanding actually represents in itself), the indeterminate whole is anterior

684. Francesco Bonaventura Cavalieri (1598–1647), Italian mathematician, one of the first to employ a logarithm in the calculation of interval sizes. Leibniz is referring to his *Geometria indivisibilibus continuorum nova quadam ratione promota* (Bologna, 1635).

685. Transcriptions K and G here omit “discrete (comme le MULTITUDE est par rapport aux UNITES) mais une quantité.”

686. “le decours des choses.” In early modern French, as in contemporary French, “decours” means “waning” (of the moon) or “abatement” (of an illness), neither of which seem to fit the context here. Leibniz’s use of the word is thus unclear, and although the phrase “le decours des choses” occurs in both M2 and M3, I have construed him as meaning “le cours des choses” [“the course of things”].



to the divisions, just as the notion of the whole is simpler than that of fractions, and precedes it.

And although each fraction (like each pitch of a harmony) always subsists in the region of eternal truths, realized by the divine understanding, nevertheless a number and a fraction should not be conceived as an accumulation of other, smaller fractions. Also points, moments, or the extremes in an increase or decrease of qualities continued according to certain mathematical laws, are not the parts but the extremities of space, of time, of the whole degree, of the “no further.”<sup>687</sup>

To better conceive the actual division of matter<sup>688</sup> with the exclusion of all exact and indeterminate continuity, we ought to consider that God has already produced as much order and variety as it was possible to introduce in it up to now, and so no indeterminacy has remained in it; whereas indeterminacy is of the essence of continuity. This is what the divine perfection teaches our mind, and what experience itself confirms through our senses. There is no drop of water so pure that one cannot notice some variety in it on a good look. A piece of stone is composed of certain granules, and through the microscope these granules appear like rocks in which there are a thousand tricks of nature. If our power of sight were continually increased, it would always find something on which to exercise itself. There are actual varieties everywhere and never a perfect uniformity, nor two pieces of matter completely similar to each other, in the great as in the small. Your Electoral Highness knew this well when she told the late Mr. D’Alvensleben in the garden of Herrenhausen to see if he could find two leaves whose resemblance was perfect, and he did not find any. Therefore there are always actual divisions and variations in the masses of existing bodies, however small we go. It is our imperfection and the shortcomings of our senses which make us conceive physical things as mathematical entities, in which there is indeterminacy. And it can be demonstrated that in nature there is no line or shape which reproduces exactly and preserves uniformly throughout the least space or time the properties of a straight or circular line, or

687. Transcriptions K and G here omit “du degre entire; de non plus.”

688. Transcriptions K and G here add “à l’infini, et,” despite these words not being present in manuscript M2.

of some other line whose definition can be grasped by a finite mind. In bodies, whatever shape they might be, the mind can conceive and draw through it using the imagination any line that one cares to imagine, just as one can join the centers of spheres by imaginary straight lines, and conceive axes and circles in a sphere which does not have any actual axes and circles. But nature cannot do this, and the divine wisdom does not will to trace exactly these shapes of limited essence, which presuppose something indeterminate<sup>689</sup> and consequently imperfect in the works of God. Yet they are found in phenomena or in the objects of limited minds: our senses do not notice, and our understanding conceals, countless little inequalities, which nevertheless do not stop God's works<sup>690</sup> from having a perfect regularity, although a finite creature cannot grasp it. However eternal truths based on limited mathematical ideas are still useful to us in practice, in as much as it is acceptable to set aside the inequalities too small to be able to cause significant errors in relation to the proposed purpose; just as an engineer who draws a regular polygon on the ground is not bothered if one side is longer than another by a few inches. It is obvious that time is not a substance, because an hour or any other part of time that we take never exists in its entirety and in all its parts together. It is only a principle of relations, a basis of the order in things insofar as they are conceived as existing successively, or not existing together. The same must be true of space, which is the basis of the relation of the order of things, but insofar as they are conceived as existing together. Both of these bases are true, although they are ideal. Uniformly ordered continuity, although it is only a supposition and an abstraction, forms the basis of eternal truths and necessary knowledge: as is the case with all truths, it is the object of the divine understanding, whose rays illuminate our understanding too. An imaginary possible participates in these bases of order as much as an actual thing, and it will be possible for a novel to be as well ordered with regard to places and times as a true history. Matter appears to us as a continuum, but it only appears so, likewise actual motion. It is like when *alabaster dust* seems to form

689. Reading "d'indeterminé" (manuscript M2) in place of "de déterminé" (transcriptions K and G).

690. Reading "des ouvrages" (manuscript M2) in place of "de l'ouvrage" (transcriptions K and G).

a continuous fluid when<sup>691</sup> it is made to bubble on the fire, or like a *toothed wheel* seems continuously transparent<sup>692</sup> when it turns very quickly, without our being able to discern the teeth from the gaps, our perception uniting the separate places and times.

It can therefore be concluded that a mass of matter is not really a substance, that its unity is only ideal, and that (leaving the understanding aside) it is only an aggregate, an accumulation, a multitude of an infinity of true substances, a well-founded phenomenon, never contradicting the rules of pure mathematics but always containing something more. And it can also be concluded that the duration of things, or the multitude of momentary states, is an accumulation of an infinity of bursts from the divinity, each of which at each instant is a creation or reproduction of all things, which strictly speaking do not have any continuous passage from one state to the next. This proves precisely that famous truth of Christian theologians and philosophers, that the conservation of things is a continual creation, and offers a very special way of verifying the dependence of all mutable things on the immutable divinity, which is the primitive and absolutely necessary substance, without which nothing could exist or last. This, it seems, is the best use that one could make of the labyrinth of the composition of the continuum, so famous among philosophers. The analysis of the actual duration of things in time leads us demonstratively to the existence of God, just as the analysis of the matter which is actually found in space leads us demonstratively to unities of substance, to simple, indivisible and imperishable substances, and consequently to souls, or to the principles of life, which can only be immortal, and which are spread throughout nature. It is evident that entelechies or primitive forces, joined to what is passive in each unity (for creatures are simultaneously both active and passive), are the source of everything. From this it is evident in what *unities* consist. I have shown elsewhere how souls always retain some body, and that therefore even animals subsist. I have also clearly explained the commerce of the soul and the body. Finally, I have shown that rational souls or minds are of a higher

691. Reading “lorsqu'on” (manuscript M2) in place of “quand on” (transcriptions K and G).

692. Leibniz's exact words in the manuscript are “une roue dentellée paroist un diaphane paraoist un diaphane continuel.” The duplication appears to be a mistake on Leibniz's part.

order, and that God is concerned for them not simply as a perfect architect, but also as a perfectly good monarch.

I am with devotion to Your Electoral Highness

Your most humble and most obedient servant

LEIBNIZ

Hanover, 31 October 1705

[M6: copy of dispatched letter]<sup>693</sup>

Copy of the letter from Mr. Leibniz to Madam the Electress of Brunswick. 24 November 1705.<sup>694</sup>

Your Electoral Highness will remember that while talking about philosophy in order to satisfy your curiosity and that of the Queen, your daughter, I often said that souls are *unities*, and that bodies are *multitudes*, that is, that the soul is a simple substance<sup>695</sup> and that the body is an accumulation of multiple substances, and that therefore souls are<sup>696</sup> immortal, as they are not subject to dissolution, while every body is able to perish through the separation of the parts which compose it. I was also happy to give the necessary clarifications of this, and the Queen was struck by the obviousness of the examples I gave of points in a line and of moments in time, which would not be true extremities at all if they could<sup>697</sup> allow the slightest division, or if something could be removed from them, which shows what it is to be simple and without parts. I also showed her that it was necessary to come to simple substances, because otherwise there wouldn't be any composites, since there is no multitude without true unities. This debate provided us with a pleasant diversion in Charlottenburg, when I had the honor of being there with the Queen, and when Her Majesty, who liked to go

693. From the French. Complete.

694. The incorrect date is presumably a mistake on the part of Leibniz's amanuensis. Indeed, on version M5, from which version M6 was made, Leibniz gives the date as 31 October 1705.

695. Reading "substance" in place of "substances."

696. are | imperishable | *deleted*, M5.

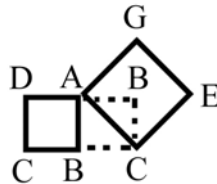
697. could | have parts | *deleted*, M5.

deeper into things, found some ruminative man, she steered him onto the subject of unities.

What leads me to mention it now, Madam, is the approval that has just been given to this doctrine by one of the most renowned authors of the time, as I have recently discovered him to be. This author reinforces me all the more since he is not a philosopher, nor even a scholar by profession, although he is a great genius and born under a lucky star. It seems that nature and genius have spoken in him, and I infinitely prefer their judgement to that of reading and education. Your Electoral Highness will ask me, so who is this author about whom I make such a fuss? You will never guess, Madam, which is why I will tell you, in a few words, that it is the Duke of Burgundy. It is true that I have not yet seen this author's book, but I have seen an extract from it in last September's issue of the *Journal des sçavans* of Amsterdam, on page 356. Here is what is said there about the occasion which gave rise to this book: "When the Duke of Burgundy was very young he was taught mathematics, and as much insight was seen in him it was suggested that every day he should write down, in his own hand, what he had been taught the day before, so that (it is said) by repeating to himself the things he had learned, and going over the geometrical truths again at his leisure—and doing so in order and following their connections—he would get accustomed to going more slowly and more surely." I add that this was the way of focusing his attention and of ensuring that it was his own thoughts which he put in writing. In addition to that, the success gave him pleasure, and motivated him to continue. Now these meditations put together have<sup>698</sup> given rise to the *Elemens de Geometrie de Monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne*, which has just been published, in 220 quarto pages.<sup>699</sup> But

698. Reading "ont" in place of "on."

699. pages. | This prince starts to explain incommensurables (page 33 of his book).



Suppose, for example, a perfect square ABCD, whose side AB is one foot. The diagonal AC, which is a straight line drawn from one corner to the opposite corner, will be incommensu-

here is what concerns my unities in it, according to the actual words of the extract:

*When the existence of Beings is considered attentively, it is very clearly understood that existence belongs to UNITIES, and not to numbers (or MULTITUDES). Twenty men exist only because each man exists. Number is only a repetition of Unities. There cannot be number if there are no unities. This being rightly conceived (says the renowned author of this book), is this cubic foot of matter a single substance, or is it several of them? You cannot say that it is a single substance for quite simply you could not divide it in two. If you say that it is several substances, because there are several of them in it, this number, whatever it is, is composed of unities. If there are several existing substances, it must be the case that there is one of them, and this one cannot be two of them. Therefore matter is composed of indivisible substances.<sup>700</sup>*

The author makes an objection worthy of his insight, which is that geometry shows the divisibility of matter to infinity, which seems to prove that there is nothing indivisible. But ultimately this proves only that one can never arrive at the final divisions, since the divisions, although continued as often and for as long a time as one likes, will only ever give a finite number of parts, whereas the number of indivisible substances is infinite. This is what follows from the objection, and not that there are no such substances. One will be able to make yet another objection, which is that geometry shows that space, or the line in space, is not composed of points, which are not parts, but only extremities. I reply that in that case space must be distinguished from matter. *Space*, or unchanging place, is an *ideal* thing, as is time, and concerns the possible as actual. This is what constitutes *Quantum*

---

rable with the side AB. However ACEG, another perfect square, whose side is AC, is commensurable with the square ABCD, for it is evident that ABCD is half of ACEG. So if ABCD was a square foot, then ACEG will be two square feet. | *deleted*, M4.

700. *Substances*. | The author makes the objection that geometry shows the divisibility of matter to infinity, which seems to prove that there is nothing indivisible. But it only follows that there is not a finite number of indivisible substances, and that we cannot arrive at one by dividing since divisions always produce a finite number of parts. It is true, however, that extension or space, which is an ideal thing, is not composed of points, which are not its parts but extremities. | *deleted*, M4.

*continuum*<sup>701</sup> (a magnitude in which there is no separation at all),<sup>702</sup> which is indifferent to all possible divisions, just as number is in relation to all the fractions one can make from it. But *matter*, which is *real*, is *Quantum discretum*<sup>703</sup> (a magnitude already divided),<sup>704</sup> just as a whole number is in relation to unities, from which there results the divisions which can be made in matter by successive operations, being actually already made there from the outset by nature, which has distinguished from all time what will be able to be detached from another, and is different from it, whether one thinks of and notices the separation or not. It is this difference between space and matter which had not been well observed, and which had diverted men from the knowledge of *unities*, that is, of the true elements and principles of substance. I am with devotion etc.

701. "A continuous quantity."

702. The bracketed words were added by Leibniz after his amanuensis had written out version M6; they are not present in versions M4 or M5 either.

703. "A discrete quantity."

704. The bracketed words were added by Leibniz after his amanuensis had written out version M6; they are not present in versions M4 or M5 either.

**69. Leibniz to Sophie (6 February 1706)**

## Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 493.  
 M2: Draft, revised and expanded from M1: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 492.  
 M3: Copy of dispatched letter, revised from M2: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 511–14.

## Transcriptions:

- K: Klopp 9: 155–63 (following M3).  
 G: G 7: 565–70 (following K).

Sophie forwarded a copy of Leibniz's letter of 31 October 1705 (see no. 68) to Elizabeth Charlotte, who had this to say about it in her reply to Sophie of 27 December 1705: "I understand Mr. Leibniz's 'unity' as little as if it were Greek or Latin; when my son has returned from Paris, I will show it [Leibniz's letter] to him in order to see whether he understands it [unity] as well as the Duke of Burgundy; the Duke of Burgundy grasps things that are way beyond my limited understanding. Fortunately, it is not particularly necessary that I know them."<sup>705</sup> Elizabeth Charlotte did indeed show Leibniz's letter to her son, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723), who had an interest in philosophical matters, for in her next letter to Sophie, of 7 January 1706, she wrote: "My son has just come in. I immediately let him read Mr. Leibniz's paper on unity; he even understands it; says it is easy to understand, which I do not think at all. My son says that he is entirely of Mr. Leibniz's opinion, and would have defended it against Father Malebranche."<sup>706</sup> It is clear from the following letter that Sophie made Leibniz aware of these comments, and also asked him for more information about his "simple substances," though if she did either of these things in writing then the relevant letter from her is apparently no longer extant.

[M3: copy of dispatched letter]<sup>707</sup>

705. Bod 2: 121.

706. Bod 2: 122–23.

707. From the French. Complete.



Hanover, 6 February 1706

Madam

I am delighted that my paper<sup>708</sup> served as entertainment for some moments to Your Electoral Highness and to Madam;<sup>709</sup> but I am even more delighted that the Duke of Orléans approves it: not only because he is a distinguished prince, but because his insight matches his dignity. If the Sultan had approved it, I would hardly be concerned.

It is also no small matter that even the Duke of Burgundy<sup>710</sup> and also Madam the Duchess of Maine<sup>711</sup> understand such deep subjects. It is important to mankind that a prince such as this Duke, who is destined to govern one day a beautiful and large area, is instructed as he is in the more solid and important truths regarding the sources of things.

For these are the true foundations of natural theology and of all that can rightly be said about God and the soul. And knowledge of these principles,<sup>712</sup> which make us think fittingly of the divine perfections, is capable of giving great depth to the fine sentiments of good-natured souls, which leads them to imitate the first intelligence by doing good according to the power which is given to them.<sup>713</sup>

708. Leibniz is referring to his letter to Sophie of 31 October 1705 (see no. 68).

709. Elizabeth Charlotte.

710. Louis, Duke of Burgundy. See no. 68.

711. Anne-Louise-Bénédicté de Bourbon-Condé (1676–1753).

712. principles | based on the divine perfections which give us the idea that | *deleted*, M2.

713. them. | Your Electoral Highness asks me what a simple being is, which is rather like if you asked me what “being” is. One does not always have the words to explain what one wants, especially when the question is so general. When one speaks of simple substances, however, I think one should say that they all have some perception of God. Genies, the soul of man, the soul of the beast, and perhaps even souls of lower classes, all have that in common. And it seems to me that the whole of nature is full of these kinds of souls, which represent what is outside of them according to their point of view. And they are all ingenerable and incorruptible. It should not be surprising if multiple representations are found all at once in the same simple substance. It is like multiple radii which converge in the same center, indivisible though it is. God’s perception or knowledge is perfect. That of genies and man’s soul is accompanied by reasons. That of beasts is only empirical, and based on examples, that is, on past cases, which make them act the same way in new cases which resemble the first. | M1. Without crossing any of that out, Leibniz then wrote next to it: “Your

And one of the most important goods that distinguished persons can do for others is to spread the light, by favoring researches into God's wonders, which shine forth in nature. This also contributes to virtue and health, the two most important goods of man.

Your Electoral Highness asks me what a simple substance is. I reply that its nature is to have perception, and consequently to represent composite things.

It will be asked how the composite can be represented in the simple, or the multitude in unity. I answer that it is somewhat like when an infinity of radii converge and form angles in the center, simple and indivisible though it is.

And these radii do not merely consist in lines, but also in tendencies or efforts along the lines, which intersect without merging with each other, as we can see from the movement of fluids.

It is like when we throw several stones into still water at the same time and see that each makes circles on the surface of the water, which intersect without merging, each line of circles advancing as if it were all alone. We also see that rays of light penetrate each other without mixing. Lastly, it is known that the same body can receive an infinity of impressions all at once, each of which has its effect; and the smallest part of a mass which is compressed and full of efforts resists the efforts of all the other parts, and this cannot occur without its receiving some impression from them. This makes me think that the actual *unities* from which everything else results must be modified in relation to everything which surrounds them, and it is this that constitutes the representation which is attributed to them.

---

Electoral Highness asks me what a simple substance is. I reply that its nature is to represent composite things, more or less as an infinity of radii converge in the center, simple and indivisible though it is. In a word, unities are souls, just as multitudes are bodies. All unities or souls always subsist, for as they do have any parts they could not be formed through the union of parts, nor destroyed by their dissolution. Whereas bodies are formed and destroyed because they are assemblages, like a flock of sheep." Version M1 then continues with numerous attempts to make the points that animals only act like empirics, i.e., they act on the basis of past examples alone, and that humans sometimes act like empirics but are also capable of ascertaining necessary truths which are not obtainable through sense experiences. Most of these attempts are either aborted, or crossed out, and Leibniz eventually abandoned the draft, seemingly unable to find a satisfactory way of making his point.

*God* is himself a simple substance, but as he is the original and universal center which contains and produces everything, he is of a different order. The other simple substances are what are called *souls*, and the whole of nature is full of them.<sup>714</sup>

Each *soul* is a world in miniature, representing things from the outside according to its point of view, and confusedly or distinctly according to the organs which accompany it, whereas *God* contains everything distinctly and eminently.

So by using souls as so many mirrors, the author of things has found the way to multiply the universe itself, so to speak; that is, he has found the way of varying the views of it, just as the same town appears differently according to the different places from which one looks at it.

And with each soul being a mirror of the universe in its way, it is easy to conclude that each soul is as imperishable and incorruptible as the universe itself.

Moreover, this is apparent from the fact that the soul is a simple substance or unity which, having no parts, cannot be formed by the composition of any parts nor destroyed by their dissolution. Souls are unities, and bodies are multitudes.

With the universe being a kind of fluid, all of one piece and like an ocean without limits, all motions within it are conserved and propagated to infinity, albeit insensibly, just like the aforementioned circles, produced by a stone thrown in water, are visibly propagated for some distance, and although they become invisible in the end, the impression nonetheless continues and extends to infinity, as is quite clear from the laws of motion.

This communication of motions means that each thing is related to and affected by everything else, although more often than not distant things do not have noticeable effects.

However, light, sound, the magnet, and some other examples prove that there are sometimes noticeable actions at a distance.

So as our organs are affected by neighboring bodies, and those bodies by their neighbors, we are affected mediately by all other bod-

714. them. | And each soul represents things from the outside according to its point of view and according to the organs which accompany it. | *deleted*, M2.

ies, and our souls too, since they represent bodies according to their organs.<sup>715</sup>

It can also be inferred from that that the soul is never entirely deprived of an organic body. For order requires that every substance always relates to everything else; there is even a demonstration for this.

It follows from this that not only the soul but also the animal always subsists. Also, nature never proceeds by leaps, and does not pass from one kind to another.

Through observations it now seems quite clear that the apparent generation of a new plant or new animal is only a growth and transformation of a plant or animal which already subsists in seeds.

Aside from what Mr. Swammerdam, Mr. Leeuwenhoek and Mr. Dodart<sup>716</sup> have observed on this matter, it can be said that reason as well as experience leads us to this conclusion, since there is no mechanism which is able to draw from an unformed mass a body endowed with an infinite number of organs, such as is that of an animal. So (unless there is a miracle) there must necessarily be a preformation, that is, a formation in advance. But after having recognized that the animal only comes into being at the same time as does the world, and that it only changes and develops by generation, I am surprised that it has not been recognized that it must also endure as long as the world, and that death is only a diminution and envelopment of the animal.

From all this it is also apparent that, as each soul is a mirror of the universe, it must follow its course just like the very universe that it represents, and that this regular course of a soul can never be completely interrupted by death, which is only a sleep, that is, a state in which perceptions are more confused, and which lasts until they redevelop.

And just as there are grounds to think that the universe itself develops more and more, and that everything tends toward some goal

715. organs. | It can even be said that the perfection of each soul or unity will increase, although this is often after taking a very circuitous route: for often one has to step back for a better leap. | *deleted*, M2.

716. Denis Dodart (1634–1707), physician and botanist, member of the Académie des Sciences and its supervisor of the study of the natural history of plants from the early 1670s until the 1690s.

(since everything comes from an author whose wisdom is perfect) it can likewise be believed that souls, which endure as long as the universe, also proceed to get better and better, at least physically, and that their perfections carry on increasing; although more often than not this happens only insensibly, and sometimes after large steps backward.

It is often necessary to move back for a better jump: death and sufferings would not exist in the universe if they were not necessary for great changes for the better. Just as a grain of corn seems to perish in the earth in order to be able to push up a shoot.

And just as there are two sorts of perception, one simple, the other accompanied by reflections which give rise to knowledge and reasoning,<sup>717</sup> there are likewise two kinds of souls, namely, ordinary souls, whose perception is without reflection, and rational souls, which think about what they do: the first are merely mirrors of the universe, but the second are also imitations of the divinity.

Ordinary souls are governed purely by examples from the senses, like empirics; but rational souls examine by reason (when they can) whether past examples are applicable to the present case. The souls of beasts consequently can never arrive at necessary and general truths; just as an empiric can never be sure if what has often been successful for him in the past (without his knowing the reason for it) will be successful for him again in the future.

It ought to be believed that<sup>718</sup> there are rational souls more perfect than us, which can be called *genies*, and we could well be of their number one day. The order of the universe seems to require this.

And as the rational soul possesses reflection, which is to say that it presently thinks of itself and knows itself, it is appropriate that it should always know itself, at least when waking from sleep or emerging from some other distraction which may interrupt its attention. So it is not only physically the same soul which always subsists, but also the same individual morally; this makes it capable of receiving

717. reasoning, | so there are common souls and rational souls. The first are merely mirrors of the universe, but the second are also mirrors of the divinity. | M2.

718. that | besides humankind, there are rational animals more perfect than us, which could be called "genies," and we could well be of their number one day. | M2.

punishments and rewards under the most perfect government, which is that of God.<sup>719</sup>

So the best conclusion that can be drawn from the true knowledge of principles is the importance of the practice of virtue.

It is true that souls born good, or accustomed to it from early on, practice it without deliberation as they find pleasure in it. But as not everyone has this advantage, and as custom and passions often lead elsewhere, it is important that one has good principles established to which even those who have received or adopted contrary inclinations can intrinsically adapt themselves little by little, and make as it were natural inclinations by a carefully chosen and regulated practice, if they want to make the effort with them. For one can change even one's temperament.

Besides, with good inclination joined to reason, the action is rendered more noble and more constant; for it is good and satisfying to know that one acts in accordance with reason: nothing is further removed from the beast state, and nothing approaches the divinity more closely. These divine rays of goodness and wisdom shine with such brilliance in some distinguished persons with whom I have and have had the honor to have commerce (and I do not dare to name you among them, Madam, for fear of it passing for flattery), that they can serve as an example to humankind.

I am with devotion etc.

P.S. I forgot to add that nature alone in fact receives all impressions and brings them together into one, but without the soul the order of the impressions matter has received could not be disentangled, and the impressions would only be confused. Each assignable point of matter has a different motion from every other point assignable to it, and its motion is composed of all preceding impressions; but this impression is as simple as those which compose it, and no composition can be recognized in it. Yet as the entire effect must always express its cause, there must be something other than matter. And where the preceding impressions are distinguished and preserved, this is where there is a soul. So there is soul everywhere. It is true and very noteworthy that, by taking this point together with the matter which surrounds it, there

719. Version M2 ends here.

is a way of disentangling the past. For all the impressions [in a soul] can be traced, so to speak, in the infinite varieties of shapes and motions that there are in the surrounding matter, which preserve something of all preceding effects. And it is also for this reason that every soul is accompanied by an organic body which corresponds to it.

**70. The Duke of Orléans to Leibniz (21 February 1706)<sup>720</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, MS XXIII, 387a, 65–66.

Transcriptions:

SP: SP 436–37 (following M).

K: Klopp 9: 169–70 (following M).

According to Elizabeth Charlotte, the initial response of her son, the Duke of Orléans, to Leibniz's letter to Sophie of 31 October 1705 (see no. 68), was positive: in her letter to Sophie of 7 January 1706, she wrote: "My son says that he is entirely of Mr. Leibniz's opinion."<sup>721</sup> However within a month the Duke of Orléans had come to a different assessment of Leibniz's unities, as Elizabeth Charlotte informed Sophie in her letter of 4 February 1706 that "My son is not entirely of Mr. Leibniz's opinion, for he claims that unity is found in God alone. He wanted to make me understand this, but I confess that, in my ignorance, I do not understand a word of it."<sup>722</sup> Some weeks later, on 21 February 1706, Elizabeth Charlotte explained to Sophie that her son had formulated a response to Leibniz's letter: "My son will himself answer Mr. Leibniz in writing in order to demonstrate that he understands him. My son and the learned people around him are in admiration at the quantity of Mr. Leibniz's writings and his great intellect, to produce everything so nicely. We will see whether he will also be satisfied with my son's writing."<sup>723</sup> The following is the response by the Duke of Orléans, which was enclosed with Elizabeth Charlotte's letter to Sophie of 21 February, and was passed on to Leibniz by Sophie.

720. From the French. Complete. On a separate page, presumably attached to the Duke's letter, Leibniz wrote: "Note from the Duke of Orléans, which Madam [Elizabeth Charlotte] sent to Madam the Electress of Brunswick [Sophie], prompted by some of my thoughts that His Royal Highness had read with Madam. February 1706."

721. Bod 2: 123.

722. Bod 2: 124. Leibniz was unaware of these remarks when he wrote his letter to Sophie of 6 February 1706 (see no. 69)

723. Bod 2: 128.



I have never seen a better or clearer piece of writing on matters so obscure and abstract than Mr. Leibniz's two letters,<sup>724</sup> which Madam did me the honor of showing me. I was delighted to see condemned by a man as clever as him the error of those who confuse matter and extension, and he demonstrates perfectly well that without real unities matter could not exist, and that the assemblage of infinitely small things could never compose a thing of any magnitude. The unity he establishes for souls is just as beautiful and as<sup>725</sup> necessary. But I admit that I was troubled by two things in it: 1) it seems to me that it is a lack of unity to be subject to changes, even if only to that of the succession of time, which makes me recognize a true unity only in God who, having the past and the future equally present, is not subject to any succession of time, and understands everything equally and at the same time through the eternal action of his imagination, so to speak; he is a true unity, foundation of all extension, time, and perception. The second thing which troubles me in my ignorance is that I do not understand the difference or the relationship between soul unities and material<sup>726</sup> unities. Nothing is more ingenious to clarify this than the comparison Mr. Leibniz uses of the radii of a circle and of the rings which occur in water. This shows perfectly what constitutes the difference between sensations and what prevents them merging into each other. It is almost geometric, but the way in which it happens and its passage is beyond my comprehension, at least in my current state. I flatter myself that I will see it more clearly if I reach the point of becoming a genie as Mr. Leibniz makes us hope to be.

724. Namely, the letter to Sophie of 31 October 1705 (see no. 68), and a letter to the Duke of Orléans of 9 February 1706 (published in Klopp 9: 163–69). The latter concerns a man from Chartres born deaf and dumb but who gained his sight and then learned to speak.

725. Transcription K here omits “aussi.”

726. Reading “matieres” for “matiere.”

**71. Leibniz to Sophie (early? March 1706)<sup>727</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 533–34.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 170–77 (following M).

Elizabeth Charlotte sent to Sophie the note written by her son, the Duke of Orléans, for Leibniz (see no. 70), on 21 February 1706. Less than a week later, Elizabeth Charlotte asked Sophie what Leibniz had made of it; she wrote in her letter to Sophie of 27 February 1706: “I would like to find out whether Mr. Leibniz will be pleased with my son’s writing, which I have sent Your Highness and which he wrote with his own hand.”<sup>728</sup> In response to the Duke of Orléans note, Leibniz composed the following letter, which expands on the topics treated in his letter to Sophie of 6 February 1706 (see no. 69).

Madam<sup>729</sup>

Your Electoral Highness and Madam<sup>730</sup> have done me a great favor in obtaining for me a paper which shows the sublime mind of the prince who has revealed his sentiments in it better than the most excellent impression on a medal could show his face. He enters so well into the heart of the matter, and goes so much beyond what gave him occasion to discuss it, that it will be difficult to meet anyone down here who is sufficiently able to clarify what Monsignor the Duke of Orléans still finds obscure in the nature of unities or simple substances. If there were means of succeeding in this by some lengthy calculation, or by a number of experiments, as there is in the problems of mathematics and physics, I would hope that I could contribute to the satisfaction of this great prince. But in these matters there is not so much need of a great labor as of a clear and penetrating view, which is not an advan-

727. From the French. Complete.

728. Bod 2: 129.

729. Down the right hand side of the first page, Leibniz wrote “March 1706.”

730. Elizabeth Charlotte.

tage which we mathematicians could ordinarily claim for ourselves, being accustomed to succeed only by dint of time and application: whereas the greatest geniuses, such as that of His Royal Highness, only require a simple view like that of the angels, as is quite apparent from his note which from the beginning lifted my admiration beyond all worldly praises.

It is true that in the past I planned a new way of calculating suitable for matters which have nothing in common with mathematics,<sup>731</sup> and if this kind of logic were put into practice, every reasoning, even probabilistic ones, would be like that of the mathematician: if need be, the lesser minds which had application and good will could, if not accompany the greatest minds, then at least follow them. For one could always say: let us calculate,<sup>732</sup> and judge correctly through this, as much as the data and reason can provide us with the means for it. But I do not know if I will ever be in a position to carry out such a project, which requires more than one hand; and it even seems that mankind is still not mature enough to lay claim to the advantages which this method could provide.

So, deprived here of the organs and instruments which have helped me in other matters, and which I need in order to reason (somewhat as feeble eyes need glasses), perhaps all I can do is give occasion to this enlightened prince to think something nobler about my views than anything I could conceive in them myself. This is what I already recognize in this same note, which seems to push me beyond my horizons by making me have a deeper consideration of the original unity, which is that of the divinity, spoken of so well there, in order to compare it with the derivative unities.

One of the great principles I use is that which entails that nothing exists without reason, or rather that there is always *a reason why*. And just about the first question that can be asked is: *why is there*

731. Leibniz is referring here to his work on developing a formal language of thought (the universal characteristic), the terms of which would, when combined in accordance with a kind of logical calculus, generate and determine propositional truths in matters such as ethics and metaphysics. For examples of some of Leibniz's writings on this "new way of calculating," see P 1–17, and W 12–29.

732. calculate | and draw from our data what can be drawn from it by reason | *deleted*. None of Leibniz's deletions are recorded in transcription K.

*something*, and there would indeed be no reason at all for the existence of things if there were not an ultimate reason for them, which has no need for one itself, and which consequently must have the reason for its existence in itself; otherwise the same question or difficulty would always exist. So the ultimate reason of things is nothing other than the absolutely necessary substance, and as such it is not subject to change.

Yet experience shows us that there are changes,<sup>733</sup> and substances which are subject to them. And reasoning agrees with experience and even shows us the *reason why*. For the same reason why there is something rather than nothing is also why there are many things rather than a few. Now if there were always the same, there would be few; since everything that could follow would be excluded.

But order requires that there be a connection between the different states, and it is for this reason that I am accustomed to say that the present is big with the future, which holds not only for things in general, but also for each substance in particular, through the relation of all its states which are enveloped inside each other, as it were. And since the changing of things is not an annihilation, but a new modification of substances which receive different states, we may conclude that the nature of created substance rightly consists in this connection which makes these different states belong to one and the same subject, and that this subject is inclined by its nature to pass from one state to another. And I call this the “active force,” which is essential to substance as is its passivity which constitutes the limits of this force.

Now because only simple substances are truly substances, other things being only accumulations and like a flock of sheep which has no reality at all aside from that which is in these sheep; and because every change occurring in these accumulations or masses has to come from the simple substances which compose these masses: it is necessary that simple substances or unities be themselves subject to and inclined to change, excepting the original unity, which is of an absolute necessity and perfection, such that it cannot acquire nor lose anything.

Nevertheless we can say with His Royal Highness that God is incomparably more unity than we are, and that he alone is unity in every way. For aside from our souls, which are unities, we have

733. changes | and consequently contingent substances | *deleted*.

bodies, which are multitudes. And I believe, with the majority of the ancient philosophers and Fathers of the Church, that God alone is an intelligence separated from all body, whereas all other intelligences—Genies, Angels, and Demons—are accompanied by organic bodies in their way.

As for the relation between the different unities, and especially that between the mind and matter, I have devised the system of pre-established harmony. And some able people (like among others Mr. Bayle, in the second edition of his *Dictionary*, article “Rorarius”), have admitted that this system, if it were possible, would resolve the matter and would be worthy of the sovereign author of things, whose wisdom and power it seems to elevate beyond what people had thought of them.<sup>734</sup> However people have wanted to raise some objection against the possibility of my hypothesis. But I do not see why God’s artistry should not be great enough to accommodate different substances together from the outset, so that one then expresses what happens in the other, without receiving any influence from it. Just as if an excellent craftsman had made two clocks of different construction which nevertheless agree with each other perfectly, each in accordance with its own laws. And it is not hard to believe that he who has adjusted things down to the winds and waves, is better able to lead ships to port by means of a tempest than is even the ablest pilot who has the wind he desires. For God executes his plans by the most fitting and best calculated ways, so that everything is led, as it were, by the hand. We can even be certain that this divine artistry is necessary and practiced everywhere, otherwise things would not have the order, the correspondence and the perfection which is fitting for them. An able man in Paris objected in his book *De la connaissance de soi-même* that my hypothesis was contrary to freedom,<sup>735</sup> whereas I believe instead that I have brought our freedom and independence from every other

734. Bayle says of Leibniz’s pre-established harmony: “there is nothing else we can imagine that gives so exalted an idea of the intelligence and power of the Author of all things. This, added to the advantage of setting aside all notions of miraculous conduct, would make me prefer this theory to that of the Cartesians, if I could conceive some possibility in the way of ‘pre-established harmony.’” Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, 245 (article “Rorarius,” note L).

735. See note 605.

thing besides God to the highest degree possible. The learned theologian Mr. Jaquelot, who has written amongst other things a book on *La Conformité de la Foy avec la Raison*, included a vindication of my view in it a little while ago.<sup>736</sup>

But if, besides the relation of<sup>737</sup> the mind and body, whereby what happens in one corresponds of itself to what happens in the other, I am again asked in what consists their union, I am not in a position to respond. For this union is not a phenomenon which makes itself known by any sensible effects beyond this relation, and down here we cannot go beyond the phenomena. However if some philosopher wants to maintain, following the Peripatetic School, that primary matter is really what is passive and the soul what is active in the simple substance, and that secondary matter is ultimately what results from it in the masses or accumulations, I have no desire to dispute with him. And I do not have any inclination to enter needlessly into this thorny philosophy of the Schools, contenting myself with what agrees well enough with experiences or phenomena. Therefore I do not think that the curiosity of Monsignor the Duke of Orléans would go any further, even if he were more of a genius than he already is.

Indeed there are only phenomena which excite our curiosity and also apparently that of angels. It is credible that they have more phenomena than we do, and that their senses are more exquisite and more varied, in proportion to their organs. Besides that, it can be believed that they are livelier and at the same time more precise in their reasoning. For I hold that ultimately they only differ from us in degree, that these intelligences are also accompanied by bodies (as I have just said), and that therefore it is everywhere as it is here, apart from the degrees of perfection which vary to infinity. It seems, however, that

736. Isaac Jaquelot (1647–1708), court chaplain to the French colony in Berlin. Jaquelot's book, *La Conformité de la foy avec la raison*, was published in 1705. However Leibniz's remark that it contained a vindication of his own theory is perhaps a little misleading. Jaquelot had sent a pre-publication copy of his book to Leibniz in the fall of 1704, and Leibniz was horrified to find, in the appendix, that Jaquelot had attacked the theory of pre-established harmony by claiming that it rendered free will illusory. A heated dispute ensued, and Jaquelot eventually revised the appendix of his book to say that, when understood correctly, the theory of pre-established harmony was consistent with free will. See G 6: 558–63 and 565–73/LNS 187–92 and 194–200.

737. of | substances of a different kind | *deleted*.

Monsignor the Duke, of whom I have the honor to speak, is not far behind them. His is a universal curiosity, and his mind among the most elevated. And if he does not have more exquisite external senses than other men, he compensates for it by cultivating painting and music, and<sup>738</sup> by making use of what art can furnish for making discoveries. Besides ordinary chemistry, he assists the study of solar chemistry by means of burning lenses.<sup>739</sup> And Mr. Tschirnhaus,<sup>740</sup> who has had the honor of supplying one of them to this prince, the most effective of all the instruments which collect the sun's rays which have perhaps existed in the world until now, told me remarkable things about the extent of His Royal Highness's knowledge. Lastly, I am assured that his example and his inclination to excellent research inspire many excellent men in Paris. As this Prince is still young, I have no doubt at all that he will be able to see a great change for the better in the state of men, with regard to their insights, in which he will have contributed in no small way, and this is not a small merit, even with regard to<sup>741</sup> religion. If men continue in the same way, and if leaders do their duty by encouraging them, as the self-interest in their health, their contentment, and even in their affairs requires, we cannot fail to go far. I wish that Your Electoral Highness and Madam also be witnesses to it. And I am etc.

Hanover

March 1706

Sophie passed the above letter on to Elizabeth Charlotte who in turn showed it to her son. On 25 March 1706 Elizabeth Charlotte wrote to Sophie: "My son

738. and | by making use of all kinds of instruments which make us go further into the interior of nature. | *deleted*.

739. On this, see for instance "Relation de ce qui s'est passé à la dernière assemblée publique de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, tenuë le 22. Avril. 1705," *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts* [a.k.a. *Journal de Trévoux*] 5 (1705), 1421; and Mr. Geoffroy F.R.S., "Experiments upon metals, made with the burning-glass of the Duke of Orleans," *Philosophical Transactions* 26 (1708–9): 374–86.

740. Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651–1708), mathematician and scientist and intermittent correspondent of Leibniz. Tschirnhaus created the largest burning lenses of his time, which enabled him to perform experiments into the behavior of various substances under high temperatures.

741. to | God and to Christianity. | *deleted*.

thinks that Mr. Leibniz praises him too much. He is happy that he is pleased with him, and thinks that everything he writes is very well written. Whether I understand the matter or not, I have still read through everything carefully, because he writes so well that it is still a pleasure to read. My son does not find things like this boring at all, he reads it with pleasure; I cannot contemplate unities and nothing because I do not understand anything about them.<sup>742</sup> This was the last exchange on these matters.



72. Louise Hollandine to Sophie (14 November 1707)<sup>743</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, MS XXIII 387a, 127–28.

Transcription:

SP: SP 461–62 (following M).

Sophie occasionally informed some of her relatives of Leibniz's philosophical views, and in her (no longer extant) letter of 1 November 1707 to her sister, Louise Hollandine, she wrote about Leibniz's views on the souls of animals. The following is Louise Hollandine's response, which Sophie passed on to Leibniz.

I am surprised at the opinion Mr. Leibniz holds, that beasts have an immortal soul. There would be a number of things to say to that, which I think would embarrass him. The book he lent you to read contains more incontestable facts than his opinion on the soul of beasts,<sup>744</sup> although I believe that they are not without attention. I observe the example of my cat, which looks for its convenience in all things; ever since I stopped eating in the refectory, she comes onto my table and makes me understand very well what she wants. The dogs that live here have even more spirit, and I expect to be licked excessively by them if I go to see them this afternoon.

743. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

744. The author is unidentified. The book may have been mentioned in Sophie's letter to Louise Hollandine of 1 November 1707 which is no longer extant.

## 73. Leibniz to Sophie (29 November 1707)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 562.

M2: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 564.

M3: Copy of dispatched letter: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 54–55.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 286–88 (following M2).

Leibniz's response to Louise Hollandine's letter to Sophie of 14 November 1707 (see no. 72). Neither Sophie nor Louise Hollandine appears to have replied.

[M2: draft]<sup>745</sup>

Madam

Your Electoral Highness has mentioned to Madam the Abbess, your sister, my opinion on the soul of beasts, which holds that it is imperishable, and I am not at all surprised that this princess, who has a lofty mind, and who sees the repercussions of things, notices some difficulties with it. But as I have anticipated perhaps the majority of them, I have tried to remove them, and having published my opinion in the *Journal des sçavans* some years ago,<sup>746</sup> I have found that people are not at all put off by this point. Indeed, what harm is there in saying that the souls of beasts<sup>747</sup> always subsist?

Gassendi even gives this privilege to his atoms. It is true that atoms, being bodies and having parts, could be divided and consequently destroyed, and a miracle would be required to make them imperishable. But with souls being simple substances which are the principle of force and perception that matter could not<sup>748</sup> supply by itself, it would instead

745. From the French. Complete.

746. "Système nouveau," G 4: 477–87/SLT 68–77.

747. beasts | are imperishable? | *deleted*.

748. Transcription K here omits the all-important "ne" [not].

require a miracle to destroy them, since they contain nothing which is liable to dissolution. And if beasts really do have perception and are not pure machines, that is, if they have true souls, it must be said that these souls are imperishable as much as ours are.

This doctrine would be dangerous if I admitted the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of beasts, and even if I only distinguished one from the other by degrees of perfection, in the way that a learned and virtuous person differs from another who is ignorant and vicious.

But in my view the difference between the soul of man and the soul of a beast is infinitely greater. They are of a different kind. The former is a mind which has intelligence and has something in common with God, neither of which is true of the latter. Indeed, man acts as a small God in his sphere; he is the only one of the known substances who knows almighty God, who can imitate him, and who is capable of knowing necessary and eternal truths which are the object of sciences. It is in this that reason properly consists, whereas the consecutions of beasts are only founded upon inductions. Beasts are like empirics who do not know the reasons why they ought to expect, as they do, what they have already experienced. Man alone is capable of foreseeing by reason events which are unlike those he has experienced.

This constitution of the human soul makes it enter into a kind of society with God, and renders it capable of the laws of punishment and reward, even with regard to internal actions, because it has reflection and thinks of what is called the *self*, which constitutes the duration or the moral identity of a person. This also means that our soul, being a citizen in the city of God, will always preserve this quality, because it leads us to conclude that the city of God, which includes all minds, is governed in the most perfect manner and the one most worthy of its monarch, and never loses anything. So we should believe that our souls will continue to retain their personality in the most reasonable way, and to such an extent that they do not lose anything through their death, not even their good qualities and acquired knowledge. It is true that we cannot know the detail of God's design, which is a little more sublime than is imagined. But we can know enough of it to be content with it and not just to have what is called forced patience. I am with devotion etc.

[M3: copy of dispatched letter]<sup>749</sup>

Madam<sup>750</sup>

I am not surprised that what Your Electoral Highness mentioned to Madam, her sister,<sup>751</sup> about my opinion on the soul of beasts, seemed a little strange to this Princess, whose mind is so elevated, and who knows the repercussions of things so well. I have always thought that we have to do one of two things: either say like the Cartesians that beasts are pure machines without any perception, or grant them imperishable souls. Now I believe that the first view will never prevail, and with good reason, so we will have to come to the second. I admit that this doctrine is considered to be subject to great difficulties, but it seems to me that in the way I explain it these difficulties vanish completely, and that there are no more of them than there are with the opinion of the Gassendists, who believe that there are imperishable atoms in matter. I am not of their opinion, since matter is not a substance because it has parts, while every soul is simple and without parts, and consequently naturally imperishable.

However the souls of beasts do not make reflection upon themselves, and are incapable of knowing the truths which are the object of sciences, and whose universality is necessary and eternal. Our soul is therefore of a much nobler nature, the knowledge of eternal things gives it a special commerce with God, and it is through reflection, or through the knowledge we have of ourselves, that we are citizens in the City of God, capable of receiving laws, punishments, and rewards even with regard to internal actions, which is not the case with beasts. I am with devotion

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness

Your very humble and very  
obedient servant  
Leibniz

Hanover, 29 November 1707

749. From the French. Complete.

750. At the bottom of the page, Leibniz wrote "To Madam the Electress."

751. Louise Hollandine.

#### 74. Leibniz to Sophie (25 September 1708)

Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 4, 10, 1–7.  
 M2: Fair copy: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 4, 10, 1<sup>2</sup>–12<sup>2</sup>.  
 M3: Fair copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 4, 10, 1<sup>1</sup>–23<sup>1</sup>.

Transcription:

FC: FC 132–65 (following M3).

The following letter contains a lengthy series of remarks on a book entitled *Lart de connoistre les hommes* (Paris, 1702), which was credited to Louis des Bans.<sup>752</sup> The letter from Sophie that prompted Leibniz to compose these remarks now appears to be lost, though it is likely to have contained her thoughts on the book (Leibniz summarizes Sophie's opinion at the beginning of his letter) and possibly a request for Leibniz to share his thoughts on it with her. If Sophie did respond to the following letter, her response is apparently no longer extant.

[M3: fair copy]<sup>753</sup>

Madam

752. This book has a curious history which is worth noting. The first edition, entitled *La fausseté des vertus humaines*, was credited to Jaques Esprit and published in Paris in 1678. The second edition, published in Paris in 1702 under the title *Lart de connoistre les hommes*, was credited to Louis des Bans, though des Bans took some liberty in claiming authorship as his second edition was largely just an edited version of the first by Jaques Esprit (Leibniz was well aware of this—see note 754). A third edition, this time credited to Abbé de Bellegarde, was published in Amsterdam in 1709 under the same title as the second edition. Leibniz's remarks in the following letter refer to the second edition, and although des Bans' role in this edition was more that of an editor than an author, in the notes below which pertain to his book I shall refer only to him and not Jaques Esprit, whose words were often retained verbatim by des Bans.

753. From the French. Complete. There is some uncertainty about the precise date of this letter. Version M3, translated here, carries a date of 25 September 1708, while version M2 is dated 15 September 1708. Version M1 is undated. I have elected to follow the date given on the version of the letter I have translated (M3).

I very much congratulate myself on being in agreement with Your Electoral Highness in the judgement on the book *L'art de connoître les hommes* which has appeared recently.<sup>754</sup> Although Your Electoral Highness hadn't said so, I noticed that she has not found in herself, or in the people close to her, the motives of acting which the author commonly attributes to human actions, which he almost always makes bad. Your Electoral Highness has known a countless number of distinguished people, and has not noticed that malice is so predominant in humankind that its virtues should almost count for nothing.<sup>755</sup> The human condition does not deserve to be lowered like this, and to paint us as so bad and so wretched is to have an insufficient recognition of the divine goodness toward us. My experience is meager in comparison with that of Your Electoral Highness, yet I think I have come across people who had a true endowment of integrity.<sup>756</sup> It is true that perfect virtue is rare, but an eminent wickedness is no less so. This has been noted already by Machiavelli,<sup>757</sup> whose book *The Prince* I compare with the one under discussion without, I think, thereby doing it a disservice.<sup>758</sup> Machiavelli depicts only a malicious prince, and offers his portrait as that of the prince in general, and our author, wanting likewise to show what men are like, gives only the character of the malicious ones. He will perhaps say that it is safest to take them for such. I admit that when it is a matter of entrusting something very important to men, one cannot take too many precautions. But aside from that, turning all into evil, and to be serious about it (which is doubtless far removed from the hu-

754. recently | and which is only an abridgement of the one by Abbé Esprit on *La fausseté des vertus humaines*. | M2.

755. nothing. | I draw this consequence from it, that the human condition does not deserve to be lowered in such a way, and I even think that to paint us as so bad and so wretched is to have an insufficient recognition of the divine goodness toward us. | M2.

756. integrity | and good opinions. | *deleted*, M1.

757. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), diplomat, philosopher, and man of letters. Leibniz is thinking of Machiavelli's posthumously-published *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (Rome, 1531), I.27: "Men very rarely know how to be entirely good or entirely bad." English edition: Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, ed. and trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81.

758. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe* (Rome, 1532). English edition: *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

mor and intention of our excellent author and of those who approve his book), is to commit injustices and make reckless judgments, to poison society, to teach wickedness.<sup>759</sup> In any case, it is better to err by going too far the other way and to do good to ingrates and the unworthy than to be lacking in the duties of charity and generosity. Our author's book would be a wonderful document if there were just as many chapters in which the other side of the coin were shown, and in which he noted the good motives of the same actions.<sup>760</sup> He would be capable of doing it, and he should be exhorted to do so.<sup>761</sup> I want to make some brief remarks as examples to show what is missing, and I would like them to be able to contribute toward the supplement [to this book] that I wish for.

Our able<sup>762</sup> author exempts privileged souls from corruption.<sup>763</sup> This is a compliment made entirely for those whom he will want to flatter by this elevation above others. He also puts aside the assistance of grace.<sup>764</sup> Here that is fine, for here it is not a matter of what concerns the spiritual, revealed religion, or the kingdom of heaven: our powers cannot admittedly do anything about those. But when it is only a matter of morals and even natural religion, it should be recognized that we contain great vestiges of God's image. The good in our nature is an ordinary grace of God, just as the grace obtained by Jesus Christ is an extraordinary additional nature. The author examines the four cardinal virtues and those which depend on them. He begins with those first, and I will follow him in that.

### *On Justice*

The motives for cultivating justice which he finds in sovereigns are pride, a burning desire to reign, and a strict policy against everything

759. wickedness | , so I do not think that the author's intention is to exaggerate things. | M2.

760. actions | for which he alleges bad motives. | M2.

761. In version M2, Leibniz wrote this sentence but then crossed it out.

762. In version M2 Leibniz crossed out this word.

763. LDB 2.

764. LDB 3.

which can cause unrest.<sup>765</sup> In magistrates, a fondness for a remarkable reputation, a desire to be promoted.<sup>766</sup> In individuals, the fear of upsetting people, the fear of punishment, an appearance of probity which makes them respectable.<sup>767</sup> In philosophers, the vanity of making themselves believe what they are not.<sup>768</sup> But is it not possible and even natural that a man finds pleasure in the good order among men, just as one finds it in the order of architectural columns? And that he finds displeasure in acts of violence just as one finds it in ugly things<sup>769</sup> which offend? So long as one has humanity, one easily sympathizes with the pains of others and is pleased to deliver them from these

765. LDB 4–5. Leibniz’s remarks here suggest that des Bans believed sovereigns have all three of the motives mentioned, which is not in fact the case. Des Bans claims that some sovereigns are just out of “their natural pride” (4), while others are so because they “love their peace, which makes them diligent in smothering seditious enterprises” (5). Des Bans does seem to suggest, however, that a desire to reign is common to all sovereigns. It is worth noting that when reporting des Bans’ views Leibniz does not generally quote him, but rather—for the most part—opts for a close paraphrasing. On occasion, however, Leibniz’s paraphrasing is anything but close, and on these occasions he often interprets des Bans erroneously. In the notes that follow, I highlight those occasions in which Leibniz does not adequately capture des Bans’ view.

766. LDB 5.

767. LDB 6–8. Leibniz’s summary here is highly inaccurate, for des Bans does not mention fear of punishment nor “an appearance of probity which makes them respectable.” Instead, he gives as the chief motive for individuals acting justly the “fear that they will be the victim of injustices,” which in turn is based on a deeper fear that each man has “not only for his life, but also for his goods, for his peace of mind, and for his reputation” (6). Acting justly helps to alleviate these fears, according to des Bans, because “just men transmit an ineffable sort of respect, and one does not dare to meddle with their goods and their honor any more than to meddle with sacred vases in temples” (7). Des Bans also claims that “people do not have the courage to ill-treat a man who lives peacefully and equitably with everyone” (7). Hence for des Bans, people act justly out of a desire to preserve the things that they value the most (e.g., life, possessions, peace of mind, and security) and their acting thus is calculated to ensure these things are threatened as little as possible.

768. LDB 8. However Leibniz’s summary here is not an accurate representation of des Bans’ point. He writes: “The justice of philosophers was only a desire to distinguish themselves from all other men by means of the uprightness of their actions, and a desire to give the impression that they alone live according to the rules of reason” (8). Des Bans thus thinks that philosophers act justly to deceive others, whereas Leibniz erroneously takes him to mean that they act justly to deceive themselves.

769. Reading “laideurs” (manuscript M3) in place of “plaideurs” (transcription FC).



pains. It is not forbidden to include with that the motives of our own utility. But it is not necessary to limit oneself to them.

### On Strength

He calls *strength* what I—with the Latin authors—would prefer to call *fortitude*, that is, the quality of the strong.<sup>770</sup> But I should learn from the author the ways of speaking well, and I only note that for greater clarity. How could (*he says*) a man who has been insulted have the rules of morality present in his mind?<sup>771</sup> This objection concerns all unanticipated accidents. One person has more presence of mind than another. A happy nature can do a great deal, and when one has familiarized oneself with the dangers, one obtains a habit which corrects or perfects his nature. One sometimes loses one's temper (*he says*) even though one has anticipated the danger of losing one's temper, and has taken precautions to keep oneself from doing so.<sup>772</sup> But the fact is that one forgets the fine resolutions that one took. There are nevertheless people who do not forget them, and who know wonderfully how to adapt themselves to men and to circumstances. The patience of Socrates (*he says*) was a subtle ambition. He wanted to persuade us that he had attained the perfection of reason.<sup>773</sup> But was it not already a great strength of mind to subject it to this fine ambition which I would wish for all men? I go further: when one has learned to do praiseworthy actions through ambition, one will afterwards do them through inclination, for one will in fact take pleasure in it, and one will find that virtue is a fine thing. He says that sovereigns will suffer the insolence of an unthinking person in order not to be ashamed of losing their temper.<sup>774</sup> I say that this is a good motive; they find that anger is an ugly thing for them and for others. But they will want to show (*he*

770. strong. | But it is not up to me to pass judgement on the ways of speaking well, and I only note that for greater clarity. | M2.

771. A very loose summary of LDB 10, which has Des Bans asking how a man being given "a slap in the face or some blows from a baton" can be expected to keep "the truths useful for the regulation of life" in his mind.

772. LDB 12.

773. LDB 14.

774. LDB 18.

*adds*) that they do not have less power over themselves than over their subjects.<sup>775</sup> I still think that it is wisely done, and that they show it effectively through this reasoning.

### *On Temperance*

The author says that one overcomes the passions by other passions.<sup>776</sup> But why would one not do it, why would one neglect such great aids? He adds that one masters greediness and flees places of debauchery out of the love of life and health.<sup>777</sup> This example is not the best choice to show the battle of one passion against the other. Love of life and health arises out of the purest reason. One ought to shun some pleasures out of consideration of a greater evil. He adds that one is often measured in order to store up good, and to live with convenience afterward.<sup>778</sup> But is there anything blameworthy in that?<sup>779</sup> It is an excellent motive to be measured in order to be able to live with order and rule. Calling it avarice is wrong. Those who are temperate through their constitution are praiseworthy too. It is a good nature provided that this constitution does not go to the opposite extreme.

### *On Prudence*

He says that prudence does not deserve our praises, because integrity is lacking in it.<sup>780</sup> But why think that it is always lacking? Because (he adds) people do not like probity, but the honor that it does us.<sup>781</sup> I answer that one can like both, and that this happens quite often. I also say that love of honor usually excites, nourishes, and increases love of probity; and by thinking about how vice is considered ugly by others, one disposes oneself to find it ugly. Thank God we do not so often find ourselves with people who think it fine, and who treat it to gallantry. I

775. LDB 18.

776. LDB 19.

777. LDB 20.

778. LDB 23–24.

779. This sentence is not present in version M1.

780. LDB 28.

781. LDB 30.

am not going to enter into the digression against the ancient philosophers which is found in this book for fear of too much repetition. I want to be brief. I note only that here *he blames* philosophers for not being aware that *self-love* is made the master of man's heart, and does not permit any virtuous action which is not useful for it.<sup>782</sup> This is to give a good thing a bad name. The *love of oneself*—which the author of nature has given us—is a<sup>783</sup> very good and very pure passion. When it is combined with regulation, there emerges what is called *self-love*. We can only want something because it seems to contribute toward our good, whether by facilitating some pleasure or by being opposed to some pain. Every pleasure is a feeling of some perfection. But there are some minor perfections which lead to incomparably greater imperfections. The most certain pleasures are those of the mind, which it finds in order and consequently in virtue. The love of others which is not in any way mercenary is the tendency to find pleasure in the happiness of what is loved. It is thus that the happiness of others enters into our happiness; and when it is a matter of God's happiness, it constitutes our own entirely. I explained this in the preface of a book on people's rights some years back,<sup>784</sup> before the disputes about pure love caused so much uproar.<sup>785</sup> Now, when it is not pleasure but utility which makes us act, it can be said that we act out of interest; but this interest is not in any way blameworthy, and one is only called "interested" when one prefers so-called utility to honesty, that is, to the purest pleasures of the mind. Virtuous actions are useful, but they are also pleasant in themselves to the virtuous. And it was a generous act on the part of Providence to have rendered virtue beautiful and good at the same time. Cicero, following the Stoics, has said excellent things about the concurrence of honesty and utility, and he has rightly

782. LDB 35–36.

783. a | natural thing | *deleted*, M1.

784. "Praefatio codicis juris gentium diplomatici," 1693, A IV 5: 50–79. Partial English translation in SLT 149–52.

785. Leibniz is here referring to the dispute between Fénelon and Bossuet over disinterested love which raged between 1697 and 1699.

noted that if one considered virtue properly, one would be delighted by its beauty.<sup>786</sup>

### On virtues connected with *Justice*

The author arranges the other virtues under the headings of the four cardinal virtues; and on justice depend, in his view, probity, gratitude, the fidelity of subjects,<sup>787</sup> the fidelity of those with secrets, sincerity, officious virtue, goodness, humility, modesty, forbearance, leniency, pity, friendship, women's honor, disinterestedness, and the love of truth. I want to go over them, but I do not want to go over the author's method with a fine-tooth comb nor the notions he gives, or rather does not give, of the virtues he talks about.

### On probity

The author says that it is rare to see religious people observe probity in secret.<sup>788 789</sup> I recognize that true probity is not as common as one would wish it to be, but neither is it as rare as he seems to insinuate. A man accustomed to good actions will not easily bring himself to do bad ones. But I admit that it is rare<sup>790</sup> that one have a probity and generally a moral virtue resistant to great temptations. To better understand this point, since it is a general one—and all the work of our able author is concerned with it—various principles of good actions have to be distinguished. One does these actions either through principles of morality or through principles of piety. There are two principles of morality—utility and pleasure. The author ordinarily only invokes the motives of utility, and these motives are good, since it is reasonable

786. Cicero, *De officiis*, II.37; English edition: Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. and trans. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 77.

787. Reading “des sujets” (manuscript M3) in place of “du sujet” (transcription FC).

788. secret. | I would like him to tell us what he means by “probity.” | *deleted*, M1.

789. LDB 38.

790. rare | that there be a probity resistant to great temptations in those who are not virtuous, and I acknowledge this with regard to the majority of men who are not inclined to virtue. The principle of men's moral virtue, when piety is put aside, is the pleasure that they find whether through their nature or through habit, which is a second nature. | *deleted*, M1.

to practice what is useful. But they are not good enough to make a man virtuous. For that, we need the principle of the pleasure which is found in virtue, and of the displeasure which is found in vice.<sup>791</sup> These are higher motives which the author hardly touches. Nevertheless, the greater this pleasure or displeasure, the more one is inwardly virtuous. When the author here recognizes that one loathes traitors,<sup>792</sup> he himself tacitly admits that men are naturally inclined to be offended by this vice [i.e., betrayal], and to find probity fine and agreeable. But if the pleasure one finds in it is only mediocre, it is liable to be overcome by other, greater pleasures, and even by the hope of future pleasures, which the offer of a great present utility makes us conceive. The same applies to a present pain, or to fears of a future pain—it is rare that the pleasure found in virtue is great enough to overcome<sup>793</sup> lively pleasures, acute pains, and considerable hopes or fears. For that, an excellent nature is required, or a well-consolidated virtue. But as great temptations are also not usually strong, it is not so extraordinary that men act through good motives. I add that the principle of honor is a good principle which more closely approaches the principle of true virtue. For, as I have already said, by thinking to ourselves that others find a bad action ugly and a good action excellent, we are more disposed to find it excellent or ugly ourselves; strictly speaking, the principle of virtuous actions consists in this. So to perform good actions in order to be contented through the satisfaction that one finds in them, is precisely the motive of virtue, although the author's subtlety extends to the point of wanting to confuse it with pride.

*The motives of piety*, if it is a true piety, are even more effective, and when one is well imbued with the great truths of God's providence and of the immortality of our souls, one counts as insignificant the pleasures, honors, and utilities of this life, which is so short and so unequal. The great future is more capable of affecting us, and the one who knows enough about the divine perfections to be delighted by them has attained this pure love whose motives are even nobler than all the motives of future hopes and fears about paradise and hell detached from the pleasure of God. This is what enhances and sancti-

791. Transcription FC here omits "plaisir qu'on trouve dans la vertu, et du."

792. LDB 44.

793. overcome | sensual passions which contain | M2.

fies virtue too, for I have already said that the pleasure one finds in good actions is the true principle of virtuous actions. But the pleasure which is found in virtue could only become greater when it is the pleasure which is found in the supreme virtue, that is, in the divine perfections: so accordingly, as pleasure is a feeling of perfection, the greatest perfection must give the greatest pleasure. Saint Augustine himself has made the nature of grace consist in the pleasure that souls feel because of it.<sup>794</sup>

### *On Gratitude*

I am surprised that the *author* goes as far as to say in general that there is no true generosity in benefactors, and no true gratitude in those whom one has obliged.<sup>795</sup> If the world were generally persuaded by them, this doctrine and other ones like it would be capable of extinguishing the sparks of virtue which still remain in souls. In order to justify this strange doctrine he criticizes the benefactor who tries to make his gift valuable and agreeable,<sup>796</sup> while I praise him for it. The author takes advantage of benefactors' anger with ingrates;<sup>797</sup> but this anger is more excusable, and there is justice in pursuing the punishment of this horrible vice [i.e., ingratitude], at least through the contempt of honest people, since laws only rarely grant what is called *actio ingrati*,<sup>798</sup> and which holds good in Roman law against a liberty

794. St. Augustine, *Expositio epistolae ad Galatas liber unus*, 1.49; English edition: *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, ed. and trans. Eric Plumer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 215–17.

795. LDB 52.

796. LDB 52. Des Bans' point, which is not clear from Leibniz's brief remark, is that benefactors ensure that their gifts are valuable and agreeable not out of generosity, but in order to create bonds between themselves and those whom they assist.

797. LDB 53–54. Des Bans attempts to show that benefactors do not have generous motives on the basis of their response to those who do not show sufficient gratitude: "one has only to consider the surprise, the anger and the despair of a man towards one who has lacked gratitude, his secret sorrow and his public hatred against the one who has not responded to his so-called generosity."

798. That is, legal action against someone for failing to repay a gratitude. See Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, 3.6–17; English edition: Seneca, *Moral Essays*, ed. and trans. John W. Basore (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1935), 3: 135–59.

and a donee.<sup>799</sup> There are people vain enough to be sorry to have an obligation to someone, and cunning enough to poison the good intention of their friend in order to release themselves from their duty. But wickedness is not so common that it should be attributed to the whole human race.<sup>800</sup>

#### On the fidelity of subjects toward princes

*He claims* that this is only the hope of kind deeds or the fear of tortures.<sup>801</sup> It seems to me that he is wrong to reproach people like this. There are many who are faithful out of the affection that they have for their<sup>802</sup> prince and for their homeland. If the desire to live peacefully is mixed in with this, there is nothing to find fault with, as public security is the principle behind the obligation of subjects.

#### On the fidelity of those with secrets

The author thinks it very rare. He conceives that the confidants of princes are very much led to use the secrets they have learned to satisfy the curiosity of an idle lady or to oblige an important man.<sup>803</sup> In spite of all that he claims that they take good precautions,<sup>804</sup> and he recognizes that there are some who are more reserved,<sup>805</sup> but he at-

799. The two forms of ingratitude most discussed in Roman law were the ingratitude of freedmen (*liberti ingrate*, i.e., the ingratitude of freed slaves towards their former masters), and the testamentary ingratitude (*testamenta ingratorum*, i.e., the ingratitude of those whose wills did not make provision for favors or benefits received). Leibniz appears to be referring to both these forms of ingratitude when he writes of an action “against a liberty and a donee.” For further information on the two forms of ingratitude, see Charles Manning, “Actio ingrati,” *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris*, 52 (1986): 61–73.

800. race | , which is not normally very enthusiastic about obliging people or very quick to express gratitude. But this is because men are unremarkable in their virtues and vices more often than not. | *deleted*, M1.

801. LDB 67–68.

802. their | king | *deleted*, M2 and M3.

803. LDB 75–76.

804. LDB 76.

805. reserved, | who reveal nothing; | M2.

tributes their fidelity to self-serving interests,<sup>806</sup> as if there were not also pleasure in being a faithful friend.

#### On sincerity

Sincere people are liked and respected. One entrusts secrets to them, one helps them into opportunities. I infer from this that men who like sincerity, like virtue. *The author* infers from it that one is only sincere out of self-interest.<sup>807</sup> But as this virtue is no less agreeable than useful, why could these two motives not work together?

#### On officious virtue

He speaks here of people who possess the good graces of great men, and who use them to do favors for people.<sup>808</sup> This inclination is excellent, and those who have it are not forbidden from being aware of the utility they derive from it, which is to diminish the envy people have of them and to be drawn into good reciprocal offices. *Our author* only attributes motives of self-interest to them, but *he adds* that they hope for these effects of their officiousness vainly.<sup>809</sup> In doing so *he* takes the exact opposite view to his usual arguments, in which he belittled virtue on account of the designs people have on the benefit which results from it. Nevertheless I think he could have acknowledged that more often than not officious people are not prone to regret this benefit. Why turn one's nose up at people of this fine occupation, by denying them the inclination to do the right thing, and by protesting about the utility for them which is found in it?

806. LDB 77–79.

807. LDB 82.

808. LDB 86–87. Des Bans explains “officious virtue” like this (86): “In all large families and especially in those of great lords, there are certain people who practice a virtue of a very distinctive kind, which is called officious virtue. For they apparently only care about being trusted and seem only to be close to them [i.e., the families] in order to return good offices to all their servants, to excuse their mistakes, cover up their failings, and to exploit their services and their good qualities.”

809. LDB 87.



## On goodness

Man is so good, *he says*, that he envies the good qualities of others.<sup>810</sup> But it is not always out of envy that one is upset to be surpassed; when one is rational, it is not the good of others, but our own modest amount of good or merit which causes our displeasure. This effect is natural, and when it stimulates us to emulation, it is praiseworthy. In a race it is acceptable to make efforts to defeat others, but not to supplant them. It is true that one is tempted to harm a competitor, when one can advance considerably by doing so, and I have already recognized that the ordinary virtues are hardly resistant to great temptations. But it does not follow at all that goodness is a chimerical virtue, as he says here.<sup>811</sup> He alleges that those who hasten to help good people try win over a lot of people who can help them; or at least, if they already have their fill of goods and of honors, they look for public approval, and to makes themselves respected and loved by everyone.<sup>812</sup> But these two motives seem to me to be very fine and very compatible with true goodness.

## On humility

*He* starts with *pride*, which is opposed to this virtue, and *he* claims that it is the principle behind the majority of internal movements. It excites distress by making a man sensible to an insult, and by a miraculous power he calms this movement, when he is aware that anger dishonors him.<sup>813</sup> But why attribute to pride what can come from a reasonable *feeling of human dignity*, a feeling which makes a person shun actions which are vile, ignoble, dishonest, and ignominious? He is nevertheless right to criticize fake humility,<sup>814</sup> and there is nothing so ignoble as the manners of people who are obsequious before the great and insufferable toward the small, as was this Curtius Rufus in the *Annals*

810. LDB 92.

811. LDB 94.

812. LDB 96.

813. LDB 97–98.

814. LDB 99.

of Tacitus: *adversus superiores tristi adulatione, arrogans minoribus*.<sup>815</sup>  
<sup>816</sup> But we should not criticize people who acknowledge their faults,<sup>817</sup>  
 for the fact that they do not blame themselves for being thieves and  
 traitors. This would be to add impudence to the crime.

#### On modesty<sup>818</sup>

People are not embarrassed by the ugliness of incorrect actions but  
 of the thought of being caught in the act.<sup>819</sup> I admit this. But even  
 this does not fail to be useful. It gives some unfavorable idea of an  
 unworthy action, and sometimes serves to make us be ashamed of  
 ourselves.<sup>820</sup>

#### On forbearance

The author finds that forbearance is usually sincere,<sup>821</sup> but that it is the  
 effect of the softness of a temperament which suffers everything.<sup>822</sup> He  
 nevertheless remarks that it is sometimes affected, when one is not in

815. “morosely sycophantic towards his superiors, arrogant towards his inferiors.” Tacitus, *Annals*, 11.21; English edition: Tacitus, *The Annals*, ed. and trans. J. C. Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226.

816. *minoribus*. | But we should not criticize people who have a true humility, who recognize their imperfections, and who admit their faults, when they do their utmost to cure themselves of them. The author objects that people only admit small faults, and that people hardly accuse themselves of being a thief, a traitor, a murderer. But one is not obliged to denounce oneself in court and bring about one’s own punishment. Besides the fact that these kinds of confessions would scandalize, and would cause other disorders, and sometimes even be treacherous. This would be to add impudence to the crime. | M2.

817. Cf. LDB 101.

818. *modesty* | ¶ Man rightly thinks that the respect due to him is violated by cheeky and foolish words and behavior. | *deleted*, M1.

819. LDB 105–6.

820. *ourselves* | , which leads to self-correction. | M2.

821. LDB 118.

822. LDB 121.

a state to repel insults.<sup>823</sup> <sup>824</sup> I find that forbearance is a vice when by enduring bad actions one makes them continue.

### On leniency

Knowledge is (*according to our author*) the principle of leniency. As our wisdom is increased we become milder and more lenient, and we enter into the feelings of others.<sup>825</sup> I admit that the consideration of human nature should move us away from a vindictive spirit, but it should not make us have a soft attitude toward vice. The author thinks that leniency is ordinarily a false virtue: one does not want to drive away those who contribute toward our amusement and who help us; one does not want to be taken for quarrelsome; it is sometimes a skillful cowardice; sometimes we request a reciprocal lenience which suits us too.<sup>826</sup> There is good in some of these motives; one does not have to make a great fuss over a trifling matter, or readily break up with one's friends; and the charitable mood can enter in it too.

### On pity

Our author claims that those who appear helpful to the unfortunate only have pity for themselves. They hope that others will do the same for them, should the same misfortune happen to them.<sup>827</sup> I am surprised at this interpretation, which is a bit forced. One is usually not prone to promise much to those whom one has pulled out of misery, and if some misfortune happens to us, others would hardly model themselves on our example. But why does he not want feelings of humanity to enter into actions of pity? It is very praiseworthy to help the unfortunate by imagining what one would wish for if one were to find oneself in their place:

823. insults. | I don't know why he mixes among the virtues what is more often than not a vice. | *deleted*, M1.

824. LDB 122.

825. LDB 124–25.

826. LDB 128–29.

827. LDB 132–33.

*Cuivis potest accidere, quod cuiquam potest.*<sup>828</sup>

Although it involves us thinking about ourselves, this principle is very far from being bad as it comes from the purest motive of charity and is in accordance with the rule of our Lord, who commands us to do to others what we would want done to us in the circumstances.<sup>829</sup> He objects that those who are so secure in their happiness that they no longer fear anything, are hardly helpful.<sup>830</sup> I do not agree with this observation, and I know great men of another disposition. There is more reason to say that pity is rarely found in those who are so overwhelmed by misery that they no longer fear anything, but there is another reason for that: aside from the fact that they lack the means, it is a kind of relief to have companions in misfortune.

### On friendship

He tells us that the friendship of two men who have extraordinary qualities is a pact of mutual esteem for each other, and that ordinary friendships are honest dealings to mutual advantages;<sup>831</sup> that the pleasure binds young people;<sup>832</sup> that one sometimes seeks out the reputation of being a good friend;<sup>833</sup> that friendship is often the effect of temperament;<sup>834</sup> that one is delighted to show that one has a lot of friends, and distinguished ones.<sup>835</sup> I do not find anything bad in all that; friendship generally consists in the pleasure that one finds in its practice. For again, relationships based on utility are pleasing. Esteem easily turns to friendship; for when one is esteemed for one's agreeable

828. "What can happen to anyone can happen to everyone." See Seneca, *De tranquillitate animi*, 11.8; English edition: Seneca, *Dialogues and Essays*, ed. Tobias Reinhardt, trans. John Davie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 130. See also Seneca, *Consolatio ad Marciam*, 9.5; *Dialogues and essays*, 61.

829. See Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

830. LDB 134.

831. LDB 140.

832. LDB 141.

833. LDB 142.

834. LDB 144.

835. LDB 147.

qualities, one is liked. But virtuous friendship is based upon the pleasure that one finds in these kinds of good qualities which make man virtuous. This friendship is the most excellent, the most enduring and even the most useful.<sup>836</sup> If there is any virtue, nothing prevents this friendship from occurring. Other friendships are nonetheless good, since that which has most utility to man is man.

#### On women's honor

As the penchant for pleasure is natural, one can only be diverted from it for a greater good or evil. So I do not see that we should criticize women who are chaste, since they consider the consequences of a lack of restraint. However the feeling of dignity, which takes one away from what is low and indecent, can still enter into it. And it is, properly speaking, in that which consists the motive of the virtue of chastity.

#### On disinterestedness

*Here he judges* that all disinterestedness is false;<sup>837</sup> he also remarks that those who call themselves disinterested employ stratagems to get money or offices through a third party;<sup>838</sup> and if they openly claim gratifications it is while saying that their honor would be slighted if they did not obtain what has been granted to their equals.<sup>839</sup> However the author recognizes that the path of disinterestedness is excellent, remarkable, and plausible, and that the wish to meet people who are on it helps us to think that there are some.<sup>840</sup> But *he claims* that there are hardly any, because it is as impossible to renounce our own interest

836. useful. | If there is any virtue, why would there not also be virtuous friendship? | M2.

837. Des Bans does not actually say such a thing outright. Leibniz is perhaps thinking of the passage in which des Bans says that disinterested people "are not numbered among those who deceive others since they are themselves deceived," which certainly implies that there is no true disinterestedness. LDB 160.

838. LDB 160–61. Des Bans in fact insinuates that so-called disinterested people are not themselves aware of these stratagems. He is thus giving what he takes to be the unconscious (interested) motives behind apparently disinterested acts.

839. LDB 161.

840. LDB 166.

as to renounce human nature.<sup>841</sup> Here he confuses useful good with good in general. I admit that it is impossible to renounce the view of our own good, but I maintain that there are people who are sometimes made to forget or neglect the useful good by the agreeable good. And, to say nothing of young pleasure-seekers, a wise man who has enough to subsist comfortably and honestly, does not make a great sacrifice if he renounces ambition and avarice, which do not constitute the greatest of life's charms. Thus it is not so difficult to come across people who have some disinterestedness.

#### On the love of truth

*He objects* that it is not usually to make use of it that a person loves the truth, but to satisfy curiosity.<sup>842</sup> The author here again takes the exact opposite view to his ordinary arguments. I am surprised that he did not instead say (as he does almost everywhere else) that the love of truth is not worth much since one only loves the truth out of the interested view of profiting from it. Now he restores the love of truth through a completely contrary reason; and he will always find something to criticize in what a person does, no matter what side one takes. I think that to love the truth out of curiosity is to love it for itself, i.e., for the pleasure that one finds in excellent knowledge, even if it is not profitable, and this curiosity moderated by reason appears to me beautiful and good. Nevertheless it is right to join the useful to the agreeable.

*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*<sup>843</sup>

There are hardly any fine truths which are not useful, even if only to raise our mind to God—source of the truth.

841. LDB 164–65.

842. LDB 167–68.

843. “He has gained every point who has mixed the useful and the agreeable.” Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 343; English edition: *The Satires of Horace and Persius*, ed. and trans. Niall Rudd (London: Penguin, 1979), 199. Transcription FC omits all but the first two words of the Latin quotation even though in manuscript M3 it is written out in full.

### On virtues which can be regarded under *Strength*

The author regards here the power over oneself, moderation, the modesty of men, the modesty of women, patience in the sick, contempt for death, constancy, firmness, generosity, the magnanimity of philosophers,<sup>844</sup> and courage.

#### On the power over oneself

The author wittily says that there is no tutor so suitable for correcting man than his pride.<sup>845</sup> But why attribute to pride what can be attributed to the commendable care of our dignity?<sup>846</sup> This care can contribute toward leading us away from anger and toward binding us to reason. I therefore do not see why he says that the control heroes have over themselves is only a false wisdom.<sup>847</sup> If they continue to feel the force of the passions they master the fact is that they cannot change human nature. If they can overcome them, the author would perhaps say that they would no longer be commendable since they would no longer have anything to fight.

#### On moderation

Here he means the virtue of those who moderate themselves in prosperity. He accuses them of being outwardly composed although inwardly they feel all their joy.<sup>848</sup> I think they are right to feel it and to make it hardly seem as if they do. The former arises out of nature, the latter of decorum. However the author does make a good observation here, as he does in many other passages, when he remarks that powerful people are never more disposed to grant their graces than when they have obtained some great success.<sup>849</sup> But are they blameworthy for that?

844. Transcription FC omits the word “philosophes,” (manuscript M3) and instead inserts the Greek “φιλοσοφ,” which is not to be found in M3 at all.

845. LDB 173.

846. dignity | and of our perfection? | *deleted*, M2.

847. LDB 174.

848. LDB 180.

849. LDB 184.

## On the modesty of men

*He claims again* that modesty originates from pride.<sup>850</sup> He means it of those who hardly talk about themselves even when they have done some fine action, because to do so is neither polite nor agreeable. *He even claims* here that this silence is a fine bit of self-praise, and that well-placed silences are like the pauses in music which give it relief.<sup>851</sup> I do not see how one can be satisfied with critics as harsh as our author. Someone who spoke often of his feats would be taken for a conceited man, for an impolite man, and for a braggart, and here he makes someone who hardly speaks of these feats out to be someone with a concealed pride.<sup>852</sup> Why does he not instead recognize that it is a wise man who avoids what is offensive and unseemly? Nevertheless there are occasions where it is good and even necessary to do justice to oneself.

## On the modesty of women

The author usually attributes this to the coolness of their temperament.<sup>853</sup> I do not know if this so-called coolness is well established. The education which instills in them a loathing for dishonest words and deeds is perhaps a better reason. But it is a compliment and not a criticism when one is said to have been well raised. Women are also praiseworthy for the care they have for their reputation, and when all these impressions have so passed into habit that immodesty seems a horrible thing to them, it can be said that their modesty is a true virtue.

850. LDB 185. In fact des Bans says that modesty originates from pride and ambition.

851. LDB 188–89.

852. LDB 190: “the silence that they [modest people] keep with regard to the fine actions that they have done, while these actions cause such a great stir in the world, is a silent language through which they praise themselves a thousand times more than vain men praise themselves through words.”

853. LDB 191.



## On patience in the sick

He claims that this patience comes from the desire and hope to live on, and from one's reflection that illnesses become worse through worries and sorrows.<sup>854</sup> In my opinion, these are good motives.

## On contempt for death

He remarks that a hero whose lust for glory makes him have contempt for death in a battle, is sometimes disturbed and demoralized by a disease which makes him fear for his life.<sup>855</sup> I think it is reasonable to prefer a death which is useful to one's homeland<sup>856</sup> to a death of languor. *He also alleges* that necessity, reputation, custom, and sometimes the hope of recovery contribute toward making the sick have patience.<sup>857</sup> So much the better. The author's conclusion is that the contempt for death is false in the men of this world.<sup>858</sup> But then why have contempt for it, and why not value a good as worthy as life? One can be patient in sickness without having contempt for the good. One will not have contempt for death, one will try to hold on to life, but one will be content with what supreme providence has ordained.

## On constancy

*He remarks* that the strength to withstand torments can come from a vehement passion.<sup>859</sup> In my opinion it is something praiseworthy and noble to be able to have these passions—which give strength to

854. LDB 202–3. Curiously, Leibniz neglects to mention various other motives identified by des Bans for patience in the sick; he claims, for instance, that the sick are patient “to acquire the respect of men” (200) and because their patience “tends to attract compassion from their close relatives and from their friends, and to intensify the affection of those who serve them” (203).

855. LDB 204–5.

856. homeland | and honorable | M2.

857. LDB 206–8.

858. LDB 213.

859. LDB 217.

the mind—at the right time. The author also claims that the constancy with which great men receive and bear unexpected accidents is nothing but a mask of true firmness,<sup>860</sup> but he does not prove<sup>861</sup> it.<sup>862</sup> The disgraced of the court, who have a fine fallback position, can console themselves very easily with it; nevertheless *he accuses them here* of not being very sincere when they boast of being happy.<sup>863</sup> I am prepared to believe that there are some who dream only of being recalled, but all are not of this temperament. He finally concludes that the men of this world are only constant because they make a virtue of necessity.<sup>864</sup> So much the better. Virtue is always good, no matter what causes it. To make a virtue of necessity is to treat it properly.<sup>865</sup> Moreover, piety gives us loftier feelings, for it teaches us not only to have tranquility, which necessity is capable of giving us, but even to find contentment in events when we consider that God does everything for the best.

860. LDB 220.

861. Reading “prouve” (manuscript M3) in place of “pense” (transcription FC).

862. so. | There are misfortunes which afflict some and do not afflict others, for example the disgraced of the court who have a fine fallback position can console themselves very easily with it if they are moderately wise; nevertheless *he accuses them here* of not being very sincere when they boast of being happy. | M2.

863. This appears to be a summary of LDB 221–22: “The falseness of the constancy of those who are driven out of court is clear...through the commerce that they maintain with their friends, through the attention that they have to all the changes which happen at the court, through the continual intrigues in which they engage in order to be recalled, but especially through the joy that they show when the news of their reinstatement takes them by surprise, and does not give them the time to study their simpering expression. It is through these signs that it is obvious how little sincerity there is in the language used by the ministers and favorites removed from the court and relegated to their houses: *That they are content, and that they enjoy themselves watching the river flow at the bottom of their garden.*”

864. LDB 224.

865. properly. | It is true that one is even more praiseworthy when one has attained virtue through loftier motives. Piety gives us these, in effect, for it teaches us not only to have tranquility, which necessity is capable of giving us, but even to find contentment in events when we consider that God does everything for the best. | M2.

## On firmness

Here he gives as an example a man who stands firm against a minister at the expense of his fortune and his family in order to have the vanity of being applauded.<sup>866</sup> I<sup>867</sup> think it is right to criticize this kind of firmness, even when the minister demands nothing which is unworthy. He also speaks here of those who stubbornly maintain their opinions.<sup>868</sup> But when a confession which is contrary to their conscience is demanded from them, I hold that they are right to refuse it.

## On generosity

Here he means the generosity that is shown toward those who have offended us, by forgiving them when we are in a state to avenge ourselves. *He attributes it* to ambition, and sometimes even to self-interest.<sup>869</sup> *He maintains* that Alexander treated the family of Darius so well because that was glorious and even useful for him.<sup>870</sup> But it seems to me that apart from that, it is a great pleasure to forgive submissive enemies, and to relieve the unfortunate.

866. A loose summary of LDB 225–26, where it is suggested that “to stand firm and not to try to patch things up with a minister at the expense of his family, his friends and himself, in order to stand out and have the reputation of being firm, is an abnormal stubbornness.”

867. Reading “Je” (manuscript M3) in place of “on” (transcription FC).

868. LDB 228. It is worth noting that, in the chapter on firmness, des Bans is merely arguing against those who take as “the basic principle of their reasoning...that the one [i.e., the basic principle] of others is always wrong, and that it is only their reasoning which is infallible.” He continues: “Those of whom we have just spoken are settled in their opinions because they put a blindfold over their eyes in order not to see that those who have opinions contrary to theirs are more reasonable.” Des Bans’ concern is thus with those who out of sheer stubbornness think themselves always right, and will not even consider the merits of positions opposing their own. Leibniz does not address such people, and instead goes on to mention those who are asked to admit or confess to something contrary to their conscience, which is not a case addressed by des Bans. Leibniz thus appears either to have been rather careless in his reading of this part of des Bans’ book, or to have been attempting to give an example of firmness which is positive and not susceptible to des Bans’ complaints.

869. LDB 232.

870. LDB 235–36.

## On the magnanimity of philosophers

Here he refutes Cicero, who located magnanimity in the liberty of the soul.<sup>871</sup> He claims that this liberty is fanciful, because passions have to be fought by other passions, and especially by ambition;<sup>872</sup> but I think, as I have already<sup>873</sup> said, that it is no minor power of the soul to be able to employ the passions at the right time. He gives examples of those who spurned kingdoms, governments, and great offices, and he tries to give reasons for their decision which diminish its value. But I would prefer to look for those which increase it. Why endeavor to spoil all fine things? At the end of the chapter, he criticizes Democritus, who withdrew himself from society in order to search for the secrets of nature.<sup>874</sup> The author claims that the desire for knowledge should be included among the passions which cause most harm, and which are most contrary to peace of mind.<sup>875</sup> For my part, if I had Democritus's advantages for research, I would be very much of his mind. Such work is better than rest. Thank God the passion he criticizes here is more common. There is scarcely a passion more agreeable or more useful. The people whom it has seized work for the most solid goods of mankind. They try to increase man's empire over nature. Their success has been considerable enough to make us wish that there be a greater number of them. Also, there is nothing more suitable for nourishing true piety, and for knowing and admiring the divine perfections.

871. Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.20.70.

872. LDB 239–40.

873. Transcription FC here omits “déjà.”

874. LDB 254–55. Democritus's motive for withdrawing from society to search for nature's secrets is attributed to his unwillingness “to put up with living in towns and a preference to live in solitary and remote places,” an unwillingness that led Democritus to have all his time to himself, enabling him to contemplate nature (255).

875. LDB 255.

## On valor

He claims that valor has two principal motives: the desire for glory, which one makes apparent, and the desire to one day rest with honor and convenience, which one keeps hidden.<sup>876</sup> It does not seem to me that there is any need to hide it. Both designs are beautiful and good.<sup>877</sup> Competitiveness is not bad either. But I do not approve the inclination some people have to breathe only war. A reasonable man will always look upon war as a necessary evil.

On virtues connected with *Temperance*

He includes there the contempt for wealth, modesty in expenditure, and grief for the death of close relatives and friends.

## On the contempt for wealth

He is right to disapprove of the behavior of the Cynics, and to show the utility of goods.<sup>878</sup>

## On modesty in expenditure

He remarks very well that ministers and favorites act wisely to avoid splendor.<sup>879</sup>

876. LDB 256–57.

877. good. | War must have peace and calm for a goal, and wise men do not approve the inclination some people have to breathe only carnage. | M2.

878. LDB 269–79. Des Bans complains that some Cynics advocated an austere life of poverty that they themselves ultimately failed to lead, while others advocated such a life because they had no hope of any other kind. In both cases, des Bans claims that no virtuous motive was present. His praise of the acquisition of goods is that it enables men to live independently.

879. LDB 282. It is wise to avoid splendor, according to des Bans, because extravagant expenditure on furnishings etc. irritates and offends people, and is especially insulting to those who are not in favor. Moreover, luxurious living inspires envy in others.

On the grief for the death of close relatives and friends

The author says that a person does not mourn the death of his friend, but the loss he has suffered.<sup>880</sup> This remark is a little too subtle; there has to be a reason for our grief. However it is not always a self-interested grief. For when someone has found his pleasure in the happiness, virtue, and good qualities of a friend, he will find displeasure in their cessation, even though self-interest is not mixed up with it. Also, those who are of a good nature are concerned by the troubles of people with whom they have a lot of contact, even though no other consideration enters into it.

On the virtues which depend on *Prudence*

There he includes solemnity, gentleness, complaisance, affability, liberality, and leniency.

On solemnity

Here he speaks of those who abandon themselves in private to the most shameful passions, while appearing in public with a wise air.<sup>881</sup> In my opinion the first is blameworthy, and the second is praiseworthy, and better than if they were still dissolute in public. I would also not criticize those who put on a more solemn air during the year that they are in charge;<sup>882</sup> these manners are decorum.

880. LDB 285–86. Des Bans goes on to argue that some people fake grief in order to win the tenderness of others (286). Des Bans singles out women for particular criticism here—their tears of grief spring, he says, from their own “weakness,” and are merely a means of getting attention. The fact that “their tears soon dry up, at least usually” is proof of this, he says (287). Des Bans goes on to say that tears of mourners are often adequately explained by imitation: “as they have always seen from their childhood that people are affected by the death of friends and relatives to the point of tears, they sigh and cry when they lose relatives and friends too, via the same spirit of imitation which makes them sing and dance when their relations or their children get married” (289).

881. LDB 292–93.

882. This is a reference to LDB, 300, which refers to magistrates being in charge for a year.

### On gentleness

He attributes it to the complaisance for those who are in need,<sup>883</sup> to the desire to overcome a passion,<sup>884</sup> to the desire to make oneself liked,<sup>885</sup> and to the desire to control oneself in disputes and negotiations.<sup>886</sup> These motives are good.

### On complaisance

Complaisance is not at all bad to be useful, provided that it be without baseness and without crime.<sup>887</sup>

### On affability

Here he means the virtue that leads great lords to be humane and honorable without departing from their greatness. He claims that they only practice it for splendor, in order to have a large court.<sup>888</sup> But why

883. Des Bans says no such thing. He does recognize that people are “gentle towards those on whom their fortune depends,” but also claims that such people “unleash their fury on everyone else” (LDB 304). Throughout his chapter “On gentleness” (302–9) there is not one reference to “complaisance” (“complaisance”) or to need (“besoin”).

884. LDB 305.

885. LDB 305.

886. LDB 307. However Leibniz overlooks the reasons identified by des Bans for why people wish to exercise self-control in disputes and negotiations; he claims, for instance, that people have “a secret desire to defeat those with whom one disputes” and deliberately assume a gentle air in order not to have a clouded judgment, which would result if the debate were to get heated. By ensuring that their judgement is not clouded, disputants can “explain themselves with clarity and force” so that their opinions prevail. Likewise, des Bans claims that gentleness in negotiations is something a person assumes “in order to gain an advantage over those with whom one negotiates” (307).

887. Des Bans does not speak of “baseness” in his chapter “On complaisance” (LDB 310–17). Leibniz may well be thinking of the passage which says: “There is a general, very unpleasant complaisance, which makes those who have it approve all kinds of men and excuse the least excusable behavior and actions.” (313) The “criminal” kind of complaisance identified by des Bans emerges when “certain corrupt men are so devoted to their friends and to persons on whom they depend that they think everything they do is good, and are always disposed to do everything that they want” (314).

888. LDB 317–19.

could better motives not enter into it? These manners win hearts, and lead people to better enjoy the conversation of honorable people. It also seems to me that he makes an overly harsh judgement at the end of the chapter, in saying that the affability of people of status, who do not have any merit, is a baseness.<sup>889</sup> Even if they had no other merit, it is one to attract the conversation of people of merit through their affability.

#### On liberality

He admits that the liberality of great lords would be very laudable if it was the effect of a fine and generous soul. But he claims that they are rather different from what they are believed to be; that they make profusions in full view of the world, but feel sorry for the smallest expenditure at home;<sup>890</sup> that they do not pay their debts; that they refuse the essentials to their close relatives; that they withhold the wages of<sup>891</sup> domestics; that they do not reward an old servant while they serve up treats to strangers.<sup>892</sup> He is right to criticize this behavior, but it would not be right to attribute it to everyone. There are some who are good managers in order to be able to be magnificent at a particular time and place, and who spread out their kind deeds in an orderly and selective way. When that comes from a beneficial inclination, natural or acquired, nothing prevents us from recognizing the virtue of liberality in it.

#### On leniency

He opposes it to cruelty, and nevertheless he doubts that it is a true virtue,<sup>893</sup> and he alleges, amongst other reasons, that it is not enduring, as he shows by means of the examples of Alexander, Julius

889. LDB 322. In fact he calls such the affability of such people “a baseness of their soul and a handicap of their rank.”

890. home | . There are some of this humor. But there are others who are good managers in order to be able to be magnificent at a particular time and place, and there is nothing so reasonable. | *deleted*, M1.

891. Transcription FC here omits “proches; qu’ils retiennent les appointemens de.”

892. LDB 322–24.

893. LDB 333–34.



Caesar, and Augustus,<sup>894</sup> although with these there would nevertheless be a way of responding in favor of these great men. He also claims that it is a mistake to think that a gentle man becomes cruel, or vice versa.<sup>895</sup> This is a general objection against all the virtues, as if there were no true virtue without its perseverance. But one's natural disposition is itself subject to change, and knowledge even more. Custom is a different nature and sometimes changes the natural disposition, and a habit derived from accustomization can be changed in its turn by a contrary accustomization.<sup>896</sup> Thus virtues are not so entrenched that they cannot be lost. Moreover, the author objects that the leniency of Kings is sometimes political, for it serves to win hearts,<sup>897</sup> namely: it is a very praiseworthy policy. But (he says) leniency is sometimes the effect of the pride of the sovereign, who wants to show that he is above the law and that he can give life.<sup>898</sup> I am prepared to believe that pride sometimes enters into it, but this motive is not one of the more common ones. The prince to whom this is an unquestioned right does not need to display it. If he sometimes yields to the importunity of those who solicit on behalf of a criminal,<sup>899</sup> the mistake is excusable enough, provided that this does not go too far and that the public<sup>900</sup> suffers because of it. He adds that the good mood in which one finds a sovereign is also often the cause of his leniency.<sup>901</sup> I will say: so much the better. It is commendable to want others to share in his contentment; is there not a general pardon (certain extreme cases aside) in the public festivities?

894. LDB 335.

895. LDB 336–37.

896. Transcription FC here omits “peut être changée à son tour par une accoutumance.”

897. LDB 339.

898. LDB 341.

899. An example drawn from LDB 345.

900. Transcription FC here adds “bien,” despite the word not being present in manuscript M3.

901. LDB 340.

So those are my remarks on the subject, made while reading a small book which is agreeable and ingenious, but which would be even more useful if the gaps I find in it were filled.<sup>902</sup>

I am with devotion  
Madam, to Your Electoral Highness

Hanover, 25<sup>903</sup> September  
1708

Your most humble and  
most obedient servant,  
LEIBNIZ

902. Leibniz was much harsher in his assessment when writing the *Theodicy* (1710), in which he remarks: “Even less do I approve books such as that of Abbé Esprit, *On the Falsity of Human Virtues*, of which we have lately been given a summary: for such a book serves to turn everything wrong side out, and cause men to be such as it represents them.” (G VI: 110/H 131) The “summary” referred to here is the volume published by des Bans, which is a shortened version of Esprit’s book.

903. As already reported in note 753, in version M2 the date is given as 15 September 1708.

**75. Leibniz to Sophie (April 1709)<sup>904</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 68–69.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 300–05 (following M).

The following letter is concerned with the relationship between faith and reason, which Leibniz later treated at great length in the opening section of his *Theodicy* (the “Preliminary dissertation on the conformity of faith with reason”).<sup>905</sup> At the time of writing this letter Leibniz was in fact working on the *Theodicy*. If the following was occasioned by a letter from Sophie, then that letter appears to be no longer extant. Sophie appears not to have replied to any of the points made in this letter.

April 1709

Madam

Until I am fortunate enough to see the book which had the honor of not causing displeasure to Your Electoral Highness,<sup>906</sup> I take the liberty of explaining myself on the same subject, since Your Electoral Highness is quite happy to put up with it. I am convinced that religion should contain nothing which is contrary to reason, and that revelation should always be given a sense which exempts it from all absurdity. And the ablest theologians from all sides share my view. By “reason” I mean not the faculty of reasoning, which can be employed well and ill, but the linking together of truths which can only produce truths, and one truth cannot be contrary to another. That being so, I find that men quite often do not use reason enough to know and honor the author of reason in the proper way. We send missionaries

904. From the French. Complete.

905. G 6: 49–101/H 76–122.

906. This book is unidentified. Possibly it was mentioned in a no longer extant letter from Sophie to Leibniz.

all the way to China to preach the Christian religion, and rightly so, but (as I have already said publicly several years ago) we need missionaries of reason in Europe to preach the natural religion, on which revelation itself is founded, and without which revelation will always be misunderstood.<sup>907</sup> The religion of reason is eternal, and God engraved it into our hearts, our corruptions obscured it, and the goal of Jesus Christ was to restore its luster, to bring men back to the true knowledge of God and the soul, and to make them practice the virtue which constitutes true happiness. We must acknowledge that revelation was necessary: reason on its own, without authority, will never make an impression on the common run of men; but revelation must not lose its aim and be turned against the eternal truths, against solid virtue, and against the true idea of God.

Our divine Scriptures throughout preach of a supreme and all-powerful intelligence which makes everything the best that is possible. Your Electoral Highness has considered beautiful and sound this passage in particular, which asks whether the one who made the eye should not see, and whether the one who made the ear should not have the faculty of hearing?<sup>908</sup> This tells us that the author of things, who is the principle of our knowledge, must himself have intelligence. And it is reasonable that by being the source of it, he possesses it in the highest degree, and that nothing escapes his providence. Jesus Christ taught us with a force which philosophers were never able to attain that everything is taken into account by God, down to the shortest hair on our head,<sup>909</sup> that a glass of water given to one who is thirsty

907. Leibniz is referring to §10 of his "Preface to the *Novissima Sinica*," 1697/99, C 51.

908. An allusion to Psalms 94:9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see." This passage appears to have been one of Sophie's favorites. On the reverse of a copy of one of his letters to Sophie, from circa 1704, Leibniz wrote: "I have heard several times of Madam the Electress that she was struck by this fine passage from the Bible: *The one who made the eye, can he fail to see; and the one who made the ear, can he fail to hear.*" *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 16, 81. See also Leibniz's letter to John Toland of 30 April 1709: "Madam the Electress is accustomed to quote and to praise in particular the passage of Scripture which asks if it is reasonable that the author of the eye does not see anything, and that the author of the ear does not hear." Klopp 9: 308.

909. An allusion to Matthew 10:30 and Luke 12:7.

will be rewarded,<sup>910</sup> that souls are immortal,<sup>911</sup> that concern for the great future which involves them should be preferred to every other concern;<sup>912</sup> but that there is nevertheless down here a foretaste of true happiness,<sup>913</sup> that all will turn to the good for those who are good and (so that no one can complain) that a good and genuine will is sufficient.<sup>914</sup> It is this good will that is meant in part by a living faith, by this charity toward our fellow man, which makes us take pleasure in seeing the good of others and in procuring it, if that is possible, and by the love of God above all things, which makes us find the greatest pleasure in the knowledge of God's government and the divine perfections; for to love is to find one's pleasure in the good, in the perfection, and in the happiness<sup>915</sup> of the one loved.

There is no doctrine more solid in itself, or one more useful for the public, or more able to give contentment to those who have genuinely embraced it, but it is little practiced, and it can be said that it is little known, although it seems that all pulpits resound with the passages of scripture which teach it. For men who have a true faith and confidence in God, and at the same time the proper charity, are rare. We show our confidence in God when we are content with everything he does, and convinced that there is nothing better, not even for us, and we show at the same time a true charity when we try with all our power to do good as much as it is within our control. In a word, we should do good and believe that God does it. Here is where natural religion and revealed religion meet, at least in practice. For mysteries concern knowledge instead. And it is sufficient that they be conceived in a way which is not in any way injurious to the attributes and perfections of God.

But Christian theologians often stray from these ideas. There are some who claim that a doctrine should appear quite absurd in order to be worthy of belief, and they call that "the triumph of faith." As if God took pleasure in making salvation difficult for us and in offend-

910. An allusion to Mark 9:41.

911. Possibly an allusion to Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:4.

912. An allusion to Matthew 6:28–34 and Luke 12:29–34.

913. An allusion to Romans 8:23.

914. An allusion to Romans 8:28.

915. Transcription K here omits "dans le Bonheur."

ing rational people. There are even some who go so far as to say that there are mysteries which imply contradiction, that is, in which there is a true absurdity.<sup>916</sup> The people who teach these things have quite different motives: there are some who do it out of simplicity, and who do not fathom the repercussions. This is the common run of theologians, and they are widespread. There are melancholics who take that approach because of their grief against those who know more about it than they do, and they console themselves for their ignorance and for their negligence with the privilege that they imagine that God grants to them over those who are more able or more studious than they are, whom they consider as so many enemies of faith. It is somewhat as the poor often console themselves by imagining that God loves them more than the rich, and that the rich will all be damned.

But there are also malicious people who make fun of theologians and religion by teaching that faith must offend reason, and that what is right in theology is false in philosophy. They<sup>917</sup> believe that by these means they prepare a way out, and a prerogative to unleash themselves against faith and to ridicule it under the pretext of making it triumph over reason.

To come down to detail, there are some who, while teaching the Holy Trinity, go to Tritheism, by conceiving three completely distinct infinite substances, which have only a perfect agreement between them. But this is to lay oneself open to the Jews and to the Mohammedans and to overthrow natural religion, which teaches us that what makes and fills all cannot be three, and that the perfect substance, the source of beings, the ultimate reason of things, is unique. Everything beyond that is impossible and superfluous, and if there are three perfect and absolute substances, nothing stops there being an infinity of them. The Holy Trinity should be conceived as three principles in one and the same substance, which have an essential relation between them, without it being possible that there be more of them, and it should be compared with power, knowledge, and will: three principles of actions in a single intelligent substance which has to be

916. Transcription K here omits “qu’il y a des mysteres, qui impliquent contradiction, c’est à dire.”

917. Reading “ils” in place of “il.”

able, to know, and to will; even though this comparison taken from our conceptions cannot be entirely accurate when it is related to God.

There are some who form a strange idea of the economy of our salvation, and, in their view, Jesus Christ, quite far from being the savior of men, would have been the cause of their ruin. For they imagine that, ever since he came into the world, and even beforehand since he had been foretold, all those who do not recognize him in accordance with the flesh, those to whom he has not been preached at all, or at least those to whom he has not been preached in a way appropriate for convincing them, are all lost. It can be said of these doctors that these are good people yet they damn everyone, as Your Electoral Highness agreeably wrote when discussing Labadie.<sup>918</sup> What idea can these people have of God's goodness and wisdom? Some fathers of the church, several theologians of the Roman church, and even Zwingli among the Reformed, were wiser.<sup>919</sup> A priest from Milan wrote a book in favor of the salvation of pagans,<sup>920</sup> and another Italian priest had the charity to save Aristotle in a book expressly written on that subject.<sup>921</sup> Here are people who submit themselves to reason. I am not saying that they have always found the right means. However nothing stops God finding these means, and even going beyond what we can know, in order to save those who are genuinely of a good will, and to give them all the absolutely necessary knowledge of Jesus Christ, when the ordinary ways fail them without it being their fault. (The Jesuits were right to plead in favor of the Chinese: I find it amusing that they are hounded when justice is on their side, and that they are given the cause as won when they are in the wrong. It is the world turned upside down. But

918. Jean de Labadie (1610–74), a convert to the Reformed Church whose mystical writings won many followers, particularly in the Netherlands. The letter in which Sophie discusses Labadie appears to be no longer extant.

919. Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), Swiss Protestant theologian.

920. Francesco Collio, *De animabus paganorum libri quinque* (Milan, 1622 and 1633).

921. Leibniz is probably thinking here of Fortunio Liceti, *Pietate Aristotelis erga Deum et hominem* (Udine, 1645), the final chapter of which contains an argument in favor of Aristotle's salvation. Leibniz certainly knew this book, and cited it in a work from 1692 or 1693; see A IV 5: 467. However there were other books written on this topic, for instance Lambertus de Monte, *De salute Aristotelis* (15th century).

the fact is that Rome always wants to be in the right, and chance passes there for the Holy Spirit.)

Another strange view held by some theologians and which also sits uneasily with natural reason—they claim that all the virtuous actions of pagans were crimes. And why? Because God was not their goal. But is it necessary that the relation to God always enters into our thoughts? Such a thing is not necessary at all, because it is not possible. It follows only that these actions are lacking a perfection, but it does not at all follow that they are bad. Moreover, when one performs good actions for the love of justice, as St. Augustine calls it,<sup>922</sup> that is, because of the pleasure that one finds in virtue, as often happened with pagans, there is a relation to the sovereign reason which exists in God even if one does not expressly think about it.

I find it even stranger that there are theologians who maintain that Adam's posterity deserves to be damned because Adam sinned, and who infer from this that children who die before baptism are damned. One has to have<sup>923</sup> a strange idea of God to believe him capable of such an injustice, and whatever respect I have for St. Augustine I cannot forgive him for this error.<sup>924</sup> Original sin persists enough without that. It reveals itself only too often, in leading men to the actual sin which causes their misfortune.

That's enough for this essay, for there is a vast field for anyone who would like to exhaust the subject. I am with devotion, Madam, to Your Electoral Highness etc.<sup>925</sup>

922. See Augustine, *City of God*, V.14.14, and "Second discourse on Psalm 32," in *St. Augustine on the Psalms*, ed. and trans. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1960–61), 2: 109–10.

923. Reading "avoir" (manuscript M) in place of "voir" (transcription K).

924. Leibniz is thinking here of Augustine's *On original sin*, II.19.

925. Similar treatments of the topics treated in this letter can be found in the *New Essays* of 1703–5. For faith and reason see A VI 6: 497–500/NE 497–500; for the salvation of pagans see A VI 6: 500–02/NE 500–02; and for the salvation of Aristotle see A VI 6: 501/NE 501.



**76. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle to the Marquis de la Fare (c. 1700–1711?)<sup>926</sup>**

Versions:

M: Copy: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 589–90.

The following letter was written by Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle to the Marquis de la Fare (1644–1712),<sup>927</sup> who was captain of the guards under Philippe II, the Duke of Orléans. A copy of this letter subsequently found its way to Leibniz; presumably Philippe passed a copy of it to his mother, Elizabeth Charlotte, who sent it to Sophie, who in turn sent it on to Leibniz.

926. From the French. Complete. According to Robert E. Pike, this letter was first printed in 1807 by Dr. Thomassin on his private press (in a run of sixty copies). It was reprinted in 1819, although apparently all of the 1819 edition has now been lost. Pike claims that a manuscript copy of it was made prior to 1758 by F. L. Janet, and is now held at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and that there are forty textual discrepancies between that manuscript and the text printed by Thomassin. The source for my translation was neither of the above, but rather a manuscript held in the Hanover State Library, which could have been made no later than June 1711 (which is when Leibniz had it in his possession; see no. 77). This manuscript appears to differ from both the one printed by Thomassin, which is now more readily available in Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Rêveries Diverses*, ed. Alain Niderst (Paris: Desjonquères, 1992), 121–23, and the one held in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In all, there are more than forty textual differences between the Hanover manuscript and the version printed by Thomassin, albeit mostly minor ones, but there are also textual discrepancies between the Hanover manuscript and the one held in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In a short paper about Fontenelle's letter, Pike quotes two passages from the manuscript made by Janet, neither of which appear in the Hanover manuscript. Consequently each of the three different sources of this letter (namely, the Hanover manuscript, the Janet manuscript, and the Thomassin printing) have textual variants not found in the others. Which of these sources contains the text closest to the one Fontenelle actually sent to de la Fare is uncertain, but I have elected to translate the Hanover manuscript as that is the one Leibniz read. For more information on the publication history of this letter and the variations between the Thomassin version and Janet manuscript, see Robert E. Pike, "A Note on a Letter by Fontenelle," *Modern Language Notes* 52 (1937): 266–67. It should be noted that Pike's paper does not mention the Hanover manuscript translated here.

927. Charles-Auguste de la Fare.

## Letter from Mr. de Fontenelle to Mr. de la Fare

You who always imagine better than anyone, you also doubt with more wit than other people. I am delighted by your problem about the immense space that there must one day be to contain together all men who, having only existed successively since creation, have managed to occupy a large part of the universe. Given your size, how do you not fear this squeeze? If everyone there had to take up as much volume as you, Chevalier Briçonner, and the Marquis de Villacerf, I would fear in my turn of not having my elbow room. In the meantime, I thought that just like you it would be rather good to have a problem too. Here is mine.

Whenever it pleases the supreme Being to return to every mind the body which will have formerly animated it, as it promises us in its scriptures, how will it set about the task? Our bodies are today only composed of the remains of our fathers' bodies; the same materials that served to form those who are no more will one day be employed in the formation of those who don't exist yet. The Lord has created once and for all time a certain quantity of matter which is neither increased nor diminished, to which nothing will be added, and over which nothingness no longer has any right. This matter has been divided into elements. The elements circulate, so to speak, and go from the composition of a horse to that of a man, and from the composition of a man to that of a tree, and so on for others. It is precisely the joining of these elements which makes a body; the way in which they are joined constitutes the difference between one species and another, and the proportions or the balance more or less observed in each composition merely determine its lifespan.

Although these elements are made to combine together always and everywhere, they will nevertheless always destroy each other. The one which dominates in a body soon sows division among the others, and forces them together to a separation, the only casualty of which is what is called the form, since the matter, that is, the elements, are soon determined to come together, albeit in a different way from before; just as they destroy each other, they determine each other too. And herein lies the whole economy of

the destructions and productions which occur at each instant, and which the ignorant common man takes for annihilation and creation. Now, how will the Lord proceed in making contemporaries out of so many men who have each had a body only because they seem to have taken their time and their measures to yield it to each other? Certainly he will not create new ones. That being so, I only know one maneuver here, Sir, and it will get us out of this problem—you and me.

If we are all revived one day, it is certain that our bodies will no longer be subject to the necessities of this life, and will no longer feel the effects of the intemperance of climates or seasons. Therefore, insensitive to hot and cold, we will no longer have need either of the waters to refresh us and moisten us, or of the sun to warm us and purify us; exempt as we will be from the necessities of eating, the earth, this liberal and common mother, will become useless to us. The hills, retreats for the majority of the animals made for the use of mortal man, the mountains, miserly depositories of treasures which cupidity makes necessary for us, all that will therefore be unnecessary in the midst of disinterested mortals. The heavens and their lights will have no more hours to mark for us, and will no longer have to produce their unequal light in a time in which the author of the day will deign to enlighten us himself. So in light of the uselessness of all these things and others contained in space, it will have to be the case that they stop being what they are. The order and the harmony of the universe will be overturned and confused; everything generally will become a pile of matter again, a uniform mass, a chaos, and a confusion, just as everything was on the first day of creation. Do you not think, Sir, that the Creator will find in all these materials enough to make as many men as will be necessary for him? And space, about which you were troubled, will therefore be to spare, since then there will only be in the world what is contained in it at the time we are talking about; the number of men there will be infinitely greater, to tell the truth, but also no more forests, mountains, or buildings. And as all matter will no longer compose anything but men, space will have nothing except men to contain too; but if, despite these wise precautions, matter came to be lacking, the wise worker would get out of the problem

by making bodies in a more economical way than yours. If need be, you have enough to supply four. In all confidence, I do not despair of seeing you there with a waist as slim as you once had. The Duke of Roquelaure will have a nose and the Duke of Estrées will have only one nose;<sup>928</sup> and if the minds of a certain magnitude will then be as rare as they are in our day, and if it nevertheless has to be that way, I will recognize you because of your neighbors—that is said without alarming you.<sup>929</sup> I still do not know whether women will retain their sex in this universal upheaval, or if the form of a man will be granted only to those who have lived well.<sup>930</sup> I will inform myself of their fate at the first long discussion that I will have with

928. The Duke of Roquelaure is likely to be either Gaston-Jean-Baptiste de Roquelaure (1614–83) or his son Antoine Gaston Jean Baptiste de Roquelaure (1656–1738), while the Duke of Estrées is Victor-Marie (1660–1737). According to Robert E. Pike, the manuscript copy of this letter held in the Bibliothèque Nationale reads: “There, Mr. de Roquelaure will be able to go to the nose-fair to choose one which pleases the ladies, and the Duke of Estrées will be one of them.” See Pike, “A Note on a Letter by Fontenelle,” 267.

929. Fontenelle’s point here is not obvious, but is perhaps this: although bodies may undergo great changes at the resurrection, minds do not, and as de la Fare (the recipient of the letter) is very intelligent, he will still be recognizable to Fontenelle on that account, i.e., de la Fare’s intelligence will set him apart from everyone else, even if his body is greatly changed. The French is: “et si les esprits d’un certain ordre sont alors aussi rares qu’ils le sont de nos jours, et qu’il en faille pourtant, je vous en connais pour vos voisins—cela soit dit sans vous alarmer.”

930. Fontenelle may well have been thinking of Plato’s hypothesis, raised at the end of the *Timaeus* (90E–91A), that those of the first generation of men who lived cowardly or wicked lives were transformed into women in the next generation. See Plato, *Complete Works*, 1289. However, the early church fathers often discussed the question of whether women would be resurrected as men, a view which seemed to some to have some slight grounding in Scripture, e.g., “Until we all attain to...perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) and “conformed to the image of the Son of God” (Romans 8:29). For discussions of this question, see, for example, Augustine, *The City of God*, XXII.17, and Tertullian, “A treatise on the resurrection of the flesh,” in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library vol. XV: The Writings of Tertullian vol. II*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Peter Holmes (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870), ch. 60.

my genius,<sup>931</sup> but if what it teaches me is not to their advantage, do not wait for me to let you know about it.

931. According to Robert E. Pike, the manuscript copy of this letter held in the Bibliothèque Nationale here adds: "brother to that of the Count of Gabalis." See Pike, "A Note on a Letter by Fontenelle," 267. The Count of Gabalis was the central character in Montfaucon de Villars' *Le Comte de Gabalis* (Paris, 1670), in which he was said to be an adept, i.e., one who possessed esoteric knowledge.

77. **Leibniz to Sophie (26 June 1711)**<sup>932</sup>

Versions:

M: Copy: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 585–86.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 341–44 (following M).

Having received from Sophie a copy of Fontenelle's letter to the Marquis de la Fare (see no. 76), Leibniz composed the following reply, which seems not to have garnered a response from Sophie.

Madam

The author of the letter that Madam<sup>933</sup> sent to Your Electoral Highness has already given to the public great proofs of his skill of putting an agreeable spin on the weightiest matters. His *Dialogues des Morts*,<sup>934</sup> his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, his book on the oracles refuted by a Jesuit,<sup>935</sup> prove that. The letter in question deals with a subject worthy of the embellishments he gives to it. It is acceptable, and even useful, to speak of truths while joking, for in this way they are more accessible.

*Ridiculum acri*

*Plenius et melius magnas plerumque secat res*<sup>936</sup>

The discussion of the question as to whether there will be room for all resurrected men could not be better addressed than to a great

932. From the French. Complete.

933. Elizabeth Charlotte.

934. Fontenelle, *Dialogues des Morts* (Paris, 1683). English translation: *Dialogues of the Dead, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1685).

935. Fontenelle, *Histoire des oracles* (Paris, 1686). English translation: *A History of Oracles in two dissertations*, ed. and trans. Stephen Whatley (London, 1753).

936. "Ridicule more often settles things more thoroughly and better than acrimony." Horace *Satires*, I.10.14; see *The Satires of Horace and Persius*, 35.

Lord; I mean great in terms of body size, though perhaps he is also great in other ways. For I do not in any way doubt that, when it comes to his mind, he is just as big (that is, that his mind is vast, and not that he is bigheaded); for good minds have a large number of good thoughts in them, and that must make them swell up a little. This question has already been discussed by philosophers and by theologians.<sup>937</sup> One finds, with the aid of geometry, that all the men taken together over some thousands of years, even if they were all as big as the three gentlemen of which Madam speaks, could easily be accommodated on a rather small part of the surface of our globe: and a certain author even attempted to determine by this calculation how long our world could last at the very most.<sup>938</sup> For as all the men since Adam up to us must be found room on the day of judgement in the valley of Jehoshaphat,<sup>939</sup> humankind will not undergo any further increase in numbers once there are enough men to fill this Palestinian valley. So there is no need to subtract anything from the flesh and bones of men in order to find room for them. And if it were even possible that each person should keep all the matter he has possessed since his birth, and that on the day of judgement he should be as big as a tower, there would be a way of finding room for all. When people are a little too crowded around a table, all they have to do to have more elbow room is everywhere move away from it a little, from the center toward the circumference, and so it is here: the good Lord would only have to pull men a little into the air to

937. E.g., Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum libri quattuor*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1855), 4.48.4 (cols. 956–57); St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ed. and trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948), 5: 2926 (supp. q88a4, objection 1); Marin Mersenne, *La vérité des sciences contre les septiques ou Pyrrhoniens* (Paris, 1625), 808.

938. The “certain author” is unidentified.

939. A reference to two passages from the Book of Joel: “I will gather together all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat: and I will plead with them there for my people, and for my inheritance Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations” (Joel 3:2); “Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there I will sit to judge all the heathen round about.” (Joel 3:12)

meet with him, and in this way there would be room for them, even if there were a lot more of them.<sup>940</sup>

So this question is not very difficult to answer, but the other is much trickier, namely, how men will be able to have their own skin, since over the course of time it will be passed into others. Some claim that a special providence will ensure that the last flesh of one is not the last of another, for each only needs his last flesh.<sup>941</sup> Others claim that it is sufficient for each to have the quintessence of his body, and that these quintessences do not get mixed up; and this is the opinion of chemists, which was not displeasing to Mr. Boyle.<sup>942</sup> However the matter is explained, there will be no need to go as far as the letter's ingenious author, who claims that all matter will return to chaos, that the order and harmony of the universe will be overturned, and that all (well-arranged) matter will no longer compose anything but men. This overthrowing of order, this universal chaos, does not seem very worthy of God, and I do not see that there is need for it. Men will always be creatures, however perfect these creatures are, which will be bound up with other creatures. If they no longer eat and drink, they will refrain from repairing themselves in another, more advantageous manner; for according to the order of things bodies must be in a perpetual change to have sensation, and to act, operations of which the purest bodies must not be deprived. It will be all as it is here, down to the imperfections which cannot be entirely removed, but which will

940. Leibniz also addressed this problem in an untitled paper (dated 1715 in the Ritterkatalog); see *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr 705, 119r. For a discussion of Leibniz's attempts to solve this problem, see Lloyd Strickland, "Taking Scripture Seriously: Leibniz and the Jehoshaphat Problem," *The Heythrop Journal* (forthcoming).

941. Transcription K here omits "de l'autre; car chacun n'a besoin que de la dernière." Leibniz is possibly thinking of Humphrey Hody's *The Resurrection of the (same) Body Asserted* (London, 1694), in which it is argued that "God will take care that no one shall die whilst his Body contains any Particles that belong to another" (189). In Hody's view, this act of providence ensures that each person is able to have his own flesh, as it was when he died, on the day of resurrection.

942. Robert Boyle (1627–91), scientist and philosopher. Leibniz is thinking of Boyle's essay "Some physico-theological considerations about the possibility of the resurrection" (1675), available in *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, ed. M. A. Stewart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 192–208. In the 1670s, Leibniz defended a position very similar to Boyle's; see A II 1 (2nd ed.): 183–85.



be able to be considerably lessened. The idea of the other world should not be too distant from ours, for fear that it gets lost in imaginary spaces. I am with devotion,

Madam, to Your Electoral Highness.

Your very obedient and very submissive servant.

Leibniz

Herrenhausen, 26<sup>943</sup> June 1711

943. 26 | July | *deleted*, M; this deletion is not recorded in transcription K, which gives the date of this letter as 26 July 1711.

78. Sophie to Leibniz (27 April 1713)<sup>944</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 613–14.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 393–95 (following M).

In the spring of 1713, the English freethinker Anthony Collins sent to Sophie a copy of his *A Discourse of Free-thinking, occasion'd by the rise and growth of a Sect call'd Free-thinkers* (London, 1713) after hearing rumors that she was not averse to the free-thinking cause.<sup>945</sup> This prompted Sophie to write the following.

Hanover, 27 April 1713

I had hoped to see you here rather than your last letter. I would have been able to show you that it is no longer necessary to explain oneself on theological opinions, for an author has sent me a book which is in fashion at the moment, and which is entitled *la Religion de Personne*.<sup>946</sup> He is called Anthony Collins. It is very well written, but I am surprised that permission was granted to publish such a nasty book, for people think naturally enough without each person being authorized to think according to his own fantasy.<sup>947</sup> The common opinions that he puts forward have always existed without him ad-

944. From the French. Incomplete; various items of personal news and political gossip have not been translated.

945. On the fly-leaf, Collins wrote a long dedication to Sophie. See SP 51–52.

946. *Anyone's Religion* or *No-one's Religion*.

947. In fact Sophie's hostility towards Collins's book was such that she instructed the Earl of Strafford to write to Queen Anne, expressing her surprise "that books of such a dangerous character should be allowed to be printed in England." SP 52. "I have been much scandalized by a book which has been sent to me called 'Free-thinker.' Although it is very natural for every one to think as he chooses; yet, in a well-governed state, every one should not have the liberty of publishing his opinion; and I imagine that is not allowed in England." Sophie to the Earl of Strafford, 9 May 1713, *Original Papers* 2: 493.

vancing them. You may well have taken the trouble of writing your fine book<sup>948</sup> in vain...

S.

948. Sophie is referring to Leibniz's *Theodicy* (1710).

**79. Leibniz to Sophie (6 May 1713)<sup>949</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 622.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 395–96 (following M).

Leibniz's reply to Sophie's letter of 27 April 1713 (see no. 78).

To Madam, the Electress of Brunswick

Vienna, 6 May 1713

Madam

It seems that it would be for me to point out new books to Your Electoral Highness, whereas it is you, Madam, who has done me the favor of pointing out the one by Anthony Collins on religion, written in English. But why would I point out books to Your Electoral Highness, since she knows better than the authors what one has to know in order to be happy? The religion of Your Electoral Highness is very sound, as she so much approves of this fine passage from Scripture: the one who made the eye, would he not see? And the one who made the ear, would he himself not hear?<sup>950</sup> If this Anthony Collins does not agree with that, he will hardly be reasonable. My book—the *Theodicy*—was more or less built on this consideration, and it is found sufficiently edifying, even in England.

There is here an Austrian Count,<sup>951</sup> who is in mind and knowledge well beyond the ordinary, and who is not content with what I proved, that faith is not in any way contrary to reason. He wants to

949. From the French. Incomplete; two paragraphs of political news have not been translated.

950. An allusion to Psalms 94:9.

951. In the margin Leibniz wrote here: "Count Jörger." He is referring to Jean Joseph Graf von Jörger.

go further and prove the mysteries by reason, even leaving revelation aside. It is not sufficient for him that mystery is the soul of reason, he makes sons or grandsons from it. And in particular he claims that the Holy Trinity was precisely demonstrated by the celebrated Raymond Lully,<sup>952</sup> who is his favorite author. And as I said in my book that Raymond Lully had been disproved on that point,<sup>953</sup> he declares war on me in favor of Lully, and will disprove me in turn. We are still friends, and if he succeeds, I will congratulate him on it with all my heart, for he will have gone further on the mysteries than one is content to believe, but for his part, he wants to have knowledge of them and share it with us. In this way all revealed religion will become a completely pure natural theology. So much the better! Raymond Lully lived more than 300 years ago, in the time of the foundation of the order of the garter. He belonged to the third order of the Franciscans. He was said to have made<sup>954</sup> gold; at any rate it is certain that he gave an art, entitled *The Great Art*, which is supposed to hold forth on everything, but which, in my opinion, is more useful for skimming over things than for going deeper into them. The Count, however, thinks that this Art is suitable for discovering the most difficult points, the curing of diseases, the transmutation of metals, the philosopher's stone, and that Raymond Lully knew all that. It would be very much hoped that this friend verifies what he says. We would all consent to bow before his Lully<sup>955</sup>...

952. Raymond Lully (c. 1232/36–1315) developed an art of combinations, which was supposed to enable theological truths, such as those concerning the Christian mysteries, to be proved true. Interest in Lully's project was revived in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by Giordano Bruno amongst others.

953. *Theodicy* "Preliminary dissertation on the conformity of faith with reason" §59, G 6: 83/H 106.

954. made | the philosopher's stone | *deleted*.

955. Lully | , and we would have the Count de Gabalis restored to life. | *deleted*.

**80. Sophie to Leibniz (16 May 1713)<sup>956</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 625–26.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 398–99 (following M).

Sophie's reply to Leibniz's letter of 6 May 1713 (see no. 79). Leibniz did not respond to any of Sophie's remarks.

Hanover, 16 May 1713

I read your letter with much pleasure, and I think you have worked a miracle by having written a book<sup>957</sup> which pleases all Christians, the majority of whom love contradicting each other. I have never read Lully's book. I have never even heard the name, aside from a person in Paris who wrote operas,<sup>958</sup> and who was better at harmonizing sounds than the learned Lully apparently was with opinions, especially if his learning tended toward finding the philosopher's stone. I find the book of the *Freethinker* rather pointless, for people do enough free-thinking without him permitting it. I responded to it,<sup>959</sup> saying that he would have written a more useful book if he had written one which made each person think like the next, especially in England where there are so many factions...

S.

956. From the French. Incomplete; various items of news and gossip have not been translated.

957. *Theodicy*.

958. Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–87), Italian-born composer of ballets and operas. He was in the service of Louis XIV from 1652 until his death.

959. The response referred to here is quite possibly the letter Sophie instructed the Earl of Strafford to write to Queen Anne. See note 947.

**81. Leibniz to Sophie (1714?)<sup>960</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 665.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 421–23 (following M, partial transcription only).

The letter from Sophie which occasioned the following from Leibniz is seemingly no longer extant. It is possible that Leibniz's remarks owe much to his project to establish a Society of Sciences in Vienna, which occupied him throughout 1713 and much of 1714.<sup>961</sup>

Madam

I am delighted that Your Electoral Highness, as well as monsignor the Elector, do not completely disapprove of the maxim that I put forward, that beautiful truths deserve to be sought out, even when they bring no profit, and that it is to dishonor them to measure them by the yardstick of our interest.

It is the nature of beautiful things in general, like diamonds and excellent paintings, that they should be valued because of the pleasure that their beauty gives.

960. From the French. Complete. The exact date of this letter is uncertain. Onno Klopp has suggested that our letter may be related to an extract from 4 January 1707 (for the text of this extract, see Appendix I, no. 9). However Klopp also notes that our letter was found among Leibniz's papers from 1714, and as there are (or were) no grounds for supposing that it was misplaced, Klopp argues that it is most likely from that year. Klopp further notes that such a dating would fit with one of Leibniz's projects from 1714, namely, the foundation of a Society of Sciences in Vienna, which may explain Leibniz's comments about the value of discovering truths in this letter. Against that it should be noted that the plan to establish such a society in Vienna occupied Leibniz throughout 1713 as well, and 1713 is also the date given to our letter in the Ritterkatalog. But with no better evidence seemingly available, Klopp's date of 1714 seems preferable.

961. For more information on this project, see Nicholas Rescher, "Leibniz Visits Vienna (1712–1714)," *Studia Leibnitiana* 31 (1999): 143–44.

But truth is especially of this order. It is like the Kingdom of Heaven, of which our Lord said: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and the rest will come to you.”<sup>962</sup> As much can be said of the truth: it is sufficient to seek great and solid truths by themselves, and nevertheless their usefulness will not fail to reveal itself. This comparison between the Kingdom of Heaven and truth is all the more justified since it can be said that the pleasures of blessed souls can only consist in the knowledge of truths which show us the wonders of God and make us love and admire his perfections. So the more one tastes these pleasures here below, the more one approaches at present the heavenly pleasures.

I do not want to reopen the controversy with the Archbishop of Cambrai<sup>963</sup> which was decided by the Pope himself; but I believe it can be said without contravening this decision that virtue is valuable in itself, and even that those whose genius is inclined to justice will observe it even if they have neither punishment to fear nor reward to hope for, and they would not want to deceive even if they should never be discovered. And the fact is these people are the most likely to perform generous actions, and even to be very helpful. So what is the most beautiful and the most solid is ultimately the most useful.

That is also apparent in the sciences. Here, Madam, is the representation of a truth or famous statement, that Pythagoras thought<sup>964</sup> worthy of a hecatomb when he discovered it.<sup>965</sup> And he was not wrong at all. It is still taken for a wonder, and it is this truth and a few similar ones that have opened up China to the Europeans. It can even be said that astronomy, which helps us to predict eclipses, and especially the perfection of navigation, by which a new world was opened up to us, are due to this knowledge.

962, Matthew 6:33.

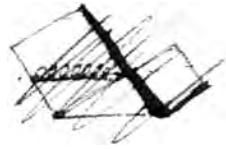
963. François Fénelon. Leibniz is referring to Fénelon’s dispute with Jacques Bénigne Bossuet over disinterested love which occurred between 1697 and 1699.

964. Reading “crût” (manuscript M) in place of “estimé” (transcription K).

965. Leibniz is referring to Pythagoras’s discovery that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the square of the other two sides. According to Diogenes Laertius, Pythagoras offered up 100 oxen (a hecatomb, from the Greek “hekaton” [hundred] and “bous” [ox]) upon making this discovery. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 2: 331.



This representation which I take the liberty to send to Your Electoral Highness can be used for cutting similar sheets of paper following the pattern of the removable pieces attached to the fixed background, and the transposition of these can show that the two smallest squares around the right angle are equal to the third square which is on the opposite side to this angle.<sup>966</sup>



966. Transcription K omits this paragraph and the diagram. The diagram, which appears to have been crossed out, is rough and presumably unfinished. It seems that Leibniz intended to send with this letter a page containing drawn shapes which would serve as a template so that Sophie could cut those same shapes out of other (larger) sheets of paper and then arrange them in a way that would demonstrate Pythagoras's theorem.

## *Appendix I*

---

### *Fragmenta*

This section contains the remaining passages of philosophical interest from the correspondence between Leibniz, Sophie, and Sophie Charlotte. None of the remarks in the following fragments drew a response from their recipients.

#### **1. Sophie to Leibniz (4/14 May 1691)<sup>967</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 65–66.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 7: 109 (following M).

A: A I 6: 40–41 (following M).

The following remarks were made in connection with Leibniz's historical researches with old manuscripts.

...It is true that it is unfortunate that wax lasts longer than men. However if some did not give way to others the world would be too full. But if it had pleased God to go to the trouble of creating all at once all the men of merit that there are, and had spared men the trouble of generation, it seems to me that his work would have been more perfect, and it would be less difficult to believe that we are made according to his image. But it seems that everything revolves and that it is only God who subsists always, and that we last much less longer than inanimate things.

967. From the French.

## 2. Leibniz to Sophie (early August (?) 1697)<sup>968</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH IV, 4, 13d, 1–4.

Transcription:

A: A I 14: 38–47 (following M).

The following remarks occur in a lengthy report Leibniz prepared for Sophie on Urbain Chevreau's *Chevraeana* (Paris, 1697).

...The rabbis' opinion that the first man was a hermaphrodite or perhaps of a twofold nature was also that of Plato,<sup>969</sup> and our friend who is now in Holland has some similar views...<sup>970</sup> It is true that among the ancients some knew—quite rightly—about the soul's spirituality, and not only this Claudius Mamertus,<sup>971</sup> mentioned on p70, but also St. Augustine and before him Pythagoras and Plato quite rightly maintained it, and St. Augustine said, as Mr. Descartes did, that the nature of the soul consists in thought, and that one of the first truths is "I think therefore I am."<sup>972</sup> But I think that all these gentlemen gave insufficient consideration to the fact that the soul consists in unity and the body in multitude, which is nevertheless the key to all the demonstrations it is possible to make on the nature of the soul... I think that not only immortality but also the conservation of all past impressions can be precisely demonstrated by considering aright the nature of unity and of substance.

968. From the French.

969. Plato, *Symposium*, 189D–191C. See Plato, *Complete Works*, 473–74.

970. Francis Mercury van Helmont. Leibniz is thinking here of Buchius, *The Divine Being*, 214. See also no. 11 above.

971. Claudius Mamertus (c. 425–c. 476), presbyter in the diocese of Vienne, France. Leibniz is thinking here of Mamertus's *De statu animae* (468–72).

972. See Augustine, *City of God*, XI.26; Descartes, *Meditations* II, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Vol. II*, 18, and *A Discourse on Method* IV, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes Vol. I*, 127. Cf. no. 51 above.

### 3. **Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (29 December 1697/8 January 1698)**<sup>973</sup>

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 8–9.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 42–45 (following M).

A: A I 15: 9–11 (following M).

At the time the following letter was written, the correspondence between Leibniz and Sophie Charlotte was very sporadic and consisted largely of news and greetings. The following remarks occur in a letter that Leibniz seemingly wrote merely to pay his respects to Sophie Charlotte on the occasion of a new year, and to offer his commiserations with regard to her problems with Prime Minister of Brandenburg-Prussia, Eberhard von Danckelmann (1643–1722).

...My fervent wishes are those of entire provinces, and God, who has foreseen and ordered everything from all eternity, often shows that he willed to arrange things in such a way that prayers are followed by their desired effect. It is not that they are able to change anything in time, or in the immutable order of destinies, but that these very prayers have contributed to form this order, into which they entered from all time. As the cause and the effect of the good comes from God, it can be said that it is always a good sign when he gives us the grace to pray properly, which is never useless. I believe that there are no better prayers than those which come about through a true passion for the general good, which accords with what in theology is called the glory of God. It is certain that what God will want, will be the best, although it does not always seem so to us because we do not know everything about the universe. But while waiting for him to manifest himself, we should be led with all our heart to what brings about the greatest presumptive good, that is, to what appears to be so according

973. From the French.

to our judgement, and would be so in itself if other, stronger reasons from elsewhere did not prevent it.

Your Electoral Highness has this advantage, that the object of her wishes is that of many good people. And I believe that the greatest happiness a person can have in this world, in matters outside of their control, is to be so situated that the common good is also theirs. For then this person has God himself in their interests. So Your Electoral Highness's great virtue will not fail to be satisfied in one way or another.

**4. Sophie Charlotte to Leibniz (May 1698)<sup>974</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 10–11.

Transcriptions:

K: Klopp 10: 49–50 (following M).

A: A I 15: 87 (following M).

Mr. Helmont is here. He will give you a very curious explanation of the first four chapters of the Bible.<sup>975</sup> I am sorry that you are not present at our conversations with him, as we need your penetration and wisdom to go further into his doctrine, although it is more intelligible than he has been. You will judge it yourself in a little while.

974. From the French.

975. Sophie Charlotte is here referring to van Helmont's *Quaedam praemeditatae*.

## 5. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (27 April/7 May 1699)

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 140–41.

M2: Copy, in the hand of Leibniz's amanuensis: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. 389, 142–43.

Transcription:

A: A I 17: 160–61 (following M1).

[M1: draft]<sup>976</sup>

Some inquisitive people have asked me for details of Mr. Helmont's life.<sup>977</sup> I think that, for that, they should go to the Prince Regent of Sulzbach,<sup>978</sup> who knew him longer.

If the good man had continued to live and write, he would have had a formal war with theologians. One of them has already produced a *Helmontian Theology* in a dissertation printed in Helmstadt,<sup>979</sup> in which, however, he speaks only of the religion of the father, Jan Baptista van Helmont, the famous doctor and chemist who also mixed religion with physics. But as the son did this incomparably more, this same author, who has written against the father, threatens the son with a similar dissertation. In this case I would have advised him to make an alliance with the Raugrave.<sup>980</sup> As for the other side, I would have wanted to procure allies for Mr. Helmont, because not long ago a little book was printed in Paris with the title *Méditations Métaphysiques*,<sup>981</sup>

976. From the French.

977. Leibniz is referring to Otto Mencke (1644–1707), professor of moral philosophy at the University of Leipzig, and founder of the *Acta Eruditorum* journal. See Otto Mencke to Leibniz, 8/18 February 1699, A I 16: 558.

978. Duke Christian August von Pfalz-Sulzbach (1632–1708).

979. J. A. Schmidt, *Helmontii de statu integritatis errantes ignes* (Helmstadt, 1696).

980. Raugrave Karl Moritz Pfalz-Simmern (1671–1702).

981. Abbé de Lanion (pseudonym; real name: Guillaume Wander), *Méditations sur la métaphysique* (Paris, 1678). Leibniz made notes on this book sometime between 1678 and 1681;

which attempts to establish the transmigration of souls too. It is a shame that this great war, which would have furnished us with an opera, has fallen by the wayside through the death of the good man. I do not know if it is a circulation of his soul, as he said, but I always know that it is the idea of him which still gives us pleasure. For you, Madam, I wish pleasures greater and more enduring than those you got from his conversation, which had something elevated about it but which was not always lively enough.



## 6. Leibniz to Sophie (12/22 July 1699)

Versions:

- M1: Draft: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 220.  
 M2: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 14–15.  
 M3: Partial copy: *British Library*, Special Collection King 140, 55–56.

Transcriptions:

- K: Klopp 8: 132–35 (following M2).  
 A: A I 17: 35–38 (following M2).

[M2: Fair copy, dispatched]<sup>982</sup>

...I do not doubt, in light of the present disposition of minds, that the human race would soon go much further if a number of Princes were to imitate the Great King,<sup>983</sup> who has recently restored in its luster the famous Academy of Sciences that he established.<sup>984</sup> For as the moderns have surpassed in a century everything the ancients did, I think that we would surpass ourselves in a short time and would render the state of humankind much better than it is if only we wanted to do so, but with enough fervor heavenly grace assists us in making all possible efforts to make discoveries in nature and in the arts. I would even like that this be achieved through a principle of piety, which would be the fruit of a properly understood science, very far from being contrary to it, and that people consider the fine pagan maxim which says that one could not sing a more beautiful hymn to the divinity than by publicizing the amazing artifices of nature.<sup>985</sup> So we find that the psalms of David and the other hymns of the ancient Hebrews are all

982. From the French.

983. Louis XIV of France (1638–1715).

984. On 20 January 1699, Louis XIV approved the reorganization of the Academy of Sciences in Paris and laid down its first rules. It then became the Royal Academy of Sciences.

985. Galen, *De usu partium*, III.10, in Galen, *Opera Omnia*, III: 237–38; see also 217, 220, and 235–36.

full of signs of admiration for God's works in nature, and that the ancient priests and Magi were the greatest philosophers and naturalists. And it is certain that the more one knows the great actions of the one praised, the more one is capable of praising him properly and of loving and honoring him openly and without flattery. Otherwise it is as if someone wanted to extol the virtues of a great prince whose life he knows little about, which he'll do by flattering rather than by fathoming the truths the prince relates. If we were to give sufficient attention to this then piety would be purer and more effective, and would have stronger roots in the mind of many men than it has at present, when it is only through imitation and through authority that people end up loving God, without knowing what makes him admirable. This is why I have found that the claim made by certain pietists, who hold that one loves God with a certain cessation of the mind's operations without having his properties and actions in mind, tends toward something inconceivable, and that this claim is much more likely to destroy true piety under the pretext of leading it higher.

## 7. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte (August (?) 1702)<sup>986</sup>

Versions:

M1: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 196–97.

M2: Draft, revised from M1: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 194–95.

Transcriptions:

FC: FC 252–54 (following M2, partial transcription only).

G: G 6: 522–28 (following M2).

The following passage is from a letter about a book entitled *Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (Paris, 1684) by the Jesuit literary critic, Dominique Bouhours. The bulk of Leibniz's letter, which was inspired by finding a copy of Bouhours's book in Sophie Charlotte's library, focuses on what he considered to be stylistic problems in contemporary writing and also poor translations of Greek and Latin authors into French.

[M2: revised draft]

But one should also not obstinately resist and be concerned about the destiny of providence

fatis accede Diisque<sup>987</sup>

for one should always be convinced that God does everything for the best, although in our present state, in which we see only a small part of things, it is impossible for us to judge what best suits the universal harmony. And this trust in God, which makes us content, and makes us believe that he makes everything happen for the greatest good of good people, is what could properly be termed the faith of natural religion, which reaches as far beyond what is evident to us as does revealed faith.

986. From the French.

987. "submit to the fates and the Gods."

**8. Sophie to Leibniz (10 January 1705)<sup>988</sup>**

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 497–98.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 114–15 (following M).

I amused myself by reading a book about the island of Formosa where 18 children a year were sacrificed in order to please a single God.<sup>989</sup> It is much more reasonable for us to think that the good Lord gave his [son] for us all. Also evident in this account is how priests have always deceived men by making them believe that they were speaking with God, who had himself commanded what the priests wanted the people to do. Solomon said very well that there is nothing new in the heavens;<sup>990</sup> instead there are [the same things] only turned in a different way, which he didn't say although it is true.

988. From the French.

989. Sophie may be referring here to George Psalmanaazaar (pseudonym; real name unknown), *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa, an Island subject to Japan. Giving an Account of the Religion, Customs, Manners &c. of the Inhabitants. Together with a Relation of what happend to the Author in his Travels; particularly his Conferences with the Jesuits, and others, in several Parts of Europe* (London, 1704). A French translation was published in 1705. This book, which was later revealed to be a forgery, contains lurid stories of child-sacrifices and other religious practices of the Formosans. According to Psalmanaazaar, the Formosans sacrificed 18,000 children a year. Formosa is modern-day Taiwan.

990. An allusion to *Ecclesiastes* 1:9–10.

**9. Leibniz to Sophie (4 January 1707)<sup>991</sup>**

Versions:

M: Extract: *Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv*, Dep. 84 A 180, 558.

Transcription:

K: Klopp 9: 265 (following M).

My principle is to work for the public good, without concerning myself about whether anyone is grateful to me for it. I think that this is to imitate the divinity, which looks after the good of the universe whether men acknowledge it or not. On many occasions it has happened to me that individuals I had obliged failed to acknowledge it, and that did not put me off at all. Much less will I be put off if the uninformed public does not take us into account for our cares.

991. From the French.

## Appendix II

---

### Supplementary Texts

This section contains texts which although not part of the correspondence between Leibniz, Sophie and Sophie Charlotte per se, nevertheless throw light upon certain parts of it.

#### 1. Robert Scott to Sophie (9/19 November 1691)<sup>992</sup>

Versions:

M: Copy of dispatched letter, in the hand of Leibniz's secretary: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 25.

The following letter pertains to the activities of Rosamunde von der Asseburg in Ebsdorf in the summer of 1691, which dominated the correspondence between Sophie and Leibniz later that year (see above, nos. 1–7).

Zell 9. Nov. 1691

Madam

Your Highness has imposed command upon me which I am not in attire to obey, having left those questions which your highness did see at Ebsdorf by a friend (then at Lüneburg), and since that time, I have given order to destroy them, being such things which concerned my own private interest, and that I would not willingly divulge. Therefore I humbly beg that your highness will be so gracious as to pardon me that I cannot satisfy your Highness in this. But that your Highness may not be altogether frustrated, I have sent the copy of four questions which was not broken up, till the answer was given. I doubt not but your Highness will find three of the same punctually answered. I was not at all content with the answer of the first question, because I found the same inclining to Armenianism which I never cherished or

992. Transcribed from the English. Complete. Scott's spelling has been modernized.

countenanced. Therefore I did write a thin demi letter wherein I produced scriptures out of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, against the universality of grace and so maintain the truth of Election. I have also sent the same letter written in very bad German. I am afraid that your Highness will hardly read the same. The answer is joined with it which is not so punctual as the first. I hazarded the third time and desired a clearer explication of the first answer,<sup>993</sup> which goes also herewith so that briefly the form of all is that Jesus Christ the mediator made no election but indifferently died for all, and offers salvation to all upon condition of believing. But God the father from all eternity foreseeing, because of the corruption of mankind that none would by faith embrace Christ, elected a certain determinate number which he decreed to draw to his son and these are called the blessed of the father. I am afraid I have been too prolix upon a matter which does so little relish persons of your Highness's character and dignity. But when your Highness will be so gracious as to consider that this proceeds from one ardent inflamed desire of your Highness's eternal happiness I hope your Highness will pardon him who recommends himself in your high grace and your highness in the protection of the most high and is ever to continue.

Your Highness

Most humble obedient and subject servant  
Robert Scott

The first letter containing four questions whereof three are here answered.

993. In September 1691, Scott requested clarification of Asseburg's answer to the first of his original four questions: "Most Gracious God be pleased to give a clearer explication of the first questione not so much for my own informatione as for the unity of thy Church" (*Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 27r). Asseburg responded on 5/15 September 1691, and Scott enclosed a copy of part of Asseburg's response with his letter to Sophie. See *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 27r–27v. A more complete copy of Asseburg's response of 5/15 September 1691 can be found in Petersen *Sendschreiben*, §31; English translation in J. W. P. *A Letter to some Divines*, 81–83 (§31).

Eternal being Jehovah Emmanuel

I humbly beg thee to answer thy poor supplicant these following questions

1. If there be an unchangeable eternal decree touching mankind and if Jesus Christ died for all mankind or for a certain determinate number.
2. If in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the unbelievers unregenerate and unworthy do enjoy the body and blood of my savior or only believers by faith.
3. If in the sacrament of baptism all who are baptized are promiscuously marked and sealed, or only the elect.
4. If after that our Lord was vivified and went and preached to the spirits in prison who were disobedient in the days of Noah, he preached salvation to the same, or denounced a sentence of further reprobation.<sup>994</sup>

994. These questions were put to Asseburg on 1/11 August 1691. Part of Asseburg's answer is printed in Petersen, *Sendschreiben*, §28; J. W. P., *A Letter to Some Divines*, 70–73 (§28). For the full answer, see *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I 20, 25v–26v.



**2. Leibniz (and Francis Mercury van Helmont?): “Preface to the Second Edition of Boëthius’s Consolation of Philosophy” (9 June 1696)<sup>995</sup>**

Versions:

M: Draft: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LH I, 5, 2, 25–26.

The second printing of Rosenroth’s German translation of Boëthius’s *The Consolation of Philosophy*, requested by Francis Mercury van Helmont during his visit to Hanover in March 1696 and ultimately arranged by Leibniz, became a focus of discussion in the correspondence between Leibniz, Sophie, and Sophie Charlotte in May 1697 (see above, nos. 23, 24, and 25). The following preface was contributed by Leibniz to the second printing of the book. Although the preface was credited to van Helmont in the published book, the fact that Leibniz’s papers contain a draft of it in his own hand complete with various additions and (mostly minor) deletions, coupled with the fact that it is dated 9 June 1696, a time when van Helmont was not present in Hanover, strongly suggests that Leibniz penned the preface on van Helmont’s behalf. In doing so it is possible that he may have been following guidelines suggested by van Helmont, though if so these guidelines are no longer extant.

Dear Reader

*Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius*, author of this little book called *Consolatio Philosophiae*, or in German: *Trost der Weisheit*, was from an old, distinguished Roman family from which many consuls and *magistri officiorum*<sup>996</sup> had originated, and he was therefore very famous because of the glory of his ancestors.<sup>997</sup> He himself also became *magister officiorum* and was held in high esteem by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, until he was forcibly removed because of his zeal for

995. From the German. Complete.

996. “Masters of Offices”; this is the plural of *magister officiorum* (“Master of Offices”) which seems to be the office Leibniz means here, although he in fact uses the German word “Bürgermeister,” meaning “Mayor.”

997. ancestors. | He was born in Rome at the time when Odoacer, king of the Heruli, began his reign there after exiling Augustulus, the last Roman emperor in Italy, namely, in the year of Christ 475. | *deleted*.

justice, and in his so-called misery he very probably consoled himself with philosophy by putting together this little book.

Although this excellent man left behind various writings, the present beautiful work in five extant books is the most highly valued of them all, especially because the verses it contains are succinct and wise. For various reasons some well-educated persons have attempted to express these verses, each in his own tongue, although they did not entirely capture the author's true understanding and intention.

Because of this, for many years I searched for someone who could really offer the aforementioned verse or poem in its entirety without adding to or departing from the author's view. Eventually, in Sulzbach in the Upper Palatine, I met Mr. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, a man very experienced in all branches of philosophy, who not only took it upon himself to translate the Latin verses into German at my request, but also did it so successfully that many informed people found no difference between the original text and the translation, and believed it could justifiably be said that if both had come out at the same time, it would be difficult to determine which was the original and which the translation, or which deserved preference.

Now when it recently happened that I came to Hanover, I found there the illustrious Electresses of Brandenburg and Brunswick,<sup>998</sup> and as an old and well-known servant I paid my respects. Thereupon it happened that the two Electresses asked me many Christian and intelligent questions, question upon question in fact, so that they could increase their God-given insight, which is in accordance with the meaning of the Christian name shared by both Electresses, Sophia. For just as they distance themselves from hypocrisy and insincerity, so they take due care to have a true reverence for God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and to turn their mental powers to recognizing the true light and the source of all good, seeking it not with empty words but with deeds. In this they make use of their sovereignty, granted by God, to do many good things for others. And they like nothing better than to talk about how one may contribute to this principal goal of knowledge and love.

When this little book by Boëthius called *The Consolation of Philosophy* came under discussion, the illustrious Electress of Bruns-

998. Sophie Charlotte and Sophie respectively.

wick indicated that not only had she read it all herself with great pleasure, but that she had assisted others with it too, as when she gave the copy she received from me to a person overcome by melancholy, this person was fully restored to health by reading it. Upon parting, therefore, I was reminded to find some copies when I got back to Sulzbach again, and to send them on. But because, as mentioned above, scarcely any could be found, I wanted to prepare a second printing upon my return, in the hope that it would serve for the edification and rejuvenation of many well-disposed souls.

9 June 1696

### 3. [Unknown author] to Sophie: Thoughts on the Leibniz-Fleming-Toland debate (August–early November (?) 1702)<sup>999</sup>

Versions:

M: Fair copy, dispatched?: *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek*, LBr. F 27, 171–72.

The following letter to Sophie, which was apparently written at Sophie's request, pertains to the debates between Leibniz, Fleming, and Toland that took place in Sophie Charlotte's court in the fall of 1702 (see nos. 56–59). Unfortunately the authorship of this letter is unknown, and the text which prompted its composition is now lost.

It is not possible to come to a precise judgement about the *piece of writing* which has been put forward without knowing the circumstances of its composition, and the connections it has, whether to Mr. Toland or to some previous conversation that will have given rise to the *actives* of Mr. Fleming. I consider him an excessively cavalier genius for entering seriously, in the metaphysical style, into the land of abstraction in which the best guides (the Malebranches) sometimes go astray. Mr. Leibniz and Mr. Jaquelot had only to untie this Gordian knot. Nothing is irresolvable to them. They are the authority on this, and prophets for Mr. Toland, if he denies (as is said) the gods and kings, which is to undermine metaphysics through the foundations; I treat his opinions as what they are. Here are mine, since one must obey.

I suppose that the material-passive, the active-inferior, or the active-superior, etc. are not physical postures, on which turns the joke, but abstract ways to express the action of spirits on bodies, and the degrees of perfection among substances.

In this language, God is rightly called the supreme *active*. *Ens entium*.<sup>1000</sup> Being of beings. Inferior beings subsist only in him. *In him* we have being, life, and movement.<sup>1001</sup> He is infinite in his *action* as in

999. From the French. Complete.

1000. "Being of beings."

1001. An allusion to Acts 17:28: "For in him we live and move and have our being."

his power. Immaterial spirits, substances simple or composite, only subsist, only act, through dependence on the sovereign *being*, which is God.

But in my view we do not have demonstrative ideas of these immaterial beings, because the usage of the word as well as that of Scripture borrows its images from the senses. So lacking simple and incorporeal ideas, we could not perfectly explain either the existence of spirits, or their action, or even simple substances (although corporeal) because composite colors cannot paint what is simple. The divisibility of matter still surpasses our imagination. Motion, which is only a subtle action of bodies, is inexplicable in certain respects. We reason about and are confusedly aware of these truths, as something so different and so far removed that we rightly feel that we do not have the power to attain them, that faith on the mystery of the incarnation is sufficient for us, and that the necessity and the usefulness of the belief in spirits takes the place of proof of their existence.

God wanted to limit our lights. If we could fix them on their true point of view, if we only made correct use of them, we would not be bothered by so many theological or metaphysical disputes, which are stirred up among men by an idle and curious vanity. A modest ignorance about incomprehensible matters would perhaps be better for the two sexes, but especially for the ladies. They have enough other advantages in their natural graces without affecting the false charms of savantism. But while preaching ignorance, I should be permitted to excuse my own to Her Electoral Highness.



## Bibliography

---

### Primary Sources

- Ante-Nicene Christian Library vol. X: The Writings of Origen*. Ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Frederick Crombie. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869.
- Ante-Nicene Christian Library vol. XV: The Writings of Tertullian vol. II*. Ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Peter Holmes. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870.
- Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa contra Gentiles, Book Two: Creation*. Ed. and trans. James F. Anderson. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Summa Theologica*. Ed. and trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. 5 vols. New York: Benziger Bros., 1948.
- Asgill, John. *An Argument Proving that according to the Covenant of Eternal Life revealed in the Scriptures, Man may be translated from hence into that Eternal Life, without passing through Death, altho the Humane Nature of Christ himself could not be thus translated till he had passed through Death*. London, 1700.
- Augustine. *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*. Ed. and trans. Eric Plumer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *St. Augustine on the Psalms*. Ed. and trans. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan. 2 vols. Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1960–61.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The City of God against the Pagans*. Ed. and trans. R. W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Aus den Briefen der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans an die Sophie Kurfürstin von Hannover*. Ed. Eduard Bodemann. 2 vols. Hanover: Hahn, 1891. (Cited as Bod.)
- des Bans, Louis. *L'art de connoistre les hommes*. Paris, 1702. (Cited as LDB.)
- Bayle, Pierre. *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. Rotterdam, 1695–97.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Entretiens de Maxime et de Thémiste*. Rotterdam, 1707.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. Ed. and trans. Richard H. Popkin. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial*. Rotterdam, 1706.
- Bekker, Balthasar. *De Betoverde Weereld*. 4 vols. Amsterdam, 1691–93.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le Monde enchanté ou examen des communs sentiments touchant les Esprits, leur nature, leur pouvoir, leur administration, et leurs opérations*. Amsterdam, 1694.
- Bellegarde, Abbé de. *L'art de connoistre les hommes*. Amsterdam, 1709.
- Boëthius. *Christlich-vernunftgemesser Trost und Unterricht in Widerwertigkeit und Bestürtzung über den vermeinten Wohl- oder Übelstand der Bösen und Frommen*. Ed. and trans. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. Sulzbach, 1667.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Des fürtrefflichen hochweisen Severini Boetti Christlich-vernunftgemesser Trost and Unterricht in Widerwertigkeit und Bestützung über dem vermeinten Wohl- oder Uebelstand der Bösen und Frommen verteutschet, und mit beygefügtten kurzen Anmerkungen über etliche Ort desselben, zum andermahl aufgelegt*. Ed. and trans. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. Lüneburg, 1697.
- Bossuet, Jacques Bénigne. *Instructions sur les états d'oraison*. Paris, 1697.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Relation sur le quiétisme*. Lyon, 1698.
- Bouhours, Dominique. *Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit*. Paris, 1684.
- Boyle, Robert. *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*. Ed. M. A. Stewart. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979.
- Briefe der Königin Sophie Charlotte von Preußen und der Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover*. Ed. Richard Doebner. Leipzig: Preußischen Staatsarchiven, 1905. (Cited as Doebner.)
- Buchius, Paulus. *The Divine Being*. Trans. Philanglus. London, 1693.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Het Godlyk Weezen*. Amsterdam, 1694.
- Carré, Louis. *L'Horscope des Jesuites, ou Lon découvre combien ils doivent durer, et de quelle maniere ils doivent cependant tourmenter les Hommes*. Amsterdam, 1691.
- Cavalieri, Francesco Bonaventura. *Geometria indivisibilibus continuorum nova quadam ratione promota*. Bologna, 1635.
- Cicero. *The Nature of the Gods*. Ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On Duties*. Ed. and trans. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.



- Collins, Anthony. *A Discourse of Free-thinking, occasion'd by the rise and growth of a Sect call'd Free-thinkers*. London, 1713.
- Collio, Francesco. *De animabus paganorum libri quinque*. Milan, 1622 and 1633.
- "La comete." *Journal des sçavans* 24 (31 August 1682): 289–90.
- Contarini, Gasparo. *De immortalitate animae adversus Petrum Pomponatium*. Bologna, 1571.
- Cudworth, Ralph. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*. London, 1678.
- Curio, Coelius Secundus. *De amplitudine regni coelestis*. Frankfurt, 1617.
- de Monte, Lambertus. *De salute Aristotelis*. 15th century.
- Descartes, René. *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Ed. C. Adams and P. Tannery. 11 vols. Paris: J. Vrin, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Ed. and trans., J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- de Scudéry, Madeleine. *Conversations morales*. 2 vols. Paris, 1686.
- de Villars, Montfaucon. *Le Comte de Gabalis*. Paris, 1670.
- The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History Book 7*. Ed. and trans. Mary Beagon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Éléments de Géométrie de Mgr le duc de Bourgogne*. Ed. Nicolas de Malézieu. Paris, 1705.
- Esprit, Jaques. *La fausseté des vertus humaines*. Paris, 1678.
- Fardella, Michael Angelo. *Animae humanae natura*. Venice, 1698.
- Fénelon, François. *Explication des Maximes des Saints*. Paris, 1697.
- Fontenelle, Bernard le Bovier de. *Choix d'éloges français les plus estimés*. Paris: D'Hautel, 1812.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*. Ed. and trans. H. A. Hargreaves. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dialogues des Morts*. Paris, 1683.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dialogues of the Dead, Ancient and Modern*. London, 1685.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Entretien de la pluralité des mondes*. Paris, 1686.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Histoire des oracles*. Paris, 1686.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A History of Oracles in two dissertations*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Whatley. London, 1753.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rêveries Diverses*. Ed. Alain Niderst. Paris: Desjonquères, 1992.

- Fragments Philosophiques pour faire suite aux cours de l'histoire de la philosophie: Correspondence de Leibnitz et de l'abbé Nicaise.* Paris: Ladrance, 1847.
- Frederick II, King of Prussia. *Mémoires pour servir a l'histoire de Brandebourg.* Berlin, 1750.
- Galen. *Opera Omnia.* Ed. C. G. Kühn. 20 vols. Leipzig, 1821–33.
- Geoffroy F. R. S. Mr. “Experiments upon metals, made with the burning-glass of the Duke of Orleans.” *Philosophical Transactions* 26 (1708–9): 374–86.
- Gourville, Jean-Herault de. *Mémoires de Gourville, tome second 1670–1702.* Ed. Léon Lecestre. Paris: Renouard, 1895.
- Gregory of Nyssa. *The Catechetical Oration.* Ed. and trans. J. H. Srawley. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1903.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *De corpore.* London, 1655.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *De corpore politico. Or the Elements of Law, Moral & Politick.* London, 1652.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leviathan, or, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil.* London, 1651.
- Hody, Humphrey. *The Resurrection of the (same) Body Asserted.* London, 1694.
- l'Hospital, Guillaume François Antoine. *Analyse des infiniment petits, pour l'intelligence des lignes courbes.* Paris, 1696.
- Huet, Pierre Daniel. *Against Cartesian Philosophy.* Ed. and trans. Thomas M. Lennon. New York: Humanity Books, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Censura philosophiae Cartesianae.* Paris, 1689.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Demonstratio Evangelica ad Serenissimum Delphinum.* Paris, 1679.
- Jaquelot, Isaac. *La Conformité de la foy avec la raison.* Amsterdam, 1705.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dissertation sur l'existence de Dieu.* The Hague, 1697.
- Jurieu, Pierre. *L'Accomplissement des propheties.* Rotterdam, 1686.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lettres pastorales adressées aux fidèles de France.* 3 vols. Rotterdam, 1686–87.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Traité de la nature et de la grâce, ou du concours général de la Providence & du concours particulier de la Grace efficace: contre les nouvelles hypothèses de M. P & de ses disciples.* Utrecht, 1687.

- Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes books I–VII*. Ed and trans. Sister Mary Francis McDonald O.P. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964.
- Laertius, Diogenes. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1925.
- Lamy, François. *De la connaissance de soi-même*. 6 vols. Paris, 1699, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Confessio Philosophi*. Ed. and trans. Robert Sleigh Jr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. (Cited as CP.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *De summa rerum*. Ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Gesammelte Werke*. Ed. G. H. Pertz. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hauptschriften zur Gründung der Philosophie*. Ed. E. Cassirer, trans. A. Buchenau. 2 vols. Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leibniz's Deutsche Schriften*. Ed. Eduard Guhrauer. 2 vols. Berlin: Veit und Comp, 1840.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*. Ed. and trans. H. T. Mason. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967. (Cited as LA.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leibniz Selections*. Ed. and trans. Philip P. Wiener. New York: Scribner, 1951. (Cited as W.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leibniz's 'New System' and Associated Contemporary Texts*. Ed. and trans. R. S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. (Cited as LNS.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits de Leibniz*. Ed. Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil. Paris: Ladrangé, 1854. (Cited as FC.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mathematische Schriften*. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin: A. Asher, 1849–63. (Cited as GM.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Essays concerning Human Understanding*. 3rd ed. Ed. and trans. Alfred Langley. La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. (Cited as NE.)

- \_\_\_\_\_. “Nova methodus pro maximis et minimis, itemque tangentibus, quae nec fractas nec irrationales quantitates moratur, et singulare pro illis calculi genus.” *Acta eruditorum* 3 (October 1684): 467–73.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Œuvres de Leibniz*. Ed. Louis Alexandre Foucher de Careil. 7 vols. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1858–75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Oeuvres philosophiques de Leibniz*. Ed. Paul Janet. 2 vols. Paris: Ladrance, 1866.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Opera Omnia*. Ed. Ludovic Dutens. 6 vols. Geneva, 1768.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Opera Philosophica*. Ed. J. E. Erdmann. Berlin: Eicher, 1839–40. (Cited as E.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Philosophical Essays*. Ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989. (Cited as AG.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Philosophical Papers and Letters*. 2nd ed. Ed. and trans. Leroy E. Loemker. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969. (Cited as L.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Philosophical Writings*. Ed. and trans. Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson. London: Dent, 1973. (Cited as P.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1875–90. (Cited as G.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Political Writings of Leibniz*. 2nd ed. Ed. and trans. Patrick Riley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. (Cited as R.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Réponse aux réflexions contenues dans la seconde édition du Dictionnaire critique de M. Bayle, article Rorarius, sur le système de l’harmonie préétablie.” *Histoire critique de la République des Lettres* 11 (1716): 78–114.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Réponse de Mr. de Leibniz à l’extrait de la lettre de Mr. Foucher Chanoine de Dijon, inserée dans le Journal du 16 Mars 1693.” *Journal des sçavans* 21 (3 August 1693): 527–29.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Reponse de M. Leibnitz aux objections que l’auteur du livre de la Connoissance de soi-même, a faites contre le système de l’harmonie préétablie.” *Journal des sçavans* (1709 [supplement]): 275–81.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Ed. Akademie der Wissenschaften. Multiple volumes in 8 series. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923–. (Cited as A.)

- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium*. Hanover, 1707.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shorter Leibniz Texts*. Ed. and trans. Lloyd Strickland. London: Continuum, 2006. (Cited as SLT.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l’union qu’il y a entre l’âme et le corps.” *Journal des sçavans* 25 (27 June 1695): 294–300 and 26 (4 July 1695): 301–6.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Textes inédits*. Ed. Gaston Grua, 2 vols. with successive pagination. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948. (Cited as Grua.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theodicy*. Ed. Austin Farrar, trans. E. M. Huggard. Chicago: Open Court, 1990. (Cited as H.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Verfasser der Histoire de Bileam*. Ed. Wilhelm Brambach. Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1887.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Die Werke von Leibniz*. Ed. Onno Klopp. 11 vols. Hanover: Klindworth, 1864–84. (Cited as Klopp.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Writings on China*. Ed. and trans. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont Jr. Chicago: Open Court, 1994. (Cited as C.)
- Leibnizens Briefwechsel mit dem Minister von Bernstorff und andere Leibniz betreffende Briefe und Attenstücke aus den Jahren 1705–1716*. Ed. R. Doebner. Hanover: Hahn, 1882.
- A letter from Her Royal Highness, the Princess Sophia, Electress of Brunswic and Luneburg, to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. With another from Hannover, written by Sir Roland Gwynne to the Right Honourable The Earl of Stamford*. London, 1706.
- L’Estoile, Pierre de. *Memoires-journaux Tome 2: Journal de Henri III, 1581–1586*. Paris: Tallandier, 1982.
- The Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne*. Ed. Beatrice Curtis Brown. London: Cassell, 1968.
- Liceti, Fortunio. *Pietate Aristotelis erga Deum et hominem*. Udine, 1645.
- Locke, John. *Essai philosophique concernant l’entendement humain, où l’on montre quelle est l’etendue de nos connoissances certaines, et la manière dont nous y parvenons*. Trans. Pierre Coste. Amsterdam, 1700.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. London, 1690.

- Lombard, Peter. *Sententiarum libri quattuor*. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1855.
- Lucretius. *Della natura delle cose*. Trans. Alessandro Marchetti. London, 1717.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *De Rerum Nature | The Nature of Things*. Ed. and trans. David R. Slavitt. London: University of California Press, 2008.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*. Rome, 1531.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Discourses on Livy*. Ed. and trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Il Principe*. Rome, 1532.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Prince*. Ed. and trans. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Malebranche, Nicolas. *De la recherche de la vérité*. Paris, 1674–75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Search after Truth*. Ed. and trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Mamertus, Claudius. *De statu animae*. 468–72.
- Mersenne, Marin. *La vérité des sciences contre les septiques ou Pyrrhoniens*. Paris, 1625.
- Molanus, Gerhard Wolter. *Antwortschreiben*. [no location], 1692.
- Original Papers; containing the Secret History of Great Britain, from the Restoration, to the Accession of the House of Hannover*. Ed. James Macpherson. 2 vols. London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1775.
- Molinos, Miguel de. *Guida spirituale*. Rome, 1675.
- More, Henry. *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*. 2nd ed. London, 1662.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Immortality of the Soul*. London, 1659.
- Naudaeana et Patiniana ou singularitez remarquables prises des conversations de Mess. Naudé et Patin*. Paris, 1701.
- Norris, John. *Letters concerning the love of God between the author of the Proposal to the ladies and Mr. John Norris, wherein his late discourse, shewing that it ought to be intire and exclusive of all other loves, is further cleared and justified*. London, 1695.
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Ed. E. J. Kenney, trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

- P., J. W. *A Letter to Some Divines... With an Exact Account of what God hath bestowed upon a Noble Maid, from her Seventh Year, until Now, MDCXCI*. Ed. and trans. Francis Lee. London, 1695.
- Paris, Matthew. *Grande Chronique de Matthieu Paris*. 12 vols. Paris: Paulin, 1840.
- Pelisson-Fontanier, Paul. *Reflexions sur les différends de la religion. Quatrième partie. Ou Réponse aux Objections envoyées d'Allemagne, sur l'unité de l'Eglise, et sur la question si elle peut tolérer les Sects*. Paris, 1691.
- Petersen, J. W. *Sendschreiben*. Lüneburg, 1691.
- Plato. *Complete Works*. Ed. John M. Cooper, trans. various. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- Pomponazzi, Pietro. *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*. Bologna, 1516.
- Princess Elisabeth, and René Descartes. *The Correspondence between Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*. Ed. and trans. Lisa Shapiro. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007.
- Psalmanaazaar, George (pseudonym). *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa, an Island subject to Japan. Giving an Account of the Religion, Customs, Manners &c. of the Inhabitants. Together with a Relation of what happen'd to the Author in his Travels; particularly his Conferences with the Jesuits, and others, in several Parts of Europe*. London, 1704.
- “Relation de ce qui s'est passé à la dernière assemblée publique de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, tenuë le 22. Avril. 1705.” *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts* 5 (1705): 1415–41.
- Richardson, Samuel. *A Discourse of the Torments of Hell*. London, 1657.
- Rosenroth, Christian Knorr von. *Kabbala Denudata*. 2 vols. Sulzbach, 1677 (vol. 1), and Frankfurt, 1684 (vol. 2).
- The Satires of Horace and Persius*. Ed. and trans. Niall Rudd. London: Penguin, 1979.
- Schmidt, J. A. *Helmontii de statu integritatis errantes ignes*. Helmstadt, 1696.
- Seneca. *Dialogues and Essays*. Ed. Tobias Reinhardt, trans. John Davie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Moral Essays*. Ed. and trans. John W. Basore. 3 vols. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1935.

- Serrurier, Pierre. *Assertion du règne de mille ans, ou de la prospérité de l'Eglise de Christ en la terre*. Amsterdam, 1657.
- Sharp, John. *A Sermon Preach'd at the Coronation of Queen Anne, in the Abby-Church of Westminster, April XXIII, MDCCII*. London, 1702.
- Sophie de Hanovre. *Mémoires et Lettres de voyage*. Ed. Dirk van der Cruysse. Paris: Fayard, 1990.
- Sophie, Electress of Hanover. *Memoirs*. Ed. and trans. H. Forester. London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1888.
- Spener, Philipp Jakob. *Theologisches Bedenken über einige Puncten*. [no location], 1692.
- Spinoza, Baruch de. *Ethics*. Ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- State Papers and Correspondence*. Ed. John M. Kemble. London: John W. Parker & Son, 1857. (Cited as SP.)
- Tacitus. *The Annals*. Ed. and trans. J. C. Yardley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Toland, John. *An account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover; sent to a minister of state in Holland by Mr. Toland*. London, 1705.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Anglia Libera: or, the Limitation and Succession of the Crown of England explain'd and asserted*. London, 1701.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christianity not Mysterious*. London, 1696.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland now first publish'd from his Original Manuscripts: with some memoirs of his life and writings*. Ed. Pierre Desmaizeaux. 2 vols. London: J. Peele, 1726.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Funeral Elogy and Character, of her Royal Highness, the late Princess Sophia: with the Explication of her Consecration-Medal*. London, 1714.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Letters to Serena*. London, 1704.
- van Helmont, Francis Mercury. *Aanmerkingen over den Mensch*. Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1692.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Cabbalistical Dialogue*. London, 1682.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Paradoxical Discourses concerning the Macrocosm and Microcosm*. London, 1685.



- \_\_\_\_\_. *Quaedam praemeditatae et consideratae cogitationes super Quatuor priora Capita Libri primi Moysis Genesis nominati*. Amsterdam, 1697.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Spirit of Diseases; or, Diseases from the Spirit: laid open in some Observations concerning Man, and his Diseases*. London, 1694.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Two Hundred Queries concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls*. London, 1684.
- Verhandeling van de Helle*. Groningen, 1694.
- von Spee, Friedrich. *Cautio criminalis*. Rinteln, 1631.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Güldenes Tugend-Buch*. Cologne, 1646.
- Wander, Guillaume (writing as Abbé de Lanion). *Méditations sur la métaphysique*. Paris, 1678.
- The Writings of Medieval Women: An Anthology*. Ed. and trans. Michelle Thiébaux. New York: Garland, 1994.

### Secondary Sources

- Aiton, E. J. *Leibniz: A Biography*. Bristol: Adam Hilger Ltd, 1985.
- Antognazza, Maria Rosa. *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Antognazza, Maria Rosa, and Howard Hotson. *Alsted and Leibniz on God, the Magistrate and the Millennium*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999.
- Baily, F. E. *Sophia of Hanover and Her Times*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1938.
- Balz, Albert G. A. "Dualism and Early Modern Philosophy II." *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 15 (1918): 225–41.
- Becco, Anne. "Aux sources de la monade: Paléographie et lexicographie leibniziennes." *Les Études Philosophiques* 3 (1975): 279–94.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Leibniz et François-Mercure van Helmont: bagatelle pour des monades." In *Magis Naturalis und die Entstehung der modernen Naturwissenschaften*, ed. Albert Heinekamp, 119–42. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1978.

- Broad, Jacqueline. *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Brown, Stuart. "Leibniz and More's Cabbalistic Circle." In *Henry More (1614–1687) Tercentenary Studies*, ed. Sarah Hutton, 76–95. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Toland's clandestine pantheism as partly revealed in his neglected 'Remarques critiques sur le systeme de M. Leibniz...' and partly concealed in the last of his *Letters to Serena*." In *Scepticisme, Clandestinité et Libre Pensée*, ed. G. Paganini and M. Benitez, 345–70. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002.
- Brown, Stuart, and N. J. Fox. *Historical Dictionary of Leibniz's Philosophy*. Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Chance, J. F. "A Jacobite at the Court of Hanover." *The English Historical Review* 11 (1896): 527–30.
- Chapman, Hester W. *Privileged Persons*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1966.
- Cook, Daniel J. "Leibniz on Enthusiasm." In *Leibniz, Religion and Mysticism*, ed. A. Coudert, R. Popkin, and G. Weiner, 107–35. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998.
- Cook, Daniel J. and Lloyd Strickland. "Leibniz and Millenarianism." In *Pluralität der Perspektiven und Einheit der Wahrheit im Werk von G. W. Leibniz*. Ed. Friedrich Beiderbeck and Stephan Waldhoff. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010.
- Fara, Patricia. "Leibniz's Women." *Endeavour* 28 (2004): 146–48.
- Fichant, Michel. "Leibniz et Toland: philosophie pour princesses?" *Revue de Synthèse* 116 (1995): 421–39.
- Foucher de Careil, Louis Alexandre. *Leibniz et les deux Sophies*. Paris: G. Bailliere, 1876.
- Garber, Daniel, and Michael Ayers, eds. *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Gleason, Elisabeth G. *Gasparo Contarini, Venice, Rome, and Reform*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Hall, Alfred Rupert. *Philosophers at War: The Quarrel between Newton and Leibniz*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Kersey, Ethel M. *Women Philosophers: A Bio-Critical Source Book*. London: Greenwood Press, 1989.

- Kroll, Maria. *Sophie, Electress of Hanover: A Personal Portrait*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1973.
- Levy, Samuel. "On Unity and Simple Substance in Leibniz." *The Leibniz Review* 17 (2007): 61–106.
- MacDonald Ross, George. "Leibniz's Exposition of His System to Queen Sophie Charlotte and Other Ladies." In *Leibniz in Berlin*, ed. Hans Poser and Albert Heinekamp, 61–69. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte." In *Sophie Charlotte und ihr Schloß*, ed. S. Herz, C. M. Vogtherr, and F. Windt, 95–105. London: 1999.
- Manning, Charles. "Actio ingrati." *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris*, 52 (1986): 61–73.
- Masser, Karin. *Christobal de Gentil de Rojas y Spinola O. F. M. und der lutherische Abt Gerardus Wolterius Molanus: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Unionsbestrebungen der katholischen und evangelischen Kirche im 17. Jahrhundert*. Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2002.
- Mittelstrass, Jürgen. "Der Philosoph und die Königin – Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte." In *Leibniz in Berlin, Studia Leibnitiana sonderheft 16*, ed. Hans Poser and Albert Heinekamp, 9–27. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990.
- Ogilvie, Marilyn Bailey. *Women in Science: A Biographical Dictionary with Annotated Bibliography*. London: MIT Press, 1986.
- Pegah, Rashid Sascha. "'Hir ist nichts als operen undt comedien': Sophie Charlottes Musik- und Theaterpflege in den Jahren 1699 bis 1705." In *Sophie Charlotte und ihr Schloß*, ed. S. Herz, C. M. Vogtherr, F. Windt, 83–89. Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 1999.
- Pesic, Paul. "Leibniz and the Leaves: Beyond Identity." *Philosophy Now* 30 (December 2000/January 2001): 18–21.
- Phemister, Pauline. "'All the time and everywhere everything's the same as here': The Principle of Uniformity in the Correspondence between Leibniz and Lady Masham." In *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, ed. Paul Lodge, 193–213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- Pike, Robert E. "A Note on a Letter by Fontenelle." *Modern Language Notes* 52 (1937): 266–67.
- Ramati, Ayval. "Harmony at a Distance: Leibniz's Scientific Academies." *Isis* 87 (1996): 430–52.
- Rescher, Nicholas. "Leibniz Finds a Niche (1676–1677)." In Nicholas Rescher, *On Leibniz*, 162–98. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Leibniz Visits Vienna (1712–1714)." *Studia Leibnitiana* 31 (1999): 133–59.
- Riley, Patrick. "Leibniz's *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, 1703–2003." *The Leibniz Review* 13 (2003): 67–81.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Review of Academy Edition I, 20." *The Leibniz Review* 18 (2008): 171–93.
- Robinet, André. "Leibniz und Sophie Charlotte." In *Leibniz and Berlin*, ed. Hans Poser and Albert Heinekamp, 28–43. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990.
- Rutherford, Donald. "Leibniz and the Stoics: The Consolations of Theodicy." In *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Elmor J. Kremer and Michael J. Latzer, 138–64. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Scott, David. "Leibniz and the Two Clocks." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 445–63.
- Sleigh Jr., Robert C. "Reflections on the Masham-Leibniz Correspondence." In *Early Modern Philosophy: Mind, Matter and Metaphysics*. Ed. Christia Mercer and Eileen O' Neill, 119–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Strickland, Lloyd. "Leibniz on Eternal Punishment." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2009): 307–31.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leibniz Reinterpreted*. London: Continuum, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Taking Scripture Seriously: Leibniz and the Jehoshaphat Problem." *The Heythrop Journal* 51 (forthcoming).
- Sullivan, Robert E. *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*. London: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Thornton, Percy. "The Hanover papers." *The English Historical Review* 1 (1886): 756–77.

- Utermöhlen, Gerda. "Die rolle fürstlicher Frauen im Leben und Wirken von Leibniz." In *Leibniz in Berlin*, ed. Hans Poser and Albert Heinekamp, 44–60. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990.
- Ward, Adolphus William. *The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession*. London: Goupil & Co., 1903.
- Weber, Eugen. *Apocalypses*. London: Pimlico, 1999.
- Waithe, Mary Ellen, ed. *A History of Women Philosophers*. Vol. 3, 1600–1900. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995.
- Widmaier, Rita. "Damaris Masham." *Studia Leibnitiana* 18 (1986): 211–27.
- Wilson, Catherine. "Love of God and Love of Creatures." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21 (2004): 281–98.
- Yardeni, Myriam. "Huguenot Traces and Reminiscences in John Toland's Conception of Tolerance." In *The Religious Culture of the Huguenots 1660–1750*, ed. Anne Duncan, 173–88. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Zedler, Beatrice H. "The Three Princesses." *Hypatia* 4 (1989): 28–63.



## *Index of Persons*

---

---

- Abraham, 232  
Adam, 107f, 113, 120, 400, 407  
Ahab, 77  
Alexander, 315, 387, 392  
Alphonse, King of Castille, 235f  
Alvensleben, Carl August von,  
21, 84, 327, 337  
Anne, Queen of England, 15ff,  
19, 23, 26ff, 410, 414, 445,  
448  
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 136f, 407,  
439  
Aristotle, 37, 279f, 324, 399f  
Arnauld, Antoine, xiv, 34f, 105,  
137, 144, 150f, 325, 335, 443  
Asgill, John, 231, 243, 439  
Asseburg, Rosamund Juliane von  
der, 69ff, 86, 92f, 95f, 430ff  
Asseburg, Sophie Ehrengard von  
der, 71ff  
Astell, Mary, 174, 176  
Augustine, St., 259, 374, 400,  
404, 419, 439  
Augustus, 393  
Averroes, 279  
  
des Bans, Louis, xiv, 365ff, 439  
Barckhausen, Hermann, 85  
Bard, Frances, 85  
Bayle, Pierre, 20f, 25f, 33, 236,  
289, 310f, 315, 332, 357, 439,  
444  
Bekker, Balthasar, 104, 116f, 440  
Bellegarde, Abbé de, 365, 440  
Bellomont, Lady. See Bard,  
Frances  
Bernstorff, Andreas Gottlieb  
von, 29  
Besser, Johann von, 17  
Bierling, Friedrich Wilhelm, 25  
Boëthius, x, 13, 48, 156, 158f,  
161, 433f, 440  
Bosses, Bartholomew des, 34  
Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne, 7, 9ff,  
69, 75, 95, 143, 149, 174f,  
371, 416, 440  
Bothmer, Hans Caspar von, 18f,  
71, 271f  
Bouhours, Dominique, 427, 440  
Bourbon-Condé, Anne-Louise-  
Bénédicte de, 345  
Boyle, Robert, 408, 440  
Brinon, Marie de, viii, 9, 11, 41,  
48, 54, 82, 162, 164ff, 169,  
171f  
Bruno, Giordarno, 413  
Buchius, Paulus, 102, 104ff, 419,  
440  
Bülow, Joachim Heinrich von, 84  
Burnet, Gilbert, 18  
Burnett, Thomas, 12, 18, 25, 119,  
174, 232  
Bussche, Albrecht Philipp von  
dem, 72, 74, 116  
Caesar, Julius, 393

- Calvin, John, 5, 11, 170  
 Carneades, 268, 270, 277  
 Caroline of Ansbach, Princess,  
     22f, 28f, 47  
 Carré, Louis, 79, 440  
 Causacau, Joseph de, 81, 83, 85  
 Cavalieri, Francesco  
     Bonaventura, 336, 440  
 Cavendish, Margaret, 4  
 Charlotte Felicitas, Duchess of  
     Modena, 182  
 Chevreau, Urbain, 419  
 Christ, Jesus, 71, 77, 80, 86, 88,  
     93, 96, 120f, 163, 168, 172,  
     195, 236, 319, 367, 396, 399,  
     431f  
 Chuno, Johann Jacob Julius, 14,  
     17  
 Cicero, 116, 371f, 388, 440  
 Clarke, Samuel, 21, 34, 327  
 Colbert, Jean-Baptiste, 140  
 Collins, Anthony, 410, 412, 441  
 Collio, Francesco, 399, 441  
 Contarini, Gasparo, 279, 441,  
     450  
 Conway, Anne, 4  
 Copernicus, 153  
 Cordemoy, Géraud de, 325, 335  
 Cudworth, Ralph, 310f, 441  
 Curio, Coelius Secundus, 103f,  
     110, 441  
 Danckelmann, Eberhard von,  
     420  
 Darius, 387  
 D'Artis, Gabriel, 2  
 Democritus, 286, 388  
 de Monte, Lambertus, 399, 441  
 Descartes, René, 3, 89, 91, 105,  
     141f, 151, 192ff, 251, 259,  
     263, 267, 419, 441, 447  
 de Villars, Montfaucon, 405, 441  
 Dobrzensky, Baron, 98  
 Dodart, Denis, 348  
 du Perron, Jacques-Davy, 269f,  
     277  
 Eckhart, Johann Georg, 211  
 Elijah, 32  
 Elisabeth of Bohemia, Princess,  
     3, 89, 91, 195, 447  
 Elisha, 232, 244  
 Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of  
     Orléans, vii, xiv, 12, 21, 25,  
     29, 36f, 44, 53f, 119f, 122,  
     125, 127, 132, 134, 141, 143,  
     150, 154f, 322, 344f, 352,  
     354, 359, 401, 406, 439  
 Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of  
     Bohemia, 5, 8  
 Epicurus, 116, 136, 289, 293  
 Ernst August von Hannover, 5ff,  
     10f, 13ff, 82  
 Esprit, Jaques, 365f, 394, 441  
 Euclid, 89  
 Eve, 108, 113  
 Fardella, Michael Angelo, 144,  
     441  
 Fare, Charles Auguste de la, ix,  
     401f, 404, 406  
 Felicity, St., 77  
 Fénelon, François, 173ff, 371,  
     416, 441



- Fleming, Heinrich Heino von,  
207
- Fleming, Jakob Heinrich von, x,  
50f, 53, 278, 295, 298, 301,  
436
- Fontenelle, Bernard le Bovier de,  
ix, 29f, 153, 401f, 404ff, 441,  
452
- Frederick II, King of Prussia, 2,  
3, 23, 48, 442
- Frederick V, Elector Palatine, 5
- Friedrich I, King in Prussia, 8, 17
- Galen, 238, 425, 442
- Gassendi, Pierre, 105, 362
- Georg Ludwig von Hannover, 6,  
13f, 16, 21ff, 27ff, 55, 189
- Görtz, Friedrich Wilhelm von,  
206
- Gourville, Jean-Herault de, 12,  
442
- Gregory of Nyssa, St., 103, 110,  
442
- Gutjahr, Sophie, 183
- Guyon, Jeanne Bouvier de La  
Mothe, 175
- Gwynne, Roland, 23f, 445
- Hardt, Hermann van der, 32
- Harling, Anna Katharina von,  
vii, 71ff, 156
- Helmont, Francis Mercury van,  
vii, x, 12f, 36, 39, 42, 87, 93,  
101ff, 117, 119, 121f, 125ff,  
134, 136, 141, 143, 145, 156f,  
159f, 218, 282, 419, 422f,  
433, 447ff
- Hessen-Rheinfels, Landgrave  
Ernst von , 9f, 72, 76, 144
- Hippocrates, 106, 148
- Hobbes, Thomas, 293, 442
- Hody, Humphrey, 408, 442
- Hohenzollern, Louise von, ix,  
318f
- Hollandine, Louise, ix, 9ff, 21,  
81, 85, 91, 162, 361f, 364
- Horace, 382, 406, 447
- l'Hospital, Guillaume François  
Antoine, 145, 148, 150f, 442
- Huet, Pierre Daniel, 78f, 149,  
442
- Innocent XII, Pope, 174
- Jablonski, Daniel Ernst, 14
- Jaquelot, Isaac, 65, 358, 436, 442
- Jerome, St., 103, 110
- Jesus. See Christ, Jesus
- Johann Friedrich, Duke of  
Brunswick-Lüneburg, 6f, 30
- Jörger, Jean Joseph Graf von, 412
- Jurieu, Pierre, 72, 79, 83, 93, 442
- Kerckring, Theodor, 147
- Labadie, Jean de, 399
- Lactantius, 268, 270, 443
- Laertius, Diogenes, 416, 443
- Lamy, François, 302, 443
- Lanion, Abbé de, 423, 449
- Lazarus, 148
- Leeuwenhoek, Antony van, 275,  
348
- Liceti, Fortunio, 399, 445

- Locke, John, 1, 57, 62, 305f, 308, 445
- Lombard, Peter, 406, 446
- Longueuil, Johann Friedrich de, 87
- Louis XIV, 9f, 79, 81, 122, 139f, 155, 325, 414, 425
- Louis, Duke of Burgundy, 321, 323, 333, 341, 344f
- Lucretius, 116, 257, 271f, 291, 293, 446
- Lully, Jean-Baptiste, 414
- Lully, Raymond, 413f
- Luther, Martin, 10f, 72, 96, 170, 451
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 336, 446
- Malebranche, Nicolas, 235, 251, 263, 282, 302, 315, 344, 436, 446
- Malézieu, Nicolas de, 321, 441
- Mamertus, Claudius, 419, 446
- Marchetti, Alessandro, 271f, 446
- Masham, Damaris, 22, 45, 310f, 317, 451ff
- Meisenburg, Klara Elizabeth von, 85
- Mencke, Otto, 423
- Mersenne, Marin, 407, 446
- Micah, 77
- Micaiah, 77
- Molanus, Gerhard Wolter, viii, 7, 10, 55f, 60f, 64, 72, 74f, 85f, 96, 127, 183, 189ff, 197ff, 446, 451
- Molinos, Miguel de, 280, 446
- More, Henry, 281f, 446, 450
- Morell, André, 46
- Naudé, Gabriel, 279f, 446
- Newton, Issac, 29, 450
- Nicaise, Claude, 17, 170, 174f, 442
- Noah, 432
- Norris, John, 174, 176, 446
- d'Olbreuse, Eleonore, 82
- Origen, 25, 103, 110, 439
- Ovid, 331, 446
- Pajon, Claude. See Payon, Claude
- Paris, Matthew, 255, 447
- Patin, Guy, 280, 446
- Paul III, Pope, 279
- Payon, Claude, 83
- Pellison-Fontanier, Paul, 9, 81, 149, 447
- Penn, William, 46
- Perpetua, St., 77
- Petersen, Johann Wilhelm, 69ff, 74, 80, 85, 92, 95f, 431f, 447
- Pfalz-Simmern, 423
- Pfalz-Sulzbach, Christian August von, 423
- Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, ix, 53, 322, 344f, 352ff, 358f, 401, 442
- Platen, Franz Ernst von, 7, 19, 85
- Plato, 103, 110, 136, 213, 224, 229, 233, 238, 241, 244, 255, 259, 281, 324, 404, 419, 447
- Pliny, 286, 441
- Plotinus, 286

- Pöllnitz, Henrietta von, 19, 22,  
197, 215, 218f, 311
- Pomponazzi, Pietro, 279, 441,  
447
- Psalmanaazaar, George, 428, 447
- Pythagoras, 136, 160, 281, 331,  
416f, 419
- Richardson, Samuel, 101, 447
- Rosenroth, Christian Knorr von,  
13, 103, 110, 136, 156, 433f,  
440, 447
- Scheffler, Johannes, 280
- Schmidt, J. A., 423, 447
- Schütz, Ludwig von, 27
- Scott, Robert, x, 72, 75, 430f
- Scudéry, Madeleine de, 175, 441
- Seneca, 374, 380, 447
- Serrurier, Pierre, 104, 111, 448
- Sharp, John, 19, 448
- Sinold, Ludwig Justus, 18
- Socrates, 224, 233, 244, 369
- Spee, Friedrich von, 180f, 449
- Spener, Philipp Jakob, 96, 448
- Spinola, Cristobal de Rojas y, 7ff,  
451
- Spinoza, Baruch de, 280, 282,  
288f, 448
- Steno, Nicolas, 98
- Stepney, George, 16f, 183ff
- Swammerdam, Jan, 274f, 348
- Tacitus, 378, 448
- Tellier, Charles Maurice le, 142
- Tenison, Thomas, 18
- Tentzel, Wilhelm, 32
- Tertullian, 77, 404, 439
- Theodoric, King of the  
Ostrogoths, 433
- Toland, John, ix, 1ff, 11f, 17ff, 25,  
48, 51, 220, 237, 248, 251,  
257f, 266, 276, 278, 291ff,  
298, 396, 436, 448, 450, 452f
- Trotter, Catharine, 1
- Tschirnhaus, Ehrenfried Walther  
von, 359
- Ulrich, Anton, 73, 82, 84, 88, 93
- Virgil, 246
- Wagner, Gabriel, 98
- Wander, Guillaume, 423, 449
- Wassenaer, Jakob van, 322f, 333
- Weigel, Valentin, 280
- Wilhelmine Amalie, Queen 182
- William, Duke of Gloucester, 8,  
15
- Zwingli, Ulrich, 399

## *Index of Subjects*

---

---

- Academy of Sciences, 29, 140, 425
- Act of Settlement, 17, 248
- Act of Union, 26
- Affability, 390ff
- Angels, 37, 60, 78, 87, 117, 123, 169, 194f, 218, 245, 259, 284, 319, 331f, 355, 357f
- Animals, 36, 50, 100, 117, 129, 131, 135, 141, 146ff, 151, 153, 183, 209, 224, 232, 244, 253, 260, 268, 270, 273f, 276, 278f, 283ff, 290, 296, 298f, 312ff, 319, 331, 339, 346, 348f, 403
- Preformation of, 285, 348
- Transformation of, 106, 147, 265, 274f, 283, 285, 314, 331, 348
- Souls of, 100, 105, 135ff, 142, 151, 276, 288, 319, 331, 349, 361ff
- Animal spirits, 57f
- Antichrist, 79
- Apostles, 171, 431
- Arithmetic, 123, 219, 222, 230, 239, 242f, 328
- Armenianism, 430
- Astrology, 79
- Astronomy, 123, 152, 416
- Augsburg Confession, 79f
- Atomism, 105, 325
- Atoms, 37f, 145f, 289, 293, 325f, 331, 335, 362, 364. *See also* Atomism; Corpuscles
- Baptism, 400, 432
- Beatific vision, 288
- Beauty, 42, 92, 124, 139, 160, 171, 177, 236, 288, 372, 415. *See also* God, Beauty of
- Berlin Society of Sciences, 14f
- Bible. *See* Scripture
- Bill of Rights, 8
- Bodies, 37, 52, 78, 93, 98, 105f, 117, 125, 129f, 135ff, 139, 151, 191, 199, 207, 209, 259, 263, 265f, 293, 295, 311ff, 315f, 320, 322, 325ff, 332, 335ff, 340, 346ff, 357f, 362f, 402ff, 408, 436f
- Glorified, 288
- Laws of Motion of, 88, 316
- Organic, 106, 199, 273, 287f, 312, 319, 331, 357
- Phenomena of, 330
- Subtle, 117
- Transparent, 225
- Brain, 57, 62f, 87f, 93, 198, 200, 212, 253ff, 259, 266, 272
- Calculus, 29, 145, 355
- Cartesians, 105, 111, 135, 151, 191, 202, 280, 282, 315, 331, 357, 364

- Causality, 58, 85, 87f, 93, 96, 98,  
195, 200, 232, 234, 240, 245,  
250, 254, 267, 350, 420
- Cause. *See* Causality
- Chance, 43, 78, 88f, 93, 103, 110,  
160, 271, 277, 400
- Chaos, 213, 403, 408
- Charity, 172, 177ff, 222, 230,  
236, 242, 367, 380, 397
- Charlottenburg, 322, 333, 340
- Chemistry, 136, 359
- Chiliasm. *See* Millenarianism
- China, xiii, 170, 396, 416, 445
- Christianity, 9, 11, 191, 359
- Church reunion, 7ff, 72, 81, 143,  
149, 162
- Cistercians, 183
- Common sense, 221, 227f, 239f
- Complaisance, 390f
- Consciousness, 251, 262
- Constancy, 383, 385f
- Contentment, 34, 40ff, 44ff, 53,  
122, 194, 236, 247, 359, 386,  
393
- Continuum, 329f, 338f
- Corporeal, 207f, 251, 263
- Action, 78
- Creatures, 108, 113
- Force. *See* Force, Corporeal
- Ideas, 60, 194, 198
- Images, 212f
- Mass, 123, 326, 330
- Passion, 78
- Representations, 195
- Things, 61, 105, 111, 194f,  
252, 264
- Corpuscles, 57, 105, 291. *See also*  
    Atoms
- Cynics, 389
- Death
- Of Leibniz, 29, 73
- Of Sophie, 28, 31
- Of Sophie Charlotte, 22, 30,  
47
- Is Only Sleep, 39, 264, 319,  
348
- Demons, 97, 357
- Dominant Unity, 199, 209, 331
- Earth, 69, 72, 107, 113, 119, 128f,  
135, 139f, 153, 186, 193, 231,  
242f, 256, 274, 286, 349, 403
- Elysian Fields, 246
- Emotions, 88
- Enthusiasm, 69, 105, 111, 450
- Eternal Punishment, 54, 103f,  
110f. *See also* Hell
- Evil, 21, 25, 33, 54, 120, 124, 161,  
185, 312, 315, 366, 370, 381,  
389
- Extension, 38, 105, 191f, 194,  
200ff, 208f, 233, 244f, 264,  
271, 276, 342, 353
- Faith, 106, 120, 122ff, 135, 236,  
246, 280, 395, 397f, 400, 412,  
427, 431f, 437
- Articles of, 124, 126
- Errors of, 96
- Forbearance, 372, 378f
- Force, 198f, 207ff, 224, 233, 235,  
245f, 312

- Active, 356
- Attractive, 243
- Corporeal, 89, 91
- Dead, 90
- Derivative, 330
- Laws of, 234
- Living, 90
- Magnetic, 231
- Motive, 316
- Primitive, 330
- Principle of, 105, 111, 362
- Formosa, 54, 428, 447
- Forms, 60, 137, 245, 282f, 289f, 310
- Free will, 21, 33, 185, 194, 302, 357f. *See also* God, Freedom of
- Friendship, 372, 380f
  
- Generosity, 367, 374, 383, 387
- Genies, 245, 253, 267, 312, 345, 349, 353, 357
- Geometry, 89ff, 99, 123, 201, 222f, 230, 232, 239, 242ff, 260, 268, 324f, 334, 342, 407
- God
  - Beauty of, 152, 165
  - Chooses the Best, 25, 40, 42, 45, 54, 178, 186, 236, 246, 386, 396, 420, 427
  - City of, 363f
  - Freedom, of, 205
  - Goodness of, 25, 41, 54, 108, 113, 120, 171, 177f, 236, 246, 366, 399
  - Grace of, 120, 125, 236, 367, 420
  - Immutability of, 99, 114, 339
  - Incarnation of, 297f
  - Justice of, 25, 41, 120, 123, 171, 416
  - Kingdom of, 178, 416
  - Omnipotence of, 120, 194
  - Omniscience of, 194
  - Perfections of, 60f, 114, 165, 176ff, 194, 236, 246, 337, 345, 356, 373f, 388, 397, 416
  - Power of, 63, 117, 179, 186, 236, 246, 357, 437
  - Wisdom of, 41, 63, 108, 113, 117, 179, 236, 246, 338, 349, 357, 399
- Grace, 77, 123, 166, 275, 284, 367, 374, 425, 431. *See also* God, Grace of
- Guelph family history, Leibniz's work on, 7f, 14, 21, 24f, 31
  
- Happiness, 41, 43f, 124, 139, 163, 174, 176f, 179f, 186, 235, 246, 371, 380, 390, 396f, 421, 431
- Harmony, 92, 118, 123, 160, 272, 287, 337, 403, 408. *See also* Pre-established harmony; Universal harmony
- Heaven, 128, 140, 160, 163, 169, 186, 367, 416. *See also* Paradise
- Hell, 79, 101, 103f, 110f, 116, 172, 373, 447. *See also* Eternal Punishment
- Herrenhausen, 12f, 18, 21, 28, 125, 309, 327, 337

- Holy Scripture. *See* Scripture
- Holy Spirit, 163, 169, 400
- Holy Trinity, 398, 413
- Honesty, 371
- Honor, 170, 368, 370, 372f, 381, 389
- Humility, 163, 372, 377f
- Ideal, 326ff, 335f, 338f, 342
- Ideas, 55, 57ff, 189f, 193ff, 198, 202, 210, 214, 221, 228, 239, 251, 253, 255, 259, 262f, 328. *See also* Corporeal Ideas
- Identity of Indiscernibles, 21, 327
- Imagination, 60ff, 76, 84, 86ff, 93, 96, 100, 194, 210, 217, 234, 239f, 246, 259, 287, 338, 353, 437
- Immortality, 106, 112, 122, 270, 419. *See also* Soul, Immortality of
- Impenetrability, 38, 233f, 245, 276, 330
- Imperial Society of Sciences, Leibniz's plans for, 26, 415
- Incarnation, Mystery of, 437. *See also* God, Incarnation of
- Induction, 199, 223, 231f, 240, 243f, 261, 363
- Inertia, 330
- Infinity, 23, 48, 78, 89, 94, 98f, 106f, 112, 145, 151, 153f, 182, 185f, 198, 200, 223f, 232, 234, 244f, 249, 281, 286f, 289f, 296, 309, 324ff, 334f, 339, 342, 346f, 398
- Intellect, 253
- Active, 279, 281
- Passive, 279
- Internal Light, 200, 222, 230, 241f, 246, 258, 261, 264, 270, 276, 309. *See also* Reason
- Jansenists, 83, 137
- Jehoshaphat, Valley of, 407
- Jesuits, 79, 399
- Jews, 103, 108, 110, 113, 120, 398
- Journal des sçavans*, 106f, 148, 150, 302, 311, 321, 323, 332f, 341, 362, 441, 444f
- Judgment, Day of, 407
- Justice, 32, 34, 42, 120, 122ff, 179, 222, 230, 242, 268, 270, 277, 302f, 367f, 372, 374, 399f, 416, 434, 452. *See also* God, Justice of
- Kabbalah, 12, 87, 103, 108, 110, 136, 447
- Kingdom of Heaven, *see* Heaven
- Laws of Mechanics, 330
- Laws of Motion, 88, 271, 315, 347
- Laws of Nature, 105, 111, 274, 320
- Leniency, 372, 379, 390, 392f
- Logic, 240, 355
- Love, 129ff, 176, 371, 400, 434. *See also* Self-love
- Disinterested, 173f, 176ff, 181, 218, 371, 416
- Of God, 87, 93, 104, 108, 111, 113, 163, 165, 170, 172ff, 236, 373, 397, 416, 426

- Lutzenburg, 204, 218, 305, 322
- Magnet, 231, 242, 347
- Magnetism, 195
- Mathematics, 5f, 89, 91, 144,  
151, 154f, 200f, 215, 218,  
228, 230, 239f, 242, 308, 321,  
323, 329, 333, 339, 341, 354f
- Matter, viii, ix, 37ff, 43, 45, 50,  
57f, 67, 105, 107, 112, 198,  
216, 220, 224f, 229, 233f,  
237, 244f, 248, 254ff, 264f,  
270f, 274ff, 283f, 286f, 289ff,  
296ff, 312ff, 316, 325ff, 329ff,  
334ff, 342f, 350f, 353, 357f,  
362, 364, 402ff, 407f, 437
- Mechanics, 123, 222, 230, 242.  
*See also* Laws of Mechanics
- Mechanism, 137, 271, 348
- Medicine, 136
- Memory, 37, 61f, 129, 131, 138,  
210, 259, 273, 275
- Metaphysics, 40, 44, 51, 89, 91,  
260, 268, 321, 355, 436
- Metempsychosis, 12, 106, 119,  
136, 246, 281, 287, 363, 424
- Microscope, 78, 136, 151, 274f,  
285, 327, 337
- Millenarianism, 69, 72, 79f, 449f
- Minds, 36f, 39f, 58, 117, 152,  
154, 186, 312, 330f, 339, 363.  
*See also* Souls, Rational.  
As Mirrors of God, 37, 152  
Immortality of, 39, 44, 63  
Materiality of, 57, 59f  
Moral accountability of, 37,  
39
- Rationality of, 37, 186, 199f,  
233, 245
- Miracle, 34, 76, 79, 224, 232, 235,  
244, 315, 348, 362f
- Missionaries, 170, 206, 395f
- Modesty, 372, 378, 383f, 389
- Mohammedans, 398
- Monad, 13, 35, 199, 329, 449
- Motion, 57, 88, 90, 98f, 123, 145,  
209, 224, 227, 234, 245, 259,  
265f, 271, 273f, 276, 289,  
291, 293f, 313, 315f, 326,  
330, 336, 338, 347, 350f, 437.  
*See also* Laws of Motion
- Multitudes, 36, 38, 52, 151,  
198ff., 207ff, 212f, 219, 281,  
322, 325f, 328ff, 332, 334ff,  
339f, 342, 346f, 357, 419
- Mystics, 106, 112
- Natural Light. *See* Internal Light
- Necessary Truths, *see* Truths,  
Necessary
- Number, 123, 137, 197, 200, 202,  
212, 215, 219, 221, 223, 228,  
230f, 239, 243f, 260, 268,  
302, 308f, 324ff, 334ff, 342f
- Occasionalism, 235, 315, 325
- Original Sin, 400
- Pagans, 103, 110, 117, 171, 191,  
399
- Paradise, 104, 111, 163, 165, 167,  
373. *See also* Heaven
- Parliament, 8, 17, 23, 27



- Passions, 175, 183, 185, 350, 370, 373, 383, 385, 388, 390  
 Patience, 40, 134, 363, 369, 383, 385  
 Perceptions, 76, 147, 154, 209, 221, 226ff, 238f, 263f, 273, 286, 312, 319  
     Confused, 37, 39, 205, 264, 272f, 316, 348  
     Distinct, 37, 146, 235, 246, 265, 286, 290, 312, 316  
     Little, 263, 269, 286, 296, 312, 314  
 Perfection, 61, 111, 133, 176f, 179, 280, 371. *See also*  
     God, Perfection of; Soul, Perfection of; Worldly things, Perfection of  
 Philosophers, 145, 148, 200, 219, 221, 226, 229, 231, 238, 241f, 246, 249, 254, 261f, 265, 280ff, 315, 320, 324, 330, 339, 357, 368, 371, 383, 388, 396, 407, 426  
 Piety, 77, 170, 372f, 386, 388, 425f  
     Of Sophie, 157  
     Of Sophie Charlotte, 157  
 Pity, 372, 379f  
 Pleasure, 44, 139, 163, 176ff, 186, 235, 246, 323, 333, 341, 350, 368ff, 380ff, 387, 390, 397, 400, 415f, 424  
 Pluralities. *See* Multitudes  
 Points, 322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 334ff, 340, 342  
 Prayers, 182f, 420  
 Pre-established harmony, 20, 63f, 202, 316, 357f  
 Probity, 368, 370, 372f  
 Progress, 43f, 139, 147, 153, 158, 246, 286  
 Prophecy, 34, 77ff  
 Providence, 23, 40ff, 47f, 44, 54, 77, 124, 167, 314, 371, 373, 385, 396, 408, 427  
 Pride, 367f, 373, 377, 383f, 393  
 Prudence, 370, 390  
 Punishment, 37, 39, 123, 174, 185f, 350, 363f, 368, 374, 378, 416. *See also* Eternal Punishment  
 Purgatory, 103f, 110f  
 Quietists, 106, 112  
 Quintessence, 146f, 226, 408  
 Rainbow, 264  
 Reason, 2, 12, 25, 33, 37, 90f, 105, 107f, 111ff, 125, 136, 166, 176, 183, 186f, 192, 195, 198f, 202, 213f, 222, 230, 233, 236, 242f, 245ff, 249, 259, 265, 282, 284f, 288, 290, 295f, 309, 328, 348ff, 355, 363, 368ff, 382f, 395f, 398ff, 412f, 437. *See also* Internal Light; Sufficient Reason  
 Religion, 10ff, 19, 33, 49, 160, 168, 171f, 180, 284, 359, 395, 397, 412, 423  
     Christian, 46, 79, 396  
     Natural, 170, 236, 367, 396ff, 427

- Revealed, 170, 367, 397, 413
- Resurrection, 256, 284, 286, 404, 406, 408
- Saints, 77, 87, 163, 177
- Salvation, 11f, 54, 163, 165, 170, 172, 174, 397, 399f, 431f
- Sciences, 43, 79, 110, 139, 192, 224, 232, 235, 239, 244, 246, 312, 329, 363f, 416
  - Abstract, 232, 244
  - Conjectural, 242
  - Demonstrative, 222, 229f, 232, 241f
  - Mathematical, 91, 94, 123, 144, 228, 239f
- Scripture, 12, 43, 72, 88, 93, 106, 108, 113ff, 124, 148, 195, 231, 243, 284f, 396f, 402, 404, 408, 412, 422, 431, 437, 452
  - 1 Corinthians, 115, 163
  - 1 Kings, 32, 77
  - 2 Corinthians, 163
  - 2 Kings, 232, 244
  - Acts, 436
  - Daniel, 171
  - Ecclesiastes, 128f, 428
  - Ephesians, 404
  - Galatians, 374, 439
  - Genesis, 13, 282, 449
  - Hebrews, 106
  - Isaiah, 103, 110
  - Joel, 407
  - John, 120, 148, 168, 196, 249
  - Luke, 104, 110, 164, 319, 380, 396f
  - Mark, 249, 319, 396f
  - Matthew, 104, 110, 164, 195, 319, 380, 397, 416
  - Psalms, 168, 396, 400, 412, 425, 439
  - Revelation, 72, 79, 163
  - Romans, 397, 404
  - Wisdom of Solomon, 195
- Self-love, 136, 170, 371
- Sensations, 37, 266f, 272, 276, 353
- Senses, viii, 45, 55f, 61, 163, 189f, 198ff, 216, 220ff, 228, 232f, 237ff, 244, 249ff, 258ff, 270, 272f, 275ff, 284f, 309, 337f, 349, 358f, 437
- Simple substances, *see* Substances, simple
- Sin 104, 111, 120, 186. *See also* Original Sin
- Sincerity, 372, 376
- Skeptics, 259, 266f, 283
- Socinians, 110
- Souls
  - Dominant, 316
  - Functions of, 264, 273, 283f, 288
  - Immateriality of, 55, 57, 61, 63, 190, 198f, 276f
  - Immortality of, 32, 44, 100, 137, 190, 200, 202, 269, 271, 276f, 282f, 322, 331f, 373. *See also* Immortality
  - Of Animals. *See* Animals,
  - Souls of
  - Perfection of, 104, 114, 139, 348. *See also* Worldly things,

- Perfection of
- Rational, 37, 138f, 191f, 199, 275, 295f, 330f, 339, 349. *See also* Minds
- Represent the Universe, 205, 209, 290, 320, 345ff
- Revolution of, 12, 108, 281, 424, 449
- Sensitive, 37, 295
- Traduction of, 283
- Transmigration of. *See* Metempsychosis
- Vegetative, 37, 295
- Space, 23, 34, 48, 62, 224, 234, 245, 265, 313, 326ff, 335ff, 342ff, 403f
- Spirits, 76, 96, 128, 290, 432, 436f
  - Animal. *See* Animal Spirits
  - Blessed, 288
  - Subtle, 200
- Stoics, 40, 371, 452
- Substances
  - Composite, 437
  - Corporeal, 233f, 245, 331, 437
  - Immaterial, 38, 199, 233, 235, 244ff, 287
  - Imperishability of, 199, 339
  - Simple, 35f, 38, 191, 199, 204, 235, 265, 274, 299, 322, 325f, 330, 332, 335f, 339f, 344ff, 354, 356, 358, 362, 437, 451
- Sufficient Reason, 98ff
- Taste, 123, 226
- Temperance, 370, 389
- Theodicy*, xiii, 25f, 39f, 46, 394f, 411ff, 445
- Theologians, 25, 83, 96, 177, 186, 330, 339, 395, 397ff, 407, 423
- Time, 34, 194, 198, 322, 326ff, 332, 336ff, 342, 353, 420
- Tranquility, 40f, 48, 167, 386
- Transmigration, *see* Metempsychosis
- Trent, Council of, 9f, 79
- Truths
  - Contingent, 308
  - Eternal, 152, 199, 261, 309, 329, 337f, 363f, 396
  - Geometrical, 323, 333, 341
  - Intellectual, 258, 264, 267
  - Necessary, 199, 222, 224, 230, 232, 242, 244, 258, 261, 270, 276, 308, 346, 349, 363f
  - Of Fact, 308
  - Of Sense, 123
  - Of Understanding, 123
- Twofold Truth, 280
- Uniformity, Principle of, ix, 39, 147, 310, 315, 318ff, 451
- Unity, 35ff, 52, 100, 147, 151, 199ff, 203f, 207ff, 212f, 215, 218f, 263, 328, 331, 339, 344, 346ff, 352f, 355f, 419, 451. *See also* Dominant Unity
- Universal characteristic, 355
- Universal harmony, 42, 427
- Universal Spirit, ix, 20, 35, 39, 52, 106, 112, 278ff, 286ff, 298
- Utility, 369, 371ff, 376, 380f, 389

Valor, 389

Virtue, 13, 31, 111, 138, 176ff,  
180, 235, 246, 268, 271, 346,  
350, 366f, 369, 371ff, 381,  
383f, 386, 389ff, 396, 400,  
416, 421, 426

Void, 254, 265, 274, 286, 293

War, 389

Wisdom, 179, 230, 350, 379, 422,  
434. *See also* God, Wisdom  
of

World Soul. *See* Universal Spirit

Worldly things, Perfection of,  
63, 112f, 130, 138, 147, 152,  
186f, 235, 246, 271, 277, 283,  
287, 290, 311, 331f, 357f,  
107f, 363, 436. *See also* Soul,  
Perfection of